MEPs, Parties, and Discipline:
A Critique of the ‘Partisan Control Thesis’

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A Summary of the Thesis

This thesis presents a critique of the partisan control thesis, a common claim in the academic literature on the European Parliament that two partisan actors – domestic political parties and the European parliamentary groups (EP Groups) – influence how Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) approach representation. Specifically, it investigates whether domestic parties and EP Groups shape how MEPs think about and carry out representation, and what factors are linked to variation in the degree to which these partisan actors seek and achieve influence.

Adopting a mixed-methods research design, this thesis analyses data from the 2010 EPRG survey of MEPs, and a body of original data gathered by conducting interviews with MEPs and officials. Three parties from Finland – KOK, the SDP, the PS – and three from the UK – the Conservatives, Labour, and UKIP – are selected as case studies. The MEPs examined are affiliated to one of four EP Groups, namely the EPP, the S&D, the ECR, and the EFD. This thesis finds that neither domestic political parties nor EP Groups exercise the degree of influence that the partisan control thesis suggests. Furthermore, it identifies that three factors are linked to the propensity of national parties to attempt to influence MEPs, and that a further three factors determine the desire and ability of EP Groups to influence MEPs.

This thesis argues that although it is beneficial that MEPs are given the freedom by their parties to carry out their work according to their own judgment, the low levels of attention domestic parties pay to the activities of MEPs gives rise to concerns regarding the existence of an ‘accountability deficit’ in the EU. The pessimistic conclusion is that this deficit is unlikely to be addressed unless parties come to place greater value on goals that lie within the context of the EU’s political system.

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Abbreviations

ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
CA	Common Assembly
CDU	The Christian Democratic Union of Germany
CSU	The Christian Social Union in Bavaria
ECR	The European Conservatives and Reformists Group
ECSC	The European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	The European Economic Community
EFD	Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group in the European Parliament
EP	The European Parliament
EPP	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
EPP-ED	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats
EPRG	European Parliament Research Group
EPLP	The European Parliamentary Labour Party
EU	The European Union
GUE/NGL	European United Left/Nordic Green Left European Parliamentary Group
IND/DEM	Independence/Democracy Group in the European Parliament
KOK	The National Coalition Party
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MLA	Members of the Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NEC	National Executive Committee
PES	The Party of European Socialists
PS	The Finns Party
S&D	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
SDP	The Social Democratic Party
STV	Single Transferable Vote
UCUNF	Ulster Conservatives and Unionists – New Force
UK	The United Kingdom
UKIP	The United Kingdom Independence Party
UKRep	The United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the European Union
US	The United States of America
UUP	The Ulster Unionist Party

Introduction

In recent decades, the unenviable – and arguably impossible – task of addressing the European Union's (EU) democratic deficit has been given primarily to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). As the EU's competences grew, so did the criticism that its decision-making structure did not provide the emerging political system with many of the features expected of modern democracies (Weiler et al., 1995; Follesdal and Hix, 2006; Hix, 2008). The European Parliament (EP) was democratised with the introduction of direct elections in 1979, and empowered to the extent that it now serves as a co-legislator, together with the Council of the EU (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 49, 2013). These radical institutional reforms were carried out in the hope that MEPs, through their work, would be able to strengthen the link between citizens and the EU's decision-making system (Rittberger, 2005: 197), and in so doing provide the EU with a stronger measure of legitimacy, accountability, and responsiveness.

The persistence of claims that the EU suffers from a democratic deficit suggests that this twin-track approach of democratising and of empowering the EP has not succeeded. While some claim that representation cannot resolve a problem caused by the lack of a European demos (Chryssochoou; 2000), others maintain that the problem lies, at least in part, in the realms of institutional design. As elections to the EP are carried out using various forms of party list proportional representation, parties in most countries play a key role in determining which of their candidates are elected. It is widely claimed that this control over the outcome of elections provides parties with a means of exercising considerable influence over MEPs during their tenure (Scully, 2001; Hix, 2002; Hix et al., 2007; Raunio, 2007). As MEPs tend to 'promote the interests of political parties and other organized interests over those of individual voters' (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 9), the role that political parties play in organizing democracy at the EU level may hinder the efforts of MEPs to solve the EU's legitimacy problems.

This thesis examines whether two partisan actors – domestic political parties and the parliamentary groups in the EP (EP Groups) – influence the behaviour of MEPs. The freedom of MEPs to carry out their work according to their own judgment is anchored in Rule 2 of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure, which states that 'Members of the European Parliament shall exercise their mandate independently. They shall not be bound by any instructions and shall not receive a

binding mandate' (European Parliament, 2013: 13). This edict reflects the principle that citizens are normatively 'always the ultimate principals' where democracy is understood as popular sovereignty (Strøm, 2003: 64). Nevertheless, it is accepted that MEPs, much like legislators in other settings, may legitimately serve multiple masters, or in the language of rational choice scholars, that MEPs are the 'agents' of multiple 'principals' (Scully, 2001; Hix, 2002; Hix et al., 2007; Raunio, 2007; Farrell and Scully, 2007).

MEPs are frequently conceived of as the agents of two principals, namely of their domestic political parties and their EP Groups. This is because both types of partisan actors are argued to have some control over the degree to which MEPs are able to achieve their primary goals, which include re-election, office, and policy goals, and are able to use this control to influence the behaviour of MEPs. While it is generally held that partisan actors do shape the behaviour of MEPs, the literature acknowledges that the degree of partisan control is likely to vary from one MEP to the next. Several factors affect the degree to which parties have an incentive to seek control of MEPs, and to have the means wherewith to discipline MEPs effectively (see Hix et al., 1999; Scully, 2001). The notion of partisan control, referred to in this study as the 'partisan control thesis', and advanced most strongly by Hix (2002; Hix et al., 2007), forms an integral part of scholarly understanding of the behaviour of MEPs.

While prevalent, the partisan control thesis has faced strong and justified criticism from Ringe (2010), who argues that party cohesion should not be taken as evidence of party discipline, and who explains the high levels of partisan cohesion with reference to the concept of 'Perceived Preference Coherence' (PPC). As MEPs are unable to develop policy expertise in every area in which the EP is active, they seek and follow guidance offered by colleagues within their domestic party delegations and Groups. He claims that the PPC dynamic describes the '"normal" way that MEPs make policy choices', and therefore explains to a large degree how decision-making in the EP takes place (Ringe, 2010: 209).

The body of literature that directly examines relations between MEPs and their national parties also provides evidence that casts doubt on the partisan control thesis (Attinà, 1994: 287; Bomberg, 1998, 121–5; Ovey, 2002; Blomgren, 2003; Poguntke et al., 2007; Raunio, 2002, 2007; Aylott et al., 2013), although these studies do not explicitly question the claims made by Hix and his colleagues regarding the degree of

influence that partisan actors exercise. Scully (2001) questions whether it is in the interests of domestic party leaders to attempt to implement party discipline in the context of the EP. Identifying that the burden of monitoring parliamentary life and the work of their own MEPs would be great, he notes that mandating MEPs may also be counterproductive, as it would restrict their scope to negotiate their way into winning coalitions. Moreover, several studies (Bomberg, 1998; Scully, 2001; Raunio, 2002; 2007; Aylott et al., 2013) find little evidence of parties issuing voting instructions. Indeed, most studies of linkages between domestic parties and their MEPs find that parties tend to show scant interest in the activities of their MEPs, and even less in the day-to-day work of the EP more generally. As a result, there are strong grounds for questioning Hix's claims regarding the degree of partisan influence.

Research Objectives

This thesis assesses the partisan control thesis by examining the extent to which national political parties and EP Groups seek and achieve to influence how MEPs approach representation. The central research question is formulated as follows:

Do partisan actors influence the way MEPs think about and carry out representation?

The terms used above reflect the discussion in Chapter 1 relating to the potential for legislators to vary in how they approach the task of acting as representatives. Debates relating to the focus of representation demonstrate that there is variation between representatives in how they think about – or conceive of – the represented (Judge, 1999: 12–13). Scholars also identify that there is scope for variation in how representatives act on behalf of the represented, or in other words, in how they carry out representation (Wahlke et al., 1962; Müller and Saalfeld, 1997; Farrell and Scully, 2007: 93–4).

As the literature identifies two types of partisan actors that are potentially able to influence the behaviour of MEPs, it is necessary to formulate the following two sub-questions:

- Sub-question 1a: Do domestic political parties influence the way MEPs think about and carry out representation?

- Sub-question 2a: Do EP Groups influence the way MEPs think about and carry out representation?

The potential for variation in the desire and ability of these two partisan actors to influence the behaviour of MEPs identified by the literature, and developed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, requires the formulation of two further sub-questions:

- Sub-question 1b: What factors explain variation in the level of influence that domestic political parties have on the way MEPs think about and carry out representation?
- Sub-question 2b: What factors explain variation in the level of influence that EP Groups have on the way MEPs think about and carry out representation?

The Contribution to the Literature

There are five main reasons for investigating the partisan control thesis by systematically examining the nature of the relationship between MEPs and the two partisan actors to which most maintain an affiliation. The first is to address the tension within the literature referred to above between studies which claim that the two partisan actors – domestic political parties and EP Groups – seek and achieve influence on the behaviour of MEPs, on the one hand, and accounts which do not suggest that these partisan actors are in a position to do so, on the other. In contrast to Ringe (2010), who critically examines the partisan control thesis by examining how individual legislators make decisions within the chamber, this study assesses the partisan control thesis by examining linkages between parties and MEPs. By adopting this approach, the study can take into account aspects of representation that are broader than simply decision-making within the EP. For example, it enables the study to examine what effect, if any, partisan relations have on the way MEPs relate to different societal groups, and on how MEPs apportion their time between different forms of political activities and settings.

The second is to gain a better understanding of how party discipline – a central organizing principle of most European legislatures (Bowler et al., 1999a; Dalton et al., 2011: 197) – operates in relation to MEPs. This will shed light on the role that partisan actors play in assisting citizens to hold MEPs accountable, and provide a

means of evaluating the service that parties provide when acting as linkage mechanisms between citizens and the exercise of the political authority delegated to the EP. It is essential that scholars gain a thorough understanding of whether parties fulfil their duties in the context of the EP, as the democratic credentials of the institution (van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Farrell and Scully, 2007) and of the political system of the EU more generally (Follesdal and Hix, 2006; Weiler et al., 1995) are routinely questioned.

Thirdly, few of the extant accounts seek to explain variation in the way that partisan actors relate to MEPs, and these largely fail to identify factors that account for any appreciable degree of variation (see for example, Raunio, 2002). As this thesis explains some degree of variation in the desire and ability of partisan actors to influence MEPs, it strengthens an aspect of the literature that is particularly weak.

Fourthly, the thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of how EP Groups operate and how they relate to their affiliated MEPs. Apart from Kreppel's (2002) examination of the two largest Groups in the EP, the European People's Party (EPP) and the Party of European Socialists (PES)[1], little systematic research has been conducted into the dynamics that operate within Groups. This is particularly the case for Eurosceptic Groups, which until recently have been neglected by scholars (Almeida, 2010; Startin, 2010; Brack, 2013; Whitaker and Lynch, 2014). The European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) and the Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group (EFD), both established in 2009, have not to date been examined systematically, and the same applies to the EFD's precursor, the Independency/Democracy Group (IND/DEM). Indeed, little scholarly interest has been shown in the dynamics operating within the smaller Groups.[2]

Fifthly, the issue of partisan linkages to MEPs requires periodic revisiting. While these ties are currently understood to be weak, they are expected to strengthen over time. Domestic political parties are expected to improve their linkage systems as they gain experience of dealing with MEPs and as the powers of the EP increase (Scully, 2001: 13; Raunio, 2002: 105). It is also plausible that MEPs seek to develop better means of cooperating with colleagues within and between Groups as they become better acquainted with the benefits of intra- and inter-Group cooperation. The evidence on which most accounts currently available are based relate to previous parliamentary terms, and there is genuine reason to expect the nature of partisan relations to have developed in the meantime. By providing evidence relating to the

current parliamentary term, the findings presented in this thesis complement and build on those of earlier studies.

Research Design and Methodology

The division of the four sub-questions into two categories reflects the fact that two steps need to be taken to address the study's central research question. The first task is to demonstrate empirically that partisan actors[3] either do or do not influence the behaviour of MEPs. The task of measuring the degree to which one societal actor exercises influence on the behaviour of another is onerous. This study presents an analytical framework which is based on the four necessary conditions of partisan control. It is argued that to be in a position where they can systematically influence MEPs, partisan actors must desire to influence the behaviour of MEPs, communicate wishes to MEPs, provide MEPs with threats and rewards, and obtain information regarding the behaviour of MEPs. The empirical component of the thesis addresses the first set of sub-questions by examining whether partisan actors fulfil these four preconditions of control.

Where parties do not fulfil these preconditions, the possibility that they intentionally influence the behaviour of MEPs can be ruled out. However, fulfilling the four preconditions is not a sufficient condition of party influence.[4] Therefore, in cases where they do fulfil these preconditions, the investigation will proceed to examine whether MEPs or officials from the partisan organizations believe that the partisan actor exercises influence on the behaviour of MEPs.

If there is evidence to suggest that at least some domestic parties and EP Groups attempt to shape how MEPs approach representation, the second stage of the analysis is to examine what factors explain variation in the degree to which partisan actors seek and exercise influence over MEPs. Previous studies have argued that a number of factors may affect the degree to which partisan actors seek and achieve control of MEPs (Hix et al., 1999; Scully, 2001; Raunio, 2007). These include factors relating to the partisan actor itself, such as its size, its status as a governing party, and its ideological positioning; factors relating to the MEPs, such as experience, career goals, and age; and factors relating to the institutional environment, such as the type of electoral system used, the timing of national and European elections, and the procedure used to deal with the policy issue at hand. There is currently little empirical evidence in support of claims that these factors act as sources of variation in the

degree to which partisan actors seek and achieve influence. Nevertheless, the discussion in Chapter 2 demonstrates that there is a distinct possibility that the nature of the relationship between MEPs and the two partisan actors varies considerably from one parliamentarian to the next, with potentially vast consequences for the degree to which parties can expect to shape the behaviour of MEPs.

The issue of variation is examined by testing a series of fifteen hypotheses that are presented in Chapter 2. As there are a total of 766 MEPs, from over 190 domestic political parties, with most affiliated to one of seven EP Groups, it is necessary to develop a research design which is able to deal with the potential for extensive variation. If the expectations are justified, the research design will also need to provide a means of measuring the degree to which different factors lead to variation. This will make it possible to address Sub-questions 1b and 2b.

The difficulties that lie in accumulating the necessary data on such a large number of relationships between partisan actors and MEPs for the findings to be both robust and externally valid are, in practice, insurmountable. One way of dealing with the potentially vast degree of variation would be to analyse data generated by a survey that is representative of the chamber in terms of the factors that are expected to lead to variation. Ideally, it would be possible to generate new data, which explicitly deals with the degree to which partisan actors fulfil the four preconditions of influence. The survey would also provide data on the extent to which MEPs feel that their thinking and behaviour is shaped by the demands made by partisan actors, together with data on various aspects of the way MEPs approach representation. However, due to the logistical limitations associated with this research project, and the difficulties faced by other researchers conducting similar research in generating sufficiently large and representative samples (see critique of the 2010 EPRG MEP survey in Chapter 2), this is not feasible.

A mixed-methods approach

In light of these challenges, the research design of this thesis is based on a mixed-methods approach. The first empirical component of the thesis features cross-national, large-*n* analysis of data gathered by a major survey of MEPs carried out by the European Parliament Research Group in 2010 (Farrell et al., 2011). This analysis serves three purposes. Firstly, it provides a means to identify whether domestic political parties fulfil two of the four preconditions of control, and secondly, to test

whether certain factors are related to the propensity of parties to fulfil these two preconditions. Thirdly, it makes it possible to examine whether there is a relationship between various factors that are believed to empower the party relative to MEPs and indicators that MEPs approach representation in ways that are consistent with the expectations of the partisan control thesis. For example, the analysis provides a means of examining whether there is a link between the use of a centralised candidate selection system and the degree to which MEPs prioritize party interests.

Analysis of this survey data is valuable. By rendering feasible the task of dealing with the extensive sources of variation, the analysis provides a way of identifying trends that are general across the EU. However, there are four major limitations associated with the strategy of relying exclusively on this approach in addressing the central research question. Firstly, questions may be raised regarding the validity of the data, due to the possibility that questionnaires were completed by individuals other than the MEPs themselves. Secondly, the survey did not ask respondents on all aspects of the partisan actor-MEP relationship in which this study is interested. Thirdly, the ability of the multivariate analysis to identify trends may be limited due to the fact that relatively few responses were received on some survey items (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed critique of the data). Fourthly, the claims that can be made on the basis of the quantitative analysis are rather general in nature, as care must be exercised when making causal inferences in cases where statistically significant relationships are identified.

Due to these four limitations, it is necessary to supplement the quantitative analyses by drawing on another body of data to address the central research question. The second empirical component of the study features analysis of qualitative data, gathered from a series of interviews with individuals with first-hand experience of MEP-partisan relations. Interviewees included MEPs and their assistants, officials from domestic political parties and the EP Groups, and officials from the Permanent Representations to the European Union. Analysis of such data makes it possible to form a far more detailed and nuanced account of how partisan actors relate to their MEPs, and what effect this has on the behaviour of MEPs. While the survey data analysis may assist in identifying which factors lead to partisan control, it is less able to explain why these factors have this affect, or to describe and to explain how MEPs respond to various sources of pressure from partisan actors. As well as providing a means of corroborating and explaining the statistical findings, analysis of the

qualitative data provides further information about the nature of the relationship between partisan actors and MEPs, together with an additional means of investigating whether these relationships affect the way MEPs approach their roles. Therefore, by adopting a mixed-methods approach, it is possible to draw on the strengths of both types of methods, while at the same time overcoming many of their weaknesses.

Country case selection

The qualitative case studies are selected on the basis of four criteria. The four criteria are related to the factors that are linked to the level of incentive and potential that partisan actors have to influence MEPs, as outlined in the discussion of the theoretical framework in Chapter 2. Firstly, the domestic parties that feature have been selected from ‘old’ Member States, that is, from countries that joined the EU before 2004. While parties from ‘new’ Member States may still be experimenting with different ways of structuring relations with MEPs, the countries from which cases have been selected have been members of the EU for a sufficient amount of time for the relationship between domestic political parties and their MEPs to have stabilized. This selection criterion means that it is not possible to examine in the qualitative component of the study whether domestic parties differ in how they structure relations with MEPs between ‘old’ and ‘new’ Member States. It also limits the extent to which the findings of the qualitative analysis can be generalized to parties and MEPs from ‘new’ Member States. Nevertheless, even if parties from ‘old’ and ‘new’ Member States currently differ in how they structure relations with MEPs, it is at the very least possible that with time, parties from ‘new’ Member States will come to deal with MEPs in a manner similar to that of parties which have greater experience of being represented in the EP.

The necessity of choosing a limited number of case studies can lead to questions being raised regarding the external validity of the findings (Yin, 2009: 15). It is not practical for this thesis to examine a selection of cases that is genuinely representative of the multiplicity of the partisan agent-MEP relationships that exist. In response to this, the second selection criterion is that the cases are chosen from the two countries that provide the settings in which domestic parties have the least and the greatest incentive and potential to influence MEPs. The rest of the universe of domestic political parties are assumed either to be similar to the cases examined, or to be no less and no more prone to seeking influence on MEPs than those featured in the

analysis. By selecting case from two such countries, it is not only possible to test whether the partisan control thesis applies to any domestic party, but also to examine whether it only applies to parties with a strong incentive and theoretical ability to influence MEPs. It also makes it possible to identify how much variation exists between cases that lie at the two extremes.

The two countries from which cases are selected are Finland and the UK. Finland is chosen because its parties appear to have less of an incentive to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, and more limited prospects of success, than parties from many other Member States. Scholars argue that party influence stems from the power parties have over the ability of MEPs to realise their personal goals, and that the parties' ability to shape the re-election chances of MEPs serves as their 'ultimate instrument of control' over the behaviour of MEPs (Raunio, 2007: 141). EP elections in Finland are conducted using an open-list system, with the constituency corresponding to the whole area of Finland. Voters cast a ballot in favour of their preferred candidate and this registers as a vote for that candidate's party. Seats are allocated to each party on a proportional basis using the d'Hondt formula, with the mandate bestowed on the party's candidates according to the number of personal votes each candidate receives. Unlike parties operating under closed- and ordered-list systems, Finnish parties are unable to list candidates in order of preference. They consequently have less control over the election prospects of their candidates than parties from many other Member States, and therefore appear to be in a far weaker position to influence the behaviour of their MEPs.

Further, it may be the case that Finnish parties are less able than others to meet the costs of undertaking the activities required for a party to be in a position where it can influence the behaviour of their MEPs. Despite the fact that Finnish parties receive state funding, their organizations are relatively small, and the number of party members is modest in most cases (Raunio and Tiilikainen, 2003: 60). As a result, the extent to which they are able to designate resources towards activities such as monitoring the work of MEPs is expected to be more limited than in the case of parties from larger Member States.

Finnish parties may also have a lesser incentive to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs than many other parties. As the number of MEPs from each Finnish party represented in the EP is low (at a maximum of three MEPs during the 2009–14 parliamentary term), as is the total number of MEPs who are from governing

parties (at nine MEPs since the 2011 national election), it appears that neither the parties nor the government have a strong incentive to attempt to use MEPs to realise goals at the EU level. Finnish parties may feel that they have a considerable incentive to work closely with MEPs who act as rapporteurs, as even individual MEPs are able to extensively shape policy outputs when writing parliamentary reports (Corbett et al., 2011: 9). However this applies to all parties represented in the EP. Further, the incentive for Finnish parties to demand that MEPs focus their activities around domestic politics may also be relatively small, as all Finnish parties represented in the EP have considerably more national parliamentarians than MEPs. Examining case studies from Finland therefore makes it possible to identify the extent to which parties, whose desire and ability to influence the behaviour of its MEPs appears, in theory, to be low, seek to do so.

In contrast, British parties appear to have a greater incentive to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, and better prospects of success, than parties from many other Member States. The use of a closed-list electoral system for EP elections in the UK appears to place parties in a strong position vis-à-vis their MEPs. These elections are conducted on a regional basis, with the country's 73[5] parliamentary seats divided between 12 constituencies. Parties put forward a list of candidates in each region, and voters cast a single ballot in favour of a party's list with no means of registering a preference for an individual candidate. Seats are allocated to each party on a proportional basis using the d'Hondt formula in England, Scotland, and Wales, while the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system is used in Northern Ireland. As British parties are able to list candidates in order of preference, they have extensive control over the election prospects of their candidates. They consequently appear to have a far more potent tool to influence the behaviour of MEPs compared with parties from countries operating open- and ordered-list systems.

In addition, the two largest British parties appear to be better placed than most to meet the costs of undertaking the activities required to influence the behaviour of MEPs. Compared with parties from across Europe, the Conservative Party and the Labour Party have large party organizations centrally, as well as at the grassroots level. Further, as the Conservatives, UKIP, Labour, and the Liberal Democrats have more than 10 seats each in the EP, they may be in a better position than other parties to use EP funds to employ EP-based coordinators to strengthen their links to MEPs.

The fact that these four British parties have a far greater number of parliamentary seats than most of the other parties represented in the EP also suggests that they have a greater incentive to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs. These four parties appear to have a clear incentive to attempt to use their MEPs to assist the party to realise policy and electoral goals at the EU and national levels. The considerable opposition to the EU that exists within the UK may provide British parties with a further reason for wishing to influence MEPs' behaviour. Support by MEPs for integrationist measures can cause parties acute embarrassment, as can instances where the actions of MEPs conflict with the preferences of party leaders (*The Guardian*, 2001, 2011; *The Financial Times*, 2008a; *The Daily Telegraph*, 2008). British parties may therefore exhibit a greater willingness than parties in other Member States to invest in the measures necessary to influence the behaviour of MEPs.

In addition, by sourcing the case studies from Finland and the UK, it is possible to examine whether there is a link between the type of electoral system used and the desire and ability of parties to influence their MEPs. This factor is particularly important to the investigation, as the partisan control thesis rests primarily on the assumption that the control of domestic parties over the reselection prospects of MEPs enables them to compel MEPs to act according the parties' wishes.

Within-country case selection

The third criterion used as a basis for selection is that the cases from within both countries differ on many of the factors that are expected to lead to variation in the degree to which partisan actors seek and exercise control over MEPs (King et al., 1994: 139–40). These include factors such as the parties' ideological positions, their status as a governing party, and the size of their delegations in the EP. By including such variation within the case selection, it is possible to examine whether there is empirical support for the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2 relating to different sources of variation.

The fourth consideration is that there is a correspondence between the three Finnish parties and the three British parties regarding the factors that are expected to lead to variation in how they structure relations with MEPs. As each of the three Finnish parties share relevant characteristics with their counterparts in the UK, it is possible to make a series of three cross-country pair-wise comparisons, and this

facilitates the task of identifying the effect of country-level factors. These comparisons provide a means of triangulating the findings relating to specific independent variables. The ability to carry out such a triangulation strategy is particularly valuable, as a relatively large number of factors are hypothesised to lead to variation in the dependent variables. It may be the case that the analysis of cases from one country identifies a relationship between several factors and the dependent variables, but that the evidence from the other country suggests that not all of these factors act as sources of variance in the dependent variable. Such a contradictory finding would suggest one of two explanations: either that some of the findings relating to the first country are spurious, or that some source of country-level variation acts as an intervening variable.

The three Finnish cases selected are the National Coalition Party (KOK), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and The Finns Party (PS). KOK and the SDP are two of Finland's largest parties. They have well-developed central party organizations and have long histories of being in government. Both are currently governing parties and are broadly pro-integrationist. In contrast, the Eurosceptic PS is a relative newcomer, having made the electoral leap from a fringe party to one which holds a considerable number of national parliamentary seats in recent years. The size of the PS' party organization is smaller than that of the other two parties, in terms of its level of expenditure and in terms of the number of party members. While KOK is positioned on the centre-right of the ideological scale, the PS is positioned slightly to the left of centre, and the SDP is positioned slightly further to the left. The number of MEPs from each party varies between each case, and each party's MEPs are affiliated to different EP Groups.

The three domestic parties selected from the UK – the Conservatives, Labour, and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) – reflect in many ways those selected from Finland. The former two dominate British electoral politics and have spent time during the 2009–14 EP term as governing parties.[6] In contrast, and in a manner similar to the PS, UKIP has only demonstrated a potential to be a party with major electoral appeal in recent years, and its party organization is considerably smaller than that of the Conservatives and Labour.

There are three measures whether the degree of correspondence between the three British parties and the three Finnish parties is slightly weaker. Firstly, the British parties exhibit slightly weaker levels of support for the EU than their Finnish

counterparts. While Labour is broadly pro-integrationist, the Conservatives are moderately Eurosceptic (Bale, 2006; Heppell, 2013), with UKIP taking an even stronger Eurosceptic position (Whitaker and Lynch, 2014). Whereas the discourse surrounding the EU in Britain compels Labour to be slightly less pro-integrationist than the SDP, the Conservatives are far less pro-integrationist than KOK, and UKIP's Euroscepticism is stronger than that of the PS. Secondly, there is a slight discrepancy between the British and the Finnish parties in terms of their location on the left–right ideological spectrum. While the Conservatives are situated on the centre-right of the ideological scale, similar to KOK, and Labour takes its position on the centre-left, similar to the SDP, there is a difference between the populist right-wing policies that UKIP espouses and the more centrist populism of the PS.

Thirdly, there is a slight discrepancy between the EP Groups to which the MEPs of British parties and their Finnish counterparts are affiliated. The SDP and Labour's MEPs are affiliated to the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) Group, and the PS' MEP and the majority of UKIP's MEPs are affiliated to the EFD Group. However, KOK's MEPs are affiliated to the EPP, while the Conservatives' MEPs are affiliated to the ECR Group. Despite these three slight discrepancies, these parties serve as appropriate cases on which to draw in examining the four sub-questions presented above and these differences do not hinder the investigation.

This discussion of EP Group affiliation demonstrates how basing case selection on the MEPs' affiliation to domestic parties provides an appropriate means of selecting cases which can be examined to address the aspect of the central research question that focuses on EP Groups. The selection makes it possible to investigate whether four Groups seek and exercise influence on the way MEPs carry out representation. The cases include the two dominant Groups, the EPP and the S&D, together with two of the smaller and most recently formed Groups, the ECR and the EFD. In the case of the S&D and the EFD, this examination takes place from the perspective of MEPs affiliated to two national delegations that differ in fundamental ways in both instances. The fact that Labour and UKIP have large delegations suggests that their MEPs are able to play a leading role within the S&D and the EFD respectively. However, the MEP–Group dynamics are expected to be different from the point of view of the SDP's two MEPs, and the PS' single MEP. The ability to compare the experiences of two dissimilar national delegations in each instance is

especially valuable, as it provides a means of examining in detail whether the nature of the relationship between MEPs and the EP Group varies according to the size of the delegation.

Interview methodology

As part of this project a total of 59 semi-structured interviews were conducted with current and former MEPs[7], their staffs, EP Group advisors, national party officials (in most instances the General Secretary or the International Secretary), and officials of the Permanent Representation to the EU of Finland and the UK. All MEPs from the selected parties were invited to participate, and interviews were sought with a member of their staffs in cases where the MEP declined. Group officials were identified as potential interviewees primarily on the basis of nationality. While, in principle, officials service the work of all MEPs regardless of nationality, it is clear that in practice they often work more closely with MEPs from their own Member States. This is especially true of the smaller Groups, and is also true of the larger Groups in the area of public relations.[8] As a result, Finnish and British Group officials were targeted, although several officials of other nationalities were also interviewed.

Interviewees were questioned at length on a range of issues, including how the two types of partisan actor structure relations with MEPs, whether these actors fulfil the four preconditions of influence, the extent to which MEPs feel able to operate independently of the two partisan actors, and how MEPs carry out various aspects of their work and relate to various groups that they may wish to represent. The duration of most interviews was between 30–35 minutes, with some shorter at around 15–20 minutes, while others lasted around 60 minutes. The questioning differed slightly according to the position of the interviewee, however the same themes were covered during all interviews. The majority of these interviews were conducted in Brussels during a ten-week period between April and July 2012, with further interviews conducted in Brussels in November 2012. Finnish national party officials were interviewed in Helsinki during the autumn and winter of 2012 and British national party officials were interviewed in various locations in the UK during the summer and autumn of 2013. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded, apart from three, which were conducted by telephone.

Several potentially sensitive and normatively charged issues were discussed during the interviews. The thesis is essentially interested in whether partisan actors

are able to provide elected politicians with inducements to think and act in ways that are contrary to their own judgment (Birch, 1971: 97). It was therefore necessary to discuss issues that partisan actors and MEPs alike may under certain circumstances wish to hide from the public domain, most notably practices relating to partisan discipline, and the degree to which domestic parties are actively engaged in EU policy-making processes. Despite the potential for respondents to be unwilling to provide information and views on some of these issues, the interviews were characterized by a high degree of candidness almost without exception. It is likely that this was facilitated by the fact that interviewees were granted anonymity and that special measures are taken in the case of small parties to protect the identity of interviewees. In most instances, interviewees are referred to by their positions, however this information is not disclosed in the case of interviewees from the smaller parties examined.

Conducting interviews with such a wide variety of actors directly engaged in the MEP-partisan actor relationship yielded a particularly valuable source of data. As the different types of actors had experience of dealing with MEPs and partisan actors in a variety of settings, they were able to provide information and perspectives on differing aspects of the various partisan actor-MEP relationships. While MEPs were able to offer evidence relating to first-hand experience of dealing with their domestic parties and their EP Groups, domestic party officials were able to provide information on the domestic parties' practices relating to EU policy formulation and promotion, and a view on the party-MEP relationship from the home capital. EP Group officials were able to provide detailed information on the nature of intra-Group dynamics. Put differently, by selecting interviewees from these backgrounds it was possible to extensively triangulate the accounts provided by MEPs and other Brussels-based actors on the one hand, with the information provided by officials based in the national capitals on the other.

The qualitative component of the thesis also makes use of secondary sources to complement the interview data. The analysis draws on reports provided by news outlets on issues such as public disagreements between MEPs and their domestic parties and the processes undertaken by parties to select candidates for the 2014 EP elections. This provides an additional means of verifying the information provided by respondents.

An Outline of the Study

This thesis is organized as follows. The first chapter begins the task of presenting the thesis' theoretical framework. Drawing on rational choice accounts, processes of democratic governance are conceptualised as two chains: a chain of delegation which stands for the transfer of authority from citizens to decision-makers, and a chain of accountability which runs in the opposite direction. It is argued that political parties are able to assist citizens in holding legislators accountable, but that they may instead coerce representatives to act in accordance with party interests rather than with the public interest. It is therefore argued that while parties should pay attention to the work of legislators to assist citizens to hold them accountable, they should not use their power to compel representatives to prioritize party interests over those of voters. Building on this theoretical discussion, the second half of Chapter 1 provides an overview of the academic literature on MEPs that focuses on studies which examine how national political parties and EP Groups structure relations with their MEPs. Studies which claim that these two partisan actors are able to exercise considerable influence on the behaviour of MEPs are identified as advancing the partisan control thesis. Attention is drawn to the tension that exists between these accounts and those that cast doubt on the assertion that partisan actors extensively influence the behaviour of MEPs. In so doing, the discussion situates this study in relation to the extant literature.

The second chapter develops the discussion of the study's theoretical framework presented in the first chapter by focusing more closely on the plausibility of the partisan control thesis. Drawing on the new institutionalist accounts of Scully (2001) and Raunio (2007), it is argued that partisan actors may indeed be able to influence the behaviour of MEPs if they are willing to incur the costs associated with carrying out the activities necessary for achieving influence. Partisan actors would, however, be required to bear significant costs to be in a position where they develop a potential to influence the behaviour of MEPs, as they would need to fulfil four conditions: to hold interests relating to the behaviour of MEPs, to communicate these interests to MEPs, to provide MEPs with incentives to act in accordance with those interests, and to monitor MEPs' behaviour in order to ensure that any threats issued are credible. The study's analytical framework, which is based on examining whether the partisan actors fulfil these four preconditions, is presented. The chapter subsequently puts forward fifteen hypotheses relating to factors that are expected to

lead to variation in the degree to which partisan actors seek and exercise influence on MEPs, before providing an overview of the research design, data sources, and the case study selection.

Chapter 3 takes the first empirical step in investigating whether partisan actors influence MEPs by presenting analysis of data from the 2010 EPRG survey of MEPs (Farrell et al., 2011). The findings indicate that many domestic political parties and EP Groups at least partly fulfil the preconditions of holding and communicating legislative preferences in the form of voting recommendations to MEPs. However, the evidence examined does not suggest that partisan actors are able to compel MEPs to focus exclusively on partisan interests. MEPs claim to place a greater emphasis on territorial representation compared with domestic partisan representation, and attribute even lower levels of importance to representing their EP Groups. Further, MEPs claim that they are free to vote at parliamentary division on the basis of their own conception of the public interests. The chapter 3 also casts doubt on the notion that leaders are able to use their control over the reselection prospects of incumbents to systematically control their behaviour. It finds that the leadership of many parties plays a subordinate role to that played by other party organs in the candidate selection procedure. The analysis yields few insights into the determinants of partisan control. None of the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2 are supported, and very few factors are identified as explaining variation in the degree to which MEPs accord importance to representing their domestic parties and EP Groups. No theoretically grounded explanation can be provided for these findings.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the analysis of qualitative data relating to MEPs selected from the six national parties discussed above. Chapter 4 draws on evidence relating to the MEPs of three Finnish parties, who operate in a setting in which levels of domestic party control is expected to be low. None of these domestic parties wish to influence any aspect of the way MEPs carry out their work, or meet any of the other three preconditions for party control. Indeed, the findings demonstrate that MEPs act with considerable independence from their parties, and that these parties treat MEPs as largely peripheral actors. In contrast, two of the Groups to which the MEPs featured in the analysis are affiliated, the EPP and the S&D, are found to influence the behaviour of MEPs. Unlike the pro-integrationist EPP and S&D Groups, the Eurosceptic EFD Group does not attempt to influence the behaviour of its MEPs. This is because the Group was established by its affiliated delegations in 2009 on the

understanding that it exists primarily to provide access to funding and administrative resources rather than to coordinate policy.

In examining the partisan relations of MEPs affiliated to three British parties, Chapter 5 finds some evidence of domestic parties attempting to influence the behaviour of MEPs. The Conservatives and Labour only attempt to influence how MEPs vote, and do so only in rare instances. In contrast, UKIP's leadership sets out broad principles by which MEPs must abide, but provides little guidance regarding how MEPs should act from day to day. The limited nature of these attempts to influence MEPs cast doubt on the notion that features of EP life such as voting cohesion within domestic party delegations are explained by centralised systems of party discipline. The findings relating to EP Groups reflect those presented in the previous chapter, with evidence of far weaker coordination within the two Eurosceptic Groups, the EFD and the ECR, compared with the pro-integrationist S&D. Despite the fact that the S&D Group does not operate a strict system of discipline, Labour MEPs feel compelled to follow the S&D's voting recommendations unless there is reason to do otherwise.

These findings are drawn together in Chapter 6, which serves as the thesis' Conclusion. This chapter argues that neither domestic political parties nor EP Groups exercise the degree of influence on the behaviour of MEPs that the partisan control thesis suggests. Three factors are identified as being linked to the propensity of national parties to attempt to influence MEPs, namely the electoral system, the degree to which the candidate selection system is centralized, and the size of the party's delegation in the EP. A further three factors are found to determine the desire and ability of EP Groups to influence MEPs. These factors are the size of the EP Group in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs, the centricity of the Group on the left–right scale, and attitudes towards integration.

The Conclusion discusses the findings, and their implications for understanding MEPs and both types of partisan actors. This discussion claims that the institutional context in which MEPs operate does not constrain their ability to make decisions independently of their domestic parties and EP Groups. As MEPs place great importance on representing their domestic parties despite the lack of pressure to do so, it is appropriate to think of MEPs largely as *voluntary* or *willing* partisan agents, rather than as agents who seek to evade the control of their domestic partisan principals. Further, it is argued that there is a disinclination for domestic party leaders

to mandate MEPs, and that this is primarily because party leaders have little interest in realising their election, policy, and office goals (Strøm, 1990) through the work of MEPs. This suggests that parties operating in a system of multi-level governance may not be multi-level goal-seekers, and that the state level remains the most important one for domestic political parties. The thesis closes with a normative response to the findings. It claims that the reluctance of domestic political parties to hold MEPs to account is problematic, and that the 'accountability deficit' that exists in the EU will not be resolved at least until parties pay more attention to the activities of their MEPs. This is unlikely to happen unless parties come to place greater value on goals that lie within the context of the EU's political system.

[1] The PES changed its name to the 'Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democracts in the European Parliament' (the S&D Group) at the beginning of the 2009–14 parliamentary term.

[2] For an example of a typically brief discussion on the smaller Groups, see Raunio, 1997: 52.

[3] This thesis is sensitive to the fact that national political parties are not unitary actors (Katz and Mair, 1993). Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity the reporting of the analysis follows the example of others in defining the national party as 'roughly equivalent to the party leadership' (Scully, 2001: 9; Mühlböck, 2012: 609).

[4] As evidence from other legislatures suggest (Jensen, 2000; Norton, 2003), fulfilling the four preconditions is not strictly a necessary condition of party influence. An MEP may decide to follow a request from the party despite there being little incentive to do so, and in the knowledge that the party is unlikely to learn of how he or she acted.

[5] Only 72 MEPs were elected from the UK at the 2009 election. The UK was awarded an additional parliamentary seat in December 2011, due to the provisions made in the Lisbon Treaty. This seat was awarded to Anthea McIntyre, Conservatives (West Midlands).

[6] After thirteen years in power, Labour was defeated at the 2010 general election, paving the way for the Conservatives to form a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats.

[7] The three former MEPs interviewed were both professionally active in Brussels during the 2009–14 parliamentary term and maintained close links to their former delegations in the EP during this period.

[8] Group officials are in many cases members of a domestic party that is affiliated to the Group.

Chapter 1: Governance, Representation, and the European Parliament

Two primary objectives are fulfilled in this chapter. The first is to begin the process of presenting the thesis' theoretical foundations. This is accomplished by examining the role that political parties and elected representatives play in democratic governance, and the consequences that their actions have for the way that democracy operates. Two key claims emerge from this discussion. Firstly, the way representatives approach representation matters, because this has considerable implications for the degree to which the system of representation provides for key functions, such as legitimacy, accountability, and responsiveness. Secondly, while parties can assist citizens by acting as an accountability mechanism, they can take advantage of their influence on representatives to act in ways which benefit the party to the detriment of the interests of citizens.

The second aim of the chapter is to examine these claims in the context of the EU, and more specifically, in the context of the work of MEPs. The expectations made of the representation provided by MEPs are juxtaposed with claims that the EP has failed to provide the EU with the key functions of representation. Following a discussion on what is currently known about how MEPs approach representation, the chapter considers the extent to which partisan actors shape the way MEPs think about and carry out their work. A tension is identified between accounts which suggest that partisan actors can – and do – influence the behaviour of MEPs, and those that suggest that the linkages are too weak for parties to be in a position to do so. As there is a potential for parties to compel MEPs to act in ways that are not in the interests of citizens, the conclusion argues that the nature and consequences of these partisan relations require further investigation.

Democracy and the Logic of Delegation

In representative democracies, the authority to make political decisions is vested in elected officials rather than exercised directly by citizens. The conduct of governance can be viewed as a chain of delegation from citizens to those who govern (Müller, 2000; Strøm, 2003: 59) and the nature of the chain varies according to the institutional form that the system of government takes. In parliamentary democracies, for example, citizens delegate to elected representatives; legislators delegate to the executive branch by selecting a prime minister from within their rank; the head of government

delegates to heads of executive departments; and ministers delegate to civil servants, who implement public policy (Müller et al., 2003: 19–20; Strøm, 2003: 64–6). Conversely in presidential systems, citizens delegate to a number of elected public officials, who in turn delegate to civil servants (Strøm, 2003: 65–6).

There are potentially considerable advantages for citizens in large polities to delegate power to representatives. Direct participation in governance would require citizens to invest considerable time and energy in political activity, limiting the degree to which they are able to undertake other desirable pursuits, such as economic activity (Bealey, 1988: 36; Beetham, 1992: 47). Governance is becoming increasingly technical and citizens recognize the value of selecting individuals with greater expertise to carry out public policy on their behalf (Strøm, 2003: 57). Further, delegation provides a means for societies to deal with social choice and collective action problems. The former relates to the difficulties collectivities face in reaching decisions that are based on the aggregation of preferences (Arrow, 1951; Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991: 23), while the latter refers to the fact that individuals often have incentives to behave in ways that undermine the interests of the broader population (Hardin, 1968; Olson, 1965; Strøm, 2003: 58).

Yet the delegation that representative democracy entails 'is inherently risky' (Müller et al., 2003: 4). The potential danger is that in transferring authority to others, citizens may lose control over the way the competences delegated are exercised, with the result that they are poorly served by those whom they have selected to act on their behalf. By losing control over their representatives, citizens effectively 'abdicate' (Müller et al., 2003: 4), and governance is carried out under the 'rule of the politician' rather than 'by the people' (Schumpeter, [1943] 1976: 269). To guard against this potential, constitutional mechanisms exist at each stage in the chain of delegation to provide a means for the delegating actor to hold the authorized actor to account (Müller, 2003: 20). A 'chain of accountability' runs in the reverse direction to that of the chain of delegation, and it is the existence of accountability mechanisms that make 'democratic regimes democratic' (Müller, 2003: 20).

Agency theory, or the principal–agent framework, serves as a valuable tool in examining issues relating to accountability and the dangers of delegating political authority in representative democracies (Strøm et al., 2003a; Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991). It is not surprising that a range of scholars working in the field of party politics draw on the framework, as it 'lends itself to rigorous and precise theoretical

reasoning' (Müller et al., 2003: 5), provides 'a means of depicting and understanding a phenomenon – party power – that often eludes rigorous definition and operationalisation', and is also 'simple and parsimonious' (Aylott et al., 2013: 16).

The framework views every link in the chain of delegation as a principal–agent relationship, or as a relationship in which the principal delegates authority to the agent and seeks to ensure that the agent acts in the ways that best serve the principal's interests. The concept of agency loss refers to the difference between the outcome resulting from delegation, relative to the outcome that would have resulted from the principal carrying out the activity herself with the aid of unlimited information and resources (Lupia, 2003: 35).[9] Where agency loss is high, the outcome of the agent's actions differs considerably from the principal's ideal outcome.[10] In political contexts, where information and resources are limited, there is considerable scope for agency loss. Yet despite the existence of this potential, citizens may still often find that it is in their interests to delegate to political agents (Lupia, 2003: 35–6), especially if they are able to form mechanisms to contain these agency losses.

Agency losses become problematic where there are preference divergences and information asymmetries between the principal and the agent, two features of political life that principals regularly face (Strøm, 2003: 61). The first of two problems relating to principals operating under incomplete information is 'hidden information', whereby 'principals do not fully know the competencies or preferences of their agents or the exact demands of the task at hand' (Strøm, 2003: 85–6; Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991: 25). There is a danger that the principal will not select an appropriate agent, a problem known as adverse selection. The second danger, that of 'hidden action', emerges where the principal is unable to observe the agent's actions and is consequently unable to judge whether the agent is acting in their best interests (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991: 25–6; Strøm, 2003: 86). This potentially gives rise to moral hazard.

As is clear from this discussion, once delegation has taken place, political agents may be tempted to act in ways that prioritize their own interests rather than those of the principal. Strøm identifies the three ways in which agents may 'misbehave' as policy divergence or policy shirking, leisure shirking, and rent seeking (2003: 61–2; Strøm et al., 2003b: 712–13; Manin et al., 1999: 40). Policy shirking occurs when politicians pursue their own policy agendas in the knowledge that these do not conform to the preferences of citizens and is a common concern for citizens

and scholars alike (Strøm et al., 2003b: 712–13). Leisure shirking arises when agents do not exert themselves in the principal's service, and the result is that the principal's interests are not optimally served (Strøm et al., 2003b: 711; 708). Rent seeking agents exploit their authority to obtain material gain to the detriment of the principal's interests (Strøm et al., 2003b: 708).

The existence of agency problems indicates that a tension lies at the heart of representative forms of democracy. One of the primary reasons for delegating political authority to elected representatives is that citizens are unable or unwilling to acquire the necessary information and skills to govern themselves. While citizens desire well-informed agents, the risks associated with moral hazard increases as the discrepancy between the informational levels of citizens and of their representatives increases (Strøm et al., 2003b: 740). As a divergence has always existed between the preferences of political principals and their agents, it appears that adverse selection and moral hazard will continue to be 'governance problems' as long as citizens call on the services of political representatives (Strøm et al., 2003b: 740).

Despite the clear potential for agency problems, however, political principals who are able to hold agents accountable may succeed in containing agency losses. In the context of delegation, accountability is viewed in two ways. Where accountability is understood 'as a process of control', the agent is only seen as accountable to the principal if the principal can 'exercise control over the agent' (Lupia, 2003: 35). Where accountability is understood as 'a type of outcome', the agent is only viewed as accountable to the principal if the agent acts in the principal's interests, regardless of whether the principal has a measure of control over the agent (Lupia, 2003: 35). It is the former notion of accountability which is relevant for this study. Responsiveness (whether this is understood as responsiveness to the wishes or to the interests of citizens) is a key function that is desired of systems of political representation (Birch, 1971), and it is when principals have some measure of control over agents that responsiveness is most likely to emerge.

Political Parties, Delegation, and Accountability

Three forms of oversight mechanisms can assist citizens to ensure accountability (or control) of their democratic representatives, namely internal or constitutional constraints, external constraints, and political parties (Strøm, 2003: 64; Bergman and Strøm, 2004; Aylott et al., 2013: 3–10). Internal or constitutional constraints refer to

checks that are to be found within the chain of delegation. The legislative branch, for example, to which citizens delegate power, itself delegates authority to the executive branch, and attempts to hold executive actors accountable by scrutinising their work (Strøm et al., 2003c: 665). The activities of entities that exist independently of the chain of delegation, such as supranational, subnational, and judicial actors, can function as external constraints on the political agents of citizens. Actions undertaken by citizens through direct democratic means, such as referenda, also function as external constraints. These constraints target *ex post* accountability, guarding against the dangers of moral hazard (Strøm et al., 2003c: 697–8).

Of the three accountability mechanisms identified by the literature, the role that political parties can play in facilitating citizen control of political agents is of greatest significance to this thesis. Parties are able to assist voters to mitigate adverse selection problems by serving as 'a mechanism to align preferences between voters and politicians' at the first stage of delegation, by advocating programmes, and by putting forward candidates who have the appropriate skills and who support the programmes (Strøm et al., 2003c: 651–3; Dalton et al., 2011: 6–7). Indeed, aligning preferences between citizens and politicians is the 'principal normative role of political parties in democratic societies' (Strøm et al., 2003c: 654). As parties acquire reputations, the costs that citizens must bear in acquiring the information necessary to make electoral decisions diminish because party labels provide an indication of how the candidates would act if elected (Müller, 2000: 313; Strøm et al., 2003c: 653). Parties also align preferences at all subsequent stages of the chain of delegation (although their ability to control the behaviour of civil servants is more limited than that of agents at other points in the chain) (Müller, 2000: 319). In short, 'political parties are *the* central mechanism to make the constitutional chain of political delegation and accountability work in practice' (Müller, 2000: 330; see also Klingemann et al., 1994: 5). This is especially the case in the parliamentary democracies of Western Europe, where parties use 'the full range of *ex ante* and *ex post* mechanisms to contain agency loss' (Müller, 2000: 330; Aylott et al., 2013: 6–7).

The ability of parties to assist citizens in controlling their political agents rests on the degree to which citizens are able to use party labels as reliable sources of information (Strøm, 2003: 68). Three conditions must be met for this to be the case:

> First, partisanship must be associated with systematic and relatively transparent differences in the bundles of goods and policies that governments produce. Second, party labels and the policy differences that they represent must bear some relationship to the preferences of the voters. Third, voters must have a way of holding the representatives of any given party responsible for its performance in office.
>
> (Strøm et al., 2003c: 653)

A broader requirement for party labels to serve as reliable information, and for parties to function as mechanisms of citizen control throughout the chain of delegation, is that parties are able to induce their agents to act cohesively (Strøm, 2003: 68). The concept of party representation is based on a four-step cycle, in which parties present programmes and personnel to the electorate; citizens choose between the range of policy packages and the politicians on offer; the successful party or parties seek to implement their programmes once in office; and the parties are judged on their performance at the subsequent election (Judge, 1999: 71). As indisciplined parties are unlikely to be able to fulfil the commitments they make at elections, citizens cannot use the information provided by their party label as a basis for delegating 'policy aggregation to party leaders' (Strøm, 2003: 69; APSA, 1950; Thies, 2001). In short, undisciplined parties do not assist citizens to contain agency losses.

The logic of party representation relies on cohesive parties, and it does not matter whether cohesion is due to preference convergence or to the ability of leaders to coerce party agents to follow commands (Ozbudun, 1970: 305; Bowler et al., 1999b: 4–5). At times, the demands of party discipline require party leaders to compel elected representatives 'to vote for a policy which is contrary to the apparent interests of his [*sic*] constituents, contrary to the prevailing opinion in his constituency, and contrary to his own personal judgment about what is best for the country' (Birch, 1971: 97). In light of the potentially considerable resistance which parties can expect to face from elected representatives in such circumstances, they must often provide politicians with incentives if they are to achieve cohesion. As parties are able to assist politicians to realise their electoral, policy, office goals, among others (see discussion on the goals held by political actors in Chapter 2), they have plenty of scope for incentivising party loyalty (Strøm et al., 2003c: 653). This is reflected in the fact that

parties achieve a high degree of cohesion within many democratic legislatures (Dalton et al., 2011: 197; Ranney, 2001: 11686).

In assisting citizens to contain agency losses, therefore, parties facilitate representative democracy. In doing so, they make a major contribution to society, as representative forms of democracy provide a means for modern societies to make collective decisions while avoiding the costs that direct forms of democracy entail. Yet the role that parties play in organizing representative democracy is not wholly unproblematic (Bergman et al., 2003: 130). In carrying out the functions that facilitate citizen control of their political agents at various stages in the chain of delegation, parties can also create further agency problems.

Parties assist citizens by aligning preferences and reducing informational discrepancies between citizens and their agents at different stages of the chain of delegation. They achieve this primarily by ensuring party cohesion. As the goals of individual politicians diverge at least periodically from those of their parties (see discussion in Chapter 2), the existence of cohesive parties suggests that leaders exercise considerable influence over the behaviour of representatives. As it is inevitable that the interests of parties and the citizens that vote for them will diverge from time to time, parties may use their control of elected representatives to compel them to act according to party interests rather than to those of citizens.

While citizens are normatively 'always the ultimate principals' where democracy is understood as popular sovereignty (Strøm, 2003: 64), their political agents may find that the incentives to treat their party as their main principal are greater. As the discussion in the next chapter demonstrates, parties are able to assist elected representatives to realise election, policy, and office goals (Strøm, 1990). Consequently, there is a danger that citizens may lose their control over the democratic process, and (to paraphrase Schumpeter) that governance is carried out under the rule of parties rather than 'by the people' ([1943] 1976: 269). The risk is particularly acute where both the degree of party control of political agents, and the level of informational discrepancy between parties and citizens, are high. De Winter and Dumont highlight the dangers of 'partitocracy' in the case of Belgium (2006: 957; De Winter et al., 1996), arguing that the imposition of the rigid party discipline that is needed for coalition stability severely limits the ability of national parliamentarians 'to represent the policy preferences of their voters' (2006: 967).

The discussion on the role that political parties can play in strengthening or undermining accountability at various stages in the chain of delegation provides a basis for making normative claims regarding the way political parties should relate to their elected representatives. To assist citizens to hold representatives accountable, parties have a duty to pay attention to the work of representatives, monitoring whether they work diligently, and in a manner that reflects their party affiliation and any personal pledges made during the electoral campaign. It is particularly important that parties carry out this oversight activity in contexts where there is low public interest in and knowledge about the work of the representatives and the institution of which they are members, where the voters have little or no means of registering a preferential vote for individual candidates, and where parties receive extensive public funding.

Further, parties have a duty to discipline representatives who do not operate in a manner that conforms to the expectations of the party's voters, even in instances where doing so in a public manner (for example, by withdrawing the party whip) causes the party embarrassment. However, parties should only attempt to control the behaviour of representatives to achieve outcomes that the party's elected representatives collectively view as serving the public good. They should refrain from using disciplinary measures to compel elected representatives to prioritize the interests of the party as an organization to the detriment of the interests of those who elected the representatives. While it may appear idealistic to expect parties to act according to these principles in instances where it does not serve their interests, these principles do offer a basic framework for evaluating the contribution made by political parties to public life.

Representatives and Representation

The discussion so far has outlined the possibilities that delegation offers modern societies in facilitating collective decision-making, together with the challenges that citizens face in ensuring that governance is carried out in their interests. The focus has remained on issues relating to the 'representational transmission of power' (Sartori, 1987: 30), and little has been said about political representatives and the role that they play in democratic politics. In her classic account, Pitkin defines representation as 'the making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact' (1967: 8–9, ital. in original). Political representatives (however

conceived) make the people (however conceived) present by acting on their behalf and in their interests, in a manner that is 'at least potentially responsive to them, yet not normally in conflict with their wishes' (Pitkin, 1967: 222; Judge, 1999: 2). Where there is a lack of responsiveness, questions are asked of the legitimacy of the political regime (Wessels, 2007: 846; for a thorough discussion of the four forms of responsiveness, see Eulau and Karps, 1978: 62–70). There is a paradox at the heart of the concept of representation, in that the represented is 'simultaneously both present and not present' (Pitkin, 1967: 9). This paradox is a feature of representation which citizens are able to exploit in the context of collective political decision-making. Political representation provides a means by which citizens can avoid the costs and the challenges that direct participation in governance processes entail, while at the same time having some form of presence at the heart of government.

Pitkin's definition of what it means to represent substantively is broad in that it does not specify who represents or is represented, how representatives should act, or how representatives should relate to the views and policy demands of those that they represent (Judge, 1999: 12; Farrell and Scully, 2007: 93; Wessels, 2007: 838). This lack of specificity reflects the fact that there is considerable scope for variation in how representatives think about and carry out their roles, both within and between political settings. The issue of the focus of representation directs attention to the question of who is represented. While legislators may conceive of the represented in different ways, it is at the level of societal groupings that political representation takes place rather than at the one-to-one level of citizen and legislator (Judge, 1999: 13). As Pitkin (1967: 221–2) explains:

> Political representation is primarily a public, institutionalized arrangement involving many people and groups, and operating in the complex ways of large-scale social arrangements. What makes it representation is not any single action by any one participant, but the over-all structure and functioning of the system, the patterns emerging from the multiple activities of many people.

Legislators may choose from a range of societal groups when deciding which interests to promote, including territorial or geographical groups, usually based on the constituency or on the whole body politic; functional interest groups; descriptive groups, such as ethnic minorities; or political parties and their supporters (Judge, 1999: 12–13). It is inevitable that the interests of these different societal groups will

diverge at least periodically, and representatives need to decide the interests of which group they will prioritize through their activities as policy advocates.

As representatives in most settings are elected by geographically defined districts or constituencies, it may be expected that legislators pay special consideration to the representation of these areas. The empirical evidence suggests that there is a strong sense in which representatives prioritize the concerns of their constituencies in certain political settings. Mayhew (1974), for example, finds that Members of the US House of Representatives are particularly sensitive to the needs of their electoral districts, and that the behaviour of these legislators is driven to a considerable degree by electoral considerations. As Mayhew identifies a high degree of responsiveness, he is able to claim that the 'electoral connection' between citizens and their representatives is strong. It is less clear whether legislators place such a strong focus on territorial representation in other settings, especially in the parliamentary democracies of Western Europe, where representatives often pay greater heed to their parties. The tendency to select the party as the basis for representation is found to be particularly strong in countries operating party-centred electoral systems (Wessels, 2007: 839–40, 1999; Esaiasson, 2000: 61–2). These contrasting findings give rise to the claim that institutional differences affect the way representatives approach their work.

The issue of the style of representation directs attention to the question of how much 'policy discretion and independence' the representative is afforded by their constituents, and to the nature of the 'power relationship' between the representative and the represented (Judge, 1999: 13). While analytically distinct (Eulau et al., 1978: 117), the focus and style of representation provide the two aspects that underlie the role orientation of legislators, or the 'basis' on which representatives act (Wessels, 2007: 846).

Eulau and colleagues identify three stylistic approaches adopted by legislators as that of the trustee, the delegate, and the politico (1978: 118). Trustees are free agents who follow their own judgment. A number of practical considerations can lead representatives to adopt the role of a trustee:

> The represented may not have the information to give intelligent instructions; the representative is unable to discover what his clienteles want; preferences remain unexpressed; there is no need for instructions because of a presumed

> harmony of interests between representative and represented… (Eulau et al., 1978: 118)

At the other extreme, rather than relying on their own judgment, legislators who adopt the role of a delegate act on instructions from their constituents, even when this deviates from their own understanding of the constituents' interests. Recognizing that many legislators do not find themselves operating at the extremes of the trustee-delegate scale, the authors introduce the role of politico to categorise representatives who oscillate between a trustee and a delegate orientation depending on the situation (Eulau et al., 1978: 119). As governance becomes ever more complex, with many issues 'beyond the comprehension of the average citizen', legislators are increasingly called on to act as trustees (Eulau et al., 1978: 119–20).

Indeed, Wessels argues that the practice of examining the position of legislators on the trustee-delegate scale – that is, the stylistic dimension of representation – is a 'relatively useless' endeavour, as many constitutions define parliamentarians 'as independent and responsible only to their own conscience' (2007: 840). In light of the demand for party discipline that is a feature of parliamentary life in many contexts, the trustee-delegate issue may be more fruitfully applied to the relationship between legislators and their parties rather than to that between legislators and constituents. It is by examining this issue that it emerges that 'political representation in liberal democracies more often than not is party representation' (Wessels, 2007: 842). This suggests that the partisan control thesis applies in the context of most democratic legislatures.

As well as differing in the way they conceive of and relate to the represented, representatives also vary in how they spend their time and energies. At the most basic level, politicians must decide how to divide their time and resources between the constituency and the legislature (Fenno, 1978: 33–4). The evidence clearly indicates that there is considerable variation in the degree to which legislators are attentive to their constituencies, together with differences in how legislators carry out constituency service (Fenno, 1978; Cain et al., 1987; Norris, 1997). Both personal factors, such as family considerations, and political factors, such as electoral competition, serve as sources of variation in legislators' 'home styles' (Fenno, 1978: 50; Norton and Wood, 1990). Politicians must also prioritize when operating in the setting of the legislature. Faced with competing demands on their time, they must

decide 'whether to work on a committee report, prepare a speech, meet with interest groups or constituents, attend a party meeting, undertake research, attend a committee meeting, attend a plenary debate and speak in plenary', among other potential forms of action (Hix et al., 2007: 72). These considerations indicate that representatives are required to make decisions regarding how they approach representation and that there is scope for them to vary in how they think about and carry out their work.

The Functions and Consequences of Representation

It is clear from the discussion above that there is considerable scope for variation as regards how elected representatives conceive of the represented and how they carry out representation, and that this potential is realised in contemporary practice. Nevertheless, the potential for variation should not be taken as an indication that the choices made by representatives are of no consequence. Indeed, the way politicians approach representation matters. It matters because it affects the degree to which the system of representation provides the political system with key functions.

Birch identifies three general functions that political representation may fulfil, and eight specific functions:

1. *Popular control*: to provide for a degree of popular control over the government.
    a. *Responsiveness*: to ensure that decision makers are responsive to the interest and opinions of the public.
    b. *Accountability*: to provide a way of holding political leaders publicly accountable for their actions.
    c. *Peaceful change*: to provide a mechanism for replacing one set of leaders by another without violence.

2. *Leadership*: to provide for leadership and responsibility in decision making.
    a. *Leadership*: to provide for the recruitment of political leaders and the mobilization of support for them.
    b. *Responsibility*: to encourage political leaders to pursue long-term national interests as well as reacting to immediate pressures.

3. *System maintenance*: to contribute towards the maintenance and smooth running of the political system by enlisting the support of citizens.
    a. *Legitimation*: to endow the government with a particular kind of legitimacy.
    b. *Consent*: to provide channels of communication through which the government can mobilize consent to particular policies.

c. *Relief of pressure*: to provide a safety valve through which aggrieved citizens can blow off steam and to disarm potential revolutionaries by engaging them in constitutional forms of activity.

(adapted from Birch, 1971: 107–8)

The concept of political representation itself provides no suggestion that any of these functions should be viewed as inherently more desirable than any other (Birch, 1971: 124–5), although the need for some functions may be viewed as more pressing than others in certain contexts. While all democratic systems fulfil the eight functions at least partially, systems of representation vary in the degree to which they provide for different functions (Birch, 1971: 108). Consequently, it is necessary to evaluate systems of political representation, paying close attention to the degree to which they provide the functions most pressingly required by the political system which they serve. In the process, it is also prudent to identify factors that may affect the degree to which the system of representation is able to provide these key functions.

Two of the arguments posited thus far in this chapter are that the way representatives approach their work determines the extent to which the political system is furnished by various functions, and that political parties are able to shape behavioural decisions made by representatives in ways that do not necessarily benefit citizens. These observations highlight the importance of gaining a thorough understanding of the role that partisan actors play in organizing democratic politics. This is especially the case in contexts where the functions that are expected of a system of political representation are clearly lacking. One such context is that of the European Union (EU), as the following section elucidates.

Representation and the European Union

The measure of political authority delegated to the EU has increased considerably in recent decades. Bearing in mind that EU law is binding and the fact that the EU's competences span an extensive range of policy areas, 'it is foreseeable – if not already the case – that European legislation will overtake the national legislation of the member-states in importance' (Thomassen and Schmitt, 1999: 3). Indeed, in certain areas of policy-making, such as agriculture, the environment, and competition, the EU

has 'essentially replaced' national states as 'the locus of meaningful power' (Warleigh-Lack and Drachenberg, 2010: 210).

The growth in the EU's competences has led to concerns that the accountability mechanisms available at the EU level are too weak (Smismans, 2013: 342–4). In the first decades of the integration project, the powers delegated to the supranational level were limited and related primarily to technical issues. Public interest in these developments was low, and as the powers were exercised by technocrats rather than through democratic participation, the project relied on a 'permissive consensus' that was based on satisfaction with its policy outputs (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970: 41; Smismans, 2013: 342). As the EU's competences and activities grew, its reliance on output legitimacy increasingly came to be viewed as inadequate, and the claim that the EU suffers from a 'democratic deficit' became widespread (Follesdal and Hix, 2006; Weiler et al., 1995). Citizens did not have a set of directly elected representatives on whom they could rely to defend their interests at the EU level. It was not until 1979 that elections to the EP were held, and its role remained marginal until over a decade later. The ability of national parliamentarians to hold EU decision-makers to account remains severely restricted due to the EU's institutional structure (O'Brennan and Raunio, 2007; Raunio, 1999; 2009). EU policy-making has historically been dominated by national government ministers in the Council and by government-appointed Commissioners, and deliberations are often conducted in private. As a result, national parliaments are unable to provide effective oversight of EU processes and 'governments can effectively ignore their parliaments when making decisions in Brussels' (Follesdal and Hix, 2006: 534–5).

Efforts at addressing the democratic deficit have centred on the twin-track approach of democratising the EP by holding elections and empowering the chamber. Since 1979 MEPs have been directly elected every five years, with elections taking place as national contests across EU Member States. As the EU has grown, so has the chamber. While the first round of elections returned 410 MEPs, there are 766 MEPs since Croatia's accession in July 2013. Successive increases in the growth of the EP's powers have seen the EP transformed from a 'talking shop' that played a peripheral role in the integration project to a powerful elected co-legislator that finds itself at the heart of European governance (Rittberger, 2005; Scully, 2010; Hix and Høyland,

2013). When created in the form of the Common Assembly (CA) of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952 the chamber's lack of budgetary or legislative powers rendered the institution largely toothless. Today, the EP partakes as an equal to the Council in most instances of EU policy-making, has extensive powers of oversight over the Commission and Council, which carry out the EU's executive functions, and wide-ranging budgetary powers (Corbett et al., 2011: 272). As a result, scholars increasingly view the EU as a 'two chamber legislature in which the Council represents the states and the European Parliament represents the citizens' (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 49; Corbett et al., 2011: 4).

Nevertheless, the concerns regarding the EU's democratic credentials have persisted. Chryssochoou (2000) has argued that the fundamental problem with the EU is that it lacks a demos, defined as 'a composite citizen body, whose members share an active interest in the governance of the larger polity and who can direct their democratic claims to and via the central institutions' (Chryssochoou, 2010: 382). The lack of 'a sense of common identity' amongst the governed (Chryssochoou, 2010: 382) makes the task of securing the acceptance of minorities for majoritarian decisions challenging (Smismans, 2013: 343). A related concern is that the EU's institutional structure is too different from what citizens are used to, and as a result citizens are unable to identify with it or to see it as democratic (Follesdal and Hix, 2006: 356).

Other objections relate to the role of the EP within the EU, and to the way that European elections are conducted. The crucial function that parliaments serve in ensuring executive accountability is strongly linked to their ability to form and to bring down governments. While the EP plays a prominent role in the appointment of the Commission, even the reforms of the Lisbon Treaty does not give it the right to elect the leadership of the EU's executive branch. There is no direct link between EP elections and the composition of the Commission and it is the national governments who are the 'agenda-setters' in the process of forming the Commission (Follesdal and Hix, 2006: 535; Smismans, 2013: 343).

Critics also argue that EP elections do not act as a mechanism that enables citizens to decide the direction of the EU or of the EP (Follesdal and Hix, 2006: 536; Hix, 2008). Elections are not fought on European issues or as contests for governing power between rival policy platforms. Voters consequently have no 'strong sense at all of affecting critical policy choices at the European level and certainly not of

confirming or rejecting European governance' (Weiler, 1995: 4). While there is some link between voting behaviour and questions of EU-level representation (Blondel et al., 1998; Hobolt et al., 2009), this is weak (Folesdal and Hix, 2006: 536). Many voters take advantage of the opportunity that EP elections afford to register a protest vote against governing parties, while lending support to smaller parties that they would not ordinarily support (Marsh, 1998: 606; Hix and Marsh, 2007; Marsh, 2007). Citizens and parties alike view these elections as less important than their national equivalents, which is not surprising as 'no government is at stake, merely the political balance in the Parliament' (Corbett et al., 2011: 32). Turnout levels are low and have declined consistently since 1979, even as the powers of the EP have grown (Scully, 2010: 171–2). In short, EP elections are the archetypal second-order elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996). As a result, there is little sense that voters confer a mandate on the representatives elected, or that elections function as a mechanism for connecting citizens with the EU.

This section has made clear that high expectations are made of MEPs. Through their work as political representatives they are expected to serve as a linkage mechanism between the people of 28 states and a political system which few citizens understand, and of which an ever declining number approve. Despite the low levels of public awareness of their work (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 31–3), MEPs are given the task of serving as a source of several of the key functions outlined by Birch (1971), features of political life which the EU continues to lack. The rest of the chapter provides an overview of current understanding of how the EP operates as a transnational representative institution, of how MEPs approach representation, and of the role that partisan actors play in structuring the context in which MEPs work. In so doing, the discussion draws attention to the fact that while there is a range of important activities that MEPs can carry out on behalf of citizens, partisan actors may be able to shape the behaviour of MEPs according to their own interests and to the detriment of those of citizens. In short, it presents the notion that parties may be exacerbating the agency losses that citizens suffer when delegating authority to MEPs rather than minimising these losses by holding MEPs to account.

Life and Politics in the European Parliament

In terms of how it operates as an institution, the EP differs in many ways from most national legislatures. This is perhaps not surprising bearing in mind that it is the 'only

transnational directly elected representative institution in the world' (Judge and Earnshaw, 2007: 148). The Parliament is based in three different locations, each in a different country. Whereas most committee work is undertaken in Brussels, MEPs undertake a 400km commute to Strasbourg each month to attend plenary sessions, while the institution's secretariat is based in Luxembourg. The chamber brings together MEPs from 28 Member States, elected from the lists of nearly 200 domestic political parties. It features an unparalleled degree of multilingualism (Corbett et al., 2011: 2), with members deliberating in any of the EP's 24 working languages, into which all documents are translated (Corbett et al., 2011: 42). The challenges of communication, together with the fact that most of the EP's work in carried out in committees, largely explain why proceedings tend to lack the spontaneity and drama of deliberations in many national parliaments (Scully, 2010: 170).

Further, the EP is similar to the US Congress, 'but unlike the national parliaments of all the EU Member States' in that it does not select a government from within its ranks and the executive is therefore not dependent on a parliamentary majority (Corbett et al., 2011: 2; 9). Individual MEPs are able to play a far more influential role in defining policy than 'back-benchers' in most national parliaments, where the executive dominates the policy process. Draft legislation 'is truly only a draft version', and considerable rewriting takes places before the EP and Council agree on a final wording (Ringe, 2010: 13). The EP delegates the task of policy development to its 20 committees, which in turn delegate each issue to rapporteurs, who guide legislation through the chamber. Astute rapporteurs can gain significant influence over the final wording of a policy document, as the views outlined in a report become Parliament's official position if approved by a vote in plenary. Every year 'thousands of amendments to draft legislation put forward by ordinary back-bench MEPs end up on the statue book' (Corbett et al., 2011: 9; Benedetto, 2005; Costello and Thomson, 2010; Yoshinaka et al, 2010). Other positions of genuine influence include Committee Chairs and Group coordinators. The former hold considerable power over committee agenda and are able to speak on behalf of their committee, while the latter play a role in allocating rapporteurships, in resolving political disagreements, and in coordinating voting (Corbett et al., 2011: 147–51; Judge and Earnshaw, 2008: 176).

Due to the lack of a governing majority in the EP, the chamber's decisions are based on a fluid majority, with coalitions forming around each issue individually.

Rather than sitting according to nationality, MEPs form parliamentary groupings (EP Groups) based on ideological orientation. Most MEPs were affiliated to one of seven Groups during the 2009–14 parliamentary term, with a small minority opting to remain unattached. Political life in the EP revolves around these Groups in many ways. They play a central role in forming parliamentary majorities, as 'MEPs vote predominantly along Group lines'; in selecting the President and Vice-Presidents, committee chairs, and rapporteurs; in setting the parliamentary agenda; and in allocating speaking time (Corbett et al., 2011: 78).

In addition, while parliamentarians in most settings have some sense of representing a geographical area, the sense in which MEPs relate to a constituency is likely to differ from that of national parliamentarians.[11] The number of constituents that MEPs are called on to 'represent' is far higher than is the case for national parliamentarians (Judge and Earnshaw, 2008: 98). Following the 2009 EP elections, for example, each MEP served a mean of 679,000 EU citizens. The figure varied considerably between Member States, from a high of 906,000 for Spanish MEPs to a low of 81,000 in the case of MEPs from Luxembourg (Corbett et al., 2011: 29–30). This compares with an average of one Member of the House of Commons per 93,487 British constituent, one Member of the Bundestag per 134,262 German constituent, and one Member of the Assemblée nationale per 109,557 French constituent (Earnshaw and Judge, 2008: 98, figures relate to 2006). The sense of distance that exists between representatives and constituents may be compounded by the fact that the areas from which MEPs are elected also tend to be far greater compared with those from which domestic politicians are elected. National constituencies were used as a basis for the 2009 EP elections in twenty Member States, while the elections were conducted regionally in a further six Member States, with Germany operating a mixed system (Corbett et al., 2011: 17–8).

Despite these idiosyncrasies, the EP shares three main similarities with national legislatures. Firstly, much like in most national legislatures contestation within the EP takes place primarily 'along a left-right dimension' (Hix et al., 2007: 66; Kreppel and Tsebelis, 1999). Secondly, in terms of its basic function, the EP corresponds to Norton's definition of legislatures as:

> constitutionally designated institutions for giving assent to binding measures of public policy, that assent being given on behalf of a political community

> that extends beyond the government elite responsible for formulating those measures.
>
> (Norton, 1990: 1, cited in Judge and Earnshaw, 2008: 10).

Thirdly, regardless of the differences outlined in this section between the EP and domestic legislatures, the function of MEPs is essentially the same as that of representatives operating in other settings, which is to provide citizens with political representation by acting on behalf of citizens in political contexts. The institutional design of the EP, both in terms of its committees and its plenary sessions, provide MEPs with settings in which to pursue policy goals and to give voice to the concerns of various societal groups. Most MEPs serve as full members of one or two committees and as a substitute on a few others (Corbett et al., 2011: 146), and constituency interests frequently shape their choice of committees (Whitaker, 2011: 173). The plenary setting offers MEPs a number of mechanisms to express opinions on issues unrelated to the policies that are under discussion in the EP at a given time. These include the 'one-minute speeches' (Corbett et al., 2011: 195; 203; 341; Westlake 1994a: 177) and the two weekly Question Time sessions (Judge and Earnshaw, 2008: 218–19). MEPs may also present written and oral questions to the Commission and Council (Raunio, 1996a: 362–3).

The following section applies many of the theoretical insights provided in the first part of this chapter by examining what is currently known about MEPs as individuals, how they relate to various groups, and how they act on behalf of the represented. As well as providing a basis for understanding how MEPs operate as representatives, this discussion provides grounds for examining in greater detail the nature of relations between MEPs and partisan actors.

MEPs as Representatives

Understanding of various aspects of the representation provided by MEPs has increased considerably over the last two decades. In certain ways, this representation is viewed as having improved over time. For example, MEPs have become more representative of citizens in the descriptive sense. While the EP shares the descriptive bias that is a feature of most legislatures in being disproportionately male, middle class, and middle aged (Beauvallet et al., 2012: 8–11; see also Judge and Earnshaw, 2008: 92 and Hix and Lord, 1997: 82),[12] it has come to feature greater levels of gender equality than most national legislatures. Over a third (35%) of MEPs elected

in 2009 were female, compared with 24% of national parliamentarians (Corbett et al., 2011: 53, figures refer to September 2009). There are also ways in which the representation provided by MEPs has improved in the substantive sense (Pitkin, 1967). The widespread absenteeism of earlier years has diminished as MEPs have increasingly come to view their role as a full time occupation (Scully, 2010: 168). While some political parties use the EP as a 'political retirement home' for former leaders, 'most members work hard' (Scully, 2010: 168; Hix et al., 2007: 72–3).

Recent work has broadened understanding of how MEPs carry out representation. Similar to legislators in other settings, MEPs must choose between different conceptions of representation and must 'prioritize their activities' on a daily basis (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 93–4; Hix et al., 2007: 72). The need to be selective may be even more important for MEPs than for legislators in other contexts. It takes a substantial amount of time for most MEPs to travel between the three settings in which they are active, namely the constituency, Brussels, and Strasbourg. The scope for influencing policy outcomes provides MEPs with an incentive to engage in policy work that back-benchers in most other settings do not share. Additionally, with the differences in language and cultures, the setting in which MEPs operate provides challenges that politicians do not face in domestic settings.

Farrell and Scully (2007) demonstrate that MEPs attach at least some value to carrying out a range of political activities. Considering the EP's considerable powers, it is unsurprising that MEPs view 'working on legislation' as by far the most important aspect of their work. They also attach considerable importance to articulating 'important societal needs and interests', to activities relating to 'parliamentary oversight', and to 'developing common strategies for EU policies'. Less importance is accorded to representing the interests of 'individual citizens' and to the task of mediating 'between different interests in society' (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 106).

However, little is known about how, or even whether, MEPs carry out constituency service. While MEPs spend much of their time abroad, most attempt to maintain regular contact with citizens in their home countries, with over 90% claiming to spend at least some time undertaking political work every week in their home countries (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 123–4; Scully, 2005: 73). Again, this may not be entirely surprising, bearing in mind that a considerable number of MEPs have experience of being active in domestic politics. Over a third of MEPs elected in 2009

(35.7%) had previously served as national parliamentarians, while more than 100 MEPs had domestic ministerial experience, and eleven had served as prime minister or president (Corbett et al., 2011: 55–8). Further, the high level of turnover that the EP sees from one term to the next suggests that many MEPs' experience of domestic politics is recent. Reflecting an historic trend, only 49.6% of MEPs elected in 2009 had served in the previous term (Corbett et al., 2011: 51).

Nevertheless, the links between MEPs and citizens are weak. The level of postal and electronic correspondence that MEPs receive from constituents is 'extremely low', even in the case of the UK, where the tradition of constituency service is strong (Bowler and Farrell, 1993: 55; Farrell and Scully, 2007: 175–6; Shephard and Scully, 2002: 162–7). The fact that MEPs are drawn from 28 Member States, each with its own political history, culture, and institutions (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 103–4), suggests that there is likely to be considerable differences in the importance MEPs attach to constituency work in general, and to the types of activities that MEPs carry out in their constituencies. As the degree of variation in the 'home styles' (Fenno, 1978) of MEPs is currently unknown, it follows that there is no way of explaining variation in the event that any exists.

Scholars have also raised concerns regarding the degree of congruence between the views of MEPs and those of citizens on key issues relating to integration. Studies by Marsh and Wessels (1997) and Thomassen and Schmitt (1997) identify that MEPs are considerably more favourable to integration than citizens. These concern are tempered somewhat by the findings presented by Scully (2005: 94–8) and Franklin and Scarrow (1999) which indicate that there is a broad similarity in the views held by national and European parliamentarians on issues relating to integration.

In addition to the concerns raised regarding the level of contact between MEPs and citizens and the degree of congruence between the views of the representatives and the represented, scholars also fear that MEPs are provided with incentives to prioritize the advancement of party interests ahead of those of constituents. Studies which examine how MEPs relate to various societal groups (Raunio, 1996b, 1997: 125–80; Farrell and Scully, 2007) have shown that MEPs attribute importance to representing several groups. According to Farrell and Scully, the greatest importance is attached to representing those who voted for their party and 'all people in my member state', followed by their national party, the EP Group and 'all people in

Europe'. As a result, the authors claim that 'most MEPs have little problem in acknowledging that their representative role is one with numerous dimensions' and that they are 'agents' of several 'principals' (2007: 105).

However, in examining how MEPs approach representation, Farrell and Scully find a link between the electoral system and the choices MEPs make regarding which societal groups and types of activities to prioritize. In contrast to MEPs elected under more open electoral systems, those who depend on their position on party lists for their re-election tend to 'promote the interests of political parties and other organized interests over those of individual voters' (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 9; 136–7). This suggests that parties exploit their control of the re-election prospects of MEPs to compel them to act in ways that prioritize the party's interests to the detriment of those of citizens. This is an alarming finding, bearing in mind that parties are called on to assist citizens to contain rather than to exacerbate agency losses, as the discussion presented earlier in the chapter makes clear. In light of this claim, the following section examines current understanding of the role that political parties play in structuring the work of MEPs.

MEPs and the Partisan Control Thesis

Questions relating to the nature of the relationship between MEPs and two actors – national political parties and the EP Groups – have stimulated considerable scholarly interest over the last two decades. A specific concern of the literature is the degree to which these two types of actors are able to influence the way MEPs think about and carry out their work. There is a clear discrepancy within the literature between studies that claim that these two actors are able to exercise considerable influence on MEPs (Hix, 2002; Hix et al., 2007; Faas, 2003; Lindstädt et al., 2011; Raunio, 2012a) and studies that either dispute this claim explicitly (Ringe, 2010), or that present evidence which casts doubt on this assumption (Aylott et al., 2013; Blomgren, 2003; Bomberg, 1998; Poguntke et al., 2007; Raunio, 2000, 2002, 2007; Scully, 2001). In examining accounts of the behaviour of MEPs and of the links between MEPs and these two types of partisan actors, this section identifies a strand in the literature which advances the partisan control thesis. The section proceeds to question the thesis, drawing on studies that argue that MEPs act largely independently of these partisan organizations. Finally, a case is made for re-examining the nature of the relationship

between MEPs and these partisan actors, in order to further understanding of the basis on which MEPs make decisions relating to representation.

The 'partisan control thesis'

The partisan control thesis is based on the notion that national political parties and EP Groups are able to provide MEPs with incentives to modify their behaviour. Successive studies have applied the principal–agent framework to the relationship between MEPs and these two partisan actors, conceiving of MEPs as agents, and of domestic parties and EP Groups as principals which seek to control their behaviour (Scully, 2001; Raunio, 2007; Hix, 2002; Hix et al., 2007). It is argued that the influence of national parties stems from their ability to control the prospects of MEPs in gaining re-election or in acquiring positions in domestic politics. EP Groups, in contrast, can use their control of parliamentary resources, such as positions of seniority, assignments, and speaking time in plenary, to coerce MEPs to follow instructions. The plausibility of this foundational argument – that partisan actors are able to use incentives to shape the behaviour of MEPs – is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. The rest of the discussion in this chapter focuses on the empirical evidence which supports and undermines the partisan control thesis.

Studies of voting at roll call divisions demonstrate that EP Groups (Attinà, 1990, 1992; Quanjel and Wolters, 1993; Brzinski, 1995; Raunio, 1996b, 1997; Hix and Lord, 1997; Kreppel 2002; Hix, 2001, 2002, 2004; Hix and Noury, 2009; Hix et al., 2005, 2007) and national party delegations (Hix et al., 2007) are highly cohesive. Examining voting behaviour during the 1999–2004 parliamentary term, Hix and colleagues find that MEPs vote with their parties at 95.48% of roll call divisions, with their EP Groups in 90.70% of instances, and with both their Groups and their parties in 88.92% of instances (2007: 137; see Figure 1). These findings have been interpreted in two ways. The first relates to the nature of the relationship between national party delegations and their EP Groups. Conflicts between Groups and national party delegations are argued to be surprisingly low, and it is claimed that national parties 'voluntarily decide not to vote against' the Group where they identify a potential for conflict (Hix et al., 2007: 133). This may be because the national party believes that Group cohesion assists it to realise long-term policy objectives or because it expects to be rewarded by the Group (Hix et al., 2007: 138).

The second interpretation of voting practices relates to the basis on which MEPs make behavioural decisions and to the relationship between MEPs and their Groups and domestic parties. As MEPs tend to vote with their domestic parties rather than with their Groups in cases of conflict, it is claimed that MEPs are 'ultimately controlled by their national parties rather than their European political groups' (Hix et al., 2007: 138; 133). Hix and Lord (1996) find that this control was typified at the confirmation of Jacques Santer as Commission President in 1994. MEPs from all national parties represented in the Council voted against their Groups in cases where the preferences of the domestic party leadership conflicted with those of Group leaders. The fact that the degree of cohesion has remained high throughout the period in which the chamber has been elected (Hix et al., 2007: 138) suggests that domestic parties have always controlled their MEPs.

		National party: % of votes with the party	National party: % of votes against the party	Total
European party	% of votes with the party	88.92	1.78	90.70
	% of votes against the party	6.56	2.74	9.30
	Total	95.48	4.52	100.00

Figure 1: Voting with/against national parties and EP Groups in the fifth parliament (1999–2004).
Note: The figure shows every vote by every MEP in the fifth European Parliament (excluding MEPs that were not attached to an EP Group or whose national party had fewer than three MEPs). Each MEP 'vote decision' was categorised as a vote either (1) with or against the majority of the MEP's national party delegation and (2) with or against the majority of the MEP's EP Group.

(Adapted from Hix et al., 2007: 137)

Supporting the basic tenets of Hix and colleagues' claims regarding domestic party control, Farrell and Scully (2007) find that MEPs whose re-election prospects are more reliant on their parties tend to focus on party activities. Based on analysis of a survey of MEPs, this finding is particularly interesting, as it suggests that parties are

able to influence the way MEPs approach different aspects of their work as representatives more broadly than simply at parliamentary divisions.

Despite the loyalty of MEPs to their national parties, the Groups are still argued to affect the behaviour of MEPs, even if this influence is 'less direct' (Hix et al., 2007: 145). National parties collectively formulate the Group positions, before using 'their own power to discipline the MEPs to follow the European party line', sometimes even when they do not agree with that position (Hix et al., 2007: 146). The claim that the behaviour of MEPs is shaped by both types of partisan actors, but that the influence of national parties is greater than that exercised by the EP Groups, remains prevalent (Hix, 2010: 236; Raunio, 2012a). Indeed, many scholars accept the partisan control thesis without question and have presented its assumptions as a central part of their theoretical framework in recent studies (Meserve et al., 2009; Lindstädt et al., 2011, 2012; Klüver and Spoon, 2013: 2–3).

Ringe's critique of Hix et al. (2007)

Evidence provided by two forms of contributions cast doubt on the partisan control thesis. This section focuses on the first, which primarily comes in the form of Ringe's (2010) monograph. He critiques how Hix and colleagues assume that voting cohesion is brought about by party control. The second body of work, which is the focus of the next section, finds that the relationship between MEPs and their domestic parties is weak in most cases.

Two main objections have been raised to Hix et al.'s (2007) findings. Firstly, scholars question the extent to which their findings, based on behaviour at roll call divisions, are generalizable to parliamentary divisions conducted by a show of hands and electronic voting. Roll call voting is only used in a minority of divisions, with estimates ranging between 15% and a third of all votes (Kreppel and Tsebelis, 1999; Thiem, 2006: 2; Hix et al., 2007: 29). Westlake claims that there is, in fact, no accurate way of measuring the percentage of divisions taking place by roll call (2007: 346–7).

Doubts over the degree to which findings relating to roll call divisions are generalizable to voting behaviour at divisions taken by other means also stem from the fact that these divisions are not typical of all parliamentary divisions. Group leaders strategically ask for votes to be taken by roll call to demonstrate the cohesion of their Group or to reveal divisions in a rival Group (Carrubba and Gabel, 1999;

Gabel and Carrubba, 2004; Hug, 2006; Thiem, 2006), and ask for divisions to be taken by roll call on some issues more than on others (Carrubba et al., 2006; Høyland, 2010). Hix and colleagues respond to these criticisms by claiming that because EP Groups tend to ask for roll call voting 'on issues that are important to them', the procedure is used to make the most important decisions (2007: 30). Others reject this claim, stating that EP Group leaders make 'sure that the most important votes are specifically not decided by roll-call' (Gabel and Carrubba, 2004: 5; Westlake, 2007: 346; Judge and Earnshaw, 2008: 143–5). Even if it is accepted that partisan actors influence behaviour at roll call divisions, this debate indicates that there are grounds to question whether they do so at divisions taken by other means.

Secondly, Ringe maintains that it is inappropriate to use aggregate-level data to draw inferences about 'how individuals make decisions on the EP floor' (2010: 4). High levels of voting cohesion is not necessarily a product of party discipline, and the statistical analysis carried out by Hix et al. does not fully interrogate 'the causal relationship between party control and party cohesion' (Ringe, 2010: 4). Focusing attention on Group cohesion, Ringe argues that the Groups are structurally weak and lack 'the traditional tools of party control and the capacity to satisfy their members' vote- or office-seeking ambitions' (2010: 4). As turnover levels at EP elections are high, MEPs seek short-term incentives, and they are unlikely 'to trade payoffs in the present for uncertain office benefits in the future' (Ringe, 2010: 4).

Instead, Ringe explains the high degree of cohesion by arguing that as MEPs are unable to acquire the expertise necessary to make accurate choices in a broad range of policy areas, they seek guidance from MEPs within their domestic party delegations or their Groups who are experts. Despite the risk that they do not hold common preferences with their expert colleagues, relying on the advice of colleagues is the most efficient way of dealing with an environment of 'competing interests, substantive uncertainty, and asymmetrically distributed information' (Ringe, 2010: 5–7). Group positions are defined by MEPs who are policy experts, and who 'serve as the *de facto* leadership of their party groups' on their specialist issues (Ringe, 2010: 213). The fact that MEPs are more likely to perceive that their preferences coincide with expert legislators from their own national political parties than from their Groups explains why cohesion levels within national delegations is higher than within the Groups. Ringe's account redefines the concept of partisan leadership in the context of

the EP, and serves as a cogent explanation of how MEPs make policy-related decisions.

Studies of relations between national parties and MEPs

Scholars examining the nature of relations between MEPs and their domestic parties present a second body of evidence which casts doubt on the veracity of the partisan control thesis. Writing in the period before the introduction of direct elections, Hearl and Sargent (1979) find that domestic parties largely ignored the work of their MEPs. Over a decade later, Attinà similarly found that 'almost all national political parties pay little attention to the activities of MEPs and easily consent that competition and coalition in the European Parliament develop independently from competition and coalition in state parliaments' (1994: 287). Rather than MEPs complaining of interference from their domestic political parties, Bomberg's examination of green parties offers an account which demonstrates that some MEPs desire greater support than domestic parties are able to provide:

> Green MEPs were given no definition of what key points to work for and implement through the EU. … The MEPs receive neither coherence from the party nor support from the grassroots. As members of a distant parliament, they enjoy freedom but no guidance, independence but little respect. For the Green MEPs, the possibilities and freedom provided by the unique green mandate are ultimately outweighed by its paradoxical consequences. (Bomberg, 1998: 123; 125).

There is thus little evidence that national parties attempt to control the behaviour of MEPs by systematically issuing voting instructions backed up by a system of threats and rewards. Writing in 1997, Hix and Lord note that there had been to date only two instances of national parties issuing voting instructions to MEPs on a regular basis: 'the French Socialists in the early 1980s and the British Labour Party since 1994' (1997: 129). Examining data provided by the 2001 MEP survey, Scully (2001) finds that the practice of national party leaderships issuing voting instructions is very limited. On a scale of 1 ('On Almost Every Vote') to 5 ('Never'), only 15.0% of responses lie above the midpoint and over two-thirds of MEPs (67.9%) indicated that they receive voting instructions from the party leadership 'Never' or 'Nearly Never' (Scully, 2001: Table 2).

In another large-*n* study, Raunio found that less than one in ten MEPs (8.5%) received voting instructions 'on a regular basis', with under a third (32.2%) receiving instructions 'on issues of fundamental importance' to parties, and nearly half of MEPs (47.5%) never receiving voting instructions from their domestic political parties (2002: 100). As few parties demonstrate any interest in the work of MEPs, and limit such interest to 'nationally important' issues, Raunio is able to claim that MEPs are 'relatively independent from their parties' (2002: 105). Despite these findings, Raunio finds that the 'information and control links between MEPs and the national parties have increased as the EU and its Parliament have acquired more powers' (2002: 105). Growing interest from political parties is not necessarily seen as a positive development for politics within the EP. Raunio cautions that increased party interaction may constitute 'serious problems for the EP and its party groups' as it may impede coalition formation processes within the EP (2002: 88).

Raunio's study made a valuable contribution to understanding of the links between domestic parties and MEPs at a time when the study of the field was underdeveloped. Nevertheless, as the author acknowledges (Raunio, 2002: 105), the strong focus on quantitative analysis limits the degree to which the findings are able to provide insights into the nature of these relationships and, in particular, into the way that the relationship affects how MEPs carry out their work. The data relating to the regularity with which voting instructions are issued serves as a prime example. While the regularity with which voting instructions are issued is identified, it is not possible to gain an understanding of whether those instructions affect the voting behaviour of MEPs. Further, the study offers little in the way of analysis of what variables may explain this variation between parties, further than noting that EP Group affiliation has 'little explanatory value' (Raunio, 2002: 100).

In a later study, which focuses on Finnish case studies, Raunio establishes that Finnish parties have little control over MEPs. No party 'has ever instructed its MEPs how to vote, nor have any of the parties invested resources in monitoring what their MEPs do in Brussels' (2007: 141). Parties expect little from MEPs: most national delegations are expected to report back to the party executive once or twice a year and to inform party officials of developments taking place in EU politics more regularly as issues arise (Raunio, 2007: 141–2). It is therefore not surprising that the level of contact between MEPs and party officials is low, and 'depends to a large extent on the personality and ideological profile of the MEPs, with enormous variation both within

and between parties' (Raunio, 2007: 140). There is very little formalised contact between MEPs and the party leadership as policy coordination takes places at working group level rather than at party leadership level. Taking these considerations together, it is clear that 'Finnish MEPs act rather, if not very, independently' (Raunio, 2007: 142).

Raunio's study also seeks to explain variation in the degree to which domestic political parties engage with their MEPs. Proceeding from the rationalist assumption that 'the level of contacts or control between national parties and their MEPs depends on the costs and benefits of such control for national parties', he hypothesises that four factors determine the degree to which parties attempt to and succeed in controlling MEPs: 'The rules of the electoral system, the size of the member state and the national party delegation in the EP, and the cohesion of the party over European integration' (Raunio, 2007: 131). As the author acknowledges (Raunio, 2007: 142), the research design adopted, based on data gathered from interviews conducted with Finnish party officials, is not entirely appropriate for testing these hypotheses. A single country study where the electoral system and size of the Member State are constant factors, and where there is little variation in the size of national party delegations in the EP or in the levels of party cohesion over European integration does not offer a rigorous basis for examining these potential sources of variation.

However, Raunio argues that the electoral system is partly to explain for the weak nature of relations between parties and MEPs. Not only does the open-list system free MEPs from the control of parties to a certain extent by removing one potential instrument of control from the parties' armoury, but it also leads MEPs to spend time directly engaged with their constituents, leaving them with little time to develop contacts with the party leadership. This tendency is reinforced by the fact that the whole country forms a single constituency (Raunio, 2007: 142). However, due to the limitations of the research design, the claim that the open-list 'electoral system *clearly* impacts on MEPs' behaviour' cannot be substantiated (Raunio, 2007: 143, ital. added).

Blomgren (2003) explores whether the nature of the relationship between MEPs and their domestic parties leads to variation in the parliamentary roles that MEPs adopt. Selecting as case studies MEPs from three types of parties – social democratic, right wing, and the greens – in Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden, Blomgren also finds that links between MEPs and their parties are weak. Reflecting

other studies, he finds that most parties 'struggle to include MEPs in their organizational set-up' (2003: iv) and lack understanding of and interest in the work of MEPs (2003: 296). He also finds that MEPs experience a 'growing hostility' towards them within their parties (2003: 196–7). None of the variables for which Blomgren tests explain why MEPs adopt different role orientations (2003: 307). Neither the degree to which candidate selection is centralised, the type of electoral system used, or even the practice of forming contracts between the MEPs and their parties has any appreciable influence on how MEPs carry out their work (2003: 306; 310).

A more recent major study of the nature of relations between MEPs and their parties largely reflects Blomgren's findings. Poguntke and colleagues (2007) examine how thirty parties from six West European Member States have adapted to EU integration, and pay some attention to the degree to which these parties engage with their MEPs. Despite the growth in the powers of the EU and its elected chamber, as well as the additional funds that the EP makes available, they find that there has only been a marginal increase in the number of officials employed by the parties to deal with EU affairs (Aylott, 2007: 169). Further, as national parties 'pay fairly little attention' to their delegations in the EP, MEPs operate with extensive autonomy from their parties (Ladrech, 2007: 218). The degree of coordination between parties and their MEPs is low in virtually all cases (Aylott et al., 2007: 200–2), as interest shown by national parties in the activities of MEPs is limited to instances where their work attains salience domestically (Luther, 2007: 43). In many cases, especially in Germany, it is the MEPs themselves who seek to build stronger links to their parties and to ensure that their behaviour corresponds to their parties' preferences (Poguntke, 2007: 124). As a result, rather than 'being held accountable by their national parties', MEPs are understood to follow a 'supply-side logic of accountability' (Poguntke, 2007: 124).

The finding that parties pay little attention to the work of MEPs may be surprising, bearing in mind that parties could use MEPs to achieve policy goals and to gain from their expertise when developing EU policy. Ladrech explains this lack of engagement with MEPs by arguing that party elites would risk their own standing in their organizations by empowering MEPs and party officials who are EU experts (2007: 226). The result of the current state of affairs is that MEPs remain marginal actors within their parties, and that there is even animosity and a degree of distrust between party elites and MEPs in some cases (Carter and Ladrech, 2007: 77–8).

These findings provide a further indication that MEPs have considerable autonomy over their behaviour, especially in terms of their activities within the EP.

In a recent study, which examines the delegation of authority and accountability mechanisms in Nordic parties, Aylott et al. (2013) also find that Danish, Finnish, and Swedish MEPs operate largely autonomously, and tend to have a greater degree of independence from their party than national parliamentarians (Aylott et al., 2013: 77–8). There is little monitoring of the work of MEPs, reflecting the apparent lack of interest from national parties (Aylott et al., 2013: 111; 115).

With most studies suggesting that parties have not taken any significant steps to engage with their MEPs, evidence from the case of the British Labour Party during Tony Blair's time as Prime Minister stands as an outlier. The party established the 'link system' to coordinate policy between the European Parliamentary Labour Party (EPLP) and government ministers (Ovey, 2002; Messmer, 2003). Government ministers selected an MEP in each policy area to act as their eyes and ears in the EP, and to assist with the development of the government's EU policy. The link MEPs were appointed to the ministerial team and, in exchange for direct access to ministers and the opportunities provided to influence policy, were required to support the government (Messmer, 2003: 205).

Writing soon after the link system was established, Messmer suggests that the link system enabled strong coordination between the government and the EPLP. He notes that link MEPs would attend ministerial meetings 'once or twice a month', with even more frequent communication taking place by telephone and email (Messmer, 2003: 206). In a slightly contrasting account, Ovey finds that there was considerable variation in the degree to which different Labour ministers utilised the link system, and that there remained a degree of detachment between the EPLP and the party in government during this period (2002). Nevertheless, it appears that the party maintained far stronger links to its delegation of MEPs at that time than most parties.

There is also evidence to suggest that parties pay some attention to their MEPs in cases where there is a potential for them to cause embarrassment to their parties domestically. The process of confirming Jacques Santer as Commission President in 1994 serves as the most prominent example (Hix and Lord, 1996). As this was an issue of particular sensitivity to the governing parties (who had selected Santer during negotiations in the Council), they placed a considerable degree of pressure on their MEPs to vote in favour of Santer's confirmation and their efforts were successful. As

the potential for MEPs to cause embarrassment to their parties has increased alongside the growth in the EP's powers, even parties that otherwise show a lack of interest in EU affairs are expected to pay attention to their MEPs when issues that attain saliency domestically emerge (Raunio, 2002: 100–101; Brown Pappamikail, 1998: 211–15).

Finally, Whitaker presents evidence in two studies that suggests that national parties engage with the EP's committees in ways that 'further their policy aims' (2011: 168; 2005). He finds that national parties are over-represented on EP committees 'whose jurisdictions have higher salience to them' (2011: 169) and that national parties ensure that MEPs who are members of 'legislatively active committees' are representative of the preferences of the wider national party delegation (2011: 169–70; 2005: 24).

Studies of relations between EP Groups and MEPs

The literature on the transnational parliamentary Groups is vast (see, for example, Fitzmaurice, 1975; Pridham and Pridham, 1981; Bardi, 1989, 1994; Raunio 1996b, 1997; Kreppel, 2002; McElroy and Benoit, 2007, 2010; Hix et al., 2007), and recent methodological advances have enabled scholars to considerably further understanding of these entities. While the extensive literature on roll call voting leaves little doubt that the mainstream Groups act in a highly and increasingly cohesive manner at parliamentary divisions (Brzinski, 1995; Kreppel 2002; Faas, 2003; Thomassen et al., 2004; Hix 2002; Hix et al., 2007; Hix and Noury, 2009), less is known about whether this cohesion is brought about as a result of Groups proactively taking steps towards discipline (Ringe, 2010).

Kreppel notes that 'the internal development of the party groups is perhaps the least studied aspect of the European Parliament' (2002: 177). Despite her important contribution to understanding the two largest Groups in the EP, the EPP and the Socialist Group, little systematic work has been carried out on the dynamics that operate within Groups. This is especially the case on the issues of whether, how, and under what conditions they attempt to enforce discipline. Further, until recently (Whiatker and Lynch, 2014), scholars have shown little interest in the smaller Groups, despite the fact that some of these Groups frequently play a key role in coalition formation processes within the chamber.

Corbett et al. present the standard view of how Groups operate, noting that while they follow 'the British tradition' of issuing voting guidance with an indication of the importance of the division, these whipping systems are 'less strict than in most national parliaments' for three reasons (2011: 121). Indiscipline is less risky in the EP than in most national legislatures, where it could lead to a government's downfall; the diversity within Groups makes it difficult to present a unified position which is acceptable to all MEPs; and Groups have few effective sanctions with which to discipline MEPs (Corbett et al., 2011: 121; Raunio, 1997: 52). The Groups' ability to use their control over desirable parliamentary assignments as a means of incentivising the behaviour of MEPs is undermined by the fact that domestic parties have considerable say in the allocation process (Hix et al., 2007: 135; Kreppel, 2002: 202). Indeed, Kreppel claims that the standard practice within the two largest Groups of transferring the allocation of assignments to the leaders of national delegations 'debilitates the group leadership and makes it all but impossible to control individual members through the effective use of benefits and sanctions' (2002: 203–4).

Westlake (1994b: 238) claims that there is little enforcement of discipline by the Groups and that:

> the 'Whip' is normally nothing more than a list, prepared by the group secretariats and circulated to members' benches in the hemicycle before voting periods, setting out the recommended group position on each amendment as well as on final resolutions and reports.

Indeed, Hix et al. claim that Group cohesion stems from the use of discipline by the leaders of national party delegations in the EP rather than the use of discipline by Group leaders (2007: 146). According to this view, it is the fact that delegation leaders use their 'power' to compel MEPs to follow what is usually both the delegation and the Group preference that explains the high level of cohesion within national delegations and Groups (Hix et al., 2007: 146). Nevertheless, further research is required into the dynamics operating within Groups, as little systematic research has been conducted into the whipping practices of those organizations.

The state of the literature on relations between MEPs and partisan organizations

The large number of studies that in some way touch upon the subject of MEP–party linkages suggests that this is a topic that is well served by the literature. In truth, the

literature on partisan linkages is far weaker than the discussion presented in this chapter suggests. Many of the studies referred to take as their main focus issues other than linkages between MEPs and their parties (Poguntke et al., 2007; Aylott et al., 2013), and consequently do not provide detailed accounts of the control mechanisms employed by parties. As the main focus of many of these studies does not relate to questions relating to party control of MEPs, there is no systematic examination of whether partisan organizations enforce discipline, and it is only in rare instances that scholars draw on frameworks that assist them to examine party control rigorously (for example, Raunio, 2007). It is therefore unsurprising that few scholars examine variation in the propensity of parties to seek and to achieve control of their MEPs. Further, the ability of studies that do examine the determinants of such variation systematically to reach robust conclusions is limited for methodological reasons as noted above (most notably, Raunio, 2007; Aylott et al., 2013: 201–2).

In addition, the way that empirical findings are reported in some of the most promising studies is problematic. Rather than reporting evidence pertaining to individual parties, much of the discussion deals with collections of parties at the country level. The failure to distinguish between cases within individual countries limits understanding of how individual parties actually relate to their MEPs (see, for example, the analysis of Finnish parties in Aylott et al., 2013: 110–15). This is particularly unfortunate due to the considerable scope that exists for within-country variation, as the next chapter argues. There is also a tendency for the conclusions reached to be rather general and vague. For example, having examined all parties with representation in the EP from three Member States, Aylott et al. resort to postulating that the state of affairs described '*could* be … [because] party leaderships see little point in expending the energy required even to try to exercise such control' (2013: 200, ital. added).

While a substantial degree of interest is shown in certain aspects of MEP–Group relations, current studies tend to focus on analysis of roll call divisions, and very few studies examine the nature of relations between MEPs and their Groups in detail. Further, little evidence is presented to substantiate some of the claims made regarding Group relations. Aylott et al. (2013: 113), for example, provide no evidence at all in support of the claim that:

> an MEP who is interested in pursuing his or her career within the group hierarchy, and a national party delegation that seeks future influence over its group's position, cannot afford to deviate [from the guidance issued by the group] too often.

In short, there remains considerable scope to develop understanding of the relationship between MEPs and the two partisan actors that appear to play a key role in the political lives of MEPs.

Conclusion

This chapter has begun the task of presenting the thesis' theoretical foundations. It has identified that elected representatives can approach representation in various ways, and that they are able to prioritize the interests of different societal groups in varying degrees. Drawing on the principal–agent framework, the discussion has demonstrated that there are risks inherent in delegating authority to elected representatives, as they may have incentives to act in ways that do not promote the interests of citizens. By acting as an accountability mechanism, political parties can assist citizens to mitigate the agency losses that can emerge when delegating authority. However, parties may exacerbate agency losses if they coerce representatives into promoting party interests when they diverge from the interests of the wider public.

Building on this theoretical discussion, the second half of the chapter examined the academic literature which informs understanding of the degree to which partisan organizations are able to influence how MEPs approach their work as representatives. Despite the fact that evidence of parties mandating MEPs is sparse, the notion that democratic politics in the EP is driven extensively by the diktat of national party leaders, with the views of EP Group leaders playing the role of an intervening variable, remains widespread. Leading scholars perpetuate the notion that partisan actors are able to use their control of reselection procedures to guide the behaviour of MEPs (Hix, 2010: 236; Klüver and Spoon, 2013: 2–3; Lindstädt et al., 2011, 2012; Meserve et al., 2009; Raunio, 2012a), undeterred by the emergence of convincing accounts that challenge this view (Ringe, 2010). One reason for the durability of the partisan control thesis, despite the opposing empirical evidence, is the fact that it is only explicitly challenged by a single study (Ringe, 2010), one which provides an alternative account of decision-making within the EP, rather than one which focuses primarily on partisan linkages.

This study engages in the debate by examining whether two partisan actors – national political parties and EP Groups – seek to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and whether or not they succeed. It also seeks to establish which factors are linked to the desire and ability of partisan actors to influence MEPs. In so doing, this investigation develops understanding of the role that these two partisan actors play in shaping the decisions that MEPs make regarding how to approach representation. It also provides a basis on which to develop understanding of the role that partisan actors play in the chain of accountability in the context of the EP. The following chapter takes the first step in this endeavour by examining the theoretical basis of the party control theory. It also presents hypotheses relating to variation in the extent of partisan control, and provides a discussion of the study's analytical framework.

[9] Strøm's account in the same volume (2003: 61) presents a contrasting understanding, viewing agency loss as the difference between what the outcome of the agent's behaviour relative to that of the principal's behaviour had the principal decided to carry out the activity herself rather than delegate. The problem with Strøm's understanding of agency loss is that it expects the principal to be able to carry out the activity in a manner that leads to a better outcome than if the agent carried out the activity. This is not consistent with Strøm's expectation that authority is often delegated to political agents because they are better equipped to carry out the activity than the principal. Another definition is provided in the volume's concluding chapter (Strøm et al., 2003b: 705): 'Agency loss is the damage suffered by a principal because an agent lacks the skills or incentives to complete the tasks delegated to him, or in other words the difference between the policy obtained through delegation and the principal's most desired (and feasible) outcome.'

[10] As Lupia notes, agency loss does not mean that the principal's interests would be better served by carrying out the activity herself: 'Agency loss is zero when the agent takes actions that the principals would have taken *given unlimited information and resources.* … most political principals do not have unlimited information and resources. Therefore, it is impossible for them to be perfect agents for themselves … Therefore, finding that delegation causes agency loss does not imply that the outcome is bad or even suboptimal.' (2003: 35–6, ital. in original)

[11] Other than possibly in the case of countries such as the Netherlands and Israel, where the area of the state is not divided into constituencies for national elections.

[12] The mean age of MEPs following the 2009 election was 51.2 (Beauvallet et al., 2012: 10–11), and there is an over-representation of professionals, while manual and agricultural workers are under-represented (Beauvallet et al., 2012: 8–9; Judge and Earnshaw, 2008: 92).

Chapter 2: A Framework for Analysis

The previous chapter identified that there is a tension within the literature on the European Parliament, between studies that claim that partisan actors extensively influence the behaviour of MEPs and those that cast doubt on this assertion by stating that the relationship between parties and MEPs is very weak. The discussion led to the conclusion that it is prudent to examine whether partisan actors influence the behaviour of MEPs. This chapter develops the discussion of the thesis' theoretical framework presented in Chapter 1 by drawing on insights provided by scholars from the tradition of rational choice institutionalism. The aim is to examine the plausibility of the idea that partisan actors influence the behaviour of MEPs, and to identify which factors may affect the degree to which partisan actors attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and succeed in their efforts. The theoretical insights provided by the discussion serves as a basis for developing the thesis' analytical framework, which is presented in the later sections of the chapter.

The first of five sections considers the basis on which MEPs make behavioural decisions, and contends that their behaviour is driven by their desire to realise up to five core goals: election, office, policy, personal gain, and future career. The second section outlines how two types of partisan actors – domestic political parties and EP Groups – may be able to control the degree to which MEPs are able to realise their goals. Drawing on the work of Scully (2001), it claims that they may attempt to use this control to influence the behaviour of MEPs, as long as they are willing to incur the costs associated with carrying out the activities necessary for achieving influence. The third section identifies the four activities that partisan actors must undertake if they are to exercise systematic influence on the behaviour of MEPs, and posits that they may not be able to exercise influence even if they fulfil these four preconditions of influence. The fourth section asserts that there is likely to be variation in the degree to which partisan actors desire and are able to influence the behaviour of MEPs. The section features a discussion of the factors that are expected to lead to this variation, and presents fifteen hypotheses relating to these potential sources of variation. The arguments put forward in these four sections are synthesised in the conclusion.

Legislators and Behavioural Decision-Making

As Chapter 1 has demonstrated, representatives can vary extensively in how they think about and carry out representation. When carrying out the substantive activity of representation, understood as 'acting for' citizens (Pitkin, 1967), politicians must decide whom it is that they choose to represent, how they relate to this group, and how they wish to act on its behalf. These are decisions that representatives make constantly, rather than once and for all at the commencement of their term. As Farrell and Scully explain:

> Choices between alternative visions and practices of representation are a daily, practical reality for elected politicians. Facing potentially infinite calls on a finite quantity of time and energy, elected politicians have to prioritize their activities. And in practice, as much previous research has shown, parliamentarians differ considerably in the priorities they select and the models of representation that they follow.
>
> (2007: 93–4, see also Wahlke et al., 1962; Müller and Saalfeld, 1997)

This applies equally to MEPs as it does to legislators in other settings, as they too must choose from a range of activities that they are able to carry out on behalf of different groups (Corbett et al., 2011: 64; Hix et al., 2007: 72).

In its discussion of the perils of delegating authority to elected representatives, Chapter 1 also indicated that political agents do not always act on the basis of their conception of the principal's interests. Indeed, the discussion noted that there may be considerable scope for elected representatives to pursue their own interests, even when their actions conflict with the interests of their constituents. The risk of adverse behaviour was argued to be particularly high in contexts such as the EP where ordinary citizens frequently do not have access to appropriate accountability mechanisms. Drawing on insights from the tradition of rational choice institutionalism, this section examines the basis on which MEPs make behavioural decisions, and argues that their behaviour is driven by their desire to realise up to five core goals.

The relationship between legislators' goals and behaviour: a review of the literature

According to the rationalist tradition, political actors hold core goals and their behaviour is driven by their desire to realise these goals (Schlesinger, 1966; Black, 1972; Fenno, 1973; Hibbing, 1986; Hix et al., 1999; Mayhew, 1974; Strøm, 1990;

Müller and Strøm, 1999). Political parties and individual politicians must continually choose from a range of activities to undertake, and must decide how to carry out this activity. The decisions made are based on their evaluation of which activity best serves their efforts to realise these aims. For Mayhew (1974) the primary goal is election, as it is a precondition of realising any other aim. He finds that as Members of the US House of Representatives are aware that citizens will evaluate their performance at the ballot box, they feel compelled to give priority to their constituents' interests, even if this means sacrificing the interests of other groups, such as that of their political parties and even the interests of the nation as a whole. This dynamic, which Mayhew calls the 'electoral connection', drives the way House Members carry out representation and holds significance consequently for the way politics is conducted within the chamber.

In another Congressional study, Fenno finds that House Members hold three 'basic' goals, '*re-election, influence within the House, and good public policy*', and two additional goals, '*a career beyond the House'* and '*private gain*' (1973: 1, ital. in original). He finds that 'All congressmen probably hold all three goals', but that Members differ in their 'mix of priorities and intensities' and that the way a legislator prioritizes goals can change over time (Fenno, 1973: 1). House Members pursue the combination of goals that are most important to them by carrying out committee work, an activity that they consciously undertake 'in ways calculated to achieve such goals' (Fenno, 1973: 1). As not all committees provide equal opportunities to realise particular combinations of goals, House Members seek membership of those which offer the greatest potential for realising the goals that are important to them. The finding that House Members are usually unable to service their three main goals through their committee work corresponds to the claim made in later theoretical accounts that legislators are aware that they must prioritize between different goals when deciding which activities to carry out (Strøm, 1990; Hix et al., 1999).

Strøm (1990) develops a framework which views the behaviour of political parties as being driven by three goals: (re-)election, office, and policy. Bringing together three strands of theoretical literature concerning the behaviour of political parties, he presents a conception of parties either as being ultimately vote-seeking, office-seeking, or policy-seeking. The vote-seeking party wants to maximize its vote share (Downs, 1957); the office-seeking party aspires primarily to hold governmental office; the policy-seeking party's focus is on enacting its policy goals, although it is

likely to focus its efforts on securing governmental office as a means of maximizing its influence over the policy process. Rather than identifying three types of parties with fundamentally different goals, Strøm argues that all parties make trade-offs between these three interrelated goals. They do so on the basis of the evaluation by influential individuals within the party of the institutional environment in which the party operates. Vote-seeking, office-seeking, and policy-seeking behaviour are not necessarily 'mutually conflicting' as a party may, for example, have as its sincere policy preference the 'electorally optimal' position (Strøm, 1990: 571). However, there will be times 'when party objectives do conflict' and in such instances the party must make a trade-off between the three main goals (1990: 570).

Hix et al. (1999) develop a behavioural theory of MEPs that draws heavily on Strøm's (1990) framework, although the attempt at applying his framework in the context of MEPs is not entirely successful. In line with Mayhew (1974) the 'vast majority' of MEPs[13] view re-election as their single primary goal, rather than the three goals that Strøm offers (Hix et al., 1999: 12). Notwithstanding this, MEPs pursue three 'strategies' to achieve the goal of re-election, namely reselection, policy, and office (Hix et al., 1999: 12). As part of their reselection efforts, 'MEPs must pursue actions that promote the interests of the sections within their domestic political parties' that control the process of selecting candidates for EP elections (Hix et al., 1999: 12).

MEPs pursue policy aims in order 'to win the support of domestic constituents and support groups' that include but are not exclusive to those related to their party (Hix et al., 1999: 12). As MEPs do not carry out executive functions in the EU's political system, the office goals that MEPs target are understood differently from those sought by legislators in many other political systems. MEPs strive to 'increase their personal profile' within the chamber and to become 'key agenda-setting' figures. To this end they will attempt to 'secure positions of authority and prestige' within the institution, such as a committee chair, a rapporteurship on an important piece of legislation, the leadership of a national party delegation or an EP Group, or a position within the Presidency of the EP (Hix et al., 1999: 12).

There appears to be a fundamental difference between Hix et al. (1999) and Strøm's (1990) understanding of the goals held by political actors and how they relate to behaviour. For Strøm, political actors hold (re-)election, policy, and office as three goals, and their behaviour is driven by their desire to realise these goals. For Hix et al.

(1999), MEPs pursue reselection, policy, and office '*strategies*' to achieve their primary goal of re-election (1999: 12, ital. added). If the behaviour of MEPs is ultimately driven by re-election concerns, they will only pursue policy and office strategies in ways that will support their re-election efforts. This suggests that they are only ever likely to give priority to their policy and office goals in cases where this improves their long-term electoral prospects.[14] If, on the other hand, MEPs pursue policy and office goals as ends in themselves as suggested by Strøm (1990), in addition to pursuing these goals as a means of servicing their re-election ambitions, they are likely to make different decisions regarding which goals they prioritize.

Hix et al. explicitly treat reselection, policy, and office instrumentally, as strategies to achieve the goal of reselection (Hix et al., 1999: 12). However, it is implicit in their work that MEPs hold policy and office goals independently of their goal of being re-elected. The authors state that MEPs are sometimes required to choose 'between rival goals' (1999: 14) and that '[a]t different points in time, in response to different stimuli, and faced with different strategic choices, politicians may favour one set of goals over others' (1999: 13). They also refer to an MEP's 'personal policy aims', suggest that MEPs 'may be ideological[ly] attached to a piece of legislation', and raise the question of how an MEP should act when his or her policy aims conflict with those of the domestic party and those of the EP Group (1999: 14). In essence therefore, while their model may appear to be different from Strøm's, in practice Hix et al.'s understanding of the role that reselection, policy, and office ambitions play in shaping the behaviour of MEPs is broadly the same as Strøm's. In fact, one of the authors provides a more convincing account in a later study, arguing that MEPs hold three goals: election, office, and policy (Scully, 2005: 82–6).

According to Hix and colleagues, and in line with Strøm's account, MEPs are not always 'forced to make any choice between rival goals' (Hix et al., 1999: 14). There will be times when 'personal policy aims, the majority in the EP Group and the national party leadership may all point an MEP to vote or otherwise behave in a particular way' (1999: 14). At other times however, an MEP is faced with the dilemma of having to choose between 'their personal ideological feelings, the position of their party group (which would increase their chances of promotion within the EP), or with their national party leadership (which would increase their chances of re-selection)' (1999: 14). It may be the case for example that an MEP may support a

piece of legislation, while the national party leadership is opposed to it, and the majority in the EP Group has decided to register an abstention at the parliamentary division (1999: 14).

Several factors are expected to shape the behavioural decisions that MEPs make, and the emphasis that they place on realising different goals in a particular setting. Hix et al. identify five factors relating to the domestic institutional structure: the type of electoral system used for EP elections, the timing of national elections, the nature of the party system, the policy location of the MEP's party, and whether the MEP's party is in government or in opposition (1999: 15–17). Three factors pertaining to the 'supranational institutional context' are expected to affect the behavioural decisions made by MEPs: the type of procedure used and the current stage of the procedure, whether the MEP's party is represented in the European Commission, and the EP electoral timetable (Hix et al., 1999: 17–18). To summarize, Hix et al. claim that the behaviour of MEPs is shaped by their wish to realise goals, and that contextual factors affect the decisions that they make regarding which goals to prioritize.

The relationship between the goals and the behaviour of MEPs: a revised account

The notion that the behaviour of MEPs is driven by their desire to realise goals, and that contextual factors shape the decisions that they make regarding which goals to prioritize, appears eminently plausible. However, there is a need to re-examine the issue of what goals MEPs hold.

It is entirely conceivable that MEPs are similar to legislators and political parties in other contexts (Fenno, 1973; Mayhew, 1974; Strøm, 1990) in that they hold election goals. Other than in the case of those intending to retire from politics at the end of a parliamentary term, MEPs may wish to be re-elected to the EP or to gain election to a domestic legislature. It is also conceivable that most MEPs wish to realise policy goals, not simply as a means of promoting their chances of re-election, but because they wish to see the policy enacted (or, in the case of non-legislative issues, because they wish to raise awareness of an issue). Membership of the EP provides MEPs with a platform for promoting issues that relate to domestic and European policy-making. As the powers of the EP have grown, MEPs have been provided with an ever-greater means of enacting public policy and of shaping political discourse.

The notion that MEPs hold office goals is also compelling. However, office goals are understood differently in the context of MEPs compared with what Strøm means when referring to the 'spoils' of office that political parties seek (1990: 570). As the EU's executive functions are carried out by the Commission and by Member State governments on behalf of the Council, spoils such as positions of government office at the EU level are not available to MEPs. As a result, MEPs must seek the spoils that their own institution can provide them, and these take the form of influence and prestigious roles within the chamber, and the respect of colleagues. This understanding of 'office' goals correspond to Hix and colleagues' use of the term in the context of MEPs (1999) and to Fenno's understanding of the goal of 'House influence' (1973: 5) in the context of the US Congress, another setting where legislators do not have direct access to the benefits of executive office. MEPs may also hold office goals that relate to the domestic political context, as they wish to hold a position of governmental office at the state or sub-state level. It is clear that many MEPs view their tenure within the EP as a stepping stone to domestic office goals (Scarrow, 1997: 259–60; Meserve et al., 2009; Høyland et al., 2013: 6).

Hix and colleagues (1999) do not identify Fenno's two additional goals of legislators – 'a career beyond the House' and 'private gain' (1973: 1) – as factors that drive the behaviour of MEPs. This is not surprising, as their aim is to offer a framework for understanding the types of activities MEPs pursue in their quest for re-election. However, it is likely that the behaviour of MEPs is also driven by their desire to realize these two goals. Firstly, it is likely that most MEPs seek to derive at least some measure of 'private gain' from their service as MEPs. Their activities as MEPs provide most with their primary source of income, and it is worth drawing attention to the fact that attendance levels increased when the level of claimable allowances was linked to participation at EP divisions. Non-monetary rewards are also on offer to MEPs, as their position provides them with social status and with a means of developing desirable personal connections. Most MEPs will avoid behaving in ways which could result in them being compelled to resign their positions, as they would lose their source of income and status, and their ability to realise their other goals would diminish.

Secondly, the goal of a 'career beyond the House' is particularly relevant in the context of the EP as the average career span of MEPs is relatively short. The level

of turnover of MEPs at elections and during parliamentary terms is high. Indeed, it has consistently been the case that only around half of MEPs elected had served during the previous parliamentary term (Corbett et al., 2011: 51–2; Whitaker, 2011: 36). In addition to the domestic office goals which are available, service within the EP provides members with opportunities to pursue lucrative careers in the private sector upon their exit from the chamber. It is entirely reasonable to expect that the behaviour of MEPs is shaped at least in part by the ambitions that they hold for the period following their departure from the EP. MEPs who intend to develop a non-political career at a later date can be expected to seek membership of a committee that is relevant to the area in which they wish to find employment. They may also seek positions of prestige and authority that will assist them to market themselves to potential employers, and to focus on developing professional connections during their time as parliamentarians. In contrast, MEPs who wish to serve until their retirement are more likely to focus on activities that will assist them to realise a combination of their re-election, office, and policy goals.

Partisan Actors and MEPs

The above section considered the basis on which MEPs make behavioural decisions, and argued that their behaviour is driven by their desire to realise up to five core goals. This section examines the plausibility of the notion that two types of partisan actors – domestic political parties and the EP Groups – are able to control the degree to which MEPs are able to realise their goals, and that they may attempt to use this control to influence the behaviour of MEPs. While the section argues that these claims are compelling, it draws on the work of Scully (2001: 12) and Raunio (2007: 144) in explaining that partisan actors may find the costs involved in attempting to influence MEPs prohibitive.

Domestic parties have considerable control over the ability of MEPs to realise their goal of re-election. All re-election seeking MEPs require the support of their parties in the form of a place on the party’s list of candidates (Hix, 2002: 691). Further, where the elections are conducted using closed- or ordered-list systems, the party has extensive control over the prospects of individual candidates (Hix et al., 1999: 15; Scully, 2001: 21; Raunio, 2007: 133–4). This is less true of candidates seeking election in countries using open-list systems, however parties are still able to

influence the outcome in favour of certain candidates by focusing their electoral campaigns on individual candidates. MEPs who wish to gain election to a domestic legislature are also reliant on their parties to realise their election goals.

Domestic parties may also be able to assist MEPs to realise policy goals by mobilising the negotiating power of the party's delegation of MEPs within the EP Group. This may assist MEPs to advance their policy preferences as the Group formulates its positions, or assist MEPs to acquire parliamentary assignments which they can use to shape the chamber's decisions.

The ability of domestic parties to shape the degree to which MEPs are able to realise office goals within the EP is limited by the fact that parliamentary assignments and positions are delegated first to the EP Groups and then allocated following a discussion between the national delegations (Kreppel, 2002: 202–4). However, successful office-seeking domestic parties are able to shape the degree to which MEPs realise office goals outside the EP. Many MEPs wish to become members of the national government and they require the support of their parties to fulfil this ambition. There is a long tradition of MEPs leaving the EP mid-term to take up posts in their national capitals[15] and of MEPs entering national politics following a career in the EP and becoming government ministers.[16] As well as assisting MEPs to realise office goals by furthering their political careers following their departure from the EP, domestic parties may also be able to support MEPs wishing to pursue non-political careers by facilitating access to appointed positions and to a network of contacts.

While EP Groups have little direct control over three of the five goals held by MEPs, namely those of re-election, a career beyond the house, and personal gain, there is reason to believe that they extensively control the degree to which MEPs are able to realise office and policy goals within the EP. As voting in the EP takes place largely on the basis of Group affiliation, it is clear that the prospects of realising policy goals are enhanced considerably if the Group lends its support, especially in cases where the MEP is affiliated to one of the three largest Groups. MEPs also depend on their Groups for the opportunity to raise policy issues in the plenary setting, as speaking time is allocated to the Groups, who divide the allotted time between the MEPs that they select to speak (Corbett et al., 2011: 197). Groups also control access to the chamber's prized positions and assignments, such as the positions of President and Vice-Presidents of the EP, Quaestors, committee chairs, and rapporteurships. They also control access to leadership positions within the

Groups, such as the Group Presidency, Bureau membership, and the role of Group committee coordinators (Hix et al., 2007: 134–5).

This discussion supports the notion that domestic parties and the EP Groups have a genuine potential to control the degree to which MEPs are able to realise their goals. It is therefore eminently plausible that they may attempt to use this control to influence the behaviour of MEPs, as several studies which advance the partisan control thesis suggest (Hix, 2002; Hix et al., 2007; Raunio, 2012a). However, it is not necessarily the case that partisan organizations of these two types attempt to influence MEPs' behaviour, or that they succeed in doing so. Scully notes that domestic parties may not wish to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs (2001: 14–15]). As the EP comprises of such a large number of national delegations, there are few instances where a single delegation is likely to play a crucial role in the coalition formation process. By providing rigid instructions, Scully argues that parties constrain the ability of MEPs to negotiate their way into winning coalitions (2001: 14–15; see also, Hix and Lord, 1997: 129). Therefore, it may best serve the party's interests to give MEPs the independence to carry out their work according to their own judgment, despite the risk that the preferences of MEPs do not necessarily correspond precisely to those of the party.

The Preconditions of Partisan Influence

Having identified that domestic parties and EP Groups have some means of incentivising the behaviour of MEPs, this section considers in greater detail what activities partisan actors are required to undertake if they are to develop a potential for influencing MEPs. It is clear that partisan organizations must bear considerable costs if they are to operate systems of discipline which provide the party with beneficial outcomes. In addition to the costs that partisan actors must incur in providing appropriate guidance to their MEPs, those seeking to develop a potential to systematically influence MEPs are required to fulfil four conditions, each of which entails further costs.

Firstly, parties must have a desire to influence the behaviour of MEPs. Much like MEPs, domestic parties are goal-seeking actors whose conception of their interests varies between cases and over time, depending on the incentive structure facing them at a given point (Strøm, 1990). Whereas MEPs hold five goals – election, office, policy, personal gain, and a career beyond the house – domestic parties only

pursue the first three (Strøm, 1990). Further, while parties and their MEPs share three *types* of goals, the specific goals that these actors hold may differ. For example, there was clearly a difference between the policy goals held by the British Labour Party and the party's MEPs on the issue of the UK's opt-out from the Working Time Directive. While the party leadership secured an agreement in the Council for the UK to retain its opt-out, Labour MEPs voted against the principle in the EP and contradicted the leadership publicly (BBC News, 2008a; *The Financial Times*, 2008a).

Parties will find no reason to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs unless they actively and systematically develop preferences regarding policies under consideration by the EP and unless they remain informed about the preferences of MEPs. It is only then that they will know whether there is a discrepancy between their interests and those of their MEPs. A party that takes little interest in the work of its MEPs, and one that does not invest resources in monitoring developments within the EP, may therefore be unaware that it stands to gain from guiding the behaviour of its MEPs.

Secondly, partisan actors must communicate their wishes to MEPs. Unless MEPs know how a partisan actor would wish them to act, they have no way of taking the views of the partisan actor into account when making decisions. Thirdly, partisan actors must provide MEPs with threats, and with promises of rewards. As goal-seeking actors MEPs have little reason to behave in ways other than those which serve their own interests, unless parties proactively engage with the incentive structure facing them. These threats or promises of rewards do not necessarily need to be particularly significant to ensure compliant behaviour, especially if the MEP's interest in the issue or attachment to a deviating position is weak. For example, knowledge that partisan colleagues will disapprove may be enough to compel MEPs to follow guidance in many instances.

Fourthly, partisan actors must obtain information about the behaviour of MEPs. If they fail to do so the threats issued will not be credible, as MEPs will realise that their parties will not become aware of whether their behaviour corresponds with the actor's wishes. There are two ways of obtaining this information. The most effective but costly way is to proactively monitor the behaviour of MEPs, what the principal–agent literature refers to as undertaking 'police patrols oversight' (McCubbins and Schwartz, 1984: 166; Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991: 32). A less costly way is to require MEPs to report regularly about their actions, or alternatively

to acquire this information from an interested third party, a technique that is known as 'fire alarm oversight' (McCubbins and Schwartz, 1984: 166). While these two approaches are less effective, the information gathered may be sufficient, depending on the type of behaviour that the partisan actor wishes to influence.

As the costs incurred by partisan actors who fulfil these four preconditions of influence may be considerable, some may not believe that the potential returns warrant the necessary investment. Further, while these are four necessary conditions of partisan influence, they are not sufficient conditions. It is only a potential to influence MEPs that partisan actors develop by fulfilling these conditions, and there is no guarantee that they will influence the behaviour of MEPs. A partisan actor may issue all kinds of threats, but an MEP may decide to ignore them. The perceived benefits for the MEP of defying the partisan actor may outweigh the costs.

This discussion of the four preconditions of influence serves as a basis for developing the first component of the thesis' framework of analysis. Sub-questions 1a and 2a are concerned with whether domestic political parties and EP Groups respectively influence how MEPs approach representation. In addressing these sub-questions, the analysis focuses on the issue of whether these partisan actors fulfil the preconditions of control.

The Potential for Variation in Partisan Influence

At the end of the 2009–14 parliamentary term, there are 766 MEPs in total, affiliated to one of over 190 domestic political parties, and to one of seven EP Groups (other than in the case of the 27 non-attached MEPs). There is expected to be variation in the extent to which domestic parties and EP Groups attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, and in the extent to which they are successful in doing so. This is for three reasons. Firstly, it is reasonable to expect that some domestic parties and EP Groups will have a greater incentive than others to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and are therefore more likely than others to be willing to make the investment necessary to meet those costs. Secondly, it is reasonable to expect that some partisan actors will be better placed than others to deal with the costs involved with influencing the behaviour of MEPs. Thirdly, the type of activity that parties wish to influence is likely to vary between parties, and the costs incurred while undertaking the activities required to influence the behaviour of MEPs varies depending on the type of behaviour that partisan actors wish to influence.

There are theoretical grounds for expecting certain factors to be linked to these three types of variation. These three types of variation are in turn linked to variation in the dependent variables, those being the degree to which partisan actors attempt to influence MEP, and the degree to which they succeed in doing so. These factors can be divided into three categories: as factors that relate to the institutional context, as factors that relate to the partisan actor, and as factors that relate to the MEPs as individuals. The following section discusses how these factors are expected to lead to variation in the dependent variables, and presents fifteen hypotheses that are tested in subsequent chapters.

Institutional factors

The first range of factors that are expected to lead to variation in the desire and ability of partisan actors to influence the behaviour of MEPs relate to the institutional context in which partisan actors and MEPs operate. Several institutional factors may lead to variation in the propensity of partisan actors to seek and to exercise influence on MEPs. These include the domestic and European electoral timetable (Lindstädt et al., 2011; Meserve et al., 2009), the length of the Member State's membership of the EU, the procedure used (Hix et al., 1999: 17), and the complexity of the political space (Scully, 2001: 15). However, the analysis of institutional considerations presented in this thesis focuses on the factor that is assumed to have the most significant effect on the degree to which partisan actors are able to influence the behaviour of MEPs. This factor is the type of electoral system used for EP elections.

The electoral system

Scholars who apply the principal–agent framework to the relationship between MEPs and their political organizations invariably suggest that domestic parties may be able to use their control of the re-election prospects of MEPs to influence their behaviour (Hix et al., 1999: 12; Scully, 2001: 21; Raunio, 2007: 141). As EP elections are organized as national contests and conducted under any of three types of electoral systems, there remains a considerable degree of variation in how EP elections are conducted across the EU. In closed-list systems, candidates are elected in the order in which they are presented by parties; in ordered-list systems, there is limited scope for candidates to climb the party list by attracting personal votes; in open-list systems parties provide a list of candidates who are elected according to the proportion of

votes gained by the party and according to the number of personal votes gained relative to their party colleagues. The type of electoral system used has consequences for the degree to which individual candidates are dependent on their domestic political parties for their election. Where the re-election prospects of incumbent MEPs are less dependent on their parties, the scope for parties to influence their behaviour is likely to be more limited than in cases where MEPs are more dependent on the party for their re-election (Hix et al., 1999: 24–7). This leads to the following expectation:

> **Hypothesis 1: Parties from countries operating more closed electoral systems are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than parties from countries operating more open electoral systems.**

Factors relating to the partisan actor

In addition to factors relating to the institutional framework, there are theoretical grounds for expecting factors relating to the partisan actor itself to lead to variation in the degree to which the partisan actor seeks and achieves influence on the behaviour of MEPs.

Candidate Selection System

The sections within parties that are responsible for selecting and ordering candidates on domestic party lists vary between parties (Raunio, 2007: 134). In some parties, it is the central party leadership that decides how the party list is composed, and which candidates will receive most support from the party during the campaign. In others it is the leadership of the party's regional organization. Many parties draw up short-lists and offer members the chance to select candidates. Parties with centralised candidate selection systems appear to have a greater potential to shape the incentive structure facing MEPs than parties where members play a prominent role in candidate selection. This is because party members do not constitute a unified actor to the same degree as the party leadership. Compared with the party leadership members will find it more difficult to develop coherent preferences regarding the behaviour of MEPs, and to use the threat of deselection as an instrument to influence their activities. As a result, parties with centralised selection systems are more likely to succeed in their attempts to influence the behaviour of their MEPs. Realising this, they are also

expected to be more eager to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs. These considerations give rise to the following expectation:

> **Hypothesis 2: Parties operating centralised candidate selection systems are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than parties operating decentralised candidate selection systems.**

While the MEPs of parties with decentralised candidate selection systems are expected to have the freedom to operate with a greater degree of independence from their parties, they are also expected to spend more time in contact with party members than MEPs from centralised parties. This is because the need to develop links with the party membership is more pressing for MEPs whose reselection prospects are dependent on the support of ordinary members.

The candidate selection systems used by some parties have in-built measures that make it easier for incumbent MEPs to gain a position on the party's list compared with their non-incumbent challengers, and to gain a high position on the list where that is applicable. Parties that offer incumbency protection have a more limited potential to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, and will therefore be less prone to attempt to influence MEPs, and less successful in their attempts.

Governing status

Parties in government are expected to have a greater incentive to influence the behaviour of their MEPs compared with parties in opposition. As governing parties are represented in the Council, the EU's other legislative chamber, they have a clear incentive to ensure that their MEPs support a position that complements that advanced by party leaders in Council negotiations (Meserve et al., 2009: 1020–1). While the desire of governing parties to influence behaviour is expected to manifest itself most evidently in the context of parliamentary divisions, governing parties also have an incentive to encourage their MEPs to acquire 'positions of power in the EP, as this will reduce the likelihood of the EP taking a different position to the Council' (Hix et al., 1999: 17). Such positions include rapporteurships, Committee Chairs, and the role of the EP Group coordinator on parliamentary committees. As governing parties are subject to greater scrutiny than those in opposition, the scope for conflict

between MEPs and the party leadership to cause embarrassment is greater. This provides governing parties with a further incentive to ensure that their MEPs toe the party line.

In addition to possessing a greater incentive to attempt to influence the work of their MEPs than opposition parties, the costs associated with undertaking the activities necessary for exercising influence, such as monitoring the work of MEPs, are lower. This is because governing parties are able to use the machinery of government to carry out some of this activity on their behalf. As a result, the efforts of governing parties are more likely to be met with success than those of opposition parties. These considerations lead to the following expectation:

> **Hypothesis 3: Governing parties are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than opposition parties.**

It is possible that opposition parties will be more likely to demand that their MEPs focus on domestic political activity than parties in government. As the saliency of EP legislative politics is low, parties may regard the potential electoral benefit of undertaking such activity as lower than domestic political activity. It remains a possibility that opposition parties wish that their MEPs focus on legislative work in the EP, as this avenue represents one of few opportunities available to parties in opposition to realise policy goals. However, as parties are assumed to prioritize domestic re-election goals over EU policy goals (Hix et al., 1999: 8), it is plausible that opposition parties will ask their MEPs to focus on domestic political activity. This leads to the following expectation:

> **Hypothesis 4: Governing parties wish their MEPs to focus on legislative activity in the EP, while opposition parties desire MEPs to focus on domestic political work.**

The number of MEPs affiliated to the partisan actor

Domestic parties with large delegations in the EP have a greater incentive to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs than parties with smaller delegations (Raunio, 2007: 134), as they have a greater potential to realise policy goals within the

chamber. It remains the case that parties who demand that their MEPs adhere to 'strictly-defined positions' limit the ability of their MEPs to bargain effectively, and risk finding themselves outside winning coalitions (Scully, 2001: 14–16). However, these risks may be reduced considerably if there is strong coordination between the party's central office and the leadership of the party's delegation in the EP, as the delegation leadership is in a strong position to respond to events as they unfold within the chamber.

Parties with large delegations are also more likely to attempt to ensure that their MEPs act cohesively in legislative contexts as the potential for embarrassment is higher than in the case of parties with smaller delegations. The scope for disunity to exist within a delegation increases in line with the size of the delegation. A considerable proportion of parliamentary votes are taken by roll call, and resources such as *VoteWatch.eu* have greatly facilitated the task of monitoring voting behaviour at roll call votes. As a result, the potential for disunited delegations to cause embarrassment for their parties domestically is high.

As well as having a greater incentive to influence the behaviour of MEPs, the costs of monitoring the activities of MEPs and of following bargaining processes within the EP are easier to bear for parties with large delegations. As a party's number of MEPs increases, so does the scope for it to demand that their MEPs pool a proportion of their parliamentary allowance to employ delegation staff. These individuals could carry out a coordinating function, both within the delegation and between the delegation and the party central office. Of course, even a party with only a single MEP could demand that one of the MEP's assistants focus on the task of liaising with the party leadership. However, this would have a far greater impact on the MEP's capacity to work compared with a situation where funds from the allowances of several MEPs are pooled to employ a coordinator. These considerations lead to the following expectation:

> **Hypothesis 5: Domestic parties with large delegations of MEPs are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than domestic parties with small delegations of MEPs.**

As the relative size of the Groups to the chamber as a whole are greater than the relative size of individual delegations to the whole chamber, an individual Group

has a far greater chance of playing a key role in coalition formation processes. In practice, the support of at least one of the two largest EP Groups is necessary to ensure the passage of parliamentary measures, with ALDE, the third largest Group, often playing a pivotal role in negotiations (Kreppel, 2002: 142–51; Hix et al., 2007: 147–60). While some effort is made to reach agreements that have the support of as many Groups as possible, most outcomes are based on compromises between at least two of the three largest Groups. This suggests that the larger Groups are more likely to obtain an outcome that is close to their ideal point, and therefore have a greater incentive to influence the legislative behaviour of their MEPs to secure such outcomes.

Larger Groups are also more likely to succeed in influencing the legislative behaviour of MEPs. They have a greater potential than smaller Groups to operate an effective system of threats and rewards, as they control the most desirable parliamentary assignments and posts (Hix, 2002: 690–1; Kreppel, 2002: 199). Larger Groups are also in a stronger position to monitor the behaviour of MEPs, as they have more advisors than smaller Groups. These considerations give rise to the following expectation:

> **Hypothesis 6: Larger EP Groups (in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs) are more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of their MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than smaller Groups.**

Resources and organizational capacity

The costs associated with influencing the behaviour of MEPs are high. Well-resourced domestic parties that have large, highly developed central party organizations are consequently expected to have a greater potential to influence their MEPs. As they realise this, they are also expected to show a greater willingness to attempt to influence their MEPs. Organizational capacity is dependent on a combination of factors. These include the organization's annual expenditure, the total number of staff, together with the number of staff employed to deal with EU affairs. It also includes the length of time that the organization has existed. The literature on domestic party adaptation demonstrates that parties take time to modify their organizations when reacting to institutional changes taking place at the EU level (Poguntke et al., 2007). This leads to the following expectation:

Hypothesis 7: Domestic parties with large organizational capacities are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than domestic parties with limited organizational capacities.

These considerations are also expected to apply to EP Groups. Their resources are virtually directly correlated to the number of affiliated MEPs. Two of the seven EP Groups, the ECR and the EFD, were created as new entities in 2009. They may therefore have a less well-developed organizational capacity than Groups with a similar number of affiliates, but with a longer history, such as the Greens/EFA Group. These considerations give rise to the following expectation:

Hypothesis 8: EP Groups with large organizational capacities are more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of their MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than EP Groups with smaller organizational capacities.

Ideological position

Hix et al. (2007: 147–60) identify the left–right ideological axis as the primary dimension along which political contestation takes place in the EP. Scully claims that the 'location of the [party's] delegation on the political spectrum of the EP' is a potential source of variation in the propensity of parties to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs (2001: 18). Centrist parties are more likely to be approached by potential coalition partners than extremist parties, and are therefore more likely to be able to realise their policy goals. However, it is unclear whether parties will feel that their interests are best served by allowing MEPs the freedom to negotiate according to their own judgment or by mandating MEPs to follow pre-defined positions (Scully, 2001: 18; see also Hix and Lord, 1997: 129; Hix et al., 1999: 16). There is no reason to expect that this factor will lead to variation in the degree to which partisan actors succeed in their efforts. Following Scully's example (2001: 18), two variants of the hypothesis relating to this issue are specified, as follows:

Hypothesis 9a: Domestic parties that are positioned towards the centre of the left–right ideological spectrum are more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than domestic parties that are positioned further from the centre.

Hypothesis 9b: Domestic parties that are positioned away from the centre of the left–right ideological spectrum are more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than domestic parties that are positioned towards the centre.

In the case of domestic parties, a key issue is how to strike a balance between ensuring that MEPs act in a manner that corresponds to the interests of the party, while at the same time giving MEPs enough flexibility to negotiate their way into a winning coalition. These pressures do not apply to Groups in the same way. Since one of the core functions of Groups is to follow developments within the EP, they will always have a broadly accurate idea of what their interests are as negotiations take place within the EP. They are therefore always able to provide informed guidance to MEPs. As the centrist Groups are more likely to be approached by potential coalition partners, they are more likely to be able to realise their goals through the work of MEPs. Consequently, they have a greater incentive to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs than Groups that are positioned away from the centre of the left–right ideological scale. As there is a correlation between the centrism of Groups, their organizational capacity, and the (dis)incentives they are able to offer MEPs, the efforts of centrist Groups to influence MEPs are expected to be more successful. This leads to the following expectation:

Hypothesis 10: Groups that are positioned towards the centre of the left–right ideological spectrum are more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of their MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than Groups that are positioned away from the centre of the left–right ideological spectrum.

Views on integration

Pro-integrationist MEPs are expected to be more likely to diasgree with their partisan organizations than Eurosceptic MEPs. This is because there will be a range of integrationist policy options available to pro-integrationist MEPs, and consequently some scope for dissenting opinions. Conversely, Eurosceptics are likely to base legislative decisions on their view of whether a measure furthers integration. Pro-integrationist parties are therefore more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs than Eurosceptic parties.

Since there tends to be a considerable discrepancy between the policy preferences of the minority of MEPs who hold Eurosceptic views and those of MEPs who hold more favourable views towards integration, Eurosceptic MEPs are likely to play a largely peripheral role in parliamentary negotiations. Realising that they have little scope for realising policy goals within the EP, Eurosceptic domestic parties are less likely to attempt to influence the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs. Lacking a desire to influence the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs, Eurosceptic domestic parties are less likely to develop systems for monitoring the work of their MEPs within the chamber and are therefore less likely to be able to influence MEPs than pro-integrationist parties. These considerations give rise to the following expectation:

> **Hypothesis 11: Integrationist domestic parties are more likely to attempt to influence the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than Eurosceptic parties.**

While most Eurosceptic parties are very eager to gain election to the EP, the question of how their MEPs should act once elected presents them with a challenge. Such parties may feel that it is appropriate for MEPs to engage in EU legislative processes, as this provides a means to defend the Member State’s interests at the EU level. However, parties may prefer that their MEPs refrain from engaging in parliamentary work, possibly with the exception of delivering plenary speeches that are critical of the EU. They may realise that the scope for realising policy goals within the EP is limited and that there are risks involved in undertaking such work. They may feel that the participation of their MEPs in EU policy processes could lend the integration project a sense of legitimacy, and that there is a danger that MEPs may unintentionally act in ways that result in the creation of additional EU legislation.

This would not only run contrary to the party's core policy goal, but could also cause embarrassment to the party and affect its future electoral performance.

Further, Eurosceptic parties may worry that their MEPs are more susceptible to being influenced by the forces of institutional socialisation than MEPs who are already broadly in favour of integration (for a discussion on institutional socialisation in the context of the EP, see Scully, 2005: 69–88). While there is little evidence to suggest that attitudes on integration change during the course of the parliamentary term in the case of MEPs who enter the chamber as pro-integrationist (Scully, 2005: 141), it has yet to be demonstrated that Eurosceptic MEPs do not 'go native'.

Eurosceptic parties have less to gain from their MEPs focusing on parliamentary work than pro-integrationist parties, while they also tend to have a greater incentive to ask them to carry out domestic political work. The Eurosceptic parties represented in the EP tend to have relatively small organizations, and tend not to have a tradition of extensive representation in their national legislatures. While some, such as the Finns Party, have made considerable headway at the most recent national election (Arter, 2011), to date the electoral success of other Eurosceptic parties, such as UKIP, are limited to EP elections and other second-order contests (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996). Compared with more established parties, Eurosceptic parties have greater scope to benefit from having their MEPs concentrate on developing the party organization and attempting to broaden the appeal of the party by carrying out extensive domestic political work. This tendency is likely to be compounded by the fact that the core policy goal of Eurosceptic parties can only be realised in the domestic political context, as membership of the EU is an issue that is determined by the national parliaments.

Together, these points suggest that Eurosceptic parties will want their MEPs to focus on a narrower range of activities than pro-integrationist parties, who will expect their MEPs to strike a more equal balance between the various activities that representatives traditionally undertake. As the costs of monitoring exclusively domestic political work are lower than the costs of monitoring a range of activities, Eurosceptic parties are expected to enjoy greater success in influencing how MEPs allocate their time. These considerations lead to the following expectation:

Hypothesis 12: Compared with pro-integrationist parties, Eurosceptic parties are expected to desire that their MEPs carry out more work in the

home country, and are more likely to be successful in determining how MEPs allocate their time.

As there is a tension between the ideology of Eurosceptic parties and the idea of conducting politics on a transnational basis, it is expected that Eurosceptic Groups operate as a loose coalition of national delegations and that decisions are taken at the level of individual national delegations rather than at the Group level (cf. Whitaker and Lynch, 2014). As a result, the scope for Eurosceptic Groups to develop a transnational will that is independent of its affiliated national delegations is far more limited than is the case with pro-integrationist Groups. As the potential for Eurosceptic Groups to develop an interest that is not shared with its affiliates is limited, they have a lesser incentive than integrationist Groups to attempt to influence the behaviour of affiliated MEPs.

The ability of Eurosceptic Groups to influence the behaviour of MEPs is also expected to be lower than that of pro-integrationist Groups. As the two Eurosceptic Groups are small, their access to parliamentary positions and assignments is restricted, and this limits their ability to incentivise the behaviour of MEPs. Compared with their integrationist peers, Eurosceptic MEPs are less likely to desire parliamentary assignments, as the EP is unlikely to approve a version of a parliamentary report that corresponds closely to their preferences.

The ability of Eurosceptic Groups to implement a system of Group discipline is further undermined by the fact that Eurosceptic MEPs are unlikely to feel that it is legitimate for a transnational political organization to influence the way they carry out their work as representatives. If Eurosceptic Groups were to operate strict systems of discipline, MEPs may choose to forgo benefits such as policy and administrational support in favour of greater independence. Conversely, pro-integrationist MEPs may be more willing to compromise with their Group colleagues, as they view this as a means of promoting the development of a transnational political system, which they view as desirable in itself. These considerations give rise to the following expectation:

Hypothesis 13: Integrationist Groups are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and to succeed, than Eurosceptic Groups.

Factors relating to individual MEPs

Thus far, this discussion has provided reasons for thinking that the desire and ability of domestic political parties and EP Groups to influence the behaviour of MEPs varies according to factors relating to the institutional context and to partisan actors. It is also likely that the potential for partisan actors to influence MEPs varies according to factors relating to individual MEPs. The partisan control thesis rests on the assumption that partisan actors take advantage of their ability to shape the incentive structure facing MEPs as part of their efforts to influence the behaviour of MEPs. It follows that the degree to which partisan actors are able to influence the behaviour of an MEP depends on the degree to which the MEP is dependent on the partisan actor to realise his or her goals.

Political experience

A link is expected between the level of political experience that MEPs have and the degree to which they are dependent on the party to realise their goals. Indicators of a politician's level of experience include factors such as whether they currently hold, or have held, any positions of seniority within the domestic party or Group, positions within the national government, or a senior position within the political system of the EU.[17] Broadly speaking, MEPs who have held such offices are likely to have developed a personal political support base and may be less reliant on partisan actors to realise future goals. It is also possible that they are approaching the end of their political careers and do not hold lofty ambitions for the future. This leads to the following expectation:

> **Hypothesis 14: Parties are more likely to seek, and to achieve, to influence the behaviour of MEPs in the case of those who have less political experience than in the case of MEPs who have more political experience.**

A similar logic applies regarding the level of influence that Groups exercise on MEPs. However, due to limitations relating to the data available, this issue is not examined in this thesis.

A summary

This section has presented the factors that are expected to be associated with variation in the degree to which domestic parties and EP Groups seek and achieve influence on the behaviour of MEPs. The section has presented fifteen hypotheses relating to variation in the degree to which partisan actors attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and succeed in their efforts. These hypotheses serve as the second of two components of the thesis' framework for analysis, and are tested in the following four chapters. This analysis serves as a means of addressing Sub-questions 1b and 2b, which ask what factors explain variation in the level of influence domestic political parties and EP Groups respectively exercise on MEPs.

Conclusion

This chapter has developed the discussion of the thesis' theoretical framework presented in Chapter 1, and has outlined the study's analytical framework. Building on the claim made in Chapter 1 that elected representatives do not necessarily prioritize the interests of their constituents when making behavioural decisions, this chapter examined the basis on which MEPs act. It argued that MEPs' behaviour is driven by their desire to realise five types of core goals: election, policy, office, personal gain, and future career.

The chapter also examines the logic underlying the core claim of the partisan control thesis, which is that since partisan actors are able to control the degree to which MEPs are able to realise their goals, they may use this control to influence the behaviour of MEPs. This claim is deemed entirely plausible. Echoing Scully (2001), it is argued that partisan actors must be willing to incur costs if they are to develop a potential to influence MEPs. Partisan actors must carry out four activities if they are to develop such a potential: to hold interests relating to the behaviour of MEPs, to communicate these interests to MEPs, to provide MEPs with incentives to act in accordance with those interests, and to monitor MEPs' behaviour.

The final part of the chapter argued that the degree to which partisan actors are willing to bear the costs of carrying out these activities is expected to vary, together with the potential that they have to influence MEPs. As a result, some domestic parties and EP Groups are expected to be more likely than others to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and to enjoy greater success. The factors that are

expected to serve as the source of this variation are discussed to substantiate these claims.

These theoretical insights serve as a basis on which to develop the thesis' analytical framework. Investigating whether partisan actors fulfil the four preconditions of partisan influence identified in this chapter provides a means of addressing Sub-questions 1a and 2a. These ask whether domestic political parties and EP Groups respectively influence how MEPs approach representation. Fifteen hypotheses are developed on the basis of the discussion of the factors that are expected to lead to variation in the degree to which partisan actors seek and achieve influence. These hypotheses are tested in the following chapters and serve as a means of addressing Sub-questions 1b and 2b. These sub-questions ask which factors explain variation in the level of influence exercised by domestic political parties and EP Groups respectively. Chapter 3 begins the task of addressing the study's four sub-questions by examining data from the 2010 EPRG Survey of MEPs (Farrell et al., 2011).

[13] All MEPs other than those not seeking re-election.
[14] The exception is where an MEP prioritizes policy work during a parliamentary term to the detriment of party-based activity knowing that while increasing their profile within the chamber does not serve their immediate reselection interests, it is likely to improve their long-term re(s)election prospects.
[15] Of the thirteen Finnish MEPs elected in 2009, two (Heidi Hautala, Greens; Carl Haglund, Swedish People's Party) had left the EP by the summer of 2012 to take up positions in the national government; Ana de Palacio y del Valle-Lersundi left the EP mid-term in 2002 to become Spain's (first female) foreign minister; Toomas Hendrik Ilves was elected President of Estonia soon after leaving the EP mid-term in 2006.
[16] To provide three British examples, Nick Clegg currently serves as leader of the UK's Liberal Democrats and Deputy Prime Minister; Geoff Hoon held a number of ministerial posts in the British government between 1997 and 2009; John Prescott served as an appointed MEP from 1975–79 and would later serve as the UK's Deputy Prime Minister.
[17] However, the signifiers of seniority, status, and experience, listed above do not necessarily serve as signifiers of whether an MEP is free from, or dependent on, partisan actors. It is possible that an MEP holds a valued position because a partisan actor has given that position to the MEP on the understanding that it will be reallocated if the MEP fails to act in accordance with the actor's demands.

Chapter 3: Analysis of the 2010 EPRG MEP Survey

This chapter takes the first empirical step in examining whether domestic political parties and EP Groups affect the way MEPs approach representation by drawing on data from the 2010 EPRG MEP Survey (Farrell et al., 2011). The chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section presents the dataset and discusses its uses and limitations in addressing the study's research question. The second section investigates issues relating to the focus and style of representation, examining how MEPs relate to various groups which they may choose to represent, and how they vote when the interests of different groups conflict. The third section explores how MEPs spend time working on behalf of the represented. In so doing, it places the work that they carry out on behalf of, and in relation to, their domestic parties in the context of the other forms of activity that they undertake.

The fourth section examines various issues that are expected to shape the relationship between MEPs and the two partisan actors. It starts by examining the role played by different party actors in the candidate selection systems to determine whether party leaders are able to use their control of party lists as an incentive. It proceeds to examine the degree of contact between MEPs and their domestic parties, before investigating whether domestic parties and EP Groups provide voting instructions to MEPs. It closes by providing evidence on the degree to which EP Groups implement a system of discipline.

The fifth and sixth sections employ multivariate regression analysis in an attempt to identify whether several of the factors discussed in the previous chapter are associated with the regularity with which domestic parties issue voting instructions on the one hand, and with variation in the degree to which MEPs attach importance to representing their domestic parties and EP Groups, on the other. In short, these analyses provide a means of testing seven of the fifteen hypotheses presented in Chapter 2, namely Hypotheses 1, 2, 5, 9a, 9b, 11, and 14. The seventh section summarizes the findings and offers some concluding remarks.

The chapter finds that while most domestic political parties and EP Groups provide voting recommendations and maintain regular contact with MEPs, they do not appear to exercise extensive influence on MEPs. The overwhelming majority of MEPs claim that they are free to vote at parliamentary division on the basis of their own conception of the public interest, and there are few signs that MEPs are driven to

focus primarily on activity related to their domestic parties or EP Groups. Few factors are identified as predictors of the regularity with which domestic parties issue voting instructions, and the only variables identified as explaining any appreciable variation is the parties' country of origin.

The Dataset

The 2010 MEP Survey (Farrell et al., 2011) is the third survey of MEPs conducted by the European Parliament Research Group (EPRG): the first two were carried out in 2001 and in 2006. The three surveys feature similar but not identical questions, and while the 2001 survey was administered in paper format, the surveys have been administered via an online system in more recent years. In 2010, respondents were asked a series of questions on seven themes, some of which are of direct relevance to this study's research question. The survey was partially completed by 270 respondents, with most individual survey items attracting around 200 responses. As the leaders of the research team note, the sample is 'reasonably representative of the EP as a whole' regarding the nationality and EP Group affiliation of respondents (Hix et al., 2011: 9).

It is easy to see why some scholars believe that these surveys provide 'a rich dataset of MEP preferences' (Hix et al., 2011: 10), as respondents address a vast number of issues in detail. For the purposes of this study, it is possible to examine the three issues that are of central importance in addressing the central research question: how MEPs approach representation and the degree of variation in this respect; whether domestic political parties and EP Groups undertake some of the activities required for them to develop a potential for influencing their MEPs; and whether certain factors are systematically linked to variation in how MEPs approach representation. The task of addressing the research question is particularly difficult bearing in mind that a large number of factors potentially affect the degree to which domestic parties and EP Groups influence MEPs (see Chapter 2). In this context, the cross-national, large-*n* nature of the data is a considerable asset, as it provides a means of including many of these variables in the analyses in a manageable way, and facilitates the task of identifying trends that relate to MEPs from across the EU. These broad trends can be corroborated and examined in greater detail in later chapters by employing qualitative methods.

However, there are potential issues with the internal validity of the data. As the surveys are self-administered, there is no way of knowing whether the responses were provided by the MEPs themselves or by their assistants, and there is scope for measurement error in cases where the data was not provided by MEPs. It is questionable whether over a third of MEPs took the time to complete (or to partially complete) the survey. The three surveys carried out by the EPRG are lengthy. With over 230 individual survey items, it is estimated that a respondent would take 15–20 minutes to complete the 2010 questionnaire if they responded to each question. It is clear that most MEPs deal with a strenuous workload, and when considering the role that assistants play in easing an MEP's burden, it is difficult to escape the possibility that the task of responding to the survey was delegated to an assistant in many cases. This is unproblematic where the survey item asks for the type of factual information that assistants could be expected to know, such as 'When did you first become an MEP?' However, the accuracy of responses on a scale of 1–5 on the importance of articulating 'important societal needs and interests' must be questioned if the respondent is an assistant. Consequently, care must be taken when interpreting the results, as some findings are likely to be more reliable than others. The issue of measurement validity is addressed where relevant when reporting the findings.

Further, while the survey provides data on a range of issues that are relevant for this study, it is necessary to be cautious and realistic in making inferences based on the findings of the statistical analysis. These data cannot be expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the nature of the party–MEP relationship, or of how factors associated with this relationship shape how MEPs approach representation. Data on the regularity of issuing voting instructions, for example, do not offer deep insights into the degree to which parties are able to control the voting behaviour of MEPs. They provide little indication of how MEPs react to these recommendations, and of whether MEPs feel under any obligation to follow instructions.

It is possible, for example, that a party only offers instructions on very important matters, but makes it clear to their MEPs that they will not be reselected if they fail to conform to the party's wishes. Another party may issue recommendations regularly, but make clear to MEPs that they are free to vote as they see fit. The survey data would be unable to convey this reality, and would in fact provide a completely misleading picture. Care must therefore be taken when analysing these findings to ensure that findings are triangulated with evidence generated from qualitative

research. On balance, however, it is clear that there is a value in analysing these data as the analysis presented in this chapter provides valuable insights into issues relating to the central research question.

MEPs and the Focus of Representation

The first task is to form a picture of how MEPs conceive of the represented, or in other words, of how MEPs relate to various groups which they may wish to represent, and how MEPs prioritize between the interests of these groups when acting as representatives. Chapter 1 argued that representatives vary in their focus of representation, and in their analysis of the 2006 EPRG MEP survey Farrell and Scully (2007) demonstrate that this is true in the case of MEPs. By drawing on the 2010 dataset it is possible to replicate Farrell and Scully's analyses and confirm their findings, as well as to expand current understanding of how MEPs relate to their parties and to other groups when making behavioural decisions.

Respondents were asked to indicate on a 1–5 scale (with 1 denoting 'of little importance' and 5 denoting 'of great importance') how much importance they attributed to representing various groups, including 'All [the] people in Europe', 'All [the] people in my member state', 'All the people who voted for my party', 'All the people in my constituency/region', 'My national party', 'My European political group', and 'Women' (Table 1).[18] Bearing in mind that Hix et al. (2007) view MEPs primarily as the agents of two principals, namely the national party and the EP Group, it is interesting that MEPs claim to attach a marginally greater level of importance to representing 'All the people in my constituency/region' (mean importance = 4.14) and all citizens in their Member States (4.04) than to representing their national party (3.94), party voters (3.97), and their EP Group (3.84). The task of representing all European citizens (3.60) and women (3.44) is deemed less important, although these scores lie above the mid-point on the 5-point scale.[19] The standard deviation values make it clear that there is some variation between MEPs in the level of importance that they accord to representing the interests of various groups. At the aggregate level, MEPs accord a high level of importance to representing many groups, including citizens who live in their region and in their Member State more generally, their national parties, party voters, and their EP Groups.

The differences in the mean averages are small, however the results of a series of paired samples *t*-tests carried out on the data indicate that there is a meaningful

Table 1: The importance attributed to representing various groups

	All the people in Europe	All the people in my Member State	All the people who voted for my party	All the people in my constituency/region	My national party	My European political group	Women
Mean	3.69	4.04	3.97	4.14	3.94	3.84	3.44
Std. Dev.	1.25	1.13	1.19	1.20	1.16	1.12	1.29
N	203	203	203	203	202	202	203

Q4.2 'How important is it to you to represent the following groups of people in the European Parliament?' *Options: 1 (Of little importance) / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (Of great importance)*

difference between the means of some of these variables. For example, the analysis indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the measures of the importance of representing constituents and all the people in the EU $t = 4.136$, $p < .001$, the importance of representing constituents and women $t = 6.861$, $p < .001$, and the importance of representing constituents and the national party $t = 2.573$, $p = .011$. The latter finding is particularly noteworthy in the context of this study, since it reinforces the suggestion that MEPs place greater value on representing ordinary citizens than on representing their national parties. These very simple findings demonstrate that in contrast to the expectations of the partisan control thesis, MEPs view territorial representation as slightly more important than partisan representation, although these differences should not be overstated.

Nevertheless, the paired samples *t*-tests indicate that there is no statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level between several pairs of variables, including the importance of representing the national party and all the citizens of the Member State, the importance of representing the national party and party voters, and the importance of representing the national party and the EP Group. The significance of the latter finding is that it suggests that there is little difference between the level of importance MEPs attribute to representing what some of the literature claims is their two most powerful principals: their national party and their EP Group.

While these data provide a general picture of the focus of representation, they should be regarded as a crude measure of the importance MEPs attach to acting on behalf of different groups. The views of MEPs regarding who should be the object of their representational activities may have little bearing on how they actually carry out their work. It is perfectly possible that MEPs believe that it is more important to represent one group than another, but that they find it is difficult to put this into practice because of the pressures to which they are subject. For example, while MEPs may provide a higher score for territorial representation than for partisan representation because they believe it to be more important, their work may still be characterised more by partisan representation than by territorial representation because of the pressure partisan actors exert on them.

Another issue relates to whether respondents were able to display differences in the level of importance they attribute to representing different groups when responding to the survey. The question of which groups are seen as more important than others is vital, because certain decisions need to be made in favour of one group

Table 2: Correlations between the importance attributed to representing various groups

	All the people in Europe	**All the people in my Member State**	**All the people who voted for my party**	**All the people in my constituency/region**	**My national party**	**My European political group**	**Women**
All [the] people in Europe		.502***	.220***	.186***	0.13	.305***	.410***
All [the] people in my member state			.382***	.425***	.297***	.379***	.412***
All the people who voted for my party				.485***	.677***	.600***	.388***
All the people in my constituency/region					.551***	.439***	.309***
My national party						.670***	.322***
My European political group							.440***
Women							

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

and against others. It is not surprising that the majority of responses are 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale, as the task of representing several of these groups is clearly important. It is not likely that an MEP would say that representing any societal groups is *not* important, other than possibly in the case of Eurosceptic MEPs, who may not place great value on representing citizens outside their Member States. Since it is likely that MEPs view some groups as being more important than others, and the use of a larger response scale would have yielded a clearer measure of these distinctions.

Testing for correlations between responses to the survey items dealing with the importance of representing various groups raises further questions regarding whether respondents were able to make a genuine distinction between the level of importance they attach to representing different groups (Table 2). There are strong positive correlations between the responses to many of the questions, even in cases where there is little theoretical grounds for a link, for example between constituency/regional representation and EP Group representation ($r = .439$, $p < .001$). It is only in the case of one pair of variables ('My national party' and 'All people in Europe') that no statistically significant correlation is found at the $p < .05$ level, and in all other cases the relationship is positive. Out of the twenty correlating relationships identified, the correlation between eight pairs of variables is of moderate strength ($r < .40$, $>.20$, $p < .05$), while eleven variables are strongly correlated ($r > 0.40$, $p < .05$). These positive correlation relationships suggest that MEPs who attach a great deal of importance to representing a certain group also tend to believe that representing most other groups is very important as well. These data therefore make the task of gauging which interests MEPs prioritize when those of two groups are in conflict very difficult.

Data from another part of the survey can be used to shed light on the issue of how MEPs act when the interests of various groups are in conflict. Respondents were asked whether they were 'most inclined' to follow their own judgment, to follow the views of national party voters, to follow the views of their national party leadership, or to follow the views of their EP Group where these views conflict (Table 3). The overwhelming majority of MEPs (69.4%) claim that they would be most inclined to follow their own judgment, with an additional 17.2% claiming that they would act in this way as a second choice. Only 14.1% would tend to vote with the EP Group as a first choice, 10.8% with the national party leadership, while a mere 6% would follow the views of party voters.

Table 3: Basis of voting in cases of conflict

	Follow own judgment (%)	Follow party voters (%)	Follow party leadership (%)	Follow EP Group leadership (%)
1st choice	69.4	6.0	10.8	14.1
2nd choice	17.2	30.4	16.8	34.8
3rd choice	7.0	31.0	41.1	21.7
4th choice	6.5	32.6	31.4	29.3
N	186	184	185	184

Q5.2 'Which of these are you most inclined to do' in instances where 'people have different views concerning matters before the European Parliament?'

This suggests that the bulk of MEPs believe that their role is to promote their own conception of the public interest and that they do not feel obligated to act according to the wishes expressed by voters, by their national party leadership, or by their EP Group. In other words, the data suggest that MEPs largely correspond to the trustee model of representation presented in Chapter 1. However, while the data also suggest that most MEPs would tend to vote according to their own judgment rather than on the basis of the views expressed by these three groups, the data do not indicate what balance MEPs would strike between the interests of various groups. It is possible that most MEPs feel free to vote according to their own judgment, but that the interests of one particular group tends to feature more prominently than those of other groups when making these decisions. The only information that is available regarding these issues is that small minorities of MEPs would tend to promote party voters (6.0%), the party leadership (10.8%), and the EP Group leadership (14.1%) regardless of the nature of the conflict between the interests of different groups.

There are two reasons why MEPs may believe that it is more important to promote the interests of their EP Group than to act according to their personal conviction. MEPs may take the view that successful policy-making in the EP over the long term is dependent on strong EP Group cohesion, and some may see Group cohesion as a means of fostering a supranational political system, a goal in itself. However, the data do not indicate that these considerations shape how MEPs make voting decisions. When asked whether voting with the position of the EP Group when it conflicted with one's personal convictions is a worthy principle, a clear majority of respondents (54.3%) indicated that they disagreed (Table 4). While fewer than one in five (19.0%) noted that they agreed with the principle, it is worth noting that this is still a surprisingly large minority. The fact that over a quarter (25.7%) indicated that

they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement probably reflects the feeling that views on this issue may depend largely on the specific context of the parliamentary division taking place.

On the whole, respondents rejected the notion of voting with the EP Group in cases of conflict between the Group and the MEP's constituents (Table 5). Two-fifths of respondents (41.8%) noted that they would prefer to vote according to the views of constituents rather than those of the EP Group, while over a third (36.7%) indicated that they had no clear view on the issue. Again, however, a relatively large minority (21.5%) maintain that it is more appropriate to vote according to the interests expressed by the Group than those voiced by constituents.

Table 4: Views on loyalty towards EP Group in cases of conflict (I)[20]

'MEPs should remain loyal to EP group at EP divisions'	
Agree completely (%)	5.7
Agree (%)	13.2
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	25.3
Disagree (%)	42.0
Disagree completely (%)	13.8
N	174

Q5.4.2 'If the opinions of the European political group appear in conflict with one's own opinions, it is correct to vote with the European political group'.

Table 5: Views on loyalty towards EP Group in cases of conflict (II)[21]

'MEPs should vote with constituents rather than with EP group'	
Agree completely (%)	7.6
Agree (%)	33.1
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	37.2
Disagree (%)	18.6
Disagree completely (%)	3.5
N	172

Q5.4.3 'If a member of parliament is under pressure from constituents, it is correct that s/he votes against the expressed will of the European political group'.

In examining the representational focus of MEPs, this section has confirmed the findings of a previous study that MEPs attach a great deal of importance to representing a number of groups (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 105). The finding that MEPs view territorial representation as slightly more important than partisan representation is of direct relevance to the examination of partisan influence. The

discussion demonstrates that when the interest of these groups conflict, the overwhelming majority of MEPs feel free to promote their own conception of the public interest, and to vote at parliamentary division on the basis of those views. This runs contrary to the partisan control thesis, which claims that MEPs are compelled to prioritize partisan interests over those of other groups.

MEPs and Representational Action

The next task is to examine how MEPs spend time acting on behalf of the groups that they represent. Doing so provides an indication of whether MEPs are driven to focus primarily on activity related to their domestic parties or EP Groups. As Chapter 1 explains, there is a variety of activities from which MEPs must choose when deciding how to carry out their work as representatives. The options include (but are not limited to) focusing on various aspects of parliamentary work, such as drafting legislation or engaging in activities relating to parliamentary oversight, publicizing themselves as politicians and their work through the media, and undertaking political activities within their Members States (Hix et al., 2007: 72; Farrell and Scully, 2007: 93–4). The survey data provides some means of identifying which activities MEPs prioritize over others, although the survey questions focus mainly on parliamentary activities at the expense of those related to constituency service and media work.

Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from 1–5 (with 1 denoting 'Of little importance' and 5 denoting 'Of great importance') the level of importance they attribute to carrying out various activities (Table 6). However, as it is unlikely that respondents will view any activity as unimportant, it is likely that many viewed the scale as effectively running from 3–5. Consequently, any differences in mean values should be emphasised.

The activity that MEPs hold as most important of those regarding which they were questioned is working on legislation. The mean value on the 1–5 scale is 4.32, and more than four out of five respondents (82.8%) noted that they viewed this activity as important or very important. There is a clear difference in the importance of legislative work and parliamentary oversight, which attracted a mean score of 3.72, and where only 62.2% responded with a value above the midpoint on the scale of 1–5. Together with legislative work, MEPs also view the task of articulating 'important societal needs and interests' as important. At 4.11, the mean value of this item is slightly lower than that of legislative activity, and 74.9% gave a response that lay

Table 6: The importance attributed to undertaking various activities

	Working on legislation (%)	Parliamentary oversight (%)	Articulation of important societal needs and interests (%)	Developing common strategies for EU policies (%)	Mediation between different interests in society (%)	Representation of individual interests of individual citizens (%)
1	3.9	5.4	3.9	5.4	9.9	14.3
2	4.9	11.3	4.9	7.4	12.3	22.2
3	8.4	21.2	16.3	17.7	25.1	23.2
4	21.2	30	26.1	30.5	27.1	19.2
5	61.6	32	48.8	38.9	25.6	21.2
Mean	4.32	3.72	4.11	3.90	3.46	3.11
N	203	203	203	203	203	203

Q4.1. 'When thinking about your work as an MEP, how important are the following aspects of your work?' *Options: 1 (Of little importance) / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (Of great importance)*

above the midpoint. Activity aimed at 'developing common strategies for EU policies' is also viewed as worthy, attaining a mean value of 3.90, with 69.4% of responses above the midpoint. The tasks of mediating between different interests in society, and of representing the interests of individual citizens, are perceived as being less important, attaining mean values of 3.46 and 3.11 respectively. These data demonstrate that while MEPs may attribute broadly similar levels of importance to representing the interests of various groups, they differentiate between the value of carrying out various forms of policy-related activities.

The discussion in Chapter 1 demonstrated that the EP's committees provide a setting in which MEPs have a genuine opportunity to influence policy outcomes, and that the bulk of the institution's activity is centred on its committees. Committee membership is one of the factors that can most extensively shape the way MEPs work on behalf of the represented. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that domestic parties or EP Groups who wish to influence the way MEPs carry out their work attempt to guide MEPs to their own preferred choice of committee(s). The data provides a means of examining the degree to which partisan considerations played a role in the committee membership of MEPs at the beginning of the 2009–14 parliamentary term.

The descriptive statistics reported in Table 7 suggest that for most MEPs, the choice of committee is based primarily on their own wishes and judgment. The overwhelming majority of MEPs (85.3%) indicate that they chose their committee largely based on their view that it covered important issues, by responding with a value of 4 or 5. This compares to 69.5% of MEPs, for whom the importance of the committee to their voters played an important role in the decision. Around two-thirds (66.1%) noted that their personal interest in the issues dealt with by the committee was important, while professional expertise influenced the decision of 64.8% of respondents.

It is clear that national political parties and EP Groups played a far less influential role in these decisions, despite the fact that the distribution of committee positions may be one of the instruments that these two actors can use as part of their efforts to enforce discipline. Only 20.5% of respondents indicated that the national party played a role in the decision, while the figure is only 15.5% in the case of the EP Groups. It remains a possibility that the EP Groups and national delegations provided these minorities of MEPs with positions on committees in which they held

Table 7: Reasons for gaining EP committee membership

Response	Personal interest (%)	Committee important to voters (%)	Professional expertise (%)	Committee covers important issues (%)	Asked by EP Group (%)	Asked by national party (%)
1	12.99	5.08	7.39	2.82	28.74	30.11
2	6.21	8.47	9.09	2.82	26.44	24.43
3	14.69	16.95	18.75	9.04	29.31	25.00
4	27.68	35.03	19.32	37.85	8.62	13.07
5	38.42	34.46	45.45	47.46	6.90	7.39
Mean	3.72	3.85	3.86	4.24	2.39	2.43
N	177	177	176	177	174	176

Q5.7 'Here is a list of reasons why MEPs choose which European Parliament committee to join. How important were each of these reasons for you in deciding which committee to join after the 2009 European elections?' *Options: 1 (Not at all Important) / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (Extremely Important)*

little interest. However, MEPs clearly do not believe that EP Groups and national delegations control access to committees with an iron fist.

While the data do not enable us to directly compare the importance MEPs attribute to policy-related activities with other forms of activity traditionally associated with the work of a representative, they do provide some evidence regarding the extent to which MEPs focus on political work in their Member States (Table 8). Reflecting the findings of previous studies (Scully, 2005: 73; Farrell and Scully, 2007: 123), the 2010 survey data suggest that MEPs regularly spend time on political work in their home countries. Over half (58.5%) indicate that they spend at least some time each week on domestic political work. As travelling between the home country and the EP's centres in Brussels and Strasburg takes considerable time and effort for most MEPs, this finding suggests that a considerable number of MEPs view undertaking activities in their Members States as an integral part of their work.

Table 8: Time spent undertaking political work in home country

Most of my time each week (%)	10.0
Some of my time each week (%)	48.5
Limited time, mostly at weekends (%)	31.0
Little or no time (%)	2.0
Varies too much to say (%)	8.5
N	200

Q4.3 'How much time do you spend on political work in your home country rather than work at the European Parliament?'

It is possible that the data underemphasises the amount of political work that MEPs undertake domestically. Reflecting the way parliamentary business is scheduled, most MEPs arrive in Brussels or Strasbourg on Monday afternoon and return to their Member States on Thursday afternoon. Due to the wording of the response options on the questionnaire,[22] it is possible that many respondents who devote substantial amounts of time to political work in their home county indicated that they only spend 'limited time, mostly on weekends' on domestic political activity, as this activity is centred on weekends. Furthermore, because of modern communication technology and practices, MEPs are able to carry out work that is related to domestic politics when abroad. Citing the difficulties of travelling within his vast constituency, one British MEP explained that he carries out as much constituency service as possible by telephone from his EP office in Brussels.[23]

Further, as the survey question asks respondents how much time they spend on political work *in* their home countries, rather than 'on domestic political work', it is possible that the data again underplays the amount of time some MEPs spend undertaking such activities.

Data relating to the regularity of contact between MEPs and various groups provide some indication of the importance that certain extra-parliamentary activities play in the overall work of MEPs (Table 9). For example, the degree of contact with ordinary citizens gives an indication of the importance that MEPs attach to constituency service, while the regularity with which they interact with journalists suggests how much time they devote to media work, and contact with party members indicates how actively they engage in party work. The fact that a larger proportion of MEPs are in contact with 'ordinary citizens' (67.0%) on a weekly basis than with any other group that features in the survey, reinforces the findings made that MEPs spend considerable time on political work in their constituencies. This suggests that, for many MEPs, dealing directly with citizens plays an integral part in their understanding of their role as representatives. It is also clear that many MEPs regularly spend time on media work. The majority (58.3%) are in weekly contact with journalists, while 89.6% interact with journalists at least once a month. The fact that 91.0% of MEPs are in monthly contact with party members suggests that they nearly all carry out some work within their party organizations, even if this only entails attending meetings with local party members.

The findings presented in this section demonstrate that MEPs accord a great deal of importance to carrying out legislative work, and to their role as spokespeople for society. The findings also suggest that the typical MEP spends time carrying out activities in a range of settings and believes that extra-parliamentary tasks such as constituency service, media work, and party activities are all part of a representative's role. There is therefore no suggestion that MEPs are driven to focus primarily on activity related to their domestic parties or EP Groups.

Nevertheless, the discussion has been limited in its ability to explain precisely how MEPs carry out activities on behalf of the represented, further than to make generalisations about how MEPs prioritize between activities related to policy-making, the media, their domestic parties, and their constituents. It remains possible that domestic parties and EP Groups compel MEPs to carry out these activities in a manner that promotes partisan interests. These limitations are mainly due to the

Table 9: Regularity of contact with various groups

	Ordinary citizens	Organized groups	Journalists	EP Group leaders	Party members	Members of party executive
Weekly (%)	67.0	46.11	58.33	51.03	51.05	27.98
Monthly (%)	23.2	36.27	30.73	32.99	40.00	48.70
Less often (%)	9.8	17.62	10.94	15.98	8.95	23.32
N	194	193	192	194	190	193

Q4.5 'How often are you in contact with the following groups, people or institutions?' *Options: At least once a week / At least once a month / At least every three months / At least once a year / Less often / No contact*'

quantitative nature of the data and to the range of issues that the survey examines. It is necessary to analyse qualitative data to provide a more nuanced understanding of how MEPs carry out activities on behalf of the represented, and that task is undertaken in Chapters 4 and 5.

Evidence of Partisan Control

The previous chapter argued that domestic political parties and EP Groups must undertake a range of activities if they are to develop the potential for influencing MEPs. These were identified as having a preference regarding the behaviour of MEPs, communicating these preferences to MEPs, providing MEPs with incentives to follow this guidance, and monitoring the behaviour of MEPs. While the 2010 EPRG MEP survey does not contain data on every one of these activities, this section examines the data that is available and investigates whether domestic political parties and EP Groups fulfil the first two preconditions of influence. The section begins, however, by investigating which organs within domestic political parties are influential in candidate selection procedures. This discussion provides a means of investigating the claim that party leaders can use their control over the candidate selection process as a disciplinary tool.

Candidate selection processes

As noted in Chapter 1, it is frequently argued that party leaders in countries operating closed and ordered lists are able to use their control of the party's lists at EP elections to influence the behaviour of MEPs (Hix et al., 1999; Hix, 2002; Faas, 2003; Raunio, 2007, 2012; Hix et al., 2007). For this notion to be plausible, party leaders must, at a minimum, play a dominant role in the selection of candidates. However, candidate selection can be in the hands of the national party leaders, of regional party leaders, or of ordinary party members.

The survey data demonstrates that there is considerable variation from one party to the next in the level of importance of these three groups in candidate selection processes (Table 10). While around half of respondents indicated that national party officials (56.2%) and regional and/or local officials (48.5%) play at least a relatively important role in such processes, it is also clear that the role played by these two groups in many parties is of minor importance. Nearly a quarter of respondents noted that national officials (23.6%) and regional and/or local party officials (24.0%) have

Table 10: The role played by various party organs in candidate selection

	National party officials (%)	Regional/Local party officials (%)	Individual party members (%)
1	10.7	11.6	9.4
2	12.9	12.4	18.8
3	20.1	27.6	28.6
4	9.9	30.7	21.9
5	26.3	17.8	21.4
N	224	225	224

Q2.3 'In your party, how important are the following groups in the selection of candidates for the European Parliament?' *Options: 1 (Not at all Important) / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (Extremely Important)*

little influence on the composition of the party's list. The role played by individual party members attracted fewer responses above the midpoint compared with the other two groups, however it is clear that members play an important role in the selection process which leads to the election of nearly half of all MEPs (42.3%). Nevertheless, over a quarter (28.2%) of MEPs indicate that ordinary party members have little influence on the way that party lists are drawn up.

A considerable percentage of responses to all three survey items lie at or around the midpoint of the response scale, suggesting that in many parties more than one group has some influence over the outcome of selection processes. Around two-thirds of responses to the survey items on the role of the three groups are between 2 and 4,[24] while between 20% and 30% of the three sets of responses lay at the midpoint of the scale. By testing for correlations between responses to the three survey items, it is possible to gauge whether particular groups tend to share the role of leading the candidate selection process. As Table 11 shows, there is a strong positive correlation ($r = .595$, $p < 0.05$) between the perceived importance of the roles played by national party officials and regional party officials in candidate selection. This suggests that in cases where selection is mainly in the hands of party officials, the task tends to be carried out jointly by officials at the national and regional levels. It can be inferred from this that even the actor that has the greatest potential to act as a successful principal – the party leadership and its officials – is usually unable to act independently in using its 'ultimate instrument of control' (Raunio, 2007: 141), namely the threat of deselection.

Table 11: Correlations of the values attributed to the importance played by different groups in candidate selection

	National party officials	Regional/Local party officials	Individual party members
National party officials		0.59****	-0.05
Regional/Local party officials			0.03
Individual party members			

**** = p < .001

The discussion relating to the processes used by parties to select candidates for EP elections has shown that it is inappropriate to conceive of domestic political parties as unitary actors, whose leaders can use their control of the selection process to influence the behaviour of MEPs. If the nature of the party–MEP relationship is extensively shaped by the degree to which party leaders control the candidate selection process, the nature of this relationship must vary considerably between cases. This also suggests that there is considerable variation in the extent to which parties that attempt to influence MEPs are successful. These insights challenge the partisan control thesis.

Contact between MEPs and their political parties

Parties wishing to influence the behaviour of MEPs must have, and must communicate their wishes to MEPs, as the first two preconditions of party control outlined in the previous chapter specify. The survey provides data relating to the regularity of contact between MEPs and various groups, including members of the domestic party, members of the national party executive, and the leadership of the EP Group. Unfortunately, it does not provide data relating to the regularity of contact between MEPs and the domestic party leaders or central party officials. Nevertheless, it is still possible to use this data to develop an account of the relationship between MEPs and the two partisan actors, and to identify the extent to which the degree of partisan interaction varies between MEPs. Since this understanding of partisan relations is based on the regularity of interaction between MEPs and partisan actors, it is inevitable that the picture of the relationship presented will be rudimentary. A more nuanced account of this interaction is formed in subsequent chapters by analyzing in-depth interview data relating to specific cases.

Data relating to the regularity of contact between MEPs and various groups were reported earlier in this chapter to demonstrate that party activity is a prominent

feature of the work of many MEPs. The same data can be drawn on again to examine whether various sections within domestic parties, together with EP Groups, communicate with MEPs (Table 12). The evidence demonstrates that most MEPs are in regular contact with party members, with such interaction taking place on a weekly basis in the case of most MEPs (51.1%), and at least once a month in the overwhelming majority of cases (91.1%). This suggests that MEPs are aware of the concerns of party members, and are therefore able to distinguish between the preferences of party members and those of other groups within the party, such as the leadership, or the national party delegation within the EP.

While it is clear that MEPs are in regular contact with party members, the degree to which these data provide an insight into the nature of the relationship between MEPs and party members is limited. It is important to note that this contact does not equate to influence. Further, the form and duration of the contact is not specified, and it would be beneficial to know more about the type of members that MEPs are in contact with, together with their number, and whether this contact tends to take place with the same members. In many cases, members of an MEP's family are party members, as are many constituency aides, and it would be reasonable for MEPs in such a situation to respond to this question with 'weekly'. There is a great deal of difference between this form of contact and meetings with party members who may take a more critical outlook on the MEP's work.

Contact with members of the national party executive is far less frequent than with ordinary party members, although it is regular in most cases (Table 12). While just over a quarter of MEPs (28.0%) are in weekly contact with members of their party's national executive, over three-quarters (76.7%) are in contact at least once a month. The role played by the national party executive, and the nature of relations between its members and the party's elected legislators, can vary. In some cases its significance within the party is considerably lower than that of the party leader and his or her inner circle, and of party officials employed to carry out the day-to-day running of the party. In other parties, members of the executive are powerful figures, even those who do not serve as legislators. There is no doubt that in most cases members of national party executives have extensive opportunities to communicate the preferences of the body on which they serve to MEPs. However, additional data relating to the nature and regularity of contact between MEPs and party officials would serve as more valuable evidence for learning about the nature of the

relationship between MEPs and their domestic parties.

It comes as little surprise that most MEPs are in very regular contact with the leadership of their EP Groups (Table 12). For the majority of respondents (51.9%) this contact occurs on a weekly basis, while a further third (33.3%) state that they are in monthly contact with the leadership. Fewer than one in six MEPs (14.9%) are in contact with their EP Group leadership less often than on a monthly basis. While further research is required to identify what kind of interaction takes place and whether this affects the way MEPs carry out their work, it appears reasonable to suggest that a continual dialogue takes place between MEPs and their EP Group leaders, and that EP Group leaders can ensure that MEPs are constantly aware of their views.

While regular contact is not a sufficient condition of influence, it is one of four preconditions. Therefore, these data do not rule out the possibility that the leadership of EP Groups can exercise a degree of control over MEPs. One issue to highlight with reference to this data is the fact that most Groups delegate responsibility over issues relating to committees to the Group's committee coordinator. If EP Groups influence the way MEPs carry out legislative activity, coordinators are likely to play a central role in this, especially in the context of day-to-day issues. It is not clear whether respondents understand 'the Group leadership' as including the Group's coordinators, or whether the term is understood as referring exclusively to the Group's Bureau. It would be possible to develop understanding of the nature of the MEP–EP Group relationship further if data were available that differentiated between the regularity of contact with the Group leadership, defined as the Group's Bureau, and with the Group's committee coordinators.

Voting instructions and partisan discipline

As the discussion of Hix et al.'s (2007) study in Chapter 1 outlined, one manifestation of the ability that partisan actors are claimed to have to influence the behaviour of MEPs is the high levels of voting cohesion at parliamentary divisions. The survey data provides no evidence in relation to the use of threats or rewards to provide MEPs with an incentive to follow voting instructions. However, it does provide data on the regularity with which various Groups issue MEPs with 'voting recommendations', the second of four preconditions of enforcing a disciplined whipping system. This data also provides some indication of how much attention parties and EP Groups pay to

Table 12: The frequency of contact with various groups

	Party members	Members of party executive	EP Group leaders	National government officials
At least once a week (%)	51.1	28.0	51.9	14.2
At least once a month (%)	40.0	48.7	33.3	33.2
At least every three months (%)	5.8	15.0	11.1	28.4
At least once a year (%)	1.1	4.7	1.1	11.6
Less often (%)	1.6	2.1	1.6	8.4
No contact (%)	0.5	1.6	1.1	4.2
N	190	193	189	190

Q4.5 'How frequently are you in contact with the following groups, people or institutions?' *Options: At least once a week / At least once a month / At least every three months / At least once a year / Less often / No contact* ([1]Non-attached MEPs are excluded from the analysis)

the work of their MEPs and to politics within the EP. Parties who do not view the EP as an institution in which their interests can be advanced are unlikely to issue voting guidance. Similarly, parties which do not keep abreast of developments are unlikely to feel that they have much to gain from mandating their MEPs.

Evidence of parties failing to provide voting instructions would suggest that party discipline is not the cause of the high levels of voting coherence observed, and would raise questions regarding claims made to this effect (Hix, 2002; Hix et al., 2007). However, indications that parties refrain from issuing voting instructions does not necessarily serve as evidence that they do not pay attention to the work of their MEPs, or maintain a close relationship with them.

Respondents were asked to indicate on a 1–5 scale (with 1 representing 'never' and 5 representing 'on almost every vote') how often they receive recommendations from various organizations, and the results are reported in Table 13. The data demonstrates that while MEPs seldom receive voting recommendations from their national party leaderships (mean = 2.20), they regularly receive such guidance from the national party delegation in the EP (mean = 3.63).[25] EP Groups issue voting recommendations more regularly than any other type of actor (mean = 4.2). Three – quarters of respondents (75.5%) gave the EP Group a value higher than 3, compared with 59.4% with reference to the national party delegation, and 11.9% in the case of the national party leadership. Less than a third of MEPs (31.8%) noted that they receive voting instructions from within their national party delegation ahead of virtually every division, although 81.8% of MEPs receive guidance from the delegation on a relatively regular basis, offering a response with a value of 3 or higher. When asked about voting instructions offered directly by the national party leadership, the majority of respondents (67.9%) offered a value of 2 or lower, while only 11.9% offered a response with a value of 4 or higher.

These findings demonstrate that the leaders of some domestic parties provide instructions as part of attempts to influence the voting behaviour of their MEPs. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that few domestic party leaders do so regularly. Further research is necessary to explore the possibility that national party leaderships issue voting instructions through the leadership of the national delegation within the EP rather than directly. The survey data does not provide a means of undertaking this task.

Table 13: The regularity with which MEPs receive voting instructions from various groups

Regularity	National party leadership (%)	National party delegation of MEPs (%)	EP Group leadership (%)[26]
1	27.46	9.90	3.7
2	40.41	8.33	7.4
3	20.21	22.40	13.3
4	8.81	27.60	20.7
5	3.11	31.77	54.8
Mean	2.20	3.63	4.2
Mode	2	5	5
N	193	192	193

Q5.1 'How often do you receive recommendations on which way to vote from the following parties or groups?' *Options: 1 (Never) / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (On almost every vote)*

While an appreciable number of MEPs receive instructions from their domestic party delegations and from their EP Groups, it is surprising that voting instructions are not provided on a more regular basis. It has been demonstrated that MEPs from national political parties with at least three seats in the EP vote with their national party colleagues at 95.48% of roll call divisions, and with their EP Group colleagues in 90.70% of instances (Hix et al., 2007: 137). If the survey data is accurate, a potential explanation for the discrepancy between the degree of congruence and the prevalence of issuing voting instructions is that domestic parties and EP Groups issue voting instructions for roll call divisions, but not for all votes taken by other means. In truth, it appears likely that the data relating to the regularity with which EP Groups issue voting instructions suffers at least somewhat from measurement error. The interview-based evidence presented in subsequent chapters demonstrates that EP Groups provide voting instructions at virtually all divisions.

Evidence that domestic leaders and domestic party delegations provide MEPs with voting recommendations less often than EP Groups does not conflict with Hix et al.'s finding that domestic party cohesion is higher than Group cohesion (Hix et al., 2007: 137). It may be the case that MEPs tend to follow the guidance issued by their Groups in the absence of instructions from their domestic party leaders or their delegation in the EP, but vote with their domestic party colleagues where differences emerge. However, it is not possible to use the survey data to examine this issue further.

The data suggests that there is little variation between EP Groups in terms of the regularity with which they provide voting recommendations, with the clear exception of the EFD Group (Table 14). The mean values of responses to the survey item relating to the regularity of voting instructions for all other Groups are above 4, and this indicates that MEPs receive guidance in preparation for the overwhelming majority of divisions. In contrast, it appears that MEPs affiliated with the EFD receive voting guidance at only half of EP divisions (mean = 2.60). This discrepancy is explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters. However, a potential explanation for this discrepancy includes the fact that as the EFD was formed only a year before the survey was administered, the Group may not have been able to develop a system for issuing voting recommendations at this time. In addition, the Euroscepticism shared by members of the EFD Group may not be a natural catalyst for close transnational cooperation. The issue of whether there are statistically significant differences between Groups in the regularity with which they issue voting instructions is examined later in this chapter as a means of testing Hypothesis 13.

Table 14: The regularity of voting instructions from EP Group leadership

Group	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	***N***
EPP	4.32	1.10	66
S&D	4.15	1.12	53
ALDE	4.23	1.12	31
Greens	4.07	0.80	15
ECR	4.50	0.76	8
GUE/NGL	4.40	0.89	5
EFD	2.60	1.43	10

Mean value of responses to the question (Q5.1) ‘How often do you receive recommendations on which way to vote from the following parties or groups?’ 1 = Never, 5 = On almost every vote

It is worth emphasising again that it is not immediately clear from these data whether the practice of mandating MEPs affects the voting behaviour of MEPs. However, it is clear that other than in the case of the EFD, EP Groups regularly communicate their preferences to MEPs, fulfilling one of the preconditions for systematically influencing the behaviour of MEPs.

Despite the fact that the survey does not contain data directly relating to whether domestic political parties and EP Groups attempt to enforce discipline, it is possible to get some sense of the dynamics operating within EP Groups. One survey

item deals specifically with the issue of whether MEPs believe that it is legitimate for Group leaders to use disciplinary measures such as 'the denial of particular parliamentary posts' in their pursuit of Group unity. By indicating whether MEPs believe that such measures are legitimate, it is possible to gauge whether it is feasible for EP Groups to take such steps (Table 15). If a large percentage of MEPs do not believe that it is legitimate, it is unlikely that Groups would employ such measures. Doing so may give rise to a situation where disgruntled MEPs would leave their Groups, thereby substantially weakening those Groups.

Nearly half (45.5%) of respondents do not believe that the use of disciplinary measures by EP Group leaders is legitimate, while around a quarter (21.9%) do not hold clear views on the issue. Almost a third of MEPs (32.6%) believe that such measures are appropriate, and this indicates that views are divided on this issue. However, as only a minority of MEPs show a clear preference for Groups to employ disciplinary measures in their search for unity, it is difficult to believe that Groups would be able to enforce discipline strictly over the long term.

Table 15: Views on the legitimacy of EP Group leaders enforcing discipline[27]

Agree completely (%)	8.3
Agree (%)	24.3
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	21.9
Disagree (%)	32.5
Disagree completely (%)	13.0
N	169

Q5.4.6 'The leader of a European political group should, as far as possible, ensure the unity of that European political group. In doing so the use of far reaching means, such as the denial of particular parliamentary posts (e.g. seats on committees), is legitimate.'

Table 16: Views on the degree of EP Group unity[28]

Should be much more unified (%)	8.5
Should be a little more unified (%)	26.7
The degree of unity is about right (%)	59.1
The degree of unity should be eased (%)	1.7
The degree of unity should be substantially reduced (%)	0.6
Don't know (%)	3.4
N	176

Q5.5 'Very generally, what is your opinion on the unity of your European political group?'

Having identified that there is little support for the principle of Group leaders actively enforcing discipline, the data also makes it possible to examine whether MEPs believe that the degree to which Groups enforce discipline in practice is appropriate (Table 16). Respondents were asked whether they believe that the degree of Group unity is satisfactory. Those indicating that the 'degree of unity is about right' or that the Group should be more unified suggest that their Group does not enforce discipline in an overly strict manner. Those who desire greater unity possess sufficient political awareness to understand that this would entail enforcing Group discipline more strictly. Conversely, those indicating that the degree of unity should be eased suggest that they feel constrained in their ability to act independently of the Group leadership. A clear majority (59.1%) indicated that the degree of unity is appropriate, with a further 35.2% of respondents suggesting that steps should be taken to ensure a greater degree of Group unity. Very few respondents (2.3%) believe that Group unity should be eased. Despite the high degree of Group cohesiveness that Hix et al. identify (2007: 137), the lack of resentment at the role played by EP Groups in their attempts to ensure unity suggests that Groups do not enforce discipline strictly. This issue receives further attention in subsequent chapters.

A summary

This section has examined whether EP Groups and domestic political parties from across the EU fulfil some of the preconditions for influencing the way MEPs carry out their work as representatives. The investigation of whether domestic party leaders control candidate selection procedures found that in many cases their role is either subordinate or complementary to those of other sections within the party, such as regional leaders and ordinary members. This finding, together with the considerable variation between cases, moderately diminishes the plausibility of the idea that party leaders from across the EU are able to use their control over the reselection prospects of incumbents to systematically control their behaviour.

Nevertheless, the analysis has found evidence that some domestic parties and EP Groups have preferences regarding the behaviour of MEPs and communicate these to their MEPs. As a result, these partisan actors fulfil the first two preconditions of influence. Few cases were identified where parties and Groups do not maintain regular contact with MEPs and provide them with voting recommendations. The task of identifying whether any factors are systematically linked to the propensity of

partisan organizations to carry out these activities is undertaken in the following section.

Domestic Parties and the Practice of Issuing Voting Recommendations

Despite the fact that the survey data is only able to shed light on whether parties and Groups fulfil a limited number of the preconditions of influence, by employing multivariate analysis it is possible to examine two issues that are of great interest. The first issue is whether certain types of domestic parties have a greater propensity for issuing voting recommendations (either directly or through the leadership of the delegation in the EP) than others.[29] Evidence to this effect would suggest that parties sharing these characteristics have a greater desire and potential to influence the voting behaviour of their MEPs, although it does not conclusively demonstrate that they do enjoy greater success in influencing the behaviour of MEPs. Such findings would not serve as a measure of the extent to which parties attempt to influence other aspects of how MEPs approach their roles as representatives, or the extent to which they succeed in their efforts. The second issue of interest is whether the factors highlighted in the previous chapter are systematically linked to the importance which MEPs attribute to partisan representation. This issue is investigated in the next section.

Two sets of seven OLS regression models are formed and these take as their dependent variable the regularity with which domestic party leaders issue voting instructions (Tables 17a and 17b) and the regularity with which the leadership of the national delegation in the EP issue voting instructions (Tables 18a and 18b). The independent variables are specified in the same way across both sets of seven models. The independent variables are selected on the basis of the discussion in Chapter 2, and their inclusion in the models provide a means of testing eight of the hypotheses presented in that chapter. The first model considers factors relating to the MEP's background, namely gender (coded '1' for male MEPs, and '2' for female MEPs), the number of years since they were first elected to the EP,[30] and whether they have held a position in their national parliament, or in their national government (both coded 1 = 'yes', 2 = 'no'). These variables are included in all subsequent models to control for individual-level non-ideological sources of variation.

The second model examines various aspects of the MEP's and of the party's political ideology. Measures of the position of the party and of the MEP on the left–right ideology scale and on the European integration scale (1–10) are included, in

their original form, as well as in a form folded around the midpoint of the scale.[31] The latter measures make it possible to identify whether the extremity of the views of the party or of the MEP is linked to the dependent variable. The measure of the party's position on the left–right ideology scale in the folded form provides a means of testing Hypotheses 9a and 9b. While Hypothesis 9a expects centrist parties to be more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs than less centrist parties, this expectation is reversed in Hypothesis 9b. The measure of the party's position on the European integration scale makes it possible to test Hypothesis 11, which expects integrationist parties to be more likely to attempt to influence the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs than Eurosceptic parties.

The third model includes a variable indicating whether the MEP was elected in a country that was an EU Member State before the 2004 enlargement (coded as 1 = 'old Member State', 2 = 'new Member State'), dummy variables for MEPs from countries operating open and order lists systems for EP elections (the use of a closed list system serves as the reference category), and a variable indicating the number of seats the respondent's party won in 2009.[32] The measures relating to the type of electoral system used for EP elections provide a means of testing Hypothesis 1, which expects parties from countries operating more closed electoral systems to be more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs than parties from countries operating more open electoral systems. Including a variable that indicates the number of seats won by the respondent's party in 2009 makes it possible to test Hypothesis 5, which posits that parties with large delegations of MEPs are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs than domestic parties with small delegations of MEPs.

Model 4 includes two variables relating to the MEP's status and level of experience. These take the form of two dummy variables which indicate whether the respondent has experience of serving as the leader of their national party's delegation in the EP and of holding any of a range of senior positions within the EP, namely EP Group Coordinator, EP Group President, committee chair or vice-chair, EP Vice-President or Quaestor, or EP President (coded as 1 = 'yes', 2 = 'no').[33] These variables provide a means of testing Hypothesis 14, which posits that parties are more likely to attempt to influence MEPs who have less political experience than MEPs who have more political experience.

Model 5 examines the importance of national party officials, regional and local officials, and individual party members in the selection of candidates, with each variable measured on a 1–5 scale. These measures serve as a means of testing Hypothesis 2, which expects parties operating centralised candidate selection systems to be more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs than parties operating decentralised candidate selection systems.

Model 6 includes a series of country dummy variables (0 = 'not from country', 1 = 'from country'), with Belgium selected as the reference category. Reflecting the claim that MEPs act as the agents of their EP Groups as well as of their domestic parties (Hix, 2002; Hix et al., 2007), Model 7 includes a series of dummy variables for EP Group affiliation and the EPP is used as the reference category. Following customary practice, the significance threshold of 0.05 is used. However, the discussion draws attention to potentially informative findings that emerge in instances where independent variables attain significance at the $p < .10$ level.

The investigation begins by examining whether factors associated with the party–MEP relationship are linked to the regularity with which the leadership of domestic political parties issue voting instructions. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 1–5 scale, with 1 denoting 'never' and 5 'on almost every vote', how often they 'receive recommendations on which way to vote from' their 'national party leadership' and from their 'national party delegation of MEPs'. The two measures are taken as separate dependent variables for each set of OLS regression models. Since the values of the dependent variables run on a 1–5 scale, the data can be interpreted as continuous or categorical, and the use of OLS regression reflects the decision to treat it as continuous data. The main advantage of this approach is that the results are clearer and easier to interpret.[34] As the regression analysis is run using the 'enter' method, cases with missing data for any variable were not included in the model, and as a result, the number of cases in many of the OLS models featuring in this section is around 135. Considering that there were 736 MEPs when the survey was conducted, the sample size is relatively small.

The dependent variable taken for the first set of seven OLS regression models is the regularity with which domestic party leaderships issue voting recommendations (Tables 17a and 17b). None of the variables included in models 1, 2, 4, or 5 attain statistical significance at the $p < .05$ level. Model 3 indicates that the leaderships of parties operating under open electoral systems ($b = .56$, $p < .05$) are more likely to

Table 17a: OLS regression models 1–4 of the regularity with which domestic party leaderships issue voting instructions

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
Variables	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)
Gender	-0.22 (0.17)	-0.20 (0.18)	-0.22 (0.17)	-0.17 (0.19)
Years since first elected as MEP	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Experience as national MP	0.31 (0.21)	0.33 (0.23)	0.41 (0.22)*	0.35 (0.22)
Experience of national government	-0.06 (0.23)	-0.01 (0.24)	-0.13 (0.24)	0.18 (0.27)
MEP left–right stance		0.03 (0.10)		
MEP left–right stance (folded)		-0.10 (0.11)		
National party left–right stance		-0.02 (0.11)		
National party left–right (folded)		0.08 (0.12)		
MEP integration stance		-0.07 (0.08)		
MEP integration stance (folded)		-0.12 (0.10)		
National party integration stance		0.02 (0.09)		
National party integration stance (folded)		0.03 (0.11)		
Old–New Member States			-0.02 (0.21)	
Open list			0.56 (0.22)**	
Ordered list			0.37 (0.24)	
Number of MEPs elected from the party in 2009			0.01 (0.01)	
Experience as national delegation leader				-0.15 (0.25)
Experience of holding a position of seniority within chamber				0.10 (0.20)
(Constant)	2.19 (0.45)	2.60 (0.75)	1.80 (0.56)	1.70 (0.64)
Adjusted R^2	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.01
N	132	126	132	123

* p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p <.01, **** p < .001. The use of a closed list system serves as the reference category in Model 3.

Table 17b: OLS regression models 5–7 of the regularity with which domestic party leaderships issue voting instructions

	Model 5	**Model 6**	**Model 7**
Variables	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)
Gender	-0.25 (0.17)	-0.20 (0.18)	-0.28 (0.18)
Years since first elected as MEP	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Experience as national MP	0.34 (0.21)	0.41 (0.24)*	0.36 (0.21)*
Experience of national government	0.01 (0.24)	0.02 (0.26)	0.02 (0.24)
Importance of national party officials in candidate selection	0.11 (0.09)		
Importance of regional/local party officials in candidate selection	0.00 (0.09)		
Importance of individual party members in candidate selection	-0.09 (0.08)		
Bulgaria		0.78 (0.57)	
The Czech Republic		-0.21 (0.58)	
Denmark		-0.13 (0.58)	
Germany		-0.17 (0.52)	
Estonia		1.28 (1.05)	
Ireland		0.85 (0.56)	
Greece		-1.33 (1.02)	
Spain		0.33 (0.53)	
France		-0.25 (0.56)	
Italy		0.50 (0.48)	
Cyprus		2.69 (1.03)**	
Latvia		0.20 (0.79)	
Lithuania		-0.59 (0.78)	
Luxembourg		(dropped)	
Hungary		0.87 (1.03)	
Malta		1.71 (1.02)*	
Netherlands		0.41 (0.64)	

Austria		0.43 (0.70)	
Poland		-0.66 (0.60)	
Portugal		0.61 (0.62)	
Romania		-0.19 (0.53)	
Slovenia		-0.20 (0.62)	
Slovakia		0.50 (0.69)	
Finland		0.14 (0.64)	
Sweden		-0.36 (0.54)	
UK		-0.24 (0.56)	
S&D			-0.26 (0.21)
ALDE			-0.16 (0.27)
Greens/EFA			-0.88 (0.32)***
ECR			-0.46 (0.46)
GUE/NGL			0.28 (0.51)
EFD			-0.19 (0.41)
Non-attached			-0.57 (0.59)
(Constant)	1.94 (0.65)	1.69 (0.62)	2.26 (0.47)
Adjusted R^2	0.02	0.11	0.03
N	132	132	132

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, **** $p < .001$. Belgium is used as the reference category for the country dummy variables in Model 6 and the EPP is used as the reference category for the EP Group dummy variables in Model 7.

issue voting instructions than those operating under a closed list system. The difference of half a point on a scale from 1–5 is small. Model 6 indicates that parties from one of the smallest EU Member States, Cyprus ($b = 2.69$, $p < .05$), are considerably more likely to issue voting instructions than those from Belgium. Model 7 demonstrates that MEPs affiliated with the Greens/EFA ($b = -.88$, $p < .01$) tend to receive instructions from their domestic party leadership less often than MEPs from the EPP.

The first two of these three findings run contrary to expectations. In contrast to the evidence presented above, Hypothesis 1 expects the leadership of parties operating under open-list systems to issue voting instructions less often than those of parties operating under other systems. Several considerations presented in Chapter 2 suggest that parties from small Member States, such as Cyprus, have less of an incentive to mandate their MEPs. The costs of monitoring activity within the EP is disproportionally high for parties whose organizations are almost inevitably smaller than those from larger countries, while the degree of influence which they can hope to gain within the EP by ensuring that their delegations vote cohesively is more limited. It may be the case that reasons that are specific to the political culture of Cyprus explain the greater propensity of its parties to issue voting instructions. A more likely explanation is that a spurious finding has emerged from an analysis which features only one Cypriot response. The discussion in Chapter 2 provides no explanation for the finding that MEPs affiliated to the Greens/EFA receive voting instructions from their national party leaders less regularly than MEPs affiliated to the EPP. However, the finding is not surprising, as the Greens/EFA is the most cohesive Group in the EP (votewatch.eu, accessed 22/10/13).

The regularity with which the leaderships of national party delegations in the EP issue voting recommendations is taken as the dependent variable of the second set of seven models (Tables 18a and 18b). None of the variables included in models 1–5 predict variation in the regularity of issuing voting guidance. Model 6 demonstrates that the leadership of party delegations from several countries are more likely to issue voting recommendations than those from Belgium, namely those from Denmark ($b = 2.77$, $p < .01$), Germany ($b = 1.47$, $p < .05$), Ireland ($b = 1.74$, $p < .01$), France ($b = 2.22$, $p < .01$), Italy ($b = 1.67$, $p < .01$), Malta ($b = 2.92$, $p < .05$), The Netherlands ($b = 1.67$, $p < .05$), and the UK ($b = 2.65$, $p < .01$). While the majority of these countries were EU members before the 2004 enlargement, it is worth noting that the variable

Table 18a: OLS regression models 1–4 of the regularity with which the leadership of national EP delegations issue voting recommendations

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Variables	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)
Gender	-0.22 (0.22)	-0.23 (0.23)	-0.27 (0.22)	-0.29 (0.24)
Years since first elected as MEP	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Experience as national MP	-0.03 (0.27)	0.05 (0.29)	-0.08 (0.28)	-0.04 (0.29)
Experience of national government	0.09 (0.30)	-0.04 (0.31)	-0.09 (0.30)	-0.01 (0.35)
MEP left–right stance		-0.12 (0.13)		
MEP left–right stance (folded)		0.10 (0.14)		
National party left–right stance		0.13 (0.14)		
National party left–right (folded)		0.05 (0.15)		
MEP integration stance		0.05 (0.10)		
MEP integration stance (folded)		0.02 (0.12)		
National party integration stance		-0.18 (0.11)		
National party integration stance (folded)		0.01 (0.14)		
Old/New Member States			0.18 (0.26)	
Open list			0.45 (0.28)	
Ordered list			-0.05 (0.31)	
Number of MEPs elected from the party in 2009			0.02 (0.01)	
Experience as national delegation leader				0.31 (0.33)
Experience of holding a position of seniority within chamber				-0.08 (0.26)
(Constant)	3.77 (0.57)	4.20 (0.95)	3.69 (0.72)	3.61 (0.82)
Adjusted R^2	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	-0.03
N	132	126	132	123

* p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p <.01, **** p < .001. The use of a closed list system serves as the reference category in Model 3.

Table 18b: OLS regression models 5–7 of the regularity with which the leadership of national EP delegations issue voting recommendations

	Model 5	**Model 6**	**Model 7**
Variables	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)
Gender	-0.20 (0.22)	-0.20 (0.24)	-0.22 (0.21)
Years since first elected as MEP	0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Experience as national MP	-0.12 (0.27)	-0.39 (0.31)	-0.05 (0.24)
Experience of national government	0.03 (0.30)	-0.20 (0.33)	0.27 (0.27)
Importance of national party officials in candidate selection	-0.21 (0.11)*		
Importance of regional/local party officials in candidate selection	0.08 (0.11)		
Importance of individual party members in candidate selection	0.01 (0.10)		
Bulgaria		0.96 (0.73)	
The Czech Republic		0.96 (0.75)	
Denmark		2.77 (0.75)****	
Germany		1.47 (0.67)**	
Estonia		0.63 (1.35)	
Ireland		1.74 (0.72)**	
Greece		1.82 (1.32)	
Spain		0.77 (0.69)	
France		2.22 (0.72)***	
Italy		1.67 (0.62)***	
Cyprus		2.62 (1.33)*	
Latvia		0.33 (1.01)	
Lithuania		1.22 (1.01)	
Luxembourg		(dropped)	
Hungary		1.02 (1.33)	
Malta		2.92 (1.32)**	

Netherlands		1.67 (0.82)**	
Austria		0.42 (0.90)	
Poland		1.40 (0.77)*	
Portugal		1.10 (0.80)	
Romania		0.44 (0.69)	
Slovenia		0.95 (0.80)	
Slovakia		1.46 (0.89)	
Finland		1.08 (0.82)	
Sweden		1.28 (0.70)*	
UK		2.65 (0.72)****	
S&D			0.05 (0.25)
ALDE			-0.05 (0.31)
Greens/EFA			-1.25 (0.37)***
ECR			1.05 (0.54)*
GUE/NGL			0.76 (0.59)
EFD			0.85 (0.47)*
Non-attached			-2.52 (0.68)****
(Constant)	4.49 (0.84)	3.57 (0.80)	3.66 (0.54)
Adjusted R^2	-0.01	0.07	0.19
N	132	132	132

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, **** $p < .001$. Belgium is used as the reference category for the country dummy variables in Model 6 and the EPP is used as the reference category for the EP Group dummy variables in Model 7.

differentiates between MEPs from countries that gained membership before 2004 and since 2004 does not attain significance at the $p < .05$ level in any of the models. Party delegations affiliated to the Greens/EFA are less likely than others to issue voting instructions ($b = -1.25$, $p < .01$) than the EPP, reflecting the findings regarding the regularity with which the national party leadership issues voting instructions.

Non-attached MEPs ($b = -2.52$, $p < .001$) are far less likely to receive guidance from their national delegations compared with MEPs affiliated to the EPP. This may be explained by the fact that many non-attached MEPs have few, if any, party colleagues, and that the survey did not provide a means of indicating that the respondent is not part of a national delegation. While the dummy variable for affiliation to the ECR Group ($b = 1.05$, $p = .053$) very narrowly failed to attain significance at the $p < .05$ threshold, the finding strongly suggests that the national delegations affiliated to this Group are more likely to issue voting recommendations than those affiliated to the EPP. This propensity to act may be explained by the fact that there are many issues on which the affiliated national delegations disagree, especially in the area of social policy. Chapter 5, which features the UK case study, discusses this issue further.

Thus far, very few factors have been identified as predicting the regularity with which these two types of partisan actors issue voting instructions, and there is little support for any of the hypotheses tested. The only variable that explains any appreciable level of variation is the parties' country of origin. Most of the factors which are expected to be linked with the regularity with which voting instructions are issued do not attain statistical significance at the designated level. These findings do not conclusively demonstrate that there is no systematic link between these factors and the regularity with which these party actors issue voting instructions, only that these data are unable to demonstrate a link. It is entirely conceivable that the ability of the analysis to identify linkages has been hindered by the relatively small number of cases. Bearing in mind the concerns raised at the chapter's outset regarding measurement validity, it is also possible that these linkages are obscured by measurement error in the data.

However, the possibility remains that the null hypothesis is correct, and that there is no variation in the degree to which partisan actors seek and achieve influence on MEPs. Due to the concerns raised regarding the robustness of the analyses, examination of other data sources is necessary before it is possible to confidently state

that the null hypothesis is correct. For this reason, trends relating to the tendency of parties to issue voting instructions, and how MEPs respond to this guidance, are two issues that are investigated further in subsequent chapters.

Explaining Variation in the Focus of Representation

By forming multivariate regression models, it is possible to identify whether the factors highlighted in the previous chapter are systematically linked to the importance that MEPs attribute to partisan representation. MEPs who are heavily mandated by their domestic parties or EP Groups are likely to acknowledge that representing one or both of these organizations is an important feature of how they approach representation. Measures of the importance that MEPs attach to partisan representation may therefore be able to provide some indication of the degree of influence that partisan actors have on MEPs. However, as these measures do not serve as proxy measures of the degree of influence the partisan actors exercise on MEPs they do not provide a means of testing the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2.

Descriptive data reported earlier in the chapter (Table 1) indicated that MEPs accord a high level of importance to representing many groups, including citizens who live in their region and in their Member State more generally, their national parties, party voters, and their EP Groups. Two sets of OLS regression models were formed according to the specification of the seven models reported in Tables 17a and 17b. A further model is included to examine whether a relationship exists between the dependent variables and the regularity with which MEPs receive voting recommendations from various partisan actors.

The first series of eight models seeks to identify factors that predict variation in the level of importance that MEPs attribute to domestic 'party representation' (Tables 19a and 19b). Other than the variables relating to the country of origin, only two attain significance at the $p < .05$ threshold. Model 3 establishes that MEPs operating under ordered-list electoral systems ($b = .72$, $p < .001$) are more likely to attribute a great deal of importance to party representation than those operating under closed lists. This is a noteworthy finding that runs contrary to the expectation presented with Hypothesis 1 that it is MEPs elected under closed-list systems that are required to place the greatest emphasis on domestic party representation. With a predicted value of 0.72 higher than other MEPs on a 1–5 scale, the difference between MEPs elected under ordered-list and MEPs elected under other electoral systems is

Table 19a: OLS regressions models 1–4 of the importance attributed to representing the national party

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Variables	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)
Gender	-.22 (.18)	-.25 (.20)	-.20 (.18)	-.09 (.19)
Years since first elected as MEP	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
Experience as national MP	.09 (.22)	.27 (.24)	.22 (.23)	.06 (.23)
Experience of national government	.36 (.25)	.41 (.26)	.35 (.25)	.47 (.29)*
MEP left–right stance		-.04 (.11)		
MEP left–right stance (folded)		.21 (.12)*		
National party left–right stance		.09 (.12)		
National party left–right (folded)		-.05 (.13)		
MEP integration stance		-.10 (.09)		
MEP integration stance (folded)		-.06 (.10)		
National party integration stance		.07 (.10)		
National party integration stance (folded)		.14 (-.11)		
Old–New Member States			.14 (.22)	
Open lists			.28 (.23)	
Ordered lists			.72 (.26)***	
Number of MEPs elected from the party in 2009			.01 (.01)	
Experience as national delegation leader				-.22 (.26)
Experience of holding a position of seniority within chamber				.09 (.21)
(Constant)	3.72 (.47)	2.91 (.80)	2.87 (.58)	3.63 (.68)
Adjusted R^2	.03	.07	.06	.01
N	139	126	139	129

* p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p <.01, **** p < .001. The use of a closed list system serves as the reference category in Model 3.

Table 19b: OLS regressions models 5–8 of the importance attributed to representing the national party

	Model 5	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**
Variables	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)
Gender	-0.20 (0.18)	-0.08 (0.19)	-0.19 (0.19)	-0.20 (0.19)
Years since first elected as MEP	-0.03 (0.02)*	-0.04 (0.02)*	-0.04 (0.02)*	-0.03 (0.02)
Experience as national MP	0.12 (0.22)	0.13 (0.26)	0.08 (0.23)	-0.01 (0.23)
Experience of national government	0.25 (0.25)	0.30 (0.28)	0.41 (0.26)	0.41 (0.26)
Importance of national party officials in candidate selection	-0.06 (0.09)			
Importance of regional/local party officials in candidate selection	0.07 (0.09)			
Importance of individual party members in candidate selection	0.21 (0.08)***			
Bulgaria		-0.22 (0.59)		
The Czech Republic		-1.15 (0.61)*		
Denmark		0.28 (0.60)		
Germany		-0.88 (0.52)*		
Estonia		0.28 (1.12)		
Ireland		-0.53 (0.58)		
Greece		0.08 (1.09)		
Spain		-0.18 (0.55)		
France		-1.18 (0.55)**		
Italy		-0.59 (0.49)		
Cyprus		0.38 (1.11)		
Latvia		0.54 (0.84)		
Lithuania		-0.19 (0.83)		
Luxembourg		-1.92 (1.09)*		

Hungary		0.15 (1.11)		
Malta		-1.75 (1.09)		
Netherlands		-0.18 (0.66)		
Austria		-1.00 (0.73)		
Poland		-0.74 (0.62)		
Portugal		-1.26 (0.65)*		
Romania		-1.41 (0.54)***		
Slovenia		-0.29 (0.65)		
Slovakia		-0.28 (0.72)		
Finland		-1.61 (0.66)**		
Sweden		-0.09 (0.56)		
UK		-0.21 (0.58)		
S&D			-0.14 (0.23)	
ALDE			0.20 (0.29)	
Greens/EFA			-0.16 (0.34)	
ECR			-0.10 (0.51)	
GUE/NGL			-0.04 (0.50)	
EFD			0.56 (0.45)	
Non-attached			-0.32 (0.64)	
Voting recommendations: party leadership				0.18 (0.10)*
Voting recommendations: national delegation				0.00 (0.08)
Voting recommendations: EP Group leadership				-0.05 (0.09)
(Constant)	3.11 (0.68)	4.18 (0.65)	3.65 (0.51)	3.62 (0.66)
Adjusted R^2	0.06	0.12	0.00	0.04
N	139	139	139	139

* p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p <.01, **** p < .001. Belgium is used as the reference category for the country dummy variables in Model 6 and the EPP is used as the reference category for the EP Group dummy variables in Model 7.

appreciable. As MEPs from closed-list systems are more dependent on their parties for their election than those elected via ordered-list, it is difficult to provide a theoretically compelling explanation for the tendency of MEPs operating under ordered lists to attach a greater level of importance to party representation. Furthermore, there is no indication that MEPs from countries operating open-list systems, and who may therefore feel that they have a personal mandate, think that party representation is less important than MEPs from other countries.

A notable and slightly unexpected finding emerging from Model 5 is that MEPs from parties in which ordinary members play an important role in candidate selection are more likely to value party representation ($b = .24$, $p < .05$). Chapter 2 argues that party leaders have a greater potential for influencing MEPs than party members. Therefore, as Hypothesis 2 posits, the importance of the role played by central party officials in candidate selection is expected to be more closely linked to attitudes towards party representation than the importance of the role played by ordinary party members.

Model 6 provides evidence that there is considerable country-level variation in the attitudes of MEPs towards the importance of party representation. MEPs from Finland ($b = -1.61$, $p < .05$), Romania ($b = -1.41$, $p < .001$), and France ($b = -1.18$, $p < .05$) are considerably less likely to accord a high level of importance to party representation than their Belgian colleagues. There appears to be no simple explanation for this trend, as these three countries differ in many ways.

A further eight models were formed to test for predictors of variation in the importance accorded to EP Group representation, with all non-attached MEPs excluded from the analysis (Tables 20a and 20b). Again, few factors are identified as predicting the level of importance attached to representing the EP Group, and none of these factors are relevant to the discussion of the determinants of partisan influence that features in Chapter 2.

Model 2 indicates that MEPs from national parties that are positioned towards the right of the left–right ideological scale view Group representation as more important than MEPs from parties on the left ($b = .23$, $p < .05$). Each unit change to the right on the left–right ideology scale that runs from 1 to 10 represents a difference of a quarter point on the 1–5 scale used to measure the level of importance attributed to EP Group representation. The differences predicted between cases towards the

Table 20a: OLS regressions models 1–4 of the importance attributed to representing EP Groups

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Variables	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)
Gender	0.04 (0.18)	-0.01 (0.19)	0.04 (0.18)	0.13 (0.19)*
Years since first elected as MEP	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Experience as national MP	-0.09 (0.22)	0.11 (0.23)	-0.02 (0.24)	-0.12 (0.23)
Experience of national government	0.25 (0.25)	0.30 (0.25)	0.25 (0.25)	0.34 (0.29)
MEP left–right stance		-0.13 (0.11)		
MEP left–right stance (folded)		0.15 (0.11)		
National party left–right stance		0.23 (0.11)**		
National party left–right (folded)		0.00 (0.12)		
MEP integration stance		-0.07 (0.08)		
MEP integration stance (folded)		-0.12 (0.10)		
National party integration stance		0.12 (0.09)		
National party integration stance (folded)		0.04 (0.11)		
Old–New Member States			-0.27 (0.22)	
Open list			0.11 (0.23)	
Ordered list			0.32 (0.26)	
Number of MEPs elected from the party in 2009			0.02 (0.01)	
Experience as national delegation leader				-0.10 (0.21)
Experience of holding a position of seniority within chamber				0.17 (0.26)
(Constant)	3.73 (0.47)	2.36 (0.77)	3.77 (0.59)	3.29 (0.68)
Adjusted R^2	-0.01	0.05	0.00	-0.01
N	136	123	136	126

* p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p <.01, **** p < .001. The use of a closed list system serves as the reference category in Model 3.

Table 20b: OLS regressions models 5–8 of the importance attributed to representing EP Groups

	Model 5	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**
Variables	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)
Gender	0.03 (0.18)	0.10 (0.18)	-0.01 (0.19)	0.06 (0.20)
Years since first elected as MEP	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Experience as national MP	-0.10 (0.23)	0.11 (0.24)	-0.02 (0.22)	-0.15 (0.24)
Experience of national government	0.19 (0.25)	0.26 (0.26)	0.34 (0.25)	0.26 (0.26)
Importance of national party officials in candidate selection	-0.09 (0.09)			
Importance of regional/local party officials in candidate selection	0.18 (0.09)*			
Importance of individual party members in candidate selection	0.04 (0.08)			
Bulgaria		-0.45 (0.54)		
The Czech Republic		-2.63 (0.56)****		
Denmark		-0.56 (0.55)		
Germany		-1.29 (0.48)***		
Estonia		-0.05 (1.03)		
Ireland		-1.17 (0.53)**		
Greece		-0.06 (1.01)		
Spain		-0.51 (0.52)		
France		-1.06 (0.50)**		
Italy		-0.96 (0.45)**		
Cyprus		0.20 (1.02)		
Latvia		0.26 (0.77)		
Lithuania		-0.47 (0.76)		
Luxembourg		-2.06 (1.01)**		
Hungary		-1.16 (1.02)		
Malta		-2.02 (1.01)**		
Netherlands		-1.55 (0.61)**		

Austria		-1.09 (0.78)		
Poland		-0.43 (0.57)		
Portugal		-1.62 (0.60)***		
Romania		-0.88 (0.51)*		
Slovenia		-0.05 (0.60)		
Slovakia		-0.21 (0.67)		
Finland		-2.17 (0.61)****		
Sweden		-1.23 (0.52)**		
UK		-1.75 (0.53)***		
S&D			-0.23 (0.22)	
ALDE			0.11 (0.28)	
Greens/EFA			-0.41 (0.33)	
ECR			-0.93 (0.49)*	
GUE/NGL			-0.86 (0.49)*	
EFD			-0.32 (0.43)	
Voting recommendations: party leadership				0.14 (0.10)
Voting recommendations: national delegation				-0.02 (0.08)
Voting recommendations: EP Group leadership				0.06 (0.09)
(Constant)	3.46 (0.69)	4.22 (0.60)	3.72 (0.49)	3.27 (0.68)
Adjusted R^2	0.00	0.21	0.01	-0.01
N	136	136	136	132

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, **** $p < .001$. Belgium is used as the reference category for the country dummy variables in Model 6 and the EPP is used as the reference category for the EP Group dummy variables in Model 7.

extremes of the ideological scale are substantial. In practice, the level of variation between most MEPs is likely to be modest, as most are elected from centrist parties.

MEPs from a number of countries are statistically significantly less likely to value Group representation than their Belgian colleagues, namely those from the Czech Republic ($b = -2.63$, $p < .001$), Germany ($b = -1.29$, $p < .01$), Ireland ($b = -1.17$, $p < .05$), France ($b = -1.06$, $p < .05$), Italy ($b = -.96$, $p < .05$), Luxembourg ($b = -2.06$, $p < .05$), Malta ($b = -2.02$, $p < .05$), Netherlands ($b = -1.55$, $p < .05$), Portugal ($b = -1.62$, $p < .01$), Finland ($b = -2.17$, $p < .001$), Sweden ($b = -1.23$, $p < .05$), and the UK ($b = -1.75$, $p < .01$).

Two potentially interesting findings provided by Model 7 fail to attain significance at the $p < .05$ level, but do attain significance at the $p < .10$ level. MEPs affiliated to the ECR ($b = -.93$, $p = .06$) and GUE/NGL ($b = -.85$, $p = .08$) tend to accord a lower level of importance to Group representation than MEPs from the EPP. The coefficients denote that the distinction in both cases is close to a full point on a 1–5 scale, and this represents a considerable difference. This finding is not wholly unexpected, as it reflects the expectations set out in Hypothesis 13. Eurosceptic MEPs affiliated to the anti-federalist ECR Group are not likely to be as enthused about transnational cooperation as their more pro-integrationist colleagues. Interview evidence gathered as part of this research,[35] but not reported in the subsequent case study chapters, strongly suggests that GUE/NGL operates in a far looser manner than other Groups. This is reflected in the fact that the Group's level of cohesion is the lowest of all, other than the EFD (votewatch.eu, accessed 22/10/13). Model 8 provides no evidence to suggest that the regularity with which domestic party leaderships, the leadership of party delegations in the EP, or EP Groups issue voting instructions, is linked to the importance MEPs attach to representing their EP Groups.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed data from the 2010 EPRG MEP Survey to examine whether domestic parties and EP Groups influence how MEPs carry out representation. Specifically, the chapter set out to identify how MEPs relate to various groups whom they may wish to represent, how MEPs act when the interests of these various groups are in conflict, and whether domestic parties and EP Groups issue voting instructions. It also sought to ascertain whether any factors associated with the relationship between MEPs and these two actors are systematically linked to variation in the

degree to which voting instructions are issued, or to variation in the value that MEPs attribute to representing the two partisan actors.

The examination of the representational focus of MEPs did not yield evidence suggesting that partisan actors are able to compel MEPs to focus exclusively on partisan interests. Indeed, MEPs attach a great deal of importance to representing a number of groups, and believe that territorial representation is slightly more important than domestic partisan representation. They attribute even lower levels of importance to representing their EP Groups. Further, partisan actors do not appear to have extensive influence on the voting behaviour of MEPs. When the interests of various groups conflict, the overwhelming majority of MEPs claim that they are free to vote at parliamentary division on the basis of their own conception of the public interest. It remains unclear how strongly the interests of partisan organizations shape this conception.

The analysis of how MEPs spend their time indicated that MEPs carry out the full range of activities traditionally associated with political representatives, such as engaging in policy-making processes, undertaking media work, carrying out political work in their constituencies, and partaking in activities relating to their political parties. There are consequently few signs that MEPs are driven to focus primarily on activity that is related to their domestic parties or EP Groups. Nevertheless, this does not rule out the possibility that these two actors put pressure on MEPs to carry out these activities in a manner that promotes their partisan interests. Since most MEPs spend a great deal of time on domestic political work, and since the distance between Brussels and the MEP's Member State is great in most instances, EP Groups appear to have limited influence on the way that MEPs carry out the extraparliamentary aspects of their roles.

The findings indicate that most domestic political parties and EP Groups fulfil the preconditions of influencing MEPs on those issues regarding which the survey provides data. They communicate their legislative preferences in the form of voting recommendations, and they maintain regular contact with MEPs. The role played by many party leaders in selecting candidates was found to be either complementary or subordinate to those of other sections within the party, such as regional leaders and ordinary members. As a result, doubt was cast on the notion that the leaderships of political parties from across the EU are able to use their control over the reselection prospects of incumbents to systematically control their behaviour. Further, it was

established that EP Groups do not employ harsh disciplinary measures to ensure that MEPs vote according to their wishes. These findings challenge the partisan control thesis.

The chapter tested seven of the fifteen hypotheses presented in Chapter 2. It did so by examining the sources of variation in the degree to which domestic parties seek to influence the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs, and the sources of variation in the degree to which MEPs accord importance to representing both types of partisan actors. None of the seven hypotheses tested were supported, and very few factors are identified as predictors of the regularity with which domestic parties issue voting instructions, or of the degree to which MEPs accord importance to representing their domestic parties and EP Groups. The only variables identified as explaining any appreciable variation in the regularity with which domestic parties issue voting instructions is the parties' country of origin. Contrary to expectations, MEPs from countries operating ordered-list systems, as well as MEPs from parties where ordinary members play an important role in candidate selection, were identified as being slightly more likely to value party representation. No theoretically compelling explanation can be provided for either of these findings. The analysis relating to the importance of representing EP Groups was unable to identify any factors with predictive power that are relevant to the hypotheses. In summary, the expectations regarding factors that affect the degree to which domestic parties seek to influence MEPs, or the degree to which MEPs value representing both partisan actors, are not supported by the data. This is surprising, because the discussion presented in Chapter 2 suggests that these factors have a considerable effect on the degree to which partisan actors seek and achieve influence.

There are three potential reasons why the analyses did not identify the expected trends. The first reason concerns measurement error in the data. As noted at the outset of this chapter, it is highly likely that assistants responded on behalf of their MEPs in at least some cases, and where this occurred there is scope for measurement error on certain survey items. For example, the discrepancy between the accounts provided in this chapter relating to the regularity with which EP Groups issue voting instructions and those featured in later chapters suggests that this is one measure on which the data suffers from error. However, the data is considered to be accurate on most of the measures on which the analysis presented in this chapter is based.

The second reason concerns the low number of cases included in the multivariate analyses. In most models, only approximately 135 observations are considered, and the scarcity of cases limits the ability of the analysis to identify trends. Consequently, it is possible that expected linkages between variables remain unidentified, despite the fact that they exist in reality.

The third potential reason why expected linkages were not identified is because they do not exist, and because the statistical results simply confirm the null hypothesis. However, due to the low number of observations included in the analysis, it is not possible to confidently state that the null hypothesis is correct in instances where the results do not attain statistical significance at the $p < .05$ level.

Since it is not possible to specify which of these three explanations is correct, it is necessary to examine an alternative body of data. This task is undertaken in the subsequent chapters, where the findings of an analysis of qualitative data relating to MEPs from six domestic political parties and four EP Groups are reported. This analysis makes it possible to corroborate the findings of this chapter, and to examine whether further, previously unidentified, linkages exist. In addition, the analysis makes it possible to state with greater precision whether partisan actors influence the way MEPs approach their work, and if they do, to identify what enables them to do so.

[18] The survey did not offer a 'don't know' option.
[19] These findings differ slightly from those of Farrell and Scully (2007: 105) who, in examining the data collected by the same team in 2006, found that the representation of party voters was given the highest median value (4.35), followed by all the people in the Member State (4.28), and then constituents (4.16). However, the median value of the importance of representing the national party (4.03) suggested that it was fourth on the MEPs' list of priorities during the previous parliamentary term, reflecting the findings presented in this chapter relating to the current term.
[20] Non-attached MEPs are excluded from the analysis.
[21] Non-attached MEPs are excluded from the analysis.
[22] The first three response options are 'Most of my time each week', 'Some of my time each week', and 'Limited time, mostly on weekends'.
[23] Interview, 25/4/12.
[24] 62.9% in the case of national officials, 70.7% in the case of regional/local officials, and 69.3% in the case of party members.
[25] The fact that not all MEPs have colleagues from the same national party (and are therefore not members of a 'national party delegation') raises questions about the validity of this data. While some MEPs who are without a national delegation may not have responded to this question, others may have opted for 'never'. While the 'never' responses are relatively low (9.9%), the lack of a response option signifying that the MEP is the party's only representative creates the potential for some, if limited, measurement error.
[26] Non-attached MEPs are excluded from the analysis.
[27] Non-attached MEPs are excluded from the analysis.
[28] Non-attached MEPs are excluded from the analysis.
[29] This analysis is not repeated in the context of EP Groups due to the concerns outlined earlier in the chapter regarding the measurement validity of the data relating to the regularity with which EP Groups issue voting instructions.
[30] This does not necessarily equate to the number of years that a respondent has served as an MEP. The survey question asks respondents to indicate the year in which they were 'first elected to the EP' and it is possible that the respondent has not served continuously as an MEP since this date.
[31] In omitting these variables from the other models to control for ideological sources of variation the analyses presented in this section replicate that presented in a significant study in the field (Farrell and Scully, 2007). Further, omitting these variables from the other models makes for more parsimonious models and reduces the risk that statistically significant findings are obscured.
[32] In some cases parties joined forces at the 2009 EP elections, but the elected MEPs reverted to using their usual party labels during the parliamentary term. In such cases, the value used reflects the number of MEPs representing the party during the parliamentary term. The respondent from the Partitu di a Nazione Corsa (France), who was elected as part of the Europe Écologie ticket, is given a value of 1, while respondents from the Europe Écologie party are given a value of 13. The respondent from the Partido Nacionalists Vasco (Spain) is given a value of 1, as she was elected from the list of the Coalición pir Europa, who won two seats. (The other is a member of the Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya, who did not respond to the survey.) The CDU and CSU are treated as different parties, with respondents from the CDU given a value of 34 and the CSU a value of 8. In the case of Finland, one respondent is coded as 'independent' in the dataset. As it is clear that this MEP is Mitro Repo,

who is currently affiliated to the Social Democratic Party, the number of MEPs from the party is given a value of 2 in his case, together with his party colleague. The Finns Party and the Finnish Christian Democrats formed an electoral alliance and won a total of two seats. As a result, both parties are coded as having one MEP.

[33] The dummy variable indicates that the MEP has served in one of these position in cases where a positive response is given to any of the five survey items. However, only respondents who provide a negative response to all five survey items are coded as not having held a position of this type. The data is recorded as 'missing' unless responses are provided for all five survey items.

[34] Since the dependent variables are measured on an ordinal scale the most appropriate technique to use is ordinal logistic regression. However, the scope for forming the desired ordinal logistic regression models is limited due to the fact that the assumption of proportional odds is violated in several cases. The analysis carried out using OLS regression in this section was also carried out using ordinal logistic regression (other than in cases where the data violated the assumption of proportional odds) and these findings are reported in Appendix A. The fact that the ordinal logistic regression findings support those identified by the OLS regression analyses to a considerable extent indicates that it is appropriate to use OLS regression analysis as part of the investigation undertaken in this section.

[35] Interview with a GUE/NGL official, 20/6/13.

Chapter 4: Finland

This chapter addresses the study's four sub-questions by examining the partisan relations of MEPs affiliated to three Finnish political parties. Selecting parties from Finland provides a means of interrogating the partisan control thesis in the context of domestic parties that appear to have less of an incentive to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, and to have more limited prospects of success, than many others from across the EU (see discussion in Chapter 2). The three parties selected are the National Coalition Party (KOK), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the Finns Party[36] (PS). The MEPs from these parties are affiliated to three EP Groups, namely the EPP, the S&D, and the EFD Groups respectively.

The chapter opens with a discussion on the partisan actors selected and how they relate to the expectations set out in the hypotheses. The chapter proceeds to examine whether the three domestic parties fulfil the four activities that partisan actors must undertake in order to develop a potential to influence their MEPs, as presented in Chapter 2. These four preconditions of influence are: to hold interests regarding the behaviour of MEPs, to communicate these interests to MEPs, to provide MEPs with incentives to act in accordance with those interests, and to monitor the behaviour of MEPs. The investigation subsequently examines whether certain factors are linked to variation in the propensity of domestic parties to attempt to influence MEPs and to variation in the level of success that such attempts attain. Nine of the eleven hypotheses that relate to domestic parties are tested. The chapter subsequently repeats these investigations in the context of the MEPs' relations to their EP Groups, and all four of the hypotheses that relate to the EP Groups are tested.

Since the domestic parties chosen as case studies are very different in nature (see following section), the degree to which they attempt to, and succeed in, influencing the behaviour of their MEPs is expected to vary considerably. Despite this expectation, the findings demonstrate a consistency across all three cases. The level of the parties' engagement in the work of their MEPs is very low and there is little evidence to suggest that parties attempt to influence any aspect of the way in which MEPs carry out their work. None of the three parties fulfil the four preconditions of influence. The parties featured in this chapter show little desire to influence how MEPs act and very seldom do they communicate any wishes or requests to their MEPs. It comes as little surprise therefore that they do not provide MEPs with threats

or promises of rewards for acting in specific ways. As parties do not take any meaningful measures to monitor the work of their MEPs, and as the linkages between MEPs and their parties are very weak in all three cases, it is clear that parties know very little about the work of their MEPs.

These findings demonstrate that MEPs act with considerable independence from their parties (cf. Raunio, 2007), and that parties treat MEPs as largely peripheral actors. The parties' lack of interest in the work of their MEPs suggests that this state of affairs is likely to continue, especially as parties would need to transform the way they operate if they are to work more closely with their MEPs in future. The findings relating to Finnish parties challenge the claim that domestic parties systematically influence the behaviour of MEPs (Hix et al., 2007). As none of the three parties seem to show any interest in influencing the behaviour of their MEPs, there is no support for the nine hypotheses relating to domestic parties that are examined in this chapter. In contrast, two of the Groups to which the MEPs featured in the analysis are affiliated, the EPP and the S&D, influence the behaviour of MEPs. The EFD Group does not influence the behaviour of its Finnish MEP. This follows expectations and supports the four hypotheses relating to EP Groups that are tested in this chapter.

The Cases

Since the 2011 national parliamentary elections, KOK has been the largest party in the Finnish Parliament, the Eduskunta, holding 44 of the 200 seats. The party is one of Finland's three traditionally large parties, having consistently garnered around 20% of the vote at national parliamentary elections since 1970. It attracted 20.4% of votes cast at the most recent elections in 2011, and became the largest party in the national parliament for the first time (Arter, 2011: 1284). The party has spent the overwhelming majority of the period since the mid-1980s in government. Jyrki Katainen, the party chair, became Prime Minister following the 2011 election and leads a six-party governing coalition. The party currently holds six ministerial posts, including the 'Europe and Foreign Trade' portfolio.

Following Finland's entry into the EU in 1995, the party was represented by four appointed MEPs until the first EP elections were held in 1996, and the party returned four MEPs at the 1996, 1999, and 2004 EP elections. Three sitting MEPs gained re-election at the 2009 elections, namely Eija-Riitta Korhola, Sirpa Pietikäinen, and Ville Itälä. The latter left the EP in February 2012 to become

Finland’s member of the European Court of Auditors (YLE, 2011) and was replaced by Petri Sarvamaa. The three MEPs are affiliated to the EPP Group, the largest EP Group. KOK is a pro-integrationist, centre-right party. With approximately 41,000 members, the party is Finland’s third largest on this measure (*Kauppalehti*, 2011). As the party with the largest number of domestic parliamentarians, it receives the greatest level of public funding (Raunio and Tiilikainen, 2003: 66). These funds amounted to €7.48m in 2013 (The Finnish Government, 2013).

Similar to KOK, the SDP is one of Finland’s traditional three main parties. It has consistently garnered around 25% of the vote at national elections in the post-war period, although its share of the vote decreased to 19.1% at the 2011 national elections, representing its worst result since 1917 (Arter, 2011: 1285). The party has been regularly represented in government as part of coalitions, and is currently the second largest partner in the governing coalition. Three of the party’s representatives served consecutively as President of Finland between 1982 and 2012 (SDP, 2013).

Following Finland’s entry into the EU in 1995, the SDP was represented by four appointed MEPs, and the party returned four MEPs at the 1996 and at the 1999 EP elections. The party won three seats in 2004, and has been represented by Liisa Jaakonsaari and Mitro Repo since the 2009 election. Both are affiliated to the S&D Group. The SDP positions itself as a centre-left party, and is pro-integrationist, having supported Finland’s accession to the EU and its adoption of the Euro. The number of party members stands at around 50,000, and by this measure it is Finland’s second largest party (*Kauppalehti*, 2011). The SDP received €7.14m in public funds in 2013 (The Finnish Government, 2013).

The PS is in many ways different from KOK and the SDP. Founded in 1995, effectively as a successor to the peripheral Finnish Rural Party (Arter, 2010: 485–6; 2012; Raunio, 2012b: 5–6), the party has made considerable strides forward in terms of its electoral popularity in recent years. Its vote share rose from 1.6% at the 2003 national parliamentary elections to 9.8% at the 2009 EP elections (Arter, 2010: 487), and it experienced a further major breakthrough at the 2011 national parliamentary elections, where it gained 19.1% of the vote. Overnight, its parliamentary party group emerged as the third largest, with 39 seats out of 200, having hitherto been the smallest group, with a mere five mandates (Arter, 2011: 1291). This success has represented a genuine challenge to the three main parties in Finland, and the party has emerged from playing a marginal role within the Finnish party system to being a

genuine potential coalition partner. Jyrki Katainen, KOK's leader, expected to include the PS as part of his coalition government following the 2011 election (Arter, 2011: 1285–6). In the event, Timo Soini, the leader of the PS, announced that the party would not form a coalition government because of his party's reluctance to provide bail-out assistance to Portugal (Arter, 2011: 1285–6; 1293–4). The party's success has been dependent to a considerable extent on the popular appeal of Soini, who has led the party since 1997. He attracted the largest number of personal votes of all candidates in Finland at the 2008 local elections, the 2009 EP elections, and the 2011 national parliamentary elections (Arter, 2010: 488; *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2011).

The PS formed an electoral coalition with the Christian Democrats to contest the 2009 EP elections (Rannanpää, 2010: 77).[37] Two MEPs were elected from the joint list of candidates, Timo Soini, and Sari Essayah of the Christian Democrats. Upon his entry to the EP in 2009, Soini became his party's first ever MEP. However, he left the EP following the 2011 election to take up his seat in the national parliament. Soini's position was filled by Sampo Terho, who continued the PS' affiliation to the EFD Group.

Reported in March 2011 as having approximately 5,000 members (*Kauppalehti*, 2011),[38] the party membership is small compared to the three parties with similar levels of representation in the national parliament. Further, the party has not had the same opportunity to develop a network of local branches as its more established opponents. The PS received €6.63m in state funding in 2013 (The Finnish Government, 2013). However, since parties are allocated funds in proportion to the number of domestic parliamentary seats that they hold, the level of state funding the party received was considerably lower until its success at the 2011 national elections. Consequently, the fledgling party's resources were very limited until around the mid-point of the 2009–14 European parliamentary term.

The academic literature has yet to reach consensus on the PS' ideological classification. Arter persuasively argues that the PS should be viewed as 'a populist radical right party in the West European tradition', due to its 'mix of traditional conservatism (socio-cultural authoritarianism) and ethno-nationalism (nativism)' (2010: 503; 502). However, the party's economic views, especially its market-based critique of the EU, leads most commentators to view it as a centre-left party (Raunio, 2012b: 6; 15–16; 22; Paloheimo and Raunio, 2008; Jungar and Jupskås 2011; Ruostetsaari 2011), a claim that is supported by the fact that it drew much of its

support from left-wing voters at the 2007 national parliamentary election (Arter, 2010: 501). Consequently, the PS is viewed as a centre-left party for the purposes of the analysis presented in this thesis. The party's Euroscepticism is considerably more moderate than those of its partners in the EP such as UKIP or the Lega Nord. While it has noted its opposition to further integration, it has not sought Finland's withdrawal from the EU or from the Eurozone (Raunio, 2012b: 20). Nevertheless, as 'the ideology of the PS is fundamentally at odds with European integration' (Raunio, 2012b: 21) it can be used as an appropriate case to examine how Eurosceptic parties structure relations with their MEPs.

Due to the differences that exist between the parties, it is possible to test nine of the eleven hypotheses relating to domestic parties that are presented in Chapter 2. As the three parties occupy different positions on the left–right ideology scale, with the SDP and KOK positioned to the left and to the right of the centre respectively, and the PS occupying a more centrist position than the SDP, it is possible to test Hypotheses 9a and 9b. Hypothesis 9a expects the PS to attempt to control the legislative behaviour of MEPs to a greater extent than KOK and the SDP, although there is no expectation that the PS is more successful. Hypothesis 9b states the reverse of Hypothesis 9a. As the number of MEPs affiliated to each party varies from one (in the case of the PS) to three (in the case of KOK), it is possible to test Hypothesis 5. While these differences are minor, KOK is expected to have a slightly greater incentive to engage with its MEPs than the other two parties due to the fact that its delegation in the EP is larger. Hypothesis 5 expects KOK to go to greater lengths in its attempts to influence the behaviour of MEPs and to be more successful at doing so than the SDP. The PS is expected to show a weaker desire and lower levels of success than the SDP. The level of variation between the three parties is expected to be small.

On certain issues there are similarities between KOK and the SDP, while the PS provides a contrasting case. These factors reinforce the expectation that the engagement with MEPs will be closer in the case of the two older parties compared with the PS. As governing parties, KOK and the SDP are expected to put pressure on their MEPs to act in ways that complement the government's strategy in the Council (Hypothesis 3) and to focus their efforts on legislative work (Hypothesis 4). This is particularly the case for KOK. As the party holds the posts of Prime Minister and Minister for European Affairs, the potential for its MEPs to cause embarrassment may be higher, as is the party's potential to realise policy goals at the EU level. Several

factors give rise to the expectation that the efforts of KOK and the SDP to influence the behaviour of its MEPs meet with greater success than those of the PS, including their status as governing parties (Hypothesis 3). These two parties have a more extensive organizational capacity than the PS. They have better-established and better-funded secretariats, and as they have considerable experience of being represented in the EP, it is reasonable to expect that they have developed more effective systems for enforcing discipline (Hypothesis 7). Due to its Eurosceptic stance, the PS is expected to be less likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of its MEP compared to other parties (Hypothesis 11), but to be more eager to see its MEP focus on political work in Finland (Hypothesis 12).

Regarding the potential for parties to vary in how they relate to different MEPs within their ranks during the parliamentary term, there are considerable differences between the MEPs from two of the parties featured in this analysis. Two of KOK's MEPs at the time of writing are individuals with considerable experience of operating as politicians (Eija-Riitta Korhola and Sirpa Pietikäinen), while the other MEP (Petri Sarvamaa) has only begun a career as a politician mid-way through the 2009–14 parliamentary term. One SDP MEP (Liisa Jaakonsaari) has had a successful career in domestic politics and held a ministerial post before entering the EP, while the other (Mitro Repo) did not have a career in politics before his entry to the EP in 2009. As the differences between the MEPs are great, it is possible to test Hypothesis 14, which expects parties to exercise greater levels of influence on the behaviour of MEPs who have less political experience than on the behaviour of MEPs who have more political experience.

While Finnish parties are unable to use their control of party lists to offer incentives to MEPs seeking re-election, they can act in two ways that affect the electoral prospects of individual candidates. Firstly, parties are able to deny re-election seeking MEPs a position on the party's list. Secondly, there are a number of techniques that a party can use during its electoral campaign to further the prospects of preferred candidates. These include focusing the party's campaign resources on its preferred candidates, providing these candidates with more extensive coverage in party-funded campaign material, and putting them forward as the party's representatives when asked for an individual to take part in media events. In light of this, were it to emerge that variation exists between the parties in how they select candidates and how they relate to different candidates during electoral campaigns it

would be possible to test Hypothesis 2. The expectation is that parties operating centralised candidate selection systems achieve greater influence over MEPs, as do parties that vary in their degree of support for individual candidates during the EP electoral campaign. However, since the three parties examined operate along similar lines with regard to these issues, it is not possible to test Hypothesis 2 in this chapter.

In addition to testing nine hypotheses relating to domestic parties, it is also possible to test the four hypotheses relating to the EP Groups. All four hypotheses give rise to the expectation that the EPP and the S&D Groups are more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of their MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than the EFD Group. The EPP and the S&D Groups are larger than the EFD Group in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs (Hypothesis 6) and organizational capacity (Hypothesis 8), are closer to the centre on the left–right ideological scale (Hypothesis 10), and are pro-integrationist, in contrast to the Eurosceptic EFD (Hypothesis 13).

Candidate Selection and the Election Campaign

KOK selects its twenty candidates centrally, following a period where individuals interested in running as a candidate at the EP election are encouraged to apply. Incumbent MEPs are effectively guaranteed a position on the party's list.[39] Officially, the party does not select 'top candidates' or give preference to individual candidates in any way.[40] Each candidate is expected to run a campaign independently of the party's campaign, and to raise funds and plan their campaigns independently of the party's central organization.[41] The party runs a national campaign and works with its local branches to organize events throughout the country in which candidates are invited to participate.[42] All candidates are treated equally in the party's poster campaigns, with each poster featuring a photograph of all candidates and information about them.[43] Despite the fact that candidates appear to receive equal treatment, one respondent suggested that the party gives preferential treatment to certain candidates in a very subtle way, for example by channelling publicity towards them by nominating them to act as the party's representative when approached by media outlets.[44]

Similarly to KOK, the SDP fielded twenty candidates for the 2009 EP election.[45] The party's executive committee, a body of fourteen individuals, selected approximately half the candidates, the remainder being selected by the party's

Council, an organ comprising of sixty members, who are mainly representatives of the party's local branches.[46] While the candidate selection process was democratic in the formal sense, the party leadership, especially the party's General Secretary, had extensive influence over the process.[47] As a result, the candidate selection system should be regarded as centralised. Party officials note, however, that rather than being in a position where they could use the selection system to exclude undesirable individuals, the need to find twenty candidates who had a realistic prospect of attracting votes to the party through their personal popularity presented a genuine challenge.[48]

As regards the SDP's campaign in 2009, officials claim that each candidate was treated equally.[49] The party offered to contribute up to approximately €10,000 to the campaign of each candidate on condition that the candidates' campaign organizations pledged an equal sum.[50] Only around 'a quarter' of candidates received the full amount of financial support from the party, with 'around half' receiving a lower amount.[51] Campaign material commissioned by the party, such as poster advertisements, featured all candidates, and the party did not show any preference for individual candidates.[52] This is despite the fact that some party officials feel that the party may stand to benefit from highlighting candidates who are strongly associated with the region in which the advertisement campaign is run.[53] The only circumstances under which some candidates would receive additional assistance from the party would be in the case of candidates seeking election for the first time and who required assistance in forming a campaign organization. The party would be willing to assist such candidates in the task of finding an appropriate campaign manager.[54]

While the EP elections in 2009 were the first at which the PS were successful, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the evidence relating to the party's campaign that can act as a reliable guide to future campaigns. This is because of the exceptional role that the leader played in the campaign, and because the party may not approach future EP elections in a similar way as a result of the changes to its position within the Finnish party system. Nevertheless, the evidence does highlight the informal and leadership-centred nature of the candidate selection system. Prospective candidates initially approached the party leader, Timo Soini, to state their desire to seek candidature and, following their nomination, required the approval of the party's executive committee.[55] It is clear that the party leadership, and in particular the party leader, had extensive control over the process of selecting candidates. The issue of

whether the party gave preferential treatment to individual candidates is largely irrelevant because of the manner in which the candidature of Soini dominated the party's campaign. There is no doubt that Soini's success was based on his personal appeal rather than on the party providing his campaign with preferential support. The PS contested the election as 'a completely open race',[56] giving no preference to any of its candidates, including regarding its use of publicity material.[57] Even Soini was treated equally, with one respondent explaining that it was clear to all that he did not need any preferential treatment from the party, as 'he's big enough' to win the election on his own.[58]

Despite the centralised nature of the candidate selection system used by the PS, the party clearly feels that the personalised nature of the electoral contest in Finland severely limits its ability to affect the outcome of the election in favour of any of its candidates.[59] The main criteria for selecting candidates are 'to be well-known in the whole country',[60] to have the potential to attract votes on the basis of personal appeal, and to be free from scandal.[61] Senior individuals within the party are aware that 'only a couple' of party members currently fulfil the first two of those criteria.[62] The party will have a strong sense of which of its candidates are likely to attract the largest number of personal votes at the next election in 2014, but will provide all candidates with 'the same money and other supports'.[63] Candidates at the 2014 EP election were not required to sign a contract stating their loyalty to the party in the event of their election,[64] as was expected of candidates at the 2011 parliamentary elections (Arter, 2011: 1291).

Staffing and Communication Practices

At first glance, KOK appears to allocate more resources in terms of staff members to issues relating to international and European affairs than any other party in Finland. There are four officials who are in various ways involved with international affairs, including an International Officer, an advisor on issues relating to the national parliament's Grand Committee, which deals with EU affairs, a coordinator on issues relating to the transnational movement of the European People's Party (rather than EPP's parliamentary Group), and an advisor who follows proceedings on the national parliament's defence committee.[65] As these officials do not work exclusively on these briefs, the extent to which the party is able to engage with international issues is more limited than the staffing figures suggest. In comparison, the SDP and the PS both

have a full-time International Officer who deal with issues relating to the parties' work in the context of the EU and more broadly.

Despite the number of staff employed, KOK does not have 'any kind of organized system' for communicating directly with its MEPs,[66] and contacts between the party and the MEPs are 'loose'.[67] MEPs have the right to attend and to speak at meetings of the party's weekly board meeting,[68] although they seldom attend as meetings are usually held on Wednesdays, when MEPs are attending to parliamentary business in Brussels or Strasbourg.[69] There is some direct contact between MEPs and the Party Secretary and other officials in the central party organization, but this contact takes place mainly in cases where the party 'happens' to engage with an issue related to the EU.[70] Officials acknowledge that the party's connections to its MEPs do not 'work so well'.[71] Party officials are in more regular contact with the assistants of MEPs.[72] It should not be inferred from this that the party maintains reasonably close relations to its MEPs and that assistants act as facilitators of party–MEP interaction. Rather, the fact that the party interacts primarily with assistants rather than with the MEPs themselves is, in itself, evidence of the party's inability to form and maintain strong links with its MEPs. The party's links to the four Finnish EPP officials are also moderately stronger than those to MEPs.[73] The party values these links primarily for the flow of information that they facilitate, especially as the responsibilities of some of these officials include media relations.[74]

KOK's links to its MEPs have always been weak, with one respondent suggesting that they had 'never' been 'closer' than at present, and that factors such as whether the party is in government has very little effect on how the party structures relations with its MEPs.[75] It is clear that both the MEPs and party officials are dissatisfied with the current state of affairs. An official noted that the links have not been 'close enough' and that they should be 'tighter'. An EP-based official expanded on this, explaining that:

> Both sides have complaints. The MEPs' view is that they are forgotten here and [that] the party is not interested in them, and the party's view is that the delegation neglects the party and is not very eager to cooperate.[76]

The party considered how it might be able to address the issue following the 2009 election, but did not implement any substantial changes in how it structures relations with its MEPs. It is currently thinking of ways 'to work together' more closely

following the 2014 election.[77] One idea under consideration is to require candidates to sign a contract stating that they will keep in contact with the party at least once a month. Officials claim that at present it is difficult to persuade MEPs to maintain contact once elected as they are able to reject requests from the party, invoking the excuse that they have 'no time'.[78] It is believed that agreeing on a system in advance of the election is more likely to work, as MEPs may feel a moral obligation to abide by the agreement.[79]

While KOK officials believe that the party has the resources necessary to form stronger links with its MEPs, they acknowledge that the party would find it very challenging to form particularly strong links, and that it would require 'time' to implement even an elementary system for communicating.[80] Further, they acknowledge that it would be more realistic for the party to form relationships with the assistants of MEPs rather than with the MEPs themselves, as the MEPs lack the time to interact with the party.[81] Another proposal under consideration at the time of writing is that a party official should travel to Brussels for a 'half-day meeting' every other month.[82] It is illuminating that a party official acknowledges that the task of building links with the party is so low on an MEP's list of priorities, and it demonstrates that there is little that the party can offer to its MEPs in terms of threats or rewards. If the party does not appear to be greatly interested in its MEPs, it seems that the feeling is mutual.

There is a greater level of cooperation between KOK's MEPs and its members of the national parliament than there is between MEPs and the party's central organizations (cf. Raunio and Tiilikainen, 2003: 60). This contact takes place independently of the party and is based on personal connections.[83] There is considerable variation in the regularity of this contact, with MEPs who have experience of serving as national parliamentarians maintaining closer links to the party's national parliamentarians.[84] The way responsibilities are divided between the party's central organization and the party's group of national parliamentarians explains, in part, why the central party organization's engagement with its MEPs is so limited, and why MEPs are in more regular contact with parliamentarians than with party officials. While the role of the party's central organization is to deal with long-term issues, and to form strategies for the next 'five or ten years',[85] the party's group of national parliamentarians is more focused on day-to-day politics.[86]

This may also explain to a limited degree why the central party organization sees little reason to attempt to influence the behaviour of its MEPs. While the national parliamentary group has a greater incentive than the party organization to attempt to persuade MEPs to act in certain ways, the party's national parliamentarians have, in theory, a more limited ability than the party to put pressure on MEPs. Parliamentarians do not have access to the instruments of persuasion that the party could potentially use. Consequently, there appears to be no actor in, or related to, the party that has both the will and the resources to influence the behaviour of MEPs.

Similarly to KOK, the SDP structures relations with its MEPs in a very loose manner. This is reflected in the fact that the party's two MEPs are organized within the party structure as a 'technical group' that is viewed by the party leadership as an organ that is 'independent' of the central party organization.[87] In terms of formal channels of communication, one MEP is a member of the party's executive body, and both are members of the party's European Working Group.[88] The MEP is very rarely able to attend meetings of the party executive as they are held on Thursday mornings, when the EP is usually in session, and there is no pressure on the MEP to attend the meetings.[89] The attraction of leaving the EP before the conclusion of its weekly business to attend meetings of the party executive committee is low due to the fact that issues relating to the EU are discussed relatively infrequently.[90] Meetings of the European Working Group take place approximately once a month, and while the schedules of the MEPs do not always enable them to be present, meetings are arranged at a suitable time in cases where the party is eager to discuss issues with its MEP.[91] It is mainly the party's broader 'policy lines for the future' which are discussed at these meetings rather than issues relating to 'day-to-day' policy-making.[92] As a result, the extent to which the party leadership is able to use these meetings to develop preferences relating to the behaviour of MEPs in specific instances, and to communicate these preferences to their MEPs, is limited.

Most substantive communication takes place informally, via emails and telephone calls. Despite the fact that MEPs feel that they have a 'good relationship' with party leaders on a personal level, they claim that it is 'very, very difficult' for them to exchange views with party officials.[93] It is only rarely that it is possible to develop a coordinated position, and one MEP noted that trying to discuss policy issues with the party organization was often 'mission impossible'.[94] The ability of the party to use the 'delegation' structure to facilitate communication with its MEPs has

decreased since 2009. In the previous parliamentary term (2004–9) the party's delegation of three MEPs held bi-weekly meetings to discuss policy issues in detail. This practice did not continue following the 2009 election,[95] when the party returned two MEPs, both of whom were new. It is likely that a similar arrangement would need to be established if the party wished to strengthen its links to its MEPs, as it would be easier for the party to coordinate with and monitor the work of its MEPs were the delegation to operate in a more structured manner.

It is not surprising that links between the SDP's delegation of MEPs and the party central office are perceived to be weak. While the party's central organization is substantial by Finnish standards, the level of resources it allocates to dealing with EU issues is modest. The International Officer is not expected to follow the passage of individual pieces of EU legislation, or to provide policy advice on specific issues to MEPs.[96] One MEP noted that the party's engagement with EU affairs is 'very weak', and that its interest mainly revolves around the work of its Minister of Finance at meetings of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council.[97] MEPs feel that their efforts to discuss issues relating to the EU are hindered by the party's apparent lack of awareness of the EU's agenda.[98]

Surprisingly, bearing in mind that the SDP is a major coalition partner in the Finnish Government, one MEP emphasised that the party does not even seem to be aware of the issues that are to be discussed in meetings of the Council of the EU until shortly before they are held.[99] This respondent noted that because EU policy-making processes are undertaken with such speed, especially when major decisions are taken by the EP or by the Council of the EU, party meetings held to discuss developments in the EU 'are always too late'.[100] MEPs and party officials alike suggest that it is easier to hold discussions between MEPs and prominent party figures on legislative issues compared with more pressing issues, such as the response to the Eurozone crisis, as legislative processes offer more time for discussions to take place.[101] It is noteworthy that the methods used by the party to coordinate with its MEPs have remained unchanged since the party entered government as part of the coalition following the 2011 Finnish parliamentary election.[102] This suggests that the party's governing status has no bearing on how it structures relations with its MEPs.

Similarly to the case of KOK, it is clear that links between the SDP's MEPs and its national parliamentarians are stronger than the links of its MEPs to the party central office (cf. Raunio and Tiilikainen, 2003: 60).[103] At the time of the research,

the Chair of the Finnish Parliament's Grand Committee, the Committee responsible for issues relating to the EU, was Miapetra Kumpala-Natri of the SDP. There is frequent contact between the party's MEPs and the Grand Committee's Chair, as well as between the MEPs and SDP members of the committee.[104] A party official acknowledged that the party fails to maintain adequate links with its MEPs, and that this is an issue which the party needs to address in future.[105] A proposed solution is to further improve the links between the MEPs and the party's national parliamentarians who are members of the Grand Committee.[106] It is noteworthy that this proposed solution would not result in the party organization itself developing stronger ties to its delegation of MEPs, but rather that it would lead to the strengthening of ties between national and European parliamentarians. The official's suggestion, together with the scale of the transformation required if the party is to develop strong links with its MEPs, suggests that the nature of the relationship between MEPs and the party organization will see little change in future.

In contrast to the two other cases, it is clear that links between the PS and its MEP were strong during the first two years of the 2009–14 parliamentary term. The MEP in question, Timo Soini, guided the party's main organs while undertaking his role as party leader. Unsurprisingly, the party did not establish a formalised system for maintaining links to its MEP during Soini's time as an MEP, nor has such a system been developed since his departure. As links between the party and its MEP are based on informal connections, there is an inevitability to the fact that the party's links with Soini's replacement, Sampo Terho, are considerably weaker. The MEP has been 'quite isolated' from the party organization,[107] partly due to the need for him to focus on adapting to life within the EP, and partly due to the fact that the party's priority has been to establish relations with its new cohort of national parliamentarians.[108] The MEP had only met 'high-ranking people from the party' twice during his first year in office.[109] Meetings with senior party members and officials take place on an 'ad hoc' basis, with requests made for the MEP to 'come and tell us something' if paths happen to cross.[110]

Much of the communication that takes place between the MEP's office and other PS party figures is conducted through a local assistant, who is based in Helsinki.[111] The MEP's local assistant is described as 'the only living link' between the MEP and the party, and as the connection that has 'kept the relationship at least alive'.[112] While the assistant visits the Finnish Parliament regularly to 'exchange news

and views' with national parliamentarians,[113] the MEP's links to the party's national parliamentary group remain very weak. The MEP had not met a considerable number of the party's Eduskunta members a full year following the successes of the 2011 national election. This lack of contact has hindered the process of exchanging views to the extent that the party's EP-based affiliates often do not know what the party's national parliamentarians 'think about the EU'.[114]

The fact that the links are weak are not surprising, bearing in mind the sudden growth of the party's national parliamentary group and the fact that neither the MEP nor 34 of the PS's national parliamentarians were full-time elected politicians until the spring of 2011. These linkages are likely to strengthen over time, especially if some of the party's national parliamentarians will be elected to the EP in 2014, as some officials expect.[115] A further possible explanation for the weak links between the party and its MEP is that only one of the MEP's five assistants (including the Group official specifically assigned to the MEP) is a party member, the others selected on the basis of their professional merit.[116] A result of this may be that the level of informal contact between the MEP's office and the party's central organization is more limited than would be the case if a greater number of assistants were personally linked to the party.

Despite the weak connection between the party organization and the MEP, there are strong direct links between the MEP and the party leader, and this connection represents the MEP's main link to the party. An official suggested that the relationship is likely to be very different from that between most Finnish MEPs and their party leaders as the two are 'more like friends' than might be the case in other instances.[117] Meetings are held with the party leader on a monthly basis,[118] and further informal communication takes place when required.

There have been some loose requests from the party for the MEP to maintain more regular and systematic contact with the party,[119] however the strain put on the party organization since it became 'seven times bigger … in one single night'[120] has meant that such efforts have not been regarded as a priority for the party. Nevertheless, both the party and the MEP's office maintain that steps must be taken to strengthen linkages between the party and its representation in the EP in future.[121] The party appears to rely heavily on personal relations between the MEP and the party leader, and despite the periodic exchanges, there remains a lack of a formalised system for facilitating regular contact. This does not greatly impede the exchange of

information between the MEP and the party leader. However, with the PS expected to gain at least one additional seat at the 2014 EP election (Raunio, 2014), it is possible that the connections between the party leadership and any new MEPs may not be as strong.

Providing Guidance on Various Aspects of Representation

KOK does not have a model of representation for its MEPs to follow. A party official acknowledged that the party does not have a clear idea of how MEPs should carry out their work, and that it does not provide MEPs with guidance on how much time they should spend in Finland, or on how to divide their time between different activities.[122] When discussing what, if anything, MEPs are 'expected' to do, the official talked in very general terms of the types of activities the party 'hopes' that MEPs will carry out.[123] The party rarely ask MEPs to undertake specific activities, and it is clear that party officials show a great degree of understanding when MEPs decline requests to attend meetings, as officials are aware that it can be 'quite difficult for them to take part' because of the calls on their time.[124] Further, the fact that the party plays no part in arranging most of the public events at which MEPs participate in Finland[125] undermines the idea that parties attempt to control such appearances so as to maximise their benefit to the party. It is clear that the party does not choreograph such events, nor does it attempt to discourage MEPs from promoting policies that conflict with those of the party.

Reflecting how KOK does not communicate in a systematic manner with its MEPs and does not provide guidance on how MEPs should carry out their work, the party also lacks a formalised system for providing policy advice. One MEP noted that the support from the party central office for day-to-day committee work was 'non existent'.[126] This MEP stated that the lack of attention paid to the work of MEPs and the party's loose contacts with them was 'understandable'.[127] This is because of the pressures of political life, combined with the fact that the party's 'focus' (as well as the media's) is on domestic politics (cf. Hix et al., 1999: 8).[128] Another interviewee noted that MEPs would not approach the party for policy advice when dealing with parliamentary reports, or other tasks requiring specialist knowledge, 'because the expertise needed is normally nowhere near the party'.[129]

KOK does not issue voting instructions to its MEPs,[130] and an official claims that it would not consider doing so.[131] An MEP explained that while the party would

sometimes identify an issue as 'important' and explain why, it 'would be unheard of' for MEPs to receive direct guidance on how to act.[132] An official confirmed this account, noting that the party would sometimes 'send them wishes', but only on a 'very hot topic for Finland'.[133] Such instances arise rarely, and the party does not apply pressure on its MEPs to act according to its wishes during such exchanges. An MEP explained that 'I would be really appalled' if 'anyone' attempted to influence the voting behaviour of MEPs, as it would encroach on 'the sovereignty of the deputy'.[134] This feeling is even stronger in cases where the MEP had made it clear to the electorate that (s)he disagreed with the party on a certain issue. An MEP explained that (s)he would not follow party policy in cases of such conflict 'because [XX,000] people voted for me and I just can't go with the party'.[135] It is clear that this MEP feels a greater duty to enact promises made to the electorate than to act according to party policy.

It is also clear that the party does not operate a system of threats and rewards in relation to its MEPs and that thinking in those terms is anathema to the party. Sources in Brussels and in Helsinki acknowledged that the party would have little effect on its MEPs even if it did attempt to apply pressure,[136] as it does not have the 'kind of power' necessary to provide MEPs with a strong enough incentive to modify their behaviour.[137] This applied equally to instances where the party desired that its MEPs act in certain ways within the EP, and to a hypothetical case where an MEP would neglect an aspect of their work that is traditionally seen as essential, such as being active in Finland.[138] The fact that the party failed in its attempts to establish a system whereby MEPs were tasked with monitoring specific EP committees on behalf of the party[139] underlies the difficulties that the party has in influencing its MEPs once elected.

An MEP appeared very relaxed with the issue of dealing with requests from the party, explaining that 'If what [party officials] say makes sense to me, then I do it. If it doesn't, then I don't.'[140] This MEP would clearly not be deterred from acting against the wishes of the party, and would be perfectly willing to provide an explanation to the party leadership: 'I explain it "OK, for this and this reason, what you are proposing doesn't make sense". Or, "I'm not in favour, so no, I'm not going to do it".'[141] An MEP acknowledged that there is a significant degree of correspondence between the party's broad outlook and the ideological orientations of MEPs, noting that 'I wouldn't be there in the party' if this was not the case.[142]

However, the MEP noted that there are issues on which there is a fundamental disagreement between MEPs and the party, but even so that the party does not actively discourage its MEPs from voicing dissenting opinions.[143]

An official acknowledged that the party is happy for MEPs to base their decisions regarding voting matters on the discussions that take place within the EP Group.[144] Confirming this account, an EP-based affiliate claimed that the party 'does not know anything about the [content of the] voting lists' that are provided by the EPP Group, and stated that 'There has not been a single person from the party who has ever, ever, ever checked the voting lists'.[145] The fact that the party is content for MEPs to make decisions relating to their parliamentary work on the basis of discussions within the EP Group rather than within the domestic party, together with the fact that the party only rarely communicates its interests to MEPs, serves as evidence of the party's lack of desire to engage with the EP's day-to-day business. This interpretation contradicts the claim that the high degree of voting cohesion within national delegations are brought about due to pressure from the national party (Hix et al., 2007: 133).

When carrying out policy-related work, KOK MEPs enjoy a great deal of freedom to make decisions not only independently of their domestic party, but independently of other related actors, such as the national government, and their party colleagues in the domestic parliamentary group. While the party 'sets the [broad policy] framework', it is for MEPs to translate those general policy aims into decisions regarding forms of action from day to day.[146] As part of this process, MEPs consult with a range of sources when developing a policy position, including with Finnish government ministers, civil servants, party colleagues in the national parliament, academic and business experts, and national and transnational interest groups.[147] Despite the fact that some of these actors may be expected to put pressure on them to defend certain policy positions in the EP, MEPs are very eager to emphasise that they 'don't take guidance' from any of these sources.[148]

Much as the MEPs are willing to act against party policy where they disagree with it, they are also willing to act against the preferences of the Finnish government where they disagree with their position. One MEP asked rhetorically 'how could I take advice from them?' on an issue where there is a fundamental disagreement.[149] MEPs are aware that the government's negotiating positions may not correspond to their views or reflect the views of the party, as they are arrived at as 'a political

compromise' between the six coalition partners.[150] There is little pressure from the government directly, and no pressure is channelled through the Finnish Permanent Representation to the EU.[151] The organization provides MEPs with information about the positions taken by the Finnish Government in the Council and regarding how the negotiations in the Council are progressing:

> What they offer and what is very helpful and what I need is [that] they tell the Finnish positions of the Council, so that I know what the Finnish government is thinking about. … And I can discuss... what is going on in the Council and what is the Finnish thinking there. So it helps me to understand.[152]

The party's MEPs consult the views of the Finnish Government regardless of whether the party is in government, although there is the perception that it is 'a bit easier to get information' when the party is in government.[153]

Similarly to KOK, the SDP provides little guidance to MEPs about how they should carry out their work. A party official noted that 'there is no code of conduct or any written rules' that outline how MEPs should act. [154] The official claimed that due to the quasi-autonomous status of the delegation of MEPs within the party structure, it is not appropriate for the party to give 'any orders or direct guidance' to the MEPs.[155] As suggested by the fact that MEPs do not accept all invitations to address party meetings, it is clear that party officials feel powerless to influence how MEPs divide their time between undertaking different activities, and between different locations. MEPs organize their work schedules independently of the central party organization, and the party views this as a perfectly valid way for them to operate.[156]

As regards giving MEPs specific instructions on specific issues, a senior official acknowledged that the party does not have the 'resources nor [the] willingness' to issue voting instructions.[157] While 'discussions' take place between MEPs and the party on some policy issues, the official noted that the process of translating the party's broad policy positions into actions at parliamentary divisions is left to the MEPs.[158] Party officials show little desire to influence the parliamentary behaviour of the party's MEPs, realising that the potential for them to derive benefit from controlling their actions is limited when the party has only 'two out of 732 [sic]' parliamentary mandates.[159] Officials note that the issue may appear different for officials from parties with larger delegations in the EP, especially for those affiliated to the largest parliamentary Group, the EPP.[160] An additional reason provided by one

official to explain why the party does not intervene in the work of its MEPs is the principle that MEPs have the right to carry out their work independently of the party as they have been elected on the basis of a personal vote.[161]

Respondents based in Brussels offer a more cynical explanation for the party's 'hands-off' approach to dealing with its MEPs, namely that the party is uninterested in the work of its MEPs. One EP-based party affiliate reacted with incredulity when asked whether the party issued voting instructions to its MEPs, claiming that the party was not in a position to do so on most issues even if it wished to, as it lacked the necessary knowledge of EU affairs.[162] Noting that any attempts by the party to issue such guidance would be firmly rejected by the delegation, the respondent noted that some EP-based affiliates would initially 'be happy' to receive voting instructions, as it would indicate that 'somebody there would have woken up and gone like "Oh my god, [the MEPs] are doing something important!"'[163] The respondent identified three mutually reinforcing tendencies that may explain the party's low level of engagement with its MEPs: a 'lack of interest', 'lack of resources', and a 'lack of understanding'.[164] The low priority afforded by the party to EP politics is reflected by the fact that, unlike in the case of other parties, SDP ministers rarely meet with MEPs when they attend Council meetings in Brussels.[165] These views are broadly shared by an MEP, who confirmed that the party showed a 'lack of interest' in the work of its MEPs.[166]

The remarks of party officials lend these views a degree of credence. They acknowledge that the considerable geographic distance between Finland and Brussels, and the time involved in travelling, hinder their efforts to maintain links with their MEPs.[167] One official claimed that the weak links, together with the lack of public interest in EU affairs, made it difficult for party officials to develop a Eurocentric mentality.[168] A factor that further discourages the party from engaging more intensely with the work of their MEPs is the fact that issues emerge in the EP and in the national context at different times,[169] and that there is a natural tendency for the party to focus on issues that are current in the context of domestic politics. This evidence reinforces Hix et al.'s claim that national parties are primarily focused on realising goals in the context of domestic politics (1999: 8).

A party that refrained from issuing voting instructions to its MEPs could still exercise considerable influence over its MEPs if they sourced information or policy advice from party officials. One MEP specified that there is no one in the SDP who is

on hand to provide policy advice or guidance, and it is clear that MEPs from the SDP rely mainly on their assistants in the European Parliament and on Group advisors for support on policy issues.[170] They are also very willing to source advice from the Finnish Permanent Representation to the EU. One respondent noted that their office is in daily contact with the Finnish Permanent Representation to the EU and stated that their relationship is 'very good'.[171] However, there is no suggestion that the MEP feels under pressure from Finnish Permanent Representation to follow the policy lines of the Finnish Government.

The PS may be expected to hold very firm opinions on how MEPs should carry out their work, as the leader recently served as an MEP. While Soini is said to hold some views on the issue and has provided 'some advice' to his replacement,[172] there is no model that the MEP is expected to follow, and the party leadership has 'never given any orders' relating to the behaviour of its current MEP.[173] There are some general expectations, such as that the MEP carries out some work in Finland, especially when elections are held, but the party provides no specific guidance on how he should divide his time.[174] When discussing day-to-day scheduling, one respondent noted that 'Mr Terho is doing what Mr Terho is doing, and [the decision has] nothing to do with the party … Mr Terho makes his own decisions'.[175]

While the PS does not have a clear idea of how its MEP should carry out his work as a representative in the general sense, the party is clear regarding the approach that its MEP should take when engaging with EU policy-making. The MEP is expected to oppose any proposals to increase the power of the EU or measures that would result in an increase in the cost of Finnish membership. Despite the independence that the MEP enjoys to decide for himself how to act there are, in theory, some limits on the actions of a PS MEP at parliamentary divisions. An official stated that it would be 'a very big mistake' for an MEP to vote against an issue that is important to the party and its voters, and that it would be 'clear' if they had done so as the party's views on most issues leave little room for interpretation.[176] It is not clear what measures the party would take against an MEP who acted in this way. As the party does not believe that this would ever happen, it has never issued an MEP with threats.

The PS does not provide any specific voting instructions or any guidance that may be construed as such.[177] Indeed, the MEP's office has 'called [the party leadership] a few times to ask' for advice on parliamentary divisions and for

clarification regarding the 'party line' on certain issues.[178] The party leadership will 'sometimes' suggest which reports and issues the MEP should follow, although again, any recommendations are provided in the spirit of consultation rather than as firm guidance. The party is aware that there are 'many things happening at the same time in the parliament of Europe, so it's impossible to be involved in everything', and lets the MEP decide on which issues and activities to spend his time.[179] This evidence again contradicts the partisan control thesis.

One proposed explanation for this laissez-faire approach is that the PS has always existed as 'a big group of independent people'[180] and has consequently found it difficult to exert party discipline. If so, it is possible that as the party succeeds in enforcing stricter levels of discipline within its national parliamentary group, it may attempt to enforce a similar system of discipline in relation to its MEP(s). However, this eventuality is unlikely. Despite holding firm views on the EU and despite the fact that there exists a potential for the party to realise policy goals at the EU level (by successfully opposing efforts at further integration), the party's primary focus, similarly to other parties, is on domestic politics.[181] The evidence provided by the other two Finnish case studies suggests that parties whose focus is on domestic politics do not subject their MEPs to party discipline.

Further, the PS feels that it benefits from the work of its MEP in two ways, and the party is not required to limit the independence of an MEP to any meaningful extent to continue to derive these benefits. The main benefit appears to be that having an MEP provides the party with a means of sourcing information about the EU and the EP directly from within the chamber in a way that it was unable to do before its first MEP was elected in 2009.[182] The second benefit is that the party is able to use the MEP to attract attention to the party, especially at elections. Finnish MEPs are able to build a national profile relatively easily as, in contrast to national parliamentarians, they represent a national constituency.[183] While it appears plausible that the party will attempt to strengthen its links to its MEP as its organizational capacity grows, the party appears to have little incentive to strengthen its grip on its EP representation in the medium term.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Party Discipline

As the mechanisms used by the three parties to coordinate with their MEPs are so weak, it is not surprising that they do not go to great lengths to monitor the work of

MEPs. KOK does not monitor the work of its MEPs or their voting behaviour, and its reporting requirements of MEPs are minimal.[184] MEPs are expected to write an annual report that provides an overview of their activities, and one of the party's three MEPs are required to address the party's biennial congress.[185] Rather than serving as an opportunity for the party to gather information about the way that its MEPs are carrying out their work, the main function of this event is to provide the relevant MEP with an opportunity to boost his or her profile within the party.[186] Every edition of the party's magazine features a column written by an MEP. The purpose of this is to offer a discussion on a topical issue related to the EU 'so that people can follow what's going on', rather than to provide the party with a means of monitoring the work of MEPs.[187] The party expects MEPs to attend 'the party conference and peer party meetings as often as possible', although officials acknowledge that there is little pressure on MEPs to attend such meetings, as they 'can't force [MEPs] to come … we just hope' that they will.[188]

KOK sources most of its information about developments in the EP from Finnish EPP officials. A monthly newsletter is prepared on behalf of the delegation and is distributed to the party during the plenary week, and Finnish EPP officials also feed information directly to party supporters and to the public more generally through social media.[189] Despite these efforts, it is clear that MEPs and party officials alike are aware that the party knows little about the activities of MEPs.[190] The party would be required to make radical changes to the way it monitors the work of its MEPs if it were to successfully operate a disciplinary system. The extent of the changes required, together with the lack of appetite that the party demonstrates to exercise greater influence on the behaviour of its MEPs, suggests that the party will not attempt to operate a system of party discipline in future.

The SDP does not monitor the work of MEPs, or expect them to report back to the party in detail about their behaviour. The only formal reporting requirement is for MEPs to attend the 'statutory meeting', which takes place between the MEPs and representatives of the party organization twice a year.[191] At these meetings MEPs must provide representatives of the party's central organization with an overview of their work during the previous period and their intentions for the next period.[192] The degree to which such exchanges enable the party to follow the work of MEPs is limited, and MEPs are aware that the party is not monitoring their work.[193] There is no obligation on MEPs to be present at the party's largest gathering, its bi-annual

Congress.[194] Nevertheless, MEPs do attend the Congress and give presentations about their past and future work. An official noted that 'it would be insane from their point of view not to be there', as the event presents such a valuable opportunity to maintain and develop their status within the party.[195] MEPs are also invited to the party Council meetings, a more modest event which takes places on alternate years when the party Congress does not meet, and to deliver keynote speeches if they choose to attend. They also periodically address meetings of local party branches.

None of these appearances are mandatory. SDP officials acknowledge that MEPs do not always accept invitations to address party meetings, and – realising the time pressures that MEPs are faced with – concede that there is little the party can do to compel them to attend. As these appearances do not happen in a regular and systematic way, they cannot be considered to provide the party with a means of gaining oversight of the work of MEPs. There is little scope for the party to use these events to gather information about its MEPs, further than to gain a brief overview of the main activities in which the MEPs are engaged. Rather than party officials proactively seeking information, it is clear that it is for MEPs to take the initiative in informing the party when an issue strikes them as being of importance to the party. A Helsinki-based official noted that as colleagues in Finland focus on day-to-day domestic issues they tend to 'forget that there [are] some people and some life also outside Finland'.[196] As a result, if MEPs view an issue as important, it is for them to 'simply send an email or they make a phone call' and to ask the party if it would 'mind taking this [issue] into consideration'.[197]

SDP officials claim that they 'trust' that MEPs 'follow the party lines in broad terms', but acknowledge that there are instances where they have voted against the party's preferences.[198] There are 'no consequences' for such deviations,[199] according to party officials, a claim which EP-based party affiliates do not dispute.[200] Officials are aware that attempting to undertake even minimal monitoring of the legislative work of MEPs would entail considerable costs. Providing a further explanation for the lack of voting instructions, an official noted that the party lacks the resources to monitor the voting behaviour of its MEPs even in the case of roll call divisions.[201]

Elected representatives may be expected to relish minimal party oversight, as attention from the party is likely to be linked to efforts to control their behaviour. However, an SDP MEP stated that the party should provide more oversight of the work of its MEPs, and claimed that the lack of attention makes the task of acting as an

MEP more difficult.[202] This is because parties that show an interest in the work of MEPs are thought to be better placed to offer support.[203] A party affiliate opined that with the resources available, it would be 'impossible' for the party to develop a means of coordinating policy with its MEPs in a systematic manner and to monitor their behaviour.[204] The respondent estimated that establishing a system to facilitate meaningful contact between the party and its delegation in the EP would require employing two full time members of staff based in the EP, as these coordinators would need to follow the work of at least two committees.[205] The prospect of tasking MEP's assistants or S&D Group staff with the role of acting as party coordinators would not be feasible unless they were relieved of their current duties.[206] As a result, it is clear that the expense incurred in maintaining a strong relationship with the party's delegation would be prohibitive even for one of Finland's largest political parties.

There is no formal expectation that the PS's MEP reports to the party,[207] although the MEP does write a column in every edition of the party magazine and authors a blog, which is updated weekly.[208] While the party monitors the work of its MEP in a cursory manner, its ability to do so in a reliable and systematic way is limited, due to the fact that it sources its information through one of the MEP's assistants.[209] In some instances there could be an incentive for the assistant (who is employed directly by the MEP) to present the information in a manner that benefits the MEP, especially if the party attempted to intervene in the work of the MEP.

Further, even if the party were to develop an interest in the MEP's voting behaviour, it realises that it would be 'impossible' to follow this behaviour because of the large number of parliamentary divisions.[210] Nevertheless, the communication that takes place between the MEP's office and the party's central office enables the party to 'have some idea' of what the MEP is doing.[211] The party's affiliates in the EP believe that the party should take a greater interest in their work, especially as they feel that their ability to mobilise effectively within the chamber is limited due to the fact that the party currently only has a single MEP.[212] An interviewee based in Helsinki believed that having only one MEP also makes it more difficult for the party to know what is going on in the EP,[213] although the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that Finnish parties with larger delegations do not have a greater awareness of the work of their MEPs than does the PS.

Within-Party Variation

As the three parties examined lack formalised systems for communicating with MEPs, it is not surprising that there is considerable variation in the nature of the party–MEP relationship within individual parties. While KOK formally relates to its three MEPs in a similar manner, officials acknowledge that there is considerable variation in the extent to which the party is in contact with different MEPs.[214] This variation is primarily a result of the willingness of MEPs to respond when approached by the party. As an official explained:

> We try to be in the same kind of connection with everyone, but of course some people are easier to get connected and easier to work with and it actually shows. And when you know who you get information from and who answers, you start to operate with him or her.[215]

Similarly in the case of the SDP, the lack of a formalised system for maintaining contact with MEPs means that the extent to which the party is able to coordinate with MEPs and to monitor their work depends on the 'personal relationships' that party officials have with MEPs.[216] Again, in the formal sense, the party deals with both MEPs in a similar way. Despite the differences between the two MEPs in terms of the positions of influence that they hold within the party, the role that they play within the party as MEPs is officially the same.[217] However, there is considerable variation in the nature of the relationship between the party and its two MEPs, and this is not surprising as the MEPs have such contrasting backgrounds.[218] An official stated that while the party would treat the MEPs in the same way, it is 'easier' for the longer-serving party member to maintain close links with various actors within the party, especially as that MEP has an assistant located in the party's headquarters.[219]

While there are extensive differences in the nature of the relationship between domestic parties and their individual MEPs, the evidence challenges Hypothesis 14, which expects parties to work more closely with, and to achieve greater influence over, less experienced MEPs. Links between the parties and the MEPs are based on personal connections, and as more experienced MEPs have stronger connections within the party, they appear to be in more regular contact with senior party members than less experienced MEPs. However, as KOK and the SDP do not attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, these differences in the nature of the party–

MEP relationship within the two parties does not affect the degree to which these two parties exercise influence on their MEPs. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that parties that do attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs achieve greater success with some of their MEPs than with others.

Fulfilling the Preconditions, and Perceptions on the Degree of Independence

It is possible to apply the evidence presented thus far in the chapter to Sub-question 1a, which asks whether domestic political parties influence the behaviour of MEPs. None of the three parties examined in this chapter carry out the activities that are required for influencing the behaviour of MEPs. While KOK sources some information regarding the work of its MEPs from EPP officials, it does not fulfil any of the four preconditions of party influence in a meaningful way. The central party organization shows little interest in engaging with the work of its MEPs, and even less interest in influencing their behaviour. Consequently, it is clear that the party's MEPs enjoy extensive freedom to define their role as representatives independently of the party, and to make decisions related to specific policy issues based on their own judgment. MEPs and party officials realise that MEPs are afforded extensive independence to approach their work as they wish. MEPs view this independence as 'a good thing', although they note that with this 'freedom' comes additional 'responsibility', as they must be more self-reliant than if the party engaged with them more intensely.[220]

KOK's lack of action may be explained by the fact that party officials are perfectly happy with the way MEPs carry out their work. However, due to the lack of communication between the party and its MEPs, and the lack of monitoring, the party has little way of knowing if MEPs carry out their work in a manner that complements its broader strategy. The party may be content with their work in the sense that it is not aware of any instances where MEPs carried out activities in a manner that was harmful to the party. However, it is clear that the party does not go to any lengths to ensure that MEPs carry out their work in a way that benefits the party. The central party organization's lack of interest in influencing how MEPs carry out their work, together with the large-scale changes needed in the way that the party structures its relations with MEPs if it is to gain any influence, suggests that KOK's MEPs will continue to operate independently of the party in future.

Similarly, the SDP does not fulfil any of the preconditions of influencing MEPs. It does not hold any views on how MEPs should carry out their work in general terms, nor does it develop specific policy preferences in the case of most issues discussed in the EP. The party does not view the practice of mandating its MEPs as legitimate and is not in any case particularly interested in maximising its ability to realise goals through their actions. The system used to communicate with MEPs is not sophisticated enough for the party to coordinate policy with its delegation in the EP in the most rudimentary sense, let alone to enable the party to provide MEPs with systematic guidance regarding how to act on a day-to-day basis. The party does not view the idea of implementing a system of party discipline driven by the party leadership in Helsinki as acceptable, and it would need to make significant changes to the manner in which it operates if the party were to attempt to implement a system of party discipline. It is therefore not surprising that MEPs feel that they have the freedom to decide for themselves how to spend their time.[221] The fact that party officials acknowledge that MEPs are 'free to act … according to their own will'[222] underscores the degree of independence which MEPs are afforded.

While there is regular contact between the PS' MEP and the party leader, and some informal monitoring of the MEP's work, the lack of specific requests and guidance from the party means that the PS does not fulfil the preconditions of influence either. Despite the fact that the MEP regularly consults with the party leader on the most problematic issues, the evidence indicates that the final decision always rests with the MEP.[223] The MEP's office does not feel that the MEP has 'enough' contact with the party, and feels that the relationship between the MEP and the party is 'too loose'.[224] As a result he is currently '*very* independent'.[225] The extent of this independence is not felt to be necessarily beneficial to the MEP. A previous account of the relationship between domestic parties frames the issue in such a way as to suggest that MEPs may wish to take steps to free themselves from the control of their parties (Raunio, 2002). This is not the case for the PS' MEP. His office intends to lead efforts to establish an effective system of communication, as part of a wider effort 'to try to not to be so independent in the future'.[226] It is felt that improving the links between the MEP and the party would be 'beneficial both for the guys back home and for' the MEP.[227]

Explaining the Findings

Two assumptions that underpin the partisan control thesis are that parties view the work of MEPs as a means of realising party goals, and that parties wish to maximise the benefits they derive from having MEPs (as long as this is cost effective). Evidence relating to Finnish parties cast doubt on these assumptions, as they generally do not seek to realise goals through the activities of MEPs. The parties examined in this chapter do sometimes attempt to use their MEPs to realise goals, such as in the case of domestic electoral campaigns and in isolated cases relating to policy work. However, they do so very rarely, and certainly not in the systematic way that the partisan control thesis suggests. Party officials provide three explanations for the restraint that they show in dealing with their MEPs: they have little to gain from influencing voting behaviour due to the size of their delegations of MEPs relative to the overall size of the EP; they do not feel that they have a right to influence the behaviour of MEPs who have gained election on the basis of personal votes; and they would not be able to influence the behaviour of MEPs even if they attempted to do so.

While these three considerations play a role, a further plausible explanation for the fact that Finnish parties do not seek to realise goals through the activities of MEPs is that parties place a low value on realising the policy and office goals that MEPs are able to assist them to fulfil. This notion is supported by the fact that while the parties realise that they derive some benefit from the work of their MEPs, they do not attempt to maximise these benefits. When party officials are questioned regarding the types of activities carried out by MEPs and from which the party benefits, they refer to activities that MEPs carry out without any support or encouragement from the party. In the case of KOK, officials are aware that individual MEPs are able to realise policy goals in the EP, yet the party offers no policy support or guidance. If the party did offer policy advice, it is likely that the MEPs would seek an outcome that is closer to the preferences of the party than would otherwise be the case, and this may even occur without the party applying disciplinary pressure.

In the case of the SDP and the PS, the main value that officials claim that their parties derive from the work of MEPs is the information they provide. Yet these parties play a largely passive role in the process of sourcing information from MEPs. Rather than operating systems that ensure that information is exchanged systematically, they rely on the MEPs to take the initiative by contacting the party with any information they believe may be of interest. Again in relation to the PS,

officials note that one of the main benefits of having an MEP is that an electoral advantage can be gained through the MEP's work at domestic electoral campaigns. Yet, the MEP was not called on to participate at the 2012 Presidential election, and was only expected to contribute to the party's campaigns at weekends in the case of the 2012 municipal elections.[228] In both cases, the MEP was afforded the freedom by the party to prioritize his work in the EP. This discussion reinforces the idea that parties prioritize the pursuit of their three goals in the context of domestic politics, while affording secondary importance to these goals at the EU level. As a result, tasks such as forming strong links with MEPs lie low on their list of priorities.

The Relationship between MEPs and the EP Group

The EPP Group has a greater degree of direct influence on the way KOK's MEPs vote than the domestic party itself. In contrast to the party, the Group systematically offers policy guidance and voting recommendations. While MEPs note that they tend to wholly agree with the Group position at around half of parliamentary divisions, they note that they moderately disagree with their Group in around a third of instances.[229] In such cases, MEPs tend to feel compelled to vote with the Group.[230] This tendency is not brought about by the Group putting pressure on MEPs to toe the Group line, but is mainly due to the fact that MEPs realise that they need to compromise in order to secure the support of Group colleagues at other divisions.[231] One MEP explained that:

> If you always vote according [to] your own wishes, and never compromise, you are a bit [of] a single rider, and ... no one wants to work with a single rider. No one is going to compromise with me if I'm not compromising with anyone … [In such cases] you think, 'okay, well, what the heck! I'll just close my eyes and vote for it! [laughs] It's not a good compromise, but well, it doesn't destroy the world!'[232]

While MEPs are adamant that they will not act according to the wishes of the national party unless those actions conform to their personal wishes, they would vote with their Group against their judgment at a sizeable number of parliamentary divisions. Despite this trend, MEPs do not feel compelled to vote with the Group at divisions where they disagree with the Group position in a fundamental way.[233] An MEP estimated that such instances arise in around 10% of cases,[234] reflecting the fact that KOK's MEPs have voted with the Group at 94.98% of roll call divisions during the current term (VoteWatch.eu, accessed 18/11/13). The respondent cited an example

which arises regularly where (s)he has campaigned against a policy which the Group supports. In such cases it is clear that there is no question of voting with the Group, because the MEP feels a duty to honour a promise made during the election campaign. While the respondent demonstrated a willingness to vote against the Group's position in cases of irreconcilable differences, (s)he also noted the importance of notifying the Group in advance where (s)he did not intend to accept the Group's voting guidance.[235] The MEP noted that 'it's sort of okay [to vote against the Group] because what counts is the predictability', and that it is 'a problem' for the Group 'if they can't predict whether I'm voting in favour or against the Group'.[236]

It does not appear that the EPP Group provides threats and incentives to entice its MEPs to vote with the Group's recommendations in a systematic way. Rather, a subtle dynamic within the Group leads to disciplined voting (see Ringe, 2010). As long as there is no fundamental conflict, MEPs vote with their colleagues, knowing that their colleagues are far more likely to return the favour when in a similar position.[237] However, if an MEP were to consistently diverge from the Group position, the Group might ask the MEP '*why* are you in our Group?' and they may discuss the future for the MEP's relations with the Group.[238]

While the respondents do not believe that there is a link between the allocation of assignments and the regularity with which an MEP votes against the Group,[239] they indicated that some MEPs believe that the EPP Group withholds assignments from affiliates whom they suspect do not share their views in the relevant policy area. An MEP noted that (s)he has been 'hit hard' by the Group when it comes to allocating rapporteurships in a policy area in which the MEP's views are 'way more radical' than those of the Group.[240] The MEP is aware that such threats are made to other MEPs as well, and believes that the denial of rapporteurships is a strong tool: 'they say that you can't have a report. Then I don't have the report. Then they give it to someone [else] and I'm upset'.[241] The respondent claims that such actions by the Group 'doesn't make me … change my behaviour because I can't go and then change myself if I really strongly believe [in] these issues'.[242] Despite feeling that (s)he could carry out the task in a superior way to the colleague to whom the assignment was entrusted, (s)he views the Group's decision as 'fair', because both parties know that (s)he would write the report 'against the Group line'.[243] While this MEP demonstrated acceptance of the costs of defying the Group, it appears highly likely

that some other EPP MEPs may base behavioural decisions on the will of the Group in order to secure positions such as rapporteurships.

SDP MEPs take a broadly similar approach to their Group relations. They note that they are very happy to source information from S&D Group advisors regardless of their nationality, and demonstrate a willingness to follow voting guidance issued by the Group in most instances. This is reflected in the fact that the SDP's MEPs have voted with the Group in 98.51% of instances at roll call divisions during the current parliamentary term (VoteWatch.eu, accessed 18/11/13). However, one respondent noted that there are often fundamental policy differences within the Group, and that these differences are usually linked to nationality. There are therefore many instances where MEPs are disinclined to follow the Group's position, although a respondent indicated that (s)he votes with the Group in all instances other than when the issue is seen as being particularly important for the domestic party.[244]

While there is some degree of pressure to vote with the S&D Group, this is not particularly strong, and stems largely from the belief of MEPs that the Group is more powerful when it acts in a unified manner.[245] MEPs who fail to follow the Group line are not ostracised, however this interviewee did feel that this might lead to the Group withholding parliamentary assignments.[246] While such threats are not made openly, it is a 'hidden rule', of which all MEPs are aware.[247] The interviewee did not refer to any specific examples where (s)he, or a colleague, felt under pressure to vote with the Group.[248] The system of maintaining Group discipline is not felt to constrain MEPs' behaviour greatly, and a respondent indicated that the difficulties that the SDP's two MEPs have in acquiring parliamentary assignments are explained primarily by the small size of the SDP's delegation relative to the Group.[249] The perceived weak link between loyalty and the allocation of assignments is reflected in the fact that one SDP MEP believes that it is 'very difficult' for either MEP to acquire 'important' rapporteurships[250] despite their loyalty at parliamentary divisions.

The PS is affiliated to the EFD Group. Relations between the affiliated parties of the EFD Group are loose, and there is very little pressure on MEPs to act in ways that correspond to the interests of the Group. This is largely because the Group does not exercise a great deal of agency and does not have a potential to develop a will that is independent of its affiliated national delegations, despite having a leadership organ in the form of the Bureau. The EFD does not provide voting recommendations, and rarely takes a genuinely 'common stance' on issues.[251] This is reflected in the fact that

at 49.45%, its levels of voting cohesion at roll call divisions are the lowest of any EP Group (VoteWatch.eu, accessed 18/11/13).

The PS' affiliates in the EP believe that there are 'advantages and disadvantages' to being attached to a Group that operates in 'such a free' manner.[252] The main advantage is that 'it's really nice to have complete freedom … when you're working in the committees'.[253] There are two main disadvantages. Firstly, there is a feeling that 'we are almost insignificant in the big votes', due to the Group's lack of voting cohesion and its size.[254] Secondly, because of the vast differences that exist between the party's views and those of the two parties that dominate the EFD, UKIP and the Lega Nord, the PS' MEP is unable to rely on Group officials to form positions on his behalf. As a result, the MEP's office must 'go through every voting list' pertaining to the MEP's committees and to plenary sessions, and this places a great burden on the MEP and his staff.[255] The challenges are exacerbated by the fact there is only a single PS MEP and that the level of policy support from the party centrally is low. This evidence strongly suggests that the PS' MEP operates with extensive independence from the EFD Group.

Testing the Hypotheses

The chapter's key finding is that the Finnish parties examined do not desire or attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs. Due to the consistency across the three cases of domestic parties, there is no variation to explain. Consequently, there is no evidence to support the nine hypotheses relating to domestic parties that the chapter set out to test. The degree to which the three parties attempt to, or succeed in, influencing the behaviour of its MEPs does not vary according to the centrality of the party's position on the left–right ideological scale (Hypotheses 9a and 9b), the number of MEPs affiliated to the party (Hypothesis 5), the party's governing status (Hypothesis 3), the party's organizational capacity (Hypothesis 7), the party's views on integration (Hypothesis 11), or the individual MEP's level of political experience (Hypothesis 17). Further, these cases provide no evidence that the type of activities that parties require its MEPs to focus on varies according to the party's governing status (Hypothesis 4), or according to its level of support for integration (Hypothesis 12). As the degree to which the candidate selection systems used by all three parties are centralised are broadly similar, together with the fact that none of the parties give

preferential treatment to any of their candidates at EP elections, it is not possible to test Hypothesis 2.

In terms of the EP Groups, the EPP and the S&D seek and achieve influence on the voting behaviour of their affiliates to a greater extent than the EFD Group. This supports Hypotheses 6 and 8, which state that larger Groups, in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs and in terms of their organizational capacity respectively, are more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of their MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than smaller Groups. As these two Groups are closer to the centre of the left–right ideological scale than the EFD Group, the findings also lend support to Hypothesis 10, which states that centrist Groups are more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of their MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than Groups positioned away from the centre.

While there is support for the three hypotheses discussed above, it is clear that the primary reason for the differences between the EFD Group on the one hand and the EPP and the S&D Groups on the other is the Eurosceptic views of the EFD's affiliates. EFD MEPs appear to view the utility of the Group primarily as a means of gaining administrational resources, parliamentary assignments, and speaking time in plenary. Due to their Eurosceptic views, the EFD's affiliates ensure that the Group does not develop a will of its own and that the national delegations retain their freedom to act independently of the other affiliated delegations. As a result, the Group is powerless to influence the behaviour of its MEPs. This discussion therefore lends strong support to Hypothesis 13.

Conclusion

Findings relating to the three Finnish case studies strongly contradict the claim that the central organizations of domestic parties extensively influence the behaviour of MEPs. None of the three parties fulfil the four preconditions of influence, as set out in Chapter 2. The evidence suggests that the parties have little interest in the work of their MEPs, and even less interest in influencing their behaviour. This is not entirely surprising, as the theoretical underpinnings of the partisan control thesis appear dubious: parties must bear high costs, while the potential for deriving a benefit is limited (Scully, 2001; Raunio, 2007). The aversion of Finnish parties to undertake this uncertain investment is understandable given that the costs are even more pronounced

for parties with relatively small organizations, and that the potential benefits are lower compared with domestic parties that have larger delegations in the EP.

The low appeal of engaging with the work of MEPs is reinforced by the fact that the focus and goals of Finnish parties lie within the domestic political context. Further, these parties accept that MEPs have a right to independence due to the personalised nature of their mandate, and they acknowledge that they could not gain much influence on the behaviour of MEPs even if they so wished, due to the personal nature of the Finnish electoral system (cf. Raunio, 2007). What is, however, surprising is the degree of the parties' passivity in dealing with their MEPs, especially in the case of the two more established parties. While parties acknowledge that they derive some benefit from the work of MEPs, they do little to maximise these gains. This suggests that Finnish parties rarely, if ever, turn to MEPs when seeking to realise goals. It also indicates that MEPs play a somewhat peripheral role in the lives of Finnish political parties.

Two of the three EP Groups examined in this chapter, the EPP and S&D, exercise far greater substantive influence on the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs than domestic parties. Both Groups systematically issue voting instructions and communicate their policy positions to MEPs in a very clear manner. They also monitor MEPs, both in terms of their parliamentary behaviour and in the sense of keeping abreast of the MEPs' views. While the Groups do not apply pressure directly on KOK and SDP MEPs at parliamentary divisions, a subtle force compels MEPs to vote against their personal wishes in a large minority of divisions. MEPs are aware that the EPP and S&D Groups withhold parliamentary assignments from MEPs whose views diverge from those of the Group in the relevant policy area. It is possible that some MEPs refrain from voicing dissent, although all respondents that feature in this chapter deny that they themselves do so.

As the goals of Groups lie exclusively within the context of EU policy-making (Ladrech, 1996: 294), the only aspect of an MEP's work that they are interested in influencing is their parliamentary behaviour. However, it is still conceivable that the EPP and S&D Groups influence the way MEPs approach their work as representatives more broadly by compelling them to focus on parliamentary work and to place a weaker emphasis on carrying out political work in their Member States. While no evidence of this is found in the analysis presented in this chapter, the issue requires further investigation.

Supporting the four hypotheses, the findings relating to the EFD Groups are in stark contrast to those relating to the EPP and S&D Groups. It is clear from the way that the EFD Group has been structured that its activities are dominated by the national delegations, and that the Group does not seek to influence the behaviour of individual MEPs or of whole national delegations. The way that the Group operates is explained almost entirely by the Eurosceptic views held by its MEPs and by the way that this ideological stance leads MEPs to ensure that national delegations remain independent. These findings indicate that claims made in relation to the level of influence that EP Groups exercise on how MEPs carry out representation should reflect the nuances of these between-Group differences.

[36] While the literal translation of the party's name, Perussuomalaiset, might be 'common Finns' or 'ordinary Finns', the name 'True Finns' was used as the English translation until August 2011, when the party formally adopted 'The Finns' as its official English name (Raunio, 2012b: 4). This change occurred because of the leadership's view that the 'True Finns' name had to it 'an extreme right or nationalistic slant' (Raunio, 2012b: 4).

Due to the ease with which it is possible to identify the PS' interviewees from their job title or location, interviews are referred to by date only.

[37] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.

[38] As these figures stem from the period immediately prior to the PS' breakthrough at the 2011 election, it is possible that the number of party members has increased.

[39] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[40] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[41] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[42] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[43] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[44] Interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.

[45] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.

[46] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.

[47] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.

[48] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.

[49] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12; interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.

[50] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.

[51] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.

[52] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.

[53] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.

[54] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.

[55] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.

[56] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.

[57] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 26/6/12.

[58] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.

[59] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.

[60] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.

[61] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 22/11/12.

[62] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.

[63] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.

[64] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12; correspondence with a PS and/or EFD official, 24/3/14.

[65] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[66] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[67] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.

[68] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12; interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.

[69] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[70] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.

[71] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[72] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[73] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[74] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[75] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[76] Interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[77] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[78] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[79] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[80] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[81] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[82] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[83] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[84] Interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[85] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[86] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[87] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[88] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12; interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[89] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12; interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[90] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[91] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[92] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[93] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[94] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[95] Interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[96] Interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[97] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[98] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[99] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[100] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[101] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12; interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[102] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[103] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12; interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[104] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12; interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[105] Interview with domestic SDP party official, 17/10/12.
[106] Interview with domestic SDP party official, 17/10/12.
[107] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[108] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[109] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[110] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[111] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 26/6/12.
[112] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[113] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[114] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[115] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 26/6/12.
[116] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[117] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[118] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[119] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[120] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[121] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[122] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12; interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[123] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.

[124] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[125] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[126] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[127] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[128] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[129] Interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[130] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12; interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12; interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[131] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[132] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[133] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[134] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[135] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[136] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12; interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[137] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[138] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[139] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[140] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[141] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[142] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[143] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[144] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[145] Interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[146] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[147] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12; interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[148] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[149] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[150] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[151] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12; interview with an official from the Finnish Permanent Representation to the EU, 27/6/12.
[152] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[153] Interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[154] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[155] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[156] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[157] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[158] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[159] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[160] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[161] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[162] Interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[163] Interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[164] Interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[165] Interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[166] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[167] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[168] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[169] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.
[170] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.

[171] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[172] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[173] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 26/6/12.
[174] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12; Interview, PS and/or EFD, 22/11/12.
[175] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[176] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[177] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 22/11/12.
[178] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[179] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[180] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[181] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[182] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[183] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[184] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12; interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12; interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[185] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12; interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[186] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[187] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[188] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[189] Interview with a KOK official, 28/11/12.
[190] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12; interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[191] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[192] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[193] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[194] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[195] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[196] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[197] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[198] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[199] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[200] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12; interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[201] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[202] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[203] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[204] Interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[205] Interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[206] Interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[207] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 22/11/12.
[208] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 26/6/12.
[209] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[210] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[211] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[212] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[213] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[214] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[215] Interview with a KOK official, 21/11/12.
[216] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[217] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12.

[218] Liisa Jaakonsaari has been a prominent figure in Finnish political life since the 1970s, serving as a national parliamentarian from 1979 until her entry to the EP in 2009, and holding the post of Minister of Labour in the period 1995–1999. She has also held senior positions in her party, including the post of Vice-Chair from 1993 to 1999. Conversely, Mitro Repo is an Orthodox priest, and was unaffiliated to the SDP until his election to the EP in 2009. As a result, has not had the same opportunity to build a network within the party.
[219] Interview with an SDP official, 20/11/12.
[220] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[221] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[222] Interview with an SDP official, 17/10/12; interview with an SDP official, 25/6/12.
[223] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12; interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[224] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[225] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[226] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[227] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[228] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 13/11/12.
[229] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[230] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[231] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12; interview with an EPP official, 2/5/12.
[232] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[233] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[234] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[235] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[236] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[237] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12; interview with an EPP official, 2/5/12.
[238] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[239] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12; interview with an EPP official, 2/5/12; interview with an EPP official, 15/5/12; interview with an EPP official, 7/6/12.
[240] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[241] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[242] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[243] Interview with a KOK MEP, 5/6/12.
[244] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[245] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[246] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[247] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[248] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[249] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[250] Interview with an SDP MEP, 20/6/12.
[251] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[252] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[253] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[254] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[255] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.

Chapter 5: The United Kingdom

The previous chapter examined cases from Finland, a setting in which domestic parties are expected to have a weak incentive to seek influence on MEPs, and a limited potential to succeed in attaining influence. The finding that none of the Finnish parties examined attempt to influence how MEPs approach their work challenges the partisan control thesis (Hix, 2002; Hix et al., 2007; Faas, 2003), although the finding that two of three Groups examined do influence the voting behaviour of MEPs supports Raunio's claims (2012a). This chapter examines cases from the UK, as British parties appear to have a greater incentive to seek influence on MEPs, and better prospects of success, than parties from most other Member States (see discussion in Introduction).

The study's four sub-questions are addressed in this chapter by examining how the Conservatives, Labour, and UKIP structure relations with their MEPs, and how MEPs from these three parties relate to their EP Groups. Having presented how the cases relate to the hypotheses, the investigation proceeds to examine whether the three domestic parties meet the preconditions of influence set out in Chapter 2: that they desire to attain influence, communicate their wishes to MEPs, provide MEPs with incentives to follow these wishes, and monitor the work of MEPs. The chapter subsequently considers whether certain factors lead to variation in the willingness of parties to attempt to influence MEPs and to variation in the level of success that such attempts meet. Ten of the eleven hypotheses relating to domestic parties presented in Chapter 2 are examined, together with the four hypotheses relating to the EP Groups.

Despite the expectation that British parties extensively seek to influence how MEPs approach their work (see Introduction), this chapter finds that the Conservatives and Labour exclusively attempt to influence the way MEPs vote, and do so only in rare instances. While UKIP's leadership sets out broad principles by which MEPs are expected to abide, it provides little guidance regarding how MEPs should act from day to day. Again, these findings challenge the claim that parties attain extensive influence on MEPs, and dispute the notion that features of EP life such as voting cohesion within domestic party delegations are explained by the existence of centralised systems of party discipline. In summary, the evidence presented in this chapter largely challenges the partisan control thesis.

Three factors are found to explain variation in the propensity of domestic parties to seek influence, namely the degree of centralisation of the candidate selection system, status as a governing party, and the party's attitudes towards integration. The findings relating to EP Groups reflects those presented in the previous chapter, with evidence of far weaker coordination within the two Eurosceptic Groups examined, the EFD and the ECR, compared with the pro-integrationist S&D. As in the case of Finnish SDP MEPs, Labour MEPs feel compelled to follow the S&D's voting recommendations unless there is a strong reason to do otherwise, despite the fact that the Group does not operate a strict system of discipline.

The Cases

By investigating the nature of the partisan relationships of British MEPs, it is possible to observe domestic parties that are expected to manage relations with their MEPs as actively as any in the EU. The three parties selected have a stronger incentive to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs than most other parties represented in the EP. These three parties are the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). If the evidence suggests that any of the three parties seek to influence their MEPs, the differences between the parties make it possible to test ten hypotheses relating to domestic parties. The case selection also makes it possible to test the four hypotheses relating to EP Groups.

The Conservatives were the dominant force in British politics during the twentieth century, its leaders serving as Prime Minister for 57 years. The party won 36.0% of the votes and 305 of the 650 seats contested at the 2010 general election (House of Commons Library, 2010: 1), becoming the largest party in terms of parliamentary representation, yet failing to secure an overall majority. David Cameron, the party leader, subsequently became Prime Minister having formed a governing coalition with the Liberal Democrats. Reflecting a broader trend in British politics, the number of Conservative Party members has declined markedly from a high of nearly three million members in the early 1950s to fewer than 150,000 members in recent years (House of Commons Library, 2012: 3). However, while the current number of members is lower than some of the EU's other large domestic parties (for figures relating to German political parties see Niedermayer, 2012), it is still high in comparison with most parties in the EU (Mair and van Biezen, 2001;

Scarrow, 2000: 89; Whiteley, 2011). The large number of party members suggests that the party has strong networks at the grassroots level. With an income of £23.7m and an expenditure of £22.8m in 2011 (The Electoral Commission, 2012), a mid-term year, it is clear that the Conservatives have access to considerable resources.

The Conservatives have a long history of representation in the EP, having won five of the seven EP elections held in the UK since 1979. With 27.7% of the vote share, the party won the largest number of votes at the 2009 EP election and 27 of the 73 seats available[256] (BBC News, 2009a). The Conservatives ended their affiliation to the EPP–ED Group in 2009 and led efforts to form a new parliamentary Group, the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) (Bale et al., 2010: 85–6). At the time of writing there was a total of 57 MEPs affiliated to the Group (European Parliament, 2014a). It is clear that there is a considerable discrepancy between the policies of those within the Group on issues other than integration (Bale et al., 2010). The UK Conservatives dominate the Group with 27 MEPs, and the party's Martin Callanan has served as chair of the ECR since December 2011 (The Conservatives, 2014).

The Conservatives are a centre-right party. While it supported the UK's membership of the European Community in the 1960s and 1970s (Driver, 2011: 60–1), the party has become increasingly Eurosceptic since the 1980s. EU policy has been a divisive and a problematic issue for the party (Driver, 2011: 70–2), and while an Eurosceptic consensus has emerged, it remains a particularly sensitive and a potentially damaging issue for the party. This is well illustrated by Cameron's announcement in January 2013 that he would hold a referendum on UK's membership of the EU in 2017, a decision made in reaction to pressure from staunch Eurosceptics within his national parliamentary party (BBC News, 2013a). The fact that EU policy poses such great challenges to the party suggests that it has considerable incentive to influence the behaviour of its MEPs.

Together with the Conservatives, Labour is the other major force in British politics. It has consistently garnered between 30% and 50% of the vote share at general elections in the post-war period, its weak results at the 1983 and 2010 elections serving as the only exceptions. The thirteen years during the period 1997–2010 was the longest that the party has spent in power, having previously spent time in office during the periods 1945–1951, 1964–1970, and 1974–1979. The number of Labour members has declined from a high of nearly a million in the early 1950's and currently stands at around 193,000 (House of Commons Library, 2012: 3). With an

income of £31.3m and an expenditure of £30.3m in 2011 (The Electoral Commission, 2012), Labour is currently the best funded party in the UK.

Labour is a centre-left party, for which – much like the Conservative party – EU policy has historically been a contentious issue. While the leadership supported British membership at the 1975 referendum, the majority of MPs campaigned for Britain to leave the EEC (Carter and Ladrech, 2007: 58). A consensus has emerged within the party in favour of a moderately pro-integrationist position since the 1990s (Butler and Westlake, 1995: 114), however the party's disunited reaction to Cameron's announcement regarding holding a referendum on Britain's EU membership (*The Economist*, 2013a) suggests that there is scope for the deep-seated divisions to return.

Similarly to the Conservatives, Labour has considerable experience of representation in the EP. Its EP electoral fortunes peaked following the 1994 EP elections, at which it won 62 out of 87 seats available. However, the party fared poorly at the 2009 election, winning 15.7% of the vote share and beaten into third place on that measure for the first time ever at an EP election (House of Commons Library, 2009: 2, 6). The votes translated into thirteen seats, another measure on which it suffered its weakest performance. These MEPs are affiliated to the S&D Group.

Much as The Finns Party (PS) is different from the National Coalition Party (KOK) and the Finnish Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the Finnish case, UKIP displays many dissimilarities compared with the Conservatives and Labour. While the two traditional governing parties have histories spanning well over a century, UKIP is a newcomer to the British party system. Established in 1993 as a reaction to the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty (Hayton, 2010: 27; Lynch et al., 2012: 736), the single policy objective stated in the party's constitution is:

> that the United Kingdom shall cease to be a member of the European Union and shall not thereafter make any Treaty or join any international organisation which involves in any way the surrender of any part of the United Kingdom's sovereignty. (UKIP, 2012a: 2.3)

While Labour is moderately pro-European, and the Conservatives 'soft' Eurosceptics (Lynch and Whitaker, 2013; Whitaker and Lynch, 2014: 239) in that they oppose further integration but do not wish to see the UK leave the EU, the policy goal stated

above demonstrates that UKIP is a ‘hard’ Eurosceptic party (Taggart and Szczerbiack, 2008; Whitaker and Lynch, 2014: 235), since the issue of integration is their primary concern (Lynch et al., 2012: 733–4). UKIP is one of few parties represented in the EP calling for the withdrawal of their Member State from the EU (Lynch et al., 2012: 739), and is the largest ‘hard’ Eurosceptic party in existence. An examination of the party’s 2010 general election manifesto suggests that the party’s policies are only slightly to the right of the Liberal Democrats and considerably more centrist than the Conservatives (Lynch et al., 2012: 744). Nevertheless, most scholars agree that the party is best viewed as ‘right-wing’ (Abedi and Lundberg, 2009: 72; Ford et al., 2012: 207; John and Margetts, 2009: 508), and it is conceived as such for the purposes of this thesis.

UKIP’s electoral advances have taken place in the context of EP and local elections – two sets of ‘second order’ elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980). The party won its first three seats in the EP following the introduction of proportional representation in 1999, before making a major advance in 2004, winning twelve seats on 16.1% of the vote share (Butler and Westlake, 2005: 152). UKIP made another advance at the 2009 EP elections, winning 13 seats and 16.5% of the national vote share, beating Labour and the Liberal Democrats into second place for the first time (House of Commons Library, 2009: 2, 6). UKIP has failed to replicate this success in the context of elections to the House of Commons. Its failure to win any seats[257] is in no small part due to the hurdle posed for smaller parties by the first-past-the-post system. The party came fourth at the 2010 general election, winning 3.2% of the vote (Lynch et al., 2012: 736). The strong showings in recent opinion polls (*The Guardian*, 2014) suggest that the party will perform strongly at the 2014 EP elections and at the 2015 general election.

Despite the fact that the issue of whether UKIP should take up its EP mandates ‘was a thorny issue in the party’s early days’ (Lynch et al., 2012: 738), the party has contested EP elections at every election since the party’s foundation and has taken up each seat that it has won. The party has acquired considerable experience of dealing with MEPs since it won its first three seats in the EP in 1999. However, some of the difficulties that the party has faced in dealing with MEPs, such as dissent and defections (BBC News, 2004), have continued during the 2009–14 parliamentary term (BBC News, 2010; BBC News, 2012; BBC News, 2013b). This suggests that the party may not have developed effective methods of dealing with its MEPs. The fact

that MEPs elected by UKIP have left the party during all three parliamentary terms raises questions about the effectiveness of the procedures that it uses to select appropriate candidates and to deal with MEPs following their election.

Of UKIP's nine MEPs at the time of writing (UKIP, 2014), eight are affiliated to the EFD Group[258] (EFD, 2014), which was established under the initiative of UKIP's leader, Nigel Farage. UKIP's delegation is the Group's largest, providing over a quarter of MEPs. The fact that the EFD is Eurosceptic in outlook, young in organizational terms, and diverse in terms of the views held by their affiliates, gives rise to the expectation that it has been less able to influence the behaviour of MEPs than other Groups. As a recent creation, it is unlikely that the EFD has developed strong mechanisms for asserting itself independently of the will of the national delegations. The strength of UKIP's Euroscepticism and its rejection of the idea of political organization on a transnational basis[259] suggests that it would not be willing to maintain an affiliation to a Group which imposes its will on the national delegations.

This notion is reinforced by the fact that UKIP has a strong presence within the Group, and that if the Group were to develop any kind of a will of its own, it is likely that this would reflect UKIP's outlook. The evidence presented in the previous chapter, as well as in other studies (Lynch et al., 2012: 739), indicates that the Group was established as a means of attracting parliamentary resources for national delegations, rather than as a means of coordinating policy. Further, the considerable policy divergences which exist within the Group, together with the fact that the Group is the least cohesive in terms of voting (Lynch et al., 2012: 739; VoteWatch.eu, accessed 20/7/13), suggests that the Group does not enforce strict discipline.

Several factors suggest that the organizational capacity of UKIP's central party machinery is limited. It takes time for new parties to develop effective organizations centrally and at the grassroots level. UKIP's rise has taken place against the backdrop of considerable 'internal conflict and leadership problems' (John and Margetts, 2009: 501; Abedi and Lundberg, 2009), and the party has struggled to develop a stable party organization. Leadership changes have occurred regularly, and the fledgling party has faced further difficulties, include the imprisonment of two MEPs elected under the UKIP banner (BBC News, 2007; 2009b), the departure from the party of MEPs (BBC News, 2000; 2004; 2010; 2012; 2013), and a scandal involving the misuse of EP allowances by MEPs (*The Guardian*, 2012). The party's

level of income and expenditure is considerably lower than that of the UK's main parties. In 2011 the party spent £970,000, compared with £30.3m in the case of Labour (The Electoral Commission, 2012).

As UKIP's MEPs are the party's main holders of major elected office,[260] the role that they play within the party differs from that played by other MEPs in their parties. Holding the office of MEP provide these individuals with a platform and access to public funds that are unmatched by the party's other members. This contrasts strongly with most of the other major British parties, as they have a number of representatives elected to legislatures at the state and at the devolved level, and MEPs are usually less well known than the representatives who serve in domestic settings. As this suggests that UKIP MEPs are senior party members, there may be less scope for the leadership to influence their behaviour.

However, two factors suggest that the party may attempt to exercise considerable influence on the way they carry out their work. Firstly, the party has a considerable incentive to encourage MEPs to carry out particular tasks on its behalf and these tasks may not be appealing to MEPs. UKIP has a clear incentive to develop its organization at the national and the local level (*The Economist*, 2012), as its primary electoral goal is to gain seats in the House of Commons. The party has little to gain from allowing its MEPs to undertake parliamentary activities in the EP, as its main goal – withdrawal from the EU – is determined at the national level. It may therefore desire that its MEPs concentrate on carrying out domestic political work, and on developing the party's organization. Secondly, the party is exceptionally leader-centric. It is dominated by its charismatic leader, Nigel Farage, who admitted in a TV interview that UKIP is a 'one man party' (Ship, 2013). The fact that few of the party's MEPs other than Farage have a strong public profile suggests that the leader is in a strong position within the party and that the other MEPs are dependent on the party to a considerable degree to realise their own personal goals. This in turn gives rise to the possibility that the leadership is able to exercise considerable influence over MEPs.

Testing the Hypotheses

The differences that exist between the three British parties chosen as case studies provide a means to examine ten of the eleven hypotheses presented in Chapter 2 relating to domestic parties and the four hypotheses relating to the EP Groups. By

examining whether the desire and ability of Labour and the Conservatives to influence the behaviour of their MEPs changed as the former left government in 2010 to be replaced by the latter, it is possible to test Hypotheses 3 and 4. Hypothesis 3 expects governing parties to have a greater desire to influence MEPs than opposition parties, and for their efforts to meet with greater success. Hypothesis 4 expects governing parties to demand that MEPs focus on legislative activity. While all three case studies have large national delegations of MEPs compared with most of the other parties represented in the EP, they vary relative to each other. It is consequently possible to test Hypothesis 5, which expects the Conservatives to show a greater willingness to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and to be more likely to succeed, than Labour and UKIP.

The vast differences between Labour and the Conservatives' level of expenditure compared with UKIP, together with the differing histories, suggest that there is considerable variation in the level of organizational capacity between UKIP and the two established parties. Hypothesis 7 expects the Conservatives and Labour, two parties with considerable organizational capacities, to be more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and to achieve greater success, than UKIP. As Labour and the Conservatives are two centrist parties with UKIP positioned appreciably to the right of the Conservatives, it is also possible to test the two variants of Hypothesis 9, which relate to the ideological distance of parties from the centre. Hypothesis 9a expects Labour and the Conservatives to attempt to control the legislative behaviour of MEPs to a greater extent than UKIP, although there is no suggestion that they will enjoy greater success. These expectations are reversed in Hypothesis 9b.

The attitudes of the three parties towards integration differ, with Labour moderately in favour of the status quo (*The Economist*, 2013b; 2014), the Conservatives wishing to see the UK remain a member of a reformed EU (*The Economist*, 2013c), and UKIP wishing to see the UK leave the EU. Hypothesis 11 expects UKIP to be less likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs than the Conservatives, who in turn are expected to be less likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs than Labour. Hypothesis 12 expects UKIP to desire that their MEPs carry out more work in the UK, and to be more likely to succeed in determining how MEPs spend their time than the Conservatives, with Labour a further step behind. As differences are found to exist in the degree to which

the candidate selection systems are centralised, it is possible to examine Hypotheses 2. This hypothesis expects parties operating centralised candidate selection systems to be more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, and to be more likely to succeed, than parties operating decentralised candidate selection systems.

Selecting these three parties as case studies also makes it possible to examine whether there is variation in how domestic parties structure relations with MEPs who have different levels of political experience. Among the MEPs elected from the lists of the three parties in 2009 are those who entered the EP for the first time in 2009 with no prior experience of serving as full time politicians, as well as individuals who had served as MEPs for over twenty years. Consequently, it is possible to test Hypothesis 14, which expects parties to be able to exercise greater levels of influence on the behaviour of MEPs who have less political experience than on the behaviour of MEPs who have more political experience.

In addition, the case selection makes it possible to test the four hypotheses relating to EP Groups. Labour MEPs are affiliated to the S&D Group, which is far larger than the ECR and the EFD Groups, to which Conservative and UKIP MEPs respectively are affiliated. Hypothesis 6 expects the S&D Group to go to greater lengths in their attempts to influence the legislative behaviour of its MEPs, and to enjoy greater success, than the ECR and the EFD Groups. Hypothesis 8 reinforces this expectation, as larger Groups are expected to have greater organizational capacities than smaller Groups. As the S&D Group is positioned closer to the centre of the left–right scale than the ECR, with the EFD further towards the right, Hypothesis 10 expects the S&D Group to be more likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of their MEPs, and to enjoy greater success, than the ECR, with the EFD less interested and successful in influencing the legislative behaviour of MEPs. Hypothesis 13 expects this trend to be further reinforced by the Groups' level of Euroscepticism.

Candidate Selection Systems

The Conservatives used a largely decentralised system to select candidates for the 2009 and 2014 EP elections. While prospective candidates were required to pass a centralised vetting procedure, known as the European Parliamentary Assessment Board, the selection procedure was carried out primarily by party officials at the regional level (The Conservatives, 2012: unpag. [3]). Selection colleges were formed

in each region, and these comprised of representatives of the party's Westminster constituency branches together with the leaders of the party's organizations at the level of the European region.[261] MEPs seeking re-election required the support of 60% of the selection college in their region to be given a preferential position on the party's list relative to non-incumbents (The Conservatives, 2012: unpag. [6]). While all sitting MEPs passed this threshold in advance of the 2009 election, three failed in their attempts in advance of the 2014 election. These were the leader of the Conservative delegation, Richard Ashworth, who is viewed as amenable to European integration (*KentOnline*, 2013; *ConservativeHome*, 2013a), and two former UKIP MEPs, Martha Andreasen and David Campbell-Bannerman (*ConservativeHome*, 2013b).[262] In regions where more than one sitting MEP passes the incumbency threshold, party members were given the opportunity to rank the order of MEPs seeking re-election through a postal ballot.

The regional selectoral college also voted to select a short-list of candidates from the pool of non-incumbent MEPs and those who failed to pass the incumbency threshold. The ranking of these candidates was decided by party members in a parallel postal contest (The Conservatives, 2012: unpag. [6–7]). The party ensured that the highest position on the list in each region not taken by a sitting MEP was allocated to a female candidate in advance of the 2009 election (*ConservativeHome*, 2008). As a result of this measure, seven of the Conservatives' eight newly elected MEPs were female.[263] Female candidates were not given preferential treatment in advance of the 2014 election.

As the Conservatives' lists are formed by the regional selectoral colleges and ordered by party members, there is limited scope for the party leadership to influence the composition of lists. Nevertheless, the system is not as decentralised as the one-member-one-vote system used by the Liberal Democrats, whereby incumbents are afforded no protection.[264] Noting that MEPs 'work through incentives',[265] respondents unanimously agreed that the system compels MEPs to remain in regular contact with regional party leaders and with members in their regions. One noted that he would 'spend less time in the region and more time in London doing what the party leadership tells me' were the selection process more centralised.[266] Another acknowledged that her reselection strategy was to target the individuals she considered most likely to be chosen as members of the selectoral college in her region.[267]

Nevertheless, this tendency to pay attention to the selectorate does not appear to place a particularly heavy burden on MEPs. Incumbents believe that the main task for MEPs seeking reselection is to communicate to the selectorate about their activity. They do not feel that they are required to spend a great deal of time undertaking activity for the benefit of those who control their re-election prospects.[268] Even so, respondents are clear that there is a 'noticeable' difference in the amount of attention MEPs pay to their regions depending on the degree of intraparty competition in the region.[269] These findings support the notion that the type of candidate selection system used influences the way MEPs carry out their work (Farrell and Scully, 2007). However, they do not necessarily support the view that the use of a closed-list system enables party leaders to compel MEPs to follow guidance.

The system used by the Labour Party to form its lists of candidates for the 2009 and 2014 elections was similarly decentralised, and also had a considerable degree of protection for MEPs seeking re-election. The highest positions on the party's list in a region are reserved for MEPs who are able to overcome a 'trigger ballot',[270] at which MEPs require a simple majority of votes cast by members in the region. Where more than one re-election seeking incumbent succeeds in overcoming the trigger ballot, the party membership in the region vote on the order in which those candidates appear on the list. To determine the composition of the lower positions on the party's list, the regional party leadership draws up a short-list of non-incumbent nominees and the order is set on the basis of a member's ballot.[271]

The selection system includes a measure of gender protection, in that one of the top two Labour candidates in each region must be female, as must one of the top two candidates in the lower part of the list that is designated for non-incumbent candidates.[272] The central party leadership has no direct influence on the process,[273] and the degree to which regional party leaderships are able to shape the outcome of the process is dependent on their ability to influence ordinary party members. The national leadership's influence is even more limited in regions where the trade unions are strong. For MEPs seeking re-election in these areas, the imperative is to 'stay in not with the party but with the trade unions', as they can have considerable influence on the composition of the Labour Party's list.[274] No incumbent Labour MEP has failed to overcome the trigger ballot since the system was introduced in 2004,[275] and deselection is generally held to be 'extremely unlikely' under the current arrangements.[276]

With the exception of the 1999 EP election, which was the first to feature a closed-list system of proportional representation, the central party leadership has not interfered with the selection of candidates, and Labour MEPs do not report that reselection concerns compel them to act in a manner that reflects the leadership's wishes. One respondent noted that he 'never' felt he might face reselection difficulties if he were to vote against the leadership.[277] Another noted that:

> Sometimes some of my colleagues are worried that they *will* [experience difficulties when seeking reselection if they do not toe the party leadership's line], but they *haven't*. It would be difficult because the party membership's involved. People have this idea that lists are chosen by the party and the party leadership can put whoever they want on them. It actually doesn't work like that; at least it doesn't in the Labour party. So I think getting rid of somebody would be quite difficult.[278]

This suggests that the decentralised nature of the candidate selection system undermines the ability of the party leadership to incentivise the behaviour of MEPs.

As in the case of Conservative MEPs, Labour MEPs acknowledge that there is a need to maintain regular contact with the party at the level of the European constituency, as the party's members at the regional level play a key role in the reselection process.[279] Supporting the findings of another study (Farrell and Scully, 2007), a long-serving MEP noted that his focus 'shifted' from the constituency to the party at the regional level following the introduction of a proportional electoral system in 1999, as the party 'essentially became your … electorate'.[280] The MEP acknowledges that he spends more time in party meetings and in contact with party members than he did when elections were conducted using the first-past-the-post system.[281]

While the system clearly compels MEPs of all parties to operate in this way, neither Labour's membership nor its party organizations at the regional level appear to take advantage of their position. There is, for example, no pressure on Labour MEPs to carry out a great deal of work on behalf of the regional party organization or to spend more time in their constituencies than Finnish MEPs. As in the case of Conservative MEPs, the task that Labour MEPs feel compelled to carry out is to maintain regular contact with the regional party organization and with the party membership in the region.[282] Further, Labour MEPs recognise that the need to maintain links with members in their regions is neither onerous nor particularly

unwelcome. Several noted that maintaining contact with party members assists them to carry out their work as representatives well.[283]

The system used by UKIP to select candidates for the 2009 EP elections was also largely decentralised. Nominees were interviewed by regional party grandees, and were given the opportunity to send a 250-word statement to party members in the region before participating in a series of poorly attended hustings in their regions.[284] The ordering of candidates on the party's lists in each region was determined by a postal ballot of members in each region, and unlike in the case of the Conservatives and Labour, incumbent UKIP MEPs were not afforded special privileges.[285] The party leadership did not remain wholly passive in the selection process. Candidates nominated by popular figures within the party, such as the party leader, Nigel Farage, fared better than others, and the leadership used this to shape the outcome of the contests.[286]

UKIP used a far more centralised system to select candidates for the 2014 election. The vetting procedure was 'considerably more stringent'.[287] Prospective candidates were required to undertake a two-hour assessment, in which they were interviewed and in which their public speaking and writing skills were examined (BBC News, 2013c). While party members at the regional level continued to have some say in the composition of the party's electoral lists, the party leadership, in the guise of the National Executive Committee, had 'the final say' over the ordering of candidates.[288] The party's constitution and rules of procedure were modified to enable this change (see UKIP, 2012a; UKIP, 2012b),[289] and this was a measure taken specifically to address the difficulties that the party has faced in ensuring party discipline during the 2009–14 parliamentary term. An official explained that the party is 'anxious to avoid some of the problems that we have had this time. We started with thirteen in the group [of UKIP MEPs] and we're down to nine and one of them has been arrested.'[290]

It is clear that the leadership has used its new powers to ensure that only its preferred candidates will be elected at the 2014 election,[291] as it did when it rearranged the order of the party's list at the election to the London Assembly in 2012.[292] Speaking in advance of the selection process, an official noted that 'If there's somebody who's predicted to give offence, then they're not going to be chosen again, that's fairly straightforward.'[293] Sitting MEPs were well aware for most of the 2009–14 term that their reselection chances was linked to the way they carried out their

work and to the degree to which they remained loyal to the party leadership. An MEP stated in advance of the selection process that colleagues who have not ‘performed the way the NEC would like them to’ during the term ‘will be downlisted’, and that the party can afford to be ‘very selective’ as ‘a lot of people want to be UKIP MEPs’.[294] This demonstrates that UKIP issues its MEPs with potent threats and rewards that are linked to behaviour.

The leadership viewed incumbency as an asset. MEPs have had the opportunity to develop an understanding of how the EP works, and the leadership viewed them as less of a liability than non-incumbents, being ‘the devil they know rather than the devil they don’t know’.[295] Nevertheless, it is clear that the party leadership was willing to deselect incumbent MEPs on the basis of behaviour and suitability for the role of MEP.[296] In the event, Mike Nattrass, a former Chair and a former Deputy Leader of the party who had served as an MEP since 2004, was deselected (BBC News, 2013c), while Godfrey Bloom was unable to seek candidature as he had the party whip withdrawn for making controversial comments about the party’s female members (BBC News, 2013d).

This discussion demonstrates that there is a fundamental difference between UKIP’s approach to selecting candidates for the 2014 EP election and those of the other two parties. Rather than seeking to shape the outcome of the selection process to the detriment of any MEPs seeking re-election, the leadership of the Conservatives and Labour have used their influence to protect sitting MEPs in recent years. Incumbent MEPs from these two parties are very rarely deselected or placed in a low position on their parties’ lists, other than in cases of serious misconduct. The failure of Richard Ashworth, the Europhile leader of the Conservatives’ delegation in the EP, to pass the regional party’s incumbency threshold during the selection process for the 2014 election (*ConservativeHome*, 2013a; *KentOnline*, 2013) was a rare instance of a sitting MEP from either party being deselected.[297] As no organ within these two parties pays a great deal of interest in the work of MEPs, there is little scope for MEPs to offend any set of individuals within their parties. In contrast, UKIP’s willingness to deselect undesirable incumbent MEPs makes it clear that its leadership now takes a far more proactive approach to the selection of candidates than it, and the other two parties, have taken in the past (other than in the case of Labour at the 1999 EP election).

Staffing and Communication

The Conservatives do not have a formal mechanism for facilitating communication between their MEPs and the party's central organization.[298] This is despite the fact that two ECR officials are based in London to facilitate coordination between the Conservatives' domestic party organisation and its delegation in the EP. The accounts provided by respondents indicate that there is variation in the degree of contact between government ministers from the party and the MEPs responsible for the corresponding policy area. Some respondents indicated that this type of interaction takes place infrequently and that ministers take little interest in the work of MEPs.[299] When visiting Brussels, ministers tend to prioritize meetings with senior figures from the Commission and Council rather than with the party's delegation in the EP. One MEP's assistant recalled how the MEP demanded a meeting with a minister, saying that:

> I want to talk to you and I want you to come and talk to our MEPs. You keep giving out that we're not following your line. We've never met you because every time you come over you're chauffeured up somewhere else because we're not important. I want you to come over and I want to talk.[300]

An official lent support to this view when claiming that 'it is often reliant on us to make the links with [the party in] London, rather than the other way around,' and that links between the delegation and the party's front bench have become weaker since the party entered government in 2010. Members of the party's front bench have made less time for issues relating to the EP since becoming government ministers.[301]

Other respondents noted that they are in regular communication with ministers and with civil servants in Whitehall, and that this is the case regardless of whether the Conservatives are in government.[302] The contrasting nature of responses reinforces the idea that communication does not take place systematically between MEPs and government ministers, and suggests that the strengths of linkages depend on the level of importance that individual ministers attach to maintaining links with MEPs.[303]

The degree of interaction between MEPs and their staffs, and officials from the UK Permanent Representation to the EU (UKRep), is greater. Respondents note that much of the information and policy advice received from the government flows between the MEPs' assistants and UKRep officials. Conservative MEPs and their

assistants are very happy to work with UKRep, especially since the change of government in 2010.[304]

The 'link system' established between 1997 and 1999 under the guidance of Tony Blair to coordinate policy between the European Parliamentary Labour Party (EPLP) and government ministers is well documented (Ovey, 2002; Messmer, 2003; see also discussion in Chapter 1). Each MEP was given the task of leading the EPLP's policy work in a specific area and of coordinating with their counterpart on Labour's front bench in Westminster. While Messmer (2003) suggested that the link system enabled strong coordination between the government and the EPLP, respondents to the present study emphasised that there has been considerable variation in the degree to which different Labour (shadow) ministers have used the link system, and this reflects Ovey's findings (2002: 165, 194, 207). The system has not always worked 'well', not least because meetings of the ministerial teams are often held when the link MEP is required to attend to parliamentary work in Brussels and Strasbourg.[305] Nevertheless, the system has 'worked well enough often enough' and in many cases there is 'good contact' between the link MEP and the relevant ministry.[306]

The appeal to senior Labour politicians of maintaining links to the EPLP is expected to have decreased since the publication of these accounts (Ovey, 2001; Messmer, 2003). The scope for Labour MEPs to influence EP policy decision has diminished in more recent times, as the size of the party's delegation in the EP has decreased, together with the relative size of the Socialist Group within the chamber. The potential for the EPLP to cause the party embarrassment has similarly decreased since it left power in 2010, as opposition parties are subject to less intense scrutiny. These expectations are reflected in the perception that exists among Labour MEPs that links between Labour's front bench and the EPLP have weakened since Labour's time in government, and that the party is not greatly interested in the work of MEPs at present. This reflects the expectation of Hypothesis 3.

Nevertheless, some of the interest shown by senior politicians during the late 1990s has persisted,[307] as some effort is made to maintain the links between MEPs and shadow ministers. Further, Labour MEPs meet the party leader every quarter and shadow ministers periodically visit MEPs in Brussels.[308] Respondents report that the degree of contact varies according to the level of interest individuals have in maintaining these links, to the perceived importance of the policy area,[309] and to the EP's level of competence.[310]

The EPLP employs a General Secretary and a Political Officer, who are primarily based in Brussels. The latter plays a central role in coordinating the delegation's work, by ensuring that MEPs develop policy positions for the delegation.[311] The full-time official who is based in the parliamentary office of the party leader, Ed Miliband, facilitates coordination between the Labour leadership in the UK and the EPLP.[312] In practice, what little contact takes place between Labour MEPs and the party tends to occur between MEPs and politicians from Labour's front bench. In rare instances where MEPs feel they require guidance from the party, the 'usual' practice is to discuss the issue with the (shadow) minister, and MEPs report no major problems when attempting to contact members of the front bench.[313] In addition, regular communication takes place between the EPLP leader, Glenis Wilmott, and the party leader, Ed Miliband.[314]

Since Labour's move into opposition and the subsequent change in party leadership, the leader of the EPLP has sat as a member of the shadow cabinet.[315] This development should not be interpreted as having been undertaken in order to provide the party leadership with a means of increasing its influence on the EPLP. Rather, it is viewed by MEPs as a means of strengthening coordination between the party leadership and the party's delegation in the EP in a period when it is almost inevitable that the links between MEPs and the party's front bench will weaken. MEPs view this development positively, as 'one thing we've got', rather than as a measure which was enacted against their will, and they note that the access that their delegation leader now has to the shadow cabinet enables her to be 'clued up about the important issues'.[316] Further, six Labour MEPs (nearly half the EPLP) are members of the party's national policy forum, a party policy-making organ that consists of 186 members and that meets two or three times a year. MEPs view membership of the national policy forum as 'quite helpful', as it provides a means of making the EPLP's views known.[317]

UKIP's party organisation is considerably smaller than that of the two other British parties examined in this thesis. In contrast to Labour, which employs over 300 individuals at the state and sub-state level (Webb and Fisher, 2001: 6), UKIP employs a total of approximately 20 staff members. Of these, half are based in London and focus on policy and campaigning activity,[318] while the other half are based in Devon and undertake administrative duties.[319] None of the party's officials are specifically responsible for liaising between the party's central organisations and MEPs, and

interaction between the party and MEPs takes place on an 'ad hoc' basis.[320] In contrast to the other two parties examined in this chapter, several of UKIP's most prominent party members are also MEPs, including the party's leader and deputy leader. There is considerable variation in the degree of contact between MEPs and the party leadership, despite the fact that the leader is a member of the party's delegation in the EP.[321]

Model of Representation

It is clear that Conservative MEPs have extensive freedom to decide for themselves how they wish to carry out their roles as representatives.[322] The party provides no guidance regarding how MEPs should divide their time between different geographical locations or between different activities. When asked whether her focus on EU policy-making was driven by the wishes of the party, one Conservative MEP stated that 'I don't know what the party wants. They never said.'[323] The considerable variation that exists in how Conservative MEPs carry out their roles as representatives serves as evidence that it is the individuals themselves who decide how to carry out their work. Respondents explain that their priorities stem from their skills and interests.[324]

Labour's constitution requires the party's candidates 'to accept and comply with the standing orders of the EPLP' if elected (Labour, 2010: 28). However, these are general guidelines and no Labour party organ provides guidance on how MEPs should divide their time, either in terms of finding a balance between carrying out work domestically and in Brussels and Strasbourg, or in terms of how they allocate time to specific tasks. This is again reflected in the variation that exists between MEPs in how they carry out their work, and MEPs feel that they have complete freedom to define their role as representatives.[325] One explained that:

> You have a *remarkable* latitude in terms of defining your own job and we all do it differently. We all have different priorities. Personally, I see my job as having been elected to the Parliament to be here, to do a lot in the Parliament. Others, just as legitimately… and I don't just mean for personal, opportunistic reasons… they think that their job is to be at home as often as they possibly can and get around their constituencies as much as possible. We all try to work out a balance between these two things, and strike different balances.[326]

There is far greater discussion within UKIP regarding how MEPs should act than in the other two parties featured in this discussion, and this is partly because of the divide that exists within the party on this issue. Elements within the party membership remain of the view that UKIP's successful electoral candidates should not take up their seats in the EP, and regard legislative work 'as totally nugatory'.[327] The party leadership, in contrast, increasingly views participation in the work of parliamentary committees as important. By undertaking committee work MEPs and the party's affiliates are able to source information that can be used to further the party's agenda within legislative processes and in its domestic campaigns (cf. Whitaker and Lynch, 2014: 242). The party leadership does not attempt to deter MEPs from attending parliamentary committee meetings or to compel MEPs to focus their energies exclusively on carrying out activities in the UK.[328]

While there is no formal model that UKIP MEPs are required to follow, the party does have certain expectations of how MEPs should carry out their work. Successful UKIP candidates at the 2009 election were expected to sign a 9-point code of conduct. This document outlines general principles to which MEPs promise to adhere, but does not provide a detailed model of representation. The principles include remaining loyal to the party and its leader, supporting party policy, attending plenary sessions in Strasbourg, becoming affiliated to the party's choice of EP Group, pooling the EP-financed communications budget, and ensuring that no acts are undertaken which bring the party into disrepute.[329] The latter principle implies that MEPs are not to criticise the party or the leadership. The party's successful candidates at the 2014 election were expected to sign a 'more greased up' document, which Nigel Farage confirmed included a clause requiring MEPs to contribute financially to the party (The Politics Show, 2014).[330] This indicates that the party leadership is seeking to enforce stricter discipline within the delegation and greater influence over the way MEPs carry out their work.

UKIP MEPs are expected to pay considerable attention to their regions, and are likely to face difficulties when seeking reselection if their regional party organization feel that they have neglected their constituency work.[331] MEPs are expected to organize public meetings, to make regular media appearances at the regional level, and to employ a press officer.[332] They are also expected to be active in their constituencies on weekends and during green weeks.[333] UKIP MEPs are provided little incentive to carry out parliamentary work, other than to participate in

parliamentary divisions. MEPs are unwise to provide the party and its members with any evidence that they are in the process of 'going native', as this is viewed as 'one of the worst crimes' that a UKIP MEP can commit.[334] To date none has been permanently based in Brussels.[335] However, the interview evidence does not suggest that the party's expectations shape the decisions that UKIP MEPs make regarding how to spend their time. The views of the party and those of its MEPs on this issue correspond to a considerable degree.

As a small party with no representation in the House of Commons, UKIP may be expected to demand that MEPs use their parliamentary allowances to employ as many assistants in the constituency as possible. While most MEPs from other British parties divide their staffing allowance relatively evenly between Brussels and their Member States, UKIP MEPs employ far more assistants in their constituencies than they do in Brussels.[336] However, there is no evidence to suggest that the party puts pressure on MEPs to focus their staffing allowances on their constituencies, despite the stipulation that MEPs operate an office in 'a major population centre' (UKIP, 2012b: W.10). Two explanations that are unrelated to the wishes of the party can be provided for the trend identified. Firstly, as many UKIP MEPs do not engage in parliamentary work as intensely as most MEPs, they can rely extensively on EFD advisors for EP-based assistance.[337] Secondly, MEPs can use their allowances as a form of patronage to strengthen their position within the regional party organizations. One interviewee stated that the practice of MEPs employing members of the regional party board had become a 'problem' for the party, and was one reason for modifying the candidate selection system in favour of the central party leadership.[338]

Policy Guidance and Voting Instructions

The Conservative Party's central office does not systematically provide MEPs with policy advice or voting instructions, and one MEP noted that he had 'never received a direct instruction from anyone for how I should be voting' in over twenty years as an MEP.[339] Nevertheless, the government does provide guidance and voting recommendations to all British MEPs through UKRep.[340] Conservative MEPs note that they regularly consult with the government on issues relating to their EP Committees, that they follow the guidance received 'nine times out of ten', and that they do so of their own volition.[341]

The government periodically attempts to persuade Conservative MEPs to follow its policy positions on 'core issues', however this does not happen regularly, and such attempts usually have 'remarkably little effect' on the behaviour of MEPs.[342] Domestic politicians tend to be interested solely in the voting behaviour of MEPs, as they are concerned that the national press will publicise instances where the Conservative delegation in the EP votes against government policy.[343] The party's central organization puts 'very little' pressure on MEPs to modify their behaviour.[344] While UKRep provides 'firm instructions' relating to how they would like MEPs to act, its officials are limited to putting 'subtle pressure' on MEPs due to the organization's remit as part of the UK's civil service.[345]

While the evidence suggests that Conservative MEPs are only rarely subject to pressure from the party or from governmental actors, the dynamics within the delegation of Conservative MEPs are more complicated. The delegation defines policy positions independently of the party and of the government, based on the judgment of the MEP who is responsible for the issue in question.[346] These policy positions are relayed to the other MEPs by the delegation whip. There is a general expectation within the delegation that MEPs follow the recommendations made by their colleagues, unless there is good reason to object.[347] MEPs note that they feel a greater sense of loyalty to their Conservative colleagues in the EP than to their colleagues in London, and that they are generally inclined to support their colleagues in the EP by following the delegation's recommendations.[348]

During Labour's time in office, government representatives provided voting instructions on a regular basis,[349] however the party leadership's tendency to mandate MEPs has declined since leaving office and is now weak. The EPLP currently receives requests from London approximately once every other month across all subject areas. The party leadership only takes an interest in the work of MEPs on the rare 'controversial' issues which attract publicity, and it is clear that MEPs view this practice as acceptable, as it does not take place very often.[350] In terms of day-to-day committee work, one MEP noted that she rarely receives or requires policy advice from the party. Issues tend to be 'pretty clear' and politicians 'instinctively know' how the party and the Group position themselves, even if they do not make it explicit.[351] Party officials are 'not normally'[352] able to provide policy advice and certainly do not seek to influence the delegation's behaviour. MEPs are not required

to seek the party's approval when undertaking policy work, although they periodically do so of their own volition on controversial issues.[353]

Similarly to MEPs from all parties examined, UKIP MEPs are required to publicly adhere to the core policy positions taken by their party. While there may be considerable latitude for MEPs from other parties to interpret party policy when negotiating within the EP, the clarity of UKIP's core principles restrict the scope of its MEPs to make their own policy judgments. The party's domestic organization does not provide policy guidance or voting instructions. Respondents suggest that it would be impossible for the NEC or for any other body within the party to provide systematic policy guidance, due to the large volume of work with which the EP deals, together with the speed at which negotiations take place.[354] Instead, UKIP MEPs receive voting recommendations from the delegation's whip. These are drawn up by EFD advisors specifically for UKIP MEPs at the request of the delegation's whip, and are discussed and amended by MEPs, who meet in advance of voting sessions.[355]

Reporting Requirements and Monitoring

The Conservative Party does not monitor the work of MEPs, and while some regional organizations ask MEPs to provide periodic written reports on their activities, the central party organizations places no reporting requirements.[356] Respondents indicated that the party is 'largely disinterested' in their work,[357] and MEPs feel that the party should work more closely with them even in policy areas where some interest is shown, such as the single market.[358] While there are no reporting requirements, many (if not all) MEPs regularly send reports about their work to party supporters in their region. MEPs are very clear that they do so to promote their reselection prospects,[359] and they exhibit no concern that the information provided may be used by the party as part of attempts to influence their behaviour. Asked if there should be more oversight of the work of MEPs, bearing in mind that voters are not afforded the opportunity to choose between the party's candidates, an MEP replied by saying that 'I see no point in inventing systems to oversee work when you have no sanction'.[360] This reinforces the point that the party does not operate a system of threats and rewards.

As in the case of the Conservatives, Labour's central party leadership does not actively monitor the behaviour of MEPs and carries out little oversight of their work. Nevertheless, as the party has a large number of MEPs and as the EPLP employs officials, it is certain that party leaders would be informed if an MEP acted in a

manner that contradicted the party's aims and values.[361] MEPs are aware that the party leadership does not pay attention to their work other than in the case of highly salient issues. There is considerable variation in the degree to which leaders keep abreast of the work of individual MEPs depending on the committee membership of MEPs, and the leadership appears to have no interest at all in certain policy areas, such as culture.[362] There is a perception among the EPLP that the party's diminished engagement in EU affairs since 2010 is explained not only by its departure from government, but also by the fact that its new leaders do not view the European project to be as 'important' as previous leaders.[363] This perceived lack of interest frustrates MEPs, who argue, similarly to Conservative MEPs, that the party leadership should pay more attention to their work.[364]

The degree to which Labour's regional organizations follow the work of MEPs varies, but is limited in most cases. All regional organizations are required to hold a 'European Forum' every year (Labour, 2010: 43), and this setting provides MEPs with an opportunity to provide an overview of their work to party members. Many MEPs also attend meetings of their regional party board. An MEP from a region where the party's organization is strong noted that one of the two MEPs reports to the monthly regional party board, as well as meeting with an umbrella trade unions organization on a monthly basis.[365] Despite the frequent contact, the MEP claimed that regional party leaders were 'by and large … unaware' of the work that he carried out. He estimated that 'half of the members of the Labour Party' in his region were oblivious to the fact that he was working on an issue that generated considerable publicity within EU circles, and noted that 'not even a dozen people' knew that he was working on another issue, which he regarded as 'important'.[366] An MEP from another region in which the party also holds two seats was more typical of other respondents, providing a more casual account of her relationship with the regional party organization. Claiming that 'no one seems to mind too much' about the MEPs reporting back to the organization, she noted that one of the MEPs would attend the bi-monthly regional party board meetings, which she described as a 'quite informal' affair.[367]

UKIP does not take any formal steps to monitor the work of MEPs[368] and there is no formal requirement for MEPs to report to the party centrally. The leader of the party's delegation in the EP selects two MEPs to attend meetings of the NEC (UKIP, 2012b: E.9), however attendance is not viewed as a means for the party to

monitor the work of individual MEPs. Further, party-affiliated officials who are based in the EP, such as EFD staff with ties to the party, state that they are not asked to report to the party about the activities of MEPs. Officials do not monitor the voting behaviour of their own MEPs, although they do pay attention to that of MEPs from the three large British parties with a view to capitalising domestically on pro-integrationist behaviour.[369] Officials state that monitoring the voting behaviour of UKIP's delegation is not currently necessary as most MEPs vote according to the recommendations provided,[370] and it is possible that officials would take a closer look if a problem emerged. However, respondents suggest that it would be difficult for the party to introduce a system whereby officials working with UKIP's delegation in the EP report to the party about the behaviour of MEPs 'even on an informal basis'.[371] UKIP is far smaller than the three main British parties, and officials noted that they would feel 'uncomfortable' reporting back other than in 'extreme cases' due to the lack of anonymity within the party.[372]

The level of contact between Nigel Farage and members of his delegation appears to be lower than is the case between delegation leaders and the MEPs of the two other parties featured in the analysis. Nevertheless, the party leader remains sufficiently informed about the work of his colleagues to be able to evaluate their behaviour. An official explained that:

> Nigel knows pretty well who is up to what and what they're doing, and he has a pretty crude idea about who are the ones who work hard. He knows only too well who are the loyalists, so in that sense he doesn't actually need us to [report on the work of MEPs].[373]

In contrast, there is a 'sense of disconnect' between MEPs and the party in the UK,[374] and the evidence presented above suggests that the party's domestic organs have little knowledge regarding the work of MEPs.

Enforcing Party Discipline

The Conservative Party leadership does not operate a system of centralised party discipline. MEPs have a considerable degree of freedom to act against government and party policy where they feel this is necessary. One MEP claimed that he did not vote with the party's recommendation 'if I don't want to vote' in that way.[375] Another MEP noted that she had negotiated on the basis of policy positions that differed from

that taken by the British government in its Council negotiations on several occasions and that this had not caused any problems in terms of her relationship with party leaders.[376] While she views herself as 'instinctively loyal' to the party and has 'always worked hard' to avoid being in a position where she must act against the wishes of her party leaders, she noted that she would not be deterred from acting against the preferences of the party leadership where there existed 'fundamental' differences.[377] The fact highlighted earlier in the chapter that Conservative MEPs *seek* the views of the government rather than simply receive it[378] reinforces the claim that MEPs have the freedom to diverge from the government's positions. If they were constantly under pressure from the government, it appears reasonable to expect MEPs to avoid contacting government ministers and officials as far as possible lest they draw attention to any divergences in opinion.

There are three main reasons why Conservative MEPs do not feel under pressure to act according to the wishes of the party or the government. Firstly, MEPs are aware that the government's policy positions are compromises between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats and that they are therefore often distinct from those of the Conservative Party. In such instances, MEPs feel that they have a mandate and a duty to develop their own policy positions which correspond more closely to the party's policies. MEPs note that diverging from the government position 'is often popular' with party members and with constituents.[379] Members of the Conservative delegation in the EP inform relevant government officials and Minsters when the delegation does not intend to follow the government's position on important issues. This is seen by MEPs as a courtesy measure rather than as a means of requesting the Government's permission to diverge from its position.[380]

Secondly, Conservative MEPs believe that they are in a better position to define appropriate negotiation positions and strategies than government ministers and officials, whom they believe lack understanding of the negotiating process within the EP. This perceived lack of understanding is reflected in the government's tendency to fail to engage with MEPs until a stage in the negotiations at which it is too late for MEPs to modify their negotiation positions.[381] Conservative MEPs see little reason to follow the guidance received from London where they view it as inappropriate.[382]

Thirdly, there is the perception among MEPs that there is little that the party or the government can do to compel them to follow policy guidance. One MEP noted that 'the only real power the party has is to take the whip away', which would mean

that the MEP would not be able to seek reselection as a Conservative candidate. This is not a threat that the party has used during the respondent's parliamentary career.[383] While MEPs are aware that this is an instrument that the party can use, none of the respondents interviewed believed that party leaders would view any issue related to EU policy-making as being of sufficient importance to warrant the use of this 'nuclear weapon'.[384]

Respondents speculated that their relationship with the government and their attitudes towards the government's policy positions would almost certainly be different were the Conservatives in government alone. One MEP noted that were this the case 'we as Conservatives would feel more loyalty to the government and more obliged to follow the government line because *not* following the government line would have an effect on how the party is perceived'.[385] The phrasing of this statement suggests that, realising that there is a greater potential for MEPs to cause embarrassment to the party and to the government, MEPs would, of their own accord, feel a greater compulsion to follow the government's policy positions were the party in government alone. In this situation, the behaviour of MEPs would still be based on their view of the party's interests rather than on the party's ability to coerce MEPs to follow guidance. The party may have a greater ability to influence the behaviour of its MEPs in this situation. However, this is because the arguments that party leaders could use in attempting to persuade MEPs to toe the party line would be more persuasive, rather than because they would have more effective instruments of control.

There is similarly no evidence to suggest that the Conservative delegation in the EP employs a disciplinary system based on threats and rewards. However, MEPs note that in some instances the delegation whip tries to persuade the MEP to support the delegation's policy position by emphasising the importance of maintaining unity. The degree to which the delegation exerts pressure on MEPs to follow its position varies considerably depending on the nature of the issue. The guidance provided by the delegation on issues such as foreign affairs, a policy area in which the powers of the EP are weak, is viewed by MEPs as 'advisory only', and there is relatively little pressure to conform to the delegation's position.[386] The delegation places stronger pressure on MEPs to follow its position on more 'important' legislative and budgetary divisions.[387] Those not intending to follow the guidance issued by the delegation

leadership are expected to notify the delegation whip and to provide an explanation for the intended voting behaviour.[388]

Long-serving Labour MEPs claim that 'heavy pressure' was placed on MEPs to follow the government's position during Labour's time in government.[389] Senior politicians largely refrained from using 'explicit' threats when encouraging MEPs to support the government, and tended to offer 'government carrots' in the form of ministerial access 'rather than sticks'.[390] Messmer argues that the link system enabled government ministries to develop 'a strong voice in the voting of the EPLP' and a great degree of 'control' over MEPs (2003: 208; 215). While the link system strengthened the position of the party leadership in relation to the EPLP, the level of the leadership's influence over MEPs should not be overstated. The EPLP did not systematically follow the government in cases where there was a divergence of views between itself, the Labour government, and the S&D, but rather deliberated 'on a case by case basis'.[391] A respondent noted that:

> If it was a matter which we thought was very important for domestic political reasons and the government had a good case, and especially if it was something that had been mentioned in the party manifesto, then we'd follow [the government's position] … In most other cases, we'd actually follow what the Socialist Group would have decided with us being part of the Socialist Group.[392]

Labour MEPs contradicted the government 'quite often' during Blair and Brown's premierships.[393] In many instances, the EPLP believed that voting with the Group rather than with the government best served the purposes of its long-term strategy, as loyalty to the Group would strengthen its position within it, as well as the Group's position within the EP. This thinking was exemplified in the EPLP's decision to vote against the government on the Working Time Directive, the issue on which the delegation came under 'the most intense' pressure from the party leadership during the years in government.[394] Respondents also argue that the degree of influence that the party leadership can hope to exert on the EPLP is also limited in the many instances where the views of trade unions diverge from those of the Labour party leadership.[395]

MEPs are aware that they are afforded 'more freedom' to act independently of the leadership since 2010.[396] One MEP firmly stated that the decline in the party leadership's interest in the work of the EPLP is explained by the fact that policy

discrepancies between the party leadership and the MEPs are less salient and less embarrassing for the party since its leaders no longer partake in Council meetings.[397] However, while MEPs have extensive freedom from the party when carrying out legislative activities, especially when writing reports, there is a limit to their independence. The party grants MEPs the freedom to carry out their work as they best see fit, as it 'trusts [them] not go off on a complete tangent and do something that would be at odds with the party values'.[398] MEPs believe that they would experience difficulties being reselected if they were to act in ways that contravened party policy in a clear way.[399]

Not a great deal of pressure is placed on UKIP MEPs to follow the delegation's recommendations on ordinary parliamentary divisions, despite the fact that one UKIP MEP serves as a whip.[400] A former UKIP MEP who 'sometimes' voted against the recommendations of the delegation confirmed that 'no action' is taken against MEPs who fail to maintain party discipline.[401] The party's unwillingness to undertake the investment necessary to enforce party discipline at parliamentary divisions is explained by the fact that the party views voting primarily as a means of ensuring that MEPs receive their full allowances, rather than as a means of realising policy goals within the EP.[402]

Nevertheless, the evidence strongly suggests that there is a disciplinarian element within UKIP and that power is centralised within the office of the party leader. While there may be some scope for MEPs to vote against the delegation's recommendations on unimportant votes, there is a strong expectation for them to follow the guidance provided on issues relating to the party's core principles. An official explained that:

> UKIP stands on a specific policy platform which is laid out pretty clear[ly] and if you want to be a member of the party then these are the policies. As a UKIP MEP you are expected to follow the party line. You're more than welcome to join another party or start up your own party if you like, but as a UKIP MEP you are expected to follow the UKIP policy. … If you don't follow the party line, well the party's not for you and off you go.[403]

Reflecting this account, a former UKIP MEP claimed to have been subjected to considerable pressure from the party leader and other MEPs to conform to the leadership's wishes on a key issue.[404]

An MEP supported these accounts, explaining that it is the party leader who 'has the ultimate say on the majority of things'.[405] Two UKIP MEPs who defected to the Conservatives during the 2009–14 parliamentary term have publicly stated concerns regarding the power exercised within the party by its leader (*LondonLovesBusiness*, 2013a; *LondonLovesBusiness*, 2013b). Martha Andreasen claimed that the party's revised constitution gave the leader 'full power on everything, including the establishment of strategy, policies and selection processes for candidates for elections' (*The Independent*, 2013). She stated further that 'the party has become a dictatorship' under Farage's leadership and that he has 'a Stalinist way of operating', securing career advancement within the party for those who 'never contradict him' (*LondonLovesBusiness*, 2013b). An interviewee supported these claims, asserting that 'if you don't agree with the great leader you are a troublemaker, you are a traitor, and you are pushed out'.[406]

These remarks may be disregarded as being those of disaffected former UKIP affiliates. However, the apparent expulsion of one MEP from the party for refusing to join the EFD Group (BBC News, 2010), the withdrawal of the whip from another MEP for behaviour that was viewed by the leadership as particularly damaging to the party (BBC News, 2013d), and the proactive role played by the leadership in the selection of candidates for the 2014 EP election, all lend weight to this interpretation. It is clear that UKIP attempts to enforce a system of discipline on MEPs that is far more rigid than the other two parties, who are largely disinterested in the work of MEPs. This is not surprising. As the professional arm of UKIP is far smaller than the other two parties, both the role that MEPs play within the party and the opportunities provided to the party from securing seats in the EP are greater.

Within-Party Variation

There is a strong sense in which Conservative and Labour MEPs organize themselves as delegations, rather than operating as a loose collection of largely independent MEPs. Policy positions are coordinated at the level of the delegation on the basis of recommendations put forward by the individual MEP tasked with following the work of a specific committee. The use of the delegation structure provides more junior MEPs, who may otherwise be more susceptible to central party influence, with a measure of protection. MEPs can present their own views to the delegation, together with those of the party, and come to a decision together with their colleagues in the

EP. Were the delegation to support the MEP's position and to reject that of the party leadership, the MEP would be able to draw on this support to resist pressure from the party's central organization.[407] As a result, neither of these two parties is able to gain a greater level of influence on MEPs with less political experience than on more experienced MEPs.

The evidence suggests that UKIP MEPs operate a looser EP delegation model. The degree of contact between UKIP MEPs and the party leadership varies considerably depending on the nature of the relationship between the individual MEP and the party leader. While some UKIP MEPs work closely with the party leader, others have no direct contact with him.[408] This suggests that the leadership is better placed to influence the behaviour of some UKIP MEPs than others. However, in practice, the MEPs who are in more regular contact with the leadership appear to be more closely aligned to the leadership in any case.[409]

Fulfilling the Preconditions, and Perceptions on the Degree of Independence

The Conservative Party fulfils the four preconditions of influence only in rare cases, and succeeds in shaping the behaviour of its MEPs exclusively when MEPs agree with the guidance provided by the party. The Conservative-led government provides guidance to MEPs relating solely to legislative behaviour, and as no measures are taken by the party or by the government to enforce discipline, MEPs view any guidance issued purely as a request. Further, the party rarely monitors the work of MEPs, and does not require MEPs to report to the party centrally concerning their activities. As a result, MEPs claim that they feel 'entirely free' to decide for themselves how they wish to approach their role as representatives.[410]

It is consequently of little surprise that Conservative MEPs have a stronger attachment to the idea of territorial representation than to the notion of party representation.[411] One MEP remarked that:

> I'm here to represent the people that voted for me, but … I don't just represent those [XX]% [who voted for me], I represent everybody in the [name of region] … I don't represent the party … I know I have the party label … [and] they could argue that they put me in a position where I could get voted for … But I see myself as representing everyone in the region.[412]

Another Conservative MEP provided a similar account, stating that 'I'm definitely here to represent the [name of region] and more generally, the UK PLC … And when

I say [the] British interest, I think the taxpayer.'[413] While there is likely to be a considerable correspondence between how the MEP and his party understand the 'British interest', it is clear that the MEP arrives at his interpretation independently of the party. Reflecting this, Conservative MEPs do not think of themselves as agents of their party, but rather as independent actors whose views correspond to a considerable degree with those of their party.

The Labour Party only fulfils the preconditions of influence in rare instances, and exclusively in the context of specific parliamentary divisions. The party leadership provides voting instructions periodically, puts some pressure on MEPs to comply, and is made aware of whether MEPs do so. The leadership often does not succeed in its efforts to shape the behaviour of MEPs, and this is explained in part by the lack of compelling threats and rewards that the party has to offer. The leadership employed such measures more regularly during Labour's time in government. While the ability to control the access of MEPs to government ministers provided the leadership with more compelling carrots and sticks during this period, the party's efforts at mandating MEPs similarly met with varying degrees of success. This underscores the difficulties that parties experience when attempting to compel MEPs to act according to the wishes of its leaders even in cases where the party has a strong desire and a considerable potential (in relative terms) to influence the behaviour of MEPs.

Other than in these rare instances, the leadership affords Labour MEPs extensive freedom to carry out legislative activity according to their own judgment. One MEP explained that the party displays no 'control-freakery' in its dealings with MEPs or any 'desire to control' them, noting that he could only recall two instances in twenty years 'when I've ended up having a fight with the party at home over something I've said or done' in the EP.[414] Further, there is no pressure on MEPs to focus on certain activities or to spend a certain amount of time in different locations. This is likely to continue as long as MEPs pay a reasonable level of attention to the tasks that are traditionally associated with the role of the representative, such as constituency, media, and party activity.

Moreover, while Labour MEPs have placed a greater focus on their regional party organizations since the introduction of a new electoral system in 1999, this does not mean that these organizations seek or achieve influence on MEPs. These organizations do not seek to shape the behaviour of MEPs or to make any great claims

on their time, and several MEPs noted that their links to their regional organizations are weak.[415] As the regional organizations know very little about the parliamentary work of MEPs, a space is created for MEPs to carry out their legislative work independently of their selectorates.

As a result, it comes as little surprise that Labour MEPs do not feel that they carry out their work as representatives in a way that is strongly orientated towards the party, or that they operate under the direction of the party. Recalling a period in the 1980s when Labour's national parliamentarians were expected to prioritize the interests of the party over those of other groups, one MEP noted that this is not how her colleagues view their role as representatives.[416] All Labour respondents emphasised that elected representatives need to strike a balance between the needs of the party and those of constituents, and that the party provides them with the freedom to do so.

UKIP fulfils the preconditions of influencing the behaviour of MEPs to a far greater extent that the other parties examined. Its leadership communicates preferences regarding the way MEPs carry out their work on certain issues, provides MEPs with very clear incentives and disincentives to follow this guidance, and keeps abreast of the activities of MEPs. UKIP MEPs are aware that their ability to realise goals such as re-election and office through the party depends on the degree to which their behaviour corresponds to the wishes of the leadership. UKIP MEPs have a clear idea of how their party leader would like them to act, and they realise that they are unlikely to be reselected as candidates if their behaviour does not correspond to the leader's wishes. Further, the code of conduct that MEPs sign sets out the boundaries in which MEPs are permitted to operate, and the apparent expulsion of an MEP at an early stage of the 2009–14 parliamentary term on the basis of having violated the agreement (BBC News, 2010), sent a clear signal to MEPs that the party expects them to comply with these principles.

However, there is a duality in the manner in which party discipline operates within UKIP. While MEPs are strongly discouraged from crossing certain boundaries, they enjoy considerable freedom to define their role as representatives within the parameters set by the leadership. MEPs are largely free to decide for themselves how they spend their time and are permitted to engage in parliamentary work, as long as they return to the UK regularly and do not support integrationist measures. A current MEP was typical of other respondents in noting that 'I try to strike a balance … but it

is up to me how I do that',[417] while a former MEP more sceptically claimed that UKIP MEPs are generally free to operate as they wish 'as long as you shut up and do as you're told'.[418] It is clear that there are some boundaries on the freedom which they enjoy, as an MEP admitted that 'if the leader says we're doing something, then we go and do it'.[419]

While there is no doubt that UKIP's leadership fulfils the preconditions of influence with regards to certain aspects of the role of MEPs, the party leadership clearly struggled to compel MEPs to modify their behaviour during the 2009–14 parliamentary term. The level of dissent within the delegation was far greater than that observed within the other British parties with representation in the EP. Three MEPs who had been openly critical of the leader left the party during the 2009–14 term (BBC News, 2010; BBC News, 2012; BBC News, 2013b), rather than attempt to be reselected under the new centralised system, while another attacked the party leadership following his failed reselection attempt (BBC News, 2013c). An official acknowledged that the party had found it 'difficult to impose' discipline,[420] while another explained that there is little that the party can offer MEPs in terms of patronage for compliant behaviour, as UKIP is affiliated to a small Group.[421] However, with the party going to great lengths to ensure that its candidates for the 2014 elections are more closely aligned to the leadership, it is eminently plausible that the party will come to exercise a greater level of influence in the next parliamentary term.

Explaining the Findings

It is clear that the Conservatives and Labour's limited engagement with MEPs is primarily aimed at minimising the potential for instances of conflict between their front benches in Westminster and their delegations in the EP to cause embarrassment domestically.[422] This is partly due to the fact that the parties have had few issues with MEPs defying the delegation whips.[423] It is also because the leadership of these two parties focus on domestic politics, and place little emphasis on making the most of the opportunities provided by MEPs to realise policy goals in the context of the EP. This analysis is supported not only by the accounts provided by interviewees, but also by the fact that the party leaderships' engagement with their MEPs takes place almost exclusively in the context of (potential) conflict. That the parties primarily mobilise in such contexts may appear unsurprising, as there is little reason for parties to interfere

in the work of MEPs in the absence of conflict, especially as their resources are limited. However, if these two parties were highly motivated to realise policy goals in the context of the EP, they would ensure that the coordination mechanisms between the delegation and the front bench in Westminster were far stronger.

It is clear that the way UKIP's leadership relates to its MEPs is different from the other two British parties examined. While Conservative and Labour MEPs generally play a marginal role within their parties and are provided with little guidance from their leaders, most UKIP MEPs are in regular contact with their leader, who also leads their delegation in the EP. It is unsurprising that UKIP's leadership takes a somewhat more proactive approach to providing guidance than the other two parties examined, and a far more active role in candidate selection. Officials are aware that UKIP attracts 'more independently minded' individuals than the more established parties,[424] and that some of the party's former MEPs have harmed the party's progress.

The changes made to UKIP's selection system for the 2014 elections can be viewed as a reaction to the party's difficulties in dealing with its MEPs from a party seeking to professionalise. The fact that the guidance issued by the leadership places a greater emphasis on the broader model of representation that MEPs carry out, rather than on voting behaviour, is also to be expected. As an Eurosceptic party, UKIP has little hope of enacting change from within the overwhelmingly pro-integrationist EP. As a party with a small organization, and one in which the MEPs are its most senior public office holders, it is natural that UKIP's leadership is interested in the work of MEPs and wish to see them actively develop the party's brand within a domestic context.

The Relationship between MEPs and the EP Group

It is clear that the national delegations that are affiliated to the ECR Group play a far stronger role in coordinating the work of MEPs than the Group itself. While the Group does provide policy guidance and voting instructions, it is sensitive to the wishes of national delegations. The Group is willing to change its recommendations where there is even a moderate level of disagreement, and it gives individual national delegations the freedom to depart from these policy positions.[425] An MEP explained that:

> There is no pressure from the ECR Group for a national delegation to change its whip. And that's because of our political philosophy that we believe the nation states are the important building blocks in Europe, *not* the EU. And we reflect this in our Group: that if a national delegation wants to depart from the Group line, then that's fine. The only rule we have is: no surprises. You must tell [the Group's chief whip].[426]

There is a fundamental difference between the role of the Group whip compared with the role of the whips of the national party delegations, as the ECR's whip 'exerts no force whatsoever on individual MEPs'.[427] ECR officials note that it would be 'very difficult' for the Group to use the allocation of rapporteurships as a disciplinary tool even if it so wished. Since the Group does not have a large number of MEPs there is no fierce competition for (shadow) rapporteurships.[428] Despite the reservations regarding Group discipline, and despite the fact that the delegation produces its own voting lists,[429] the Conservatives are the ECR's most loyal national delegation, voting with the Group in 97.20% of instances at roll call votes since 2009 (VoteWatch.eu, accessed 13/6/13). This apparently high degree of loyalty is not surprising, bearing in mind that the Conservative delegation provides close to half of the ECR's MEPs.[430]

Practical considerations limit the extent to which the Group is able to act assertively. Established in 2009, the ECR Group is a young organization, which has far fewer staff members than the larger Groups. Policy advisors cover broader policy areas than in the larger Groups, and this makes it more difficult for them to develop an expertise. MEPs complain that the support they receive from the Group's advisors is not always adequate, claiming that the advisors are 'not always experts' and are in some cases 'as inexpert' as the MEPs themselves.[431]

As affiliated MEPs view the ECR Group as 'a construct for the convenience of European Union politics', rather than as a project of political integration, it is not surprising that the Group does not act with greater agency.[432] It is difficult for the Group to develop a transnational identity, as it does not have a remit to form political strategies that prioritize the good of a specific political movement over that of an individual national delegation, as may be the case for more integrationist Groups. Viewing the Group in instrumental terms, the sense of loyalty MEPs have towards the Group is considerably less than that felt towards the Conservative Party, and it is unlikely that the way that MEPs relate to the Group will change as the Group becomes more established. Together with the philosophical reasons Eurosceptic MEPs have to avoid developing an attachment to a transnational political entity stands

the fact that the Group is unable to provide MEPs with a means of realising core goals as extensively as the domestic party. An MEP explained that while 'I will not get elected as an MEP without the [party] label … the Group provides me with none of those' benefits.[433]

The relationship between Labour's MEPs and their Group has historically been 'up and down', but has improved in recent years.[434] Interviewees note that the delegation frequently voted against the Group's position during the 1990s, a period in which the EPLP dominated the Group, but that this is no longer the case.[435] Nevertheless, of the 31 national delegations affiliated to the S&D, only two vote with the Group less regularly than the EPLP. Between the 2009 election and the time of writing, Labour MEPs have voted with the Group in 87.31% of instances, while the mean of the Group's voting cohesion is 91.37% (VoteWatch.eu, accessed 7/6/13). In light of this difference, it is not surprising that the EPLP has its own whip system.[436] Until the early 2000s, the EPLP developed positions independently of the Group on all issues, before considering how this stance related to that of the Group. At present, the initial presumption is that the EPLP will follow the S&D's position, unless MEPs or EPLP officials decide that it is necessary to examine the issue in greater detail.[437] Respondents from the EPLP emphasise that they work closely with their colleagues in the S&D, with the aim of influencing the Group's positions where possible.

Despite the expectations that may arise from the S&D Group's high level of cohesion, Labour MEPs do not feel that it enforces discipline 'overtly'.[438] The Group does not employ 'severe sanctions', such as 'fining Members, suspending them, [or] withdrawing the Group whip',[439] although MEPs who systematically vote against the Group are unlikely to receive the support of the Group when seeking rapporteurships.[440] The Group accepts that MEPs will feel that it is necessary to vote against its recommendations at times, and shows particular leniency where MEPs vote against the Group as part of their national delegation.[441]

A number of reasons explain the high level of cohesion within the Group, and the EPLP's loyalty, despite the fact that the Group does not proactively employ disciplinary measures. Firstly, a lack of willingness to compromise with Group colleagues leads to strained relationships and a sense of unease. An MEP emphasised that 'nobody likes the opprobrium' that ensues when the Group narrowly loses a parliamentary division with one's delegation having voted against the Group.[442] Secondly, and supporting Ringe's (2010) findings, MEPs acknowledge that they are

unable to follow every piece of legislation and that they therefore regularly defer to the judgment of the MEP that the Group has tasked with dealing with an issue. While relying on 'experts is sometimes a dangerous thing', MEPs view it as a necessary evil.[443] Thirdly, MEPs are aware that the S&D's position within EP negotiations are stronger when it acts cohesively. It is this realisation, together with the fact that the Group strives to ensure that there is an accepted consensus within the S&D, 'that keeps the Group cohesive, rather than a disciplined system'.[444]

The organizing philosophy of the EFD is similar to that of the ECR Group. The EFD exists to provide its affiliated delegations with assistance and with access to additional funding (cf. Whitaker and Lynch, 2014), and facilitates the coordination of positions where delegations find common ground. It does not enforce discipline, other than in cases of misconduct. The right of individual MEPs and affiliated delegations to 'vote as they see fit' (EFD, 2009: 3) and 'to act in accordance with his/her own conviction' (EFD, 2009: 4) are enshrined in the Group's statutes and is observed in practice. As the Group's power in relation to the national delegations is strictly limited, the loose relationship between UKIP MEPs and their parliamentary Group resembles more closely that which Conservatives MEPs enjoy with the ECR than that between the EPLP and the S&D.

UKIP MEPs source policy advice on issues relating to parliamentary affairs mainly from EFD advisors, and tend to spend the better part of their personal allowances on employing assistants who are based in their constituencies. The extensive support that Group advisors provide UKIP MEPs includes drawing up lists of voting recommendations in preparation for committee and plenary meetings. However, the EFD as a Group does not provide voting guidance.[445] When EFD officials provide UKIP MEPs with voting recommendations, they do so specifically for the delegation and at the request of the delegation's whip. The reliance of UKIP MEPs on EFD advisors should not be interpreted as providing the Group with a means of influencing the behaviour of MEPs. Several EFD officials have links to UKIP, and any advice received from Group advisors aligned with other delegations is verified before MEPs take action.

As the EFD does not enforce Group discipline, the concept of Group loyalty in the context of UKIP's MEPs is somewhat abstract. Of all the national delegations affiliated to an EP Group, UKIP's delegation of MEPs has shown the lowest levels of Group loyalty at roll call parliamentary divisions between the 2009 election and the

time of writing. UKIP's EFD affiliates voted with the Group in only 49.91%[446] of instances (VoteWatch.eu, accessed 6/6/13). This is surprisingly low; the potential for UKIP MEPs to form coalitions within their Group appears to be considerable, as the delegation provides the EFD with around a third of its affiliates. The low level of loyalty is explained by the lack of common ground between UKIP and its less staunchly Eurosceptic fellow Group affiliates. The willingness of UKIP MEPs to vote against their Group colleagues, together with the lack of disciplinary tradition within the Group, strongly suggests that the EFD Group has little influence on the manner in which UKIP MEPs carry out their work.

Testing the Hypotheses

The factors that are expected to lead to variation in the propensity of partisan organizations to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and the degree to which they succeed, were presented in Chapter 2 and accompanied by hypotheses. As none of the three Finnish parties examined in the previous chapter attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs, it was not possible to use the evidence relating to those cases to test the hypotheses. Unlike the Finnish parties, the three British parties examined in this chapter demonstrate at least some desire to influence certain aspects of the way MEPs carry out their work. As there is variation in the degree to which Labour and the Conservatives, on the one hand, and UKIP, on the other, wish to influence the behaviour of their MEPs and fulfil the preconditions of influence as set out in Chapter 2, it is possible to test ten of the eleven hypotheses relating to domestic parties. However, due to the limited number of cases examined, the degree to which the evidence presented in this chapter can be used to conclusively test the hypotheses is limited.

The evidence presented in this chapter supports, or partly supports, three of the hypotheses relating to domestic parties. The more proactive manner in which UKIP structures its relations with MEPs supports the first part of Hypothesis 2, which states that parties operating centralised candidate selection systems are more likely to seek influence than parties operating decentralised candidate selection systems. However, as a result of the inability of UKIP to maintain discipline during the 2009–14 term, the second part of Hypothesis 2, which states that parties operating centralised selection systems are better able to influence the behaviour of MEPs, is unsupported. Hypothesis 3, which states that governing parties are more likely to

attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs in the context of policy work than opposition parties, is supported to some extent by the finding that Labour and the Conservatives show greater interest in the policy work undertaken by MEPs when in government compared to when they are in opposition. However, there is some evidence to suggest that links between the Conservative front bench in Westminster and its delegation in the EP have become weaker since the party entered government in 2010. Further, there is no evidence to suggest that governing parties are more likely than those in opposition to succeed in their efforts to influence MEPs.

The evidence also supports Hypothesis 12, which expects Eurosceptic parties to desire that their MEPs carry out more work in the home country compared with pro-integrationist parties. This is certainly the case for UKIP compared with both the Conservatives and Labour. However, while UKIP MEPs spend more time in the UK compared with Conservative and Labour MEPs, it is difficult to establish whether this is a result of the party's expectations or whether UKIP MEPs arrive at the decision to divide their time in this way independently of the party.

Seven of the hypotheses presented are unsupported. There is no evidence to support Hypothesis 4, which states that governing parties desire that their MEPs focus on legislative activity in the EP, while opposition parties desire MEPs to focus on political work in their Member State. Labour and the Conservatives do not provide guidance to MEPs relating to this issue, regardless of whether they are in government or in opposition. Neither is there evidence to support Hypothesis 5, which expects domestic parties with large delegations of MEPs to be more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and to be more likely to succeed, than domestic parties with small delegations of MEPs. While UKIP is more proactive in attempting to influence the behaviour of MEPs than the other two parties examined, it won the same number of seats as Labour at the 2009 EP election and far fewer than the Conservatives.

There is also no evidence to support Hypothesis 7, which states that domestic parties with large organizational capacities are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, and are more likely to succeed, than domestic parties with limited organizational capacities. While Labour and the Conservatives have considerably larger organizational capacities in terms of human resources and spending power, UKIP makes greater expectations of its MEPs.

Hypothesis 9a expects domestic parties that are positioned towards the centre of the ideological spectrum to attempt to control the legislative behaviour of MEPs to a greater extent than domestic parties that are positioned further from the centre, while that expectation is reversed in the case of Hypothesis 9b. Dealing with a similar issue, Hypothesis 11 expects Eurosceptic domestic parties to be less likely to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs than pro-integrationist parties. As the degree of interventionism is low in all three parties, there is little variation in the dependent variable – the degree to which the party leaderships attempt to control the legislative behaviour of MEPs – between the three cases. The Conservative and Labour leaderships only rarely seek to influence the legislative behaviour of MEPs, and while UKIP's leadership seldom pays attention to parliamentary divisions there is a general expectation that MEPs vote against integrationist measures. Consequently, Hypotheses 9a, 9b, and 11, are unsupported by the data. Further, there is no evidence to suggest that parties are able to exercise greater levels of influence on the behaviour of MEPs who have less political experience than on the behaviour of MEPs who have more political experience. Hypothesis 14 is therefore unsupported.

The evidence presented in this chapter supports the four hypotheses relating to EP Groups presented in Chapter 2. Hypotheses 6 and 8, which respectively expect larger EP Groups in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs and in terms of organizational capacity to be more likely than smaller Groups to attempt to influence the legislative behaviour of their MEPs, and to be more likely to succeed, is supported. The evidence similarly supports Hypothesis 10, which makes the same expectations of more centrist Groups. Unlike in the case of the ECR and EFD, officials of the more centrist S&D Group actively attempt to persuade national delegations to support its policy positions. Labour MEPs are more susceptible to being persuaded to act according to the wishes of their Group compared with Conservative and UKIP MEPs, especially as the S&D holds clearer preferences.

Despite the fact that the evidence presented in this chapter supports Hypotheses 6, 8, and 10, attitudes towards integration offer a far more plausible explanation for the variation identified. It is primarily because of their anti-integrationist outlook that the ECR and the EFD do not put pressure on its affiliated delegations to follow specific policy positions, rather than because of their size or positioning on the left–right ideological spectrum. This lends support to Hypothesis 13, which expects Eurosceptic Groups to be less likely to attempt to influence the

behaviour of MEPs than pro-integrationist Groups, and to be less likely to succeed. Nevertheless, in relation to Hypothesis 6, it is likely that the large number of MEPs affiliated to the S&D Group encourages Labour MEPs to follow the Group's voting recommendations. Since affiliates of larger Groups have a greater potential for realising policy goals within the chamber compared with those of smaller Groups, they have a greater incentive to support their colleagues in the hope of receiving the support of colleagues at a later date.

Conclusion

In contrast to the findings presented in the previous chapter, the evidence relating to the three British cases examined in this chapter lend limited support to the notion that parties attempt to influence the behaviour of their MEPs. While the desire of the Conservatives and Labour to influence the actions of MEPs is limited to their voting behaviour at parliamentary divisions in rare instances, UKIP's leadership has clearer preferences regarding how it wishes its MEPs to divide their time and to approach policy-related activity. Nevertheless, UKIP's leadership limits its intervention in the affairs of its MEPs largely to setting out broad principles by which MEPs must abide, and the party provides little guidance regarding how MEPs should act from day to day. The chapter found evidence that three factors explain variation in the propensity of partisan actors to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, namely the degree of centralisation of the candidate selection system, status as a governing party, and the party's attitudes towards integration.

Labour and the Conservatives only fulfil the preconditions of influence as set out in Chapter 2 in a very limited sense, and it is clear that their MEPs do not feel under pressure to modify their behaviour to correspond to the party's wishes in the rare instances where the party intervenes in their work. The leaders of the Conservatives and Labour show little interest in the work of their MEPs and do not operate a centralised system of party discipline. As they have little control over the candidate selection process, their ability to modify the incentive structure in which MEPs operate is limited to offering rewards to MEPs for compliant behaviour. UKIP fulfils the preconditions of influence to a far greater extent than the other two parties. Although the party does not operate a formalised system of party discipline, MEPs are made aware that their reselection is dependent on the degree to which their behaviour corresponds to the wishes of the leadership. Despite the proactive stance to party

discipline taken by UKIP's leadership, the open dissent witnessed during the 2009–14 term, reflecting the party's experiences in previous terms (BBC News, 2000; BBC News, 2005), suggests that the party has so far failed to exercise an appreciable measure of influence on the behaviour of MEPs.

Despite the new approach that UKIP has developed during the current parliamentary term, and the rare instances where the leadership of the Conservatives and Labour have put pressure on MEPs to follow voting guidance, the account provided in this chapter extensively contradicts the partisan control thesis. The findings cast doubt in particular on the notion that cohesive voting within the national delegation of MEPs occurs because party leaderships operate centralised systems of party discipline. While it may not be surprising that Finland's small parties do not attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs, the fact that the UK's two largest parties do not relate to their MEPs in a more proactive manner is more unexpected. As is the case with the Finnish parties examined, it is clear that these two parties are largely disinterested in the policy goals which may be attained through the work of MEPs. The focus of the party leaders and members alike remain on realising their three core goals – election, policy, and office – at the state level.

The chapter's findings relating to the relationship between MEPs and their EP Groups reflect those of the previous chapter. While there is a contrast between integrationist and Eurosceptic Groups in how they relate to MEPs, even integrationist Groups enforce discipline in a reserved manner. Despite the differences in the number of Labour MEPs and those from the Finnish SDP who are affiliated to the S&D Group, MEPs from both parties note that they relate to the Group in a similar manner. While the Group does not operate a strict system of discipline, they feel compelled to follow its recommendations unless there is a moderately strong reason to do otherwise. This also reflects the findings of Chapter 3, which found that MEPs are either content with the degree to which their Groups enforce discipline, or wish to see their Group go to greater lengths to ensure cohesive behaviour. In contrast, and reflecting the findings relating to the EFD in Chapter 4, neither the EFD nor the ECR Groups place any pressure on UKIP or Conservative MEPs. The variation identified reinforces the argument presented in the previous chapter that scholars wishing to develop understanding of the nature of MEP–Group relations need to pay greater attention to the differences that exist between Groups.

[256] This figure includes the seat awarded to Jim Nicholson, who was elected in Northern Ireland as the joint candidate of the Ulster Unionist Party and the Conservatives under the title 'Ulster Conservatives and Unionists – New Force (UCUNF)'. It also includes the additional seat that the party received following the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty.
[257] Bob Spink MP briefly claimed an affiliation to UKIP following his departure from the Conservatives in 2008 (Lynch et al., 2012: 736).
[258] Trevor Colman does not have an affiliation to an EP Group.
[259] UKIP is the only established British party that is not affiliated to a pan-European political party. This remains the case despite the fact that Nigel Farage has campaigned in favour of joining the European Alliance for Freedom, claiming that the party would stand to gain by £1m from becoming affiliated (Lynch et al., 2012: 740).
[260] UKIP is represented in the House of Lords by three former Conservative peers and in the Northern Ireland Assembly by an MLA elected under the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) banner since October 2012. However, UKIP is not currently represented in the House of Commons or in the Scottish or Welsh devolved legislatures.
[261] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[262] In the event, these three individuals won the contest for non-incumbents and were therefore placed in the positions immediately below the other sitting MEPs (*ConservativeHome*, 2013b).
[263] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12.
[264] Interview with a former Conservative MEP, 25/4/12.
[265] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[266] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP 8/6/12.
[267] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[268] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[269] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12.
[270] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12; interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13.
[271] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[272] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12; interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13.
[273] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 8/5/12.
[274] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[275] Interview with a former EPLP official, 22/11/13.
[276] Interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13.
[277] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[278] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[279] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[280] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[281] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.

[282] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[283] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[284] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12; interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12; interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[285] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[286] Interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[287] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[288] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12; interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[289] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[290] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[291] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[292] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[293] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[294] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[295] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[296] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12. The official stated that the party would give preferential treatment to 'better qualified' individuals.
[297] Martha Andreasen and David Campbell Bannerman, both of whom defected from UKIP to the Conservatives during the 2009–14 parliamentary term also failed to pass the incumbency threshold. However, these cases are different, as they had not previously been elected as Conservative candidates.
[298] Interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 8/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12; interview with an ECR official, 3/5/12.
[299] Interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 8/6/12.
[300] Interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 8/6/12.
[301] Interview with an ECR official, 10/5/12.
[302] Interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12.
[303] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 7/6/12.
[304] Interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 8/6/12; interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12; interview with an ECR official, 3/5/12.
[305] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[306] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12; interview with a former MEP, 8/5/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[307] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[308] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13.
[309] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[310] Interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13.
[311] Interview with a Labour MEP, 7/5/12; interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13.
[312] Interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13.
[313] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[314] Interview with an assistant to a Labour MEP, 28/6/12; interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13; interview with a former Labour MEP, 8/5/12.
[315] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[316] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[317] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[318] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 31/3/14.
[319] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 13/1/14.
[320] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 31/3/14.

[321] Interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[322] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12; interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[323] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[324] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 17/4/12.
[325] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 22/6/12
[326] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[327] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12; interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[328] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[329] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12; interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12; interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[330] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[331] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12; interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[332] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12; interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12.
[333] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12.
[334] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12; interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[335] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[336] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12. The information provided as part of the MEPs' profiles on the EP website supports this claim (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/search.html), as does the author's experiences when conducting interviews in the EP.
[337] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12.
[338] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[339] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 7/6/12.
[340] Interview with an UKRep official, 22/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12.
[341] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[342] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12; interview with an ECR official, 3/5/12.
[343] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12; interview with an ECR official, 10/5/12.
[344] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[345] Interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 8/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12; interview with an ECR official, 3/5/12; interview with an UKRep official, 22/6/12.
[346] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12; interview with a Conservative MEP, 26/6/12.
[347] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[348] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[349] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[350] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 22/6/12.
[351] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[352] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[353] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[354] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12.

[355] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12; interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12; Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12; interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[356] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12; interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12; interview with a Conservative MEP, 26/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12; interview with an ECR official, 10/5/12; interview with a Conservative official, 28/10/13.
[357] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[358] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[359] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[360] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[361] Interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13.
[362] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[363] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[364] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[365] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[366] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[367] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[368] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12; Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 31/3/14.
[369] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12.
[370] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12. Of the nine MEPs elected by UKIP in 2009 and that remain affiliated to the party's delegation in the EP, six have voted with the majority of their colleagues in at least 96.70% of divisions, while the other three MEPs have only voted with the delegation in 81.35–87.72% of instances (votewatch.eu, statistics correct as of 4/6/13).
[371] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[372] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[373] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[374] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[375] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 7/6/12.
[376] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[377] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[378] Interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP 8/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP 15/6/12.
[379] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[380] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[381] Interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP 15/6/12; Interview with an ECR official, 3/5/12.
[382] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP 15/6/12.
[383] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[384] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[385] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[386] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[387] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[388] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[389] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 8/5/12.
[390] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[391] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.

[392] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[393] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[394] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 8/5/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[395] Interview with an assistant to a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[396] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[397] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[398] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[399] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[400] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[401] Interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[402] Interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[403] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12.
[404] Interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[405] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 26/6/12.
[406] Interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[407] Conversely, if there were little coordination at the level of the delegation, the leadership of the two parties may attempt to sway some MEPs to follow London-issued recommendations, while being aware that other, more senior, MEPs may be more likely to defy the party line.
[408] Interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[409] Interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[410] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12; interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 8/6/12; interview with a Conservative MEP, 26/6/12.
[411] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 7/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12; interview with a Conservative MEP, 26/6/12.
[412] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[413] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[414] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 22/6/12.
[415] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[416] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 8/5/12.
[417] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 28/11/12; interview with an UKIP MEP, 26/6/13.
[418] Interview with a former UKIP MEP, 28/11/12.
[419] Interview with an UKIP MEP, 26/6/12.
[420] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[421] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 21/6/12.
[422] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12; interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13; interview with a former EPLP official, 22/11/13.
[423] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12; interview with a Labour official, 4/10/13.
[424] Interview, UKIP and/or EFD, 28/6/12.
[425] Interview with an assistant to a Conservative MEP, 15/6/12; interview with an ECR official, 3/5/14; interview with an ECR official, 7/5/14.
[426] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.
[427] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 20/6/12.

[428] Interview with an ECR official, 3/5/14; interview with an ECR official, 7/5/14; interview with an ECR official, 10/5/12.
[429] Interview with an ECR official, 7/5/12.
[430] This figure is based on 25 MEPs who were affiliated to the Conservatives and to the ECR on 13/6/13. It does not include Jim Nicholson, who was elected under the banner of the Ulster Conservatives and Unionists-New Force, or Martha Andreasen, who defected from UKIP to the Conservatives in 2013. The figure includes David Campbell Bannerman, who defected from UKIP, for the time that he has been affiliated to the Conservatives and to the ECR.
[431] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[432] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[433] Interview with a Conservative MEP, 10/5/12.
[434] Interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 8/5/12.
[435] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with an assistant to a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[436] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 8/5/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[437] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[438] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[439] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[440] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[441] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[442] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12.
[443] Interview with a Labour MEP, 19/6/12; interview with a Labour MEP, 6/6/12.
[444] Interview with a former Labour MEP, 4/6/12.
[445] Interview, PS and/or EFD, 9/5/12.
[446] This figure includes the voting behvaiour of Trevor Colman, a UKIP MEP who is not affiliated to an EP Group.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This concluding chapter is divided into four main parts. The first part directly addresses the thesis' central research question and its four sub-questions. It compares the empirical findings across the three empirical chapters, and re-examines the evidence cross-nationally. This discussion finds that neither domestic political parties nor EP Groups exercise the degree of influence on the behaviour of MEPs that the partisan control thesis suggests. The three factors identified as being linked to the propensity of national parties to attempt to influence MEPs are the electoral system, the degree to which the candidate selection system is centralized, and the size of the party's delegation in the EP. A further three factors determine the desire and ability of Groups to influence MEPs. These are the size of the EP Group in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs, the centricity of the Group on the left–right scale, and attitudes towards integration.

The second part of the Conclusion relates these empirical findings to the literature which presents the partisan control thesis. It argues that the party control literature overemphasises the degree of influence that domestic parties exercise on MEPs, while the broader literature on MEPs underplays the degree to which the behaviour of MEPs within the chamber is shaped by EP Groups. The third section sets out the broader implications of the thesis' findings. These relate to scholarly understanding of the institutional context in which MEPs operate, to the issue of the focus of representation in relation to MEPs, and to national political parties as political organizations operating at different levels of governance. The section also argues that Eurosceptic Groups need to make fundamental changes to how they relate to MEPs if they are to gain greater influence within the chamber. Further, the section argues that one aspect of the EU's supranational party system – its manifestation within the EP – is more highly developed that most scholars acknowledge.

The fourth and final section provides a normative response to the thesis' findings. While the freedom that MEPs enjoy to carry out their work according to their judgment is to be welcomed, the low levels of attention that domestic parties pay to the activities of MEPs gives rise to concerns regarding the existence of an 'accountability deficit' in the EU. The pessimistic conclusion is that this deficit is unlikely to be addressed unless parties come to place greater value on election, policy, and office goals that lie within the context of the EU's political system.

Addressing the Central Research Question

This thesis set out to examine whether two partisan actors – domestic political parties and the parliamentary Groups in the EP – influence how MEPs approach representation. The investigation was structured around the four sub-questions that are presented together with the central research question in the Introduction. Sub-questions 1a and 1b were concerned with whether the domestic political parties to which MEPs are affiliated influence their behaviour, and if so, which factors are linked to variation in the extent to which they exercise this influence. Sub-questions 2a and 2b relate these concerns to EP Groups.

Domestic Parties and the Partisan Control Thesis

Sub-question 1a: Do domestic political parties influence the way MEPs think about and carry out representation?

This thesis has found very little evidence to suggest that domestic party leaders exercise influence on the behaviour of MEPs. It is clear that party leaders do not have the means to compel MEPs to vote as cohesively as they currently do, and it is not appropriate to think of the relationship between domestic parties and MEPs in terms of 'control' (Hix et al., 2007: 132). While three of the parties examined in detail in the case studies – the Finnish KOK, SDP, and PS – do not seek influence at all, the other three parties – the British Conservatives, Labour, and UKIP – only seek to influence the behaviour of MEPs in very limited ways, and the evidence suggests that their attempts are largely, if not wholly, unsuccessful. The Conservatives and Labour make infrequent requests that relate to the parliamentary activity of MEPs. It is clear that MEPs only comply with these requests when they agree with their parties that such activity is appropriate. As a result, these MEPs should not be viewed as acting as party delegates (Eulau et al., 1978: 118) even when acting in accordance with the wishes of their parties. UKIP has sought to impose a model on how MEPs should act in a more general sense. And yet, while the party has sought to incentivise compliant behaviour, the indiscipline witnessed during the 2009–14 parliamentary term suggests that its efforts have failed thus far.

The case study findings also indicate that party leaders from across all six cases do not tend to intervene in the work of MEPs, and that the degree of interaction between party leaders and MEPs is low in most cases. These findings are supported by the statistical data relating to parties from across the EU. The data suggest that while most party leaders maintain some degree of contact with MEPs, they seldom issue voting instructions, unlike the leadership of the national delegation of MEPs. When considering the work of MEPs more broadly, both the quantitative and the qualitative evidence suggest that partisan actors do not compel MEPs to focus disproportionately on promoting partisan interests. While MEPs attach a great deal of importance to representing a number of groups, they emphasise the promotion of territorial interests to a greater degree than those of their domestic parties. In addition, findings relating to both data sources cast doubt on the central tenet of the partisan control thesis, which is the claim that domestic party leaders are able to use their control over the reselection prospects of incumbents to systematically control their behaviour. In many cases, the role played by party leaders in selecting candidates was found to be either subordinate or complementary to those of other sections within the party, such as regional leaders and ordinary members.

As the level of interest shown in the work of MEPs by party leaders and by ordinary party members is low, it is not surprising that MEPs feel that they are free to define how they carry out their work independently of their domestic parties. MEPs acknowledge that there is a considerable degree of correspondence between how they carry out their work and how their parties would like them to carry out their work. This is reflected in the high levels of cohesion within national delegations identified by the literature (Hix et al., 2007: 137). However, it is also clear from the analysis presented in this thesis that this correspondence is not the result of party discipline, as MEPs often do not follow their parties' guidance in the rare instances where conflicts emerge. This strongly suggests that party leaders do not influence how MEPs think about different groups whom they may wish to represent through their activities. In other words, MEPs are largely able to define their focus of representation independently of partisan constraints.

The Partisan Control Thesis and Domestic Party Variation

<u>Sub-question 1b: What factors explain variation in the level of influence that domestic political parties have on the way MEPs think about and carry out representation?</u>

No domestic political party examined in this thesis was observed to exercise significant influence on MEPs, and the observed differences between parties in the degree to which they seek influence are small. Despite the fact that the degree of variation observed between the domestic parties is slight, it is possible, and appropriate, to attempt to explain this variation.

The statistical analysis presented in Chapter 3 yielded few insights into the sources of variation that are linked to the degree to which domestic parties seek influence, or into the sources of variation that are linked to the degree to which MEPs emphasise party representation. Few factors are linked to the dependent variables examined, and no theoretically compelling explanation can be offered for any of the trends identified. The inability of the statistical analysis to identify trends is arguably best explained by the low number of cases included in the analysis. It is consequently necessary to base the explanation of the factors that are linked to variation in the desire of domestic parties to influence MEPs on an analysis of the qualitative data available.

The analyses presented in Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the evidence relating to parties from Finland and the UK respectively. There are two reasons for re-examining the evidence by taking a cross-national perspective. Firstly, by bringing together the findings relating to all six domestic parties examined, it is possible to examine the effects of the electoral system, and therefore to test Hypothesis 1. This is done in the first part of this sub-section. Secondly, by examining the findings across all six cases, it is possible to corroborate the trends identified in Chapters 4 and 5. To this end, the second part of this sub-section re-examines the sources of variation identified in Chapters 4 and 5, and establishes that two of the findings require revision. The third part re-examines the data relating to the factors that are not identified as predictors of variation in Chapters 4 and 5, and finds that one further revision is required to the findings presented in earlier chapters.

Electoral system effects and an alternative explanation

While the three Finnish parties do not seek influence at all, the three British parties seek limited influence. It is worth noting that this finding runs contrary to the statistical analyses reported in Chapter 3, which suggested that party leaders in countries operating open-list electoral systems are slightly more, rather than less, likely than others to issue voting instructions. Nevertheless, the contrast between the Finnish and British parties is striking, and strongly suggests that there is a link between the degree to which domestic parties seek to influence the behaviour of MEPs and the country in which the party is based. Indeed, of the factors examined in the thesis, this is the factor that is most clearly linked to the propensity of domestic parties to seek influence.

The finding that British parties, who operate under closed-list systems, are more likely to seek influence than Finnish parties, who operate under open lists, strongly suggests that the type of electoral system is linked to the degree to which domestic parties seek to influence their MEPs. This finding reflects the expectations of the partisan control thesis and directly supports the first part of Hypothesis 1, which states that parties operating under more closed electoral systems are more likely to seek to influence their MEPs. The findings do not support the second part of Hypothesis 1, which states that such parties are also more likely to achieve influence.

There are strong theoretical grounds for interpreting the contrast between the evidence relating to the Finnish and British parties in this way. Firstly, in contrast to parties operating under open lists, parties that control the candidate selection process may feel that they are able to provide MEPs with a threat credible enough to compel MEPs to follow guidance. Secondly, such parties may feel that they have a more legitimate claim to mandate MEPs compared with parties whose MEPs are elected largely on the basis of a personal vote.

However, the cross-national differences observed may be unrelated to the electoral system. It is possible that they are a product of a broader consideration relating to political culture. Despite the rise of the Finnish PS in recent years, the nature of political discourse in the UK is far more Eurosceptic compared with that in Finland. This is reflected both in the attitudes of the main parties towards integration, and in the degree of public support for the EU (European Commission, 2013). The greater propensity of British parties to seek influence may be explained by the fact

that they are more sensitive to the potential for their MEPs to cause them embarrassment domestically.

As this alternative explanation is plausible, it would be valuable to examine parties from settings other than the two countries examined in this thesis as part of further research, as this would further understanding of the role that the electoral system plays in this context. Parties from a large Member State using a closed-list system, such as France, Germany, or Spain, would serve as appropriate case studies to corroborate the findings presented in this thesis relating to British parties. Similarly, it would be possible to compare findings relating to parties from a small Member State operating an open-list system, such as Denmark and Luxembourg, directly to those relating to Finnish MEPs presented in this thesis. Examining parties from countries using ordered-list systems, such as those from the Netherlands, Austria, and Sweden (Lühiste, [undated]: 96; Sudulich, 2014), would provide an additional means of corroborating the findings relating to the effects of the electoral system.

Re-examining trends identified previously

The evidence relating to British parties reported in Chapter 5 suggested that two factors are linked to variation in the degree to which parties seek influence, namely the degree to which the candidate selection system is centralised, and status as a governing party. The analysis also found that Eurosceptic parties are more likely to desire that MEPs focus on domestic political work. In contrast, the analysis of the evidence from Finland did not identify any factors as being linked to variation in the way parties relate to MEPs. Due to the consistency across the Finnish cases regarding the degree to which they seek influence, there is no variation to explain in the Finnish context. This discrepancy raises the possibility that there is a contradiction between the findings relating to the Finnish and the British parties.

Hypothesis 2 posited that domestic parties operating centralised candidate selection systems are more likely to attempt to influence their MEPs than parties operating less centralised selection systems. There is no fundamental conflict between the finding that British parties using centralised candidate selection systems are more prone to seeking influence on MEPs than those operating decentralised systems, and the finding that none of the three Finnish parties seek influence. As it is the electorate who rank order the candidates at EP elections in Finland, and as no MEP seeking re-election has ever been excluded from the lists of the three parties examined, the

candidate selection system within Finnish parties can be regarded as entirely decentralised. The degree of centralisation within the Conservatives and Labour can be regarded as slightly higher, as is their propensity to seeking influence on the behaviour of MEPs, relative to Finnish parties. UKIP has centralised its selection procedures considerably, with the specific intention of influencing how its MEPs act. As a result, the cross-national analysis corroborates the finding from the British context that there is a link between the degree to which candidate selection is centralised and the degree to which parties seek to influence the behaviour of MEPs.

In contrast to the above finding, two factors identified in the British context as predictors of variation in how domestic parties deal with MEPs, namely status as a governing party and attitudes towards integration, require revision in light of cross-national analysis. Hypothesis 3 posits that governing parties are more likely to attempt to influence their MEPs than opposition parties. In investigating this issue, it is possible to consider the Conservatives, Labour, KOK, and the SDP as parties who spent time in government and in opposition during the 2009–14 parliamentary term, and to consider UKIP and the PS as parties who have no experience of governing. While the evidence suggests that leading figures within the British Conservatives and Labour pay marginally greater attention to their MEPs when they are in government, this is not reflected in the cases of the Finnish KOK and the SDP. As regards the non-governing parties, the UKIP's leadership pays some attention to the activities of its MEPs, whereas the PS' leadership largely does not. These observations suggest that the trend observed within British parties, whereby they pay greater attention to their MEPs when they are in government, is not reflected cross-nationally.

A similarly trendless cross-national picture emerges when examining Hypothesis 12, which expects Eurosceptic parties to be more prone to demand that MEPs focus on work in their home countries compared with integrationist parties. UKIP, the British Eurosceptic party, clearly wishes that its MEPs limit the time they spend in Brussels and Strasbourg, and it is clear that this is directly linked to the party's Eurosceptic views. However, of the three Eurosceptic parties examined in this thesis, this tendency applies exclusively to UKIP. Its Finnish counterpart, the PS, was fully supportive of Sampo Terho's decision to base himself in Brussels and to focus on parliamentary work when he replaced Timo Soini as the party's only MEP in 2011. Similarly, the more moderately Eurosceptic British Conservative Party does not issue its MEPs with guidance on how to divide their time between different settings, and

nor do the more pro-integrationist Labour, KOK, or SDP parties. As UKIP is the only party of the six examined that places limits on the amount of time it wishes its MEPs to spend on parliamentary activity, it must be regarded as an outlier, at least until further cases are examined. Consequently, the thesis does not find evidence to support the notion that Eurosceptic parties are more likely to demand that MEPs limit the time they spend in Brussels and Strasbourg.

Re-examining other potential explanatory variables

There is a theoretical basis for expecting several factors to be linked to the propensity with which parties seek to influence their MEPs, and these are outlined in Chapter 2. The empirical analysis presented in Chapters 4 and 5 was unable to identify such a link in the case of many of these factors. This suggests that these factors are not linked to how parties relate to their MEPs. By comparing the evidence across the six cases it is possible to re-examine whether these factors are, in fact, linked to variation in the way parties relate to MEPs.

Most of these findings do not require revision when subjected to cross-national analysis. Regarding the individual-level factor examined, there is no evidence to suggest that parties vary in how they relate to MEPs depending on the MEPs' level of political experience (Hypothesis 14).[447] Similarly, in the context of factors relating to the parties, there is no suggestion that ideological centrism (Hypothesis 9a and 9b) or the size of the party in terms of its organizational capacity (Hypothesis 7) is a relevant factor. As regards the latter issue, the PS and UKIP are considerably smaller organizations than the other four parties, yet UKIP certainly pays greater attention to its MEPs compared with KOK or the SDP. These findings reinforce the notion that the variation is best explained with reference to country level phenomena.

However, it is necessary to make one revision to the findings presented in earlier chapters when examining the evidence across the six cases. Hypothesis 5 states that domestic parties with large delegations of MEPs are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs than domestic parties with small delegations of MEPs. While this expectation is not supported in the analysis of the Finnish or British parties, a pattern emerges when examining the six cases together. The Conservatives, Labour, and UKIP, the three British parties examined, returned 26, 13, and 13 MEPs respectively following the 2009 election, while the three Finnish parties, KOK, the

SDP, and the PS, returned 3, 2, and 1 MEP respectively. The empirical findings suggest that the three parties with the larger delegations are more prone to seeking influence. In contrast to the findings of Chapters 4 and 5, this finding lends support to the first statement of Hypothesis 5, namely that domestic parties with larger delegations of MEPs are more likely to attempt to influence the behaviour of MEPs. There is, however, no evidence to support the second clause, which expects parties with larger delegations to exercise a greater level of influence than those with smaller delegations.

A summary

To conclude, the analysis of the qualitative data suggests that there is a link between three factors and the degree to which domestic parties seek influence on the behaviour of MEPs. These are the electoral system, the degree to which the candidate selection system is centralized, and the size of the party's delegation in the EP. There is a strong correlation between the three factors and whether the party's country of origin is Finland or the UK. As a result, further research is necessary to identify the relative effects of the three factors. By examining evidence relating to cases from Member States other than Finland and the UK, such future research may shed light on whether the tendency of the British parties to seek influence is explained by a broader issue related to political culture.

EP Groups and the Partisan Control Thesis

Sub-question 2a: Do EP Groups influence the way MEPs think about and carry out representation?

While the evidence relating to domestic political parties contradicts the partisan control thesis, the evidence relating to two of the four EP Groups examined supports the notion that partisan actors influence the behaviour of MEPs. The EPP and the S&D fulfil the four preconditions of influence and exercise a measure of substantive influence on the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs. Parliamentarians do not blindly follow the voting guidance issued by these Groups, as demonstrated by the fact that they vote with their domestic parties more often than with their Groups (Hix et al., 2007: 137). However, it appears that MEPs from the EPP and the S&D routinely vote

with Groups, other than where there is a fundamental conflict between the position of the Group and the preferences of individual MEPs or whole national delegations. As approximately 5,000 divisions take place in the EP annually (Corbett et al., 2011: 200), there is ample scope for issues to arise on which the preferences of MEPs and their Groups diverge moderately. This suggests that Groups influence the voting behaviour of MEPs regularly.

Further, these two Groups may exercise influence on the way that MEPs voice their opinions. As the EPP and the S&D prefer to allocate parliamentary assignments to MEPs who share the views of the majority of their affiliated MEPs, there is an incentive for MEPs to keep their views private on issues where their views diverge from those of their Group colleagues. While this thesis finds no definitive evidence that this factor does lead MEPs to refrain from voicing their opinions, it clearly has the potential to affect how MEPs act.

The primary factor underlying the ability of Groups to influence the behaviour of MEPs, according to the party control literature, is their control over the ability of individual MEPs to realise policy and office goals within the EP. Some support is lent to this view by the evidence that there is a general understanding among MEPs affiliated to the EPP and to the S&D that MEPs risk being denied assignments on issues where their views conflict with those of their Group colleagues. However, a variety of explanations are provided by respondents from the EPP and the S&D for their propensity to vote with their Groups when conflicts emerge. The most prevalent of these is that most MEPs share the norm that they should vote with their Groups unless there is a fundamental conflict, as indiscipline weakens the Group. MEPs certainly reject the notion that Groups use threats and rewards to compel them to vote according to the Groups' recommendations. The statistical findings reported in Chapter 3 reinforce this claim, as they suggest that MEPs are moderately in favour of strengthening Group cohesion, a development that would necessarily entail greater use of disciplinary methods by the Groups.

On the basis of evidence relating to the EPP and the S&D Groups, it is possible to state that while the partisan control thesis is correct in arguing that Groups exercise some influence on the behaviour of MEPs, their ability to compel MEPs to adapt their behaviour is limited. The influence of the EPP and the S&D Groups is largely restricted to the context of parliamentary divisions, which is only one of many settings in which MEPs act as representatives. It is not the use of disciplinary tools

that primarily enables them to influence how MEPs vote. Rather, their ability to compel MEPs to follow voting guidance arises primarily as a result of the widely accepted norm that it is in the long-term interests of MEPs who seek to realise policy goals within the EP to ensure that the Group operates as cohesively as possible.

In contrast, the evidence relating to the ECR and the EFD Groups challenges the partisan control thesis' claim that Groups influence the behaviour of MEPs. These Groups do not seek to influence the behaviour of individual MEPs or of national delegations. Indeed, the degree of coordination within these Groups is far weaker, especially in the case of the EFD. The norm observed within the EPP and the S&D is not shared among the ECR or the EFD, and it appears that these latter two Groups were formed to maximise their constituent domestic parties' access to resources rather than to advance policy positions collectively within the EP. The contrast observed between the EPP and the S&D Groups on the one hand, and the ECR and EFD Groups on the other, suggests two things. Firstly, some Groups wish to influence the policy-related behaviour of MEPs, while others do not. Secondly, Groups that wish to influence the policy-related behaviour of MEPs succeed. This second finding lends support to the logic underlying the partisan control thesis in relation to EP Groups.

Despite the fact that two of the Groups examined exercise a degree of influence on the behaviour of MEPs, there is little evidence that the EPP and the S&D Groups influence the way MEPs think about representation in the sense of shaping their focus of representation. The statistical analysis clearly demonstrates that MEPs do not place a great deal of importance on representing their Groups, and this finding is reinforced by the qualitative data. This suggests that when MEPs vote against their consciences and with the preferences of their Groups, their ultimate goal in doing so is not to promote the interests of the Group. Rather, they do so primarily because they view such behaviour as a means of promoting the interests of the societal grouping(s) which they have selected as the object of their activities as representatives.

The Partisan Control Thesis and EP Group Variation

Sub-question 2b: What factors explain variation in the level of influence that EP Groups have on the way MEPs think about and carry out representation?

The thesis has drawn on data relating to four EP Groups to examine the factors that are linked to variation in the level of influence that such actors exercise on MEPs. The analysis presented in the section above suggests that EP Groups do not influence how MEPs make decisions regarding which interest they prioritize through their work as representatives. However, the discussion does suggest that certain Groups influence how MEPs carry out their parliamentary duties, especially in the context of voting. The research design has made it possible to examine how the S&D and the EFD Groups operate from the perspective of two of their national delegations in both cases, the SDP and Labour in the case of the S&D Group, and the PS and UKIP in the case of the EFD Group. The practices employed by the EPP were examined from the perspective of KOK, while the ECR was examined from the perspective of the Conservatives.

Chapters 4 and 5 identify four factors as being linked to the degree to which EP Groups seek and achieve influence on the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs. The four factors are the size of the EP Group in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs (supporting Hypothesis 6) and in terms of organizational capacity (supporting Hypothesis 8), the centricity of the Group on the left–right scale (supporting Hypothesis 10), and attitudes towards integration (supporting Hypothesis 13). These findings are based on two separate sets of analyses, the first relating to MEPs from Finland and reported in Chapter 4, and the second relating to MEPs from the UK and reported in Chapter 5. This section corroborates the findings by re-examining the data from all the cases examined in this thesis. It confirms that the findings relating to the S&D and to the EFD presented in Chapters 4 and 5 are consistent between both chapters. However, it finds that only three of the four factors identified in those chapters are in fact linked to variation in the propensity of Groups to seek and achieve influence on MEPs. The size of the Group in terms of organizational capacity should not be viewed as a factor that is related to the practices employed by Groups.

There is a clear difference between the EPP and the S&D on the one hand, and the ECR and the EFD on the other, in terms of the degree to which they seek and achieve influence on the behaviour of MEPs. While the EPP and the S&D Groups do not exercise a considerable degree of influence on how MEPs operate as representatives, and while their MEPs certainly do not place a great emphasis on Group representation, it is clear that they do exercise some influence on how MEPs vote at parliamentary divisions. In contrast, the MEPs affiliated to the ECR and EFD

Groups vote virtually exclusively on the basis of the recommendations made by their national delegations. The four factors that are identified in Chapters 4 and 5 as being linked to this variation are consistent across the two pairs of Groups. Compared with the ECR and the EFD, the EPP and the S&D Groups are larger, both in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs and in terms of organizational capacity, are positioned closer to the centre on the left–right scale, and are more amenable towards integration.

It is not surprising that these four factors are all identified as being linked to the variation examined, as they are interrelated. There is a direct and causal link between the number of MEPs affiliated to a Group and its organizational capacity. Indeed, the measure of a Group's organizational capacity that underlies the analysis is primarily based on the number of MEPs affiliated to the Group, together with the number of years that the Group has existed. Further, in terms of the case studies selected for this study, the two largest Groups are also the most centrist and the most integrationist. Generally speaking, these two trends are reflected in the chamber. The largest Groups tend to be more centrist than smaller Groups, and while they also tend to be more amenable towards integration, this latter correlation is not as strong.

Despite the interrelated nature of the four factors identified as being linked to variation in the degree to which EP Groups seek and achieve influence, it is possible to reach certain conclusions regarding the relative degrees to which they serve as determinants of variation in the dynamics within Groups. The empirical findings suggest that Group attitudes towards integration is the key explanatory variable in this context. Respondents from the Eurosceptic Groups examined uniformly state that the basic principle upon which their Groups operate is that national delegations have complete independence to act as they wish, as long as they do not bring the Group into disrepute. Unlike the EFD, the ECR does make some attempt to coordinate policy positions. However, the ECR does not put pressure on individual MEPs or on national delegations to follow its guidance. In contrast, the leadership of the integrationist EPP and S&D desire that affiliated MEPs follow the guidance issued by the Group, and a norm is shared among the MEPs from these two Groups that MEPs should follow the Group's guidance unless it conflicts with the preferences of the national delegation in a fundamental manner.

While it is likely that the other three factors identified play a far more limited role in the degree to which Groups seek and achieve control of their MEPs, it is plausible to make a link between the willingness of MEPs to follow Group guidance

and the number of MEPs affiliated to the Group. In a context of fluid majorities, larger Groups have a greater incentive to act in a disciplined manner than smaller Groups, as they are more likely to be part of a winning coalition. Realising that their Group have a realistic chance of being on the winning side in a given parliamentary division, MEPs affiliated to larger Groups have a stronger incentive to compromise with their Group colleagues by following the Group's guidance, especially if they trust their colleagues to return the favour at a later division.

The prediction that the larger Groups exercise greater influence on MEPs is usually linked to the argument that the larger Groups control the most desirable parliamentary assignments and positions and can use this control to shape the behaviour of MEPs (Hix, 2002: 690–1). This thesis has not found evidence suggesting that Groups use their powers of patronage to influence MEPs. Rather than suggesting that the larger Groups have greater means of influencing their MEPs, the logic presented in this discussion is that MEPs affiliated to larger Groups have greater reason to be willing to conform to the wishes of their Groups than MEPs from smaller Groups. This consideration may go a long way in explaining the norm that exists within the integrationist Groups that MEPs should remain loyal unless they object strongly to the Group's policy position.

It is arguable that centrism in terms of left–right ideology plays a limited role in explaining the degree to which Groups seek and achieve influence. Nevertheless, MEPs from centrist Groups do have a stronger incentive to act cohesively than MEPs affiliated to Groups positioned away from the centre of the left–right ideological scale. Again, this is because these Groups are more likely to be able to negotiate their way into a winning coalition. Other than in the exceptionally unlikely event that a Group positioned towards either extreme were able to command a majority in the chamber, or where Groups on the two extremes are willing and able to work together to form a majority, the support of at least one centrist Group will always be required to form a parliamentary majority. As the centrist Groups always play a pivotal role in the process of forming coalitions in practice, they always have at least as strong an incentive to remain cohesive as Groups that lie towards the extremes. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that Groups that lie towards the centre on the left–right ideological scale are more likely than others to seek and achieve influence on the behaviour of MEPs relative to more extremist Groups.

The discussion linked to Hypothesis 8 presented the notion that Groups with greater organizational capacity are more likely to seek and achieve influence on MEPs than those with fewer resources, as they are in a stronger position to operate a system of partisan discipline. While the two larger Groups examined achieve greater influence on MEPs, the analysis suggests that this trend has little to do with the ability of Groups to deploy resources in a manner which enables them to maintain a system of partisan discipline. This is because the two Groups which are able to influence the behaviour of MEPs do not use the traditional means of partisan influence – providing legislators with overt threats and promises of rewards – to achieve this influence. Rather, the influence that the two larger Groups achieve stems at least in part from the norm shared within their ranks that it is a courtesy to colleagues for MEPs to follow the Group's voting guidance in cases where the level of conflict is low.

This discussion suggests that the organizational capacity of the Group plays a very marginal role at most in explaining the degree to which they seek and achieve influence. As a result, the finding relating to Hypothesis 8 should be regarded as a spurious finding that emerges due to the fact that organizational capacity is empirically interrelated to factors such as attitudes towards integration and the size of the Group in terms of the number of MEPs.

In conclusion, in comparing the four EP Group case studies together, this section finds that it is necessary to make a revision to the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Only three factors are linked to the degree to which EP Groups seek and achieve influence on the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs. These are the size of the EP Group in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs (supporting Hypothesis 6), the centricity of the Group on the left–right scale (supporting Hypothesis 10), and attitudes towards integration (supporting Hypothesis 13). The discussion challenges Hypothesis 8 and the notion that the size of the Group in terms of organizational capacity is linked to the degree to which Groups seek and achieve influence.

A Discussion on the Findings

The empirical findings of this thesis provide a strong challenge to the partisan control thesis. They make clear that neither domestic political parties nor EP Groups exercise the degree of influence on the behaviour of MEPs that other accounts either suggest (Hix, 2002; Hix et al., 2007) or assume (Meserve et al., 2009; Lindstädt et al., 2011, 2012; Raunio, 2012a). Indeed, this thesis has found little evidence that domestic party

leaders influence how MEPs think or act. In fact, they show little interest in the activities of MEPs, and even less desire to influence their behaviour. This is because party leaders seldom wish to realise goals in the contexts in which MEPs operate. The findings suggest that integrationist EP Group leaders have a limited ability to persuade MEPs to act contrary to their own judgment, but that this is primarily linked to a norm that encourages cohesive behaviour within integrationist Groups rather than to the enforcement of discipline.

The thesis also informs theoretical understanding of the factors which shape the degree to which partisan actors seek and achieve influence on MEPs. Three factors are linked to the propensity of national parties to attempt to influence MEPs, namely the type of electoral system, the degree to which the candidate selection system is centralized, and the size of the party's delegation in the EP. Three factors are also identified as being linked to the propensity of EP Groups to seek and to achieve influence. These are the size of the EP Group in terms of the number of affiliated MEPs, the centricity of the Group on the left–right scale, and attitudes towards integration.

Understanding national political parties: why no discipline, why no influence?

Although the thesis finds little empirical support for the partisan control thesis, its findings do not challenge the logic underlying the partisan control thesis, which is that partisan actors are able to use threats and rewards as part of efforts to compel MEPs to follow guidance (Hix et al., 1999, 2007; Raunio, 2007; Scully, 2001). No evidence is found to suggest that domestic parties or EP Groups could not influence the behaviour of MEPs if they were ready to make the necessary investment. This investment would take the form of employing officials to monitor developments in the EP with the aim of providing appropriate guidance to MEPs, and to monitor the work of their own MEPs. Parties would also need to be more willing to issue credible threats and offers of rewards.

The empirical findings indicate that most domestic party leaders do little to maximise their potential for influencing their MEPs. The three Finnish parties consciously refrain from interfering in the affairs of their MEPs. The leaders of two of the three British parties, the Conservatives and Labour, forgo the potential for influencing the behaviour of MEPs that is offered by control of the candidate selection system. By using decentralised candidate selection systems, the leadership

of these two parties relinquish both their ability to shape the outcomes of the selection process and their 'ultimate' tool for incentivising the behaviour of MEPs (Raunio, 2007: 141). UKIP is the only party that has sought to implement centralised party discipline, and its attempts have largely been unsuccessful due to the preference of its MEPs to leave the party rather than to follow its guidance.

By evaluating the theoretical underpinnings of the partisan control thesis, and by drawing on the empirical insights provided by this thesis, it is possible to explain why national parties structure relations with their MEPs in a manner that is too passive for them to be able to influence their MEPs. In explaining why parties tend not to issue voting instructions, Scully argues that party leaders do not have an incentive to mandate MEPs. He argues that leaders may feel that the party's interests are best served when MEPs are afforded the freedom to act on the basis of their own judgment, as MEPs require a degree of flexibility to form winning coalitions (Scully, 2001: 14–15, 23). The findings presented in this thesis suggest that party leaders do not make a calculated decision regarding the use of discipline. Party leaders tend not to mandate MEPs primarily because they have little interest in realising goals through the work of MEPs, and therefore have little interest in influencing their behaviour.

If MEPs are largely free agents, what explains the high degree of cohesion?

The high degree of partisan cohesion evident at parliamentary divisions, together with the range of disciplinary tools available to partisan actors, highlights the attractiveness of claiming that partisan organizations 'control' MEPs (Hix et al., 2007: 132) and that the 'electoral connection' operates via parties in the case of MEPs (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 201–2; Mayhew, 1974). Rather than setting out to examine how decision-making takes place in the EP (Ringe, 2010), this thesis is concerned with the issue of whether MEPs are subject to partisan discipline. However, as the findings indicate that partisan actors make limited use of discipline, it is clearly necessary to provide an explanation for the high degree of partisan cohesion.

Of course, the EP is not unique as a legislature in which the high degree of voting cohesion observed is explained with reference to considerations other than the enforcement of strict partisan discipline. Jensen finds that 'the extremely high party cohesion in Nordic parliamentary parties is voluntary and consensual' (2000: 234), while Norton (2003) demonstrates that the degree of cohesion among the parties in the House of Lords is near absolute, despite the fact that the whips have virtually no

means whatsoever of compelling peers to follow guidance. Norton explains that peers are usually 'unaware of the issue on which the vote is taking place ... [and] simply follow the guidance of the whips' (2003: 68). Decision-making in the EP partially reflects these findings relating to Nordic legislatures and to the House of Lords.

The thesis' empirical findings suggest that the high levels of partisan cohesion within the EP is best explained with reference to the need of MEPs and their national parties 'to establish divisions of labour and mechanisms of coordination in the face of an overload of decision-making' (Hix and Lord, 1997: 147; Ringe, 2010). The European Parliament's twenty committees all deal with a number of reports at any given time. As only eight national parties have more than twenty MEPs (European Parliament, 2014b), it is reasonable to assume that few parties are able to divide the task of following every issue under discussion within the EP between their MEPs. With individual MEPs, and most national delegations, only able to develop an expertise on a certain number of issues, their ability to develop preferences independently of their Groups is limited. This suggests that the overwhelming majority of MEPs and their national delegations are reliant to a considerable extent on the policy support provided by their Groups.

The propensity of MEPs to vote with their Groups is explained both by their reliance on the guidance which the Groups provide, and by the fact that the preferences of national delegations on issues where they are able to develop an expertise is likely to be conditioned extensively by those of their Group colleagues. Indeed, as MEPs operate in a context of fluid majorities, it is natural that their preferences are shaped both by those of other national delegations within their Groups and by the preferences of rival Groups.[448] MEPs need to negotiate their way into winning coalitions if they are to influence policy outcomes, and this requires a willingness to compromise on their part.

Yet MEPs and their national delegations are not completely powerless to form preferences independently of their Groups, as even individual MEPs and small national delegations can develop an expertise on certain issues. On issues where preferences can be developed independently of Groups, it is inevitable that national delegations will, on occasion, be able to identify differences between their own preferences and those of their Groups. It is reasonable to assume that MEPs will follow the guidance provided by national party colleagues when that conflicts with the recommendations issued by their Group colleagues from other Member States.

This is because there is likely to be a higher degree of ideological convergence within national delegations, and because the guidance issued by a national party colleague is more likely to take account of how the issue affects their own Member States.

The evidence presented in this thesis therefore supports the account provided by Ringe (2010). Most MEPs vote on the basis of the guidance provided by their Groups in the overwhelming majority of instances, but tend to vote with their national party delegations on the small minority of issues where national colleagues indicate that there is a fundamental conflict in preferences. This explains both why the degree of cohesion is higher within national delegations than within Groups, and why the degree of cohesion within the two partisan organizations is high despite the limited use of discipline.

Understanding EP Groups: influence without discipline?

It is possible to draw on the argument presented above when considering an issue which has provided one of the main stimuli of research in this area, namely whether it is the national parties or the EP Groups that exercise the greatest degree of influence on the behaviour of MEPs. The literature's discussion (Hix et al., 2007; Raunio, 2012a) is based on the assumption that partisan actors can compel MEPs to act contrary to their wishes, and the conclusion is that national parties have the greatest means of inducing compliant behaviour.

While this study demonstrates that neither type of actor exerts much, if any, systematic control on MEPs, its findings suggest that the influence of national party colleagues is higher in relative terms than that of Group colleagues. When colleagues from the national delegation and the Group compete to persuade MEPs to follow contrasting guidance, MEPs are more prone to follow the guidance provided by their national party colleagues. However, at least in the case of the majority of MEPs, who are affiliated to relatively small national delegations and integrationist Groups, it is the EP Groups that exercise the greatest degree of influence on MEPs in absolute terms. Most MEPs affiliated to integrationist Groups usually vote on the basis of recommendations developed by their Groups rather than by their national parties. This indicates that Groups shape the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs to a greater extent than national party colleagues.

Broader Implications

The findings presented in this thesis have implications for a number of important issues relating to MEPs, to their partisan organizations, and to the state of the EU's supranational party system.

MEPs and the institutional context

The first set of implications relates to the institutional context in which MEPs operate as representatives. The partisan control thesis suggests that MEPs are severely constrained in their ability to make decisions independently of their domestic parties and EP Groups. It posits that MEPs are deterred from acting in ways that conflict with the interests of the leaders of the two partisan organizations, and are offered incentives to comply with the guidance issued. However, this is not an accurate portrayal of the institutional context in which MEPs operate. Rather than being subject to strong pressure from partisan actors, this thesis demonstrates that MEPs enjoy a considerable degree of independence in deciding how they wish to operate as representatives. They are largely free from partisan pressures when making decisions regarding how to divide their time between different activities and geographical settings. As most party leaders do not incentivise parliamentary behaviour by linking it to goal-related threats and rewards, MEPs are largely protected from partisan pressures when making behavioural decision within the chamber.[449]

Indeed, rather than indicating partisan control, evidence relating to the degree of cohesion within domestic parties and Groups can be interpreted as indicating that MEPs enjoy significant freedom to act according to their own judgment. Approximately 1,000 parliamentary divisions are taken by roll call vote each year, and MEPs vote against their colleagues from their national parties in nearly 5% of instances, and against their EP Groups in nearly 10% of instances (Hix et al., 2007: 137). Due to the technical nature of the issues considered by the EP, together with the high number of divisions, it is widely held that MEPs are unable to form an opinion on a considerable portion of the issues that arise (Ringe, 2010; Hix and Lord, 1997: 147). The number of votes on which an MEP has a clear preference, and one which conflicts with that of the national delegation or the Group, can therefore be expected to be fairly low. Considering that MEPs vote against their partisan organizations relatively regularly, these observations suggest that MEPs are inclined to vote against

their delegations and EP Groups when preferences diverge. The findings therefore present a stern challenge the partisan control thesis.

MEPs and the focus of representation

The second set of implications relates to scholarly understanding of MEPs as representatives. Despite the fact that they operate with extensive independence from their domestic party organizations, MEPs have a strong sense of acting on behalf of their domestic parties. Most appear to promote policy issues in ways that are consistent with their parties' core policies and carry out party-related work in their domestic settings. All party officials interviewed for this thesis other than those from UKIP indicated that they are perfectly content with the way that their MEPs carry out their work. It is clear that MEPs realise that there is little to compel them to focus on the party's interests.[450] This suggests that the importance MEPs place on party representation does not result from the fact that MEPs feel that they are under pressure from the domestic party to prioritize party interests, as Farrell and Scully suggest (2007: 9). Rather, the strong focus on party representation stems from the desire of MEPs to promote party interests. Unsurprisingly, most MEPs feel an ideological attachment to their domestic parties. It is therefore appropriate to think of MEPs largely as *voluntary* or *willing* partisan agents, rather than as agents who seek to evade the control of their domestic partisan principals.

While the quantitative and the qualitative evidence examined indicates that most MEPs share a strong sense of representing their domestic parties, the evidence also demonstrates that even MEPs affiliated to integrationist Groups do not feel a strong sense of attachment to their Groups. What little importance MEPs place on Group representation stems from the belief that they are able to advance their interests – and those of their constituents – by working through their Groups. This indicates that MEPs from all four Groups examined in this thesis primarily view their Groups in instrumental terms. Both sets of data suggest that MEPs tend to place a stronger emphasis on geographical representation than on either form of partisan representation. All the British MEPs interviewed demonstrated a willingness to promote the interests of their region and of the UK more broadly. In the case of the Finnish MEPs interviewed, the emphasis tended to be on representing the whole of Finland, with only a few respondents noting a desire to place a special emphasis on representing a particular region.[451] This suggests that MEPs primarily wish to

represent people, rather than partisan organizations or political ideologies, and that they enjoy the freedom to do so. Considering the normative position presented in Chapter 1 that citizens are ‘always the ultimate principals’ where democracy is understood as popular sovereignty (Strøm, 2003: 64), this finding is reassuring.

National parties as political organizations: three implications

The Conclusion has argued that the passivity with which domestic parties structure relations with their MEPs is explained largely by the fact that their leaders have little interest in engaging with the work of MEPs. This key claim informs the understanding of three important issues. It informs theoretical understanding of how domestic parties structure relations with their MEPs, understanding of how domestic parties act in multi-level settings, and understanding of why parties have undertaken such limited organization change, despite the vast changes made to the structure of governance in Europe.

Firstly, institutionalist theories of how partisan actors structure relations with their MEPs need to take greater account of the degree to which partisan actors wish to realise goals through the work of MEPs. Scholars have developed sophisticated theoretical accounts, which postulate the conditions under which partisan actors are likely to seek and to achieve influence on MEPs (Scully, 2001; Raunio, 2002, 2007; see also Chapter 2 of this thesis). These are compelling, and this thesis lends support to the claims that three of these factors – the electoral system, the degree to which the candidate selection system is centralized, and the size of the party’s delegation in the EP – are linked to the degree to which domestic parties seek to influence the behaviour of MEPs. However, these accounts ignore the fact that domestic parties rarely show an interest in the work of their MEPs, or in the affairs of the EP. The findings suggest that the factor that is central to understanding how parties structure relations with their MEPs is the degree to which the partisan actor desires to realise goals such as election, policy, and office through the work of MEPs.

Secondly, the passive nature of domestic parties’ engagement with the affairs of the EP informs theoretical understanding of how parties operate in multi-level settings. Chapter 2 discusses Strøm’s (1990) claims that the behaviour of parties is driven by their desire to realise three types of goals – election, policy, and office – and that parties are required to make trade-offs between these goals in certain instances. Parties based in the EU may seek to realise these three goals at different

levels, including at the level of the EU, of the state, and at sub-state levels. As a result, there will be instances where they must prioritize not only between the three goals, but also between the different levels.

Despite the growth in the powers of the EU and of the EP, the domestic parties examined in this thesis are far more interested in realising their goals in the context of domestic politics than at the EU level (cf. Hix et al., 1999: 8). While these parties operate in a system of multi-level governance, it does not appear that they are multi-level goal-seekers. This thesis does not seek to explain why this is the case, or to identify which factors explain the propensity of domestic parties to prioritize goals on some levels of governance over those on other levels, and these are issues which require further research. However, the findings presented in this thesis provide grounds for postulating that parties systematically prioritize goals that may be pursued on certain levels of governance over those relating to other levels, and that the state level remains the most important one for domestic political parties.

Thirdly, the observation that party leaders have limited interest in realising goals in the context of the EP also informs understanding of how parties have adapted to changes taking place at EU level, that is, of the Europeanization of political parties. The empirical findings support the claims of those who find that parties have made few changes to their organizations despite the transformation that has taken place in how governance is structured (Poguntke et al., 2007). The degree to which parties engage with issues relating to EU policy-making, especially in the context of the EP, is low. In most cases, the investment that parties make to develop a capacity to deal with politics beyond the state takes the form of employing an EU (or an International) Officer, who is not expected to follow EP policy-making processes closely. As a result of this lack of investment, most parties allow MEPs to take sole responsibility for dealing with the affairs of the EP, especially with regards to developing policy on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, the freedom that MEPs are provided to carry out representation independently of their parties is largely explained by the fact that they are in most cases the *only* individuals from their parties that pay any attention to politics within the EP.

These insights provide grounds for furthering understanding of why parties have been so impervious to change despite the extensive changes that have taken place at the EU level. Ladrech explains the limited degree of Europeanization by arguing that as the EU does not affect the ability of party leaders to realise core goals,

the ‘necessary condition to trigger party organizational change are … absent’ (2007: 222). The discussion on which this claim rests relates exclusively to the effect that the EU has on the ability of party leaders to realise goals that lie within domestic politics. However, it is possible to develop this explanation further by making a more explicit claim relating to how party leaders view EU-level goals. The limited degree of party organizational change taking place in response to developments at the EU level is explained both by the fact that EU-related factors largely do not affect the ability of parties to realise domestic goals (Ladrech, 2007: 222), *and* by the fact that party leaders have limited desire to realise goals that lie at the EU level.

Eurosceptic Groups and influence within the chamber

The empirical findings relating to practices of policy coordination within Eurosceptic Groups have implications for the degree to which these Groups can hope to influence policy-making within the chamber. The fact that Eurosceptic Groups allow affiliated national delegations to define policy positions independently limits their ability to act cohesively. The most Eurosceptic Group, the EFD, is currently the second least likely Group to feature in a winning parliamentary coalition (Frantescu, 2013: 3), and this suggests that its ability to influence policy outcomes is currently limited. There is at present little incentive for the larger Groups to seek the EFD’s support, as they are always able to turn to Groups holding more similar views in order to find a parliamentary majority. However, the number of Eurosceptic MEPs has increased considerably in recent years, and the secular decline in public support for the EU suggests that their ranks will swell in the future. As a result, it is not inconceivable that Eurosceptic Groups such as the EFD will be in a position where they can systematically influence policy outcomes at some point.

Nevertheless, even if the number of MEPs affiliated to Eurosceptic Groups were to increase substantially during the coming parliamentary terms, the findings presented in this thesis suggest that the Groups would have to fundamentally change how they operate if they are ever to develop a means of influencing policy processes within the EP. If they are to become more relevant in coalition formation processes within the chamber, the EFD in particular (and the ECR to a lesser extent) will need to act in a more cohesive manner. This clearly requires compelling national delegations to vote together at parliamentary divisions. Cohesion can be achieved either by using traditional disciplinary means, or by fostering the norm that there is a

value to voting cohesively even when preferences diverge, as exists within the integrationist Groups. The thesis' findings suggest that it would require a radical rethinking within these Groups for either of these developments to take place. Bearing in mind that there is a fundamental tension between Euroscepticism and the notion of transnational political co-operation, such a transformation is unlikely to happen. As a result, Eurosceptic Groups are unlikely to gain serious influence within the EP even if their ranks did swell considerably in the future.

The state of the supranational party system in the EU

The thesis' findings inform understanding of the current state of the supranational party system in the EU. Studies which examine the development of the EU's supranational party system invariably conclude that Marquand's wish regarding the development of an '*Europe des partis*' rather than a '*Europe des patries*' (1978) has not been realised (Raunio, 1997; Hix and Lord, 1997; Kreppel, 2002). Pessimists may also draw on this thesis' finding that Groups do not enforce discipline to argue that the dynamics of transnational partisan cooperation are too weak to spur on the development of truly supranational party system. From this perspective, it is competition between collections of national party delegations that provides the basis for politics in the EP, rather than competition between unified transnational party Groups.

Demonstrating that EP Groups are highly influential actors within the EP, this thesis presents an alternative view. As national parties lack the capacity to deal with issues relating to day-to-day policy-making in the EP, MEPs are reliant on their Groups for guidance on how to act within the chamber, most notably at the thousands of parliamentary divisions that take place annually. In addition, on issues where the MEP or the national party has the expertise to develop preferences, those preferences are likely to be shaped extensively not only by those of their Group colleagues, but also by the preferences of rival Groups. As others have noted (Hix et al., 2003: 327; Kreppel, 2002: 216; Scully, 2001: 14–16; Whitaker and Lynch, 2014: 240), the dynamics of coalition formation processes provide an incentive for Groups, national delegations, and MEPs to take the preferences of others into account when developing negotiating positions. This suggests that the supranational party system is highly influential in one context, namely within the EU's directly elected parliament.

Free From Party Control, But Also Free From Scrutiny? A Normative Response

Two observations can be made as a response to these findings from a normative perspective. The first is that there is clearly reason to welcome the fact that MEPs enjoy the freedom to act on the basis of their own conception of the public good, and are not excessively constrained by partisan considerations. There is more scope for MEPs to act in the public interest when they are able to act on the basis of their own judgment compared with when they are rigidly compelled to act in ways that conform to the wishes of their partisan leaders.

However, the second normative observation is less positive and relates to the degree to which citizens can rely on partisan actors to assist them to minimise agency loss by scrutinising the work of MEPs. As noted in Chapter 2, agency theory assumes that a degree of scrutiny is necessary if legislators (agents) are to prioritize the pursuit of the interests of citizens (principals) ahead of the advancement of their own interests. The EP is a context in which citizens are particularly vulnerable to agency losses, as the scope for ‘adverse selection’ and ‘hidden action’ (Strøm, 2003: 85–6; Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991: 25–6) is acute. Citizens know little about the preferences of candidates before they are elected, and have little means of indicating a preference for the candidates that share their preferences most closely in the majority of Member States. The low level of public and media interest in the work of the EP suggests that MEPs are afforded considerable scope to pursue any set of interests that they wish once elected.

As parties play a central role in the chain of delegation between citizens and the exercise of power (Strøm et al., 2003a), the public may legitimately expect parties to scrutinise the work of MEPs on their behalf. This is especially the case in contexts where citizens have little or no control over which candidates are elected from a party’s list, as is the case in countries operating closed- and ordered-list systems. However, the findings presented in this thesis indicate that citizens cannot rely on partisan actors to scrutinise the work of MEPs. The domestic parties examined are unwilling to make the investment required to enable them to subject the work of MEPs to any meaningful level of oversight. In the language of some of the theoretical principal–agent literature (McCubbins and Schwartz, 1984), not only are there no ‘police patrols’ of the agents, but the ‘fire alarm’ does not have a battery fitted! As public knowledge and understanding of EP Groups is virtually non-existent, the

Groups cannot reasonably be expected to act as organizations that assist citizens in holding MEPs to account.

The fact that partisan actors do little to assist citizens to scrutinise the work of MEPs, despite the pressing need for them to do so, is clearly problematic. The level of political authority delegated to MEPs is considerable, and the growth in their power in recent years was viewed as a means of increasing the degree to which the EU political system is responsive to citizens. In the absence of mechanisms of accountability there can be no guarantee – and it should not even be expected – that MEPs will act in a manner that is responsive either to the wishes or to the interests of citizens. The EU's failure to develop a strong sense of legitimacy has been linked to the inability of citizens to oversee how their national governments act in the various settings of the Council (Follesdal and Hix, 2006: 553; Raunio, 1999). It follows that if there is no scrutiny of the work of MEPs, there is little reason to expect that they will able to address this legitimacy deficit through the representation that they provide.

Of course, it is not inconceivable that MEPs will act in ways that are responsive to citizens despite the fact that there is a lack of institutional mechanisms providing them with inducements to advance the interests of citizens. After all, as the discussion presented above makes clear, MEPs place a great deal of importance on geographical and partisan representation even though parties and citizens provide MEPs with few incentives to promote their interests. However, as Follesdal and Hix have argued (2006: 556), the fact that those currently in authority happen to promote the interests of citizens is not sufficient to satisfy the requirements of normative democratic theories. A strong democratic political system requires mechanisms that ensure that decision-makers advance the interests of the citizenry.

Greater levels of oversight by domestic political parties would not necessarily act as a means to ensure that MEPs act on the basis of the interests of the citizenry. Indeed, the concern underpinning the first normative observation is that MEPs may be more sensitive to the wishes of their parties than to their conception of the interest of citizens if parties were to pay closer attention to their work. However, if MEPs were subject to greater scrutiny by their parties, the scope for them to promote interests that diverge both from those of citizens and of the parties for whom citizens vote would become more limited.

Therefore, it is arguable that the contribution that domestic parties make in assisting citizens to contain agency losses in relation to the work of MEPs would be

greater if parties paid closer attention to the activities of their MEPs and to EU policy processes more broadly. Parties should also ensure that those involved in the process of selecting candidates have a genuine means of evaluating the activities of incumbent MEPs, possibly by circulating information generated by party officials during the parliamentary term. They should also be clear about their willingness to deselect MEPs seeking re-election, despite the adverse publicity that taking such a step can attract. These reforms would naturally raise concerns regarding the degree of independence that MEPs enjoy from their parties. However, on balance, the notion that MEPs act on the basis of their parties' wishes is more palatable than the idea that they are free to act without needing to be overly concerned about being held to account at a later date.

Domestic parties are unlikely to implement these recommendations because they have little incentive to do so. In the normative sense, domestic parties serve the public by providing various forms of linkage between citizens and the state (Lawson, 1980, Römmele et al., 2005; Dalton et al., 2011: 7). However, they are not selfless organizations. Not only are they goal-seeking organizations, they also exist to assist party leaders and other party members to realise goals. Directing party resources away from domestic concerns and towards the work of the EP does not increase the ability of these individuals to realise their core goals, which lie primarily within the domestic sphere. Moreover, party leaders have a disincentive to task officials with engaging with EU policy processes. The consequence of doing so would be to create a new group of experts within the party, who could use their expertise to challenge party leaders. These officials may also undermine the efforts of domestic party leaders to keep issues relating to the EU off the domestic agenda (Ladrech, 2007: 226).

Farrell and Scully argue that the EP is a 'failure as a representative institution' (2007: 9). One of potentially several reasons for this is that 'the electoral systems used to elect most MEPs promote the interests of political parties and other organized interests over those of individual voters' (2007: 9). The result is that the EU suffers from a 'representation deficit' (2007: 9). This thesis challenges the view that MEPs are subject to considerable pressures from their domestic parties, and that the institutional context in which they operate compels them to prioritize the interests of partisan organizations to the detriment of citizens' concerns. However, it shares the deep concern regarding how representation is carried out in the context of the EP.

The low levels of engagement by domestic partisan actors, and the apparent reliance of many MEPs on the policy guidance issued by their EP Groups, indicate that the relationship between citizens and the EP is characterised by an 'accountability deficit'. MEPs are able to make use of the considerable political authority that has been delegated to them largely without needing to be concerned that their actions are subject to oversight by citizens, political parties, or the media. As domestic parties clearly perceive that their main goals lie within domestic politics, they have little reason to change how they structure relations with their MEPs. Consequently, the prospect of addressing the EU's perceived democratic deficit by relying on the representative capabilities of MEPs is not promising.

[447] The party leaders who are also MEPs may serve as exceptions to this general rule, as the potential for them to come under pressure from the 'party leadership' appears to be more limited than in the case of MEPs who do not hold the position of party leader.
[448] The degree of ideological centrism and support of integration is likely to affect the extent to which this statement applies to different MEPs. As extremist and Eurosceptic national party delegations are less likely to be able to negotiate their way into a winning coalition, there is less incentive for their MEPs to compromise with other national delegations within their Groups or with rival Groups.
[449] It remains possible that MEPs are subject to some partisan pressure in the context of parliamentary voting due to the dynamics operating within national party delegations. However, this issue lies outside the scope of this thesis as it does not relate to pressure from the party leadership.
[450] This observation holds across the cases, other than in the case of UKIP MEPs and in the case of a minority of British MEPs who are in competition with other sitting MEPs for a place on their parties' list and who realise that their party is likely to win fewer seats at the next EP election.
[451] The differences identified between the geographical focus of Finnish and British MEPs reflect the differences in the nature of constituencies between the two countries.

Appendix A: Ordinal Regression Tables

Table 21a: Ordinal regression models 1–4 of the regularity with which domestic party leaderships issue voting instructions

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Independent variables	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)
Gender: female (reference category: male)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Years since first elected as MEP	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Experience as national MP (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Experience of national government (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
MEP left–right stance		n.s.		
MEP left–right stance (folded)		n.s.		
National party left–right stance		n.s.		
National party left–right (folded)		n.s.		
MEP integration stance		n.s.		
MEP integration stance (folded)		-.303 (.094)		
National Party integration stance		n.s.		
National Party integration stance (folded)		n.s.		
Old/New Member States			n.s.	
Open list (reference category: closed)			n.s.	
Ordered list (reference category closed)			n.s.	
Number of MEPs elected from the party in 2009			n.s.	
Experience as national delegation leader				n.s.
Experience of holding a position of seniority within chamber				n.s.
Cox & Snell R^2	0.032	0.105	0.072	0.057
Nagelkerke R^2	0.045	0.113	0.078	0.061
N	132	126	132	123

Table 21b: Ordinal regression models 5–7 of the regularity with which domestic party leaderships issue voting instructions

	Model 5	**Model 6**	**Model 7**
Independent variables	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)
Gender: female (reference category: male)	The model violates the assumption of proportional odds	-.630 (.097)	n.s.
Years since first elected as MEP	-	n.s.	n.s.
Experience as national MP (reference category: no experience)	-	n.s.	n.s.
Experience of national government (reference category: no experience)	-	n.s.	n.s.
Importance of national party officials in candidate selection	-		
Importance of regional/local party officials in candidate selection	-		
Importance of individual party members in candidate selection	-		
Bulgaria		n.s.	
Czech		n.s.	
Denmark		n.s.	
Germany		n.s.	
Estonia		n.s.	
Ireland		1.926 (.094)	
Greece		n.s.	
Spain		n.s.	
France		n.s.	
Italy		n.s.	
Cyprus		n.s.	
Latvia		n.s.	
Lithuania		n.s.	
Luxembourg		(dropped)	
Hungary		n.s.	

Malta		n.s.	
Netherlands		n.s.	
Austria		n.s.	
Poland		n.s.	
Portugal		n.s.	
Romania		n.s.	
Slovenia		n.s.	
Slovakia		n.s.	
Finland		n.s.	
Sweden		n.s.	
UK		n.s.	
(Member State reference category: Belgium)		-	
EP Group: S&D			n.s.
EP Group: ALDE			n.s.
EP Group: Greens/EFA			-1.667 (.010)
EP Group: ECR			n.s.
EP Group: GUE/NGL			n.s.
EP Group: EFD			n.s.
EP Group: Non-attached			n.s.
(EP Group reference category: EPP)			-
Cox & Snell R^2	-	0.305	0.099
Nagelkerke R^2	-	0.328	0.106
N	-	132	132

Table 22a: Ordinal regression models 1–4 of the regularity with which the leadership of national EP delegations issue voting instructions

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
Independent Variables	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)
Gender: female (reference category: male)	n.s.	The model violates the assumption of proportional odds	n.s.	The model violates the assumption of proportional odds
Years since first elected as MEP	n.s.	-	n.s.	-
Experience as national MP (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	-	n.s.	-
Experience of national government (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	-	n.s.	-
MEP left–right stance		-		
MEP left–right stance (folded)		-		
National party left–right stance		-		
National party left–right stance		-		
MEP integration stance		-		
MEP integration stance (folded)		-		
National Party integration stance		-		
National Party integration stance (folded)		-		
Old/New Member States			n.s.	
Open list (reference category: closed)			n.s.	
Ordered list (reference category closed)			n.s.	
Number of MEPs elected from the party in 2009			n.s.	
Experience as national delegation leader				-
Experience of holding a position of seniority within chamber				-
Cox & Snell R^2	0.015	-	0.250	-
Nagelkerke R^2	0.015	-	0.265	-
N	132	-	132	-

Table 22b: Ordinal regression models 5–7 of the regularity with which the leadership of national EP delegations issue voting instructions

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Independent variables	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)
Gender: female (reference category: male)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Years since first elected as MEP	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Experience as national MP (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Experience of national government (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Importance of national party officials in candidate selection	-.346 (.038)		
Importance of regional/local party officials in candidate selection	n.s.		
Importance of individual party members in candidate selection	n.s.		
Bulgaria		n.s.	
Czech		n.s.	
Denmark		5.604 (.000)	
Germany		2.685 (.011)	
Estonia		n.s.	
Ireland		2.892 (0.12)	
Greece		n.s.	
Spain		n.s.	
France		4.717 (.000)	
Italy		2.649 (.007)	
Cyprus		n.s.	
Latvia		n.s.	
Lithuania		n.s.	
Luxembourg		(dropped)	
Hungary		n.s.	
Malta		n.s.	
Netherlands		2.568 (.044)	

Austria		n.s.	
Poland		2.105 (.078)	
Portugal		n.s.	
Romania		n.s.	
Slovenia		n.s.	
Slovakia		n.s.	
Finland		n.s.	
Sweden		2.425 (.027)	
UK		4.790 (.000)	
(Member State reference category: Belgium)		-	
EP Group: S&D			n.s.
EP Group: ALDE			n.s.
EP Group: Greens/EFA			-1.918 (.002)
EP Group: ECR			2.432 (.041)
EP Group: GUE/NGL			n.s.
EP Group: EFD			1.903 (.034)
EP Group: Non-attached			-4.013 (.003)
(EP Group reference category: EPP)			-
Cox & Snell R^2	.046	.322	.247
Nagelkerke R^2	.048	.339	.261
N	132	132	132

Table 23a: Ordinal regression models 1–4 of the importance attributed to representing the national party

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
Independent Variables	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)
Gender: female (reference category: male)	n.s.	n.s.	The model violates the assumption of proportional odds	The model violates the assumption of proportional odds
Years since first elected as MEP	n.s.	n.s.	-	-
Experience as national MP (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	n.s.	-	-
Experience of national government (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	-.795 (.089)	-	-
MEP left–right stance		n.s.		
MEP left–right stance (folded)		.442 (.043)		
National party left–right stance		n.s.		
National party left–right stance		n.s.		
MEP integration stance		n.s.		
MEP integration stance (folded)				
National Party integration stance		n.s.		
National Party integration stance (folded)		n.s.		
Old/New Member States			-	
Open list (reference category: closed)			-	
Ordered list (reference category closed)			-	
Number of MEPs elected from the party in 2009			-	
Experience as national delegation leader				-
Experience of holding a position of seniority within chamber				-
Cox & Snell R^2	.039	.174	-	-
Nagelkerke R^2	.042	.188	-	-
N	139	126	-	-

Table 23b: Ordinal regression models 5–7 of the importance attributed to representing the national party

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Independent variables	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)
Gender: female (reference category: male)	n.s.	n.s.	The model violates the assumption of proportionality	The model violates the assumption of proportionality
Years since first elected as MEP	-.058 (.071)	n.s.	-	-
Experience as national MP (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	n.s.	-	-
Experience of national government (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	n.s.	-	-
Importance of national party officials in candidate selection	n.s.			
Importance of regional/local party officials in candidate selection	n.s.			
Importance of individual party members in candidate selection	.047 (.005)			
Bulgaria		n.s.		
Czech		-2.277 (.054)		
Denmark		n.s.		
Germany		-1.920 (.068)		
Estonia		n.s.		
Ireland		n.s.		
Greece		n.s.		
Spain		n.s.		
France		-2.424 (.026)		
Italy		n.s.		
Cyprus		n.s.		
Latvia		n.s.		
Lithuania		n.s.		
Luxembourg		-3.706 (.068)		

Hungary		n.s.		
Malta		-3.413 (.092)		
Netherlands		n.s.		
Austria		-2.326 (.095)		
Poland		n.s.		
Portugal		-2.562 (.041)		
Romania		-2.785 (.009)		
Slovenia		n.s.		
Slovakia		n.s.		
Finland		-3.352 (.009)		
Sweden		n.s.		
UK		n.s.		
(Member State reference category: Belgium)		-		
EP Group: S&D			-	
EP Group: ALDE			-	
EP Group: Greens/EFA			-	
EP Group: ECR			-	
EP Group: GUE/NGL			-	
EP Group: EFD			-	
EP Group: Non-attached			-	
(EP Group reference category: EPP)			-	
Voting recommendations: national party leadership				-
Voting recommendations: national delegation				-
Voting recommendations: EP Group leadership				-
Cox & Snell R^2	.137	.373	-	-
Nagelkerke R^2	.148	.401	-	-
N	139	139	-	-

Table 24a: Ordinal regression models 1–4 of the importance attributed to representing EP Groups

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
Independent Variables	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)
Gender: female (reference category: male)	n.s.	The model violates the assumption of proportional odds	n.s.	n.s.
Years since first elected as MEP	n.s.	-	n.s.	n.s.
Experience as national MP (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	-	n.s.	n.s.
Experience of national government (reference category: no experience)	n.s.	-	n.s.	n.s.
MEP left–right stance		-		
MEP left–right stance (folded)		-		
National party left–right stance		-		
National party left–right stance		-		
MEP integration stance		-		
MEP integration stance (folded)		-		
National Party integration stance		-		
National Party integration stance (folded)		-		
Old/New Member States			n.s.	
Open list (reference category: closed)			n.s.	
Ordered list (reference category closed)			.813 (.078)	
Number of MEPs elected from the party in 2009			.035 (.078)	
Experience as national delegation leader				n.s.
Experience of holding a position of seniority within chamber				n.s.
Cox & Snell R^2	.014	-	.061	.027
Nagelkerke R^2	.015	-	.066	.029
N	139	-	139	129

Table 24b: Ordinal regression models 5–7 of the importance attributed to representing EP Groups

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Independent variables	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)	Parameter estimates (significance)
Gender: female (reference category: male)	The model violates the assumption of proportionality	n.s.	n.s.	The model violates the assumption of proportionality
Years since first elected as MEP		n.s.	n.s.	-
Experience as national MP (reference category: no experience)	-	n.s.	n.s.	-
Experience of national government (reference category: no experience)	-	n.s.	n.s.	-
Importance of national party officials in candidate selection	-			
Importance of regional/local party officials in candidate selection	-			
Importance of individual party members in candidate selection	-			
Bulgaria		n.s.		
Czech		-6.010 (.000)		
Denmark		n.s.		
Germany		-3.377 (.010)		
Estonia		n.s.		
Ireland		-3.250 (.017)		
Greece		n.s.		
Spain		n.s.		
France		-3.164 (.017)		
Italy		-2.751 (.025)		
Cyprus		n.s.		
Latvia		n.s.		
Lithuania		n.s.		
Luxembourg		-4.960 (.022)		

Hungary		n.s.		
Malta		-4.949 (.023)		
Netherlands		-4.107 (.006)		
Austria		-2.985 (.061)		
Poland		n.s.		
Portugal		-4.071 (.005)		
Romania		-3.003 (.020)		
Slovenia		n.s.		
Slovakia		n.s.		
Finland		-5.015 (.001)		
Sweden		-3.511 (.009)		
UK		-4.554 (.001)		
(Member State reference category: Belgium)		-		
EP Group: S&D			n.s.	
EP Group: ALDE			n.s.	
EP Group: Greens/EFA			n.s.	
EP Group: ECR			1.715 (.050)	
EP Group: GUE/NGL			1.632 (.059)	
EP Group: EFD			n.s.	
EP Group: Non-attached			n.s.	
(EP Group reference category: EPP)			-	
Voting recommendations: national party leadership				-
Voting recommendations: national delegation				-
Voting recommendations: EP Group leadership				-
Cox & Snell R^2	-	.373	.078	-
Nagelkerke R^2	-	.401	.083	-
N	-	139	139	-

Appendix B: List of Interviews

Date	Position
16/04/2012	Assistant to a Labour MEP
17/04/2012	Assistant to a Conservative MEP
17/04/2012	Assistant to a Conservative MEP
25/04/2012	Former Conservative MEP
02/05/2012	EPP Group official
03/05/2012	ECR Group official
07/05/2012	Labour MEP
07/05/2012	ECR Group official
08/05/2012	Former Labour MEP
09/05/2012	PS and/or EFD
10/05/2012	Conservative MEP
10/05/2012	ECR Group official
11/05/2012	S&D Group official
11/05/2012	EPP Group official
11/05/2012	S&D Group official
15/05/2012	Assistant to a Conservative MEP
15/05/2012	EPP Group official
04/06/2012	Former Labour MEP
05/06/2012	KOK MEP
06/06/2012	Labour MEP
07/06/2012	EPP Group official
07/06/2012	Conservative MEP
08/06/2012	Assistant to a Conservative MEP
15/06/2012	Assistant to a Conservative MEP
19/06/2012	Assistant to a Labour MEP
19/06/2012	Labour MEP
20/06/2012	EPP Group official
20/06/2012	SDP MEP
20/06/2012	GUE-NGL official
20/06/2012	Conservative MEP
21/06/2012	UKIP and/or EFD
21/06/2012	UKIP and/or EFD
22/06/2012	Assistant to a Conservative MEP
22/06/2012	Labour MEP
22/06/2012	UKRep official
23/06/2012	A former assistant to SDP MEPs
25/06/2012	S&D Group official
26/06/2012	PS and/or EFD
26/06/2012	UKIP MEP
26/06/2012	Conservative MEP
27/06/2012	Official from the Finnish Permanent Representation to the EU
28/06/2012	Assistant to a Labour MEP

28/06/2012	UKIP and/or EFD
29/06/2012	Assistant to a Labour MEP
17/10/2012	SDP official
13/11/2012	PS and/or EFD
20/11/2012	SDP official
21/11/2012	KOK official
22/11/2012	PS and/or EFD
28/11/2012	UKIP MEP
28/11/2012	KOK official
28/11/2012	A former UKIP MEP
28/11/2012	Former Conservative official
04/10/2013	Labour official
28/10/2013	Conservative official
22/11/2013	Former Labour official
19/12/2013	Former Labour official
13/01/2014	UKIP MEP
31/03/2014	UKIP and/or EFD

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