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Parties in the Council?

Sara Hagemann and Bjorn Hoyland

ABSTRACT Ideology is widely seen as a powerful explanatory force of behaviour in collective decision-making. Yet, research on the Council of the European Union, the chief legislative body in the European Union, has only recently started to pay attention to ideology. We investigate to what extent formal position-taking can be explained by the ideological party affiliation of the governing parties. The focus is twofold. First, can aggregated coalition patterns be explained by ideological party affiliation? Second, do countries change coalition partners when there is a change of parties in government?

KEY WORDS Council; European Union; ideology; political parties; voting.

The key legislative body in the European Union (EU) is the Council of the European Union.¹ For most of the history of European integration, decision-making in the Council has been surrounded by secrecy (see e.g., Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997). However, during the 1990s calls for transparency led the Council to publish its voting records and minutes from ministerial meetings. This resulted in a new area of research on EU decision-making, and on policy-making in the Council in particular.

Consensual politics dominate negotiations in the Council (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997; Heisenberg 2005; Westlake 1999). Yet, drawing on data from 1994 to 1999 Mattila and Lane have shown that coalitions do occur between Council members, and that some coalitions are more likely to form than others (Mattila and Lane 2001). Still, the logic of the coalition pattern is contested, ranging from government preferences over integration and general left–right politics to the country's share over the EU budget and different types of political economic systems (Aspinwall 2006; Hagemann 2006; Mattila 2004).

Our empirical contribution to the literature on voting in the Council is that it provides and analyses a dataset covering the whole period from 1999 to 2007. Methodologically, we introduce a method of analysing voting in small committees, originally developed to analyse voting in the US Supreme Court. This model is more resistant to biased results than those currently used in the Council literature (Bafumi *et al.* 2005) and can effectively address problems of lopsided votes and deviations from the theoretically assumed spatial model. On this basis, our approach allows us to estimate and compare the relative positions of all governments – and not just member states as unitary

actors – in the period under investigation, and the aim is to address two research questions in this paper. First, can aggregated coalition patterns in the Council be explained by ideological party affiliation? Second, and as a supportive test for the previous question, do countries change coalition partners when there is a change of parties in government?

The organization of the rest of this paper follows the conventional manner. First, we present a brief review of the existing literature on coalition formation in the Council. This literature can be divided into three strands based on methodological approaches used in the investigations: one approach relies on expressed positional data obtained from expert interviews (e.g. Thomson *et al.* 2006), another identifies expressed co-operation patterns from survey analysis (Naurin 2008), and a third focuses almost exclusively on governments' recoded positions as found in the Council's minutes and summaries of adopted legislation and decision records (Hagemann 2007; Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 2006; Mattila 2004; Mattila and Lane 2001).

The second section of the paper summarizes the key aspects of spatial models of voting, paying particular attention to the effect of high adoption thresholds for the types of decisions recorded in the Council minutes.

The third section presents the data used in the analysis, which is recorded positional data from the years January 1999 to October 2007. This section also provides a non-technical introduction to the robust ideal point estimation technique used to analyse the data.

The fourth section presents the results. We find that there is a clear, although weak, tendency of ideological coalition formation in the Council. Centre-left governments are, on average, more likely to vote together with other centre-left governments than with governments from the centre-right. Furthermore, when a new government enters the Council, it often finds that its closest coalition partners are not those of the previous government's if the government change also meant a change in party political platform.

ANALYSES OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE COUNCIL

Owing to the only recent decision to make records of Council decision-making publicly available, researchers interested in this empirical field have been forced to rely mostly on other sources, such as material gathered from interviews with key practitioners and decision-makers (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997; Wallace 1984). One branch of research has based on these sources estimated actors' positions and sought to test various theories of bargaining and decision-making in the EU (Bueno de Mesquita and Stokman 1994). This approach has attracted much attention since the mid-1990s, and also very recent research has followed this methodology, most notably in the work presented by the large research team that constructed the Decision-making in the European Union (DEU) dataset.² The main contribution of this line of research is perhaps the thorough evaluation of competing models of decision-making, and the interesting finding that preferences for integration and type

of regulatory system seem to explain a good proportion of coalition formations (see for example Thomson *et al.* 2004).

A second branch of researchers have sought to evaluate the decision-making process in the Council by mapping the network of government officials. For example, Naurin (2007, 2008) relies on surveys on Council working groups, which are used to estimate who co-operates with whom. This line of research finds that geographical positions matter for the choice of governments to interact with, and that Germany is a central actor in this network, connecting northern and southern members.

With the increased availability of information from formal Council documents and decision records, a third approach has recently experienced a rapid development. Investigating who are most likely to vote with whom at the final decision stages, Mattila and Lane (2001) opened a new area in the research on the Council, relying on multi-dimensional scaling to generate spatial pictures of voting behaviour in the Council. Their findings have been that geographical patterns also appear in analyses of voting coalitions as captured by formal decision records. However, rather than accepting a 'territorial' theory of voting behaviour, these patterns, they suggest, are best explained in terms of budgetary transfers and different types of regulated economies. Those characteristics do also differ in accordance with geography.

In sum, it seems that one general conclusion can be drawn from the literature: ideology matters and budgetary transfers influence how governments vote (Aspinwall 2006; Mattila 2004). However, we would like to point out one critical aspect of this research: there is a rather weak point in how researchers have dealt with the question of what a 'no' or a 'yes' decision by a government actually means in terms of both coalition-building and ideology. For example, all negative votes are by assumption constrained to have the same interpretation in both Mattila (2004) and Aspinwall (2006). The most 'extreme' interpretation is that in Aspinwall (2006) opposition against the common position in the Council is implicitly defined as opposition against integration. While the adopted model in Aspinwall's study generates a very 'approachable' continuous dependent variable that can easily be analysed using standard linear regression, the model implies the bold assumption that both abstentions and oppositions, albeit to a different degree, are always an indication that these governments favour less integration in the particular policy area.

Mattila and Lane's (2001) estimations of position of actors in the policy space face a similar challenge in distinguishing between reasons for governments' oppositions. Also, it is in fact unclear precisely how their multi-dimensional scaling technique translates into a theory of voting behaviour. Mattila has in later work (2006) improved upon this by using the nominate scaling technique which implements a statistical estimate of the spatial model (see also Hagemann, forthcoming). However, one problem still remains: nominate is not guaranteed to recover the true estimates in small legislatures and comes without reporting of uncertainty values, essentially questioning the robustness of the results (Jackman 2001; Poole 2005). Mattila (2007) has very recently adopted a Bayesian

approach which deals with these problems and has on this basis presented very interesting results. Our approach further develops on this step by also being resistant to any effects opposed upon the analysis from outliers in the data. In the case of the Council, outlier problems may occur when votes are extremely lopsided, i.e. where only one government opposes. There are many such votes in the Council, and hence it may be that the results presented so far in quantitative analyses of the governments' behaviour have indeed been driven by a considerable number of lopsided votes in the data.

A SPATIAL MODEL OF VOTING IN THE COUNCIL

The analyses of Council decision-making discussed above all have a starting point in the standard spatial model of politics (Downs 1957; Hinich and Munger 1997). The power of the basic spatial model comes from its simplicity and general applicability. The model presents a policy space within which all policy alternatives can be placed according to some underlying dimension (or several dimensions). Actors have preferences over the location of the policies on the dimension and seek to maximize own interests by voting for the alternative closest to their most preferred location on the dimension (their ideal point).

The logic of the model is illustrated in Figure 1. The x-axis represents the policy dimension over which governments L, C and R have ideal-points, θ_L , θ_C and θ_R , respectively. These ideal points represent the most preferred policy on this dimension. The governments consider how to vote on proposals x, y and z. The location of midpoints between the 'yes' position and the 'no' position on proposals x, y and z can also be represented on the same dimension as θ_x , θ_y and θ_z . The extent to which the proposal is able to discriminate between the governments on this policy dimension is represented by θ . The value of θ is represented on the y-axis. Proposals that differ from zero are

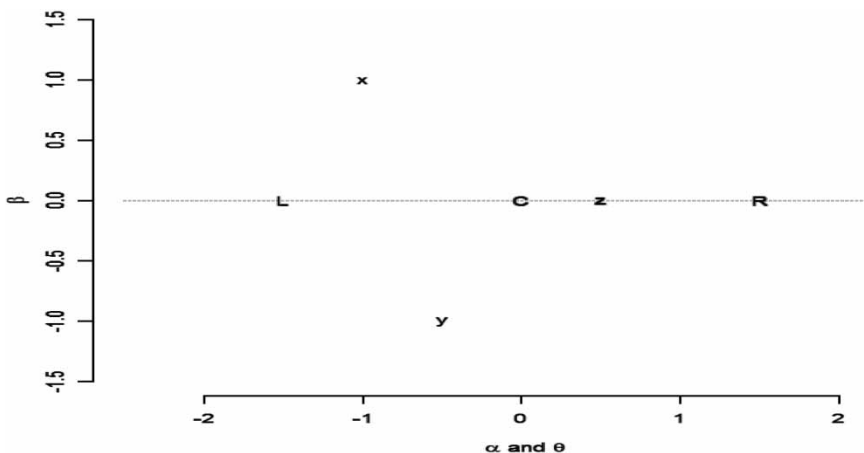


Figure 1 The logic of the item response model

able to distinguish between governments. If θ is positive, it means that the probability of voting in favour of the proposal is positively correlated with the value of the ideal points of the governments. Conversely, a negative θ means that the probability of supporting the proposal is negatively correlated with the value of governments' ideal points. A high absolute value of θ_j means that proposal j distinguishes well between the governments. Government L votes against governments C and R on proposal x, as the midpoint θ_x is located between governments L and C. As θ is positive it means that L is likely to vote 'no', while C and R are likely to vote 'yes'. Government L also votes against governments C and R on proposal y. However, as θ_y is negative, the model predicts that government L will support the proposal while governments C and R will oppose. The midpoint between the 'yes' and 'no' alternative, θ_z , on proposal z is located between the ideal points of governments C and R. However, as θ_z is zero, it means that proposal z is not able to distinguish between the governments on this dimension.

The problem in the Council is that it is only the decisions on lopsided votes that are recorded. This is owing to the fact that the Council only reports the results of the voting when an act is adopted. In that context, consider the standard one-dimensional model presented by Tsebelis and Garrett (2000), reproduced in Figure 2. The model has seven actors and a majority of five out of seven is necessary to change the status quo. Only in cases where five out of seven of the members prefer the new policy to the status quo will the voting decisions of individual countries be recorded. So even if we assume that the status quo can be located anywhere in the policy space, no recording will occur of how governments acted on proposals which did not meet this majority threshold, and we therefore only have information about those cases where the Council has managed to find a large coalition behind the proposal. It also means that we do not have information about those proposals that distinguish relatively moderate governments from each other. Nevertheless, in order to better distinguish between these governments, we have complemented the governments' voting decisions with formal statements where governments, although they supported the proposal by voting, expressed disagreement in writing. We discuss this in more detail below; however, the point here is that there may be great nuances between the opposing governments, and that more detailed information from the Council records is available to include such variations also in quantitative, spatial analyses of the governments' behaviour.³

In sum, an understanding of the coalition pattern that forms when governments vote in the Council is essential for understanding legislative politics in the EU. We focus on two key questions. First, does the ideological nature,



Figure 2 The standard one-dimensional model of spatial politics in the Council. As only successful votes are recorded, the data contain lopsided votes only

i.e. party political platform, of governments matter for coalition formation in the Council? Second, does a shift in ideology of a government mean that it finds new coalition partners? The next section presents the data and method we apply to address these questions. This is followed by a presentation of the results and a discussion of the findings.

DATA

The data we use for our empirical analyses below consist of each government's individual position on all adopted legislation from January 1999 to October 2007, both months included. Legislation voted upon but not adopted during this time span is not included in the dataset. In total, the data cover how each government (and please note the distinction between governments rather than countries) voted on 1,477 legislative acts and the sum of individual observations amounts to 27,773.⁴

A few comments should be made about the coding of the data. First, the data are used here in a binary format where governments are either coded as being in favour of a decision or in opposition to it. For this categorization, one important difference between the unanimity and qualified majority voting (QMV) systems must be pointed out. When the decision rule is unanimity, abstentions are not counted as 'no' votes. This means that decisions can be made with few countries actually voting for the proposal, if none of the countries actively opposes it. The opposite is true for QMV, where the high threshold makes abstentions have in practice the same effect as 'no' votes. Second, it has recently been pointed out that, on some occasions, governments may decide to record their concerns – or even direct disapproval – about a proposal through a formal statement attached to or directly included in the Council minutes⁵ rather than through voting (Hagemann 2007). In cases where such formal statements can be seen to show a government's direct disapproval, these have also been included as an opposition in the dataset. Third, the data include several cases where a single policy proposal presented to the Council had to make a decision on more than one issue. For instance, a proposal on regulation of emissions from vehicles may include several different levels of emissions standards depending on the type of vehicle.⁶ Decisions may therefore be taken on each of these regulatory levels and are also included in the data as separate decisions. The data are collected from the Council's website,⁷ the inter-institutional database PreLex⁸ and from the Council's Access Service.⁹

As is often done in the presentation of empirical material gathered from the Council, two important limitations to the data should be made explicit. First, and as mentioned above, only those decisions that result in a successful adoption are recorded, and hence the material used in quantitative analyses is unfortunately incomplete. Any legislative act that looks from the outset as though it will fail to be adopted will not be put on the Council agenda, but is sent back to the Commission 'for further study' (Heisenberg 2005). Second, it should also be noted that member states can still choose not to make their

positions on a proposal public. If a member state requests that its position is not officially recorded, the minutes will simply state that 'the Council has adopted the above [regulation/directive/decision]'. This occurred only a small number of times in the period studied here. Yet, the fact that a member state is at least aware of this possibility may still play a role in the decision-making process.

Statistical model

Decision-making in small committees has fascinated and frustrated political scientists for decades (Downs 1957; Riker 1962, 1980). Drawing heavily on game theory, committee decision-making has been at the core of the development of positive political theories as the mechanisms for revelation of information and strategic manipulation of decision rules have provided key insights to political scientists (Austen-Smith 1990; Austen-Smith and Banks 2005; Banks and Duggan 2006; McCarty and Meirowitz 2007). Until recently, it was difficult to test these theories owing to the complexity associated with the fact that both the position of actors and the location of the proposals voted over were not directly observable. Complicating factors have been the low number of members in such committees, as well as few decisions available for analyses (Londregan 2000), although the statistical testing of these theories has recently made substantive inroads. This is mainly, but not only, because of the introduction of computational intensive Bayesian simulation methods in political science (Clinton *et al.* 2004; Gelman *et al.* 2004; Jackman 2000). A Bayesian method allows the researcher to jointly obtain estimates of the position of the actors as well as the proposal voted on. Also, the simulation method provides uncertainty estimates for all parameters. Still, one of the key problems associated with applying this method to institutions with many lopsided votes (e.g. owing to high majority requirements and how adopted positions are recorded) is that many decisions have only a single actor on the losing side. This may be particularly problematic if one actor's opposition is due to reasons not associated with the policy content of a proposal. Such behaviour could, for example, be observed in the Council if a government feels pressurized to voice opposition owing to domestic politics rather than merely position itself according to own preferences in the EU context. In such cases, an actor may vote with other governments with whom it does not necessarily share underlying policy preferences, but nevertheless positions itself with them on the basis of external factors. Other scenarios are also possible, such as the simpler cases where governments present a more 'sincere' opposition to the policy on the table, but where those opposing still do so for differing reasons. In either case, the effect of these 'diverging oppositions' is problematic if the theory behind the statistical model relies on a spatial understanding of politics where actors are always assumed to vote for the alternative closest to their most preferred policy.

In our following analysis, we allow the governments to make deviations in their behaviour from the prediction of the spatial model by estimating a contaminated hierarchical logistic version of the item response model. Governments

are hence allowed to deviate somewhat from the logic of the one-dimensional spatial model in a heterogenic fashion without invalidating the results. This model is presented in Bafumi *et al.* (2005) and the intuition behind this modification is simple: some governments deviate more often than others from the predictions of the spatial model. Our model accounts for this deviation on the basis of the data. We follow the parameterization of Martin and Quinn (2006): let government i have an ideal point defined as θ_i . Let the midpoint between common position j and the status quo be α_j . Utility-maximizing implies that governments vote for the alternative closest to their ideal point. The discrimination parameter β_j measures to what extent the proposal voted over distinguishes between governments in the estimated dimension. The error rates δ estimate to what extent the governments deviate from the spatial model when voting in the Council. The probability π that government i supports proposal j is then assumed to be:

$$\pi_{ij} = \delta_0 + (1 - \delta_0 - \delta_1)/(1 + \exp(\alpha_i - \beta_i \theta_i))$$

Since our intention is to establish whether party political patterns are at all detectable in the governments' revealed preferences as recorded in the Council's records, we apply an ideal point estimation model which calculates the governments' positions on all decisions included in the data and provides an estimate as well as confidence intervals for each government relative to each of the other members of the Council. As an empirical basis, we therefore follow the standard approach in ideal point estimation and treat each vote as an independent observation. True, this may inflate the differences in the estimated ideal points between some governments, and we must therefore consider this fact in the interpretation of the results. Furthermore, and as mentioned in the section above, our data include cases where multiple votes were cast on the same piece of legislation. This does not mean, however, that the proposals voted on were identical: there are no indications from the data that the proposal position adopted by the Council is identical across different readings, since legislation is often amended in the process. Therefore, we stick to the commonly applied method of treating each observation separately, but apply a model which allows us to jointly estimate the position of each government and the location of the point separating those in favour of the legislation from those opposed. On this basis it will be possible to evaluate to what extent proposals that are voted on several times also have identical locations.

The model is estimated with the MCMCirtKdRob function in the MCMCpack library (Martin and Quinn 2006: 26) in R (www.r-project.org). We ran 110,000 iterations, where the 10,000 iterations were discarded to ensure that the model had converged before we started to sample estimates. Our estimations are restricted to a one-dimensional version of the model as information in the data is not sufficient to estimate two-dimensional models or changing moving averages (Jackman 2001; Martin and Quinn 2002). We

kept the results of every 100th iteration. This provides us with 1,000 almost independent draws from the posterior distribution. The scale of the model is identified by constraining the first, centre-left Italian government to be negative and the centre-right Dutch government to be positive.¹⁰ We would thus expect social democratic governments to be located towards the left in the results, and centre-right governments to be located towards the right, if indeed any left–right political patterns exist in the Council.

RESULTS

The results are summarized in Figure 3. It presents the ranked positions of the governments from 1999 to 2007, with the axis on the left indicating the overall ranking on the primary dimension of expressed disagreement amongst governments in the Council.

The governments are represented in the figure by labels which list first their affiliation to European-level party groups as stated on the governments' and the EU's official websites,¹¹ then by their country names, and lastly by naming the dominant national party in government. The ranking is generated by sorting each government by the estimated ideal points for each of the saved iterations. We then calculated the median ranking across the iterations as well as the inter-quintile range of the ranking for each government. The governments were subsequently sorted based on affiliation with the different transnational party groups by their median ranked position, with the dot indicating the median ranked position of the government. The line that goes through the dot shows the inter-quintile range as a measure of variability of the estimated ranked positions across the iterations. This can be considered as a measure of the precision in our estimated ranked position.

The upper end of the governments ranked in Figure 3 shows the positions of those governments affiliated with the centre-right party group, the European People's Party (EPP).¹² The dashed horizontal line indicates the median government within the EPP. Governments affiliated with the European Liberal, Democratic and Reformist Party (ELDR) are grouped below the EPP governments, towards the centre of the rank list. Also, three governments which were not affiliated with any of the three main EU party groups in this period have been included in this middle group. These governments are the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL) government from Cyprus, the Irish Fianna Fáil (FF) government and the Civic Platform–Law and Justice (PO–PiS) government from Poland. The rankings of these three governments are presented after the ELDR. Lastly, the lower end of the figure shows the overall ranking of the governments affiliated with the centre-left party group, the Party of European Socialists (PES). Similarly to the above, the dotted horizontal line here indicates the rank position of the median government in the PES.

From Figure 3 we see that only three EPP governments have a median ranked location to the left of the median within the PES. No PES government is located to the right of the median inside EPP. Four PES governments, all of which have

1999–October 2007

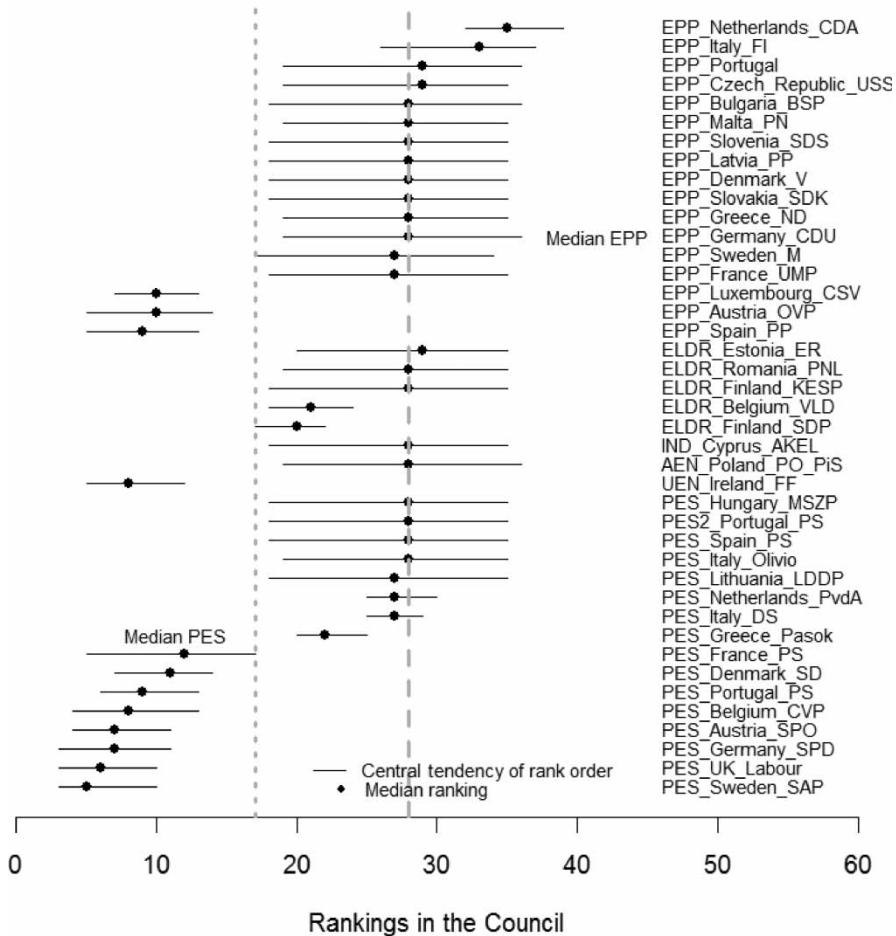


Figure 3 The estimated rankings of the governments from 1999 to October 2007 on the basis of their recorded positions in adopted legislation

only participated in a handful of votes, have an estimated rank position at the median in the EPP. The governments affiliated with ELDR governments are all ranked between most governments in the EPP and the PES. This is in line with what we would expect from a party political logic of voting in the Council. The Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN)-affiliated Irish FF government has a median rank position that places it to the left of any of the governments from the EPP. The key message from the figure is thus that while there is considerable overlap across party groups, a tendency of party groups clustering can be identified. This is clearly represented by the difference

in the location of the PES and EPP median governments. The median government within the PES is ranked as number 17 while the median within the EPP is ranked as 28 out of 41.

However, the deviations from this party-ideological picture are not minor. For example, the Lithuanian, Spanish, Italian, the second Portuguese and the Hungarian centre-left governments all have positive probabilities of being located at the median position amongst the EPP governments while zero probability of being the median of the PES governments. But at the same time, each of these governments has rather large uncertainty intervals in their estimates.

One explanation for the variation in uncertainty surrounding the estimates may be that some governments have held office for a longer period than others, and hence have been involved in more Council decision-making. This would mean that those governments have more data 'attached' to them from the dataset, and this could therefore lead to an increase in the certainty with which their positions are estimated. Appendix A comprises a table of all government changes that have occurred in the EU countries from January 1999 to October 2007, and when comparing the term of office with the results in Figure 3, it becomes apparent that the positions of governments are more robustly estimated when they have been in office for longer periods, and that this duration seems to include the governments in the ranking more 'accurately' according to their party political affiliation. In fact, the correlation between the precision in the estimates, calculated as the inter-quintiles range, and number of votes is -0.386 .

Our second research question regarding the effect of government change on the recorded behaviour in the Council is in fact a measure supportive of the above interpretation. Again, looking at Figure 3, we see that most new governments end up with different governments from those of their predecessor as their closest allies. France changed its closest coalition partners upon replacing a centre-left government with a more centre-right located government in 2002. The shift was in the direction that would be predicted by a party ideological affiliation and, in probability terms, there was a 85.9 per cent probability that the centre-left government was indeed placed to the left of the following centre-right government. The change in Dutch government from a centre-left to a centre-right government coalition involved a clear shift to the right. The probability that the shift was to the right is 0.96. Although the former government was located closer to the more moderate centre-left governments, the new government that subsequently came into office located itself to the right even amongst the EPP governments and this explains the high probability of a rightward shift. The same tendencies are apparent for a number of other governments, such as Belgium, Denmark, Italy and Sweden.

As a last point on the findings from Figure 3, our results show that it would take a courageous researcher to make any distinctions between 'new' and 'old' EU member states on the basis of these estimates. Even excluding the latest entries, Bulgaria and Romania, there is simply not sufficient information in

the data to be able to distinguish most governments from the new member states. This is indicated by the rather large uncertainty values around most of the new member states' estimates. It is almost impossible to distinguish between these governments.

In sum, our findings seem to support the suggestion that coalition formation at the voting stage in the Council falls along some ideological left–right dimension. Notwithstanding some exceptions, the message from Figure 3 is that, overall, the governments do, to some extent, seem to behave – at least in the official records – as if party political lines influence their decisions. This is further emphasized by the finding that changes in government composition mean a change also in that country's behaviour at the EU level, a fact which certainly indicates the dynamic, ideological elements to voting in the Council rather than the static, geographically defined interests often suggested in the literature. The uncertainty associated with the estimates does, however, demand a great degree of caution. We would, in fact, warn against using the rankings merely based on the mean position to distinguish between adjacent governments within the same party group as there is considerable overlap in the position of most governments. Still, the overall trends are clear from the results, and we would encourage further exploration of these structures both in analysis of final stage decision-making and in process-focused research (e.g. along the lines of König and Proksch 2006; Quinn *et al.* 2006).

CONCLUSION

Voting behaviour related to the adoption of new legislation is one method by which the constituencies can ascertain whether politicians are behaving according to their stated political objectives. Such argumentation is also relevant in the context of Council decision-making, as the passing of legislation – even in the enlarged EU – requires the member governments to take a stand on policy issues which also have a regulatory and redistributive effect. The mere scope of co-operation in many of the policy areas is evidence that the EU member states are not just negotiating within an intergovernmental construction. Hence, voting behaviour and coalition formation are issues that must be adequately addressed and reported upon. Yet, these issues are not always politically innocent and the relatively sparse insights into the Council meetings pose a problem for outsiders attempting to investigate the topic.

In this paper, we have presented an evaluation of whether party political affiliation matters for coalition formation in the Council. This has been done through the application of a model which does not make any spatial assumptions about the governments' reasons for opposing a proposal. Furthermore, the model accommodates for the fact that some governments may have heterogeneous motives for dissenting from the majority view. The cost of the latter feature is that the positions of the governments are estimated less precisely. We raised two issues: first, can the aggregated coalition pattern be explained by ideological party affiliation? Second, do countries change coalition partners

when there is a change of parties in government? While the results leave room for much further exploration, the main finding is that ideological affiliations influence coalition formation in the Council. Most of the governments tend to vote with other governments of the same ideological affiliation more often than not. When governments are replaced, new governments tend to find their closest coalition partners with governments other than the ones favoured by their predecessors. Usually, these new coalition partners are of similar ideological affiliation. Overall, this means that political party affiliations do not play an ignorable role in decision-making in the Council.

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email: bjorn.hoyland@stv.uio.no

APPENDIX A

<i>Country</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>EU party affiliation and time in office, 1st govt</i>	<i>EU party affiliation and time in office, 2nd govt</i>	<i>EU party affiliation and time in office, 3rd govt</i>
Germany	18/09/2005	PES, 72 months	EPP, 25 months	
France	05/05/2002; 10/06/2007	PES, 41 months	EPP, 58 months	
UK	None (elections on 07/06/2001; 05/05/2005)	PES, 106 months		
Italy	13/05/2001; 10/04/2006	PES, 39 months	EPP, 59 months	PES, 18 months
Spain	14/03/2004	EPP, 64 months	PES, 42 months	
Poland	21/10/2007	AEN, 33 months		
Netherlands	22/07/2002; 22/01/2003; 22/11/2006	PES, 43 months	EPP, 52 months	11 months
Greece	07/03/2004; 16/09/2007	PES, 63 months	EPP-ED, 43 months	

(Continued)

Appendix Continued

Country	Change	EU party affiliation and time in office, 1st govt	EU party affiliation and time in office, 2nd govt	EU party affiliation and time in office, 3rd govt
Belgium	13/06/1999; 18/05/2003; 10/06/2007	ELDR, 100 months		
Czech Republic	02–03/06/2006	MER, 42 months		
Portugal	17/03/2002 + 20/02/2005	PES, 53 months	EPP, 33 months	PES, 30 months
Hungary	None (elections on 23/04/2006)	PES, 42 months		
Sweden	21/09/2006	PES, 93 months	EPP-ED, 13 months	
Austria	05/02/2000; 25/04/2004; 01/10/2006	EPP-ED, 84 months	PES, 12 months	
Slovakia	17/06/2006	PES, 42 months		
Denmark	20/11/2001; 13/11/2007	PES, 35 months	EPP-ED, 71 months	
Finland	16/03/2003; 18/03/2007	ELDR, 106 months		
Ireland	17/05/2002; 20/05/2007	AEN, 106 months		
Lithuania	10/10/2004	PES, 42 months		
Latvia	07/10/2006	EPP-ED, 42 months		
Slovenia	03/10/2004	EPP-ED, 42 months		
Estonia	04/03/2007	ELDR, 42 months		
Cyprus	21/05/2006	Indpt., 42 months		
Luxembourg	13/06/1999 + 13/06/2004	EPP-ED, 100 months		
Malta	12/04/2003	EPP-ED, 42 months		

Notes: AEN = Alliance for Europe of the Nations; MER = Movement for European Reform; EPP-ED = European People's Party–European Democrats.

NOTES

- 1 In the remainder of the paper, we will refer to this institution as the Council.
- 2 Their main findings have been summarized in Thomson *et al.* (2006).

- 3 It should be noted that studies of voting in the Council may benefit from incorporating insights and data from research on legislative speed, both in the committees in the Council (Häge 2007) and in the EU as a whole (Golub 1999; Schulz and König 2000; Van Schendelen 1996).
- 4 For the years with 15 member states, the data consist of 934 legislative decisions and hence $(15 \times 934 =)$ 14,010 observations; for the period with 25 members the number is $(25 \times 449 =)$ 11,225; for the 27 member state Councils the sum comes to $(27 \times 94 =)$ 2,538.
- 5 http://europa.eu/documents/eu_council/index_en.htm (accessed January 2007).
- 6 See, e.g., Council document number 8118/00: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a scheme to monitor the average specific emissions of CO₂ from new passenger cars. Reference numbers are PE-CONS 3608/00 ENV 48 ENT 28 CODEC 145+COR 1 and corresponding documents from meetings held in relation to this decision can be found based on these references through the PreLex database.
- 7 http://europa.eu/documents/eu_council/index_en.htm
- 8 <http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/apcnet.cfm?CL=en>
- 9 access@consilium.eu.int
- 10 We have, of course, tried other identifying constraints as well. The results are not a function of this particular choice of constraints.
- 11 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parties_in_the_Council_of_the_European_Union for a summary and all relevant links.
- 12 We use the party group names from the 5th European Parliament.

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