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Allocation of Codecision Reports in the Fifth European Parliament

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that MEPs from national parties represented in the Council of Ministers are more active as rapporteurs on Codecision legislation than MEPs from national parties not represented in the Council. EP rapporteurs can be thought of as informed actors offering non-binding advice to the EP plenary. Expert committees and the Council presidency play a similar role in the Council. Compared with rapporteurs from parties not represented in the Council, EP rapporteurs from parties represented in the Council may incur lower costs in coordinating their proposals with the informed actors in the Council. If this is the case, they should be more interested in writing Codecision reports than are MEPs from parties not represented in the Council. This possibility is investigated using a data set consisting of all Codecision legislation initiated by the Commission between 1999 and 2004.

KEY WORDS

- codecision
- European Parliament
- rapporteurs
- national parties

The workings of the Codecision procedure and the politics inside the EU institutions have been the topic of several studies (see Hörl et al., 2005, for a recent review). In contrast, the effects of the Codecision procedure on politics inside the EP have until recently been studied only in terms of voting behaviour under different majority rules (e.g. Hix et al., 2003; Kreppel, 2000). The aim of this article is to investigate whether national party representation in the Council of Ministers influences the number of codecision reports written. The model presented here highlights the different incentive structures faced by a party, depending on whether it is represented in the Council of Ministers or not. Rapporteurs from national parties represented in the Council have lower costs of coordinating their behaviour with actors inside the Council than do rapporteurs from national parties not represented in the Council. This results in higher expected payoffs from writing codecision reports. Although the rights to reports are distributed proportionally, recent research has shown that the allocation of reports is not fully proportional (Benedetto, 2005; Kaeding, 2004; Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003). This paper's contribution to this literature is threefold. First, it offers a theoretical explanation of the allocation of reports in the context of the Amsterdam version of the Codecision procedure. Second, it presents an original data set consisting of all codecision reports initiated by the Commission since the start of 1999 and allocated to a national party during the Fifth EP. Third, it applies a statistical method that allows not only for an estimation of the distribution of codecision reports, but also for an estimation of why some parties do not write codecision reports.

The first section reviews the literature on the role of the European Parliament in the Amsterdam version of the Codecision procedure (Codecision II) and the literature on the internal organization of the Parliament of relevance to the involvement of the EP in the Codecision procedure. The following section presents a model of the Codecision procedure as a signalling game with two senders. The model predicts different levels of involvement as a function of whether actors are represented in both the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament or only in the EP. The third section presents the data set used to test the prediction of the model and the statistical technique. The results are presented in the fourth section. The final section concludes by discussing the implications of the findings and areas for future research.

Codecision and the European Parliament

The literature on the codecision procedure is vast. A complete review is beyond the scope of this paper (see Selck, 2004). Only the main theoretical

and empirical findings related to the workings of the Codecision procedure as amended in the Amsterdam treaty of relevance to the allocation of co-decision reports are discussed.

Formal models of the Amsterdam version of the Codecision procedure (Codecision II) highlight the decline of the power of the Commission, and show that the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament have become equal partners. Support from both the Council and the EP is needed in order for new Codecision legislation to be adopted. Furthermore, neither of the institutions has formal agenda-setting power in the last stage of the procedure, the Conciliation Committee (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2000; Corbett, 2001; Crombez, 2001; Crombez et al., 2000). There is not complete consensus on these issues. Burns (2004) argues that most of the models neglect the role of the Commission. She claims that the Commission is still powerful because it offers opinions on EP amendments in the first and second readings. Second reading amendments not accepted by the Commission need to be adopted by unanimity in the Council rather than by qualified majority (QMV). However, if a qualified majority in the Council accepts the amendments, the EP and the Council will be able to adopt these amendments in the Conciliation Committee. Hence the Commission is able to delay the adaptation of these amendments only to the next stage in the process.

Empirical work on Codecision II finds that the ability of the institutions to agree on legislation at an early stage has increased compared with Codecision I. One of the changes in the Codecision procedure from Maastricht to Amsterdam was to allow the Council of Ministers to adopt legislation at its first reading if the member states accepted the European Parliament's proposal (Article 251). The ability to conclude earlier may also have been enhanced as the actors gained more experience with the procedure or as a new culture of cooperation developed (Corbett et al., 2003; Shackleton, 2000; Shackleton and Raunio, 2003).

Existing overviews of the internal organization of the EP are numerous (Corbett et al., 2000; Judge and Earnshaw, 2003; Katz and Wessels, 1999; Westlake, 1994). The key findings are that the EP has developed a sophisticated committee system to deal effectively with the voluminous legislative output of the Union (Bowler and Farrell, 1995; Kasack, 2004; Selck and Steunenbergh, 2004; McElroy, in this issue). The committee system is party based (Whitaker, 2001, 2005). The rapporteurs act as agenda-setters inside the EP because they are responsible for drawing up the position of the Committee and presenting the legislative report to the plenary session (Tsebelis, 1995). The chair and party group coordinators in the relevant committee negotiate over how the reports should be allocated (Wurzel, 1999). This negotiation has been described as 'an elaborated poker-game', in which the coordinators are

rewarded with property rights over reports as a function of their party group's size (Corbett et al., 2000). The exact rules of the 'bidding' process might differ across committees, but coordinators may have an incentive to bluff each other into paying more than necessary for a report that they are interested in, by expressing interest in some reports just to increase the price. Although country size and party group size correlate well with the number of committee reports allocated, significant differences in the involvement of MEPs from national parties of similar size can be found (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003). It has also been shown that those who choose to get involved as rapporteurs have different backgrounds from those who do not get involved. The differences are related both to expertise and to constituency interests (Kaeding, 2004).

An important motivating factor in the recent focus on the EP committee system has been the increased legislative power of the Parliament. However, potential differences in the incentives to be involved as a rapporteur in the EP have not been linked theoretically to the features of the Codecision procedure. The aim of the next section is to establish a model of how national party delegations play their cards in the report allocation game.

Model

We can think of the Codecision procedure as a signalling game with more than one sender (e.g. McCarty and Meirowitz, forthcoming). Two institutions, r_1 and r_2 , bargain over a policy $p \in X[0,1]$ in a one-dimensional policy space \mathbb{R}^1 . It is common knowledge that actors in both institutions have policy preferences drawn from a distribution $G(\cdot)$ on X . The responsibility for proposing a new policy is delegated to a sender inside both institutions. Assume two senders, s_1 and s_2 , independently drawn from a distribution of types $\theta_{s1}, \theta_{s2} \in \Theta = [0, 1]$ with a message space $m_{s1}, m_{s2} \in M = [0, 1]$. It is common knowledge that both θ 's are drawn from a distribution $F(\cdot)$ on Θ . The preferences of the two senders may differ. If the two senders send the same message to r_1 , then r_1 selects the corresponding $p, m_{s1}, m_{s2} = p \in X = [0, 1]$. Actors have quadratic loss functions around their ideal policy. The institutions r_1 and r_2 receive expected payoffs $EU_i = -(p - x_i)^2$, whereas s_1 and s_2 receive expected payoffs of $EU_i = -(p - x_i)^2 - c_i$, where c_i is the cost associated with coordinating the message with the other sender. If $m_{s1} \neq m_{s2}$, r_1 proposes its ideal policy p_{-si} to r_2 , ignoring the messages from s_1 and s_2 . With probability $q, 0 < q < 1$, r_2 accepts p_{-si} , and all actors $i \in [s_1, s_2, r_1, r_2]$ receive an expected payoff of $U_i = -\delta_i(p_{-si} - x_i)^2$. With probability $(1 - q)$, r_2 does not accept; the expected payoffs are then

$$EU_i = -\delta_i^2 \left[\left(\frac{\alpha p_{r1} + \beta p_{r2}}{2} \right) - x_i \right]^2,$$

where $\alpha + \beta = 1$, but the values are unknown, corresponding to a Nash bargaining solution. We see that the senders pay a cost c_i only if they coordinate, because it is cost free for them to send any m without prior coordination with the other sender. The focus in this paper is limited to an evaluation of the senders' incentives to be involved in the process. Two factors are of importance: (a) the cost of coordinating m with the other sender and (b) the resulting policy if coordination takes place. The cost is related not to the policy but to factors related to the sender's type. The willingness to be involved can be rewritten as:

$$\text{Be involved if: } c_i \leq (p - x_i)^2 \quad (1)$$

$$\text{And: } c_i \leq \delta_i(p_{-si} - x_i)^2 q \quad (2)$$

$$\text{And: } c_i \leq (1 - q)\delta_i^2 \left[\left(\frac{\alpha p_{r1} + \beta p_{r2}}{2} \right) - x_i \right]^2 \quad (3)$$

We see that a sender chooses to be involved if the cost of being involved is equal to, or lower than, the expected policy payoff resulting from the involvement. The expected policy payoff of being involved will have to be either equal to, or higher than, the expected payoff from not being involved. The fulfilment of these two conditions depends on five factors; the sender's cost, c_i ; the sender's policy position, x_i ; the sender's discount factor, δ_i ; the policy adopted without s_i 's involvement times its probability; and the relative power of the two institutions when bargaining with each other in the last stage of the procedure. If the cost increases, the payoff of being involved goes down, holding the other factors constant. The potential policy change resulting from s_i 's involvement is positively associated with willingness to be involved. Hence, as the stakes of the issues go up, senders with higher costs are willing to participate. The higher parties' discount payoffs $(1 - \delta)$ in the future compared with payoffs today, the more willing they are to be involved. As the difference increases between the policy adopted with s_i 's involvement and the policy adopted without s_i 's involvement, the willingness to be involved increases. The bargaining power of the institutions whose collective preference is located furthest away from those of sender s_i is positively associated with willingness to be involved in the process. This is the same for both senders. The conditions for both senders sending informative signals, the same m , are that conditions (1), (2) and (3) hold for both senders simultaneously and that r_1 prefers $m_{s1} = m_{s2} = p$ to any $p' \neq m_{s1}, = m_{s2}$. The condition for this is

$$U_{r1}(p) \geq \delta(p' - x_{r1})q \geq \delta^2(1 - q)\left(\frac{\alpha p_{r1} + \beta p_{r2}}{2}\right) \forall p'.$$

Hence there may exist an informative equilibrium if δ is sufficiently low that s_1 , s_2 and r_1 prefer p to the discounted value of any other p' that may materialize from continuing the game. The sufficient δ is decreasing as $\sum_{i \in s1, s2, r1} (p - x_i) \rightarrow \infty$. As the differences of the policy preferences of the actors involved increase, future payoffs have to be discounted more heavily in order for an informative equilibrium to exist. In other words, the closer the policy preferences of the involved actors, the more likely it is that an informative equilibrium will exist.

The right to draw up a proposal for a piece of legislation in the relevant committee and in the plenary session of the Parliament is allocated to an individual MEP, called the rapporteur. The right to be involved as a rapporteur is a function of the size of the party group and the national party. We can combine the rights to be involved, k , and the cost of being involved, c , to find the marginal rate of substitution between the frequency of involvement and costs. Let the frequency be defined by $L_i = (k_i - c_i)/c_i$. Parties with higher costs of coordinating their message will hence write fewer reports.¹

H1: Parties with lower costs of coordinating their message with the sender from the Council will be more frequently involved as EP rapporteurs than parties with higher coordination costs.

Data

The dependent variable is the number of codecision reports written by a national party in a given year. The data set consists of all codecision reports initiated by the Commission between 1999 and 2003, i.e. labelled COD1999/xx/xx or later.² Legislation initiated earlier but considered during this period is excluded, as is legislation where more than one MEP acts as rapporteur (co-rapporteurships) or legislation on which no MEP acts as rapporteur. Reports allocated to MEPs from Luxembourg are excluded owing to missing data on some of the independent variables. This gives a total of 372 Codecision reports. Once Luxembourg is excluded, there were 106 national parties present in the EP during the period under study. The total number of observations is 529; 360 of these observations take the value 0, and 169 take positive values. The maximum number of reports allocated to a national party in any one year is 11; the mean is 0.704. Because the phenomenon of interest is the number of reports allocated to party i in a given year, the dependent variable is best described as a count outcome. It cannot take

negative values, and its measurement is discrete. Hence, a count model seems more appropriate than a standard ordinary least squares model.

The standard count model is the Poisson regression model, which assumes that the conditional variance is equal to the conditional mean. If the conditional variance is greater than the conditional mean, the Poisson regression model will be consistent but inefficient, with standard errors biased downwards. This might result in rejection of the null hypothesis in cases where it should not be rejected. The negative binomial regression model allows for the conditional variance to exceed the conditional mean, by estimating the conditional mean as a random variable consisting of the independent variables and a random disturbance term. The random disturbance term has the effect of allowing for variance on the dependent variable for observations with the same values on the independent variables. This is owing to unobserved heterogeneity in the data, captured by the random disturbance term. It may, however, be the case that the reasons for not writing codecision reports are different from the factors that influence the number of codecision reports a party writes. For example, the reasons for most Eurosceptic parties not writing codecision reports might be very different from the reasons for Dutch MEPs being overrepresented (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003). To take account of this possibility, the process that generates zero counts may be modelled separately, as a binary logistic model. Combining the additional zero outcome process with the negative binomial model from above gives the zero-inflated negative binomial model. This model produces separate estimates for the non-zero and zero outcomes (Long, 1997: 217–50). The coefficients for the count outcome are labelled B , and the binary zero-count coefficients are labelled Y .

The independent variables of interest for the theory are *government*, *policy* and *partysize*. *Government* is a dichotomous variable taking the value 1 if the party was a member of the national government at the start of the year, 0 otherwise. Table 1 provides an overview of the governing parties in the member states. *Policy* captures the effect of policy location. I use NOMINATE scores on the first dimension from the first half of the 1999–2004 EP (see Hix et al., 2005). This dimension can be understood as a version of the normal left–right policy dimension (Hix, 2001, 2002b). Higher values indicate locations further to the right in the policy space. *Partysize* is the number of representatives in the national party delegation to the European Parliament.

To control for the effects of parties' attitude towards Europe on their uptake of reports, data from an expert survey are used (Marks and Steenbergen, 2004). The data set contains four variables relevant for this study: *dissent*, *position*, *salience* and *EP*. *Dissent* is a measure of internal dissent in the party over European integration. The scale goes from 1 to 5, where 1 represents

Table 1 Governing parties in the 15 EU member states 1999–2003, as of 1 January each year

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Austria	SPÖ/ ÖVP	SPÖ/ ÖVP	ÖVP + FPÖ	ÖVP + FPÖ	ÖVP + FPÖ
Belgium	CVP + PSC + SP + PS	VLD + PRL/FDF + SP + PS + Ecolo + Agalev	VLD + PRL/FDF + SP + PS + Ecolo + Agalev	VLD + PRL/FDF + SP + PS + Ecolo + Agalev	VLD + PRL/FDF + SP + PS + Ecolo + Agalev
Denmark	SD + RV	SD + RV	SD + RV	V + KF	V + KF
Germany	SPD + Die Grünen	SPD + Die Grünen	SPD + Die Grünen	SPD + Die Grünen	SPD + Die Grünen
Finland	SDP + KOK + SFP + VAS + VIHR	SDP + KOK + SFP + VAS + VIHR	SDP + KOK + SFP + VAS + VIHR	SDP + KOK + SFP + VAS + VIHR	SDP + KOK + SFP + VAS + VIHR
France	PS + PCF + PRS + MDC + Verts	PS + PCF + PRS + MDC + Verts	PS + PCF + PRS/PRG + MDC + Verts	PS + PCF + PRS/PRG + MDC + Verts	RPR + UDF + DL
Greece	PASOK	PASOK	PASOK	PASOK	PASOK
Ireland	FF + PD	FF + PD	FF + PD	FF + PD	FF + PD
Italy	DS + PPI + RI + UDR + PDCI + FV + SDI	DS + PPI + RI + PDCI + FV + D + Udeur	DS + PPI + RI + PDCI + FV + D + Udeur + SDI	FI + AN + LN + CCD + CDU	FI + AN + LN + CCD + CDU
Luxembourg	CSV + LSAP	CSV + DP	CSV + DP	CSV + DP	CSV + DP
Netherlands	PvdA + VVD + D66	PvdA + VVD + D66	PvdA + VVD + D66	PvdA + VVD + D66	CDA + VVD + LPF
Portugal	PS	PS	PS	PS	PSD + CDS-PP
Spain	PP	PP	PP	PP	PP
Sweden	SAP	SAP	SAP	SAP	SAP
UK	LP	LP	LP	LP	LP

Notes: Austria – SPÖ: Social Democratic Party of Austria; ÖVP: Austrian People's Party; FPÖ: Freedom Party of Austria. Belgium – Agalev: (Flemish) ecologists; CVP: (Flemish) Christian People's Party; Ecolo: (Walloon) ecologists; FDF: (Brussels) Democratic Front of Francophones; PRL: (Walloon) Liberal Reformist Party; PS: (Walloon) Socialist Party; SP: (Flemish) Socialist Party (from 2001, SPA); VLD: Flemish Liberals and Democrats. Denmark – KF: Conservative People's Party; V: Venstre, 'Left', or Liberal Party; RV: Radical (Left-Social) Liberal Party; SD: Social Democracy in Denmark; Germany – SPD: Social Democratic Party; Die Grünen: The Greens. Finland – KOK: national Coalition Party; SDP: Finnish Social Democratic Party; SFP: Swedish People's Party in Finland; VAS: Left-Wing Alliance; VIHR: Green League. France – PS: Socialist Party; UDF: Union for French Democracy (confederation to 1998; then single party); RPR: Rally for the Republic (disbanded 21 Sep 2002); PCF: French Communist Party; PRS: Radical Socialist Party (then PRG); PRG: Radical Party of the Left; MDC: Citizens' Movement; DL: Liberal Democracy; Les Verts: The Greens. Greece – PASOK: Panhellenic Socialist Movement. Ireland – FF: Fianna Fáil; PD: Progressive Democrats. Italy – DC: Christian Democracy; DS: Democrats of the Left; D: Democrats; FI: Forward (Forza) Italy; LN: Northern League; AN: National Alliance; CCD: Christian Democratic Centre; CDU: United Christian Democrats; PPI: Italian People's Party; RI: Italian Renewal; UDR: Democratic Union for the Republic; FV: Federation of Greens; PDCI: Party of the Italian Communists; SDI: Italian Democratic Socialists; Udeur: Union of the Democratic European Reformers. Luxembourg – CSV: Christian Social People's Party; LSAP: Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party; DP: Democratic Party. Netherlands – CDA: Christian Democratic Appeal; PvdA: Labour Party; VVD: People's Party for Freedom and Democracy; D66: Democrats 66; LPF: List Pim Fortuyn. Portugal – PSD: Social Democratic Party; PS: Socialist Party; CDS-PP: Social Democratic Centre–Popular Party. Spain – PP: Partido Popular. Sweden – SAP: Social Democratic Labour Party. United Kingdom – LP: Labour Party

Source: <http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith00europa.htm>.

complete unity and 5 would suggest that the majority of party activists oppose the position of the leadership. *Position* captures the attitude of the party towards European integration. A high score indicates a favourable position; a low score indicates Euroscepticism. The existing literature would suggest that the relationship should be positive: parties more favourable towards European integration should also be more interested in taking on committee work. *Salience* measures how important European integration is for the party. The scale goes from 1 to 7, where 1 means that the party does not think that European integration is important and 7 would mean that European integration is the most important issue for the party. From the existing literature it might be expected that the effect is positive: the more importance a party attaches to European integration, the more committee work the party is willing to undertake. *EP* is a measure of party leadership positions on the power of the European Parliament. The scale goes from 1 to 7, where 1 means that the party is against expanding the powers of the EP, and 7 indicates that the party favours strengthening the EP.

Results

This section first presents some descriptive statistics before moving on to analyse the results from the regression models. Table 2 shows the conditional mean number of codecision reports per year and standard deviations in the different party groups, conditional on being represented in the Council. We see that the overall mean number of reports per year in the two groups is 0.58 and 0.98 for opposition and governing parties, respectively. There are differences within the different party groups as well. Christian Democratic parties (EPP) that hold national cabinet posts write on average 1.55 codecision reports, whereas their colleagues out of office write only 1.11 on average. There is a similar pattern for socialist (PES) governing and opposition parties. Those represented in the Council write on average 1.33 codecision reports, whereas those that are not represented write on average 0.99. The pattern that national parties represented in the Council write more codecision reports is consistent across all party groups, but the difference between the two subgroups varies across party groups. The descriptive data show substantial variation within each subgroup.

The fact that the conditional variance is greater than the conditional mean suggests that a binomial model is more suitable than a standard Poisson model for analysing the data. I consider two specifications (see Table 3). Model 1 contains only the variables related to the hypothesis: whether the party is represented in the Council; its location in the policy space; and the

Table 2 Conditional mean number of codecision reports by party group

<i>EP party group</i>	<i>Governing parties</i>		<i>Opposition parties</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
EPP	1.553	2.947	1.113	2.203
PES	1.333	1.903	0.987	1.542
ELDR	0.545	0.869	0.456	0.846
Green	0.428	0.598	0.327	0.625
GUE	0.143	0.378	0.264	0.524
EDD	–	–	0.320	0.557
UEN	0.167	0.408	0.000	0.000
Not attached	0.429	0.535	0.242	0.867
Average	0.982	1.892	0.576	1.383

Source: Own calculations based on data obtained from the European Parliament webpage; URL: <http://www.europarl.eu.int/oeil>.

Notes: EPP: European People's Party (Christian Democrats); PES: Socialist Group in the European Parliament; ELDR: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe; Green: Greens/European Free Alliance; GUE: European United Left; EDD: Europe of Democracy and Diversity; UEN: Union for Europe of the Nations.

size of the party delegation measured by the number of MEPs. Model 2 includes control variables. Because the effect of location in the policy space might differ between those national parties represented in the Council and those that are not represented, I also introduce an interaction effect between *government* and *policy*, labelled *interaction*.

The Vuong test indicates that a zero-inflated negative binomial model is favoured over the negative binomial model (see Long, 1997: 248). The likelihood χ^2 tests for both models are highly significant ($\chi^2 = 130.09$, p -value $\approx .000$ for the reduced model, and $\chi^2 = 176.92$, p -value $\approx .000$ for the full model). Hence, both of them explain some of the variation in the data. Comparing the log-likelihoods of the two models gives a likelihood χ^2 ratio of 62.59, which is highly significant. Thus, the hypothesis that the full model does not offer additional explanatory power is rejected. Testing the different groups of explanatory parameters, we have to reject the hypothesis that the variables measuring the effect of party group ($\chi^2 = 8.58$, p -value = .036), institutional considerations ($\chi^2 = 25.79$, p -value = .001) or representation in the Council and location in the policy space ($\chi^2 = 12.81$, p -value = .001)³ are jointly zero.

Table 3 Zero-inflated negative binomial model: allocation of codecision reports, annually, by national party

	<i>Model 1</i>				<i>Model 2</i>			
	<i>B-coefficient</i>	<i>Z-score</i>	<i>Y-coefficient</i>	<i>Z-score</i>	<i>B-coefficient</i>	<i>Z-score</i>	<i>Y-coefficient</i>	<i>Z-score</i>
Constant	−0.818	−3.77 ***	1.573	2.97 **	−3.642	−4.30 ***	−1.697	−0.41
Government	0.355	2.15 **	0.082	0.11	0.307	2.00 *	1.236	1.12
Policy	0.552	2.70 **	2.169	2.55 *	0.952	2.31 *	8.336	2.01 *
Interaction	–	–	–	–	1.623	4.23 ***	11.623	2.63 **
Party size	0.067	7.42 ***	−0.583	−2.09 **	0.050	5.51 ***	−1.506	−2.85 **
Position	–	–	–	–	−0.337	−2.88 **	−0.533	−0.70
Salience	–	–	–	–	0.097	0.60	−2.432	−1.32
Dissent	–	–	–	–	0.360	2.17 *	2.264	1.86
EP	–	–	–	–	0.666	4.49 ***	2.363	2.23 *
EPP	–	–	–	–	0.235	0.54	−4.790	−1.25
Green	–	–	–	–	0.547	1.44	1.400	0.67
PES	–	–	–	–	1.214	2.94 **	5.207	1.56
ELDR	–	–	–	–	0.343	0.94	−3.170	1.23
Log-likelihood	−472.633				−441.337			
ln alpha	−1.092	−2.88			−1.63	−3.48		
Alpha	0.334	–			0.196	–		
Obs	529				529			
Non-zero obs	168				168			
Zero obs	361				361			
LR χ^2	130.09***				176.92***			
Vuong test	3.18 ***				4.52 ***			
LR test alpha = 0	18.57 ***				8.66**			

Sources: European Parliament webpage (www.europarl.eu.int/oeil/), Marks and Steenbergen (2004), European governments (www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00europa.htm).

* > .05; ** > .01; *** > .001

Table 4 Factor change in the expected number of codecision reports

	<i>Model 1</i>				<i>Model 2</i>			
	<i>Factor change in the number of reports of a one unit increase in x</i>	<i>Factor change in the number of reports of a standard deviation increase in x</i>	<i>Factor change in the probability of not writing reports of a one unit increase in x</i>	<i>Factor change in the probability of not writing reports of a standard deviation increase in x</i>	<i>Factor change in the number of reports of a one unit increase in x</i>	<i>Factor change in the number of reports of a standard deviation increase in x</i>	<i>Factor change in the probability of not writing reports of a one unit increase in x</i>	<i>Factor change in the probability of not writing reports of a standard deviation increase in x</i>
Government	1.426	1.179	1.085	1.039	1.359	1.153	3.441	1.776
Policy	1.737	1.298	8.748	2.787	2.59	1.568	7.5465	16.576
Interaction	–	–	–	–	5.067	1.48	171.93	51.385
Party size	1.069	1.641	0.558	0.013	1.051	1.445	0.222	0.000
Position	–	–	–	–	0.714	0.539	0.587	0.376
Salience	–	–	–	–	1.102	1.056	0.088	0.258
Dissent	–	–	–	–	1.433	1.221	9.619	3.513
EP	–	–	–	–	1.947	2.453	10.621	24.092
EPP	–	–	–	–	1.265	1.108	0.008	0.124
Green	–	–	–	–	1.729	1.204	4.055	1.608
PES	–	–	–	–	3.367	1.559	182.559	6.719
ELDR	–	–	–	–	1.409	1.138	0.042	0.304

Discussing the effect of individual variables, we see that the government variable is significant and in the expected direction: being in government increases the predicted production of codecision reports. Becoming represented in the Council of Ministers is associated with an increase in the expected number of reports by 43%, controlling for party size and location in the policy space (see Table 4). The variable measuring location in the policy space is significant and positive, suggesting that parties located further to the right are more frequently involved than parties on the left as codecision rapporteurs. During the period under investigation, most governing parties were located in the centre to left-hand side of the policy spectrum. However, because the Council uses qualified majority voting for most policy areas covered by the codecision procedure, the findings seem to suggest that those parties closest to the pivot in the Council were more interested than those further away in being involved. A one standard unit change toward the right in the policy space is associated with an increase in the expected number of codecision reports by 30%.

Party size is also significant and positively associated with the number of reports. For each additional MEP, the increase in the number of codecision reports is in the region of 7%.

The model suggests that parties located further to the right are also more likely not to write any codecision reports at all. One standard deviation change to the right is associated with an increase in the odds of not writing codecision reports in any given year by a factor of 2.79. Party size is also significant. A one member increase in the size of the national party delegation to the EP makes it 44% less likely that a party will not be allocated any codecision reports in any given year.

We now move on to the full model. Representation in the Council has a positive and significant effect on the number of codecision reports a party writes. The expected number of reports is 36% higher for governing parties compared with opposition parties, holding all other variables constant. This is very similar to the effect in the reduced model. Location in the policy space is significant and positive. A one standard unit change to the right in the policy space is associated with a 57% increase in the number of reports. From the interaction term we see that the effect of location in the policy space is stronger for governing than for opposition parties. Being represented in the Council increases the effect of a standard deviation rightward change in the policy location by 48% compared with a standard deviation rightward change amongst opposition parties. The effect of location in the policy space seems to get stronger when other factors are controlled for. The effect of party size is positive and highly significant. An additional MEP is associated with a 5% increase in the number of reports, holding all other variables constant. This

is similar to the effect found in the reduced model. Overall, the variables in the reduced model seem to be resistant to the introduction of the control variables.

The effect of party position on European integration is significant and negative, suggesting that a pro-integrationist stand is associated with fewer, not more, codecision reports. A standard deviation increase in support for European integration decreases the expected number of codecision reports by 46%. Salience of European integration does not seem to have an independent statistical significant effect on the number of codecision reports. Party dissent over integration has a positive, and significant, effect on the number of reports. A standard deviation increase in party dissent is associated with a 22% increase in the number of codecision reports. Institutional preference for a stronger European Parliament has a positive, and highly significant, effect on the number of reports. A one standard deviation increase more than doubles the expected number codecision reports (by a factor of 2.45). Amongst the party groups, only membership in the PES has a significant impact on the number of codecision reports. The effect is positive: national parties affiliated with the PES have an expected number of codecision reports that is 56% higher than that for parties from the smaller party groups. The effect is significant when compared with the EPP ($\chi^2 = 6.07$, p -value = .013) and the ELDR ($\chi^2 = 6.01$, p -value = .014) but not when compared with the Greens ($\chi^2 = 2.55$, p -value = .11).

The factors associated with failure to write any codecision report are only partly the same as the factors associated with the number of reports parties write. As we also found in model 1, whether a party is represented in the Council or not does not seem to have any influence on the probability of not writing codecision reports. Again, as in model 1, location in the policy space is significant and positive, indicating that parties on the right are more likely than parties on the left not to be involved as rapporteurs in the codecision process. A standard deviation change to the right is associated with a 51 times increase in the likelihood of not writing reports. The effect of a standard deviation move to the right for governing parties is even larger, increasing the effect of such a change from a 51 times increase to a 67 times increase in the likelihood of not writing any reports. The effect of a rightward change in the location in the policy space is hence twofold. Such a shift is, on the one hand, associated with an increase in the number of reports, if the party is likely to be in the subset of parties that are allocated codecision reports. Such a shift is, on the other hand, also associated with an increase in the likelihood of being amongst those parties that never write any codecision reports at all.

The size of the national party delegation has a significant effect on the likelihood of being amongst the parties that do not write any codecision

reports. The direction is negative, as expected. The fewer the MEPs, the more likely it is that the party does not get to write any of these reports. The effect of a one member decrease in the size of the delegation is a 78% increase in the likelihood of being in the group of parties that do not get a chance to write codecision reports. Compared with model 1, we see that the effect of one additional MEP is even larger once other factors have been controlled for. It is also interesting to note that the effect of a one member change in the size of the national party delegation has a much larger effect on the likelihood of not writing any codecision reports at all compared with the effect it has on the number of codecision reports.

Table 5 compares the predicted probabilities of being allocated 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 or more codecision reports annually for governing and opposition parties. The first two columns give the predicted probabilities of the different numbers of reports, holding all other variables constant at their mean. Columns 3 and 4 show the difference between governing and opposition parties within the PES, and columns 5 and 6 show the difference between governing and opposition parties within the EPP. Overall, we see that governing parties have a higher predicted number of codecision reports and a lower level of not writing any reports in a particular year, given that it is in the group that tries to write reports. The table also shows that governing parties have a higher predicted probability than opposition parties of any positive number of reports. The overall picture is hence that governing parties are more likely than opposition parties to write codecision reports. The picture is modified when we investigate the effect of being represented in the Council within the two main party groups. In particular, we see a different pattern within the PES compared with the overall pattern and with the pattern within

Table 5 Change in predicted annual number of codecision reports by representation in the Council of Ministers

<i>Number of reports</i>			<i>Governing parties from PES</i>	<i>Opposition parties from PES</i>	<i>Governing parties from EPP</i>	<i>Opposition parties from EPP</i>
	<i>Government</i>	<i>Opposition</i>				
Expected number	.688	.507	.844	.929	.595	.438
Always 0	.002	.001	.467	.203	.000	.000
0	.525	.617	.601	.482	.570	.657
1	.318	.284	.162	.265	.304	.265
2	.115	.079	.117	.150	.097	.064
3	.033	.017	.066	.066	.024	.012
4	.008	.003	.032	.025	.005	.002
5 or more	.002	.001	.022	.012	.001	.000

the EPP. Whereas being a governing party increases the predicted probability of any positive number of codecision reports within the EPP, being in government has a negative effect on the probability of being allocated between 1 and 3 codecision reports within the PES. The effect of being a governing party becomes positive only for higher numbers of reports. We also see that, within the two main party groups, it is only national party delegations within PES that have a non-trivial probability of not being involved as codecision rapporteurs at all.

Discussion

As a first step towards a bicameral explanation of legislative politics in the codecision procedure, this paper has investigated how sitting in the Council influences how many codecision reports members of national parties write each year. Modelling the relationship in a signalling context, the importance of credibility was highlighted. To the extent that MEPs from governing parties share policy preferences with their ministers, the model suggested that there would be more of an incentive for governing parties than for opposition parties to write reports. It is less costly for MEPs from parties represented in the Council to obtain reliable information about possible win-sets in Council. The statistical model found support for this assertion. National parties sitting in the Council have a higher expected number of allocated codecision reports than do parties not represented in the Council. This is in line with recent findings that highlight the role of national parties in EU politics (Messmer, 2003; Raunio, 2000; Whitaker, 2001, 2005). A next step would be to investigate in more detail the relationship between the rapporteur and the privileged actors in the Council, in particular the Council presidency (e.g. Farrell and H  ritier, 2003, 2004).

The results also suggest that shared policy preferences, and not just formal membership, increase the number of reports. During the period under investigation, the Council was predominantly populated by social democratic parties. We saw that opposition parties from the social democratic party group (PES) were even more active than governing parties as codecision rapporteurs. This seems to suggest that party group might play a role in facilitating the transmission of information. This is in line with the literature, which emphasizes the importance of transnational party groups in structuring behaviour in the Parliament in particular (Hix et al., 2005) and in the whole of the EU political system more generally (Hix, 1993).

The model may provide a framework for studying the Conciliation Committee negotiations. It has been argued that the Parliament might have

the upper hand in conciliation negotiations because it may be more patient than the Council (Rittberger, 2000). One possibility would be to compare the common position of the Council and the second reading's EP amendments with the outcome of the Conciliation Committees, because these documents form the basis for the conciliation negotiations.

If the model provides some insights into EU legislative politics, it should also be able to explain the design of the codecision procedure and why governments have increased its scope through consecutive treaty reforms. This is an issue of controversy in the EU literature (Moravcsik and Nicolaidis, 1999; Hix, 2002a). Although the reform of the Codecision procedure may have reduced the power of the Commission (Crombez, 2000; Tsebelis and Garrett, 2000), it potentially gives more power to the Council presidency, its working groups and the EP rapporteur by allowing for early agreement. The EP's absolute majority requirement for amending the common position of the Council, combined with a decrease in the payoff from having the legislation adopted at a later stage and uncertainty regarding the outcome, may be sufficient punishment to induce truth-telling by both the rapporteur and the privileged groups in the Council (Farrell and Héritier, 2004; Strøm, 1998). The condition is that the privileged actors in the Council and the EP rapporteur prefer the qualified majority pivot in the Council to adopt a coordinated position rather than proposing its own recommendation to the Council. The qualified majority pivot will also have to prefer adopting the coordinated suggestion to any other winnable proposal. By allowing legislation to be adopted at the Council's first reading, the cost of non-agreement seems to suggest that legislative stalemates should occur only on policies where the cost of delay is low relative to the potential cost of a policy change. Both the rapporteur and the privileged actors in the Council have incentives to coordinate their signals, and the pivotal government also has a bigger incentive to make concessions on the more urgent policies. Hence, reform of the procedure to allow for the adoption of codecision legislation in the Council's first reading makes the EU legislative process more efficient when it is necessary, while allowing for lengthier negotiations when the potential policy implications are high. It therefore allows for both efficiency and political contestation.

Finally, if there are differences between rapporteurs with different characteristics in the probability of securing the optimal policy payoff on behalf of their principal, this should have implications for how reports are allocated within committees and how parties allocate committee assignments amongst their members. Studies of committee assignments have focused on either describing the distribution of reports amongst different subgroups of the EP (e.g. Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003), testing distributive and informational models (Kaeding, 2004) or investigating to what extent committee assignments

can be used to discipline members (McElroy, 2002). The power of the EP committees, and of their rapporteurs, party group coordinators and chairmen, is often highlighted (e.g. Tsebelis, 1995; Wurzel, 1999), and the EP rules of procedure make it easier for committee members than for non-committee members to amend legislation, but it has not been shown that these formal rules correspond to committee protection to the same extent as is assumed in the formal models of legislative organization developed in the American context (Cox and McCubbins, 1993; Gilligan and Krehbiel, 1987; Shepsle and Weingast, 1987). The study of the allocation of EP reports and of the legislative organization of the EP would benefit from a careful analysis of the behavioural incentives created by the formal rules regulating floor amendments, in particular at the different stages in the codecision procedure.

Notes

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- 1 The first-order condition of $f = (k_i - c_i)/c_i$ is $f' = -(k_i/c_i^2)$. We see that, as the cost, c , of coordinating their message goes up, the frequency of being involved goes down, holding the rights to be involved, k , constant. The second-order derivative is $f'' = 2k_i/c_i^3$. Because both k and c are positive, this is always positive. Hence we have found a minimum point. By symmetry we see that, as the cost of being involved goes down, the frequency of involvement goes up.
- 2 All legislation was collected from www.europarl.eu.int/oeil, May 2004. The dataset is available on the author's webpage: www.ucl.ac.uk/spp/people/bjorn-hoyland.php
- 3 If the interaction effect is included in this test, $\chi^2 = 36.27$, p -value $\approx .000$.

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