

# Annotated Table of Contents: Dissertation

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

European political system has developed a distinctive two-level party system during its integration processes. In the system national parties and European Party Groups (EPGs) function together with different roles in the European Parliament (EP) elections and in the European legislature. Specifically, the EPGs, as political entities for supra-national policy representation, have significantly improved their levels of party cohesion inside the EP. However, they do not yet substitute for the role of national parties in the electoral competition. Thus, while European voters reveal their policy preferences on the alternatives suggested by national parties competing in the EP elections, European policy making processes are not restricted to the role of national parties to the extent that the EPGs' leaderships have influence on the voting behaviors of members of the EP (MEPs).

This distinctive two-level European party system has presented challenges of analyzing the development of European party representation. In this system, the EPG leadership may provide MEPs with more incentives to defect from their party supporters in the EP elections. In addition, it become much more difficult for European voters to assess the effectiveness of their national parties' policy responsiveness due to the influence of the EPGs. Developing from normal party system, traditional theories of political representation have difficulty in analyzing this multi-level party system. Then, how can we account for the current development of party representation in the EP? On which level of the party system do we need to focus, national or European? How can we explore the political context in which MEPs make their legislative decisions under

the influences of both their national parties and the EPGs, but they largely depend on only their national parties in the electoral competition? In this chapter, I address these puzzles with a focus on the different roles of national parties and EPGs in political representation in Europe. First, I review the traditional theories of political representation. Second, problems of applying those theories to the European system are described. Third, I advance a way of relatively assessing the current development of party representation in the EP, in which national parties' performance in the EP elections and in the European legislature is viewed from the consideration of their relationships with the EPGs to which they have memberships.

## **Chapter 2. Analyzing European Roll Calls**

How can we appropriately estimate MEPs' ideal points with the roll calls generated from the influences of their two party leaderships, the national parties and the EPGs? This chapter applies a Bayesian method to estimate MEPs' ideal points. I support the application of the Bayesian method, normally called Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) method, to European roll calls by analyzing two characteristics of the roll calls: large amount of absenteeism and MEPs' frequent defection from their majority side of European alternatives. Theoretically, while the MCMC method is not much hampered by the characteristics, the characteristics make it worse the fact that NOMINATE does not report standard errors of its estimates. First, the lack of information resulting from the roll calls with large number of absenteeism records, other things being equal, would increase standard errors of estimates. Second, while the model of NOMINATE method regards legislators' defection from their majority side alternatives as legislators' voting errors, MEPs' frequent defection from their majority side of European alternatives makes the errors widely dispersed along the issue dimension. One bad property of NOMINATE method is that it should impose artificial constraints on the roll calls with widely dispersed legislators' voting errors in order to estimate the ideal points.

Using the European roll call data from the first to fifth EP session, I explore the potential problems of NOMINATE method and draw some implications by comparing the estimates from the two methods. The analysis of outputs from two methods shows that when we suspect the reliability of NOMINATE estimates, MCMC method allows us to use its estimates confidently by reporting the standard errors. Moreover, the comparison of the estimates from two methods shows that even though the distribution of MEPs' ideal points in two-dimensional issue space is fairly robust between the estimates, lots of adjacent MEPs' locations cannot be differentiated from each other after we consider the

properly estimated standard errors of the estimates. One implication of the results is that studies measuring MEPs' voting behavior with distinctive NOMINATE estimates would reach incorrect inferences due to the lack of uncertainty measures.

### **Chapter 3. Policy Responsiveness in the European Parliament**

A necessary condition of political representation through parties is that parties respond to their voter preferences by working as a unit in the legislature. However, in the European Parliament, MEPs cast their votes as members of both national parties and EPGs. This multi-party membership raises a question of MEPs' responsiveness to their supporters in the EP elections. Compared to normal Parliamentary members, the influence of the EPGs' leaderships makes it much easier for MEPs to defect from their national party leaderships. Then, what explains the variation of such MEPs' defection among national parties? Why do some national parties have more members who defect from the national party leaderships than others? Does European voters' electoral support for parties have influence on the variations even in the complex party influence?

I argue in this chapter that MEPs, as re-election seeking representatives, depend on European voter support for their national parties in the EP elections when they make their voting decisions under the influences of two party leaderships. To support the argument, I first build a theoretical model of MEPs' voting decisions as a function of electoral stability of voter support and the strength of national parties defined by the electoral institutions in each member state. One theoretical expectation from the model is that as voters provide much higher probability of re-election through stable electoral support in the EP elections, MEPs are less affected by their national party leaderships in their voting decisions and thus more likely to function as European representatives who support more their EPGs.

I empirically test this expectation at an aggregate level with measures of the stability of electoral support and MEPs' strategic voting decisions under the influences of two party leaderships. I measure the stability of electoral support by the electoral volatility between the EP elections and previous national elections. In addition, using the summary measure of MEPs' voting records, i.e. ideal point estimates, I represent MEPs' relative closeness between the policy positions of their national parties and the EPGs. The analysis confirms that voters' stable electoral support for a party better accounts for MEPs' voting decisions supporting their EPGs more than their national parties. It

also shows that the amount of effect of the stable voter support is restricted depending on institutionally defined national party strength. These results improve upon Hix's (2004) institutional deterministic view of MEPs' voting behavior in which MEPs' voting decisions are mainly determined by the different electoral institutions of member states. The results, thus, provide the first empirical evidence that MEPs' voting behavior under the influences of two party leaderships depends on voters' electoral support in the European two-level party system.

## **Chapter 4. National Parties as European Alternatives in the European Elections**

Why do European voters change their support for parties in the EP elections from their choices in national elections? Do they have different policy preferences from those in the national elections? Do they use the EP elections as instruments in order to hold their representative responsible for European public policies? Challenging the dominance of the "Second-Order model" in studies of European voter change of party support, I claim in this chapter that voter change of party support in the EP elections is determined by the assessment of the effectiveness of their national parties in European decision-making processes. By this claim, I attempt to show national parties as working European alternatives for the development of party representation in the European Parliament.

To support the claim, I first rely on Miller and Stokes's (1963) cue-taking voter assumption. In the application to European political context, voters are assumed to take cues of the effectiveness of their national parties in European decision-making processes. When national parties draw voter attention by high levels of conflicts with the EPGs, voters are likely to consider the national parties less effective for the European representation. Second, the level of conflicts is measured by the level of national party cohesion resulting from individual party members' relative closeness between the national parties and the EPGs. Given several alternative EPGs in which national parties join, high levels of conflicts with the EPG are represented by low levels of national party cohesion.

Using the data from the second EP elections in 1984 to the sixth EP elections in 2004, I empirically test the effect of national party cohesion in European decision-making processes on European voter change of party support. After controlling for the factors of previous 'Second-Order model,' and 'European Issue model,' one statistical model is analyzed for national parties in general and the other model for governing parties specifically. The analyses of two statistical models confirm the main hypothesis that

European voters are less likely to change their party support as their national parties show higher levels of cohesiveness in European decision-making processes. In addition, they show that the positive effect of national party cohesion on parties' electoral fortunes is conditioned by the governing position of the parties and their size measured by the number of MEPs. These independent and conditional effects of national party cohesion on European voter change of party support imply that European elections function as instruments of European democracy by the role of national parties as European alternatives in the EP elections.

## **Chapter 5. Conclusions**

This book concludes by summarizing the role of national parties in the current development of European party representation and examining the future development of European party representation. The argument for the common European election systems among member states and the effect of the recent enlargement of membership to Eastern European countries are discussed. The chapter also identifies the large implication on the debates about the democratic deficit in European decisions.