

Between Nation, Party and Identity: A Study of European Parliamentarians

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*EPRG was founded in March 1998 and brings together some of the leading scholars of the European Parliament from Europe and North America. EPRG aims to improve our understanding of all aspects of political behavior and institutions in the European Parliament, and to raise the profile and sophistication of research on the European Parliament.

INTRODUCTION

With the increased powers it has received in recent years, the status of the European Parliament (EP) as an actor within the EU has been transformed. What occurs in the chamber, and the attitudes and behaviour of its membership, matters much more now than was the case until recently. And with this growth in the importance of the EP has come a substantial development in research on the parliament - as demonstrated, for instance, by the other chapters in this volume. The burgeoning literature on the EP, which has also encompassed a considerable advance in the diversity and sophistication of the research techniques deployed, is undoubtedly an enormously positive development. Yet even rapidly developing academic literatures can sometimes leave older, more basic questions unresolved. This is the situation motivating this chapter, which is an assessment and empirical investigation of what might be termed the 'going native' thesis (GNT): the idea that EP members (MEPs) come, over the time they serve in the chamber, to adopt core values of the institution, principal among these being a more 'European' outlook than obtained previously. The thesis, in its various (and more or less subtle) manifestations, is essentially premised on notions of institutional socialization - the idea that because of their experiences in the chamber, European parliamentarians become staunch advocates for closer European integration in general, and perhaps a greater role for the EP in particular.

At first sight, the GNT might appear to be obviously correct. The European Parliament has consistently, and with the support of a clear majority of its members, campaigned in the direction implied by the thesis,¹ and is generally regarded as occupying a position that is more integrationist than that of most national governments or national parliaments.² Perhaps because of this, the thesis has only been investigated partially and sporadically. Yet it surely warrants more sustained attention, not least because the GNT is, on closer inspection, replete with potentially far-reaching implications for our understanding of European integration and the developing political system in the European Union (EU). If the GNT is true, this supports the old neo-functionalist argument that involvement in 'Europe' changes one's loyalties, and thereby enhances the broader credibility of neo-functionalist ideas and those of their theoretical inheritors (e.g., Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998) regarding the self-reinforcing nature of European integration. If the GNT turns out to be partially or largely false, however, this would challenge us to think further about the nature and implications of involvement in the EU system for political actors.

The task for the rest of this paper, therefore, is to investigate the GNT more deeply. The next section examines the origins of the thesis and scrutinizes what appear to be its theoretical foundations. This draws upon previous work on the EU, and also that on socialization processes in legislatures and other institutions. This is followed by an analysis of the degree of empirical support which can be deduced for the thesis. Specifically, I examine the voting behaviour of all MEPs on a series of votes surrounding the two most recent Inter-Governmental Conferences (IGCs), and consider survey evidence which compares a sample of UK MEPs with their national counterparts and with candidates at the 1994 EP elections. The conclusion then reviews the previous discussion and addresses its broader implications.

THE ‘GOING NATIVE’ THESIS

The notion that those who work with or in European institutions come to develop a more ‘European’ outlook is one of the most widespread conjectures made about the EU.³ Yet it is also one that has rarely been explored to any great depth or degree of analytical sophistication. “Relatively little research has been done on the way in which actors in Brussels become socialized to ‘Europeanism’” (Peterson 1997), a statement which applies at least as much to European parliamentarians as to others. Given this paucity of previous work, a useful place to begin is with some basic questions - such as why anyone should believe that MEPs are likely to ‘go native’?

Putative answers to this question can be seen to emanate from at least three directions: integration theory, work on other parliaments, and a broad range of scholarship in the field of organizational psychology. To take the latter first, the notion of encounters with new organizational surroundings provoking attitude changes is widely regarded as one of the most strongly supported findings within the field of Organizational Psychology (egs. Falcione and Wilson 1988; Feldman 1981; Louis 1980; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992). As van Maanen and Schein observe, “research has yet to discover a work setting which leaves people unmarked by their participation” (1979:210).

Such notions are implicit to a broad tradition of literature which seeks to explain European integration, at least in part, through processes of socialization and attitude conversion. This line of thinking is most obviously associated with Ernst Haas and other neo-functionalist scholars. Haas’ complex neo-functionalist synthesis included at least some elements of a theory of socialization, the idea that interactions occurring within new contexts

can lead to changed attitudes. Indeed, attitude and loyalty shifts were central to his understanding of the integration process:

[p]olitical integration is the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their *loyalties*, expectations and political activities towards a new center... (Haas 1968:16. Emphasis added).

Some scholars have interpreted neo-functionalism as predicting such shifts in beliefs to occur most strongly of all within the established European institutions. For example, Brigid Laffan comments that “for Haas, institution-building came first, leading to a shift of elite loyalties over time” (1996:83). If one becomes more European over time by experiencing ‘Europe’ in action, and by interacting with others from within Europe, then the European institutions should surely be where those processes operate most intensely?

Interestingly, however, while believing that such processes occurred elsewhere, such as among members of political parties and (even more so) among members of organized interests, Haas’ own investigation of the Common Assembly - as the EP was originally titled - found little evidence of members ‘going native’, for a simple reason:

What has been the contribution of the Assembly to western Europe’s political integration?... Very few, if any, individual members were persuaded to the federalist creed as a result of their work in Strasbourg. With the exception of perhaps fifteen members, *the bulk was more or less in favour of integration before they ever took up their supranational mandate* (Haas 1968:437. Emphasis added).

In other words, the voluntaristic nature of service in the Common Assembly tended in practice to act as a magnet for those who were already positive towards ‘Europe’, and perhaps saw service in the chamber as a means to contribute to European unity. A powerful ‘self-selection’ effect among national legislators as to who would undertake part-time service in the virtually powerless European chamber meant that, for the most part, only confirmed Euro-enthusiasts bothered to expend their time and energies in this way. Those who did choose to do so might plausibly, through their interactions with fellow delegates to the Assembly, reinforce their pro-European attitudes. But service in Strasbourg was unlikely to promote any fundamental attitude shifts.

Some early work on the EP supported Haas' argument. Kerr's (1973) study of a sample of French and German MEPs suggested that longer-serving members developed a more sophisticated understanding of European politics, but he could detect little evidence of any substantial changes in attitudes towards either integration or the specific status of the EP. When compared with samples of their fellow national legislators,⁴ MEPs attitudes were more 'European', but they were no less so amongst newcomers to the Parliament than with veterans of several years experience. This led Kerr to speak of "the self-recruitment of many legislators who were avowed Europeans *before* their nomination" (1973:45. Emphasis added).

This analysis, however, was based on a small number of interviews, among MEPs from only two countries (albeit two large and important EU member states), and was conducted at a time when the EP's membership was unelected and the chamber virtually powerless. Thus, Kerr's conclusions could hardly be treated as definitive. The question of significant socialization effects within the parliament began to be raised once more when the direct election of its members finally became a reality at the end of the 1970s, and the prospect loomed of a larger, mostly full-time and power hungry, democratic EP. Marquand argued that those elected to the chamber with more sceptical views would find it difficult to resist the pro-federalist ethos that would dominate, observing that "[p]arlaments are even better at indoctrinating their members with their own norms than are public schools or miners' lodges, as a whole list of angry firebrands who later mellowed into sage and gradualist parliamentary statesmen bears witness" (1979:75). Meanwhile, Cotta argued that, along with a general inclination to seek closer European unity, a more specific aspiration would develop among MEPs - towards making the parliament itself a powerful law-making body within that union:

We now have for the first time a political elite that is not based in national political institutions but in a supranational institution. A political class that has therefore a vested interest in the strengthening of the European parliament and more broadly in the promotion of European integration (Cotta 1984:126).

Subsequent developments showed Cotta to appear broadly correct. The EP consistently championed both closer European unity and as an enhanced role for itself - as seen most notably in its ambitious 1984 Draft Treaty on European Union. Other evidence also pointed in the direction of a distinct 'Euro-elite' developing within the parliament.

Westlake (1994a) analysed the development of a more European outlook amongst Britain's elected MEPs. He found that while a significant proportion of the first UK contingent, and particularly those from the Labour party, were distinctly hostile to European unity, this soon began to change. The British Labour Group transmuted into the European Parliamentary Labour Party, its development of a more positive attitude towards the EU pre-figuring a similar change in the attitude of its domestic party. Conservative MEPs, meanwhile, generally maintained a positive approach even as their domestic party was becoming ever more 'Euro-sceptic'. Thus, it seemed that service in the chamber had contributed in some way to altered attitudes among the British contingent.⁵ But with a marked paucity of further, detailed tests of the GNT, it has only been a small step from this suggestive evidence towards the thesis being accepted by many as true (egs Hrbek 1990; Jackson 1993:169; Dunphy 1996; Marsh and Wessels 1997:238).⁶

The plausibility of the GNT is, nonetheless, further enhanced by the fact that the comparative literature on legislative and parliamentary politics has produced numerous studies appearing to demonstrate the ability of parliamentary chambers to, as Marquand insists, inculcate Members into core values, beliefs and practices. Fenno's classic study of the Appropriations Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives demonstrated how a cohesive body of experienced members within a functioning organization could exert considerable pressure upon neophyte legislators to at least comply with established practices, if not come to support them as well (1962, 1973). Other scholars of Congress have examined the issue both from the point of view of the chamber (how the legislature must "transmit its norms to legislative newcomers in order to insure the continued, unaltered operation of the institution" (Asher 1973:499)), and also from that of the new Member of Congress ("They must learn to make sense of this new world and understand their place in it - in short, become socialized in a new institution and role" (Fiellen 1962:80; see also Matthews 1960, and Gomez 1996).⁷ In his study of the British House of Commons, Searing (1986) has made the convincing argument that membership of the chamber tends, over time, to moderate opinion, both on matters of socio-economic policy and also on questions on radical institutional and political reform. More specifically, Mughan et al (1997) have mapped the decline in institutional radicalism on new Labour members in the 1980s, even finding such a process applicable to the relatively moderate reform measure of introducing television coverage of the chamber's proceedings.

However, on the more cautionary side of the ledger there are at least three reasons for believing that, while MEPs clearly are socialized in some ways via their experiences in the

parliament, the effects of this process might not necessarily work in the direction implied by the 'going native' thesis. First, while much of the extant literature does emphasise the powerful socializing role of legislatures, this process is generally seen as having a conservatising effect. Most parliaments are, for the greater part, seen as predominately 'status quo' institutions. It is much less well-established whether they are readily able to inculcate parliamentarians into adopting a more radical agenda - such as the drive towards some form of federal Europe.

Second, none of the literature reviewed above has suggested anything to rule out the possibility of powerful 'selection' effects being behind much, if not all, of the pro-integrationist stance of the EP. It may well be that, whether via the self-selection of those choosing to go forward as candidates, or the choices made by candidate-selectors and/or voters, that the majority of MEPs have already 'gone native' before they are even elected. It is plausible that some socialization effects on this dimension may still be detectable: service in the chamber may broaden and deepen a pre-existing commitment. But an equally plausible counter-hypothesis is that selection effects may leave little or no scope for the observable impact of post-entry socialization processes, or indeed that those entering the EP enthused about European integration may 'regress to the mean' as they experience first-hand some of the flaws of the process.

The third, and probably the most important caveat to enter, however, is that arguments for the GNT tend to be made minus any explicit conceptualization or understanding of the role of the MEP. Implicit to the thesis appears to be the notion that representatives, once elected, more or less disappear to Brussels and Strasbourg for 5 years, to re-surface at the national level again only to seek re-election. Yet we have sufficient knowledge about MEPs to know that this picture is substantially incorrect - and not only for those MEPs (now a very small minority of the total membership) who rarely if ever attend. Most MEPs are elected as candidates of the major national political parties, after elections fought by those same parties largely on national issues, and they continue, post-election, to maintain regular links with their domestic party (Scully 1999). If the experience of being an MEP is different to that which has sometimes been painted, so might also be the consequences to follow from that experience.

GOING NATIVE? AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

A major problem with analysing the impact of socialization processes on individuals is that it is generally difficult to gather clear and unambiguous evidence of their effects. As Mughan et al comment, in their study of deradicalization among British Labour MPs,

the socialization of professional politicians is all but impossible to chart by conventional observational or survey methods...[as] it is not readily visible at any single point in time. Second, legislators may not themselves be aware of their attitudinal conservatism. Behavioural anomalies can always be rationalized away by 'the circumstances', and need not be admitted to reflect more profound changes in ways of thinking. Third, even if legislators admit to themselves that their radical instincts have waned, they will commonly deny it, for any number of good reasons - loss of self-respect for 'selling out', concern about not being renominated by more radical constituency parties, fear of electoral reprisal and so on (1997:94-95).⁸

Given these difficulties, it would be unreasonable to expect an examination of available evidence on the GNT to produce a conclusive answer. But analysing different sources and types of evidence should make it possible to draw conclusions with at least some degree of confidence. In the analysis to follow, two different sources of evidence will be deployed. Later, surveys of British MEPs, members of the House of Commons and candidates in the 1994 EP elections will be explored. Before that, however, I will examine the behaviour of European parliamentarians from all of the member states on a series of major votes held in the EP. When MEPs are asked to decide whether to endorse calls for closer European integration and for more parliamentary powers, which way do they vote, and why?

*When 'Push Comes to Shove':*⁹ The basis for the analysis to follow is a series of 7 major votes held in the EP between July 1990 and March 1996. These divisions were not selected randomly, since the concern here is not to ascertain 'typical' influences on voting behaviour across all issues within the chamber.¹⁰ Rather, they constituted key moments where MEPs were asked to endorse closer integration and the granting or usage of significant powers for the EP. In other words, whilst vaguely pro- or anti-federalist ideals might be held with no real consequences by members at any stage of their career, examining these votes addresses

what MEPs do when ‘push comes to shove’: when they are asked to take a clear, public position.

The first three votes examined (11-07-90, 22-11-90, and 07-04-92) addressed institutional debates surrounding the Maastricht treaty negotiations, and the European Parliament’s attempt to place its demands for an enhanced role very firmly on the agenda for those negotiations (Corbett 1993).¹¹ The first vote concerned a resolution in support of the second of the three ‘Martin Reports’ issued by the Parliament’s own Institutional Affairs committee, through which the EP sought to bring institutional reforms more clearly onto the agenda of the forthcoming Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) on Political Union that had recently been approved by the national governments.¹² The second vote, taken later that year, then sought MEP’s support for the follow-up ‘Martin III’ report, which suggested a considerable enhancement in the powers of the EP among a series of specific draft treaty proposals for the consideration of the IGC.¹³ The third vote occurred post-Maastricht, on a resolution giving the Parliament’s approval of the treaty, but nonetheless also criticising the final agreement for a perceived inadequacy in the degree of institutional reforms agreed.¹⁴

The fourth vote (19-07-94) examines a somewhat different issue from the others, in that it involves the EP actually using existing powers rather than calling for additional ones. This vote, on the issue of European regulations on the voice-telephony industry, was highly significant in that it represented the first opportunity for MEPs to use the 3rd reading veto power over European legislation they had been granted by the Maastricht treaty’s ‘co-decision’ procedure (Scully 1997; Crombez, 1997). While under powers granted it by the 1986 Single European Act the parliament had been able to reject the position taken by national governments in the Council of Ministers, this rejection could never be final. The legislation always returned to national governments, who could, by unanimity, re-assert their stance as the final outcome (Nugent 1994:312-320). Under co-decision, parliamentary rejection of a law in 3rd reading was final. Yet this placed great responsibility on the EP: it faced a ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ choice if national governments laid down the gauntlet by refusing an earlier compromise. Several observers doubted that the parliament would ever choose to confront the national governments by using its veto (eg. Tsebelis 1995). This vote is included in the analysis in order to tap into a rather different aspect of what might be more general support for greater parliamentary powers.

The last three votes, (17-05-95, 14-12-95, and 13-03-96) were all on resolutions relating to the forthcoming IGC, which culminated in the June 1997 Amsterdam treaty. All three resolutions examined here involved demands for greater powers for the EP, including a

strengthening and extension of its co-decision prerogative, as well as other institutional reforms of the EU. (A brief description of the outcomes of each vote is given in the Appendix).

For each of the votes, the dependent variable in the analysis was coded '2' if an MEP supported the pro-integration position, '0' if they voted against, and '1' if the member was present in the chamber and registered an abstention - something allowed by EP rules.¹⁵ A separate OLS regression analysis was conducted for each vote.¹⁶ Several independent variables were coded, in line with prior theoretical expectations.

First, in order to test the 'going native' thesis directly, a variable is included to measure the length of service for each member in the EP. The assumptions underlying this test are not entirely unproblematic. As Shepherd (1996) suggests, it may often be difficult empirically to disentangle loyalty that derives from a long-term 'careerist' commitment to service in an institution (which may, however, be present from the beginning of a legislative career) from that which has been acquired over time via a socialization process. For the purposes of this study, however, such a distinction is essentially unnecessary. What is important is whether large numbers of MEPs endorse a pro-integrationist position, and when in their career as a member they do so. If significant socialization processes are present, then one should expect to see a positive relationship between length of service and members' institutional loyalty. If, on the other hand, purely careerist considerations are at work, one would still expect to see essentially the same statistical relationship. This is because while both careerists and non-careerists should be present in the less experienced cohorts, only careerists (following Scarrow's definition of a 'European career' MEP as being a member who "served for at least eight years...without winning a new national legislative seat or holding a dual mandate for more than two years" (1997:262)) will be present in significant numbers among more experienced members. While a fine distinction between careerism and socialization may not be possible from this test, one can at least largely rule out the possibility of either process being present if no significant statistical relationship exists. The length of service variable measures the number of years an MEP has spent in the chamber as an elected member; following the practice of previous studies, this variable is logged to account for likely diminishing returns the longer the time spent in the institution.¹⁷

A number of variables are also included to measure the impact of various national and partisan influences. Most directly, a set of dummy variables for the nationality and party group of each member were included.¹⁸ It would certainly be plausible to think that MEPs from countries more cautious about closer integration in Europe - like the UK and Denmark -

might be less likely to offer support for a pro-European and pro-parliament position, as might also members representing political factions less enthusiastic about European unity - such as the 'Europe of Nations' group in the current Parliament.

But simply accounting for party membership and national status does not exhaust the potential influences on the attitudes and behaviour of MEPs that might come from this direction. In addition, and following the lead of Gabel and Hix (n.d.), I include a variable for whether an MEP's domestic party was in government at the time of each vote. Gabel and Hix's analysis of voting on the issue of whether or not the EP should endorse the nomination of Jacques Santer as President of the European Commission in July 1994 found that MEPs were reluctant to oppose the expressed wishes of national governments when their own domestic party formed, either alone or in coalition with other parties, one of those governments. The variable is included here, therefore, partly for consistency, and partly for the possibility that the degree of power exercised by one's party at home might have a more general influence on MEPs' attitudes: in particular, their willingness to support greater powers for European institutions. It is plausible that lesser success domestically might generate support for more powers to be taken to a level where one's viewpoint may be more strongly represented.¹⁹

In addition, biographical information on MEPs was deployed to examine the impact of their prior political experience.²⁰ Two variables were coded: whether MEPs had ever been members of their national legislature, and whether they had ever held ministerial office at the national level. Either or both of these experiences might be posited to have two possible effects: first, making an MEP less likely to be socialized by their experiences in the EP if they were already a hardened political veteran with more fully formed attitudes; and second, instilling a greater attachment to national political institutions and national sovereignty. These variables were therefore entered into the equation both independently and via interaction terms where they were combined with time spent in the EP. Finally, control variables for the age and gender of each MEP were included, previous work having indicated that these factors can often be important predictors of legislators' attitudes and behaviour.²¹

Tables 1 and 2 about here

How do the alternative hypotheses presented above stand up to this initial test? Several things stand out in the results reported in Tables 1 and 2. Results for the age, gender and previous political experience variables are notable only for their lack of a general impact on

voting patterns. It would appear, for instance, that neither having been involved in the workings of national government nor having been a national parliamentarian influences MEPs' behaviour when issues relating to closer European integration are put to the vote. Certainly, there is no evidence here that such experience engenders an attachment to national political institutions in a manner which prevents an individual supporting a greater role for the EP. It is also interesting that age cohorts do not differ, given that much work on the mass public in Europe argues that younger people are more receptive to measure of European unity (eg. Abramson and Ingelhart 1995).

The results for other variables, however, indicate the presence of distinct national and partisan influences. Confirming Hix and Lord's identification of the status of one's domestic political party as an important influence on MEPs' behaviour, this variable is a significant predictor of opposition to the pro-integrationist position on several occasions. The party and nationality dummies also turn up positive and highly interesting results. While their impact is not entirely consistent, two things are conspicuous. First, there is a strong tendency for the mainstream, more moderate party groups - the Socialists, Christian Democrats and Liberals - to be particularly supportive of closer European unity. This is consistent with previous work on European ideological families which has suggested that these groupings are generally favourable to such notions (Dunphy 1996). What is possibly a little more surprising is to see less mainstream groups like the left-wing Radical Alliance and other leftist fractions, including the Greens, also taking these positions strongly and frequently. Any interpretation of this finding must be cautious. But it may reflect a sense that, notwithstanding the large weight of the mainstream parties (the Socialists and Christian Democrats between them have over 62% of MEPs in the current parliament), the EU in general, and the EP in particular, offers a forum which allows such groups a greater voice in policy than they would typically receive in their home countries.

Second, it is noticeable that Danish and British members, as expected, are the nationalities most commonly inclined to oppose closer integration. The image of politicians from these countries being the least willing to countenance transferring powers to European institutions does, it would seem, have some basis in reality. Moreover, this statement applies not only to national figures in London and Copenhagen, but even to representatives in Strasbourg and Brussels. MEPs from these countries may often be more Euro-phile than others in their national parties (an argument to be examined later). But when compared with their fellows from other nationalities, they remain among the more 'sceptical' of European parliamentarians.²² Taken together, the results here reinforce arguments based on more

impressionistic evidence which suggest that while many MEPs may have established and long-standing European careers, a large number of them are far from immune to domestic ties (Scully 1999).

But as far as the ‘going native’ thesis is concerned, the most salient finding is that length of service in the EP is never a significant predictor of support for an enhanced role for the chamber on *any* of the 7 votes. Indeed, on 4 out of 7 occasions the coefficient is even of the ‘incorrect’ (ie. negative) sign. New MEPs, even though largely unsocialized, and many presumably without long-term career ambitions in the chamber, would seem to be little different from more experienced and more career-oriented members in their willingness to support closer European unity. This finding is bolstered by the absence of a significant relationship when length of service is allowed to interact with national political experience.

To summarize, the findings from the analysis of these seven key votes yields strong support for a view of MEPs’ that sees their endorsement of a closer integration and greater EP powers as being primarily shaped by national and partisan factors. There is no support evident for the ‘going native’ thesis - that large numbers of MEPs develop, perhaps through a socialization process, an institutional loyalty. Nonetheless, while the absence of a relationship between length of service and support for integration across all 7 votes is an impressively uniform finding, it is nonetheless true that examining any single vote, or even a series of such votes, allows no measure of the *consistency* and *depth* of MEPs’ support. Many members may enter the chamber already disposed to support some provisions for closer integration but not others. Over time, such sympathies can broaden and deepen. This can be tested by constructing an additive scale from several of the votes. As with interest groups in the United States who construct liberalism-conservatism scores for members of Congress (Fowler 1982), the assumption is that the more broadly and deeply a legislator supports a position, the more likely he or she is to vote for it consistently.

Figure 1 about here

Figure 1 displays the distribution for an additive scale for all MEPs who participated in the 4 votes previously analysed taken from the 1994-99 parliament.²³ The votes of each MEP in these four divisions were added into one aggregate ‘support score’, whereby a member who endorsed the ‘pro-integration’ position each time would have an aggregate score of 8, while one who took the opposite position each time would score 0, a ‘habitual abstainer’ would

score 4 etc. While the distribution is heavily skewed towards high levels of support, there is nonetheless sufficient variation to make a multivariate analysis viable.

Table 3 about here

Table 3 therefore reports OLS estimates for those members for whom a support scale could be constructed. The results must be interpreted with some caution: the absence of those members who either were not, or (such as in the case of those from Austria, Finland and Sweden, which joined the EU after 1994), could not be present for all 4 votes might potentially bias the results. However, what is clear is that the results here closely follow the pattern found in the analyses of the votes measured separately. Partisan and national differences account for the vast majority of explained variance in support for a closer integration; length of service as an MEP does not have any substantive impact on such behaviour.

Probing Further: Were the conclusion to be drawn from the above analysis that socialization processes do not exert powerful effects over MEPs' attitudes to integration among the membership of the EP as a whole, it may still be the case, however, that such effects are detectable among specific populations within the parliament. This is perhaps most plausible for members coming from an environment where attitudes to European integration and to the parliament are substantially, if not predominantly, hostile. Such has certainly been the case within the UK during the 1990s - indeed, arguably for much longer than that. The greater degree of Euro-scepticism in British political life than in many other EU members might make it more likely that there is more scope among UK MEPs for greater initial hostility and later attitude conversion. What evidence is there for this?

Survey evidence has been gathered in recent years on MEPs from both the British Conservative and Labour parties, in parallel with their partisan counterparts from the Westminster parliament.²⁴ In the case of the Conservative sample, the survey was conducted in 1994, which also allowed for the questioning of Tory candidates in that year's EP elections who were not already sitting MEPs. (The Labour sample was gathered in 1996 among sitting national and European parliamentarians alone).

What should one expect to see the data revealing? The voting analysis above indicated little support for the 'going native' thesis. One obvious reason for the EP remaining a pro-integration institution, therefore, might be the persistence of 'selection' effects among its membership. If this were the case, one would expect to see - probably even for the British

case - national parliamentarians being generally less favourable to closer integration and greater powers for the EP than either MEPs or EP candidates (EPCs). On the other hand, if one saw EPCs adopting positions that were substantially less positive towards European unity than existing MEPs, one might conclude either: a- that there had been over time a change in those seeking candidature or those being chosen from among the candidates, such that new potential MEPs possessed a different attitude profile from existing members; or b- that some post-entry socialization effects among sitting MEPs were being detected here which were not identified in the previous analysis of voting behaviour.

Table 4 about here

Table 4 presents results for a simple difference-of-means test between national MPs, MEPs and EPCs on a cumulative index of responses to four questions tapping into attitudes towards closer integration and greater parliamentary. The picture revealed by these figures is somewhat inconclusive. Among Labour respondents, there was no significant difference between national and European parliamentarians in their responses, indicating little in the way of selection or socialization effects operating on Labour MEPs. For the Conservatives the picture is radically different, with MEPs having the most pro-integration attitudes, EPCs the next, and Westminster representatives being the most antagonistic towards closer European unity. The differences between the categories are highly statistically significant. It is impossible to be sure whether these differences reflect selection effects or socialization ones. One can venture, however, that it would be an odd form of socialization effect that worked so much more strongly on Conservative MEPs than Labour ones. The more plausible conclusion, one endorsed by the original collectors of this data (Baker et al 1996), is that the differences between MEPs and the 1994 EPCs reflect far more the changing politics of the Conservative party, and in particular its radical transformation from the 'Party of Europe' under Edward Heath in the 1970s, to the increasingly virulent anti-European grouping it had become in recent times. In other words, the differing attitudes between these two groups primarily reflect differences at the stage of pre-entry selection procedures, with somewhat more sceptical candidates now coming forward and being chosen. They are not, in all likelihood, the result of post-entry socialization processes.

To summarize then, the evidence does not rule out the possibility of socialization effects along the pro-/anti-integration dimension among British MEPs, but the indications of this are neither definite nor strong. There is also some slightly stronger evidence of selection

effects: that rather different types of people, or at least people with rather different types of attitudes, come to be candidates for the European compared with a national parliament. Overall, the evidence both here and in the previous section suggests that support for closer European unity among European parliamentarians, including for an enhanced role for the EP within that evolving union, has rather more to do with the attitudes of political parties, national differences, and the selection process for candidates, than it has to do with socialization processes leading European parliamentarians to 'go native' subsequent to their election.

CONCLUSION

The European Parliament has long been seen as a bastion of pro-integrationist opinion. The central argument made in this paper, however, is that it does not necessarily follow from this that members of the parliament 'go native' subsequent to being elected to the chamber. That is an empirical question; and the empirical evidence examined here indicates, at best, very weak support for this thesis. Rather, the evidence points to the importance of national and partisan ties among MEPs, and the significance of who is nominated and elected to the parliament, as the major factors in explaining the high-levels of 'Europeanist' attitudes in the parliament. In large part MEPs do not have to 'go native', because their own beliefs, and the values of the national parties from which they come, already point firmly in this direction. They are doubtless socialized in some directions, but the evidence examined here indicates that their socialization experiences do not include substantial change in the form which the 'going native' thesis proposes.

Why, then, does the GNT appear to be incorrect? The above findings might be dismissed as simply a function of limited and imperfect data, analysed via somewhat crude statistical methods. However, dismissing the findings is probably unwise given that those limited empirical studies covering similar ground seem mostly to come to similar conclusions (Franklin and Scarrow 1999; Pollack 1998). A wiser course is probably to use the findings of this and other studies as a stimulus to re-think assumptions that may have developed regarding the nature of involvement in EU politics. While the argument cannot be developed in detail here, neo-functionalists and others do seem to have, at least in part, misunderstood what EU politics involves. Many actors do not simply shift their activities - never mind their loyalties - from the national to the European level. Rather, while interacting closely with those of other nationalities in the European arena, they still retain strong links to national political entities like parties. In short, we should not necessarily expect people's experience

of 'Europe' to shift their attitudes in the manner commonly postulated, because that experience is itself rather different to how it is commonly understood.

Certain practical consequences may follow from this argument. If MEPs do not, by and large, have their attitudes on European integration changed as a result of their service in the parliament, what might occur if - as has happened to some degree in 1994 and again in 1999 - changed domestic political circumstances lead to considerably greater numbers of MEPs being elected who adopt a more fundamentally sceptical viewpoint? One possibility is that it is only under such circumstances that one will see large-scale socialization processes manifesting themselves, as there would now be the scope for these to operate. But an alternative and probably more plausible possibility is that one could then see the nature of the EP itself transformed. The strongly pro-integration position of the EP could, in time, come to be seen not as something that is inevitable and unchanging, but as the rather conditional consequence of essentially domestic political factors.

**TABLE 1: REGRESSION ESTIMATES (STANDARD ERRORS) FOR 3 VOTES IN 1989-94
PARLIAMENT**

Variable	11-07-1990	22-11-1990	07-04-1992
Years as MEP (log)	- .00 (.04)	- .01 (.01)	- .00 (.02)
Age	- .00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Gender	.06 (.08)	.03 (.05)	.17 (.09)*
Ex-National Legislator	.17 (.12)	- .14 (.07)*	- .25 (.21)
Ex-National Minister	- .27 (.18)	.10 (.09)	.07 (.13)
Domestic Party in Govt.	- .00 (.09)	.08 (.05)	- .18 (.09)**
Socialists	.88 (.35)**	1.93 (.26)***	2.11 (.43)***
Christian Democrats	.92 (.35)**	1.88 (.26)***	1.78 (.43)***
Liberals	1.07 (.37)***	1.83 (.26)***	2.07 (.44)***
Conservatives	1.57 (.40)***	1.65 (.28)***	1.24 (.51)**
Greens	.55 (.38)	.98 (.27)***	.74 (.46)*
United Left	.60 (.36)*	2.00 (.27)***	1.71 (.46)***
Gaullist/Fianna Fail	- .02 (.39)	- .09 (.29)	1.37 (.46)***
Rainbow Group	- .04 (.39)	- .09 (.29)	.53 (.49)
Left Unity	- .64 (.41)	.92 (.30)***	.44 (.48)
Right	- .88 (.38)**	.05 (.27)	.32 (.46)
Dutch	- .25 (.16)	- .10 (.09)	.02 (.19)
Luxembourg	(dropped)	- .69 (.17)***	- .05 (.37)
French	- .12 (.15)	- .16 (.08)*	- .27 (.16)*
German	- .16 (.14)	- .03 (.08)	- .40 (.16)**
Italian	.08 (.15)	- .06 (.10)	.18 (.18)
British	- .72 (.17)***	.01 (.09)	- .10 (.22)
Irish	- .01 (.24)	.01 (.12)	.30 (.22)
Danish	-1.38 (.23)***	- .03 (.15)	- .48 (.22)**
Greek	- .25 (.21)	- .04 (.12)	.06 (.20)
Spanish	.05 (.15)	- .06 (.08)	.08 (.17)
Portuguese	- .13 (.23)	.01 (.11)	- .13 (.21)
Nat.Leg.*Years as MEP	- .07 (.08)	.08 (.05)	.14 (.11)
Nat.Min.*Years as MEP	.11 (.11)	- .08 (.07)	.02 (.05)
Adjusted R ²	.56	.87	.46
Number of Cases	276	204	326
* p< .10 ** p< .05 *** p< .01			

**TABLE 2: REGRESSION ESTIMATES (STANDARD ERRORS) FOR 4 VOTES IN 1994-99
PARLIAMENT**

Variable	13-03-1996			
Years as MEP (log)	-.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Age	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.01 (.00)**
Gender	.04 (.04)	.04 (.05)	.01 (.04)	-.03 (.05)
Ex-National Legislator	-.00 (.05)	.01 (.05)	.04 (.05)	-.01 (.07)
Ex-National Minister	.04 (.07)	.11 (.08)	-.01 (.07)	.07 (.15)
Domestic Party in Govt.	-.06 (.04)	-.35 (.05)***	-.19 (.04)***	-.22 (.06)***
Socialists	.24 (.13)*	1.87 (.15)***	1.70 (.14)***	1.64 (.13)***
Christian Democrats	.23 (.13)*	2.05 (.15)***	1.60 (.14)***	1.68 (.14)***
Liberals	.17 (.14)	1.71 (.15)***	1.56 (.15)***	.40 (.15)***
Forza Italia/Union for Europe ^a	-.73 (.15)***	.85 (.23)***	.62 (.15)***	.47 (.16)***
Greens	.17 (.14)	.69 (.17)***	1.05 (.16)***	-.05 (.16)
United Left	.25 (.14)*	.00 (.16)	.51 (.16)***	.17 (.16)
Gaullist/Fianna Fail	-1.50 (.15)***	.12 (.17)	--	--
Radical Alliance	.36 (.16)**	1.98 (.22)***	1.73 (.19)***	2.15 (.23)***
Europe of Nations	-1.20 (.15)***	.08 (.18)	-.30 (.18)	-.06 (.19)
Dutch	.21 (.10)**	.17 (.13)	.03 (.10)	.32 (.13)**
Luxembourg	-.11 (.18)	.35 (.20)	-.18 (.18)	.06 (.23)
French	-.09 (.09)	-.07 (.13)	-.27 (.10)***	-.06 (.13)
German	.13 (.08)	-.01 (.11)	-.02 (.09)	.21 (.11)*
Italian	.13 (.09)	-.15 (.13)	.31 (.10)***	.60 (.14)***
British	.13 (.09)	-.92 (.12)***	-.33 (.09)	-.92 (.12)***
Irish	.04 (.12)	-.33 (.17)*	-.04 (.13)	-.06 (.18)
Danish	-.61 (.12)***	-.35 (.17)**	-.13 (.15)	-.55 (.17)***
Greek	.14 (.10)	-.73 (.14)***	-.03 (.12)	.32 (.15)**
Spanish	.12 (.09)	-.02 (.13)	-.03 (.09)	.35 (.12)***
Portuguese	.05 (.11)	-.03 (.15)	-.07 (.13)	.41 (.15)***
Austrian	--	.26 (.24)	-.10 (.14)	.35 (.15)**
Finnish	--	-.03 (.25)	-.31 (.13)**	.04 (.16)
Swedish	--	-.27 (.23)	-.43 (.13)***	-.29 (.16)
Nat.Leg*Years as MEP	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.02 (.02)	-.05 (.03)
Nat.Min*Years as MEP	-.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.03)	.00 (.09)
Adjusted R ²	.75	.71	.65	.71
Number of Cases	437	470	424	457

* p< .10 ** p< .05 *** p< .01

^a In July 1995, Forza Italia, French Gaullists and Irish Fianna Fail MEPs joined together in the Union for Europe group.

TABLE 3: REGRESSION ESTIMATES (STANDARD ERRORS) FOR AGGREGATE 'PRO-INTEGRATION' SCORES OVER 4 VOTES IN THE 1994-99 PARLIAMENT

Variable	
Years as MEP (log) ^a	.06 (.06)
Age	.00 (.01)
Gender	- .23 (.13)*
Ex-National Legislator	.16 (.20)
Ex-National Minister	.40 (.37)
Domestic Party in Govt.	- .86 (.15)***
Socialists	7.51 (.66)***
Christian Democrats	7.42 (.66)***
Liberals	5.67 (.72)***
Forza Italia	6.65 (1.09)***
Greens	3.79 (.69)***
United Left	2.78 (.71)***
Gaullist/Fianna Fail	- .41 (.81)
Radical Alliance	(dropped)
Europe of Nations	.43 (.76)
Dutch	.37 (.37)
Luxembourg	- .18 (.57)
French	- .14 (.44)
German	- .01 (.34)
Italian	- .65 (.41)*
British	-2.43 (.35)***
Irish	-.69 (.45)*
Danish	-2.37 (.49)***
Greek	- .76 (.44)*
Spanish	- .14 (.37)
Portuguese	.42 (.55)
Nat.Leg*Years as MEP	- .07 (.13)
Nat.Min*Years as MEP	- .29 (.21)
Adjusted R ²	.85
Number of Cases	220
* p< .10 ** p< .05 *** p<.01	

^a The Age and Years as MEP variables for this equation were set at their 1995 values.

TABLE 4: ONE-WAY ANOVA ON CUMULATIVE INDEX OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS CLOSER INTEGRATION, BY PARTY (UK LEGISLATORS)

<i>Conservatives</i>	Mean ^a	Std.Deviation	N. of Cases
MPs	10.06	3.74	104
EPCs	12.10	2.81	39
MEPs	15.55	3.44	20
F= 22.19		p<0.0000	
<i>Labour</i>	Mean	Std.Deviation	N. of Cases
MPs	13.68	3.23	75
MEPs	14.81	4.52	26
F= 1.89		p=0.1724	

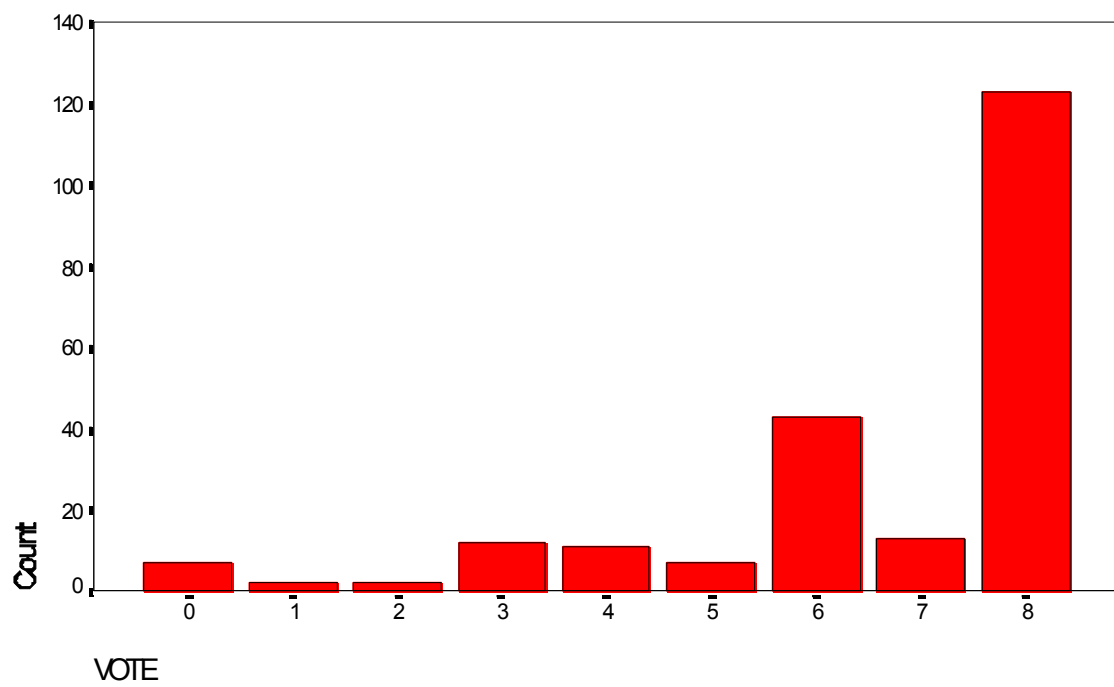
^a This index was computed by summing the responses of survey participants to four statements contained within both the Labour and Conservative surveys. The statements were:

- ‘The disadvantages of EC membership have been outweighed by the benefits’
- ‘The 1996 IGC should not increase the supranational power of EU institutions’
- ‘EMU is not desirable’
- ‘The European parliament should be given the right to initiate EU legislation’

Respondents were allowed 5 options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree or Strongly Disagree. The items used in the index I have constructed were selected not only for being common across the two surveys, but also in order to tap into some of the main aspects of the pro-integration and pro-parliament attitudes which this paper has been investigating.

Scores in the original survey were scaled from ‘1’ for ‘Strongly Agree’ to ‘5’ for ‘Strongly Disagree’. For the construction of the index here they have been re-scaled so that the most pro-integration response in each instance scores ‘5’, with the most strong counter-viewpoint scoring ‘1’. The index therefore allows for a range of scores between 4 and 20.

FIGURE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF AGGREGATE 'INSTITUTIONAL LOYALTY' SCORES AMONG MEPS FOR 4 VOTES IN 94-99 PARLIAMENT



¹ See Scully (1998); also Marsh and Wessels (1997:238; and Westlake 1994b:28-29).

² The assumption that the EP is generally at the extreme 'pro-integration' end of the spectrum is used, for instance, to underpin the modelling work of Tsebelis (1994) and Garrett and Tsebelis (1996).

³ To take but one example, pulled from recent press coverage after the Cardiff June 1998 European Council summit: "The idea of a super-council of deputy prime-ministers raises more questions than it answers. There is a clear tendency for those personally engaged in Europe to go native", Martin Walker, 'Analysis: balancing act in the rise and rise of neo-nation states', *The Guardian*, June 17 1998.

⁴ Kerr's study was conducted, of course, on the pre-1979 unelected Parliament, whose membership was made up of national legislators delegated to serve in Strasbourg.

⁵ It is unclear, however, what interpretation can be placed upon such trends. Further behavioural evidence is examined by Westlake, but the results are inconclusive. He examines the voting patterns of the British contingent across 14 votes, between 1981 and 1992, where issues concerning greater powers for the Parliament and closer European unity were placed before MEPs (Westlake 1994a:245-257). The major method of analysis, however, is to chart *aggregate* patterns of support, opposition or abstention/absence across these fourteen votes. Not only is there no identifiable trend in support among UK members across the votes (charting aggregate levels of support over time reveals a statistically insignificant coefficient); even if there were, it would be difficult to draw any clear inferences from such a pattern. Increasing British support could have come from the changing attitudes of UK members in the chamber (although in fact, charting simply the behaviour of surviving members of the 1979 intake across all 14 votes yields little evidence of a trend either), *or* from less supportive members in this original cohort gradually being replaced by more supportive figures.

⁶ A recent study by Franklin and Scarrow (1999), drawing on data on MEPs and EP candidates in the 1994 elections, constitutes the most serious effort to examine the socializing impact of membership of the chamber. The study measures attitudes towards the EU at two separate points in time - 1994 and (among some of those elected) 1996. Nonetheless, the study is also severely limited - as the authors acknowledge - by the small number of respondents common to both surveys, and the fact of measures only being conducted at 2, widely separated, time points. Nonetheless, it is interesting in light of the discussion to follow here that Franklin and Scarrow find only very limited evidence of socialization effects.

⁷ In a similar manner, Hagle (1993), writing about the experiences of new members of the U.S. Supreme Court, supports the idea that new members of political institutions undergo periods of learning and socialization: rather like much of the organizational psychology work mentioned below, Hagle sees new entrants undergoing an initial period of 'bewilderment and disorientation'.

⁸ Relatedly, a consistent observation of Pollack (1998) in his review of numerous studies purporting to study attitude and loyalty shifts among those working in international

organizations, is that many of these studies suffer from serious methodological problems, rendering their conclusions of dubious validity.

⁹ The analysis in this section draws heavily on that contained in Scully (1998).

¹⁰ Efforts to calculate more 'typical' influences across all votes held in the EP can be found in Brzinski (1995), Raunio (1997) and Hix and Lord (1997).

¹¹ These votes are among those identified by Westlake (1994a) as significant divisions in relation to support for integration and greater EP powers.

¹² The 'Martin' reports were named after David Martin MEP, then *rapporteur* on these matters for the EP's Committee on Institutional Affairs, now a Vice-President of the Parliament.

¹³ In particular, this report presented a clear proposal for the form and extent of co-decision powers that the EP was requesting.

¹⁴ While this vote by the EP had no legal force over treaty ratification, it arguably had greater significance than this might suggest given that the Italian parliament had earlier promised not to ratify any treaty rejected by the EP.

¹⁵ Voting 'abstained' on a division in the EP is thus distinct from simply being absent from a vote. Because of the diversity of reasons that might explain a member's absence from the chamber, absent members have been excluded from the following analysis.

¹⁶ The use of regression could be questioned, given that the categories of the dependent variable essentially form an ordinal rather than an interval-level scale. Ordered Logit and Ordered Probit analysis was therefore also conducted on the same votes, producing substantially similar results. Given this similarity of results, I have chosen to report the more familiar regression findings.

¹⁷ See, for example, Mughan et al (1997), and Arnold (1998). Linear specifications of the regression model, as well as those including the logged function, were run as a check. There were virtually no significant differences resulting from the different model specifications, except for a mild tendency for the logged specification to obtain a better fit.

¹⁸ The 'base' categories - that for which no dummy variable was entered, were Belgium, for the nationality variables, and 'Non-aligned' members for the party variables. Dummy variables were, of course, necessary, there being no obvious ordering within these categories.

¹⁹ This is similar to the argument that the British Labour Party, and the trade union movement, came to be much more sympathetic to European integration in the late-1980s because Europe was as arena where their policy priorities were accorded greater respect than in a UK dominated by Mrs Thatcher and the Conservative Party.

²⁰ Data on MEPs was collected from the following: *The Times Guide to the European Parliament*, (London: Times Books) 1989 and 1994 editions; *Who's Who in European Politics (second edition)*, (New York: Bowker-Saur, 1992); *Guide to the European Parliament*, (Brussels: EU Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce, 1995); *List of Members*, (European Parliament, various dates); and the *Europarl* web server.

²¹ See, for example, Mughan et al (1997), which finds that women MPs in the House of Commons were significantly more likely than men to favour the institutional change of introducing television coverage of proceedings.

²² Thomassen and Schmitt (1997) suggest that, at least as far as British Conservatives are concerned, they also differ ideologically from their fellow EPP members in being more right-wing across socio-economic issues.

²³ Only these 4 votes, rather than all 7, are used in the construction of the scale because a scale constructed from all 7 would have excluded all but a very small number of MEPs from the analysis. The single biggest reason for this is the high turnover of MEPs in the 1994 elections. After the polls, less than half of the new membership (241 out of 567), had been outgoing members of the previous Parliament.

²⁴ For an extended description of the study, as well as analysis of various aspects of the data, see Baker and Seawright (1998).