"Elite Environmental Attitudes and European Integration"

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Abstract

In the past has been argued that the European integration will take place at the elite level. This is mainly the approach of the neo-functionalist theorists who believe in the spill-over effect. Success in one area will lead to the adoption of new policy areas of co-operation. The European Community has expanded its policy of co-operation on several areas. One of the policy areas that has attracted significantly the attention of the Community politicians and political scientists has been the area of environment. paper examines certain elite attitudes on environmental and energy policies in the European Parliament. It mainly examines a number of roll-call votes during the first term of the directly elected European Parliament. We try to find the degree of agreement or disagreement among the Members of the European Parliament on the above mentioned policy area. We looked at two variables: nation and political groups. This aspect indicates if the members of the European Parliament transcend national loyalties or ideological guidelines on the environmental issues.

Introduction

One of the most significant developments in the European Community the last twelve years has been the expansion of the Parliament's powers. The Parliament is considered to be one of the milestones in the integrative process of the European Community. From 1979 to the present there were three direct elections for the European representatives. This fact alone gave the Parliament greater legitimacy and greater accountability. Although the direct elections did not give immediately powers to the Parliament it considerably contributed to the further integration of the Community. The size of the Parliament grew from 197 in 1978 to 410 with direct elections in 1979 and to 434 in 1981 with the second enlargement and to 518 as it is at the present. In addition the last five years the debate on the Parliament's powers intensified. This debate intensification brought fruitful results in 1986 with the Single European Act which gave further authority to EP. Although a great deal of negative publicity was given to the Parliament of not having acted responsibly during the first term, it achieved extensive recognition by the Commission and the Council of Ministers. Often in the past the Council of Ministers did not bother to wait for the Parliament's opinion on proposed legislation. This attitude has significantly changed during the decade of the 1980s. The Parliament and the Commission frequently position themselves on the same side of issues, a fact that makes them stronger against the most important institution of the Community; the Council.

This study examines the attitudes of the European

Parliamentarians on issues of environment and energy through their voting behavior during the first term of directly elected Parliament (1979-1984). We mainly ask the question of whether they vote as partisans or as national groups.

European Parliament: An Overview

The European Community (EC) consists of three institutions: the Commission, the Council of Ministers, and the European Parliament (EP). The European Parliament has historically been the least important of the three institutions and the least likely to influence the decision-making in the European Community. Because of this relative lack of authority, the Parliament has received little attention from the political scientists and from the public in general. In 1979, however, direct elections for the EP took place for the first time, in order to elect a parliament based on popular vote (rather than being appointed by the national governments as was practiced until 1979). The elections may have marked a turning point in the Parliament's significance. It was the hope of many pro-Europeanists that the direct elections for the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) would serve as a catalyst for a further integration by creating a European consciousness among the citizens and their representatives. It was believed that the MEPs appointed by their national parties either were not free to express their will on European matters or cared less about European political developments since they were representatives of their national parliaments and their political careers were

strictly controlled by the national party apparatuses. comparison, the directly-elected MEPs would be less restricted in their behavior partly because they would respond to their electorate. With the 1979 direct election at least three important developments took place: the issuing of common programs by the supranational groups across all countries in the Community, the abolition of the dual mandate for the MEPs, and the expansion of the size of the Parliament. Through the issuing of common programs the supranational groups were able to conduct an electoral campaign based on the ideological tendencies of the parties which composed The ability of the supranational the supranational groups. political groups to issue common programs, even if they were somewhat vague, was considered a success. It was conceivable that the members of the supranational groups, having similar ideological tendencies but different national experiences, would behave similarly in the post-election period. The size of the Parliament grew from 197 in 1978 to 410 with the direct elections in 1979 and to 435 in 1981 with the entrance of Greece. The size of the Parliament expanded to 518 when Spain and Portugal became members of the EC in 1986.

The above developments contributed in one way or another to the "democratic accountability or legitimacy" of the European Parliament as Juliet Lodge calls it (Lodge, 1978). Legitimacy can partly be tested through the agreement or cohesion of the political groups in taking similar positions when they vote in the Parliament. It is the purpose of this study to determine if the

members of the various European political parties are influenced by their group membership when it comes to voting in the Parliament.

The issue of whether the various supranational parties show a certain cohesiveness in their vote is obviously an empirical question. The groups talk about common policies and common objectives that go beyond national boundaries, but it is only in the Parliament where they can show commitment to their common statements through their vote on issues. By examining the roll-call vote of the first session of the European Parliament we hope to reveal whether pan-European voting patterns exist on the environmental issues. However, one has to take into account that the MEPs may seriously consider their constituencies' or national interests. Although these interests may be hard to determine, nevertheless, can be determined through their voting behavior.

Thus the objective of this research is to test the relative weight of ideological and national influences in determining the voting behavior of members of the EP. The results will tell us about how policy is being made in the Parliament, and also provide indirect evidence on the process of European integration.

Hypotheses

This study is focusing on the voting behavior of the members of the European Parliament during the first term of the first directly-elected Parliament (1979-1984). We are trying to determine what factors mostly influence the behavior of the MEPs on environmental issues.

- (1) The voting behavior of the MEPs is mostly determined by their political group they belong to on the environmental issues.
- (2) The voting behavior of the MEPs in the European

 Parliament is mostly influenced by the factor nationality on
 the issues of the environment).

3. Methodology and data selection

The data for our study are roll-call votes in the first directly-elected European Parliament. The period covered is 1979-84. We followed several steps in order to narrow down the number of votes:

- 1. Since it would not have made much sense to consider the votes in which less than a third of the membership of Parliament had voted, we first selected only the roll-call votes for which at least thirty percent of the membership of the Parliament had voted. After applying this criterion the number of votes was reduced to 497.
- 2. We, then, excluded those votes which were either unanimous or quasi-unanimous. We only chose the votes for which the split between the yeas and nays was at least 85 percent to 15 percent. Using this criterion we further narrowed the number of roll call votes to 283.
- 3. We divided these votes in fourteen policy areas based on the existing parliamentary committees. For the purpose of this study we selected the votes that refer to the energy and environment which fit our study that are only nineteen votes.
- 5. Subsequently we conducted a factor analysis procedure in order to determine which roll call-votes have common characteristics within the environmental policy area.
- 6. We selected the roll call votes that loaded higher than.
 40 in each dimension.
- 7. Those roll call votes that loaded higher than .40 and

belong to the same dimension form a new variable which is analyzed with the Analysis of Variance method.

Energy and Environment: the background

Energy, research and environmental issues have received a great deal of attention in the European Community. Energy, has been one of the problems confronting the European Community during the decade of the 1970s because of the oil embargo. This particular problem slowed down the process of integration because the states did not agree how to proceed when the 1973 Arab oil embargo took place. Each member-state tried to solve the problem of energy shortages unilaterally. But at the same time it made European leaders look for alternative energy resources in order to confront future oil embargoes. One of the alternative energy sources that the Europeans looked upon was nuclear energy. Nuclear power was already being expanded before the oil embargo was imposed but was accelerated during the 1970s as a consequence of the high oil prices.

Nuclear power as source of cheap energy had delighted many people around the world during the sixties and seventies: Poor and wealthy countries welcomed the new technology. The left and the right were equally content with it because it meant greater prosperity for all. The high hopes, however, began to diminish as time went on when the public became aware that there was a downside in it. Environmental harm by a

nuclear accident would not be contained between national boarders. Nuclear waste and other chemical oriented wastes cannot safely be stored and contained for unlimited period of time. A number of incidents such as the Seveso in Italy in 1976 gave great publicity to those who dedicated to protect the environment. Pressure from the environmental groups and explicit evidence of the harm of the environment forced the political elites to respond to the problems that went beyond the national reach. At the national level, environmental ministries were created in order to discuss the problem. In addition, international conferences began to take place in order to coordinate common approaches.

The European community itself began to realize that this problem should be solved at the European level. The EC provided support to the environmental groups through the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) in order to coordinate common action toward the various environmental problems. The ministers of environment in the EC meet frequently as the environmental problems mount. The Commission has its own "Directorate-General for the Environment, Consumer Protection and Nuclear Safety that is responsible to the related issues. The European Parliament has also its own Committee that deals with the above matters.

The environmental issues is a policy area that cannot clearly be categorized as either left or right oriented. In the past these issues have split the parties within not

between. The split comes from the fact that some perceive that by protecting the environment it will halt the economic growth. Diminish of economic growth will affect both the industrialists and the workers. The other argument comes from those who perceive that there could be economic growth and protection of the environment at the same time. But split on the environmental issues could be detected between the EC nations as well. This split must mainly depend on who benefits mostly by not paying for damages to the environment.

The emphasis on the alternative energy sources in the EC differed considerably among states for different reasons. Great Britain, for example, had less urgency to develop new energy sources because of the discovery of North Sea oil. Denmark, Luxembourg, Italy and Greece depended entirely on oil imports for their industries. France responded with the expansion of its nuclear energy program which is the largest in the EC. Germany and Denmark wanted to develop nuclear energy as well, but their governments were confronted with widespread political opposition because of the environmental concerns. These environmental concerns became more and more prevalent across the Community through the development of environmental groups that warned that improper use of nuclear energy as well as other forms of energy would have negative effects on the environment and on the economy in the long run.

Taking into account these concerns the European Community, through the Commission took initiatives in

proposing "renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind wave, and tidal power" (Daltrop, 1986, p. 161). These renewable energy sources had the advantages of not being harmful to the environment but were not economically efficient. For this reason the responses among member states were different. The French for example went ahead with their nuclear program because they thought it was safe and economically viable.

The European Parliament took the problem of the environment seriously and discussed it extensively after a series of environmental incidents such as the Seveso chemical plant incident in which poisonous fumes were released in the atmosphere and seriously threatened the lives of nearby residents in 1976. The EP asked for Community action in order to prevent future accidents.

Indicative of the EP's involvement in this policy area is the relative high number of roll-call votes that we found in this area. There are nineteen roll-call votes for the area of Energy, Research and Environment (Table 1). When we factor analyze these votes they form four different dimensions. These four different dimensions should also reflect the variety of positions that are taken by the MEPs on these issues.

Out of nineteen roll-call votes only four items load less than .40 on the first dimension (RC # 112, 264-589). The first dimension reflects the fact that there is some sort of common denominator across these issues which include issues

that span from items that emphasize research on plutonium (RC # 004-020) to the need for Community measures for storage of radioactive wastes (RC # 589).

The second factor includes three votes (RC # 071-074) that mainly call for greater measures on nuclear power stations on the frontiers. The first vote is a proposal for an establishment of Community procedure for consultations on the location of nuclear facilities near frontiers. The second vote calls for "a uniform application throughout the Community of the 'polluter pay principle' in the event of transfrontier pollution by power stations and for the power stations to be taken out of operation and dismantled if pollution exceeds previously accepted Community standards. The third roll-call

TABLE 1

Energy, Research and Environment Issue Area

	PACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3	FACTOR 4	PACTOR
	n .	,,			COMMUNALITIES
	Energy,	Nuclear	On Rew	Need for Sto-	
	Research,	Power	Sources	rage of	
	Environment	Stations	of Energy	Radioactive	
	Issues	on Pron-		Vaste	
		tiers			
RC #					
004	.70810	13513	07852	.03860	.545
010	.78114	21932	05069	00274	.667
013	.83276	18153	08135	.06562	.761
014	.84830	25072	05997	.03598	.804
016	.83281	28106	07288	.00047	.760
017	.85114	20676	05030	07569	.790
018	.83322	.28192	02678	05490	.828
019	.84060	27045	03716	06972	.810
020	.68249	12521	00493	02386	.504
054	.42828	.25186	.11417	.02988	.272
071	.47555	. 67632	38665	11592	.800
072	.49240	.71162	19591	06150	.816
074	.41011	.57125	26308	.02646	.535
112	. 26438	. 19544	.12805	.11131	.149
222	.53944	.37897	.62334	13529	.743
223	.48391	.34861	.66664	19414	.724
264	.34513	.21700	.11791	.30591	. 209
489	.24169	.10907	.17194	.25001	. 133
589	.26400	.18590	.14053	. 40747	.152
Percen of Tota					
Varian	- -	13.1	8.3	5.6	
. w. 1 will	1414	1011	010	4.0	
Bigen-					
value	7.77	2.48	1.58	1.06	
	1111	# 1 TU	1.40	1140	

Principal Axis Pactoring (PAP)

vote calls for legislation stating that in the event of transfrontier environmental pollution caused by power stations the member states and/or regional authorities may be held responsible for possible compensation arrangements. In summary this dimension is interpreted as support for stricter legislation on the nuclear stations in the frontier areas. Dimension three includes two roll-call votes that emphasize research for new sources of energy (RC 222-223). The first stresses the fact that expenditures for new sources of energy must increase because they are not as well funded as the other areas of research activities. The second vote calls for increase payments for research on the environment because the EC needs alternative sources of energy. Thus, this dimension is a general call for development of new sources of energy.

The last factor of this area consists of only one vote that calls for the urgent necessity to find safe storage facilities for radioactive material.

The overall assessment of this issue area is that there is a great concern on the part of the Parliament in matters that deal with environment and energy, but at the same time the factor analysis suggests that the interests of the MEPs change from vote to vote and for this reason there are four different dimensions.

4. The Analysis and Findings

In this study we analyze fifteen roll-call votes in order

to determine who supports the environmental issues and who opposes them. These roll-call votes area divided in four different themes (see Table 2). Our analysis shows that the vote outcome is determined mainly by the political groups. Before, however, we analyze the groups, we should look at the voting behavior of the individual countries. From the ten countries there are two of them that show considerable opposition to these issues. They are France and Denmark. the general category and on nuclear power stations frontiers the French and the Danish representatives vote significantly against these issues. It is more significant for the French if we take into account the fact that the number of French deputies is much higher than the Danish. In addition it is significant because it indicates that the French deputies support their countries extensive nuclear program. France is the country whose nuclear energy provides sixty-five percent of the country's electricity, the highest in Europe (The Economist, March 14, 1987). In addition the French nuclear program is recognized to be one of the safest in the world. It is important to note though that the issues that mostly France as a group opposes is "on nuclear power stations in frontiers" (Table 2). These roll-call votes mainly aim to sanction those countries whose pollution affects other countries more than themselves. To illustrate this point best I use the following quotes from The Economist. "Each country protects its own interest. France, near the source of the

Rhine, is less insistent on keeping it clean than downstream West Germany and Holland which have to cope with the waste" (The Economist, March 14, 1987).

As for the political groups there is a clear division between left and right in this area. The Socialists are by far the groups that mostly support regulations on nuclear power stations, on need for new sources of energy and on the need for storage of radioactive waste. In three out four of these environment and energy subthemes the Communist group votes together with Socialist group. The Group that mostly opposes regulations for the environment is the Conservative (DEP). The Christian Democrats seem to be divided on these issues.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance for Energy, Research and Environment Issue area by Nation and Political Group (ECA)

-				ch Energy nvironment (All)		On Nucl Station Prontie		rer	On He of Zn	ergy ergy	rces	Stora	active
KOITAK		Mean	Adj.X.	Ķ	Mean	Adj.X.	Ч	Yean	Adj.X.	Ä	Yean	Adj.X.	<u> </u>
	BEL	.06	01	22	.12	03	13	11	14	16	.26	.17	11
	FR	09	10	73	38	40	32	. 22	.09	50	.08	02	22
	PRG	.13	.03	80	.21	.07	44	.13	.03	70	01	02	54
	ΙT	.13	.08	59	.31	.15	28	.04	03	48	20	.03	22
	LUX	.31	.30	6	.27	.17	4	07	20	6	13	04	4
	WL	.08	.00	25	.14	.02	17	09	18	23	.16	01	15
	DBX	17	19	10	11	10	4	30	18	i i	.12	03	2
	IRL	.21	.15	17	.06	00	8	.14	.06	14	13	03	8
	UK	23	02	86	16	.09	65	20	.06	82	38	07	13
	GR	.09	03	11	00	00	00	05	11	11	.25	.05	16
POL. GR	OUP												
	COM	.05	.03	26	. 23	.22	12	.10	.11	19	21	24	6
	SOC	. 23	.24	118	. 32		52	.08	.09	95	. 60	.60	53
	LIB	20	17	31	25		17	.28	.28	25	31	30	16
	NA	.12	.12	21	.35	. 26	8	35	-,27	15	.62	.55	5
	BPP	. 05	.01	104	.06	.01	59	.07	.10	91	32	33	69
	CON	39	36	64		35	55	33	38	63	38	30	12
	DEP	19	13	25		15	12	.17	.10	19	38	35	6
GRAND M	BAN		55			.52		,	59			38	
CORF.													
NATION.		.45	.23		. 6	4 .48		.45	.24		.36	.11	
POL. GR	OUP	. 62	.59		. 7	4 .69		.55	.58		.91	.90	
	R	•	. 66			. 82			.59			.92	
	(N)		(389)		(215)		(3	27)		(1	67)

Note: The "N" in each column indicates the (N) of each particular group for each issue. The "M" the mean for the individual groups, and the "AM" the adjusted mean which is provided by the MCA analysis. The coefficients are represented by "etas" and "betas". In the first column "Mean" are the etas and in the second column (Adj.M.) are the betas. All statistical results are significant at .05.

For two themes of the area their score is very close the grand mean. For the other two, they support the issues on new sources but oppose on the need for storage of radioactive waste.

The general picture we get here from the analysis of environmental and energy issues is that the socialists and the Communists are more concerned about protecting the environment than the conservative groups, mainly the ED, Liberal, DEP (Gaullist). As for the Christian Democrats are highly divided in this area. This particular area should be given a greater attention because is considered as non traditional policy area due to its development along with the development of new technology. Normally, these issues are debated and pursued by the new emerged green parties in Europe. The analysis of the data we have here comes from the first session of the European Parliament when there was not an environmental party in the EP. It is important, however, to note that the analysis of this data supports the theory that the Socialist parties have been able to come to terms with the new reality of the environmental issues. It has been argued in the past that some countries have not developed strong green parties because the Socialist parties have covered somewhat successfully the area of environment.

5. CONCLUSION

Although we have looked at relatively few roll-call votes which makes very difficult to draw inferences with regard to

the European integration, it is safe to say that the behavior of the elite in the Parliament is more international than national. We would like re-emphasize the fact that this particular roll-call vote analysis is an extension of previous analyses of other issue areas (Bourdouvalis, 1990). The previous roll-call vote analysis has for its most part revealed the same pattern of behavior with regard to the Parliamentarians. It indicates to us that the environment is an issue area that the elites cooperate in the European Parliament.

Theories of Integration in Connection to this Study

Although this study is not designed to test the various theories of regional integration that have developed through the years with emphasis mostly to the European integration, we can indirectly link the MEPs' voting behavior to the theories of integration and more specifically in the area of the However, we believe that the theory of environment. integration that mostly applies to our study is the neofunctionalist theory of European integration that was first developed by Haas and later was supported by Linbeg and Sheingold The neo-functionalist theory implies at least three things. First integration is initiated at the elite level, such as governments and legislatures. Second, there must be cooperation at the elite level. Third, there is the "spillover effect" which implies that success of an institution in

one area will lead to the expansion of powers to additional areas. This example was drawn from the success of the European Coal and Steel Community that led the European political elites to expand this Community to the European Economic Community with a broader sphere of influence.

Our study includes one part of the elite: parliamentarians. Our study shows that implicitly these three elements of the neo-functionalist theory of European integration have taken place. Let us look at each one of them separately. First, there is the co-operation factor. The results of the roll-call votes show that the elites co-operate more than one may have expected. In addition the MEPs as political groups support issues that emphasize integration such as expansion of the Parliaments authority. Secondly, the MFPs on various occasions have initiated policies that emphasized expansion of the European Parliament's authority. Third, there is the "spill-over effect". The European Parliament has slowly progressed towards a more integrated supranational legislature. One example is the direct elections that took place for the first time in 1979. After the direct elections there was the Single European Act that gave the EP significant additional powers. The Single European Act is considered to be one of the most important developments in the European Community since it gave extensive powers to its institutions in order to make quicker decisions (The Economist, July 7, 1990). The next step is the codecisions powers with the Councils of Ministers and the Commission.

The neo-functionalist theory not only can be applied to the MEPs with regard to the environmental issues but to the other political elites of the national governments as well. At the present, for example, the two major continental EC members, Germany and France are proposing forms of further unification with the introduction of a new constitution which may take place before the end of 1990. Partly the new emphasis on a more unified European Community stems from the German unification which worries most Europeans. The leaders of the above mentioned countries propose the Union for different reasons apart from the fact that Europe has committed herself to a greater unification. For example, The Economist puts the issue as follows:

Mr Kohl is most concerned to prove that German unity is not slowing down European integration (as some had thought it would). This may explain the relish with which he calls for a big transfer of power to the European Parliament and the Commission. Mr Kohl is inspired by the memory of Konrad Adenauer, one of the Community's founders. Mr Kohl (no less than Mr Mitterrand and Mr Delors) worries about his own role in the history books. He wants to be seen as the forger of two unions, Germany's and Europe's (The Economist, July 7, 1990, p. 27).

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Appendix POLITICAL GROUPS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT Socialist Group

Country	Party Mem	bers
Belgium	Parti Socialiste	
	Belgische Socialistische Partij	3
Denmark	Socialdemokrater	3
	Siumut	1
France	Parti Socialiste et Mouvement des	
	Gauche	21
Germany	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	35
Greece	Socialist Party (PASOK)	10
Ireland	Labour	4
Italy	Partito Socialista Italiano	9
	Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano	4
Luxembour	Letzeburger Sozialistesch Arbechter-	
	Parte	1
Netherlands	Partij van de Arbeid	9
United Kingdom	Labour	17
	Social Democratic and Labour Party	1
9	13	122

European People's Party Group

Country	Party	Members
Belgium	Christelijke Volkspartij	7
_	Parti Social-Chretien	3
France	Union pour la France en Europe(UFE)	9
Germany	CDU	34
	CSU	8
Greece	Nea Dimokratia	8
Ireland	Fine Gael	4
Italy	Democrazia Cristiana	29
	Sudtiroler Volkspartei	1
Louxembourg	Chreschlech-Sozial Volkspartei	3
Netherlands	Christen Democratisch Appel	10
7	10	116

European Democratic Group

Country	Party	Members
Denmark	Konservative Folkeparti	2
	Centrum Demokraterne	1
United Kingdom	Conservative Party	60
	Official Ulster Unionist	1
2	4	64

Communist and Allies Group

Country	Party	Members
Denmark	Socialist Folkeparti	1
France	Parti Communiste	19
Greece	Communist	3
	Communist (interior)	1
Italy	Partito Communista Italiano	24
3	3	48

<u>Liberal</u> and Democratic Group

Country	Party	Members
Polarium		
Belgium	Partij voor Vrijheld en Vooruitgang	2
	Parti des Reformes et de la Liberte	2
Denmark	Venstre	3
France	Union pour la Democratie Francaise	17
Germany	Freie Demokratische Partei	4
Italy	Partito Liberale Italiano	3
	Partito Republicano Italiano	2
Luxembourg	Demokratesch Partei	2
Netherlands	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democra	tie 4
Ireland	Independent	1
8	10	40

European Democrats for Progress

Country	Party	Members
Denmark	Fremskridtspartiet	1
France	Defense des Interets de la France e	n
	Europe	15
Ireland	Fianna Fail	5
United Kingdom	Scottish National Party	1
4	4	20
Non-attached		_
Country		Members
Belgium	Front de Frankophonen un Wallonisch	e
	Summlungsbewegung	2
	Valksunie	1
Denmark	Folkebevaegelsen	4
Greece	Progressive/Democratic Socialism	2
Ireland	Independent	1
Italy	Movimento Sociale Italiano	4
	Partito Radicale	3
	Partito di Unita Proletaria	1
	Democrazia Proletaria	1
Netherlands	Demokraten '66	2
United Kingdom	Democratic Unionist Party	1
7	12	12