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## The Politics of Justification?

Applying the 'Discourse Quality Index'  
to the Study of the European Parliament

Christopher Lord and Dionysia Tamvaki



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## **Abstract**

In this paper, we apply a revised version of the discourse quality index (DQI) developed by Steenbergen et al. on European Parliament debates in an attempt to evaluate the democratic quality of representation at the EU level. This updated measurement instrument, after the inclusion of new indicators, helps us identify not just the principles of EU deliberation but most importantly the favourable contextual conditions of supranational deliberation. We illustrate the new DQI coding for selected debates over the last EU parliamentary term and across six debate topics following the former three pillar structure of the Union. We discuss how these data can be employed to assess the overall quality of deliberation in the European Parliament. At the same time we demonstrate that institutional issues matter for the quality of EP discourse much like MEPs personal characteristics. Issue attributes on the other hand, influence supranational deliberation but not in the expected direction.

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## **Keywords**

Deliberative Democracy — Democracy — European Parliament — MEPs — Political Science



## Introduction

The deliberative turn in contemporary democratic theory has begun to transform ways in which scholars analyse and evaluate parliaments (Spörndli, 2003, Steiner et al., 2004, Bächtiger et al., 2005), supranational decision making bodies (Naurin, 2009) and the workings of various interest-groups (Klüver, 2009). But little has yet been written on the discursive politics of the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) (with some notable exceptions, e.g. Costa, 2001).

This is a pity both from the point of view of the study of European integration and that of deliberation. It needs little imagination to anticipate why the European Parliament (EP) might be a distinctive case study in deliberation. A polyglot Parliament which participates in making policies and laws for application in 27 other polities is likely encounter some novel challenges of parliamentary debate beyond any identified in single country case studies.

A study of European Parliament debates may also help with some important questions in the study of European integration. Others have asked whether integration can to some degree occur through deliberation (Eriksen and Fossum, 2000)? Does deliberation have a role in helping publics and their representatives decide what it is they want from integration in the first place? Does it contribute to the legitimation of the Union by filling democratic deficits and satisfying rights to justification? And in so far as deliberation contributes to integration or to its democratic legitimacy does it do so in conjunction with institutional solutions, or in compensation for them? Does it in some way make up for the profound difficulties of constructing and agreeing institutions at the European level? Or are deliberations at the European level dependent for their legitimating force and their practical effect on antecedent institutions?

These questions are large, many and varied. Yet, recent developments in research methods permit some modest progress in their investigation. In particular, Steenbergen *et al* (2003) have developed a Discourse Quality Index (DQI) for the evaluation of debates in national parliaments. This paper attempts to adapt the DQI to the study of deliberation in the European Parliament (EP) in three steps. In Section 2 we 'return to political philosophy' in order to derive our own somewhat modified indicators of 'discourse quality' from a normative analysis of what parliamentary deliberation has to contribute to democratic legitimation. In Section 3, we identify causal factors that are likely to influence the quality of discourse in the EP. These include institutional factors (Co-decision, Council decision-rules, majority-minority relations in the EP, and differences in the domestic political systems in which MEPs are elected), attributes of particular issues (polarisation) and the personal characteristics of MEPs (socialisation and gender). In Section 4 we present a full statistical analysis of how our indicators of discourse quality vary across six debates of the 2004-9 Parliament (on climate change, criminal liability, European Security and Defence Policy, the 2006-12 multi-annual budget, the Commission's work programme and Constitutional /Treaty change), and of how far that variation can be attributed to each of our causal hypotheses. In sum then, the paper is both evaluative and analytical. It asks '*how well* the EP deliberates?' and '*what causes variation in the quality of its deliberations?*' We conclude with some brief reflections on whether our answers to those questions have any wider lessons for how deliberation, legitimacy, democracy and institutions fit together in the European arena.

## Theory and Indicators

Political scientists have mainly studied legislatures through roll-call analyses of how representatives vote. Why go further and include an empirical analysis of the way in which representatives deliberate with one another? Can the second really tell us anything that the first cannot? Roll call analysis of voting implies that the primary purpose of parliamentary representation is to aggregate preferences into collective decisions. Thus the focus is on how votes are aggregated into representation as a result of elections: and then on how representatives, in turn, aggregate their votes into legislation, given their promises to voters in previous elections, or their anticipation of voter behaviour in future elections (Mansbridge, 2003).

One difficulty with this focus on aggregation is that it is inadequate on its own terms, by which we mean that it is inadequate even assuming that the mere translation of preferences into collective decisions is all that needs concern representatives. Ever since Kenneth Arrow's 'impossibility theorem' (Arrow 1951), social choice theory has been aware of the difficulty of designing any system for aggregating preferences – representative institutions included – that simultaneously satisfies what Amartya Sen describes as the following 'mild-looking conditions': a) pareto efficiency; b) avoidance of interpersonal comparisons in which some preferences are assumed to be better than others; c) independence of preferences and d) complete and consistent rankings of preferences (Sen 2002: 72). Under further conditions – that are equally well understood – aggregation will often be indeterminate (anything is possible (McKelvey 1976)) or even arbitrary (excessively dependent on manipulative selections of procedures (Riker, 1986: 305)).

We mention these difficulties, since one reason why justification does and ought to feature so strongly in any representative process is that it is needed to 'rescue' the politics of aggregation. As has been explored in detail by a number of authors – notably Robert Goodin (1986), David Miller (1996) and Amartya Sen (2002) – predicaments in the aggregation of preferences can be significantly ameliorated where 'actors are prepared, as Goodin puts it, to 'launder their preferences' by justifying them one to another. Crucially they demonstrate this not at a level of philosophical speculation on what amounts to justifiable collective choice but from within the methods of social choice theory: from within the science of how to get from conflicting individual choices to social decisions without offending against some pretty basic principles of consistency, freedom and fairness that are assumed in advance. Whilst this is not the place to reproduce their conclusions in full, they have demonstrated that deliberations can help actors overcome dilemmas involved in aggregating and arbitrating preferences by a) removing disagreements that are simply based on misapprehensions; b) identifying how far their disagreements are of fact or value; c) clarifying the dimensionality of disagreement; and d) testing the sincerity and e) intensity of contrasting positions.

Yet even if problems of aggregation did not exist there are deeper reasons why the act of representation – making decisions on behalf of others – requires processes of justification. However the act of representation is conceived, it is hard to imagine it functioning without some mechanism of account giving. Even if the represented is quite happy to trust the representative to make decisions on her behalf most of the time, the reasons why the representative acted in the way she did must be available to the represented, if there is to be any possibility of public control. One obvious role of

deliberation, then, is simply to record, during the course of legislation itself, the reasons why representatives acted as they did in the making of the laws.

On top of all that, democracy presupposes that collectively binding decisions should be justified to losers or to, put the point more politely, to those who are outvoted. To understand this point it helps remove any illusion that democracy is a non-coercive form of rule. John Dunn puts the point thus:

Like every modern state, the democracies of today demand obedience and insist on a very large measure of compulsory alienation of judgement on the part of their citizens. When they make that demand in their citizens' own name, however, they do not merely add insult to injury, or perpetuate an evident absurdity. They also acknowledge their own permanent potential for effrontery in levying such demands, and offer a slim measure of apology for the offence inherent in levying them

(Dunn, 2005, p. 19)

Majority decisions require individuals to do many things they would sooner not do; and, even if democracies are usually less cruel than other political systems in their means of coercion, the very fact of majority endorsement is often used to justify systems of collective choice - such as those made by welfare states or even by well-regulated market economies - that are remarkably encompassing in their effects on individual lives and limited in the exit options they allow those same individuals.

It was precisely the preceding point - that being out-voted by others is a harsh discipline that many of us are only prepared to accept where reasons are available for why we have been out-voted - which John Dewey had in mind when he famously observed that voting is unlikely to be enough on its own to make democracy an acceptable form of political rule (Dewey, 1927). Before him, John Stuart Mill observed that even voting is 'a mere act of will' where it is not accompanied by 'reasons' (Mill, 1972 [1861], pp. 239-40).

Indeed, democratic legitimacy presupposes that *each individual* has a right to a justification (Forst, 2007) for each collectively binding decision. As Rawls argues, liberal polities are committed to the belief that their own citizens are morally autonomous individuals who should judge for themselves what is good and right. It follows that liberal polities are also committed only to enforce obligations coercively in ways their citizens themselves accept as right (1993, p. 38). Thus as Habermas puts it, legitimacy in liberal societies is limited to those 'political obligations' individuals 'put themselves under' through the 'propositional logic of their *own moral claims*' (Habermas, 1996, p. 67). Even majorities who are elected in free and fair elections by one person, one vote owe minorities a justification that they are, indeed, using the coercive powers of the polity in ways that oblige all. The frequently-used definition of democracy as 'public control with political equality' (Beetham 1994; Weale, 1999) could, therefore, do with being expanded to 'public control with political equality and justification'.

In sum, then, justification is an essential part of what parliaments do for two reasons. First, deliberation is needed to 'rescue' aggregation from its own indeterminacy and arbitrariness. Second, justification is needed during the course of legislation if the latter is to be legitimate. It is the empirical investigation of the second of these roles which interests us here.

To avoid any doubt we would like to make one limit to what we are attempting clear from outset. The chances are that the observable behaviour of parliaments will always be too ambiguous - too open to differences of interpretation - for researchers to be able to design a set of tests which are *collectively sufficient* to indicate where parliamentary deliberations satisfy rights to justification. But that need not preclude the identification of a handful tests which are *individually necessary*. With that more limited objective in mind we propose the following as indicators for our own revised version of the DQI;

*Indicator 1. Respect and Recognition. How far do representatives show respect a) for other participants and b) for other arguments in parliamentary debates?*

*Indicator 2. Reason-giving. How far do representatives justify their statements with reasons?*

*Indicator 3. How far do representatives include interests, values, and rights in their justifications?*

*Indicator 4. How far do representatives justify their views with reference to some notion of the common good, and, if so, whose common good, that of a) national publics, b) the European public and c) all affected individuals?*

*Indicator 5. How far do representatives give and demand accounts?*

We will explain in detail how we intend to operationalise each of these indicators below. However, some preliminary remarks are needed on how they differ and why we have selected them.

We include indicator (1) as a basic condition that must be satisfied if representatives are to regard one another as *subjects* to whom they owe obligations of justification. Even in single state polities, representatives may vary in their willingness to justify their own arguments in relation to the arguments of all other representatives. At the European level some representatives may also believe that the justifications they owe other representatives are themselves limited by the limited nature of the Union's political association. Yet, in any system of representation guided by liberal democratic principles, representatives need *some* concept of mutual recognition wherever they combine together in *some* way to make a shared body of law that regulates aspects of the lives of those they represent. That necessity does not follow from their own personal characteristics as representatives. Rather it follows from the equal moral worth of the persons they represent (Honneth, 1995) under assumptions of liberal democracy, and the equal entitlement of the latter to receive justifications via those who speak, listen and quibble for them in the representative body. Note, too that respect is owed to other arguments and not just other representatives. Each individual is owed a justification for why each of her own preferred arguments should be set aside if coercively enforceable collective choices are not to be mere acts of will (Mill, 1972 [1861]).

We include (2) as an indicator of the *level* of justification. Of all the indicators this is the most straightforward. It simply scores the number of justifications speakers give for their claims.

We include (3) as an indicator of *completeness* across different types of reasons that may need to be combined to form adequate justifications for binding collective



actions. We take our intuition that different types of reason may, indeed, be needed from Habermas' argument that legislatures need to be able to answer three distinct questions simultaneously if they are to make legitimate law: namely, what ought to be done if interests are to be aggregated fairly? What ought to be done if the values of the governed are to be promoted? What ought to be done if the rights of all affected individuals –and not just the governed – are to be respected (Habermas, 1996, pp. 157-162)? Thus we code speeches for how far they offer interest-based, value-based and rights-based justifications.

We include (4) as an indicator of *inclusiveness* across different persons to whom justifications can conceivably be owed. Political philosophers often observe that laws can only be justified by 'public reason' even where they are also motivated by private ends. As Rawls puts it, 'in a democracy, public reason is the reason of equal citizens who exercise political and coercive power over one another'. He further remarks that 'public reason is public in three ways': first, it is the 'reason of the public'; second, its 'subject is the good of the public' and its conceptions of justice; third, it is 'conducted' in public (1993, pp. 213-4). Johan Olsen and James March capture much of what is involved here:

'Parliamentary procedure has evolved in such a spirit... Political enemies address each other with elaborate forms of politeness; the rules of debate ensure that a variety of voices will be heard, and even the most obvious appeals to prejudice and self-interest will expressed in terms of service to the commonweal'

(March and Olsen, 1995, p. 85)

But who is the 'public' to whom 'public reason' is owed in the making of European Union laws? Depending on different conceptions of the Union polity, a case can presumably be made that MEPs should justify their decisions as 'good' for particular member state publics, the EU public as a whole, or even for all affected persons, quite regardless of whether they are EU citizens. The former two possibilities highlight the difficulty that democracy always contains potential for conflict between the levels at which it is practised (Goodin, 2005). There may, in other words, be limited means of deciding within democratic principles themselves how publics at different levels should be prioritised in decision-rules or in rights to justification. That problem is, in turn, compounded by the difficulty of 'affected outsiders' who have neither 'votes' nor 'voice' within the polity (Joerges, 2006; Grant and Keohane, 2005). Representatives are unlikely to have incentive or mandate to consider outsiders. Yet negative externalities and rights conceptions within the polity itself may limit how far outsiders can be ignored altogether. If, then, indicator (3) attempts to accommodate the need for any parliament to satisfy rights to justification in relation to interests, values and rights, indicator (4) attempts to capture a further complexity: namely, the room for legitimate disagreement on how far MEPs should justify their decisions in relation to national publics, all Union citizens or all affected persons.

We include as (5) an indicator of the *consequentiality* of justification in so far as we also want at the very least to know whether this has consequences a) for their own willingness to account to others for the quality of their justifications and b) for how far they demand that others account for their justifications.

Two further preliminary points are in order. First, indicators (1) and (2) are used in the original DQI, (3) and (5) are indicators of our own which go beyond the original DQI, while finally indicator (4) builds upon an earlier DQI indicator but refines and

extends it. Second parliamentary deliberation is a process. Parliaments can organise themselves for justification as much as for aggregation or the exercise of power. Every Parliament is a division of labour between committees and plenaries, between parties which give different salience to different issues, and between individuals who specialise or assume roles as 'surrogate representatives' for particular causes (Mansbridge, 2003). Thus any process of parliamentary justification is likely to be more complex and comprehensive than any one contribution to it. Even, when parliamentarians cease dividing their labours and come together in a single deliberation, they may, as Bob Goodin observes, be wise in the manner of a Condorcet jury. The cognitive limitations on the individual representative/juror may mean there is only a slightly higher chance than evens that she will judge wisely. Yet, the chances that the overall process will judge wisely will increase with the number of representatives/jurors who need to convince each other (2003). This is, of course, one more reason why representatives need to respect one another's arguments, as our indicator (1) requires. However, the observation that parliamentary deliberation is a process also has methodological implications. Even if individual speeches are our units of analysis, deliberative quality needs to be evaluated at a level of overall debates. Of course, even plenary debates may not capture the full process of justification within a parliament. Still, there is a clear logic in evaluating parliaments for how far different views are justified through their plenary debates: that is the moment where they reason most publicly during the course of making collectively binding laws.

## Framing the EP DQI Hypotheses

A first objective in building up the updated DQI is to tackle fragmentation in the study of deliberative politics and establish a unified analytical framework capable of providing comparable measures of deliberation in distinct parliamentary settings (national and supranational). Existing deliberative research has long proceeded in separate empirical tracks, as Tschentscher et al. (2010) point out, producing divergent explanations of deliberative politics and a proliferation of research methodologies. Deliberative instruments that focus on deliberation rather than its outcome range from speech act analysis (Hozlinger 2001) to the DQI that abides by a Habermasian logic in the study of deliberation (Steenbergen et al. 2003 ) to Stromer-Galley's (2007) content focused codebook in studying group interaction and finally to Klüver's (2009) quantitative text analysis of Commission and interest group debates juxtaposing manual coding to automated text analysis. In an attempt to tame such polyphony we abide by the DQI not only because - like us - it focuses on the analysis of parliamentary speeches but also because it is a dynamic research instrument that has considerably evolved over the years (Bächtiger et al. 2009, 2010). The EP DQI we put forward will add one more case, and one which will add, crucially, to the diversity of the settings to which the DQI has been applied, since its earlier application to national parliaments will be complemented in this study by an application to a single albeit supranational parliament.

The EP DQI does two things. First it *evaluates* the quality of deliberation in the European Parliament using the indicators set out above. Second it *explains* variations in the quality of deliberation. It investigates possible causal influences at three levels of analysis. Four hypotheses examine the influence of structural features of the Union's political system (Co-decision, Council voting rules, the multi-level character of the Union's polity, majority-minority relations within the EP's party system). One

hypothesis tests the influence of a characteristic of the debates themselves (the degree of issue polarisation). Two hypotheses test the influence of personal characteristics of MEPs (socialisation and gender). The following paragraphs explain each hypothesis in detail (see Figure 1).

Let us start with the possible effects of Council voting rules on deliberation within the Parliament. Whilst the association between the two may not at first be obvious, the role of veto powers is one of the main issues in studies of discursive politics. Kleine and Risse in a detailed analysis of the European Convention argue that the deliberative process tends to collapse under the unanimity deadlock. Under unanimous voting, outlier positions and veto threats often dominate. Even so all mainstream preferences or coalition preferences can be identified by the exchange of threats and incentives rendering actors less prone to deliberate for fixed positions that are accepted as equal (2004:11). David Austen Smith and Timothy Feddersen (2006) similarly argue that veto power and unanimous voting rules create incentives for some actors to hide information in ways which disrupt the deliberative process. Conversely, Naurin (2009:35) in the study of EU council discursive politics argues that unanimity encourages deliberation as the veto power allows actors to control the outcome of the decision-making process generating security feelings that favour higher quality deliberative exchanges. Similarly, Bächtiger and Hangartner consider unanimity as an “enabling constraint” that encourages political actors to engage in serious arguing so as to achieve deliberative agreement on fundamentals. The greater the veto power the more other actors are forced to listen and deliberate (2010 :614). In this paper, we follow the original DQI in hypothesising that veto points do indeed require actors to rely more on persuasion and deliberation (Tschantz et al. 2010:15). Thus the first hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1: The quality of parliamentary deliberation increases in the context of unanimous voting**

Likewise, in the supranational arena, Co-decision – now called the “ordinary legislative procedure” since Lisbon – might be expected to be a further institutional mechanism that affects deliberation. It adds a further veto point to the Community’s decision-making system. The co-decision process, introduced by the 1990/1991 Maastricht IGC and extended by the Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon Treaties, has turned the Parliament and the Council into co-negotiators allowing the former a *de facto* veto over legislation in an increasing number of policy areas (for an overview see Maurer 2003). Not only does Co-decision increase formal parity<sup>1</sup> between the central EU institutions, but it also “fosters deliberative virtues in that it spurs cooperation, conciliation and anticipated reaction among all key decision makers”, as Eriksen and Fossum point out (2002:413). In fact, as the institutional rules and interests enlarge under co-decision so do the interaction norms among the interested players. The procedural set-up of co-decision eliminates political imbalances and ensures an intelligible decision-making process with up to three readings, where there is ample time for arguing among institutional players prior to final decision-making (Stie, 2010: 3-4). In this context the incentives to engage in reason giving as well as in account

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<sup>1</sup> In the aftermath of the 2004 enlargement there is a growing tension between the formal provisions and the established practices of the co-decision procedure. Successful co-decision dossiers are often preagreed in “trilogues” and subsequently concluded as “fast-track legislation” at first reading, as Christine Reh (2008) notes. Trilogues will not be considered in the present analysis, however, since plenary EP debates constitute the research object. In addition the scope and scale of these meetings between a limited selection of participants from the EP, the Council and the Commission run counter to and are largely incompatible with democratic and deliberative decision-making.

claiming and granting are substantially increased. Similarly, supranational representatives may find it easier to show consistent respect under an additional veto constraint that enhances their security feelings. Indeed it seems plausible that the full veto powers which accompany Co-decision might lead to fuller justification of decisions. Co-decision may also allow MEPs to claim that it is the European Parliament which is able to represent encompassing conceptions of values, rights and a shared European or even global common good in contrast to the more intergovernmental interest oriented Council. We thus expect that:

**Hypothesis 2: Deliberative quality is higher where the Parliament and the Council co-decide**

A third institutional factor relates to the multilevel character of the EP: Since they are elected in member states each MEP has, in effect, to work simultaneously in two different political systems. Deliberation in the European Parliament may, therefore, be affected by differences in the national political systems in which MEPs are elected. We therefore ask whether it makes a difference that some MEPs originate from consensual systems that stress power sharing, and others from majoritarian governments that center on the concentration of power and thereby delimit actors' discourse capabilities (Lijphart, 1999). One aspect of consensus democracy stands out in promoting deliberation: the existence of broad coalition arrangements (Steiner et al. 2004:80). Justification may be needed to overcome disagreements among coalition partners, while respect and recognition may be needed if the coalition is to function constructively. Voters may also expect coalition partners to take shared responsibility for justifying decisions (Bächtiger and Hangartner, 2010:613). Justifications may, therefore, need to encompass a wider range of persons, interests, values and rights where parties govern in coalition, rather than alone. In contrast, majoritarian systems are less conducive to open, comprehensive discourse. Since the stakes in losing or winning are so high, actors are more likely to compete by exaggerating differences; by denigrating, rather than respecting, opponents; and by articulating exclusive conceptions of the common good, designed to appeal to winning majorities, as opposed to a broad consensus. Thus we claim that:

**Hypothesis 3: Deliberative quality is higher amongst MEPs who come from member states with consensus rather than majoritarian political systems**

Yet, turning back to the other political system in which MEPs are located, namely that of the Union itself, it seems likely that their deliberative behaviour is influenced by the structure of the EP's own party system. Even, though the European Parliament only has a weak and indirect government-opposition divide (some MEPs come from national parties of government and others from national parties of opposition, the EP does have a distinctive pattern of majority-minority relations. The large groups of the centre almost always participate in winning majorities. Smaller fringe groups do so less often. Indeed, Sara Hagemann (2009) shows that in the 2004-2009 euro-parliament "the larger centrally-placed groups have moved closer together while the smaller parties on each side of the left-right divide now appear to be located further towards the margins". MEPs who are more likely to be in the minority may feel less need to justify outcomes for which they have little responsibility, or to show respect for the views of those other groups with whom they expect to combine to form winning coalitions. In so far as they are unlikely to affect policy outcomes, their main interest may lie in denigrating the majority, whilst portraying themselves as the only 'real accountable opposition' in the Parliament or even in the system as a whole. The

majority may, in turn, reciprocate by portraying them as the 'irresponsible and incompetent opposition' (Scharpf 1997: 192). Thus we claim that:

**Hypothesis 4: Deliberative quality is lower amongst MEPs most likely to vote with the minority as they have a strong interest in encouraging the 'protest vote' by becoming non-cooperative in a policy process dominated by bargaining**

Besides institutional issues the debate-specific contextual properties we consider as conducive to higher or lower EP deliberative standards pertain to issue polarization. In controversial issue-areas where actors' preferences are intense and consequences less predictable deliberative dynamics play a less significant role, as Magnette and Nicolaïdis convincingly argue (2004:394). Facing tough decisions where the stakes are high puts political actors on the defensive and less willing to deliberate (Naurin, 2009:34). In polarised issue settings where legislators sharply disagree on policy fundamentals, shared values and goals it is increasingly difficult to engage in 'open-minded deliberation'. On the contrary, when policy preferences converge - in regulatory rather than distributive settings - and 'the cake does not have to be divided up', deliberative discourses prevail resulting in respectful, justified and accountable utterances (Ulbert and Risse, 2005:364). In addition, low issue polarisation affects justification completeness and inclusiveness boosting reference to shared values as ideological distances decrease and promoting a more encompassing common good over and above competitive nationalistic considerations. Thus in line with the original DQI we predict:

**Hypothesis 5: Non-polarised issues result in higher quality parliamentary deliberation**

Turning to personal characteristics that may affect deliberation, we first use the distinction between MEPs from old and new member states to test for the influence of socialisation. 'Socialization' as employed by modern constructivists (Wendt, 1992 Checkel, 2000), refers to a top-down diffusion of shared values and cognitive structures which results in the internalisation of norms so that they assume a *taken for granted* status. In the context of parliamentary deliberation, we might expect differences in socialisation to be associated with lower deliberative quality amongst MEPs whose member states had no experience of the EP prior to 2004-2009. Thus we hypothesise.

**Hypothesis 6: Representatives of new member states are characterised by a lower level of parliamentary deliberation than the more socialised legislators of old and democratically experienced member states**

Gender is also extensively discussed in the literature on deliberative democracy. On the basis of insights from feminist writing, many scholars have asked if gender explains variation in deliberation, either on its own or in interaction with other influences. Coleman (2002), based on a comparison of ten institutional forums (in Scotland, Wales and UK), observed that gender balance was topic related- the more the topic of discussion was related to problems of everyday life and personal experience, the more women participated in the debates. Grunenfelder and Bächtiger (2007) found no such difference between the sexes in their study of Swiss parliamentary debates, much like Childs (2004: 11) who argued that gender may not matter for deliberation since the pressures of the 'system' - institutional and partisan - are so powerful that any differences between men and women wither away.

Conversely, Karpowitz and Mendelberg (2007) using data on small group deliberations demonstrated that the gender composition of the group made a difference for the quality of deliberation. Paraphrasing Jennifer Nedelsky (1991) we claim that women's socialization and role in childrearing, among other causes, makes them especially concerned to transform "I" into "we" and to seek solutions to conflict that accommodate diverse and often suppressed desires. More than men, the female self has more "permeable" boundaries open to deliberative standards. Greater socialization skills could thereby render female MEPs not just more respectful, accountable and open to justification but also more inclusive in their common good evocations, over and above the national sphere, and complete in the justification content making room for values and rights besides utilitarian interests. Summing up,

**Hypothesis 7: The quality of parliamentary deliberation increases in the context of female participation and arguing**

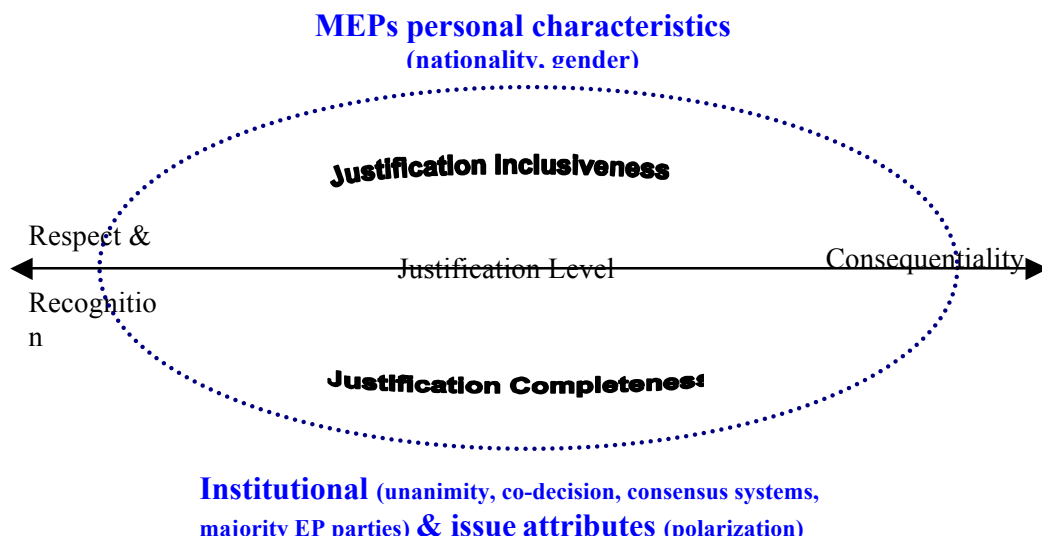


Figure 1: The EP DQI Continuum

## Data and Methods

### Research Design and Case Selection

To test these hypotheses over the factors that determine the quality of deliberation in European parliamentary discourse we have selected a total of 32 debates (out of the 94 relevant plenary debates found in the EP's website) mainly from 2004 to 2009<sup>2</sup> i.e. the last term of the European assembly and we have coded separately each intervention made by the 884 participant MEPs. We have employed "theoretical sampling" (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003:92). In other words we have chosen debates where there are already good theoretical reasons to expect links between our independent variables (veto points, issue polarisation etc) and dependent variables (discourse quality). Note, this is *not* tautological. In each case, it is possible that the theory is wrong and that the data will demonstrate no causal influences at all. Unlike random sampling, where every member of the European Parliament and every debate topic

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of debates on the Lisbon Treaty for which the starting date is 2003.

would have the same probability of being sampled, we generated a set of “critical cases” (Eckstein, 1975: 118) against which we examine the applicability of the DQI theoretical construct and whether it can be refined and extended from the national to the supranational arena.

Even though we do not aim at generalizing our inferences to the entire population of EP debates, as random sampling case selection would do, we do not confine ourselves to the qualitative practices of theoretical sampling. We also conduct a statistical analysis on the EP data aiming at a thorough understanding of the DQI paradigm in a new parliamentary context. Nevertheless we refrain from probability sampling for practical reasons. Although, the population of European parliament debates may not be as widely dispersed as that of the national assemblies, a sampling frame is hard to use. Random selection could have limited the study to debates on insignificant issues of little theoretical relevance. Purposive sampling is more suited to testing both the applicability of the DQI to the EP and any theoretical claims that can be investigated with its help.

Given that four of our hypotheses aim to test for institutional influences on the quality of deliberation, we have selected debates which correspond to some of the main institutional differences in how Union decisions are made. The debates cover a) the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties, b) the financial perspective agreed in 2006 -i.e. the 6 year framework budget, c) EU proposals to deal with climate change, d) the 2009 work programme of the Commission, e) advances in the European Security and Defence Policy field, and f) Justice and Home Affairs proposals to co-ordinate criminal liability at the EU level. Thus we include debates one debate that relates to Treaty formation; two that, in effect, review policy mandates (the multi-annual budget and the Commission work programme; and three others which correspond to each of the pre-Lisbon pillars of the Union.

Between them, these debates capture differences in Council-decision rules and Co-decision. The unanimous voting issues of the Lisbon Treaty, the budget, ESDP and criminal liability are contrasted to those of climate change and the Commission work programme where the veto power had been absent between 2004- 2009. Finally co-decision topics comprise climate change and the EU budget, while criminal liability that moved to co-decision under the Lisbon treaty is taken as an issue dealt with only by the Council in the 2004-2009 sample we examine, along with the Lisbon Treaty and ESDP. Moreover, debates on ESDP and the Union budget focus on strategic economic and security interests, while the constitutional treaty, climate change and criminal liability topics are considered as value laden and rights oriented. The discussion on the Commission work programme on the other hand is a ‘neutrality buffer’ potentially advancing justifications of all three kinds.

The selection of topics is also likely to bring out differences in how far MEPs justify their positions with reference to national, European or global conceptions of the common good. Thus debates about the old pillars 2 and 3 might be expected to produce an ‘inter-governmental’ style of justification with reference to ‘national interests’, the Commission’s work programme a focus on shared justifications for acting together at the European level, the budget a mixture of the latter two modes of justification, and climate change legislation more global common conception of the common good. In this instance, it is the discussion of the Constitution/Lisbon Treaties which can be expected to function as a ‘neutrality shield’ potentially encompassing common good perceptions of all types.

Finally the debates cover topics where there are good *a priori* reasons to expect any influence of differences in issue polarisation on the quality of deliberation to manifest itself. The six cases vary in their distributive implications. Climate change legislation perhaps approximates most closely to pure regulatory ideals where it should at least be theoretically possible to identify pareto-improving solutions (taking compensations into account). The budget, in contrast, as well as some of the constitutional issues, contain more scope for zero-sum disagreements, whilst the constitutional issues, the ESDP and questions of criminal liability are all potentially re-allocative of political or ethical values.

Last but not least, our coverage of the number of debates is balanced apart from the Commission case where we are constrained by the fact that there are only two debates that can be analysed (see Figure 2).

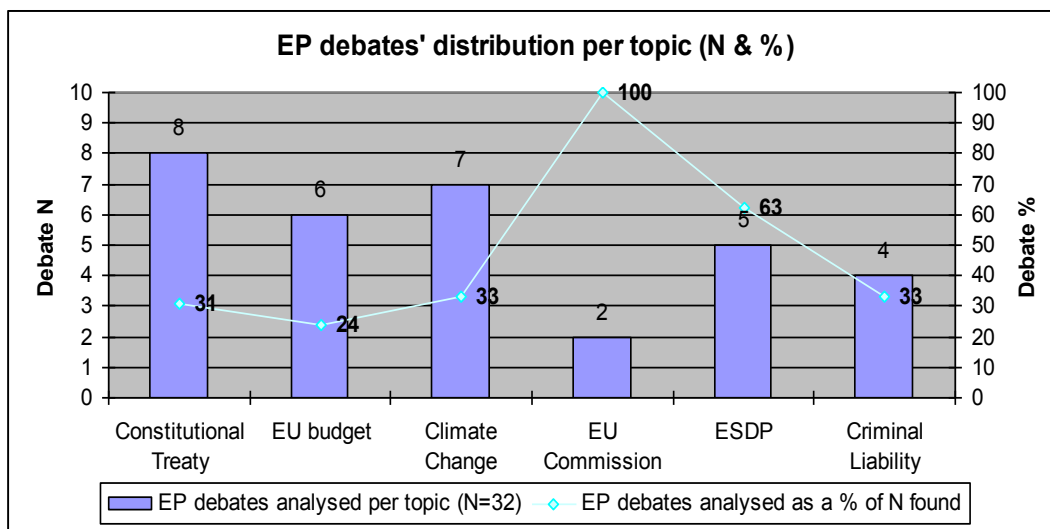


Figure 2: EP Debates' Distribution per Topic (N&%)

### Measures and Method

To measure the quality of discursive politics in the EP we have developed an updated "Discourse Quality Index" (Steenbergen et al. 2003) the "EP DQI", with six indicators that complement one another and allow for a quantitative analysis of the coded individual speeches. The six indicators as delineated in section three comprise: 1. Respect and Recognition a) for other participants in plenary debates and b) for other arguments employed in such debates (Do MEPs degrade, ignore, treat neutrally or explicitly respect a) their interlocutors and b) their arguments?), 2. Justification level (How far do MEPs justify their statements with reasons? Do they offer no reasons, one reason or two reasons for positions taken?), 3. Justification completeness (How far justifications are complete in their content advancing interests, values and rights?), 4. Justification inclusiveness (How far justifications are inclusive in their addressees promoting a national, European or global common good?), 5. Justification consequentiality (How consequential justification is? Do MEPs give and/or demand an account in their speeches?).

In the ensuing empirical analysis the different EP DQI dimensions are assessed individually - except for the respect and recognition items - since the six indicators are weakly correlated and do not satisfy the criterion of scale homogeneity, reaching a



Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (+0.47) below the critical value of roughly 0.7. For the respect and recognition category, however, we use a combined index not just because it constitutes a theoretical whole but also due to the scale reliability coefficient of 0.77 that is well above the threshold requirement. The 'overall respect' index ranges from low (0) to medium (1) and finally high respect (2). It adds together two dichotomous indicators we had initially constructed for the respect and recognition variables, where 0 indicated no respect and/or no reference and 1 denoted implicit and/or explicit respect to a) other MEPs and b) other arguments. Besides overall respect, justification level is employed as an ordinal variable ranging from low (0- no justification) to medium (1- inferior and qualified) and finally highly justified MEP statements with specific reasons (2-sophisticated justification). Justification completeness and inclusiveness on the other hand, are nominal indicators constituting the scope conditions rather than the richness of parliamentary justification. Completeness in particular measures neutral (0), interest specific (1), value laden (2) and rights based (3) utterances in MEPs justifications, while inclusiveness assesses how comprehensive are MEPs in the addressees of their justifications by being neutral (0) or evoking a national (1), European (2) and a global (3) common good. The consequentiality of justification is finally added to the continuum of European parliamentary deliberation as a dichotomous variable measuring MEPs reluctance (0) or willingness (1) to give and/or demand an account for the utterances and actions of themselves and/or those of their colleagues. Overall, the European Parliament discourse index we propose here differs from the original DQI in the following ways: First it takes into account the scope conditions of justification, which assess *completeness* in its content and *inclusiveness* in its addressees. Second, the accountability level in MEPs discourse is considered as a way of measuring the *consequentiality* of justification.

The predictors in our analysis in turn, comprise the institutional, speaker and issue characteristics set out in the hypotheses in section 3. We specify issue polarisation as a dichotomous variable. On the basis of a prospective content assessment we assign a value of 1 to the more contentious issues (EU budget and the Constitutional treaty) and 0 to more consensual topics of climate change, the Commission work programme, ESDP and criminal liability. On the basis of pre-2009 arrangements, questions requiring unanimous agreement of member states are measured through a dummy variable. Thus a value of 1 is assigned to debates on the Lisbon Treaty, ESDP, criminal liability and the EU budget, and a value of 0 to the rest. Co-decision is similarly a dichotomous indicator assuming the value 1 for climate change and the EU budget and 0 otherwise.

Moving from systemic to individual institutional factors we have built a nominal variable to capture the quality of deliberation amongst MEPs who come from Member States with Consensus rather than Majoritarian political system. Following Lijphart (1999) we distinguish between those from majoritarian systems that assume the value 0 (after scoring negatively in both the federal - unitary and the executives-parties dimension or having negative values that clearly outperform their positive ones) and comprise the UK, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, France and Malta and those from consensus systems that assume the value 2 (after scoring positively in both the federal - unitary and the executives-parties dimension or having positive values that outperform their negative ones) and comprise the remaining nine member states out of the old fifteen EU countries plus Cyprus. The ten CEECs are assigned the value 1 as a separate category in between these two extremes following Spinner (2007) who argues that while the CEE democracies strongly resemble Lijphart's consensus type of

democracy in their institutional set-up it is far from clear that CEE elites have developed a similarly consensual political culture compared to their West European counterparts.

A dichotomous distinction is finally drawn between MEPs from groups which vote with the majority vs. those in the minority. Thus MEPs from the EPP, PES and ALDE are coded as 0 and those from the UEN, Green, EUL and ID as 1.

Besides the institutional and issue determinants of deliberation, MEPs personal characteristics come under scrutiny too. To capture possible gender differences in the discursive quality of EP debates, male MEPs are assigned the value 0 and female ones the value 1. Variations in speakers' socialization are similarly assessed via nationality. Having a sample of MEPs from 27 member states we distinguish between those that originate from the "old" fifteen member countries and take the value 1 and those coming from the twelve "new entrants" assuming the value 0. A detailed description of the EP DQI indicators and the predictors can be found in Appendix 1.

To measure the quality of deliberation in the EP and estimate in turn the factors that affect it we take three analytical steps. First, we simply report our assessment of what was the quality of deliberation as measured by our indicators in the European Parliament as a whole and across the six selected debate topics (Parts A and B). Second, we assess how far our hypotheses explain variations in the quality of supranational deliberation using frequency distributions (Part C1). Third, we explore the possible impact of the scope conditions of justification- i.e. completeness and inclusiveness- on the quality of deliberation using an additional set of cross tabulations. More specifically, we test whether the scope conditions of justification (variables  $z$ ) function as either partially endogenous variables that determine the purely endogenous variables of discourse quality (variables  $y$ ) - respect, justification level and accountability- (i.e. variables  $z$  are influenced by  $x$  and influence  $y$  in turn) or as pure additive variables (i.e. variables  $x$  and  $z$  are causally independent of each other. The effect of  $z$  on  $y$  does not affect the effect of  $x$  on  $y$ ). In particular, a path analysis for non parametric data allows us to explore the aforementioned causal assumptions. Last but not least, we test whether our findings are statistically significant. Here we use different non parametric tests, depending on the measurement levels of the dependent and the independent variables. In particular, to assess if a predictor exerted a systematic effect on the various aspects of supranational deliberation we performed a Wilcoxon-Mann Whitney test, a Chi- square test accompanied by Cramer's  $V$  value and a Kruskal Wallis test, i.e. a non parametric version of ANOVA. The results of the significance tests are reported in Appendix 3.

## Results

### Part A:

#### **The Discourse Quality in the European Parliament (Debates 2003-2008)**

The figures presented in this section show how the debates we studied rate against each of our indicators of discourse quality. They broadly indicate a high quality of deliberation, comparable to that recorded in studies of national parliamentary systems (Bächtiger and Steenbergen, 2004). The respect and recognition levels to begin with, are very high, slightly surpassing in magnitude those recorded by the original DQI applied to a linguistic debate in the Swiss parliament (Bächtiger et al.2009: 6). More than 50 per cent of coded speeches showed evidence of respect to

other speakers (Figure 3) and their arguments or actions (Figure 4). Only sixteen per cent showed disrespect to other speakers and only twenty five per cent towards their arguments or actions. Although, this is far above the impressive five per cent registered in the discussion on Swiss linguistic policies, it should be borne in mind that the Swiss language bill is a topic of lower salience than the majority of the European Parliament debates included in the present analysis, a point confirmed by Bächtiger et al. when mentioning that disrespect grows to twenty per cent in more polarized debate issues in Switzerland. Moreover, both respectful and disrespectful references can be considered as evidence of 'interaction'. Both therefore increase interaction density (i.e. reference to other participants) and interaction quality (i.e. reference to other participants arguments and actions) reaching a sixty-eight per cent of the debates' content in the first case and eighty per cent in the second. Only thirty two per cent failed to refer to other speakers altogether. Similarly, only twenty per cent failed to refer altogether to the arguments and actions of others. Since the comparable figures for the Swiss language debate were forty-five and fifty per cent, the EP debates showed less evidence of outright neglect of other speakers or arguments.

As for levels of justification, a high proportion of speeches included one or even two justifications that explicitly spelled out reasons for positions taken. In this respect 'supranational parliamentary deliberation' compares well with national MPs in competitive systems, such as the British and the German parliamentarians analyzed by Steiner et al. (2004: 112, 115). However, it compares less well with consensual systems like Switzerland where qualified and sophisticated levels of justification reach an impressive level of 80 per cent. Still, in comparison with the Swiss Parliament MEPs, arguably, operate in an even more complicated environment, where diversity of language, political culture and national democracies of origin are even more constraining of deliberation. Given that the EP operates in 23 languages<sup>3</sup>, MEPs might be expected simply to state their positions in the limited time available to them (often just 2-3 minutes) without always offering detailed reasons that might get lost in translation. As it happens remarkably few speeches offer no justification at all (nine point six per cent). In that regard, the EP compares favourably to national consensual systems.

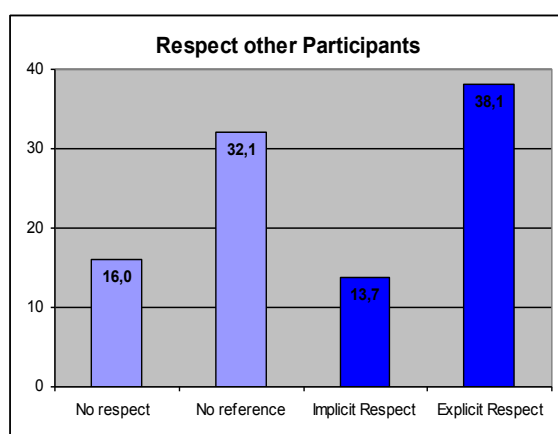


Figure 3: Respect and Recognition Level 1

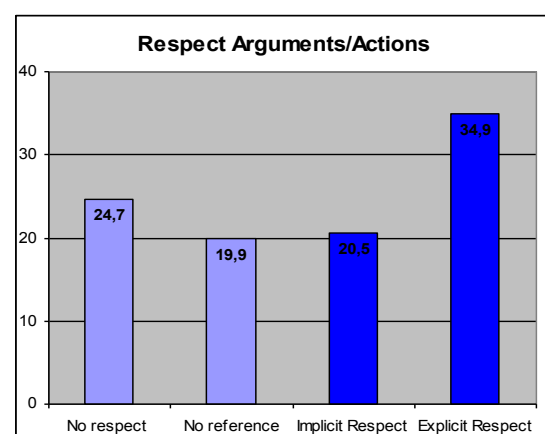


Figure 4: Respect and Recognition Level 2

<sup>3</sup> The European Parliament is not the only one to use several languages: the Belgian parliament, for instance, has two and the Swiss use four. However the MPs of these individual countries are able to understand one another without the need for interpreters.

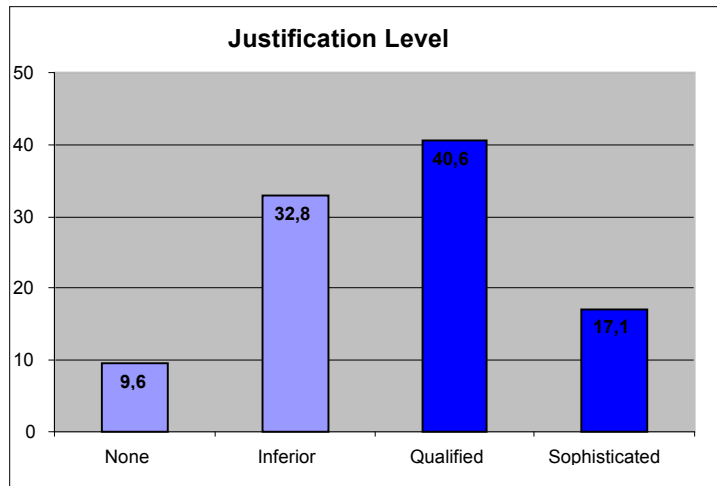


Figure 5: Justification Level

Turning now to the “completeness” and “inclusiveness” of EU wide justifications – two elements that go beyond the original DQI- we come across a diversified picture indicative of the “multilevel” and “polycentric” nature of the Union as well as of its high deliberative standards. About seventy two per cent of the legislators in the supranational arena (see Figure 5) besides justifying their statements with reasons, they hold at the same time themselves liable to answering three distinct questions over what they *ought* to do if utilitarian interests are to be fairly aggregated, if the values of the governed are to be promoted and if the rights of all affected individuals –and not just the governed – are to be respected. In line with an intergovernmental perception of the Union as a regulatory regime (Majone 1998; 2005) set up to address functional problems that member states cannot resolve independently, forty four per cent of the speakers advanced utility oriented justifications. It does not, however, follow that deliberations in the EP most resemble those that might be expected in the parliament of a delegated democracy where states more than citizens are seen as the contracting parties (Eriksen and Fossum, 2007). Quite apart from the obvious possibility that interest-based justifications may also be transnational in nature, utilitarian arguments have no monopoly on deliberation in the EP. Value-laden justifications accounted for seventeen per cent of our sample and rights-based justifications for a further twelve per cent. MEPs would seem to switch between those patterns of justification that are most distinctive of delegated democracy (member state interests), supranational democracy (the shared values of an imagined multinational political community) and cosmopolitan democracy (the rights of all affected persons).

The distinctive challenges of deliberating in the supranational parliament of a multi-level “polycentric” polity are also reflected in the inclusiveness of MEPs’ justifications. Almost eighty per cent of the reasons put forward by the supranational representatives attend to a national, European and/or global common good. In fact, the main addressees of MEPs justifications are EU citizens that account for fifty per cent of euro-parliamentary utterances, unlike a country specific and a global common good each comprising approximately fifteen per cent of the debates’ sample. The tendency towards high scores on evoking an EU-wide common good compared to the high level of interest based justifications suggest a multileveled European context deliberatively framed as both a functional self-interested regime and a federal order representing the common good of the “European people”. Only

in the fringes of Parliamentary deliberation, does a post-national Union emerge attending to global human rights and addressing a cosmopolitan common good. Taken together Figures 6 and 7 give an overview of the scope conditions for justification. They indicate that the predominantly utilitarian *content* of justification is not only qualified by references to values and rights. It is also qualified by a tendency for the *addressees* of justifications to include more than individuals from 'one's own country'. Those justifications which appeal to some conception of a 'common good' are more likely to rest on claims of what is good for Europe as a whole, rather than particular member states. Even claims about the 'global common good' are more common than the latter.

Accountability is perhaps the weakest link in our indicators of the discursive qualities of the European Parliament. Only thirty one per cent of the speeches in our sample gave or demanded an account for justifications advanced. This confirms the growing scholarly concern that the shift from nationally inspired policy-making to a transnational and polycentric mode of European governance with multiple stakeholders is not being matched by proper accountability regimes (Arnulf & Wincott 2002; Bovens, 2007). Thus, to conclude this sub-section, deliberation in the EP shows high levels of respect and justification, but a certain reticence when it comes to demanding fuller accounts of justifications offered.

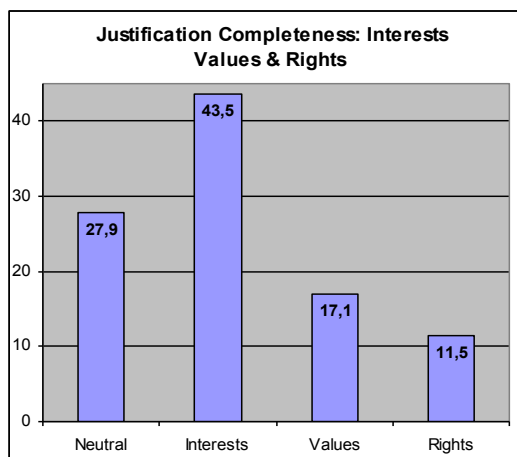


Figure 6: Completeness of Justification

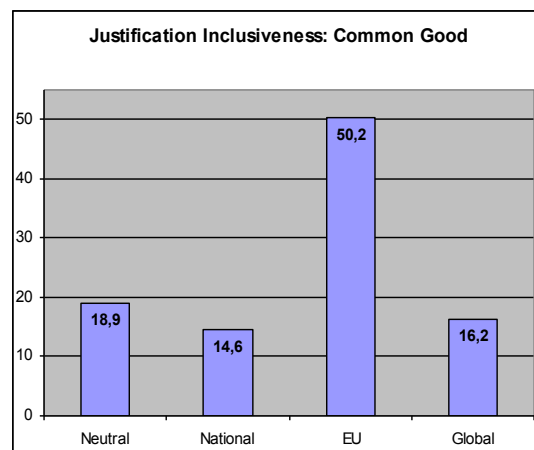


Figure 7: Inclusiveness of Justification

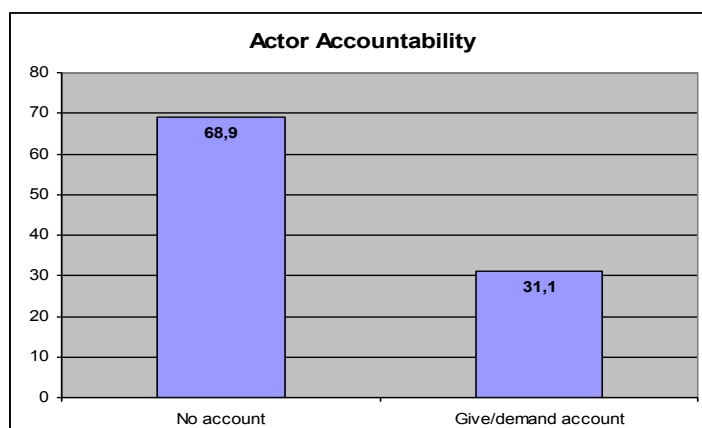


Figure 8: Level of Accountability

## Part B: The EP Discourse Quality across Selected Debate Topics

Overall discourse quality was high across all six debates, not least in terms of reason giving and respect. This potentially challenges our hypotheses that might predict some variation of discourse quality across debates on account of institutional differences (Co-decision etc) and differences in the polarisation of issues. Differences in the proportion of MEPs who justify their statements with reasons are limited to a fairly narrow range between an impressive fifty two per cent in discussions over the Commission's work plan and sixty two per cent observed in debates over the Lisbon Treaty (see Figure 7 and Table 1 in Appendix 2). Levels of respect for other participants and other arguments are also much the same in four out of six of the debates at around fifty and sixty per cent respectively. The two exceptions are debates on criminal liability issues where the respect levels are between seventy and eighty per cent, and debates on the Commission programme where they reach a low of thirty seven and twenty nine per cent respectively in discussions over the 2009 Commission work programme. The consequentiality of justification on the other hand, in line with the low institutional accountability levels of the EP, amounts to approximately twenty five per cent in three out of the six cases. The lowest level of twenty per cent is observed in a highly polarized topic with strong distributive implications, i.e. the Union budget, while the highest score is registered in the non controversial discussion of climate change. More interestingly though, accountability was higher in the sometimes heated debates over the Lisbon treaty, suggesting that issue polarization may not function to the detriment of deliberation in a consensual parliament.

The *content* of justifications was predominantly utilitarian in all the debates. Only in the debates over the Lisbon treaty were interests and EU values on a par, though references to human and civic rights reached an impressive fifty per cent in debates on criminal liability. Overall, comparisons across the debates would seem to confirm the ambiguity we noted earlier in how discursive practices reflect the multi-characteristics of the European polity (see Figure 8 and Table 2 in Appendix 2). The consistency with which justifications are predominantly utilitarian in their *content* across all debates suggests that even the European Parliament deliberates in a manner that implies the Union is more an association of interests than of values. Yet, it is also a common pattern across all debates that justifications are *inclusive* in their addressees. In all cases MEPs are more likely to refer to a European as opposed to a national conception of the common good. Perhaps unsurprisingly topics with implications extending well beyond EU borders, such as climate change and ESDP, also produce cosmopolitan references to a global common good (thirty six and twenty seven per cent respectively). It is worth mentioning that reference to national interests registers its highest score (22.9 per cent) in debates over the Lisbon Treaty, while criminal liability discussions have an equally high (20 per cent) intergovernmental touch (see Figure 9 and Table 3 in Appendix 2).

All in all, it remains to be seen whether the observed similarities in the quality of deliberation as well as the differences in the scope conditions of justification statistically hold when we treat the debate topics as predictors - testing hypotheses 1, 2 and over issue polarization, unanimity and co-decision. At the same time speakers' individual characteristics will also be brought into the analysis as explanatory factors testing the remaining three hypotheses over political affiliation, nationality and gender.

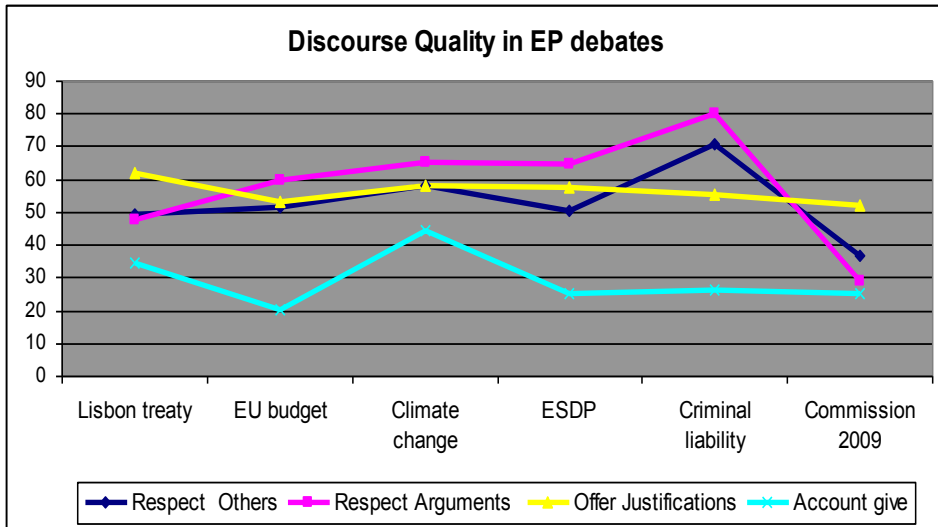


Figure 9: Presenting the Mean Positive Values of 4 Variables Across the 6 EP Debate Topics

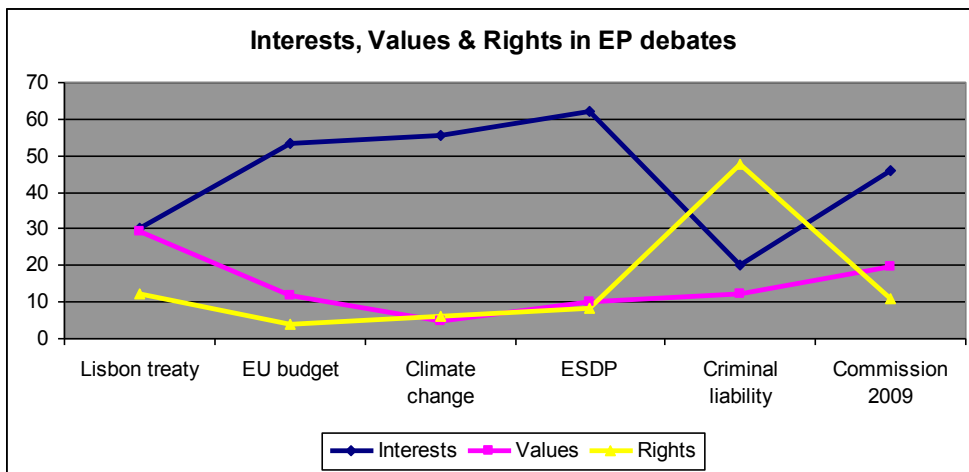


Figure 10: Reference to Interests, Values and Rights across the 6 EP debates

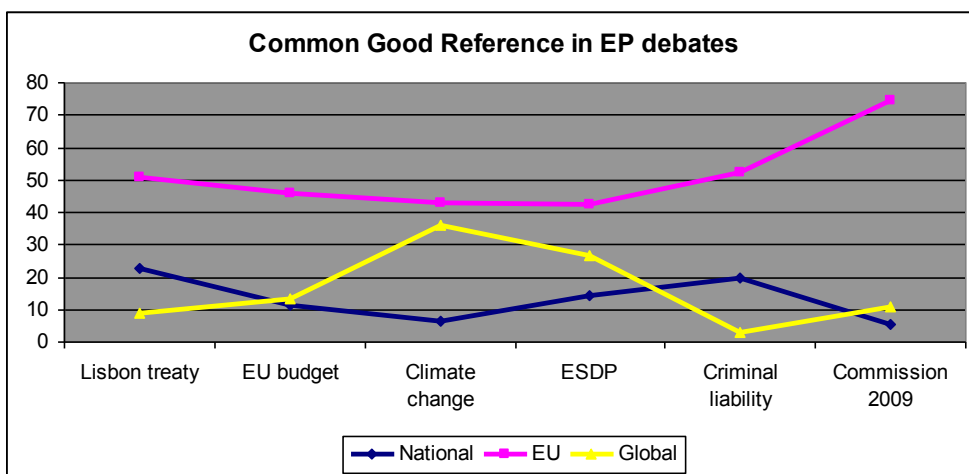


Figure 11: Common Good Reference across the 6 EP debates



## **Part C1: The impact of contextual factors on EP Discourse Quality**

Turning to the institutional and issue attributes of the selected debates we test our hypotheses on unanimous voting and co-decision debate topics as well as on issue polarisation. The empirical results in Table 1 confirm the evidence of high quality EP discourse presented in parts A and B but lend mixed support to our theoretical expectations. Issue polarization in particular (hypothesis 5), does not preordain poor deliberation in the supranational arena. When policy preferences diverge there are no substantive differences in the levels of justification and accountability which tend to be even marginally higher on the polarised topics of the Lisbon Treaty and the EU budget (58.7 and 33.3 per cent respectively vs. 56.2 and 29.2 per cent in low polarization issues). The statistical tests of significance reported in appendix 3, additionally reflect no significant effect of issue polarization on the level of justification and accountability. Moreover, while highly respectful utterances are more common when issue polarization is low (46.8 per cent) than when it is high (37.2), levels of disrespect do not diverge (33.5 vs. 34.9 per cent). This suggests that the danger of arguments or personalities being trivialized in the European parliament is unaffected by the degree of polarization- a result significant at the 0.05 level. Furthermore, supranational representatives do not just engage in open minded deliberation despite sharp disagreements on an issue. They also focus more on shared EU values (22.5 per cent) when the political stakes are high rather than low (10.4 per cent). As ideological distances increase over the distributive implications of the Union budget and the Lisbon treaty, MEPs insist on bringing up values showing that serve a uniting rather than dividing purpose in the supranational context. Justification completeness differences thereby, being strongly significant from a statistical point of view (see Appendix 3), further prove that unlike our original expectations, high discourse quality is not difficult to achieve in the EP when discussing polarized topics. Last but not least, justifications are more focused on national conceptions of the common good when issue polarisation is high (18.5 per cent) rather than low (9.9 per cent). Yet, in both instances justifications are more likely to appeal to a 'European common good' (49 vs. 51.6 per cent), irrespective of the degree of polarization.

These findings do not essentially disconfirm the results obtained by Steiner et al. (2004) in the original DQI. While the latter report considerable differences in discourse quality between less polarized and highly polarised issues (ibid: 131), they point out that institutional arrangements can help overcome the difficulty. Consensual, rather than competitive, institutions make it easier to combine high quality discourse when divisive topics (ibid: 135). In this respect the capacity of the EP to sustain high discourse quality even where issues are polarised, fits the view that it benefits from a wider institutional framework created by the Union's consensual decision-rules and the oversized majorities they require (Hix and Lord, 1997:18).

The role of the veto power in European parliamentary politics in turn, yields mixed results that do not fully corroborate our expectations. The pressure to find unanimous agreement in the Council does not seem to affect the quality of deliberation in the Parliament, since both respect and justification levels either increase slightly or remain unchanged when veto power is strong, producing statistically unreliable scores. In studies of national parliaments André Bächtiger and Dominik Hangartner (2010: 622) likewise find that veto powers have an insignificant impact on respect, whilst Steiner et al. (2004: 119) demonstrate they have no statistically significant effects on levels of justification. Only the scope conditions of justification, and in particular the completeness in MEPs argumentation differ significantly (at the 0.001 level) under topics subject to the unanimity rule. Unanimity would seem to function



as an 'enabling constraint'. It actually makes it more likely that MEPs will use arguments that go beyond statements of utilitarian interest to explore shared EU norms (19.9 per cent vs. 10.1 per cent when veto power is weak) and global rights (13 per cent vs. 7.7 per cent) so as to achieve deliberative agreement on fundamentals.

Matters are, however, the other way round when it comes to the frequency with which MEPs justify themselves with reference to national, European or global conceptions of the common good. MEPs are more inclined to refer to a more encompassing European and global common good when the veto power is weak (81 per cent approximately) rather than when it is strong (60 per cent) indicating that the deliberative process gets disrupted under unanimity. Similarly the deliberative standards of accountability tend to collapse under the unanimity deadlock. When veto power is strong accountability dynamics are adversely affected (28.8 per cent vs. 37.3 per cent when veto power is weak). All in all, our results suggest that in supranational politics accountable and inclusive discourse is less likely when the veto

Table 1: The impact of debate content on Discourse quality

Debate Quality Aspects	Debate Content/Issue Polarisation Unanimity and Co-decision					
	Low Polari- sation	High Polari- sation	Non Unanimity (Climate & Commis- sion)	Unanimity (Lisbon, Budget, ESDP, JHA)	No Co- decision (Lisbon, ESDP, JHA, Commission)	Co- decision (Climate & Budget)
<b>Overall Respect</b>						
Low	<b>33.59</b>	<b>34.95</b>	38.52	32.57	<b>38.27</b>	<b>28.45</b>
Medium	<b>19.59</b>	<b>27.79</b>	19.84	25.86	<b>22.69</b>	<b>26.15</b>
High	<b>46.82</b>	<b>37.26</b>	41.63	41.57	<b>39.04</b>	<b>45.40</b>
<b>Justification Level</b>						
Low	11.20	8.21	10.12	9.33	8.27	11.49
Medium	32.57	33.05	33.85	32.41	32.69	33.05
High	56.23	58.74	56.03	58.27	59.04	55.46
<b>Justification Completeness</b>						
Neutral	<u>26.21</u>	<u>29.26</u>	<u>29.57</u>	<u>27.17</u>	<u>25.00</u>	<u>32.18</u>
Interests	<b><u>48.85</u></b>	<b><u>39.16</u></b>	<b><u>52.53</u></b>	<b><u>39.77</u></b>	<b><u>36.15</u></b>	<b><u>54.60</u></b>
Values	<b><u>10.43</u></b>	<b><u>22.53</u></b>	<b><u>10.12</u></b>	<b><u>19.97</u></b>	<b><u>22.88</u></b>	<b><u>8.33</u></b>
Rights	<b><u>14.50</u></b>	<b><u>9.05</u></b>	<b><u>7.78</u></b>	<b><u>13.09</u></b>	<b><u>15.96</u></b>	<b><u>4.89</u></b>
<b>Justification Inclusiveness</b>						
Neutral	<b><u>15.27</u></b>	<b><u>21.89</u></b>	<b><u>12.45</u></b>	<b><u>21.60</u></b>	<b><u>16.73</u></b>	<b><u>22.13</u></b>
National CG	<b><u>9.92</u></b>	<b><u>18.53</u></b>	<b><u>6.23</u></b>	<b><u>18.17</u></b>	<b><u>18.27</u></b>	<b><u>9.20</u></b>
EU Common Good	<b><u>51.65</u></b>	<b><u>49.05</u></b>	<b><u>54.09</u></b>	<b><u>48.61</u></b>	<b><u>54.04</u></b>	<b><u>44.54</u></b>
Global CG	<b><u>23.16</u></b>	<b><u>10.53</u></b>	<b><u>27.24</u></b>	<b><u>11.62</u></b>	<b><u>10.96</u></b>	<b><u>24.14</u></b>
<b>Accountability</b>						
No Account	70.74	66.67	<b><u>62.65</u></b>	<b><u>71.52</u></b>	69.42	68.10
Account	29.26	33.33	<b><u>37.35</u></b>	<b><u>28.48</u></b>	30.58	31.90

Note: The bold and/or underlined differences between groups are highly significant, those in bold are marginally significant and the plain ones insignificant

power on the debated topic is strong. On the hand, unanimity makes it more likely that MEPs will offer justifications that are complete in the sense of covering values and rights, as well as interests. Finally, there are no significant differences in levels of justification and respect in the Parliament where the Council decides by unanimity.

An entirely different picture emerges when the veto power of the EP is taken into account in support of our second hypothesis. The results obtained indicate a greater quality of supranational deliberation when the Parliament acts as a co-legislator with the Council. Unlike unanimity, co-decision in the EP leads to significantly higher respect levels. In fact, the gap between the highest and lowest respect levels grows wider among the topics that fall within the scope of the co-decision procedure (16.95 per cent) than among those that are not subject to co-decision, where disrespect is almost equated with respect producing a negligible difference of 0.77 per cent. Justification on the other hand, remains unaffected in terms of degree as well as in its consequentiality, but not in its scope conditions. Co-decision has a small effect on account and on reason giving, but these effects are not statistically significant.

On the other hand, our theoretical expectation is confirmed that Co-decision leads to greater inclusiveness in justification. Where MEPs have to co-decide with the Council references to European or global common conceptions of the 'common good' reach an impressive 68.7 per cent. In contrast, reference to the 'good' of specific member states is double where Co-decision is not used (18.3 vs. 9.2 per cent). Contrary to our expectations, though, justifications are more utilitarian (54.6 vs. 36.1 per cent), less concerned with shared EU values (8.3 vs. 22.9 per cent) and less concerned with global rights (4.9 vs. 16 per cent) where Co-decision is used.

Turning to actors' institutional factors, MEPs from consensual democratic system display a small but systematic increase in their quality of deliberation compared to their colleagues from majoritarian cultures. CEECs are closer to the latter. Thus lower levels of deliberation would seem to result where institutions with some consociational features are not supported by a consensus political culture. In general, differences in how far MEPs from majoritarian and consensual political cultures show medium and high respect levels are minimal (66.2 vs. 68.1 per cent) but statistically significant. Much the same goes for variation in the level of justification, where extensive reason giving ranges between 57.7 and 61.2 per cent respectively. Similarly MEPs from the two extreme political cultures vary significantly but just by 1.5 per cent in their account claiming and giving tendency. It is only the inclusiveness in MEPs' addressees that varies significantly and substantially between these adversarial political systems. While they both appeal to an EU centred (50.4 vs. 51.2 per cent) and partially globally oriented common good (14.6 vs. 17.8 per cent), nationalistic evocations are double among competitive majoritarian systems. The impact of national political affiliation on the completeness of MEPs arguments, in turn is largely insignificant.

The level of partisanship in the EP makes a significant and sizeable difference. Discourse quality is systematically higher amongst MEPs from the larger groups which are more likely than the smaller groups to take part in majority formation. Just as Hix et al. (2003: 326-327) report strategic differences in how large and small party groups co-operate and compete in votes, we detect evidence of differences in how they deliberate in plenaries. Respect levels vary significantly. The gap between the highest and lowest respect scores grows wider among MEPs less likely to vote with the majority - reaching a wide -37.4 per cent - than among those who form the

majority amounting to 21.4 per cent. MEPs who usually vote in the minority are much less likely to show high levels of respect (19.5 vs. 48.5 per cent for their majority voting colleagues) and much more likely to record disrespectful utterances (56.7 per cent compared with 27.1 per cent amongst those who form the majority in voting).

Table 2: The EP DQI Across MEPs Contextual Characteristics

Debate Quality Aspects	Speaker Qualities/ Institutional id, Nationality, Gender								
	Majoritarian	CEE	Consensus	Majority Party	Minority Party	Old MS	New MS	Male	Female
<b>Respect (Overall)</b>									
Low	33.82	41.56	31.81	<b>27.10</b>	<b>56.78</b>	<b>33.10</b>	<b>39.52</b>	34.21	34.62
Medium	21.28	28.57	24.80	24.37	23.81	22.68	29.94	23.52	25.38
High	44.90	29.87	43.40	<b>48.54</b>	<b>19.41</b>	<b>44.22</b>	<b>30.54</b>	42.27	40.00
<b>Justification Level</b>									
Low	<b>11.66</b>	<b>11.04</b>	<b>7.01</b>	8.58	12.09	<b>9.27</b>	<b>10.78</b>	9.38	10.00
Medium	<b>30.61</b>	<b>40.26</b>	<b>31.81</b>	35.09	34.80	<b>31.53</b>	<b>38.32</b>	31.25	36.54
High	<b>57.73</b>	<b>48.70</b>	<b>61.19</b>	56.34	53.11	<b>59.20</b>	<b>50.90</b>	59.38	53.46
<b>Justification Completeness</b>									
Neutral	26.53	32.47	27.22	<b>25.73</b>	<b>35.16</b>	27.39	29.94	29.28	24.62
Interests	45.48	42.21	42.32	<b>45.81</b>	<b>37.36</b>	43.37	44.31	42.93	45.00
Values	17.78	11.04	18.87	15.98	17.58	18.40	11.38	18.26	14.23
Rights	10.20	14.29	11.59	12.48	9.89	10.84	14.37	<b>9.54</b>	<b>16.15</b>
<b>Justification Inclusiveness</b>									
Neutral	16.33	18.83	21.29	18.91	18.32	19.12	17.96	19.08	18.46
National CG	<b>18.66</b>	<b>18.18</b>	<b>9.43</b>	<b>12.09</b>	<b>22.34</b>	13.84	17.96	<b>17.27</b>	<b>8.46</b>
EU Common Good	<b>50.44</b>	<b>46.75</b>	<b>51.48</b>	<b>54.58</b>	<b>44.69</b>	50.64	48.50	<b>48.68</b>	<b>53.85</b>
Global CG	<b>14.58</b>	<b>16.23</b>	<b>17.79</b>	14.42	14.65	16.41	15.57	14.97	19.23
<b>Accountability</b>									
No Account	<b>66.76</b>	<b>82.47</b>	<b>65.23</b>	74.07	67.77	65.48	83.23	68.91	68.85
Account	<b>33.24</b>	<b>17.53</b>	<b>34.77</b>	<b>25.93</b>	<b>32.23</b>	<b>34.52</b>	<b>16.77</b>	31.09	31.15

Note: The bold and/or underlined differences between groups are highly significant, those in bold are marginally insignificant and the plain ones insignificant

Justification levels on the other hand vary little between the three biggest EP groups (PES, EPP and ALDE) and the smaller minority forming parties (UEN, Green, EUL and ID), but are not statistically robust. In addition, political contestation has a significant negative effect on the scope conditions of justification. MEPs who are more likely to vote with the minority are also more likely to offer only neutral justifications which make no claims about interests, values or rights (35.2 per cent vs. 25.7 per cent). They are also more likely than those who vote with the majority to appeal to national (22.3 vs. 12 per cent) rather than European conceptions of the common good (54.6 vs. 44.7 per cent). As we had expected, MEPs from less influential groups are, however, much more likely to demand accounts. But the effect is not statistically robust.

In line with our sixth hypothesis, socialization has a positive effect on the quality of supranational deliberation. Representatives from the original fifteen EU countries display higher deliberative quality than their colleagues from the ten new member states that have not yet been fully immersed to the workings of the supranational parliamentary body. Our results indicate marked differences between the two groups in the respect levels. Among the new entrants disrespectful utterances surpass in magnitude highly respectful references by 9 per cent, while the exact opposite trend is observed among the “old” fifteen where respect (44.2 per cent) comfortably prevails over contempt (33.1 per cent). High justification levels are similarly far more common among MEPs belonging to the socialized group of member states (59.2 per cent) than among the newcomers (50.9 per cent). We fail, however, to obtain statistically significant differences on the scope conditions of justification. How complete MEPs are in their content and how inclusive in the addressees of their assertions does not seem to be affected by socialization measured by differences between MEPs from new and old member states. The consequentiality of justification, on the other hand, is strongly significant at the 0.001 level and lends full support to our hypothesis. Account claiming and giving is an exercise clearly preferred by more experienced MEPs (36.5 per cent) than those that have just entered supranational deliberative politics (16.8 per cent).

Gender differences in supranational deliberation finally are very much in line with the original DQI findings running counter to our theoretical expectations. In terms of respect we corroborate Grunenfelder and Bächtiger’s (2007: 18) finding that there is no “gendered deliberation” in the sense that female MEPs behave differently to their male colleagues. The respect levels display miniscule differences that are statistically unreliable. Similarly there are no distinct and robust differences between sexes in justification and accountability. Pressures of the ‘system’ conceivably assimilate female MEPs to deliberative practices set by their male counterparts (King, 1995). Only in the scope conditions of justification is there some limited room for a feminist approach to deliberation. It appears that gender significantly affects the inclusiveness in MEPs reason giving, since women put forward a more encompassing understanding of the common good scoring 53.8 and 19.2 per cent in EU and global common good evocations respectively as opposed to the 48.6 and 14.9 per cent of men, who only surpass women in nationalistic considerations (17.2 vs. 8.4 per cent). In terms of justification completeness, however male and female MEPs do not deliberate that differently since the slight emphasis of men on shared EU values seems to be counterbalanced by a commensurable focus of women on human and civic rights. In this light, gendered deliberation does not affect the supranational parliamentary politics in any other aspect than in terms of inclusiveness in the addressees of MEPs justifications.

## **Part C2:**

### **The impact of the scope conditions of justification on EP Deliberation**

Before concluding, we explore the indicators we added to the original DQI in an attempt to detect the potential impact of the multileveled character of the Union –as expressed in MEPs justifications- on the core items of deliberation, i.e. respect, justification and accountability. We are interested in detecting potential differences in supranational deliberation produced by an intergovernmental, federal and/or cosmopolitan understanding of European parliament politics. Tables 3 and 4 vary in the significance of the results obtained but both put forward a straightforward picture.

Focusing on the statistically robust effect of justification inclusiveness on the EP DQI we notice that an intergovernmental understanding of Union politics produces lower deliberative quality standards than federal and cosmopolitan notions advanced through representatives' reason giving. Emphasis on the promotion of a country-specific common good results in significantly lower respect levels. Disrespectful utterances reach the high level of 52 per cent among MEPs employing competitive nationalistic justifications, while contempt levels drop significantly among their colleagues who advance consensual reasons based either on an EU centered and/or a global common good (34.1 and 22.7 per cent respectively). The highest respect scores on the other hand, are registered among those who are cosmopolitan in their addressees (51 per cent) as well as EU specific (40.1 per cent). Justification levels in turn are shaped by a similar logic, since qualified justifications are most common among MEPs addressing a global and European audience (67.4 and 62.6 per cent) rather than among those with national concerns (51.2 per cent). Similarly, as table 4 indicates justification levels are higher amongst MEPs who employ cosmopolitan and or federal arguments based on human rights and shared EU values rather than utilitarian interests that promote a functional, intergovernmental vision of the Union. Last but not least, the levels of accountability further confirm our expectations showing that reason claiming and giving is far less common among MEPs advancing a competitive intergovernmental common good (26.8 per cent). Accountability however, grows substantially among EU specific justifications of a federal orientation (31.9 per cent) and reaches an impressive 39.7 per cent among MEPs advancing arguments with a global reach.

Table 3: Justification Inclusiveness' Impact on EP DQI

Debate Quality Aspects	Justification Inclusiveness / Common Good Reference			
	Neutral	National	EU-centred	Global
<b>Overall Respect</b>				
Low	31.10	<b><u>51.97</u></b>	<b><u>34.17</u></b>	<b><u>22.70</u></b>
Medium	21.95	<u>18.90</u>	<u>25.69</u>	<u>26.24</u>
High	46.95	<b><u>29.13</u></b>	<b><u>40.14</u></b>	<b><u>51.06</u></b>
<b>Justification Level</b>				
Low	<u>18.29</u>	<u>10.24</u>	<u>7.34</u>	<u>5.67</u>
Medium	<u>40.85</u>	<u>38.58</u>	<u>30.05</u>	<u>26.95</u>
High	<b><u>40.85</u></b>	<b><u>51.18</u></b>	<b><u>62.61</u></b>	<b><u>67.38</u></b>
<b>Accountability</b>				
No Account	<u>75.00</u>	<u>73.23</u>	<u>68.12</u>	<u>60.28</u>
Account	<b><u>25.00</u></b>	<b><u>26.77</u></b>	<b><u>31.88</u></b>	<b><u>39.72</u></b>

Note: The bold and/or underlined differences between groups are highly significant, those in bold are marginally significant and the plain ones insignificant

Tables 3 and 4 in turn, prepare the ground for testing whether the scope conditions of justification (i.e. completeness and inclusiveness - variables z) function as either partially endogenous variables that determine the purely endogenous variables of discourse quality (i.e. respect, justification level and accountability - variables y) through the predictors x (i.e. issue polarisation, veto power etc.) or as pure additive variables that have an independent effect on deliberation. In the first case variables z are influenced by x and influence in turn y. In the second case variables x and z are causally independent of each other, while the effect of z on y should not affect the

effect of  $x$  on  $y$ . To test the aforementioned assumptions on the causal relations between the scope conditions of justification, our predictors and the three main EP DQI indicators we have performed a non parametric path analysis to match the categorical nature of our variables. The dependent (endogenous) variable is one EP DQI factor, i.e. accountability, the independent (exogenous) predictors include political affiliation, nationality and issue polarisation while as an intermediary predictor we have included justification inclusiveness that produced a systematic and significant effect on all EP DQI variables (see Table 3). We have refrained from including all exogenous indicators as well as the universe of our predictors so as come up with a comprehensive path diagram that will better test our causal assumptions.

Table 4: Justification completeness' impact on EP DQI

Debate Quality Aspects	Justification Completeness/Reference to			
	Neutral	Interests	Values	Rights
<b>Overall Respect</b>				
Low	35.95	35.45	32.43	29.00
Medium	21.07	25.13	23.65	28.00
High	42.98	39.42	43.92	43.00
<b>Justification Level</b>				
Low	<u>16.94</u>	<u>6.88</u>	<u>4.73</u>	<u>9.00</u>
Medium	<u>38.43</u>	<u>31.22</u>	<u>33.11</u>	<u>25.00</u>
High	<b>44.63</b>	<b>61.90</b>	<b>62.16</b>	<b>66.00</b>
<b>Accountability</b>				
No Account	71.49	67.99	72.97	60.00
Account	38.51	32.01	27.03	40.00

Note: The bold and/or underlined differences between groups are highly significant, those in bold are marginally significant and the plain ones insignificant

Our results in fact corroborate the additive function of the scope conditions of justification on the quality of EP deliberation, defined as accountability. The path diagram produced (see Figure 11) displays in bold the significant path coefficients which suggest a direct positive effect of justification inclusiveness on deliberative quality rather than an indirect one via our predictors (political affiliation, nationality and issue polarisation). Greater reference to more encompassing version of common good increases the account claiming and demanding tendency in the supranational parliament. MEPs political affiliation and nationality on the other hand, have an independent significant effect on the quality of deliberation and such an impact is not mediated by how inclusive MEPs are in their addressees. In line with the findings of the previous section MEPs from the experienced fifteen member states are inclined towards greater levels of justification consequentiality while those from political groups more likely to vote with the majority do not feel as great the need to engage into account claiming and giving as those in smaller groups that promote the protest vote of the minority. Issue polarisation in turn does not have a robust effect on accountability levels confirming the evidence presented in Table 1. In this light, the additive effect of the scope conditions of justification on the quality of EP deliberation suggests that in future causal modelling of the associations presented in this paper it would make sense to include justification completeness and inclusiveness on the right hand side of our equation building up hypotheses on their effect upon supranational deliberation.

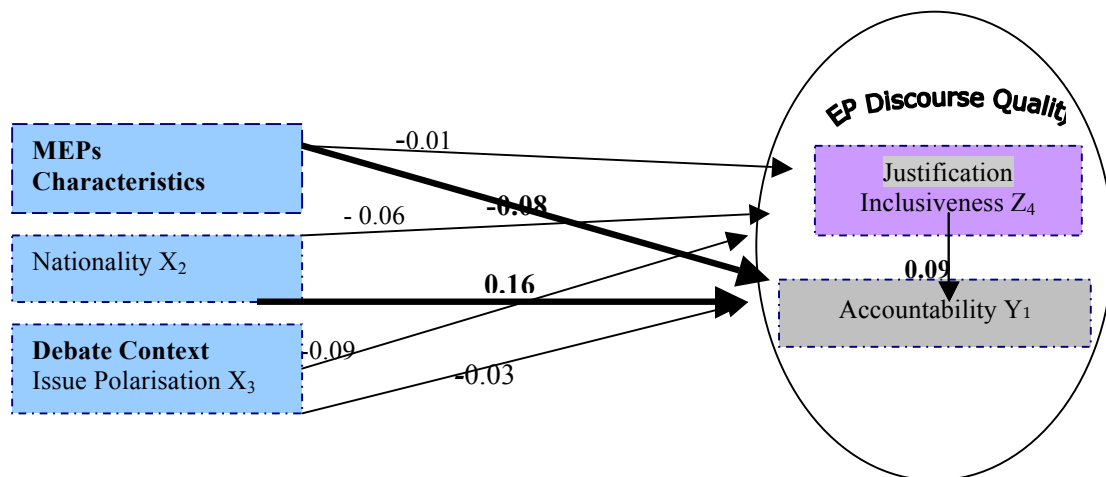


Figure 12: Path Analysis Testing the Causal Assumption that Justification Inclusiveness has an Additive or Partially Endogenous Impact on One EP DQI Factor

## Conclusions

In this paper we have attempted an overall assessment of deliberation in the European Parliament using a re-developed DQI instrument that has enabled us to explore deliberative processes beyond the nation state. At the same time we have recorded the favourable contextual conditions of supranational deliberation in terms of structural features of the Union's political system, issue attributes and MEPs' personal characteristics. The most important conclusion is that the degree of EP deliberation largely compares to that registered in national legislatures while the effect of political institutions, personal attributes and issue contexts matches to a great extent the results obtained on national representative institutions. In concrete terms we find that both respect and justification levels are high in the European parliament confirming the findings of the original DQI. Moving beyond the original instrument, the EP DQI further focuses on the scope conditions of supranational justifications - "completeness" and "inclusiveness" - that accentuate the "polycentric" character of the Union and its high deliberative standards. MEPs are *complete* in the content of their justifications, advancing utilitarian claims over and above value and rights based arguments, and *inclusive* in their addressees evoking mainly an EU-wide common good followed by national and global considerations. Such findings suggest a multileveled European context deliberatively framed as both a functional self-interested regime and a federal order representing the common good of the "European people". Only in the fringes of Parliamentary deliberation, does a post-national Union emerge attending to global human rights and addressing a cosmopolitan common good. Last but not least the EP DQI adds to the study of deliberation the dimension of accountability which is the only weak link in the study of supranational discursive politics indicating that the transfer of policy-making from a national to a transnational mode of governance with multiple stakeholders is not being matched by a proper accountability apparatus.

Turning now to the context of supranational deliberation, our data suggest that certain institutional issues matter for the quality of EP discourse much like personal characteristics. Issue attributes on the other hand, influence supranational deliberation but not in the expected direction. We find that consensus institutions and the supranational partisan status further deliberation among political actors since MEPs most likely to vote with the majority much like those belonging to a consensual



democratic system display a systematic increase in their quality of deliberation. The manipulation of EP specific institutional rules in turn, enhances only certain aspects of deliberation since co-decision boosts respect levels and actors' justification inclusiveness that is geared to an encompassing European and global common good. The level of justification and accountability, though, remain unaffected by the institutional setting that allows the EP an additional veto point. Under co-decision finally MEPs reference to utilitarian interests surpasses possible references to values and rights casting doubt on the success of EP specific institutional engineering. High quality deliberation has finally showed remarkable resilience to unanimous decision making as both respect and reason giving are unaffected by strong veto power. Only MEPs' reference to shared values and global rights increases under unanimity, while justification inclusiveness (i.e. reference to an encompassing common good) and accountability get disrupted.

While variation in MEPs institutional/partisan characteristics enhances deliberation MEPs' personal characteristics produce mixed results. MEPs' nationality functioning as a socialization factor increases deliberative standards among experienced MEPs from the "old" fifteen EU member states boosting respectful exchanges, reason giving and accountability. We only fail to obtain statistically significant differences on the scope conditions of justification between more and less socialized parliamentarians. Gender differences, on the other hand, are muted in the context of supranational deliberative politics showing that gender composition does not make a difference for the quality of supranational deliberation. Our findings on issue attributes significantly affect the quality EP deliberation but not in the expected direction. Highly polarised debate topics enhance rather than diminish MEPs discursive standards. Disrespectful utterances are not different from those observed in low issue polarisation and the promotion of a shared European common good prevails. Interestingly enough the completeness in MEPs justifications is also positively affected when the political stakes are high leading to a double score on the evoked EU values. Justification and accountability levels remain unaffected by issue polarization.

Finally, in the last section of this paper we explore the potential impact of the scope conditions of justification on the core EP DQI items i.e. respect, justification and accountability detecting the multileveled character of the Union -as expressed through MEPs justifications. The content of MEPs arguments does have a robust effect on the quality of deliberation. In particular greater justification inclusiveness is associated with consistently higher respect, justification and accountability levels. The more MEPs stress a shared European or global common good in the reasons they advance, the higher the deliberative standards they reach. In contrast an intergovernmental emphasis on a country specific common good triggers lower deliberation. In fact the impact of justification inclusiveness on our measures of discourse quality is independent of the contextual factors discussed above. This might suggest that a political culture may emerge out of the justifications MEPs use to substantiate their arguments which can itself alter deliberative standards in the EP.



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## APPENDIX 1: Variable Description

Variable name	Values	Description/ comments
<b>Debate Topic (DT)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Constitutional/Lisbon Treaty</li> <li>2. EU Budget (2006-12 financial perspective)</li> <li>3. Climate change legislation</li> <li>4. ESDP development</li> <li>5. Criminal liability (JHA)</li> <li>6. Designation of new Commission 2009</li> </ol>	<p>Following the "old" three-pillar structure of the pre-Lisbon Treaty EU era the debate topics can be grouped as follows:</p> <p>1st Pillar: Topics 1,2,3 and 6            2nd Pillar: Topic 4            3rd Pillar: Topic 5</p>
<b>Political Affiliation (PA)</b>	A list of European Parliament party groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PPE-DE (European Peoples' Party)</li> <li>2. PSE (Party of European Socialists)</li> <li>3. ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe )</li> <li>4. Verts-ALE (The Greens - European Free Alliance)</li> <li>5. GUE/NGL (European United Left–Nordic Green Left)</li> <li>6. IND/DEM (Independence/Democracy)</li> <li>7. UEN (Union for a Europe of Nations)</li> <li>8. NI (Non-Inscrits)</li> <li>9. NA (Not Applicable , i.e. Commission, Council etc)</li> </ol>
<b>Nationality (NT &amp; NTn)</b>	Speakers' Nationality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AU 2. BE 3. BG 4. CS 5. CY 6. DE 7. DK 8. ES 9. ET 10. FI 11. FR 12. GR 13. HU 14. IRL 15. IT 16. LT 17. LU 18. LV 19. MT 20. NL 21. PL 22. PT 23. RO 24. SK 25. SL 26. SW 27. UK</li> </ol>
<b>Gender (MF)</b>	0. Male 1. Female	Speakers' gender distribution
<b>Justification Level (JL)</b>	0. No justification 1. inferior justification 2. qualified justification 3. sophisticated justification	<p>0. No Justification: A speaker only says that X should or should not be done, but no reason is given.</p> <p>1. Inferior Justification: Here a reason Y is given why X should or should not be done, but no linkage is made between X and Y—the inference is incomplete. This code also applies if a conclusion is merely supported with illustration .</p> <p>2. Qualified Justification: A linkage is made why one should expect that X contributes to or detracts from Y (the means through which X contributes to or detracts from Y is mentioned). A single such complete inference already qualifies for code 2.</p> <p>3. Sophisticated Justification: Here at least two complete justifications are given, either two complete justifications for the same demand or complete justifications</p>
<b>Justification Inclusiveness (CG)</b>	0. Neutral 1. My country 2. My country and other Member States 3. Europe as a whole 4. Global	<p>0. Neutral: No reference to common good.</p> <p>1. My country: Reference to the national common good only.</p> <p>2. My country and other Member states : Reference to the common good of my country plus other specific member states.</p> <p>3. Europe as a whole: Reference to a European common good.</p> <p>4. Global : Reference to an international / global common good mentioning people and countries outside EU.</p> <p><b>The argument can be both in favour and against the common good</b></p>

<b>Justification Completeness (IVR)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. Neutral</li> <li>1. Interests</li> <li>2. Values</li> <li>3. Rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. Neutral: No reference to interests, values or rights.</li> <li>1. Interests: Arguments refer to peoples' material needs and interests.</li> <li>2. Values: Arguments refer to European and transnational values.</li> <li>3. Rights: Arguments refer to civic and human rights.</li> </ul>
<b>Respect toward other participants (Interactivity I) (RP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. No respect</li> <li>1. No reference</li> <li>2. Implicit Respect</li> <li>3. Explicit Respect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. No respect: Personal or partisan attacks on other participants.</li> <li>1. No reference: No reference to other participants</li> <li>2. Implicit Respect: Neutral reference to other participants</li> <li>3. Explicit Respect : Personal or partisan praises of other participants (DQ12 order reversed)</li> </ul>
<b>Respect toward other participants' arguments and counterarguments (Interactivity II) (RAC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. No respect</li> <li>1. No reference</li> <li>2. Implicit Respect</li> <li>3. Explicit Respect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. No respect: Personal or partisan attacks on other participants' arguments/actions.</li> <li>1. No reference: No reference to other participants' arguments/actions.</li> <li>2. Implicit Respect: Neutral reference to other participants' arguments/actions (or reasoned opposition).</li> <li>3. Explicit Respect : Personal or partisan praises of other participants' arguments/actions. (DQ12 order reversed)</li> </ul>
<b>Polarised (POL)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. Non Polarised debates</li> <li>1. Polarised debates</li> </ul>	<p>Those debate topics with the higher 0 score in RP and RAC qualify for code 0, the rest are assigned the value of 1</p>
<b>Accountability (GDA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. Speakers do not demand / give an account</li> <li>1. Speakers demand and give an account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. The speakers do not give/demand an account to/from the addressees of their speech.</li> <li>1. Speakers demand/give an account from/to other MEPs or Commission and Council.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

Table 1 accompanies Figure 8. Presents the mean positive values of 4 variables across the 6 EP debate topics.

	Lisbon treaty	EU budget	Climate change	ESDP	Criminal liability	Commission 2009
Respect Others	49,3	51,4	58,1	50,7	70,8	36,7
Respect Arguments	47,6	59,7	65,3	64,8	80,0	28,9
Offer Justifications	62,2	53,0	58,1	57,8	55,4	52,2
Account give	34,5	20,4	44,3	25,4	26,2	25,3

Table 2 accompanies Figure 9. Reference to Interests, Values & Rights across the 6 EP debates.

	Lisbon treaty	EU budget	Climate change	ESDP	Criminal liability	Commission 2009
Interests	30,4	53,6	55,7	62,0	20,0	46,2
Values	29,4	11,6	4,8	9,9	12,3	19,8
Rights	12,3	3,9	6,0	8,5	47,7	11,0

Table 3 accompanies Figure 10. Common Good Reference across the 6 EP debates.

	Lisbon treaty	EU budget	Climate change	ESDP	Criminal liability	Commission 2009
National	22,9	11,6	6,6	14,1	20,0	5,5
EU	50,9	45,9	43,1	42,3	52,3	74,7
Global	8,9	13,3	35,9	26,8	3,1	11,0

### Appendix 3

#### Significance Tests for Tables 1 and 2

Debate Quality Aspects	Speaker Characteristics /Gender, Nationality, Institutional id				Debate Characteristics		
	Male vs Female	Old vs New MS	Majority/Consensus	Majority vs Minority Formation Party	Low vs High Polarisation issues	Unanimous Voting issues	Co-decision issues
<b>Respect (Overall)</b> <i>Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test</i>	0.432 (0.666)	<b>-2.740</b> <b>(0.006)</b>	<b>Kruskal W test</b> <b>9.122</b> <b>(0.010)</b>	<b>-9.008</b> <b>(0.000)</b>	<b>1.920</b> <b>(0.055)</b>	-0.856 (0.392)	<b>-2.651</b> <b>(0.008)</b>
<b>Justification Level</b> <i>Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test</i>	1.492 (0.135)	<b>-1.863</b> <b>(0.062)</b>	<b>7.267</b> <b>(0.026)</b>	-1.166 (0.244)	-1.019 (0.308)	-0.624 (0.533)	1.309 (0.191)
<b>Justification Completeness*</b> <i>Chi-square test/Cramer's V</i>	<b>10.246</b> <b>(0.017)/</b> <b>0.109</b>	5.704 (0.127)/ 0.081	Chi square 7.561 (0.272)/ 0.066	<b>9.735</b> <b>(0.021)/</b> <b>0.111</b>	<b>29.359</b> <b>(0.000)/</b> <b>0.184</b>	<b>21.8614</b> <b>(0.000)/</b> <b>0.1587</b>	<b>68.2355</b> <b>(0.000)/</b> <b>0.2804</b>
<b>Justification Inclusiveness*</b> <i>Chi-square test/Cramer's V</i>	<b>12.698</b> <b>(0.005)/</b> <b>0.121</b>	1.845 (0.605)/ 0.046	<b>15.929</b> <b>(0.014)/</b> <b>0.096</b>	<b>15.432</b> <b>(0.001)/</b> <b>0.140</b>	<b>37.283</b> <b>(0.000)/</b> <b>0.207</b>	<b>53.8933</b> <b>(0.000)/</b> <b>0.2492</b>	<b>40.9706</b> <b>(0.000)/</b> <b>0.2173</b>
<b>Accountability (de jure)</b> <i>Chi-square test/Cramer's V</i>	0.000 (0.984)/ 0.000	<b>19.841</b> <b>(0.000)/</b> <b>0.151</b>	<b>16.291</b> <b>(0.000)/</b> <b>0.137</b>	<b>3.508</b> <b>(0.061)/</b> <b>-0.067</b>	1.662 (0.197)/- 0.044	<b>6.6509</b> <b>(0.010)/-</b> <b>0.0875</b>	0.1694 (0.681)/ 0.0140

#### Significance Tests for Tables 3 and 4

Debate Quality Aspects	The scope conditions of justification	
	Justification Completeness*	Justification Inclusiveness*
<b>Respect (Overall)</b> <i>ANOVA (Kruskal Wallis)</i>	1.474 (0.688)	<b>24.832 (0.000)</b>
<b>Justification Level</b> <i>ANOVA (Kruskal Wallis)</i>	<b>29.008 (0.000)</b>	<b>35.512 (0.000)</b>
<b>Justification Completeness*</b> <i>Chi-square test/Cramer's V</i>	NA	<b>200.988 (0.000)/0.278</b>
<b>Justification Inclusiveness*</b> <i>Chi-square test/Cramer's V</i>	<b>200.988 (0.000)/0.278</b>	NA
<b>Accountability (de jure)</b> <i>Chi-square test/Cramer's V</i>	5.744 (0.125)/0.081	<b>8.967 (0.030)/0.102</b>



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- 2007/04  
John Erik Fossum  
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Canada and the European Union
- 2007/03  
Christian Joerges  
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and the *Biotech* Panel Report

2007/02

James Bohman

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