

# The threat of terrorism within the European Union and its counter-terrorism policy

MEPs torn between national interests and party politics

*by Theresa Fuchs*



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Theresa Fuchs studied Political Science, international law and economics in Regensburg and Liège before completing a Masters Degree in Political Science at the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich. Her thesis titled „The threat of terrorism within the European Union and its counter-terrorism Policy – MEPs torn between national interest and party politics“ shed light on the voting behavior of MEPs regarding counter-terrorist legislation. Her research interest and areas of expertise are security politics on the one hand and the Near and Middle East on the other hand. Through her time as a Carlo-Schmid-Fellow at the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Morocco, she gained deep insight in the foreign and security politics of the EU and the political scene in Morocco. She is currently working as a Communications Manager at the Munich Security Conference, the world’s leading forum for debating international security policy.

#### PICTURE

European Union Flag

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#### DATE OF PUBLICATION

February 2022

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#### WISSENSCHAFT & SICHERHEIT ONLINE

WiSi Online, short for German "Wissenschaft und Sicherheit Online - Research and Security Online" is the electronic publication series of the German Academic Association for Security Studies (BSH). All WiSi Online articles are subject to a double-blind peer review. Listed under ISSN 1667-9649, WiSi Online is being published in a new edition since 2015.

#### IMPRINT

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**EDITORIAL BOARD:** Cornelia Bohl, Anja Schön, Jakob Landwehr-Matlé, René Muschter, Lena Alt, Jan Heidbüchel

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# The threat of terrorism within the European Union and its counterterrorism policy

## MEPs torn between national interests and party politics

### ABSTRACT

Since the member states of the European Union are differently affected by terrorist attacks, the question arises whether the voting behavior of the respective Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) vary, in regard of their countries of origin. Do MEPs rather vote alongside country line or alongside party lines when it comes to counter terror resolutions? Since this research question has not sufficiently been targeted in the existing research, this thesis sheds light onto the research gap by quantitatively analyzing 14 counter terrorism resolutions over 15 years and by applying two competing theories, namely the liberal Intergovernmentalism (LI) and the securitization theory. The astonishing result is relatively clear: the voting behavior of the MEPs concerning counter-terrorism legislation is predominantly influenced by their EPG affiliation, and not by their national interests. Furthermore, MEPs who are ideologically positioned further right on the left-right ideological scale are more likely to support counter-terrorism legislation in comparison to MEPs who are ideologically embedded further left.

### KEY WORDS

Counter-terrorism, European political parties, Voting behaviour of Members of the European Parliament

### INTRODUCTION

According to Rule 2 of the Parliament's Rules of Procedures, the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) "(...) shall exercise their mandate freely and independently, (and) shall not be bound by any instructions and shall not receive a binding mandate." (European Parliament 2019:12). This condition gives the impression that MEPs take each vote individually, solely based upon their own opinion. However, the question arises whether their voting behavior is nevertheless additionally led by external influences, or even coercions? The MEPs are delegates from their national parties, they are moreover members of European party groups (EPGs), and additionally represent the preferences of their countries of origin. Thereby, they are exposed to different expectations and carry various influences. Thus, the following research question arises: What determines the voting behavior of the MEPs?

There is an extensive literature analyzing the voting behavior of parliamentarians, to which this master thesis speaks to. Most of the scholars agree that the votes of parliamentarians, such as the here analyzed MEPs, are primarily and dominantly influenced by their EPG affiliation rather than their national interests. "Almost everything is explained by political group affiliation." (Noury 2002:52). This argumentation is rooted in the fact that the ideological dimension, based upon which the MEPs are organized in EPGs, is decisive for their voting behavior. Furthermore, it is argued that the EPGs can establish intra-group cohesion through sanctioning mechanisms

and incentives (Attina 1990; Hix, Noury and Roland 2007, 2009; Kreppel and Tsebelis 1999).

*If (the MEPs') 'true' preferences are such that nationality matters more than ideology, then we should see MEPs voting along national lines on non-legislative resolutions. But (...), this is not the case. Member state, territory or nationality are not strong determinants of voting behaviour in the European Parliament. In contrast, there is overwhelming evidence that left-right preferences are the dominant determinants of MEP and party behaviour on all issues in the European Parliament." (Hix, Noury and Roland 2007:68)*

While this argumentation and the empirical evidence sound convincing, there are other strands of literature arguing that national interest dominate the policy-making process within a supranational institution. This occurs especially in the domain of the foreign and security politics, since countries see these domains as their core national interests, their prerogatives and *raison d'être* (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014:23; Raunio and Wagner 2017:9f.). Thus, they do not accept to lose their sphere of influence in this sensitive field to a supranational body such as the European Union (EU). Rather, countries are eager to control their foreign and defense policy themselves, since their geopolitical interests prevail over the European ideology (Moravcsik 1998:430), resulting in the limited competencies of the EU in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) domain.

Thus, the EU legislation related to foreign and defense policy is highly contested and is therefore expected to be predominantly shaped by national preferences.

Hence, these two above mentioned conflicting theories result in a puzzle, namely the question whether the dominance of the EPGs' influence on their MEPs is also applicable to the EU legislation within the CFSP domain where national interests often prevail since legislation touching upon security and foreign policy is a sensitive issue in the EU.

This theoretical puzzle is highly relevant since it has not yet been answered satisfactorily. Different studies examining the voting behavior of MEPs in the domain of the external dimension led to varying outcomes on whether the EPGs or the national delegations are more cohesive and therefore have a prevailing influence over the national interests. Attina argued for example in his early study that the cohesion within the EPGs was higher in international issues such as security, foreign policy, or armament questions than in other issues due to the affinity of the EP with international political questions (Attina 1990:572). These findings are in contrast with scholars who showed that the EPG cohesion is lower on external relations issues, since some of these issues split the MEPs along national lines (Hix, Noury and Roland 2007:127).

Thus, this master thesis aims at solving this puzzle by focusing on one specific and well-defined field within the domain of the CFSP, namely the counter-terrorism legislations. Hence, in the following, the voting behavior of MEPs concerning legislations within this policy field is examined quantitatively. Thereby, the above introduced research question regarding the decisive influences on the MEP's voting behavior is being answered by analyzing the case of the counter-terrorism legislation of the EP in the time frame of 2004 – 2019.

The policy field of counter-terrorism is chosen since terrorist attacks on European soil are becoming more frequent. The EU acknowledges the threat of terrorism and declares its fight against it as a top priority (General Secretariat of the Council 2020). The timeframe is defined as stated since the first terrorist attack within the EU took place in Madrid in 2004 and reliable data later than 2019 are limited. Additionally, this research period thereby spans over three legislative terms of the EP, enabling the analysis of various relevant legislative acts.

The methodological approach of this master thesis contains a two-step empirical analysis. The first step aims at determining whether a MEP is more likely to vote according to other MEPs from the same EPG with which he<sup>1</sup> is affiliated, or whether he rather votes likewise MEPs from his country of origin. These findings are substantiated in the second step, which sheds light on the individual differences potentially influencing the MEPs' individual voting behavior, namely the MEPs' ideological

position and the perceived threat of terrorism in their countries of origin. The conducted empirical analysis provides significant evidence for the prevailing effect of the MEPs' EPG affiliation over the influence of the national interests, despite the here analyzed sensitive domain of the counter-terrorism legislation. Thereby, it supports the hypothesis of previous studies arguing for the dominance of the EPG. This assumption can therefore also be applied onto the here examined case of one specific field within the CFSP, namely the counter-terrorism legislation.

## THEORY

There is a vast academic literature regarding the European Parliament (EP), targeting its development, its composition, its role, and its position within the EU. This thesis speaks mainly to the literature of the legislative behavior of parliamentarians, especially of the MEPs. In the following, two different strands of theories are introduced, both aiming at explaining the MEPs' voting behavior.

The first theory argues that MEPs vote according to their EPG affiliation, resulting in a high intra-group cohesion of EPGs, which will be formulated in H1a. This assumption has been examined and proven through various quantitative studies which analyzed RCVs of past EP legislative terms. However, valuable counterarguments against the domination of MEPs' EPG affiliation can be found, arguing that the national interests also play a crucial role, especially in contested domains such as the EU CFSP. Thus, as a competing theory, the Liberal Inter-governmentalism (LI) is used, which justifies the predominance of the national interests. These assumptions are formulated in the following in H1b.

## INTRA-EPG COHESION

To elaborate about the state of the research regarding the voting behavior of the MEPs according to the EPG lines, a brief background of the development and organization of EPGs is needed at first. EPGs were established as party groups along the ideological lines in the 1970s. The Social democratic party was founded as the first EPG in 1974, followed by the Association of Liberal and Democratic Parties and the European People's Party of the Conservatives in 1976 (Hix 2003:160f.). Democratically elected MEPs are not grouped alongside their national lines, but rather sit according to their ideological preferences in party groups in the EP. This is done in order to avoid the dominance of national points of view and to underline the supranational character of the EP (Raunio 1997:36). These EPGs "(...) are much more than procedure requisites. They assemble elected representatives of national parties which share a consistent similarity in political ideologies and strategies." (Attina 1990:557).

<sup>1</sup>In this paper, the generic masculine is used for better readability. Female and other gender identities are explicitly included.

Moreover, the EPGs do not only act as umbrella organizations for national parties but turned into powerful actors over time. They share the cost of gathering information, divide the workload, and issue voting instructions for their members. Thereby, they are lowering the costs of each MEP and increase his chance of achieving the aspired policy goals (Hix, Noury and Roland 2009:821f.).

The importance of EPGs is shown since a vast literature argues that the voting behavior of the MEPs is first and foremost influenced by the preferences of their EPGs, since the "(...) legislative behavior in the EP is structured more by party affiliation than national affiliation. MEPs are more likely to vote with their EP party groups than with MEPs from their Member State (who sit in other EP groups)." (Hix 2001:684).

Since this master thesis analyzes the voting behavior of MEPs regarding counter-terrorism, scholars addressing the voting behavior of MEPs in the domain of external relations, such as Raunio and Wagner, who published different studies on this issue (Raunio and Wagner 2017; Raunio and Wagner 2020a, 2020b, 2020c), are highly relevant. They acknowledge that the MEPs would have good reasons to follow the interests of their country of origin in key issues within the domain of external relations, since national interests often prevail over supranational preferences in the EU's foreign policy (Raunio and Wagner 2017:10). Nevertheless, their most recent study proves that the prevailing effect of party cohesion over country cohesion can also be traced in external relations, arguing that "(...) foreign policy is indeed 'business like any other' in the Parliament" (Raunio and Wagner 2020b:11). Even Attina argued in his early study that the cohesion within the EPG was higher in international issues including security, foreign policy, or armament questions than in other issues due to the affinity of the EP with international political questions (Attina 1990:572).

The here examined EPG cohesion is defined by Hix and Lord as "(...) the cohesion of the party groups (...) mean (s) their ability to achieve internal unity and make decisions without excessive outside interference." (1997:140). Through the measurement and comparison of the intra-EPG cohesion with the cohesion within the national delegations, it is assessed whether the MEPs rather vote according to their EPG affiliation or according to their national delegation, hence their national interests. Thereby, the question whether the EPGs dominate the legislative process within the EP or not, can be answered. Summarizing, based on the above outlined state of the art and the therein contained theory, the following hypothesis is constructed:

H1a: The cohesion within the EPGs is higher than the cohesion of national delegations when voting on counter-terrorism legislation.

A dominating effect of the EPGs influence on the MEPs voting behavior is assumed. The cohesion within the EPGs is therefore expected to be higher than the cohesion within the national delegations. This hypothesis will be tested on the case of the EP's counter-terrorism legislation in the 6th, 7th, and 8th legislative term during 2004 - 2019.

#### COHESION OF NATIONAL DELEGATIONS

Despite the above introduced overwhelming literature regarding the dominance of party lines in the legislative behavior of the MEPs, there are nevertheless cases and domains questioning the predominance of the EPG influence. As an example, the case study of Callaghan and Höppner demonstrated the predominance of national interests and showed a division within the EPGs alongside the national lines (Callaghan and Höppner 2005:307, 321).

Most of the scholars acknowledge that national interests can undermine the EPG cohesion in certain situations. This holds especially true when national interests are at stake, when some issues are of higher importance for certain member states than for others, or as the result of lobbying by national actors. This occurs in particular in foreign policy legislation (Costello and Thomson 2016:774, 781; Hix, Noury and Roland 2007:90, 127; Raunio 1997:84, 108). Therefore, EPGs sometimes decide not to release a voting instruction regarding international issues and thus allow their EPGs to use their free mandate (Hix, Noury and Roland 2007:127). Moreover, pressure is exercised on MEPs if the national interests' conflict with the EPG line. Then, national parties as well as the MEP's EPG pressure the MEPs through high-level meetings and written briefings (Costello and Thomson 2016:774f.).

The LI is consulted to theoretically underpin the argument of the prevalence of the national preferences. While it was originally used to explain integration processes, such as the EU's, it is here applied to the case of the voting behavior of the MEPs concerning counter-terrorism legislation. Hence, it argues that the cohesion of the national delegations should be higher than the intra-EPG cohesion since the national interests prevail. The Intergovernmentalism goes back to Hoffmann (1966), was theoretically embedded by Moravcsik (1991, 1993, 1998), and originally aimed at explaining the integration on the international level. According to Hoffmann, integration does only occur in policy areas where states constantly profit from the cooperation and do not draw disadvantage from delegating competencies. Thus, the gains must constantly outweigh the losses for integration to happen in an issue area. According to Hoffmann, integration in high politics areas, such as defense and foreign politics, is highly unlikely and unrealistic for the future (Hoffmann 1966). According to Hoffman and his slogan more obstinate than obsolete, the intergovernmentalist approach stresses the national core compe-

tence of the states regarding external issues. Thereby, it is limiting the theoretical implication expecting further international integration in the foreign policy domain. (Hoffmann 1966:869, 892–908). Moravcsik extended Hoffmann's intergovernmentalist approach by applying it onto the case of the formation of the Single European Act, and explaining a deepened EU integration through Intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik 1991:56). Later he expanded the theory by adding a liberal perspective by including background on how national preferences are formed, thereby manifesting the LI. Domestic societal groups formulate, depending on their interests and their influence, preferences which are then aggregated by the government (Moravcsik 1993:482f.). The underlying assumption of the liberal intergovernmentalism is thus that the "(...) state behaviour reflects the rational actions of governments constrained at home by domestic societal pressures and abroad by their strategic environment." (Moravcsik 1993:474). According to the LI, state preferences are shaped by domestic groups, leading to the fact that national preferences are not fixed potentially changed by exogenous influences regarding their ideological, geopolitical and economic environment (Moravcsik 1998:22f.).

The ground-breaking book *The Choice for Europe* by Moravcsik in 1998 tested the LI over different cases of EU integration. It further extended the LI by the possibility that other actors, not only states, are involved in the bargaining process on the international level, while states remain nevertheless the most decisive actors regarding all international relevant decisions. (Moravcsik 1998). Due to its principle that states are the most important actors in the international system, the LI overlaps with realism. However, these two theories differ since the LI argues that states are no black boxes since their underlying national preferences are shaped by their political economy (Moravcsik 1991:27, 1998:3,6).

Thus, the integration as well as the state's preferences are driven by the geopolitical and economic interests of the state, while the importance of the geopolitical influence is based upon the linkage between the economic policies and the underlying politico-military goals (Moravcsik 1998:26f., 428). Moravcsik divides the international negotiations in three different stages, namely the formation of national preferences, the interstate bargaining, and the institutional choice. These preferences are being bargained over with other states (Moravcsik 1998:20).

*"The liberal intergovernmentalist view seeks to account for major decisions in the history of the EC by positing a two-stage approach. In the first stage, national preferences are primarily determined by the constraints and opportunities imposed by economic interdependence. In the second stage, the outcomes of intergovernmental negotiations are determined by the relative bar-*

*gaining power of governments and the functional incentives for institutionalization (...)." (Moravcsik 1993:517).*

Moravcsik furthermore agrees with Hoffmann that integration in the domain of foreign and security policy is not realistic because states are not willing to hand over competencies in this domain, since the member states see their foreign policy as their prerogative and *raison d'être* (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014:23). Thus, they do not want to lose their influence in this field to a supranational body but want to maintain full control over their foreign and defense policy, since their geopolitical interests prevail over the European ideology (Moravcsik 1998:430). This leads to an expected domination of national interests over party politics. Legislative acts within the contested domain of the CFSP are therefore highly sensitive and expected to be primarily shaped by national preferences, also due to the lack of competencies of the EU.

Thus, national interests are expected to dominate party politics in the domain of the CFSP, also in the EP when foreign policy issues are on the MEPs' agenda (Raunio 1997:108). Empirical evidence regarding the lower cohesion of EPGs on external issues was for example found by Hix, Noury, Roland, who argued that "(s)ome external relations issues (...) split MEPs on national lines as well as along party lines." (2007:127). Raunio and Wagner justify these findings by arguing that the spirit of the politics stops at the water's edge can be found within the CFSP, meaning that the party politics is put aside, and a consensus is aimed for to enable the actor to speak with one voice regarding sensitive CFSP issues (Raunio and Wagner 2020c:6). These findings are in contrast with the above-introduced findings by Attina, who argued that the intra-EPG cohesion is higher regarding issues related to foreign and security policy in comparison to other domains (1990:572).

Especially the domain of the CFSP is shaped rather intergovernmentalist since EU institutions have limited competencies in this field. The EP managed nevertheless to increase its role significantly towards being a decisive actor in the EU external relations, with its votes influencing legislations such as international trade agreements, the EU's development policy and the accession of new EU members (Raunio and Wagner 2017:6). While the primary goal of the LI was to explain EU integration (Moravcsik 1991:27), the theory can nevertheless be used for the MEPs' legislative behavior since every adopted legislation by the EP results in a deepened EU integration. Thus, when applying the LI on the case of counter-terrorism legislation voted upon in the EP, it can be expected that the voting behavior of the MEPs is rather led by national interests than by the EPGs preferences. As a competing hypothesis to H1a, it is therefore expected that the cohesion of national delegations is higher than

the EPG cohesion in the field of the counter-terrorism legislation.

*H1b: The intra-group cohesion of the national delegation is higher than the intra-EPG cohesion when voting on counter-terrorism legislation.*

### INFLUENCE OF MEP'S DIFFERENCES

Beside the influence from their EPG and their national preferences, individual differences, such as the MEPs' ideology or their countries of origin are argued to play a crucial role regarding their attitude towards a resolution. Thus, these underlying individual differences amongst the MEPs will be analyzed since they are expected to influence the MEPs' voting behavior concerning the analyzed counter-terror legislation. The two following assumptions each substantiate one of the above-mentioned hypotheses and help us to learn more about the underlying reasons regarding the MEPs' preferences. Since these hypotheses serve mainly as a support for either H1a or H1b, their theoretical framework will be addressed more briefly than the theory of the first two hypotheses, because these build the main theoretical part.

### INFLUENCE OF THE MEPS' DIFFERENT IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS

It can be argued that the different ideologies of the MEPs are a decisive factor for their vote, especially on sensitive issues within the CFSP domain, such as the counter-terrorism legislation. The underlying theory, which is referred to in this context, is known as the law and order politics. This theoretical approach is applicable since the counter-terrorism resolutions analyzed here can be seen as law and order policies.

Law and order politics can be defined as the following:

*"The term 'law and order politics' describes a pattern of public discourse in which one political party or politician seeks to gain electoral advantage over another through exaggerated (or false) claims about crime and promises of (ever) tougher policies to deal with it. Practitioners of law and order politics routinely deride their opponents as 'soft on crime' and with being more concerned about the rights of offenders than the welfare of crime victims." (Wakefield and Fleming 2009:185).*

Measures advocated by law and order politics may include for example the demand for a higher funding for the police and prisons, a zero tolerance policy of the police, stricter laws concerning the prevention and prosecution of crimes, more extensive surveillance of public places, comprehensive interception measures, or more police presence in the public (Hartleb 2004:126f.). However, the underlying motives of parties and politicians

advocating for law and order politics is rarely the crime control, but usually a mean to generate more power, and thus, the "(...) crime control (as) the ostensible objective of the politics of law and order, frequently takes a back seat to the scramble for power and position among politicians (...)" (Scheingold 1984:xii).

Traditionally, conservative and right-wing parties are more likely to support law and order policies than green or social democratic parties (Wenzelburger 2020:7,97). Conservative parties as well as populist or right-wing parties portray themselves as the preservers of the national identity and want to be seen as the saviors of the culturally homogenous community (Minkenberg 1998:174). Therefore, these parties demand a more intensive fight against crime, claiming that the social order has to be re-established and that the silent majority of the population has to be defended as a result of the increasing crime rate (Hartleb 2004:125).

The threat posed by terrorism, terrorist acts and terrorist organizations is on the rise causing multiple fatalities in Europe per year. The European Council and the Council of the European Union also frame the threat of terrorism as the following: "Terrorism threatens our security, the values of our democratic societies and the rights and freedoms of European citizens. Fighting terrorism is a top priority for the EU and its member states as well as its international partners." (General Secretariat of the Council 2020). Therefore, terrorism can be seen as an issue related to crime, and can be incorporated in the definition of law and order policies (Wenzelburger 2020:6). Thus, this theoretical construct of law and order politics is applicable to cases concerning counter-terrorism policies.

When applying this theory onto the case of the counter-terrorism legislation in the EP, the following assumption can be made, since the legislative acts analyzed here can be categorized as law and order policies: MEPs who are positioned on the right side of the ideological left-right dimension are expected to be more likely to vote in favor of counter-terrorism laws than MEPs who are located on the left side of the ideological spectrum. However, since the assessment of each individual MEPs' ideological position is out of the scope, it is being operationalized through their EPG affiliation and its respective ideological position. Thus, the above-introduced assumption regarding the MEPs' ideological position is being applied to the EPGs' position on the left-right dimension, resulting in the following hypothesis:

*H2: The further right a MEP's EPG lies on the ideological left-right spectrum, the more likely he is to approve a counter-terror legislation.*

### INFLUENCE OF THE MEPS' DIFFERENT COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Besides the differing ideologies, it can be argued that further differences among the MEPs, such as specificities

of their countries of origin, play a crucial role. The assumption formulated in H1b argues that the voting behavior of the MEPs, especially regarding legislations within the contested CFSP domain, is primarily shaped by their national interests. Deriving from this hypothesis, it is argued that the different perceptions of threat of terrorism by the population in the member states plays an important role concerning the MEPs' voting behavior. The underlying theoretical construct is the collective securitization. This theory argues that besides a national state, a supranational organization such as the EU can also act as a securitizing actor (Sperling and Webber 2017, 2019). This theory builds upon the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School, which elaborates the effect of framing an issue as a security issue by a securitizing actor (Buzan, Waever and Wilde 1998). According to this theory, securitization can be defined as "the discursive process through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat." (Buzan and Waever 2003:491). The collective securitization constructed by Sperling and Webber firstly advances the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School by opening it up to different sectors. Another extension is the acknowledgment of the importance of the interactions with the public by including the recursive interaction, which means that the member states and their populations "(...) serve as the validating audience of a securitisation move (...)" (Sperling and Webber 2017:21).

The collective securitization theory is applied onto the EU in the present study. Concerning the securitization of terrorism, one can argue that the terrorist attack of September 11th 2001 (9/11) can be seen as the precipitating event which led to the collective securitization of terrorism as a security threat by the EU. By the securitizing move through European leaders, terrorism was therefore successfully framed as a security threat. Thereby, the European political elite was enabled to formulate policy objectives and to push for further EU integration by promoting relevant EU legislation concerning counter-terrorism measurements (Kaunert and Léonard 2019:266-269). The MEPs are part of the securitization actors since they are the only democratically elected EU officials and adopt legislation, thereby contributing to the securitization process.

According to Raunio and Wagner, the securitization of an issue as a security threat leads to the decrease of party politics. This holds especially true for issues located in the hard field of the security and defense domain since the party political division is more likely to be overcome if an issue is existential to the continued existence of the community (Raunio and Wagner 2020b:8). Since the counter-terrorism legislation analyzed here lies in the domain of the CFSP, this assumption can be seen as the first theoretical indication that the EPGs influence on the

MEPs decreases regarding resolutions linked to foreign or security related issues. This presumption, that party politics is not mainly decisive for votes within the CFSP, is contrary to H2, which assumes that the ideological differences predominantly influence the voting behavior of the MEPs.

Referring back to the fourth step in the collective securitization cycle, the audience is granted an influential role through the recursive interaction (Sperling and Webber 2017:26). When applying this onto the here analyzed case of counter-terrorism legislation, it can be expected that the European population plays a decisive role in influencing the EP's legislation and the MEPs' voting behavior. Therefore, the perceived threat of terrorism is considered, since it is expected that the attitude of the European population towards terrorism affects the MEPs. The perception of the European population regarding threat of terrorism varies over the different EU member states (European Commission 2005:77). These differences are partially rooted in the fact that different countries are differently affected by terrorism with some countries having suffered from multiple terrorist attacks with different ideological or religious backgrounds while other EU member states have not yet been targeted by terrorist attacks. However, the different perception does not necessarily result from the objective number of terrorist attacks but can also be influenced by a country's attitude towards menaces, its resilience and history. Thus, the perceived level of threat of terrorism is considered rather than the objective level, since the attitude of the population is expected to play a role, and the people's attitude is driven by emotions rather than hard facts.

Therefore, the following hypothesis substantiates H1b and assumes that the higher the perceived level of threat of terrorism in a MEPs' country of origin, the more likely it is for him to support the respective counter-terrorism resolution.

*H3: The greater the perceived threat of terrorism in a member state, the more likely it is for MEPs representing this country to vote in favor of counter-terrorism legislation at EU level.*

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This master thesis follows a quantitative approach, aiming at answering the above generated research question and at testing the introduced four different hypotheses. The quantitative approach is chosen to analyze the object of investigation, the voting behavior of the MEPs regarding counter-terrorism legislation, over the time span of three legislative terms in the EP. This allows for a higher number of resolutions to be examined, namely 14 legislative acts between 2004 – 2019, avoiding the specificities of one resolution to dominate the analysis and hereby enabling a generalization of the outcome. The sum of all the individual votes taken by the MEPs over



the three different legislative terms for the 14 legislations amounts to over 8.950 individual voting acts.

Since all relevant legislative acts are considered and analyzed, there is no risk of a distorted sampling or a selection bias. The data is therefore representative, and the calculations can easily be reproduced, since all the analyzed votes on the legislative acts are publicly available. The approach is furthermore deductive, applying the above mentioned different theoretical approaches regarding the voting behavior of MEPs onto the case of counter-terrorism legislation of the EU during the research period 2004 – 2019.

The here conducted two-step approach allows to firstly target the cohesion within the EPGs and within the national delegations in order to find out whether the MEPs' EPG affiliation prevails or whether it is their national interests which predominate the MEPs' voting behavior. In a second step, the individual differences of the MEPs, namely their ideological position and the perceived threat of terrorism in their countries of origin, are being examined. In this course, H2 and H3, which substantiate the main hypotheses H1a and H1b, are tested. This analytical approach is visualized in the following figure.

The research period of the present works spans from 2004 to 2019. The start of this timeframe is chosen since the first attack on European soil took place in Madrid in 2004. Moreover, a new legislative term in the EP started in this year as well, thereby facilitating the gathering of data concerning potentially relevant counter-terrorism legislation. 2019 as the time of end is designated due to the limited availability of the most recent Eurobarometer surveys and because of the end of the 8th European Parliament legislation term. This research period allows the analysis of 14 counter-terrorism resolutions voted upon by the MEPs, matched with the most recent Eurobarometer survey data.

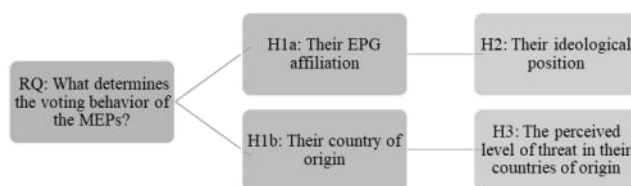


Figure 1: visualization of hypotheses—own depiction

## CASE SELECTION

The cases of the counter-terrorism legislation analyzed here were selected according to four different criteria, namely the fact that the EP voted upon them, the date of the vote, the thematic relevance of the resolution as well as the voting mechanism used in the vote. These criteria are introduced in more detail in the following.

Since the research question examines the voting behavior of the MEPs, the resolutions must firstly be voted upon by the EP. The EP has only limited competencies regarding the legislative process. This criterion elimi-

nates some important and even some mile-stone resolutions, such as the European Council Declaration on Combating Terrorism of 2004, or the European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy of 2005 (Council of the European Union 2005; European Council 2004). In comparison to the Council and the national governments, the role of the EP in the CFSP legislation remains minor.

Secondly, the resolutions must be voted upon by the EP during the defined timeframe of 2004 – 2019. This period spans over three legislative terms and covers different periods, in which the EU suffered from terrorist attacks. Thereby, a direct linkage of one terrorist attack onto the EU counter-terrorism legislation is avoided and the individual attacks become less important.

The third criterion concerns the thematic relevance of the resolutions. Since this work analyzes the voting behavior of MEPs concerning legislative acts in the domain of the CFSP, more specifically counter-terrorism legislation, only resolutions with a thematic relevance are selected. The assessment whether a legislation is relevant or not has been conducted by the author, after a thorough analysis of the content. The resolutions must frame terrorism as a threat and must include specific counter-terrorism measures. These proposed measures can be in different domains, such as the establishment of a new institution for the fight against terrorism or an international cooperation enabling the facilitated exchange of information. Thus, as an example, resolutions which only briefly refer to terrorist attacks but first and foremost contain propositions which are not directly related to the fight against terrorism are not included in the data set. However, legislative acts which propose concrete counter-terrorism means and approaches or target a specific problem of terrorism, are considered.

Another important criterion regards the voting mechanism in the EP. Three voting procedures are exercised in the EP, namely the electronic vote, the show-off-hands method as well as the RCV method. The RCV is however the only voting procedure which tracks the individual voting behavior of each MEP, while the electronic vote and the show-off-hands method only track the final voting result of the vote. The RCV can be requested by any EPG or by a group of MEPs (Johansson and Raunio 2016:18) and is automatically used at the final vote on a legislation when deciding on the basis or a report, according to Rule 179 of the EP's rule of procedure (European Parliament 2018a:108). Thus, only legislative acts which are voted upon using RCV can be used in the quantitative analysis since the needed data cannot be derived through the other voting mechanisms. The risk of a selection bias occurring when choosing resolutions through a sample is avoided since all relevant legislative acts are analyzed here.

As a result of these four criteria, 14 different resolutions, which are thematically relevant since they target the fight against terrorism, and which were voted upon by

the MEPs in the timeframe of 2004 – 2019 using the RCV method, were found. Thereby, the analysis includes a variety of legislative acts which are the cases for the present master thesis.

#### DATA

All data concerning the MEPs' voting behavior was collected from publicly available information. The information of the MEPs, such as their nationality and their EPGs affiliation, was derived from the website of the EP (European Parliament). This information is needed in order to test H1a and H1b and to estimate whether the EPG affiliation or the national affiliation predominates the MEPs' voting behavior. While MEPs changing their EPG affiliation within a legislative term are rare, these changes were tracked and applied to the timeframes where votes regarding the analyzed counter-terrorism legislations were held. This results in the fact that some names of MEPs appear twice in the dataset since their EPG affiliation changed and thus, they were treated as different MEPs. The voting records of the MEPs concerning the 14 analyzed counter-terrorism legislative acts were gathered from the Minutes Protocols published by the EP after each voting session (European Parliament 2005:11f., 2008b:47f., 2008c:62f., 2010:4f., 2014b:30f., 2014c:233f., 2015b:54f., 2015c:171f., 2015d:198f., 2016:44f., 2017:5f., 2018b:14, 2018c:15f., 2018d:8f.). These protocols list the votes by the MEPs of the respective day and categorize them firstly into the consent, the rejection, and the abstention, but cluster them also according to the MEPs' EPG affiliation.

The MEPs' voting records were manually transferred in the author's Excel data set, resulting in over 8.950 individual voting acts. Besides the individual voting behavior of the MEPs concerning the 14 analyzed legislative acts on counter-terrorism, the data set contains the MEPs' personal information, such as their name, their EPG affiliation, and their country of origin. This information is self-explanatory assigned to the respective votes in the data set. This data set builds firstly the basis for the calculations of the Agreement Index (AI), which is needed for the construction of the dependent variable. Moreover, the AI derived from this data set was then used for the empirical analysis testing H2 and H3 with a logistical regression.

#### OPERATIONALIZATION

After the description of the data in the previous chapter, the following sequence presents the operationalization of the dependent variables (DVs), the independent variables (IVs) as well as the control variables.

Since this paper contains a two-step analytical approach to answer the research question on the influences on the MEPs regarding their voting behavior on counter-terrorism legislation, the DV varies. In the first step, the intra-group cohesion in the EPGs and the national dele-

gations is regarded as the DV1, while the individual voting behavior of the MEPs is treated as the DV2 in the second step. Overall, four IVs are taken into consideration in this paper. Amongst those are the MEPs' EPG affiliation (IV1), their nationality (IV2), the ideological position on the left-right dimension (IV3) as well as the perceived threat of terrorism in their home countries (IV4). Moreover, two control variables are included in the analysis, namely the country size of the EU member states and the objective level of terrorism threat.

#### OPERATIONALIZATION DV

As mentioned above, this quantitative master thesis follows a two-step approach to answer the research question regarding the influences on the MEPs' voting behavior as thorough as possible. Thus, the DV changes since it is operationalized differently, thereby generating a higher explanatory value. However, the data for both DVs is the same, namely the individual voting records of the MEPs concerning the 14 legislative acts on counter-terrorism, which were selected according to the four criteria elaborated in the chapter above.

In the first step, the DV1 is the intra-group cohesion of the EPGs and the national delegations for votes on counter-terror legislation. These cohesion scores are compared to find out whether the MEPs vote rather according to their EPGs or likewise other MEPs from their country of origin. In comparison, DV2 in the second step is operationalized as the individual voting behavior of the MEPs regarding the counter-terror legislation. This is done since individual factors determining the voting behavior are analyzed in the second step, thereby substantiating the first two hypotheses. In the following, the operationalization of DV1 is explained before elaborating on the operationalization of DV2.

DV1, the intra-group cohesion is constructed to test H1a and H1b. It considers all three voting options (Yes, No, Abstentions) since the abstention vote is often also a strategic choice, caused by competing demands and positions by the MEP's EPG on the one hand and the MEPs' national party on the other hand. The inclusion of abstention was not the standard procedure in the earlier analyses of the EP legislative procedure. The recent literature agrees however upon the importance of abstentions and thus, includes it in the analysis of the legislative voting behavior in recent studies (Mühlböck and Yordanova 2017:234). Thus, three categories of answers are included in DV1 to calculate the intra-group cohesion, which is realized with the help of the AI. Even though some scholars use a different methodological approach, such as a non-parametric analysis of variances instead of an AI to rule out a potential bias regarding the temporal variation (Voeten 2009:110f.), the vast majority of scholars use some kind of AI to evaluate the intra-group cohesion.

The present paper uses the AI to operationalize the DV1, the intra-group cohesion of the EPGs and the national delegations. Here, the AIs are calculated according to the following formula by Hix, Noury and Roland, “(...) where  $Y_i$  denotes the number of Yes votes expressed by group  $i$  on a given vote,  $N_i$  the number of No votes and  $A_i$  the number of Abstain votes.” (Hix, Noury and Roland 2005:215).

Here, the AIs for the different EPGs as well as those for the different national delegations were calculated according to the formula introduced above for each voting act. A mean AI for every legislative term was generated. This was followed by constructing the relative AI for each EPG and for each national delegation per legislative term, thereby taking the overall cohesion of the EP in the respective legislation period into consideration. One relative AI per EPG and national delegation was constructed by taking the mean of these three values. Thus, DV1 portrays the intra-group cohesion for each EPG and each national delegation over the whole research period.

In comparison to DV1, DV2 portrays the MEPs’ individual voting behavior regarding the counter-terror legislation in the EP and is used for the logistical regression in the second analytical step. DV2 is used to test H2 and H3 concerning the underlying individual differences amongst the MEPs and therefore portrays all of the MEPs’ individual voting behavior for the 14 analyzed different counter-terrorism legislation during 2004 – 2019. Here, the abstentions are excluded since they cannot be incorporated in the conducted statistic regression. This is justified since the observations nevertheless amount to over 8.100 votes, and the main interest lies in the analysis of the agreement or disagreement concerning the legislation by the MEPs. Thus, DV2 is constructed as a dichotomous variable portraying the individual voting behavior of the MEPs (*votingbehaviour\_total\_new*).

#### OPERATIONALIZATION IV

Overall, four IVs, namely the MEPs’ EPG affiliation (IV1), the MEPs’ country of origin (IV2), the EPGs’ ideological position (IV3), and the perceived threat of terrorism in the different EU member states (IV4) are considered.

The first IV (IV1), the MEPs’ EPG affiliation, is needed to test the first Hypothesis H1a. Each individual MEP’s EPG affiliation is tracked to measure the influence of the party affiliation on the MEPs’ voting behavior. This information is derived from the public accessible website of the EP (European Parliament). MEPs, who see themselves as Non-Inscrits (NI), as non-attached members, are categorized as those and are not considered in the analysis. MEPs who changed their EPG during a legislative term appear twice in the dataset and are thus treated as different MEPs, since their EPG affiliation is crucial for this IV. This results in the fact that the dataset contains a few more MEPs than in the actual respective legislative

term, even though not every listed MEP voted in every vote, due to the reason mentioned above.

The country of origin of each MEP is the second IV (IV2). The MEPs’ nationality is tracked to measure the influence of nationality onto the MEPs’ voting behavior. This information is also publicly available on the website of the EP (European Parliament) and is used to test the Hypothesis H1b. MEPs originating from countries which joined the EU during the research period are included in the data as soon as they participated in a relevant vote. This concerns MEPs from Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria.

The third IV (IV3), the ideological position of each MEP, is operationalized by using his EPG affiliation, since the research regarding each MEP’s ideological position is out of the scope. Thus, the ideological position of the different EPGs on the left-right dimension is being examined across the different legislative terms to test Hypothesis H2. MEPs who are not affiliated with any EPG and are referred to as NI are excluded in this sub-analysis. The data needed to examine the ideological position of each MEP is tracked in an ordinal scale (EPG\_total) and matched with the voting behavior of its MEPs over the whole research period, in order to test H2, stating that MEPs’ whose affiliated EPG is located further right on the ideological scale are more likely to approve counter-terrorism legislations.

The perceived level of threat of terrorism as the fourth IV (IV4), is also indirectly measured. It is operationalized using a specific question from the EU-wide Eurobarometer surveys. The terrorist threat perception is measured by analyzing the answers given by the population of the different member states to the question “What do you think are the two most important issues facing (our country) at the moment?” (European Commission 2019:17). Here, respondents are provided several answer possibilities, such as terrorism, unemployment, housing, immigration, etc. amongst which they could choose two options. These answers are tracked in percentage, also providing the average percentage of each item. Thus, IV4, the perceived level of threat of terrorism is operationalized through a question of the Eurobarometer surveys. This IV is needed in the second analytical step to test H3.

#### OPERATIONALIZATION CONTROL VARIABLES

After having introduced the operationalization of the DVs and the IVs, other variables should also be considered in the analysis as control variables. Since it is assumed that further factors influence the MEPs’ voting behavior, the objective threat of terrorism as well as the size of the member states are included as control variables to make the model more robust to alternative explanations.

One could argue that it is trivial to analyze the voting behavior of the MEPs regarding counter-terrorism legis-

lation at all, since the different votes could only be solely based upon whether or not the country of origin of the MEP recently suffered from terrorist attacks or not. The objective threat of terrorism is though believed to influence the MEPs' voting behavior and is thus included in the analysis. Since the objective threat of terrorism can only be measured indirectly, it is operationalized through the assessment of the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). In the GTD, all terrorist attacks worldwide which fulfil these criteria are listed, including the number of fatalities, injured persons as well as the perpetrator group and the target type. Terrorist attacks which have not killed or injured anyone but have still been carried out are also included (University of Maryland 2019:10f.). For this thesis, all terrorist attacks carried out in EU member states, regardless of their ideological backgrounds are considered, since the ideological background of attacks is out of the scope. The relevant attacks are incorporated in the thesis' dataset by including a dichotomous variable (Terroristattacks\_total), classifying EU member states in countries which have experienced a terrorist attack in the year of the vote ("yes") and in countries which have not experience such ("no").

Furthermore, the size of the EU member states is considered in the logistical regression to control whether the size of their countries of origin effects the MEPs' voting behavior. The underlying theoretical assumption argues that large EU member states have more influence in the legislative process in the EP, since decisions are sometime bargained informally prior to the official voting time, enabling thereby large EU member states to control the EP legislation. This could lead to the fact that a large EU member state is more likely to support a legislative proposal in comparison to a smaller EU member state due to the fact that its content had been negotiated and agreed upon informally prior to the actual vote (Callaghan and Höpner 2005:318). The size of the EU member states is operationalized through the total amount of the seats of their national delegations in the EP in the respective legislative term since the seats are distributed proportionally according to their population. The number of seats per country is tracked in an interval scale (Country\_size), over the three different legislative terms and is matched with the votes of MEPs originating from the respective member states.

## METHOD

As mentioned previously, this work contains a quantitative two-step analytical approach. The test of H1a and H1b regarding the intra-group cohesion of the EPGs and the national delegations marks the first step of the empirical analysis regarding the voting behavior of MEPs on the here analyzed case of counter-terrorism legislation during the research period of 2004 – 2019. This is conducted with the help of the cohesion index, as explained in the sub-chapter on the operationalization of the DV. The relative AIs for each EPG and for every different na-

tional delegation for the whole research period were calculated with Excel. Based on this comparison, it is decided whether the intra-group cohesion of the EPGs or the intra-group cohesion of the national delegation is higher, which results in the acceptance or denial of H1a and H1b. Since these hypotheses are competing ones, maximum one of them can be accepted. The calculations with the AI formula are followed by a two-sample t-test in Stata to test for the significance and to rule out a random correlation of the means.

As a second step in this quantitative master thesis, the effects of the MEPs' individual differences on their individual voting behavior concerning counter-terrorism resolutions are examined. After having determined in the first analytical step whether the EPG or the national delegations have a higher influence on the voting behavior of the MEPs, the next step aims at finding differences amongst the MEPs concerning their EPG affiliation and their countries of origins, as argued for in H2 and H3.

These two hypotheses substantiate the previous hypotheses H1a and H1b and are tested with a logistic regression, since DV2, the MEPs' individual voting behavior, is dichotomous because abstentions are treated as missing values. The potential influence of the control variables objective level of threat of terrorism and country size is also controlled for during the logistic regression. This is done to verify whether it really is the MEPs' nationalities or their EPG affiliation which shape the MEPs' voting behavior regarding counter-terrorism legislation, or whether it is rather the size of the EU member states or their objective level of terrorism threat which influences the MEPs.

This two-step approach enables an in-depth empirical analysis concerning the voting-behavior of the MEPs. The combination of the calculation with the AI formula, which is verified with a statistical t-test in Stata generates a high explanatory value and is therefore well-suited. The underpinning of the first findings with the logistic regression from the second-step sheds light on the differences of the MEPs concerning their individual voting behavior and thereby provides insight information.

## EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

To answer the research question: What determines the voting behavior of the MEPs? an empirical analysis is conducted in this chapter to test the four hypotheses generated above. Firstly, H1a and H1b will be tested with the help of calculations with the relative AI to compare the cohesiveness of the MEPs in their EPGs and their national delegations. A two-sample t-test controls for the statistical reliability in Stata. In the second step, a logistic regression further examines the underlying individual factors of the MEPs, namely their ideological position and the perceived level of threat of terrorism in their

countries of origin, which could influence the MEPs' voting behavior, as assumed in H2 and H3.

#### **ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF THE INTRA-GROUP COHESION**

First and foremost, the intra-group cohesion of the EPGs and the national delegations are calculated and compared by using the respective relative AIs. These values measure the degree of cohesion and take the overall cohesion of the EP in the legislative term into consideration, therefore enabling a comparison (Hix, Noury and Roland 2007:93). Thus, the relative AI considers the overall cohesion of the EP in each period and thereby indicates whether an issue is contested amongst the MEPs or whether they share the same opinion and voting behavior on an issue. The relative AIs of the three legislative terms were added up and a mean was generated for each EPG and each national delegation to have one value for the whole research period.

This analysis is done to determine whether the cohesion within the EPGs or the cohesion within the national delegations is higher. In case of a higher cohesion within the EPGs, H1a: The cohesion within the EPGs is higher than the cohesion of national delegations when voting on counter-terrorism legislation will be accepted, while H1b: The intra-group cohesion of the national delegation is higher than the intra-EPG cohesion when voting on counter-terrorism legislation is accepted if the cohesion of the national delegations shows a higher cohesion.

The different relative AIs for the whole research period for each national delegation and for all the EPG which existed between 2004 – 2019 are compared in the following. The highest theoretically possible relative AI amounts to 0,729, based on the fact that the AIs are put in relation to the overall AI of the whole Parliament through a division and hence, only the AI can reach 1, not the relative AI.

When analyzing the relative AIs of the national delegations, it shows that their degree of internal cohesion is highly fragmented and varies more than the intra-group cohesion of the EPGs. The national delegation of the UK shows by far the least cohesion concerning the here analyzed counter-terrorism legislation, with a relative AI of 0,335. While ten national delegations such as Greece, Germany or France have a low relative AI, which ranges from 0,400 to 0,499. The mean relative AI for the national delegations thus results in 0,550. The national delegation of Malta shows the highest degree of internal cohesion, with a relative AI of 0,687. Since the highest possible relative AI amounts to 0,729, it must be acknowledged that the MEPs of the national delegation of Malta almost always voted likewise concerning the counter-terrorism legislation. The high internal cohesion of Malta is at least partially rooted in the fact that Malta has the smallest national delegation, including five MEPs in the 6th term and 7th term and six MEPs in the 8th term,

thereby facilitating a cohesive voting behavior in comparison to for example the UK whose national delegation included 78 MEPs in the 6th term, 72 MEPs in the 7th term, and 73 in the 8th term (European Parliament 2004, 2009, 2014a).

When comparing the relative AIs of the EPGs with the respective data of the national delegations, one can argue that the values from the national delegations are more fragmented than the relative AIs of the EPGs. By analyzing the means of the relative AIs, one can see that the weighted mean relative AI of the national delegations amounts to 0,550, while the respective value of the EPGs is higher with 0,588. While four out of six EPGs show a very high degree of internal cohesion since their relative AIs lie between 0,673 and 0,696, only four out of 28 national delegations show a comparable high internal cohesion with relative AIs varying between 0,680 and 0,687, namely Malta, Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia. While some national delegations thus show comparable high internal cohesion, their relative AIs do not exceed the EPG ones. Therefore, it can be summarized that the internal cohesion of the EPGs is higher than the internal cohesion of the national delegations. As a result, there is a strong tendency to accept H1a while H1b, which argued that the intra-group cohesion of the national delegations is higher than the intra-EPG cohesion, should be rejected. However, this must be statistically verified.

To rule out a coincidental correlation, these calculations are being tested for their significance with a two-sample t-test in Stata, which is statistically significant on the 1% -level. Thus, H0 assuming that there is no difference between the relative AIs of the EPGs and the national delegations can be rejected. The fact that the total relative AI of the EPGs exceeds the relative total AI of the national delegations is thereby proven and statistically significant.

The result of the statistical analysis provides a strong evidence for the acceptance of H1a: The cohesion within the EPGs is higher than the cohesion of national delegations when voting on counter-terrorism legislation. These findings lead to the rejection of H1b: The intra-group cohesion of the national delegation is higher than the intra-EPG cohesion when voting on counter-terrorism legislation. In other words, evidence was found for a higher internal cohesion within the EPGs than within national delegations.

One can therefore argue that the predominating effect for the influence of the MEPs' voting behavior is their EPG affiliation, rather than their country of origin, which brings us one step closer to answering the above introduced research question concerning the decisive influences on the MEPs' voting behavior. This result is in line with the theory introduced in chapter 2.1, which argues for the dominating influence of the EPGs on the voting behavior of the MEPs (Attina 1990; Hix, Noury and Roland 2007, 2009; Kreppel and Tsebelis 1999). Thus, this theoretical approach can be applied onto the here ana-

lyzed case of the counter-terrorism legislation during 2004 – 2019, despite the fact that it is embedded in the highly contested field of the CFSP and the counter-terrorism domain can therefore be seen as a sensitive domain.

The assumption, that the EPGs also dominate the MEPs' voting behavior concerning issues on foreign policy or external relations (Attina 1990:572; Raunio and Wagner 2020b:11), was found to be true in the here analyzed case and is hereby verified in the course of the analysis of the MEPs' voting behavior concerning one specific field. Surprisingly, the issue of counter-terrorism therefore does not seem to be so contested that it leads to the division of the MEPs along national lines.

### ANALYSIS OF THE MEPS' DIFFERENCES

The first step of the empirical analysis revealed, that the MEPs rather vote likewise MEPs who are affiliated with the same EPG than likewise MEPs from their country of origin, through the comparison of the means of the relative AI for the EPGs and the national delegation. Now, the second analytical step focuses on the underlying motives of the voting behavior of the MEPs, which are specifications of H1a and H1b.

Thus, the aim is to explore potential differences between the EPGs and the member states which influence the MEPs' individual voting behavior. These are formulated in the hypotheses H2 and H3. Whether they can be accepted or rejected is being analyzed with a logistical regression, since the DV2 (*votingbehaviour\_total\_new*) is dichotomous after the exclusion of the abstentions. DV2 hence includes all the individual voting behavior of the MEPs for the 14 different counter-terrorism legislation during 2004 – 2019, resulting in over 8.100 cases.

The IVs tested for are constructed as mentioned in the operationalization chapter. IV3, the MEPs ideology is operationalized through the ideological position of the EPGs they are affiliated with (*EPG\_total*). And IV4, the perceived level of threat of terrorism in the different member states is operationalized through the evaluation of a question in the Eurobarometer surveys (*standardized\_Eurobarometer\_total*). Furthermore, the logistical regression includes the control variables for the objective threat of terrorism (*Terrorattacks\_total\_new*) and the size of the member state (*Country\_size*) to make the model more robust to alternative explanations. This is done to verify whether it really is the MEP's nationality or his EPG affiliation which influences his voting behavior. Or whether it is rather the objective threat of terrorism in his home country or the size of his country of origin which influences his voting behavior regarding counter-terrorism legislation. To rule this out, the control variables are included in the following logistical regression. When analyzing the logistical regression, one notices right away that this statistical model is first and foremost highly significant on the 1%-level. The value of Pseudo R2 provides us with the information, that this

statistical model explains 3,10% of the variance of the explanatory variables.

Regarding the effect of the ideological position (*EPG\_total*) of the MEP, the statistical analysis yields a positive and statistically significant result, with an average value of 1,21. Thus, the chance, that a MEP votes in favor for a counter-terrorism resolution is 21% higher in comparison to a MEP whose affiliated EPG is located 1 further left on the left-right dimension than the EPG of the first mentioned MEP. After calculating the margins, an even more concrete prediction can be made. Thus, a clear positive influence of the ideological position of the EPG, which equals the ideological position of the individual MEP, on the MEPs' voting behavior is found, with a positive influence of 1,2 in average. As a result of this statistical analysis, a significant effect of the ideology from the individual MEP onto his voting behavior on counter-terror legislation is revealed. MEPs who are located further right on the ideological left-right dimension therefore rather vote in favor of counter terrorist legislation than MEPs located further left. H2 can therefore be accepted.

Therefore, it can be argued with confidence that the underlying individual differences such as the ideology of the MEPs also play a crucial role concerning their voting behavior. Putting these empirical findings in the theoretical context of H2, the assumption, that conservative and right-wing parties rather support law and order policies in comparison to parties located on the left side of the ideological dimension can be applied to the here analyzed case of counter-terrorism resolutions. As discussed earlier, the counter-terrorism legislation can be seen as law and order policies (Wenzelburger 2020:6). Thus, the findings worked out in the empirical analysis above, that MEPs, whose EPGs are located more right on the left-right dimension, are more likely to vote in favor for the counter-terrorism legislation, goes in line with the theoretical approach of the law and order politics. This theoretical argument is supported by the findings in this analysis.

Furthermore, the here accepted H2 can be seen as a specification of H1a, which argues for the dominating effect of the MEPs' EPGs affiliation since the MEPs are organized in EPGs based on their ideological preferences, thereby representing the whole ideological left-right spectrum. Thereby, the results of the analysis in the first analytical step, resulting in the findings that the EPGs predominantly influence the MEPs' voting behavior, is strengthened and supported.

After having discovered the positive effect of the MEPs' ideology onto their voting behavior, the influence of the perceived level of threat of terrorism in the different EU member states onto the voting behavior, which is formulated in H3, is examined. According to the conducted logistic regression, there is a statistically significant marginal negative effect of IV4 (*standardized\_Eurobarometer\_total*) onto DV2. The log

odds are 0,987 times lower for a MEP whose country of origin shows a one percentage higher level of perceived level of threat of terrorism, in comparison to a MEP where the level of perceived threat of terrorism in his country of origin is one percent lower, holding all other IVs constant. Thus, the chance for a MEP to vote in favor of a counter-terrorism legislation is 1,3% lower in comparison to a MEP whose country of origin show a one percentage lower perceived level of threat of terrorism.

After conducting the calculation of margins for the perceived level of threat of terrorism, the prediction can be made more concrete, by saying that a MEP whose country of origin shows a level of perceived threat of terrorism amounting to the standardized 1% has a 88,39% probability to vote in favor of a counter-terrorism legislation. The negative effect of IV4 can be seen here since a MEP whose country shows the highest perceived threat of terrorism, namely 46% which is here standardized and treated as 100%, has a 68,18% chance to support the counter-terrorism legislation. While the effect is marginal, it is still negative and hence, H3 has to be rejected since a higher perceived level of threat of terrorism in a MEPs' country of origin does not encourage the MEP to vote in favor for a counter-terrorism legislation. These empirical findings must also be put into the context of the hypothesis' theoretical framework, namely the theory of the collective securitization which stresses the importance of the recursive interaction, thereby meaning the interactive dialogue between the securitizing actor and its audience which is needed in order to validate the securitizing move (Sperling and Webber 2017:26).

This theoretical assumption thus argued for the influential role of the European population and their attitude onto the EP's legislation in general, and hence also on the here analyzed case of counter-terrorism legislation. Since H3 is rejected, one must acknowledge that the European population, more specifically, its attitude towards terrorism and its perception regarding the threat of terrorism, does not influence the MEPs' voting behavior positively. In contrast, a marginal negative influence, resulting in the fact that MEPs whose countries of origin have a lower perceived threat of terrorism are slightly more likely to support counter-terrorism resolutions in comparison to other MEPs, was found. Thus, these empirical findings are not in line with the theory on collective securitization, more precisely its element of the recursive interaction, and thereby this theoretical framework cannot be applied onto the here analyzed counter-terrorism legislation. The reasons for this are diverse and various but cannot be elaborated at this point, due to the limited scope of this master thesis.

H3 can furthermore be seen as a specification of H1b, which argues for the decisiveness of the member states specifics resulting in a higher internal cohesion within national delegations. Through the rejection of H3, the individual underlying factors of the MEPs based on their

country of origin goes in line with the rejection of H1b, thereby showing the clear predominant effect of the MEPs' EPG affiliation and the significant influence of the underlying individual factors of the MEPs which are also related to their EPG affiliation, namely their ideological position on the left-right dimension.

While the control variable country size is not statistically significant, the objective threat of terrorism is. These control variables were held constant during the calculations to make the model more robust to alternative explanations. The effect of the country size onto the MEPs' voting behavior cannot be interpreted since it is statistically not significant. The objective threat of terrorism was expected to influence the MEPs' voting behavior positively by leading them into supporting a counter-terrorism legislation if their country of origin suffered from a terrorist attack. This positive influence on the MEPs' voting behavior was not found in the statistical model, rather a statistically significant negative effect was observed. Hence surprisingly, MEPs whose countries of origin did not suffer from a terrorist attack in the year of the vote are more likely to support a counter-terrorism legislation than MEPs whose countries of origin experienced a terrorist attack. This finding is contrary to the expected influence of the objective threat of terrorism onto the MEPs' voting behavior.

#### EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The first analysis in this two-step quantitative master thesis examined whether the MEPs vote according to other MEPs from their EPG or according to other MEPs from their national delegation. This question was answered through the comparison of the relative AIs for the EPGs and the national delegations. Since the mean relative AI of the EPGs with 0,588 exceeded the mean relative AI of the national delegations 0,550, and no national delegation showed a higher degree of relative AI than an EPG, it can be stated that the internal cohesion of the EPGs is higher than the internal cohesion of national delegations. Thereby, H1a was accepted while H1b had to be rejected.

Thus, the analysis showed that MEPs voted rather likewise MEPs from their EPGs than from their national delegations. Hereby, the findings are in line with the literature arguing for the dominance of the party influence over country influence. This results in the fact that this theoretical framework can also be applied on the here examined case of counter-terrorism legislation, even though this field is in the highly contested domain of the CFSP. The LI on the other hand, which assumed the domination of national interests, especially since the counter-terrorism lies within the national core interests, is not applicable onto this case. Thus, the EPG affiliation (IV1) has a strong influence on the DV1, the intra-group cohesion, whereas the country of origin (IV2) cannot be seen as a decisive factor concerning the voting behavior of the MEPs.

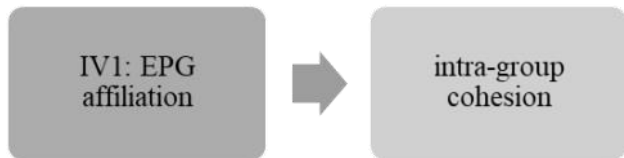


Figure 2: Influences of IV1 on DV1—own depiction

Recalling the research question asking what determines the MEPs’ voting behavior, the acceptance of H1a and thus rejection of H1b provides first valuable information that the MEPs EPG affiliation plays a decisive role. However, in order to examine the differences amongst MEPs from different EPGs, and between MEPs from different member states, underlying individual factors of the MEPs, namely their position on the left-right ideological dimension as well as the different perceived level of threat of terrorism in their countries of origin were analyzed in a logistical regression. The statistical analysis resulted in the acceptance of H2 since an average positive effect of IV3, the MEPs’ ideology amounting to 1,21 onto their voting behavior was found.

This means, that if the EPG of a MEP is located one further right, the chance for him to vote in favor of a counter-terrorism resolution is 21% higher compared to a MEP whose EPG is located further left on the left-right ideological scale. After examining the conditional marginal effects, it must be noted that this positive influence affects the EPGs and their affiliated MEPs located further left on the dimensions stronger than EPGs located on the right side. These findings are in line with the theoretical framework of this hypothesis, the law and order politics which assumes that conservative and right-wing parties are more likely to support law and order policies due to their self-image as defenders of the national security and identity (Minkenberg 1998:174). And since the counter-terrorism legislation can be seen as a law and order policy (Wenzelburger 2020:6), this theory is not only applicable to this case, but is furthermore supported by the conducted statistical analysis.

In comparison to the positive effect of IV3, the ideology of the MEPs operationalized as their EPGs’ ideological position on the left-right dimension, the theoretical assumed positive effect of IV4 argued for in H3, the perceived threat of terrorism, was not found. Rather, a marginal negative effect was found, resulting in the rejection of H3. This goes in line with the result of the first hypothesis test, since H2 is a specification of H1a as it explains the differences of the MEPs voting behavior amongst the different EPGs. The theoretical framework of H3, the theory of collective securitization, promotes the great importance of the recursive interaction between the securitizing actor and its audience. After applying this theory onto the here analyzed case, one must acknowledge that the assumed great importance of the audience, here the European population, is not supported.

Summarizing, DV2, the individual voting behavior of the MEPs, is positively influenced by IV3, the MEPs’ ideology, operationalized as their EPGs’ ideological position while IV4, the perceived threat of terrorism, showed a marginal negative influence on DV2.

As a result, one can therefore argue that the MEPs’ EPG affiliation as well as their ideology are decisive for their voting-behavior regarding the counter-terrorism legislation in the EU during 2004 – 2019. This goes in line with the theory arguing that the MEPs’ EPG affiliation determines their voting behavior (Attina 1990; Hix, Noury and Roland 2007, 2009; Kreppel and Tsebelis 1999). The theoretical assumption, that MEPs vote rather likewise MEPs from the same EPGs, than likewise MEPs from the same country, can thus be applied to the case of counter-terrorism legislation in the EU in the time frame 2004 – 2019.

This agrees with the findings of a very recent study analyzing the broad context of the external relations legislation, which demonstrated that even in sensitive legislative areas, such as external relations, the influence of EPGs prevails over the influence of the interests of the MEP’s countries of origins (Raunio and Wagner 2020b:11). The introduced conflicting theoretical LI ap-



Figure 3: Influence of IV3 on DV2

proach is not supported. However, the influence of the



national delegations onto their MEPs should not be considered as of no importance at all, since some national delegations show a relatively high internal cohesion. Thus, the theoretical approach of Hix et al., according to which the MEPs should be seen as agents with two principles, is furthermore supported in this case of the counter-terrorism legislation (Hix, Noury and Roland 2007:3; 133-136) since the influence of the EPGs on the MEPs' voting behavior prevails while the influence of the national interests through the national delegations cannot be completely neglected.

## CONCLUSION

The present work aimed at closing the research gap concerning the voting behavior of MEPs regarding a specific legislation field within the area of the EU CFSP. In order to do so, 14 legislative acts on counter-terrorism were analyzed in the research period from 2004 – 2019. The theoretical underpinning was derived from scholars such as Attina, Hix, Noury and Roland on the one hand, arguing for the predominance of the MEPs' EPG affiliation over the influence of their countries of origin. On the other hand, the LI was consulted, based on Hoffmann and Moravcsik, according to which the national preferences prevail, especially in the domain of the CFSP. The thereby resulting contradiction was addressed in the here conducted two-step quantitative analysis, including calculations resulting in comparable relative indices of agreement as well as statistical analysis such as a t-test and a logistic regression, which were conducted with Stata. The empirical findings demonstrated that the MEPs' EPG affiliation and the MEPs' ideology predominates their nationality and the different attitudes related to their different countries of origins and therefore dominate their voting behavior.

The first step, examining the intra-group cohesion of each EPG and each national delegation, provides evidence that the cohesion within EPGs is statistically significantly higher than within national delegations. Thus, the voting behavior of the MEPs concerning counter-terrorism legislation is predominantly influenced by their EPG affiliation, and not by their national interests. In the second analytical step, the individual voting behavior of the MEPs was examined to substantiate the first step by finding decisive factors explaining the MEPs' differences. The results of the hypotheses test for H2 and H3, derived from a logistical regression, showed a significant positive effect of the MEP's ideology. Thus, MEPs whose EPG is located further right on the left-right ideological scale, are more likely to support counter-terrorism legislation in comparison to MEPs who are ideologically embedded further left (H2). It was furthermore assumed that the different perceived levels of threat of terrorism in the member states play a decisive role for the MEPs in their voting behavior, arguing that MEPs whose countries of origin show a high level of perceived threat of terrorism are more likely to vote in favor for counter-terrorism

legislation (H3). However, the conducted analysis did not find evidence for this expected positive effect. It showed rather a marginal negative effect, making it surprisingly slightly more unlikely for MEPs to support the respective legislative acts if their countries of origin show a high level of perceived threat of terrorism.

To summarize, this paper demonstrated the prevailing effect of the EPGs concerning the MEPs voting behavior on counter-terrorism legislation: Firstly, because the EPGs' intra-group cohesion is higher than the cohesion within national delegations. And secondly, since the ideology of the EPGs, which build the basis for their organizational structure, is another decisive factor.

Hence, the empirical results are in line with the extensive literature arguing for the prevalence of the EPGs over national interests when analyzing the external influences of the MEPs. Thus, the research question posed in the beginning, what determines the voting behavior of the MEP? can be answered with the predominance of the EPGs' influence as well as the ideological differences, as demonstrated in this case of the EP's counter-terrorism legislation. This furthermore shows that MEPs do not vote solely according to their own opinion and their own values, but are influenced by external factors, namely first and foremost their EPG affiliation. Hence, the MEPs are subject to the means of coercion or incentives issued by their EPGs.

The puzzle introduced in the beginning of this master thesis, caused by two conflicting theories arguing for the dominating influence of the EPGs on the one hand and the national delegations on the other hand on the MEPs' voting behavior concerning counter-terrorism legislation, was thereby solved.

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