

# Cohesion or Cacophony?

An analysis of EU voting behaviour in the United Nations  
General Assembly from the 62nd until the 65th session

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# Abstract

The EU has struggled for many years to be able to speak with a single voice in external affairs. The aim of this thesis is to analyze how cohesive the EU is in the UN General Assembly (UNGA). This is done by studying the voting behaviour of the EU member states in the UNGA from the 62nd until the 65th session (2007-2011). Three hypotheses are constructed to test whether the EU voting cohesion has been affected by the change of US administration in 2009, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and the financial crisis that reached Europe in 2008. The hypotheses are based on assumptions from realism and the new institutionalisms. The method used is Roll-Call Analysis and the material is the voting records of the UNGA. The main findings are that the EU voting cohesion has decreased over the analyzed period and that the hypothesis about the financial crisis therefore is the one closest to the empirical findings, although it cannot be completely supported.

*Key words:* European Union, United Nations, voting behaviour, foreign policy, cohesion

Words: 19 962

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# 1 Introduction

The Member States shall support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity and shall comply with the Union's action in this area.

The Member States shall work together to enhance and develop their mutual political solidarity. They shall refrain from any action which is contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations (Art. 24(3) TEU, European Union 2010).

Ever since the members of the European Economic Community (EEC) started to cooperate in matters of foreign policy – at first *outside* of the EEC, in the European Political Cooperation (EPC), and after the Maastricht Treaty, *within* the European Union under the Common Foreign and Security Policy – the aim has been to be able to ‘speak with a single voice’. The difficulties inherent in the task of coordinating the policies of numerous states (six at the start of the EPC and 27 today), in a field which traditionally has been closely connected to the national sovereignty, are obvious. At the same time, the increased influence and political weight that comes from the successful coordination of the policies of 27 states are equally obvious. It is apparent that the EEC/EU member states have seen the benefits of foreign policy coordination at an early stage (Farrell 2006:27) and every treaty amendment since the EPC was introduced has included some provisions aiming at increasing the EU's ability to be a unified foreign policy actor with a single voice (Hosli et al 2010:9-11). Yet, it is equally apparent that the EU still struggles to achieve this aim (Guibernau 2009:283).

Another important feature of the EU's foreign policy is its embracement of *multilateralism* (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan 2008:299-301). Multilateralism can be defined as an approach to international relations “based on the idea that if international cooperative regimes for the management of conflicts of interests are to be effective, they must represent a broad consensus among the states of the international system” (McLean & McMillan 2003:356).

The importance that the EU sees in multilateralism is reflected in several of the Union's key documents (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan 2008:299-301). In the *European Security Strategy* from 2003 one of the underlying principles is to base the security in an ‘effective multilateral system’ (European Union 2003:9). The commitment to multilateralism is also reflected in the *Treaty on the European Union* (European Union 2010) which states that:

The Union shall seek to develop relations and build partnerships with third countries, and international, regional or global organisations which share the principles referred to in the first subparagraph. It shall promote multilateral solutions to common problems, in particular in the framework of the United Nations (Art. 21(1) TEU).

This paragraph highlights the importance that the EU sees in multilateral cooperation in general and in the UN in particular. That the UN has a pivotal role in the EU's pursuit of an effective multilateral system is also evident in the Commission's communication *The European Union and the United Nations: The Choice of multilateralism*, in which the Commission describes the EU's commitment to multilateralism as "a defining principle of its external policy" (European Commission 2003:3) and in which the UN is described as the "backbone of the multilateral system" (European Commission 2003:23).

So, if the desire to speak with one voice and the embracement of multilateralism, with the UN as the most important forum for pursuing multilateral solutions, are defining principles of the EU's external policies, it becomes relevant to ask questions about how the EU member states act within the UN.

One way of doing this, which has been the focus of many previous studies (examples of this research are presented in Chapter 2), is to analyze how the EU member states vote in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). When seen over a period of a few decades, the general trend is that the EU member states' voting cohesion has increased and in recent years the member states have voted identically on about 70-80 per cent of the UNGA resolutions (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan 2008:305). However, the voting cohesion continues to have its ups and downs (Ojanen 2011:63). Furthermore, even though identical voting has increased over time, these numbers show that there is still a considerable amount of votes where the EU member states fail to vote coherently.

The EU member states' voting behaviour is, thus, rather well documented and analyzed historically. However, no study has covered the voting behaviour in the most recent years, and considering that the international development has taken certain 'turns' lately, there appears to be a need to update the existing research in this field. Three of these 'turns' - the Lisbon Treaty, the financial crisis and the new Obama administration - are in this thesis assumed to have affected the EU voting cohesion and will, therefore, be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 3 where they will be discussed in relation to two theories on international cooperation - realism and the new institutionalisms.

## 1.1 Research Problem

The intention with this thesis is, therefore, to depart in earlier studies of voting behaviour in the UN General Assembly and then to conduct an analysis of the voting behaviour in those years that have not been covered by previous research (2007-2011, i.e. the 62nd-65th UNGA sessions). The overall research question for this thesis is thus:

How has the voting behaviour of the EU member states in the United Nations General Assembly developed from the 62nd until the 65th session and how has it been affected by the financial crisis starting in 2008, by the change of US administration in 2009 and by the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009?

## 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to contribute to and update the existing body of research on EU voting behaviour in the United Nations General Assembly by *describing* how the member states of the European Union have voted from the 62nd until the 65th<sup>1</sup> session and by *analyzing* whether it is possible to discern any impact on the voting cohesion by the change of US administration in 2009, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and the financial crisis that reached Europe in 2008.

I will not try to find any *causal* explanations to why shifts in EU voting cohesion at the UNGA changes or remain unchanged during the analyzed period. The aim is rather to find *correlations* between the three ‘events’ and the level of voting cohesion and to come up with tentative explanations that could constitute the base for future research.

The topic of this thesis is relevant as it will contribute to the existing body of research on EU foreign policy in general and on the EU in the UNGA in particular. By analyzing the EU voting behaviour in the 62nd to the 65th session this thesis will provide a descriptive result that then will be used to test hypotheses about what affects the EU member states’ ability to vote cohesively. Regardless of whether the hypotheses in this thesis are supported or falsified, the descriptive result of the EU voting behaviour could constitute the base of future research.

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<sup>1</sup> In the 65th session, the recorded votes until 7 April are included.

### 1.3 Why study EU voting cohesion at the UNGA?

This question can be answered by, at first, discussing the importance of the UNGA. The UNGA is one of the UN's six primary organs and it is the only major body where all UN members are represented equally on the principle of 'one state, one vote' (Gareis & Varwick 2005:22-23). It is also the only primary organ that can cover any issue in the UN Charter (Wouters 2001:5). Although the UNGA does not have the authority to adopt binding decisions, its resolutions and decisions set the international agenda (Wouters 2001:6) and many of its resolutions are, with the help of political and moral pressure, almost universally accepted (Gareis & Varwick 2005:26).

These features of the UNGA indicate that it is an important forum for the EU and that it therefore is important to speak with a single voice. Moreover, the strictly intergovernmental nature of the UNGA (one state, one voice) implies a hard test for the EU's ability to agree on common positions (Farrell 2006:28). The broad agenda of the UNGA contributes to this hard test too. As such, its voting cohesion in the UNGA is *one* important indicator of the cohesion of the EU's foreign policy.

### 1.4 EU coordination and representation in the UNGA

This study includes UNGA sessions both before and after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (which changed the EU's procedures at the UN). It is therefore necessary to give a short introduction to the EU coordination and representation in the UNGA and also to present some of the changes in the Lisbon Treaty<sup>2</sup>.

All issues that are dealt with in the UNGA are considered as issues falling under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), regardless of whether they are first pillar issues in the EU. Decisions are therefore made by unanimity (Luif 2003:13). The massive amount of issues that are discussed in the various committees of the UNGA demands extensive coordination between the member states' representations in New York – some 1200-1300 coordination meetings are held annually (Wouters 2001:7, European Union 2011). This complex coordination process has implications for the EU's role in the UNGA and it has been described as reactive rather than proactive – the EU seldom put forward its own proposals (Luif 2003:16).

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<sup>2</sup> For a thorough analysis of the EU coordination process at the UN see Rasch 2008: 23-133.



Before the Lisbon Treaty it was the responsibility of the rotating presidency to manage the coordination process (Luif 2003:13) as well as representing the EU whenever a common position had been agreed (European Union 2011b).

After the Lisbon Treaty, the responsibilities of the rotating presidency have progressively been transferred to the new EU delegation (European Union 2011b). This new delegation has replaced the Commission Delegation as well as the Council's Liaison Office which existed before the Lisbon Treaty (Luif 2003:14, European Union 2011b).

## 1.5 Definitions and delimitations

*EU foreign policy* is in this thesis mainly referring to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Since all issues in the UNGA are considered as falling under the CFSP, the focus on foreign policy cohesion relates mainly to the ability to act cohesively in CFSP matters. However, as some issues dealt with in the UNGA do not *usually* fall under the CFSP (e.g. development and trade), the term *EU foreign policy* will be used to avoid confusion.

In this thesis the *EU voting cohesion* is the subject of analysis. Voting cohesion is merely one indicator of the EU's general foreign policy *cohesion*. Cohesion in a broad sense can be defined as "the degree to which an entity is able to formulate and articulate internally consistent policy preferences" (Kissack 2007:3). In the UNGA context another type of cohesion is *declaratory cohesion*, i.e. the ability to issue joint statements, proposals et cetera (Kissack 2007:5). However, only the EU's ability to *vote* cohesively will be analyzed in this thesis.

As indicated in the research problem it is UNGA *sessions* – not years – that are studied in this thesis. A session starts the third week of September and meetings are then held throughout the year. However, the bulk of the meetings are held between September and December (Gareis & Varwick 2005:26).

## 1.6 Disposition

In the next chapter an overview of existing research about the EU in the UNGA is provided. It is concluded that this field has a need for more research. In the third chapter the theoretical foundations of the thesis are presented. Two theoretical schools, realism and the new institutionalisms are then presented. In the same chapter three hypotheses about the change of the US administration, the Lisbon Treaty and the financial crisis are founded upon assumptions from the two theoretical schools. In the fourth chapter the methodology and the material is

discussed. The fifth chapter presents the findings from the empirical analysis. These findings are then analyzed and related to the hypotheses in the sixth chapter. The seventh chapter concludes this thesis by discussing its main findings and some of its shortcomings and by giving recommendations for future research.

## 2 Research overview

This chapter will start with a categorization of the existing research that focuses on the EU and the UN, placing the present study in the category of studies that focus on the voting cohesion of the EU member states in the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Thereafter, some of the most important studies will be presented. The research overview is then concluded with a section with some general remarks about the methodologies and theories that have been applied and about discernible patterns in the findings of previous studies.

### 2.1 Categorization of existing research on the EU and the UN

The EU's activities at the UN have been the focus of much research for a few decades and the topic has attracted scholars both from the International relations field and from the European integration field. The existing studies have had various focuses and Maximilian B. Rasch, who himself has produced a comprehensive analysis of the EU at the UN (Rasch 2008), divides the existing research into five subcategories.

First there are studies focusing on single EU member states' engagement at the UN. The second category entails studies focusing on a group of EU member states, e.g. the Nordics or the Central and East European Countries. A third category consists of studies that use quantitative voting analysis to measure the degree of cohesion in the EU's foreign policy. Studies in the fourth category adopt a more thematic angle, focusing on, for instance, human rights or reform of the UN Security Council. Finally, there are studies focusing on the relationship between the EU and the UN (Rasch 2008: 15-19).

Although the present study will touch upon several of these categories, it is a clear example of the third category. Therefore, a brief overview of previous studies on the EU member states' voting behaviour in the UNGA will now follow.

## 2.2 Examples of existing research

One of the first studies of the (at the time) EEC in the UNGA was conducted by Leon Hurwitz (1975). By looking at the voting behaviour of the then six to nine member states, during the years 1948 – 1973 he finds that among the six original member states there is a high level of cohesion, but that this varies from one issue area to another. France is the member state least in line with the others (Hurwitz 1975:233). Another interesting result is that the overall cohesion among the six founding members decreased in the analyzed period (Ibid:234). Hurwitz ascribes the decreased cohesion mainly to the voting behaviour of France (Ibid:233-4, 236-38), but hypothesizes that a shift in the tension in the Cold War could be another factor (Ibid:236).

Strömvik (1998) analyzes the voting alignments of the EU 15 in the UNGA in the period 1975-1995. In addition to mapping out the general trends of voting behaviour, this study also discusses the reasons behind the shifts in voting behaviour that are found. Out of the six tentative explanations that are tested, it seems as if systems-level explanations, in this case the shifts in tension during the Cold War, best explain shifts in EU member states' voting behaviour (Strömvik 1998:192, 194).

Luif (2003) has studied the voting behaviour of the EU member states and a number of third countries in the UNGA in the years 1979-2002. He finds that the overall voting cohesion of the EU 15 has had its ups and downs (Luif 2003:27), but also that there are persistent differences between issue areas. The four issue areas that are included are the Middle East, Human Rights, International Security, and Decolonization. The result of the study is that voting on the Middle East and Human Rights have always led to a higher level of cohesion than the overall average cohesion, whereas voting on International security and Decolonization have always been below the average (Ibid:27-29). In general, France and UK are the two countries that diverge most from the other member states (Ibid:31).

Wouters (2001) has studied the EU cohesion in the UNGA in the years 1995-1999. In line with the findings of Luif (2003), he finds that although the overall cohesion has increased over time, the level of cohesion is lower on International security and Decolonization (Wouters 2001:14-15, 21). One of the conclusions is that the increased overall cohesion has been facilitated by extensive coordination efforts among the EU member states' representations in New York, but that this recipe is insufficient to overcome the remaining intra-EU splits (Ibid:26-27).

Jakobsson (2009) examines whether the War on Terror and the fifth enlargement of the EU in 2004 have affected the EU member states' voting cohesion in the UNGA. His findings, after studying the years 2000-2005, are that the War on Terror, in particular the crisis over Iraq, led to a decrease in the voting cohesion and that the fifth enlargement did not negatively affect the voting cohesion

(Jakobsson 2009:539-40). From these findings he draws the conclusion – just as Strömvik (1998) – that a systems-level hypothesis is best able to explain the voting behaviour of the EU member states in the UNGA (Ibid: 549). Once again, France, and especially the UK, are found to be the most divergent countries (Ibid:543).

Rasch (2008) analyzes the voting behaviour in the years 1988-2005 and includes all the present 27 EU member states. The main findings are, for instance, that the degree of voting cohesion is higher on Middle East and Human Rights issues than on International Security and Decolonization issues (Ibid:235-50). Interestingly, he finds that it is not UK and France (although on third and fourth place) that are “the Main Dissenters” (Ibid:262) in the analyzed period, but that Cyprus and Malta possess this unflattering epithet (Ibid:262-63). However, in the last few of the analyzed years, Cyprus and Malta have converged with the EU majority (except on Middle East Issues), whereas the UK and France have seen no such convergence (Ibid:265-66). Thus, also this latter finding is in line with the other studies.

A study that belong to the second category (i.e. studies focusing on a group of states) should also be mentioned here. Johansson-Nogués (2006), examines how the Central and East European countries (CEEC) that joined the EU in 2004 have been affected by (the prospects of) EU membership. In terms of voting behaviour, Johansson-Nogués finds that the CEECs have not chosen *one* group of member states to align with, but that “there is evidence of shopping around, shifting coalitions, and pragmatism in trying out what would serve the national interest best” (Ibid:100).

## 2.3 General remarks - existing research

All of the abovementioned studies of EU voting behaviour in the UNGA use a descriptive statistical analysis of recorded roll-call votes as their main methodological tool (Birnberg 2009:46). However, different variants of this tool are used and since the studies also focus on different time spans, it is hard to compare their findings directly (Hosli et al. 2010:16) (these differences will be discussed in Chapter 4). Nevertheless, there are some discernible patterns. First, the overall EU voting cohesion has increased over the last twenty years, but has had its ups and downs (Ojanen 2011:63). Second, the countries that most often are found to be most divergent are UK and France. Third, the degree of cohesion varies between issue areas, with Middle East and Human Rights issues usually scoring higher than International Security and Decolonization. Finally, in those studies that have tried to explain the shifts in voting cohesion, systems-level explanations, e.g. shifts in tension in international politics, have been found to have most merit, although it has not been seen as an exclusive explanation.

Regarding the theoretical approaches that have been applied, a first point to make is that several of the previous studies have been of an empirical nature, and have only to a limited extent (e.g. Strömvik 1998) or not at all (e.g. Wouters 2001, Luif 2003 and Rasch 2008) been anchored in a theoretical discussion. Among those studies that have applied a theoretical perspective, two perspectives seem to be favoured: realism and constructivism.

What could be concluded from this overview of the existing research is that none of these studies have examined the most recent years. Thus, and considering that important changes that might have had an impact on the EU coordination efforts have taken place in recent years (e.g. the Lisbon Treaty, the financial crisis and the change of US administration), it appears as if the existing body of research needs to be updated.

## 3 Theory

The topic of this thesis is located between two major fields of studies: International relations (IR) and European integration. It is a clear example of the former as it deals with relations between sovereign states within *the* most important international organization. It is also an example of the latter as it deals with the European Union's foreign policy, which is a step in the process of integration in Europe.

An important distinguishing feature between international relations theory and European integration theory is that the former has a bias towards explaining broad phenomena (Andreatta 2005:19) (e.g. the EU is treated as an example of integration or of an international organization *in general*), whereas the latter is focusing exclusively on explaining the integration in Europe. When analyzing the behaviour of the EU member states in the UNGA it can, therefore, be fruitful to include theoretical assumptions from both fields. IR theories might then come with important insights about relations between states and groups of states on a general level, whereas European integration theories might offer insights about the specific nature of the EU foreign policy cooperation.

When considering the full range of theoretical approaches that exists within these two fields it is obvious that numerous theories could be utilized to explain and hypothesize about EU voting behaviour in the UNGA. The theoretical starting points that will form the basis of the hypotheses in this study will therefore be chosen upon the findings of earlier studies of EU voting behaviour. However, before starting to theorize about whether and why shifts in EU voting cohesion should be predicted or not, it is useful to take a step back and ask, in the first place, why the EU member states cooperate at all in foreign policy matters.

### 3.1 Why do sovereign (European) states cooperate?

The question about why sovereign states decide to cooperate with each other has been one of the most debated questions within the study of International relations and the explanations differ from one theoretical approach to another. Despite this ongoing debate, the cooperation in foreign policy matters among the EU member states have traditionally been largely overlooked by IR theorists, or dealt with as an empirical example (Andreatta 2005:19). However, as the EU foreign policy has evolved, those IR theorists that have not previously dealt with the subject have been forced to consider it (Andreatta 2005:23). IR theories might therefore be

more suitable to explain cooperation between states *on a general level*, whereas theories focusing on European integration might provide useful insights regarding cooperation between states *in Europe*. For this reason, *realism* and the *new institutionalisms* have been selected as the theoretical framework for this study. Although the latter is not a European Integration theory *per se* (in fact, it is not a single theory, but includes several theories), it has been frequently applied to explain European integration (Pollack 2009:125).

### 3.1.1 Realism

Realist theories are based on three main assumptions (Grieco 1997:164). First, states are the central actors in the international system. Other types of actors are recognized, but states set the scene in which these actors operate (Grieco 1997:164). Second, the international system is anarchic as there is no authority above the nation states (Grieco 1997:164, Cohn 2005:66). Due to this lack of a central authority in the anarchic international system, there is always a possibility for states to “resort to force to get what it wants” (Wolforth 2008:34), with the result that politics tend to be “dominated by military considerations and by the fragility of trust and cooperation” (Andreatta 2005:23). Third, states are rational, goal-oriented (Grieco 1997:164) – with survival as the number one goal (Mearsheimer 2009:57) – and value-maximizing (Allison & Zelikow 1999:27-28).

When considering these three assumptions, it comes as no surprise that realist theories are quite sceptical about the likelihood of international cooperation (Andreatta 2005:25) and that the importance of international institutions is heavily discounted (Grieco 1997:184). The fact that cooperation between states *do* occur – not least among the European states – has forced realist theorists to adapt their theories to be able to explain this phenomenon (Andreatta 2005:25).

Grieco (1997:174) argues that realist theorists are fully aware of that cooperation is an important feature of world politics and states that “[r]ealism holds that states may cooperate by forming defensive alliances aimed against external challengers”. Behind cooperation, there is often a *balance-of-power* logic, which causes states to form alliances and to cooperate against common enemies (Mearsheimer 2009:59). Cooperation is, however, always constrained by three factors, which makes cooperation both hard to achieve and hard to sustain. The first is that states are concerned about relative gains, i.e. it is important for a state that it does not do worse than any other state in an agreement. The second is that states are concerned about cheating. States are always tempted to cheat on the agreement and at the same time they fear that others may cheat and gain a substantial advantage (Mearsheimer 2009:59). The third factor is that states, in order to ensure their survival, “prefer to be able to perform as many functions (especially those having an effect on their security and autonomy) as possible” (Grieco 1997:174). On the contrary, cooperation usually involves some degree of



specialization, and states are therefore reluctant to enter agreements that involve functional diffusion (Grieco 1997:174).

Despite the awareness that cooperation among states does take place, most realists have downplayed the rise of the EU as a power (Jørgensen 2010:98). The realist assumptions about the constraints on international cooperation place realism in a problematic situation when it comes to explaining the extensive cooperation among the EU member states, in particular the development of common institutions (Grieco 1997:184-85). Realist theories generally claim that international institutions only marginally affect state behaviour and the prospects of cooperation, and the role of the EU institutions in the European integration process has, thus, caused problems for realists (Collard-Wexler 2006:398, 401).

An attempt to explain the European integration process is made by Grieco (1997:185-186) who explains this development with the concepts 'voice opportunities' and 'dominance rationalization'. According to his arguments, weaker European states choose to cooperate through institutions to balance against external challengers and to lessen their dominance by the stronger partners. This is facilitated by institutional rules that give the weaker states 'voice opportunities' (Grieco 1997:185). The stronger partner (Germany), on the other hand, accept these arrangements since the cooperation provides economic benefits and at the same time institutionalizes and legitimizes its dominant position (Grieco 1997:186).

Finally, it could be argued that hypotheses derived from realist theories, despite their somewhat insufficient explanations of the European integration process, are feasible in the context of this study due to their focus on system-level explanations (Jakobsson 2009:534). The relationship between systemic structure and state behaviour is the main focus of realism. As Jørgensen (2004:38) puts it, "systemic structural impulses, transmitted via balance of power dynamics, determine state behaviour". Since the UN is a strictly intergovernmental forum where each state has one vote, realism should - if anywhere - have something to say about what determines the behaviour of the member states.

### 3.1.2 New Institutionalisms

A second branch of theories, which differs from realism, are the *new institutionalisms*. March and Olsen (1998:948) states that

[...] an institutional approach is one that emphasizes the role of institutions and institutionalization in the understanding of human actions within an organization, social order, or society.

It is, however, important from the outset to note that the new institutionalisms in fact consist of plural institutionalisms, each with its own theoretical assumptions

(Pollack 2009:125). What binds them together, and what distinguish them from realism (although this is not the only distinguishing feature), is the claim that institutions matter (Keohane 1995:47-48, Jupille & Caporaso 1999:431). Due to this view on institutions, the new institutionalisms have been frequently applied to the study of the EU and European integration (Pollack 2009:125).

Two types of new institutionalisms will be discussed here; *rational-choice institutionalism* (RCI) and *sociological institutionalism* (SI). A third type is *historical institutionalism* (HI), but since it shares many of the basic assumptions of the rational-choice institutionalism (Pollack 2009:128) it will not be presented in detail here. A further argument for not having to include the third type is that this study does not concern why institutions are designed in a specific way, but rather concerns the way in which institutions might affect state behaviour. In this sense, both RCI and HI rely on rationalist basic assumptions.

RCI and SI differ in their ontological position on human agency, where the former assumes that human actors' preferences are exogenously given (Jupille & Caporaso 1999:432) and that actors are strategic utility-maximizers (Pollack 2009:126), whereas the latter assumes that actors do not exist independently from their social environment, which defines the identities and preferences of the actors (Risse 2009:145-46). These differing ontological starting points have implications for how these two perspectives explain why states cooperate/create institutions and how institutions affect state behaviour. Furthermore, RCI and SI differ in their very definition of institutions, where the former has a narrow definition that includes only formal institutions and where the latter has a much broader definition including informal norms and conventions as well as formal rules (Pollack 2009:126). Each type will now be presented separately.

#### *Rational-choice institutionalism*

As indicated by the name, rational-choice institutionalism assumes that actors are rational (Keohane 1988:386). Like realism, RCI considers the state to be the principal actor in the international system. When states are assumed to be rational they are seen as goal-seeking actors with central interests defined principally from their position in the international system (Weber 1997:233). In this view, international institutions are purposely created by states and the reason is "the combination of the potential *value* of agreements and the *difficulty* of making them [...]" (Keohane 1988:386). Institutions are needed for states to be able to cooperate in world politics "on more than a sporadic basis" (Ibid:386). In this way "institutions are created by states *because of* their anticipated effects on patterns of behavior" (Keohane 1995:46) and the benefits that come from the creation of institutions include changed incentives to cheat, reduced transaction costs, issue linkages (Keohane 1995:49-50), and decreased uncertainty through the provision of information and monitoring (Keohane 1988:386).

In sum,

Rationalist institutionalism views social institutions [...] as primarily constraining the behaviour of actors with given identities and preferences. These actors follow a ‘logic of consequentialism’ (March and Olsen 1989, 1998) enacting given identities and interests and trying to realise their preferences through strategic behaviour. Institutions constrain or widen the range of choices available to actors to realize their interests (Risse 2009:147).

### *Sociological institutionalism*

Sociological institutionalism is closely related to social constructivism and shares many of its assumptions. The basic assumption of sociological institutionalism is that structures and agents are mutually constitutive, i.e. the social environment (structure) constitutes who ‘we’ (agents) are and at the same time do ‘we’ create, reproduce and change the social environment through our daily practices (Risse 2009:145-146). Translated into international politics, this implies that it “makes no sense to talk about states separately from one another or from their environment” (Weber 1997:234).

In contrast to RCI, where actors are assumed to be driven by a *logic of consequentialism*, SI assumes that actors are driven by a *logic of appropriateness*. In this logic actors are not driven by strategic considerations with the purpose of maximizing their given preferences, but are instead assumed to trying to do the appropriate thing by figuring out the appropriate rule in any given situation (Risse 2009:148). In this sense,

[a]ction involves evoking an identity or role and matching the obligations of that identity or role to a specific situation. The pursuit of purpose is associated with identities more than with interests, and with the selection of rules more than with individual rational expectations (March & Olsen 1998:951).

Appropriate action by a state is then action that is essential to that state’s conception of itself (March & Olsen 1998:951). Institutions – whether formal or informal – are therefore not the result of strategic action by states, but rather the result of states (and state representatives) trying to fulfill their identities (March & Olsen 1998:958). Due to the mutual constitutiveness of structure and agency, international institutions (structure) do not only constrain the available choices for states (as RCI assumes), but can also change the way in which states (agents) define their interests and identities. This difference in the view of institutions has implications for how the concept of *Europeanization* is understood, and it is to this concept that we now turn.

### *Europeanization*

When these two theoretical approaches have been applied to the study of the EU and European Integration, both RCI and SI scholars have frequently used the

concept of *Europeanization*. This concept is, however, “ill-defined” (Wong 2005:135) and various perspectives assign different meanings to it (Brommesson 2010:227), even to the extent that some researchers have questioned if the concept is useful at all (Olsen 2002:921). Accordingly, the two perspectives presented here have very different understandings of Europeanization and have applied the concept in different ways (Bulmer 2007:50-51).

A very general definition of Europeanization is that it “refers to the political and policy changes caused by the impact of membership in the European Union on the member states” (Wong 2005:135). This definition indicates that membership in the EU leads to some form of adaptational pressures. These adaptational pressures are at work whenever there is misfit between EU policies/politics/institutions and domestic policies/politics/institutions (Börzel & Risse 2009:1-2, 4) and the degree of misfit determines the level of the pressure (Börzel & Risse 2009:5). Despite the general nature of this definition, it is a useful starting point for a discussion about how RCI and SI understand the process of Europeanization.

Rational choice institutionalism would emphasize two meanings of Europeanization – first as a ‘top-down’ process of national adaptation, and second, as a ‘bottom-up’ process of national projection (Wong 2005:136-137, Börzel & Risse 2009:6-7). In the ‘top-down’ sense, Europeanization is understood as a process in which the member states react and adapt their policies and politics to the requirements of the EU institutions (Wong 2005:136). These adaptations comes at a cost for the member states and due to these adaptational costs, the member states try to upload their own national policies to the European level in order to reduce their costs (Börzel & Risse 2009:7). Through this ‘bottom-up’ process, in which member states project their national policies at the European level, previously national policies are ‘Europeanized’(Wong 2005:137).

A sociological institutionalist understanding of Europeanization emphasizes the socializing effects of the EU institutions on the individuals who participate in them (Checkel 2005: 807). It is assumed here that the identities and objectives of individuals who participate in repeated meetings in the EU institutions over a long period of time might be redefined from purely national to also include ‘the European’ (Wong 2005:138, Checkel 2005:807, Bulmer 2007:51, 55). This kind of “élite socialisation” (Wong 2005:138) is then assumed to spread from the officials who participate in the EU institutions back into the member states. In relation to the EU member states’ foreign policies it is assumed that as diplomats and national officials start to ‘think European’ this “feeds back into EU member states and reorients their foreign policy cultures along similar lines” (Wong 2005:138-139). In this way the foreign policies of the member states converge.

In sum, none of these understandings of Europeanization can be assumed to be the *only* explanation. It is likely that both are present and that the Europeanization of the EU member states’ foreign policies should be understood as a two-way process, i.e. both top-down and bottom-up (Wong 2005:152), that entails elements

of both rationality and socialization (Risse 2009:158, Jenson & Merand 2010:83-84).

## 3.2 Potential explaining variables and hypotheses

In this study, it will be tested whether it is possible to discern whether *the change of US administration, the financial crisis* and *the Lisbon Treaty* have affected the level of voting cohesion among the EU member states in the United Nations General Assembly. So why have these factors been chosen as potential explaining variables in this study?

The first and most important base for the selection is the findings from existing research on EU voting behaviour in the UNGA. Apart from these findings, these three variables have been chosen because it is possible to argue theoretically about anticipated effects of these ‘events’. In addition, they are examples of both external (the change in US administration and the financial crisis) and internal factors (the Lisbon Treaty) and therefore make it possible to test hypotheses from various theoretical schools.

There is a risk that the effects of these three events take out each other, for instance that the effects of the financial crisis take out the effects of the Lisbon Treaty. There is also a risk that other variables may influence the ability to vote cohesively (Jakobsson 2009:533). If the purpose of this study had been to find *causal relationships* between the events and the level of EU voting cohesion, this would have been a serious problem. However, since the purpose is to analyze *potential explanations* by finding *correlations*, this problem is not that serious, but one should anyhow be aware of the risk.

In the following, each of the three variables will be presented. Each variable will be presented in a separate section consisting of, first, a presentation of the event and empirical findings from existing research, and second, a theoretical discussion and presentation of the hypothesis.

### 3.2.1 Hypothesis 1: Changes in the international system – Obama entering office

One common explanation is that changes in the international system have the potential to cause shifts in EU voting cohesion. In particular, shifts in tension on a global level seem to be related to the level of voting cohesion, in that an increase in tension produces lower cohesion among the EU member states (e.g. Strömvik 1998, Jakobsson 2009, Hurwitz 1975, Rasch 2008). The link between tension in the international system and level of voting cohesion, could be that during times of increased external pressure, the EU member states expose their national

preferences, which might make it hard to act cohesively (Jakobsson 2009:532). One example of such shifts in tension are the ups and downs in the relation between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, which seem to almost perfectly coincide with shifts in the EEC member states' voting cohesion (Strömvik 1998:192, 194). Another, more recent, example is US-led War on Terror and the initiation of the war in Iraq, which coincided with a decrease in voting cohesion among the EU member states (Jakobsson 2009:549).

An especially important building block in this explanation seems to be the foreign policy behaviour of the US. Since the relations to the US are not equally important or strong for all EU member states (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan 2008:312), shifts in US foreign policy might lead to dilemmas for those countries closest to the US. This was visualized by the crisis over Iraq, which caused an intra-EU split with the UK leading the camp following the Bush administration's decision to intervene and France and Germany leading the camp resisting US policies (Mauer 2011:31-34). This split was also reflected in the voting behaviour in the UNGA, which decreased shortly after the split occurred (Jakobsson 2009:549).

So, if those changes in the international system that tend to influence EU foreign policy cohesion are mainly related to the US foreign policy behaviour, then it is appealing to assume that a change in the US foreign policy doctrine could be such a systems-level change. These assumptions are strengthened by a study of Gabriele Birnberg (2009), who analyzes, among other things, the impact of the transatlantic partnership on EU voting behaviour. On those issues where the US position diverges from the position of the EU majority, cohesion among the EU member states is much lower than on those issues where the positions of the US and the EU majority converge (Birnberg 2009:148-49, 153-54).

Furthermore, some analysts argue that the US influence in the EU politics is far greater in the politico-security realm than in, for instance, the political economy. In the politico-security realm, the ability of the US to incite defection from common positions and to undermine solidarity is increased (Smith & Steffenson 2005:349). However, as Smith and Steffenson (2005:349-50) put it,

[t]his need not be a matter of conscious or explicit US policies; it can simply be a reflection of the different incentives and natural political leanings of the member states, as well as an indication of the EU's institutional setup in the areas of Common Foreign & Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

If these assumptions are correct it becomes interesting to look at the differences in foreign policy doctrines between the Bush administration and the present Obama administration, and the possible impact that they could have on EU voting cohesion in the UNGA. The foreign policy of George W. Bush was clearly of a unilateral nature. Iraq was probably the most obvious example of this

unilateralism, but the rejection of the Kyoto Protocol and the withdrawal from the treaties on the International Criminal Court and on missile defence (Hodge 2010:283) serves as other examples of the Bush doctrine. This unilateralism clashes severely with the EU's embracement of multilateralism and several of its common policies (Musu 2011:128). It is therefore possible to assume that those countries closest to the US, mainly the UK and the CEECs (Mauer 2011:33-34), were torn between US policies on the one hand, and EU loyalty on the other, with the result that the EU foreign policy coordination became more difficult and therefore negatively affecting the voting cohesion in the UNGA. Some scholars even indicate that the Bush administration had an intentional strategy aiming at driving a wedge into the EU (Monar 2009:3, Mauer 2011:33).

Turning to the Obama administration then, what makes it likely that this administration could affect the EU voting cohesion in a different way than its predecessor? A first point here is that Obama has broken with the unilateralism and hostile attitude towards multilateralism and institution-building (Mauer 2011:39, Hosli et al 2010:4). As a sign of this break, President Obama, during his first months in office, adopted a strategy of multilateral engagement to signal his serious intentions about international cooperation (Gowan 2010:2). A second point – however superficial it may seem – is that “the new President will have the attraction of not being George W. Bush” (Rees 2009:117). The ideological perspective and the harsh language of the Bush administration seem to have damaged the relation with some of the EU states, and Obama could, therefore, be seen as a welcome break from the strained last eight years (Rees 2009:117). As one analyst put it:

Barack Obama's approach to foreign policy has nothing in common with that of George W. Bush [...] and the radical departure from the confrontational style of conducting foreign policy that characterised the Bush era throws a window of opportunity wide open for the EU ambition of a world governed by effective multilateralism [...] (de Vasconcelos 2009:11).

### *The hypothesis*

The first hypothesis is based upon the realist assumptions about the prevalence of the national interest and the weakness of international cooperation, in this case the European Union. From a realist point of view, the fact that the members of the EU do cooperate in many policy areas does not remove the prevalence of the national interests of the member states. Therefore, the EU member states coordinate their foreign policies only when it allows them to better defend their national interests than when acting on their own (Brandtner & Gowan 2009:39). Since the most important national interest for any state is survival, and due to the constraints that are inherent in international cooperation, cooperation in matters of ‘high politics’ is particularly contentious. This would explain the intergovernmental structure of the CFSP/ESDP, as well as the difficulties in finding a common position that the EU has experienced in times of crisis.

Based on these realist assumptions it is now possible to hypothesize about the effects of the change of the US administration. The Bush administration's policies were clearly distant from the EU majority's positions, leading to an increased distance between the EU's and US's policy positions in the UNGA across all issue areas (Luif 2003:41-47). Since some EU member states see the US as their most important ally, whereas others considers 'EU sovereignty' to be most important, the increased policy distance between the EU and the US led to a decreased level of voting cohesion among the EU member states (Jakobsson 2009:540-541). After the Obama administration succeeded the Bush administration, the policy distance between the US and the EU, at least rhetorically, seems to have decreased across many issue areas, ranging from the Middle East to the global climate challenges (de Zoysa & Newman 2009:297, 313-14). Obama's openness to multilateralism is also, in this context, an important contrast to his predecessor.

In other words, there are reasons to believe that the decreased policy distance between the US and the EU has simultaneously led to increased voting cohesion among the EU member states. In the language of Jakobsson (2009) and Strömvik (1998), the change of administration would then be a systems-level change that would lead to decreased external pressure on the EU. In this way national interests become less exposed, with the result that common positions are more easily agreed upon.

However, in this view, the fact that the coordination problems have been most severe in the areas of International security and Decolonization, i.e. in 'high politics', makes it unlikely to expect full cohesion between the EU member states even if the US and EU positions are coming closer. For instance, it is unlikely that the UK and France would substantially have changed their nuclear policies in the analyzed period. Nevertheless, if the Obama administration's warmer language is translated into practice, it could be expected that the distance between the EU's and the US's positions has decreased and that the overall EU cohesion has increased from the 64<sup>th</sup> UNGA session on. The first hypothesis is therefore the following:

*H1: The change of US administration in 2009 has led to a) increased voting cohesion between the US and the EU and b) increased voting cohesion among the EU member states from the 64<sup>th</sup> session on.*

It is important to note that for this hypothesis to be supported, i.e. that a correlation is found between the change of US administration and the EU voting cohesion, it is necessary that the voting cohesion *both* between the EU and the US and among the EU member states have increased.



### 3.2.2 Hypothesis 2: Institutionalization of EU foreign policy – The Lisbon Treaty

Another type of explanation that has been presented in some earlier studies (e.g. Strömvik 1998, Rasch 2008 and Wouters 2001) relates to the institutionalization of the EU's foreign policy. Strömvik (1998) examines the effects of four new formulations of text governing the EU foreign policy and finds that the adoption of two of these texts (the Solemn Declaration on Political Union and the Maastricht Treaty) coincided with a steep rise in voting cohesion. The author, however, recognizes the difficulties in ascribing the rise in voting cohesion to the adoption of the texts (Strömvik 1998:192). Other studies highlight the importance of institutionalization of the EU foreign policy in a somewhat different manner. Wouters (2001:26-27) states that the recipe that has been used to overcome splits this far, i.e. extensive coordination among the member states, will not be sufficient to bridge the splits that still exist. The same conclusion is reached by Rasch (2008), who states that “[c]ohere[n]ce could only be increased through further institutional adjustments or alterations of national policies” (Rasch 2008:219).

The most important institutional change in recent years is the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1 December, 2009. An important part of the legal innovations in the new treaty is devoted to a streamlining of the EU's external relations, and there are reasons to believe that these innovations might affect the EU's role at the UN (Laatikainen 2010:2), including the voting cohesion in the UNGA (Rasch 2008:196). Of the reforms included in the Lisbon Treaty, three might be especially important to the EU cohesion in the UNGA (Rasch 2008:196). First, the system where the rotating presidency of the EU chairs the EU coordination meetings in New York has been replaced with a system in which the new EU delegation is “responsible for the day-to-day coordination of the EU common position, including the drafting of EU statements and the adoption of EU positions on Resolutions and other texts” (European Union 2011). The delegation sorts under the authority of the High Representative and has replaced the European Commission Delegation and the EU Council Liaison Office (European Union 2011). By bringing continuity and a more streamlined organisation to New York, this reform has the potential to increase the cohesion among the EU member states. However, the new EU delegation has been developed progressively and of course it did not start working the very day that the Lisbon Treaty was ratified (European Union 2011). The potential effects on EU cohesion can therefore be assumed to be stronger over time.

Second, the new office of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs combines the roles of the previous High Representative (the position held by Javier Solana), the Vice-President of the Commission in charge of external relations, and the role previously played by the Foreign Minister of the country holding the presidency (Missiroli 2010:4).

Third, the EU as a whole has been granted legal personality, compared to the previous situation where only the EC had this status. In those UN bodies where the EC had the status of observer, e.g. in the UNGA, the EU has now inherited this status (European Union 2011). This change might lead to a stronger influence for the EU in the UNGA (Rasch 2008:199-200), which, in turn, might spur the EU member states to better coordinate their positions (Luif 2003:12).

However, none of these reforms will in and of themselves lead to a higher level of voting cohesion in the UNGA, but as Rasch (2008:201) points out, “the EU Reform Treaty [the Lisbon Treaty, author’s note] would be a step into the direction of a gradual stronger political convergence”.

### *The hypothesis*

The second hypothesis is based upon the assumptions of the new institutionalisms, in short that institutions matter. Although both rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism would agree that the Lisbon Treaty has the potential to lead to higher voting cohesion among the EU member states, they would differ in their understanding of the importance and impact of the Treaty.

RCI would emphasize that the signing of the Lisbon Treaty was a rational decision by the member states. The provisions on the EU’s external relations can in this way be seen as an attempt to strengthen the EU’s foreign policy. On a general level, a strong European foreign policy is potentially beneficial to all member states in that it increases their influence globally (Wong 2005:137). The three innovations mentioned above (the EU delegation in New York, the HR and the legal personality for the EU) can all be seen as attempts to strengthen the EU foreign policy and to make it more efficient in the UN system. If using the terms of RCI, these innovations would decrease transaction costs, link issues and more readily provide information. In sum, if it is assumed that the signing of the Lisbon Treaty was a rational decision by the member states, aiming at strengthening the EU foreign policy, then it is likely that the voting cohesion in the UNGA has increased since the entry into force of the Treaty. It must, however, be mentioned that the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP that remains after the Lisbon Treaty could be seen as evidence of the continued salience of the national interests, all in line with RCI assumptions.

SI would, on the other hand, emphasize the potential socializing effects of the innovations in the Lisbon Treaty. In this way, the foreign policy provisions in the Lisbon Treaty could, in themselves, be seen as evidence of the convergence of the foreign policies of the member states. The three innovations in the Lisbon Treaty would, from a SI perspective, have the potential to increase the voting cohesion in the UNGA. First, the new EU delegation in New York, and the responsibilities for the daily EU coordination that are assigned to it, might create strong socializing effects on the member states’ representatives. When diplomats from the member states work under the same roof, the socializing effects could be assumed to be stronger than when they work in different member state offices. In line with the SI

assumptions, this new institutional set-up might lead to increased convergence of the member states' foreign policies.

Second, the introduction of the 'new' HR and the granting of legal personality to the EU could both be seen as important *political symbols*. Political symbols can be seen as playing two main roles: as an instrument used by political leaders to influence the beliefs of political elites and public opinion and as a means for political leaders and public opinion to create a sense of the political environment (Bjola 2000:11). From a SI point of view the HR and the new legal personality could then be seen as symbols that help socializing the member state officials into a more 'European way of thinking'.

Regardless of whether the RCI or the SI assumptions are favoured, it would be naïve to believe that legal innovations such as those in the Lisbon Treaty would produce radically changed voting behaviour overnight. Socialization, for instance, is a long-term process. However, there are reasons to believe that the Lisbon Treaty could have converging effects that are discernible in the analyzed period. From an RCI point of view, the fact that the Lisbon Treaty was signed at all is evidence that the member states wish to see a more coherent foreign policy and it would, therefore, be rational to try to be more coherent once the Lisbon Treaty is in place. Otherwise the credibility of the EU could be undermined (Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 122). From an SI point of view, and in line with the 'logic of appropriateness', it is assumable that with the Lisbon Treaty – and its emphasis on the importance of speaking with a single voice – accepted by all member states as legitimate, no member state wants to be the one that raises another voice.

To sum up; assumptions based on the new institutionalisms make it possible to assume that the Lisbon Treaty has led to a higher level of voting cohesion between the EU member states. Despite the likely long-term effects, it is possible to assume that the Lisbon Treaty has some short-term effects on the voting cohesion. However, it is likely that the effect is becoming stronger over time. The second hypothesis is therefore:

*H2: The innovations in the Lisbon Treaty have led to an increased level of voting cohesion among the EU member states in the UN General Assembly in the 64th and the 65th sessions and the effect is becoming stronger over time.*

### 3.2.3 Hypothesis 3: The Financial Crisis

Another change in the international system in recent years was the financial crisis that started with the US subprime mortgage crisis in the summer of 2007 and which spread to Europe a year later (Dabrowski 2010:38-39). Some commentators have argued that the financial crisis "is likely to be the most serious sustainability test in its [the EU's, author's note] history" (Dabrowski 2010:39), whereas others have suggested that the crisis has the potential to be a turning point in

international relations of the same magnitude as the fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11 (Youngs 2009:3). It therefore appears necessary to include the financial crisis in the present study.

When the crisis hit Europe, the responses from the EU member states were uncoordinated and took place mostly on national level. Part of the reason for the national responses was that the almost non-existent fiscal capacity at the EU level forced national authorities to act (Dabrowski 2010:43). The lack of common capacity was particularly apparent in the fall of 2008 (Begg 2010:1111), when most member states resorted to ‘beggar-thy-neighbour policies’, economic nationalism and free riding (Dabrowski 2010:43). Examples of these measures were financial aid to manufacturing companies, measures restricting cross-border movements of labour and regulatory actions focusing on the national markets rather than the Common Market (Dabrowski 2010:43). When considering how central the Common Market is to the entire EU cooperation, and considering the potential disruptive effects of these national measures, the challenges posed by the financial crisis become more evident.

#### *The hypothesis*

An alternative to the anticipated positive effects for EU voting cohesion in the first two hypotheses can be formulated when discussing the impact of the financial crisis. The realist assumptions about the prevalence of the state and the national interests and about the fragility of international cooperation could constitute the base for a hypothesis about the potential effects of the financial crisis on EU voting behaviour in the UNGA.

The financial crisis could then be seen as an event leading to increased pressure on the EU member states, and in line with the systems-level explanations proposed by Strömvik (1998) and Jakobsson (2009), the increased pressure would then expose the national interests. As noted above, this seems to have been exactly what happened in the initial phase of the financial crisis.

So, how can the resort to national measures supposedly have affected the EU voting cohesion in the UNGA? If the assumption about the exposed national interests is valid, then it can be assumed that common positions are more difficult to reach. This in turn, could then lead to a more conflictual atmosphere among the EU member states in general (remember the assumed fragility of international cooperation), which also would be evident in the voting cohesion in the UNGA.

In sum, although it is not self-evident that the disruptive effects of the financial crisis have spread to the voting behaviour in the UNGA, the importance of the Common Market for the entire EU cooperation and the magnitude of the crisis make it possible to assume that the national interests of the member states have been exposed and that it therefore have become more difficult to agree on common positions. It should be noted that the temptation to resort to national measures has decreased as signs of global recovery have appeared (Dabrowski

2010:44). The effects of the financial crisis should, therefore, be expected to be greatest in the initial phase of the crisis. The third (alternative) hypothesis is therefore:

*H3: The financial crisis has led to a decreased level of voting cohesion among the EU member states in the UNGA, in particular in the 63rd session.*

# 4 Methodology

In this chapter the methodology of this thesis will be discussed. The method that will be used to analyze the voting behaviour of the EU member states in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) is *roll-call analysis* (RCA). The chapter starts with a discussion about quantitative and qualitative methods. It will then proceed with a section about roll-call voting and with a discussion about the benefits and drawbacks of studying roll-call votes as a measure of cohesion. In the third section, the method will be presented in detail and alternative ways of using RCA will be discussed.

## 4.1 Quantitative or qualitative methods?

Methodological discussions in social sciences frequently concern the usefulness of quantitative and qualitative methods (Djurfeldt et al 2003:17). However, this debate is somewhat flawed since no method can be said to be *the* most useful in any given situation. What should determine the method to be applied are not the researcher's own methodological preferences, but the research problem (Djurfeldt et al 2003:18, Shapiro 2002:598).

For this study a quantitative approach has been chosen. To mention a few of the general benefits of this approach it could be said, first, that it allows for fairly precise statements about the subject of the study (Weiss 1998:83), i.e. EU voting cohesion. Second, a number of statistical techniques can be used to identify relationships between multiple variables (Weiss 1998:83). Third, quantitative methods can, arguably, be said to produce more objective data than qualitative methods as fewer interpretations must be made by the researcher (Weiss 1998:84).

However, the last point points to one of the major problems with quantitative methods – the danger of relying too much on the scientific appearance of numbers. Quantitative researchers must also interpret the meaning of the numbers, must decide which numbers to focus on and which data to collect. In other words, “just because numbers come out of a computer, there is no reason to treat them as though they were untouched by human hands” (Weiss 1998:84).

Another problem with quantitative methods is that they can be said to ignore the complexities of the world. For instance, numbers say little about individuals' motifs and underlying beliefs, whereas qualitative methods are better able to analyze these phenomena (John 2002:218).

A consequence of the chosen approach is that only *correlations* can be sought after. *Causal relationships*, to the extent that they are possible to find at all in political science, will not be possible to discover in the present study. But since the purpose of this study is to describe the EU voting behaviour and to analyze potential explanations, the quantitative approach can still render interesting results (see 1.2).

## 4.2 Roll-Call Votes as a measure of cohesion

Roll-call voting is a procedure in which the vote of every individual of a legislative body is recorded. In the UNGA, this means that when roll-call voting is used, the vote of every UNGA member state is recorded. Any member state may request that roll-call voting should be applied. A member state can choose to vote 'yes', 'no' or 'abstain' or be 'absent'. Roll-call votes are the only votes that are recorded in the UNGA, and they are therefore "helpful to assess the extent of cohesion among specific regional groups" (Hosli et al 2010:12). About 20 to 30 per cent of the resolutions that are passed in the UNGA each year are decided with roll-call votes (Luif 2003:22, Rasch 2008:211). The remaining resolutions are adopted by consensus (Luif 2003:22). In studies of voting behaviour in the UNGA, the consensus votes are usually excluded (e.g. Luif 2003, Strömvik 1998, Rasch 2008, Wouters 2001, Hosli et al 2010). The reason is that the consensus votes artificially increase the degree of cohesion of the EU (Luif 2003:22). Adding the consensus votes to the analysis would not say anything about the effect of the EU coordination, since all other states also are able to agree on a common position (Rasch 2008:211).

Kissack (2007:7-8) lists a number of benefits with analysing roll-call votes. First, the data used, i.e. the records of how the states have voted, are reliable, easy to work with, and easily accessible (e.g. via the UN Bibliographic Information System, see United Nations 2011). Second, the data are consistent and, therefore, allow long-term studies. Third, voting records are suitable for being analyzed statistically, which makes it possible to look at the voting behaviour over time and at the voting behaviour of individual states. Finally, analyzing roll-call votes makes it possible to discern which issues tend to break cohesion.

On the other hand, as no method is perfect, there are also potential pitfalls when studying roll-call votes. Apart from the problems that stem from the quantitative nature of roll-call data (see 4.1) there is one specific problem with the use of this type of data. This problem is related more to studies that are analyzing roll-call data to measure party cohesion, but is still necessary to bring up here. Some analysts argue that party leaders choose roll-calls strategically to control the party members on contentious issues. In this way, the recorded roll-call votes might constitute a biased sample, only including contentious issues (Carruba et al

2006:692). However, in the UNGA, this risk appears to be limited, since resolutions are either adopted by consensus or by roll-call votes. This implies that the votes are recorded on all resolutions that are actually voted upon. Thus, it should be of little relevance for, for instance, an EU member state to request roll-call voting to control the other EU member states.

To clarify, a contrasting example can be given. In the European Parliament (EP), the members usually vote by show of hand, but when the President is unable to determine the majority, he may call for an electronic vote (without the individual votes being recorded). Roll-call votes are only used when a party group or 40 members so request (European Parliament 2011). The likeliness for strategic voting in the EP is thus much higher.

### 4.3 Roll-Call Analysis (RCA)

When analysing the voting behaviour of the EU member states in the UNGA, two measures will be used. First, the *percentages of identical and divided votes* will be calculated, i.e. on how many per cent of the recorded votes in each UNGA session that the EU member states vote coherently (Strömvik 1998:183-184). Secondly, an *Index of Voting Cohesion* (IVC), as developed by Lijphart (1963) will be used both to identify changes in the overall level of cohesion over time and to identify which states diverge most from the other member states. To be able to say something about the US influence on EU cohesion, the US votes will also be included in the IVC.

It should be noted from the outset that the percentage of identical votes and the IVC produce different types of numbers (see 4.3.2 and 4.3.3) and that the numbers produced by the two measures, therefore, cannot be compared directly. However, the numbers in themselves are not very interesting – what is interesting is how they differ over time and between states and issue areas. What is sought after is, thus, general trends and not specific numbers. And in this sense, the general trends identified by the two measures can be compared to each other and thereby a more detailed picture of the EU voting cohesion can be painted.

#### 4.3.1 RCA - Methodological considerations

Before going into the details of the measures presented above there are a few questions that need to be considered, and which different researchers have had different thoughts about (Hosli et al 2010:15-16). The results from a study such as this one will be affected by how these questions are dealt with. It is, therefore, in order to be able to compare the results to similar studies, very important to be explicit about how one chooses to handle these questions.



### *Representativeness of roll-call votes*

The first question has already been dealt with above (see 4.2) and concerns the representativeness of the studied roll-call votes. As noted above, only roll-call votes will be included and consensus votes will, thus, be excluded, despite the risk that the roll-call votes are not completely representative.

### *Whole resolutions*

The second question is whether to include only votes on whole resolutions or to include votes on parts of resolutions, rejected resolutions and decisions as well. Only the votes from the adopted whole resolutions are recorded. To include the votes on parts of resolutions etc. would therefore require the researcher “to search the verbatim records of all the sessions of the UNGA” (Rasch 2008:213). Despite this, a few scholars have included these types of votes too (e.g. Luif 2003 and Hosli et al 2010). However, the results from studies including the votes on parts of resolutions etc. only differ marginally from the studies that only include whole resolutions (Rasch 2008:213). Due to the time limits of this study and, more importantly, the fact that the differences in the results seem to be marginal, only votes on whole resolutions will be included in this study.

### *Categorization of votes*

The third question relates to the categorization of the roll-call votes cast by the studied states on each resolution. On each resolution the member states can vote ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘abstain’. The most common way to categorize the votes is to divide them by *identical votes* (all member states vote in a similar way, either ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘abstain’); *solidarity votes* (at least one member state abstains and all the others vote similarly, either ‘yes’ or ‘no’); and *divided votes* (at least one member state votes ‘yes’ and at least one member state votes ‘no’) (e.g. Strömvik 1998:184, Luif 2003:24, Lijphart 1963:906). This categorization is used in this thesis too.

### *Interpretation of abstentions*

The fourth question is probably the most contentious in this context and concerns the interpretation of the abstentions. Once again, different researchers have dealt with this question in different ways, and the result is that the calculation of the IVC is affected. Three interpretations have been used in this type of studies (Hosli et al 2010:16). First, abstentions have been considered as a soft version of voting ‘no’ and have therefore been coded as ‘no’. Second, some scholars have interpreted abstentions as “‘neutral’ votes” (Hurwitz 1975:229) between ‘yes’ and ‘no’, and have thus credited it with “half the weight” (Lijphart 1963:910), i.e. ‘yes’ is coded as 1, ‘no’ is coded as 0 and ‘abstain’ is coded as 0.5 (e.g. Luif 2003:24). A third alternative is to interpret ‘abstain’ as equally strong as ‘yes’ and ‘no’, i.e. to be considered cohesive, two countries must either vote ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘abstain’ (Hosli et al 2010:16-17). In the present study the second version will be

used and I will return to the consequences of this choice when the method for calculating the IVC is discussed (see 4.3.3).

#### *Interpretation of absences*

The final question that needs to be considered is how to deal with absences. In general there are three ways to handle absences: exclude all votes where a state is absent, exclude some of the votes where a state is absent or equate 'absent' and 'abstain'. The argument for excluding all votes where a state is absent is that it is impossible to know how a state would have voted if it was present. Treating absences as, for instance, abstentions would therefore distort the results. According to this argument, absences should therefore be treated as a lack of data (Lijphart 1963:910). An example of a study that uses the second alternative (exclude some of the votes where a state is absent) is Jakobsson (2009). When a state is absent, the resolution that is voted upon is excluded if the votes of the other member states are *identical votes* or *solidarity votes*. On the other hand, if the votes of the other member states are *divided votes*, the resolution is included. The reason is that irrespective of how the absent state would have voted in the latter case, it would still be a *divided vote* (Jakobsson 2009:537). The argument for treating absences as abstentions is that it is a "wilful and conscious decision not to participate" (Hurwitz 1975:229) and it is therefore considered to be "in-between' a pro and a contra vote" (Luif 2003:24).

In some of the few cases where EU member states are absent, the states in question have declared afterwards how they had intended to vote. This clarification can be found in the protocol from each meeting (United Nations 2011). In this study, those cases where the absent member states have clarified their positions will be counted as votes. In cases where absent member states have not declared their positions, the votes on those resolutions will be excluded.

### 4.3.2 Percentages of identical and divided votes

The first measure of EU voting cohesion in the UNGA that will be used in this study is *the percentages of identical and divided votes*. This measure will be used to describe the overall cohesion for each analyzed UNGA session, all in all four sessions. The overall cohesion will be presented as the percentages of *identical votes*, *solidarity votes*, and *divided votes* of the total number of adopted resolutions where all the member states participated during each session (Jakobsson 2009:537). When talking about the EU's voting cohesion in the UNGA, it is generally the percentage of *identical votes* that is intended and this figure is therefore particularly interesting.

### 4.3.3 Index of Voting Cohesion

The Index of Voting Cohesion (IVC) is a method for discovering groups and measuring their voting cohesion in legislative bodies. Arend Lijphart (1963) was the first researcher to use this method in the UNGA, although he named it Index of Agreement (IVC is more frequently used, and this term is therefore used in the present study). As the EU is not a group that needs to be ‘discovered’, the method will in the present study (as in many other studies) be used as a measure of cohesion and to identify those states that tend to break unity (Strömvik 1998:185).

The basic principle is that an index, where 100 represents full cohesion and 0 represents complete disagreement, is calculated between all possible pairs of members of a legislative body (Lijphart 1963:909), in this case among the EU member states in the UNGA. The indexes are then usually displayed in a matrix (see Appendix 2-6) and in this way it is possible to identify subgroups with high IVCs (Strömvik 1998:185). However, in this study, the matrices will not be included because, first, the identification of subgroups is not necessary to test the hypotheses and, second, because the inclusion of 27 member states plus the US makes such matrices too large to be clear. Instead the IVCs will be used to calculate an *EU mean IVC*, an *EU-US IVC* and two *conformity indexes* (see below) (Strömvik 1998:189-190, Jakobsson 2009:538).

The index for a pair of states is calculated by looking at the roll-call votes on every single resolution to identify the number of *identical votes* (both states vote ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘abstain’), *solidarity votes* (one state abstains and the other votes ‘yes’ or ‘no’), and *divided votes* (one state votes ‘yes’ and the other votes ‘no’). Researchers that use this method always code identical votes as 1 and divided votes as 0, but the question about the value of solidarity votes is not equally obvious. Here is where the impact of the interpretation of abstentions comes in (see 4.3.1).

Lijphart (1963:910), and most other researchers, treats solidarity votes as something in-between identical votes and divided votes and therefore credit them half the weight of the identical votes, i.e. 0.5. This is certainly a feasible interpretation in most contexts. However, Rasch (2008:210) is of another opinion:

[...] this study looks at the specific situation within the caucusing group of the European Union member states, who develop their own rules and strategies in order to pursue common aims and to represent a homogeneous outward policy. For that reason every vote which deviates from the EU consensus, also if it is an abstention, undermines the endeavour to speak with one voice within international circles.

The differences can be made explicit with an example. Lijphart uses the following equation to calculate the IVC between two states:

$$IVC = \frac{f + 0,5g}{t} \times 100$$

$f$  equals the number of identical votes,  $g$  equals the number of solidarity votes and  $t$  equals the total number of votes (where both states were present, or where an absent state declared its position afterwards). Rasch (2008:210), on the other hand, excludes the solidarity votes, and an equation based on his arguments would look like this:

$$IVC = \frac{f}{t} \times 100$$

In a hypothetical case, state A and state B vote on twenty resolutions. 15 identical votes and 5 solidarity votes are recorded. Lijphart's equation would produce this result:

$$IVC = \frac{15 + 0,5 \times 5}{20} \times 100 = 87.5$$

Rasch's equation would produce a different figure:

$$IVC = \frac{15}{20} \times 100 = 75.0$$

This example proves the importance of being explicit about the interpretation of abstentions. Although Rasch's argument is highly relevant for this study, Lijphart's version will be used. The reason is that the impact of the US will be analyzed too. Since the EU and the US have no common aim to speak with one voice, it would be too harsh to consider solidarity votes as divided votes. As Lijphart's version is the most frequently used it also increases the comparability with other studies. The IVCs will be used to calculate the following:

#### *EU mean IVC*

The EU mean IVC is calculated for each session. It is the average of all IVCs between all possible pairs of EU member states (Strömvik 1998:189-190). In this way, it does not say anything about individual member states, but it is an indicator of the overall level of cohesion, which can be compared over time.

#### *EU-US IVC*

The EU-US IVC is also calculated for each session. It is the average of the US's IVCs towards all individual EU member states (Jakobsson 2009:538). As such, it is a measure of how close the US is to the EU mean.

#### *Conformity indexes*

Two conformity indexes will be used. The first is the *IVCs of individual member states towards all other member states*. The average IVC for each individual

member state towards all other member states is then calculated and this indicates which member states are most and least in line with the other member states (Strömvik 1998:189-190).

The second conformity index is the *IVCs of individual member states towards the US*. This is simply the IVC of each individual member state towards the US and this measure shows which states are closest to the US.

#### 4.3.4 Summary

To be able to test the three hypotheses in this thesis, five measures will be used. First the *percentages of identical and divided votes* will be used to show on how large a share of the total number of resolutions the EU member states vote identically. Second, an *EU mean IVC* will be calculated, indicating an overall level of cohesion among the EU member states. Third, an *EU-US IVC* will be used to measure the distance between the US and the EU mean. Fourth, *IVCs of individual member states towards all other member states* will be calculated to show which member states diverge from the others. Finally, the *IVCs of individual member states towards the US* will indicate which EU member states are closest to the US.

It should be remembered that the numbers in themselves are not very interesting for this study (e.g. what does an EU mean IVC of 94.5 say?) – they are merely indicators that are used to discern general trends and patterns.

Finally, it should be said that an analysis of roll-call votes should be taken for what it is. It is merely one indicator of the EU's ability to speak with one voice, but as such it is able to show explicitly how the voting cohesion changes over time, which member states that diverge and on which issues divergences occur.

## 4.4 Material

The data that will be used in this study are the voting records from the roll-call votes in the UNGA between the 62nd and the 65th session<sup>3</sup>. These records include votes on adopted resolutions and can be found in the UN Bibliographic Information System (see United Nations 2011). For the sessions 62–63 a database produced by Voeten and Merdzanovic (Voeten & Merdzanovic 2009) has been used. For the sessions 64–65 the UN Bibliographic Information System (United

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<sup>3</sup> In the 65th session, the recorded votes until 7 April are included.

Nations 2011) has been used. In the analyzed period 288 resolutions were adopted by roll-call voting (see Appendix 1).

The resolutions have been split into four issue areas: the Middle East (e.g. Israel-Palestine, Iraq and Syria-Lebanon), International Security (e.g. nuclear weapons, non-proliferation, and disarmament), Human Rights (e.g. the impact of globalization and arbitrary executions), and Decolonization (e.g. non-self-governing territories and the right of self-determination) (Luif 2003: 23-24). This categorization is the most frequently used in previous research and to increase the comparability of the findings, this categorization has been chosen here too. Some resolutions relate to more than one issue area and in these cases the main theme of the resolution will be the one that counts. For instance, a resolution about the human rights situation of the Palestinian refugees will be coded as a human rights resolution, although it could be seen as an issue belonging in the Middle East category. Twelve resolutions have not been possible to place in these categories and are therefore only included when the cohesion across all issue areas is analyzed.

# 5 Results

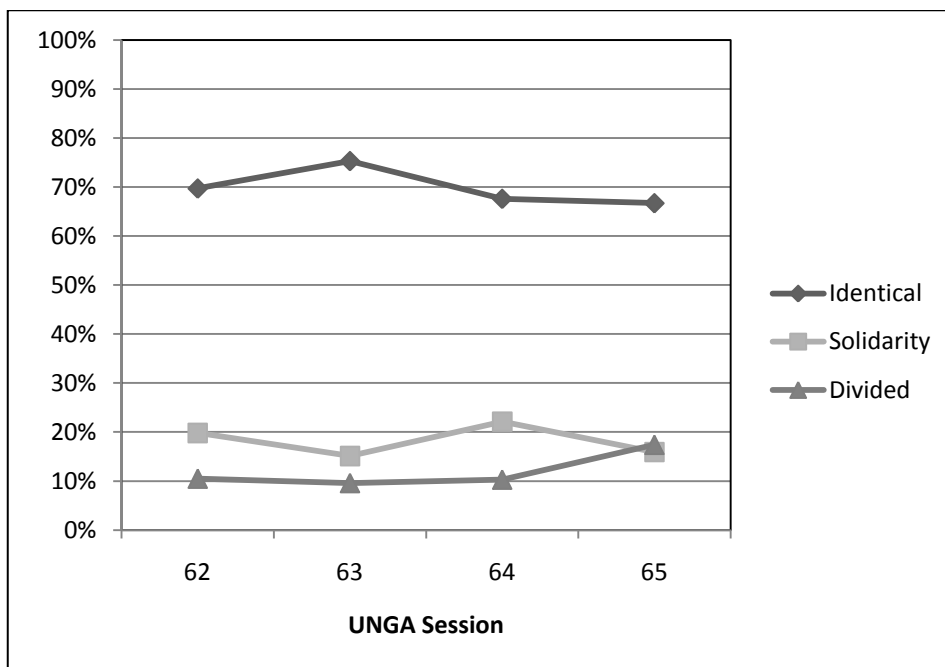
In this section the results of the empirical analysis of the EU voting behaviour in the UNGA in the period between the 62nd and the 65th session will be presented. In the first section, the overall cohesion across all issue areas will be presented. In the following four sections the results will be divided into the four issue areas discussed above; the Middle East; International Security; Decolonization; and Human Rights. Due to the technical nature of the result presentation a brief summary of the main findings will be given in the final section.

## 5.1 Overall cohesion across all issue areas

### 5.1.1 Percentages of identical and divided votes

The first measure to be presented here are the percentages of *identical votes*, *solidarity votes*, and *divided votes* of the total number of adopted resolutions that were voted upon (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** % of Identical, Divided, Solidarity votes of all recorded votes



When looking at the overall cohesion across all issue areas, it is hard to point to a general trend of either increased or decreased voting cohesion. Starting with the

*identical votes*, the largest share was recorded in the 63rd session (75%) and it then decreased both in the 64th (68%) and the 65th (67%) sessions.

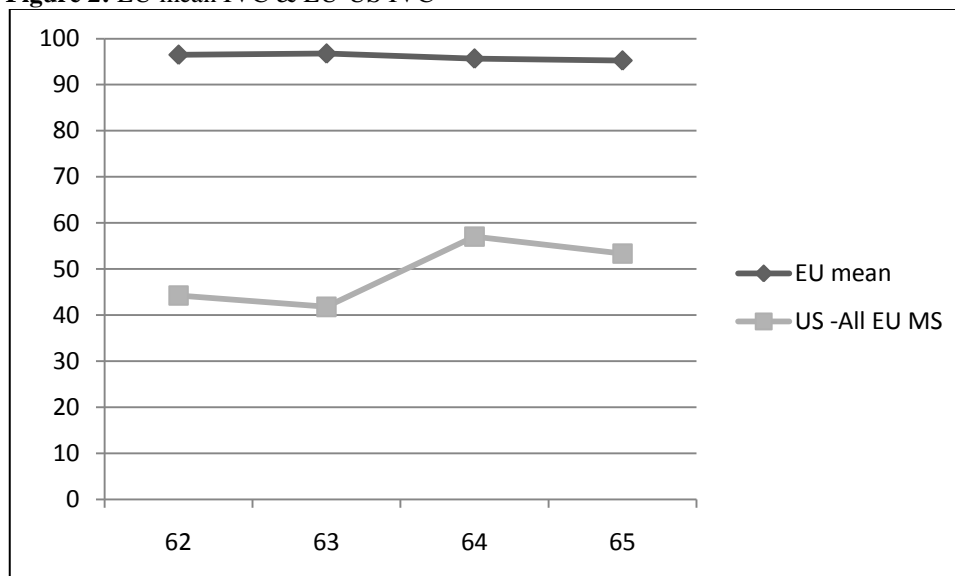
The share of *solidarity votes* was 20% in the 62nd session, reached its lowest point in the 63rd session (15%), increased to its highest point in the 64th session (22%) and decreased again in the 65th session (16%).

These findings become more interesting when the *divided votes* are added to the analysis. In the first three sessions, the share of divided votes was very stable (10-11%). However, in the 65th session the share of divided votes increased to 17%. This increase obviously coincided with decreased shares of both identical and solidarity votes and it can therefore be concluded that the EU member states were least cohesive in the 65th session.

### 5.1.2 Index of voting cohesion: EU mean and EU-US

In Figure 2 the *EU mean IVC* and the *EU-US IVC* are both represented by a separate graph. As noted in the methodology chapter (see 4.3.3), the IVC indicates the level of cohesion among any given pair of states. The index starts at 0 (complete disagreement) and ends at 100 (full cohesion). It should be remembered that the IVC scores are *not* percentages. The numbers in the IVCs are much higher than those in the *percentages of identical and divided votes* (Figure 1) and cannot be compared directly.

**Figure 2:** EU mean IVC & EU-US IVC



The *EU mean IVC* represents the average of all the IVCs calculated for every pair of EU member states (see Appendix 2) and is thus an indicator of the general level of cohesion. It should be underlined that the inclusion of as many as 27 member



states in the IVC has the effect that a significantly changed pattern between two states, might have little effect on the mean cohesion.

When the mean IVC is used as an indicator, a stable level of voting cohesion among the EU member states appear (see Figure 2). The highest point of cohesion was reached in the 63rd session (96.77) and the lowest in the 65th session (95.26). Although the shifts are not as explicit as when using the percentages of identical and divided votes as an indicator, the EU mean IVC shows exactly the same trend: the highest level of cohesion was reached in the 63rd session followed by a decrease in the 64th and the 65th sessions.

The *EU-US IVC* is the average of the IVCs between the US and each individual EU member state. Hence, it indicates how close the US voting behaviour is to the EU mean. After a decrease in the 63rd session (from 44.25 to 41.77), the voting behaviour of the US changed significantly in the 64th session and the cohesion with the EU reached its highest point (57.04). It then dropped again in the 65th session, but the cohesion was still at a much higher level than in the 63rd session (53.36).

### 5.1.3 IVCs of individual member states towards all other member states and the US

As mentioned above, the EU mean IVC does not say anything about the individual member states. Likewise, the IVC of the US towards all EU member states does not say anything about which member states are closest to the US. In this section, the *IVCs for every individual member state towards all other member states and the US* will, therefore, be presented. Table 1 demonstrates the IVCs of every individual member state towards all other member states (the same table sorted alphabetically is displayed in Appendix 7 to visualize the development over time for individual member states).

**Table 1:** IVC for every individual EU member state towards all the other EU member states.

<b>62</b>		<b>63</b>		<b>64</b>		<b>65</b>	
Belgium	97,85	Bulgaria	98,02	Greece	97,27	Denmark	96,72
Denmark	97,82	Estonia	98,02	Luxembourg	97,18	Bulgaria	96,63
Portugal	97,67	Hungary	98,02	Estonia	97,13	Poland	96,63
Lithuania	97,62	Luxembourg	98,01	Latvia	97,07	Germany	96,6
Greece	97,6	Slovenia	98,01	Bulgaria	96,95	Greece	96,6
Slovenia	97,6	Lithuania	97,95	Spain	96,9	Estonia	96,52
Slovakia	97,57	Belgium	97,91	Denmark	96,77	Luxembourg	96,52
Luxembourg	97,5	Portugal	97,88	Slovakia	96,71	Portugal	96,52
Finland	97,49	Finland	97,65	Finland	96,51	Slovakia	96,51
Romania	97,37	Germany	97,65	Portugal	96,46	Czech Rep.	96,48
Estonia	97,35	Italy	97,65	Slovenia	96,43	Lithuania	96,48
Netherlands	97,35	Poland	97,64	Belgium	96,37	Latvia	96,47
Hungary	97,32	Czech Rep.	97,63	Romania	96,32	Slovenia	96,41
Latvia	97,32	Denmark	97,63	Hungary	96,3	Hungary	96,4
Poland	97,3	Latvia	97,38	Czech Rep.	96,26	Netherlands	96,4
Germany	97,27	Greece	97,24	Netherlands	96,26	Italy	96,36
Italy	97,27	Netherlands	97,24	Germany	96,18	Romania	96,14
Bulgaria	97,16	Slovakia	97,15	Italy	96,1	Finland	96,09
Spain	97,05	Spain	97,07	Lithuania	95,82	Belgium	95,97
Sweden	96,29	Sweden	96,95	Austria	95,76	Spain	95,13
Ireland	96,12	Romania	96,79	Sweden	95,7	Sweden	94,78
Cyprus	95,87	Ireland	96,59	Ireland	95,27	Austria	94,5
Czech Rep.	95,79	Austria	96,52	Poland	95,26	Ireland	94,5
Malta	95,57	Malta	95,44	Malta	94,17	Cyprus	93,58
Austria	95,49	Cyprus	93,78	Cyprus	93,64	Malta	93,28
France	90,63	France	91,32	UK	89,43	France	88,65
UK	88,63	UK	89,58	France	89,2	UK	85,27
EU mean	96,51	EU mean	96,77	EU mean	95,68	EU mean	95,26

A number of observations can be made in the table above. First, when looking at the individual member states, the same story as in earlier studies (reviewed in Chapter 2.2) is repeated, with UK and France as “the main dissenters” (to use the language of Rasch 2008: 262). Second, Cyprus and Malta are among the bottom six in the 62nd session and are, apart from the UK and France, the two member states with the lowest scores in the other three sessions. Third, three of the ‘neutral’ member states, i.e. Sweden, Ireland and Austria are among the bottom eight in all sessions. The fourth ‘neutral’ state, Finland, is much closer to the EU mainstream. A fourth observation is, however, that most member states score fairly equally. Only UK and France, and maybe Cyprus and Malta in the last three sessions, can be said to deviate significantly from the other member states.

The IVCs of every individual member state towards the US are displayed in Table 2 (the same table sorted alphabetically is displayed in Appendix 7).

**Table 2: IVC for every individual EU member state towards the US**

<b>62</b>		<b>63</b>		<b>64</b>		<b>65</b>	
France	51,97	UK	52,05	UK	65,94	UK	67,65
UK	51,30	France	49,32	France	63,04	France	62,50
Germany	47,40	Latvia	44,52	Czech Rep.	59,42	Czech Rep.	55,15
Hungary	47,40	Denmark	43,15	Netherlands	59,42	Estonia	55,15
Italy	47,40	Poland	43,15	Poland	59,42	Latvia	55,15
Latvia	47,40	Czech Rep.	42,57	Germany	58,70	Lithuania	55,15
Poland	47,40	Bulgaria	42,47	Slovakia	58,70	Denmark	54,41
Czech Rep.	45,39	Netherlands	42,47	Denmark	57,97	Netherlands	54,41
Greece	44,16	Estonia	41,89	Italy	57,97	Slovakia	54,41
Lithuania	44,16	Hungary	41,89	Lithuania	57,97	Bulgaria	53,73
Netherlands	44,16	Lithuania	41,89	Bulgaria	57,35	Poland	53,73
Slovakia	44,16	Luxembourg	41,89	Hungary	57,35	Belgium	53,68
Slovenia	44,16	Slovenia	41,89	Belgium	57,25	Germany	53,68
Belgium	43,51	Belgium	41,22	Estonia	57,25	Hungary	53,68
Denmark	43,51	Portugal	41,22	Latvia	57,25	Romania	53,68
Estonia	43,51	Romania	41,22	Romania	57,25	Greece	52,21
Luxembourg	43,51	Finland	40,54	Greece	56,52	Italy	52,21
Romania	43,51	Germany	40,54	Luxembourg	56,52	Portugal	52,21
Portugal	42,86	Greece	40,54	Spain	55,80	Luxembourg	51,47
Bulgaria	42,21	Italy	40,54	Portugal	55,07	Slovenia	51,47
Finland	42,21	Slovakia	40,54	Slovenia	55,07	Sweden	51,47
Spain	42,21	Spain	39,86	Sweden	55,07	Finland	50,74
Sweden	41,56	Sweden	39,86	Austria	54,34	Spain	50,74
Cyprus	40,26	Austria	39,19	Ireland	53,62	Austria	48,53
Ireland	40,26	Ireland	39,19	Cyprus	52,17	Ireland	48,53
Malta	39,61	Malta	38,36	Finland	52,17	Cyprus	47,79
Austria	39,61	Cyprus	35,81	Malta	52,17	Malta	47,06
US-EU Mean	44,25	US-EU Mean	41,77	US-EU Mean	57,07	US-EU Mean	53,35

A first observation here is that the two ‘main dissenters’, France and the UK, are the two countries clearly closest to the US. The similarities in these three countries’ nuclear arms policies are probably part of the explanation. Interestingly is also that after the surge in EU-US cohesion in the 64th session, the cohesion decreased between the US and all EU member states, *except* the UK, in the 65th session.

A second observation is that Cyprus and Malta, which also deviated from the other EU member states, are among the countries farthest away from the US in all four sessions. Also the four ‘neutrals’ are among the countries farthest away from the US across all four sessions.

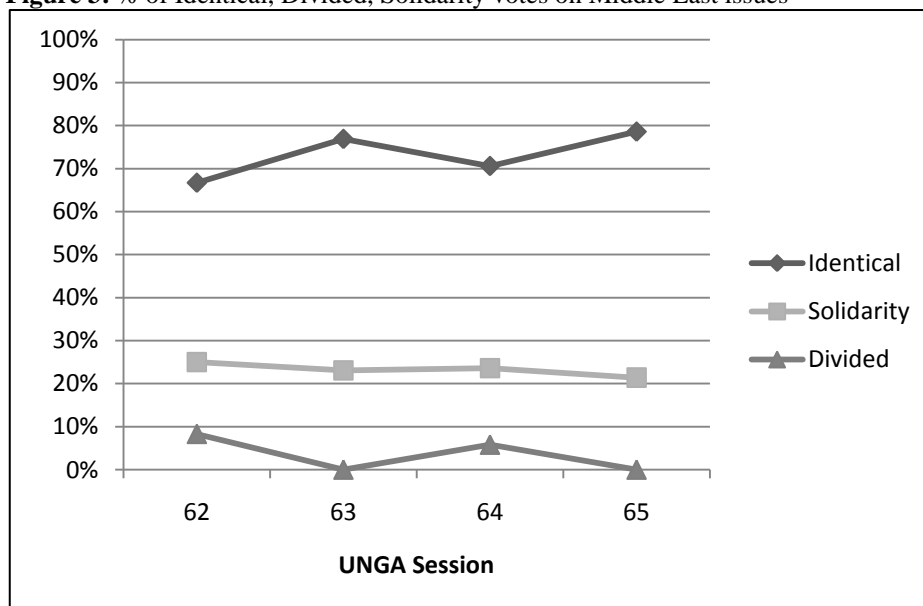
A third observation is that the ten member states usually categorized as ‘the CEECs’ cannot be considered to have a unified position in relation to the US. On average across the four sessions the Czech Republic, Poland, and Latvia are the CEECs closest to the US (Latvia in the 64th session and Poland in the 65th session are exceptions), whereas Slovenia and Romania are the two CEECs farthest away from the US.

## 5.2 The Middle East

The Middle East is one of the issue areas where the EU member states historically have voted most cohesively (see 2.2). The bulk of the resolutions relate to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, but included are also resolutions on, for instance, Syria and Lebanon.

### 5.2.1 Percentages of identical and divided votes

**Figure 3:** % of Identical, Divided, Solidarity votes on Middle East issues



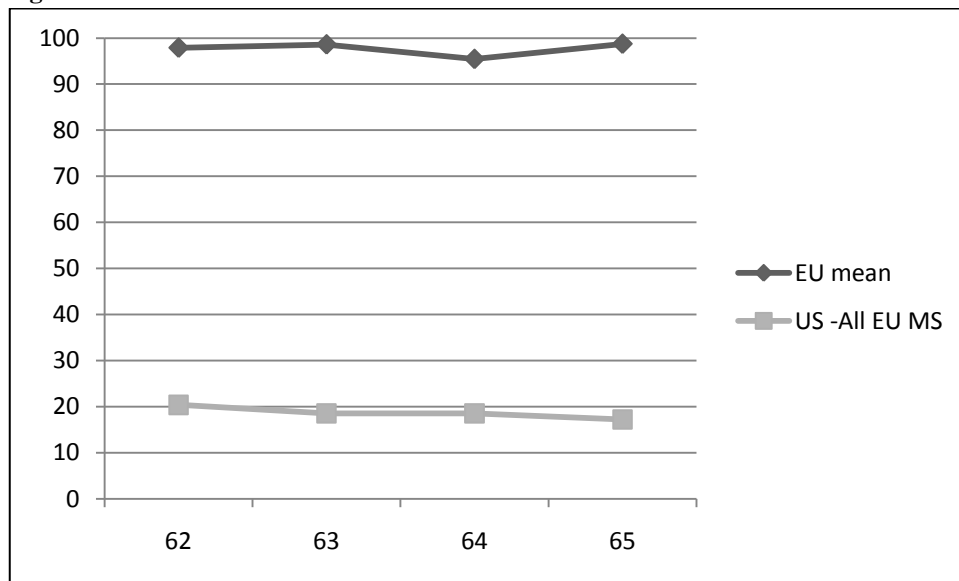
The graphs in Figure 3 produce a picture of a fairly volatile voting behaviour among the EU member states on Middle East issues. A first observation that can be made is that the share of *solidarity votes* is quite stable over the four analyzed sessions. The largest share of solidarity votes is found in the 62nd session (25%) and the smallest in the 65th session (21%).

Starting at a low point in the 62nd session (67%), the share of *identical votes* increased in the 63rd session (77%), decreased in the 64th session (71%), and increased again, and reached its highest level, in the 65th session (79%).

The share of *divided votes* has, then, seen an inverse trend, starting at a high point in the 62nd session (8%), decreasing in the 63rd session (0%), increasing in the 64th session (6%) before decreasing again in the 65th session (0%). It is worth underlining here that no divided votes were recorded in the 63rd and the 65th sessions.

## 5.2.2 Index of voting cohesion: EU mean and EU-US

**Figure 4:** EU mean IVC & EU-US IVC on Middle East issues



When looking at the *EU mean IVC*, the same trend as when looking at the percentages of identical and divided votes is discernible. In the 62nd, 63rd and 65th sessions, the EU mean IVC is between 97.89 and 98.74 with the highest point in the 65th session. The most significant change in cohesion occurred in the 64th session where the mean IVC dropped to 95.46.

Turning to the *EU-US IVC*, a first observation is the very low level of cohesion between the US and the EU in general. The Middle East is the issue area where the EU and the US are farthest away from each other. The graph above shows also that this situation is not improving – instead there has been a steady decrease during the studied sessions. The EU-US IVC has declined from 20.37 in the 62nd session to 17.2 in the 65th.

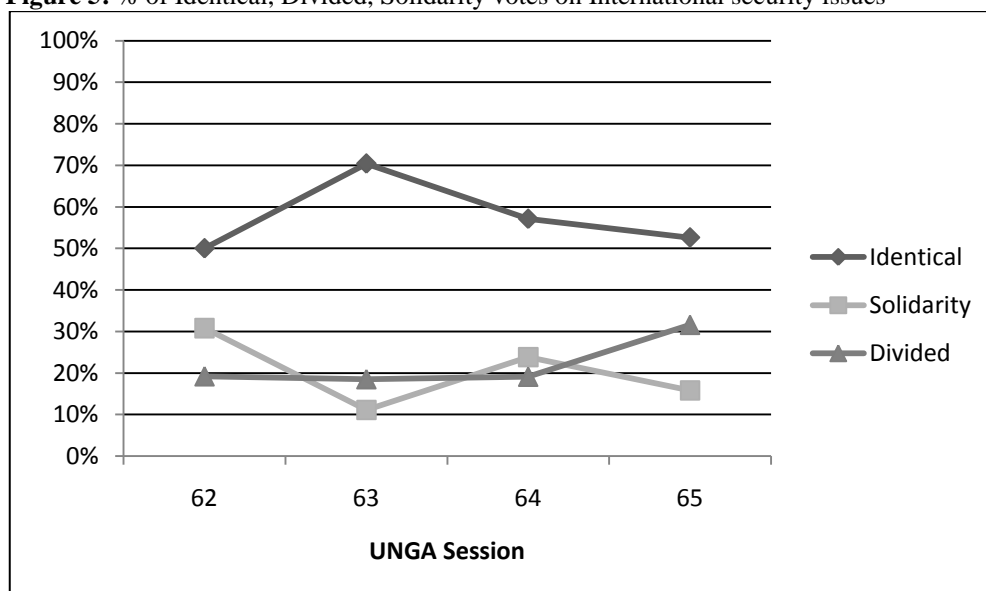
## 5.3 International security

The resolutions relating to International Security have historically caused problems for EU unity. Especially troublesome have resolutions on, for instance, nuclear arms been. Other resolutions included in this issue area are those on, for instance, disarmament, non-proliferation of arms, and mine-bans.

### 5.3.1 Percentages of identical and divided votes

The percentages of identical and divided votes on International security issues show some interesting trends (Figure 5).

**Figure 5:** % of Identical, Divided, Solidarity votes on International security issues



The share of *identical votes* was smallest in the 62nd session (50%). It then increased significantly (with 20 percentage points) in the 63rd session, reaching the highest point in the analyzed period (70%). In the 64th and the 65th sessions the share of identical votes then dropped steadily again, reaching 53% in the 65th session.

In the first three sessions, the share of *solidarity votes* follows an inverse pattern. In the 63rd session it decreased significantly (from 31% to 11%) and then increased again in the 64th session (24%). However, in the 65th session also the share of solidarity votes decreased (16%).

The share of *divided votes* was 19% in all of the first three sessions, before increasing significantly in the 65th session to 32%. Taken together, the fact that in the first three sessions the variation occurred between *identical* and *solidarity*

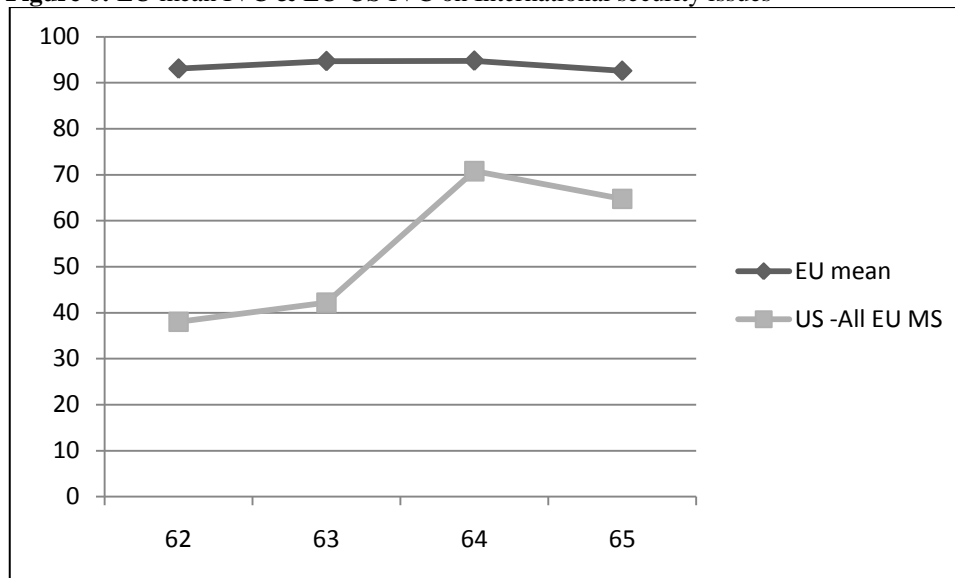
*votes*, whereas in the 65th session the variation involved all three types, makes it possible to conclude that the 65th session was the most conflictual.

### 5.3.2 Index of voting cohesion: EU mean and EU-US

When the *EU mean IVC* is used as a measure (Figure 6) the cohesion on International security issues differs to some extent from when the percentage of identical votes is used as a measure. Although the changes are small, the EU mean IVC increased slightly between the 62nd and 63rd sessions (93.06 to 94.70), increased marginally between the 63rd and the 64th sessions (94.70 to 94.78) and decreased between the 64th and 65th sessions (94.78 to 92.59).

The main difference between the two measurements is thus the 64th session. One possibility is that a changed behaviour of one or a few states has a large impact on the *percentage of identical votes* whereas it might have little effect on the *EU mean IVC*. To see whether this is the case, the *IVCs for every individual member state towards all other member states* on International security issues will be analyzed in the next section, but first the EU-US IVC will be discussed.

**Figure 6:** EU mean IVC & EU-US IVC on International security issues



In the 62nd session the EU and the US were quite far away from each other. In the 63rd session, the *EU-US IVC* increased slightly, from 38.04 to 42.22. Between the 63rd and the 64th sessions there was a remarkable rapprochement between the two and the IVC score surged to 70.77. In the 65th session there was a slight decrease again (64.73).

### 5.3.3 IVCs of individual member states towards all other member states

The IVCs for every individual member state towards all other member states on International security issues (Table 3) reveal some information about the differences between the percentages of identical votes and the EU mean IVC.

**Table 3:** IVCs of every individual member state towards all other member states on International security issues

<b>62</b>		<b>63</b>		<b>64</b>		<b>65</b>	
Lithuania	95,68	Czech Rep.	96,67	Greece	97,07	Denmark	95,22
Belgium	95,53	Poland	96,62	Luxembourg	97,07	Bulgaria	95,13
Denmark	95,53	Estonia	96,6	Portugal	97,07	Poland	95,13
Luxembourg	95,53	Hungary	96,6	Belgium	96,98	Portugal	95,13
Slovakia	95,53	Lithuania	96,6	Czech Rep.	96,98	Spain	95,13
Portugal	95,02	Bulgaria	96,58	Denmark	96,98	Belgium	94,9
Spain	95,02	Denmark	96,58	Estonia	96,98	Germany	94,9
Estonia	94,87	Slovenia	96,57	Germany	96,98	Greece	94,9
Greece	94,8	Belgium	96,31	Italy	96,98	Luxembourg	94,9
Hungary	94,8	Portugal	96,31	Netherlands	96,98	Slovenia	94,9
Slovenia	94,8	Luxembourg	95,57	Slovakia	96,98	Hungary	94,63
Latvia	94,78	Finland	95,55	Slovenia	96,98	Estonia	94,62
Poland	94,72	Germany	95,55	Spain	96,98	Latvia	94,53
Finland	94,47	Italy	95,55	Bulgaria	96,97	Lithuania	94,53
Czech Rep.	94,13	Netherlands	95,54	Hungary	96,88	Slovakia	94,53
Romania	94,13	Greece	95,48	Latvia	96,88	Czech Rep.	94,51
Netherlands	94,06	Romania	95,48	Cyprus	95,79	Netherlands	94,28
Germany	93,83	Slovakia	95,48	Finland	95,79	Italy	93,93
Italy	93,83	Spain	95,13	Romania	95,79	Finland	93,8
Bulgaria	93,61	Latvia	95,09	Poland	93,41	Romania	93,43
Cyprus	93,24	Sweden	93,82	Lithuania	93,13	Cyprus	92,36
Malta	91,9	Cyprus	93,18	Austria	92,31	Sweden	89,38
Sweden	91,75	Austria	92,91	Malta	92,31	Austria	89,23
Ireland	90,49	Ireland	92,91	Sweden	92,31	Ireland	89,23
Austria	90,42	Malta	92,88	Ireland	92,2	Malta	89,14
France	80,62	France	85,18	UK	84,55	France	78,84
UK	79,42	UK	85,12	France	79,87	UK	78,84
EU mean	93,06	EU mean	94,66	EU mean	94,79	EU mean	92,59

Between the 62nd and the 63rd sessions, the individual IVC scores increased for almost all member states. Both the percentage of identical votes and the EU mean IVC increased in this period too.



Between the 63rd and the 64th sessions the individual IVCs increased for a majority of the member states. However, for a few countries – most obviously France – the individual IVCs decreased. It is therefore likely that the decrease in the percentage of identical votes was caused by a changed voting behaviour of one (France) or a few member states, whereas this change is hardly discernible in the *EU mean IVC*.

Finally, in the 65th session, there seems to have been a general decrease in cohesion among most member states.

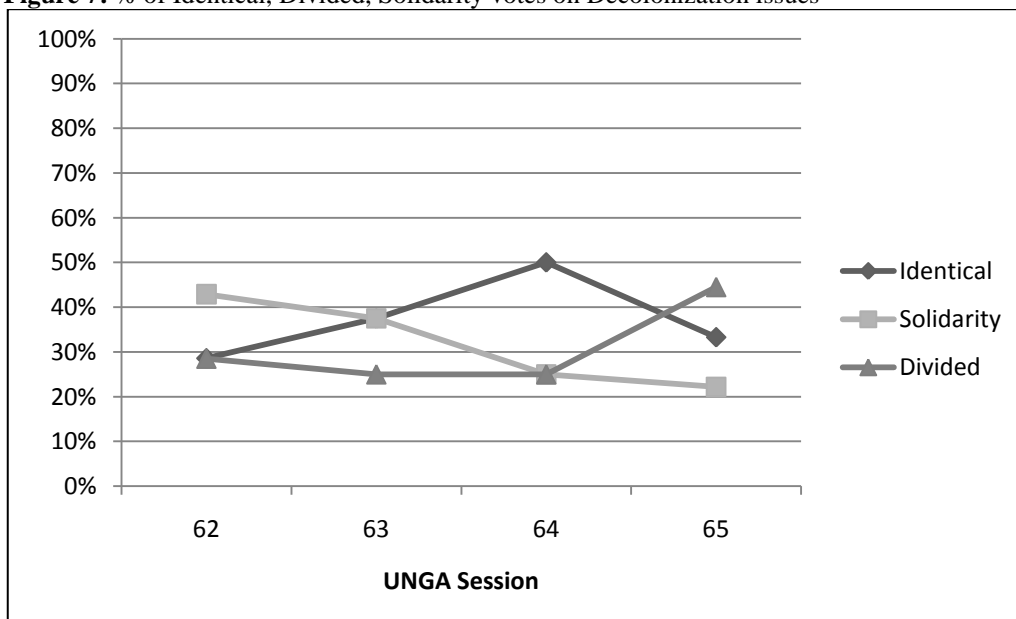
## 5.4 Decolonization

Decolonization resolutions mainly concern non-self governing territories and the right to self-determination. This has traditionally been one of the most divisive issue areas for the EU. It is also the issue area where fewest resolutions are voted upon. In the analyzed sessions the number of resolutions that have been voted upon has varied between seven and nine. One should, therefore, be careful to make claims about trends in voting behaviour in this issue area, since the votes on a single resolution has a large impact on, for instance, the percentage of identical votes.

### 5.4.1 Percentages of identical and divided votes

The *percentages of identical and divided votes* on Decolonization issues are displayed in Figure 7.

**Figure 7:** % of Identical, Divided, Solidarity votes on Decolonization issues

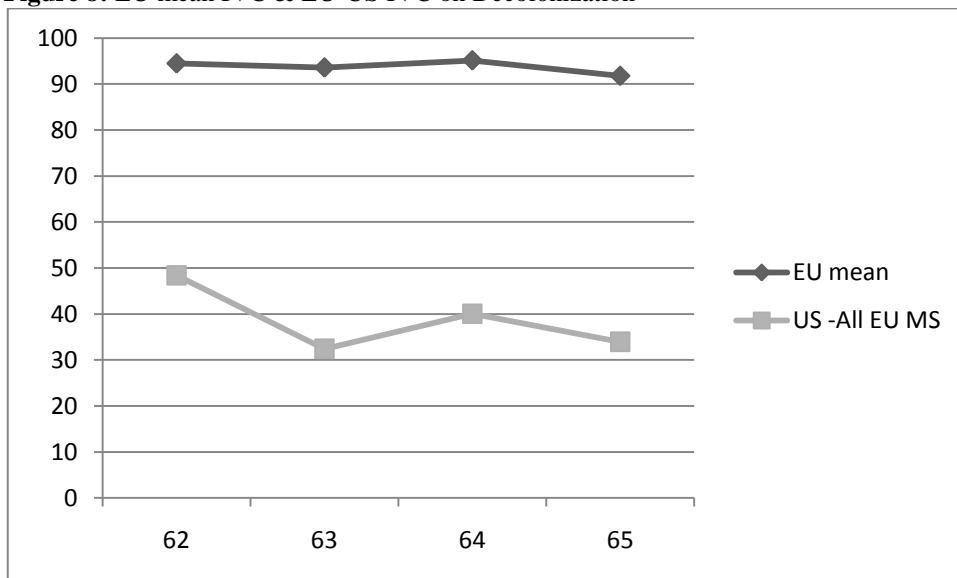


Although it is hard to talk about general trends based on the low number of resolutions, it is possible to see a pattern of polarization in the analyzed period. The share of *solidarity votes* have steadily decreased throughout the four sessions (from 43% to 22%), whereas the shares of *identical votes* increased between the 62nd and 64th sessions and then decreased in the 65th session. The share of *divided votes* remained rather stable for the first three sessions and then increased in the 65th session (from 25% to 45%).

#### 5.4.2 Index of voting cohesion: EU mean and EU-US

A few words should be said about the *EU mean IVC*. What could be noted first is that the EU mean IVC is very high compared to the share of *identical votes*. This indicates that one or a few member states vote differently than the vast majority. Based on earlier research, it could be assumed that France and the UK are to blame for the low share of identical votes in this issue area (e.g. Rasch 2008:249).

**Figure 8:** EU mean IVC & EU-US IVC on Decolonization



Keeping in mind the risk in talking about trends in this issue area, it can still be seen that the *EU-US IVC* has in general decreased over the four sessions. Compared to the other issue areas, the US and EU are rather far away from each other - only on the Middle East issues (and International security in the 62nd session), the score is lower. No improvement of the situation between the two is discernible in the analyzed period.

## 5.5 Human Rights

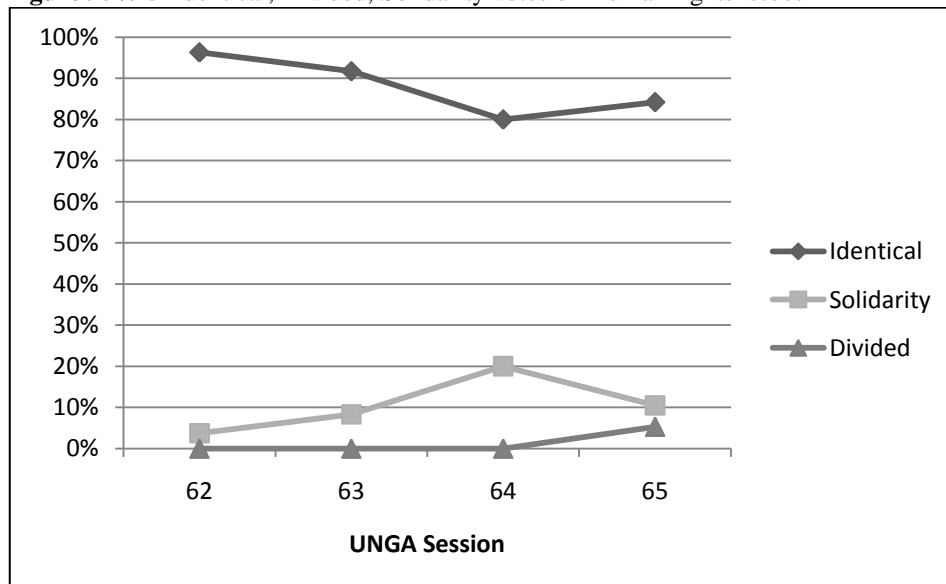
The Human Rights issues are those where the EU member states historically have voted most cohesively (see 2.2). Resolutions on, for instance, refugees, freedom of religion, racism, the situations in specific countries and the impact of globalization are included here.

### 5.5.1 Percentages of identical and divided votes

In the 62nd session the share of *identical votes* was 96% and no *divided votes* were recorded (Figure 9). In the 63rd and 64th sessions, the share of identical votes decreased, but still no divided votes were recorded.

In the 65th session, the share of *solidarity votes* decreased, and both the share of identical and divided votes increased. This could be interpreted as a sign of polarization, but part of the explanation is that few resolutions within this issue area were voted upon in the 65th session (see Appendix 1). The 5% share of divided votes was, in fact, only one vote, cast by Spain and it would therefore be incorrect to interpret this as a sign of polarization.

**Figure 9:** % of Identical, Divided, Solidarity votes on Human rights issues



### 5.5.2 Index of voting cohesion: EU mean and EU-US

The *EU mean IVC* (see Figure 10) follows the same pattern as the *percentage of identical votes*. It decreased slightly between the 62nd and 63rd sessions (99.17 to

99.09) and then decreased a bit more between the 63rd and 64th sessions (99.09 to 96.42), before increasing slightly again in the 65th session (96.85).

**Figure 10:** EU mean IVC & EU-US IVC on Human rights

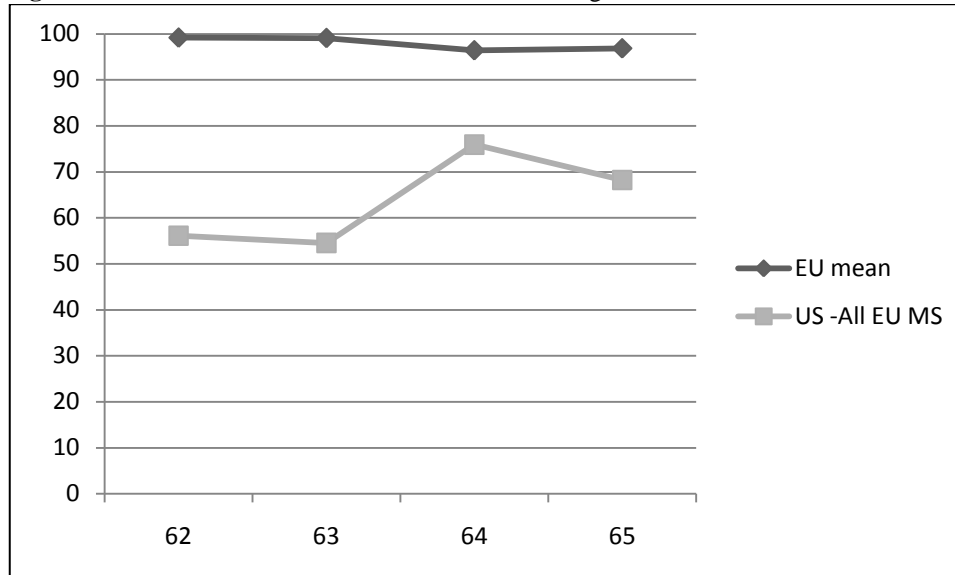


Figure 10 becomes more interesting when the graph representing the *EU-US IVC* is studied. Starting at 56.10 in the 62nd session, it decreased slightly in the 63rd session (54.55) before surging in the 64th session (75.93). It then decreased again in the 65th session, but was still at a relatively high level (68.23).

## 5.6 Summary

To visualize the main findings, a few comments are necessary about, first, the EU voting cohesion and, second, about the EU-US cohesion.

When looking at all issue areas taken together, and when combining the pictures given by the different measures, the EU cohesion was highest in the 63rd session and lowest in the 65th session.

*Human rights* and *the Middle East* are the issue areas where the EU member states are most cohesive. The cohesion in the former area has decreased over the analyzed period, whereas the cohesion in the latter area reached its highest point in the 65th session.

*Decolonization* and *International security* are, thus, the two issue areas which cause most conflict among the EU member states and the cohesion in these areas have hardly increased in the analyzed period.

When looking at individual member states, France and the UK are the two most diverging countries, followed by Cyprus and Malta. The two former seem to diverge mainly on Decolonization and International security issues, whereas the two latter mainly diverge on Middle East issues (see Appendix 2-6).

Turning to the EU-US cohesion, the most obvious finding is that the cohesion surged in the 64th session. This increase was caused by an obvious rapprochement in the *International security* and the *Human rights* areas. In the 65th session, there was a slight decrease again, but the cohesion was still significantly higher than in the 63rd session.

*International security* and *Human rights* are the two issue areas where the EU and the US are closest to each other. In the other two areas – *the Middle East* is particularly conflictual – the situation has not improved in the analyzed period.

# 6 Analysis

In this chapter the empirical results will be discussed in relation to the three hypotheses and to the theoretical assumptions upon which the hypotheses were founded. Each hypothesis will be discussed in a separate section.

## 6.1 Hypothesis 1

*H1: The change of US administration in 2009 has led to a) increased voting cohesion between the US and the EU and b) increased voting cohesion among the EU member states from the 64<sup>th</sup> session on.*

As predicted in the theoretical discussion about the first hypothesis (see 3.2.1), the change from the Bush administration to the Obama administration had a significant impact on the US voting behaviour. The rhetoric of President Obama has, thus, not been empty words and a new foreign policy doctrine seems to be in place. This new doctrine seems to be closer to the foreign policies of the EU member states since the voting behaviour between the US and the EU became more similar in the 64th session, i.e. after the inauguration of President Obama (the EU-US IVC increased from 41.77 to 57.04). This rapprochement has, however, not been visible across all issue areas, but overall, the US and the EU have become more cohesive. The first part of the hypothesis has thus been supported.

The second part of hypothesis predicted that increased cohesion between the US and the EU would lead to increased cohesion among the EU member states too. In contrast to the first part, this prediction has not been supported by the results from the empirical analysis. When all issue areas are taken into account, the cohesion between the EU member states decreased in the 64th session (for instance, the share of identical votes decreased from 75% to 68%), despite the changed foreign policy of the US.

In the 64th session, the EU-US IVC increased on *International security* (42.22 to 70.77), *Human rights* (54.55 to 75.93) and *Decolonization* (32.41 to 40.05), but only in the latter category the EU cohesion increased. In the first two categories, the EU cohesion decreased significantly. So, if the change of US administration had any impact at all on EU cohesion, it was more likely a negative impact. However, the analysis conducted in this thesis is insufficient to make any claims about such a negative impact.

If these findings are related to the realist assumptions that constituted the foundation of the hypothesis, it could be said that the decreased external pressure after Obama's entry has not made the EU member states hide their national preferences and therefore the expected increase in EU voting cohesion has not occurred. A conclusion could therefore be that either the assumption about external pressure and the exposure of national interests is flawed or, alternatively, has 'something else' affected the voting behaviour and reduced the effects of the US administration change. That 'something else' could potentially be the financial crisis (see 6.3).

## 6.2 Hypothesis 2

*H2: The innovations in the Lisbon Treaty have led to an increased level of voting cohesion among the EU member states in the UN General Assembly in the 64th and the 65th sessions and the effect is becoming stronger over time.*

The second hypothesis was based on assumptions derived from the new institutionalisms and predicted – like the first hypothesis – that the EU voting cohesion would increase in the 64th and the 65th sessions. As already discussed, the empirical analysis showed that the development, in fact, was quite on the contrary – the EU cohesion decreased in both the 64th and the 65th sessions (the share of identical votes from 75% in the 63rd session to 67% in the 65th and the EU mean IVC from 96.77 to 95.26). The second hypothesis can, therefore, not be supported by the evidence found in this study.

However, whereas the first hypothesis can quite easily be falsified, the second hypothesis still has some potential. The change of US administration has already taken place, and no future impact on the EU voting cohesion can be expected from President Obama's inauguration. On the contrary – and as mentioned in the theoretical discussion about the second hypothesis (see 3.2.2) – the effects of the Lisbon Treaty are likely to be stronger over time and it could be that these institutional changes have not yet begun to have an impact on EU foreign policy.

Seen from a *sociological institutionalist* perspective the unimproved EU cohesion could, thus, be interpreted as if the socializing effects of, for instance, the new EU delegation have not yet reshaped the member state representatives' interests and identities to fully include also 'the European'. On the other hand, even if/when 'the European' will be fully included in the identities of the member states, 100 per cent voting cohesion is not necessarily the result. As Risse (2009:149) states:

[...] we all occasionally run a red light. Does this mean that we do not accept the rule as binding or valid?

In other words, even if the norm that the European interest should be the main interest is accepted as legitimate and incorporated in the identities of the member states, occasional violations by one or several member states might still occur. However, the fact that the number of resolutions on which the EU are not cohesive is still quite high and the fact that this number has increased in the 64th and the 65th sessions indicate that ‘the European’ is not yet a more important building block of the identities of the member states, than is ‘the national’.

The salience of ‘the national’ (although interests, rather than identities are intended here) would also be an important part of a *rational-choice institutionalist* explanation to why the EU voting cohesion has not increased. As the member states are assumed to be rational, and as institutions are intended to constrain unwanted behaviour, it could be argued, on the one hand, that the benefits from voting coherently are not seen as good enough to avoid unilateral action and, on the other, that the institutional innovations in the Lisbon Treaty are not sufficiently constraining the choice to act unilaterally. After all, the Lisbon Treaty does not replace the intergovernmental structure of the CFSP.

### 6.3 Hypothesis 3

*H3: The financial crisis has led to a decreased level of voting cohesion among the EU member states in the UNGA, in particular in the 63rd session.*

The third hypothesis predicted that the voting cohesion among the EU member states would decrease, in particular in the 63rd session. As the empirical analysis shows, the EU voting cohesion has decreased in the analyzed period. However, in contrast to the assumption in the hypothesis the voting cohesion reached its highest point in the 63rd session (the share of identical votes was 75%). Although the third hypothesis, due to the faulty prediction about the 63rd session, to some extent must be falsified it is still the hypothesis that seems to have most merit of the three that have been put to test in this thesis.

The fact that the EU voting cohesion decreased in the 64th and the 65th sessions despite the Lisbon Treaty’s embracement of multilateralism and its emphasis on the importance of speaking with a single voice, indicates that ‘something’ has caused the EU member states to deviate from this rhetoric. And although the external pressure from the financial crisis, arguably, was strongest in the 63rd session, the financial crisis was by no means over when the 64th session started. On the contrary, the strong initial *external* pressure could be seen as having been replaced by a new *internal* pressure – the emergence of the euro crisis.

If then the euro crisis is assumed to have had more disruptive effects on the EU voting cohesion than the initial phase of the financial crisis, then a correlation between the decreased voting cohesion and the financial crisis could be discerned.



The euro crisis started in the fall of 2009 (Bohn & De Jong 2011:7), i.e. in the same fall as the 64th UNGA session started. Bohn & De Jong (2011:7-8, 14) argues that the euro crisis revealed – and was to some extent caused by – differences in political culture in Germany and France and that these differences then led to ‘contagion effects’ for other EU member states. If this argument is valid, then it could potentially explain the difficulties in reaching consensus in the UNGA.

If translated into the terms of realism, the fragility of international cooperation has been made visible, regardless of whether the financial crisis is seen as the disruptive factor or not. If it is assumed that the euro crisis, rather than the initial phase of the financial crisis, caused the lower degree of cohesion it could be said that the national interests were exposed, not by a pressure *external* to the EU, but by an *EU-internal* pressure. Although the pressure came from inside the EU, it is still external to the individual member states and could, in this sense, be seen as increasing the tension – if not at the international level – at least on the European level.

However, this discussion about the euro crisis is of a highly speculative nature and it needs to be studied in far greater depth before any conclusions can be drawn about its effects on the EU voting cohesion in the UNGA. But, since the third hypothesis is the one that is closest to the empirical findings in this study the discussion could still be valuable, not least as a starting point for future research (more about this in Chapter 7).

## 7 Conclusions

In this thesis a quantitative analysis of the EU member states' voting behaviour from the 62nd until the 65th UN General Assembly session has been conducted. The analysis has been conducted by, first, producing a descriptive quantitative result and, second, by analyzing the potential impact of the change of US administration in 2009, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and the financial crisis that reached Europe in 2008.

The hypotheses concerning the three abovementioned events were based on assumptions from realism (the US administration change and the financial crisis) and from the new institutionalisms (the Lisbon Treaty). The hypotheses about the change of US administration and the Lisbon Treaty both predicted that the EU voting cohesion would increase from the 64th session on. The third hypothesis, concerning the financial crisis, predicted that the EU voting cohesion would decrease, in particular in the 63rd session.

None of the hypotheses that were put to test could be directly supported by the empirical findings. However, only the hypothesis about the change of US administration can be directly falsified. The hypothesis about the Lisbon Treaty can still have some merit since it predicted that the effects of the Treaty would be stronger over time. It could therefore be that the effects are yet to be seen. The hypothesis about the financial crisis was right in the prediction that the EU voting cohesion would decrease in the analyzed period, but it failed to predict when the decrease would be the greatest.

These findings make it possible to conclude that this thesis has contributed to the existing body of research on EU voting behaviour in the UNGA in two ways. First, as none of the hypotheses were directly supported, the main contribution is probably the descriptive analysis of the EU voting cohesion. Second, the analysis of potential explaining variables has to some extent contributed to the understanding of what affects EU voting behaviour. The findings of the analysis of the three events have also visualized two potential shortcomings:

First, a question that must be asked is what type of explanations that can be the result from this type of studies. To study only four UNGA sessions is of course insufficient to make any claims about what generally explains shifts in EU voting cohesion. However, considering that the only hypothesis that was somewhat supported predicted that a change in the international system would affect the degree of cohesion, the findings are in line with earlier studies that also have found systems-level explanations to be most relevant. The question is then how

far one can stretch the concept *systems-level explanations*? Is it useful to claim that events as diverse as the Cold War, the War on Terror and, potentially, the financial crisis are similar enough to put them in the same category? The overarching question is then whether it is possible to come up with large-scale explanations to shifts in EU cohesion at all or whether such attempts only will render very general explanations that are too all-inclusive. The findings of this thesis do not provide answers to these questions, but they should still be raised.

A second point concerns the methodology applied in this and other similar studies. Studying voting records and testing hypotheses by analyzing the trends in voting behaviour will never produce more than *tentative explanations*. The reason is that the numbers does not say anything about why the individual states voted as they did. To come up with more than just tentative explanations, research in this field must apply a broader methodology than is usually done. Two examples where interviews with officials have been a complement to the quantitative analysis are Rasch (2008) and Luif (2003), but none of these studies try to explain the shifts in voting cohesion.

These two points indicate that there is a need for more research in this field and a few recommendations can be given here. First, to be able to identify which factors that potentially affect EU voting behaviour, more research must be conducted with an explaining focus and more variables need to be analyzed. Two of the events in this thesis, the Lisbon Treaty and the financial crisis, could be examples of variables that need further attention.

Another variable that has not been analyzed in relation to the voting behaviour in the UNGA is the role of national politics. It would be interesting to analyze whether individual member states' behaviour in the UNGA is related to the opinion of their domestic constituencies. If then the governments are bound by the opinion of the people in their states then this could be a limitation on the ability of the EU to vote cohesively. Such an approach would also imply that a new set of theories could be used to derive hypotheses from, for instance, liberal intergovernmentalism (see Moravcsik 1993) or Putnam's 'logic of two-level games' (see Putnam 1988).

A second recommendation is that, as already mentioned, a broader methodology needs to be applied. In addition to the abovementioned interviews, more sophisticated statistical analyses could be conducted to discern relationships between variables. This would be a feasible technique if, for instance, the impact of domestic politics on voting behaviour in the UNGA is analyzed.

A final recommendation is to broaden the focus to include also other elements of EU cohesion, e.g. speeches, common statements and proposals. This would give a more nuanced picture of the subject under analysis in studies within this field – the EU's ability to speak with a single voice.

## 8 Executive summary

One important feature of the EU's foreign policy is the strife for speaking with a single voice in external affairs. Although the aim to speak with a single voice has been recognized by the member states for decades, they still struggle to achieve this aim. Another feature of the EU's foreign policy is the embracement of multilateralism. In the pursuit of an effective multilateral system, the EU places a special emphasis on the role of the UN. When taken together, the strife for speaking with a single voice and the embracement of multilateralism with the UN as the most important organ, make it interesting to analyze how cohesive the EU is inside the UN. One way of doing this is to measure the EU voting cohesion in the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Several studies have done this before, but most of them have been of a very empirical nature and none of them have covered the most recent years. The present thesis aims at updating the existing body of research about the EU in the UNGA, by describing the EU voting behaviour from the 62nd until the 65th session (2007-2011) and by analyzing whether it has been affected by the change of US administration in 2009, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and the financial crisis that reached Europe in 2008.

The theoretical framework of this thesis consists of two (groups of) theories about international cooperation – realism and the new institutionalisms (rational-choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism). These theories are chosen, firstly, because they are examples of International relation theories and European Integration theories, secondly, because they have been prevalent in previous research, and thirdly, because they are relevant for explaining the three events that are studied (the change of US administration in 2009, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and the financial crisis). The theories are then used to construct three hypotheses about these three events.

The first hypothesis concerns the assumed impact on the EU voting cohesion of the US administration change in 2009 when President Obama replaced President Bush. It is assumed here that the foreign policy doctrine of the Obama administration is much closer to the EU foreign policy than the doctrine of the Bush administration. Previous research have demonstrated that the foreign policy behaviour of the US has had an impact on the EU's ability to act as a cohesive foreign policy actor. It is therefore assumed that a decreased policy distance between the US (under Obama) and the EU might also lead to a higher degree of EU voting cohesion. These assumptions are based on realist arguments that say that at times of external pressure, the EU member states expose their national interests with the result that the voting cohesion is negatively affected. The

change of US administration is in this sense seen as an event that decreases the external pressure and therefore might lead to a higher degree of voting cohesion.

The second hypothesis concerns the potential impact of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. Previous research has shown that the adoption of texts governing the EU's foreign policy have coincided with rises in the EU voting cohesion. Furthermore, some analysts have come to the conclusion that to overcome the remaining splits, further institutional adjustments must be made. In the Lisbon Treaty, three innovations are assumed to be such institutional adjustments that might lead to a higher degree of voting cohesion – the new EU delegation in New York, the 'new' High Representative, and the granting of legal personality to the EU as a whole. The hypothesis, which predicts that EU voting cohesion should increase from the 64th session on and that the effect will be stronger over time, builds on assumptions from both rational-choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. The former assumes that the EU member states have seen the benefits of a cohesive foreign policy and that the innovations in Lisbon Treaty are aimed at strengthening the foreign policy. Sociological institutionalism would emphasize the socializing effects of the new EU delegation and the symbolic values of the new High Representative and the new legal personality.

The third hypothesis concerns the impact of the financial crisis. The magnitude of the crisis has been compared to the fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11 and due to its systems-level effects assumptions derived from realism are used to construct the hypothesis. Realism assumes that international cooperation is fragile and that at times of increased external pressure, nation states expose their national interests. Research has shown that in the initial phase of the financial crisis the EU member states resorted to national measures and free-riding. Considering how central the Common Market is to the entire EU cooperation, this resort to national policies is assumed to have negatively affected the ability to vote cohesively in the UNGA. The hypothesis predicts that the decrease in voting cohesion will be greatest in the 63rd session.

To describe how the EU voting behaviour has developed in the analyzed period, a quantitative methodology is applied. The method used is roll-call analysis which is a way to analyze roll-call votes in legislative bodies, in this case the votes on adopted resolutions in the UNGA. The resolutions are divided into four issue areas: the Middle East, International security, Decolonization, and Human rights. Two measures are used, *the percentages of identical and divided votes* and an *index of voting cohesion*. The former gives a general view on how well the EU member states succeed in voting cohesively. The latter is a more sophisticated method that provides data about how the overall EU cohesion has developed, as well as information about individual member states. To be able to test the first hypothesis, the US is also included in the *index of voting cohesion*.

When all issue areas are taken together, and when combining the pictures given by the different measures, the EU cohesion is found to be highest in the 63rd session and lowest in the 65th session. *Human rights* and *the Middle East* are the issue areas where the EU member states are most cohesive. The cohesion in the former area has decreased over the analyzed period, whereas the cohesion in the latter area reached its highest point in the 65th session. *Decolonization* and *International security* are, thus, the two issue areas which cause most conflict among the EU member states and the cohesion in these areas have hardly increased in the analyzed period. When looking at individual member states, France and UK are the two most diverging countries, followed by Cyprus and Malta. The two former seem to diverge mainly on Decolonization and International security issues, whereas the two latter mainly diverge on Middle East issues.

Regarding the cohesion between the EU and the US, the most obvious finding is that the cohesion surged in the 64th session. This increase was caused by an obvious rapprochement in the *International security* and the *Human rights* areas. In the 65th session, there was a slight decrease again, but the cohesion was still significantly higher than in the 63rd session. *International security* and *Human rights* are the two issue areas where the EU and the US are closest to each other. In the other two areas – *the Middle East* is particularly conflictual – the situation has not improved in the analyzed period.

The hypothesis about the impact of the change of US administration is falsified since it predicted that that the EU cohesion would increase after President Obama's entry. The hypothesis was right in that the EU and the US approached each other in the 64th session, but since the EU cohesion decreased in both the 64th and the 65th session the hypothesis is falsified.

The hypothesis about the Lisbon Treaty must also be falsified to some extent as it also predicted that the EU cohesion would increase from the 64th session on. However, the hypothesis predicted that the effect of the Treaty would be stronger over time and it could therefore be that the effects are yet to come.

The hypothesis about the financial crisis was the one closest to the empirical findings since it predicted that the EU cohesion would decrease in the analyzed period. However, the hypothesis failed to predict when the decrease would be the greatest and therefore it cannot be said to have been supported by the empirical findings. On the other hand, if it is assumed that the euro crisis that emerged in 2009 had more disruptive effects than the initial phase of the financial crisis, then there seems to be a correlation with the decreased voting cohesion. This last assumption is, however, of a speculative nature and must be studied further.

This thesis can be said to have contributed to the existing body of research on EU voting behaviour in the UNGA in two ways. First, it has provided a descriptive analysis of the EU voting cohesion from the 62nd until the 65th session. Second,

the analysis of potential explaining variables has to some extent contributed to the understanding of what affects EU voting behaviour.

Two points of contention are discussed in the concluding chapter. First, the question about what type of explanations that is possible to come up with is raised. The overarching question is whether it is possible to come up with large-scale explanations to shifts in EU cohesion at all or whether such attempts only will render very general explanations that are too all-inclusive. The second point concerns the type of results that can be achieved with the methodology used in this and other similar studies. It is concluded that to come up with more than just tentative explanations, a broader methodology needs to be applied.

Recommendations for further research are, first, to test more variables that can be assumed to affect EU voting behaviour. The Lisbon Treaty and the financial crisis need to be analyzed further and a new variable that could be tested is whether the opinions of the domestic constituencies affect the voting behaviour of individual member states. A second recommendation is to apply a broader methodology in this type of studies. Interviews with member state officials would provide data on the motifs behind individual member states' voting behaviour, whereas more sophisticated statistical techniques could be used to test, for instance, the impact of the opinion of the domestic constituencies. The final recommendation is that other elements of cohesion, not only voting cohesion, could be brought into the analysis.

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Appendix 1: Number of resolutions per issue area and session

	<b>62</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Middle East</b>	12	13	17	14	<b>56</b>
<b>International Security</b>	26	28	21	23	<b>98</b>
<b>Decolonization</b>	7	8	8	9	<b>32</b>
<b>Human rights</b>	27	24	20	19	<b>90</b>
<b>Other</b>	5	1	3	3	<b>12</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>288</b>























Appendix 7: IVCs of individual member states, sorted alphabetically

IVCs of individual MS towards all other MS					IVCs of individual MS towards the US				
	62	63	64	65		62	63	64	65
Austria	95,49	96,52	95,76	94,5	Austria	39,61	39,19	54,34	48,53
Belgium	97,85	97,91	96,37	95,97	Belgium	43,51	41,22	57,25	53,68
Bulgaria	97,16	98,02	96,95	96,63	Bulgaria	42,21	42,47	57,35	53,73
Cyprus	95,87	93,78	93,64	93,58	Cyprus	40,26	35,81	52,17	47,79
Czech Rep.	95,79	97,63	96,26	96,48	Czech Rep.	45,39	42,57	59,42	55,15
Denmark	97,82	97,63	96,77	96,72	Denmark	43,51	43,15	57,97	54,41
Estonia	97,35	98,02	97,13	96,52	Estonia	43,51	41,89	57,25	55,15
Finland	97,49	97,65	96,51	96,09	Finland	42,21	40,54	52,17	50,74
France	90,63	91,32	89,2	88,65	France	51,97	49,32	63,04	62,50
Germany	97,27	97,65	96,18	96,6	Germany	47,40	40,54	58,70	53,68
Greece	97,6	97,24	97,27	96,6	Greece	44,16	40,54	56,52	52,21
Hungary	97,32	98,02	96,3	96,4	Hungary	47,40	41,89	57,35	53,68
Ireland	96,12	96,59	95,27	94,5	Ireland	40,26	39,19	53,62	48,53
Italy	97,27	97,65	96,1	96,36	Italy	47,40	40,54	57,97	52,21
Latvia	97,32	97,38	97,07	96,47	Latvia	47,40	44,52	57,25	55,15
Lithuania	97,62	97,95	95,82	96,48	Lithuania	44,16	41,89	57,97	55,15
Luxembourg	97,5	98,01	97,18	96,52	Luxembourg	43,51	41,89	56,52	51,47
Malta	95,57	95,44	94,17	93,28	Malta	39,61	38,36	52,17	47,06
Netherlands	97,35	97,24	96,26	96,4	Netherlands	44,16	42,47	59,42	54,41
Poland	97,3	97,64	95,26	96,63	Poland	47,40	43,15	59,42	53,73
Portugal	97,67	97,88	96,46	96,52	Portugal	42,86	41,22	55,07	52,21
Romania	97,37	96,79	96,32	96,14	Romania	43,51	41,22	57,25	53,68
Slovakia	97,57	97,15	96,71	96,51	Slovakia	44,16	40,54	58,70	54,41
Slovenia	97,6	98,01	96,43	96,41	Slovenia	44,16	41,89	55,07	51,47
Spain	97,05	97,07	96,9	95,13	Spain	42,21	39,86	55,80	50,74
Sweden	96,29	96,95	95,7	94,78	Sweden	41,56	39,86	55,07	51,47
UK	88,63	89,58	89,43	85,27	UK	51,30	52,05	65,94	67,65
EU mean	96,51	96,77	95,68	95,26	US-EU Mean	44,25	41,77	57,07	53,35