

**European Members of Parliament: Between National and Community Political Spaces.
The hypothesis of professionalization and socialization of MEPs.**

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In what way are Members of European Parliament (MEPs) “Europeans” and not only elected members of Parliament in a European institution? This question is the source of a debate within the political science domain. On one side, studies highlight the weak autonomy of the institution and its members. These studies emphasize the heterogeneousness of national processes of choosing elected members² and of representative practices³ (with initially relatively high resignation rates showing an overall low level of involvement),⁴ and of the political careers which are very nationally centered.⁵ Thus, recent research downplays internal socialization procedures at the European Parliament.⁶ On the contrary, other studies show the importance of the autonomization processes in the institution, specialization and rationalization of parliamentary work,⁷ the specificity of internal votes and means of structuring parliamentary majorities⁸ and the shift from an “exogenous” internal political system (based on exterior constraints and considerations) to an “endogenous” one (based on constraints and considerations determined by requirements and specificities of the internal games).⁹

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² The “second order election” concept has been a dominant paradigm of analysis since the 1979 elections.

³ For example recently: Navarro J., *Les députés européens et leur rôle. Analyse sociologique de la représentation parlementaire dans l'Union européenne*, Thesis for PhD in Political Science, University of Montesquieu Bordeaux IV, 2007.

⁴ Bryder T., “Party Groups in the European Parliament and the Changing Recruitment Patterns of MEPs”, in Bell D., Lord C. (ed.), *Transnational Parties in the European Union*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998.

⁵ On French MEPs, see Andolphatto D., “Les Eurodéputés en question”, *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, n°970, 1994, p. 26-33.

⁶ Navarro J., *op. cit.* This is also the case of Roger Scully, notably in opposition to neo-functionalist predictions. Scully R., *Becoming Europeans ? Attitudes, Behaviour, and Socialization in the European Parliament*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.

⁷ Bowler S., Farrel M. D., “The Organizing of the European Parliament: Committees, Specialization and Co-ordination”, *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 25, n°2, p. 219-243; Delwit P., De Waele J.-M., Magnette P. (dir.), *A quoi sert le Parlement européen*, Brussels, Complexes, 1999 ; Costa O., *Le Parlement européen, assemblée délibérante*, Brussels, Editions of the University of Brussels, 2001.

⁸ Especially Attina F., “The voting behaviour of the European Parliament members and the problem of the Europarties”, *European Journal of Political research*, vol. 18, 1990, p. 557-579; Kreppel A., *The European Parliament and Supranational Party System. A Study in Institutionnal Development*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; Hix S., Noury A., Roland G., “Power to parties: Competition and Cohesion in the European Parliament, 1979-2001”, *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 34, n°4, 2005, p. 209-234.

⁹ Hix S., Lord C., *Political Parties in the European Union*, London, Macmillan, 1997.

In an attempt to highlight the specific economy of internal political transactions in the institution, these new studies overlap with political sociology studies, which question the modalities by which a European political and institutional order both partially differentiated and in constant interdependence with national spaces comes to being.¹⁰ Indicators on which this political sociology is based are nevertheless different. They focus particularly on two aspects: firstly, the importance of the processes by which certain resources (“capital”) are concentrated and redefined at European level;¹¹ Secondly, the emergence of new types of professionals of power who are in charge of individual and collective political enterprises aiming at the appropriation of these resources and whose management requires more and more specialized skills.¹² The combination of these two elements leads to the highlighting of new spaces of “competitive cooperations” whose logics and balances are both very specific (in relation to logics characteristic of national spaces) and very unequally institutionalized.¹³

This paper aims at elaborating on these researches by showing that if the institutionalization of the European Parliament remains an unfinished process, it is reflected first of all, by the increasing prevalence of a number of central positions of leadership or power whose control requires resources specific to the EP. Beyond the persistent instability of parliamentary staff, its strong heterogeneity related to its multinational character and the practical modalities of its selection (in segmented national contexts), our quantitative study clearly highlights the growing importance of professionals of a particular type, at the *center* of the institution. Not only do they live “from” and “for” Europe, they also accumulate political and symbolic resources which allow them to successfully claim the most important internal positions of power at the EP.

In order to study them, we have made up a database from biographies of elected members of the European Parliament between June 2004 and December 2006, data collected from the

¹⁰ For a summary of the numerous studies in this trend, cf. Georgakakis D., “La sociologie historique et politique de l’Union européenne : un point de vue d’ensemble et quelques contre points”, *Politique européenne*, n°25, Spring 2008, p. 72-73.

¹¹ Georgakakis D., de Lassalle M., “Genèse et structure d’un capital institutionnel européen. Les très hauts fonctionnaires de la Commission européenne”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n°166-167, 2007, p. 39-53.

¹² Georgakakis D. (dir.), *Les métiers de l’Europe politique. Acteurs et professionnalisation de l’Union européenne*, Strasbourg, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Coll. “Sociologie politique européenne”, 2002 and “Sur l’Europe”, special issue, *Regards sociologiques*, n°27 and 28, 2004.

¹³ For example: Smith A., *Le gouvernement de l’Union européenne : une sociologie politique*, Paris, LGDJ, 2004.

institution's official list (n=736).¹⁴ This paper is based more particularly on the processing of this data. Beyond the national logics upon which European elected members' selection is based and the strong heterogeneity that is representative of a multinational population, the first section will aim at showing convergences in the modalities of their political and social recruitment. The second section will underline concentration phenomena that have resulted in the emergence of a parliamentary elite that is specifically European in terms of resources and career types, likely to position itself at the centre of the institutional space and occupy the main leadership positions within the European Parliament.

The transformation and the specialization of the MEP's recruitment

End of political career mandate, a very quick turnover, lack of European political careers, a serious dependence on national contexts and a low institutionalization are some of the subjects that the study of the MEP's sociopolitical characteristics calls into question. As a matter of fact, apart from the persistence of the national spaces' weight in the process of selecting the MEPs, a thorough study on MEPs' profiles shows a degree of convergence of their socio-demographic and political characteristics and growing mandate stabilization. In the same way, it underlines a type of Europeanization of the selection processes, i.e., the emergence of norms that are more or less explicit and codified, but apply to various national contexts. The gaps between MEPs from countries of the 2004 enlargement and the others reinforce this early conclusion: the former, recently subjected to European regulations, are close to MEPs in the 1980s in terms of characteristics.

The underlying convergence of socio-demographic characteristics

The predominance of cultural capital in the structure of social resources, the growing internationalization of individual profiles and lastly the narrowing up of the age pyramid and the feminization of the population are the variations associated with socio-demographical characteristics of MEPs. More than just a place where MEPs about to retire come to spend

¹⁴ Not 732, since four MEPs who resigned during the first half of the term are included. The list does not take into account the Bulgarian and Romanian MEPs who accessed the EP in 2007. It includes indicators linked to their demographical properties (sex, age), to socio-cultural properties (level and type of degree, past profession), to dispositions to internationalization (foreign degrees), to their political paths (type of mandates, career characteristics), as well as to their investment in the European Parliament: Committees in which they sit, number of mandates and years in the EP, positions of power exercised (presidency and vice presidency of committees, of groups, member of the Bureau, delegation presidency), number of administered reports, plenary interventions, questions asked, written resolutions and declarations put forward within three years (between June 2004 and 2007), elements available on the European Parliament website. Most of the present material comes from biographical dictionaries, double-checked with information from the Internet. This data is completed by an overview of information from the existing literature, which allows us to carry out useful diachronic comparisons.

their last mandate, the European Parliament is considered more and more like a political professionalization area for an intellectual elite partly internationalized and increasingly feminized.

The professional backgrounds seem rather to match those of the political personnel.¹⁵ MEPs have a middle-class profile (according to British/American classifications), with a predominance of juridical professions (12% of the Parliament in 1996) and more especially teachers (22%).¹⁶ The over-representation of jurists and teachers – particularly those of high education, is not insignificant in this Community space which was historically constructed based on law and on an expert competence involving the mobilization of specific capital.¹⁷ The remarkably high level of the MEPs’ degrees in the sixth term confirms their intellectual profiles.

Table 1: Distribution of the MEPs’ degrees depending on the country of election during the sixth term

| | First fifteen countries | Accessing countries |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Degree level = baccalaureate > or = master | 51% (250) | 77% (112) |
| Doctorate | 20% (113) | 48% (75) |
| Degree in: | | |
| • Economics | 14% (63) | 23% (33) |
| • Science and technology | 11% (48) | 22% (13) |
| • Health | 4% (18) | 13% (18) |
| • Law | 28% (128) | 16% (23) |
| • Humanities | 34% (151) | 21% (30) |

One half is in possession of a master’s degree or higher while one fourth have a PhD. Most of them have done degree courses related to Law (26%), Political Science (8%), Economics (16%) or Social Sciences (31%), rather than Science and Technology (Mathematics, Physics etc.) (13%) or Health (especially medicine) (6%) and they have also practiced upper intellectual professions: 21% of scientific professions (academics and researchers such as

¹⁵ Read for example Dogan M., “Les professions propices à la carrière politique, Osmoses, filières et viviers” , in Offerlé M., *La profession politique XIXème XXème siècle*, Paris, Belin, 1999, p. 171-199.

¹⁶ Norris P., Franklin M., “Social representation”, *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 32 (2), 1997, p. 185-210; Hix S., Lord C., *Political Parties in the European Union*, op. cit.; Westlake M., *Britain’s Emerging Euro-Elite?*, op. cit.

¹⁷ See Vauchez A., “Droit et politique”, in Belot C., Magnette P., Saurugger S., *Science politique de l’Europe*, Paris, Economica, p. 53-80; Georgakakis D., de Lassalle M., “Genèse et structure d’un capital institutionnel européen. Les très hauts fonctionnaires de la Commission européenne”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n°166-167, 2007, p. 39-53. For the French case, see interviews held with MEPs in Beauvallet W., *Profession : eurodéputé. Les élus français au Parlement européen et l’institutionnalisation d’une nouvelle figure politique et électorale (1979-2004)*, PhD thesis in political science, Université Robert Schuman, Strasbourg, 2007.

Lipietz, Weber), 13% of information, communication and entertainment professions (Cavada, Geringer de Oerdenberg, Cashman, Goebbels and Piks), 11% liberal professions (Gaubert, Leinen), 10% were once secondary school teachers (Fruteau, Wurtz, Martens, Simpson, Foltyn-Kubicka). Regularly declining proportions compared to past terms of office are: farmers (2%) (Daul, Coveney, Ashworth) as well as intermediary and working-class categories (6% of intermediary professions and less than 3% of workers and laborers).¹⁸

Because of the internationalization of university markets and the international elites,¹⁹ MEPs have more and more international profiles. Previously few and far between, these international profiles have now become more frequent and durable in the EP. Within the sixth term of office, a little more than one MEP out of ten (12%) has obtained a degree in a different country than their own (in Europe, the USA or even Russia for some Eastern European MEPs). This internationalization of profiles is all the more distinctive as MEPs come from countries with a more peripheral position in the European Union. On this level, we can distinguish more especially MEPs from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Malta and also those from Portugal and Greece (42% of them). While, for instance, Greek MEPs have particularly internationalized profiles (cf. Table), this internationalization is geographically localized and concerns mostly members of the intellectual elite having graduated in the United States, Great Britain or in France rather than in the former Yugoslavia for instance.²⁰ Going across borders and attending reputable schools in Europe or the United States allows elites from “small” countries to receive the same training as future elites from “big” countries and therefore to be able to acquire resources that can be converted at national level (in diplomacy for example) – the detour through other countries often has a national objective. Hence, the international elites find in the European Parliament an arena where they can make use of their dispositions to work in a multicultural institution.

¹⁸ More qualified, MEPs from accession countries have more often studied Economics, Science and Technology and Health than Law and Humanities. They have held more scientific professions (39% against 16%) and have been senior officials or diplomats more than managers and company managers, secondary school teachers, middle management staff, employees and laborers.

¹⁹ Wagner A.-C., *Les nouvelles élites de la mondialisation, une immigration dorée en France*, Paris, PUF, 1998 ; Lazuech G., “Le processus d’internationalisation des grandes écoles françaises”, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, n°121/122, 1998, p. 66-76.

²⁰ Concerning Greek students’ studies abroad, cf. Panayotopoulos N., “Les ‘grandes écoles’ d’un petit pays. Les études à l’étranger : le cas de la Grèce”, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, n° 121/122, 1998, p. 77-91.

The Greek MEPs' international profile

More than 40% of Greece's 2004 MEPs have obtained their degrees abroad: G. Dimitrakopoulos obtained his PhD in International Relations in Washington; Samaras obtained an MBA at Harvard University; K. Hatzidakis followed postgraduate studies in Political Communication at Kent University; G. Karatzaferis has obtained his London School of Journalism Degree; R. Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou obtained a Degree from the Geneva Institute of European Studies; S. Lambrinidis obtained a Law PhD from Yale; G. Papastamko obtained a Law PhD from the University of Tübingen; M. Xenogiannakopoulou obtained his postgraduate certificate (DEA) in Paris I; M. Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, who also worked in Germany, France, Italy and Greece, obtained a History PhD from the University of Paris I. Several Greek MEPs have made careers in the European Union. K. Batzeli, a PhD holder and a former European Council intern, was once a Financial Advisor in European Affairs, Chairman of the Olive Oil Processing Section of the COPA-COGECA European Farm Organizations and a member of advisory committees and working groups on structural policy, olive oil and horticulture. She was also Secretary-General of European and International Affairs Section of the Ministry of Agriculture. P. Beglitis also had an important European career: after his Law and Political Science studies in Athens and Paris, he started a career in diplomacy and worked in the Greek Permanent Representation to the European Union.

The MEPs' profiles change especially in terms of age and sex. As for age, European representatives are not different from other political professions: Most of them have a middle age type of profile,²¹ which puts into question the idea of the European Parliament as a privileged rest home. In 2006, their mean age rose to 53.3 years (Standard deviation of 9.8 years) – the oldest being 82 whereas the youngest was 29, and the modal age class being between 50 and 60 years of age (40% of MEPs). This situation is due to the long-term evolution. In 1979, there were more very aged persons in the European political personnel: the figure of the “end-of-career” MEP was a prevalent one. During the late 90s, it was the opposite; the majority of MEPs (73%) was aged between 40 and 60 and only 14% of the total were less than 40 while 13% was more than 60.²² Noticeable variations between countries should be pointed out; Luxembourg (ten years older than the average), Cyprus, Estonia,

²¹ Best H., Cotta M. (eds), *Parliamentary representatives in Europe 1848-2000*, Oxford, Oxford University press, 2004.

²² Hix S., Lord C., *Political Parties in the European Union*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997.

France and Italy had high averages – more than 55 years, as opposed to Malta, Hungary, Holland and Sweden.²³ Generally speaking, those who are a bit younger are women (51.4 years against 54.2 years), MEPs from left wing political groups (51 years for the Greens/EFA, 52 years for the GUE/NGL, against 54 years for the EPP, 56 years for the ID) and those from the 2004 accession countries (51.6 for accession countries against 53.8 from the first Fifteen).

The women's proportion, which is more important than in most of the other national Parliaments, has doubled between the first parliamentary term and the last two terms: 16% in 1979 and 30% in 1999 and 2004. If the European Parliament is one of the most feminized Parliaments in Europe,²⁴ it has not yet achieved parity. Major variations remain between countries, which indicate differences between national political spaces. There are fewer women amongst MEPs from Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Italy, Czech Republic and Latvia. It is the opposite in Sweden – the only country where the number of women is the same as that of men. There are more than 40% of women MEPs in the Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia, Slovenia and France. All in all, the MEPs from countries of the 2004 enlargement are less feminized than those from the first Fifteen (less than a quarter against a third respectively) and there are more women in central left groups²⁵ - Party of the European Socialists group (PSE) (40% of MEPs), 47% for the Greens/EFA – than in the GUE (30%), EPP (23%) and especially ID, UEN and non-attached (between 11% and 16%). Even the imperative of lists on which parity was to be respected did not work. Some women even resigned just after the election.

However, the proportion of women in the European Parliament turns out to be higher than in national parliaments. As in the case of inexperienced MEPs or the so called “Euro-regionals”,²⁶ this data reinforces the thesis on the European Parliament as a true area of political professionalization largely occupied by actors whose sociopolitical profiles are less

²³ French MEPs, who are amongst the oldest in the parliament (56 years and 2 months), are nevertheless younger than national MPs (56 years and 9 months) (source: French national assembly) and senators (61 years (source: French Senate, 2008)).

²⁴ Kauppi N., “Power or Subjection? French Women Politicians in the European Parliament”, *The European Journal of Women's studies*, vol. 6, 1999, p. 329-340; Beauvallet W., Michon S., “Les femmes au Parlement européen : effets du mode de scrutin, des stratégies et des ressources politiques. L'exemple de la délégation française”, *Swiss Political Science Review*, vol. 14, n°4, winter 2008/2009, p. 663-690.

²⁵ Such an observation was already made in Norris P., Franklin M., “Social representation”, *European Journal of Political Research*, 32, 1997, p. 185-210, p. 193.

²⁶ Kauppi N., “European Union and French Political Careers”, *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol. 19 (1), 1999, p. 1-24.

favorable to political competition than in national political spaces.²⁷ This greater openness of the European political space also alters hierarchies that are established at the national level.²⁸ The European Parliament appears as a privileged space of political investment for the MEPs climbing up the political ladder and who constitute an intellectual elite that is partially internationalized, younger and more feminized than the political elites from central political fields who are in smaller proportions term after term. Mandate stabilization and specialization of paths towards Europe form two other evolutions of MEPs' political recruitment that also back up this thesis.

Increasing mandate stabilization and the developing specialization of political paths to Europe

In contradiction with the general opinion according to which the European Parliament is a very unstable place and often abandoned by MEPs who turn to national political fields and subjected to the national usages of the European mandate by very weakly Europeanized party organizations; during the fifth term (1999-2004) less than 15% resigned during their mandate (24% under the first term), and close to one MEP out of two was reelected.²⁹ 15% of the MEPs in the sixth term (2004-2009) from the first Fifteen countries have already been MEPs (43% in total). It is only since the third term (1989-1994) that MEPs started joining the European Parliament for longer periods.³⁰ Halfway through the sixth term, the MEPs from the first Fifteen countries have 7.1 years of presence and 2.0 mandates on average.

If variations between national delegations should be taken into consideration, showing precisely some degree of persistence of specifically national logics, they tend, however, to decrease. A pattern tends to prevail beyond national specificities. This reality is more explicit within major delegations whose number of MEPs easily allows statistically significant historical comparisons. Between 1979 and 1994, 58% of the English and 43% of Germans accumulate up to 7.5 years of presence at the European Parliament against 25% of the French

²⁷ For the French case, see Beauvallet W., Michon S., "Les femmes au Parlement européen : effets du mode de scrutin, des stratégies et des ressources politiques. L'exemple de la délégation française", *Swiss Political Science Review*, vol. 14, n°4, winter 2008/2009, p. 663-690.

²⁸ Kauppi N., "Power or Subjection?...", art. cit.; Norris P., Franklin M., art. cit.

²⁹ Bryder T., "Party groups in the European Parliament and the Changing Recruitment Patterns of MEPs", in Bell D., Lord C. (eds), *Transnational parties in the European Union*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998, p. 189-203; Corbett R., Jacobs F., Shackleton M., *The European Parliament*, Fourth Edition, John Harper Publishing, 2000.

³⁰ Marrel G., Payre R., "Des carrières au Parlement européen. Longévité des eurodéputés et institutionnalisation de l'arène parlementaire", *Politique européenne*, n°18, 2006, p. 69-104.

and 28% of Italians.³¹ In the 6th term it is certainly always the Germans and the British who have the longest seniority (Table 1): During the 2004 elections, more than two German MEPs, and out of three and close to/almost four British out of five are reelected; they have 2.4 and 2.3 mandates in average per MEP against 2.0 for the French, 1.8 for the Italians, 1.5% for the Irish, 1.4% Portuguese, 1.4% for the Swedish and 1.3% for the Greeks.³² But this pattern also increasingly affects, for instance, the French and the Italians (from 31 and 22% reelected MEPs in 1999 to 45 and 41% in 2004).

Table 2: Indicators of seniority at the European Parliament according to country of election of the 6th term MEPs (decreasing order)

| Country of election | Total staff | Average number of mandates at Parliament | Average number of years at the EP ³³ |
|---------------------|-------------|--|---|
| Germany | 99 | 2.4 | 9.0 |
| United Kingdom | 78 | 2.3 | 8.2 |
| Austria | 18 | 2.2 | 6.9 |
| Belgium | 24 | 2.0 | 6.3 |
| France | 78 | 2.0 | 6.4 |
| Luxembourg | 6 | 2.0 | 6.1 |
| Denmark | 14 | 1.9 | 6.3 |
| Spain | 54 | 1.9 | 6.3 |
| Finland | 14 | 1.9 | 5.7 |
| Italy | 79 | 1.8 | 5.7 |
| Netherlands | 27 | 1.8 | 5.7 |
| Ireland | 13 | 1.5 | 3.9 |
| Portugal | 24 | 1.4 | 3.8 |
| Sweden | 20 | 1.4 | 3.7 |
| Greece | 24 | 1.3 | 3.5 |
| Cyprus | 6 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Estonia | 7 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Hungary | 25 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Latvia | 9 | 1.0 | 2.0 |

³¹ Scarrow S.E., "Political Career Paths and the European Parliament", *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, vol. 22, 1997, p. 253-262.

³² In average, 9 and 8.2 years at the EP for the Germans and the British against 6.4 years for the French (in the fourth position), only 3.7 and 3.5 for the Swedish and the Greeks, 5.5 for all of them and 6.6 for those from the first fifteen. Due to a number of elements specific to this country (in particular the mode of election), the British seem to be, however, a more Europe-specialized personnel than average (Westlake M., *Britain's Emerging Euro-Elite? The British in the Directly-Elected Parliament, 1979-1992*, Dartmouth, Aldershot, 2004).

³³ On 1 July 2006 (two years after the election).

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|--|--|
| Lithuania | 13 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Malta | 5 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Poland | 54 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Czech Republic | 24 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Slovakia | 14 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Slovenia | 7 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Total | 736 | 1.8 (2.0 for the first Fifteen) | 5.5 (6.6 for the first Fifteen) |

The historical stabilization of the mandate goes hand in hand with the modification of political properties, and a tendency to the emergence of an ideal figure. If MEPs in the 80s often had substantial political experience at national level, in the 90s –and regardless of the country- several saw the EP as a means of access to political professionalization: it is often their first mandate (a little bit more than one out of three in the 6th term) or their first important mandate (one out of four had before then only exercised local mandates such as regional or local councilors). It is thanks to Europe that an increasing number of MEPs access a mandate allowing them to exercise a political activity paying them full time salary.

Bearing in mind the national divergences that are still present, as we will see, political careers appear clearly Europe-specialized. MEPs can no longer have double mandates (national and European): Under the 1st term (1979-1984), 31% still held double mandates (national and European Parliament) against less than 7% under the 5th term (1999-2004) before the ban of this practice institutionalized a norm already implicit in a lot of Member States. This practice was in fact strongly contested and stigmatized in the European Parliament itself.³⁴ As a sign of a progressive differentiation in the paths to Europe, which were clearly dependent on national parliamentary paths until 1979, MEPs less often have national parliamentary experience: 45% of MEPs from the 1st term have already been members of Parliament in their home country, 35% for the 2nd, and only 28% for the 5th (in all three terms, 17%, 13% and 10% have already been Ministers). If these proportions have increased in 2004 (36% former MPs and 16% former ministers), it is especially because of the MEPs from countries of the 2004 enlargement, who tend to come from the center of national political fields. As a matter of fact, as for the first Fifteen, percentages are rather similar to those of the 5th term (31% and

³⁴ Included in several national legislations, the prohibition of the combination of European and national mandates was introduced in 2002 in the Brussels' Act of 20 November 1976 on the election of MEPs. On this point, refer to Navarro J., *op. cit.*, p. 108-119.

12% respectively). In this manner, these results show the disparities within the population. These disparities however depend less on strictly national oppositions (a German type versus a French type) than on the evolution of the MEPs' mode of recruitment.

De facto, MEPs with substantial political experience at national level tend to be older men, preferably from a right-wing party and from countries of the 2004 enlargement. Thus, 40% of men were elected in one of the national parliaments (against 29% of women) and 18% have occupied governmental positions (11% of women). Most of the oldest MEPs have already had a national mandate: 57% of those less than 60 years of age against 30% for those between 55 and 60 years and only 3.5% of those less than 45. More than one MEP out of three from the UEN group has worked in a government, one out of five from the PPE; UEN and PPE being the two main right-wing groups- only one out of eight from PSE, one from the Greens/EFA and none from GUE. MEPs from states who accessed the EU in the 2004 enlargement have profiles similar to those from the mid 80s. More frequently men, older and more often right-wing,³⁵ most MEPs from accessing countries have a national level parliamentary experience (50% against 31% of the first Fifteen) whether they are Latvian, Estonian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Lithuanian, Polish, Hungarian or Czech. Amongst the first Fifteen, only those from Portugal (71%) and those from Finland (77%) have high rates as compared to those from Holland (7%), from Germany (14%) and from Britain (16%). In the same way, former government members represent 78% of Latvians, 50% of Estonians, 43% of Slovenians, only 5% of British, 0% of Germans and Dutch. Amongst the first Fifteen, only the Irish and again the Portuguese are an exception.

Table 3: Proportions of MEPs of the 6th term having previously exercised a national mandate or been a member of Government according to country of election.

| Country of election | National Parliament | Former members of Government |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| France | 26% (20) | 18% (4) |
| Germany | 14% (14) | 0% (0) |
| Italy | 31% (24) | 12% (9) |
| Belgium | 42% (10) | 33% (8) |
| Netherlands | 7 % (2) | 0 % (0) |
| Luxembourg | 67% (4) | 67% (4) |
| United Kingdom | 16% (12) | 5% (4) |

³⁵ The enlargement was beneficial to right-wing political groups: whereas MEPs from the ten accessing countries of 2004 represent 22% of the Parliament, the UEN group is mostly composed of MEPs from accessing countries, the PPE composed of one fourth, and there are only 15% of them in the three left-wing groups (only 2% for the Greens/EFA, 17% for PSE and 20% for GUE).

| | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| Ireland | 69% (9) | 46% (6) |
| Denmark | 42% (5) | 8% (1) |
| Spain | 43% (23) | 9% (5) |
| Portugal | 71% (17) | 38% (9) |
| Greece | 25% (6) | 17% (4) |
| Sweden | 50% (9) | 5% (1) |
| Finland | 77% (10) | 31% (4) |
| Austria | 44% (8) | 6% (1) |
| Hungary | 46% (11) | 29% (7) |
| Slovakia | 77% (10) | 31% (4) |
| Poland | 49% (25) | 22% (11) |
| Czech Republic | 50% (12) | 13% (3) |
| Lithuania | 54% (7) | 31% (4) |
| Estonia | 83% (5) | 50% (3) |
| Latvia | 100% (9) | 78% (7) |
| Slovenia | 57% (4) | 43% (3) |
| Malta | 20% (1) | 20% (1) |
| Cyprus | 67% (4) | 17% (1) |
| Total | 36% (261) 31%(173) for the first Fifteen | 16% (114) 12% (70) for the first Fifteen |

Beyond the persistence of relationships of dependence inherent to an institutional space that consists of actors elected in national contexts whose functioning and structure remain greatly differentiated from one another, the relative convergence of parliamentary profiles tends to show feedback effects related to the institutionalization and the autonomization of the European Parliament. The practices and modalities of legitimizing that structure the Parliamentary space (that we are now going to study closely), have effects on the practices that are at the root of the selection process of elected representatives at national level.

The emergence of a parliamentary elite and the relative closure of the space

The variations of MEPs' recruitment go hand in hand with the autonomization of the internal functioning of the institution and its government. Unlike a perspective that would emphasize the determining character of national legitimacies (linked to positions occupied in national political spaces) in the structuring of the European Parliament, the analysis of the institution's distribution of power and leading positions shows the importance of the types of legitimacy and resources specific to the European Parliament. Gradually, the actors who have the most European professionalization to Europe and the most internal political resources take control

of leading positions in the institution: the value of internal resources and careers (that are European and associated with the exercise of the European mandate and positions acquired at this level) thus, prevails over the value of external resources and careers (referring to national logics).

The European Parliament's leading positions

The positions considered here (Presidency, vice-presidency and Quaestors, presidency and vice-presidency of political groups and parliamentary committees) constitute the main leading and representative positions of the institution.³⁶ They are vital positions of power in the European Parliament (even though they are not the only ones), in the sense that they provide those who occupy them with several resources likely to give them a degree of control of institutional games and/or games specific to sub-spaces to which they are related (political groups, parliamentary committees). These positions are filled every two and a half years; at the beginning and in the middle of each of the terms. The bureau is elected by secret ballot and by an absolute majority of member votes and the number of votes determines the order of precedence. The group's presidents are elected based on principles that are similar in each group, whereas the committee presidents (in the same way as presidents of delegations and vice presidents of committees and delegations) are designated using the "d'Hondt system": the number of each group's appointed positions depends on the number of members; the groups then share the positions that they were attributed between their different delegations, and eventually internal delegations in the groups submit names for given positions (but this choice must be endorsed by the group bureau). As they give authority, and make speaking on behalf of the institution possible, in its name or in the name of their peers, thereby conferring several resources specific to the position,³⁷ these positions allow their holders to ensure the practical and political control of the institutional universe. Their strategic character has considerably increased along with the complexity of parliamentary games, the growth of the institution's internal division of labor and the affirmation of the European Parliament in inter-institutional games.³⁸

The study of the characteristics of MEPs who occupy leading positions in the institution during the 6th term confirms variations that were observed in the late 90s, when there was a notable Europeanization in the EP.³⁹ In addition to the stabilization of the political personnel, seniority favors access to these positions, which go hand in hand with an average of at least 2.5 mandates (against 1.8 mandate out of the total of MEPs). The presidency of a political

³⁶ Corbett R., Jacobs F., Shackleton M., *The European Parliament*, Fourth Edition, John Harper Publishing, 2004, p. 94-104.

³⁷ Bourdieu P., "La représentation politique, éléments pour une théorie du champ politique", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n°36-37, 1981, p. 3-24; Bourdieu P., "La délégation et le fétichisme politique", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n°52-53, 1984, p. 49-55.

³⁸ Cf. Costa O., *Le Parlement européen, assemblée délibérante*, Bruxelles, Ed. de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2001.

³⁹ On this point, cf. Beauvallet W., "Une institutionnalisation du Parlement européen. La distribution des positions de pouvoirs, l'émergence d'un capital spécifique et l'autonomisation de l'espace politique européen", in Gravier M., Vassiliki T. (dir.), *Organisational Culture in the Institutions of the European Union*, EUI Working Paper SNP, 2005, n°4, Badia Fiesolana, San Domenico, p. 108-131.

group is the most seniority-dependent function: the (former and current) group presidents have exercised close to four mandates.⁴⁰ Then comes membership in the bureau of the EP (2.9 mandates) and the presidency of a committee (2.8 mandates), which suggests that specifically European resources are a key to the occupation of the most central positions of power within the space.⁴¹ Finally, vice presidencies of committees (2.4 mandates) appear to be more accessible and less central. In a quite logical manner, when taking experience into account, the inclusion or the non-inclusion of MEPs from countries of the 2004 enlargement alters the averages obtained:

Table 4: MEPs of the 6th term's average number of mandates and years of service in the European Parliament according to present and past leading positions (data from late 2006).

| | MEPs of the 25 | | | MEPs of the 15 (without the 10 countries that accessed in 2004) | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|
| | Staff | Average no. of mandates | Average number of years of service in the European Parliament | Staff | Average no. of mandates | Average number of years of service in the European Parliament |
| Bureau of the European Parliament | 33 | 2.9 | 10.8 | 32 | 2.9 | 11.1 |
| Group President | 14 | 3.9 | 16 | 16 | 3.9 | 16 |
| Committee President | 23 | 2.8 | 10.9 | 28 | 3.1 | 12.2 |
| Group vice president | 54 | 2.8 | 10.1 | 50 | 2.9 | 10.8 |
| Committee vice president | 115 | 2.4 | 8.4 | 96 | 2.61 | 9.7 |

⁴⁰ In this sense, the appointment of J. Daul as the leader of the PPE group after only one mandate and a half is exceptional. As soon as he arrived in the European Parliament, however, different elements gave him symbolic markers and specialized skills likely to be promptly made profitable in the EP.

⁴¹ The institutionalization of the EP, its centering in the European Union's decision-making triangle from the mid-1980s as well as the development of the internal political division of labor which has resulted from the diversification of its skills, match, on the institutional level, the increasing domination of hierarchical structures (the bureau), of political groups and parliamentary committees. On the consideration of these evolutions in specialized literature, cf. Costa O., Rozenberg O., "Parlementarismes", in Belot C. et al., *op. cit.*, p. 249-283.

| | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Leadership position (Parliament presidency and vice presidency, committee, group) ⁴² | 189 | 2.5 | 9.1 | 167 | 2.72 | 10.1 |
| Total | 736 | 1.8 | 5.5 | 572 | 2.0 | 6.6 |

MEPs holding leadership positions have above all a high number of years of service in the European Parliament in common.

The importance of seniority in the structuring of the parliamentary space is especially highlighted by the analysis of multiple correspondences based on the main sociopolitical and institutional variables of MEPs.

A multiple correspondence analysis to represent the Parliamentary space

This statistical technique consists in associating several variables. By studying the proximities and the distinctions between variables and groups, it allows to describe the principles of the structuring of parliamentary committee space, taking into consideration sociopolitical and institutional characteristics of MEPs by distributing the main correspondences on different axes. The active variables are: sex, four indicators of political paths (having formerly been a minister, national MP, representative at regional or departmental level or mayor), two indicators of cultural capital (degree level and being a PhD holder) and finally, two indicators on paths to the European Parliament (the number of mandates in the EP and the occupation of a position of power in the Parliament). Because of an excessively large number of modalities and sometimes a small number of staff, the initial profession, nationality and the detail of positions of power (member of the bureau, presidency and vice presidency of committees and groups) have become supplementary variables; they do not contribute to the construction of the axes but can be considered with the active variables. Typically, in this paper, we will focus on the three most important axes that, in technical terms, represent 13.25%, 10.30% and 9.85% of the total inertia.

The first axis represents the MEP's volumes of political and cultural capital: On the one hand, those that are more endowed (former ministers, members of a national parliament, PhD holders) – mostly men, quite old, from countries of the 2004 enlargement; on the other hand, those whose political capital is often based on party or activist resources, more often women, younger and less qualified.

The second axis underlines the structure of political capitals: they oppose MEPs who are more endowed in terms of local capital (mayors, former national MP) to those that are more experienced in the European Parliament (5 mandates and more) whose career has been above all focused on Europe for several terms.

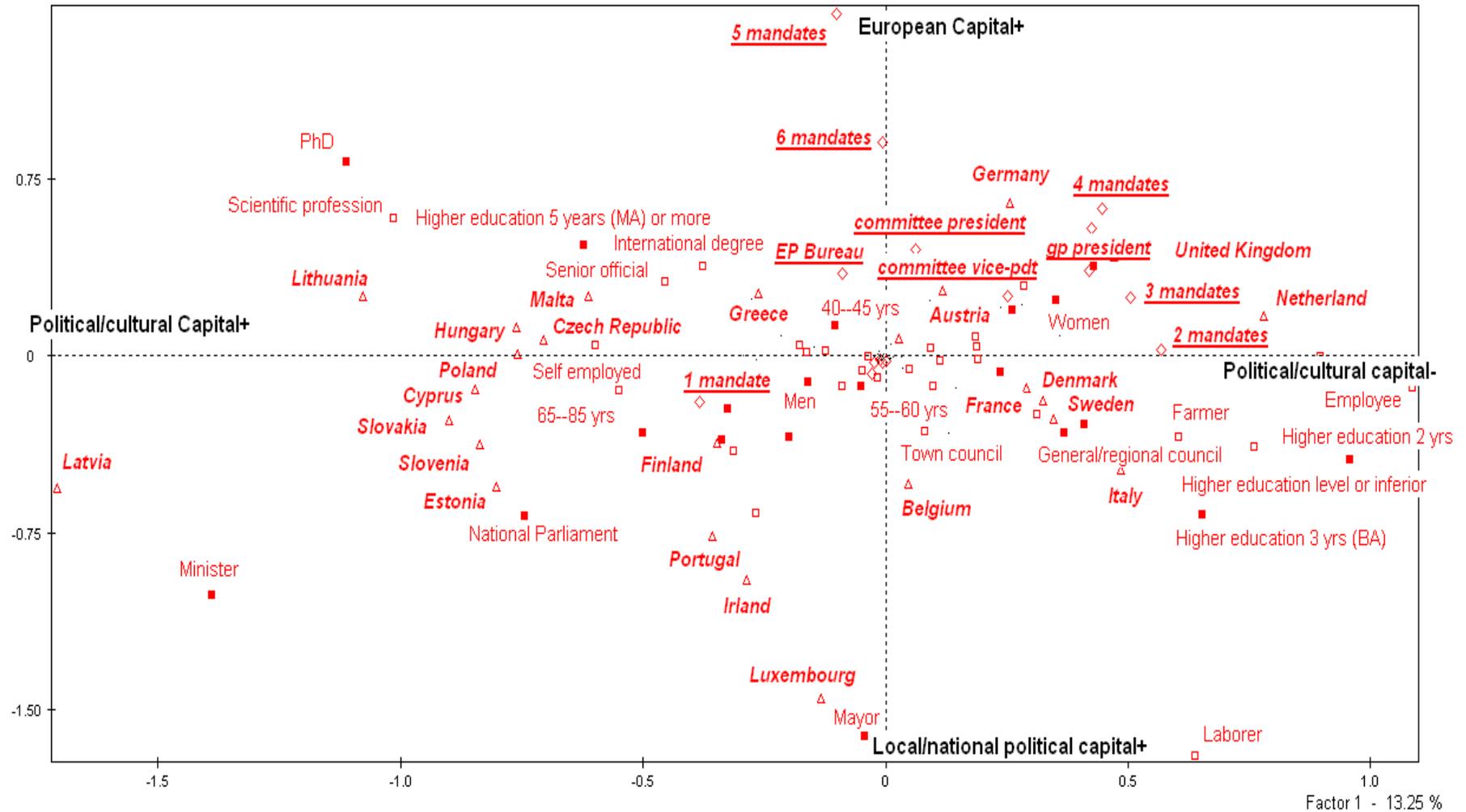
⁴² The leadership position variable does not include the position of the president of the delegation for which seniority is also cleavable: they exercise 2.5 mandates in average.

The third axis is the axis of seniority and of responsibilities within the European Parliament, separating MEPs who exercise or have exercised responsibilities within the Parliament (members of the bureau, president and vice president of a committee or a group), rather old (between 55 and 65 years), having several mandates, from the least experienced who are often women, young and members of smaller groups (GUE-NGL, Greens/EFA, Independence and Democracy).

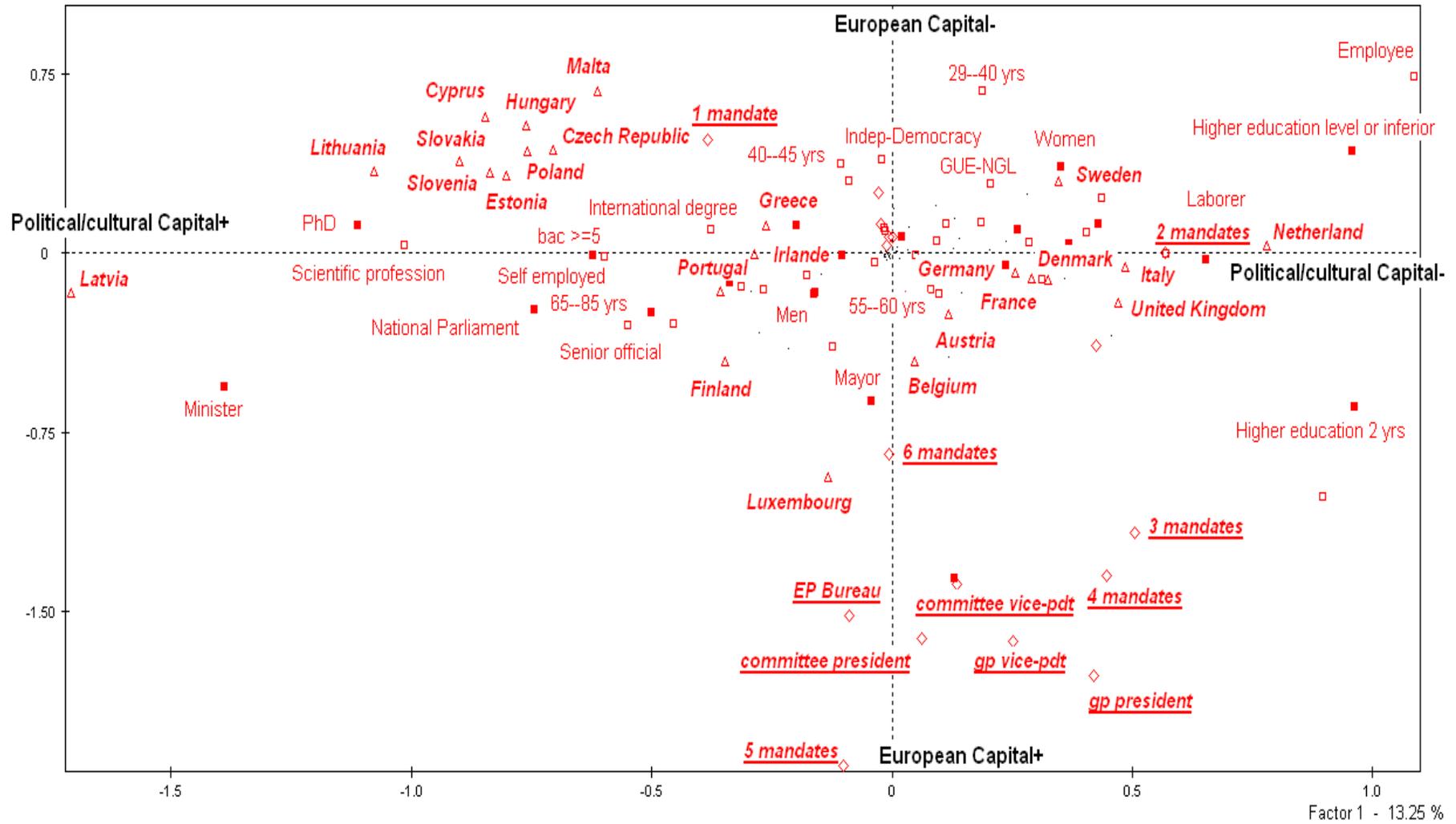
Figure 1: A Multiple correspondence analysis representing the distribution of sociopolitical and institutional characteristics of the 6th term MEPs (Axe 1 and 2).

Figure 2: A multiple correspondence analysis representing the distribution of sociopolitical and institutional characteristics of the 6th term MEPs (Axe 1 and 3).

Factor 2 - 10.30 %



Factor 3 - 9.85 %



The prevalence of seniority on the second and third axis sheds light on the determinant character of specific forms of institutional credit based on the control of internal networks (in particular specifically national networks), the control of skills and expertise specific to the space or the acquisition of the practical sense of political games in the European space (which allows the actors to act and to develop political strategies adapted to the specificities of the space in question). However, other elements should not be overlooked.

MEPs who occupy major leading positions in the European Parliament are more often men and senior officials/diplomats. The clear prevalence of the male sex reproduces the sexual hierarchies of the political field. Even though women, compared to the feminization of national parliaments, seem to benefit from a much easier access to the European Parliament, sexual discriminations remain: they represent ca. 30% of the parliament but there are only 14% who are or who have been president of a political group, 19% president of a committee, 22.5% vice president of a committee. Whereas sexual inequalities tend to diminish in the access to the European Parliament, as shown by the increasing feminization of some delegations compared to tendencies in national parliaments, to some extent, they endure in the institution;⁴³ showing especially the effect of political capital and the prevalence of seniority.

The high number of former senior officials and of diplomats (22% of Presidents of Committees and 13% of Vice Presidents of committees against 7% of the total population) shows the importance of skills and symbolic indicators linked to the internationalization of political life within the parliamentary space. One could think, indeed, that these professions allow to develop dispositions and skills that encourage the acquisition of the European institutional capital, such as the familiarity with multinational political universes, the command of foreign languages, as well as subtle games of negotiations and compromises. These MEPs' dispositions are activated in this arena, contrary to those who do not have them and have to make more efforts to acquire them and earn their place in the Parliament. In fact, national experience does not appear significant as such according to the statistics. It appears determinant only in so far as resources and political capital acquired on the national scene are Europeanized, by means of an investment in the parliament. MEPs who have already occupied leadership positions taken into consideration here do not have more or less experience at national level: For the two groups, 26% with a previous national mandate; if

⁴³For more information on this refer to: Kauppi N., "Power or Subjection ?..." , art. cit.; Beauvallet W., Michon S., "Les femmes au Parlement européen..." , art. cit.

there are a few more former ministers (30% of them against 26%), there are slightly less national MPs (26% against 27%).

The role of some variables is obvious. But it is seniority in the parliament that appears to be the most cleaving, as shown by the logistic regression. The proposed model, explaining the occupation of a leadership position (member of the EP bureau, presidency or vice presidency of a committee or group) includes the main variables: the number of mandates at the European Parliament, having formerly exercised a national mandate (member of the government and/or MP), degree level and sex. It specifies the number of mandates at the EP as the most important variable – odds-ratios represent up to 3.408 for the MEPs with 2 mandates at the European Parliament, 9.808 for those with 3 mandates and finally 27.274 for those with at least 4 mandates (table 5). In other words, MEPs with long seniority have more chances to occupy a leading position, other things being equal. Apart from seniority, it is worth noting in the model below, only the degree level is significant: The most highly qualified have more chances to occupy a leadership position in the EP. On the contrary, political experience at national level and sex are not significant.

Table 5: Model of logistic regression of the occupation of a leadership position at the EP by MEPs of the 6th term (c=0.766).

| | Odds-ratio | Occupation of leadership position | Significance |
|---|------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Number of mandates at the EP | | | |
| 1 mandate | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| 2 mandates | 3.408 | -0.3636 | 0.0374 |
| 3 mandates | 9.808 | 0.6936 | 0.0004 |
| 4 mandates and more | 27.274 | 1.2596 | <0.0001 |
| Former national mandate (government and/or parliament) | | | |
| Already exercised | 1.345 | 0.1516 | NS |
| Never exercised | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Degree level | | | |
| < or=baccalaureate | 0.390 | -0.7116 | 0.0184 |
|] baccalaureate-master[| Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| > or =master | 1.286 | 0.4814 | 0.0082 |

| | | | | |
|------------|--------|-------|---------|------|
| Sex | | | | |
| | Male | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| | Female | 0.709 | -0.1718 | NS |

Field: 638 MEPs with data available on the variables considered.

Interpretation: The modality that we aim to explain is “occupation of a leadership position” (European Parliament bureau, presidency or vice presidency of committees or groups). The model used here is the *logit* type. A statistically significant and positive value shows that we are dealing with a factor that increases the chances of an MEP to occupy a leadership position, other things being equal. A statistically significant and negative value shows that we are dealing with a factor that decreases the chances of an MEP to occupy a leadership position. The value of “c” is an indicator of the evaluation of a model’s quality: The higher it is, the better the model (c depends on the percentages of the concordant pairs). The odds-ratio is the exponential function of the β coefficient of logistic adjustment i.e. the multiplier coefficient linked to a modality through the reference modality. The baseline is a male MEP elected for the first time in the European Parliament in 2004, who has never had a mandate at national level (member of a government or parliament) whose degree level is greater or equivalent to baccalaureate but less than master’s. Having been elected at least 4 times at the European Parliament and obtained a degree at least equivalent to master’s favors the occupation of a leadership position, unlike having only one mandate and no baccalaureate.

If the processes of Europeanization follow different modalities and temporalities according to the nationalities (a process that deserves to be studied for each of these groups), then we cannot overlook the growing centrality of specifically European resources in structuring and hierarchizing the European parliamentary space, especially considering that nationalities themselves are related to unequal symbolic European marks. Even though they still depend on other factors (configuration of the relationships between political groups and delegations within groups), the processes of internal mobility remain linked to the amount of European or Europeanized political resources held. Collected data thus confirm the autonomization and the growing professionalization of the European parliamentary space, with a specific organization and symbolic as well as financial resources. If exogenous dimensions (especially the national factor) which dominated these processes in the early 80s were structuring elements in the late 90s (the distribution of these positions still being partially dependent on nationality and political resources more directly national, like party resources), nonetheless, these elements are now subjected to the affirmation of a determinant internal legitimacy (European and parliamentary). Besides, from this point of view, nationality as such is less determinant than

*the specifically European credit given to each nationality by the collectivity, mobilized and presented by those who benefit or who seek to benefit from it.*⁴⁴

The emergence of European political careers and the identification of some sort of institutional avant-garde are related to processes of mobility within the space. By and large, it is of course actors coming from a “core” of professionals who control the parliament and its major organs (political groups and parliamentary committees). By so doing, the same actors participate in restructuring the space by managing to place of their own resources in its centre. In contrast with the image of an unstable institution in terms of its composition, these elements show the importance of authority attributed through long-term investment in the EP (and not only in an internationalized environment, even though moving in these spheres is likely to offer resources which may be determinant in internal competitions). It is indeed through actors with a profile of “professionals of Europe” that the EP and its major internal structures (Bureau, political groups and committees) are governed. These figures also “represent” the institution and embody its specific “charisma”. From this point of view, the contrast with the 80s now seems very strong: If between 1979 and 1984, figures like Pierre Pflimlin – older, who have participated in the 2nd World War and who have for a long time been committed at national and local level – seemed to better embody the European Parliament, between 2004 and 2008, figures such as Hans Poettering with careers above all centered on the institution have been prevalent.

The European Parliament Presidents

The EP has had thirteen presidents between 1979 and 2009. For the first five (1979-1992), the introduction to the parliament was an extension of a political career at national level. Simone Veil (France, president from 1979 to 1982) was the former Health Minister to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (President of the Republic of France from 1974 to 1981). Pieter Dankert (Netherlands, 1982 to 1984) sat in the Dutch parliament during fourteen years (lower house) where he was president of the Foreign Affairs committee. Pierre Pflimlin (France, 1984-1987) was a former French MEP and was on several occasions a minister during the 1950s and 1960s. Enrique Barón Crespo (Spain, 1982-1992), who had only been a MEP for two years when he was elected, was a deputy in the Cortes for nine years and a member of the Spanish socialist government from 1982 to 1985). The clear legitimacy of these presidents thus appears to be linked to a specifically national legitimacy, doubled with an undifferentiated European legitimacy. The first presidents have not only made the history of their country but also the history of the European continent. Accordingly, the biographical note on Lord Plumb (United Kingdom, 1987 to 1989) is a listing of positions occupied in professional agricultural organizations, more particularly at Community level, then at the EP (president of the Agricultural Committee from 1981 to 1982 and

⁴⁴ Joseph Daul explained that the German delegation's support of his candidacy played a major part in his getting the post: beyond its numerical weight, this recognition works as a presumption of (true) Europeanity and thus confers a significant volume of internal symbolical capital. Cf. Beauvallet W., cited thesis, p. 520-525.

president of the European Democratic Group from 1982 to 1984). P. Dankert is a former member of pan-European organizations: Western European Union (WEU), Council of Europe, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The former president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, P. Pflimlin is a historical figure of European federalist movements and until 1983, he was the mayor of Strasbourg, the “Capital of Europe”. Lastly, S. Veil positions herself at the heart of the historical and symbolic European universe by opening her parliamentary biography with the story of her experience in the concentration camps.

Without the division being necessarily very linear, the characteristics of the following presidents (1992 to 2009) confirm the reinforcement of experience specific to the European Parliament at the expense of national political experience and therefore the possibility of the differentiation of specifically institutional resources. Hence, Egon Klepsch, (Germany, 1992 to 1994) represents a transition of sorts. A member of Bundestag for fifteen years (from 1965 to 1980) then member of the EP, he had several mandates there, including the key post of president of the European People’s Party, one of the most important groups. Klaus Hänsch (Germany, 1994 to 1997), José-Maria Gil Robles Gil-Delgado (Spain, 1979 to 1999), Nicole Fontaine (France, 1999 to 2002) and Hans-Gert Pöttering (2007 to 2009), on the other hand, have no national political experience. Their election to the presidency of the European Parliament is particularly linked to their political experience of Europe. K. Hänsch was an MEP since 1979, J-M Gil Robles Gil-Delgado since 1989, N. Fontaine since 1984, H-G. Pöttering since 1979. Each one of them has managed to acquire a specific credit in the EP, thanks to a continuous investment within groups and committees. The determining weight of this experience is especially explicit in the case of N. Fontaine, who was Vice president then First Vice President successively between 1989 and 1999 and of H-G Pöttering, who was president of the Subcommittee on Security and Defense between 1992 and 1994 and then Chairman of EPP-ED Group during the time when the latter was in the majority (from 1999 to 2007). Pat Cox (elected as president of the EP from 2002 to 2004) combines national and European experience: he was elected in the Parliament between 1989-2004 and was also elected at the Irish Parliament in 1992. Ultimately, only the case of the Spanish Josep Borell Fontelles (president from 2004 to 2007) diverges from these paths. After a long political career at regional and national level, he was elected president as soon as he came into the Parliament in 2004. His specifically European legitimacy remains however important since he has presided the European Union Joint Committee in the Cortes and since he was elected Cortes representative in 2002 at the European Convention of 2004

The results of this research show the European parliamentary space as a space where positions are structured around the distribution of specific resources, linked to the exercise of a European mandate and to the effective participation of actors in the political games taking place at European level. The control of these resources seems to be essential to the acquisition of particular forms of credit necessary for obtaining the occupation of leadership positions at the European Parliament from one’s peers. The study of leadership positions through quantitative data shows the increasing importance of properties emanating from involvement and action within the parliamentary space itself (seniority, investments in the institution and its organs on a long-term basis). These properties seem ever more decisive in the access to the

main positions of the EP. These transformations attest to a process of Europeanization of the parliamentary elite and the growing specificity of parliamentary logics to the detriment of merely national logics: MEPs earn their positions at the EP by acquiring specialized resources. The control of these different elements and the progressive acquisition of a real practical sense of Europe give individuals a fraction of this institutional charisma that is necessary for laying claim to the exercise of internal power. However, we can only emphasize the plurality of the forms that power takes in terms of the various variables that structure the parliamentary space: seniority, logics specific to the investment of parliamentary sub-spaces, political contexts, etc. Attention should also be focused on its ever-changing aspect. The definition of specific resources is part of the ongoing process of institutionalization in the EP and the MEP career.

Nonetheless, the examination of the distribution of power and leadership positions in the EP seems to generally attest to a process of concentration of resources and to the emergence of particular form of political capital whose distribution overlaps with structures of positions specific to the space in question. This capital appears as a symbolic capital internal to the institution. Those who hold this capital benefit from respect, fear, charisma, positive assumptions on their competences from their peers; this authorizes them to occupy the positions of power in the space. Associated with continuous investment in the institution, a large relational network, practical control of institutional and inter-institutional games, influence or collective beliefs on some MEPs, this political credit is an alternative to other types of political capital (national political capital, acquired at national level) whose value tends to depreciate as one gets closer to the centre of the space, without disappearing altogether. In this sense, the European Parliament indeed functions as a socialization environment: MEPs can develop their knowledge and skills there, their beliefs, legitimate ways of operating that have progressively become necessary for those who wish to enter the institutional game, acquire its “practical sense”⁴⁵ and obtain the available “trophies”.

Rather than considering the European Parliament as torn between its different national logics (of selection, practices and career) – as suggested by the realistic approach of studies mentioned in the introduction – or on the contrary, as a single entity devoted to a uniform support to European construction- according to neo-functionalists,⁴⁶ the European Parliament

⁴⁵ See Pierre Bourdieu, *Le sens pratique*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1984.

⁴⁶ Who expected, through the EP, the emergence of a class of pro-integrationist politicians. Cf. Haas Ernst, *The Uniting of Europe. Political, Social and Economic Forces: 1950-1957*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1968; Cotta M., “Direct Election and the European Parliament: A Supranational Political Elite in the Making?”,

has to be understood based on a double logic-national and European, itself inherited from a unique structural and contradictory history.⁴⁷ If national logics explain dependences inherent to an institution that is both parliamentary and European, heading an “incomplete community”⁴⁸, strongly divided (in terms of political personnel selection and the perception of the represented social groups), European logics, on the other hand, show the emergence of a space structured by specific dynamics and interests, led by specialized professionals endowed with the types of knowledge, know-how and collective credit necessary in order to control the space on the long term.

in Reif K. (ed.), *European Elections 1979 et 1984: Conclusions and Perspectives from Empirical Research*, Berlin, 1984, p. 122-126.

⁴⁷ European construction can be likened to “a process of construction of a political form developing, to some extent, like State construction (specialization and professionalization of the agents, autonomization of an institutional order, appropriation of various resources and competences), but which has historically failed to successfully claim the monopoly over legitimate physical violence. From this results a unique process shown in the construction of an institutional space doubly characterized by the weight of state structures on one hand and Community dynamics on the other”. Georgakakis D., “Sociologie politiques des institutions européennes”, *Politique européenne*, n°14, automne 2004, p. 130-131.

⁴⁸ Stephano Bartolini, for instance, mentions the issue of the European Union’s lack of stable borders as a key element in the obstacles to the emergence of a European political community: “La structure des clivages nationaux et la question de l’intégration dans l’Union européenne”, *Politique européenne*, n°4, printemps 2001, p. 15-45.