Socialisation of the new Members of the European Parliament: integration in the institutional life

Working paper

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Introduction

This paper is a working paper from my PhD research. It is one of the first steps in my research, and then its aim is presenting the topic and some preliminary hypotheses to test. My research would contribute to the debate about the creation of supranational elite and investigate the role of institutions in this process. In particular according with the national historical experience, I am interested in studying the role of European parliament in this process. The national parliaments represent from at least one century the institutional arena between represented and govern that these institutions have played in the national political systems. The development of the EP as co-legislator has created wide values sharing among its members, has supported the creation of wide pro-European majorities, and at the same time has given prominence to the anti-European voices. Moreover, it seems that after the European experience most of MEPs hold top elite position at national level. The increasing of political autonomy and the disappearance of dual mandate and the decreasing of substitutions during the legislature could be a signs of the institutionalization of a European parliamentary career. Is the European parliament a key arena for the creation or consolidation of the political culture of the EU political elite?

In this paper, I will present my research and some preliminary reflections about the necessity to study the socialisation as multidimensional process that concern organizational features, role, attitudes, and behaviour of the new MEPs.
Enlargement, institutions, and individuals

The starting point of this research was a general reflection about the effects of recent enlargements of the EU (2004 and 2007). One of the questions that has emerged concerns the capabilities of the EU institutions to assimilate without structural challenges the organizational changes necessary to integrate people who come from new member states.

Enlarging the membership of an international institution implies in practice integrating individuals who come from outside the organization. These individuals have not only personal features, but hold national values, norms, and traditions. Some of these coincide with those of the institution that the people joined, others are different. These differing values, norms and traditions are a potential source of conflict. The integration of new actors in an institution is not a new subject of analysis in social science, but the enlargement of EU is an extraordinary opportunity to study what happens when outsiders join an international institution.

The relationship between institutions and individuals is a source of huge debates. Does the institution affect its members or vice versa? The only right answer is “both”! Both phenomena take place in the same place and at the same time. Thus, the analyses of individuals and institutions are strongly bound together. Individuals who become members of an institution renew it and at the same time, the institution socialises the individuals into new roles and norms. However, these rules and values have also been redefined according to the contributions of the new members. The most efficient strategy is to study these two phenomena - innovation and socialisation – separately. My interest relates to the latter phenomena.

Socialisation is a social process that concerns the integration of individuals in an institution. I intend to investigate the process of socialisation in the EU institutions in the crucial case in which the institutions not only socialize fresh members, but in which most of them come from countries that only recently have joined the EU. I am interest in particular in one of the EU institutions, namely the EP. Approximately 6000 people work in this institution; 785 of them are MEPs, others are administrators, officials of political groups, translators and interpreters, assistants and secretaries. Most of these people work permanently in the EP, in particular in the case of administrators in the general secretariat and translators, other stay in
the EP only for a relatively short time like the majority of the assistants. Others are elected by citizens every 5 years, MEPs, and their permanence in this institution depends on the electoral cycles (at EU and at national level), as in all parliaments in the world. A very important feature of this parliament is the high turnover in its membership at each election: in the previous legislature around the fifty percent of the elected are first-time MEPs (or freshmen) (Pasquinucci and Verzichelli 2004). As previous studies have shown, between a quarter and a third of all MEPs have national parliamentary experience and around one in ten have served in a ministerial capacity ‘back home’. Nevertheless approximately half of the new elected at the start of each parliamentary legislature are new or ‘freshmen’ MEPs (Bale and Taggart 2006). The MEPs are my units of analysis.

This parliament is the only supranational parliament in the world and its members come from different countries that have different political cultures. In particular in the last enlargements the countries that joined the EU had a strong relation or were part of the Soviet Union.

(Q1.) Is the EP able to socialize the new MEPs, in particular those of theme from the new member states? Which differences emerge within the MEPs socialisation?

(Q2) Which factors affect the process of MEPs socialisation?

(Q3) Which mechanisms take place in this process?

My research aims to answer these questions.

A definition of socialisation

What is socialisation? This concept, which is rooted in sociology but quickly permeated all social sciences, defines a specific social process. In general, we can find three different approaches to socialisation. The first one is the so-called integrationist-functionalist approach. According to this approach, the process of socialisation develops through functional diversifications that affect the creation of the personality and the learning of new competencies and values necessary to play a specific social role. Through socialisation, individuals create the bonds between the personality system and the cultural system (values interiorization) on one hand and the social system (role interiorization) on the other hand. The socialisation is a permanent and linear process through which the individual integrates into society according to the social expectations. The theories and models that investigate socialisation focus on norms, social roles, and individual ability to interiorize them. The second approach is the communicative – argumentative approach. According with this approach socialisation is a constant process of creation and revision of identity, world images, and knowledge. Models that refer to this approach allude to intersubjectivity and communication. This process is not related only to a specific part of life, but involves the entire life; institutions naturally develop the integration of individuals, but it is not a kind of functional requirement as in the case of integrationist approach: in this case individuals tend to integrate actions by integrating them into a new universe of meanings. The third approach is the rational-realist approach. According to this approach, individuals are rational actors who strategically decide to socialize
themselves to enter in the institution. The actor integrates in the structure’s rules and norms of behaviour according to the logic of maximizing utility.

Those three approaches that describe the mechanisms and scope of socialisation are not exclusive. All approaches refer to a mode of action that rarely occurs in pure form in real life. Individuals usually combine several modes of social interaction according to the three main logics of social action: the logic of consequentialism, the logic of appropriateness, and the logic of arguing (Risse, 2000).

The logic of consequentialism has as main reference the rational choice approaches: according to those approaches, the individual participate to the interaction on the basis of their given identities and interest with the aim to realize their preferences through strategic behaviour. That does not exclude that the individuals change their attitudes or values as a consequences of the cooperation (Schimmelfenning 2005). According to the logic of appropriateness, individuals are driven by rules of appropriate or exemplary behaviour, organized into institutions. Rules are followed because they are seen as natural, rightful, expected, and legitimate. Actors seek to fulfil the obligations encapsulated in a role, an identity, a membership in a political community or group, and the ethos, practices and expectations of its institutions (March and Olsen, 2004, 1). The logic of arguing implies that individuals try to change the validity claims and to seek a communicative consensus about their understanding of a situation as well as justifications for the values and norms guiding their behaviour. They are prepared to change their view of the world and redefine their values and norms in light of the better argument (Risse 2000, 7). According to the assumption that individuals in institutions can adopt different logics of action, it would be a mistake to define socialisation according merely to one of those logics. Individuals enter in an institution and are socialized according to different mechanisms that refer to the three logics of action. Given that I assume that all three logics of action play a role in socialisation, I will need a definition of socialisation that integrates the various logics of action and can thus capture the multiple components of socialisation.

The definition of socialisation that I shall use is the following: socialisation is the social process that integrates individuals into the organization’s structures, roles, norms and rules, and into the value-system of the institution. This process occurs according to three different logic of social action, namely consequentialism, appropriateness, and arguing. Different
combinations of logics produce different mechanism of socialisation that could be integrationist, communicative and rational ones.

In my research, I investigate the features of this process by measuring the degree of socialisation of MEPs (Q1), the factors that affect the process and stimulate the creation of mechanisms (Q2), and finally individuate which if it all is the prevalent logic of action (Q3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Definition of socialisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialization:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. integration in the organizational structures;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. integration in roles;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. integration in norms and rules;</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. integration in values.</td>
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What do we know about socialisation in EP?

(Un)fortunately not much! In most of the research about the MEPs and EP, socialisation is one of the intervenient variables that can help to explain other phenomena. For instance, the decrease of legislative activity or some troubles in the cohesion of political groups immediately after the election is considered to be a consequence of the current process of socialisation and rule-learning by the new members.

Nevertheless, some studies although they did not investigate the whole phenomenon of socialisation directly, address directly parts of the socialisation process. In particular, some inferences about role perceptions, attitudes, and values are drawn from the comparison between the MEPs and MNPs. It emerges in general that the European parliamentarians display peculiar attitudes, role orientations and behaviour, which in a long-term analysis differentiate them from those of the national parliamentarians; for instance MEPs are more pro – European oriented. In two contributions, Katz (Katz 1997 and 1999) compares MEPs with other candidates for the EP and MEPs with MNPs. He finds that the MEPs have a strong perception that they are trustees who act for their constituents even if a significant percentage of them acts according to the loyalty to a party group. Furthermore, the evidence makes it clear that the MEPs appear more likely to interact directly with lobbyists than their constituents do. Both are dissatisfied with the current role of the parliament at both levels, but the MNPs are less supportive of an increasing of EP power, while the MEPs support an increased role for NPs. In general, a small difference in role perception and attitude towards the EU between the MPs at national or European level emerges. According to those studies, are those differences related to the EP power of socialisation?

Wessels (2005) found that electoral mechanisms and national settings affect the representative’s understanding of whom MPs should represent at EU as well as at national level. He compared the MNP with the MEPs and he found that the role perception of the former is affected also by the country’s system of interest intermediation. Contrary to that, MEPs perceptions seem to be affected by two systemic variables, country size and years of membership (large size and old membership influence positively a European focus of representation). Scully (2003) focused on the EP and investigated the factors that can explain
the differences in the role perceptions and attitudes within the MEPs. He found that most of parliamentarians interpret their own representative role broadly, believing that they have responsibilities towards a multiple constituency. Individual understanding of their own role plays an important part in the explanation of the differences among MEPs in how they see the representative role of the parliament as a whole. Prior political experience can condition representatives’ attitudes, and ideology too affects the opinion about the relative power of EU institutions and national government. In another work, Scully (1998) found that pro integrationist attitudes are not related with the length of service in EP, a conclusion reached too by Katz and Wessels (1999). Recently, yet more research by Scully (2005) has confirmed his previous findings, adding to them how there is no evidence that MEPs are socialized into becoming substantially more European-minded than national-level representatives become. No relationship was observed between the length of service in the EP and individuals attitudes on integration and no results support the hypothesis that the seniority in the institution affects the shift in loyalty from national party to European political group. In contrast, the earlier studies Franklin and Scarrow (1999) provide to some extent an argument in support of the EP power of socialisation to generate pro-European attitudes. They compare the results of a survey of candidates to the results from the same survey submitted to the elected members and they found a very small shift in the preferences. They prudently conclude that probably this process develops very quickly after the entrance in the new institution.

Another source of information about the power of socialisation of the EP comes from the studies concerning the behaviour of MEPs and in particular, how they vote in the parliament. MEPs seem more inclined to persuade and negotiate with colleagues from other countries than to defend given constituency (Corbett 2003). According to the results of the analysis of MEPs votes from 1979 to 2001 (Hix, Noury, Roland 2006) the main dimension of voting behaviour both within and between the transnational political parties is the left-right; on the contrary, national interests, independent of national party positions, have very little systematic influence. The European Parliament is surprisingly like all other democratic parliaments. The party system in the EP constitutes a highly developed, relatively stable, and competitive party system that has been strengthened by increased EP powers. Therefore, we can suggest that as the ability of the EP to influence policy outcome grew and the agenda expanded, there were increased incentives for MEPs to develop more powerful party organizations and to use those in the European political arena (Hix, Kreppell and Noury 2003). Moreover, Scully’s (2005) analysis found no consistent relation between length of service and voting behaviour: experienced MEPs are not more likely to vote in favour of advances in integration than are their less experienced colleagues.

From the preliminary review of the literature, it emerges that MEPs are different from MPs in role perceptions and attitudes and similar in the legislative behaviour –elements that support the idea of the making of a supranational political elite. However, there is no clear evidence that supports or disconfirms in these findings the power of socialisation of the EP on the MEPs.
In the last 10 years, the issue of the relationship between individuals and institution has been explored in other fields of political science; significant contributions come from students of international relations. The question that drives an increasing number of researches is: how can international political institutions create a sense of community and belonging in their members? According to both the Rationalistic and Constructivist paradigms, these studies mainly focus on two aspects. The first one refers to the effects of socialisation of international institutions on the countries. In this case, the units of analysis are not individuals, but the countries and how and if international environment and in particular the membership in international institutions, influence national political system. A second group of researches concern the effects that working in the international institutions has on the individuals. In this case, the unit of analysis are individuals and the question is how, and if, international institutions affect individual perceptions, opinions and behaviours.

If on one hand the Europeanisation and the internationalization of human rights could be interpreted as socialisation of countries, on the other hand up to now no net evidences support the idea that international institutions can socialize their members (Checkel 2003, 2005; Beyers 1998, 2005; Hooghe 2001, 2005; Shimmelfenning 2005). These results if confirmed at EU as at international level would cause a crisis on the bases of relevant part of paradigms and theories in political science and would cause serious trouble to the entire sociology disciplines. If instead, according to the evidences at national or social level, we accept the assumption of institutions’ socialisation ability, and if we assume that international organization are institutions – container of incentives (Rational paradigm) or set of rules, structures, role, and procedures (constructivist paradigm) -, why the researches don’t support the first assumption? The problem might be not in the assumptions, but on one side in the conceptualization of socialisation and on the other hand on the validity of measurement. As in the studies on the EP, also in the case of international relations studies, socialisation is merely reduced to one of its dimensions or mechanisms. Hooghe, in one of the most interesting contribution (2001) on this topic, considers the socialisation as a mechanism whose features refers to what she calls theory of socialisation, which I identify as a theory of internationalist-functionalist approach. In her hypotheses, socialisation is one of the possible mechanisms that can explain the preferences shifting of officials that work in the Commission. Her findings do not support the existence of a Commission socializing ability. Similar, Beyers (2005) investigating the attitudes of the official in Council (supranational or national oriented) comes to the same results.

A more interesting definition of socialisation comes from the analysis of the Council of Europe. In particular Checkel (2003), conceptualizes socialisation as a mechanism that can have different features; he describes two type of socialisation that we can assimilate to two classical interpretations of socialisation, the integrationist (Type I), and the communicative ones (Type II). Furthermore, Checkel has recently tried to elaborate a more complex idea of socialisation and giving a substantial contribution to the studies of socialisation in the
international institutions. In particular, Checkel defines socialisation as a process of inducting actors into norms and rules of a given community (Checkel 2005, 1046) and tried to build a bridge between rational and constructivist approach. Even if attitudes and behaviour are not considered in this definition, this conceptualization gives the opportunity to study socialisation in a more complex way. With other scholars, he recently explores the mechanism of the socialisation and analyses when and under which conditions is a particular mechanism more likely to lead to strategic or, Type I or Type II socialisation in the case of several institutions. Traditionally there has been a tendency to view strategic-choice effect and socialisation effect as “either/or”, however as suggested by Checkel and other authors, the progress in understanding how individuals change interests, attitudes, and behaviour inside institutions will come from understanding the interactions of strategic behaviour with social-psychological socialisation mechanisms (Johnston, 2005). Checkel, summarizing different contributions on socialisation in different institutions – that separately do not support strongly the assumption of socializing effect of institutions - identifies four socialisation mechanisms that can take place in international institutions, namely bargaining, arguing, social influence, and cognitive role-playing. According to the results of Checkel analysis, we can find some elements that can promote some mechanisms of socialisations: for instance, primary affiliation and isolation from domestic policy promote shifting in loyalty towards international level through arguing mechanism. This is not the place to discuss all findings, but this exercise demonstrates that it is possible to understand the socialisation process and find reliable results if we develop a more complex analysis concerning all dimensions of the process and not only one or two of them, therefore adopting a “both/and” logic of research, rather than a traditional “either/or” one (Zurn Checkel 2005). Even if the findings of Checkel are preliminary and require more investigations, the recent studies about socialisation in the international institutions suggest that more evidences of the socializing abilities of institutions may be find if we use a more complex analysis that involve all the dimensions of the process.

A set of (very) preliminary hypotheses

According to the first literature review I’ve built my research design and I try to specify my general question formulating a preliminary set of testing hypotheses.

_Q1._ Is the EP able to socialize the new MEPs, in particular those of them from the new member states? Which differences emerge within the MEPs socialisation?

In the first part of the research I will develop the concept of socialisation in the EP, I will investigate how, and if the MEPs are socialized (exploration of my dependent variable). In particular, I will elaborate a set of indexes that help me understanding if there are some differences in the integration in the different aspect of institutional life. According to my definition of socialisation, I formulate an index for each dimension of the process. I expect that the individuals have been integrated in some aspects, but not in others. Therefore,

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1 He is coordinator of a special issue of international organization (2005, Fall,59) focused on socialisation in the international organizations.
according to the results of analyse I can develop a typology of socialized MEPs and have a picture of the level and quality (dimension) of socialisation in a single moment.

**Table 1: Socialization Typology /Index (SI)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socialization, integration in:</th>
<th>Index of structure integration (IS)</th>
<th>Index of role integration (IR)</th>
<th>Index of norms and rules integration (IN)</th>
<th>Index of values integration (IV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. organizational structures;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. roles;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. norms and rules;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SOCIALIZATION TYPOLOGY/INDEX (SI) = IS*IR*IN*IV

Every index concerns different aspect of institutional life. The Index of structure integration refers to the formal role that the MEPs have in the institution, namely in the committees, political groups and plenary and what they do in the parliament. The index of role integration refers to the perception of role as a member of the parliament at the EU level. The index of norms and rules perception refers to if the MEP know and adapt his behaviour to the formal and informal requirements. Finally, the index of value measures how much the values of the MEP coincide with the values of this institution. Every index is composed by the combination of different variables and indicators. The index of structure integration would catch the phenomena of socialisation, in particular the public manifestation of MEPs’ activities and their formal roles in the EP structures. The index of role integration is a composition of two dimension of representation: the first one is the representation of interests (European national local, group, individuals etc…); the second one is the importance of some aspect of the MEPs work (legislative, contact with electors, etc…). The third dimension of socialisation deals with the vote behaviour. A great number of studies on roll call made by the EPRG (European Parliament Research Group) support the idea that the political group are very cohesive and that the EP tend to vote according the group instructions. In particular, I will take into consideration the data related to discrepancy between group/party instruction and MEPs individual votes. The fourth index would grasp the set of values of MEPs. At this stage of the research, I can suggest the most common variables used by other scholars: the supranational against intergovernmental attitude, the opinion about the power of EP (legislative, control, budget powers) and the support for the enlargement. However, other elements may emerge during the work.

According with the result of the analysis of single index, I will individuate the common trends and a typology of the MEPs according to their socializing features.²

² In the case that the analysis doesn’t reveal any trends or a set of different typology, I will reconsidered my indicators, my variables and finally also my conceptualization.
Table 1: Components of dependent variable (preliminary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEXES</th>
<th>Data Source*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index of structure integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal role in committee</td>
<td>Web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal role in groups</td>
<td>Web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal role in EP</td>
<td>Web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Web/Doc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of role integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views on importance of representing different interests</td>
<td>Quest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views on importance of aspects of work</td>
<td>Quest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of norms and rules integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote behaviour</td>
<td>Doc./O.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of values integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion on the power of EP</td>
<td>Quest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration support (supranational vs. international)</td>
<td>Quest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlargement support</td>
<td>Quest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Web, Doc. (Official Documents), Quest. (Questionnaire), O.S. (Other Studies).

Table 4: Hypothesis of Typology of MEPs according to the level of socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socialization</th>
<th>Socialized MEP</th>
<th>Type A MEP (H)</th>
<th>Type B MEP (H)</th>
<th>Type C MEP (H)</th>
<th>Type D MEP (H)</th>
<th>No socialized MEP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index of structure integration</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of role integration</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of norms and rules integration</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of values integration</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Q2) Which factors affect the process of MEPs socialisation?

The following step will be the analysis testing which individual and institutional (at EP, EU, or national level) features affect the socialisation as a whole ad in each its different dimensions. According to my general idea, the life in the EP influences individuals in their behaviour values and attitudes. The recent election and the fact that MEPs coming from new EU member states join the EP in this legislature give me the opportunity to study if and how national/cultural features and or primacy or novelty effects affect the socialisation process in the EP. As in the case of the dependent variable, those independent variables are the same that we traditionally find in the studies on role perception, attitudes, and behaviour. The main idea is to understand which are the most relevant in the process and verify which of them are not explanatory variables, rather intervenient variables in the causal process or on the other variables. I will organize the variables according to the individual and institutional features in order to investigate clearly, what is the role of institutions and what the role of personal features and skills. The causal relations between variables will be studied no only as merely cause and effect singular relation, but with the aim to individuate more complex relation between factors. The reason of some of the unsatisfying results from previous analyses may be related to an excessive simplification of social interaction (Baron and Kenny, 1986).
According to my definition of socialisation and the findings in the literature, I intend to test the following preliminary hypotheses.

\textit{H1: Socialisation is strongly related to the time that the MEPs spend in the EP.} I expect that the people that spend a lot of time in meetings groups, committee are highly integrated in the different dimensions of socialisation.
**H2:** Contacts with other colleagues and in particular with functionaries affect positively the integration in the institutional life. I expect that the contact with other people that have previous experience in the parliament support the socialisation process.

**H3:** National support for EU integration and membership hold up the socialisation in the EP. I expect that the national features affect the socialisation process, in particular the elite and national parties attitudes towards the EU.

**H4:** International education and multiple language skills are necessary to be integrated in the institutional life. I expect that the international education and the knowledge of different languages and culture support the process of socialisation.

**H5:** MEPs are more integrated in the institutional life if they want to continue their career at EU level. I expect that the people that want to stay in Brussels are strategically interest to be integrated in all aspect of the institutional life; contrary I expect that the people that want continue their carrier at national level are only partially integrated (for instance the behaviour index would suggest that they behave according to the instructions of national party rather then European group).

**H6:** Socialisation is more pervasive if the MEPs work in a policy area in which EP can have a strong influence. I expect that the people are more stimulate to work in the EP in those fields that are competencies of the EP co-decision. That obviously affects the integration in the institution.

Those are preliminary hypotheses to test. Every hypothesis will be tested in all dimension of socialisation focusing in the difference between old and new elected from new and old EU membership state.

(Q3) Which mechanisms take place in this process?

The third part of my thesis will investigate the mechanism that take place in the MEPs socialisation process. Mechanism is a set of hypotheses that could be the explanation for some social phenomenon, the explanation being in terms of interactions between individuals and individuals or between individuals and other social aggregate or structure. According to this classical definition I expect that from the testing hypotheses will emerge a set of relations between variables that can be coherently organized and suggest some specific mechanism of individual action in the EP. In particular, I will investigate if there are common trends about the logic of consequentialism, arguing and appropriateness and which variables affect the mechanisms of socialisation. Is the individual social action affected by the nationality of the MEPs pushed in logic of consequentialism? Or does the political group affiliation promote a kind of logic of arguing in MEPs interaction? Do international education, and public support of EU integration in country of origin support logic of appropriateness in MEPs socialisation?

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**Figure 3: Logic of MEPs socialization (adaptation from Risse 2000)**

![Logic of MEPs socialization](image-url)
Data

According to my definition of socialisation, the best way to analyse the process is to confront pictures taken in different moments of the process. In my case it is not possible, then the best thing it would be to have the most detailed picture and the most sophisticated causal mechanism description that could be verified in following studies.

Data for the databases and than the analyses come from different sources, primary and secondary ones. A great part of them comes from internet sources, officials documents and other studies, but I need some information that could be find only with interview or/and questionnaire. Nevertheless, according to Taggart and Bale, anonymous questionnaires provide invalid measure in particular in the case of role orientation (one of the dimensions of socialisation). As they point out, ‘the importance of interviews and particularly of semi-structured interviews is that they allow the researchers to probe and observe whether and how research subject prioritise certain orientations and downplay, or often not even mention, others.’ (Bale Taggart 2006, 10) This constraint have practical consequences. I cannot interview all new MEPs in a relatively short period. Therefore, I have selected sample of six countries according to the rule inferences from the analyses of most different cases could give information about common trends. I have selected six countries one for each enlargement, different sizes (geographically demographically and economically), different party systems, different public opinion and elites attitudes towards the EU: Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden, Poland and Bulgaria. Because the number of variables and data are very large, the use of computer software is necessary, not only for the statistical analyses. Actually, automating the collection of data from internet and from documents is necessary for this project but could be a continue source of updated information useful for the next researches.

Concluding remarks

Previous findings about the EP power of socialisation are not encouraging. Only very feeble results confirm the ability of the EP to socialize their members. Nevertheless, the literature investigating the phenomenon, have analysed not the entire phenomenon, but part of the process. A significant number of studies concerning values, attitudes and behaviour of MEPs, give some preliminary suggestions about the effect of education, elite and public opinion attitudes toward the EU, but not all these dimensions of socialisation have been studies in a single research design. The main idea of this project is demonstrating if and how the EP socializes their new member, that means integrating them in structures, roles, rules and values and building a coherent argument about the logic of individual actions that drive this social process.

The result of this research would contribute to the debate on institutions ability to socialize individuals and adding some suggestions about the creation of a European political Elite. Is the experience in the EP one of the necessary step to become part of the European political elite?
References


