



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

MASTER THESIS IN
EUROPEAN STUDIES

Career Ambitions and Roles in the European Parliament

A case study of the 2014 French delegation to the
European People's Party

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ABSTRACT

The research aim of this Master's thesis is to explore to what extent the roles that politicians play in parliamentary structures are shaped and influenced by their career ambitions. More precisely, the thesis proposes to investigate this relation in a « unique institutional laboratory »: the European Parliament (EP). The main assumption of the thesis is that it is possible to establish a clear relationship between the way Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) relate to their career plans and the way they interpret their parliamentary roles. In order to answer the research question, the thesis proceeds with a qualitative and explorative case study of “specific” politicians in a “specific” context: French members of the European People's Party (EPP) in the 2014-2019 legislature of the EP. Based on eight respondents semi-structured interviews and on background information on the political profiles of the different interviewees, the thesis demonstrates that the French delegation mobilizes three different representative styles shaped by different ambitions: the *European Animator*, the *French Politician* and the *Local Specialist*. These ideal-types are the results of an abductive and motivational approach to the empirical material, which allows in turn the thesis to enter directly in discussion with mainstream previous research, namely the American political science “ambition theory”. Whereas the thesis agrees with American political scientists that there clearly is a relationship between the interpretations MEPs make of their role(s) and their (un)revealed career goals, it however advocates for more nuanced and contextualized tools of analyses of ambitions. The thesis ends with concluding remarks on the implications of the empirical findings for previous and future research.

FOREWORD

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"Max Weber (1965) advanced a similar duality of the pursuit of public station, that one "lives off politics, or one lives for politics". Under this definition, either politics as a career is pursued as an ends to sustain one's self, like any other profession; or, alternatively, there is a political animal, a person who engages in civic life because he or she cannot imagine doing anything else and who serves for a variety of motives that defy fiscal security. Politicians who live for politics are like sharks in the sea: if they do not swim, they do not breathe."

Ronald K. Gaddie (2004) "Born to Run: Origins of the Political Career" (p.9)

I) INTRODUCTION

a) « **Ambition lies at the heart of politics** »

A bit less than fifty years ago, the American scholar Joseph Schlesinger released a book that would completely change our way of understanding and conceiving the mandates of parliamentarians. « *Ambition lies at the heart of politics* » (1966: 1) was the opening line and main argument of the political scientist.

Indeed, as Borchert (2011) perfectly summarizes: « Politicians tend to be an ambitious crowd. Few content themselves with a short stint in political office and then happily return to their prior occupation. (...). Professional politicians- who in that regard do not differ markedly from practitioners in any other distinguished profession- want to stay on and they want to rise. (...) Politicians themselves not only know which offices do exist, but also what one's individual chances of obtaining a particular office are and what comparative value that office has in relation to others » (p. 118-119).

These conceptions of the political office are well-established across the Atlantic and they have guided an impressive amount of quantitative and qualitative research on the impact that career ambitions exercise on the legislative activity of American politicians, whether they are local councilmen, Congressmen or the Presidents themselves. Most of these studies have focused on how parliamentarians' ambitions influence the content of their votes: their argument is that a specific type of ambition generates a particular set of behaviours which *in fine* can be determined empirically.

It should therefore come a bit as a surprise that these fruitful tools of analysis have been marginalized in most contemporary research in European studies. While American scholars have for a long time impregnated the research field of EU integration with powerful and influential theoretical concepts, these have surprisingly been overpassed in Europe when it comes to analyse those, who in many regards, play the most important role in the decision-making process : our politicians and more precisely, our members of Parliament (MPs).

As if European politicians were less ambitious than their American counterparts.

As if ambition was not a shared value among the elected representatives of the Old Continent.

Moreover, this general reluctance is particularly true to a « unique institutional laboratory »: the European Parliament (EP) and its members (MEPs).

The EP has indisputably been given uneven attention by the researchers interested in European integration and more generally European issues. Whereas other institutions such as the European Commission and the European Council have been the centre of focus of most scholars from the beginning of the European project, the EP on the other hand, which initially suffered from an important lack of power, and its members, who originally were national delegates, have only recently started steering attention on their behalf.

Moreover, the motivations which lie behind the tenure of a « European political office » have been under-scrutinized. The career plans and career paths of European parliamentarians have been more or less neglected by an important amount of the literature and when they have actually been taken into consideration, it has been done only-so-imperfectly. Indeed, a large proportion of the literature is dedicated to quantitative analyses of legislative behaviours, perhaps best represented by the neo-institutionalist school of thought of Simon Hix *et al.* An overwhelming majority of these works have stressed the importance of the selection rules of candidates and the party-system to explain how in turn ambition can shape behaviours within the chamber (Hix *et al.* 2012). Surprisingly though, much less attention has been given to *other dimensions* of the « representative style »: namely, roles.

After all, parliamentarians can hardly be reduced to their voting prerogative. Even though the EP has seen its powers increase drastically in the past years and the generalisation of the « ordinary legislative procedure » has conferred more weight to the institution, MEPs cannot be limited to the votes they produce during once-a-month plenary sessions in Strasbourg. MEPs interact, play and evolve very differently from one another in the EP. For instance, while some parliamentarians choose to specialize in committee-work, others prefer to prioritize other type of legislative activities. While certain are allocated important reports, others dedicate their time to speaking during group meetings. Some MEPs are extremely satisfied by their European mandate while others wait (im)patiently for new opportunities to come before leaving the European Parliament. Why is that the case? How can we explain these divergences when it comes to MEPs' role-playing? What part does ambition play in all of that ?

b) Relevance of the study

These questions are relevant both from an academic perspective and for policy-practitioners. As Susan Scarrow (1997) explained, studying the career movements of MEPs is important because it tells us something about European institutions and their future. She makes a distinction between three types of career in the EP and notes the following about the increasing amount of parliamentarians who choose to fully invest in their European mandate: « Such records make it much more likely that future assemblies will be populated with careerist MEPs who view the European Parliament as their main political arena, and who seek to increase the prestige of their institution and its power relative to other European and domestic institutions » (p. 261). Therefore studying career paths, and more precisely the ambitions of MEPs, reveal something about the institution in itself and about how it is perceived in other member states (MS) through the lenses of different cultural sensibilities. As Kauppi (1996) notes about European Union institutions and French political careers: « Evidence seems to indicate that the simple reason why French politicians are unlikely to support rectifying the European democratic deficit by creating a supranational and federal state has more to do with the structure of the domestic political markets and the political trajectories of individuals in them, than with the structure of European institutions themselves » (p. 18). Studying the political will and the wished-futures of politicians are, from these perspectives, good indicators of the « desirability » of the EP as an institution and more generally of the EU's popularity. These factors can also help to reanimate the classical debate between rationalism and constructivism, between plans and pleasure, and to a certain extent, between cynicism and instinct: to what extent does ambition explain the roles MEPs adopt? Without any doubt, answers to this interrogation will interest a large range of policy-stakeholders: home-parties, groups in the EP and the MEPs themselves.

This Master's thesis proposes to answer all of these questions through an *explorative* study of the French delegation to the European People Party in the 2014-2019 legislature. To do so, *eight semi-structured interviews* were conducted with members of the delegation in order to understand to what extent ambition shape the roles MEPs adopt in the hemi-cycle. The French delegation is used as an *exemplifying* case and, to a certain extent, a *critical* case. Indeed, whereas in American political science and in American politics talking of one's ambitions is pretty common, a French politician with the national calibre of an MEP would never talk in the same way as Senator John McCain (2002: 373) did in his memoirs: « *I didn't decide to*

run for president to start a national crusade for the political reforms I believed in or to run a campaign as if it were some grand act of patriotism. In truth, I wanted to be president because it had become my ambition to be president. In truth, I'd had the ambition for a long time » (quoted in Öhberg 2011: 172). If we found that ambitions influence the roles of French politicians in the European Parliament in a way that differs from one another, then there are good reasons to think that this scheme could apply at the scale of the whole group, or even to every MEPs of the legislature.

In addition, a study which focuses exclusively on the ambitions of French politicians is relevant for the general topic of ambition and roles: France has historically played an important part in the European integration process and French MEPs, with diverse intensities, have been key-players of this assembly. Moreover, in this legislature the EPP Group is the biggest political group in the EP, which means that it ensures the most important leadership positions in the assembly. In these regards, the 2014 French delegation is no exception to the rule: with 20 parliamentarians, it is the third biggest delegation in the EPP Group. It is composed of many incumbent MEPs who exercise responsibilities in every possible department of the EP (member of the bureau of the EP, member of the bureau of the EPP Group, Chair and Vice-Chairs of Committees, Coordinators and Vice-Coordinators for the EPP in Committees, Presidency and Vice-Presidencies of delegations). Other « freshmen » MEPs have exercised important responsibilities at the national level: former senior ministers, ministers, secretary of state and members of parliament (the National Assembly especially) compose this group of people. In other words, « ambition » is not just an empty word for these politicians and the objectives they may have are actually reachable. *Their ambitions make sense.*

c) Research aim and question(s)

The research aim of this Master thesis is to explore to what extent the roles that politicians play in parliamentary structures are shaped and influenced by their career ambitions. More precisely, the thesis proposes to investigate this relation in a « unique institutional laboratory »: the European Parliament (EP). Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) typically face several career paths: they can choose to invest fully in a « European career », they can use their mandate as a stepping-stone for national politics or they can decide to end their career in the EP (Scarrow 1997). These career choices are grandly conditioned by their personal ambitions. At the same time, MEPs can decide to interpret and invest in very

different manners their parliamentary mandates. Because of the relative lack of institutionalisation of the EP (Beauvallet 2003), MEPs face multiple choices in how to prioritize their behaviours in the assembly and what role(s) they can or wish to « play » within its walls. The « bet » of this thesis is that we can establish a clear relationship between the interpretations MEPs make of their role(s) and their (un)revealed career goals. The principal aim of the thesis is to ask how MEPs relate to their career ambitions and if/how their future plans and parliamentary roles in any way are correlated, or at least clearly linked. Consequently, the research question of this thesis is:

How do career ambitions shape the roles MEPs adopt in the assembly?

d) Outline of the thesis

The Master's thesis is structured into several chapters in order to answer the overarching research question. In chapter II, we present what has been done before us in the area of political ambition and roles. More precisely, the chapter is divided in several themes relevant to the research question: we first show what has been done in the American political science literature in the domain of ambition before turning to the « state-of-play » of the question in the European studies' field. We then describe how these issues were addressed in the French constructivist and legislative careers' literature and how they are relevant to our topic of discussion. We conclude this section by establishing what will be the core of this thesis: a motivational approach to role and career ambitions. This approach is further developed in the chapter III of the thesis where the best method for gathering qualitative data is argued for. The thesis is an explorative qualitative case study of the 2014 French delegation to the European People's Party based on eight respondents' semi-structured interviews with members of the European Parliament. Further data is gathered based on the political profiles of the MEPs in order to add more complete and useful information for our enquiries. The chapter then demonstrates why an approach by ideal-types is best for the analysis and presents the coding strategy, which is based on the literature and previous theoretical foundations. The chapter IV of this Master's thesis is also the core of the paper: the data is analysed in that section. Based on the empirical evidence, three ideal-types of French MEPs' roles and ambitions are established: *European Animators*, *French Politicians* and *Local Specialists*. These semantic and empirical constructions are the fruit of an abductive approach based on the interviews and combined with the MEPs' political profiles. Each ideal-type is composed of a unique set of

roles and ambitions which allows us to distinguish MEPs of the sample based on those factors. In Chapter V, we discuss how these findings actually help us to answer the research question. The results of this explorative thesis seem to suggest that if ambitions do shape the roles MEPs adopt in the chamber, it does so only imperfectly and not how the literature usually describes it. We plea for the use of new political science « tools » in order to give better context and more nuance to the ambitions of politicians. We end the thesis with some concluding remarks.

II. Previous research and theory

a) Career ambitions in American political science

The strategies or *ambitions* that MEPs adopt have surprisingly been under-developed in European studies to explain other types of behaviours in the EP. While there exists a wide, comparative and quantitative literature on voting patterns of MEPs, still not much is known about their *roles* in the assembly (to the notable exception of Scully *et al.* 2003 ; Bale *et al.* 2006 ; Navarro 2009 ; Costa *et al.* 2009 but on very different topics). How MEPs interpret their roles of representatives, how they understand their mandate and what priorities they give to their functions lacks systematic research. Moreover, these analyses have, to my knowledge, never been studied under the banner of *ambitions*.

Role and ambition « theories » are however well known from American (and British) political scientists and scholars such as Donald Searing (1991) and Joseph Schlesinger (1966) are recognised authorities in the field. Whereas their theoretical concepts have been used separately to analyse behaviour in the EP (Hix *et al.* 2013 ; Meserve *et al.* 2009 ; Navarro 2009), nobody has yet explicitly used ambition as an *explanatory* factor of MEPs' roles. That is the goal of this thesis.

In his 2004 scholarly book on different congressional candidates and their electoral campaigns around the US, Gaddie notes the following about a theory of ambition: « Political ambition theory presumes that all politicians have motivations for office. The question that ambition theory has been a vehicle for answering is « Why do people run? ». Then, once people win office, students of ambition theory turn to another question: « How do people use their office to fulfil their ambitions? » » (p. 19). Indeed, Schlesinger argues (cited in Black

1972) that « the central assumption of ambition theory is that a politician's behaviour is a response to his office goals. Or to put it another way, the politician as office-seeker engages in political acts and makes decisions appropriate to gaining office... It makes little difference to the theory of ambition whether men adopt the ambitions suitable to the office or attain the office because of their ambitions » (p. 144). As we see, one assumption of this model is that politicians behave in a rational manner when selecting among alternative offices and that « rather than being driven by excessive ambition, they tend to develop ambition slowly as a result of their changing circumstances » (Black 1972: 145). This means that politicians are aware of the environment in which they evolve and their actual capacity of moving from one office to another. Moreover, politicians act accordingly to these office-goals in their everyday work. We should therefore be able to « spot » empirically ambitious behaviours and their consequences on the roles of MEPs.

Schlesinger conceptualizes ambition as either *discrete*, a one-term office followed by the withdrawal from public office (or in Gaddie's words (2004 : 19) : « discrete ambition embodies in the minds of some the « classic » notions of American politics : duty for the sake of duty, a limited tenure of office, and then a return to private life »); *static*, the wish from a politician to make a long career out of one office/position ; or as *progressive*, that is the aspiration to seek a higher office from the one that the politician actually holds (1966 : 10). Herrick *et al.* (1993) add to this typology *intrainstitutional* ambition, that is the desire of a leadership position within an institution. Empirically, these categories are constructed after observing behavioural differences in the legislative activities of Congressmen and MPs. Every form of ambition is unique in the sense that it results in behaviours distinct from those generated by other types of ambitions. For example, Herrick *et al.* theorize that members with progressive ambition are expected to be more active than their colleagues: they should introduce larger amount of legislation and be more active on the floor (measured as the number of speeches and amendments). Moreover, they expect that progressive ambitious politicians will be less specialized than their colleagues because they pursue broad policy agendas (1993: 767-8). On the other hand, « members with intrainstitutional ambition are expected to honour the norm of legislative specialization since those who engage in hard, detailed work in a narrow area have traditionally been rewarded with respect from fellow members » (p.768).

These analyses are fruitful because they give a clear guide in how to distinguish politicians by their ambitions but they are not unproblematic. Specifically, how do we « operationalize » these concepts and data to the context of the European Parliament? Even though ambitious politicians are not a particular feature of American politics, the aforementioned tools of analysis are too much anchored within the American context to be used as such in a study on the EP. For example, MEPs cannot introduce any type of legislation: it is exclusively the prerogative of the European Commission. Moreover, it is also hard for European parliamentarians to pursue broad policy agendas because of the limited amount of power of the EP and because of the internal functioning of the chamber: MEPs are divided within committees which lead to the specialization of behaviours and an increased control from party groups of their members' behaviours (Bowler & Farrell 1995). This has led many to talk of a unique parliamentary style for MEPs: the figure of the *eurodéputé expert* (Beauvallet & Michon 2012).

Other issues have been raised by scholars concerning these studies of ambitions: actually, *they do not really measure ambition*. To their own acknowledgment, Herrick *et al.* agree that quantitative analysis of ambition have to be seen as « surrogate measures » (1993: 766). Indeed, « systematic examination of ambition is problematic because ambition is best thought of as a psychological predisposition » (Hibbing cited in Herrick *et al.* 1993: 766). In a note written years later, Herrick (2001) refines her previous results by conducting a study based on surveys of congressional candidates in order to analyse to what extent ambition affect legislators' behaviours. Her argument is that most scholarly works have been done reversely, leading to fuzzy results and « instead of testing whether ambition affects behaviour, (it) tests whether members with certain legislative styles are more apt to seek higher positions » (p. 470). In this vein, *ambitions are more the construct of social scientists than the actual wishes of politicians*. This is exactly what Gaddie (2004) claims when he remarks that « studies of political careers and political ambition are usually exercises in backward mapping. One looks at the successful candidates for the highest offices and sees who fails or succeeds in moving up (...). In other words, most of the ambition scholarship is about politicians who have established careers and who are in the midst of pursuing crystallized, progressive ambitions. » (p. 16-7). That is problematic because this is how most research on ambition has been conducted the past decades: these results therefore have to be relativized, as Herrick finds that even though ambition does affect behaviour, it does so only weakly (2001: 471). Hence, there is a real need in social research to move out from « career paths » studies which have been

used until now interchangeably to designate « ambition studies ». There are important differences between both approaches that imply methodological and empirical consequences. We now turn to what has been done in European studies concerning politicians' behaviours and ambitions.

b) Quantitative studies of voting behaviours in the European Parliament: the neo-institutionalist literature

As Hix *et al.* (2003) note « the development of academic writing and research on the EP has broadly been a function of the powers and prestige of the chamber » (p. 193) and, since the new powers granted to the EP in the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty, research interests on the topic have not stopped increasing. In this sense, since the 1990's, academic literature on the *political behaviours* of MEPs is well established in the field of European studies.

Among the research field, several scholars have shown the concrete influence that career paths play on the voting behaviours of MEPs (Hix *et al.* 2012, 2013; Meserve *et al.* 2009). Indeed, in a vast part of the literature, career paths and parliamentarians' wished future orientations have been used to explain different types of behaviours within the chamber. For example, these scholars demonstrate that MEPs wishing to gain influence within the European institution will have a greater tendency to vote along the lines of their party group in the EP than along those of their national parties at home, when these interests clash. Moreover, the type of political career envisioned by a politician determines how valuable different type of activities are to this politician: in this sense, « since political ambitions influence legislators' priorities, those who plan to exit the EP to return to national politics or to retire from politics altogether are far less likely to participate actively in the legislative activities of the parliament. » (Hix *et al.* 2012: 17).

In these respects, the very important work of Hix *et al.* has contributed to increase our understanding of how strategies and career paths influence MEPs' *voting behaviour* in the EP. The *institutionalist-rationalist* approach has constructed extremely sophisticated models to help us predict and create patterns of voting behaviour linked to MEPs' career plans. These models assume that the primary goal of the vast majority of MEPs is to be *re-elected* (Hix *et al.* 1999: 12). In order to fulfil this objective, MEPs face very different strategies (which often are mutually exclusive) that will considerably influence their behaviours in the EP. They can

either aim at *re-selection* (by pursuing actions that promote the interests of their domestic party who controls the re-selection process), *policy* (by engaging in actions that will promote the interests of their domestic constituents who *in fine* assures their election) or *office* (by increasing their personal profile in the EP and securing positions of authority and prestige in the chamber to make them essential candidates).

MEPs evolve in a constraining environment, not least because they are agents who must respond to two principals when they vote: the national parties, who control the selection of candidates in the EP elections, and the political groups in the EP who control a variety of private goods in the chamber such as leaderships positions, committee assignments, speaking time and the legislative agenda (Hix 2002: 688). Therefore, one of the main tasks of an MEP is to select an appropriate balance of priorities when voting in the assembly. Moreover, variations in these pressures will produce variations in MEPs behaviour : for instance, their personal profile, the national party and political group to which they belong, or the fact that their party is sitting in the government at home will affect what they *seek* to do in the parliament and what they realistically *can* do (Hix *et al.* 1999 : 8). Whereas Scarrow (1997 : 261) argued that MEPs would eventually grow independent from national parties, Hix *et al.* conclusions are that MEPs are essentially « national parliamentarians » and that their personal ideological preferences and the Member State from which they come from are stronger predictors of their attitudes towards EU policies than their EP group political affiliation (Hix *et al.* 2002 : 678). Simply said, MEPs respond more to their national party principal than the "Eurogroup" with which they sit in the EP.

Several scholars have shown the theoretical and empirical limits of such models to predict or at least explain different range of attitudes within the EP (Carrubba & Gabel 1999; Rasmussen 2008). First, and turning towards our research question, models based solely on voting patterns are unsatisfactory to give full accounts of behaviours in parliamentary structures. One can hardly limit parliamentarians to their voting behaviours not least because their functions are by essence much wider: they are elected representatives. Second, voting behaviours are biased to a certain point because they are based on « flawed » data : by lack of other means, scholars such as Hix *et al.* (2002, 2003, 2012, 2013) and Faas (2003) use roll-call votes analysis to test their variables. However, roll-call votes represent barely one-third of all the votes in the EP (the other options being the show of hands and electronic votes) and they are politically « charged »: they are used unevenly by the political groups and not on all

issues. Corbett *et al.* (2000) argue that they are used in three ways: to show the party's position to the public on an issue, to embarrass another party or to keep a check of their own members' behaviour (p. 150). Third, quantitative studies of voting behaviours are insufficient to explain thoroughly patterns and decisions of MEPs (Rasmussen 2008). Indeed, most quantitative studies assume that MEPs face a limited amount of choice when they vote: they either vote for or against a text and these choices are indicators of their "preference" toward one principal (may it be the home party, their EP group or the constituents). Why in some cases MEPs choose to register an abstention or not to participate to the vote is badly explained by the previously-mentioned models. In fact, in-depth interviews with 14 Danish MEPs reveal that the choices they face are much more complex than that: most of the time, MEPs *choose not to choose* when a policy conflict emerges between their group and their party (2008: 15). The lessons to draw from this preliminary previous research section are three-folded for our research question: first, MEPs cannot be limited to their voting behaviours to explain other range of behaviours. Second, it would greatly benefit to our analysis to draw out from stereotypical *clichés* about parliamentarians: they do not all aim for re-election and they do not make trade-offs all the times between different principals. Third, quantitative studies on MEPs are limited and there is a real need to accentuate research within the qualitative field to give a full and accurate account of behaviours and attitudes within the EP. To do so: first, by drawing theoretical concepts and new « variables » from American political science to explain the roles of MEPs, namely *ambition*, as it was done in the former section ; second, by exploring what other types of literature have done on the topic, namely French constructivist scholars and the legislative career literature, before turning to the core of this thesis: a motivational approach.

c) Ambition in the structural constructivist and legislative careers literature

We need, therefore, to nuance our understanding of ambition. In this sense, the *structural constructivist* literature is rich in theoretical concepts (Kauppi 1996; Beauvallet 2003, 2009). Structural constructivists *per se* hardly ever mention ambition as such in European studies. This is probably less surprising than in the neo-institutionalist literature because the theoretical foundations of constructivism do not give much space to actors and individual trajectories in general. Inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's work on social fields and capitals, scholars like Beauvallet define the European Parliament as a « *structuring structure* » (2010: 171). Studies of « Eurocracy » consider that European institutions have to be seen as an

autonomous field that is increasingly professionalizing and institutionalizing itself and as the « permanent social space where there are people (some permanent, others part-time) competing to define European policies, norms and instruments as well as the skills of legitimate definition. » (Georgakakis 2010: 331). Simply said, the EP cannot be studied like any other political object (such as the US Congress) and with over-simplified constraining variables (such as nationality or party groups), but should rather be understood as a closed space that is governed by its own logic. This has numerous implications for the research question of this thesis.

First, ambitious politicians are constrained by the logic of their institutions. For example, Beauvallet's (2005) longitudinal analysis of the profiles of the different President of the European Parliament between 1979 and 1999 demonstrates that the « emergence of a capital specific to the institution which holding would stand out to be imperative to occupy leadership positions in the EP » is essential to understand the institution (p. 109). Therefore when it comes to *intrainstitutional ambition* as it was defined beforehand, only MEPs endowed with a specific type of resource, « *une expérience politique proprement européenne* », will succeed in their ambitions. This means concretely that being a former important minister from a big member state does not constitute (partly) anymore a resource in itself to pretend to leadership positions within the institution. Other resources are valued in the European « field »: the production of an expertise, the posture of the specialist who is hard-working and diligent (p. 117-8). The detention of a symbolical capital acquired in the national political field is not enough anymore to occupy positions of leadership and prestige in the EP (p.118).

Second, there are methodological implications for our research question and for a theory of ambition. One of the structural constructivists' core arguments is that you can measure institutionalization processes by evaluating the socio-political background of members of parliaments. Several studies have shown that the profiles of MEPs are fundamentally different from the one of French members of parliament for example: MEPs are younger, more feminine, and particularly less endowed with political capital than their national counterparts (Kauppi 1996). The implications are two-folded: first, gathering quantitative data on MEPs (level of income, diplomas, previous career, gender, age for example) can become good *indicators* of their ambitions. Once again, acting *a posteriori*, the background of leadership positions in the EP illustrates common characteristics between parliamentarians : presidents

and vice-president of committees have the tendency to share the same longevity of mandate, at least 10 years in 75% of the cases (Marrel & Payre 2006 : 88). Second, success in ambition is (implicitly) conditioned to the possession of certain specific « qualities ».

Whereas these analyses are very powerful to explain the evolution of the chamber and the distribution of power within it (namely *contextualizing* intrainstitutional ambition), they become, in my opinion, insufficient to explain other types of behaviours from MEPs and other types of ambitions. *In these regards, what constitutes progressive ambition anymore for European parliamentarians?* This question can hardly be answered by establishing tables of hard-coded quantitative data but has to be pursued in another way. To a certain extent, that is what legislative careers studies have been attempting to do the past decade.

One central assumption of most career paths and ambition studies is that, when it comes to the European Parliament, an important amount of politicians uses it as a stepping-stone for a national political career. This is how Scarrow (1997) describes MEPs trajectories. She argues that MEPs can order their careers in the EP in three different way: those who use their seats for winning or regaining national political office; those who show a long and primary commitment to their European jobs, thus investing in a « European career »; and a third group for whom a seat in the EP is synonym of « Political Deadend », and who stay in the Parliament only briefly and who are not subsequently elected to national or European office (1997: 259). In her paper, Scarrow compares the French, German, Italian and British delegations of MEPs between 1979 and 1994 and concludes that a significant proportion of representatives from these countries pursue European careers. As we can see, she takes as a standpoint that these paths only make sense if we compare them from the national perspective of politicians. However, that is far from being evident. As Kjaer (2001) notes, it is « rather peculiar that the description of the MEPs is based on their political past (former experiences at other levels) and their political future (which levels are target of their political ambition?) instead of their political present (the European office) » (p.3). That is to say that most career studies are *a priori* biased because they consider that politicians most desired future resides nationally, or as Westlake (cited in Kjaer 2001 : 2) puts it, that « the only way up is out ».

Moreover, the stepping-stone argument has been challenged in numerous works. Whereas the conventional wisdom holds that the national level is the apex of professional political careers, the emergence of new supranational institutions like the EP and relatively low exchange rates

between institutions (from the EP to the French national assembly for example and *vice versa*) suggests that parliaments at the European level also function as *career arenas* in their own rights (Stolz 2001). « The mere inclusion of national political career in the description of the MEPs leads the reader to treat this dimension as an influential characteristic » (Kjaer 2001: 6) but the line remains pretty open and has to be interrogated in new ways. Politicians' ambitions are complex and not one-folded. They can hardly be limited to « uni-directional » career paths (Stolz 2001: 18).

In this sense, the theory of political *capital* is precious because it gives a *context* to ambition: in short, ambition does not have the same meaning from one MEP to another. If we understand political capital as « the main social resource that constitutes the object and means of struggle in the political field: political knowledge, recognition, competence and prestige » (Kauppi 1996: 4), then we can have a first hint of the different categories of MEPs based on their priorities. Kauppi considers three types of careers for French MEPs: those that combine in their careers both national and regional politics; those who are national politicians; and those who are regional politicians (1996: 8). This is another way to understand MEPs' ambitions even though the line has progressively become blurred to define *promotion*. For example, *is a seat in the French parliament more prestigious than one in the EP?* These considerations have largely been studied under the scope of the socio-political background of parliamentarians: where they come from, where they studied, what kind of resources are they endowed with, determines what they wish and can realistically do with their careers. For example, Kauppi suggests that in terms of career patterns the position of an MEP in French political hierarchies can be compared to those of national deputy and top-level regional representative (medium high-level) (1996 : 16). This means that staying in the EP is also a position of prestige and worthy in itself.

Turning back to the research question, this section elaborates the different ways one can understand ambition in the scholarly literature. Even though it is largely underdeveloped in European studies, an ambition theory is possible to establish. In the next section, I propose to develop a definition of MEPs roles and to conduct an explorative study that uses ambition as the principal influence and distinguishing factor for MEPs roles.

d) Ambition and roles: towards a motivational approach

A role theory of parliamentary behaviours in the European Parliament is also pretty much absent from the scholarly debates. To the notable exceptions of certain academics (Navarro 2009; Bale & Taggart 2006; Scully & Farrell 2003), not much has been done in the field to categorize and make typologies of MEPs based on their roles, attitudes and behaviours. Once again, the main source of inspiration comes from Anglo-Saxon political science where role « theory » is a well-established tradition in legislative studies.

There are three main approaches in the field to the analysis of parliamentarian roles (Searing 1991). The *structural approach* first developed in the 1950-60's, emphasises the dominance of institution over individuals. From this perspective, roles are constructed and maintained by institutions: they have little to do with individual preferences and they will continue to exist in the institution whether or not these individuals choose to play them. The *interactional approach* is the second dominant paradigm to cover role theory. Here, roles are seen as a set of informal rules created and recreated through interaction, especially through negotiations between individual and their associates. The chief contribution to this approach is that « individuals participate in defining their own role, that these roles have variations, and that they are usually undergoing change » (Searing 1991: 1246).

Whereas these two first approaches neglected either « both institutional specifics and exogenous preferences » and « overemphasised the extent to which roles were about expectations of others and the degree of conformity to them » (Bale & Taggart 2006: 7), the *motivational approach* of Searing has proven to be one of the most efficient to categorize MEPs based on their roles, and will be the one used in this thesis. The approach is based on three assumptions: *the preferences and incentives that politicians use in adapting to their institution are acquired before they take their post; rationality is a dominant feature of the institution in which politicians construct their roles: the perspectives and agendas of politicians are independent of interactions* (Searing 1991: 1248). It is therefore a rational approach to neo-institutionalism which « aims principally at describing situational-specific role orientations, as well as emphasizing the influence of individual preferences, incentives and rationalities determined not just within but also outside the institutional context » (Bale *et al.* 2006 : 7). Schematically speaking, Searing's argument is that we can understand how MPs

adopt particular roles in relation to their *emotional incentives*, or as Rozenberg (2009) puts it, because of the *pleasure* they take in occupying certain positions.

The main contribution of this approach is that it encourages the reconstruction of political roles as they are understood by their players. It also integrates different tradition of political science by recognising that the roles of politicians are embedded in institutional context while at the same time treating the role players as purposive actors with independent standpoints (Searing 1991: 1252). Searing also makes a distinction between *position* and *preference* roles: the first is associated with positions that require the performance of many specific duties and responsibilities and is thus easily recognisable (whips, group and committee presidents for example). The second is perhaps the most interesting for our study because preference roles are associated with positions that require the performance of few specific duties (Searing 1991: 1249). Roles are therefore comparatively unconstrained by the institution and are more easily shaped by the preferences of the role player. Here it is crucial to understand why certain politicians adopt roles that they are not constrained to have while others, due to their position in the assembly, are obliged to do very many duties.

It is thus a profoundly *interpretative* approach that gives space to politicians to define themselves and their roles. As a consequence, all motivational role « theory » is *inductive* and hence rarely tests previous role theory. Indeed, roles are dynamic and embedded with actors so it is impossible to expect precise resurgence of behaviour across legislatures and across parliaments. A greater importance is also given to the psychological level rather than the « burden » of institutions: the analysis focuses on the *emotional incentives* of actors and tries to understand why roles structure the selection, interpretation and application of certain objectives.

As Navarro (2007) demonstrates, this conception of role theory is neither free from criticisms. There are four main points that have been held against this interpretation of roles: it is often based on a simplistic/simplified psychology; it has a reduced capacity of explaining behaviours (it is very often tautological in its explanations); the origin of preferences are hardly ever clarified (we can observe the preferences but with difficulty explain why they are the way they are); feelings and emotions are not considered rational (p. 255).

This last criticism is perhaps the most important for our study and research question because it opens a door that links *subjective emotions to objective career goals*. In that sense it is not antonymic to think that one adopts a role for pleasure *and* for career ambitions. We could go as far as to say that there is nothing irrational in taking pleasure of playing a role *we know* will offer us opportunities to fulfil our « hidden » ambitions. In this sense, we perfectly convey with Searing when he argues that « the roles politicians construct around their objective are usually constructed reasonably (...). They evaluate the outcome of their performance and, in this light, adjust both their preferences and the behaviours and attitudes associated with these preferences » (Searing 1991: 1255). We should therefore *trust* politicians to know why they act the way they do as the motivational approach considers that « politicians reflect self-consciously on their principal political role because such roles are the framework of their careers » (Searing 1991: 1255). There should not be any contradictions in taking an approach that covers emotions as well as future objectives for higher offices.

I argue that emotions and pleasure can be combined with rational career goals. Moreover, these roles act as the *reflection* of MEPs' career motivations. Therefore, this study proposes to investigate to what extent the relation between ambitions and roles is tangible in the 2014 legislature of the European Parliament, through the case study of the 2014 French delegation to the European People's Party.

III. METHODS FOR GATHERING QUALITATIVE DATA

a) Design of the study

This Master thesis is a *case study* of the French delegation to the European People's Party (the leading conservative transnational Eurogroup in the EP) in the 2014 legislature, which is a « detailed and intensive analysis of a single case » (Bryman 2012 : 66). More precisely, Bryman calls this design an *exemplifying case* because « the objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation » (cited in Bryman 2012: 70). These types of cases are chosen « not because they are extreme or unusual in some way but because either they epitomize a broader category of cases or they will provide a suitable context for certain research questions to be answered » (Bryman 2012: 70). Like most case study design, the inconvenient (or not?) is that the results are hardly generalizable.

However, the reasons for conducting a study on this group of 20 parliamentarians are multi-folded and believed to be appropriate for the scope of the research aim.

As explained briefly below, I argue that ambition can only be fully understood through the lenses of national politics. Indeed, if some MEPs' ambitions are to come back to the national political landscape, then we should concentrate on one national delegation to obtain results that make sense for MEPs themselves. Moreover, the strategies that MEPs will adopt to reach their objectives should be considered through the place that the European market occupies in their central political market (Beauvallet 2003). The significance, beliefs and strategies are too different from one national delegation to another to obtain good comparable results. Focusing on one delegation is also a good way of neutralizing the national dimension of roles (Costa *et al.* 2013).

Concentrating this research on one party group within the French national delegation is also argued to be appropriate. First of all, it is a feasible sample to analyse for a Master's thesis. Second, previous research has hardly found that role orientation is affected by political orientation (Costa *et al.* 2013). Individuals are pretty free to interpret their mandate as they wish, especially in an institution like the EP which lacks formal constraining rules in the matter (Costa *et al.* 2009, Beauvallet 2009). Moreover, as Hix *et al.* (1999) argues, we should expect these MEPs to act even more deliberately than their Socialists counterpart for example, because their party is not sitting in the government. Therefore their political orientation is less a « *burden* » than for these other MEPs. This delegation is also composed of members who possess a wide range of different leadership position within the institution (bureau of the Parliament and party group, chairs of committees and delegation, coordinators) which fits well in Searing's models of *preference* and *position* roles. In addition, my position as a researcher/parliamentary assistant allowed me to have valuable access to a group of MEPs who normally are very hard to get: ambition is a sensible topic for politicians (especially in France), and that a group of MEP accepted delivering information on this area with me is a real opportunity for researchers. Last but not least, there has never been, to my knowledge, any scholarly paper written on samples like this one: whereas it is not uncommon to find in the literature analyses on national delegations in the EP (on the French one especially: Beauvallet 2007; Kauppi 1996, 1999), nothing has been written specifically on the political groups which compose these delegations. Finally, the 2014 legislature has barely started its activities and an academic paper dedicated to it could become a good starting-point for future

contributions. Therefore, focusing on the French delegation to the EPP seems a reasonable option for our enquiry and for practicalities.

The method for gathering qualitative data was done by conducting *semi-structured interviews with respondents*. The respondents were the MEPs of the delegation themselves. Silverman (2011) calls this method *emotionalist interviews*. The aim of these types of interviews is not so much to obtain objective facts but rather to elicit authentic accounts of subjective experience (2011: 174). Interviewers' particular concern is with the lived experience of their respondents and for this purpose « emotions are treated as central to such experience » (2011: 175). Because I use Searing's motivational approach to conduct this study (which stresses the importance of emotional incentives), this specific type of interview seemed particularly relevant to lead my enquiries. Moreover, this method allows respondents to use their unique ways of defining the world and to raise important issues not contained in the schedule (cited in Silverman 2011: 176). This is fruitful because I aimed at creating categories from what my respondents told me and this should be done in the most unbiased way as possible.

As done by Beauvallet *et al.* (2010) and Navarro (2009), I also gathered *quantitative data* based on the MEPs' « political biographies » (age, gender, constituency, position in the EP, other ongoing electoral mandate, responsibilities in their home party/political group/EPP, former political/national responsibilities, relevant previous professional experience) which I used to clarify or explain certain tendencies one could observe from one respondent to another (see Table 1 in Appendix).

b) Samplings procedures

Ideally I would have interviewed the 20 MEPs of the delegation. However it was hardly feasible and therefore I fixed myself the objective of conducting *eight respondent interviews*, which I eventually managed to do. Knowing the general reluctance of French politicians to be interviewed by social scientists (Costa *et al.* 2013) and the sensible/polemical aspect of the research topic, this is an excellent result. Combining these interviews with quantitative information gives a more complete picture for my investigation. Moreover, several studies have given conclusive results by conducting a limited number of interviews: Rozenberg's study of French and British Presidents of EU committees in their respective national parliaments is composed of only six interviews (2009) and manages to create convincing role categories. In the same vein, Rasmussen's article on the Danish delegation in the EP (2008)

brings new light to the voting behaviour of MEPs by conducting a limited amount of interviews. Size should therefore not be an issue to conduct a good analysis.

I collected my data through *strategic and purposive sampling* because the case chosen illustrates some feature or process in which I am interested in (Silverman 2011: 388). It is a non-probability form of sampling which is made in a strategic manner so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed (Bryman 2012: 418). I actually resort to two samplings to analyse MEPs role orientation: first, I choose to look at the French delegation to the EPP. I argue that a study of the 20 parliamentarians who constitutes this group can be relevant for larger and transferable enquiries about MEPs roles. Second, I choose to conduct only a limited amount of interviews among these 20 parliamentarians (with the achievement of 8 interviews).

There were two reasons for this: first, there are too many categories within the sample to divide it accordingly and to be sure that the isolated « variable » would be decisive to explain role orientation. For instance, we could categorize the sample by the position these MEPs occupy in the EP; we could separate MEPs who before their European mandate were French local politicians or ministers; or we could divide them by age categories as previous research has shown that it affects ambition (Hain 1974, Meserve *et al.* 2009). However, we assume that *all MEPs are career ambitious* even if they do not aim towards the same goals: whether one simply wishes for re-election or another to become (again) a Minister does not change the essence of this study. Moreover, we can hardly know for what career they aim *before* interviewing them and it would therefore not make any sense to divide them in pre-established typologies. Second, and on the field of practicalities, one can hardly be picky when it comes to selection procedures with politicians: they are very busy people and MEPs especially travel a lot during their mandate (between their constituencies, Brussels and Strasbourg for the least). They are hard to reach and, unless having good connections with the party, the opportunity to interview them is hazardous. In this sense, using strategic and purposive sampling was the most plausible way of obtaining as much interviews as possible.

c) Analytical approach and conduct of the analysis

The study is by nature *abductive* because it aims at « generating social scientific accounts from social actors' accounts » (Ong 2010: 1). This means that « the researcher grounds a

theoretical understanding of the contexts and the people he is studying in the language, meanings, and perspectives that form their worldview » (Bryman 2012: 401). As Ong demonstrates, grounded concepts in the form of typologies are generated through the use of abductive logic (2010: 1). Moreover, the added-value of an abductive reasoning in comparison to broader inductive approaches is that the theoretical account is grounded in the worldview of those one researched : the results and categories of my studies do not only make sense for social scientists but *also* for the parliamentarians themselves. For example, Navarro (2009) draws his categories *specialist* and *intermediary* from what MEPs told him and how they described themselves (or others). This is precisely what this thesis sought to do with respondent semi-structured interviews.

Even though there already are typologies of MEPs from different legislature and categorization of MPs and US congressmen in the literature, the thesis does not aim at testing them on new material. The reasons for this are four-folded: first, interviews are not known to be a good method to test previous hypotheses. My sample is moreover too small to give some good representative result. Second, as Bale *et al.* (2006) argues, roles are dynamic and, in its motivational acceptance, they change, or for the least evolve with new actors. Roles are not established within the institution and, as we know, the EP is an institution permanently evolving and gaining new powers, new members and new prerogatives: these changes affect role orientation. However, this does not signify that roles are not valuable means to measure politicians' behaviours, but rather that the suggestions of the empirical findings should be dealt with precaution. Third and strongly linked to the second argument, the EP, as some claim, is at each legislature a « new parliament »: it is characterized with important turnover and considerable amount of « freshmen » MEPs (Marrel & Payre 2006). That is also the case for the French delegation to the EPP: these new members come with pre-established behavioural patterns and these can probably change throughout their mandate. This is why it is important to say that the study is viable at a certain point in time (the beginning of the 2014 legislature) and that previous research is probably not always accurate to describe changes. Fourth, most research has been conducted on members of national parliaments (Searing's is on the British House of Commons in the 1990's; Rozenberg's on the late French National Assembly). There has been a strong argument among *structural constructivists* that the EP should be treated as an idiosyncratic chamber with a very peculiar work-culture that differentiates it from most parliaments. MEPs position themselves in the *field* as « experts » and they more or less share the same characteristics: a technical mastery of files, a diplomatic

management of processes and the strong capacity to negotiate between groups and institutions (Beauvallet & Michon 2012: 130-1). This means that creating categories without taking into account their particularities would not make any sense.

However, the analysis will be strongly *inspired* by this previous research in at least two ways: first, because it cannot be ignored that Searing and Navarro's typologies are extremely important contributions to the field. Their findings will be used as a compass to make sure that my results are not too far-off from what has been done before me. It would not come as a surprise if I end up with more or less the same categories (most likely because some are intrinsically linked to the function of parliamentarians: trustees, delegates, or constituency men for example). Second, because their methods will be used as a *point of departure* for my analysis. For instance, the first part of my interview guide is strongly inspired by the one used by Navarro (2007) and Searing (1994) in their studies of MPs role orientation. My contribution is however to use these first questions on a new material (ten to twenty years separate my study from theirs) and with a *new variable*: ambition.

The overall contribution of this study is to explore how the (independent) variable « ambition » affects the (dependent) variable « role » of MEPs from the French delegation to the EPP in a qualitative perspective. Whereas most studies have analysed ambitions retrospectively (from the perspective of career paths) and quantitatively (by analysing voting behaviours), this thesis is principally interested by how politicians argue, motivate and *interpret* their ambitions and how they link it to their representative roles. In other words, the study conducts a *narrative analysis* because it seeks at analysing the *story* that MEPs tell and share (Silverman 2011: 75-82). With narrative analysis, the focus of attention is « how do people make sense of what happened and to what effect? » because stories are nearly always told with a purpose in mind (Bryman 2012: 582). Even though narrative analysis is often used for life history research, its use can be much broader than this. Answers that people provide in qualitative interviews can be viewed « as stories that are potential fodder for a narrative analysis » (Bryman 2012: 582). How MEPs situate their mandate within their careers and ambitions and argues for it does constitute a story. In the end, it does not really matter if they achieve their goals or not. As Searing puts it, we should *trust* politicians to « reflect self-consciously on their principal political role because such roles are the framework of their careers » (1991: 1255). It also means that the only good way to know their career orientations is to actually *ask them*. This is in parallel the most difficult task of this project: why would

politicians accept to deliver me their « secret » ambitions? Why would they tell me where they (really) wish to project themselves in the future?

As we saw, MEPs can follow *several* career paths: stay in the EP, leave the EP to go back home, or end their careers in the EP as Scarrow (1997) would argue. An important amount of the (American/Anglo-Saxon) literature argues that these paths are influenced by their ambitions (*discrete, static, progressive* or *intrainstitutional* (Herrick *et al.* 1993)). These are the « independent » variables that affect role orientation. Now the question is: *how do we know that it is actually these career ambitions that affect their practices in the EP?* How do we know that their role orientation is not influenced by any other things, such as *pleasure*, for example? It thus must be clear in the interview guide that the prioritization they make of certain tasks, their support to certain « principals » (home party, EP group, the constituents) are guided by these ambitions. This was done by asking them in follow-up questions « *Do you think of X principal when you choose to focus on this aspect of your legislative work?* ». The question of whom they think of when they act can also be addressed this way: « *In your opinion, what differentiates a good from a bad MEP? Why?* ». In the end, I gathered sufficiently convincing material to construct *ideal-types*. This is the method used by Searing and Navarro (strongly inspired by Max Weber) to dress typologies of MEPs. It is also a good way to insure that the categories are *mutually exclusive*. One good way to distinguish one particular pattern of behaviour from one MEP to another was to ask them: « *Generally speaking, what are the most important tasks of an MEP?* ». We should, for example, expect MEPs interested in a promotion within the institution to prioritize concrete legislative work, specialize in one domain (if they wish for instance to become President of a Committee), while those interested by a national career should feel more obliged to their constituents, act as an intermediary or spend more time in Paris with the home party than participating to the work in Brussels.

A quick example to illustrate an archetypical role one can find in the literature on the EP: the *animator* as he is described by Navarro (2009). Animators are characterised by their primary interests for « major issues » to the opposition of *specialists* who focus on expertise and specific topics. Animators describe the EP as a place for exchange and debate and their principal legislative activities consist in speaking during plenary sessions and political groups meetings. They typically seat in prestigious committees such as Foreign Affairs and Constitutional Affairs. They privilege the most political position of the EP such as the bureau

or leadership position in their groups. During the interviews, they explain how much pleasure they take in exercising their mandate and the personal dimension of this experience, which represents sources of self-fulfilment (p. 483-6). However, not much is known towards which goals these roles are adopted for and to which purpose they serve. In the end, beyond the mere description of categories of roles, the thesis aims at restoring these behaviours within career trajectories, differentiated ambitions and strategic purposes.

Many more examples can be found and used in Hix *et al.* (1999) and Navarro (2007, 2009) to motivate these orientations. Additional information could have been used by looking at if they attend sessions, write reports or table amendments but, because we are only at the beginning of the legislature, the statistics would not have made any sense. Also, it is not so much in the essence of a qualitative study to watch these aspects as it has already done many times before by quantitative researchers (Hix *et al.* 2013; Meserve *et al.* 2009).

d) Ideal-types

As mentioned above, one of the principal tool for gathering convincing qualitative data and instruments to efficiently distinguish one MEP from another in categories, is the creation of ideal-types. The answers given by the respondents during the semi-structured interviews allow us to situate their roles as well as their ambitions. In addition, confronting this material to the « political biographies » of each interviewee enables us to establish different ideal-types. This method of analysis is fruitful and useful for several reasons.

In one sense, an approach by ideal-type is the next logical step that follows a paper based on role theory. Whereas in classical American political science scholarship MEPs or Congressmen are first and foremost treated as individuals who evolve quite independently in institutional settings, a parliamentary role approach considers that roles are the fruit of a meeting between subjectivity and a social position (Navarro 2009 : 481). This type of consideration therefore avoids analyses which are strictly based on biographical conducts or voting behaviours. To the opposite of most mainstream research on the behaviours of MEPs, role theory uncovers the daily complexities of parliamentary practices and refutes analyses strictly based on voting behaviours. The argument is the following : a social position is not composed by as much models of conduct than people occupying it, and therefore a limited amount of models should emerge because actors attach themselves in a privileged manner to

one function or another based on their interests, values or ambitions (Navarro 2009 : 481). With the analysis of the data, we will establish these limited amounts of models in ideal-types. That is precisely the method used by Navarro and Searing (1994).

While Navarro (2009) constitutes his ideal-types by confronting different types of material (semi-structured interviews, quantitative data and *in situ* observations), this thesis focuses almost exclusively on the semi-structured interviews to create the ideal-types. The background of the MEPs are not used like in Navarro's doctoral thesis (2007) to confirm intuitions or models, but rather to add complementary information to one particular behaviour. Moreover, the greatest originality of this *explorative* study is that roles are created not solely on the basis of the MEPs unique conception of their mandate, but in priority on their career ambitions. The aim of the thesis is to demonstrate that an approach by ideal-type based on ambition is a sustainable method to explain differences of behaviours and conduct in the EP.

As Searing (1994) elegantly argues: « Typologies make diversity intelligible by squeezing out the idiosyncratic. When they become too abstract, however, they lose their explanatory grounding. Thus, in studying political behaviour, it is desirable to tether typologies to the constructs that are actually in the minds of the political actors being studied » (p. 411). The thesis is abductive and therefore it seems logical that the constructed ideal-types should also make sense for the respondents interviewed: the MEPs. However with this approach, roles are primarily understood as abstractions whose key features are deliberately exaggerated in order to highlight what is most characteristic about each and every one and their specificities (Navarro 2009 : 482). It should therefore not be too much of a surprise that during the empirical analysis not one single MEP strictly belonged to one ideal-type. There is no contradiction in that and the opposite would have been quite surprising. Moreover, MEPs cannot be stereotyped into one type of ambition or one role category: to refute these branches of analyses was the initial intention and key ambition of this Master's thesis. Finally, ideal-types possess the advantage of not being *stricto sensu* analytical categories: without quantitative triangulation means, the categories established would pass with difficulty the fence of scientific reliability. In that sense, the explorative dimension of the thesis does not allow us to go further than the creation of broader interpretative and inductive ideal-types.

e) Coding ambitions and roles

How was the data gathered? How do we know when a role-type emerges? When do mentioned career-orientations constitute an ambition? To answer these questions, the thesis arms itself with different analytical tools and means of coding.

First of all, the thesis is strictly based on eight semi-structured respondent interviews with members of the French delegation to the EPP in the 2014-2019 legislature. Each interview was conducted in the MEPs' offices in Brussels or in Strasbourg (see Appendix a). They were unanimously held in French. The length of the interviews varies: the shortest one lasted 15 minutes and the longest one 45 minutes. In general, interviews were 27 minutes long and each of them were tape-recorded then transcribed. The quotations of their answers are personal translations: the original quotes are in the Appendix (c). MEPs were guaranteed anonymity even though, to one exception, none of them made any remarks related to this issue. Five interviews were conducted in Strasbourg and because of the architecture of the offices, each MEPs assistant were there during the interviews. Objectively, this did not seem to influence the content of their answers even though some of them would now and then mention, evoke or joke around with their parliamentary assistants. For example, the parliamentary assistant of interviewee n°7 shortly participated in the discussion to clarify a point. Generally, every interviewees were administered the same questions and followed the same schedule of interview. Unfortunately, because of the lack of time for some of them, certain questions were deliberately omitted. This was specially the case with question n°4 of theme n°1 (see Appendix b). However, each respondent had questions concerning their ambitions and answered them. Not one single interviewee refused to answer a question.

Like Searing (1994) preconizes, « each Member of Parliament was approached, in other words, as a respondent whose general views would be used, along with the views of colleagues, to reconstruct the institutional context. But each was also approached as an expert informant whose particular experiences (which had been researched before the interview began) could help illuminate specific aspects of the parliamentary system » (p. 405-406). As mentioned previously, the interview guide was strongly inspired by the one used by Navarro (2007) and Searing (1994) in order to develop a motivational approach to role while at the same time developing a unique set of questions on their career motivations. We therefore do not completely convey with Searing's double approach of respondent/informant interviews: in

our opinion, they are principally means to uncover politicians' interpretation, argumentation and disclosure of their ambitions. Therefore, a respondent approach was enough to obtain satisfying data. Were they truthful however? Searing believes that interviews conducted on a « nonattribution basis » or anonymity facilitates frankness and that most interview's topics which concerns institutional matters, career information or beliefs are simply too abstract to seem politically sensitive (1994: 408). This might be true in an Anglo-Saxon context and when questions do not mention directly ambition, but it should be considered with precaution in this Master thesis. Vague answers or sometimes initial rejection of the questions influenced the way ambition was analysed and processed for the purpose of this paper. In other words, how the MEPs' answers were *coded* is primordial for the well-being of this study.

Coding consists generally in two phases (Bryman 2012). First, the unstructured material must be categorized. « For example, with answers to an open question, this means that the researcher must examine people's answers and group them into different categories » (p. 247). Answers to the interview guide constitute the unstructured material. The guide is divided in two themes: the first is composed of specific questions about MEPs roles (their motivations to become an MEP, their duties and responsibilities, their representative role, the importance of their mandate, their satisfaction and frustration about their mandate). Answers to these questions were then set into a table and MEPs were divided by shared answers (see Table 2 in Appendix). The same was done with the second theme of the interview guide which focuses specifically on MEPs' ambitions (see Table 4 in the Discussion section). Questions about which position MEPs would like to seek, eventual candidacy to upcoming elections and where they generally saw themselves in the years to come, generated answers that were then processed in a table to identify each MEP's specific ambitions. To simplify the task and to discuss directly with the literature, Schlesinger (1966) and Herrick's (1993) concepts were used to distinguish MEPs: they could either be *discrete*, *static*, *intrainstitutional* or *progressive* ambitious. Specifically concerning this theme, the inconvenient of this method called *post-coding* is that it can be an unreliable process because « it can introduce the possibility of variability in the coding of answers and therefore of measurement error (and hence lack of validity) » (Bryman 2012: 247). However, answers to theme 1 and theme 2 were then processed and matched to create the ideal-types. In other words, each ideal-type assembles together MEPs who share the same roles and the same ambitions. As the analysis and discussion section elaborates later, three ideal-types were

empirically found within the delegation: the *European Animator*, the *French Politician* and the *Local Specialist*.

To uncover preference roles and their players, Searing recalls to a « special methodology » (1994: 411). We employed the same methodology because, like Searing, we presumed that « politicians' roles are usually driven by goals: career goals and emotional incentives » (p. 412). Whereas he focuses nearly exclusively on the incentives of players through the pleasure they take in exercising their positions and functions, our coding efforts concentrated specifically on career goals. « We wished to understand what backbenchers understood to be the motivational foci of backbench roles, what they understood to be the set of desires that guided them and their colleagues in organizing their work at Westminster » argues the author (p. 412). The approach is similar to the one described in the previous paragraph : for example Searing describes how he asked backbenchers to characterize the broadest and most significant aspects of their work in order to develop their purposive role : « backbenchers typically respond by describing what they do in terms of why they do it » (p. 412). This is precisely what was done all along this thesis, with a special focus on ambition, to gather good qualitative data.

f) Generalizability, reliability, validity and ethics

Generalizability is not the main aim of this Master thesis. It is hard to assume that my results would have consequences for all of the members of the EP. Moreover, studies based on interviews are not known to be particularly efficient to generalize. As Bryman (2012) argues, « purposive sampling does not allow the researcher to generalize to a population » (p. 418). We can only say that they are strong points of departure and that they would be worth to invest in deeper research in this area. Indeed, we could easily argue that *all* politicians are ambitious and that they *all* adopt concrete and differentiated roles in the hemicycle. Small samples can sometimes yield big insights and if this is verified for an important amount of our sample, why would it not be true for all of the other MEPs? Transferability could therefore be expected from my findings because, as Silverman puts it (2011), « by thoroughly examining a small number of cases, the researcher may explore in-depth the contextual dimensions that influence a social phenomenon » (p. 392). Eight strategically sampled interviews are not enough to generalize, but they are however to assume that the results could be transferred to wider groups (the whole EPP group or the complete French delegation for example).

Reliability should only be expected to a certain point in time. As we know, MEPs' roles and behaviours evolve along the legislatures and we cannot completely expect from them to act univocally the same way five years in a row. This is particularly true of « freshmen » MEPs who are known to have adaptive behaviours (Lindstädt *et al.* 2012; Bale *et al.* 2006). Also, these roles can be shaped by other external factors correlated to their ambitions: the best example is the one of upcoming elections. The closer they get to desired elections (may it be the 2017 French presidential elections or the mid-term EP elections which decides who gets appointed to what position in the assembly), the more acute becomes their roles. However, two arguments go in favour of the reliability of this study: « important » elections are too far to drastically change our MEPs behaviours (maybe to the exception of the 2015 French regional elections: but do they represent promotion and are they worth of their ambitions? Moreover, not one single respondent openly admitted that he or she would be a candidate). Second, the motivational approach to roles expects to a great extent that the preferences and incentives that politicians use in adapting to their institution are acquired before they take their post (Searing 1991: 1247-8). This explains why politicians are generally consistent along the legislature and from one chamber to another. This also justifies why most role theory studies end up with close categories. Constrained or not, in the end there are not thousands of way to act or interact for parliamentarians.

Finally, how do we know that it really is ambition that affects role orientation and how do we know that MEPs were « truthful » with me during the interviews? How do we *validate* my results? For the first part, the interview guide is done as such that ambition is isolated as an explanatory factor for role orientation. If interviews were conducted well, they should have given valid results. Moreover collecting, as mentioned before, *quantitative data* and checking that my results do correlate with previous assumptions one can find in the literature, are good indicators of the validity of my results. The personal background of MEPs is in a way useful to keep in mind: we could expect that a former-minister's ambition is to become a minister again and that he/she uses his/her European mandate for such purpose. This should be particularly true for freshmen MEPs who failed to be elected at the national level and who use their mandate as a stepping-stone and as way to stay in the national political landscape. Secondly, as Searing advocates, we should trust politicians when they talk of themselves to be truthful: it is after all on what they base their career. The « truthfulness » of their about is linked to the « ethical » issues of the thesis: I expected them to be more truthful to me than

with other social scientists because I was part of the « *tribe* ». In this sense, my position of parliamentary assistant was a strength for the purpose of this thesis. The success of my enquiries was therefore strongly linked to my position and to my connections with the different members of the staff of the French delegation.

IV. ANALYSIS

The empirical analysis based on the semi-structured interviews and on the political profiles of the respondents enables us to identify three ideal-types of roles and ambitions for the 2014 French delegation to the European People's Party: the *European Animator*, the *French Politician* and the *Local Specialist* (see Table 3 in Appendix). These semantic and theoretical constructions are the fruit of an abductive approach and the result of specific sets of ambitions and roles. In this sense, even though each interviewed MEPs do not strictly belong to one category, each ideal-type is nonetheless *mutually exclusive*. The ideal-types demonstrate how differently parliamentarians understand their mandates and their roles and how they relate them directly to their ambitions and career plans. As the chapter shows, this relation roles-ambition is present in at least three different ways in the French delegation and acts as a primordial distinguisher of MEPs.

a) The European Animator

The first role model that the interviews enable us to identify is the one of the « European animator ». To a large extent, the name of this ideal-type as well as his defining characteristics are inspired by the model developed by Julien Navarro in his doctoral thesis and following articles (2007 ; 2009). Whereas Navarro's « animator » is principally defined by the way he or she understands the EP as a political institution and how an MEP should conduct and interact within this institution, our « European animator » distinguished itself from other respondents during the interviews by the way he/she made clear that he/she could only conceive his political career as a European one. Interviewee n°1, n°3 and to a lesser extent n°8 are the respondents who correspond the most with this model.

The first crucial distinguishing factor of this category is how motivated European animators were to become Members of the European Parliament. Whereas most interviewees, when asked « Could you start by telling me how did you first become an MEP? What were your initial motivations? » usually hesitated to answer before presenting their mandate as an

opportunity that was offered to them, European animators made clear that MEP is a position for which they fought and which makes sense in their own political trajectories. For example, respondent n°1 to show how motivated he was to become an MEP stated that:

« I chose, and to my knowledge (but maybe you will find in the framework of your research other cases) I am the only French politician who, deliberately at a time where the law did not oblige him to, abandoned a non-negligible national political career and abandoned the most beautiful of political mandate, which is to be mayor. »

In this sense, European animators consider being an MEP as a position worthy in itself, which might explain why none of the respondents of the sample exercise any other electoral mandates. Moreover, this ideal-type argues for proof of his motivation by fitting his mandate in a narrative which makes sense considering his own political and personal trajectory. For instance, respondent n°3 links her mandate back to her family origin, her life as a student in Strasbourg when the European Parliament was first elected in 1979 and how this event had a huge importance later for her professional life:

« The familial factor plus the territorial factor (since I lived for a long time in Strasbourg) had as a consequence that I was always interested with European topics, I was always interested with what was happening in the backyard of our neighbours and I was always very attached to the European project, across the French-German reconciliation, so... So it always interested me. But after that, my professional and personal path has followed diversified and varied evolutions, depending on the people I met, depending on the possibilities (I tried seizing opportunities each time) even though I had the opportunity to anchor for quite some time, but not all along, my professional and personal path in the shadow of someone, (A.L), (because I was his collaborator), who himself discovered the importance of the European project at the same time he was progressing along his political career, and so there was this red thread of my interest for Europe who was extended. »

In the same vein, every respondent demonstrated how hard they had to fight within their home-party in order to get a good position on the electoral lists. This was specially the case for respondent n°3 and n°8, whom were not the initial preferred choice of the members of their party. To her own acknowledgment, interviewee n°3 had to be very strategic and tactical and invest a lot of time and effort to obtain an eligible position:

« And then I went around trying to convince, to find allies, because there is a national commission for investiture and the number of people you have to convince is quite limited and so, braced with my single hardiness and with the real but tenuous encouragements of my hierarchy, I went to convince the head of parties and the different members of the national commission for investiture of the UMP. And I eventually ended up in a good position on the list: it was quite complicated; there were a lot of varied and diversified sequences. I found

myself finally...I did a bit of tactic : that I knew how to, it is part of my professional « savoir-faire » I would say, I did some tactic, a bit of strategy to foil others and ...And so finally I managed to get rid of some women competitors and I ended up in 6th position on the list. »

European animators have a particular conception of their mandate and of their duties and responsibilities which distinguishes them from other respondents. First and foremost, what defines an MEP in their opinion is his investment in the legislative activity of the institution. More precisely, three elements kept coming back during the interviews concerning the legislative work: the most important tasks are to exercise influence by following the work in the committees, fighting to obtain as much reports as possible and amending texts. This is what respondent n°8 explains when he argues that:

« Within the legislative work, the most important is to try to...as the initiative of laws goes to the Commission. We are not at the initiative of laws. Our work consists in modifying and amending them. And that is what I try to do. Besides, I believe I am one of the 50 MEPs who, since the beginning of the mandate, have tabled the most amendments, whatever the text is. It is a power of modification but to do it efficiently you need to study in-depth each texts and be surrounded with collaborators who are on the same line as you, and that is what makes you progress. »

Due to the organization of the institution, obtaining good and influential reports is often the results of long negotiations within the group, and it requires commitment to the institution and working hard within its lines. In this sense, European animators consider "rapporteurship" as the most prestigious mean to exercise influence in the European Parliament. It is the most valuable mean to acquire because it opens and gives access to the « keys » of the functioning of the institution. For example, respondent n°1 argues that:

« The only person who knows completely the topic is the rapporteur. And therefore if you are a rapporteur, even if you belong to a small group, you can have an influence on the content of texts which is unique. »

Because they conceive their career essentially through an European scope, European animators will privilege acquiring « means » that will present value on the European « market » and exercising responsibilities in their group (Presidency of a Special Committee, EPP Coordinator to a Committee) and in their delegations (Presidency, Vice-Presidency) in order to acquire a double type of legitimacy : proving their commitment to their European peers while at the same time showing their loyalty to their home-party in order to satisfy their ambitions. It should therefore not come as too much as a surprise that when asked « As an MEP, who do you represent ? », only one interviewee of the three respondents composing this

ideal-type answered that he represents all of the citizens of the European Union. It is nonetheless surprising because European animators are well aware of the juridical roundabouts of the Treaties, but still consider that they are committed to the constituency that elected them. Respondent n°3 summarizes perfectly this ambiguity:

« We are... it is a bit ambiguous...at the same time the representatives of the citizens of the Union whose aspirations, demands, hopes we carry, but at the same time, a bit in priority, we carry the demands, the aspirations, the messages of demands, the angers, etc., the interrogations of our constituents who are our national electorate. Therefore it is a bit ambiguous, we are MEPs but at the same time we are French MEPs. »

This ambiguity can only make sense if we consider the ambitions of European animators: mostly static, and for some intrainstitutional, these MEPs cannot act in isolation of their home-party and of their electorate. This explains why European animators also exercise important responsibilities in their home-party (member of the political bureau, member of the national council, national functional secretary responsible for a specific theme in the party): because of the mode of designation for European elections, it is essential that they exercise responsibilities that will enable them to convince their party of their added-value.

A key characteristic of European animators is the satisfaction they take out of their mandate and the importance they give to it. Unanimously, this ideal-type considers being an MEP extremely important for the well-being of society as a whole. They often describe the European Parliament as a career arena in itself where very important decisions are being taken. They describe the EP as a place where the projects of the future are being discussed, and much earlier than in the arrogant French National Assembly, which is essentially composed of « drama queens » MPs whose only power is to shout. Respondent n°8 describes this phenomenon in a nutshell when stating that:

« Well to a pretty simple extent, it is that between 60 and ...it depends which years, it depends which sources you refer to, but we consider that between 60 and 80% of law texts which are laws, decrees, regulations which will be applied in France, are in fact the transposition of application of texts which were decided in the European Parliament. So this gives you an idea of the influence and the importance of the choices we have to make here, even though in the media not much people realize it. »

They have the feeling of doing real politics in the EP to the contrary of the National Assembly where:

« Rather than in France if you are in the opposition, you have one power it is to shout and nobody cares, and if you are in the majority, you have one power, it is to shut up, because the texts of the governments have to pass, which says « Article I : the government is always right. Article II: if you are not happy and that you are a member of its majority, please refer to Article I! ». That's all: summary of the Fifth's Republic Constitution for the National Assembly. »

European animators share the same frustrations concerning their mandate. They have the feeling that it is not sufficiently acknowledged by the French media and political class. They stress that this is principally due to the "Presidentialisation" of the French Fifth Republic where most political commentators prefer focusing on the Presidential campaign and national elections rather than by what is happening in the « boring » European Parliament. Being a former Minister, Interviewee n°1 considers that when he chose to exclusively focus on his European mandate he became bound to take a « vow of media virginity ». He cruelly summarizes how EU politics is perceived in France the following way:

« Nobody gives a damn. Nobody cares except the French media and political class. And so in all of that mess, Europe is covered not even like a sport's rubric (because sport actually interests people, at least football), neither like the cultural rubric (because a certain amount of people are interested by culture), but I would say like the scientific rubric! « There are specialists, which I am sure are good people, but all of this is really boring to say the least! ». So we do talk about it because some newspapers have to do it. Nevertheless, that is a real frustration which is not only psychological and for my own self-esteem. »

On the other hand, European animators share the same satisfaction concerning their mandate. The particular facets of a life in Brussels are what primarily contribute to their self-fulfilment through this position. They unanimously stress how enriching it is to work in a multicultural and multinational environment, how intellectually stimulating it is to evolve and interact with meaningful persons and contacts. They also stress how much the political game is more interesting in the European Parliament than in France and particularly in the National Assembly. This is summarized by respondent n°1 when he says that:

« And why I chose the mandate of European parliamentarian rather than the mandate of national parliamentarian, is because of the capacity we have here, that an MEP has, if he works well, his political work included (in the positive appreciation of the term): he can build his own majority, he can have an important influence on the substance of reports, but what is also interesting here, it is this possibility to evolve surrounded by enriching contacts. »

European parliamentarians are free from the classical left-right constraints of the French political game which, in their opinion, makes the National Assembly a useless institution, a

« theatre of shadows » and a « Commedia dell'arte » as it is ironically described by Interviewee n°3. Quite the opposite, the European Parliament and EU politics in general are perceived as a « civilised method of governance » by Interviewee n°8. This is what makes the mandate so « fun » in the opinion of respondent n°3:

« There, we are free from purely politician and political constraints, and we work on the basis of...we do real politics here. You need alliances, we look for agreements, and we work the European «pastry» to move along together: what is interesting is that no parliamentary group has a majority alone but we are permanently in the construction of a strategy of alliances. And so once again that is intellectually exciting, fun, there...it's real politics! We are not in the pavlovian reflex; we are in the political construction of agreements and compromise like we say in this house. »

The fact that two out of the three MEPs who constitute this ideal-type are incumbent MEPs might explain how much pleasure they take in evolving in this institution, whose internal mechanisms are often complex. It is foremost an institution in which they feel comfortable and which they consider like a home. Moreover, this might explain why, during the interviews, European animators are the MEPs who are the most opened about their ambitions. This is also probably due to the fact that their ambitions are intrinsically linked to the institution in itself, making it more legitimate to talk about it rather than if they were counting on leaving soon the European Parliament.

As stated before, European animators have European ambitions. When asked where they see themselves in five years or which other position in the EP they would like to occupy, each of these MEPs stress their attachment to the institution. For example, respondent n°3 considers it evident that she will run again for a seat in the EP five years from now. Indeed, it is part of the inner logic of the institution and of her own political trajectory to achieve several mandates in the EP:

« Well yes! A lot of people say that you need to achieve three mandates to make the most of it. Yes. The formula usually practised by the Germans and by the Brits: a first mandate to discover, a second mandate to act, and a third mandate to exercise influence. It's the German-British model. »

In the same vein, respondent n°1, who is incumbent since 1989 in the EP, has, to his own acknowledgment, built a strategy only on the basis of a European political career. When asked about his ambitions, he tells with disappointment that his life-goal was to actually become a

European Commissioner and that for several reasons (including the aforementioned vices of the French regime) he will never become one:

I¹: The function to which I was candidate and which I never reached was Commissioner.

PE: Commissioner?

I¹: There, my political objective was to become a European Commissioner. It will never happen.

PE: You will never become one?

I¹: No. You have to be proposed by the President of the Republic and, there, I come back to the description I was doing of the monarchic system: you need to lick boots; you have to kiss asses... And I do not kiss asses. And so ... I do not know...four, five, six times I applied to become French Commissioner. Now I will never become one.

Interviewee n°1 evokes that he could also have become the President of the European Parliament at the beginning of the legislature if the good conditions had been reunited. He also mentions that the seat will be rotating in two years and that he will probably be the candidate with the strongest chance. In his opinion, this is due to two factors: his own legitimacy as an incumbent and much invested MEP, and the logic of rotating nationalities which governs the institution. No French has ruled the EP in a long time and it would only seem logic that he becomes the next President of the EP.

To conclude, the European animator distinguishes himself from other role models by his strong attachment to the EP, his unique conception of the European mandate, by the satisfaction and frustration he draws from being a European parliamentarian and by the way he anchors a seat in the EP as a logical step in his own political career. European Animators are definitely « EU politics » ambitious.

b) The French Politician

The second role type that the conducted interviews permit us to identify is the one of the « French Politician ». This name-tag is not so much a reference to these MEPs' ambitions (which one could foresee as a return to the French national political life after a quick passage in the European Parliament) than to the numerous evocations these parliamentarians make about being French representatives and the special link that unites them to the French (and local) territory. Whereas European animators self-reflect on their own personal political trajectories nearly exclusively through a European spectrum, the French Politicians anchor their European mandate in an already-long and sometime ongoing French political career.

French Politicians MEPs have exercised important responsibilities in the French national political sphere (former Minister and MPs) and are exclusively freshmen MEPs. They have a particular conception of their mandate which distinguish them drastically from other parliamentarians, and a set of ambitions which make the « French Politician » role-category pretty unique. Interviewees' n°2 and n°6 are the respondents who correspond the most with this role.

The first distinguishing factor of this category is the motivation or rather the lack-of motivation that French Politicians have shown to become an MEP. While European animators perceive their mandate as « making sense » in reflection to past « European » experiences and often they had to fight internally within their party and at home to be candidates for this position, French Politicians on the other hand do not show any particular initial motivation or previous experience for the position which could justify to have become candidates. When asked what motivated him to become an MEP, interviewee n°2 answered in a very straightforward tone « Nothing ». In the same vein, interviewee n°6 presents this mandate as an opportunity:

« (It was not from your own initiative?) Hum...no. No no no. I would never have imagined to plebiscite a mandate like this one. There it's...the opportunity presented itself, I took it, but it is a proposal that was made to me. »

Interestingly, both of these MEPs were asked by their party to be candidates for these elections following an electoral defeat in the 2012 legislative elections to the National Assembly. To their own acknowledgment, they accepted this proposal from their party because it was a good way of coming back to the (national) political life. Interviewee n°2 justifies his candidacy in the following manner:

« Following the Presidential elections I lost the legislative elections and, because I have a professional activity and a complete independence, considering that my own camp betrays me is one thing, but that my electorate leaves me is another, I had decided to put an end to my political career. That was until my political family the UMP asked me to be the head of the list on (this) great region because they considered that I was the best to fight (the National Front) and to pull the list. I hesitated a lot, I said yes, and I went back into politics, and I ended up a Member of the European Parliament. »

In any case, French Politicians were asked by a third-party to become candidate, whether it is the party itself (the UMP) or a former Prime-Minister. They accepted because fighting for

their ideas and living for politics is intrinsically linked to their personalities and conditions their existence. French Politicians have been MPs for decades before entering the European Parliament and this influences importantly the way they perceive their duties and responsibilities as EU parliamentarians. Whereas European animators generally are incumbent MEPs who believe that what defines a good MEP is his investment in the legislative activity of the chamber (being a reporter, tabling amendments, exercising responsibilities within Committees or the Group), French Politicians have a much more ambiguous and vast conception of their mandate. They have a strategic perception of their mandate, choosing the committees in which they seat or the investment in certain types of legislative work for a particular reason. Interviewee n°6 understands his role of MEP as follows:

« First of all, it's to do correctly your job, as best as possible, so to be present. And hum...after that I have...two goals: first I want to keep the link between the European mandate (through the responsibilities I exercise in the committees in which I seat) and the local territory. So find a way to make the connection between my territory and the mandate of MEP »

They believe that selecting strategic committees and exercising specific responsibilities will make the difference when it comes to be influent. Respondent n°2 explains why he chose certain positions within the EP:

« Which brings me to action after: to take responsibilities within the delegation: I got myself elected Vice-President because it is the political area; to keep my political responsibilities within my party: I am a member of the bureau of the UMP, because it is the place where decisions are being taken. And ensure that in this new hemicycle I can be in the places and in the committees of action. I chose the Transport Committee because I consider that transports are important for the movements of goods and people in the entire of Europe. I consider that it is important for France who is in the middle of all of the passage. And I consider that it is important for my constituency. »

French Politicians are not « ideologists » but consider themselves « pragmatic ». To the opposite of European animators who act and vote in function of a project or a long-term vision for Europe, the French Politician acts on a case-by-case basis and always with « political » considerations in mind. These schemes of interpretations probably explain best who they believe they represent as MEPs: first and foremost, France and the French state, and in second position, their electorate (whereas European animators represented the constituency and citizens of the EU). Respondent n°2 uses the word « Frenchy » to describe himself and

respondent n°6 argues that he is first of all a « French MEP, representing France ». French Politicians are also the only MEPs of the interviewed sample to mention part of French political life to justify some of their decision-making. For instance, they try to give a « political » and national vision to everything they do and they anchor their mandate in opposition to other political formation, and more particularly the extreme-right National Front. For example, interviewee n°2 is a member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism in the EP and explains he chose this committee because it is « very political »: taking as an example the Lyon-Turin rail line construction, he argues he chose to work on the topic because the Green Party is against it and the Socialists do not have any clear position. In the same vein, French Politicians are the only one to clearly indicate that they are representatives of the French right-wing and of the right-wing electorate:

« I belong to a right-wing political sensibility which I take responsibility for, in a group with our qualities and defects, but I am from the French right-wing. There. I am the representative of my electorate. »

These considerations probably also trigger their particular conception of the mandate of a European parliamentarian. When asked why they consider being an MEP important for society as a whole, French Politicians refer unanimously to the French territory and to the pedagogical role of MEPs (especially in relation to the rise of extreme-right during the 2014 European elections):

« The difficulty that we meet is that, because during an important amount of years, left and right, have hit on Europe saying « It's Europe's fault », in order to hide our cowardice, turpitude, our lack of courage, an absence of decision-making : we do not like the European system. And so there is a depreciation of Europe within the population because we have not stopped for years hitting on it and now we do not see its utility anymore. As a consequence, in the political component, now come populist discourses. »

Interviewee n°6 expresses the exact same views concerning their roles:

« And to say to the electorate or at least to the citizens that it is useless to let off steam on the European elections so that the first French delegation is the one of the National Front. Because it does not serve any useful purpose. It does not make any sense here, it is of no use. And so it's to tell them that Europe, there...a ballot is not to laugh around with. We have to try to...And when you vote for the National Front, first delegation, it does not reinforce the role of France even though it is not the electorate's intentions. »

In a nutshell, French Politicians, because they act on the behalf of French interests and values, give a pedagogical dimension to their mandate: they consider that French citizens should be

aware of the importance of Europe for their everyday life and for the prestige of France in general. Interestingly, and even though the formula was used by interviewee n°1 whose representative style comes closest to the European animator, French Politicians consider themselves as « diplomats », representing France in an international arena. The fact that respondent n°2 is a former secretary of state of foreign affairs is probably not innocent to why he conceives MEPs as representatives of France, even if it means « defending the policies of François Hollande which is not always easy considering what he does ! ». This specifically French dimension of their mandate is also a motor of the satisfaction they have representing their country, and is a crucial distinguishing factor from the other interviewees. Rather than satisfaction, French Politicians feel « proud and honoured » to be among the « happy few » who have the chance to represent their country. Whereas European animators were thrilled by the specifically European dimension of their mandates (evolving in an international environment, working on the big projects of the future), it is rather the added-value this mandate has from the French « market » perspective which pleases these MEPs. Interviewee n°2 summarizes it perfectly when he conveys that:

« The truth is that it is a beautiful mandate. We are not a lot; we are only 20 for the UMP. This means that we are not numerous to express a French voice in a France who has lost influence at the European level and who is losing it even more with the policies of Mr Hollande. »

Respondent n°6 adds in the same perspective:

« Well it's...it's a great honour...I mean we are really not that much. In a lifetime....when you do politics to have a mandate like this one is once again an honour. We modestly try to live up to it but yes I am very proud of it. »

Moreover, and once again in complete opposition to European animators, French Politicians do not draw satisfaction from the typically European dimension of the mandate but rather from the consequence it has for their political life. To a large extent, the French Politician is a « political animal » who lives for and from politics. When asked what they would miss the most if they left politics, both interviewees mentioned the thrill and the excitement they have being politicians and fighting for their ideas. Respondent n°2 says the following about why he decided to come back in the political life even though he was financially independent because of a long stand professional activity on the side of his political career:

« The only thing I missed, and it is the reason why I came back, is the fight! The political fight, it's like a high-level sportsman! We want to have political fights, to confront ideas, to exchange opinions, to try to affirm ourselves, to defend our positions, to move our pawns in order that our ideas go forward. So that is the only thing that I missed because...so I have a professional activity, I have remunerations so...it's simply the conquest of power and the exchange of ideas. »

In the same vein, Interviewee n°6 does not imagine leaving anytime soon the public sphere and if it had to happen he hopes it would be the consequence of a personal decision rather than following a defeat. Politics is part of him and he does not know how he could find a job after that. As he elegantly mentions it, it would be hard for him to find another activity because politics is like « a big tattoo in the back! ». French Politicians typically do not exercise any important responsibilities within the European Parliament because they are newcomers to this institution and because they already exercise (professional and political) responsibilities outside the chamber. For instance, interviewee n°2 regularly stresses that to the opposite of other parliamentarians he has a job on the outside which enables him to take decisions very independently. Respondent n°6 cumulates numerous local mandates: he is the mayor of a city of 20 000 inhabitants, chair of a Community of Councils, President of an association of mayors. The local « roots » of the French Politician has direct consequences for the frustration he can have concerning the EP and for his ambitions within the institution.

French Politicians are freshmen MEPs and therefore they express frustration concerning the complexity of an institution which they are still discovering. The slow mechanisms behind each decision-making, the complexity of the functioning of Europe, the difficulty to obtain efficient changes are reluctant motives of their frustration. Moreover, they link this frustration directly to their (potential) electorate. Respondent n°2 analyses his frustration in the following way:

« But when we take a decision at the European level to find subsidies for farmers who got fucked in the frame of their establishment; that there are several hundred millions or a billion that needs to be validated... The stake is that the farmer actually manages to get a hand on this money. But before he actually manages, hello! It's of a rare complexity to actually manage to. And therefore there is no way that he will reach it. It does not frustrate me, but it is going to irritate me very quick! »

In their opinion, it is this complexity which is directly responsible for the rejection of an important part of the French population of the European Union and which enables extreme-right and populist political parties to gain more and more seats in the EP. The second

consequence of this accumulation of activities is linked to their ambitions within the institution. To their own acknowledgment, being newcomers makes it harder for them to know where the real zones of influence are and how to concretely proceed in order to gain new positions. Respondent n°2 summarizes it perfectly:

« In one year I took what I wanted...I took what I wanted so I am satisfied. I will be able to answer better this question, because I am a young European parliamentarian, when I will have perfectly understood the zones of influence around here. There. So now for my first mandate I obtained what I wished and so...hum...I believe that I will be able to answer better this question in a year or two. »

Interviewee n°6 has an even more humble approach, considering that climbing up the ladder should be done step by step:

« No, right now, no. Now it's to do correctly the job but hum... (No half-mandate objectives?). No no. It's to do correctly the job, obtain a report, and have topics on which I am recognised in my committee. But nothing more than that for now. (Are there any topics which interest you in particular?). Well those on which I am working right now (...) on copyright, the issue that it can represent in substance and because it's also about defending the interests of France. »

Whereas for European animators career ambitions are intrinsically linked to the EP and to holding positions within the institution, French Politicians MEPs do not reflect in the same way to the issue. To the question « Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years », these MEPs unambiguously answer that their career paths and ambitions are the product of opportunities. In this sense, French Politicians do not consider themselves bound to the European Parliament or to any institutions for the matter. The fact that they have already exercised many responsibilities by the past and some still ongoing seems to confirm this hypothesis. This is why French Politicians paradoxically have the hardest ambitions to read: one could expect, by the view of their « political biographies » and by taking into consideration their local and French « roots » that their career ambitions lie in their national territory or in some other place than the EP. However, their answers and ambitions diverge from these traditional views. Respondent n°6 answers simply:

« Listen, today I am 47 years old, in five years it will be the end of the mandate. Well I hope to do another one. And hum...ten years from now I do not know. (You do not know?) No. No. (It's maybe a bit too far ahead?). Well you know things are...once again two years ago I would have never imagined I would become one day an MEP. So hum...when I started...when I finished my studies I would never have imagined doing politics. So ...life is made of

opportunities, special occasions, encounters, and so...to tell you 5 years is already a lot, but 10 years is impossible to conceive. »

In the same vein, interviewee n°2 refuses during the interview to project himself politically:

« Pfffff... No idea. No idea. I will do everything to be happy. It is not an individual quest, it will anyways be a collective quest, that is I always worked for....I am a doctor...I always worked for the general interest, I always was the students' representative, or of my profession...I always committed myself to a common good so maybe I will be working for a charity or in an association, maybe that...hum....I will be writing books or poetry hum...anyways I think that you need an intellectual elevation and I believe that you need to give back what was given to you. »

While respondent n°2 does not *per se* exclude a European career, he does not attach any particular significance to his mandate either. Far from that, he is actually the one who keeps coming back during the interview on his past experiences as a Minister, as an MP and as a local politician, by emphasizing how much pleasure he took exercising each of these functions. In this sense, the European Parliament does not represent for the French Politician the endpoint of a career or the achievement of a longstanding goal which would make sense in his personal trajectory, but should rather be seen as one among the many fruitful experiences of his political career.

c) The Local Specialist

The third category that the conducted interviews allow us to depict is the one of the « Local Specialist ». These MEPs characterise themselves by the strong attachment they demonstrate to their local territory as well by their specialisation in one particular topic of the legislative work. They constitute the most « ambiguous » role model because of the diversity of representative style and political biographies they constitute. This specific group is composed of freshmen and incumbent MEPs, of men and women, and of all different range of ages. They share heteroclitic ambitions even though to a large extent they can be categorised under the banner of « discrete » ambitious: this will be the last mandate of three of the four respondents of this group. Nonetheless, Local Specialists share key characteristics when it comes to their personal conception of the European mandate, their motivation, their satisfaction and frustration and this makes this group an important category of our sample and apart from the two other ideal-types that are the European animator and the French Politician. Respondent n°4, n°5, n°7 and to a lesser extent n°8 are the interviewees who correspond the most with this category.

Whereas European animators showed extreme motivations to become MEPs (putting an end to a national mandate or fighting hard within the party) and French Politicians close to none (being asked by their home-party or important members of the party to stand for election), the Local Specialist constitutes somehow a category in between. To their own acknowledgment, none of the interviewees had ever imagined becoming one day a Member of the European Parliament. Using the same rhetoric that of French Politicians, they present their candidacy and then their elections as opportunities. While French Politicians were directly asked by the home-party to stand for election because of their high profile (former Minister and MPs), Local Specialists were asked to become candidate not *per se* by the party but by a specific member of the party. In other words, each Local Specialist was godfathered by a special figure, and preferably a European figure. Respondent n°5 recognizes that:

« Actually, (M.B) is the one who always considered that...well, when I mean who always considered...since 1994, (M.B) has always been militantly in favour that I become a candidate to the European elections. Because of agricultural issues and because I was recognized on these topics. He fought hard so that I could be on the lists in 1994. »

In the same vein, respondent n°4 argues that she never had any career plans based on the European Parliament but because she « fitted » the expected profile (a woman politically involved with European issues) and because she was pushed by her former employer, a high-profile MEP, she accepted the position on the list:

« I mean concerning the mandate in itself: it was really an opportunity; I never had any career plans based on that: I had imagined doing many other things, at the regional level actually, in Alsace. At no moment I actually saw myself becoming an MEP and then there, it was the circumstances: a woman was needed, (from the region, on the list), politically committed which was my case as I was engaged and had responsibilities with the Bas-Rhin's UMP, and who appreciated European issues, which was also my case. In any case, I had no career plans to become a Member of the European Parliament. »

Whereas respondent n°4 and n°5 demonstrated specific « valuable » skills for the European market (respondent n°5 was very involved with agricultural issues and respondent n°4 was the former parliamentary assistant of an MEP and she was committed regionally to economic issues), respondent n°7 admits that he had never really « heard » of Europe before starting his mandate. Like the other interviewees, he was asked by his « politicians colleagues » to run for a seat in the EP:

« It was for me something that...that was not foreseeable, that was not reflected upon. We proposed to me politically, the politicians colleagues proposed to me, to be true. I was member of the government for 10 years: I could have started a third mandate but the colleagues did not propose to me to do something else because there was this possibility to become a Member of the European Parliament. And so I told myself: « Why not? » and so I went for it, and there you go! »

As shortly mentioned beforehand, Local Specialists have the lowest political profile of the French delegation to the European People's Party. None of them ever exercised before their European mandate important or national responsibilities within governments or parliaments, and their election to the EP was more the fruit of opportunities and circumstances than of their own will : this has naturally important repercussions on the perceptions they have of their roles as European parliamentarians and for their ambitions.

First of all, concerning their duties and responsibilities as MEPs, Local Specialists have a very specific vision of the parliamentary work. Whereas European animators and French Politicians consider that the main responsibility of a good MEP is to exercise influence (through specific legislative work or by choosing strategic activities), the Local Specialist distinguishes himself from the other ideal-types by the special link he tries to create with his local territory and constituency. Respondent n°7 describes his duties in the following manner:

« Me, I come personally from (a region) so hum...I try to ensure that (my region) can benefit from my mandate of MEP. And I try to see, here, with my team: we are trying to see with my team which instruments, which financial instrument can (my region) benefit from, for those who still do not. And that is precisely the work we did during the last legislature. »

In this sense, a good MEP for a Local Specialist is an MEP who is capable of creating good legislation which will in the end benefit to a particular sector or population. The possessions of two necessary qualities to achieve these goals are remotely quoted by Local Specialists: a good capacity of listening and hard-work. This last quality is not so much essential for legislating than to be recognised by their peers: as Local Specialists argue, if other members do not see that you are very implied within the chamber's work, it will be difficult to progress and achieve your goals. As explains interviewee n°5:

« Here, if you want to be legitimate, you need to work. Hum...I was a member of the Committee on Agriculture....So I did everything in the Committee on Agriculture as a full-time member, I spent five years in the Committee on Transports as a substitute and today I am

in the Committee on Environment. In the three committees, it's the same thing. You have those who are present, those who are respected because they know their subjects and they are constant in their ideas, and those who are insignificant entities. And the...the true difference from one MEP to another is in my opinion the quality of the work they produce. And the recognition of this work by the peers. »

Local Specialists are less politically endowed than their other (French) peers and for this reason it is important for them to legitimize their actions by working hard and specializing themselves in one topic. This also explains why two out of the four MEPs who constitute this ideal-type exercise specific responsibilities within committees: one of them is Vice-President of a Committee and the other one Vice-coordinator for the EPP Group. This demonstrates a strong investment in a specific and relevant sector for both of them. It is also because they are specialists in a certain domain and coming from a specific territory within their "euroconstituency" that they were initially enrolled by the party. Therefore, their investment in the parliamentary work acts as a translation of these two conditions by demonstrating on the one hand that they « earned » their place on the list, and on the other hand that they are « legitimate » as MEPs : each Local Specialist is member of a Committee which makes « sense » in light of their previous professional commitments. Whereas they cannot really be considered as former members of civil society, their presence on the list is principally due to a speciality, a *savoir-faire* which is recognised for having a political added-value. As a consequence, Local Specialists are invested in committees relevant to their own experience : interviewee n°5 is full-time member of the Committee on Agriculture after having worked for years with these issues professionally at first then through his local mandate ; interviewee n°7 is a full-time member of the Committee on Development, as he comes from a region where the European Development Fund is primordial for the well-being of the population ; interviewee n°4 is a full-time member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and a substitute in the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy which makes sense if we consider that she worked for years in her region's Economic, Social and Environmental Council.

These key characteristics have consequences for the representative role of this category of MEPs. Even though one could expect that Local Specialists when asked « As an MEP, who do you represent? » would answer « My constituency », the answer is in fact more subtle. First, two of the four MEPs who compose this ideal-type unambiguously consider that they represent the whole of the European Union. As interviewee n°8 argues:

« First of all, I would like to remind what appears in the French Constitution and in the Treaties of the Union that established the European Parliament, which is that there is no binding mandate! Which everyone forgets all of the time! Those who tell you: « I propose 110 proposals or 60 commitments » (if this reminds you recent elections), they can betray them without any fear because there is no binding mandate. Me, I personally do not make any promises, it makes me feel more at ease... »

The vagueness of interpretation of the mandate and of the Treaties allows these MEPs to take more liberty when it comes to understand their own roles. Another crucial factor is that these two MEPs are « discretely » ambitious, which means that this mandate is probably their last. To the acknowledgment of respondent n°8, it presents the advantage of being freer when they have to take decisions. However, and bearing in mind these two exceptions, Local Specialists show a tendency of representing their constituency, and even sometimes a specific sector of their territory. Whereas European animators acted clearly on the behalf of the citizens of the EU and of their (general) constituency, and French Politicians on the behalf of France and certain values (the French right-wing for instance), Local Specialists are the voices of specific sectors of the constituency. For example, interviewee n°4 confesses:

« I represent the citizens of my constituency, so: my constituency it's the East of France, so five administrative regions in the East. So I represent the individual citizens but my idea is also to represent professional organizations, the organized civil society who defends private interests at the same time. »

A bit later in the interview, she admits that she is for example much more sensible to the demands of her fellow centre-right wing constituents than of those from extreme-left. Respondent n°5 claims that he is well-known from certain industries and that the mandate of European parliamentarian in itself does not allow a larger recognition from the population:

« The difficulty is to ... the difficulty is to make the work we do recognize on the field. In general, we are pretty well recognized by the sector for which we work for. Hum...the chemistry industry, the hunters, agriculture, transports...But to have a larger legitimacy in the public opinion is another story... »

Whereas European animators consider being an MEP and working within the European institutions to be important because as representatives they have an impact on the projects of the future, and French politicians consider their duty is to be pedagogical about Europe because it is important for France, Local Specialists anchor the importance of their mandate in

an exclusively local perspective. In one word, the EU is important for these MEPs because their constituency and local territory can benefit a lot from it. Interviewee n°7 considers that he was elected so that his constituency can benefit from his mandate:

« You need to be present in order to answer their interests. And so hum...that was during the last legislature and now it continues. It continues for the (the constituency), which means that...You know that they benefit from the European Development Fund (EDF) like African countries. But they are not developing countries like African countries for example. They are already at a higher level but...they still use the EDF. So we are trying with my team...we are going to try to propose another instrument, much more flexible, registered in the budget of the European Union, which would allow to use this new instrument much more easily than the EDF. »

These politicians' ambitions are not innocent from their particular conception of their role. Indeed, interviewee n°4 confessed that she had never imagined becoming an MEP one day and that she had always prepared herself for a regional career. On the same line, interviewee n°5 claimed at the beginning of the interview that he will be in the obligation of letting down his European mandate after this legislature because he was meanwhile elected Mayor of a city of 60 000 inhabitants and with the law forbidding the « cumul des mandats » which will enter in application by 2019, he cannot do both together. Interviewee n°7 considers himself too old and too tired to continue a new mandate and Interviewee's n°8 future is to his own acknowledgment and for several reasons extremely uncertain. From these perspectives, their career ambitions and plans act as good explanatory factors of their roles.

The satisfaction and frustration that Local Specialists draw from their mandate is also typical of their category. Whereas European animators enjoyed the specifically European dimension of their position, and French Politician the sparseness of their mandate in comparison to the French market, Local Specialists take pleasure in the work-load of the function which enables them to specialize themselves in one topic and which they unanimously consider as an enriching experience. In this sense, they appreciate what the mandate can or would bring to them outside of the walls of the European Parliament. During the interviews, the respondents regularly referred to how « fascinating » their mandate is and how much they learn from it. Interviewee n°4 describes her mandate as follows:

« It's a beautiful experience. Yes yes yes. It's fascinating. It's very absorbing but it's really fascinating. (What do you like in the mandate?). Well, I like the diversity. It's very diverse. So in the beginning, it's difficult because we switch from one world to another regularly: so

we switch from one topic to another, very technical subjects, very specific. So me for example I am in the Employment Committee, in the Industry Committee, I follow a bit agricultural issues, and we switch from one topic to another and every time you have to get back in the saddle...so there you go... Also, you switch from one place to another, between your territories, the Parliament in Strasbourg, the Parliament in Brussels, so it varies a lot, it's very rich, and I like a lot the contact with people. »

Interviewee n°7 specifically emphasizes the pleasure he takes from working on certain files:

« I take pleasure from what I do because we are doing things for the (whole constituency). We stood up in some cases for the (whole constituency) and so there you go. I mean hum...It's a very very interesting mandate. Very very interesting. It's well...very good...we are always here following the cases and so it makes you work. And then we are satisfied when a text passes, and with satisfaction comes the desire to work. Yes yes. »

In the same vein, respondent n°5 was at first chocked by the question concerning his satisfaction of being an MEP because he considered it to be pretentious. However, and making the same comparisons than previously did by European animators, he underlines that the huge advantage of being an European deputy is that you can work in peace and not under the constraints of medias. In his opinion, MEPs are first and foremost judged on their results and legislative efficiency, which seems only fair. Precisely like interviewee n°2 whose role comes closest to a French Politician, he argues that pleasure is not the motor of his career or ambitions: he confesses that the question of satisfaction is one he never addresses. In this sense, Local Specialists fit well the « discrete ambitious » politicians as they are described by Gaddie (2004): it is rather more the sense of duty and the satisfaction of good-work which animates them than the pleasure of climbing the ladders of political hierarchy.

Based on what we said, it should not come as a surprise that Local Specialists are the less frustrated group of our sample by any means. When respondents actually express frustration or dissatisfaction is it rather heteroclite or in their own words « meaningless »: their frustrations are not too much of an important topic to focus on, they argue. Whether it is the work-organisation of the chamber for interviewee n°4, the difficulty of establishing a more solid link with the constituency for interviewee n°5 or the lack of acknowledgment of their work from the medias for interviewee n°8, the mentioned frustrations are not *per se* essential elements of this ideal-type. Whereas European animators are very frustrated by the « system » in general and French Politicians by its « complexity », Local Specialists do not situate themselves within this logic. Interviewee n°7 imagines a situation where he could be frustrated as the following:

« I come from far away all things considered. (...). Frustrated, if I was always complaining about wanting to fly back home all of the time etc...this would be a frustration. But I have found pleasure in working here and so... I compensate this frustration with the pleasure I take in working. That is all. »

He argues further that spending time in the work-load is the best way to beat frustration and once he retires he is scared to become bored.

In many aspects, Local Specialists MEPs are the politicians of our sample with the less power-play. As described before, they have the lowest political profile and their election is the fruit of circumstances and « godfathers » rather than the product of their own will. These politicians are typically « discretely » ambitious, in the sense that this mandate will be very probably their last before going home to retire or pursue other responsibilities. It is for example striking that respondent n°5 confesses that if he had followed his own career plans he would have taken bigger responsibilities within the EP and would not have pursued a local career :

« Because I wanted to do a second mandate, in order to finish the CAP and to (because it's a second mandate we can take more responsibilities)...in fact we came to me to ask me to take the presidency of the Committee on Agriculture (Yes?). Hum...Joseph Daul offered it to me, the former Commissioner M. Boel offered it to me, Di Castro the outgoing President told me : « (...), you are the one who should take my place » etc...I did not accept to take the chair of the Committee on Agriculture because it is not compatible with the mandate of mayor of (my commune). I am under the obligation to really limit my time here or in Brussels: I spend the time that is necessary to my mandate, which means participating to the sessions, participating to the group meetings, to the groups etc...But I cannot spill over: a mayor position is very absorbing... so there. (Yes). But, if you want, if I had leaded my personal plan I would not be the mayor of (my commune) and I would have taken responsibilities in the European Parliament. »

In the same vein, interviewee n°4 refuses to project herself in the future because it is too uncertain: she rather prefers talking of « wishes » to designate her own career plans. Interviewee n°7 answered automatically that he will be going home after his mandate and interviewee n°8 is preparing himself to find a new job soon.

Therefore, in term of career plans, representative style and conception of the European mandate, the Local Specialist is a pretty unique and meaningful ideal-type to understand the different roles which exist in the 2014 French delegation to the EPP.

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the previous research, the theoretical framework and the analysis section of this Master's Thesis, we should be able to proceed in answering the research question of this paper, which was « *How do career ambitions shape the roles MEPs adopt in the chamber?* ». As one could expect, the answer to this question is far from being one-folded. In a nutshell, « *Yes* » ambitions influence the roles of MEPs in many aspects but « *not* » in the ways the literature usually describes it, at least based on the empirical evidence of the eight conducted interviews with members of the French delegation to the European People's Party in the 2014-2019 legislature.

This *explorative* study proceeded quite successfully in establishing typologies and ideal-types of MEPs based on their roles and ambitions. Whereas most previous studies had created in isolation ideal-types of ambitions (Schlesinger 1966, Herrick 1993) or career paths as they are called in European studies (Hix 2002, Scarrow 1997, Meserve *et al.* 2009) and roles (Searing 1994, Navarro 2007, Costa 2009, Scully and Farrell 2003), no paper had before, to my knowledge, tried to link these « variables » or set of factors together in order to explain the behaviours of parliamentarians. In this sense, this first brush of results is satisfying.

Another reason for satisfaction is that it is possible to study actual empirical material on the sole basis of interviews, as it was first sensed by Searing and later exposed by Herrick, in order to interrogate politicians' career plans. The benefits of this method to the opposite of more quantitative-vote-based strategies for gathering data, is that there is no way of getting around the intentions of politicians concerning their ambitions. While *a posteriori* and biographical studies can only *speculate* on the true-intentions of MEPs, by basing their analysis on MEPs voting behaviours during particular legislatures or their movements from one career arena to another (local, regional, national, supranational), interviews have the benefit of putting the question on the table, either directly « *Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years ?* », « *Are there any other positions you wish to pursue in the chamber ?* » or by indirect means « *Will you be candidate to other elections by the end of your mandate ?* », « *Would you be ready to put an end to your European mandate for some other position ?* » in order to *code* ambitions.

The same thing can be said about the roles of politicians : whereas studies strictly based on quantitative data and statistics, which for example base their explanations on the measurement of the rate of participation of MEPs in plenary session, the amount of tabled amendments or the number of time certain MEPs speak during group meetings, can only *guess* the satisfaction these politicians draw from these type of activities or the sense of duties and responsibilities they administer to their roles, interviews have the benefit to ask MEPs *directly* what it is they like about their mandate. Questions such « *What satisfies you the most in your mandate?* », « *What frustrates you about being an MEP?* », « *In your opinion, what distinguishes a good from a bad MEP?* » offer moreover the *guarantee* to obtain answers which will make sense for the construction of ideal-types. From that point of view, the answers to these questions by all of the respondents provide a real contribution to the literature on politicians and parliamentarians behaviours.

However, the study presented an important amount of difficulties that were only partly overcome during the phase of qualitative data gathering and which, as a consequence, strongly influences the final answer to our initial research question. Among these difficulties, inherent to a paper based solely on interviews, was to obtain *actual answers* to the questions asked: these were double-folded. First, how can we truly trust the worthiness of politicians' answers? Second, how can we code efficiently ambitions in their answers?

Whereas American ambition theorists argue, in a nutshell, that most politicians are rational and progressively ambitious in the sense that their intentions are to climb up the political ladder, the empirical evidence seems to nuance this statement. A good way of analysing ambitions was to ask MEPs if they would be ready to put an end to their mandate for national responsibilities. The question was asked in such a way that it was opened to interpretation: in France, national responsibilities can mean many different things, from a position of Minister to a seat in the National Assembly or the French Senate. These functions are not compatible with a seat in the European Parliament. The answers to this question actually shed light on practices that mainstream ambition theory hardly covers: *in France, politicians do not run for national responsibilities, they are called to them*. Politicians are either called by the government to become a Minister or by the party to run in its name in a constituency in order to integrate the national Parliament. This has consequence for French politicians and MEPs ambitions in and outside the EP: to the opposite of American politicians, there is rarely any

individual conquest of power in French politicians' mind. Interviewee n°3 summarizes the strategies of candidacy which are specific to French parties in the following way:

« But when you say national responsibilities, what do you mean? Deputy, senator or Minister? There are only three national functions. Well there is also President of the Republic but that would maybe be going a bit far ahead! This, I rarely think about to the honest...I actually do not think about it all...But as there is an incompatibility, if one day, yes, something happened in the sense of acquiring a national mandate, I would de facto put an end to my functions of Member of the European Parliament. But it would have been the result of a strategy that would have been constructed, developed, in the cyclist sense of the term, for a very long time etc etc. I am not at this point today. (You do not think about it?). I do not think about pissing off the entire world and every cacique of my party to obtain at all costs an investiture for something. But I simply know, because I am a little bit experienced after hanging all of these years in this environment, I know that things often happen that we, ourselves, had not prepared or anticipated because there are collective political strategies, there are strategies which are constructed by the political family and sometimes it is suitable to fold for them. There. That is all. I ...I do not say anything mysterious. »

MEPs evolve in a constraining environment and their power-play at all means in quite limited because European elections are hardly held on the name of politicians. They have to cope with many factors to satisfy their ambitions: the party, their constituents, the (new) institution in which they participate, their peers. This means that *if there are strategies of ambitions, they are rarely the result of individual will*. Several examples in our analysis section showed that MEPs are not acting alone when it comes to choose the mandate they want to run for or the one they wish to run from. That is the same thing for progressive ambition. Whereas American neo-institutionalists present ambition as a sometimes long-established individual strategic mean of obtaining a seat with more prestige than the one actually occupied by a politician, several interviewees argued against this traditional view. Interviewee n°2 explains why he would have to accept a position of Minister if he was nominated to:

« I do not have the choice! (You do not have the choice?). When you are called to the government, you cannot say no. If you are here to serve! Me, I already did it twice...Hum...will I be called again? No idea. Maybe it's time for the younger generation. If we call me I do not have the choice, we never say no to the government, it is my duty. »

Respondent n°2 does not argue that he would want this position, but he states instead that he would not have the choice. Does this count as ambition then? If an MEP ends up in a higher position than the one he could/would or should have wished for, it certainly means that this politician had a risen trajectory but it does not mean *per se* that he was ambitious for it. Many politicians accepted certain position or to be candidates to certain elections because they

considered it to be their duty. This argument overflows the classical viewpoint that some MEPs use intentionally the EP as a stepping-stone for a national career. To her own acknowledgment, interviewee n°3 describes herself as a « good soldier » of the party. Respondent n°2 makes this interesting comment about being a Minister a bit later in the interview:

« Let me reformulate the question in relation to your feelings. It is very very important for a politician to enter the government. And for a politician, there is no successful career if he does not enter the government. Me, I was twice a member of the government. I am very happy to have been part of it and probably at the most beautiful place at the best of times. There. Now there are people who dream to go back there and others who dream to enter for the first time a government, and who would do anything for it. Me, I had it and I was very happy. I will not prostitute myself to do it again. I am completely detached from that. »

Similarly, it is striking to see how interviewee n°1, the most European ambitious respondent of the sample, reacts about entering in the government:

« Well yes of course! To come back to the government, yes of course (Yes?) Well yes, for sure. Well, in a domain which would be linked to things I know. But this question is not of actuality in the years to come... »

On the other hand, many respondents did not alone consider this opportunity as a possibility. Perhaps the fact that some MEPs did not evoke the sole possibility of entering the government, and others of becoming national MPs, are revelatory of the reachability of these goals, or as interviewee n°2 ironically describes his colleagues, their « Peter's scale ». Others, like respondent n°8, brutally beat back this type of position:

« No no no. It does not interest...what is it? Is it to become a Minister? That does not interest me! Absolutely no interest. The complete emptiness of this type of post rouses absolutely no enthusiasm, no interest in me. (...). Which can seem strange for someone who has worked close with power but...I do not have the pretentiousness to leave a trace in history! It does not work like that... »

In the same vein, intrainstitutional ambition, as it is understood the ambition to gain a more prestigious seat within the institution, is also the product of complex mechanisms proper to the European Parliament. Whereas American political science « calculates » how rational it would be for a parliamentarian to invest in campaigning for higher seats, the inner logic of the institution does not quite fit this model : as demonstrated before, the EP functions on the basis of diverse mechanisms which are there to ensure the largest representation of nationalities and

parties within its walls. When they were asked for which position they would like to run in the EP, many MEPs argued that things are not as simple as that: the logic of rotation and of diversified representation (called *la loi d'Hondt*) distribute leadership positions and "rapporteurship" in the institution. This does not mean that MEPs cannot develop self-conscious strategies to obtain more prestigious seats, but that these seats are rather the product of often uncontrolled circumstances, such as the result of their party at the European elections, the size of their national delegation, the nationality of the individual who let a seat vacant, the intentions of other participants, the distribution of reports in the chamber. Interviewee n°3 stresses how complicated this type of positions are to obtain:

*« Oh no! In a near future, no no no no. No no. Anyway, there are no new functions coming at the horizon. The function of President of Group is occupied for the moment quite seriously I think so. No, there are no other functions for which I aspire. (No **Presidency of Committee for example?**). Oh no no no no, these are things are so complicated to implement, hum...No no I do not ambition this at all, I do not express the wish to develop any strategies in this regard. No, not at all. No no. »*

On the other hand, respondent n°1 obtained the Chair of Special Committee shortly after the interview was conducted. Even though he was asked during the interview which other position he would like to pursue in the EP, he never mentioned anything in relation with chairing a committee (but he did though mention his intention to be the next President of the EP): can we count this event as the demonstration of his ambition for new seats? The interviews do not unfortunately let us think so. Moreover, when does ambition start and when does it stop? Several MEPs have argued during the interviews that if they could, they would run again for a seat, but circumstances (the *cumul des mandats*, retirement age) prevent them from. Interviewee n°5 explained very clearly that if he had the choice he would be campaigning five years from now for a new seat in Brussels. He wishes to, but he cannot clearly ambition it. The same thing can be said about interviewee n°7 : he feels that he is getting old and tired, and he would crave to go home which is « far-away » after his mandate, but he likes the EP and he hesitates to go for another mandate : what are his *real* ambitions then ?

The concept of ambition as it is currently developed in the literature is problematic to give a full account of the different strategies developed by MEPs for their desired futures. Based on the answers of the eight respondents, their different ambitions would look like the following in a table:

Table 4. Typology of the ambitions of the eight respondents interviewed based on the American "ambition theory" literature

<i>Discrete ambition</i>	<i>Static ambition</i>	<i>Intrainstitutional ambition</i>	<i>Progressive ambition</i>
Interviewee n°1	<u>Interviewee n°3</u> (clearly evoked)	Interviewee n°1 (became member of the bureau of a Special Committee since the end of the interview/ Presidency of the EP) (*2)	Interviewee n°2 (Presidency of a regional council /Important position in the party/ Becoming a Minister)
Interviewee n°7	<u>Interviewee n°6</u> (clearly evoked)	Interviewee n°4 (obtaining a report) (*2)	
Interviewee n°5 (of being an MEP)	Interviewee n°4	Interviewee n°6 (obtaining a report) (*2)	
Interviewee n°8	Interviewee n°7 (*2)		
	Interviewee n°5 (*2)		

As we can see, there are no straight-forward and unique ambition by MEPs. If we actually used only straight-forward answers (which are underlined), we would only have been able to situate two MEPs on the ladder of their career plans. In fact, MEPS can have multiple and non-exclusive ambitions (in bold) which sometimes are not *solely* based on career motivations (obtaining a report for example constitutes an ambition for certain MEPs). Therefore, these categories made little sense to cover MEPs ambitions and to explain their roles, which this thesis proposed to do in a first place. When comparing MEPs ambitions with their roles (the answers they gave to their different type of motivations, duties, representative style, satisfaction and frustration), we managed to create *three ideal-types of ambitious MEPs* in the 2014 French delegation to the European People’s Party. These categories have the advantage of using ambition as a *leitmotiv* for their roles. Whereas previous research did not take into consideration ambition as a primordial factor to explain parliamentary behaviours (outside from voting behaviours), this thesis took the bet that it is possible to establish a typology of ambition which corresponds to a typology of roles of MEPs: the overarching aim was to demonstrate that these type of motivations should be taken more seriously by researchers

interested in the attitudes of parliamentarians. In these regards, and as expressed in the discussion section and in our analysis, this Master's thesis is a *semi-success*. It succeeds in creating typologies which makes sense for the actors themselves, as the abductive method prescribes to, and in obtaining answers which are relevant for the French delegation as a whole and probably for other parliamentarians. However, several points will need confirmation and an improvement in future studies, notably what constituted the essence of the thesis: the solid *link* between ambition and roles. Whereas the ideal-types demonstrate without any ambiguity that there is a relationship between how parliamentarians conceive their desired futures and how they understand their European mandate, and that this relationship differs in at least three different manners for our sample, the study nonetheless is *limited* in two ways: first, the interviews do not allow us completely to testify that it is in reality career ambitions which shape the roles of MEPs. At no point in the interviews did any MEPs confess that they act in a certain ways because it would be better for their career plans. This is after all not very surprising: such acts are generally seen as cynical and we should not expect anybody, politicians above all, to plead in their favour or to confess of doing them. Moreover, emotionalist interviews do not favour ostensibly the confession of acts based on pure rationalism (which previous research usually conveys for), but require from respondents to mobilise argument tools based foremost on emotions and pleasure. In this regards, it is nonetheless satisfying to observe that there is a link between pleasure and rationalism, emotions and career goals, and that MEPs are after all "human beings". Moreover, as we demonstrated before, ambitions are not only the product of individual desires but also of circumstances and, in this regards, they can be *irrational*. The second limit of the thesis is to mobilize sufficiently satisfying answers from MEPs concerning their ambitions, and which was after all the angular stone of this study: without the politicians' revealing their goals, the thesis would have lost all of its interest. Even though every MEPs answered questions concerning their ambitions, their desired futures, position they would like to seek, there is however absolutely no way to know the truth about their intentions. They could easily have lied either because they do not see the benefit of revealing their objectives to an unknown student or either, as many of the respondents have argued, because they simply do not know. Should we for instance believe Respondent n°2 when he said that he could very well be writing poetry five years from now? There is a thin line between not knowing where one *will* go and between where one *wishes* to go: this is for example what respondent n°5 pleaded when the question was asked to her. She summarizes perfectly the difficulty to situate oneself in the future for an MEP:

« I am incapable to answer this question. Incapable to answer you. I cannot tell you. I do not see. I do not see. (Do you not know?) No no. If I was a national member of Parliament with my constituency, with a personal and unique candidacy ; if I liked what I do I would tell you « There, I will be re-elected and I will get involved in the territory ». But here, you know, the composition of lists, the constitution of list is so...how to say ...I do not want to say complicated but today I am not capable to tell you that I will be once again in an eligible position on the list. Many French MEPs have spent five years in the European Parliament and did not come back after that. So today ideally I would tell you « I would be delighted to be here again, to make several mandates » because, first of all, it would interest me, it fascinates me but also because I believe that it would be a good thing for France to have this stability at the level of elected representatives, but I am not able to tell you...It would be a wish, there you go! Yes, it is a wish, it is a wish. »

Therefore, to what extent is interviewee n°5 ambitious to become again an MEP? She clearly expresses the wish to become one again, but at the same time she seems completely defeated by the complex process of a re-selection by her home-party. On the other hand, interviewee n°3 and n°6 clearly said that they would like to become MEPs again, without eluding too much on the modalities of how this would happen: are their answers the same than the one of interviewee n°5? Are they ambitious in the same way? Classical political science tools answer this question with difficulty because they rarely give subtle nuances to politicians' desires. This is why an approach based on role theory was developed all along the thesis to give a context to ambition: whereas ambitions were primarily used to reveal different practices of the European mandate, it would seem to also work the other way around. Roles can or should be used as revelatory of ambitions. The findings of the thesis clearly suggest that it is the case: set of roles generate set of ambitions (and vice versa?) which can empirically be distinguished from one another. It would therefore be the suggestion of this explorative thesis and of its primary results to pursue future studies in this horizon.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings of this explorative study seem to suggest that parliamentarians can be distinguished based on their roles and ambitions, and that these "variables" are intrinsically linked together, as the thesis originally assumed. More precisely, the empirical results seem to confirm the theory that ambitions *do influence and shape* the behaviours, attitudes and roles of politicians, or as we should say with more exactitude that *"there is a clear link between the way French members of the European People's Party in the European Parliament in the*

2014-2019 legislature conceive and interpret their parliamentary roles and the way they relate to their future career plans". This complex relationship is present in at least three different ways for our sample: French right-wing MEPs either belonged to the ideal-types of *European Animators*, *French Politicians* or *Local Specialists*. These semantic and theoretical constructions are the fruit of an abductive approach strictly based on interviews and on background information on the political "profiles" of MEPs: the categories therefore possess the advantage of being relevant for the politicians themselves (the interviewees) *and* the scientific community. Indeed, once we have managed to answer our initial interrogations and establish these categories, then come the next questions: what do these results tell us in relation to previous research? And more importantly, what are the take-away of the thesis' findings for *future* research?

In a certain sense, the answer to the first question leads inevitably to answering the second. As we argued, the point of departure of this thesis was to say that previous research in European studies is incomplete to give a full account of explanations on the behaviours of European parliamentarians, and that when theoretical concepts do exist, they are not entirely satisfactory (quantitative, based on roll-call votes, etc...). This is why we turned our focus to American political science and its "ambition theory", where theoretical concepts to explain the attitudes and roles of politicians are well-established traditions. However, the findings of this thesis seem to suggest that, to a certain extent, the "tools" emanating from American political science are also not entirely appropriate to explain the roles of "specific" politicians in a "specific" context: French members of the European Parliament. The data gathered from the interviews and the political profiles of the respondents, plus the analysis of the empirics, clearly indicate that "ambition" as it is today understood in the literature, should be *nuanced*. This is particularly true to French politicians in the European Parliament for whom the inner logic of individual candidacies and stated ambitions one can find in mainstream American politics, is especially irrelevant. As we discovered, in the minds of French politicians serving in the European Parliament, there is no individual campaigning without the support of the party: to parody the opening lines of this Master's thesis, "*French MEPs are not born to run, they are called to run*". This does not mean *per se* that they are less ambitious than their American counterparts or that they are not as free to acquire means to pursue their own ambitions the way it is done on the other side of the Atlantic, but that political scientists could do a better job in explaining the formation of career ambitions and how parliamentarians (European and national) link them directly to their parliamentary roles at a general level.

Now, what are the implications of this explorative study's preliminary results for future research? More precisely, what are the consequences of the thesis for European studies? First, when it comes to the methods to employ in order to gather good and reliable data on politicians' ambitions and other "psychological predispositions", the study clearly suggests that there is an added value in coming back to the fundamental roots of ambition studies: "probing, qualitative studies" (Gaddie 2004: 201). Indeed, as Gaddie remarks about participant observations and following politicians on the tracks, and as it could be said on using unstructured or semi-structured interviews and already being part of the politicians' environment: "(...) the easiest way to blend in is to become an active participant. By avoiding a structured instrument, I was free to navigate interesting events as they unfolded rather than forcing my subject back to my list of topics. Political people love to talk..." (2004: 202). It is thus quite surprising that these types of approaches have been more or less neglected in European studies to analyse politicians' roles and desired futures, and it would be the first "recommendation" of this thesis to pursue efforts, or, for the least, partially come back to these methodological standpoints. Second, and from an empirical perspective, the results seem to suggest that the relation ambition-role could be found at an even wider level than the one used for our sample. Without any doubt, these schemes of analyses could be applied at *the scale of the complete French delegation in the EP* (or its 74 MEPs). French politicians think in French terms, relate to French events and imbricate their French political culture in their European mandate: the interviews clearly demonstrated that. The fact that only French right-wing MEPs were part of this study does not seem to make the results any less true for the other political parties in the French delegation. However, doubts could be cast on the relevance of this study at the scale of the whole European People's Party Group in the EP. The fact that one of the ideal-type ended up being named the *French Politician* and that nearly all of the interviewees related to typically French political narratives to frame their roles and ambitions (the French party structure and selection process, the President of the Republic, the "cumul des mandats", etc...), would suggest that the ambition-role linkage one can find among French peers would apply with difficulty for non-French MEPs. Therefore, future research could be dedicated to investigate whether the ambitions French MEPs express are idiosyncratic to the delegation or if they can be found, maybe in more subtle terms, among other delegations. Hopefully, these fruitful research topics would lead us to a better understanding of all of the European parliamentarians across legislatures. Optimistically, these investigations would end up making sense not only for MEPs but also for any

parliamentarians in Europe. The question of whether these categories could be reliable and valid for any type of politician (local, regional, national and European) is however one we dare not ask today.

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APPENDIX

a) Interviews (schedule)

Interview n°1. 9th of February 2015. Strasbourg. 43 minutes.

Interview n°2. 11th of February 2015. Strasbourg. 33 minutes.

Interview n°3. 23rd of February 2015. Brussels. 31 minutes.

Interview n°4. 25th of February 2015. Brussels. 23 minutes.

Interview n°5. 11th of March 2015. Strasbourg. 17 minutes.

Interview n°6. 11th of March 2015. Strasbourg. 16 minutes.

Interview n°7. 12th of March 2015. Strasbourg. 20 minutes.

Interview n°8. 24th of March 2015. Brussels. 29 minutes.

b) Respondent Interview Guide

- English Version

Theme I: Roles in the European Parliament

- I) Could you start by telling me how did you first become an MEP ? What were your initial motivations?
- Were you pushed by your party to become a candidate or was it from your own initiative?
- II) Thinking about your broad role as a Member of the European Parliament, what are the most important duties and responsibilities involved? Which tasks do you prioritize ?
- In your opinion, how do you differentiate a good MEP from a bad MEP ?
- III) As an MEP, who do you represent?
- When you have to take a decision within your political activity, who's « voice » do you prioritize: your home-party, your group or the constituents? Any other categories ?
- Would you ever go against (mentioned entity) when taking a decision?
- IV) Thinking for a moment very broadly about French (or European) society, how do your duties and responsibilities fit in with the work of society as a whole?
- How important is your work as an MEP to the functioning of society as a whole ?
- V) Thinking over your political activity, what do you find personally most satisfying about it?

- Which of your political activities has brought you the most satisfaction? Reversely, what did you found the most frustrating ?
- What would you miss most if you left politics ?

Theme II: Career Ambition(s) in the European Parliament

- VI) Where do you see yourself in five/ten years?
- Are there any further positions in the European Parliament or outside that you would like to seek sometime in the future?
 - What would you say are your chances of achieving (mentioned position) ? Do you think that being MEP would help you reach this goal/position?
- VII) Will you be candidate to any elections before the end of your European mandate?
- Would you be ready to interrupt your European mandate if you were called to national or local responsibilities? Why ?
 - For which position would you absolutely put an end to your European career ?
- VIII) Finally, how do you distinguish the different ambitions among your French colleagues ?

- French Version

Thème n°1: Le rôle de député européen

- I) Pourriez-vous commencer par me dire ce qui vous a donné envie de devenir député européen ? Quelles étaient vos motivations ?
- Concrètement, est-ce votre parti qui vous a demandé de vous présenter ou cela est-il venu de votre propre initiative ?
- II) Concernant votre rôle de député européen, d'une manière générale : quels sont les devoirs et responsabilités les plus importantes qu'il implique pour vous ? Quelles tâches se doivent d'être prioritaires?
- Selon vous, qu'est-ce qui distingue un bon d'un mauvais eurodéputé ?
- III) En tant que député européen, qui représentez-vous ?
- Par exemple, lorsque que vous devez prendre une décision liée à votre mandat, quelle voix/intérêts mettez-vous toujours en priorité : ceux de votre parti politique, de votre groupe au Parlement ou de votre circonscription ? Ou d'autres perspectives ?
 - Est-il imaginable que vous puissiez prendre une décision allant à l'encontre des intérêts (de l'entité mentionnée) ?
- IV) Si l'on pense pour un moment de manière générale à la société française ou européenne, dans quelle mesure vos tâches et responsabilités sont importantes pour leur bon fonctionnement ?
- V) D'une manière générale, êtes-vous satisfait d'être député européen ?

- Parmi les précédentes fonctions que vous avez occupées, lesquelles vous ont apporté le plus de satisfaction personnelle ?
- De manière inverse, qu'est-ce qui vous frustre le plus dans votre mandat actuel et dans vos mandats précédents ?
- Qu'est-ce qui vous manquerait le plus si vous étiez amené à quitter la sphère publique ?

Thème n°2: Perspective de carrière et parcours professionnel

- I) De manière générale, où vous voyez-vous dans 5/10 ans ?
 - Y a-t-il d'autres fonctions au sein du Parlement européen ou en dehors que vous souhaiteriez occuper dans un futur proche ?
 - Quels sont vos chances, à votre avis, d'occuper ses fonctions ? Pensez-vous que votre mandat d'eurodéputé vous aideriez à atteindre ses fonctions ?

- II) Serez-vous candidat à de élections avant la fin de votre mandat d'eurodéputé ?
 - Seriez-vous prêt à mettre fin à vos fonctions de parlementaire européen si vous étiez appelé à des responsabilités nationales ou locales ? Pourquoi ?
 - Y-a-t-il un poste/une position pour lequel vous mettriez absolument un terme à votre mandat européen ?

- III) Pour conclure, comment distinguez-vous les ambitions respectives de vos collègues au sein de votre délégation ? Est-ce un sujet ouvert ou secret ?

c) Quotes (original)

Each and every quotes of this section are the original version of the translated text which can be found in the Analysis and Discussion section of the thesis. All of the interviews were held in French, tape-recorded and then transcribed. The original transcripts of the interviews are in French but for the requirements of this thesis each quotes are personal translations to English. However, and in order to preserve the anonymity of the respondents interviewed, some parts of the quotes were deliberately omitted and sometimes changed. When this is the case, non-italic brackets appear in the text to signify that the text was changed: (...).

- Analysis

- THE EUROPEAN ANIMATOR

« J'ai choisi, et, à ma connaissance, mais dans le cadre de vos travaux vous trouverez peut-être qu'il y a maintenant d'autres cas, je suis le seul homme politique français qui a délibérément, et à un moment où la loi ne l'obligeait pas, abandonner une carrière politique nationale qui n'était pas négligeable, et abandonner le plus beau des mandats politiques, qui est d'être maire. » INTERVIEWEE N°1

« Donc voilà le facteur familial plus le facteur territorial (puisque j'ai longtemps vécue à Strasbourg) ont fait que je me suis toujours intéressée aux sujets européens, je me suis toujours intéressée à ce qu'on fait chez nos voisins et j'ai toujours été très attachée au projet européen, par-delà la réconciliation franco-allemande, euh voilà... Donc ça m'a toujours intéressée. Bon après, mon parcours professionnel, personnel a suivi des évolutions diverses et variées, au grès des rencontres, au grès des possibilités (j'ai essayé de saisir à chaque fois la balle au bond) mais j'ai eu quand même l'opportunité d'inscrire assez longtemps, pas tout le temps, mais assez longtemps mon parcours personnel et professionnel dans le sillage de quelqu'un, A.L, (puisque j'ai longtemps été collaboratrice d'A.L) qui lui-même a découvert l'importance du projet européen, au fur et à mesure qu'il avançait, je dirais, au cours de sa carrière politique et donc il y a eu le fil rouge, voilà, de l'intérêt pour la chose européenne qui s'est prolongé. » INTERVIEWEE N°3

« Et puis j'ai fait mon petit tour, voilà, pour essayer de convaincre, de trouver des alliés, parce qu'il y a une commission nationale d'investiture et le nombre de gens qu'il faut convaincre est assez limité et donc, armée de mon seul courage et des encouragements réels mais quand même très ténus de ma hiérarchie, je suis allé convaincre les chefs de parti et les différents membres de la commission nationale d'investiture, voilà, de l'UMP. Et je me suis trouvée finalement en bonne position sur la liste : ça été assez compliqué, il y a eu beaucoup beaucoup de... (hésitation) séquences diverses et variées. Je me suis retrouvé finalement, voilà, j'ai fait un peu de tactique : ça je savais faire, ça fait parti de mon savoir-faire professionnel je dirais, j'ai fait un peu de tactique, un peu de stratégie puis trouvé à déjouer voilà... Et donc finalement j'ai réussie à me débarrasser de certaines concurrentes (rire étouffé) et je me suis retrouvé en 6^{ème} position. » INTERVIEWEE N°3

« Au sein du travail législatif, ce qui est le plus important c'est d'essayerpuisque en fait l'initiative des lois revient à la Commission. Nous ne sommes pas à l'initiative des lois. Notre travail consiste à les modifier, à les amender. Et c'est ce que j'essaye de faire. D'ailleurs je pense être un des députés... un des 50 députés européens qui depuis le début du mandat a déposé le plus d'amendements, quelque soit les textes. Voilà. C'est un pouvoir de modification mais pour le faire il faut étudier chaque texte puis avoir des collaborateurs aussi qui soient sur la même ligne, et c'est ce qui permet de progresser. » INTERVIEWEE N°8

« La seule personne qui connaît à fond le sujet c'est le rapporteur. Et donc si vous êtes rapporteur même appartenant un petit groupe, on peut avoir une influence sur la contenu des textes qui est sans commune mesure » INTERVIEWEE N°1

« Nous sommes... c'est un peu ambiguë... à la fois les représentant des citoyens de l'Union dont nous portons les aspirations, les revendications, les espoirs des citoyens de l'Union mais par ailleurs, un peu prioritairement, les aspirations, les revendications, les messages des revendications, colères, etc, interrogations de nos mandants qui sont nos électeurs nationaux. (Et donc.. Interruption...). Donc c'est un peu ambiguë, on est à la fois député européen mais on est aussi député européen français. » INTERVIEWEE N°3

« Ben dans une mesure assez simple, c'est que entre 60 et...ça dépend des années, ça dépend des sources, mais on considère qu'entre 60 et 80% des textes de lois qui sont des lois, des décrets, des règlements etc... qui seront mis en œuvre en France, sont la transposition d'application de texte qui auront été pris par le Parlement européen. Donc ça vous donne une idée de l'influence et de l'importance des choix qu'on a faire ici même si médiatiquement pas grand-monde s'en rend compte. » INTERVIEWEE N°8

« Plutôt qu'en France si vous êtes dans l'opposition vous avez un pouvoir c'est de hurler, tout le monde s'en fout, et si vous êtes dans la majorité vous avez un pouvoir c'est de vous taire parce qu'il faut faire passer les textes du gouvernement qui « Article I, le gouvernement a toujours raison, Article II, quand vous êtes pas contents du gouvernement et que vous êtes dans sa majorité, vous vous référez à l'article I ! ». C'est tout : résumé de la Constitution de la Cinquième République pour l'Assemblée nationale. » INTERVIEWEE N°8

« Tout le monde s'en fout. Tout le monde s'en fout sauf la classe politique et les journalistes politiques français. Et donc dans tout ça l'Europe est traité même pas comme une rubrique sportive (parce que le sport ça intéresse quand même, au moins le foot), non pas comme la rubrique culturelle (parce que la rubrique culturelle il y a un certains nombre de gens que la culture intéresse), mais je dirais comme la rubrique scientifique (Rires). « Il y a des spécialistes, qui sont des gens biens, mais tout ça est quand même enfin très chiant quoi ! ». Donc on en parle parce qu'il faut bien qu'il y ait un journal qui s'y tient. Ca c'est une vraie frustration qui n'est pas simplement d'ordre psychologique et pour l'amour propre. » INTERVIEWEE N°1

« Et ce pour quoi j'ai choisi le mandat de député européen plutôt que le mandat de député national, c'est cette capacité que l'on a ici, qu'à un député européen, si je puis dire, si il travaille bien, y compris son travail politique (dans le bon sens du terme) : il peut bâtir sa propre majorité, il peut avoir une influence importante sur le fond des dossiers mais ce qui est intéressant aussi, c'est cette possibilité d'avoir cette richesse de contacts. » INTERVIEWEE N°1

« Voilà, on est libéré des contraintes purement politiciennes, et on travaille sur la base euh.. voilà on fait de la vraie politique. Il faut des alliances, on cherche des accords, on travaille la pâte européenne pour avancer ensemble : donc ça c'est intéressant le fait qu'aucun groupe parlementaire n'ait la majorité à lui seul mais soit en permanence en construction de stratégie d'alliés. Et donc ça c'est intellectuellement encore une fois assez excitant, assez marrant, c'est de la vraie politique quoi. On est pas dans le réflexe pavlovien, on est dans la construction politique, d'accords, de compromis comme on dit dans cette maison. » INTERVIEWEE N°3

« Ben oui ! Beaucoup de gens disent qu'il faut faire trois mandats pour pleinement en profiter. (Oui?). Et oui. La formule habituellement pratiquée par les Allemands, les Britanniques : un premier mandat pour découvrir, un deuxième mandat pour agir, et un troisième mandat pour exercer de l'influence. C'est le modèle germano-britannique. » INTERVIEWEE N°3

I¹ : La fonction à laquelle j'étais candidat et à laquelle je n'ai jamais accédée, c'était Commissaire.

PE : Commissaire ?

I¹ : Voilà, mon objectif politique c'était d'être Commissaire européen. Je ne le serai jamais.

PE : Vous ne le serez jamais ?

I¹ : Non. Il faut être proposé par le Président de la République et, là, je reviens à la description que je faisais du système monarchique : il faut baisser la babouille, il faut cirer les pompes, il faut ... Et je ne suis pas un cireur de pompes. Et donc ... je ne sais plus ... quatre, cinq, six fois j'ai posé ma candidature pour être Commissaire français. Maintenant je ne le serai plus. INTERVIEWEE N°1

▪ THE FRENCH POLITICIAN

« (Ce n'est pas venu de votre initiative ?). Euh... non. Non non non. Jamais j'aurais imaginé plébisciter un mandat comme celui-ci. Voilà c'est ... L'opportunité s'est présentée, je l'ai prise, mais c'est une proposition qu'on m'a faite. » INTERVIEWEE N°6

« J'ai perdu aux législatives au lendemain des présidentielles et donc, comme j'ai une activité professionnelle, et une indépendance totale, estimant que mon camp me trahisse c'est une chose, que mes électeurs me lâche s'en est une autre, j'avais décidé d'arrêter. Jusqu'aux européennes où ma famille politique l'UMP m'a demandé d'être tête de liste (...) parce qu'ils estimaient que j'étais le meilleur pour lutter contre (le FN) et pour tirer la liste. J'ai beaucoup hésité, j'ai dit oui, et je suis reparti en politique, et je me suis retrouvé député européen. » INTERVIEWEE N°2

« D'abord c'est de faire correctement son travail, le mieux possible, donc d'être présent. Euh.. ensuite j'ai eu euh... deux objectifs : d'abord je veux garder le lien entre le mandat...enfin essayer de trouver le lien entre le mandat européen...enfin les responsabilités qui sont les miennes notamment dans les commissions dans lesquelles je siège... Et le territoire local. Donc trouver le moyen de faire la connection entre le territoire, celui qui est le mien, et le mandat de député européen. INTERVIEWEE N°6

« Ce qui m'amène dans l'action après : à prendre des responsabilités à l'intérieur de la délégation : je me suis fait élire Vice-Président parce que c'est l'endroit politique; à garder mes responsabilités politiques au sein de mon parti : je suis membre de mon bureau à l'UMP,

c'est l'endroit où se prennent les décisions. Et à faire en sorte que dans ce nouvel hémicycle, je puisse être dans les endroits, être dans les commissions de l'action. J'ai choisi la commission Transport parce que j'estime que les transports sont importants pour la circulation des biens et des personnes sur la totalité de l'Europe. J'estime que c'est important pour la France qui est au milieu de tout le passage. Et j'estime que c'est important pour ma circonscription. » INTERVIEWEE N°2

« J'appartiens à une sensibilité politique de droite que j'assume, dans un groupe avec nos qualités et nos défauts, mais je suis de droite française. Voilà. Je suis représentant de mes électeurs. » INTERVIEWEE N°2.

« La difficulté que l'on rencontre, c'est que comme on a pendant un grand nombre d'années, droite et gauche confondues, tapé sur l'Europe pour dire « C'est la faute de l'Europe », pour cacher nos lâchetés, turpitudes, nos manques de courages (ça c'est la lâcheté), une absence de décisions : on aime pas le système européen. Et donc il y a un discrédit de l'Europe auprès de la population parce qu'on a tapé dessus sans arrêt et on en voit plus l'intérêt. Arrive maintenant sur le volet politique un langage populiste. » INTERVIEWEE N°2

« Et puis de... de dire aux électeurs, en tout cas aux concitoyens qu'il suffit pas de se défouler aux élections européennes pour que la première délégation française soit celle du Front National. Parce que ça sert à rien. Il n'y a aucun intérêt ici, aucune utilité. Et donc c'est de leur dire voilà l'Europe, il faut... il faut...un bulletin de vote c'est pas pour rigoler quoi. Il faut essayer de... (Hum). Et quand vous votez Front National, première délégation, ça renforce pas le rôle de la France alors que c'est pas l'intention de l'électeur. » INTERVIEWEE N°6

« La réalité c'est que c'est un très beau mandat. On est pas nombreux, on est que 20 pour l'UMP. Ce qui veut dire que l'on est pas nombreux pour avoir une voix française dans une France qui a perdu de l'influence au niveau européen et qui en perd encore plus aujourd'hui avec la politique de M. Hollande » INTERVIEWEE N°2

« Ben c'est un ... c'est un grand honneur...de...de... je veux dire on est quand même très peu. Dans une vie on a ...quand on fait de la politique d'avoir des mandats comme celui-ci c'est...encore une fois c'est un honneur. On essaie modestement d'être à la hauteur mais oui je suis très fier. INTERVIEWEE N°6

« La seule chose qui m'a manquée, et c'est notamment la raison pour laquelle je suis retourné, c'est le combat ! Le combat politique, c'est comme un sportif de haut niveau, quoi ! On a envie de faire un combat politique, d'affronter les idées, d'échanger, d'essayer de s'affirmer, défendre ses positions, d'avancer ses pions de façon à ce que ces idées avancent, voilà. Donc ça c'est la seule chose qui m'a manquée parce-que Donc j'ai une activité professionnelle, j'ai des rémunérations donc... c'est simplement la conquête du pouvoir et l'échange d'idées. INTERVIEWEE N°2

« Mais quand on prend, nous, une décision au niveau européen de trouver des subventions pour des agriculteurs qui sont baisés dans le cadre de leurs implantations ; qu'il y a plusieurs centaines de millions, voir un milliard qu'il faut valider là-dessus... L'enjeu c'est que l'agriculteur il puisse toucher cet argent. Mais avant qu'il le touche, bonjour ! C'est d'une complexité pour y arriver. Et donc il n'y a aucune chance pour qu'il y arrive. Ça ça ne me frustre pas, mais ça va m'énerver très vite ! » INTERVIEWEE N°2

« En un an j'ai pris ce que je voulais... j'ai pris ce que je voulais donc je suis satisfait. Je pourrai mieux répondre à cette question, parce-que je suis un jeune parlementaire européen, quand j'aurais parfaitement compris les zones d'influences. Voilà. Donc là pour mon premier mandat j'ai eu ce que je voulais et donc.. euh... je pense que cette question je pourrai y répondre plus facilement dans un an ou deux. INTERVIEWEE N°2

« Non, pour l'instant non. Bon là c'est faire correctement le job mais euh... (Pas d'objectif de mi-mandat ?). Non non. C'est faire correctement le job, avoir un rapport, avoir des sujets sur lesquels on est reconnu dans sa commission. Mais pas plus que ça pour l'instant. (Est-ce qu'il y a un sujet qui vous intéresse particulièrement?. Ben ceux sur lesquels je travaille...euh ... (...) sur le droit d'auteur, l'enjeu que cela peut représenter sur le fond et puis parce que c'est aussi défendre les intérêts de la France. » INTERVIEWEE N°6

« Ecoutez, moi j'ai 47, dans 5 ans ça sera la fin du mandat. Ben j'espère en faire un autre. (Hum ?). Et puis euh.. ben dans 10 ans, je sais pas. (Vous savez pas ?) Non. Non (c'est peut-être un peu loin ?). Ben vous savez les choses c'est... encore une fois il y a deux ans j'imaginai pas être député européen. Donc euh... quand j'ai commencé...quand j'ai terminé mes études jamais j'aurais imaginé faire de la politique. Euh... donc la vie elle est faite d'opportunités, d'occasions, de rencontres, euh... donc euh vous dire, 5 ans c'est déjà beaucoup, mais bref, 10 ans donc impossible à concevoir » INTERVIEWEE N°6

« Pffffff... Aucune idée. Aucune idée. Je ferai tout pour être heureux. (Oui ?). C'est pas une quête individuelle, ça sera de toute façon une quête collective, c'est à dire que j'ai toujours travaillé pour... je suis médecin... j'ai toujours travaillé pour l'intérêt général, j'ai toujours été représentant des étudiants, de ma profession... je me suis toujours engagé pour un bien commun donc peut-être que je serai dans la caritatif et l'associatif, peut-être que... euh... j'écrirai des livres ou de la poésie euh... de toute façon, je pense qu'il faut avoir une élévation intellectuelle et je pense qu'il faut rendre ce qu'on a reçu. » INTERVIEWEE N°2

▪ **THE LOCAL SPECIALIST**

« A vrai dire, c'est M.B qui a toujours considéré...enfin quand je dis a toujours considéré... depuis 1994, B. a toujours....milité pour que je sois candidat aux européennes. A cause des sujets agricoles et à cause du fait que j'étais reconnu sur ce sujet-là. Il s'est battu pour je sois sur la liste en 1994 » INTERVIEWEE N°5

« Après sur le mandat lui-même c'est vraiment une opportunité, moi, je n'avais absolument pas de plans de carrières sur ça : j'avais imaginé faire beaucoup d'autres choses plutôt au niveau de la région d'ailleurs, au niveau de l'Alsace. À aucun moment je ne me suis vu député européen et là voilà, c'est les circonstances : il fallait une femme, (de la région, et sur la liste) engagée politiquement ce qui était mon cas puisque j'étais engagé avec des responsabilités avec l'UMP du Bas-Rhin, et qui appréciait les questions européennes, ce qui était mon cas aussi. En tout cas, il n'y avait pas de plan de carrière pour devenir député européen. INTERVIEWEE N°4

« C'était pour moi quelque chose de ... qui n'était pas prévisible, qui n'était pas réfléchi. On m'a proposé politiquement, les collègues politiques m'ont proposé, les collègues politiciens m'ont proposé, voilà. J'étais membre du gouvernement pendant 10 ans: je pouvais recommencer encore une deuxième manda...une troisième mandature mais les collègues ne

m'ont pas proposé de faire autre chose parce qu'il y avait cette possibilité d'être député européen. Alors je me suis dit : « Pourquoi pas ? » et puis je me suis lancé, et voilà ! » INTERVIEWEE N°7

« Moi je viens d'une (région) donc..euh... j'essaye de faire en sorte que (ma région) puisse bénéficier de mon mandat de député. Et j'essaye de voir, d'avoir ici, avec mon équipe : on essaie de voir avec mon équipe quels sont les instruments, quels sont les instruments financiers dont peuvent bénéficier (ma région) qui n'en ont pas encore. Et c'est le travail qu'on a fait pendant la dernière législature. » INTERVIEWEE N°7

« Ici, si vous voulez être légitime, il faut bosser. Euh... Je suis passé à la Commission de l'agriculture... J'ai fait donc tout à la Commission de l'agriculture en tant que titulaire, j'ai passé 5 ans à la Commission des transports comme suppléant et je suis aujourd'hui à la Commission de l'environnement. Dans les trois commissions c'est la même chose. Il y a ceux qui sont présents, ceux qui sont respectés parce que connaissant leurs sujets, connaissant leurs...étant constant dans les idées, et puis ceux qui sont entités négligeable. Et... la ...la vraie différence d'un député à l'autre je pense que c'est la qualité du travail. Et la reconnaissance de ce travail par les pairs. » INTERVIEWEE N°5

« D'abord je voudrais rappeler ce qui figure dans la Constitution française et dans les traités de l'Union qui ont instauré le Parlement européen, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de mandat impératif (oui !). Ce que tout le monde oublie tout le temps ! Ceux qui vous dit je propose 110 propositions ou 60 engagements (si ça vous rappelle des élections récentes), ils peuvent les trahir sans crainte puisqu'il n'y a pas de mandat impératif. Voilà. Moi je fais pas de promesses, je suis d'autant plus tranquille... » INTERVIEWEE N°8

« Je représente les citoyens de ma circonscription, hein : ma circonscription c'est l'Est de la France, donc c'est 5 régions administratives de l'Est. Donc je représente les citoyens individuels mais mon idée c'est aussi de représenter les organisations professionnelles, la société civile organisée qui défend des intérêts particuliers, quoi. » INTERVIEWEE N°4

« La difficulté c'est de...la difficulté de faire reconnaître sur le terrain le travail qu'on fait. En général on est assez bien reconnu par le secteur pour lequel on travaille. Euh.... La chimie, la chasse, l'agriculture, le transport etc... De là à avoir une légitimité plus large dans l'opinion publique.... » INTERVIEWEE N°5

« Il faut être présent pour répondre aussi à leurs intérêts. Et je donc... Ca c'était pour euh...pendant la dernière législature, et ça continue maintenant, voilà. Ça continue pour (la circonscription), c'est-à-dire qu'on veutVous savez qu'eux bénéficient du FED comme les pays africains (Interruption de son assistante : - FED, c'est Fonds européen pour le développement !- Oui, Oui !- Voilà ! Rires). Mais ce ne sont pas des pays en développement comme les pays d'Afrique par exemple. Ils sont déjà à un niveau un peu plus là... mais ils utilisent le FED. Alors on essaye avec mon équipe...on va essayer de proposer un autre...un instrument beaucoup plus flexible, inscrit dans le budget de l'Union européenne, voilà, qui permettent l'utilisation du...de cet instrument beaucoup plus facilement que le FED. » INTERVIEWEE N°7

« C'est une belle expérience. Oui oui oui. C'est passionnant. C'est très prenant mais c'est vraiment passionnant. (Qu'est-ce qui vous plaît dans le mandat ?). Alors moi j'aime la diversité.... C'est très divers, hein. Alors au début c'est difficile parce- que l'on passe

vraiment d'un monde à l'autre et régulièrement : alors on passe d'un sujet à l'autre, des sujets très techniques, très spécifiques. Donc moi qui suis en commission Emploi, en commission Industrie, qui suit un peu les questions agricoles, on passe d'un sujet à l'autre et à chaque fois il faut se remettre dans le bain...enfin voilà... Après vous passez d'un lieu à l'autre, voilà, entre votre territoire, le Parlement à Strasbourg, le Parlement à Bruxelles, donc c'est très varié, c'est très riche, et puis moi j'aime beaucoup le contact avec les gens. » INTERVIEWEE N°4

« Je tire du plaisir à ça parce qu'on a fait des choses pour (toute la circonscription). On a défendu des dossiers (pour toutes les régions) et puis voilà. Je veux dire euh...C'est un mandat très très intéressant. (Oui). Très très intéressant. Je le...bon c'est très bien...Je veux dire on est là tout le temps à suivre nos dossiers, et voilà, ça fait travailler. Et puis on est satisfait quand un texte est réusé, et la satisfaction c'est l'envie de travailler. Oui oui. INTERVIEWEE N°7

« Je viens de loin quand même(...). Frustrer, si j'étais à me plaindre pour repartir au pays tout le temps etc...ça serait une frustration. Mais j'ai trouvé du plaisir à travailler ici et puis bon...Je compense cette frustration par rapport au plaisir que je trouve à travailler. C'est ...c'est tout. » INTERVIEWEE N°7

« Parce que je voulais faire le deuxième mandat, à la fois pour finir la PAC et pour (comme c'est un deuxième mandat on peut prendre plus de responsabilités)...de fait on est venu me chercher pour prendre la Présidence de la Commission de l'Agriculture. (-Ah oui ?). Euh... Joseph Daul me l'a proposé, le Commissaire précédent M. Boel me l'a proposé, Di Castro le Président sortant m'a dit : « C'est toi (...) qui doit prendre ma place » etc... J'ai pas accepté de prendre la Présidence de la Commission de l'Agriculture parce que c'est pas compatible avec le mandat de maire de (ma commune). Je suis obligé de limiter mon temps vraiment ici ou à Bruxelles : je passe le temps qui est nécessaire à mon mandat, c'est-à-dire participer aux séances, participer aux réunions de travail, de groupes etc... Mais je peux pas déborder : un poste de maire est très pregnant, donc voilà. (-Oui). Mais... mais si vous voulez si j'avais mener mon plan personnel je ne serai pas Maire de (ma commune) et j'aurais pris des responsabilités au Parlement européen » INTERVIEWEE N°5

• Discussion

« Mais quand vous dites fonction nationale, vous pensez à quoi ? Député, sénateur ou ministre ? Il n'y en a que trois des fonctions nationales. Enfin bon, Président de la République ça serait peut être un peu s'avancer quand même ! (*ton amusé*). Là, je n'y pense guère à vrai dire euh... Je n'y pense même pas du tout... Mais bon comme il y a incompatibilité si d'aventure, oui, il devait arriver quelque chose de l'ordre de l'acquisition d'un mandat national, *de facto* je mettrais fin à ma fonction de député au Parlement européen. Mais ça serait une stratégie qui aurait été construite, qui serait euh voilà...développer, au sens cycliste du terme je dirais, très longuement etc etc. Je n'en suis pas du tout là aujourd'hui. (*Vous n'y pensez pas ?*). Je ne pense pas à emmerder la terre entière et tous les caciques des mon parti pour à tout prix qu'ils m'accordent une investiture pour quelque chose, hein. Mais je sais simplement, parce que je suis un petit peu expérimenté après les quelques années que je traîne dans le milieu, je sais qu'il se passe souvent des choses que l'on a pas soit-même préparer ou anticiper parce qu'il y a des stratégies politiques collectives, il y a des stratégies qui sont construites par la famille politique auxquelles de temps en temps il est convenable de se plier. Voilà. C'est tout. Je...je ne dis rien de mystérieux. » INTERVIEWEE N°3.

« J'ai pas le choix ! (*Vous n'avez pas le choix ?*). Quand on vous appelle au gouvernement, vous ne dites pas non. Si vous êtes là pour servir. Moi je l'ai fait deux fois déjà.... Euh... est-ce qu'on m'appellera ? J'en sais rien. Place un peu au jeune peut-être. Si on m'appelle j'ai pas le choix, on dit jamais non au gouvernement, c'est mon devoir. » INTERVIEWEE N°2

« Ah ben oui évidemment ! Pour revenir au gouvernement, oui bien sûr (*Oui ?*). Ah oui bien sûr ! Enfin, dans un domaine qui a trait à ce que je sais faire. Mais bon la question ne se pose pas dans les années qui viennent... (*Rires/grincement*) » INTERVIEWEE N°1

« Je vais reformuler ta question par rapport à ton ressenti. C'est très très important pour un homme politique d'entrer au gouvernement. Et pour un homme politique il n'y a pas de carrière réussie si on n'entre pas au gouvernement. Moi j'ai été deux fois. Je suis très content de l'avoir été et probablement au plus bel endroit au meilleur moment. Voilà. Maintenant il y en a qui rêvent d'y retourner et il y en a qui rêvent d'y entrer, et qui ferait tout pour le faire. Moi je l'ai eu, j'étais très heureux. Je ne me prostituerai pas pour le faire. Je suis complètement détaché de ça. » INTERVIEWEE N°2

« Non. Non non. Ca m'intéresse....c'est quoi ? c'est d'être Ministre ? Ca m'intéresse pas ! Aucun intérêt ! La vacuité complète de ce genre de poste ne soulève en moi aucun enthousiasme, aucun intérêt. Ce qui peut paraître bizarre pour quelqu'un qui a travaillé proche du pouvoir mais c'est... Je n'ai pas la prétention de laisser une trace dans l'histoire ! Ca ne marche pas comme ça... » INTERVIEWEE N°8

« Ah non. Dans un futur proche, non non non non. Non non. De toute façon il n'y a aucune fonction qui se profile à l'horizon. La fonction de Président de Groupe est occupé actuellement je crois assez sérieusement (*ton amusé*), voilà. Non, il n'y a pas d'autres fonctions que j'ambitionne. (*Pas de Présidence de Commission par exemple ?*). Ah non non non, ça des choses tellement compliqué à mettre en branle, euh... Non non je ne l'ambitionne pas du tout, je ne souhaite pas du tout développer la moindre stratégie à cet égard. Non pas du tout. Non non. » INTERVIEWEE N°3

« Je suis incapable de vous répondre à cette question. Incapable de vous répondre. Je ne peux pas vous dire. Je vois pas. Je vois pas. (*Vous ne savez pas ?*). Non, non. Je serais député national avec ma circonscription, avec une candidature personnelle, unique ; si j'aime ce que je fais je vous dirai « Ben voilà, je serai réélue, je m'implique sur le territoire ». Mais là, vous savez, la composition des listes, la constitution des listes est tellement euh...(*hésitation*)...comment dire...je veux pas dire compliqué mais aujourd'hui je ne suis pas capable de vous dire que je serai à nouveau en position éligible sur la liste. Beaucoup de députés européens français ont fait des passages de 5 ans et ne sont pas revenu, hein. Donc idéalement aujourd'hui je vous dirai « Je serai ravi d'être encore là, de faire plusieurs mandats » parce-que déjà ça m'intéresserait, ça me passionerait mais aussi parce-que je pense que ça serait une bonne chose pour la France d'avoir cetta stabilité au niveau des élus mais je suis pas capable de vous dire euh.... Ça serait un vœu, voilà ! Oui c'est un vœu, c'est un vœu. » INTERVIEWEE N°5

d) Tables

Table 1. Political profiles and biographies of the eight respondents interviewed

	<i>Interviewee n°1</i>	<i>Interviewee n°2</i>	<i>Interviewee n°3</i>	<i>Interviewee n°4</i>	<i>Interviewee n°5</i>	<i>Interviewee n°6</i>	<i>Interviewee n°7</i>	<i>Interviewee n°8</i>
Sex	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age (years)	> 60	50 > 60	50 > 60	50 >	50 > 60	50 >	> 60	50 >
Leadership position(s) in the EP	- Member of the bureau of the French delegation to the EPP - Member of the bureau of a Special Committee	- Member of the bureau of the French delegation to the EPP -Member of the bureau of a Delegation	- Member of the bureau of the French delegation to the EPP - EPP coordinator in a Committee	- None	- EPP Vice-Coordinator in a Committee	- None	- Member of the bureau of a Committee - Member of the bureau of a Delegation	- None
Other ongoing electoral mandates	None	None	None	None	- Mayor of a city of 60 000 inhabitants	- Mayor of a city of 20 000 inhabitants - Chair of a Community of Councils	None	None

Responsibilities in the home party/political group/EPP	- Member of the political bureau of the UMP - Member of the political assembly of the EPP	- Member of the political bureau/political adviser of the UMP - Member of the EPP Bureau	- Member of the national council of the UMP - National Functional Secretary - Member of the EPP Bureau	Local responsibilities for the UMP	- National Thematic Secretary for the UMP - Local responsibilities for the UMP	None	None	None
Incumbent/Freshman	Incumbent	Freshman	Incumbent	Freshman	Incumbent	Freshman	Incumbent	Freshman
Former political/national responsibilities/ Relevant professional experience	- Former MP - Former Minister - Former local mandates	- Former MP - Former Minister - Former local mandates	- Former minor local mandate - Former parliamentary assistant and technical adviser	- Former parliamentary assistant	- Former adviser to Ministers	- Former MP - Former parliamentary assistant	- Former member of a local government - Former substitute of an MP	- Former local mandate - Former parliamentary assistant

Table 2. Coding scheme to establish the roles of the eight respondents interviewed

	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Duties and responsibilities</i>	<i>Representative role</i>	<i>Importance of MEPs/EU</i>	<i>Satisfaction</i>	<i>Frustration</i>
Shared	Interviewee n°2/ Interviewee n°6/ Interviewee n°7 (none)	Interviewee n°3/ Interviewee n°4/ Interviewee n°6/ Interviewee n°7 (linking mandate to the local territory)	Interviewee n°7/ Interviewee n°4 (constituency)	Interviewee n°2/ Interviewee n°6/ Interviewee n°8 (pedagogical role)	Interviewee n°2/ Interviewee n°6 (honoured of being among the few representing France)	Interviewee n°2/ Interviewee n°4 (complexity of the institution)
Shared	Interviewee n°1/ Interviewee n°3/ Interviewee n°5/ Interviewee n°8 (very)	Interviewee n°2/ Interviewee n°1/ Interviewee n°3 (*2) (taking responsibility and having influence)	Interviewee n°2/ Interviewee n°1/ Interviewee n°3/ Interviewee n°6 (constituency + France)	Interviewee n°1/ Interviewee n°3/ Interviewee n°8 (*2) (work on the projects of the future)	Interviewee n°1/ Interviewee n°3/ Interviewee n°7 (working in an international environment)	Interviewee n°1/ Interviewee n°3/ Interviewee n°8 (lack of attention from the media and the French political class)
Shared	Interviewee n°5 (*2)/ Interviewee n°4 (ambiguous)	Interviewee n°5/ Interviewee n°8 (good legislation/capacity of listening)	Interviewee n°5/ Interviewee n°8/ Interviewee n°3 (*2) (citizens of the EU)	Interviewee n°5/ Interviewee n°7/ Interviewee n°4 (benefiting to a sector or population)	Interviewee n°4/ Interviewee n°5 (specializing in one topic)	Interviewee n°5/ Interviewee n°6 (being recognised by the local territory)
Shared					Interviewee n°8 (contributing to peace in Europe)	Interviewee n°7/ Interviewee n°4 (*2)/ Interviewee n°3 (*2) (not really frustrated)

Table 3. Ideal-types of the roles and ambitions of the eight respondents interviewed

IDEAL-TYPES	<i>Role(s): The European Animator</i>	<i>Role(s): The French Politician</i>	<i>Role(s): The Local Specialist</i>
MEPs	Interviewee n°1/ Interviewee n° 3/ Interviewee n°8	Interviewee n°2/ Interviewee n°6	Interviewee n°5/ Interviewee n°4/ Interviewee n°7/ Interviewee n°8 (*2)
<i>Motivation</i>	Very motivated	No motivations	Motivated but unexpected.
<i>Duties and responsibilities</i>	Exercising influence: Preparing the legislative work, the votes and being a reporter.	Exercising influence: choosing strategic committees and making the link with the needs of the local territory.	To work-hard to be recognised by the peers and the electorate: being present in Brussels and investing in committee-work.
<i>Representative role</i>	Represent France and the citizens of the EU	Represent France	Represent the constituency
<i>Importance of MEPs/EU</i>	MEPs work on the projects of the future.	Pedagogical role of MEPs	MEPs as intermediaries between the constituency and their European mandate.
<i>Satisfaction</i>	Very satisfied to work in an international, multicultural environment and contributing to a project.	Proud and honoured to be among the happy few representing their country.	Happy to work on specific, technical issues. They are hard-workers.
<i>Frustration</i>	The complete lack of attention from the French media and political class.	The complexity of the institution which makes it hard to establish a link with the constituency.	No real frustrations.
<i>Political profile/biography</i>	Incumbent MEPs. They exercise responsibilities in the French delegation, in the EPP Group, in their home party and in Committees.	Freshmen MEPs. Former MPs or important national responsibilities.	Incumbent and Freshmen MEPs. They exercise important responsibilities within Committees. Strong local roots. Godfathered by a European figure.
Ambitions	Ambitious within the EP. Between static and intrainstitutional ambition.	Ambitious in and without the EP. Between static and progressive ambition.	Most heteroclite ambitions: between discrete and static.

