

Using a grounded theory qualitative research approach the author constructs a theoretical framework around understanding the subjective experience of incoming (newly elected) Member European Parliament (MEPs) to the European Parliament and proposes a theory to explain the relationship between MEPs and the Parliament. A select group of MEPs were interviewed around their subjective experience of joining the European Parliament, and how they attempt to resolve their main concerns. The author used a grounded study framework proposed by Tie et al (2019) which is designed to assist the novice researcher. In an on-going iterative process of 'comparative analysis' which stayed close to the original data, the author 'reached down to fundamentals' and 'up to abstract understandings' (Charmaz 2012) while exploring the emerging concepts, to theorise that when transitioning into the EU Parliament, MEPs experience a changing identity, and in seeking to shape parliament, MEPs are themselves shaped by the parliament.

The findings suggest that newly elected MEPs experience a changing identity on joining the Parliament, and in response attempt to change the Parliamentary structures and practices. The Parliament however resists change by a socialising process. The MEPs themselves are changed during their term in office, and the Parliament remains fundamentally unchanged. The process is repeated with the periodic arrival of newly elected MEPs.