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► **To cite this version:**

Olivier Costa. Introduction: The need for further research on the European Parliament. Olivier Costa (ed.). The European Parliament in times of EU crisis : dynamics and transformations, Palgrave Macmillan, pp.1-21, 2019, European administrative governance, 978-3-319-97390-6. 10.1007/978-3-319-97391-3_1 . halshs-01936419

HAL Id: halshs-01936419

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01936419>

Submitted on 26 Jan 2024

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Introduction: The need for further research on the European Parliament

Olivier Costa

in O. Costa (ed.), *The European Parliament in Times of Crisis: Dynamics and Transformations*, London, Palgrave, 2019, p. 1-21.

‘Highly organized research is guaranteed to produce nothing new.’
Frank Herbert, *Dune*

1. A very broad literature

In the last two decades, around a hundred books and a thousand papers have been devoted to the study and analysis of the European Parliament (EP) – mainly in English, but also in French, German, Italian and Spanish. On top of that, numerous PhD students have also proposed their own vision of the most diverse aspects of the assembly. This literature is very rich but with the exception of a few textbooks, quite fragmented and increasingly specialized. It is organised around two key dimensions – disciplines and methods – but also by topics.

First, there are diverse approaches depending on the *discipline*. Public lawyers were first to study the EP – which was the case for all European institutions. They soon proposed institutional analyses, describing the assembly’s organisation, powers and activities. Political scientists started to complement those views by the end of the 1980, with a major contribution by authors working within EU institutions. The EP became a mainstream subject for political science in the 2000s, when a growing number of scholars, specialized in legislative and electoral studies, started to apply their methods, concepts and hypothesis to the European assembly and European elections. Since then, most social sciences have started to pay attention to the assembly. Sociologists have studied in detail the identity, values and careers of members of the EP (MEPs), but also of their assistants and other staff members. Historians have assessed the developments of the institution and its role in European integration. Anthropologists and ethnologists have analysed the actors and ‘tribes’ of the EP. Specialists of quantitative methods and economists have mobilized their skills to make a sophisticated use of data, in order to analyse the behaviour of members and voting patterns. Philosophers and political theorists have included the EP in their reflexions on the possibility of democracy or deliberation at supranational level. The EP’s contribution to main EU policies has also been studied, sector by sector, by specialists of each field. Finally, international relations scholars have explored the role of the EP in external affairs and its relations with other international parliamentary organs. The literature on the EP is also structured around the use of different *methods and approaches*. Obviously, each discipline and sub-discipline is grounded on specific epistemological and

methodological choices. But there is more: there are continuous scientific discussions on the kind of data and analyses that should be chosen in order to better understand the EP. Today, academics use a very vast array of sources: databases on EP or EU activities; datasets on MEPs socio-biographical profiles and roll call votes; the results of closed questionnaires with MEPs and staff members; open or semi-structured interviews with them; observations conducted in plenary sessions or within various EP organs; quantitative and qualitative analysis of all kinds of official documents; public opinion surveys; media databases... There are also many scientific discussions around the suitability of the use of comparison in order to study the EP: Can it be compared to national parliaments? Or better, to the US Congress? To which extent is it possible to apply classic tools, theories and hypotheses of legislative studies to the EP? Can we consider the EP and the Council as the two chambers of a bicameral European legislature? It is worth mentioning that not all central debates around EU studies make sense in the EP's case. The various approaches of neo-institutionalism are obviously prominent in the research field, and scholars are endlessly discussing the compared merits of its various declinations (historical, rational-choice, sociological, discursive...), including deep controversies between partisans of the rational-choice approach and supporters of a constructivist/cognitivist one, or between proponents of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Compared to neo-institutionalism, the classic controversies between neo-functionalists and intergovernmentalists do not make much sense in the case of the EP, because both are quite unable to account for its historical developments and empowerment, and do not propose an institutional model in which it plays a central role. In contrast, part of the research devoted to the EP is better linked to the general debates in social sciences than the studies focusing on the other EU institutions which are more specific. At least in the field of political sciences, the EP has indeed attracted the attention of 'mainstream' scholars, especially in legislative studies and elections specialists, which is still not the case of the Commission or of the Court.

2. The six main topics under study

The literature on the EP is also structured around *topics*. There are several textbooks that propose a more or less exhaustive approach of the EP, but most of the work focuses on a specific aspect of the institution. We can distinguish six main areas of research that have all generated a significant amount of publications.

First, there is the *institutional approach*. Since the 1950s, the EP has been obviously addressed by all EU institutional law textbooks, but the main books that are specifically focused on the institution itself have always included considerations about the political dynamics or the sociological dimensions of the assembly (Corbett, Jacobs, Neville, 2016; Judge, Earnshaw, 2008; Palmer, 2015; Ripoll Servent, 2018; Steunenberg, Thomassen, 2002; Westlake, 1994). They all deal with the main features of the EP: its role, competences, process of empowerment, interaction with other institutions... The question of the history (Corbett, 1998; Priestley, 2008; European Parliament, 2009) and empowerment of the EP (Christiansen, 2002; Farrell, Héritier 2005; Hix, 2002b; Hix, Høyland, 2013; Judge, Earnshaw, 1994; Rittberger, Schimmelfennig, 2006; Rittberger, 2014; Tsebelis, 1994) has attracted many publications. As previously stated, a growing number of researchers, trained in comparative politics, tend to consider that the EP is a 'normal' parliament, that should be compared to national legislatures (Hooghe and Marks,

2008; Hix and Hoyland, 2013; Kreppel, 2012; Young, 2016; Yordanova, 2011). However, most international relations scholars refuse this idea of ‘normalisation’ or, better, propose an alternative approach of it: they consider the EP as an international parliamentary organisation among others, to be compared to its peers (Costa, Dri, Stavridis, 2013; Malamud, Stavridis, 2011; Šabič, 2008).

A second set of researches discuss the *organisation* of the EP. They focus on MEPs (see below), political groups (Brack, 2018; Kreppel, 2002; Raunio, 1997), various organs (committees, delegations, intergroups, leadership structures) (Coman, 2009; Whitaker, 2011; Costa, 2013), staff (Egeberg et al., 2013; Winzen, 2011) and assistants (Pegan, 2017), procedures (Bressanelli et al., 2016; Kreppel, 2000; Brack and Costa, 2018b), or specific issues such as the seats or languages (Priestley, Clark, 2012).

The first direct elections of the EP in 1979 have led to a vast literature analysing *European elections* and discussing their specificities (Déloye and Bruter, 2007; Gabel and Hix, 2002; Hix and Hagemann, 2009; Hobolt, 2015; Lodge, 2016; Reif, Schmitt, 1980; Viola, 2015), or developments such as the ‘Spitzenkandidaten’ procedure (Schmitt, Hobolt, Popa, 2015; Priestley, Peñalver García, 2015). They have led to researches dealing with the question of electoral support, attitudes of the public opinion towards the EP and its members (Blondel et al., 1998), and the public image (Lord, 2018) and communication strategy of the assembly (Anderson, McLeod, 2004).¹

The interactions between the EP and *external actors* a fourth stream of studies. It includes national and European parties (Gallagher, Laver and Mair, 2011; Hix, 2002b), National parliaments (Auel, Benz, 2005; Hefftlar et al., 2015; Maurer and Wessels, 2001), interest groups (Mashall, 2010; Kluger, 2016), and civil society organisations (Warleigh, 2000; Foret, 2017). It also comprises organisations and actors outside the EU, with researches analysing the relations of the EP with other parliamentary bodies, at the national level and within international organisations, as well as with the representatives of states outside of the EU (Diedrichs, 2004; Thym, 2006).

The analysis of the EP, thanks to the various tools of *legislative studies*, has given birth to a very vast literature. These studies focus on MEPs socio-biographic profiles (Kauppi, 2005; Scarrow, 1997; Whitaker, Hix, Zapryanova, 2017), professionalisation (Beauvallet, Michon, 2010), views and beliefs (Whitaker, Hix, Zapryanova, 2017), allegiances and representational roles (Hix, 2002a; Noury, 2002; Wessels, 2005). A central question has always been the one of socialisation: do MEPs go native, that is do they become more favourable to European integration during their time in the EP (Franklin, Scarrow, 1999; Scully 1998, 2006)? MEP’s voting behaviour has also attracted a lot of interest (De Vries and Hobolt, 2016; McElroy, Benoit, 2012; Ringe, 2010), especially since the introduction of roll-call-votes for the final vote on each text (Carruba et al., 2006; Hix, Noury, Roland, 2007). Other activities of MEPs, in the plenary meetings and committees (Hurka, Kaeding, 2012; Judge, Earnshaw, 1994; Bowler; Farrell, 1995), or in the constituency (Poyet, 2018), have also generated much research.

¹ The creation by the EP of the ‘Parlemeter’, a biannual survey similar to the Eurobarometer, conducted twice a year in all EU member states, has provided researchers with a huge amount of data on a wide range of issues, such as citizens’ knowledge of the EP, their perceptions of the EU, and their expectations in view of the European elections, the EP and the EU in general.

Finally, the *activities* of the EP are quite well studied nowadays. The objective of this vast array of work is to understand how the assembly implements its competences. Authors deal with the question of coalition building (Kreppel, Tsebelis, 1999; Kreppel, 2000), interinstitutional relations and negotiations (Rasmussen, Toshkov, 2011), influence within the EP (Burns 2005; Tsebelis et al., 2001) and of the EP (Héritier, 2017; Maurer, 2003; Shackleton, 2000; Tsebelis, 1994; Yordanova, 2013). They analyse the EP's impact on internal (Ripoll Servent, 2013) and external policies (Herranz-Surrallés, 2014; Stavridis, Irrera, 2016), its capacity to control other organs (Raunio, 1996), as well as its role in constitutional matters (Fossum, Menéndez, 2005) and as a public forum (Crespy, 2014).

In recent years, this typology of topics has however, partially lost its relevance. Some interesting pieces of work have bridged various approaches, linking for instance the literature on institutional change with the one on MEPs' individual behaviour or social profiles. Authors have shown that the institutional changes undergone by the EP have impacted MEPs identity (Daniel, 2015), their behaviour (Ringe, 2010), the sorts of careers they choose (Daniel, Metzger, 2018), their links to their respective constituencies (Poyet, 2018) or the way groups select their rapporteurs (Hermansen, 2018).

3. The recent decline of research on the EP

Over the past ten years, the EP has somehow lost part of its attractiveness in the eyes of scholars. This is the result of several factors.

The primary one is directly linked to the type of research devoted to the EP, which has experienced a continuous process of routinisation and specialisation. First, there is a form of routinisation, since the scholars involved in the field of EP studies tend to endlessly reproduce the same research on the same subjects: MEPs voting behaviour or role perception, coalition-building, evolutions of the legislative procedure, EP electoral rules, turnout in EU elections, influence of national delegations within the house... It is obviously necessary to update the existing work, since the EP constantly evolves, through elections, enlargements, new treaties, and internal reforms. However, the added-value of each new piece of work tends to regress. Also, many publications or PhD theses do not emanate from an interesting or original research question, nor from the will to study or understand a new phenomenon. They are quite often rather data-driven, i.e. they result from the availability of certain types of data: roll-call votes, MEPs surveys, data on EP or EU activities, etc. Thus, most contributions merely update existing information, and are affected by a phenomenon of declining scientific added-value.

A second difficulty derives from the over-specialisation of research. In the field of EP studies, more and more detailed and sophisticated approaches -that do not necessary allow for a better understanding of the dynamics of the EP as a whole – have appeared. These works are often very self-referential, with a limited number of authors quoting each other's studies or discussing tiny details in their respective researches. There are constantly new papers discussing new evidence or proposing specific improvement to a given empirical or theoretical design. We are thus losing the capacity to assess the general evolution of the EP. While several textbooks do propose an exhaustive approach of the institution, of its role, history, activities and organisation, they yet tend to overlook the dynamics of the institution, especially in the case of new editions of existing volumes.

Research on the EP has also slowed down since the beginning of the 2000's as a result of a conjunction of political events. The fiasco of the constitutional process, citizens and elites' enduring lack of interest for European elections, the institutionalisation of the European Council by the Lisbon Treaty, the growing role of the Commission, the European Central Bank and the European Council in the context of the Eurozone crisis, and the overall rise of Euroscepticism – in Member States and within EU institutions – have challenged the developments of politics at the supranational level, as well as the idea of the EP's centrality in the EU regime. As a result, EU studies specialists have paid less attention to the EP – even if the Eurocrisis has led to interesting publications. This turn has also led to the reviving of theoretical debates on the nature of European integration and on its dynamics. This controversy, mainly articulated between revised approaches of intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism (Bickerton et al., 2015; Fabbrini, 2015; Monar and Chang, 2013; Puetter, 2012), does not pay much attention to the EP, which is only central to some federalist theories – keeping in mind that neo-institutionalism is not a theory per se.

4. The need for new research

Regardless of this decline in academic interest, the EP has continued to evolve, as a result of the transformation of the EU's institutional context, which has created new constraints on the assembly, but also new opportunities and challenges (Brack, Costa 2018a). In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty recognized the EP as a central institution of the EU regime and a key-player of democracy and legitimacy (articles 10 and 14 TEU). It also induced a different balance of powers between the main institutions (Fabbrini, 2015; Héritier, 2017; Schackleton, 2017). It has created new prospects for the EP, that have notably led to the generalisation of legislative trilogues and early agreements (Bressanelli et al., 2016; Reh, 2014) as well as the implementation of the 'Spitzenkandidaten' procedure. The latter has modified the institutional arrangements, creating a new political situation within the EP (with a formal coalition between the groups EPP, S&D and ALDE, called the 'block') (Hobolt, 2014; Schmitt et al., 2015), a new kind of relationship between the EP and the Commission, and a more political role for the EP President. The crisis of European integration and the rise of Euroscepticism have also increased the presence of European issues in national political debates, induced a better connection between domestic and EU politics and given more relevance to European elections (Taggart, 1998; Brack, 2018). Furthermore, the 2008 financial crisis has also led to significant reflexions on the best way to democratize – with or without the EP – the governance of the Eurozone (Cooper, Smith, 2017; Rittberger, 2014).

In this changing context, we have witnessed the emergence of some original research, based on new questions or methods. Scholars have studied EP deliberations (Roger, 2016), the place of religion within the house (Foret, 2017), the way EP staff members make choices (Kuehnhanss et al., 2017), the establishment of the EP policy agenda (Greene, Cross, 2017), and analyzed online contestation during the 2014 campaign (Wilde et al., 2014). However, plenty of other aspects and evolutions of the EP remain unstudied, because of the routinisation of research and of the focus of EU scholars on other institutions and processes.

The present book is based on the idea that things do change at a rapid pace within the EP, in many respects. There has been a real shift in the partisan landscape, with the emergence of the

'block' and the empowerment of Eurosceptic groups. The EP is still adapting to its new competences granted by the Lisbon Treaty (legislation, budget, appointment, approval of international agreements, delegated legislation...). Moreover, interinstitutional negotiations play a growing role in the functioning of the EU political system. The EP is also developing strategies to increase its control capacity on the Commission, the Council and even the European Council, and its influence on areas such as external relations, defence and macro-economic governance. The relations between the assembly and its environment – civil society, interest groups, national parliaments, EU agencies – are also carefully considered by MEPs. The aim of this book is thus to go beyond the existing literature as to fill some of its gaps. To do so, the aim was to focus on unstudied topics, innovating approaches and novel methods or data. This project results from research conducted at the Department of European Political and Governance Studies of the College of Europe. Individual research of several policy analysts of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) have contributed to this endeavour. The overall book project was launched during a workshop organised in Bruges in October 2016, and the first drafts were presented and discussed during a two-day workshop at the European Parliament in May 2017.

The 34 authors of the book have been encouraged to focus on the recent evolutions, changes, and developments within the EP, and to underline emerging trends. They all have been studying the EP for many years, which allows them to appreciate its evolutions and to contextualize them. This volume, without purporting to do so exhaustively, covers – with its 19 chapters – the main points of interest concerning the EP today. It addresses a vast range of topics, questions, and issues, and rely on various methods and approaches. Some have benefited from original data gathered by the EPRS.

5. The volume

The book is laid out in four parts, dealing respectively with the place of the EP within the EU political system, its role in the EU policy-making, its election and internal politics as well as its impact on EU policies.

The first part deals with the **changing role of the EP within the EU regime**. It has evolved considerably in recent years, thanks to the Treaty of Lisbon and to the formal and informal changes it has induced. In this part, attention is paid to the changing relations between the EP and four key-actors: the Commission, the European Council, the Court of Justice of the EU and the Committee of the Regions.

In her chapter, **Eva Poptcheva** examines the different types of parliamentary oversight at the EP's disposal, grouping them into classical control instruments of ex-post, negative, oversight and ex-ante, steering, oversight. She seeks to establish whether the EU political system has transformed from a system which has a separation of powers to one with a fusion of powers, since scrutiny instruments become more relevant. Her hypothesis is that the more the EP is asserting positive scrutiny, the more this stimulates a shift towards a parliamentary system of fusion of powers.

Wolfgang Wessels, Johannes Müller Gomez, and Johannes Wolters focus on the evolution of the balance of power between the EP and the European Council. They argue that it is a key

dimension of the EU regime, yet under-researched and under-theorized. Based on three theoretical models, they conduct three case studies on the management of the euro crisis, the investiture of the Commission President and the adoption of the multiannual financial framework. The authors explore the communalities and differences that exist among the various kinds of inter-institutional relations between the EP and the European Council.

Sabine Saurugger and **Fabien Terpan** address the relations between the EP and the Court of Justice of the EU, another under researched issue, at least in the recent period of time. They aim to analyse whether and, if so, why the jurisdiction of the CJEU supports the EP's decision-making powers in the European governance system since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. While, according to many authors, the Court has historically played a role in empowering the Parliament, some arguments support the idea that this support has declined since Maastricht, and even more since the post-Lisbon period. Through the case study of the Court's case law on the external powers of the Parliament, Saurugger and Terpan argue that there is no systematic bias in favour of the Parliament in the Court's case-law, but that the Court may still be supportive of the Parliament, in particular when it also develops its own jurisdiction over European law and helps strengthening the European legal order.

François Decoster, **Jennifer Rousselle** and **Vincent Delhomme** explore an neglected dimension of the EU political system: the relationship between the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the EP. They argue that a strong relationship is profitable for both institutions and for European democracy as a whole. Indeed, the CoR, as a purely consultative body, needs the EP to carry its voice, while the EP relies on the CoR to increase consideration for regional and local interests. Despite the improvement that has been made since the Lisbon reforms, the CoR's positions benefit still from very little consideration by the EP. This chapter provides an assessment of the current situation, and sketches out some avenues for progress.

The second part of this volume deals with the **role of the EP in the EU policy-making**. The Treaty of Lisbon has provided many changes in this respect, and the situation is in constant evolution.

Justin Greenwood and **Christilla Roederer-Rynning** deal with the generalisation of legislative trilogues. The topic is not a new one, but the way institutions organize their legislative negotiations is constantly evolving, especially in the case of the EP. As the people's tribune, a core question is whether it has come to a stable set of arrangements in order to be able to assert itself in co-decision with other EU institutions. The secluded nature of trilogues and the lack of record has made them targets for public anxiety, and as the directly elected institution, the EP has been most aware of its role in this process of negotiation. The authors examine the internal mechanisms of the EP when preparing for trilogues, as a critical moment of the institutionalisation of the assembly as a legislature. They also discuss the political implications of these developments using a comparative perspective in light of recent developments in US legislative politics.

Vicky Marissen examines another aspect of EU policy-making that has been deeply reformed by the Treaty of Lisbon, namely the adoption of secondary legislation. Scholars have paid much attention to the increase of EP powers in legislative, budgetary and trade matters, but far less to the – long battled for – strengthening of its prerogatives in the area of EU secondary legislation, which is delegated and implements acts. To do so, the author first describes the formal

prerogatives of the EP in this matter. She then moves on to an in-depth analysis of the practical arrangements it has put in place to deal with its powers over secondary legislation, the challenges it faces, and the points on which further progress could be made.

Michael Kaeding further explores delegated legislation. He examines the EP's and Council's use of post-Lisbon legislative vetoes to override the Commission's rule-making. Using an original data set of legislative vetoes by both European legislators from 2006 to 2017, he shows that the frequency of use of the formal veto to overrule regulatory policies is very low. What is particularly interesting is that they have not increased significantly since the Lisbon Treaty came into effect, suggesting that the ways in which the treaty formally expanded the powers of legislative scrutiny have not resulted in an appreciably greater formal exercise of these powers. Moreover, significant differences have not appeared between the two EU legislative bodies.

Anne Vitrey and **Frederik Mesdag** propose a reflection on another key competence of the EP, namely its contribution to the EU budget. They first show that MEPs have always been eager to use their budgetary competences to promote particular policies and to extend their other powers. The authors show that dialogue and soft law have allowed for institutional progress and maturity, in a spirit of loyal cooperation. They then explore how, over four decades, the EP has battled to maintain the original balance of powers and to increase its legislative and budgetary powers, sometimes at the institutional level, and sometimes within the institution itself. The article argues that the strive for balance is ongoing and faces new challenges in the aftermath of Lisbon, to ensure that the EP remains a fully-fledged part of the budgetary authority.

The third part of the book deals with **the EP politics**, that is the way it represents citizens and the civil society, and the way it is politically structured.

Amandine Crespy and **Louisa Parks** propose a reflection on the array of relationships between the EP and organised civil society (OCS). The EP has been an active agent in securing its growing power over time but, as a co-legislator with relatively few resources, it became a key target for OCS. Also, unlike the Commission, the EP is a representative democratic institution. This forms a central dilemma regarding OCS: as the 'voice of the people' the EP is open to civil society, yet at the same time, retains a suspicion of groups that may not represent the 'people'. The chapter discusses this dilemma through a focus on the EP's role in the regulation of interest groups' involvement in EU politics, the formal events it hosts for OCS (intergroups, public hearings and the European Citizens' Initiative), and the relations between individual MEPs and OCS, including the right-wing nationalist groups.

Nathalie Brack and **Olivier Costa** explore the territorial dimension of the European mandate and its recent evolutions. This dimension is generally considered as central to the process of representation at the national level, but has been relatively neglected so far in the EP. Rather than assuming an electoral disconnection between MEPs and EU territories, Brack and Costa take an inductive approach to empirically examine to what extent territorial representation is reflected in members' practices. To do so, they do not use questionnaires, but rely on an analysis of MEP's written questions, which constitutes another understudied area of EU studies. The content of those questions is used as an indicator of members' priorities as well as their centres of interest, conception of their mandate, and of their evolution over recent years. The point of

the chapter is notably to determine whether one can witness an evolution of MEPs' approach to territories as a result of the confidence crisis in the EU, i.e. a process of re-nationalisation.

Rudolf Hrbek comes back to the old question, that originated in the 1960s, of the adoption of a single electoral system for the EP. His chapter deals more specifically with the most recent attempt - initiated in the EP - to introduce a uniform electoral system. He first identifies the challenge which is the major weaknesses of previous EP elections and existing rules. Based on this analyses, he explains the response, and examines the major innovations of the EP's new proposal. Finally, the author explains why this new initiative will not be successful nor implemented for the 2019 EP elections.

Birte Wassenberg questions both theoretically and historically the link between Euroscepticism and European elections. She first proceeds with a country-specific, differentiated analysis of the 2014 EP elections which identifies different logics working behind the general banner of anti-Europeanism. Her chapter continues to investigate, more in detail, the relationship between Euroscepticism and European elections, taking into account the 'historical' development of Eurosceptical political forces in the EP. Finally, she studies the current results of the EP elections, and embeds them into the general framework of European integration, by demonstrating that we are confronted with a deeply rooted phenomenon of Euroscepticism that has accompanied this process from the start.

Brice Cristoforetti and **Lara Querton** explore the internal politics of the EP. Focusing on migration policies, the main objective of their chapter is to explore a potential discursive contagion effect from the periphery to the mainstream of the assembly over an eight-year period (2009-2017). More precisely, their study examines the narratives stated in plenary speeches by the mainstream right MEPs, by comparing them to the speeches of three peripheral right groups (ECR, EFDD and ENF), which have gained political weight following the 2014 European elections. With regards to this extremely topical and controversial policy, the expected result is a sharpening of the discourses of the mainstream right political group reflecting a more restrictive, culturally-conservative and nationalist position after the 2014 elections.

Martin Westlake concludes the third part of the book with a chapter examining the possible future for the EU party political system. He first reviews post-war steps to a parliamentary and a party-political EU, concluding that they are irreversible. He considers the 'Spitzenkandidaten' procedure, and assumes, more debatably, that this also is irreversible. He acknowledges six 'known unknowns' that could have consequences for the evolution of the Union's party political system. He also considers several basic questions about the model the Union has cumulatively chosen, before examining some of the 'discontents' towards party-political systems and their potential relevance to the EU's emerging system. Westlake concludes that the existence of a parliamentary party-political system, with electoral linkage between the executive and the legislature, is a necessary but far from sufficient condition for viable governance – and opposition.

The fourth and last part of the book deals with the **role of the EP in internal and external EU policies**.

Dermot Hodson and **Michele Chang** explore the involvement of the EP in the governance of the Eurozone. There is a debate in the literature about how much influence it had in its reforms after the euro crisis. Most scholars accept that the EP punched above its weight when it comes

to the powers allocated to it in the treaties, but less has been written about what the EP used its influence for. This chapter shows that the Economic Dialogue is less effective than the Monetary Dialogue, although there is room to enhance the former. The authors first examine the origins of the Economic Dialogue, looking at how the idea emerged in negotiations over the so-called ‘Six Pack’. They then review the early experiences of the Economic Dialogue, noting its diffuse configurations, and asking whether it has had any early wins. The final section puts forward some tentative ideas for how it could be strengthened.

Frédérique Berrod, Louis Navé and Samuel Verschraegen address the question of the EP’s influence in the European energy policy, as this policy is largely driven by member states’ interests. The purpose of their contribution is to determine to what extent the EP can exploit the social objectives of the energy policy with the aim of influencing and shaping the current debate on the Energy Union. To that effect, they explore the fight against energy poverty that the EP is actively promoting, via a set of means and instruments. They especially analyse the various initiatives undertaken by the EP in the attempt to lay the basis of a social policy in the field of energy, despite a highly constrained environment.

Beatrix Immenkamp and Naja Bentzen explore the role of the EP in EU external relations, dealing more specifically with European parliamentary diplomacy. They focus, mainly, on the EP’s recent activities in the area of democracy support. These activities focus on a number of priority countries: Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in the Eastern Neighbourhood, Tunisia and Morocco in the Southern Neighbourhood, Tanzania and more recently Nigeria in Africa, Myanmar in Asia and Peru in South America. The authors first define the concepts of ‘parliamentary diplomacy’ in general, and ‘democracy support’ in particular. They then present the EP’s activities in the areas of ‘democracy and election action’ and ‘mediation’ in the context of specific countries. Finally, they analyse the EP’s activities in Ukraine, arguably the country in which the diplomatic activities have been the most successful and have produced tangible results.

Elena Lazarou addresses the EP’s involvement in the field of security and defence. The chapter outlines the main changes in the EP’s role in the area of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and, more generally, in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. It then assesses how the EP has since used its general powers (elective, budgetary and legislative) in order to increase its role in the policy-making process in this area. The author focuses particularly on developments related and subsequent to the conception and release of the EU’s Global Strategy (2015-2017), as a reaction to new geopolitical realities in the EU’s security environment.

Finally, **Laura Puccio and Roderick Harte** analyse the role of the EP in monitoring the implementation of EU international trade policy. The Lisbon Treaty substantially increased the Parliament’s powers in the field, by extending the ordinary legislative procedure to it and applying the consent procedure to trade agreements. The chapter focuses on analysing how the EP monitors implementation of EU trade policies after they have been adopted. With the increase in decision-making powers, the control function of the EP has become key in verifying that its legislative contributions are actually implemented. A survey is used to examine the EP’s monitoring process, including its instruments, triggers and frequency, to better understand its control function in the area of EU trade policy.

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