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The Europeanization of the political class in the European Parliament: a cross-country and cross-temporal analysis of MEPs' career patterns (1979-2019)

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Abstract:

The European Parliament (EP)'s formal authority has considerably expanded since 1979. As a result, several studies have – conceptually and empirically – posited the development of a European political class over time. Since Scarrow (1997)'s seminal distinction between 'EP careerists', 'domestic-oriented MEPs', and 'short-term politicians', there has been surprisingly no systematic analysis, though. Studies are often country-oriented and/or restricted to some legislative terms. This paper presents the first systematic empirical analysis of all 3,654 MEPs' career patterns from the 28 Member States over 40 years (1979-2019). Using Borchert's (2011) analytical framework as a heuristic device, the paper analyses how the "attractiveness", "accessibility" and "availability" of offices in the EP has shaped MEPs' career patterns. The main conclusion is that the Europeanization of the political class is a distinctive trend and that it took place at an early stage of the institutional development of the EP. Furthermore, despite the recent rise of Euroscepticism, the professionalization of MEPs' career has never been as large as in the latest legislative terms. Yet, EPGs do not contribute equally to the rise of this European political class. On the opposite, fragmentation of party systems in the late 2000s and early 2010s has questioned the (historical) contribution of some of the most influential EPGs. In this wake, the paper argues that these latest developments could undermine the EP's formal policy-making capacity in the near future, as illustrated by the recent 2019 European elections (largest turnover and biggest electoral success of Eurosceptic parties).

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***** *Work in progress* *****

Introduction

The incremental empowerment of the European Parliament (EP) over time – now on an equal footing with the Council of the European Union regarding the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP) – is one of the most notable evolutions in the democratic functioning of the EU. Legislative behaviour of Members of the EP (MEPs) may have very concrete effects on the EU's policy-making. The EP's real influence in the EU policy-making depends upon the profiles and behavior of members that serve in the supranational institution, and in particular of 'MEPs willing to exercise and extent powers granted to their assembly' (Scarrow, 1997: 253). More recently, Daniel and Metzger (2018:91) arrived at a similar conclusion when they outlined that the EP can only achieve its policy-making capacity when populated with MEPs seeing the supranational assembly as more than a 'second-order electoral arena'.

In this regard, Scarrow (1997) was one of the first to outline the emergence of 'European Careerist' MEPs in the 1990s. Recent studies confirmed Scarrow's initial findings: the attractiveness of the EP now appeals to an increasing number of European careerists devoted to the institution and seeking to empower it (Beauvallet-Haddad *et al.*, 2016; Biro-Nagy, 2019; Daniel, 2015; Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005; Edinger & Fiers, 2007; Whitaker, 2014). While this first batch of studies made important contributions to unpack the various career paths of MEPs and outlining the development of a European political class, it also relies on relatively 'fragmented' empirical evidence: studies are often *country-oriented* (e.g., Beauvallet and Michon 2010, 2016 on French MEPs; Real-Dato, Jerez-Mir, 2007 - Real-Dato & Alarcón-González 2012 on Spanish MEPs; Kakepaki, Karayiannis, 2021 on Greek MEPs; or Bale and Taggart, 2006; Bíró-Nagy 2016, 2019 on central and/or eastern countries), and/or *restricted to specific legislative terms* (e.g., Bale & Taggart, 2006; Beauvallet & Michon, 2016; Scarrow, 1997; van Geffen 2016; Salvati, 2016), and/or restricting the analysis of political career to *MEPs' background* instead of encompassing the broader complexity of pre- and post-position served by MEPs throughout their career (Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005; Beauvallet & Michon, 2016; Salvati, 2016). In other words, since Scarrow's (1997) seminal contribution, there has been no systematic analysis of MEP's career patterns that permits to define the structural evolution of the European political class over the first eight first legislative terms (i.e. 1979-2019).

In this wake, the objective of the article is to contribute to the research agenda analysing the Europeanization of the political class in the EP on two accounts. First, our paper provides a longitudinal analysis (i.e. 1979-2019, legislative terms 1 to 8) of the political career of 3,654

MEPs from the EU 28 Member States, covering both pre- and post-EP legislative and executive offices held at the national level, but also at the regional level¹. Second, relying on Borchert's (2011) three A's conceptual framework ('attractiveness', 'availability' and 'accessibility' of offices), the article seeks to explain how evolutions in the institutional opportunity structures have been shaping MEPs' career patterns. Indeed, the EP had to integrate 'new' MEPs originating from different political systems and cultures (see on this matter, Bale & Taggart, 2006; Biro-Nagy, 2016, 2019;), deal with the progressive expansion in the share of Eurosceptic MEPs (Brack, 2018) along an increase in the number of national political parties represented in the EP (i.e., party fragmentation) (European Parliament, 2018, 2019a). Overall, while our longitudinal study confirms the establishment of a European political at an early stage in the EP's development (i.e. the second legislative term in 1984), it also shows that this trend is not linear over time and across party groups. In addition, important changes in the EP's institutional opportunity structure since the early 2010s (i.e. increased party fragmentation and competition) started jeopardizing the core of the European political class.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. Section 1 consists of the research design. It first gives an overview of existing research on MEPs' career paths and identifies current gaps in our knowledge. The section then continues by discussing the evolving institutional opportunity structures of MEPs, using Borchert's (2011) three A's framework as a heuristic device. Section 2 presents the dataset and the operationalization of career patterns. Subsequently, we provide an analysis of MEPs career paths over time for the EU28. The article ends with a discussion of the findings and its implications for the development of the European political class following the recent political and electoral transformations.

1. Mapping MEP's career patterns longitudinally

In her study, Scarrow's had originally distinguished three main career paths. The first one is composed of "*political deadend*" MEPs who served in the EP only for a short period of time and who did not extend their political career after their EP mandate(s) (i.e., commonly labelled "EP retiree"). The second career path gathers so-called "*stepping stone*" MEPs aiming at 'winning or regaining' a national mandate after their time in the EP (i.e. MEPs with a domestic

¹ The analysis includes regional positions for the 2 209 Austrian, Belgian, British, French, German, Italian and Spanish MEPs having served – once or multiple times – during the 1979-2019 period. Our case selection is heuristically driven by the seminal classification in regional and federal studies (Swenden 2006). We cover all three federations (Austria, Belgium and Germany) and four regionalized countries (France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom).

orientation) and finally, the third category is composed of “*European careerists*”, defined as those with a ‘long and primary commitment’ to the EP (i.e. MEPs with a European orientation).

In the last years, these three career paths were further discussed and refined, albeit using different labels in the literature². First, the “*political deadend*” category was further developed and now distinguishes across three types of short-termers: “*EP retiree*”, “*One-off MEPs*” and “*discrete European career*”. For instance, van Geffen (2016) introduced a distinction between “*EP retirees*” and as “*one-off*” MEPs (i.e. MEPs without any political experience before or after their European mandate and serving in the EP for less than 1 legislative). Previous studies highlighted the existence of a relatively small – but stable – share of “*EP Retiree*” (Biro-Nagy, 2016; Whitaker, 2014). On the opposite, there is a progressive increase over time of so-called “*one-off*” MEPs (Van Geffen, 2016) and more than one MEP out of five are “*one-Off*” MEPs during the 8th legislative term (Dodeigne et al. (2021). In addition, we also suggest to include a third category of *MEPs*” labelled “*discrete European career*”. Contrary to “*one-off*” MEPs, their experience in the EP was not a ‘one-shot’ experience, despite a relatively short European career.

Second, the “*stepping-stone*” career pattern was also further considered, even though empirics show that the share of “*stepping-stone MEPs*” is relatively small (see. for instance, Van Geffen, 2016; Biro-Nagy, 2019, Whitaker, 2014; Hoyland, Hobolt, Hix, 2019). In this category, Real-Dato and Jerrez (2007) proposed to make a distinction between MEPs using the supranational assembly as a “*training*” ground (i.e., MEPs using the EP as a space of professionalization before conducting a longer career at the domestic level) and situations where the EP is considered as a ‘bridge’ between two domestic positions (i.e., the EP is then used as a ‘transition’ between two mandates at the domestic level), while other authors regroup these two categories into one career pattern (see. also Biro-Nagy, 20019; Scarrow, 1997). Also, Dodeigne et al. (2021) outlined potential differences between stepping-stone MEPs with national political goals and the ones with regional political goals³.

Third, the category of “*long-termers*” has attracted most attention from scholars (Biro-Nagy, 2016; Verzichelli and Edinger, 2005; Edinger and Fiers, 2007; Van Geffen, 2016; Salvati, 2016; Whitaker, 2014). This pattern provides one of the strongest pieces of evidence of the development of a European political class (i.e. MEPs with a European orientation). These

² An overview of the different labels used to describe MEP’s career path is available in the annexes. While the list is not exhaustive, it allows to map the variety of labels used currently in the literature.

³ Indeed, about 25% of MEPs from regionalized and federal countries (i.e., Austria, Belgium, Germany / Spain, Italy, UK and France) also spent a part of their career at the regional level.

'long-termers' received different labels in the literature, with sometimes distinct empirical operationalization, resulting in some conceptual ambiguity. For instance, Verzichelli and Edinger (2005) (see also Edinger and Fiers, 2007) differentiated between "*Euro-politicians*" (i.e., MEPs without any prior political experience serving in the EP during multiple mandates) and "*Euro-expert*" (i.e., politicians with a significant domestic career but subsequently conducting a professional career in the EP). Van Geffen (2016), Slavati (2016) and Dodeigne et al. (2021) followed that distinction as it highlights the importance of taking former domestic political experience into account, for instance, in the effects upon parliamentary behaviour. Yet, to avoid confusion over the term 'expert', we propose to use the label of "Euro two-track" MEPs rather than "Euro expert". Indeed, having a previous domestic political experience does not mean that these MEPs are 'expert' of the EU when they start their second career 'track' at the European level. Overall, these "*Euro two-track*" and "*Euro-politicians*" are of particular importance for the objective of this research, as it underlines the development of a European political class with the EP. The literature tends to point out towards the emergence and stabilization of such European 'long-termers'"(Bale and Taggard, 2006; Beauvallet-Haddad et al. 2016; Beauvallet & Michon, 2010; Biro-Nagy 2016, 2019; Daniel, 2015; Dodeigne et al., 2021; Edinger & Fiers, 2007; Kakepaki & Karayiannis, 2021; Real-Dato & Alarcon-Gonzalez, 2012; Scarrow, 1997; Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005).

Finally, we also suggest including a last category of MEPs, composed of politicians displaying "unclear orientation" (i.e., MEP's presenting both a domestic and a European orientation in their political trajectory). The main rationale behind this category is that in a multi-level political arena, such as the European Union, one needs to differentiate between MEPs who develop 'stable' careers and MEPs with more 'ambiguous' orientation. Almost entirely overlooked in the literature, this new category includes MEPs holding dual mandates at both European and domestic levels (be it with the regional or, until 2004, with the national levels). This is an important information to have, as accumulating a domestic mandate while serving in the EP could affect the behaviour of those MEPs (e.g. deviating more systematically from EPGs' voting lines, when a piece of legislation affects domestic interests). In addition, we also included in this category "discrete two track" MEPs. This career pattern consists of ephemeral career" (Real-Dato and Jerez-Mir, 2007) at both the EU and domestic levels (national and/or regional), without clear orientation towards one or another. The following figure (figure 1) summarises the main MEPs career paths identified in the literature and operationalized in this study.

Short-termers Political deadend			Stepping-stone Domestic ambition		Long-termers European ambition			Multi-level Unclear ambition	
EP retirees <i>EP Short-termers with previous political experience</i>	Discrete Euro career <i>MEP's making their entire career in the EP, but for less than 1,5 terms</i>	One-off MEPs <i>Only 1 term in the EP, without pre and post political experience</i>	Stepping-stone MEPs <i>EP short-termers with national, or/and regional political goals</i>	Transitional domestic MEPs <i>MEPs with a short transitional period at the European level</i>	Euro Two-tack <i>MEPs with previous domestic political experience but now committed to the EP</i>	Euro-politician <i>MEPs making their entire career in the EP, for more than 1,5 terms</i>	Transitional Euro-politician <i>MEPs with a short transitional period at the domestic level</i>	Accumulating MEPs <i>EP retiree, Euro-two tracks MEPs and Euro politicians with a substantial domestic accumulation</i>	Discrete career <i>MEP's with a short career at both the domestic and European levels</i>

Figure 1: Categorization of MEPs' career patterns. *Key:* categories highlighted in blue are new categories introduced in this paper.

Despite the rich and important contributions made by scholars working on MEPs career path, empirical evidence used to validate Scarrow's assumption remains fragmented. As the overview presented in the second appendix outlines, previous studies present limitations on four empirical accounts. First, studies adopting a longitudinal perspective and covering all first 8 legislative terms are rare and most often, these studies are country-specific (see. Beauvallet & Michon, 2016 on France or Kakepaki, Karayiannis, 2021 on Greece). Second, linked to the previous point, there is also a lack of a comprehensive study including all 28 Member States: most studies are either country-specific, focusing on a particular group of countries or, when they include all 28 Member States (but see. Beauvallet-Haddad et al., 2016), the empirical analysis is limited to a few legislative terms. Third, the coding of both pre- and post- EP offices is not always included in this scholarship (see literature review on that account from van Geffen 2016). Finally, going beyond methodological nationalism, the inclusion of subnational offices – as a political arena in its own right - is almost systematically missing in the scholarship (see remarks from Whitaker 2014, Høyland et al. 2019 on this regard). While some studies include the analysis of the domestic level of 'lower' offices, authors often do not make a distinction between regional and local mandates, despite the growing importance of subnational regional tiers in some of the largest (federal and regionalized) Member States. Based on the previous arguments, the first objective of this article is therefore to fill in these 'empirical' gaps by analysing longitudinally (i.e. 1979-2019, legislative terms 1 to 8) the evolution of career paths of all MEPs originating from the EU-28. In particular, the study provides a systematic analysis of the political career of 3,654 MEPs, covering both pre- and post-EP legislative and executive offices held at the regional and/or national levels. Ultimately this analysis will permit to provide a comprehensive account of the development of European elites since 1979.

2. Explaining the evolution of MEP's career paths: attractiveness, availability and accessibility of the European offices.

The above studies tend to confirm Scarrow's anticipation about the EP that "the development of European careerists [...] is likely to be self-reinforcing, because the greater the role that the Parliament claims, the more likely it is to attract those with European interest" (Scarrow, 1997:261). We seek to empirically assess this claim based on a comprehensive dataset and our renewed analytical framework of MEPs' career patterns presented above. In this respect, we explain the evolution of MEP's patterns over time as a consequence of the major changes in institutional and political opportunity structure, that constrain and/or favor MEPs' career navigation in the European multilevel structures. Using Borchert's (2011) three A's framework as a heuristic device, the article therefore also aims to identify and discuss the main evolution of MEPs' institutional opportunity structure over time (Sections 2.1 to 2.3) in terms of *availability* (i.e. the number of seats available and for which a candidate can compete), *attractiveness* (i.e. the interest that a certain political arena raises amongst the politicians) and *accessibility* (i.e. the difficulty to access a seat).

2.1 The rising attractiveness of the European Parliament

Attractiveness is understood as the interest that a certain political arena triggers amongst the potential aspirants to office (Borchert, 2001). The attractiveness of the European Parliament is thus a direct component for the development of a EU parliamentary class at the individual level: it needs to attract candidates fueled by a European ambition. In this regard, the incremental empowerment of the EP in terms of its legislative, budgetary, and scrutiny functions are important evolution in the democratic functioning of the EU role (Rittberger, 2012; Schackleton, 2017; Scully, 2010). As outlined by Hix and Hoyland (2013: 172), "[t]he European Parliament has evolved from the toothless Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community to an equal partner with the European Union (EU) Council in almost all policy areas".

The question of the empowerment of the EP has been extensively discussed by European scholars (e.g. Meissner, Schoeller, 2019; Hix and Hoyland, 2013; Koning, 2008; Rittberger, Schimmelfennig, 2006; Rittberger, 2012). Since 1952, the EP's legislative decisioning role evolved from consultation to codecision, while its policy scope – including regarding budget – has been extended through the multiple treaties. Initially limited to a consultative role in the Treaty of Rome, the two budgetary Treaties of the 1970s (1970 – 1975) brought profound

changes on the role of the EP: the assembly was given the power to reject the budget as a whole and veto power over so-called non-compulsory expenditures. Following the Lisbon Treaty (and article 314 TFEU), the EP now shares powers with the Council over all EU spending in the annual budget (Schackleton, 2017; Mény, 2009; de Gardebosc, Mesdag, 2019). The same type of observation can also be made regarding the increasingly important role of the EP in the investiture of the Commission (Rittberg, 2012) and, more recently, regarding the election of the president of the Commission with the *Spitzenkandidaten* system (Christiansen, 2016; Gattermann et al., 2016; Hobolt, 2014).

The effects of the formal empowerment of the EP upon MEPs career patterns have been outlined by several scholars (Beauvallet-Haddad *et al.*, 2016; Biro-Nagy, 2019; Fiers, Edinger, 2007). Their main observation is that the stronger the EP, the more attractive are the supranational positions. As a result, it has the potential to attract more experienced politicians as well as politicians fueled by European ambition willing to commit their political career to the institution. In other words, the EP progressively became an attractive political arena in its own right, thanks to a complete institutional repertoire to either control the Commission, influence legislative outputs and fulfil (individual) MEPs' ambitions with the possibility to gain mega-seats and key (influential) positions (i.e. rapporteurs, (vice)chair of EPGs).

However, we expect that the attractiveness of the EP will differently affect candidates, depending on their political affiliation across EPGs. The rationale behind this expectation is simple: some EPGs have more resources and are more influential in the EP (Socialists and Christians democrats holding an absolute majority until the 2014 elections, inclusive); while the other political groups are only pivotal actors (e.g. the Liberals and the Greens), if not marginalized and excluded from most of the EPs' decision-making processes. In this respect, Aldrich (2018) found that incumbents and/or domestically experienced MEPs are more likely to (re)enter the EP when belonging to vote or policy-seeking European political groups. The findings of Bíró-Nagy (2016) and Beauvallet-Haddad et al. (2016) are going in the same direction: both found that MEPs from the largest and most influential EPGs tend to have longer careers than other MEPs. In this wake, Pemstein et al. (2015) previously found that incumbent MEPs are more likely to be ranked higher on candidate lists if they belong to one of the three largest policy-making groups of the EP, if their national party emphasises European issues or if their domestic party has more limited opportunities at the national level. Overall, we should therefore expect the development of European-oriented candidates ("Euro politicians" and "Euro two-track" MEPs) since 1979.

While the expectation of the development of a EU parliamentary class is common to all EU-28 Member States, we nonetheless expect differences between ‘older’ EU-15 and ‘newer’ EU-13 Member States following the mid-2000s and onwards enlargement. Previous works on EP elections in Romania (see. Gherghina and Chiru, 2010) and on MEP’s career of EU-13 countries (Bale, Taggart, 2006; Bíró-Nagy, 2019) underlined that (previous) domestic political experience was an important factor to get a top position on electoral lists for European elections. In addition, the same authors also outlined that EU-13 first-timers MEPs were not ‘virgins’ when entering the European parliament, but rather the opposite (i.e. experienced domestic politicians). Consequently, we expect to find more ‘Euro two-track’ than ‘Euro politicians’ MEPs in EU-13 countries.

Conversely, the presence of MEPs considering the EP as a mere stepping-stone for domestic politics or as retiring place (“EP retiree”) should decrease as the EP empowers. Furthermore, we expect that these effects will be more noticeable amongst the ranks of policy-seeking and office-seeking EPGs (Socialists, Christians-Democrats and Liberals) because they have the greatest influence. While the Greens can be a relevant actor in coalition building for some policy issues, most Greens’ national party regulations have tended to establish the principle of office rotation in order to restrict mandates accumulation over time (Burchell, 2001). We should therefore expect less “Euro Politicians” amongst the Greens, and more “one-off MPs” – albeit this difference with the main EPGs (Socialists, Christian-Democrats, and Liberals) reduced over time.

Expectation 1a: We expect the growing share of ‘European-oriented’ MEPs as the EP empowers. This trend should be more noticeable for policy-seeking and vote-seeking EPGs.

Expectation 1b: As a mirror, we expect a decline of ‘domestic orientation’ as well as ‘political deadend’ orientation as the EP empowers over time. This trend should be more noticeable for policy-seeking and vote-seeking EPGs.

2.2 Availability of seats in the EP: a new opportunity for politicians?

Availability of seats in the EP is understood as the number of seats available for which a candidate can compete (Borchert, 2011). In this regard, the first direct election of the EP in 1979 was not only an important step regarding the development of a direct channel of participation for citizens and in how MEPs are representing citizens (Dreischer, 2015), it was also a major change for politicians in terms of career mobility. Apart from the German

federation, multi-level governance was, in the early days of the EP, a novel territory for most EU Member States (Schmitt, Toygür, 2016). Overall, joining the EU meant new political offices for which politicians can compete as well as new opportunities in terms of career mobility. Still, since 1979, this ‘new’ reservoir of political offices also evolved on two important aspects: (1) the size of the national delegations changed over time and (2) the practice of dual mandates between the EU and the national levels got gradually forbidden.

First, with the successive EU enlargements and Treaty reforms, the size of national delegations sent to Brussels and Strasbourg were modified on several occasions. For almost all Member States, this meant a progressive decrease in the number of seats available⁴ except for Germany and, to a lesser extent, the Netherlands that are today better off than in 1979 (i.e., Germany: from 81 seats to 96 in 2014; The Netherlands: from 25 seats to 26) (Salm, 2019). Overall, the number of seats in the EP remains limited, especially when compared to political mandates available at the national and/or regional levels (Slavati, 2016). Yet this limited evolution (negatively) impacted the availability as well as on the accessibility (see. *Infra*) of the EP for candidates.

A second notable evolution is the modification of the legal framework (both at the domestic and EU levels) regarding the use of dual mandates. While in 1979 dual mandates between the European Parliament and their national or regional counterparts were a common practice⁵ (Verzichelli and Edinger, 2005; Beauvallet-Haddad, 2016), this is not the case anymore since a 2002 Council decision has been taken on this matter. Except for the opting-out provisions (i.e., until 2007 for Ireland and 2009 for the United Kingdom), holding a dual mandate between the EP and its national counterpart is not allowed anymore since the 2004 elections (inclusive). As such, the sixth legislative term was a decisive evolution in the institutional opportunity structure: MEPs who used to accumulate offices had to make a key career choice between the national and the European political arenas. Still, this evolution does not mean the disappearance of all types of dual mandates politicians, as the legal framework and the extent of dual mandates between local and/or regional political offices with an EP mandate is defined by each Member States’ legislation⁶.

⁴ For example, between 1979 and 2014, the Belgian delegation decreased from 24 seats to 21 seats, France from 81 to 74, Hungary from 24 to 21 and Denmark from 16 to 13.

⁵ Before 2002, there is some important cross-country variation: while having dual mandates with the national level was deemed incompatible in Austria, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and to some extent, in Greece, this was not the case for the other Member States (European Parliament, 1997).

⁶ For example, Put and Vanlangenakker (2010) found that during the 2003-2009 period, the majority of Belgian MEPs held dual mandates with the regional and/or local levels. The same type of *cumul* was and still is possible in France.

Expectation 2: Following new rules related to dual mandates and the associated decrease over time of accumulating MEPs, we expect career choice in favour of the European level reinforcing the increase of European-oriented MEPs.

2.3 The accessibility of seats in the EP: facing an increased competition and fragmentation

Accessibility describes the relative ease with which a certain position can be obtained (Borchert, 2011: 122). On this matter, a general observation is that the EP, as a political arena, became more difficult to develop European-oriented MEPs as “European politicians” and “Euro two-track” MEPs have a privileged access as incumbents. Specific electoral rules related to seat availability and, more critically, the evolution and transformation of party systems have strongly changed the structure of opportunity. Therefore, we identify three important evolution that impacts the accessibility of seats in the EP: an increase in party fragmentation domestically and within EPGs; an increase in party competition and the progressive increase of Eurosceptic political groups and, finally, the development and use of gender quotas.

Regarding party fragmentation at the domestic and European levels, Casal Bértoa (2021) shows an increase in the electoral fragmentation and in the creation of new parties in most EU Member States – albeit important cross-country variation exists. While a total of 57 national political parties were represented in the EP in 1979, this number evolved to 168 in 2004 and reached 212 national political parties in 2019. Overall, the number of national political parties represented in the European Parliament has increased faster than the number of Member States, with an increase of the number of national delegations within EPGs (European Parliament, 2019). Consequently, the electoral competition and, therefore, accessibility of seats in the EP, is now more challenging than it previously was.

On the one hand, it becomes harder for “Euro-politicians” to remain in office in a highly fragmented system where established parties are contested (mostly Socialists, Christian-democrats, and Liberals), hence we should observe a stabilization or a slight decrease in the number of MEPs with a European orientation. On the other hand, emerging parties and/or parties situated at the extremes of the political spectrum are more likely to have “one-off MEPs” – because of their volatile electoral results in party systems under transformation. Overall, it is the development of European political elites that is undermined.

A second notable evolution is the change in *rapport de force* between EPGs over time, and in particular the strengthening of Eurosceptic political groups. Since 2004, McElroy and Benoit (2012: 152) observed that “[a]ll of the member states now have some form of a

Eurosceptic party competing in European elections. In the 2009 elections, far-right parties also won substantial support in some member states where they were not traditionally powerful [...]”. This phenomenon was already discussed by Taggart, in 1998, when he outlined that “increased Euroscepticism has been the corollary of increased integration” (Taggart, 1998: 363). Brack and Startin (2015) even claim that Euroscepticism has become mainstreamed, as it became an increasingly legitimate political view across European Member States. Overall, since 2004, there is a progressive expansion in the share of Eurosceptic MEPs: from 19.1 percent in 2004, it increased to 30.5 percent during the 2014-2019 legislative term, making Euroscepticism a ‘stable component of European politics’ (Brack, 2020:1).

This phenomenon may have tremendous effects on the officeholders attracted to serve in the EP as well as on the work of the EP as an institution. Indeed, with traditional political families gradually losing ground in some EU Member States associated with the rise of these ‘new’ political actors, there are now more political actors at the domestic level competing for the seats in the EP. As a consequence, and while taking into consideration that the number of seats available slightly decreased over time, getting access to the EP has become more challenging over time. Overall, Eurosceptic parties might create a new generation of “one-off MEPs”. Even if they give birth to a generation of “Euro Politicians” (as Eurosceptics become a mainstream representation), the latter are by definition against the empowerment of the very institution they serve into. The development of “Euro Politicians” has negative – not positive – effects for the reinforcement of the EP.

Expectation 3a: As party fragmentation developed, we expect an increase in the share of “one-off MEPs” in Eurosceptic and non-mainstream political groups as well as for other main EPGs who suffered from the corresponding electoral decline.

Expectation 3b: As career maintenance at the EP is contested in a context of increasing electoral competition, we expect a decrease – or at least a stabilization – of “European orientation” in MEPs’ career.

Finally, a last evolution that may impact the accessibility to the EP seats is related to the use of gender quotas – and more generally – to the feminization of the EP. While the objective of this article is not to review the extensive literature on (the evolution and use of) gender quotas, it is necessary to highlight that, like the dual mandate, it has an impact on who can access the EP. While not all countries adopted quotas (e.g. 10 countries on 28 relied on such a system in the 2019 European elections), the feminization of the EP is unmistakably a major trend. The share

of women elected to serve in the EP evolved from 15.2 percent in 1979 to 40.6 percent in 2019⁷ (European Parliament 2019b). Interestingly, Beauvallet-Haddad *et al.* (2016:120) outlined in this regard that “the European mandate in itself represents more often an opportunity for political professionalization for women” in comparison to national legislatures (Beauvallet-Haddad *et al.* 2016: 120). We can thus expect a generation of female “Euro politicians” investing an arena that offers greater opportunities than national parliaments.

Expectation 4: As the EP empowered and provides new career opportunities, we expect an increase of professional European-oriented female MEPs, taking alternative career paths *vis-à-vis* national politics predominantly dominated by male professional parliamentarians.

3. Data and operationalization of career paths

Our empirical analysis is based on an original dataset of EU-28 3,654 MEPs having served – once or multiple times – in the EP over the first eight legislative terms (1979-2019). First, the dataset builds upon existing biographical information on MEPs experience in the EP, gender, age and EPG (Hix and Høyland 2011). Second, the dataset was completed with legislative and executive political offices held by MEPs before and after their time in the EP. For the latter, sources combined former studies (Dodeigne, 2018; Dodeigne forthcoming) as well as manual coding of political offices based on information published by official institutions or via biographies available online. In practice, for each individual career, we collected empirical data regarding the duration (in months) of their parliamentarian and governmental career at the domestic and European levels before, during (dual mandates) and after their EP mandates.

Because a significant number of Member states sending delegations of MEPs to the EP are federations or regionalized states in which regional tiers present a high degree of authority (see. Regional Authority Index; Hooghe, Marks and Schakel 2010), the dataset also includes systematic information related to subnational political offices for 7 out of the EU-28 Member States (i.e., Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK). Empirically, about a quarter of MEPs originating from federal or regionalized Member States (i.e., Austria, Belgium, Germany; UK, Spain, Italy; France) have served in regional politics (see. Dodeigne, Randour, Kopsch 2021).

⁷ For example, during the latest European elections, 11 Member States had quotas per sex, varying between a minimum of 33% of Women on the electoral list to 50%. There exists also some important variation in the timing of adoption of such quotas: For example, while France adopted gender quotas in 2000, Belgium did so in 2002 and Spain in 2007 etc. (see. IDEA Gender quota database, 2021).

Our operationalization of MEP's career patterns is based on previous works and distinguishes between four broad types of career patterns: (1) "political deadend", (2) "domestic-oriented" MEPs, (3) "European -oriented" MEPs, and (4) MEPs with an "unclear career orientation" between domestic and European electoral arenas.

In the "political deadend" category, "EP retirees" are defined as MEPs with substantial previous domestic political experience (be it regional or national) and serving in the EP for no more than 1,5 legislative terms before ending their political career. "One-off MEPs" covers MEPs with no previous political experience that remain less than 1 full term in the EP before ending their political career. Finally, "discrete European career" MEPs are politicians with no previous political experience remaining in the EP between 1 and 1,5 terms before ending their political career.

Regarding "domestic-oriented" MEPs, MEPs without previous political experience who started their career for less than 1,5 terms in the EP followed by a career at the national level of at least 2 terms were categorized as stepping-stone MEPs with national ambition. The same rationale applies for "stepping-stone with regional ambition": these are MEPs without previous political experience, spending less than 1,5 terms in the EP and having a longer career at the regional level as a second step. The last profile identified is the one of "transitional domestic MEPs". These are MEPs serving in the EP for less than 1 term and using the supranational institution as a transition between two domestic mandates.

The third category, "European-oriented" MEPs, is operationalized the following way: "Euro-politicians" consists of MEPs with at least 1,5 terms in the EP but without any previous political experience (be it regional or national) before or after their EP mandates (i.e., MEPs spending their entire career in the European Parliament). "Euro two-track" are MEPs serving at least 1,5 terms in the EP after their domestic career (regional or national) before ending their career. Albeit an unlikely scenario, "transitional European MEPs" are politicians serving at the domestic level for less than 1 term and using domestic elective mandates as a bridge between two European mandates.

Finally, the category of MEPs with "unclear orientation" gathers politicians with complex career patterns, in the sense that these EP parliamentarians held mandates in the EP and/or at the national and/or at the regional levels without a clear career pattern emerging. While our dataset covers the first eight first legislative terms, we made sure that our categories remain valid when analyzing the ninth legislative term for those MEPs (censoring of data).

4. Empirical findings: towards an ever more professionalized EU parliamentary class

The empirical analysis of the evolution of MEPs' career patterns over time confirms several of our expectations. First, we anticipated the emergence and stabilization of a European political class (*expectation 1a*), with the development of "European-oriented" MEPs. Figure 2a highlights that the progressive empowerment of the EP went along with the development and stabilization of a European political class, operationalized in this study as "Euro-Politicians" (i.e., MEPs starting their career in the EP and making a career in the institution) and "Euro-experts" (i.e. MEPs with previous domestic experience specializing, as a second step, in the EP). These "European-oriented" MEPs in the 28 Member States vary between 28% (LT2) and up to 35% (in LT5 and LT7) of MEPs. However, notorious differences exist between MEPs from the 15 Member States that were part of the EU before the mid-2000s' enlargement, and the other MEPs from the 13 Member States joining the EU at that period. Figure 2b shows that the European-oriented career pattern stabilized – relatively – early in time for the MEPs from the 15 Member States (reaching 31% as soon as the second legislative term, 1984-1989). These European-oriented represented up to 46% as early as the third term, keeping relatively similar proportions ever since (with the only exception of the 35% observed in LT4). In the new 13 Member states, the starting point of analysis is the sixth legislative term (2004-2009, see figure 2c). As in the EU-15, the emergence of European-oriented appear quickly as soon as LT7 for MEPs from East and Central European Member states (34% see figure 2b). Yet, their overall proportion remains smaller (no more than 36% in the latest term). In other words, expectation 1a is unmistakably verified, albeit with some limited differences between EU-15 and EU-13 Member states.

Reflecting as a mirror (*expectation 1b*), we complementary see a constant decline of MEPs with "domestic orientation" using the EP as a "stepping stone" towards domestic politics (be it regional or national politics): while domestic-oriented MEP covered 18% in LT1, their proportion has been declining almost constantly to 4% in LT8. While this decrease is particularly neat for EU-15 MEPs (from 24% to 4% from the first to the last terms), this decline is less pronounced for EU-13 MEPs (from 16% to 8% from the first to the last terms). However, figure 2a provides mixed results regarding the evolution of the share of "Political deadend" MEPs (*expectation 1b*). While this category stabilized around a quarter of all MEPs after LT2, we observe an increase from LT5 and onwards. This evolution is mostly due to changes observed in EU-15 (from 26% in LT6 to 42% in LT8), with the growing electoral success of three EPGs (the Conservatives, the Eurosceptics and radical left MEPs), which are more closely

associated to this kind of career pattern (see below). In EU-13, we also observe an increase but at a much slower rate (from 14% in LT6 to 18% in LT8).

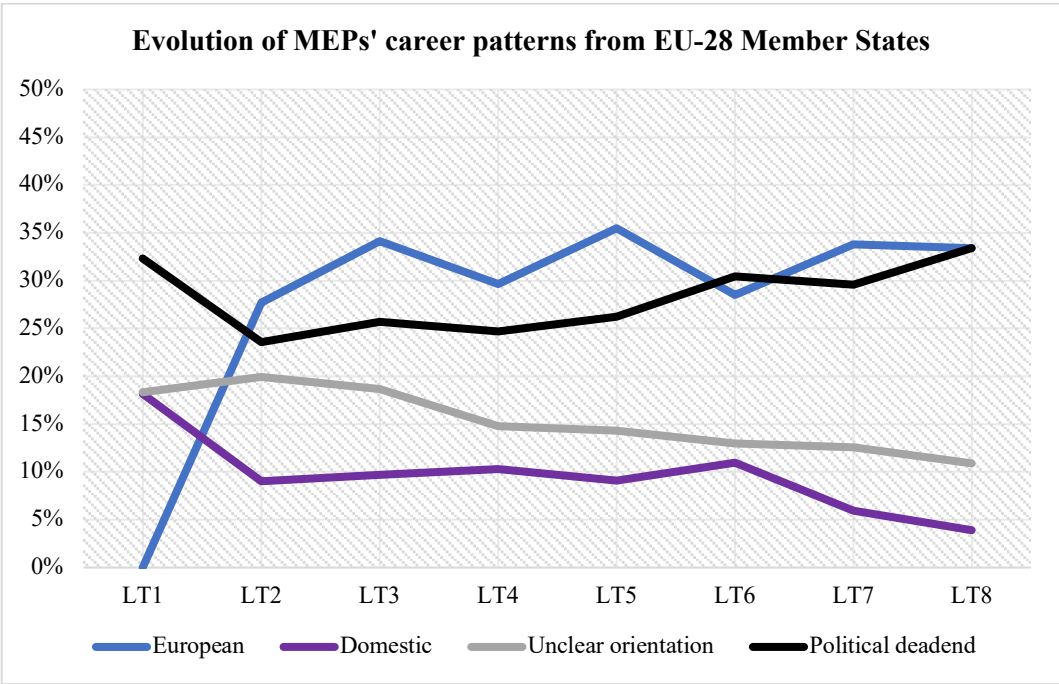


Figure 2a: Distribution of MEP’s career pattern over time (1979-2019 – EU 28)

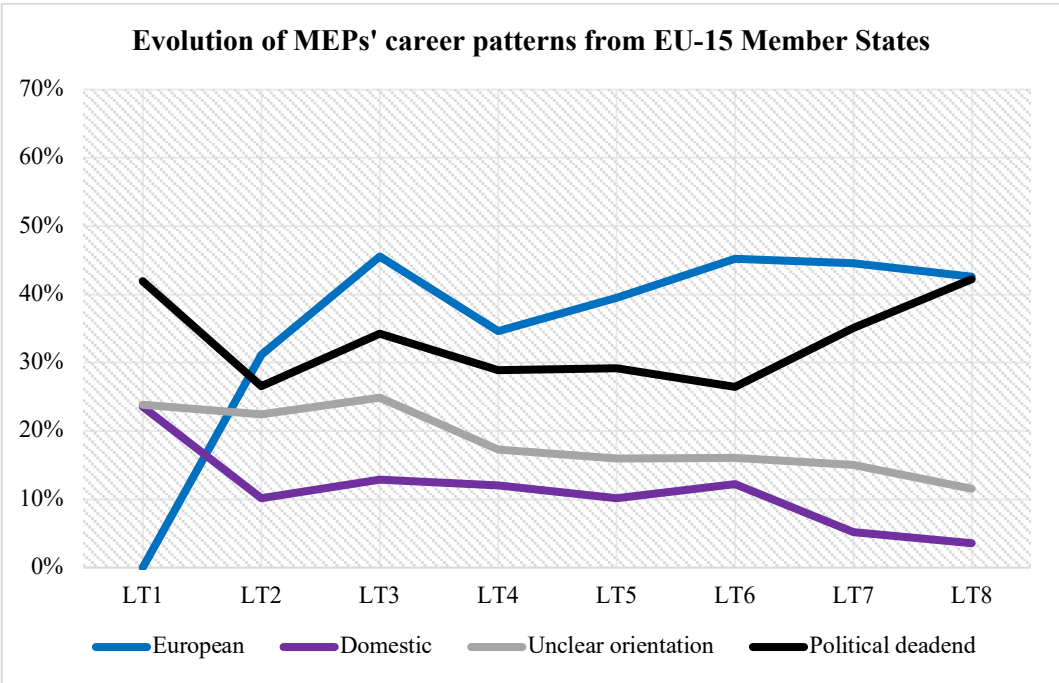


Figure 2b Distribution of MEP’s career pattern over time (1979-2019 – EU 15)

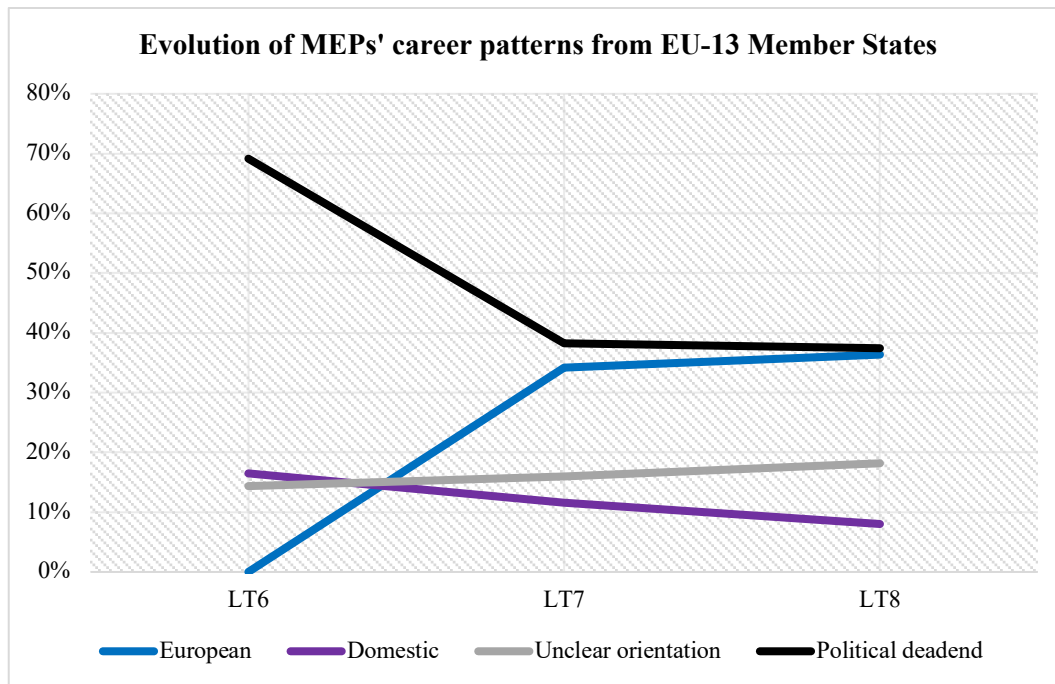


Figure 2c: Distribution of MEP’s career pattern over time (1979-2019 – EU 13)

Overall, except for the maintenance and even empowerment of the pattern of “Political deadend”, the results confirmed our expectations regarding the broader evolution of career orientation in the EP. Not only has the proportion of European-oriented officeholders prevailed in the EP, but their time of service in the supranational institution has also substantially increased (figure 3a). While the average time of service of MEPs from EU-15 Member States was respectively of 103,9 months for European-oriented in LT2, those MEPs have – almost constantly – developed more professionalized career over time, reaching up to 170 months of service on average in LT7 (i.e. almost three full terms, totalizing 14 years of service)⁸. By comparative standards of time of service in national legislatures, these European-oriented MEPs are amongst the most professionalized parliamentarians across the world. Interestingly, albeit as a slower rate, this is the same evolution that we observe for European-oriented MEPs from the 13 Member States joining the EU after the 2000s enlargement: their average experience in the LT8 is now of 135,5 months. The constant (quasi) development of a European political class since 1979 is, thus, an unmistakable trend (Daniel, 2015; Beauvallet-Haddad et al., 2016; Scarrow, 1997; Whitaker, 2014).

⁸ For each legislative term, some MEPs were censored as, at this stage of their career in the EP, it was not yet possible to categorize them. The figure is therefore an illustration of all MEPs that we could categorize with certainty at the end each legislative session.

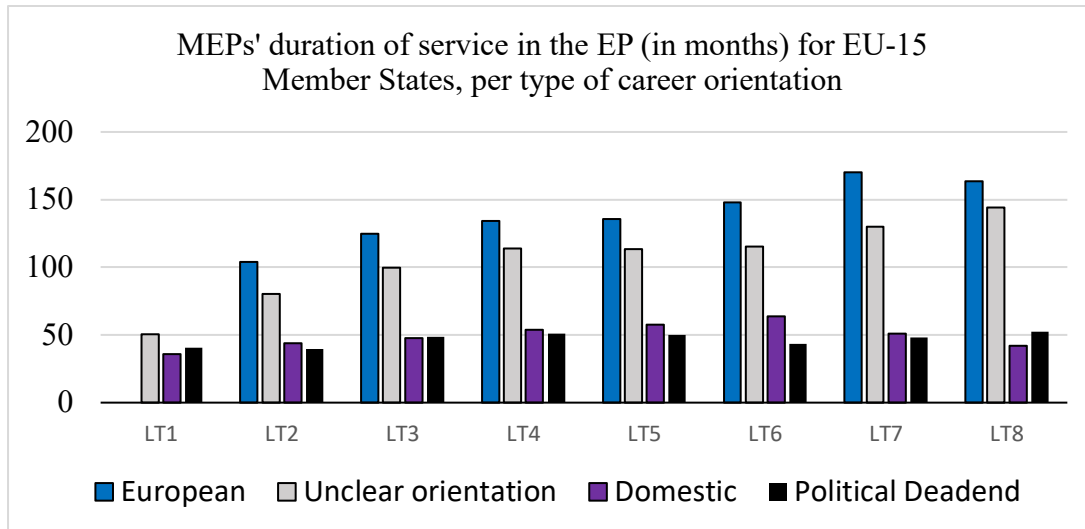


Figure 3a: Career duration of MEPs over time (1979-2019 – EU 15)

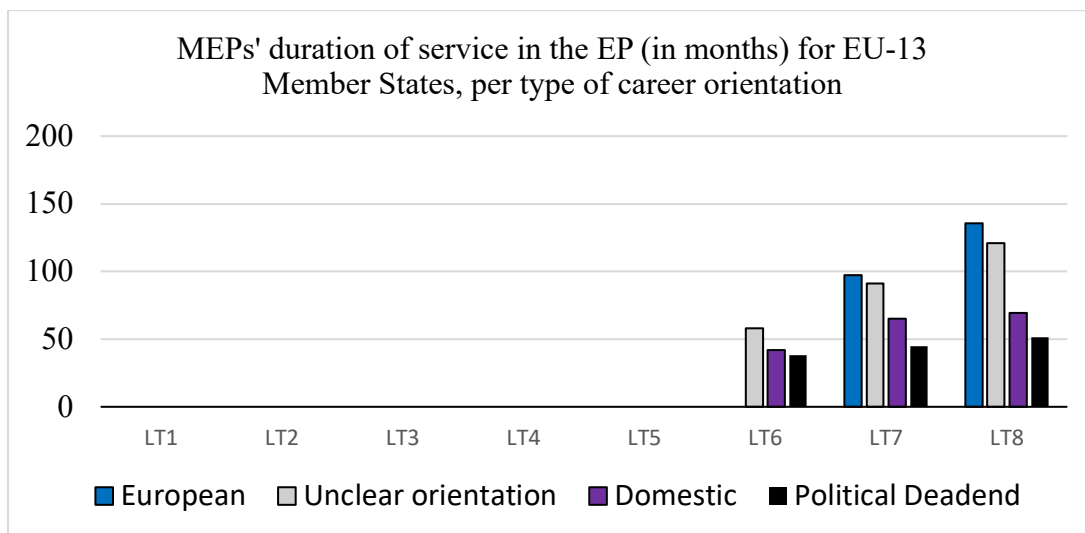
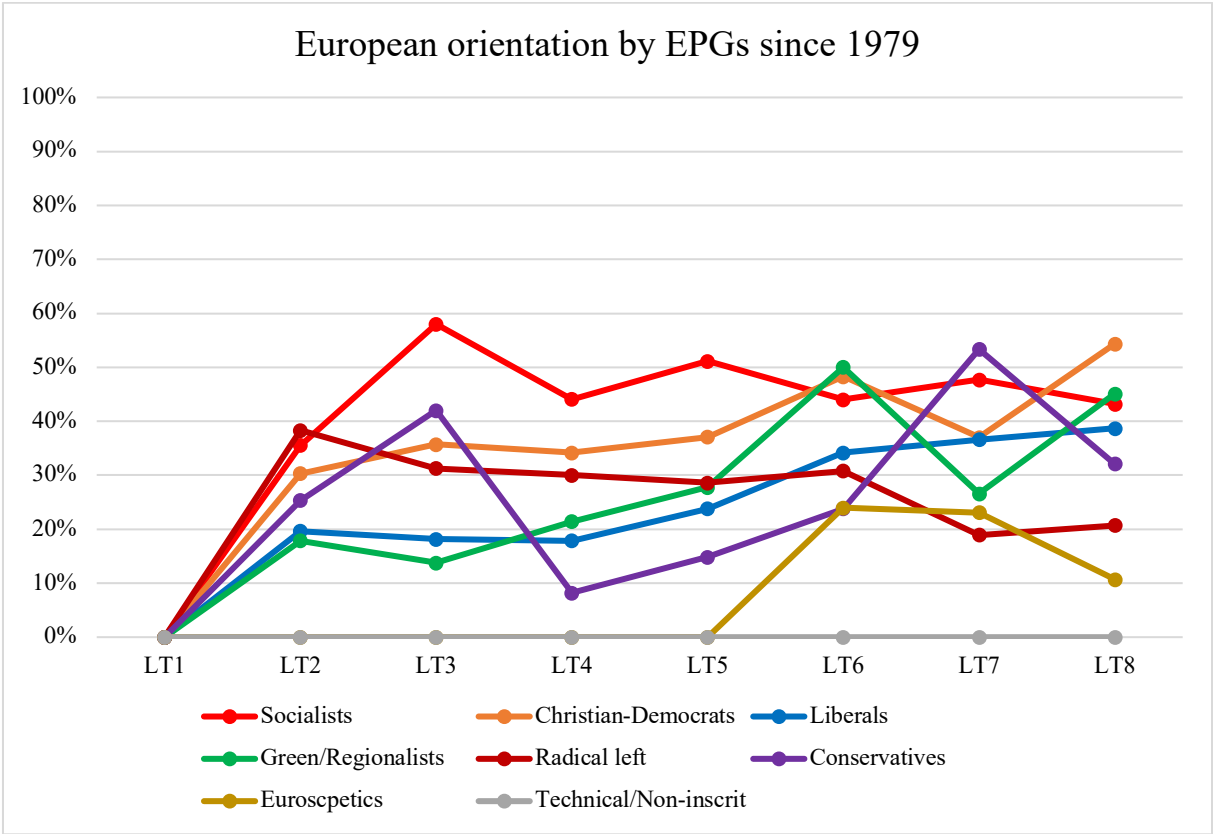


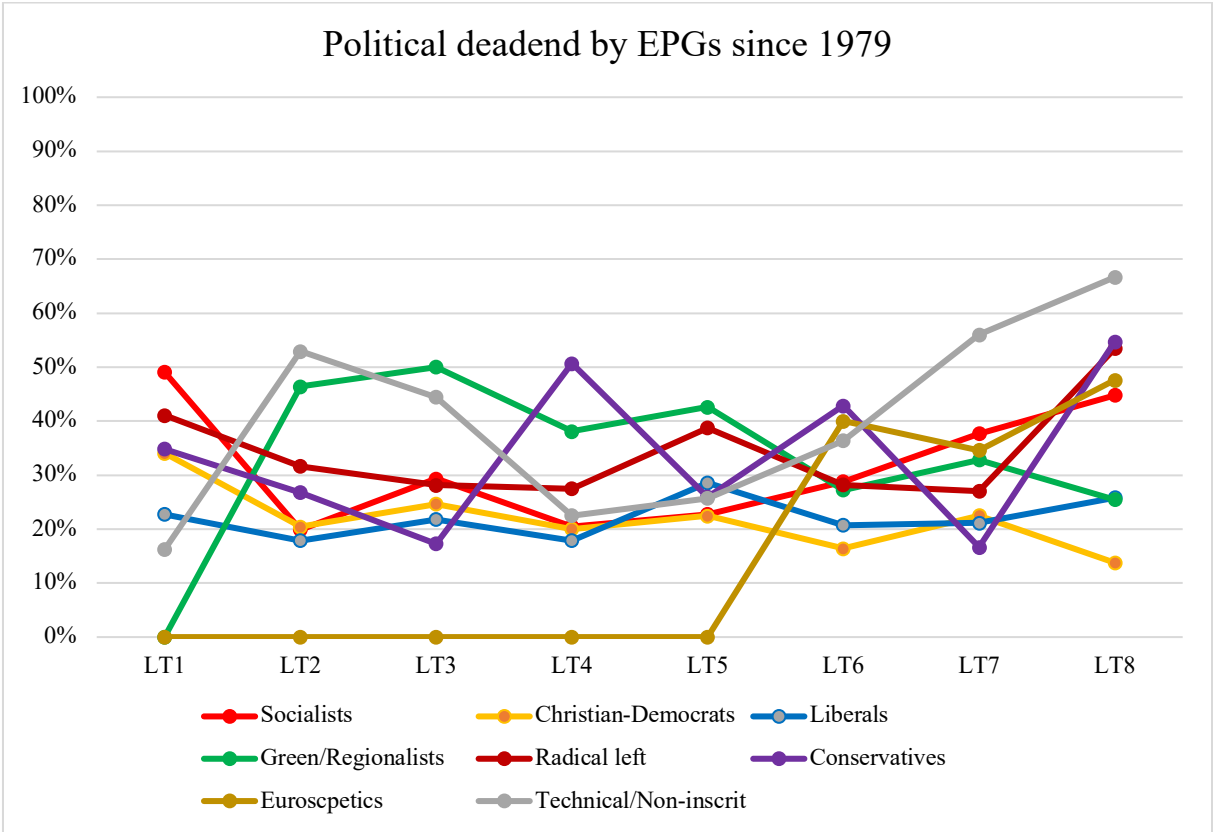
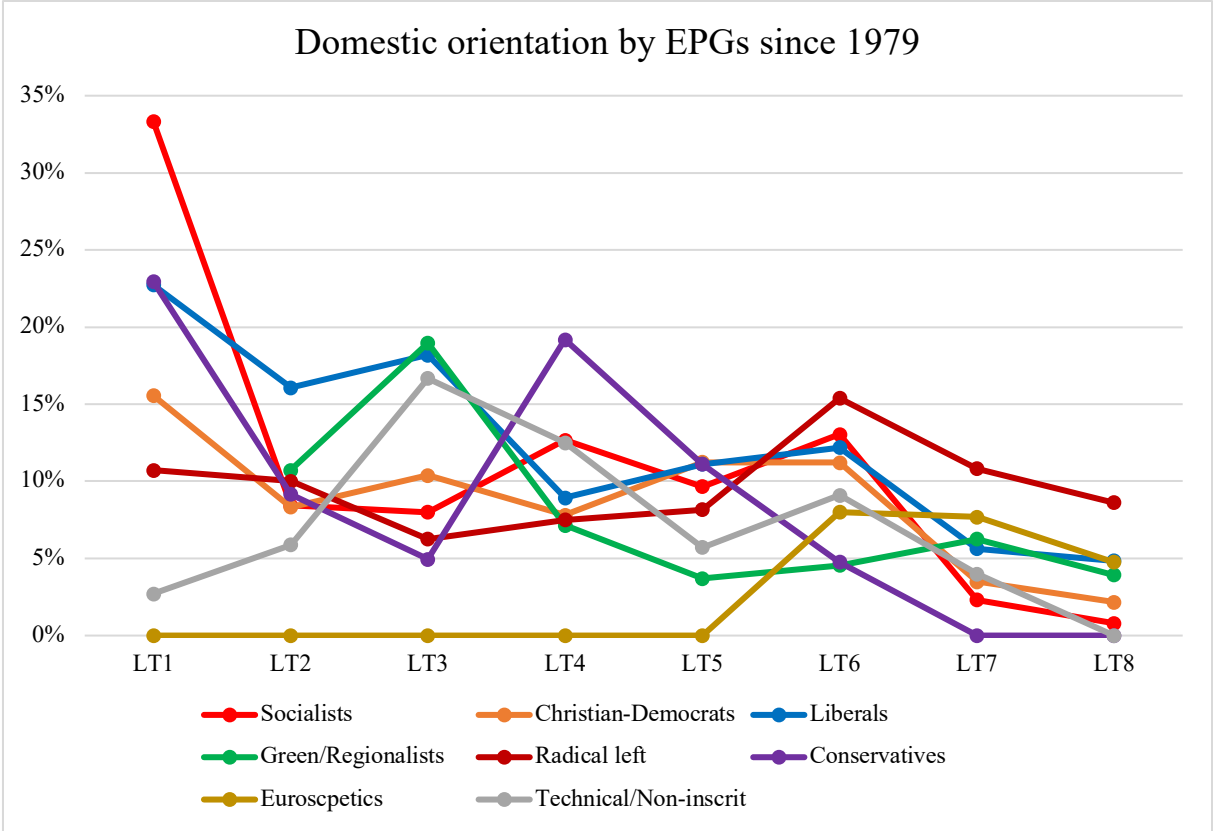
Figure 3b: Career duration of MEPs over time (1979-2019 – EU 13)

In addition, our expectation (1a) also assumed that the development of a EU parliamentary class should be predominantly found within the most influential EPGs in terms of legislative activity. To this end, we present the variation across EPGs for each career pattern. As figures 4, 5 and 6 show for EU-15 Member states, the increase of “European-oriented” MEPs in Brussels and Strasbourg comes primarily from the Christian-Democrats (from 30% in LT2 to 54% in LT8, now the largest group in the EP), the Liberals (about a fifth of their delegation over time, but with some higher percent such as in LT7 with 39%) and from the Green/Regionalists (with a maximum of 50% of their MEPs belong to this category in LT6). As we expected, the Greens presented lower proportions of professionalized European careers in the early life of the EP, with a corresponding higher proportion of “one-off” MEPs because of their internal regulations

(figure 6). While this proportion remains amongst the highest, it has been structurally declined until LT8.

On the opposite, the Socialists (who were the largest group until the mid-2000s and now the second largest), have seen their proportion of European-oriented” MEPs decreased over time. While the European-orientation career pattern totalized 58% amongst the Socialists in LT 3 (their maximum), it has continuously declined to reach 43% in LT8, which constitutes their second-lowest score ever observed since 1979. This can be explained by our third expectation about party fragmentation: the erosion of their electoral strength threatened incumbents and prevented incumbents from pursuing an (extensive) European career (see below). What comes more as a surprise – but the phenomenon is ephemeral – is the importance of “Euro-politicians” within the Conservatives’ ranks in LT7 (53%). Finally, as expected, the radical left has contributed only to a lesser extent in the increase of “Euro-politicians”.





Figures 4 , 5 and 6: Distribution of MEPs' career patterns per type of orientation across EPGs for EU-15 Member States

We now turn to empirical discussion for our second expectations for which we expected a decrease over time of MEPs accumulating offices at both levels (*expectation 2*). While the share of these MEPs was relatively stable and covered about a quarter between LT2 and LT6, we observe an immediate drop after 2004 about 15%. As a large of these MEPs were not anymore allowed to accumulate offices, they had to make a choice between tiers of government. Interestingly, this diminution of multi-level MEPs (since LT6) is associated with a progressive increase of “one-off” MEPs during the same period of time: from 16% of MEPs in LT6 up to 26% in LT8. However, a closer look at the EPGs show that they are mostly due to the Green, the technical group or Radical left MEPs who were not previously the greatest provider of these MEPs accumulating. Future (multivariate) empirical analysis of individual analysis is, therefore, be necessary to determine the factors determining career orientation. Overall, we thus observe that the share of MEPs with unclear orientation between European and domestic electoral arenas is structurally on decline, but not fully vanished. Indeed, European rules forbidding accumulation of offices mostly apply to national offices, while the electoral regulations for regional offices still vary across Member states.

According to our third expectation, we posited of the “Political deadend” pattern along the rise of Eurosceptic EPGs and decline of mainstream EPGs’ electoral strength in a context of higher party fragmentation (*expectation 3*). On the one hand, figure 6 unmistakably confirm the constant rise of the “Political deadend” pattern since LT6 (early 2000s) amongst the Socialists. This pattern now culminates to 45% (LT8), a percentage that is more than twice bigger than the proportions observed between LT2 and LT5. On the other hand, comparing the specific sub-category of “one-off MEPs” over time by EPGs, expectation 3 is only partly confirmed. First, we observe an increase of “One-off MEPs” in the group of Eurosceptics. Established in the fourth term, their number was very high with 79%. It decreased over time, but remains still high in comparison to most of the other EPGs, with 34% in LT6 and 37% in LT8. But the Eurosceptics are not the group with the strongest increase in the category of the “one-offs” over time. It is especially the Radical Left (from 30% in LT1 to 43% in LT8) and the ‘technical’ group of MEPs (from 25% in LT1 to 67% in LT8) who are characterized by a strong increase over time. Against our expectation 3, we find no similar increase of “one-off MEPs” in the other main EPGs over time. Rather, a strong decrease in that classification is found. The Greens/Regionalists for example had a high share of “one-off” MEPs in the first term (54%) which decreased over time (21% in LT8). The same applies for the Christian Democrats (24% in LT1 to 8% in LT8) and the Liberals (37% in LT1 to 16% in LT8). Only for the Socialists can be found a slight increase in the eighth term with 25% (in comparison to the

16% observed in LT7). This means that party fragmentation has not necessarily resulted in a high increase of “one-off” MEPs in the EP, except for the Socialists.

To conclude the empirical analysis, we now turn to the question of the feminization of the EP (*expectation 4*). For female MEPs, the development of professionalized parliamentary career in the EP was clearly conducted under the “Euro-politician” pattern and not via the “Euro-two track” since LT2. Hence, amongst female MEPs, the share of “Euro-politician” pattern is twice or three as bigger than the share of with “Euro-two track” pattern (the gap was even bigger in LT2 and LT3, with a proportion of five and three times more important). As we expected, the contribution of female MEPs to the “Euro-two track” pattern is thus, on average, lower than male MEPs. Yet, as national parliaments across Member states have seen their own share of female MPs increased since the 2000s (often through active electoral reforms such as the introduction of gender quotas), the “Euro-two track” pattern increasingly became as much important as for female MEPs in comparison to their male colleagues. As a matter of fact, the proportion of female MEPs with such “Euro-two track” pattern has become even slightly more important than for male MEPs for the first time in the latest term (respectively 13% and 11%).

5. Discussion and conclusion

Since Scarrow’s seminal work on MEPs’ political career in the late 1990s, recent studies extended the empirical scope to new Member States and/or assess more systematically the evolution of MEPs career paths over legislative terms. Despite the merit of previous works, the literature still faced gaps regarding our knowledge about the evolution of MEPs career patterns over time. In order to contribute to this research agenda, our paper had a two-folded objective. Not only did we seek to map evolution of career patterns of all 3,654 MEPs from the 28 Member States since 1979, but we furthermore aimed at explaining how the (evolving) institutional opportunity shape the development of the European political class over time. Using Brochert’s triple A framework (2011) as a heuristic device, we posited that the increasing attractiveness of the EP, as a result of its institutionalization and formal empowerment, could trigger the development of European-oriented MEPs. Yet, this trend can be undermined because of a decreased *availability* of seats (in particular regarding more restrictive rules regarding dual mandate) as well as the reduced *accessibility* of seats in the EP, in a context of greater electoral competition and party fragmentation.

In this respect, our empirical analysis has unmistakably established that the EP is increasingly appealing to a larger number of European-oriented MEPs, conducting long-term careers. In particular, the data shows that the development and stabilization of this ‘European

political class' was most noticeable amongst the Christian-democrats, the Liberals and, to a lesser extent, in the Greens/EFA. Female MEPs also seem to have found career opportunities to conduct professionalized European careers, in higher proportions than male MEPs. Our empirical analysis confirms our expectations that the EP offered alternative professionalized political arenas in their own right *vis-à-vis* domestic politics. Yet, this trend is not uniform across party groups as MEPs from the Socialist group present a more contested conclusion: while they used to represent the highest proportions of European-oriented MEPs, their electoral misfortune in the late 2000s and early 2010s resulted in the decline of such European-oriented office-holders. As a result, we observe a slight but clear increase of MEPs with a short-term service (the EP as a "political deadend").

However, despite the increase of Euroscepticism's electoral strength in the EP, our empirical data did not show that the European political class is (yet) entirely threatened – with the notorious exception of the Socialist political group. Actually, it shows that MEPs devoted to the EP ("Euro politicians" and "Euro two track") have never been as experimented as in the eight legislative terms: they serve on average 14 years of mandates, a duration that has been almost continuously on the rise since the direct elections of the EP in 1979. Yet, the 2019 European elections remind us that this trend is far from being certain, though: the latest elections present the greatest turnover of MEPs ever observed since 1984, coupled with a high degree of fragmentation of the assembly. Last but not least, Eurosceptic parties obtained some of their largest electoral successes ever. In this wake, the literature has long established that the type of persons serving in legislative institutions matters (Matthew 1984). In other words, the profiles of MEPs affect the extent to which the EP can achieve its policy-making powers. The current transformations undergoing in the EP have, therefore, potential damaging effects for the supranational institution. Party system transformations across Member states show that the undermining of the core of the European political class is – arguably – already at work amongst the second biggest group of the EP, namely the Socialists. The recent electoral success of the Conservative and the Eurosceptic parties (with mild or severe negative positions about European integration) could not only result an ever more fragmented European Parliament, but it would also contribute to undermine the core of Euro careerists of in other EPGs, in particular the EPP that is often one of the direct electoral competitors of those parties, as the Socialists' electoral experience in the 2010s. The goal of this paper – as part of the broader 'Evolv'EP project – is precisely to examine how changes occurring in the structuration of the European political class could affect the broader EP's policy-making capacity.

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Annexes

Appendix 1: MEP's career patterns since Scarrow's original categorization

MEP's career pattern		The labels identified in the literature
Political deadend (Short-termers)	<i>EP retiree</i>	EP retiree (Van Geffen, 2016), EP Pensionate (Verzichelli, Edinger, 2005), Retirement (Real-Dato, Jerez-Mir, 2007), end of national career (Beauvallet, Michon, 2016), European pensioners (Biro-Nagy, 2019), EP Retiree (Dodeigne, et al. 2021); Golden Parachutists (Kakenaki, Karayiannis), political pensioners (Edinger & Fiers, 2007).
	<i>One-off MEPs</i>	One-off MEPs (Van Geffen, 2016), One-off MEPs (Dodeigne et al., 2021)
	<i>Discrete euro career</i>	<i>Ephemeral career</i> (Real-Dato, Jerez-Mir, 2007); Multi-level short-termers (Dodeigne et al., 2021).
Stepping stone (domestic ambition)	<i>Stepping stone with domestic goals</i>	<i>Stepping stone with domestic goals</i> (Dodeigne et al., 2021); <i>Training and Bridge</i> (Real-Dato, Jerez-Mir, 2007).
	<i>Stepping stone with regional goals</i>	<i>Stepping stone with regional goals</i> (Dodeigne et al., 2021); <i>Training and Bridge</i> (Real-Dato, Jerez-Mir, 2007).
EP Careerist (European ambition)	<i>Euro-politicians</i>	<i>Euro-politicians</i> (Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005; see. also Edinger & Fiers, 2007); <i>European politicians</i> (Slavati, 2016); <i>Specialisation</i> (SLL – Real-Dalto, Jerez-Mir, 2007); <i>Euro-politicians</i> (Dodeigne et al., 2021).
	<i>Euro two-track</i>	<i>Euro-expert</i> (Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005; see. also Edinger & Fiers, 2007); <i>European politicians with domestic experience</i> (Van Geffen, 2016); <i>Recycling (L-L-S)</i> (Real-Dalto, Jerez-Mir, 2007); <i>National politicians</i> (Slavati, 2016); or <i>Two-track Euro MEPs</i> (Dodeigne et al., 2021)
	<i>(Ambiguous) Multi-level MEPs</i>	<i>Ambiguous Multi-level MEPs</i> (Dodeigne et al., 2021); <i>Super-Career</i> (LLL); <i>Specialization and successful later national career</i> (Real-Dalto, Jerez-Mir, 2007).

Appendix 2: Overview of current studies on MEP's career path

Author(s)	Geographical scope	Time scope	Political experience	Main findings
Scarrow (1997)	4 MS: UK, France, Germany, Italy	3 LT: 1979-1994	-National and lower offices (regional & local) -Pre/post EP career	Identification of 3 career patterns : <i>European Career (28%), Domestic Career (16%), Political Deadend (28%)</i> .
Verzichelli, Edinger (2005)	25 MS: Comparing EU-15 with Acc-10	6LT: 1979-2009	-National offices - Pre-EP Career	Identification of 5 types of MEPs : <i>Euro-politicians, Euro-experts, European insider, EP pensionate and Stepping-stone politicians</i> .
Bale, Taggart (2006)	25 MS: Comparing EU-15 with Acc-10 MS	1 LT: 2004-2009	-National and lower offices (regional & local) -Pre EP career	The authors identify 4 ideal types of MEPs (role) : European evangelists, policy advocates, constituency representatives, institutionalists.
Beauvallet, Michon (2010)	25 MS: EU 15 + Acc-10.	1LT: 2004-2009	-National and lower offices (regional & local) - Pre EP career	The authors do not identify/develop a typology of MEPs' career patterns.
Real-Dato, Jerez-Mir (2007)	1 MS: Spain	6 LT: 1986-2010	-National and lower offices (regional & local) -Pre/post EP career	The authors identify 8 different career patterns : the first 4 patterns imply a weak EP specialization: <i>Ephemeral career, Training, Retirement, Bridge</i> . The 4 last patterns imply EP specialization: <i>Specialisation, Specialisation and successful national career, Recycling, Super career</i> .
Whitaker (2014)	15 MS: EU 15	6TL: 1979-2009	-European offices only - NA	The author relies on existing categorization, mainly Scarrow.
Daniel (2015)	25 MS: EU 15 + Acc-10.	7LT: 1979-2014	-National offices - Pre-EP Career	The author relies on existing categorization, mainly Scarrow.

Beauvallet, Michon (2016)	1 MS: France	8LT: 1979-2019	-National and lower offices (regional & local) - Pre EP career	The authors identify 7 paths of access to the EP: <i>end of national career, direct entry, 'medium stage career' domestic politician, local politicians with minor experience, experienced local politicians,</i>
Beauvallet-Haddad et al (2016)	28MS: All EU Member States	4LT: 1979-1984; 2004-2019	-National and lower offices (regional & local) - Pre EP career	The authors do not identify/develop a typology of MEPs' career patterns.
Biro-Nagy (2016, 2019)	5 MS: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia	2LT: 2004-2014	-National and lower offices (regional & local) -Pre/post EP career	The author discusses 3 career patterns: <i>European Careerists, Stepping-stone politicians, European Pensioners</i> and identifies 4 MEPs role orientation, <i>national politicians, EU politicians, national policymaker and EU policymaker.</i>
Salvati (2016)	12 MS: Acc-12	1 LT: 2009-2014	- National and lower offices (regional & local) - Pre EP career	The author identifies 3 European parliamentary careers: <i>amateur, national politician, European politician</i>
Van Geffen (2016)	15 MS: EU-15	1LT: 2004-2009	-National offices - Pre/post EP career	Identification of 5 career patterns: <i>'EP careerists', 'stepping-stone', Retiree, one-off MEPs, EU politicians with domestic experience.</i>
Dodeigne et al (2021)	7 MS: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, France, UK	8 LT: 1979-2019	-National and regional offices -Pre/post EP career	Identification of 8 career patterns: <i>EP retirees, One-off MEPs, Multi-level short-termers, stepping stone MEPs with national political goals, Stepping stone MEPs with regional political goals, Euro-politicians, Two-track Euro MEPs; Ambiguous multi-level MEPs.</i>
Kakepaki, Karayiannis (2021)	1 MS: Greece	9 LT: 1981-2019		Identification of 4 career patterns: <i>Strategists (17,1%), Careerists (50%), Party</i>

				<i>Soldiers (5,2%), Golden Parachutists (27,1%).</i>
Edinger & Fiers (2007)	No specific geographical scope	No specific time scope	No specific empirical data collected	The authors identify 6 types of career patterns amongst MEPs: <i>failed stepping stone politicians – Careerists; Euro politicians and Euro insiders</i> constitute Type 1 and 2. These are MEPs that never held mandates at the regional or national levels. Types 3 and 4 are constituted of MEPs that held mandates at the domestic level before their EP mandates: it regroups 3 different types of MEPs – <i>political pensioners, Euro Leaders, Euro experts</i> . Types 5 and 6 include MEPs having a career after their EP mandate: <i>stepping stone MEPs and nationally promoted politicians</i> .