

# **The development of the European 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 a first major step towards a systematic empirical analysis of all MEPs' career patterns over 40 years (1979-2019). At this stage, the paper focuses on EU-15 Member states – 3 016 MEPs, i.e. about 85 percent of all MEPs – but will ultimately cover all EU-28 Member states. Using Borchert's (2011) analytical framework as an heuristic device, the paper analyses how the "attractiveness", "accessibility" and "availability" has impacted the MEPs' career patterns. Our main conclusion is that the development and stabilization of a European political class is an unmistakable trend. And despite the recent rise of Euroscepticism, MEPs' career professionalization has never been as large as in the latest legislative terms. We also observed that female MEPs are more likely to conduct professionalized European careers. Yet, EPGs do not contribute equally to the rise of this European elite: party systems fragmentation in the late 2000s and early 2010s has particularly undermined the (historic) contribution of the Socialists. This undermining of the European political class could potentially undermine the EP formal policy-making capacity in the near future, a threat that is reinforced by the recent 2019 European elections (largest turnover and biggest electoral success of Eurosceptic parties).

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## Introduction

Member States have defined the European Union (EU) in the basic treaty as a representative democracy (art 10.2 TEU), a qualification implying the representation of EU citizens via direct and indirect channels of participation. In this regard, the incremental empowerment of the European Parliament (EP) over time – now directly elected and on an equal footing with the Council of the European Union regarding the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP) – is one of the most notable evolution in the democratic functioning of the EU. Today's legislative behaviour of Members of the EP (MEPs) may have very concrete effects on the EU's policy-making. However, to assume a key role in EU decision-making processes, having formal powers alone is not sufficient. If the EP wants to play a central role in EU policy-making processes, it needs '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. This leads to a first important question in the field of EU studies: *what profiles of politicians are called to serve in the EP?*

In this regard, Scarrow (1997) was one of the first to outline the emergence of 'European Careerist' MEPs. More recent studies also arrived at a similar conclusion: 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 supranational elites, they are also facing several shortcomings. Research conducted on this subject relies on a relatively 'fragmented' empirical evidence: studies are often (a) 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 eastern countries), and/or (b) restricted to specific legislative terms (e.g., Bale & Taggart, 2006; Beauvallet & Michon, 2016; Scarrow, 1997; van Geffen 2016; Salvati, 2016), (c) and/or focusing on the previous political career of MEPs (Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005; Beauvallet & Michon, 2016; Salvati, 2016), without looking systematically at what they did before and after their time in Brussels and Strasbourg. In other words, since Scarrow's (1997) seminal contribution, there has been no systematic analysis of MEP's career paths covering

both pre- and post-EP positions, over the first eight first legislative terms (i.e. 1979-2019). Yet, adopting a longitudinal approach allows to analyze the evolution of MEPs career paths and to identify potential critical junctures in the development of this EU supranational elite. This leads to our second main research question: *How do the Eps' attractiveness, accessibility and availability impact the evolution of MEPs career patterns over time (period 1979-2019)?*

The objective of this article is therefore to contribute to this debate. First, our paper provides a longitudinal analysis (i.e. 1979-2019, legislative terms 1 to 8) of the political career of 3 016 MEPs from the EU 15 Member States<sup>1</sup>, covering both pre- and post-EP legislative and executive offices held at the national level but also at the regional level. Second, relying on Borchert's (2011) three A's conceptual framework ('attractiveness', 'availability' and 'accessibility' of offices), the article also aims at shedding lights on the (evolving) institutional opportunity structures shaping the MEPs' career patterns. Besides its gradual empowerment, 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).

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, the method and the operationalization of career patterns. Subsequently, we provide an analysis of MEPs career paths over time for the EU15 (soon to be 28). The article ends with a discussion of the findings and its implications for the development of the European political class under recent political and electoral transformations.

## **1. Mapping MEP's career patterns longitudinally**

### *1.1 Mapping MEP's career pattern: main evolution since Scarrow's work*

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

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<sup>1</sup> The research team is currently collecting the missing data for the EU28. At this stage, we have collected data for 20 out of 28 countries. The dataset, including all 28 Member States, should be completed by the end of September 2021.

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 and finally, the third category is composed of “*European Careerists*”, defined as those with a ‘long and primary commitment’ to the EP.

In the last years, the three main career paths identified by Scarrow were further discussed and refined, albeit using different labels in the literature<sup>2</sup>. First, the “*Short-termers*” category was further refined to distinguish across 3 types of short-termers: “*EP retiree*”, “*One-off MEPs*” and “*multi-level short-termers*”. For instance, van Geffen (2016) made a distinction between “*EP retirees*” (i.e., MEPs at the end of their political career, also labelled “EP Pensionate”, “political pensioners” or “Golden Parachutist” in the literature) and what he labels as “*one-off*” MEPs. The latter do not have any political career before or after serving in the EP: they merely served in the EP for a short period of time. In addition, Dodeigne et al. (2021) also suggested to include a third category within “*short-termers MEPs*” labelled as “*multi-level short-termers*” to underline their discrete time of service at different tiers of government. This new type of MEPs career pattern includes MEPs with a very short political experience at both the EU and domestic levels (national and/or regional), also considered as an “*ephemeral career*” by Real-Dato and Jerez-Mir (2007).

Second, the “*stepping-stone*” career pattern was also further discussed in the literature. For instance, Real-Dato and Jerez (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 an ‘interval’ 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 goals. Indeed, overall, 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 (Dodeigne et al., 2021).

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;

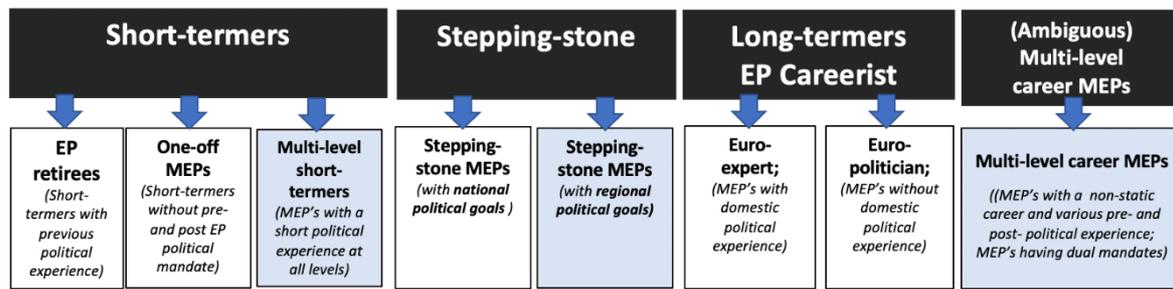
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<sup>2</sup> An overview of the different labels used to describe MEP’s career path is available in the annexes of this article. While the list is not exhaustive, it allows to have an idea of the variety of labels used currently in the literature.

Salvati, 2016; Whitaker, 2014). Indeed, this pattern provides one of the strongest pieces of evidence of the development of an EU parliamentary elite. These ‘long-termers’ received different labels in the literature, with sometimes distinct empirical operationalization, resulting in some conceptual ambiguity. For instance, Verzichelli and Edinger (2005) – followed by Edinger and Fiers (2007) – identified those MEPs as “*Euro-expert*” (i.e., politicians with a significant domestic career but now committed to supranational issues, also called “national politician” or “recycling MEPs”) and “*Euro-politicians*” (i.e., MEPs without any major political experience and directly recruited for a career at the European level, also labelled as ‘European politician’ or ‘Specialization’). Van Geffen (2016), Slavati (2016) and Dodeigne et al. (20121) followed that distinction underlining the importance of taking former domestic political experience into account. Overall, these “*Euro-expert*” 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.

Finally, a last type of MEPs career pattern has been identified in the literature: “(ambiguous) multi-level MEPs” (Dodeigne et al., 2021). This category is composed of individuals with experience at several levels of government, in a non-ordered manner. This category does not permit to establish a clear orientation towards one level or the other, but rather reflects a strong integration of the regional to national and European political arenas. Interestingly, this category also covers MEPs having accumulating mandates at multiple level, be it with the regional and/or, until 2004, with the national level. The main rationale 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. To our knowledge, this category has been almost entirely overlooked in the literature. However, accumulating a domestic mandate while serving in the EP could potentially affect greatly the behaviour of those MEPs (e.g. deviating more systematically from EPGs’ voting lines, when a piece of legislation affects national interests). The only exceptions are Real-Dato and Jerez-Mir (2007) who also identified what they called ‘*Super Career*’ (i.e., MEPs who have a long national career, followed by a long European career and ending back at the domestic level for a similar period of time) or ‘*Specialization and successful later national career*’ (i.e., after a first experience at the national levels, MEPs specializing at the EU level followed by a successful national career).

The following figure (figure 1) summarises the main MEPs career paths identified in the literature and operationalized in this study.



**Figure 1:** Categorization of MEPs career path

### 1.2 MEP's career pattern: suggestions for refinement of existing categories<sup>3</sup>

Previous studies focusing on MEPs political careers outlined five main tendencies. The first major finding is the **(1)** emergence and stabilization of “European politicians” (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). Amongst the most recent studies, Beauvallet-Haddad *et al.* (2016) thus highlighted that career service at the EP is longer than before, and that the percentage of MEPs re-elected steadily increased across time (i.e., after the 2014 elections, almost one third of MEPs were beginning their second mandate and 13 percent their third one). Overall, the authors also observed a relative stabilization of the EP's composition and MEPs background. Second, scholars also highlighted the existence of a **(2)** relatively small – but stable – share of “EP Retiree” (Biro-Nagy, 2016; Whitaker, 2014). Third, several authors found the share of “stepping-stone MEPs” is relatively small (see. for instance, Van Geffen, 2016; Biro-Nagy, 2019, Whitaker, 2014; Hoyland, Hobolt, Hix, 2019). The fourth major tendency is the progressive increase over time of so-called “one-off” MEPs (Van Geffen, 2016). Studying MEPs' career patterns in federal and regionalized Member States, Dodeigne et al. (2021) found that this pattern is not anecdotal at all: more than one MEP out of five are “one-Off” MEPs during the 8<sup>th</sup> legislative term (2014-2019). Finally, a last but important tendency is the large share of MEPs having complex careers at two or three governance levels (i.e., regional, national, European) in a non-order manner without a clear orientation towards one level or the other (Dodeigne et al., 2021).

Overall, 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”

<sup>3</sup> Title inspired by Raunio (2009): ‘National parliaments and the EU: what we know and what we should know’

(Scarrow, 1997:261). However, 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 the literature (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 - has 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 biggest (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-15 (soon to become EU-28). In particular, the study provides a systematic analysis of the political career of 3016 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. Understanding the evolution of MEP's career paths: an equilibrium between attractiveness, availability and accessibility**

To understand the evolution of MEP's patterns over time, it is also necessary to assess the changes in MEPs' institutional opportunity structure. Indeed, the career paths of officeholders cannot merely be explained by their individual personal ambition, and one needs to further integrate the structure of opportunities constraining – or favoring – MEPs' navigation in the European multilevel structures (Dodeigne, 2015a; Dodeigne, 2015b).

In particular, Borchert (2011) outlined the importance of three dimensions related to the structure of opportunities of MEPs: *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). 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 3.1 to 3.3). This will allow us to reflect on the impact of these changes upon the career patterns of MEPs and, more specifically, on the development of an EU parliamentary class (Section 3.4).

### *2.1 The rising attractiveness of the European Parliament*

Attractiveness is understood as the interest that a certain political arena raises among 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 fuelled 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 already been discussed on numerous occasions (e.g. Meissner, Schoeller, 2019; Hix and Hoyland, 2013; Koning, 2008; Rittberger, Schimmelfennig, 2006; Rittberger, 2012). In short, while the EP's legislative role evolved from consultation to codecision, it also had regular extensions of its policy scope, the Lisbon Treaty being - with the introduction of the Ordinary Legislative procedure (OLP) and the extension of codecision to 90 legal bases - a major step in the formal empowerment of the EP. The EP has also increased its power regarding budgetary policies. From a right to be consulted 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 in that 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 hypothesis is simple: some EPGs have more resources and are more influential in the EP's decision-making processes (Socialists and Christians democrats holding during 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 in terms of legislative activities and key positions in the European Parliament 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 emphasizes European issues or if their domestic party has more limited opportunities at the national level.

Overall, we should thus expect the development of European-oriented candidates resulting in the increase of "Euro politicians" and "Euro Experts" since 1979. Conversely, the presence of MEPs, who considered the EP as a mere place for 'external' political ambition (be it a stepping stone for domestic politics or a not more than a golden ticket, should decrease as the EP empowered. 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 principal rotation of offices to restrict mandates accumulation over time (Burchell, 2001). While this kind of party rules have been relaxed and derogations have been provided on multiple occasions to MEPs as the Greens' national party structures institutionalized and professionalized (following Michels' "Iron law of oligarchization"). We should thus 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:** Development of the EU parliamentary class as the EP empowered, especially in the policy-seeking and vote seeking EPGs, resulting in the increase of the share of "Euro Politicians" and "Euro experts" career patterns.

**Expectation 1b:** Decline of 'external' ambition as the EP empowered, resulting in the decrease of "EP retirees" and "Stepping stone for domestic ambition" career patterns over time.

## *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. With the exception of 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 level 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 available<sup>4</sup>, with the exception of 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

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<sup>4</sup> 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, Denmark from 16 to 13

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 counterparts were a common practice<sup>5</sup> (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: “multilevel” MEPs (MLG) who used to accumulate offices had to make a key career choice between the domestic 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’ legislation<sup>6</sup>.

**Expectation 2:** A decrease over time of multilevel politicians following new rules related to the dual mandate, having as a corollary effect that MEPs must make a choice, and that long-term officeholders will favor the EP (“Euro Politicians”) as it has become more attractive over time.

### *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 access for new entries as “European politicians” and “Euro experts” have a privileged access as incumbents. Specific electoral rules related to seats 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.

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<sup>5</sup> Before 2002, there is some important cross-country variation: while having dual mandates 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).

<sup>6</sup> 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 Fran

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. As a result, a total of 57 national political parties were represented in the EP in 1979, but 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). As a consequence, it means that the 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). On the other hand, emerging parties are more likely to send “one-off MEPs” – because of their volatile electoral results in party systems under transformation. In addition, we expect a greater share of “multilevel MEPs” accumulating offices at domestic levels – because of limited personal resources, emerging parties are more likely to focus on a few popular candidates. 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). Today, Brack and Startin (2015: 240) even claim that Euroscepticism has become “mainstreamed, in the sense that it has become increasingly more legitimate and salient (and in many ways less contested) across Europe as a whole”. 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 (Brack, 2018), 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 mostly decreased of time,

getting access to the EP has become more challenging over time. Overall, Eurosceptic parties might create a new generation of “one-off MEPs” because the EP is not the apex of their ambition. Even if they develop a generation of “Euro Politicians” (as Eurosceptics become a mainstream representation), the latter are by definition against the development of the very institution they serve into – advocating on the opposite greater subsidiarity, if not renationalization of some European powers. Ironically, the development of “Euro Politicians” has negative – not positive – effects for the reinforcement of the EP.

**Expectation 3:** As party fragmentation developed, there is an increasing share of “one-off MEPs” amongst the Eurosceptic groups as well for other main EPGs who suffered from the corresponding electoral decline.

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 2019<sup>7</sup> (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, there is an increase of professionalized European-oriented female MEPs, taking alternative career paths *vis-à-vis* nationally politics dominated by men.

### 3. Data and operationalization of career paths

The analysis is based on an original dataset of 3 016 MEPs having served – once or multiple times – in the EP over the first eight legislative terms (1979-2019). It currently focuses on the EU 15, but will soon be completed to include all 28 EU Member States (about 3 600 MEPs).

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<sup>7</sup> 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).

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 parliamentary and governmental career at the domestic and European levels. Finally, since a significant number of Member states that send 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 EU15 Member States (i.e., Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK). Empirically, about 25% 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, Kopsch, Randour, 2021).

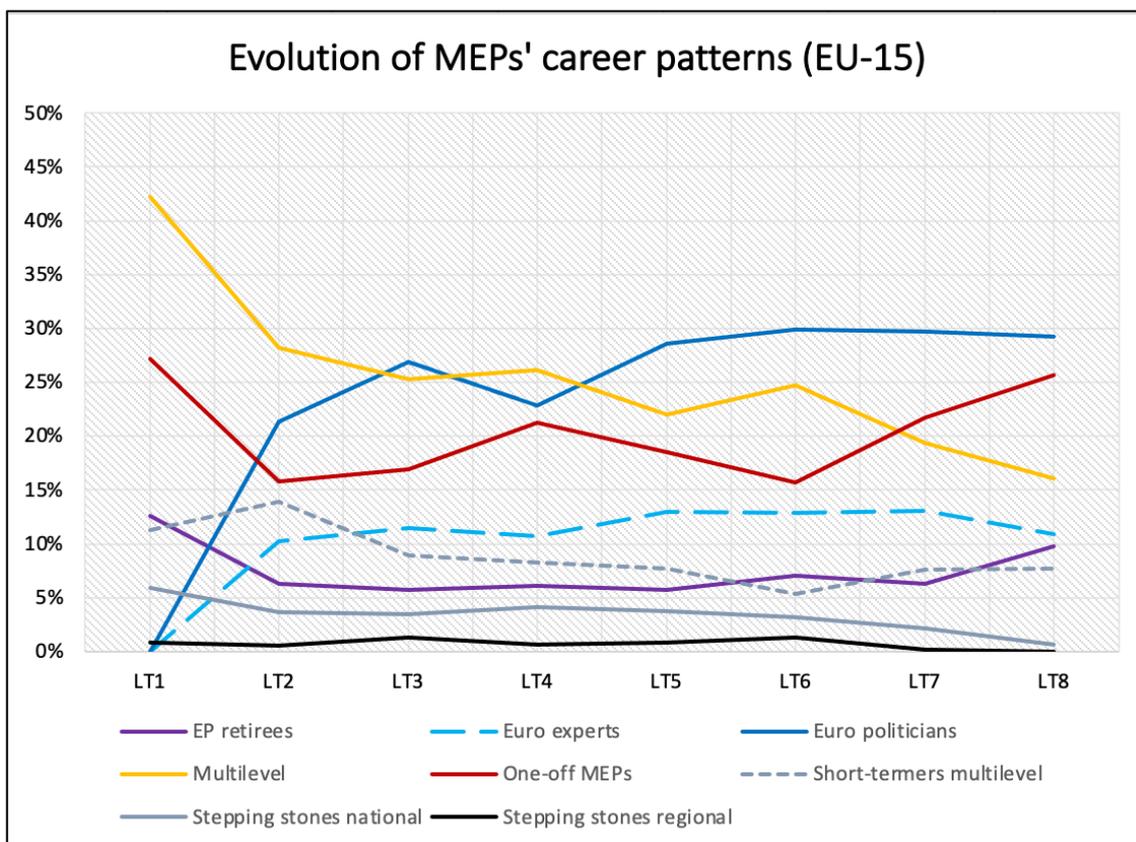
We now turn and discuss the operationalization of MEP's career paths. The categorization is conducted based on previous works and distinguishes between four broad categories career patterns: (1) 'short-termers', (2) 'stepping-stone MEPs', (3) long-termers 'EU careerist' and finally, (4) '(ambiguous) multilevel MEPs'. In the short-termers category, 'EP retirees' are defined as MEPs with 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. Regarding stepping stone politicians, MEPs that seated less than 1,5 terms in the EP and at least 1,5 terms at the national level (i.e., the career at the domestic level must be longer than the one at the EU level) we categorized as stepping stone MEPs with national ambition. The same rationale applies for 'stepping stone with regional ambitions': these are MEPs spending fewer than 1,5 terms in the EP and having a longer career at the regional level as a second step. The third category, long-termers EP careerist, is operationalized the following way: 'Euro-Experts' are MEPs that served at least 1,5 terms in the EP after their domestic career (regional or national) while 'Euro-politicians' consist of MEPs with at least 1,5 terms in the EP but without any previous political experience (be it regional or national). Finally, the category of 'Ambiguous multi-level MEPs' 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 analysis of the distribution of career patterns over time – for all 3 016 MEPs from EU-15 – confirms several of our expectations. First, we anticipated the emergence and stabilization of a European political class (**expectation 1a**). Figure 2 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). Taken together, these two categories represent between 31% (LT2) up to 43% (in LT6 and LT7) of MEPs. Interestingly, the empiric shows that both career patterns stabilized – relatively – early in time. While the share of “Euro-expert” is relatively stable since LT2 (between 10% and 13%), the trend is, however, slightly different for “Euro-politicians”. For the latter, after a steady increase (but some fluctuations in LT3), we observe the stabilization of the “Euro-politicians” career pattern more significantly at fifth legislative term (i.e. around 29% of MEPs).

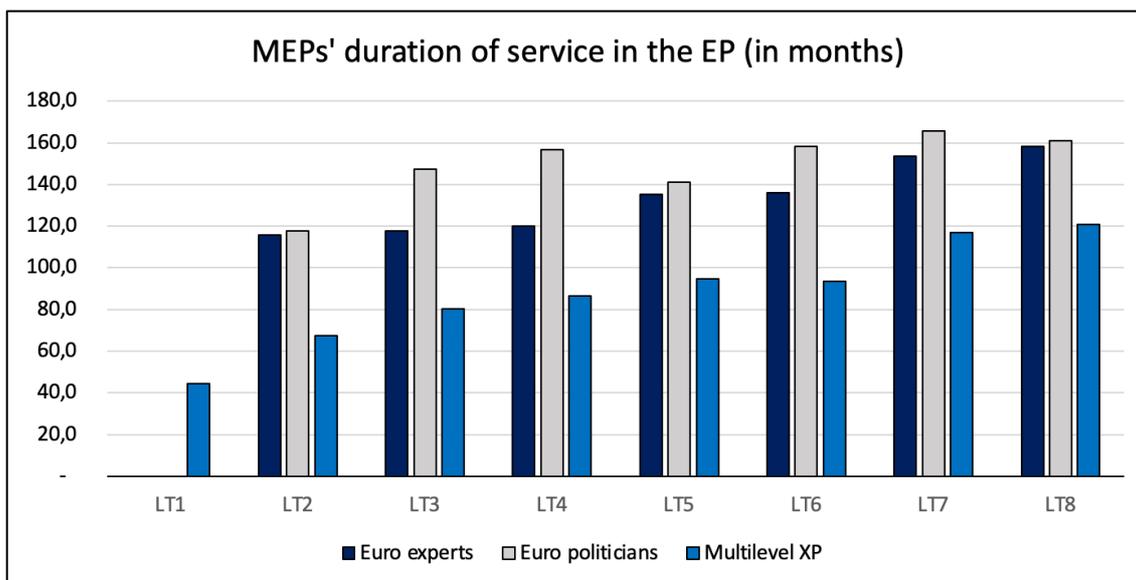
Reflecting as a mirror, we complementary see the constant decline of MEPs with domestic ambition, using the EP as a “stepping stone” towards national politics (**expectation 1b**): it went from 6% (LT1) to 1% (LT8). Regionally-oriented ambition remains relatively low from the beginning and reach the same percentage as national ambition in the latest terms. Finally, figure 2 also confirms that the share of “EP retiree” was relatively minor since the beginning and quickly stabilized after the second legislative term: it went from 13% (LT1) to 6% (LTé) and remains almost identical until recent European elections. The only exception is due to the increase of “EP retiree” during LT8, mostly due to three EPGs (the Conservatives, the Eurosceptics and radical left MEPs). The empirics confirmed, therefore, our expectation and main trends from previous findings (Whitaker, 2014). In other words, the EP was never a retiree home for politicians with non-European ambition.



**Figure 2:** Distribution of MEP's career pattern over time (1979-2019 – EU 15)

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 3). While the average time of service was respectively of 117,7 months and 147,5 months for “Euro Experts” and “Euro Politicians” in LT2, those MEPs have – almost constantly – developed more professionalized career over time, with respectively 158,3 and 160,9 months in LT8<sup>8</sup>. These findings are interesting as it shows that the stabilization of this European political class came together with increasingly experienced politicians. 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).

<sup>8</sup> 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 3:** Distribution of MEP's career pattern over time (1979-2019 – EU 15)

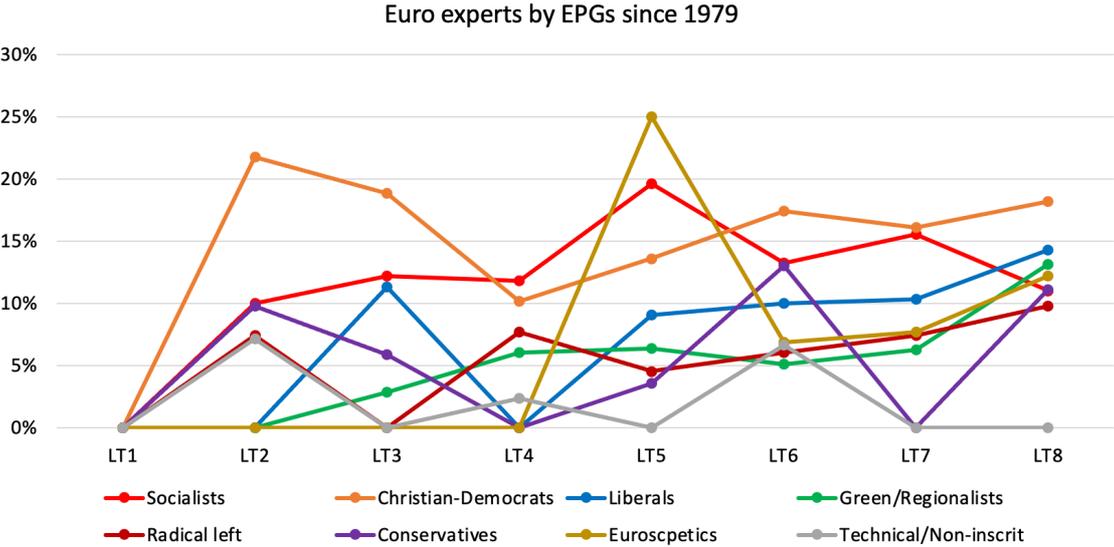
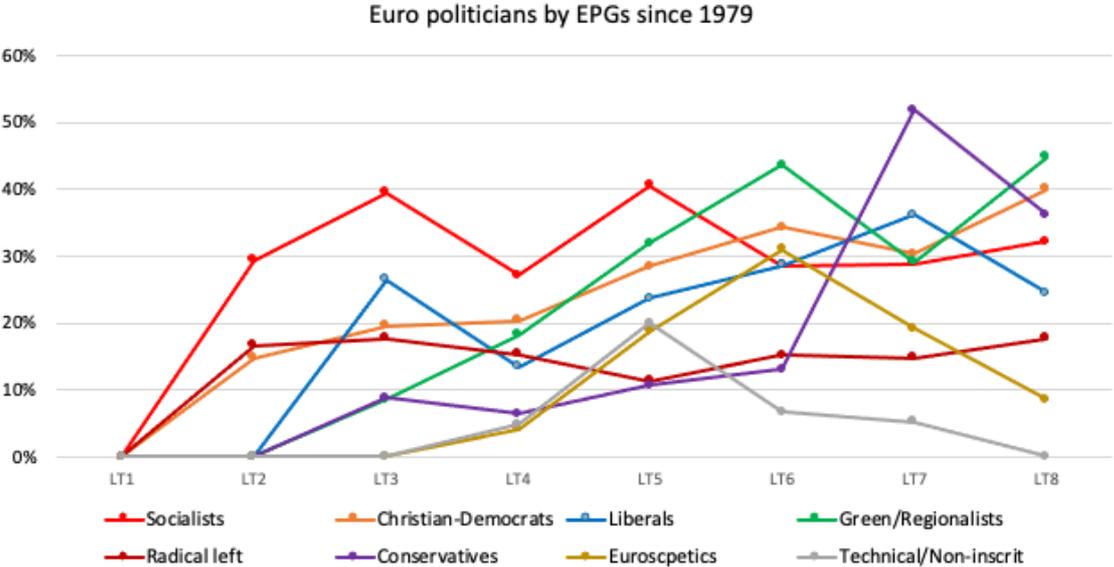
In addition, our expectation (1a) also assumed that the development of a EU parliamentary class should be predominantly found within the most influential EPGs in terms of legislative activity. To this end, we present the variation across EPGs for each career pattern. For the sake of clarity, we mostly present the figures related to the “Euro-politicians” and “Euro-experts”<sup>9</sup>. As figures 4 and 5 show, the increase of “Euro-politicians” in Brussels and Strasbourg comes primarily from the Christian-Democrats (from 15% in LT2 to 40% in LT8), the Liberals (about a quarter of their delegation over time, but with some higher percent such as in LT7 with 36%) and from the Green/Regionalists (with a maximum of 44% of their MEPs belong to this category in LT6 and LT7). 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.

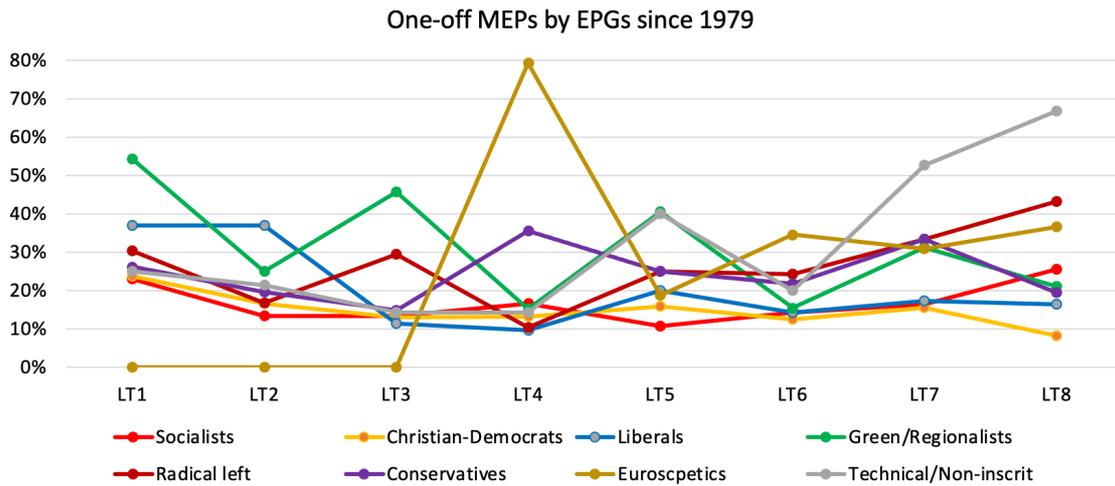
Over the entire period of analysis, the Socialists have, however, rather decreased (from 41% in LT3 and 40% in LT5) as the proportion in the last three terms examined has now reached a proportion comparable to LT 2 (about 30%). This can be explained by our third expectation about party fragmentation: the erosion of their electoral strength threatened incumbents and prevented incumbents from pursuing an (extensive) European career. What comes more as a surprise – but the phenomenon is ephemeral – is the importance of “Euro-politicians” within

<sup>9</sup> The findings presenting variation of all career patterns across all EPGs are available in appendix 4.

the Conservatives' ranks in LT7 and LT8. Finally, as expected, the radical left has contributed only to a lesser extent in the increase of "Euro-politicians".

The empirical conclusions are slightly different when analyzing the evolution of "Euro-experts". Indeed, in LT8, the Christian-democrats, the Liberals and the Greens are the main EPGs having amongst their rank experienced domestic politicians now committed to the European level. However, we see a decrease amongst the Socialists, showing overall a slight but a clear decline of European-oriented MEPs: from 20% in LT5 to 11% in LT8 (the reasons are connected to our fourth expectation, see *infra*).





**Figures 4 , 5 and 6:** Distribution of ‘Euro politician’, ‘Euro expert’ and ‘One-off’ MEPs across EPGs

We now turn to empirical discussion for our second expectations for which we expected a decrease over time of “multi-level MEPs” (**expectation 2**). While the share of ‘(ambiguous) multi-level MEPs’ was relatively stable and covered between 28 and 22% between LT2 and LT6, we observe an immediate after 2004 followed by a mild but constant progressive in the subsequent elections (from 25% in LT6 to 16% in LT8). As a large of these “multi-level 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, Technical/non-inscrit or Radical left MEPs who were not previously the greatest provider of these “multi-level MEPs”. Future (multivariate) empirical analysis of individual analysis is, therefore, be necessary to determine the factors determining career orientation.

According to our third expectation, we expect an increase in the share of “one-off MEPs” along the rise of Eurosceptic EPGs and decline of EPGs’ electoral strength in a context of higher party fragmentation (**expectation 3**). Comparing the “one-off MEPs” category over time by EPGs, expectation 3 can be confirmed only partly. First, we observe an increase of “One-off MEPs” in the group of Eurosceptics. Established in the fourth term, their number was with 79% very high. 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/Non-inscrit 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 in parallel 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 of 25% (16% in LT7). This means that party fragmentation does not affect a high increase of One-off MEPs across all political groups in the EP.

To conclude the empirical analysis, we now turn to the question of the feminization of the EP (**expectation 4**). The pattern of “Euro-politicians” is clearly the dominant pattern since LT2 (between 31 and 26%, except for LT4 with 20%). In general, the share of women MEPs is equal or higher than the share of male “Euro-politicians” (except for LT4 and LT8). As we expected, the EP indeed often represents a first and lasting political experience for female MEPs. On the opposite, the contribution of female MEPs to the “Euro-experts” pattern is, on average, lower than male MEPs (except in LT8), but it has consistently increased over time (from 5% in LT2 to 14% in LT8). This tendency is interesting as it shows that the EP attracts more and more domestically experienced female politicians.

## 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. Nonetheless, albeit the merit of previous works, the literature still faced gaps regarding our knowledge on the evolution of MEPs career patterns over time. In order to contribute to this research agenda, our article had a two-folded objective. As a first step, the article mapped the evolution of career paths of all MEPs originating from the EU 15 Member States. As a second step, the article also aimed at shedding lights on the (evolving) institutional opportunity structures of MEPs along the development of this EU parliamentary elite.

Overall, using Brochert’s triple A framework (2011) as a heuristic device, we identified major evolution in MEPs’ institutional opportunity structure. We learnt that overall, (1) the *availability* of seats in the EP represented a new opportunity for EU politicians, but that this reservoir of ‘new’ seats faced a limited decrease over time associated with more restrictive rules regarding dual mandates. (2) Recognizing the fact that the EP can still be considered less powerful than the Council and the lively debate regarding the second-order nature of EP

elections, we also outlined the *increased* attractiveness of the supranational assembly, along its institutionalization and formal empowerment. Finally, (3) while looking at *the accessibility* of seats in the EP, the article emphasized that accessing the EP nowadays is more challenging than before, especially while considering the increase in new political parties, parliamentary fragmentation and to a lesser extent, the use of gender quotas.

Within this evolving institutional opportunity structure, our data outlined that the EP is increasingly appealing to a larger number of European careerists devoted to the institution. 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 political arenas *vis-à-vis* domestic politics. The Socialists present a more contested conclusion: while they used to send amongst the highest proportion of Euro careerists, their electoral infortune in the late 2000s and early 2010s resulted in the decline of such European-oriented office-holders, associated with a clear increase of “one-off MEPs”.

However, despite the increase of Euroscepticism’s electoral strength in the EP, our empirical data do not show that the European political class is (yet) entirely threatened – with the notorious exception of the Socialist political group discussed above. Actually, it shows that MEPs devoted to the EP (“Euro politicians” and “Euro experts”) have never been that experimented. More recently, the 2019 European elections remind us that this trend is not linear, 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 amongst their largest electoral success ever. In this wake, the literature has long established that the type of personals serving in legislative institutions matters. 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 institutions: trends undermining the core of the European political class are 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.

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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 litterature
<b>Political deadend</b> (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>Multi-level shorttermers</i>	<i>Ephemeral career</i> (Real-Dato, Jerez-Mir, 2007) ; Multi-level short-termers (Dodeigne et al., 2021).
<b>Stepping stone</b>	<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).
<b>EP Careerist</b> (Long-termers)	<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-experts</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); <i>or Two-tracks 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
Scarrows (1997)	4 MS: UK, France, Germany, Italy	3 LT: 1979-1994	-National and lower offices (regional & local) -Pre/post EP career	Identification of <b>3 career patterns</b> : <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 <b>5 types of MEPs</b> : <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 <b>4 ideal types of MEPs (role)</b> : 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 <b>8 different career patterns</b> : 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 Scarrows.
Daniel (2015)	25 MS: EU 15 + Acc-10.	7LT: 1979-2014	-National offices - Pre-EP Career	The author relies on existing categorization, mainly Scarrows.
Beauvallet, Michon (2016)	1 MS: France	8LT: 1979-2019	-National and lower offices (regional & local) - Pre EP career	The authors identify <b>7 paths of access to the EP</b> : <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 <b>3 career patterns</b> : <i>European Careerists, Stepping-stone politicians, European Pensioners</i> and identifies <b>4 MEPs role orientation</b> , <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 <b>3 European parliamentary careers</b> : <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 <b>5 career patterns</b> : <i>'EP careerists', 'stepping-stone', Retiree, one-off MEPs, EU politicians with domestic experience</i> .

<b>Dodeigne et al (2021)</b>	<b>7 MS:</b> Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, France, UK	<b>8 LT:</b> 1979-2019	-National and regional offices -Pre/post EP career	Identification of <b>8 career patterns</b> : <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-tracks Euro MEPs; Ambiguous multi-level MEPs.</i>
<b>Kakepaki, Karayiannis (2021)</b>	<b>1 MS:</b> Greece	<b>9 LT:</b> 1981-2019		Identification of <b>4 career patterns</b> : <i>Strategists (17,1%), Careerists (50%), Party Soldiers (5,2%), Golden Parachutists (27,1%).</i>
<b>Edinger &amp; Fiers (2007)</b>	No specific geographical scope	No specific time scope	No specific empirical data collected	The authors identify <b>6 types of career patterns</b> among 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>