Assessing the Impact of Membership Turnover on Constituent Views of the European Parliament

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ABSTRACT: This chapter examines the relationship between personnel turnover in the European Parliament (EP) and citizens' attitudes toward the EP since the start of direct elections in 1979. European citizens generally see the EP as a "second-order" institution whose importance pales in comparison with that of national institutions. At the same time, the EP is characterized by high levels of personnel turnover, with many of its members exiting the legislature prior to the end of their elected mandate. We address whether nationally divergent patterns of turnover affect the ways that citizens view the EP. We find some evidence that early exit from the EP negatively affects the attitudinal dimension of input legitimacy. We find, however, that this effect has weakened as the EU has grown larger.

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The European Parliament (EP) represents a crucial piece of the European Union's (EU) institutional commitments to representative democracy and is often cited as a key remedy for the perception of the EU democratic deficit. However, both its constituents and its members (MEPs) have ascribed to the EP a status of "second order" importance at various moments in its history. While direct elections to the EP were introduced in 1979 in order to give EU citizens a direct voice in the selection of the legislature and therefore bolster its input legitimacy, voter turnout has underwhelmed, and a consistent "electoral connection" that could be seen as analogous to the representative links offered by national legislatures has yet to be fostered between MEPs and members of the voting public.

In addition, EP personnel have long struggled to overcome the popular adage that EP service is used either as a "kindergarten, a hospital, or a retirement home"—taking in a mix of political novices, scandal-ridden politicians, and has-beens. This is particularly true for the case of MEP turnover, both within and between EP terms, as members routinely exit for national positions that might be seen as more prominent (e.g., Daniel 2015). Although the EP has undoubtedly increased its legislative power as a co-decider on most EU legislation since the effectuation of the Maastricht Treaty, it has yet to fully shake the stigma of Reif and Schmitt's (1980) seminal "second order" labelling. However, it is less clear from existing scholarship just how MEP treatments of the body they serve may also condition the views of their constituents and thus negatively affect the attitudinal legitimacy ascribed to it.

Indeed, MEP membership volatility has been consistently higher than in national legislatures. Whereas relatively high degrees of turnover between sessions of a legislature may not be any more troubling from a normative perspective than legislatures with exceptionally low replacement rates of their members, the EP further sets itself apart from other bodies insofar as it

also has comparatively high rates of *early exit*. Between 1979 and 2014, an average of 13.1% of all sitting MEPs failed to complete their full, elected mandate (Daniel and Metzger 2018). Moreover, patterns of early exit are also highly correlated with national background. In every session of Parliament since 1979, at least one country delegation has seen more than a third of its members leave office early (*ibid.*). While scholars have already examined the causes and consequences of such high turnover rates for legislative behavior within the EP, what impact might high turnover have on the citizens that such MEPs are meant to represent?

Naturally, early exit from the EP may also be conditioned by negative valuations of the EP by constituents. Therefore, we examine this question by using a cross-sectional analysis of EU citizen views of the EP that incorporates various waves of survey data from the Eurobarometer over the course of the EP's existence. Our results indicate that high degrees of MEP early exit from across the EU have indeed lowered citizen valuations, up to a point. We narrow this relationship to the pre-Maastricht Treaty European Community (EC) era, and further show that this trend has reversed and then disappeared entirely in recent years as the EP's legislative power has grown. This indicates that EP personnel turnover may not be a key source of citizen attitudes around the legislature's importance.

This chapter is concerned with input legitimacy's attitudinal dimension. Like Clark and Scherpereel in this volume's next chapter, we seek to determine the extent to which turnover among MEPs affects EU citizens. While Clark and Scherpereel (2020) focus on citizens' (voting) behaviors, however, we focus on citizens' attitudes—specifically, on citizens' valuations of the EP as an institution. We examine whether or not high quantities of turnover among a country's MEPs during a legislative session lead citizens to think more negatively about the EP and its importance. Whereas turnover is oftentimes studied in terms of 'between-session' changes in a

legislature's composition, we view these early exits as sending a particularly strong signal about members' esteem of the institution. If members view other opportunities as more important to them than finishing their elected mandate, what are their constituents to think about the value of their position – and thus the institution that is meant to represent them? We believe this has strong relevance for the input legitimacy that the EP is meant to provide. In the following section, we discuss existing research on EP elections and public opinion, before developing a theory for the negative effect of early exit on constituent views.

EP elections, citizen views, and personnel turnover

European elections were intended to provide democratic legitimacy and popular input to the EU policymaking process, but the existing literature has long maligned the electoral connection between MEPs and EU citizens as deficient, in comparison with national legislatures. EP elections are viewed as "second order" to national ones, misunderstood by voters, characterized by populist voices as being in contest with national sovereignty, and hobbled by a proportional election system that removes personal connections between members and their constituents.

Reif and Schmitt's (1980) work on the "second-order elections" model continues to dominate scholarly assessments of European elections. Their theory articulates how EU citizens view the EP as less important than national parliaments and how EP elections accordingly become tools of national oppositions—whose voters are more willing to vote with their "hearts" than with their "heads." Others have used their work to explore both low turnout rates in EP elections, as well as the disproportionate prevalence of populist, fringe, and extremist voices

among MEPs (e.g., Daniel 2016; Hix and Marsh 2011; Hobolt and Wittrock 2011; Reif 1984; Reif and Schmitt 1980). More recent scholarship has even suggested that EP elections may be self-defeating, as disinterested citizens vote in campaigns that are poorly understood and actually enhance the presence of Euroskeptic politicians within the EU's only directly elected institution (van der Brug and de Vreese 2016).

A general lack of citizen knowledge and understanding of EU institutions further plagues EP elections. For example, Hobolt and Tilley (2014) discuss how the EU's lack of a clearly defined government leads citizens to distrust and ascribe blame to its institutions, such as the EP. Similarly, works by Hobolt and Franklin (2011) and Beaudonnet and Franklin (2016, in van der Brug and de Vreese 2016) detail how EP elections actually lead to decreased participation in both future national and European elections and decrease "diffuse support" for the EU, as they lead citizens to focus on their lack of understanding of European integration. Conversely, Schmitt et al. (2015) demonstrate how knowledge of the *Spitzenkandidat* process – meant to link the EP elections with the formation of the new European Commission – had a positive effect on EP election turnout in 2014. And, on the aggregate, turnout rose even further in the most recent 2019 elections. The general feeling is therefore that European voters would love the EP and participate more fully in its elections, if only they knew what it was for.

In a similar vein, others have viewed European elections in relation to the citizen valuations of their national governments. Hobolt and de Vries (2016) review support for the EU as a tension between theories that pit the "winners" against the "losers" of European integration, in contrast with studies that highlight the role of European identity on fears of lost national sovereignty. As relates to support for the EP, Winzen et al. (2015) find that national parliaments led by MPs who are more in favor of European integration are less likely to view the EP as a

threat or a rival and are therefore less likely to call for increased oversight of EU affairs by national MPs. Relatedly, Muñoz et al. (2011) find that while more trusting citizens are more likely to share their trust with both national and EU governments, higher levels of trust in one's national government across the national population correspond with lower levels of trust in the EP. In other words, not only must citizens more fully understand the purpose of the EP in order to support it, but they must also be influenced by national institutions and actors that view the EU as a useful partner to national governments, as opposed to a challenger or an exclusive rival. This is particularly important in an age of increased Euroskepticism, where populist voices oftentimes inhabit the EP itself.

Finally, other studies of EP elections have pointed to foundational flaws in the institutional structure of European elections that remove the ability of MEPs to form an "electoral connection" with their constituents. Farrell et al. (2007) find that the EP loses out on support from citizens, due in part to many member-states employing closed-list forms of proportional representation (PR) that privilege political parties. Similarly, Hix and Hagemann (2009) call for a reform of EU electoral systems to favor citizen representation via the creation of smaller electoral districts and more open lists. Their "natural experiment" approach evaluates the shift of the UK's European elections from single-member district plurality (SMDP) elections – as in Westminster – to list-style PR voting; they conclude that the corresponding drop in turnout harms citizen connectedness to MEPs. And Obholzer and Daniel (2016) demonstrate the importance of citizen representation via their assessment of electoral district size and MEP Twitter campaigns during the 2014 European elections. In sum, a pessimistic view of the literature might suggest that Europeans are destined to misunderstand and mistrust the European Parliament, due to its particular institutional complexities, its connection to national

governments, and its electoral process. Still, despite the existence of a range of factors encouraging citizens to mistrust the EP, citizen attitudes toward the institution vary significantly across countries and over time. To what extent might turnover affect such variation?

The effect of MEP turnover on citizen support

While the bulk of the literature on EP elections has looked at citizen views and knowledge of Parliament, as well as the institutional nature of European elections, there is reason to suspect that the individual behavior of MEPs themselves may also impact support for the legislature. As mentioned in the introductory section, one striking feature of MEP behavior is their volatile careers – with many representatives eschewing their elected mandates in favor of other positions in national politics or at the EU level. Could it be reasonable, therefore, to expect that high degrees of early exit from one's career as MEP might negatively affect the views of one's constituents about the importance of the job?

The quantity and effects of member turnover have already been the focus of much study, both comparatively and within the EU. Matland and Studlar's (2004) work refers to turnover as a classic "Goldilocks problem": too little can hamper representative democracy, while too much can signal internal chaos and prevent the efficiencies of institutional memory. While their work does not come down on a "just right" amount of turnover, it does frame the broad contours of its causes and points to the role of national political parties and election systems as paramount for engendering healthy levels of membership change.

Within the EU, most scholars seem to view turnover across sessions of the EP as a self-selecting problem. For instance, Whitaker (2014) assesses the role that too-high levels of

turnover have on the ability of MEPs to signal a commitment to the legislature and accordingly lose out on intra-institutional positions of power. Similarly, Beauvallet-Hadded et al. (2016) view MEP turnover as decreasing among members who choose to stand for a second term in office; van Geffen (2016) also views these MEP "careerists" as having self-selected into more active roles within the legislature.

However, others also point to national-level factors. Daniel and Metzger (2018) assess turnover from a national-institutional perspective, identifying degrees of national federalism, electoral systems, and election cycles as each contributing to high levels of early exit from the EP. This work takes the EP out of isolation and relates it more with the national constituencies that serve as the legislature's selectorate. Scherpereel and Perez (2015) further connect turnover between the EP and Council of the European Union, suggesting that national political shifts that lead to changes in the Council's composition may limit its inter-institutional power vis-à-vis the EP. On the whole, the literature suggests that MEPs are often in control of their careers, to the extent that they choose to leave early or not return to Parliament, and that these decisions may have broad-reaching impacts on the ability of politicians to effectively do their jobs.

So far, we have examined how citizen views of the EP have been negatively affected by a lack of citizen understanding of and enthusiasm for European integration, competing valuations with national governing systems, and the complex institutional characteristics of European elections. However, we have also seen that MEPs themselves play a role in the squandering of institutional power via early exit and high across-session turnover, and that national political institutions may further exacerbate such membership volatility. It is worth considering, however, whether these two problems relate. Are citizens views of the EP negatively affected by MEP turnover? Does a lack of stability from among the EP's membership hurt more than just the

ability of an MEP to get important legislative work done? We turn to this question in crafting our theory for MEP early exit and citizen views of the legislature.

Theory and hypothesis

We view high levels of within-session turnover (i.e., early exits) as potentially harmful for citizen valuations of the EP. In terms of citizen attitudes, knowledge of politicians "jumping ship" from the EP for domestic-level office may leave voters pessimistic about the EP's purpose. In other words, if politicians do not take their positions seriously, then why should voters? High turnover rates may therefore be damaging to the input legitimacy that is needed for the EP to serve as a balm to representative democracy in the EU. More practically, however, we know that high turnover rates affect the ability of politicians to do their jobs—hobbling the institutional seniority and expertise needed to have a strong impact on internal legislative processes. This may also harm citizen valuations of the throughput legitimacy of the institution, as high turnover rates lead MEPs to be viewed as unproductive or ineffective in their job as policy makers.

However, other processes may condition citizens' views of the EP. As the EP has moved from an unelected talk shop to a directly elected veto player, its membership has expanded to more than 700 full-time and professionalized politicians. MEP careers have also lengthened, and studies of a new "European class" of legislators have enhanced the perspective of MEPs as important players in both the EU policy-making process and within national political systems. Nevertheless, the EP remains an interesting laboratory of study, insofar as the singular body has been comprised of 28 (now 27) differing member-states—each with its own national political

culture, institutions, and parties. This suggests that a cross-sectional study of MEP turnover, over time, is necessary to answer our question.

Between 1979 and 2014, some national delegations saw 100 per cent of their MEPs complete a five-year mandate, while others saw more than half leave their positions early. It is reasonable to expect that this pronounced degree of intra-institutional heterogeneity, which we know to be heavily conditioned on a national basis, may also affect the views of MEP constituents. Might heightened levels of MEP early exit detract from citizen valuations of the EP? We believe that it will.

More specifically, we expect that citizens from countries in which their MEPs are more likely to leave their mandate early will view the EP more negatively. We assume that such early exit signals to constituents a lack of importance for the job of MEP, as well as reduces the ability of MEPs to form an electoral connection with their constituents. In keeping with the extant literature on EP support, we further assume that high rates of MEP turnover will lead to lower awareness of and knowledge about the EU system. This lack of understanding of the body may lead to pronouncements of its unimportance. In other words, we posit the following:

> H1a: High rates of MEP early exit from one's own national delegation will negatively affect one's views of the EP.

However, it may be that a weak electoral connection means that citizens are unaware of the specific internal dynamics of their national delegations, but do recognize the general propensity for MEPs to exit early from within the system. For instance, the well-known tactic of political parties to use high-profile national politicians to lead electoral lists that never intend to

actually take up their seat and serve in the EP may lead voters to think negatively about the legislature. Similarly, ongoing scandals, whereby MEPs use their office to either enrich themselves or to funnel money to national party organizations—never doing any real work at the EP level—may also lead citizens to view the legislature as generally unimportant or even harmful to the European project. We anticipate in this way that high turnover rates will negatively affect constituent views of the EP, even when such turnover does not come from one's own national delegation of MEPs. We therefore posit a related hypothesis:

> H1b: High rates of MEP early exit from other national delegations will negatively affect citizens' views of the EP.

Alternative explanations

It may be that other variables lead EU citizens to view the Parliament negatively, across both time and space. These variables, which are mostly hinted at in the above literature review, could range from national-level traits—such as the national electoral calendar and political system—to individual-level characteristics of voters—such as general knowledge of and support for the EU. We examine these competing explanations in the following section, after introducing our data sources and modelling approach.

Research design and analysis

In order to test our hypothesis about MEP early exit and citizen views of the EP, we begin with Daniel and Metzger's (2018) individual-level data on all MEPs that served during the first seven sessions of Parliament (1979–2014) and combine this information with data on citizens' views of the EP from Eurobarometer (EB) surveys. Our unit of analysis is the individual survey respondent.

We use the Mannheim Cumulative Trend Dataset (Schmitt and Scholz 2009) for our Eurobarometer data, which compiles and harmonizes Eurobarometer questions across survey waves from 1970 to 2002. With the survey questions we use, our main estimation sample can only include information on 15 EU countries, spanning from 1983 to 2000;[1] however, we ran separate robustness checks using similar questions from additional waves and countries. Our estimation *N* for this baseline dataset is 260,577.[2] In later models, we divide the baseline dataset by historical era and expand our observational period through 2011, using additional data from Clark and Rohrschneider (2019).

Our main dependent variable is EPIMPF, a respondent's personal feeling about whether the EP should play a more important role. The question appeared on 28 Eurobarometer waves that enter our sample, which reflects by far the broadest coverage of any individual question regarding the EP's value.[3] The question's wording for the bulk of our included EBs is, "Would you personally prefer the European Parliament played a more important or a less important part than it does now?" This wording remains fairly constant across all the waves, with only minor changes.[4] The question's responses are on a 3-point scale, recoded such that: (1) =less important, (2) =about the same, and (3) =more important. We assume respondents who would like to see the

EP increase in its importance are more likely to be supportive of the institution, generally speaking. Our primary analysis includes any individual who provided a valid question response for EPIMPF, and omits any individuals who answered "don't know" or for whom the question was not applicable (collectively, DK/NAs).[5]

We use an ordered probit model for our primary analyses with robust standard errors, clustered by respondent-country. We also include country fixed effects, which capture any time-invariant factors for each country. Further, we include fixed effects for each EP session. Our main results are unweighted, but we report weighted results for reference in the online appendix (DuMouchel and Duncan 1983; Solon et al. 2015).[6]

VIEW CHAPTER 2 ONLINE APPENDIX MATERIALS HERE

Our main independent variable is the amount of within-session turnover among the respondent's MEPs within the past year. We generate the variable using Daniel and Metzger's (2018) within-session turnover dataset, which has information on how long each MEP stayed in the EP within and across sessions. We begin by determining the earliest date each EB survey was deployed in a country, and treat this as the earliest day the respondent could have taken the survey. We then use Daniel and Metzger's dataset to count the number of MEPs from the respondent's country who had dropped out of the European Parliament in the year preceding the earliest possible survey date.[7] Finally, we normalize this turnover count by dividing the count by a weighted average of the number of seats allotted to the respondent's country in the EP sessions occurring within the prior-year window. For instance, if 45% of the preceding year's days occurred during EP6 and 55% of the preceding year's days occurred during EP7, the

denominator would be 0.45*(country's # of seats in EP6) + 0.55*(country's # of seats in EP7). For countries that were not EU members in one of the preceding year's EP sessions, we reallocate the entire weight to the session in which the country was an EU member. The final variable ranges from 0% to 50% in our sample.[8]

Finally, we include a number of respondent-level and country-level control variables. For respondents, we control for their gender (=1 if female, =0 if male), age (and age^2, both in years), and education level.[9,10] At the country level, we control for time since last national election,[11] time since the last EP election (in days), voting age population turnout in the last EP election (%), and how long the country has been a full EU member (in years).[12] Our online appendix includes descriptive statistics for all the variables mentioned above.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Table 1 contains the main results from our ordered probit models, with the relevant rows for hypothesis 1a shaded dark gray. Positively signed coefficients mean that higher covariate values increase the probability of the respondent answering "very important" to EPIMPF.[13] We begin with Model 1, a pooled model containing all EB surveys between 1983 and 2000. Consistent with H1a, we see that country within-session turnover has a negative and statistically significant effect. Respondents from countries with higher within-session MEP turnover rates are less likely to believe the EP should play a more important role in the European Union. This effect persists when we include an additional variable for the number of within-session dropouts within the past year in all *other* EU countries (Model 2).[14]

Model 2 also serves as a test of H1b (rows with light-gray shading). Initially, we see no support for H1b, but the non-result is a product of a non-linear relationship between other countries' within-session turnover and respondents' views about the EP. Once we include a squared term for other countries' within-session turnover, we find an inverse-U relationship (Model 3). The non-linearity means for certain values of other countries' within-session turnover, more turnover decreases the probability of a respondent believing the EP should play a more important role, consistent with H1b. However, for other of the covariate's values, the relationship is flipped—higher levels of other countries' within-session MEP turnover increases the probability of respondents believing the EP should play a more important role. Model 3's results continue to hold if we remove any control variables with two-tailed *p*-values greater than 0.10 (Model 4).

While our analysis so far offers some support for our hypotheses, our pooled sample may also be masking important era-specific effects. In other words, the relationship between within-session turnover and respondents' beliefs about the EP may vary at differing moments in the broader context of the EU's historical evolution. To investigate, we further split our sample into the three distinct eras, starting from the EP's shift to an elected body in 1979: (1) the European Community period (August 8, 1979 – October 31, 1993); (2) the EU's pre-enlargement phase, once the Maastricht Treaty granted co-decision to the EP (November 1, 1993 – April 30, 2004); and (3) the EU's post-enlargement phase, following its near-doubling of member-states (since May 1, 2004). We use Clark and Rohrschneider's (2019) data for information on this third era, as our principal dataset only goes through 2000. To preview our findings: we find support for both of our hypotheses about within-session turnover (H1a, H1b), but only during the European Community era (e.g., 1979–1993). We find the *opposite* of what we posit for both hypotheses

during the EU's pre-enlargement era (1993–2004), and we find no support for either hypothesis during the EU's post-enlargement era (2004 forward).

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

Our era-specific models (Table 2) reveal distinct differences in the relationship between within-session MEP turnover and respondents' EP beliefs. We now find non-linear relationships for both within-session turnover variables when we disaggregate by era. We generate our predicted probabilities analytically using the era-specific models, varying within-session dropout's values, as usual. However, for all the other covariates, we use our dataset's observed values ("observed value approach"), instead of the typical convention of setting everything else to its mean or median ("average case approach") (Hanmer and Kalkan 2013). The predicted probabilities still represent the same quantity, but their meaning is now different: it is the average predicted probability *across all our dataset's respondents*, for specific values of within-session dropout.

INSERT FIGURES 1 AND 2 HERE

Figure 1 displays the predicted probabilities for respondent-country MEP within-session dropout's 5^{th}, 25^{th}, 50^{th}, 75^{th}, and 95^{th} percentiles within each era. The three columns correspond to EPIMPF's three possible answers, while the three rows correspond to the three EU eras. For respondent-country within-session dropout to have an effect, the difference between two

covariate profiles' predicted probabilities must be statistically distinguishable from zero, indicated in Figure 2 by a difference's confidence interval (CI) excluding zero.[15]

Figure 1 shows that respondent-country within-session turnover exhibits a different effect within each EU era. Starting with the EC era ("pre-Maastricht" row), our results are as expected: as a country's level of within-session turnover increases, respondents from that country are less likely to believe the EP should play a more important role (Figure 1, upper-right panel). For instance, holding all other variables at their observed values, a respondent from a country with no within-session MEP turnover in the past year has a 63.8% chance, on average, of believing the EP should play a more important role, pre-Maastricht. Increasing the amount of respondent-country within-session MEP turnover to 1.2% lowers the respondents' average probability of holding "should be more important" beliefs to 63.5%. This 0.3 percentage point decrease is statistically distinguishable from zero (Figure 2, upper-right panel, first estimate), as are all the decreases in Figure 1's upper-right panel (Figure 2, upper-right panel).

Once the Treaty of Maastricht goes into effect, our evidence no longer supports H1a. In the post-Maastricht era (1993–2004), more respondent-country within-session MEP turnover *increases* the probability of a respondent believing the EP should play a more important role (Figure 1, middle-right panel), and these increases are all statistically distinguishable from zero (Figure 2, middle-right panel). After the 2004 EU enlargement, the relationship becomes statistically indistinguishable from zero (Figure 2, bottom-right panel)—there appears to be little connection between respondent-country within-session turnover and respondents' beliefs about the role that the EP should play. Given the EP's increased importance after co-decision was codified by the Maastricht Treaty, it may be that citizen feelings towards the EP's importance were already at a high-enough baseline and were therefore less sensitive to turnover rates. On the

whole, then, our results suggest turnover in a respondent's own MEP delegation within an EP session does lead respondents to believe the EP should play a less important role, but only pre-Maastricht.

INSERT FIGURES 3 AND 4 HERE

We also run a second set of predicted probabilities in which we vary other countries' within-session MEP turnover rate to assess H1b, computing the same era-specific percentile values as before (Figure 3).[16] Figure 3 shows that other countries' within-session turnover rates affect respondents' personal beliefs about whether the EP should play a more important role. Notably, like the respondent-country dropout results, the nature of this relationship varies across eras. For the pre-Maastricht era, our evidence is consistent with H1b: increasing other countries' within-session dropout decreases the probability of a "should play a more important role" response. However, this relationship only holds for lower levels of turnover, with only the 5th-25th and 25th-50th differences being statistically different from zero (Figure 4, upper-right panel).

In the 1993–2004 era, we find the opposite of what H1b implies; this surprising finding is similar to the respondent country–turnover finding. Increases in dropouts among MEPs from other member states *increases*, rather than decreases, a respondent's probability of believing the EP should play a more important role (Figure 4, middle-right panel). Finally, in the post-2004 era, there is no detectable relationship between the two variables (Figure 4, bottom-right panel), thus offering no support for H1b. In short: within-session MEP turnover in other EU countries will lead a respondent to believe the EP should play a less important role, but again, only prior to the Maastricht Treaty.[17]

Although not the focus of our investigation, a number of control variables behave as expected throughout the results. Corroborating discussions of the feminist critique of turnover from the introductory chapter, for instance, we find that female respondents are consistently more pessimistic about the EP across all three eras, even after controlling for respondent age and education level. This lends empirical heft to the statements made by Irigoien (2019, 25–27). On the other hand, our results also confirm that more educated voters have been the most supportive of the EP throughout history. This speaks to populist critiques of EU institutions, which oftentimes cater to less-educated voters with simplistic characterizations of political institutions. Although we do not test these variables in light of varied degrees of turnover, it is worth noting such relationships within the broader context of the EU's input legitimacy.

Discussion and conclusions

Citizens' attitudinal support for the EU broadly, and the EP specifically, is an important component of the EU's input legitimacy. However, citizens may reasonably be expected to view the EP in a negative light, should MEPs themselves not take their jobs seriously and leave early from their elected mandates. Our initial analysis offers some support for the expectation that high levels of MEP early exit may dampen the attitudinal dimension of the EU's input legitimacy. More specifically, we find signs of a statistically significant relationship between rates of early exit and the importance that citizens ascribe to the EP, when *both* the early exit rates of one's national MEPs and other countries' MEPs are taken into consideration. We find, however, that this effect is only apparent in the expected direction until the advent of co-decision, at which time higher rates of turnover actually leave citizens valuing the EP as even more important. The

effect then disappears entirely after the 2004 enlargement period. What, then, does this say about the connection between EP personnel turnover and citizen attitudes towards the legislature? And what, more broadly, does it tell us about the EU's input legitimacy?

Having only been elected since 1979, the EP was still a relatively new—and comparatively powerless—institution throughout the 1980s. This may explain a general view that the EP should be more important, particularly among those citizens who perceived membership turnover as lower. Naturally, the opposite appears to be true for those citizens exposed to high levels of turnover—why shift more powers to a new legislature unable to keep its members? Unlike in present times, a much larger proportion of MEPs during the pre-Maastricht period were indeed yesteryear's political retirees, as well as unfamiliar faces, and indeed even some national MPs who continued to serve dual mandates both national legislatures and the EP. It would therefore be reasonable for these citizens to take a pessimistic attitude towards a legislative body whose representatives may not have seemed fully committed to the demands of the job.

On the other hand, since the expansion of EP powers to include co-decision, we found that high turnover may actually have had a positive effect on citizen views of the EP. Perhaps this also coincides with an era in which EU politicians were beginning to build their own political "class" and voters saw a need for new, specialist faces that were not just angling for a national position? Another way of saying this is that if politicians were continuing to use the EP as a springboard to national office (cf. Daniel 2015) and thereby leaving it early, even as its institutional capacity had grown, voters might continue to view national legislatures as the most important and fail to support further increases in the EP's level of power.

Finally, the lack of effect for turnover on citizen views, post-2004, could be seen as a sign of the EU's maturation. Nearly three decades of co-decision on, the EP may now just be seen as important "enough" and therefore our dependent variable less sensitive to a wide range of inputs that might once have swayed citizen opinions about the EP. Regardless, this chapter's analysis provides no empirical support for the populist claim that infusions of new blood will help to redeem the EU or the theoretical notion that turnover will bolster input legitimacy.

Whatever the case, the EP remains an interesting example for the study of turnover's effect on citizen views. Similar to other chapters in this volume, those effects are not always obvious or straightforward. However, so long as the EP is seen as both of secondary importance to the national parliaments of the EU, as well as the crucial balm of input legitimacy for a Union plagued by the narrative of democratic deficits, then its personnel turnover is worthy of consideration. If EP personnel turnover does not matter much for the attitudinal dimension of input legitimacy, later chapters in this volume will investigate the extent to which it matters for the behavioral dimension of input legitimacy, for throughput legitimacy, and for output legitimacy.

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Tables

Table 1: Determinants of "Should the EP Play a More Important Role?"

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5 DV = EPIMP1
Country WS turnover	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003**	-0.003**	0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Other countries' WS turnover		-0.007	0.050**	0.049**	0.044**
		(0.007)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.020)
Other countries' WS turnover^2			-0.009**	-0.009**	-0.006*
			(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Age	0.010***	0.010***	0.010***	0.010***	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Age^2	-0.000***	-0.000***	-0.000***	-0.000***	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Female	-0.110***	-0.110***	-0.110***	-0.110***	0.071***
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.022)
Education: DK/NA	0.165**	0.168**	0.164**	0.164**	0.058
	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.073)	(0.069)
Education: 16-19	0.085***	0.085***	0.085***	0.085***	0.010
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.023)
Education: 20+	0.242***	0.242***	0.243***	0.243***	-0.095**
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.038)
Turnout, last EP elect.	0.002	0.002	0.002		0.007**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)		(0.003)
Days since last EP elect.	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		(0.000)
% since last nat'l elect.	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000		-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		(0.000)
Length of EU m'ship	-0.025***	-0.020**	-0.024***	-0.023***	0.008
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.005)
τ_1	-1.709***	-1.666***	-1.625***	-1.927***	-0.409*
	(0.219)	(0.190)	(0.193)	(0.248)	(0.211)
τ_2	-0.800***	-0.756***	-0.716***	-1.017***	0.782***
	(0.236)	(0.211)	(0.217)	(0.273)	(0.198)
τ_3					2.284***
					(0.207)
N	260577	260577	260577	260577	237520
Log-likelihood	-226342.20	-226339.93	-226318.91	-226343.44	-263688.48
AIC	452712.40	452709.86	452665.83	452714.89	527404.97
BIC	452858.99	452866.92	452812.42	452861.48	527550.26

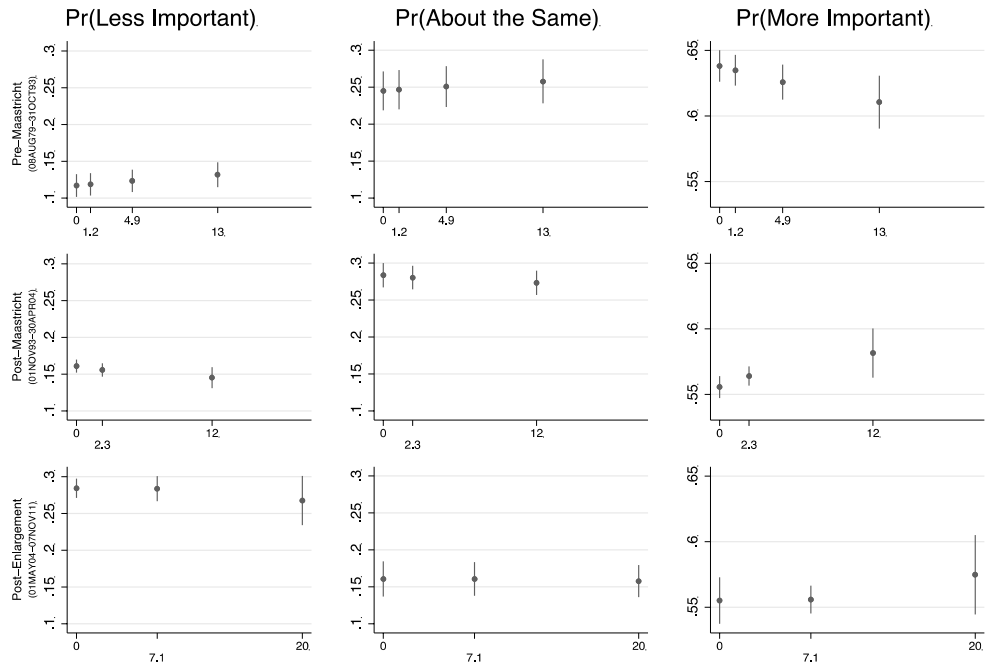
* = $p \leq 0.10$, ** = $p \leq 0.05$, *** = $p \leq 0.01$, two-tailed for all variables. WS = within-session. Robust standard errors clustered on country reported in parentheses. Country fixed effect and wave fixed effect estimates omitted to save space. Omitted category for education: ≤ 15 yrs. DV = EPIMPF for all models except Model 5, where DV = EPIMP1 (see discussion in note 17).

Table 2: By EU Era, Determinants of "Should the EP Play a More Important Role?"

	Without Survey Weights			With Survey Weights	
	Model 6 Pre-Maastricht (08AUG79–31OCT93)	Model 7 Post-Maastricht (01NOV93–30APR04)	Model 8 Post-Enlargement (01MAY04–07NOV11)	Model 6a Pre-Maastricht (08AUG79–31OCT93)	Model 7a Post-Maastricht (01NOV93–30APR04)
Country WS turnover	-0.0078**	0.0107***	-0.0010	-0.0060**	0.0089**
	(0.0031)	(0.0036)	(0.0040)	(0.0027)	(0.0039)
Country WS turnover^2	0.0001	-0.0004***	0.0002**	0.0001	-0.0003***
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Other countries' WS turnover	-0.0699**	0.2990***	0.6983*	-0.0666***	0.3126***
	(0.0284)	(0.0714)	(0.3722)	(0.0256)	(0.0686)
Other countries' WS turnover^2	0.0090**	-0.0688***	-0.0706*	0.0082**	-0.0726***
	(0.0038)	(0.0195)	(0.0386)	(0.0035)	(0.0190)
Age	0.0117***	0.0072***	0.0087***	0.0120***	0.0077***
	(0.0035)	(0.0027)	(0.0017)	(0.0032)	(0.0027)
Age^2	-0.0001***	-0.0001**	-0.0001***	-0.0001***	-0.0001***
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)
Female	-0.1305***	-0.0785***	-0.0815***	-0.1331***	-0.0761***
	(0.0177)	(0.0152)	(0.0135)	(0.0150)	(0.0153)
Education: DK/NA	0.0026	0.2527***	0.0727	-0.0567	0.2465***
	(0.0702)	(0.0915)	(0.0807)	(0.0772)	(0.0880)
Education: 16-19	0.0973***	0.0668***	0.1009***	0.0940***	0.0667***
	(0.0117)	(0.0132)	(0.0169)	(0.0091)	(0.0162)
Education: 20+	0.2524***	0.2155***	0.1694***	0.2461***	0.2163***
	(0.0360)	(0.0302)	(0.0238)	(0.0378)	(0.0346)
Turnout, last EP elect.	0.0011	0.0034*	0.0036	0.0010	0.0035*
	(0.0022)	(0.0020)	(0.0027)	(0.0019)	(0.0021)
Days since last EP elect.	0.0000***	-0.0000	0.0002**	0.0000***	-0.0000
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)
% since last nat'l elect.	-0.0001	-0.0017***	0.0002	-0.0001	-0.0017***
	(0.0003)	(0.0004)	(0.0005)	(0.0003)	(0.0004)
Length of EU m'ship	-0.0265***	-0.0030	-0.0037	-0.0265***	-0.0031
	(0.0071)	(0.0149)	(0.0321)	(0.0068)	(0.0142)
τ_1	-1.8871***	-0.8964**	5.8403**	-1.8708***	-0.9566**
	(0.1897)	(0.4124)	(2.8936)	(0.1749)	(0.4172)
τ_2	-0.9666***	0.0027	6.2839**	-0.9444***	-0.0550
	(0.1768)	(0.4263)	(2.8919)	(0.1590)	(0.4321)
N	170243	90334	81051	170243	90334
Log-likelihood	-141607.04	-84236.89	-77598.09	-140419.83	-82753.79
AIC	283236.07	168501.78	155228.19	280863.66	165535.57
BIC	283346.57	168633.54	155377.03	280984.20	165667.33

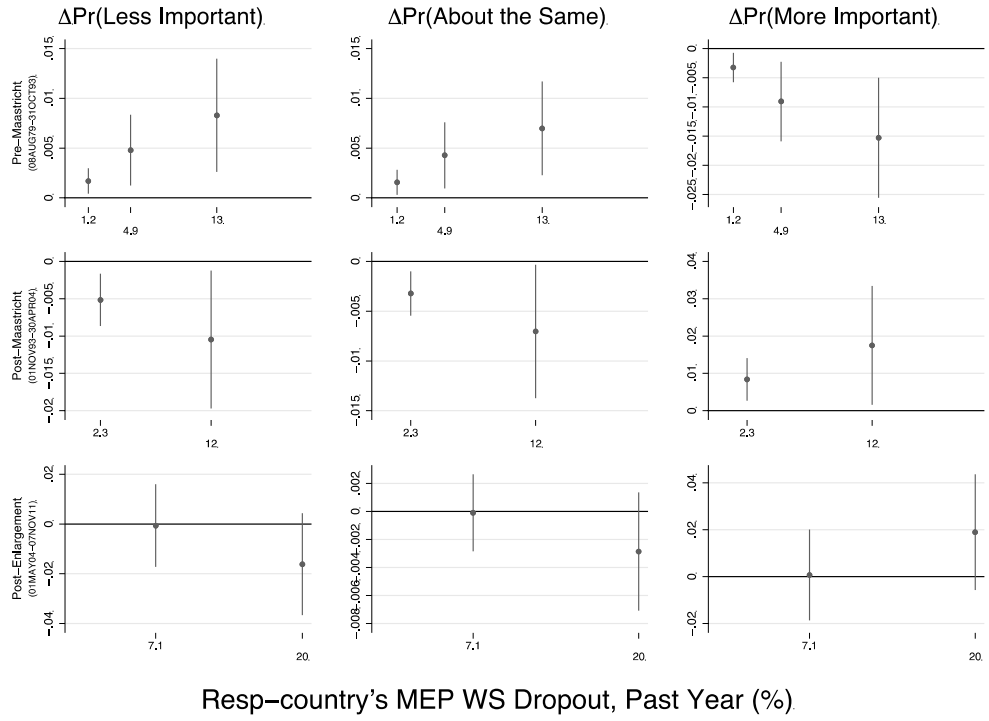
Figures

Figure 1: Predicted Probabilities: Respondent-Country MEP Dropout



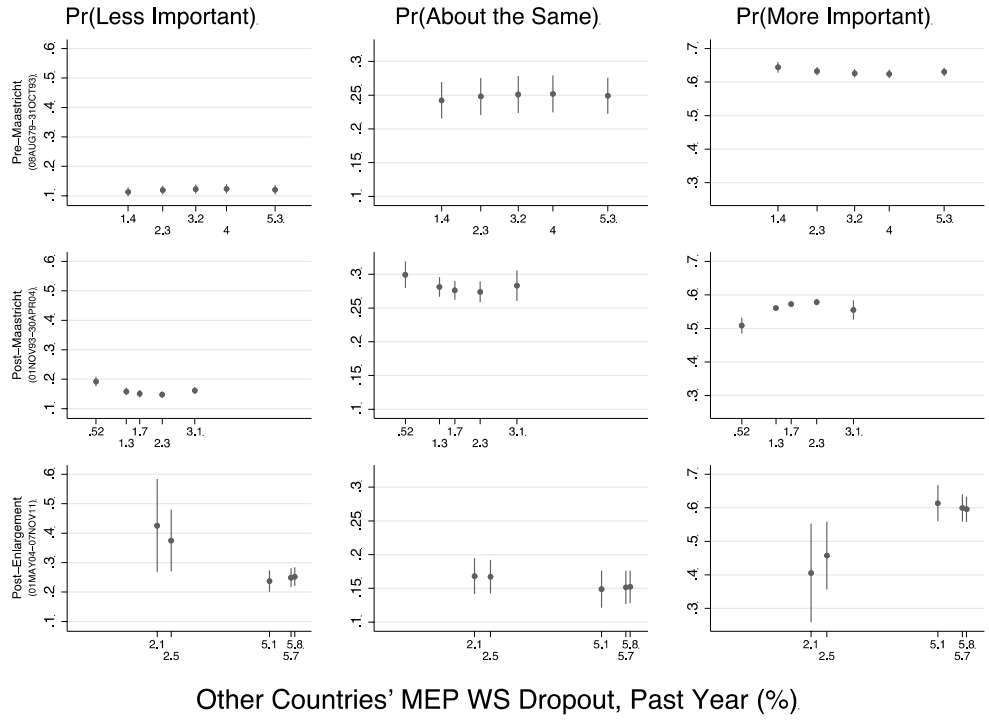
WS = within-session. Probabilities generated using Table 2's unweighted era models for 5th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 95th era-specific percentiles. 95% confidence intervals. Only four probabilities displayed because *x*'s 5th and 25th percentiles are equal; fewer than four lines occur in some panels for the same reason. Note: same *y*-scale within columns, but different scales across columns.

Figure 2. First Differences: Respondent-Country MEP Dropout



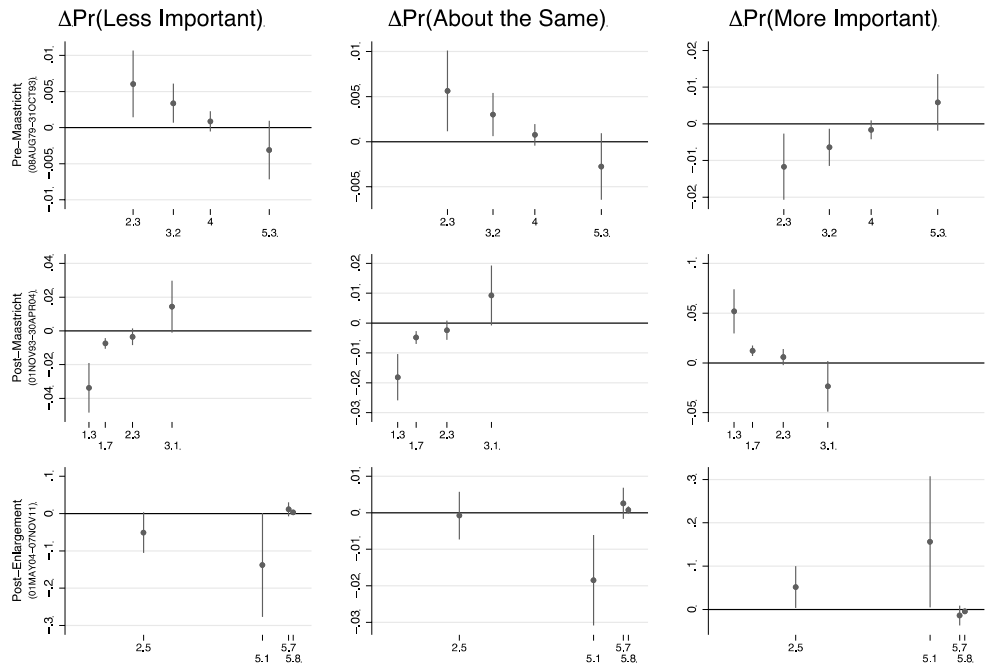
WS = within-session. Plotted quantity: (labelled percentile's predicted probability) – (previous percentile's predicted probability). Probabilities generated using Table 2's unweighted era models for 5th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 95th era-specific percentiles. 95% confidence intervals. Fewer than four first differences appear because some of *x*'s percentiles are equal, within eras. Note: different *y*-scales within and across columns, to maximize readability.

Figure 3. Predicted Probabilities: Other Country's MEP Dropout



WS = within-session. Probabilities generated using Table 2's unweighted era models for 5th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 95th era-specific percentiles. 95% confidence intervals. Note: different *y*-scales within and across columns, to maximize readability.

Figure 4. First Differences: Other Countries' MEP Dropout



WS = within-session. Plotted quantity: (labelled percentile's predicted probability) – (previous percentile's predicted probability). Probabilities generated using Table 2's unweighted era models for 5th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 95th era-specific percentiles. 95% confidence intervals. Note: different *y*-scale within and across columns, to maximize readability.

Notes

[1] As we mention later, we eventually split our sample into different EU eras, using Clark and Rohrschneider's (2019) data for the period 2004–2011.

[2] We display the specific breakdown of countries based on our included survey waves, with the values representing the number of respondents from that country in a particular year, in the online appendix.

[3] EB19, EB20, EB21, EB22, EB23, EB24, EB25, EB26, EB27, EB28, EB29, EB30, EB31, EB33, EB34.0, EB35.0, EB36, EB37.0, EB38.0, EB39.0, EB42, EB43.1, EB44.1, EB47.2, EB48.0, EB49, EB52.0, EB53.

[4] "Would you, personally, prefer *that* the EP played…," "Would you personally *like* the EP *to play* a more or a less important *role* than it does now?"

[5] Different countries coded DK and NA in different ways in different waves (e.g., as two separate values for some waves, but a single value in others). To address this, DK and NA are merged into a single value in the Mannheim dataset.

[6] The Mannheim dataset lacks the specific survey structure information we would need to make further design-related adjustments.

[7] Technically, the end point of our year-long windows is the day before the earliest possible survey date.

[8] For descriptive information on within-session turnover broken down by country and EP session, see Daniel and Metzger (2018, Appendix A).

[9] Education level is a categorical variable, recording the age at which respondents "finished" (for some waves) or "stopped" (in other waves) their full-time education. There are four categories: (1) < 15 years old; (2) 16–19 years old, (3) 20+ years old, or (4) DK/NA. For respondents still in

school, we use their age at the time of the survey. We use < 15 years as our omitted category and include the other three categories as regressors.

[10] We considered including other respondent-level variables, such as political knowledge, interest, efficacy, and/or participation; degree of Euroskepticism; and the respondent's community size (urban/suburban/rural). However, these questions do not appear consistently across the same EB waves as EPIMPF. We lose at least 75% of our observations if we include at least one of these variables in our regressions. Further, some of the questions (political participation, political interest) do not *ever* appear in the same EB wave as EPIMPF; we lose 100% of our observations. We nonetheless check for robustness in our findings by including the variables we can in separate models for applicable EB waves; results remain consistent.

[11] Formally, we normalize this variable. It appears as the percent of days that have passed in the country's current constitutional inter-election period (CIEP). The CIEP for all countries in our sample is either 4 or 5 years. A value of 10% in a country with a 5-year CIEP means 6 months have passed since the last national election.

[12] Similar to note 10, there were additional country-level variables we wished to include, but could not without losing observations (e.g., average number of voting age population per MEP).

[13] Ordered probit coefficients indicate the direction of *x*'s relationship with the probability of observing the scale's first or last categories, similar to basic probit. However, the coefficients do not have a similarly easy meaning for the probability of observing the scale's middle category (or categories) because of how ordered probit models are constructed (Greene 2003: 738-739).

[14] This variable is also a percent, with the denominator computed using the same weighted average logic as the country-specific turnover variable. The weights are multiplied by the

number of seats allocated in the relevant EP session(s) to all countries other than the respondent's.

[15] We opted to assess differences in adjacent covariate profiles only (e.g., 25th vs. 50th percentile), but could have also assessed others. See Austin and Hux (2002) for why we must use first differences to gauge statistical significance instead of overlapping predicted probability CIs.

[16] This variable exhibited a quadratic relationship with respondents' beliefs about the EP's importance and was statistically significant in Model 3's pooled results. This pattern continues to hold for Table 2's era-specific models.

[17] We also estimated a model with a slightly different dependent variable: EPIMPF1, which addresses *whether* a respondent thinks the EP plays an important role—different than our dependent variable, which asks *should* the EP play a more important role. Interestingly, neither type of within-session dropout has any effect on respondents' belief about the role that *is* played by the EP. The implication, then, is that within-session dropout does not affect respondents' EP-related views about what *is* the EP's importance, but only about what *should* the EP's importance be, relative to now. These results are featured in Table 1, Model 5.

Appendix A: Weighted Regressions

TABLE 1. Determinants of "Should the EP play a more important role?" – Weighted Models

	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model D
Country WS turnover	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Other countries' WS turnover		-0.008	0.053**	0.052**
		(0.007)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Other countries' WS turnover^2			-0.010**	-0.009**
			(0.004)	(0.004)
Age	0.010***	0.010***	0.010***	0.010***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Age^2	-0.000***	-0.000***	-0.000***	-0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Female	-0.111***	-0.111***	-0.111***	-0.110***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Education: DK/NA	0.133*	0.137*	0.132*	0.133*
	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.073)
Education: 16-19	0.082***	0.082***	0.082***	0.082***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Education: 20+	0.238***	0.238***	0.238***	0.239***
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.030)
Turnout, last EP elect.	0.002	0.002	0.002	
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	
Days since last EP elect.	0.000*	0.000	0.000	
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	
% since last nat'l elect.	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	
Length of EU m'ship	-0.025***	-0.020**	-0.024***	-0.024***
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
τ_1	-1.733***	-1.680***	-1.637***	-1.925***
	(0.217)	(0.189)	(0.191)	(0.237)
τ_2	-0.818***	-0.766***	-0.723***	-1.011***
	(0.234)	(0.210)	(0.215)	(0.260)
N	260577	260577	260577	260577
Log-likelihood	-223637.76	-223634.53	-223610.88	-223634.30
AIC	447303.53	447297.06	447249.77	447298.60
BIC	447450.12	447443.65	447396.35	447455.66

* = $p \leq 0.10$, ** = $p \leq 0.05$, *** = $p \leq 0.01$, two-tailed for all variables. WS = within-session. Weighted based on included EB country weights. Robust standard errors clustered on country reported in parentheses. Country fixed effect and wave fixed effect estimates omitted to save space.

Appendix B: Descriptive Data Information

TABLE 2. Estimation Sample Composition, by EB Year and Country

EB Yr.	*Austria*	*Belgium*	*Denmk.*	*Finland*	*France*	*Germany*	*GB*	*Greece*	*Ireland*	*Italy*	*Luxemb.*	*Netherl.*	*Portugal*	*Spain*	*Sweden*	TOTAL
1983	0	1,499	1,343	0	1,555	1,630	1,666	1,452	1,458	1,722	532	1,735	0	0	0	14,592
1984	0	1,773	1,290	0	1,612	1,641	1,773	1,596	1,534	814	533	1,732	0	0	0	14,298
1985	0	1,709	1,243	0	1,833	1,651	1,801	1,447	1,565	1,841	526	1,706	0	0	0	15,322
1986	0	1,600	1,328	0	1,623	1,656	1,692	1,465	1,460	1,877	544	1,739	1,085	1,035	0	17,104
1987	0	1,679	1,378	0	1,634	1,503	1,648	1,543	1,436	1,734	511	1,622	1,210	1,241	0	17,139
1988	0	1,657	1,465	0	1,599	1,663	1,633	1,524	1,499	1,729	490	1,616	1,265	663	0	16,803
1989	0	779	700	0	815	810	742	742	733	798	247	867	756	651	0	8,640
1990	0	1,563	1,594	0	1,628	1,615	1,677	1,539	1,594	1,776	251	1,814	1,530	1,439	0	18,020
1991	0	1,792	1,644	0	1,683	1,709	1,755	1,577	1,578	1,788	798	1,764	1,591	1,641	0	19,320
1992	0	1,843	1,718	0	1,679	1,675	1,669	1,615	1,518	1,738	886	1,753	1,709	1,568	0	19,371
1993	0	903	827	0	833	842	878	809	761	859	438	838	823	823	0	9,634
1994	0	788	859	0	811	822	826	824	772	822	439	828	679	775	0	9,245
1995	1,516	1,718	1,786	1,555	1,652	1,727	1,724	1,589	1,403	1,713	1,101	1,727	1,482	1,546	1,419	23,658
1997	1,536	1,563	1,668	1,622	1,587	1,608	1,537	1,731	1,417	1,578	1,011	1,761	1,453	1,374	1,325	22,771
1998	750	775	852	824	805	782	711	800	704	711	543	903	722	667	692	11,241
1999	787	859	906	831	806	828	673	863	707	830	512	870	831	720	832	11,855
2000	747	886	876	816	799	784	636	814	700	832	504	808	777	767	818	11,564
TOTAL	5,336	23,386	21,477	5,648	22,954	22,946	23,041	21,930	20,839	23,162	9,866	24,083	15,913	14,910	5,086	260,577

Values for W. Germany used for Germany, pre-reunification. British numbers exclude survey respondents Northern Ireland, who were recorded separately in EB surveys. Number of years ≠ number of EB waves because some years have multiple EBs.

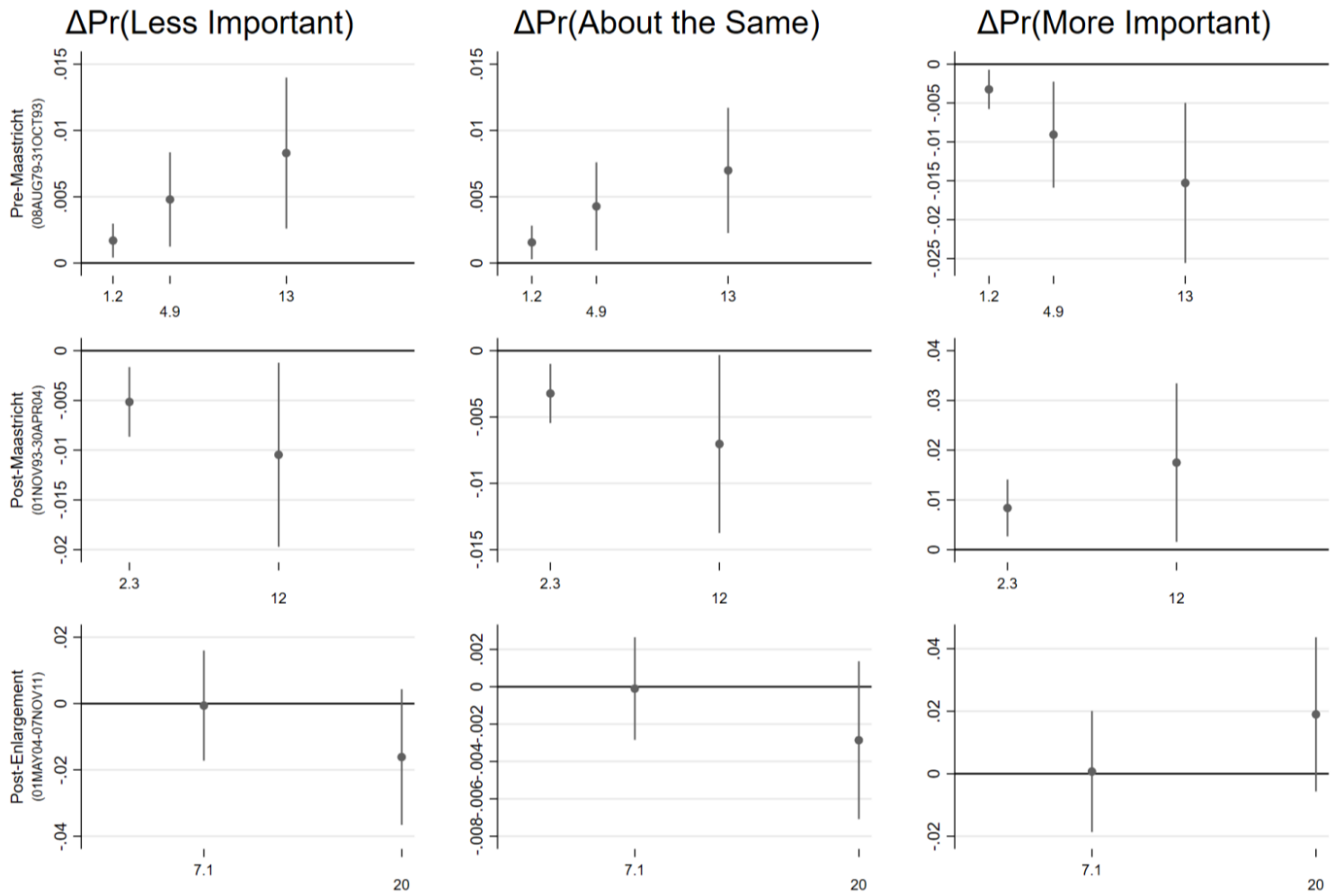
TABLE 3. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*	*Min*	*Max*
DV				
EPIMPF	1.5277	0.7188	1	3
IV				
Country WS turnover	2.8460	4.7765	0	50
Other countries' WS turnover	2.6971	1.2774	0.3417	6.1785
Controls				
Respondent				
Age	42.4975	17.4938	15	99
Female?	0.4777	0.4995	0	1
Education: DK/NA	0.0027	0.0519	0	1
Education: 16-19 yrs.	0.4046	0.4908	0	1
Education: 20+ yrs.	0.2579	0.4375	0	1
Country				
Turnout, last EP election	60.4425	18.019	24.02	92.09
Days since last EP election	10670.86	2052.658	7097	14405
% since last national election	42.09027	26.636	0.0684	101.0267
Length of EU membership	24.948	14.499	0.211	47.745

N = 260,577 for all variables, calculated on unweighted sample. WS: within-session; both turnover variables for past year, reported as percentage. Omitted category for education: < 15 yrs. full-time schooling; see main text fn. 9 for more details. % since last national election = % CIEP; see main text fn. 11.

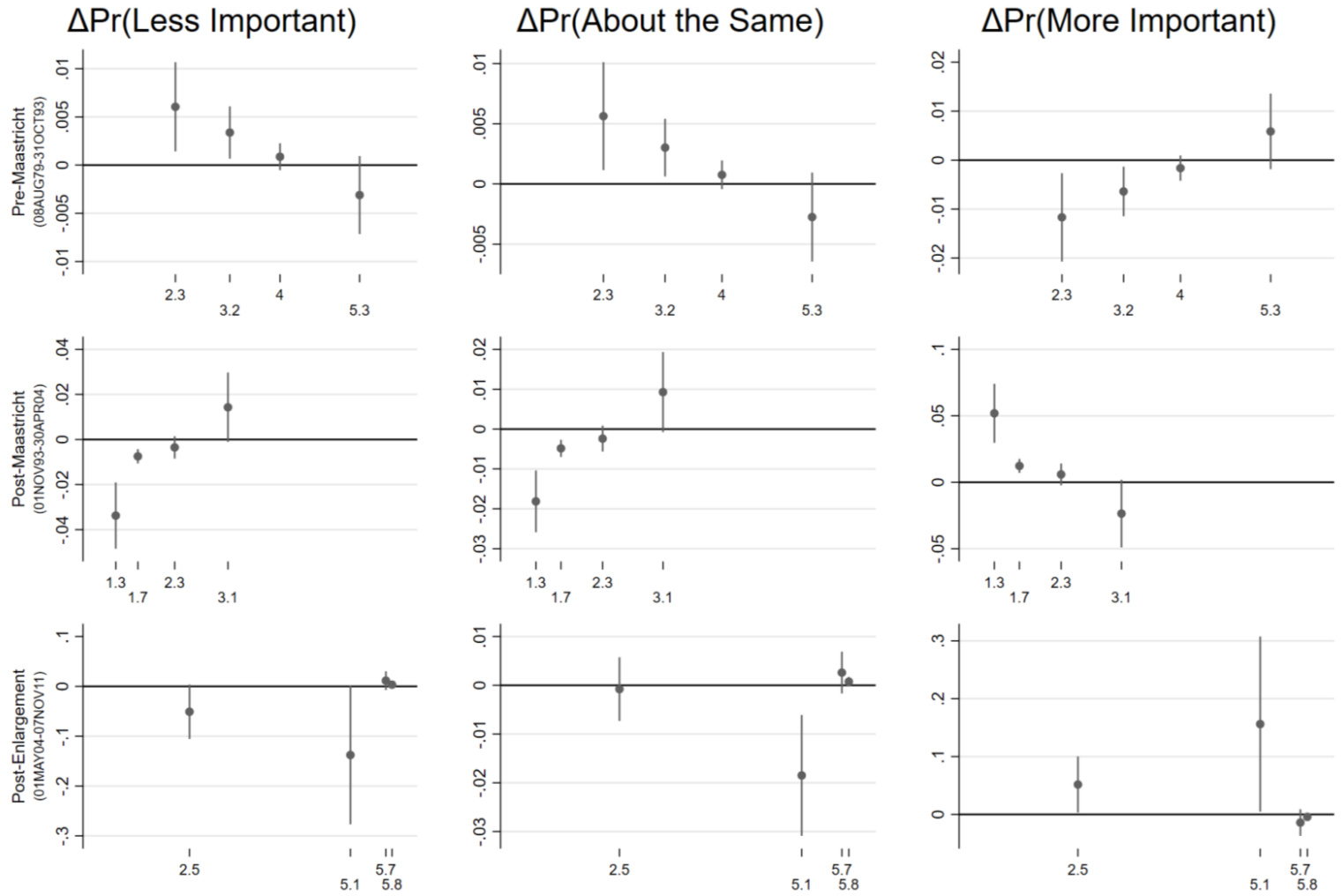
Appendix C: Predicted Probability First Differences

FIGURE 1. First Differences: Respondent-Country MEP Dropout



WS = within-session. Plotted quantity: (labelled percentile's predicted probability) – (previous percentile's predicted probability). Probabilities generated using Table 2.2's unweighted era models for 5th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 95th era-specific percentiles. 95% confidence intervals. Fewer than four first differences appear because some of *x*'s percentiles are equal, within eras. Note: different *y*-scales within and across columns, to maximize readability.

FIGURE 2. First Differences: Other Countries' MEP Dropout



WS = within-session. Plotted quantity: (labelled percentile's predicted probability) – (previous percentile's predicted probability). Probabilities generated using Table 2.2's unweighted era models for 5th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 95th era-specific percentiles. 95% confidence intervals. Note: different *y*-scale within and across columns, to maximize readability.