

# Career Ambitions and Legislative Participation: The Moderating Effect of Electoral Institutions

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## **Abstract**

What motivates politicians to engage in legislative activities? In multi-level systems politicians may be incentivized by ambitions to advance their careers either at the state or federal level. We argue that the design of the electoral institutions influences how politicians respond to these incentives. Analyzing a unique dataset of both ‘stated’ and ‘realized’ career ambitions of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) we find that those who seek to move from the European to the national (state) level participate less in legislative activities than those who plan to stay at the European (federal) level. For MEPs who aim to move to the state level, attendance and participation in legislative activities is substantively lower amongst legislators from candidate-centered systems. Importantly, the effect of career ambitions on legislative participation is stronger in candidate-centered systems than in party-centered systems. These findings suggest that the responsiveness associated with candidate-centered systems comes at the expense of legislative activity.

In representative democracies politicians are sometimes forced to choose between actions that will further their political careers inside a legislature or party and actions that will be popular with the public, and hence increase their re-election chances. These choices are particularly complex in multi-level systems, where politicians can pursue careers at either the regional or national level.<sup>1</sup> The career choices that legislators make, and the actions that follow from these choices, are central to the functioning of representative democracy; yet we know little about how political ambitions play out in multi-level contexts. In this paper, we argue that the effect of individual ambition on legislative behavior is crucially shaped by the electoral system, which influences *inter alia* whether politicians have incentives to cater primarily to those actors who control candidate selection (either locally or centrally) or primarily to voters in their constituencies. Hence, there is trade-off, conditioned by electoral institutions, between dedicated and professional legislators on the one hand and politicians who are visible and accountable to their electorates on the other hand.

To investigate how electoral institutions moderate the relationship between career ambitions and legislative participation in a multi-level political system, we take advantage of the variation in electoral rules governing European Parliament elections and examine the career ambition and behavior of the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). We posit that politicians seeking political career progression either at the state or federal level adjust their legislative participation carefully to increase their chances of promotion at their preferred level of government. Such personal ambitions are moderated by the structural incentives of

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<sup>1</sup>Samuels 2003; Stolz 2003; Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2009; Borchert 2011; Daniel 2015; Pemstein, Meserve, and Bernhard 2015.

the electoral system.<sup>2</sup> In a ‘candidate-centered’ electoral system, such as open-list proportional representation, legislators who want to be re-elected need to devote greater attention to their constituency regardless of which office they are seeking. Once a high profile has been established locally, this lowers the cost of transferring from one political arena to another. In contrast, in a ‘party-centered’ electoral system, such as closed-list proportional representation, legislators primarily need to be on good terms with their party leaders, who control candidate selection. The effect of career ambition on legislative participation thus varies across electoral systems. Politicians in candidate-centered systems are likely to be less willing to spend time on legislative activities in particular if they seek a career at a different electoral level, as their need to spend time on developing a constituency profile is greater. In contrast, in party-centered systems, politicians who aim to further their career can afford to focus more on legislative activities since their party, not their constituency, matters most for their career advancement at both the regional or national levels.

We test these propositions using original data on the career ambitions, both ‘stated’ and ‘realized’, of MEPs. We employ data from surveys of the MEPs to identify their ‘stated ambitions’, as well as data on post-parliamentary careers to identify MEPs’ ‘realized ambitions’. The European Parliament is a useful laboratory within which to investigate these issues because the same set of politicians in a single legislature are elected under different electoral systems in each European Union (EU) member state. Also, because the European Parliament is a low-salience legislature, a large proportion of politicians harbor ambitions to re-

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<sup>2</sup>Sartori 1976; Carey and Shugart 1995; Cox, Rosenbluth, and Thies 2000; Farrell and Scully 2007.

turn to national politics. Our findings show that these career ambitions have a substantive effect on legislative participation in candidate-centered systems, causing those MEPs with national level ambitions to participate substantively less. The career-ambition effect is weaker in party-centered systems. Importantly, this suggests that candidate-centered systems, which are generally seen to encourage politicians to be more responsive to voters, can reduce the quality of legislative decision-making, at least in low-salience legislatures.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. We first situate our contribution in the literature on career ambitions of politicians in multi-level systems, legislative behavior and electoral institutions, before presenting our theoretical argument and hypotheses concerning how electoral institutions condition the effect of career ambitions on legislative participation. We subsequently introduce the data and the methods we use in the analysis, before presenting the results. The conclusion discusses the wider implications of our findings.

### **Career Ambitions, Legislative Behavior and Electoral Rules**

Legislators have different ambitions about their future careers.<sup>3</sup> Some may wish to remain for multiple terms in the same legislature, some will aspire to higher office, while others may wish to leave politics altogether. Such political ambitions shape the choices legislators make in their current positions. As Schlesinger noted in his seminal book, *Ambition and Politics*, ‘a politician’s behavior is a response to his office goals’.<sup>4</sup> To achieve these goals, a politician must adapt his behavior to satisfy not only current constituents, but also potential future constituents:

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<sup>3</sup>Scarrow 1997; Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2009.

<sup>4</sup>Schlesinger 1966, p. 6.

‘our ambitious politician must act today in terms of the electorate he hopes to win tomorrow’.<sup>5</sup> Several studies have applied and extended the basic tenet of this ‘ambition theory’ in the US context.<sup>6</sup> Hibbing’s study of legislative behavior in the US House of Representatives, for example, confirms that politicians behave with an eye toward the constituency they hope to serve tomorrow.<sup>7</sup> He demonstrates that representatives who want to trade constituencies change their behavior before the contest for the new constituency is held. The key conclusion from this literature on political ambition and legislative behavior is that we cannot simply treat legislators as ‘single-minded re-election seekers’ in their current career positions. Rather, for many legislators their behavior will be shaped by the specific political constituency they hope to serve in the future.<sup>8</sup>

In most studies political careers are assumed to be hierarchically organized: from the local, to the regional (state), to the national (federal) level. In the US context, for example, research has shown that politicians have ambitions to ‘move upwards’ from the state level to the federal level, and that state and federal levels of government provide different incentives and rewards for politicians.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, career paths in other countries are often less clear-cut. Studies of political careers in federal systems have shown that while many politicians aspire to ‘move up’, others see their regional or state office functions as the main focus of their careers.<sup>10</sup>

Hence, in multi-level systems it is useful to distinguish between a progressive ambition, which implies that a legislator seeks to leave his or her current legis-

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<sup>5</sup>Schlesinger 1966.

<sup>6</sup>For example Black 1972; Rohde 1979; Kiewiet and Zeng 1993; Carey 1996.

<sup>7</sup>Hibbing 1986.

<sup>8</sup>Mayhew 1974.

<sup>9</sup>Schlesinger 1966; Francis and Kenny 2000.

<sup>10</sup>Stolz 2003; Stolz 2011; Scarrow 1997; Borchert 2011.

lature chamber and move to a another level of government (without assuming uni-directionality), in contrast to a static ambition, which implies that a legislator wishes to build a career within his or her current legislature.<sup>11</sup> Depending on the specific institutional context, the predominant ambition among legislators may be static, seeking re-election, or progressive, seeking to move either ‘up’ from the state level to the federal level (e.g. in the United States), ‘down’ from federal level to state/subnational level (e.g. in Brazil), or indeed ‘across’ between the regional and federal levels (e.g. in Catalonia). Legislative behavior in Brazil, for example, has shown that political ambition of Brazilian legislators focuses on the subnational (municipal and state) level.<sup>12</sup> Yet, in line with ambition theory, Samuels demonstrates that even while serving in the national legislature, Brazilian legislators act strategically to further their future extra-legislative careers by serving as ‘ambassadors’ of subnational governments. Similarly, Carey finds that Costa Rican legislators, who are constitutionally restricted to a single term in the national legislative assembly, compete to align themselves with key party leaders, who are best placed to help them secure a post-legislative administrative appointment.<sup>13</sup> In a European context, Stolz points to integrated career paths at the regional and federal levels for Catalan politicians, whereas there are distinctly alternative career paths in Scotland.<sup>14</sup>

We argue that to understand how such ambitions shape legislative behavior in multilevel systems, electoral institutions are a key conditioning variable. It is well known that electoral systems shape how politicians campaign and how they

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<sup>11</sup>See Schlesinger 1966; Samuels 2000; Samuels 2003; Borchert 2011; Cunow et al. 2012.

<sup>12</sup>Samuels 2003; Desposato 2006.

<sup>13</sup>Carey 1996.

<sup>14</sup>Stolz 2011.

behave once elected; such as how responsive politicians are to legislative party leaders or which legislative committees they choose to join.<sup>15</sup> We know far less about how electoral rules moderate the effect of career ambitions on legislative behavior. There is some existing research on this question. For example, Cox et al. and Pekkanen et al. examine how variations in electoral rules moderate the effect of career ambitions on factionalism in the Japanese Diet.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Jun and Hix find that the structure of candidate selection South Korea shapes individual parliamentary behavior of legislators.<sup>17</sup>

Where career incentives are concerned, one key aspect of the electoral system is the difference between ‘candidate-centered’ and ‘party-centered’ systems.<sup>18</sup> In candidate-centered systems, the ballot structure allows voters to choose between candidates from the same political party, as in the open-list proportional representation systems or under single-transferable vote. In party-centered systems, in contrast, the ballot structure only allows voters to choose between pre-ordered lists of candidates presented by parties, as in the closed-list proportional representation systems.<sup>19</sup>

In candidate-centered electoral systems, legislators who want to be elected need to develop their name recognition among voters in their constituency regardless of which office they are seeking to be elected to. Career prospects in a candidate-centered electoral system therefore depend in large part on the candidate’s ability

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<sup>15</sup>For example Ames 1995; Haspel, Remington, and Smith 1998; Stratmann and Baur 2002; Hix 2004; Ferrara, Herron, and Nishikawa 2005; Chang and Golden 2006.

<sup>16</sup>Cox, Rosenbluth, and Thies 2000; Pekkanen, Nyblade, and Krauss 2006.

<sup>17</sup>Jun and Hix 2010.

<sup>18</sup>Carey and Shugart 1995; Hix 2004; Farrell and McAllister 2006; Farrell and Scully 2007.

<sup>19</sup>In the empirical section, we move beyond this distinction to test the effect of career ambition on participation within the different types of electoral systems used in European Parliament elections.



to cultivate personal identification and support amongst the electorate. For legislators who want to continue their political career at the current institution, low participation rates may be an electoral liability. But, for politicians elected under candidate-centered electoral institutions, any potential electoral cost of campaigning rather than participating, and hence appearing to shirk on ones responsibilities inside the legislature, would be heavily outweighed by the positive benefits of raising ones profile amongst the voters.

This argument is in line with formal work, such as Ashworth's model of how legislators trade off legislative participation vis-à-vis constituency service under different legislative arrangements.<sup>20</sup> An implication of this model is that legislators devote relatively more effort to constituency activities if voters can distinguish between support for a party and support for an individual candidate in the ballot box. Moreover, this trade-off in favor of campaigning over legislative participation is likely to be higher for legislators seeking a career in another legislative arena than for those seeking to continue in their current arena, since for this latter group low legislative participation may be seen as a liability. In a party-centered electoral system, in contrast, it is usually sufficient for the legislator to be on good terms with the party leaders who control candidate selection to keep his or her position.<sup>21</sup>

We now turn to how electoral rules and career ambitions interact to shape legislative behavior in the specific multi-level context of the European Union.

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<sup>20</sup>Ashworth and Mesquita 2006.

<sup>21</sup>Jones et al. 2002.

## **Participation, Ambitions and Electoral Rules in the European Parliament**

The EU is a pertinent example of multi-level career paths. As in other legislatures in multi-level systems, Members of the European Parliament typically follow one of three career paths: some advance within the European Parliament itself, others see the European Parliament as a stepping-stone to a more coveted legislative or executive position in their home country, while a third group leave politics altogether or retire. The key contrast is between the first two types of MEPs: 1) those who have ‘static ambitions’, who seek to build a career in Brussels; and 2) those who have ‘progressive ambitions’, who seek a career ‘back home’.<sup>22</sup> For example, Daniel finds that as the powers of the European Parliament have grown, and the related professionalization of the chamber has increased, the proportion of MEPs who have a static career ambition, and hence seek re-election to the European Parliament, has also grown.<sup>23</sup> Politicians with these static ambitions need to undertake tasks that are important to party leaders inside the European Parliament, to increase their prominence within the institution. However, these politicians also need to please those who control their re-selection and re-election, who tend to be located at the national level.<sup>24</sup> These national selectors do prefer to renominate MEPs, everything else equal.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, politicians who seek to move to the national arena are less concerned with developing their prominence within the European Parliament. Instead, their key concern is to make it plausible that they are capable of conducting tasks associated with holding national office, such as

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<sup>22</sup>Scarrow 1997; Stolz 2003.

<sup>23</sup>Daniel 2015.

<sup>24</sup>Norris 1997.

<sup>25</sup>Pemstein, Meserve, and Bernhard 2015.

being visible in the national media and cultivating ties with the national leadership in order to secure an attractive post if successful in entering national politics. Hence, the focus of these politicians, with progressive career ambitions, will not be on pleasing those who control promotion inside the European Parliament or re-selection/re-election to the European Parliament. Instead, their primary interest will be to cater to the gatekeepers of political office at the national level. Indeed, work on career ambition in the European Parliament has shown that MEPs who aim to return to national politics are more likely to vote against their legislative party groups and oppose legislation that enhances the power of the EU's supranational institutions. Using age as a proxy for career ambition, Meserve et al. find that those with progressive career ambitions (younger) are more likely to vote against their European political groups than those (older) MEPs with static career ambitions.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Daniel finds that more senior MEPs, who have had a longer static career in the European Parliament, are more likely to win 'rapporteurships' (legislative report-writing positions).<sup>27</sup>

To identify the interaction between electoral rules and career ambitions in shaping legislative behavior in the EU we focus on one particular aspect of legislative behavior: legislative participation. Participation can be regarded as a pivotal indicator of a legislator's 'valence' (e.g. his or her quality, commitment, or diligence).<sup>28</sup> Conversely, absenteeism and low involvement in legislative activities can be seen as a sign of shirking.<sup>29</sup> Participation may also influence the re-election chances of legislators. However, the personal valence of politicians plays a less significant

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<sup>26</sup>Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2009.

<sup>27</sup>Daniel 2015.

<sup>28</sup>cf. Hix 2004; Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2009.

<sup>29</sup>Galasso and Nannicini 2011.

role in electoral competition for seats in lower salience legislatures, such regional or state-level legislatures, since the lack of media attention to these legislative bodies makes it far harder for voters to monitor and sanction the behavior of politicians in these legislatures. This is relevant in our context given that for voters, parties, and candidates, elections to national political office are more highly valued and highly salient than elections to the European Parliament.<sup>30</sup>

Of course, career ambitions are not the only motivation that guides legislative behavior. Legislators are also policy-seekers who are driven to participate to fulfill certain policy goals.<sup>31</sup> Yet, all other things being equal, we expect that career ambitions are an important factor shaping parliamentary behavior. Consistent with the existing literature on careers and legislative behavior, we thus argue that legislators optimize their behavior in light of their career goals.<sup>32</sup> There are competing demands on legislators' time, such as scrutinizing legislation, constituency service, participation in public debates, and work in the party organization.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, because each of these activities matter more to some voters and candidate-selectors than others, legislators need to engage in the optimal combination of activities to maximize their chances of reaching their career goals. Specifically, for a legislator to be trusted with an office, he or she needs to make the case to the key gatekeepers to that office that he or she is capable of conducting the tasks of the office in an appropriate manner and in the interests of the gatekeepers.

Here, the electoral institutions come into play. Despite Europe-wide 'direct' elections to the European Parliament since 1979, and repeated efforts to establish

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<sup>30</sup>Schmitt 2005; Hix, Noury, and Roland 2007.

<sup>31</sup>Strøm and Müller 1999.

<sup>32</sup>Schlesinger 1966; Hibbing 1986; Samuels 2003; Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2009.

<sup>33</sup>Hazan and Rahat 2010.

a uniform electoral system, there is still considerable discretion for each member state to determine the precise rules for electing MEPs (as long as a proportional electoral system is used). Where the ballot structure is concerned, about half of the EU's states used a candidate-centered system (either open-list proportional representation or single-transferable-vote), while the other half use a party-centered system (closed-list proportional representation). In most of the states that use party-centered electoral systems, the lists of candidates are drawn up by central party leaderships. Even in the two states with party-centered systems and regional constituencies – France and the United Kingdom – the central party leaderships influence the order of the lists, by deciding whether candidates can re-stand in the elections and formally approving any new candidates.

Within party-centered electoral systems, where the party has considerable influence over the individual MEP, a legislator's active involvement in parliamentary activities has a positive influence on his or her career prospects at the European level. The national party is more likely to want to re-select an MEP for a seat in the European Parliament if she has actively participated in legislative activities. Equally, an MEP who has her heart set on a second or third term in Brussels is more likely to prioritize legislative activities inside the Parliament if she knows that the relevant gatekeepers are going to take notice. While the party leaderships will take notice of politicians' activity levels, because of the low salience of European Parliament elections, voters are largely ignorant of the day-to-day activities of MEPs. However, while voters pay limited attention to activities in the European Parliament, research has shown that candidate characteristics and campaign activities may influence their re-election chances.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Hobolt and Høyland 2011; Hobolt and Spoon 2012.

Given that the career prospects of candidates hinge on the party leadership in party-centered systems, we would expect that those MEPs who have ambitions to stay at the European level to be far more engaged in legislative activities in the Parliament. Moreover, politicians who would like to progress to the national level can still spend time in the legislature conditional on the national party leadership being supportive of their move to national level politics, since national party leadership support is sufficient for a successful transition to national politics (assuming electoral support for the party does not collapse).

In contrast, the career prospects of a politician in a candidate-centered electoral system depend to a larger extent on the candidate's ability to cultivate personal identification and support amongst the electorate. Hence, there are fewer incentives for politicians elected in these systems to participate in legislative work in their current legislature, in particular for legislators seeking to continue their career at another level. We therefore expect more distinct differences in legislative participation between legislators with national level ambitions in candidate-centered systems, and a clearer distinction between politicians with static and progressive career ambitions in party-centered systems.

This consequently leads us to the following hypotheses about career ambitions and legislative participation in multi-level systems, and about the moderating effect of the electoral system on the relationship between career ambitions and participation:

$H_1$ : Politicians with (static) European level career ambitions are more likely to participate than politicians with (progressive) national level career ambitions.

$H_2$ : The difference in participation attributed to differences in career ambitions is more pronounced in candidate-centered than in party-centered electoral systems.

In the next section, we discuss the data and methods that allow us to test these hypotheses.

## Data and Empirical Estimation

As discussed, the European Parliament provides an excellent case for investigating these propositions because multiple electoral systems operate within the same institutional setting. Although legislation on the uniformity of electoral procedures in European Parliament elections was enacted in 2003 (according to which all elections to the European Parliament shall be held under a proportional electoral system), there continues to be considerable variation in the ballot structure, district magnitude and candidate selection rules across the EU member states. There are some within-country differences in electoral systems applied for European Parliament and national parliamentary elections, in particular after the unification of the European Parliament electoral rules.<sup>35</sup> However, these differences are not consequential for classifying an electoral system as candidate or party-centered.

A further strength of our study is that we examine the effect of our primary explanatory variable, career ambition type, using two unique indicators of both ‘realized’ ambitions and ‘stated’ ambitions. Previous research on ambition has relied on proxies, such as age, to measure MEPs’ ambition.<sup>36</sup> We use actual measures of stated career ambition, using survey data on MEPs’ future ambitions,

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<sup>35</sup>Farrell and Scully 2005.

<sup>36</sup>Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2009.

as well as realized ambition, using observed data on MEPs' actual careers. The advantage of the former measure is that it captures subjective ambitions prior to legislative participation for a subset of MEPs, whereas the advantage of the latter measure is that it provides us with actual biographical data on all MEPs in the period under investigation. In combination these measures provide a rigorous test of the effect of ambitions on legislative behavior.

To achieve this, our empirical analysis focuses on 2,094 MEPs who were elected to serve in any period between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> sessions of the European Parliament (1994-2014), since this allows us to obtain good quality data on pre-EP careers and ambitions as well as post-EP careers. As several MEPs served in more than one term, we have 3,341 observations in total. In line with previous work, we distinguish between three types of career ambitious amongst MEPs: national (progressive), European (static), and non-political careers.<sup>37</sup> For data on post-EP careers (realized ambition), we conducted a systematic search, consulting a range of online resources, such as the official webpage of the European Parliament and national parliaments, webpages of European and national parties and individual politicians, complemented by *EU Who is Who*. We classified post-EP careers as either: 1) *National political career*; 2) *European political career*; or 3) *Non-political career*. The national political career category includes MEPs who went on to become members of the national parliament or members of the national cabinet, either within a year (post-EP career) or at some point within the following 5 years (within 5 years career). The European political career category includes MEPs who remained members of the European Parliament or became European Commissioners. All others are classified as having a non-political career or retired.

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<sup>37</sup>See Scarrow 1997.



To capture ‘stated’ career ambitions we used survey data on MEPs collected in 2000, 2005 and 2010.<sup>38</sup> This allows us to compare stated and realized ambitions for a subset of the MEPs who responded to the survey. The survey question was worded as follows:

*What would you like to be doing 10 years from now? (Choose as many boxes as you wish)*

- *Member of the European Parliament*
- *Chair of a European Parliament committee*
- *Chair of a European political group*
- *Member of a national parliament*
- *Member of a national government*
- *European Commissioner*
- *Retired from public life*
- *Something else, please specify.*

Over the course of the three surveys, there was a total of 727 respondents. Some MEPs participated in the surveys in several Parliaments. As a result, we have a total of 591 distinct MEPs in this dataset. The respondents to the survey were not significantly different from the population of MEPs on key variables, such as European political group, member state, or gender.<sup>39</sup> Respondents who answered ‘Member of the European Parliament’, ‘Chair of a European Parliament committee’, ‘Chair of a European political group’, or ‘European Commissioner’ as seeking a European level career. MEPs who answered ‘Member of a national

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<sup>38</sup>Farrell, Hix, and Scully 2011.

<sup>39</sup>See Scully, Hix, and Farrell 2012.

parliament' or 'Member of a national government' are coded as seeking a national level career.

To measure our dependent variable, we consider two types of legislative participation: voting, and speeches in debates. Voting and speeches are the two main activities that legislators engage in in the plenary sessions, and have been the subject of numerous studies.<sup>40</sup> For these two types of behavior we look at two different ways of measuring 'participation'. When considering voting participation, we look at all roll-call votes as well as participation in at least one vote on a given day where at least one roll-call vote was requested. We use all data from 20 years of voting and attendance records, from 1994 to 2014, EP4 to EP7. Some concern has been raised that findings based on roll-call votes in the European Parliament may be biased, as roll-call votes do not represent a random sample of all votes. In particular, many roll-call votes are taken on non-binding, and lop-sided, resolutions.<sup>41</sup> But as we rely on both voting and attendance records, our results should be less sensitive to such bias. In addition, in Tables A2 and A3 in the Appendix, we repeat the analysis on legislative votes and close votes (where the difference between Yes and No was less than 100). Also, as there may be substantive differences across national parties, Table A4 reports the results from models with national party and legislative term random intercepts. All these results are in line with those presented in the results section.

Similarly, for participation in plenary debates, we consider all speeches by an MEP, given all speeches made during the time the MEP serviced, as well as the number of days with plenary debates where an MEP participated at least

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<sup>40</sup>Hix, Noury, and Roland 2007; Slapin and Proksch 2014.

<sup>41</sup>Carrubba et al. 2005; Hug 2010; Yordanova and Mühlböck 2015.

once, given all days he or she could have participated. Proksch and Slapin provide a comparative analysis of participation in debates, demonstrating that there is variation in party leadership control by electoral institutions, arguing that in candidate-centered systems, constituency based critiques of the policies of the party leadership is more welcomed.<sup>42</sup> Due to the availability of debates in an electronic format, we are limited in our analysis to the the most recent 15 years, 1999-2014 (EP5 to EP7).

To test our second hypothesis we need to operationalize the key moderating variable: the electoral system. As discussed, the most important distinction for our purpose is between candidate-centered and party-centered systems, which concerns the degree to which the ballot structure allows voters to determine the fate of individual candidates. In the main models, we follow Farrell and Scully, supplemented by our own reading of the electoral rules in the 2009 elections. We classify closed-list proportional representation (CLPR) as party-centered, and single-transferable vote (STV), open-list proportional representation (OLPR), and single-member plurality (SMP) as candidate-centered.<sup>43</sup> To ensure that the career effect holds within the different systems, we also run a model where the effect of career ambitions is analyzed separately for each type of electoral system. In order to capture how electoral institutions shape behavior through the re-election incentives they create, rather than the selection effects, we consider the prospective system an MEP is likely to run under in the next election, not the system he or she was elected under. The distribution of MEPs by career ambition and electoral institutions are presented in Table 1.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Proksch and Slapin 2015.

<sup>43</sup>Farrell and Scully 2007.

<sup>44</sup>An overview of the distribution of MEPs by career ambitions and electoral systems are

Table 1: Career Ambitions by Electoral Institutions

	Party Centered	Candidate Centered
European Career	1095	367
National Career	227	127
Other	1030	550

**Note: Party Centered Systems:** Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece (- 2009), Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and United Kingdom.

**Candidate Centered Systems:** Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Greece (2014), Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, and Sweden.

We see that most MEPs are elected in party-centered systems, and there is a higher proportion of MEPs with national level political ambitions in candidate-centered systems. But in these systems there is also relatively more MEPs who plan to leave politics. This suggests that there may be a difference in who becomes an MEP across the two systems.

## Results

We begin our analysis of participation in roll-call votes by a simple comparison of participation levels given career ambition conditional on the type of electoral institutions.

Table 2 shows that those who seek to continue as an MEP participate more than both those MEPs who seek a career at the national level as well as those who seek to leave politics. Also, MEPs who seek a national level career participate least. This holds for both candidate- and party-centered systems. Also, within career ambition types, MEPs from party-centered systems participate more. In Table provided in Table A1 in the Appendix.

Table 2: Participation in Roll Call Votes by Career Ambition, and Conditional on Electoral Institutions

	All	Candidate Centered	Party Centered
European Career	0.77	0.71	0.79
National Career	0.66	0.58	0.70
Other	0.72	0.65	0.77

**Note:** Percentage of Roll Call Votes participated in, out of all roll call votes in the period each MEP served.

3, we show that this pattern holds when we consider presence in the European Parliament, as measured by participating in at least one roll-call vote per day. However, here we notice that the difference between those who seek to stay on and those who leave politics is smaller.

Table 3: Participation (days with rcvs), by Career Ambitions, and Conditional on Electoral Institutions

	All	Candidate Centered	Party Centered
European Career	0.58	0.54	0.60
National Career	0.48	0.49	0.48
Other	0.57	0.54	0.60

**Note:** Percentage of days with Roll Call Votes that MEPs voted in at least one roll-call vote, out of all days roll call votes in the period each MEP served.

In Table 4, we present the results from a more sophisticated statistical analysis. The statistical models are hierarchical binomial, taking number of votes cast (model 1 and 3), or active voting days (model 2), given the number of total votes (models 1 and 3), or total voting days (model 2), as the dependent variable. Our explanatory variables are the combinations of career ambition and electoral institutions. We control for background in national politics, incumbency in the European Parliament, age and leadership roles in the committees and the European political groups. We also include political group, member state and

legislative term specific intercepts. In model 3, we use electoral systems rather than the binary candidate- vs party- centered system. Note that the inclusion of intercepts for political groups, member states and parliamentary terms allow us to average over differences across countries, political groups, and over time.<sup>45</sup>

We see that the patterns from the bivariate analysis hold even when controlling for other variables, such as political group, member states, and legislative term. In line with our hypotheses, we see that career ambition matters for participation in votes. MEPs with national career ambitions participate less than those with European level career ambitions. The reference category is European career ambitions in a party-centered system. In Model 1, we see that the difference in participation as a function of career ambition is larger in candidate-centered systems than in party-centered systems. However, in Model 2, where we only count participation in at least one vote per voting-day, the difference across the electoral institutions is harder to detect. This is in line with the pattern we would expect to see if MEPs with national career ambitions from candidate-centered systems were more likely than other MEPs to either arrive late or leave early in order to attend extra-parliamentary events in their constituencies. This finding is supported by a recent study that demonstrates that electoral institutions impact the outreach strategies of MEPs on Twitter. Notably, these other results show greater social media activity by MEPs in candidate-centered systems.<sup>46</sup>

In Model 3, we depart from the binary distinction of candidate- vs party-centered systems to investigate the difference in behavior as a result of career

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<sup>45</sup>The models are estimated in JAGS, Plummer 2015, We ran three chains from dispersed starting points for 500,000 iterations, keeping each 25<sup>th</sup> iteration from the last 250,000 iterations. Convergence tests suggest that the all parameters have converged during the first half of the chains. We are left with 30,000 draws from the posterior distribution.

<sup>46</sup>Obholzer and Daniel 2016.

Table 4: Hierarchical Binomial Models: Participation in Roll Call Votes

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
EP incumbent	-0.098 [-0.101 , -0.095]	-0.138 [-0.152 , -0.125]	-0.124 [-0.127 , -0.121]
National background	-0.197 [-0.201 , -0.194]	-0.171 [-0.189 , -0.152]	-0.225 [-0.229 , -0.221]
Non-political career	-0.057 [-0.06 , -0.054]	0.011 [-0.003 , 0.026]	0.153 [0.147 , 0.158]
Age	-0.084 [-0.097 , -0.07]	0.204 [0.139 , 0.267]	0.046 [0.032 , 0.06]
Leader (Group)	0.052 [0.049 , 0.055]	0.065 [0.051 , 0.078]	0.055 [0.052 , 0.058]
Leader (Committee)	0.062 [0.059 , 0.065]	0.048 [0.034 , 0.063]	0.059 [0.056 , 0.062]
National (Candidate)	-0.359 [-0.367 , -0.35]	-0.124 [-0.165 , -0.083]	
National (Party)	-0.272 [-0.278 , -0.267]	-0.152 [-0.178 , -0.126]	
EU (Candidate)	0.061 [0.055 , 0.067]	0.04 [0.013 , 0.066]	
CLPR (national)			-0.085 [-0.094 , -0.077]
CLPR (EP)			0.221 [0.215 , 0.227]
CLPR/STV (EP)			0.232 [0.223 , 0.242]
Semi-OLPR (National)			0.069 [0.053 , 0.085]
Semi-OLPR (EP)			0.18 [0.171 , 0.19]
STV (National)			0.024 [-0.006 , 0.053]
STV (EP)			0.197 [0.18 , 0.214]
OLPR (EP)			0.303 [0.296 , 0.31]
SMP/STV (National)			-0.077 [-0.092 , -0.063]
Political group intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes
Member state intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes
EP intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Note:** Hierarchical Binomial Models with random intercept for political groups, member states, and parliamentary term. Dependent Variable: Participation in Roll Call Votes (all, daily, all). Estimates are posterior mode and 95 percent posterior probability intervals.

ambitions within each system. The reference category here is MEPs with national career ambitions in open-list proportional representation systems. In line with our first hypothesis, career ambitions matter for participation in votes across all systems. Within each electoral system, MEPs with national level career-ambitions participate in fewer votes than MEPs with European level ambitions. The pattern holds within each type of electoral system.

In Figure 1, we illustrate the substantive moderating effect of electoral institutions given career ambition on participation in votes in EP7 (2009-14). As examples of MEPs from party-centered systems, we selected French Social Democrats (P&S), German Christian Democrats (EPP). These are presented in the top row of the figure. As examples of MEPs from candidate-centered systems, we selected Italian Social Democrats (P&S) and Finnish Conservatives (EPP). These are presented in the bottom row. Two aspects are clear from the figure. First, the difference in the level of participation is substantively larger in candidate-centered systems than in party-centered systems. Also, the level of participation varies across countries within these two types of systems. For example, French MEPs participate less than German MEPs and Italian MEPs participate less than Finnish MEPs. Daniel links such differences between member states with similar electoral institutions to differences in the party systems.<sup>47</sup> This is an interesting suggestion, but outside the scope of this paper, where our focus is the effect of electoral institutions on career ambitions.

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<sup>47</sup>Daniel 2015.



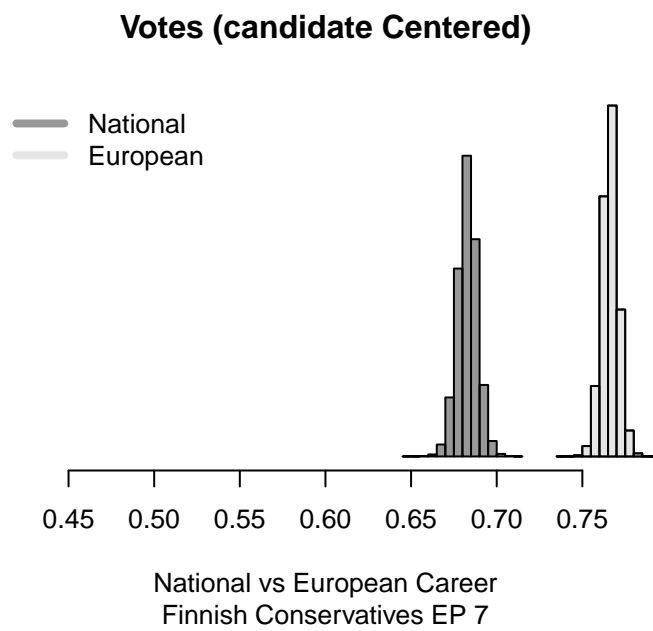
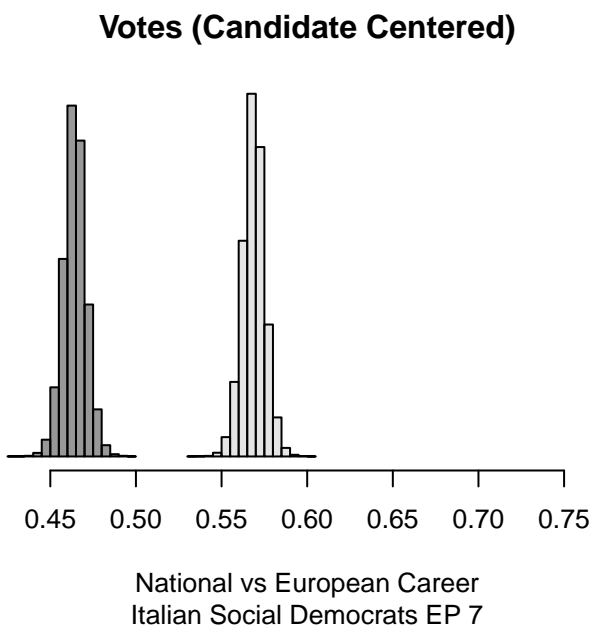
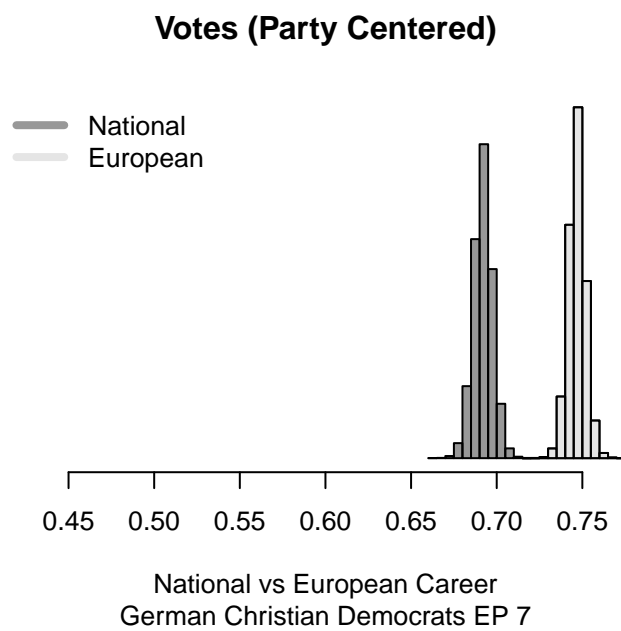
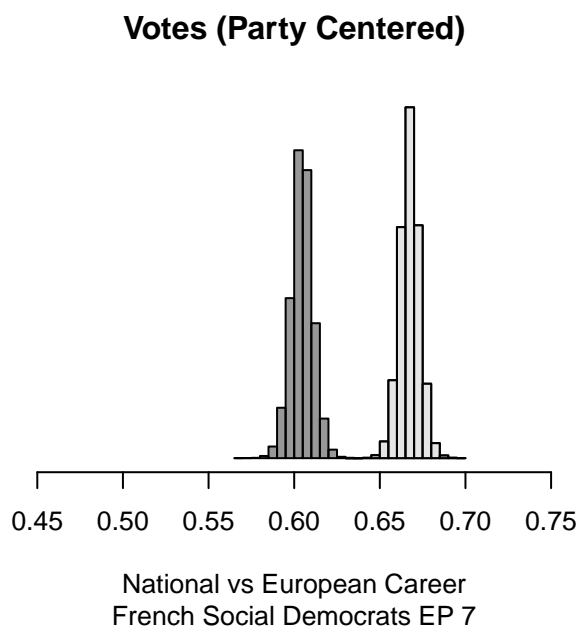


Figure 1: Moderating effect of electoral institutions given career ambition on voting.

## Participation in Debates

Next, we investigate to what extent we can find a similar pattern for parliamentary debates. We begin by investigating aggregate differences in mean participation rates across electoral institutions and career ambitions, in Table 5. As with votes, we see that MEPs with European career ambitions participate more than those with national career ambitions.

Table 5: Participation in Plenary Debates, by Career Ambition, and Conditional on Electoral Institutions

	All	Candidate Centered	Party Centered
European Career	0.13	0.15	0.12
National Career	0.09	0.10	0.08
Other	0.12	0.13	0.12

**Note:** Percentage of days with debates MEPs participated in, out of all days with debates in the period each MEP served.

In Table 6, we run a similar set of models, but using debates instead of votes as our dependent variable. In Model 4 the dependent variable is the number of speeches out of all speeches occurring during the period an MEP was a member. In model 5 we use the number of days an MEP participated in a debate given all the days with debates during the period he or she was a member. Model 6 replicates Model 4, but using electoral systems interacted with career ambitions.

The key results are consistent with those reported in the previous subsection, on votes. MEPs with national career ambitions participate less than those with European career ambitions. When we count all speeches, the difference is larger in candidate-centered systems than in party-centered systems. Again, this difference disappears if we use the number of days with a speech (Model 4) instead of the number of speeches (Model 5), which is consistent with these MEPs missing part

Table 6: Hierarchical Binomial Models: Participation in Debates

	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
EP incumbent	0.116 [0.104 , 0.128]	0.191 [0.171 , 0.21]	0.191 [0.171 , 0.211]
National background	0.214 [0.199 , 0.229]	0.085 [0.059 , 0.11]	0.084 [0.058 , 0.111]
Non-political career	-0.118 [-0.13 , -0.105]	-0.182 [-0.202 , -0.161]	0.237 [0.169 , 0.304]
Age	-2.296 [-2.345 , -2.247]	-1.684 [-1.769 , -1.6]	-1.655 [-1.739 , -1.57]
Leader (Group)	0.067 [0.054 , 0.079]	0.08 [0.061 , 0.1]	0.083 [0.063 , 0.103]
Leader (Committee)	0.174 [0.161 , 0.186]	0.123 [0.103 , 0.143]	0.128 [0.108 , 0.147]
National (Candidate)	-0.584 [-0.631 , -0.539]	-0.418 [-0.482 , -0.354]	
National (Party)	-0.313 [-0.34 , -0.286]	-0.373 [-0.413 , -0.333]	
EU (Candidate)	-0.1 [-0.122 , -0.078]	-0.045 [-0.081 , -0.008]	
CLPR (national)			0.007 [-0.075 , 0.089]
CLPR (EP)			0.356 [0.285 , 0.428]
CLPR/STV (EP)			0.655 [0.568 , 0.744]
Semi-OLPR (National)			0.235 [0.114 , 0.355]
Semi-OLPR (EP)			0.478 [0.398 , 0.56]
STV (National)			0.054 [-0.102 , 0.21]
STV (EP)			0.516 [0.405 , 0.625]
OLPR (EP)			0.355 [0.287 , 0.423]
SMP/STV (National)			0.061 [-0.08 , 0.202]
Political group intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes
Member state intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes
EP intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Note:** Hierarchical Binomial Models with random intercept for political groups, member states, and parliamentary term. Dependent Variable: Dependent variable: participation in debates (all, at least once that day, at least once that day). Estimates are posterior mode and 95 percent posterior probability intervals.

of the plenary sessions due to engagements outside the chamber, which forces them to leave early or arrive late more often than their counterparts in party-centered systems. Also, in Model 6, we see that higher participation for those MEPs with European career ambitions than MEPs with national career ambitions holds in every pair of electoral systems.

The patterns in the control variables are consistent cross model-specifications. Political experience, both at the European and the national levels is associated with more plenary speeches. In contrast, there is a negative correlation between age and participation in plenary debates. Unsurprisingly, both the group and committee leaders speak more often during the plenary sessions than 'backbenchers'.

In Figure 2, we compare participation in debates across electoral institutions, using the same examples as above. While we see that there are smaller substantive differences by career ambitions, we nevertheless notice a distinct difference between party- and candidate- centered systems. In the latter, we are able to detect two different peaks in the distribution. MEPs with European level career ambitions tend to participate more than MEPs with national level ambitions in candidate-centered systems. There is hardly any detectable difference in party-centered systems.

### **Stated Career Ambitions**

Finally, we evaluate to what extent we find similar patterns when considering 'stated' rather than 'realized' career ambitions. The descriptive relationship between career ambitions and votes is presented in Table 7, and in the case of debates

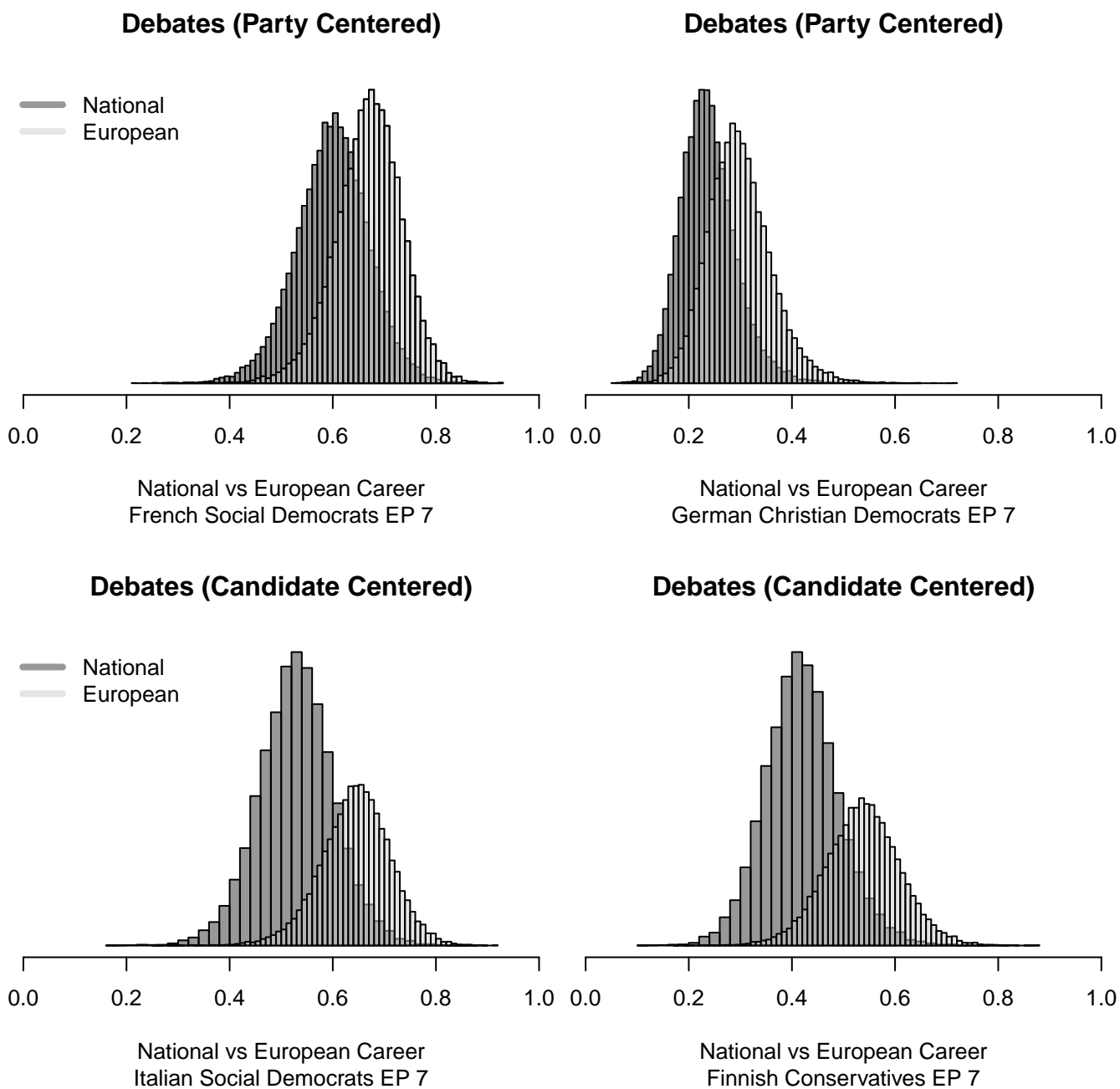


Figure 2: Moderating effect of electoral institutions given career ambition on speeches.

Table 7: Survey: Future Career, Electoral Institutions, and Participation in Votes

	All	Candidate Centered	Party Centered
European Career	0.84	0.81	0.86
National Career	0.78	0.72	0.81
Other	0.81	0.80	0.81

**Note:** Percentage of days with Roll Call Votes that MEPs voted in at least one roll-call vote, out of all days roll call votes in the period each MEP served.

the relationship is presented in Table 8.<sup>48</sup>

Table 8: Survey: Future Career, Electoral Institutions, and Participation in Debates

	All	Candidate Centered	Party Centered
European Career	0.16	0.21	0.14
National Career	0.12	0.12	0.12
Other	0.12	0.14	0.10

**Note:** Percentage of days with debates MEPs participated in, out of all days with debates in the period each MEP served.

The tables show that for participation in both votes and debates, those MEPs who seek a long-term European career participate more. Also, the difference in participation by career ambition is larger in candidate-centered systems than in party-centered systems.

These descriptive results are encouraging, and Table 9 investigates whether the patterns also hold in a more sophisticated model. For the survey based career ambition variable, we show the correlation between career ambitions and participation in roll-call votes in model 7. Then, in model 8, we focus on debates. We use the same control variables and structure as in the previous models, i.e. mem-

<sup>48</sup>We see that, across all activities, in both sets of electoral institutions and across different career ambitions, those that answered the survey had higher participation levels than those MEPs analyzed above. The differences across career ambition and electoral institutions are robust to changes in how career ambition is measured.

Table 9: Hierarchical binomial models. Survey: Votes and Speeches

	Model 7	Model 8
National (Candidate)	-0.216 [-0.234 , -0.197]	-0.511 [-0.629 , -0.395]
National (Party)	-0.277 [-0.289 , -0.265]	-0.388 [-0.464 , -0.313]
EU (Candidate)	0.203 [0.191 , 0.215]	0.12 [0.057 , 0.182]
EP incumbent	-0.092 [-0.099 , -0.086]	0.302 [0.267 , 0.336]
National background	-0.039 [-0.047 , -0.03]	0.183 [0.137 , 0.228]
Non-political career	-0.1 [-0.107 , -0.093]	-0.087 [-0.125 , -0.049]
Age	0.629 [0.602 , 0.657]	-1.489 [-1.641 , -1.333]
Leader (Group)	0.09 [0.084 , 0.095]	0.103 [0.071 , 0.136]
Leader (Committee)	0.068 [0.061 , 0.074]	0.134 [0.1 , 0.167]
Political group intercepts	Yes	Yes
Member state intercepts	Yes	Yes
EP intercept	Yes	Yes

**Note:** Hierarchical Binomial Models with random intercept for political groups, member states, and parliamentary term. Dependent Variable: Participation in Roll Call Votes (Model 7) and in debates (Model 8). Estimates are posterior mode and 95 percent posterior probability intervals.

ber state, political group, and legislative term random intercepts. As above, we control for previous experience, age and leadership roles in the political groups and committees.

The patterns from the 'stated' survey results are similar to the above results that relied on 'realized' career ambitions. Career ambitions matter for participation, and more so in candidate-centered systems. MEPs seeking to move to the national arena participate less than MEPs who want to stay on in the European Parliament. The effect of career ambitions on participation is larger in candidate-centered systems than in party-centered systems.

For the control variables, the patterns are as expected. The MEPs who said that they planned to leave politics tended to have higher participation rates than those MEPs who were aiming for a national career, but lower participation rates than MEPs who planned to stay on in the European Parliament. Political experience, both national and European, is associated with lower participation in votes but higher participation in speeches. Older MEPs, for whatever reason, vote more, but are less likely to speak. Unsurprisingly, political group leaders participate in more votes and speak more often than backbenchers. Committee chairs (and vice-chairs) are more active than backbenchers across both types of participation.

Finally, Figure 3 shows the substantive effects of stated career ambition, given electoral institutions. We illustrate the effect with French and Italian Christian Democrats in EP7 (2009-14). We see that there is a substantively larger difference in participation as a function of stated career ambitions among Italian MEPs than among French MEPs. When we compare across activities, we see the same pattern when we use stated preferences as we found for realized preferences. The career



effect is largest when access to the activity is not scarce (in votes). Alternatively, making speeches may be highly valuable to MEPs from party-centered systems as it may be an opportunity for individual MEPs to demonstrate their level of policy expertise to their party leadership, and thus increase their chances of being re-elected.

These results show a clear and consistent pattern in the case of participation in both voting and debates. Our key findings can be summarized as follows. MEPs with national level career ambitions participate less than MEPs who seek a European level career. The difference is larger in candidate-centered systems. This holds for both realized and stated career ambitions. This pattern is strongest when participation is not a scarce good, such as in voting. The fact the one MEP is participating in a vote does not reduce the opportunity for other MEPs to participate in that vote. In contrast, making a speech is a scarce good, as speaking time is limited, and MEPs have to compete with each other for speaking time in plenary debates.

## **Conclusion**

Politicians' participation in legislative activities is a prerequisite for political influence. Voters whose elected representatives fail to be present in the legislature are not represented in a meaningful way. However, for the elected politicians, participation in legislative activities has to compete with extra-parliamentary activities that might enhance a politician's personal profile among his or her electorate. Hence, it is important to examine the conditions under which politicians have incentives to prioritize legislative work. To understand what motivates legislators

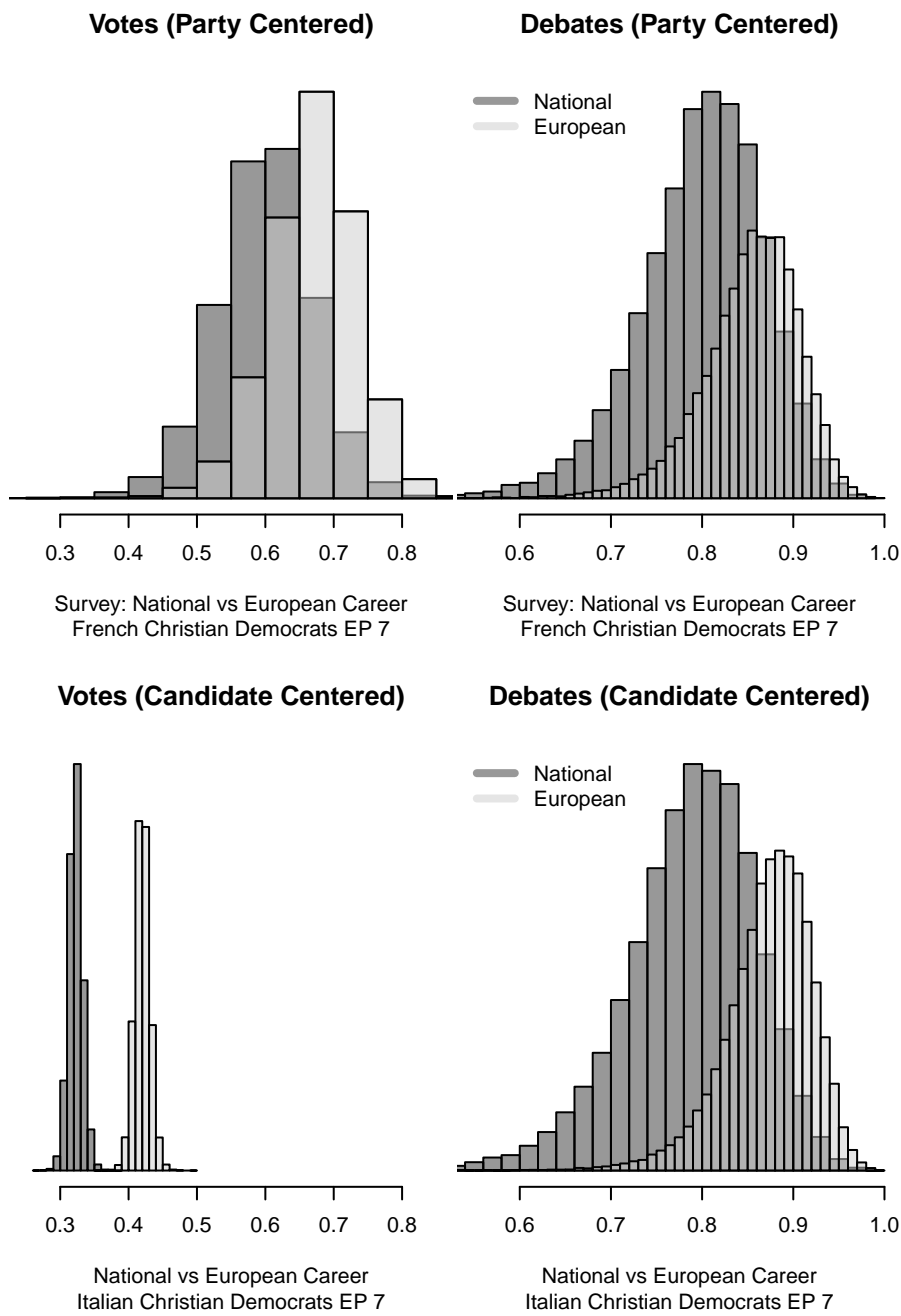


Figure 3: Moderating effect of electoral institutions given career ambition on votes and speeches (Survey).

in multi-level systems, we have argued that not only do career ambitions shape legislative behavior, but electoral systems also influence how legislators respond to these incentives.

To examine this argument empirically, we have taken advantage of the European Parliament setting, where politicians are elected under different electoral systems in each EU member state. Using unique data on both the stated career ambitions (from surveys) and the realized career ambitions (from post-parliament careers) of the MEPs, we demonstrate that politicians with ‘progressive’ career ambitions, who use the European Parliament as a stepping-stone to a national career, are less active in the legislature than those MEP with ‘static’ ambitions, who wish to continue their political career at the European level.

Moreover, contrasting candidate-centered electoral systems with party-centered electoral systems, we find that even those representatives who seek to continue their careers at the European level have lower levels of participation if they were elected in candidate-centered electoral systems than in party-centered electoral systems. This, we argue, is because politicians in candidate-centered systems need to be visible to voters to be able to win the within-party competition for electoral support. In contrast, politicians elected in party-centered systems simply need to please the ‘selectorate’ in the party leadership. That task can more easily be achieved by focusing on legislative activities. We also find that the effect of electoral institutions in legislative participation is greater for politicians who seek to return to national politics: with candidate-centered rules leading to lower legislative participation than party-centered rules.

These findings have potentially important implications for representation in the European Union and beyond. Although we can assume that most voters

would like their elected representatives to participate in the legislative activities of the institution in which they serve, our results suggest that party-centered electoral systems are more likely to encourage politicians to invest significant time and efforts in legislative activities. In contrast, in candidate-centered systems, even politicians who want to pursue a long-term career inside their current legislature have few incentives to engage in legislative activities, since their re-election depends on their links with local constituents. Such electoral systems reward politicians who raise their profiles among local voters and party members.<sup>49</sup> In the EU context, participation in European Parliament committees and plenary sessions is barely noticed beyond Brussels. While the European Parliament is dependent on members who are prepared to commit themselves to the legislative activities in such a way that the European Parliament is able to strengthen its hand in its dealings with other EU institutions, it seems that the incentives to do so are largely confined to those politicians who wish to stay in the European Parliament and who are elected in party-centered systems.

These findings are also likely to have relevance for other legislatures. The EU may be seen as peculiar in that the hierarchy of career paths in the EU is reversed compared to many other multi-level systems, since the European Parliament is often regarded as the less coveted ‘lower’ legislature. However, most political systems have a hierarchy of legislatures with some that are regarded as ‘lower salience’ and where voter attention to legislative activity is limited and hence where the mechanism of electoral selection and monitoring does not work as efficiently as in more highly salient elections. In such legislatures, we would expect similar mechanisms of career ambition (static or progressive) to shape legislative participation,

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<sup>49</sup>See also Ariga 2015.

conditioned by the electoral system in place. Research on legislative behavior in countries with mixed-member electoral systems suggests that whether a politician is elected in a (candidate-centered) single-member district or a (party-centered) party-list influences how the politician behaves in the legislature and in his or her campaigning activities.<sup>50</sup> This indicates that the conditioning effect of electoral systems is likely to travel beyond the specific European context.

Our results consequently suggest a trade-off between two desirable outcomes in representative democracy: on the one hand, better known or more accountable politicians, and, on the other hand, more dedicated and professional legislators. This trade-off is likely to be particularly acute in low-salience legislatures, like the European Parliament or state-level or local assemblies, where legislative participation may not enhance the public profile or re-election chances of individual legislators in their home constituencies. One limitation of this study is therefore that such a trade-off may not necessarily be as evident in high-salience legislatures. Future research should examine whether this trade-off is a general phenomenon or whether highly salient legislatures encourage politicians from both candidate-centered and party-centered systems to participate in equal numbers regardless of their career ambitions.

More broadly, our findings therefore present a dilemma for constitutional designers in the EU and elsewhere. Existing research suggests that candidate-centered electoral systems provide incentives for politicians to invest time campaigning.<sup>51</sup> In the EU context, these incentives lead to greater awareness about the European Parliament and closer connections between citizens and MEPs in

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<sup>50</sup>For example Ames 1995; Haspel, Remington, and Smith 1998; Stratmann and Baur 2002; Ferrara, Herron, and Nishikawa 2005.

<sup>51</sup>Ames 1995; Carey and Shugart 1995.

member states where candidate-centered systems are used, such as in Ireland, Finland and Denmark.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, as our study has found, MEPs elected in candidate-centered systems are less motivated to participate and engage in day-to-day legislative activities inside the European Parliament, even if they aim to be re-elected to that institution.

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<sup>52</sup>Farrell and Scully 2007; Hix and Hagemann 2009.

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## Appendix

Table A1 provides an overview of career ambitions by prospective electoral system.

Table A1: Career Ambitions by Electoral System

	CLPR	CLPR/STV	OLPR	Semi-OLPR	SMP/STV	STV
European Career	695	209	330	191	0	37
National Career	164	0	116	35	28	11
Other	693	0	522	199	138	28

**Note: CLPR:** France, Germany, Greece ( - 2009), Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Spain.

**CLPR/STV:** United Kingdom (European elections)

**OLPR:** Austria, Bulgaria (2014), Finland, Greece (2014), Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and Sweden.

**Semi-OLPR:** Belgium, Bulgaria ( - 2009), Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Latvia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

**SMP:** United Kingdom (National elections).

**STV:** Ireland, and Malta.

Now, we report the results from additional analysis of voting participation and attendance. In particular, we first limit the votes to legislative votes only. Then, we limit the investigation to close votes, e.i. votes where the difference between the number of yes and no votes is less than 100. In Table A2 we report the result from the analysis of voting participation in legislative votes. Our two key findings remains. First, the estimate for those with a national career ambition are lower than for those with European career ambition. Second, the difference in participation between national and European level career is larger in candidate-centered systems than in party centered systems. This holds for both measures of career ambitions.

In Table A3 we only investigated participation in close votes. By close, we mean that the difference between Yes and No votes was less than 100. Again, we see that the two key findings hold up for both measures of career ambitions.

Then, in Table A4 we control for national parties specific effects by replacing the political group and country specific intercepts with national party intercept. The main pattern in the results is similar to those reported above.

Table A2: Hierarchical Binomial Models: Participation in Legislative Roll Call Votes

	Model A1	Model A2	Model A3	Model A4
EP incumbent	-0.096 [-0.099 , -0.093]	-0.126 [-0.14 , -0.112]	-0.108 [-0.112 , -0.105]	-0.092 [-0.099 , -0.086]
National background	-0.213 [-0.218 , -0.209]	-0.158 [-0.177 , -0.139]	-0.228 [-0.232 , -0.224]	-0.039 [-0.047 , -0.03]
Non-political career	-0.097 [-0.1 , -0.093]	0.014 [0 , 0.029]	0.237 [0.23 , 0.245]	-0.1 [-0.107 , -0.093]
Age	0.078 [0.064 , 0.092]	0.26 [0.194 , 0.326]	0.114 [0.1 , 0.128]	0.629 [0.602 , 0.657]
Leader (Group)	0.044 [0.041 , 0.048]	0.113 [0.099 , 0.126]	0.047 [0.043 , 0.05]	0.09 [0.084 , 0.095]
Leader (Committee)	0.069 [0.066 , 0.073]	0.049 [0.034 , 0.064]	0.069 [0.066 , 0.072]	0.068 [0.061 , 0.074]
National (Candidate)	-0.419 [-0.428 , -0.409]	-0.093 [-0.135 , -0.052]		-0.216 [-0.234 , -0.197]
National (Party)	-0.29 [-0.296 , -0.284]	-0.182 [-0.209 , -0.155]		-0.277 [-0.289 , -0.265]
EU (Candidate)	0.054 [0.048 , 0.06]	0.182 [0.158 , 0.206]		0.203 [0.191 , 0.215]
Semi-OLPR (National)			0.152 [0.135 , 0.169]	
CLPR (national)			0.03 [0.02 , 0.04]	
CLPR (EP)			0.331 [0.323 , 0.34]	
CLPR/STV (EP)			0.426 [0.414 , 0.437]	
OLPR (EP)			0.409 [0.4 , 0.417]	
Semi-OLPR (EP)			0.266 [0.255 , 0.277]	
STV (National)			0.146 [0.116 , 0.176]	
STV (EP)			0.333 [0.314 , 0.353]	
SMP/STV (National)			0.013 [-0.004 , 0.03]	
Political group intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Member state intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EP intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Note:** Hierarchical Binomial Models with random intercept for political groups, member states, and parliamentary term. Dependent Variable: Participation in Legislative Roll Call Votes (all, daily, all,survey). Estimates are posterior mode and 95 percent posterior probability intervals.

Table A3: Hierarchical Binomial Models: Participation in Close Roll Call Votes

	Model A5	Model A6	Model A7	Model A8
EP incumbent	-0.096	-0.1	-0.12	-0.084
	[-0.099 , -0.093]	[-0.114 , -0.085]	[-0.126 , -0.115]	[-0.096 , -0.072]
National background	-0.213	-0.132	-0.191	0.002
	[-0.218 , -0.209]	[-0.151 , -0.112]	[-0.199 , -0.184]	[-0.015 , 0.018]
Non-political career	-0.097	-0.02	0.111	-0.113
	[-0.1 , -0.093]	[-0.034 , -0.005]	[0.1 , 0.122]	[-0.127 , -0.1]
Age	0.078	0.132	-0.083	0.588
	[0.064 , 0.092]	[0.064 , 0.2]	[-0.11 , -0.055]	[0.534 , 0.643]
Leader (Group)	0.044	0.085	0.057	0.074
	[0.041 , 0.048]	[0.072 , 0.099]	[0.051 , 0.062]	[0.062 , 0.085]
Leader (Committee)	0.069	0.068	0.049	0.041
	[0.066 , 0.073]	[0.053 , 0.083]	[0.043 , 0.055]	[0.029 , 0.054]
National (Candidate)	-0.419	-0.166		-0.203
	[-0.428 , -0.409]	[-0.208 , -0.124]		[-0.239 , -0.167]
National (Party)	-0.29	-0.204		-0.322
	[-0.296 , -0.284]	[-0.232 , -0.177]		[-0.345 , -0.3]
EU (Candidate)	0.054	0.085		0.133
	[0.048 , 0.06]	[0.059 , 0.111]		[0.11 , 0.156]
Semi-OLPR (National)			-0.016	
			[-0.046 , 0.014]	
CLPR (National)			-0.128	
			[-0.145 , -0.112]	
CLPR (EP)			0.187	
			[0.175 , 0.199]	
CLPR/STV (EP)			0.165	
			[0.147 , 0.184]	
OLPR (EP)			0.245	
			[0.232 , 0.258]	
Semi-OLPR (EP)			0.13	
			[0.112 , 0.148]	
STV (National)			-0.163	
			[-0.223 , -0.102]	
STV (EP)			0.057	
			[0.024 , 0.091]	
SMP/STV (National)			-0.13	
			[-0.158 , -0.1]	
Political group intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Member state intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EP intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Note:** Hierarchical Binomial Models with a random intercept for political groups, member states, and parliamentary term. Dependent Variable: Participation in close Roll Call Votes (all, daily, all,survey). Estimates are posterior mode and 95 percent posterior probability intervals.

Table A4: Hierarchical Binomial Models: National parties random effects

	Model A9	Model A10
National (Candidate)	-0.415 [-0.424 , -0.406]	-0.304 [-0.378 , -0.231]
National (Party)	-0.292 [-0.298 , -0.286]	-0.36 [-0.405 , -0.316]
EU (Candidate)	-0.028 [-0.034 , -0.022]	0.14 [0.1 , 0.181]
EP incumbent	-0.127 [-0.131 , -0.124]	0.079 [0.056 , 0.102]
National background	-0.167 [-0.171 , -0.162]	-0.008 [-0.038 , 0.022]
Non-political career	-0.089 [-0.093 , -0.086]	-0.166 [-0.188 , -0.143]
Age	0.244 [0.23 , 0.258]	-1.304 [-1.403 , -1.205]
Leader (Group)	0.024 [0.021 , 0.027]	0.013 [-0.009 , 0.034]
Leader (Committee)	0.044 [0.041 , 0.048]	0.05 [0.027 , 0.072]
EP intercept	Yes	Yes
National parties intercept	Yes	Yes

**Note:** Hierarchical Binomial Models with random intercept for national parties and parliamentary term. Dependent Variable: Participation in Roll Call Votes / Participation in Debates. Estimates are posterior mode and 95 percent posterior probability intervals.