Received: 3 November 2021 | Revised: 12 December 2022 | Accepted: 22 December 2022

DOI: 10.1111/gove.12761

Governance WILEY

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Executive power in European Union politics

Silvana Tarlea[1] | **Stefanie Bailer**[2] | **Zdenek Kudrna**[3] | **Fabio Wasserfallen**[4]

[1]Institute for European Global Studies and Department of Social Sciences, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland

[2]Department of Social Sciences, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland

[3]New Zealand Productivity Commission, Wellington, New Zealand

[4]Institute of Political Science, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Correspondence
Silvana Tarlea, Institute for European Global Studies and Department of Social Sciences, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland.
Email: s.tarlea@unibas.ch

Funding information
the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, Grant/Award Number: 649532

Abstract

In the multilevel system of the European Union (EU), national governments have been empowered at the expense of parliaments. We study the executive power shift in EU politics in the formation of national preferences. This article shows that governments are more likely to integrate parliaments and external actors, such as other governments and EU institutions, when they advocate extreme bargaining positions in EU negotiations. We theoretically develop this argument and provide an empirical study of Eurozone politics, covering the preference formation of 27 EU member states. The analysis shows that the executives are overall the dominating power: most of the time, governments form national preferences on their own. When governments integrate additional actors, they mostly rely on external actors and do so to avoid blame and to shift responsibility. These findings question whether the integration of national parliaments in EU politics indeed addresses democratic accountability concerns.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The democratic legitimacy of decision making in the European Union (EU) is a key question of European integration, as more and more sensitive policy decisions are taken on the level of the EU (Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2018; Hutter et al., 2016; Mortensen, 2012). National governments, who act as legislators in EU decision making, accumulate power in this development, which raises the question of how the actions of governments are democratically embedded. As a remedy for this executive power shift, some scholars postulate a better anchoring of member states' actions in the multilevel structure of the EU and the national democratic systems through

 © 2023 Wiley Periodicals LLC.

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

the involvement of national parliaments (Auel & Christiansen, 2015). A textbook case for the power shift to governments are negotiations among member states with encompassing redistributive consequences, such as the reforms enacted during the Eurozone crisis or the negotiations on the financial framework and the Covid-19 recovery package. As governments take far-reaching decisions in these bargains, a central question, from a democratic perspective, is how governments form their preferences prior to the negotiations. Do they involve other institutions and actors when they form their preferences? And, if yes, whom do they involve, and why?

We study these questions theoretically and empirically and find little democratic anchoring of the preference formation process through the involvement of national parliaments or other domestic actors. Quite the contrary, our analysis suggests that governments only involve domestic actors if they consider it beneficial for their own interests—and not from an attempt to represent domestic preferences in these debates. They revert to national and EU actors in preference formation for strategic reasons that are related to their bargaining position on the EU level, rather than involving additional actors to counteract the executive power shift in EU politics, as the literature pointing to democratic accountability would demand (Crum & Fossum, 2009; Hooghe & Marks, 2020). The main argument developed in this analysis is that governments involve additional actors in preference formation to shift blame and responsibility: either to their national parliament or the EU level. This argument postulates that governments prefer to shift blame and responsibility to other institutions when they hold contentious positions (Heinkelmann-Wild & Zangl, 2020Heinkelmann-Wild & Zangl, 2020). In line with the more recent two-level game literature (Schlipphak & Treib, 2017), our findings suggest that governments' blame shifting goes both to EU-level institutions (directed at the domestic arena) and to domestic actors (to justify national positions in EU negotiations).

Another key finding of our study is that national executives dominate national preference formation in the run-up of EU negotiations with very little involvement of other actors. The dominant role of governments in both the formation of positions and in the negotiations on the EU level shows that the democratic deficit gets reinforced as national executives legislate on the EU level with limited checks and guidance from national parliaments. We provide empirical evidence and illustrations of the blame shifting mechanisms for the case of the Eurozone crisis. Our findings point to a substantial shift of the balance of power in national democracies. Governments are strengthened at the expense of national parliaments and other domestic institutions. The empirical findings from the politics of the Eurozone are relevant because EU policy making during the Eurozone crisis had strong reverberations in EU member states, leading to demonstrations, early elections, and government crizes (Kriesi, 2020; Tarlea & Bailer, 2020).

Our analysis documents that governments include the parliament, other domestic or external actors, such as EU institutions, more strongly in the formation of national preferences, when they take pronounced outlier positions (compared to other EU member states), because they want to shift blame and responsibility. This theoretical mechanism of blame-avoidance in preference formation implies that the inclusion of parliaments does not counteract the executive power shift. Rather, the involvement of national parliaments follows strategic considerations of the government: the executives involve domestic actors to shield themselves in Brussels. With the involvement of the parliament, the executive can shift the blame for its (extreme) position to domestic politics. The other way around, national governments also involve external actors, such as EU institutions, in preference formation when they hold extreme positions, which signals to domestic actors that supranational considerations have to be taken into account. This helps governments to claim domestically that they fought hard in Brussels, and then shift the responsibility to EU institutions and other member states. These mechanisms of blame-avoidance and

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

responsibility-shifting attenuate democratic accountability concerns, as they further amplify executive dominance in EU politics (Hobolt & Tilley, 2014).

This article develops three theoretical expectations, which explain the dominant role of the executives and identify the conditions that could be conducive to the involvement of additional actors in preference formation. We then proceed to the descriptive empirical analysis of the politics of the reform of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) between 2010 and 2015, which unfolds in two steps. First, we present descriptive quantitative data on the hypothesized patterns regarding the involvement of domestic and external actors in the formation of national position in the run-up of EU negotiations. Our analysis relies on extensive data collected within the Horizon 2020 project EMU Choices. The data has been collected on the basis of 141 interviews with high-level experts of all EU member states. The interview data codes the positions of EU governments and the extent of the involvement of domestic and external actors. In addition, qualitative information from the interviews shed light on the strategies of the involved actors, which allows us, in a second step, to illustrate the mechanisms through which governments included domestic and external actors. In sum, the findings of our analysis shows that the executives are dominant in national preference formation, and they contribute to ongoing discussions about the democratic legitimacy of the EU.

2 | WHY DO GOVERNMENTS INCLUDE OTHER ACTORS IN PREFERENCE FORMATION?

Multilevel governance scholars argue that authority in European states has shifted "upward, downward, and sideways from central states" (Hooghe & Marks, 2003, p. 233). Thus, power in Europe does no longer lie within the central state, but is organized in a multi-level structure. Within this multilevel structure, the influence of public opinion and national parliaments is of particular interest. In their landmark study, Hooghe and Marks (2009) postulate that domestic actors (i.e., parties, parliaments, and public opinion) have to be considered to a much greater extent in EU decision making. Correspondingly, parliaments, as representatives of citizens, are expected to become more active players at the EU level (Auel & Höing, 2015; Winzen, 2012, 2017). In this vein, scholars have identified a diversity of demands for oversight stemming from national parliaments (Genovese & Schneider, 2020). However, only little research has investigated the capacity of parliaments to actually shape the preferences of governments. Studies that looked at the actual influence of parliaments or other domestic groups found that parliaments had higher influence on policy positions than other domestic actors, but that all actors were relatively insignificant compared to governments (Bojovic et al., 2020). Our actor-centered theoretical approach puts governments central stage and theorizes their incentives to involve additional actors.

The increased parliamentary scrutiny of governments should be particularly intense when governments are exercising their legislative function on the EU stage and in cases of redistributive politics that infer with core state powers, such as the reform of the Eurozone (Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2018). The Eurozone crisis has had massive effects on the lives of European citizens and led to a deepening of the EMU with a series of reforms. The importance of the negotiations of these reforms should have helped domestic actors in their attempt to influence the preferences of their governments before they bargain in Brussels. Several studies point to domestic articulation of political interests through public protests (Hutter et al., 2016) or national parliaments (Auel & Höing, 2015; Puntscher Riekmann & Wydra, 2013).

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

This perspective of domestic scrutiny of governments, however, stands in contrast with the traditional account of international relations, according to which governments are the main and unitary actor involved in international negotiations (without strong relevance attributed to other actors). Influential domestic actors, such as parliaments, media, and interest groups, are considered to prioritize domestic affairs over foreign policy, which leaves governments with an exclusive mandate to determine national positions (Hill, 2003). Governments are expected to be the ultimate decision taker due to their "ability to commit the resources of the government and the power to prevent other entities (…) from reversing their position" (Hermann & Hermann, 1989, p. 361). In line with this view, several studies show that executives are the dominant actors also in EU decision making with only marginal roles for domestic actors (Csehi & Puetter, 2021; Manow & Döring, 2008). Governments are in control of negotiations from the onset, starting from technical consultations with the European Commission through negotiations in the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Council formations, and the European Council. In the EU, the executive power is vested in both member states and supranational organs and is referred to as a dual executive (Tallberg, 2007).

For the purpose of this article, we use the term *preferences* and *preference formation* to describe the process leading to an official negotiation position taken at the European level (Bailer & Weiler, 2015; Lundgren et al., 2019; Tarlea et al., 2019). Our focus is on the question of whether the government defines preferences exclusively, or whether it involves additional actors in forming these preferences. We expect governments to consciously avoid having to integrate additional opinions since this leaves more leeway in negotiations to them. However, the involvement of domestic actors may be useful for governments to signal domestic constraints internationally (Hug & König, 2002; Putnam, 1988; Schelling, 1960). This also means that the involvement of domestic actors is at the discretion of national governments to gain strategic advantages.

The contrasting view is that the executive is negotiating under a clear mandate from the parliament. Denmark is a case in point, where the government has to inform and consult its parliament on a regular basis (Winzen, 2013). More generally, national parliaments have come to rely on oversight institutions, such as European Affairs Committees, to gain information about EU affairs and in an attempt to influence the positions of their governments (Winzen, 2021). The institutional prerogatives of national parliaments have largely converged over time. For instance, half of national parliaments received formal rights in the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). What is still unclear, however, is what types of behavioral consequences these formal rights bear and whether parliaments have become more than just formally involved (Winzen, 2021).

Taken together, one strand of the literature points to the influence of national parliaments (Auel et al., 2015; Puntscher Riekmann & Wydra, 2013; Winzen et al., 2018) and public opinion (Hagemann et al., 2017; Hooghe & Marks, 2009), while another strand of scholarship continues to emphasize the dominant role of governments in foreign and EU policy making (Crum, 2018). In line with this latter literature, we argue that governments prefer autonomy in forming preferences, since the involvement of domestic actors is burdensome and limits executive discretion. Previous studies showed that negotiations in the EU Council are only marginally influenced by public opinion (Bailer et al., 2015), and, if so, only in situations of public media attention (Hagemann et al., 2017) or electoral stress, such as upcoming elections (Hagemann et al., 2019). Accordingly, our first theoretical expectation is as follows:

> Governments clearly dominate preference formation, that is, the involvement of other actors, such as national parliaments, is marginal.
>
> (E1)

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

The exclusive power of forming preferences that lead to national positions, as postulated by E1, also comes with responsibility. When governments form preferences without the involvement of other actors, they are fully accountable for the positions they advocate. Governments, however, do not always want to be fully accountable and responsible for a national negotiation position. Rather, they may have an interest in formally involving other actors to share responsibility for controversial positions—both domestically and internationally. This is particularly relevant when a government holds preferences that are located at the extremes of a polarized negotiation setting on the international stage. Governments of other EU member states challenge and scrutinize the stance of a country with an extreme position. For example, the Dutch government is regularly in the spotlight in questions of fiscal solidarity, as it strictly opposes transfer payments (both during the Eurozone crisis and in negotiations of the budget and the COVID-19 recovery spending).

In reaction to the pressure on the EU stage, the governments of such countries have to explain to their EU counterparts why they complicate collective decision making. In this situation, governments may want to play the two-level game with the involvement of the national parliament and other domestic actors in the formation of positions (Putnam, 1988). When the national parliament debates the positions that its government is supposed to advocate, members of the parliament will articulate why the government must defend a tough position in the interest of the country. Some members of the parliament will ask for non-accommodating negotiation behavior. In several instances, the EU governments have to integrate parliaments due to the institutional rights of the respective parliaments, particularly in cases of traditionally strong parliamentary involvement in EU affairs (Christensen, 2015; Winzen, 2013, 2021)—but to what extent this involvement is anything more than formal is still not settled in the literature (Winzen, 2021). The Lisbon Treaty provided national parliaments with new participation rights through the Early Warning System, which also tends to be used by the more active parliaments (Auel & Christiansen, 2015). However, this institutional power is contested: while some argue that parliamentary powers increased (Puntscher Riekmann & Wydra, 2013), another part of the literature emphasizes undermined parliamentary scrutiny and control (Crum, 2018; Laffan, 2014), which does not “outweigh the centralization of the nascent EU fiscal regime” (Jančić, 2016, p. 225).

Another point is that the involvement of the parliament helps the national government to argue on the EU stage that it has a domestic mandate for its position. In such a situation, the government shows to its European partners that it faces serious domestic constraints and shifts the blame to domestic politics for its controversial position. This is an additional explanation—beyond the formal rules—about why and when we may expect a government to move in the direction of a more inclusive preference formation process with the involvement of the national parliament (deviating from the executive-dominance hypothesis stipulated by our first expectation). Importantly, the mechanism of blame-avoidance is not consistent with the argument that governments involve parliaments for a better democratic anchoring of legislative action on the international stage. Rather, this mechanism further amplifies the power shift to the executive, as it highlights that the involvement of the parliament is at the discretion of the government—and eventually serves the interest of the government. The blame-avoidance mechanism expects the following:

> Governments involve the parliaments in the preference formation process when they are in an extreme bargaining situation to avoid blame for their stances vis-à-vis their EU counterparts.
>
> (E2)

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

A government with a position located at the extremes of the bargaining space is not only under pressure on the EU stage, but also domestically. Here, again, the government has an interest in sharing responsibility, as the eventual EU negotiation outcome will be a compromise between the governments of all member states (and the EU institutions). This negotiation outcome will be located somewhere in the middle of the bargaining space—and thus deviate from the preferences of the government. Under the assumption that the executive of this member state does not want to take responsibility for a bargaining failure (i.e., gridlock and standstill), the government has an interest in signaling to domestic actors that supranational considerations must be integrated in the formation of preferences. If the government fails to do so, it will have to explain why it accepted a bargaining deal that clearly deviates from the national position.

From the standpoint of shifting responsibility for the negotiation compromise, we expect that the government of a country with an extreme bargaining position involves supranational and external actors (i.e., EU institutions and the governments of other EU member states) in the formation of bargaining positions, which resonates with the findings of the new intergovernmentalism literature (Csehi & Puetter, 2021). Studies on new intergovernmentalism emphasize the importance of other national governments and intergovernmental bodies in preference formation (Bickerton et al., 2015; Kassim et al., 2020). The mechanism of external involvement is expected to prevail when domestic pressure is high. Governments involve supranational and external actors to refer to them domestically, claiming that they are not accountable for the eventual negotiation outcome, as they also had to respect deviating views. The involvement of supranational and external actors in preference formation thus serves the purpose of showing domestically that the government had to compromise because its room to maneuver on the EU bargaining stage was constrained. This way, the government shields domestic criticism of the negotiation outcome by adding external voices to the preference formation process. Accordingly, the mechanism of responsibility-shifting expects the following:

> Governments involve EU institutions in preference formation when they are in an extreme bargaining situation to shift responsibility for negotiation outcomes domestically.
>
> (E3)

Taken together, E1 underlines the exclusive dominance of the executive in the formation of national preferences, which supports the view of an executive power shift in EU politics and speaks against the perspective that governments anchor negotiation positions democratically with the involvement of national parliaments. Moreover, the mechanisms of blame-avoidance (E2) and responsibility-shifting (E3) further amplify the executive power shift, as they hypothesize that the governments involve additional actors when they hold preferences located at the extremes of the international negotiation space for strategic reasons. Given this negotiation setting, governments play the two-level game by avoiding blame for national stances and by shifting responsibility for negotiation outcomes, which deviate from national preferences. Figure 1 illustrates the three expectations on a stylized one-dimensional EU negotiation space for a given issue.

3 | EMPIRICAL STRATEGY AND DATA

The following empirical investigation is structured in two steps: first, we rely on quantitative data to study which national governments have involved additional actors in preference formation.

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

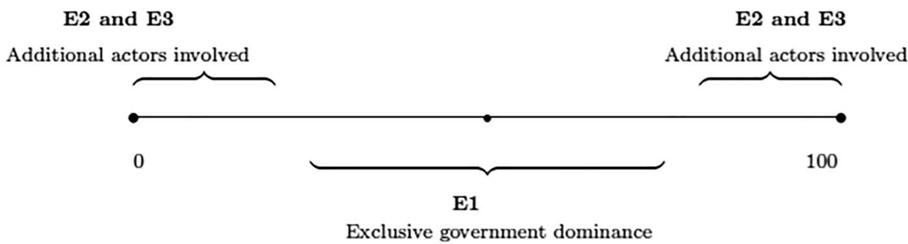

FIGURE 1 Theoretical expectations in the European Union negotiation space with extreme positions of member states on each side of the scale.

This quantitative inquiry evaluates E1 on government-dominance and provides suggestive findings regarding E2 and E3. In a second step, we further nuance and illustrate the mechanisms of blame-avoidance and responsibility-shifting with qualitative evidence from specific countries using annotations to make our approach more transparent (ATI, 2021). All annotations referring to the original documents are included in the Online Appendix material (Elman & Kapiszewski, 2018). For this mixed-method approach, we use original data on EMU reform negotiations during the Eurozone crisis from the *EMU Formation* dataset, which provides information on preference formation between 2010 and 2015 based on 141 semi-structured interviews with experts from all EU member states.[1]

This dataset includes both quantitative and qualitative empirical material on national preference formation in EMU reform politics. The data is thus well suited to analyze the involvement of a diverse set of domestic actors and their role in national preference formation. This data also allows us to investigate the mechanisms underpinning the involvement of parliaments and of external actors in the formation of national positions. The interviews for the *EMU Formation* dataset were conducted between October 2016 and June 2017. The 22 interviewers underwent training to ensure the comparability of the data. The data was collected on the basis of the *EMU Positions* dataset, which codes the positions of EU member states for 47 contested issues related to the fiscal support for Greece, the European Financial Stability Facility, the European Stability Mechanism, the Six- and Two-Packs, the Fiscal Compact, and the Banking Union (Wasserfallen et al., 2019). The *EMU Formation* data provides more detailed information on how the positions of European countries have been formed for the four selected issues, which represent the broader set of issues from which they were selected (see the Appendix for more information on the covered policy issues).

The data was collected with semi-structured interviews, combining closed questions on influence scores as well as open questions (see the Online Appendix for more information on the dataset). The closed interview questions provide us with quantitative data on the influence of different actors. Based on these indicators, we comparatively analyze the bigger picture regarding the question of who was involved in national preference formation and whether this process has been dominated by governments, as E1 submits. The qualitative interview material helps us further nuance the results from the quantitative part.

The quantitative influence scores are based on the concept of attributed influence (Dür, 2008). They capture the perceived overall influence of an actor on an outcome (which is, in our case, the positions of member states as represented in Brussels). Influence scores are depicted on a scale from 0 to 100, whereby 0 indicates no influence and 100 suggests decisive influence on the formation of the national position (see the Online Appendix for the conceptualization of

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

influence scores). Influence scores were collected in the *EMU Formation* dataset for the following actors:

- Government representatives, such as, the head of government and lead ministries, which represent member states in the European Council, ECOFIN Council, and the Eurogroup.
- National parliaments.
- Additional domestic actors, such as, business associations and trade unions.
- External actors, such as, EU institutions, other EU governments, and international organizations.

4 | WHO WAS INVOLVED IN PREFERENCE FORMATION?

Based on the quantitative analysis of the influence scores, we first study the extent to which the different actors have been involved in the formation of national preferences. Our analysis offers a comprehensive comparative investigation of all EU countries in preference formation and includes the inquiry of domestic and external actors. In terms of empirical coverage this goes beyond the existing literature, which provides country case studies (e.g., Fontan & Saurugger, 2020) or investigates exclusively external or domestic influence (Bojovic et al., 2020; Csehi & Puetter, 2021).

Similar to Figure 1, Figure 2 ranks the countries according to their overall position-taking in EMU reform. As discussed in the previous section, E2 and E3 expect that governments with more extreme positions are more likely to involve domestic and external actors. Relying on the analysis of the *EMU Positions* data by Lehner and Wasserfallen (2019; EMUChoices, 2021), who estimate the ideal points of member states positions with dimension-reduction methods, we list the countries on a scale from strong support for *fiscal transfers* to strong support for *fiscal discipline* (and resistance against mutual debts). This has been the major line of conflict during negotiations for the Eurozone crisis (Armingeon and Cranmer (2018)). In Figure 2, countries with extreme positions in negotiations are pictured on the extreme left and right side of the graph. In this understanding, France is the country with the most consistent support for fiscal transfer policies in EMU reforms, followed by Greece and Spain, while the Netherlands holds the most extreme positions advocating for strong fiscal discipline, followed by Finland and Germany. The countries in the middle of the scale take moderate positions. Figure 2 also structures all countries in the middle and at both extremes in 3 groups, and we highlight for which expectations we find support in these three groups (E3, E1, and E2 and E3). For each individual country, Figure 2 shows the influence score of four institutional actors: the governments (1), national parliaments (2), other domestic actors (3), EU institutions, and other external actors (4). The overall picture provides support for E1 on government-dominance, as governments were the dominant actors in preference formation in most countries. However, there is also notable variation between countries located in the middle and at the extremes.

For a better comparison of the three country groups (middle and at both extremes), Figure 3 provides average influence scores for the four groups of actors across the three different groups of countries. To provide an indication of the extent to which governments were central according to this data, the average influence score of the national government on position formation was 58 on a scale from 0 to 100 for the countries in the middle group (E1). Thus, in line with our theoretical expectations, particularly the governments of countries with moderate positions in

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

FIGURE 2 Influence of domestic and external actors in preference formation in European Union members. The countries are ranked from left to right on a scale from support for fiscal transfers to support for fiscal discipline, and they are structured into three groups (see also Figure 3).

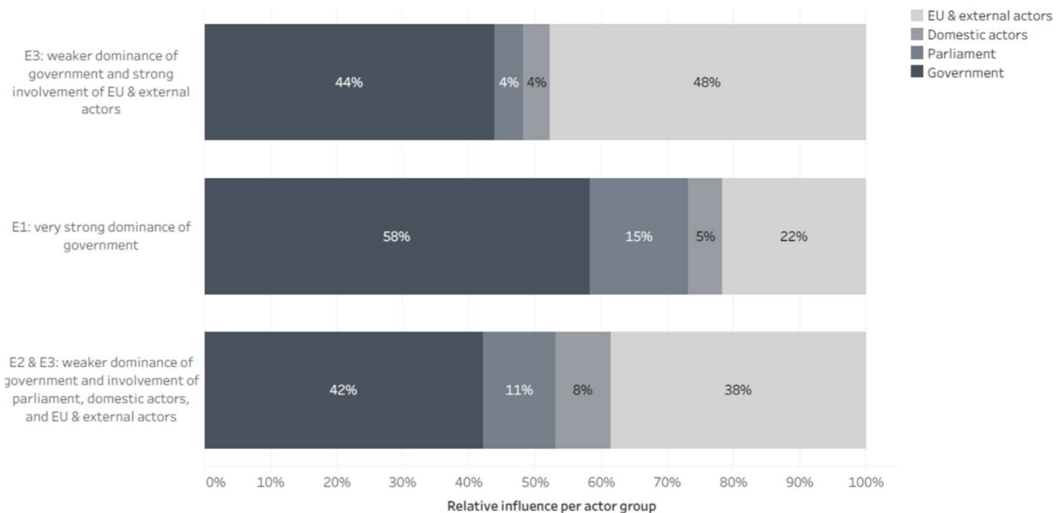

FIGURE 3 Aggregated comparison of the three groups of member states in the middle and at both extremes (E3, E1, and E2 and E3), as shown in Figure 2.

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

the middle show very high government dominance (e.g., Bulgaria, Poland, the UK, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, and the Czech Republic). There are notable exceptions to this broader finding, such as Malta, Denmark, Estonia, and Romania, where external and European actors appear to have played a more important role. Overall, however, we find a very strong executive dominance and that is why this middle group is labeled as E1.

Our theory further expects that governments of countries with more extreme positions are more likely to involve the parliament for blame-avoidance and external actors for responsibility-shifting. Our indicators support these expectations: the six countries on both ends of the scale have lower influence scores of the governments (an average influence of 42% and 44%, respectively, as shown in the bar charts in Figure 3). Thus, governments of countries with extreme positions involve additional actors in position formation more strongly, as expected by E2 and E3.

As far as the distinction between the mechanisms of blame-avoidance (E2) and responsibility-shifting (E3) is concerned, the data hints to an interesting pattern. The governments of the debtor countries France, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Belgium, who support fiscal transfers, invoke the involvement of external actors (with an average score of 48% influence, as seen in Figure 3), as the responsibility-shifting argument of E3 expects. In the context of Eurozone reforms, they shift responsibility for negotiation outcomes, which will also include fiscal discipline measures. There is, however, no support for E2, quite the contrary, as we find the lowest level of domestic involvement. Accordingly, we label this group as E3 (i.e., very strong responsibility shifting to external actors).

On the other extreme, the governments of creditor countries, such as Germany, Finland, and the Netherlands also extensively involved external actors, as E3 expects for countries at the extreme. They also had some involvement of their parliaments, as hypothesized by E2, which is why we label this group of countries as E2 and E3. However, with an average score of 11%, the involvement of parliaments has not been intense. The level of influence is slightly below the middle group, but much higher compared to the creditor countries. Also, the involvement of parliaments in Germany and Finland provides some support for E2 on blame-avoidance, suggesting that the German and Finish governments had an interest in involving national parliaments to avoid blame on the EU level for their hawkish fiscal discipline positions. Yet the results also raise the question of why this has not been higher, which we discuss in the qualitative analysis. E3 thus applies to both debtor countries supporting fiscal transfers, while E2 is more prevalent in creditor countries advocating fiscal discipline (See also Figure 3 in Appendix for a detailed view at differences between the groups). We broadly summarize the findings of Figures 2 and 3 as follows:

- In most countries, particularly those positioned in the middle, the governments exclusively formed national positions (which is consistent with E1).

- Some governments of countries advocating fiscal discipline (and opposing transfers) involved national parliaments, as the blame-avoidance argument submits, but this involvement was not at high levels (E2). These countries also relied more strongly on external actors (which is consistent with E3)

- The governments of countries advocating for fiscal transfers relied strongly on external actors in the formation of preferences, as the responsibility-shifting argument submits (E3).

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

In the following section, we further illustrate the responsibility-shifting and blame-avoidance mechanisms for the countries with extreme positions in EMU negotiations with qualitative interview material. We note that these patterns are not entirely uniform, which is to be expected in such complex decision-making environments. While doing so, we also ask why parliamentary involvement is not as strong as posited by E2 and why E3 holds in both creditor and debtor countries.

5 | HOW GOVERNMENTS OF CREDITOR COUNTRIES AVOIDED BLAME BY INVOLVING PARLIAMENTS (E2) AND SHIFTED RESPONSIBILITY BY INCLUDING EXTERNAL ACTORS (E3)

Our second expectation (E2) on parliamentary involvement in creditor countries was supported by the quantitative data, but the involvement of the parliaments was not at high levels. This is puzzling given the well-documented strong parliamentary control in the countries in question (Winzen, 2012, 2021). For the analysis of the qualitative material we distinguish three main channels of parliamentary control: (a) information (access to documents, government memorandum), (b) processing (EU committee, specialized committee, scrutiny reserve), and (c) enforcement (mandating) (Winzen, 2012, p. 661). We contend that access to information or plenary debates are mechanisms that do not automatically influence the actual preference formation of the government. Yet, mandating translates into actual influence.

According to Figure 2, in **Finland**, one of the countries strongly advocating for fiscal discipline measures in EMU reforms, domestic and EU actors were involved in preference formation. Even so, all our interviewees argued that the actual preference formation process was in the hands of specialists in the Finnish ministries of economics or finance. In addition to this perceived lack of actual influence over the formation of preferences, our interview material also points to a hierarchy in the level of involvement of domestic actors: while political parties in the parliament were consulted during negotiations, other actors, such as trade unions, were just informed about the final outcome. Juxtaposing this to the three channels identified by Winzen (2012), the Finnish parliament had access to information regarding the ongoing EU negotiations, but its enforcement capacity, that is, the capacity to mandate the government (which has been repeatedly documented to be formally strong in Finland), was not used.

Our Finnish interview experts confirmed that the parliament requested extensive and timely information on negotiations: "*The finance ministry could give informal views to the parliament, which in turn was better informed. Someone said we had the best-informed parliament in the Eurozone*" (FIN03, see Annotation A2 in Online Appendix). However, no mandating has been observed by our interview partners. Rather, this request for information was used by the Finnish government in its negotiation strategy at EU level, as illustrated by our other interview partners from Spain. A Spanish interviewee remarked: "*In Finland, for instance, the prime minister and the minister of the economy systematically stopped meetings in Europe to say: I have to explain (to) the parliamentary leaders that we are in this point to see whether we have support or not*" (ESP06, see Annotation A23 in Online Appendix). The perception of the Spanish negotiators shows that Finland was effective in invoking its domestic constraints to justify its extreme position in EU negotiations. While the formally strong control of the Finnish parliament was known at the EU level, the government used the request for information to imply that the parliament was mandating the government. The parliament, however, did not do that, despite the rise of the Eurosceptic True Finns party.

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Indeed, these domestic constraints proved to be much less binding than presented by the government: “*Quite honestly, it was total unanimity in parliament and in the government that we should not bail out. Faced with the European Council and an emerging unanimity, Finland was not going to be the one to block a decision from the big players*” (FIN02, see Annotation A3 in Online Appendix). An interviewee mentions the influence of the German counselor, which is corroborated by another interviewee: *“The Commission and the IMF influenced the government position. But... I would say that the German government influenced the Finnish position the most, not so much the Commission”* (FIN03, see Annotation A3 in Online Appendix). Hence, despite the attempt of the Finnish government to use the alleged parliamentary control to support its position in European negotiations, we find that external actors had strong influence over its position. In domestic politics, the government thus used the argument of the “emergent unanimity” at the EU level to justify its concessions in negotiations. These strategies of the Finnish government illustrate the mechanisms of blame-avoidance and responsibility-shifting, and how they interact.

A similar strategy becomes apparent in the **Netherlands**—another country that took an extreme position. The formal ex-ante control of its parliament helped the Dutch government to be vocal at the EU level by invoking domestic control of its parliament. The parliament tried to push itself in a position of power by building specialized committees in the EU finance area (Crum, 2018). Nonetheless, *“when the banking crisis erupted in 2008, recapitalization happened very fast and the parliament was angry about being sidelined”* (NL07, see Annotation A5 in Online Appendix). The Dutch parliament had access to information through specialized committees, but no mandating capacity. The domestic parliament appears to have been neglected at key moments. It was an additional actor that needed to be taken onboard by the government, as illustrated by one of our interview partners: “*in 2015, (there was) very high political pressure for not signing the Greek agreement, but Rutte managed to get support*” (NL07, see Annotation A6 in Online Appendix). Indeed, in 2015, prime minister Mark Rutte was the last Eurozone head of government to agree to the third bailout of Greece after an apparent “bruising debate” with its parliament (Euractiv, 2015). Rutte ended up supporting the EU agreement despite formal parliamentary opposition, which is testament to the powerful influence of external actors and, at the same time, evidence of the little effectiveness of the enforcing capacity of the parliament. Indeed, as one interviewee said, “*European institutions had a strong influence because the Netherlands committed to their announcements*”. Nonetheless, the formally strong position of the Dutch parliament was well known among European observers (Euractiv, 2015), which speaks to the effective two-level game of the Dutch government, which has portrayed the information and processing capabilities of its parliament as enforcing capabilities on the EU stage.

In **Germany**, Angela Merkel was generally perceived to be able to set debates both at home and in Europe. During negotiations for the first Greek bailout, the German government invoked the famous phrase that there is no alternative (TINA), because the room to maneuver had become extremely limited. This proclaimed lack of alternative was criticized at the EU and national level for not allowing alternative solutions (Göbel, 2011). Also, the media condemned this attempt to exclude the parliament from the decision-making process (Prantl, 2010). Nonetheless, similar to Finnish and Dutch parliaments, “*parliamentarians wanted to be informed*” (DEU02, see Annotation A25 in Online Appendix). As a consequence, the parliament asked for more decision rights, and the formal control improved over time: “*in 2014 the parliament was better and more swiftly informed than in 2010*” (DEU00, see Annotation A25 in Online Appendix).

Again, the access to information improved, but this has not translated into processing or mandating rights. In line with this argument, our interviewees underlined that the parliament

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

was hardly capable of translating these instruments into influence on the position formation of the government (DEU00, see Annotation A7 in Online Appendix). The increased involvement of the parliament by the government came at a time when obtaining wider support was important for avoiding blame in EU negotiations for the fiscal discipline position of the German government. This helps explain why the public perception has been that the German parliament had become stronger during the crisis. The parliament obtained information and processing powers, but no mandating capacity.

6 | HOW GOVERNMENTS OF DEBTOR COUNTRIES SHIFTED RESPONSIBILITY BY INVOLVING EXTERNAL ACTORS (E3)

The preference formation mechanism in countries advocating for fiscal transfers is different compared to the patterns discussed above for the fiscal discipline countries. The governments of Spain and Greece overwhelmingly involved external actors in the formation of their preferences. In the words of one Spanish interviewee: "*governments are independent but not autistic*", which essentially describes that the interviewee explains that Spanish representatives had to adapt to the positions of other EU actors in negotiations (ESP01, see Annotation A8 in Online Appendix). Moreover, we find an acute awareness in Spain regarding its economically weak situation from the very beginning of the crisis. When the first Greek bailout was debated at the European level, "*what mattered in Spain was Germany's wishes as interpreted by Spanish actors*" (ESP05, see Annotation A9 in Online Appendix). "*Inside Spain, the position was clearly siding with Greece, but absolutely conditioned by the policies enacted in Germany*" (ESP01, see Annotation A10 in Online Appendix).

But Spain also "*took into account what the Southern Pole wanted* (*Italy, Portugal, France*)" (ESP05, see Annotation A9 in Online Appendix). "*In the program for Spain, the German minister had to go to the German parliament to explain it, but this program never went to the Spanish parliament. We do not have the same sensibility to disagree on European issues (…) in part because (…) we have no influence capacity, in part because of this European feeling that we accept almost anything that comes from Europe, then, there is little checking from the parliament*" (ESP04, see Annotation A11 in Online Appendix).

Despite the lack of involvement of domestic actors, our interviewees emphasized that the government did not form positions on its own but stressed the relevance of various external actors as expected by E3. Some European institutions are referred to specifically: "*The European Central Bank supported Greece and had a lot of influence over Spain. (…) the European actors were very influential, except for the European Parliament*" (ESP04, see Annotation A26 in Online Appendix). Other interviews point in the same direction, arguing that "*all big countries were influential at some point and pressured Spain to assure the stability of the Eurozone*" (ESP02, see Annotation A27 in Online Appendix). One respondent even mentioned unconventional external actors to have been relevant in the preference formation process. A phone call made by the president of the United States, Barack Obama, reinforced the position of the Spanish prime ministers to support the IMF involvement in the Greek bailout (ESP05, see Annotation A12 in Online Appendix).

In another debtor country, the perspective of **Greek** negotiators shows how their government integrated the views of other member states and European institutions to avoid that the government bears the entire responsibility domestically. Remarkably, in spite of public protests and intense domestic discussion, the parliament was not involved in Greek preference formation. One interviewee noted that the "*Memorandum of Understanding of 2010 was just announced to the Greek Parliament, as a piece of information, not as a bill to be debated in the plenum of*

the parliament" (HEL03, see Annotation A13 in Online Appendix). Or, as another interviewee pointed out, "*Greece was on the brink of sovereign default in the period under study, so the role of most domestic political and social actors gradually decreased and became negligible*" (HEL05, see Annotation A15 in Online Appendix). This perceived little room for maneuver was justified by the constraints at the European level: "*Germany and its satellites (other EU member states) pressed Greece to take a position*" (HEL05, see Annotation A17 in Online Appendix). Hence, the Greek government was undoubtedly under high crisis-pressure, but it also appears to have strategically involved European actors in its preference formation process.

Overall, the analysis above highlights the power imbalance between creditor and debtor countries in Eurozone politics. As the governments of debtor countries had to accept conditionality and fiscal discipline measures, they were constrained in the involvement of their national parliaments. In creditor countries, parliaments were also quite constrained, despite signals to the contrary. Indeed, the mechanisms that we identify provide a more nuanced perspective on preference formation and the central role of governments. In addition to the mechanisms discussed in this article, other factors can also explain why governments involve additional actors. One such factor is the government composition. For example, a minority government needs the support of the majority in the parliament. This was the case for the first Rutte government (October 2010–November 2012), which "*was weaker in the face of the parliament than the second government* (NL01, see Annotation A 4 in Online Appendix).

The need of a minority government to integrate the parliament was also prevalent in Sweden and Denmark. In Sweden, in 2010, a center-right majority government lost its majority after elections. This domestic political situation explains the involvement of the Swedish parliament in a country that did not hold an extreme position: *"The change from majority to minority government meant a greater role for the opposition and national parliament"* (STO26, see Annotation A03 in the Online Appendix). Also, Denmark was governed by a minority government, and an interviewee explicitly mentioned as far as the EMU reform positions were concerned: *"this minority government has to come to this house to get support for whatever steps they want to take"* (STO26, see Annotation A03 in the Online Appendix). Thus, institutional considerations also played a role in the involvement of additional actors. These considerations remain in the realm of formality, rather than a strong de facto influence in position formation.

In countries that took less extreme positions, our data highlights that preference formation was in the hands of the executive. There are, however, also notable exceptions. In non-Eurozone countries, external and European actors appear to have played a more important role. As an illustration, one *leitmotiv* in the case of non-Eurozone members from Central and Eastern Europe was their willingness to prove their commitment and worthiness to the European project: "*Poland wanted to demonstrate that letting them be part of the negotiations does not slow decisions down"* (PL01, see Annotation A19 in Online Appendix). Even in this case, where external actors played an important role, it was still the decision of the government to delegate this authority. Similarly, in Romania, "*parties do not seem to play a role, as there seems to be a consensus among them to be pro-European, which distorts to some extent the available options from which to choose when it comes to preference formation"* (RO20, See A20 in Online Appendix).

7 | CONCLUSION

The findings of this analysis show that preference formation in EU politics is strongly dominated by governments. In Eurozone politics, the involvement of national parliaments was very limited—and if they had a voice in preference formation, this was mostly in the strategic interest

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

of the government, which wanted to avoid blame on the EU level for their extreme positions situated at the fringes of the bargaining space. Particularly creditor countries, such as Germany and Finland, used the objections of their domestic parliaments to justify their positions. Nonetheless, EU actors remained influential in creditor countries, and their influence was even stronger in debtor countries. The debtor countries shifted the responsibility for negotiation outcomes, which deviated from their own positions, with reference to EU actors in the formation of preferences.

While observers may be tempted to conclude that the inclusion of domestic parliaments in preference formation has improved the democratic accountability of EU decision making, our analysis of Eurozone politics challenges this view. When national parliaments are involved, this is often merely a formal act, which is at the discretion and in the interest of the national government, who want to gain bargaining leverage on the EU stage or shift responsibility for EU compromise solutions. These mechanisms of blame-avoidance and responsibility-shifting show that governments do not involve parliaments for a better democratic anchoring of EU legislative action. Rather, our analysis amplifies that executives have been substantially strengthened in EU politics at the expense of national parliaments. Speaking to the broader literature, if the institutional role of parliaments is measured to comprise *constraints* and *information* (Winzen, 2021), our analysis reveals an important role of parliaments in obtaining information from governments or directly from EU institutions. Their constraining role over policy, however, has been negligible. Thus, our analysis suggests that despite significant institutional differences with regards to the formal involvement of national parliaments in European affairs, these differences remain largely at the formal level and show little substantive capacity to influence preference formation at the government level.

As governments will continue to tackle global crizes, such as the Covid-19 pandemic or the security threat from Russia with intergovernmental negotiations, this trend will likely continue. Our findings challenge the view that control and influence of domestic parliaments are making EU policy making more democratically accountable. Relying on national parliaments seems to be a rather ineffective mechanism for providing democratic legitimacy. In the case of Eurozone politics, this shortage of domestic anchoring comes on top of a very minor role of the European Parliament. Both, the national and EU legislators, have been effectively side-lined, as legislative politics was conducted by governments. Our analysis also illustrates how this seems to be a necessity, when the bargaining win-set is small. In this case, the involvement of national parliaments in countries with outlier positions could easily lead to gridlock. This eventually highlights the complex trade-off between democratic legitimacy and decision-making capacity on the international level. In any case, the dominance of executives in European politics reinforces concerns about the democratic deficit of the EU.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This article has been written as part of the project EMU Choices funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 649532.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that supports the findings of this study are available in the supplementary material of this article.

ENDNOTE

[1] Since Croatia joined the EU only in the middle of the period covered by *EMU Formation* data, it is not included in the analysis.

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

REFERENCES

Armingeon, K., & Cranmer, S. (2018). Position-taking in the euro crisis. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *25*(4), 546–566. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1268642

ATI. (2021). Annotation for transparent inquiry at a glance. Retrieved April 16 2021 from: https://qdr.syr.edu/ati

Auel, K., & Christiansen, T. (2015). After Lisbon: National parliaments in the European Union. *West European Politics*, *38*(2), 261–281. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2014.990693

Auel, K., & Höing, O. (2015). National parliaments and the Eurozone crisis: Taking ownership in difficult times? *West European Politics*, *38*(2), 375–395. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2014.990694

Auel, K., Rozenberg, O., & Tacea, A. (2015). To scrutinise or not to scrutinise? Explaining variation in EU-related activities in national parliaments. *West European Politics*, *38*(2), 282–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2014.990695

Bailer, S., Mattila, M., & Schneider, G. (2015). Money makes the EU go round: The objective foundations of conflict in the C ouncil of M inisters. *Journal of Communication and Media Studies: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *53*(3), 437–456. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12194

Bailer, S., & Weiler, F. (2015). A political economy of positions in climate change negotiations: Economic, structural, domestic, and strategic explanations. *The Review of International Organizations*, *10*(1), 43–66. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-014-9198-0

Bickerton, C. J., Hodson, D., & Puetter, U. (2015). *The new intergovernmentalism: States and supranational actors in the post-maastricht era*. Oxford University Press.

Bojovic, J., Munta, M., & Puetter, U. (2020). The European stability mechanism and domestic preference formation during the Eurocrisis: The role of non-governmental actors. *Political Studies Review*, *18*(4), 475–490. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929919868663

Christensen, M. B. (2015). The Danish Folketing and EU Affairs: Is the Danish model of parliamentary scrutiny still best practice? In *The palgrave handbook of national parliaments and the European Union* (pp. 275–289). Springer.

Crum, B. (2018). Parliamentary accountability in multilevel governance: What role for parliaments in post-crisis EU economic governance? *Journal of European Public Policy*, *25*(2), 268–286. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1363270

Crum, B., & Fossum, J. E. (2009). The multilevel parliamentary field: A framework for theorizing representative democracy in the EU. *European Political Science Review: EPSR*, *1*(2), 249–271. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1755773909000186

Csehi, R., & Puetter, U. (2021). Who determined what governments really wanted? Preference formation and the euro crisis. *West European Politics*, *44*(3), 463–484. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2020.1731666

Dür, A. (2008). Measuring interest group influence in the EU: A note on methodology. *European Union Politics*, *9*(4), 559–576. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116508095151

Elman, C., & Kapiszewski, D. (2018). The qualitative data repository's annotation for transparent inquiry (ATI) initiative. PS. *Political Science & Politics*, *51*(1), 3–6. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1049096517001755

EMUChoices. (2021). The choice for Europe since Maastricht. Retrieved 16.04.2021 from: https://emuchoices.eu/

Euractiv. (2015). Dutch vote gives final go-ahead to Greek bailout. Retrieved 16.04 from: https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/dutch-vote-gives-final-go-ahead-to-greek-bailout/

Fontan, C., & Saurugger, S. (2020). Between a rock and a hard place: Preference formation in France during the Eurozone crisis. *Political Studies Review*, *18*(4), 507–524. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929919868600

Genovese, F., & Schneider, G. (2020). Smoke with fire: Financial crises and the demand for parliamentary oversight in the European Union. *The Review of International Organizations*, *15*(3), 633–665. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-020-09383-0

Genschel, P., & Jachtenfuchs, M. (2018). From market integration to core state powers: The Eurozone crisis, the refugee crisis and integration theory. *Journal of Communication and Media Studies: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *56*(1), 178–196. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12654

Göbel, H. (2011). *"Alternativlos" Merkels Verdrusswort*. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

Hagemann, S., Bailer, S., & Herzog, A. (2019). Signals to their parliaments? Governments' use of votes and policy statements in the EU Council. *Journal of Communication and Media Studies: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *57*(3), 634–650. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12844

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Hagemann, S., Hobolt, S. B., & Wratil, C. (2017). Government responsiveness in the European Union: Evidence from Council voting. *Comparative Political Studies*, *50*(6), 850–876. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414015621077

Heinkelmann-Wild, T., & Zangl, B. (2020). Multilevel blame games: Blame-shifting in the European Union. *Governance*, *33*(4), 953–969. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12459

Hermann, M. G., & Hermann, C. F. (1989). Who makes foreign policy decisions and how: An empirical inquiry. *International Studies Quarterly*, *33*(4), 361–387. https://doi.org/10.2307/2600518

Hill, C. (2003). *The changing politics of foreign policy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Hobolt, S. B., & Tilley, J. (2014). *Blaming Europe?: Responsibility without accountability in the European Union*. Oxford University Press.

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2003). Unraveling the central state, but how? Types of multi-level governance. *American Political Science Review*, *97*(2), 233–243.

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2009). A postfunctionalist theory of European integration: From permissive consensus to constraining dissensus. *British Journal of Political Science*, *39*(01), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123408000409

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2020). A postfunctionalist theory of multilevel governance. *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, *22*(4), 820–826. https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148120935303

Hug, S., & König, T. (2002). View of ratification. Governmental preferences and domestic constraints at the Amsterdam Intergovernmental Conference. *International Organization*, *56*(2), 447–476. https://doi.org/10.1162/002081802320005531

Hutter, S., Grande, E., & Kriesi, H. (2016). *Politicising Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

Jančić, D. (2016). The role of the European parliament and the US congress in shaping transatlantic relations: TTIP, NSA surveillance, and CIA renditions. *Journal of Communication and Media Studies: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *54*(4), 896–912. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12345

Kassim, H., Saurugger, S., & Puetter, U. (2020). The study of national preference formation in times of the Euro crisis and beyond. *Political Studies Review*, *18*(4), 463–474. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929919873262

Kriesi, H. (2020). Backlash politics against European integration. *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, *22*(4), 692–701. https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148120947356

Laffan, B. (2014). Testing times: The growing primacy of responsibility in the euro area. *West European Politics*, *37*(2), 270–287. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2014.887875

Lehner, T., & Wasserfallen, F. (2019). Political conflict in the reform of the Eurozone. *European Union Politics*, *20*(1), 45–64. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116518814338

Lundgren, M., Bailer, S., Dellmuth, L. M., Tallberg, J., & Târlea, S. (2019). Bargaining success in the reform of the Eurozone. *European Union Politics*, *20*(1), 65–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116518811073

Manow, P., & Döring, H. (2008). Electoral and mechanical causes of divided government in the European Union. *Comparative Political Studies*, *41*(10), 1349–1370. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414007304674

Mortensen, P. B. (2012). "It's the central government's fault": Elected regional officials' use of blame-shifting rhetoric. *Governance*, *25*(3), 439–461. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2012.01585.x

Prantl, H. (2010). *Für "Angie" kommt "Tina". Die mächtigste Frau der Welt heisst nicht mehr Angela Merkel - sondern "Tina". Sie regiert die Politik und dirigiert die Kanzlerin*. Süddeutsche Zeitung. https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/fuehrung-fall-merkel-fuer-angie-kommt-tina-1.944947

Puntscher Riekmann, S., & Wydra, D. (2013). Representation in the European state of emergency: Parliaments against governments? *Journal of European Integration*, *35*(5), 565–582. https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2013.799943

Putnam, R. D. (1988). Diplomacy and domestic politics: The logic of two-level games. *International Organization*, *42*(3), 427–460. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818300027697

Schelling, T. C. (1960). *The strategy of conflict*. Harvard University Press.

Schlipphak, B., & Treib, O. (2017). Playing the blame game on Brussels: The domestic political effects of EU interventions against democratic backsliding. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *24*(3), 352–365. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1229359

Tallberg, J. (2007). Executive politics, Knud Erik Jorgensen, Mark A. Pollack and ben rosamond, eds. In *The handbook of European union politics*.

Tarlea, S., & Bailer, S. (2020). Technocratic cabinets in European negotiations. In *The technocratic challenge to democracy* (pp. 148–163). Routledge.

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Tarlea, S., Bailer, S., Degner, H., Dellmuth, L. M., Leuffen, D., Lundgren, M., Tallberg, J., & Wasserfallen, F. (2019). Explaining governmental preferences on economic and monetary union reform. *European Union Politics*, *20*(1), 24–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116518814336

Wasserfallen, F., Leuffen, D., Kudrna, Z., & Degner, H. (2019). Analysing European Union decision-making during the Eurozone crisis with new data. *European Union Politics*, *20*(1), 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116518814954

Winzen, T. (2012). National parliamentary control of European Union affairs: A cross-national and longitudinal comparison. *West European Politics*, *35*(3), 657–672. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2012.665745

Winzen, T. (2013). European integration and national parliamentary oversight institutions. *European Union Politics*, *14*(2), 297-323. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116512467088

Winzen, T. (2017). *Constitutional preferences and parliamentary reform: Explaining national parliaments' adaptation to European integration*. Oxford University Press.

Winzen, T. (2021). The institutional position of national parliaments in the European Union: Developments, explanations, effects. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *29*(6), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2021.1898663

Winzen, T., de Ruiter, R., & Rocabert, J. (2018). Is parliamentary attention to the EU strongest when it is needed the most? National parliaments and the selective debate of EU policies. *European Union Politics*, *19*(3), 481–501. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116518763281

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

How to cite this article: Tarlea, S., Bailer, S., Kudrna, Z., & Wasserfallen, F. (2023). Executive power in European Union politics. *Governance*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12761

14680491, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12761 by Universität Bern, Wiley Online Library on [01/03/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License