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## Cheap Talk or Keeping/Making Promises? Party Rhetorics Between Elections

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### Abstract

*Party rhetorics – such as politicians' statements to the press, speeches and interviews – are often understood as sheer symbolism signaling cognition of public interests which are not followed by more substantial policy steps. Thus, few studies seek to embrace party rhetorics as signals for substantial policy efforts between elections. First, the paper argues that by understanding rhetorics as policy cues, party scholars can gain important information on parties' policy preferences between elections. Using data on party rhetorics after the Fukushima catastrophe across twelve countries drawn from the ResponsiveGov project, I show that rhetorical party positions appear to be strongly structured around a) party manifesto positions and b) party families traditional stance on the usage of nuclear energy. Yet, rhetorics also yield considerable variation and deviation from parties' raison d'être and thus can enhance our knowledge on party positions movements and changes between elections. Second, by linking rhetorical party positions to parties' policy outputs (e.g. bills, legislative acts and laws), the analysis shows that parties walk like they talk: their policy efforts are mostly congruent to their rhetorical positions. Furthermore, in the line of previous research, I find that opposition parties' rhetorics are more susceptible to be hollow gestures not pushing for congruent policy outputs.*

“Politics is oftentimes little more than an endless exchange of public conversations between those who control scarce resources and those who wish to control them” (Hart 1987: 5).

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

As Hart (1987: 5) points out, politicians reach the public to an enormous extent by their talk: candidates duel each other in TV, parliamentarians fight with words during debate sessions, politicians answer questions by the press, send press releases or hold speeches at all kinds of public gatherings. Thus, the public might rightly have the impression that politics is mainly a battle of words and not of substantive policy-making. Interestingly, research on policy informations delivered by such rhetorics is limited and often bound to campaign periods. Rhetorics have been mainly studied in the light of inaugural addresses – such as the state of the union address given by the American President (Cohen 1995; Canes-Wrone 2001; Druckman and Holmes 2004) or the Queen’s speech in the UK (Hobolt and Klemmensen 2007; Jennings, Bevan, and John 2011) which take place at very distinctive points in time and seek ample attention by the public and media alike. In contrast, daily rhetorics of politicians – via press releases, statements during interviews, public speeches, party meetings or parliamentary debates – attracted less interest in the literature. Lately, several studies started to fill this gap by analyzing parliamentary questions (Saalfeld and Bischof 2013; Martin 2011; Russo and Wiberg 2010) and parties’ press releases (Senninger and Wagner 2014; Hopmann et al. 2010; Brandenburg 2002).

To date, rhetorics are often understood as symbolic acts and rarely as means to provide substantial policy frames to the public (For an overview of the debate, see: Cohen 1999: 24-26). If not interpreted as such, studies rather argued that rhetorics can be substantive but rarely delivered analysis showing that this is actually the case. Rhetorics, thus, have been often described as “hollow gestures” (Gillion 2014: 2), notwithstanding that the link between party rhetorics and their policy outputs needs yet to be studied in most contexts. Testing this congruence between *how* parties talk and *what* they subsequently deliver in their policy outputs in parliaments however can not only tell us how resilient party rhetorics are, but also enhance our knowledge on the relationship between concepts of symbolic and substantive representation (Pitkin 1967).

By analyzing data on party rhetorics and their policy outputs across twelve countries from the ResponsiveGov data on nuclear energy after the Fukushima nuclear meltdown, I show that parties’ attempts to influence a country’s nuclear policy (e.g. via parliamentary motions, bills, legislative acts and laws) reflects their policy positions shared through their rhetorics (via press releases, inter-

views, public speeches, party meetings or parliamentary debates).<sup>1</sup> Thereby the paper proceeds in a two step manner. Firstly, I put forward arguments *why* party rhetorics revealing their positions on the usage of nuclear energy is likely to reflect on parties' manifesto positions and the particular ideology parties belong to. Subsequently, drawing on these theoretical arguments I derive hypotheses linking party rhetorics to policy outputs. Secondly, I provide face validity underlying that party rhetorics are indeed structured around parties' *a) manifesto positions* and *b) party families traditional positions* on nuclear energy, before linking these rhetorical positions to parties' policy outputs. The final analysis shows that party rhetoric is indeed *congruent* to policy outputs, even though this effect is mediated by being in government.

The following section presents the current debate on party rhetorics and their policy output. The third section outlines why rhetorics can be understood as substantive policy signals by parties. The fourth section describes the data used in the analysis, while the fifth section shows the results of the pooled regression analysis. Section six concludes.

## 2 PARTIES BETWEEN SYMBOLISM & POLICY-MAKING

The ideological positions parties hold and compete on in modern democracies are one of the core interests of political science (Downs 1957; Budge et al. 2001). The literature on parties' positions is manifold and proved that party positions matter for parties vote- (Adams et al. 2006), office- (Bäck, Debus, and Dumont 2011) and policy-seeking incentives (Budge and Hofferbert 1990). Yet, party positions are measured mostly via extractions from electoral programs (Budge et al. 2001) or via expert surveys (Castles and Mair 1984). In the former case, party positions can only be measured during parties campaign periods when manifestos are published. This assures large comparisons across several countries and time periods, but leaves party position switches in between elections untouched. Expert surveys, on the other hand, depend on the availability of suitable experts and their subjective perception of changes in party position across time. In summary, even though both approaches have proven their justification for research, they lack the capability to measure party positions changes in more frequent and smaller time intervals – especially between elections.

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<sup>1</sup> **NOTE:** Future drafts will expand the analysis to another two policy issues: one economic issue (property rights in the internet) and one foreign policy issue (Iraq war). The data gathering process of the ResponsiveGov project is underway and therefore at the moment data can only be presented for the issue of nuclear energy.

Without doubt expert judgements and manifesto positions enlarged political science knowledge on party behavior. By using these measurements, mandate theory scholars show that incumbent parties' policy positions taken from manifestos are an excellent predictor for what parties subsequently do while in government in a variety of different institutional settings: for Spain (Artés 2013), the Netherlands (Thomson 2001), the UK (Bara 2005; Hofferbert and Budge 1992), the USA (King et al. 1993), Greece (Kalogeropoulou 1989), Ireland (Costello and Thomson 2008) and in comparative perspective (Mansergh and Thomson 2007). As Budge and Hofferbert (1990: 112) annotate, studies show that impressively around 70 % of pledges lead on to substantive policies and a recent review confirms this observation (Pétry and Collette 2009). Consequently, we know how substantive manifesto promises of incumbent parties are.

In contrast, parties self-selected expression of their position on and attention to an issue on a daily basis – made in press releases, interviews, public speeches, party meetings or parliamentary debates – have attracted less interest in the literature on party politics and representation (Gillion 2014: 5). If discussed, rhetorics are often understood as sheer symbolic acts and as means of symbolic representation (Pitkin 1967: 92-111).

In the American context, the president's State of the Union Address has found large appeal amongst scholars of presidential responsiveness. On the one hand, presidential speeches are paraphrased as symbolism, containing little – if any – policy content (Tulis 1987; Hinckley 1990). In this vein presidential rhetorics do not share policy information, but are symbols to increase presidential popularity. They seek support by the public to put congress under pressure to deliver policy, in order to pass legislation which then underpins Presidents' re-election goals (Ragsdale 1984; Brace and Hinckley 1993). Theoretically akin, but distinct in their arguments, studies showed that rhetorics are successfully used for priming (Druckman and Holmes 2004), to create trust among the public (Bianco 1994; McGraw, Best, and Timpone 1995) and to alter the public's perception of the president's issue competence (Holian 2004).

On the other hand, it has been argued that speeches are used to set the president's or government's policy agendas (Cohen 1995, 1999; Jennings and John 2009; Bernardi 2014). Rhetorics are therefore understood as a preceding step to policies: the priorities and positions presented in speeches are likely to result in substantive policy making. Bevan, John, and Jennings (2011) for instance show that the Queen's speech is a strong and positive predictor of legislative outputs in the UK. However, most studies showed that an increase of bills (Bevan, John, and Jennings 2011) or public spending (Budge and Hofferbert 1990) on a cer-

tain issue was preceded by an increase of attention on the issue in speeches or manifestos. Consequently, these studies did not differentiate among different types of attention: all mentions on a policy issues were treated equally without distinguishing between their ideological frames and positions (Cohen 1999: 67).

Thus, studies focussing on party rhetoric between elections and accounting for positions shared by rhetorics are scarce (Helbling and Tresch 2011: 174). This is mainly so because scholars stucked to well established approaches to measure party positions – namely survey or manifesto-driven techniques (Keman 2007: 77-78) – which are then bound time-wise either to elections in the case of manifestos or the period of data-collection in the case of expert surveys. While political science found substantial evidence that mass media seems to have a profound impact on public perceptions of parties (Schmitt-Beck 2003; Baum 2013), we know very little about the policy positions shared by politicians via the media (Helbling and Tresch 2011: 174-175; Kriesi et al. 2008) and even less about the relationship between parties' rhetorics and their policy output (Gillion 2014).

### 3 PARTY RHETORICS, MANIFESTO POSITIONS & POLICY

Using party rhetorics to measure party positions comes with several advantages to traditional techniques (for an extensive comparison please see, Helbling and Tresch 2011: 174-177). First, party rhetorics are a daily routine. Parties share rhetorical positions through several activities – e.g. press releases, interviews, debates in parliament. Therefore, they can help us to fill the positional black-box between elections.<sup>2</sup> Second, they allow an issue based evaluation of party positions. Such issue based measurements are especially important once we try to estimate party congruence or responsiveness to e.g. public opinion (Lax and Phillips 2009: 368-369). Third, voters can be assumed to largely rely on cost-low information to judge about parties' ideological offerings. Rhetorics are reasonable to access for voters via TV, newspapers, campaign events, public speeches or public assemblies. In fact, rhetorics in the media might even reach voters without them seeking such information. Just alongside everyday activities people are often exposed to party talk when listening to radio, watching TV, reading newspapers or checking twitter. This is certainly not the fact for party manifestos, which are often extensive documents, partly filled with complex jargon and ignored by many voters (Bara 2005: 586 & 597). Consequently, nowadays

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<sup>2</sup> Expert surveys cover this period as well, but scholars are not capable of disentangling the bases on which experts evaluate parties. Especially once experts are asked to judge on party positions retrospectively (Mair 2001: 24-25).

the public keeps itself mainly informed about politics via the media (Baum 2013: 442). Hence, leading party figures are likely to be cautious about the positions they share with the public when talking, since it seems fair to assume that they are aware that voters are listening to their talk.

### 3.1 *What happens between electoral promises – parties & nuclear energy*

Given these arguments why party rhetorics seem to matter for voters' perception of parties, it is astonishing how little scholars of party politics know about parties' rhetorical position taking. The main argument on which I draw below, is that party ideologies are mainly reflecting on the traditional positions parties and party families stand for. Thus, I argue that party rhetorics should be similar across parties within the same party family. Furthermore, party rhetorics should be committed to past or future manifesto positions as will be argued below.

Once party rhetorics are understood as costly signals for politicians by creating public audience costs (Fearon 1997), politicians are unlikely to deviate from the party line. Voters listen to party rhetorics and judge parties based on the signals parties send. In between elections parties do not draft party manifestos. However, the political agenda is constantly in flux and party positions might change between elections. Thus, between elections rhetorics essentially mark out which set of policies parties regard as feasible and sensible and which options they disregard. Above all, rhetorics give parties the opportunity to frame the debate on relevant issues or to prime one issue above the other (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010: 665; Druckman and Holmes 2004). Voters also expect parties to position themselves in the political space. Therefore, remaining silent results in losing the capability to influence how a topic is framed and therefore appears to be risky business (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010).

Once a larger fraction of a party is immune to party discipline and party members send contrary policy cues, its position blurs. However, position ambiguity is harmful for parties' vote-seeking incentives. Especially for salient issues, voters are likely to penalize parties without a clear cut message (Dalton 1985: 294; Ferrara and Weishaupt 2004: 299). For that reason maximizing ambiguity is often not a sensible and profitable strategy (Schedler 1998: 196). Party leaders need to make sure that members follow the party line and party members themselves should have an interest to follow the party line, too. Especially in times of strong party leadership accompanied by rising mass media influences, leading figures

of parties are likely to control their cadre's and member's rhetorics (Poguntke and Webb 2005).<sup>3</sup>

However, changing environmental circumstances provide parties with opportunities to update and change their beliefs (Harmel and Janda 1994; Schedler 1998: 202-206; Pétry and Collette 2009: 66). Unpredictable events – such as the Fukushima accident – can lead parties to rethink their policy promises and update them in order to produce reliable and feasible positions. In those situations parties might be able to renege their initial positions and start to forward new messages to voters, divergent to their initial policy promises. Doing so might in fact be the only possibility to not lie to the voter.

Therefore, I firstly assume that party rhetorics either echo past or anticipate future party manifesto positions. Since party positions might change in between elections, such changes are likely to be reflected in the rhetorical cues parties share between elections. Switchers are therefore likely to not talk in line with their bygone manifesto position, but rather pre-empt upcoming ones.

Secondly, I expect parties' talk to be structured around party families. Nuclear energy was largely neglected by political parties until the 1980s. Yet, with green parties fitting their party agendas and ideology around anti-nuclear and peace movements, nuclear energy has become an ever more present issue across Western party systems. Thereby, nuclear energy can be understood as a sensational issue which remains rather unobtrusive to the public (Soroka 2002; Walgrave, Soroka, and Nuytemans 2007; Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010). Though unobtrusive to the public in general, external events or shocks cannot only lead to an incremental increase of attention by political parties to sensational issues but also in the course to party position switches – as has been argued above.

This is also accurate for nuclear energy which remained an issue mainly debated by green parties and environmental movements throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Yet, the Three Mile Island (1979) accident and the Chernobyl meltdown (1986) cast doubt on the safety of nuclear energy all over the globe and increased attention of the public, media and parties. This was also mirrored in several social democratic parties starting to questioning the safety of nuclear energy. As a consequence, social democratic parties in Sweden, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland declared themselves against building new nuclear reactors even before the 1990s (Nohrstedt 2008: 264; Koopmans and Duyvendak 1995: 239; Swyngedouw N.d.: 12; Aarts and Arentsen N.d.: 11; Kriesi N.d.: 19). Though, at first the Parti Socialiste (PS) in France remained unperturbed by

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<sup>3</sup> However, lately it has been shown that parties might benefit from blurring their position on some issues not being part of their *raison d'être*, while sharpening them on issues which mirror their core ideology (Rovny 2012b,a).

their family members' switches, internal debates became public on the nuclear issue in the early 1990s. Even though the PS subsequently updated its ideology towards more anti-nuclear sentiments to attract the green party (Les Verts) as a coalition partner under Jospin, these remained symbolic (Brouard and Guinaudeau 2013: 19).

In contrast, conservative and christian democratic parties largely kept their pro-nuclear stances before the Fukushima disaster. Especially in Canada, the US and the UK there appears to be a parliamentary wide pro nuclear accordance, with green parties not being represented in the parliament until today.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, within these party systems mainstream parties never had to react to the challenges provided by niche parties such as the Greens, while they often did so in the aforementioned cases (Meguid 2005; Spoon 2011; Spoon, Hobolt, and de Vries 2013).

In summary, I expect that the nuclear issue symbolizes to a certain extent the traditional divide between party families – with left parties leaning towards anti-nuclear positions and right parties leaning towards pro-nuclear positions. Because of this, party rhetorics on the nuclear issue should mirror such a left-right divide after the Fukushima accident as well. Furthermore, parties are likely to mirror their manifesto positions when talking in order to not blur their message between elections.

### 3.2 *Linking party rhetorics & policies*

When party rhetorics are structured policy talk and not only reflecting cycles of issue attention, the question arises *which* meanings rhetorics can have for parties. The question is whether or not party rhetorics are sheer symbols or represent cues for policy-making. Are rhetorics congruent to parties' policy output? And if so, which parties are likely to be more congruent?

The literature shows that parties which dedicate more attention to a certain topic, are subsequently also more likely to provide policies on the same issue. This has been shown for governmental speeches (Bevan, John, and Jennings 2011) and for salient topics in party manifestos (Budge and Hofferbert 1990). Subsequently we can assume that party rhetorics should also reflect parties' intentions to influence policies in a congruent manner. While party rhetorics do not state a credible commitment comparable to speeches or party manifestos, they still raise audience costs through voters' attention to party talk (Fearon 1997) – as has been argued in the last section. Thus,

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<sup>4</sup> Though the green party in Canada now holds one seat since the 2012 elections.



*H1: Parties are likely to deliver political decisions which are congruent to their rhetorics.*

Yet, whether parties follow through with their talk might be moderated by parties' "raison d'être". Parties might talk about issues in order to attract voters or accommodate issues (Meguid 2005, 2007) without perceiving the necessity to push for congruent policies. They could manipulate politics in a way which enforces their electoral goals without intending to alter policy (Riker 1996). Thus, by talking they strategically change public discourses and voters hold them competent on a topic without parties ever having tried to implement policies. In contrast, parties which are already perceived as competent for a certain issue are likely to push for congruent policy implementation. In the case of nuclear energy, which has been largely framed as an environmental issue after Fukushima, green parties are traditionally perceived by voters as being competent (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans 2009).<sup>5</sup> They own the issue of nuclear energy and profit from their attempts to push for congruent policies, since this draws more media attention on an issue from which green parties are likely to benefit electorally:

*H2: In the case of nuclear energy green parties are more likely to influence policy implementation congruent to their rhetorics.*

As has been argued elsewhere, government and opposition parties find themselves in completely different situations when it comes to setting issue agendas (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010; Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans 2009). Governments need to be responsive to ever changing environmental conditions, since they are held accountable for a nation's well-being. Therefore, they often cannot remain silent on salient issues, otherwise voters apprehend government as being incapable of delivering solutions for relevant issues (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010: 262). The Fukushima shock not only incrementally raised the salience of nuclear energy as a topic, but also pressures on several Western governments to address questions on its safety. While government parties enjoy less freedom than the opposition in selecting their agendas and therefore might

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<sup>5</sup> I am aware of the debate around the dimensions of issue ownership. Thus, the argument put forward here mainly reflects on the associative dimension of issue ownership, which states that certain party families are almost intuitively linked to being competent on a certain issue (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch 2012). For instance in a survey in Belgium 87% of the Flemish respondents spontaneously linked green parties to environmental issues, while only 45% linked Liberals to taxes (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch 2012: 774-779) I conclude that it is a fair assumption that green parties are representing a rather clear cut case for issue ownership of environmental topics. Furthermore, as Tresch, Lefevere, and Walgrave (2013) show parties appear to be unable to steal previously associatively owned issues – such as the environment for green parties.

have been forced to talk about nuclear energy after the explosions in Fukushima, they can still choose *how* to frame an issue. Thus, government parties are likely to share rhetorical positions which they subsequently can also follow suit. In contrast, opposition parties are more susceptible to say one thing and then do another. They feel more independent from public pressures. Thus, they are less likely to deliver policy outputs in line with their talk. In turn, voters are not likely to measure opposition parties on basis of their policy outputs, because they hold the government accountable to deliver policy.

*H3*: Governmental parties are more likely than opposition parties to attempt to influence policy implementation congruent to their rhetorics.

#### 4 DATA & METHODS

I use the ResponsiveGov data to analyze whether party rhetorics are *congruent* to parties attempts to influence policy making. Yet, first I will show some validity checks that party rhetorics are indeed partly reflecting traditional demarcations between parties.

The ResponsiveGov project aims to find out “[t]o what extent [...] democratic governments [are] responsive to citizens’ demands and preferences between elections” (Morales 2014: 1). Data collection is thereby based on pre-defined time periods, which are called ‘policy junctures’. Every juncture is bound to a certain policy issue – here nuclear energy after Fukushima. The project collects data by manual coding of the content of a country’s main newswire, legislative and parliamentary databases.

First, coders select the relevant news articles to be coded with an extensive keyword search. Second, coders extract from these newswires any relevant event taking place during a certain policy juncture. Thus, the unit of coding is not a single publication of a newswire, but all events reported within the publication. An event can be a claim, a declaration or an action. A wide range of different types of events, ranging from speeches, acts, parliamentary debates and court rulings etc. to protest events, public opinion polls are coded (for a full list of events, see: Lühiste and Morales 2014). For instance in case of the nuclear energy after Fukushima juncture, in Sweden Mona Sahlin (*the actor*), leader of Socialdemokraterna (*the institution*), gives a speech (*the event*) on the 25.03.2011 and says that nuclear energy should not be pictured as the only solution for Swedish energy needs, but instead green energy should be thought of as a viable alternative (*the position*). As such the ResponsiveGov data supply a detailed account of which actions parties, protesters and the mobilized public undertake

and which positions they reveal on different policy issues across a large quantity of countries.

Thereby part of the novel approach of the ResponsiveGov project is to differentiate between so called ‘normal’ and ‘unexpected’ policy junctures. The former junctures start with an electoral mandate or in case such a mandate does not exist, with a policy proposal by the government and ends once a government transforms its mandate into policy, a government has been responsive to public demands or a government is removed from office by an election. In contrast to these normal junctures, unexpected junctures start with an external shock – such as the nuclear accident at the Daiichi nuclear site. They end by governments being responsive to public demands, in case a general election takes place a minimum of half a year after the external shock or two years after the shock happened without any governmental responsiveness to public opinion claims.

**THE FUKUSHIMA DATA** The ResponsiveGov data on the Fukushima accident reports data for Belgium, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the US. At the time the Fukushima accident happened, all of these countries either already used nuclear energy or the parties in office had plans to phase-in again (Italy). In the case of the Fukushima juncture, the data collection starts on the day of the Fukushima accident (11.03.2011) and ends two years after the accident (31.03.2013). However, in case a government decided to phase-out nuclear energy (Germany, Italy<sup>6</sup> & Switzerland) *or* in case general elections take place a minimum of half a year after the Fukushima accident (France, Spain & Netherlands), these events mark the end of the coding period. For all twelve countries included in the data collection process any party activity reflecting on nuclear energy reported by a nation’s press agency, its parliamentary or legislative database are included in the ResponsiveGov data.

**PARTY SELECTION** The visibility of parties’ rhetorics in the media is partly depending on their relevance in Sartori’s (1976) sense, parties incumbency status and the time period of observation. Scholars showed that parties’ size and office positions are favorable factors to obtain attention by the media (Hopmann et al. 2010), with campaign periods representing more balanced coverage by the media across all parties (Harris, Fury, and Lock 2006). Since the ResponsiveGov data mainly relies upon manual coding of newswires stemming from national

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<sup>6</sup> To be precise in the case of Italy the government withdrew from the plan to re-enter nuclear energy.

press agencies, the selection of parties included in my study needs to take their capabilities to enter the media agenda into account. Even though this study is not interested in the sheer amount of news coverage per party, the selection of parties has to make sure that a substantial amount of access to the media is guaranteed across all parties. Otherwise the results on rhetorics of certain parties might be systematically biased by parties' capabilities to penetrate the media agenda. Thus, parties included in this study have been selected to assure that they fulfill Sartori's (1976) ideas of party relevance, as well as their coalition and blackmailing potential.

As a general rule parties that managed to secure at least five seats in the national parliament and at least 5% of the national vote share are included in the analysis (For more details, please see: Bischof, Lühiste, and Morales 2013). Furthermore, parties needed to repeat this success at least once during the period of interest of the ResponsiveGov project (1980-2013).<sup>7</sup> I also included all governmental parties during their time being in government and parties which helped to stabilize a minority government.<sup>8</sup> This results in 67 parties included in the following analysis (For an overview of these, see: Table 4 on page 36).

#### 4.1 *Measuring rhetorical positions*

Since the ResponsiveGov project is interested in governments' responsiveness, all events coded during the Fukushima case are recorded in relation to governments' initial policy positions on a five point scale (For more information on the coding procedure, please see: Lühiste and Morales 2014). Since my analysis is not interested in government positions, but in comparing party positions I had to recode all events to assure a comparability across parties (Description of re-codings can be found in the appendix A.1 on page 30). After recoding the ideological position of every actor is captured as either supporting nuclear energy or rejecting nuclear energy.

**PARTY RHETORICS**     *"Party rhetorics"* encompass statements to the media (Interviews), press conferences, any kind of speech made during assemblies or party meetings, public letters which also include tweets, statement/speeches

<sup>7</sup> While these rules pertain to most parties included in the following analysis, exceptions have been made in several occasions to guarantee to not ignore country particularities (Please see: Bischof, Lühiste, and Morales 2013). Table 4 on page 36 in the appendix gives an overview of all included parties and reasons for their selection.

<sup>8</sup> A minority government supporter is thereby defined as: *"Party in Support of Government* are those parties that are not represented at the ministerial level but which at the same time support the investiture of that government" (Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge 2000: 15).

given during rally and campaign events, party resolutions and declarations, parliamentary questions and statements given during hearings. All these activities are assumed to aim at persuading the public, or to share information on a party's position with citizens. However, none of these rhetorics are themselves events of substantial policy making. Yet, they might very well reflect on past policy decisions or introduce upcoming ones.

Furthermore, I only included statements undertaken by members of the national party branch and the government. Neither statements by parties' regional politicians, nor members of the European Parliament are included. Regional and supranational politics substantially differ from national politics. Therefore party members of regional or supranational branches often deviate from the national party branch. Since this study is not interested in party fragmentation between regional, national and supranational politics, these statements have been excluded from the analysis.

As outlined before, all events are matched into two ideological categories: one outlining support for nuclear energy, the other one rejecting the usage of nuclear energy. This applies for party rhetorics as well. In a first step I *counted* these pro- and anti-nuclear rhetorics per party and month.<sup>9</sup> In a second step, rhetorics were then summarized by party and months using the following formula:

$$Rhetorics_{it} = \log(\sum pro\ nuclear + 0.5) - \log(\sum anti\ nuclear + 0.5) \quad (1)$$

I subtracted the sum of "*anti nuclear*" rhetorics from the sum of "*pro nuclear*" rhetorics for each party per month – comparable to measurements of parties' left-right placement.<sup>10</sup> Thus, values greater zero indicate party rhetorics favoring nuclear energy, while values below zero indicate rhetorics against the usage of nuclear energy. Just subtracting pro- and anti-nuclear rhetorics results in a highly skewed measurement, with values on the extremes being heavily overrepresented. This might substantially infringe the validity of the upcoming analysis.

<sup>9</sup> *Ex ante* there is no reason to stick to a monthly measurement. One might as well think of a weekly or daily aggregation period. Yet, the smaller the time periods, the more parties will not talk at all about an issue. Thus, it is useful to find mid ranging time intervals which still assure to cover party rhetorics in a detailed fashion without artificially increasing the zeros of the measurement.

<sup>10</sup> This means that zeros can have two meanings: Either the party did not talk about nuclear energy at all, or the party is completely divided regarding the nuclear issue. The latter case only occurs 11 times out of 1098 possibilities (see histogram of rhetorics on page 32 in figure 6). Running the upcoming regression analysis excluding these 14 cases does not change the results substantially. The results are also similar once I run regressions with two separate rhetoric variables – a pro- and an anti-nuclear rhetorics variable. However, my proposed measurement eases interpretation of the regression results and was therefore preferred to the other two outlined options for the following analysis.

Therefore, I follow Lowe et al. (2011) and use a log transformation to control for skewness – as shown in equation (1).<sup>11</sup> This is a common technique for variables or models based on count data such as the party rhetorics used here.

Besides controlling for skewness, the interpretation of a measurement based on logged ratio is appealing, since this means that party position change is not defined by the *absolute difference* between the counts of pro- and anti-nuclear rhetorics but by their *ratio* (Lowe et al. 2011: 130-132). Thus, imagine being a voter and listening to party’s talk on nuclear energy in the media. Assume that party A gives 100 statements in favor of nuclear energy and 50 against it in January. In February party A would share again 100 statements in favor of nuclear energy but now 51 against it. This suggests to voters that party A’s position has not changed at all between the two months. However, once party rhetorics shift to 10 statements in favor of nuclear energy and 5 against it in January and then to 10 rhetorics in favor of nuclear energy and 6 against in February, voters are more likely to notice a change in party A’s rhetorical position. Thus, in the measurement outlined in equation 1 the marginal effect of a single rhetoric *decreases* with the amount of rhetorics already made publicly on the nuclear issue.

#### 4.2 Model specifications

In order to measure whether party rhetorics are in line with parties’ policy outputs, a measurement of such outputs is needed. Parties’ policy outputs are measured using parties’ policy outputs coded within the ResponsiveGov data. I used parties’ policy proposals, motions, administrative decrees and legislative acts to measure parties’ policy outputs. As outlined before, all countries included in the study had nuclear programs running. Therefore, the status quo represents a pro-nuclear policy. Therefore, it seems counterfactual to analyze whether parties attempted to extend the pro-nuclear road of their country by trying to bring policies to parliamentary floors which are even “more pro-nuclear”. Instead, the binary dependent variable *only* accounts for parties’ attempts to introduce “*anti-nuclear’ policies*”. Thus, it is ‘1’ for party month in which a party produced an anti-nuclear output and 0 otherwise.

A logistic regression will be calculated to estimate the congruence between party rhetorics and policy outputs. The underlying data are measured across 67 parties per month and therefore should be treated as pooled time-series-cross-

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<sup>11</sup>  $\log(0)$  is undefined. Therefore I chose to introduce ‘0.5’ into the equation. This assures that in case a party did not talk at all is not undefined in the measurement but represents the middle of the scale with zero.

section (tscs) data. To account for the temporal correlation in the data (autoregression), a lagged dependent variable (LDV) is usually used in standard ols regression models (Beck and Katz 1995). Besides criticism that such LDVs tend to dominate results and thereby might camouflage other relationships in the model (Achen 2000; Plümper, Troeger, and Manow 2005), they are insufficient to control for serial correlation in event count models and bernoulli processes (Brandt et al. 2000; Brandt and Sandler 2012; Beck and Epstein 2002). In addition to standard logistic regression techniques, I follow the suggestions by Stewart (2006) and also run logistic random effects models and country fixed effect models.<sup>12</sup>

The measures of the independent variables are straightforward. Green parties are measured by a dummy variable which takes on '1' in case the party belongs to the green party family and zero otherwise. The same is true for government parties, which is '1' once a party is in government and '0' otherwise. The hypotheses section introduced three hypotheses, two of them being interaction effects with party rhetorics. Thus, I constructed interaction effects with both – the government and the green party variable – to estimate whether such a mediating effect can be found in the data. Finally, since my main independent variable and the dependent variable might be affected by party size with larger parties having more access to the media and/or producing more policy outputs, all models control for party size measured as the seats a party currently holds in the national parliament. Since drafting policy implementation takes time, all independent variables have been lagged by one month.

## 5 RESULTS

We now turn our attention towards the results derived from these considerations. First, I describe how parties talk between elections. Second, the hypotheses regarding congruence between rhetorics and policy outputs will be tested using logistic regression models.

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<sup>12</sup> Dickey Fuller tests reveal that the dependent variable follow a non-stationary structure. Due to the incidental parameters problem party fixed effects models are not a suitable alternative. Using party fixed effects reduces the included sample in the analysis by 90% due to correlation with the main explanatory variables. The country fixed effects models already reduce the included observations by 50%.

### 5.1 *Validating the rhetorical position scale*

Table 1 presents parties' rhetorics after the Fukushima shock across party families. The upper part of table 1 reports the relative frequencies of pro-, neutral- and anti-nuclear rhetorics. The lower part of table 1 reports the means and standard deviations of the rhetorical position measurement as described in the last section. The fact that across all party families rhetorics about nuclear energy are either positive (+) or negative (-), but seldom neutral (o), attracts attention.<sup>13</sup> Hence, parties appear to use rhetorics to share cues on their positions. Furthermore, the most silent party families are parties with comparably narrow issue stances without an interest in environmental politics (ethnic regional; radical right; agrarian). This becomes even more crucial once we realize that there are almost as many observations of regional parties included in the data as observations of green parties. Since party families in table 1 are sorted by party family's mean rhetorical positions (mean), it becomes evident that as expected green parties are the most prominent and homogenous critics of nuclear energy, followed by the communist and social democratic parties. The latter present the most heterogeneous group (standard deviation). Thus along the lines of the arguments in the last section, there still appear to be large chasms across social democratic parties on the issue of nuclear energy. Finally, the christian democratic and conservative parties both largely underpinned their pro-nuclear ideology after the nuclear accident in Fukushima. Yet, the former are internally more divided on the matter which is especially so due to the position shift of the Unionsparteien (CDU/CSU) in Germany shortly after the Fukushima meltdown. In summary, parties' rhetorical positions in table 1 seem to reflect the aforementioned expectations that left party families are more critical about nuclear energy, while right party families largely stuck to their pro-nuclear positions.

However, looking into party families represents a time invariant view into party politics. Thus, it would be more interesting to see to what extent party rhetorics after the Fukushima accident reflect parties' manifesto positions of the elections prior to and after the Fukushima shock. Figure 1 plots the distributions of party rhetorics split by parties' manifesto positions before the Fukushima accident on the left hand side and their positions after the accident on the right hand side respectively. Therein, higher values on the y-axis outline a more pro nuclear manifesto position. Both graphs report a strong relationship between party manifesto and rhetorical positions. Regressing party manifesto positions on rhetorics

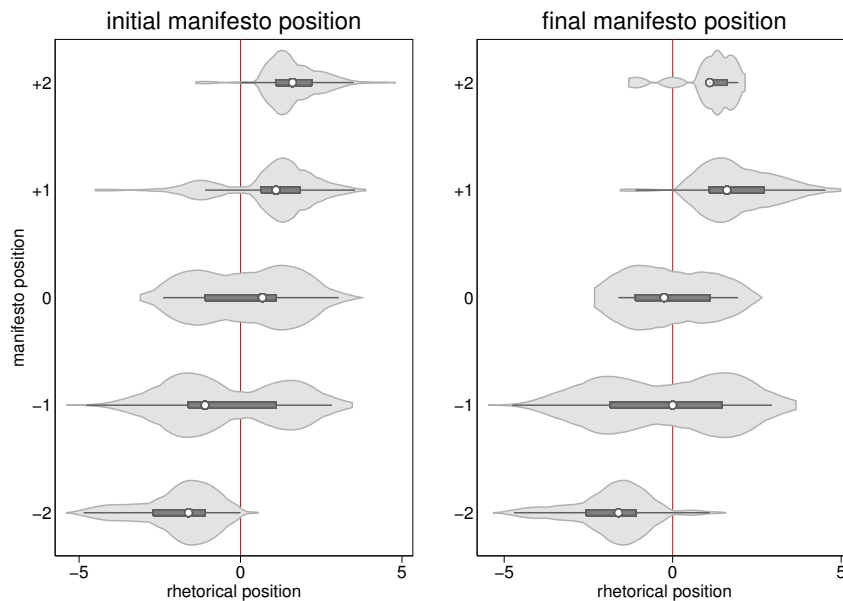
<sup>13</sup> The only party family not holding up to this trend is the regional family. Yet, the number of rhetorics for this family is fairly low with 10 rhetorics in total.



**Table 1:** Party families & rhetorics

	ecologist	communist	social democratic	ethnic- regional	liberal	christian democratic	radical right	agrarian	conservative
<b>rhetorics</b>									
+	5.4	12.3	30.0	80.0	39.6	26.8	69.0	89.8	84.0
0	19.4	14.5	24.1	10.0	11.1	21.7	27.6	4.5	12.9
-	75.2	73.2	45.9	10.0	49.3	51.4	3.4	5.7	3.1
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>N</i>	423	138	623	10	371	451	29	88	549
<b>rhetorical position</b>									
mean	-1.65	-1.24	0.1	0.93	0.93	1.14	1.31	1.6	1.81
standard deviation	1.05	1.37	1.91	0.93	1.33	1.38	0.97	0.56	0.84

Source: Author's own, party family categorization taken from comparative manifesto data.

**Figure 1:** Violinplot of rhetorical positions & manifesto positions

Source: Author's own.

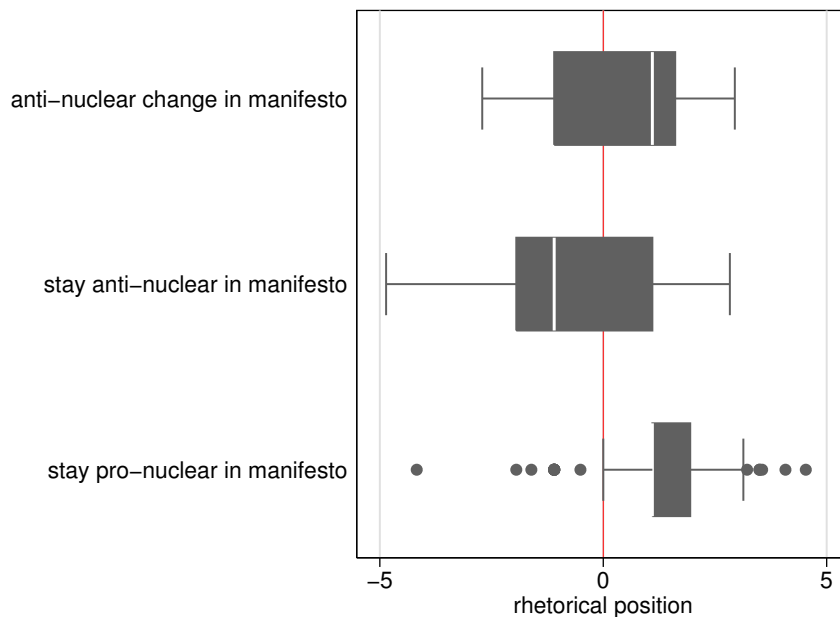
**Note:** Violinplots across parties' initial and final manifesto positions. '+2' indicating a 'very pro-nuclear' manifesto position and '-2' a 'very anti-nuclear' manifesto positions (detailed codebook descriptions can be found in the appendix section A.2 on page 31). Violinplots plot the estimated kernel density of rhetorical positions with box plots, marker is the median, box indicates interquartile range, spikes extending to the upper- and lower-adjacent values.

also returns strong positive coefficients. Therefore, on the surface party rhetorics strongly reflect party manifesto positions on the nuclear issue. Digging deeper into how parties talk, however, reveals that party rhetorics appear to be shifting across time, with distributions overlapping across party positions. Especially, parties with an initial pro-nuclear manifesto position partly talked anti-nuclear after the Fukushima shock. Furthermore, parties with vague manifesto positions also talk vaguely in their rhetorics with medians close to zero and distributions including almost pro- and anti-nuclear talk symmetrically. Finally, due to some parties changing their manifesto positions in the elections after the Fukushima shock, both pro-nuclear groups appear to be more cohesive when their rhetorics are compared to their final manifesto positions. Yet, again figure 1 does not directly show how party manifesto position changes might be reflected by party rhetorics beforehand.

Figure 2 reports the talk of parties which changed their nuclear manifesto positions from pro-nuclear to anti-nuclear compared to parties which stuck to their pro- or anti-nuclear position. Parties which stuck to their stance both reflect these positions in their rhetorics – even though some outliers are present

in both groups. In comparison, parties which changed their manifesto positions are subject to high variation in their rhetorics, with pro-nuclear rhetorics still dominating their talk. Yet, such changes are uncommon with only the German

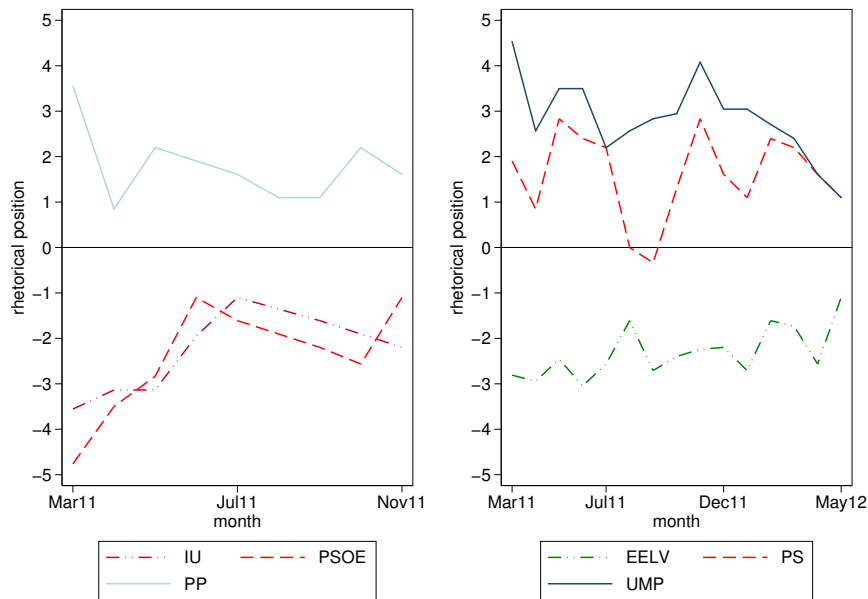
**Figure 2:** Boxplot of rhetorical positions & manifesto position change



Source: Author's own.

FDP, CDU/CSU, the Dutch CDA, and the Belgian PS undertaking such a u-turn in their manifesto positions. The German FDP and CDU/CSU both immediately after the Fukushima meltdown started to question their nuclear lifetime cycle extension law (Jahn and Korolczuk 2012), which is also reflected in their rhetorical positions leaning towards more anti-nuclear positions from the very beginning of the Fukushima juncture. After the Chernobyl accident, the Dutch CDA began to doubt the safe usage of nuclear energy, but revised this position again in their 2002, 2006 and 2010 manifestos calling for an extension of the Dutch nuclear program (Aarts and Arentsen N.d.: 11). Yet again, their 2012 manifesto outlines that in the long run the Netherlands will not need to rely upon the usage of nuclear energy, while their rhetorics after Fukushima largely reflect a pro-nuclear position.

Figure 3 gives a final look into the movement of party rhetorics across time. The plot at the left shows the Spanish parties and their rhetorics across time, the one at the right the French ones. In the Spanish party system there is a clear cut left-right divide on the nuclear issue after the Fukushima incident with the

**Figure 3:** Movement on the nuclear issue in Spain & France

Source: Author's own.

**Note:** The graph on the left hand only pictures line plots for the Partido Popular (PP), Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and Izquierda Unida (IU). The graph on the right hand only pictures line plots for the Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP), Parti socialiste (PS) and Europe Écologie - Les Verts (EELV). The remaining parties in the French and Spanish system have been omitted in the graph for the sake of clarity. Missing values omitted.

Partido Popular (PP) supporting the usage of nuclear energy and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and Izquierda Unida (IU) rejecting it. Yet, even though this clear divide continues, emphasis on the nuclear issue shrinks during campaign time starting in June 2011 and continuing until the national elections on 20th November 2011.

The same is true for France with presidential elections taking place in late April and early May 2012, but to a lesser extent. Especially the green party stays fairly constant in its position across time which again supports arguments of issue ownership theories. Interestingly the rhetorical position of the Parti socialiste (PS) appears to be in permanent motion, even flip-flopping its position once. Across time, the socialists send mixed policy messages to voters and their position on the nuclear issue appears to be blurred. During August 2011, Martine Aubry and François Hollande – both seeking to be nominated as presidential candidates of the PS – publicly debate their different standpoints on the nuclear future of France which is perfectly reflected by the PS's rhetorical position hitting the x-axis in figure 3. After an explosion at the Marcoule nuclear site in September, several candidates and members of the PS share their doubts on the safety of

nuclear energy. Ségolène Royal even declares that once elected she will close the nuclear reactor in Fessenheim, but already in October François Hollande states that the nuclear construction site in Flamanville needs to be finished. Again this short-lived unity of the PS is reflected in an anti-nuclear shift in the rhetorical measurement.

## 5.2 *Congruence between rhetorics & policy outputs*

The last section described how party rhetorics on the nuclear issue are shaped after the Fukushima shock. It became evident that party rhetorics are substantially reflecting parties' traditional issue appeals and positions on the nuclear issue. Yet, besides showing that parties largely share policy cues when talking, we still do not know whether their rhetorics are congruent to their policy outputs. To test whether this is the case I run logistic regression models with parties' rhetorical positions as the main independent and their policy outputs as the dependent variable.

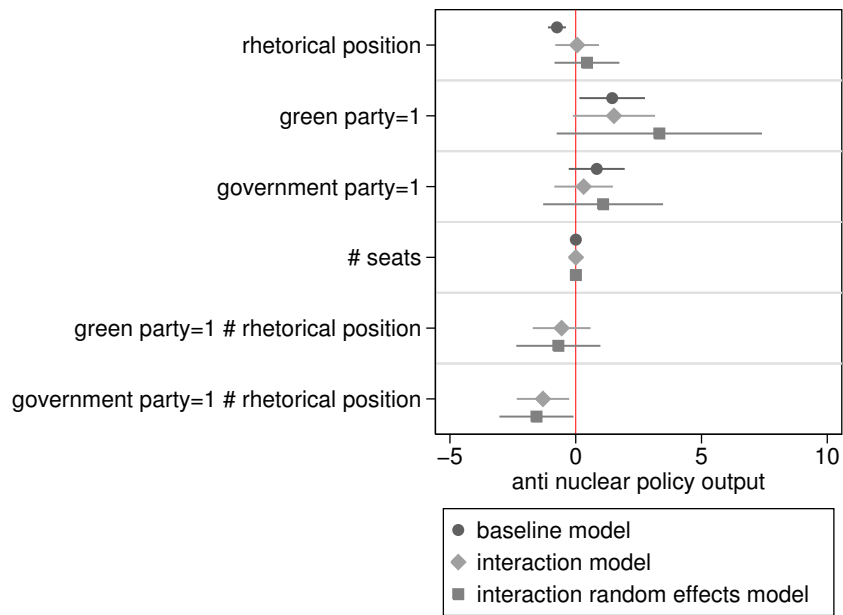
Figure 4 reports the coefficients and confidence intervals of three logistic regression models which are also reported in table 3 on page 33.<sup>14</sup> Model baseline includes parties' rhetorical positions, the green and governmental party dummy and party size measured by seats held in parliament. The point estimate of party rhetorics in the baseline model shows a negative coefficient and a small confidence interval which does not include the zero. Thus, there appears to be a highly significant negative effect of party rhetorics in the baseline model. This essentially means that the more anti-nuclear a party talks the higher the probability that the party presents an anti-nuclear policy output in its parliamentary chamber. Thus, *ceteris paribus* hypothesis one can be confirmed with the baseline model. Furthermore, being in government is not a significant predictor of parties' policy outputs.

Even though green parties significantly push for more anti-nuclear policies in the baseline model, the interaction term with party rhetorics is insignificant in both interaction models. The confidence intervals of both models stretch across zero and are also insignificant on conventional levels. Thus, there is no evidence that green parties are more likely to walk like they talk.

The effect of governmental parties in the baseline model is insignificant, yet government parties moderate the effect of party rhetorics in both interaction models. Admittedly, the confidence intervals in the random effect models reaches

<sup>14</sup> For the following analysis missing values (parties which did not talk in a given month) are included as zero values.

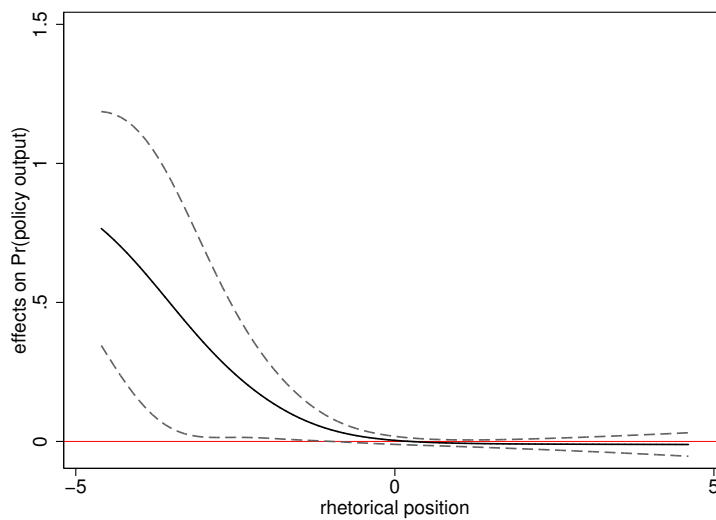
**Figure 4:** Logistic regression results across three models



Source: Author's own.

**Note:** Markers are coefficients of logistic regression results with horizontal spikes for confidence intervals. The models are also reported in table 3 models (3), (4) and (5).

**Figure 5:** Marginal effects plot of interaction between rhetorics & incumbency



Source: Author's own.

**Note:** Based on model 2 (logistic interaction) in figure 4 & table 3 on page 33, model (3). Average Marginal Effects of government party=1 with 95% confidence intervals as dashed lines.

out to zero, but does not include the zero. In both interaction models governments moderate the effect of party rhetorics significantly on the 5 % level.

Since the interpretation of interaction terms is not straightforward, I report the marginal effect of the interaction between party rhetorics and being incumbent in figure 5. Thus, parties in government which talk pro-nuclear are not likely to produce an anti-nuclear policy output. In contrast, the more anti-nuclear incumbent parties talk, the more likely they are to produce a congruent policy output. This discloses support for hypothesis three: Government parties appear to be more likely to push for policies which are congruent to their rhetorical statements.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to contribute to the ever more emerging debate on *whether* and *how* party rhetorics – such as politicians’ statements to the press, speeches and interviews – matter. Using data on party rhetorics after the meltdown at the Dai-ichi nuclear site across twelve countries drawn from the ResponsiveGov project, the investigation of descriptives has shown that rhetorical party positions firstly reflect upon party families’ traditional issue appeals and their manifesto positions. Yet, the descriptive section of the paper also revealed that the proposed party rhetorics measure deviates from parties’ *raison d’être*. Thereby the measurement of rhetorics provides scholars of party politics with the opportunity to fill the positional blackbox between elections.

Second, the pooled logistic regression analysis underpinned the theoretical assumption that parties refrain from saying one thing and doing another. Party rhetorics are *congruent* to parties’ policy outputs (e.g. bills, legislative acts and laws) across several models. Added to that, government parties’ policy outputs appear to be more likely to be congruent to their rhetorics than oppositional talk. This reinforces results of existing literature on the responsiveness of governmental policy agendas (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010; Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans 2009). It is also important to annotate that the paper does not seek to suggest a causal direction running from party rhetoric to policy outputs. It might as well be that parties talk like they walk and not walk like they talk. Yet, the causal direction is not important for the implication of the analysis. It should rather be read as a preceding step to more detailed analyses taking into account public opinion and public mobilization.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper has strongly profited from comments by Stuart Soroka, Christine Arnold and Sara Hobolt shared during the workshop “Voters, protest and policies: bridging public opinion, social movement outcomes and policy responsiveness research” held in Leicester in June 2014. Laura Morales, Maarja Lühiste and Luca Bernardi also gave helpful comments on previous presentations of the paper. I am deeply thankful for all these comments.

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A appendix

A.1 Re-coding actors' positions

All actor positions within the ResponsiveGov project are coded in relation to governments' initial policy positions. Government positions are coded on a pre-defined five point scale – ranging from 'very progressive' to 'very conservative'. Based on governments' manifestos, coalition agreements or policy documents prior to the Fukushima accident, whether they are favoring nuclear energy or whether they intend to phase-out nuclear energy at a certain point in time, they are then matched into the five point scale to assure comparisons between countries. Progressive positions thereby outline positions against nuclear energy and conservative positions outline positions in favor of nuclear energy.

Coders are then asked to place all actor positions during an event again on a five point scale, ranging from '(-2) an actor's position is radically more progressive' to '(2) an actor's position is radically more conservative' than the government's initial policy position – with '(0) being the same position as the government's initial position'. In the case of Fukushima, statements coded as progressive on the scale thereby are more against nuclear energy than the initial government position, while conservative statements picture more support for nuclear energy than the initial government position. Since this paper is interested in

**Table 2:** Rules for recodes of rhetorics

Initial government position	statements' original classification	position after recode
-2 (Radically more progressive)	-2	Anti-nuclear
	-1	Anti-nuclear
	0	Anti-nuclear
	1	Anti-nuclear
	2	Pro-nuclear
-1 (slightly more progressive)	-2	Anti-nuclear
	-1	Anti-nuclear
	0	Anti-nuclear
	1	Pro-nuclear
	2	Pro-nuclear
1 (Slightly more conservative)	-2	Anti-nuclear
	-1	Anti-nuclear
	0	Pro-nuclear
	1	Pro-nuclear
	2	Pro-nuclear
2 (Radically more conservative)	-2	Anti-nuclear
	-1	Pro-nuclear
	0	Pro-nuclear
	1	Pro-nuclear
	2	Pro-nuclear

Source: Author's own, based on Lühiste et al. (2014: 12-16).

party positions, the original coding scale does not allow a party based comparison *across*

countries due to varying initial government positions. Events outlining a more progressive position than the government might still be in favor of nuclear energy depending on the government's initial position in the country. Therefore, I recoded the scale according to the rules outlined in table 2 (see also: Lühiste et al. 2014: 12-16). For example in the case of Italy, the Berlusconi government's position was to re-enter nuclear energy and construct new nuclear plants – which was firstly coded as '(2) *very conservative*'. I then recoded any action by a politician which was classed between '-1' and '2' an activity supporting nuclear energy, while any action classified as '-2' into an activity rejecting the use of nuclear energy. By this procedure all policy positions are then coded as either supporting or rejecting nuclear energy.

#### A.2 Codebook for party positions:

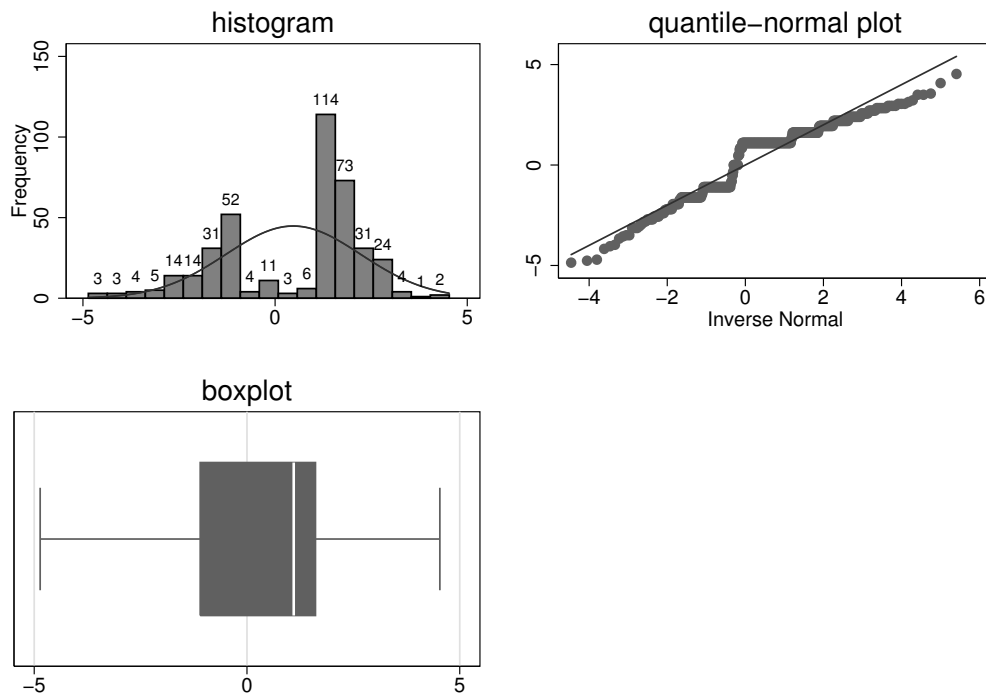
In the case of coding parties (pre-Fukushima) nuclear energy policy positions, the following categories applied:

- 2 = *Very progressive*: The party is completely against the use of nuclear energy. If there are no nuclear power plants but some political or public stakeholders want the party to build (or allow the building) of nuclear power station, then code '-2' only if the party is fundamentally against such plans. If the country has nuclear power station(s), code '-2' only if the party is committed to close ALL the nuclear power stations in the near future (within the next 5-10 years).
- 1 = *Progressive*: The party is against the use of nuclear energy but is not very radical in its views. If there are no nuclear power plants but some political or public stakeholders want the party to build (or allow the building) of nuclear power station, then code '-1' if the party is in principle against such plans but may be open for some talks and negotiations. If the country has nuclear power station(s), code '-1' only if the party indicates that it is committed to close some or all nuclear power stations (the plans do not have to be very clear and the planned closure can be in more than 10-years time).
- 0 = *No position / neutral / vague*: Try to avoid using this category. Use it only if the document used for coding the party position EXPLICITLY mentions that the party does NOT have a clear position on nuclear energy. See the notes below for coding party's policy position when NO references are made in ANY document to party's position on nuclear energy.
- 1 = *Conservative*: The party is in favour of the use of nuclear energy but is not very radical in its views. If there are no nuclear power plants but some political or public stakeholders want the party to build (or allow the building) of nuclear power station, then code '1' if the party is in principle in favour of such plans but may be open for some counter-arguments from parties and interest groups against such plans. If the country has nuclear power station(s), code '1' only if the party does NOT indicate that it wants to close some or all nuclear power stations BUT also does NOT plan to build any new nuclear power plants.
- 2 = *Very conservative*: The party is strongly in favour of the use of nuclear energy. If there are no nuclear power plants but some political or public stakeholders want the party to build (or allow the building) of nuclear power station, then code '2' if the party is the principal stakeholder advocating for the building of nuclear power plants and is not open for any discussions to halt these plans. If the country

has nuclear power station(s), code '2' only if the party does NOT indicate that it wants to close ANY of the nuclear power stations within the next 20 years, sees no alternative to nuclear energy, and plans to build or is building new nuclear power stations.

A.3 Further figures and tables

Figure 6: Diagnostics and descriptives of rhetorical position measurement



Source: Author's own.



Table 3: Logistic regression models

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	logistic	logistic	logistic	logistic	logistic	logistic
		re	baseline	interaction	interaction re	country fe
rhetorics	-0.803 <sup>***</sup> (0.172)	-0.620 <sup>*</sup> (0.304)	-0.746 <sup>***</sup> (0.182)	0.0576 (0.443)	0.447 (0.657)	0.483 (0.455)
green party			1.450 <sup>*</sup> (0.665)	1.520 (0.834)	3.324 (2.083)	2.582 <sup>*</sup> (1.046)
government party			0.836 (0.568)	0.314 (0.594)	1.088 (1.216)	1.356 (0.889)
# seats			0.001 (0.003)	0.00 (0.004)	0.01 (0.007)	0.00 (0.008)
rhetorics*green party				-0.561 (0.586)	-0.690 (0.853)	-0.185 (0.605)
rhetorics*government party				-1.303 <sup>*</sup> (0.532)	-1.560 <sup>*</sup> (0.752)	-1.298 <sup>*</sup> (0.584)
constant	-4.387 <sup>***</sup> (0.288)	-6.025 <sup>***</sup> (0.824)	-5.379 <sup>***</sup> (0.550)	-5.057 <sup>***</sup> (0.532)	-7.084 <sup>***</sup> (1.857)	-6.066 <sup>***</sup> (1.015)
N	1098	1098	1098	1098	1098	542

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Models (1), (2), (4) report standard pooled logistic regression results.

Models (3) and (5) report pooled logistic regression results with random effects.

Model (6) report pooled logistic regression results with country fixed effects which are not reported in the table.

Table 4: Parties included in the Fukushima juncture

country	abbreviation	party name	Inclusion criteria		
			5 & 5	gov	right censored
Belgium	CD&V	Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams	x		
	cdH	Centre démocrate humaniste	x		
	Ecolo	Écologistes Confédérés pour l'Organisation de Luttes Originales	x		
	MR	Mouvement Réformateur	x		
	N-VA	Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie	x		
	PS	Parti Socialiste	x		
	SP.A	Socialistische Partij Anders	x		
	VB	Vlaams Belang	x		
	VLD Open	Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten	x		
	Canada	BQ	Bloc Québécois	x	
CP		Conservative Party	x		
LP		Liberal Party	x		
NDP		New Democratic Party	x		
KD		Kristillisdemokraatit		x	
Finland	KESK	Suomen Keskusta	x		
	KOK	Kansallinen Kokoomus	x		
	Ps	Perussuomalaiset			19.1% & 39 seats in 2011
	SDP	Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue	x		
	SFP	Suomen Ruotsalainen Kansanpuolue		x	
	VAS	Vasemmistoliitto	x		
	VIHR	Vihreä Liitto	x		
	EELV	Europe Écologie-Les Verts	x		
	FN	Front National			system relevance
	MoDem	Mouvement démocrate	x		
France	NC	Nouveau centre		x	
	PCF	Parti communiste français / Front de gauche	x		
	PS	Parti Socialiste	x		

Continued on next page

Table 4 – Continued

country	abbreviation	party name	Inclusion criteria		
			5 & 5	gov supporter	right censored
Germany	UMP	Union pour un mouvement populaire	x		
	CDU/CSU	Christlich Demokratische Union/ Christlich-Soziale Union	x		
	FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei	x		
	Grüne	Die Grünen	x		
	Linke	Die Linke	x		
	SDP	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	x		
	LN	Lega Nord	x		
	PD	Partito Democratico	x		
Italy	PDL	Il Popolo della Libertà	x		
	UdC	Unione di Centro	x		
	CDA	Christen Democratisch Appèl	x		
	D'66	Democraten 66	x		
Netherlands	GL	GroenLinks	x		
	PvDA	Partij van de Arbeid	x		
	PVV	Partij voor de Vrijheid	x		
	SP	Socialistische Partij	x		
	VVD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	x		
	CiU	Convergència i Unió	x		
	IU	Izquierda Unida	x		
	PP	Partido Popular	x		
	PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	x		
	Sweden	C	Centerpartiet	x	
FP		Folkpartiet liberalerna	x		
Kd		Kristdemokraterna	x		
MP		Miljöpartiet de Gröna	x		
MSP		Moderata samlingspartiet	x		
SAP		Socialdemokraterna	x		
SD		Sverigedemokraterna	x		5.7% & 20 seats in 2011
V		Vänsterpartiet	x		

Continued on next page

Table 4 – Continued

country	abbreviation	party name	Inclusion criteria			
			5 & 5	gov	gov supporter	right censored
Switzerland	BDP	Bürgerlich-Demokratische Partei Schweiz		x		
	CVP	Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei	x			
	FDP	Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei der Schweiz	x			
	GPS	Grüne Partei der Schweiz	x			
	SVP	Schweizerische Volkspartei	x			
	SPS	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz	x			
United Kingdom	CON	Conservative and Unionist Party	x			
	LAB	Labour Party	x			
	LIB	Liberal Democrats	x			
United States	DEM	Democratic Party	x			
	REP	Republican Party	x			