

Credit Claiming in the European Union

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Abstract

Incumbents in multilevel systems are assumed to exploit uncertainty of responsibility by claiming credit and shifting blame, yet little is known about when and how they engage in these rhetorical strategies. This article draws on the example of Europe's multilevel system of governance to argue that electoral incentives determine governments' presentation of the EU in their domestic public spheres. I use an original dataset of over 6,000 classified statements by heads of government presenting the outcomes of EU Summits to their national media between 2005 and 2018, and find that governments both claim credit for themselves, and share credit with other levels of government. Governments are more likely to claim credit when domestic Euroscepticism is high, and for issues that are salient to domestic audiences. Findings challenge the conventional view that the EU receives little recognition from politicians in domestic public spheres, and that governments frequently shift blame onto the EU. Rather, the EU is credited for policy issues citizens care less about, whereas governments claim credit for issues that are electorally salient. Findings have implications for democratic accountability in multilevel systems of governance.

Keywords: credit claiming, European Union, multilevel governance, democratic accountability, text as data, international organizations

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1 Introduction

Multilevel systems are assumed to facilitate incumbents' attempts to claim credit and shift blame. The division of competencies across local, national, and supranational levels of government make it difficult for citizens to attribute responsibility correctly, and a large literature argues that politicians exploit this uncertainty through the strategic use of communication (see Hooghe and Marks 2003; Anderson 2006; Schmidt, 2006; Hood, 2010; Hobolt and Tilley, 2014). This behaviour is assumed to be pronounced in the EU, the polity most associated with processes of multilevel governance, where policy areas involve overlapping responsibilities of the national and the EU level. Overall, governments in the EU are presented as deeply opportunistic: they will frequently claim credit, rarely credit the EU directly, and frequently shift blame onto its supranational institutions to avoid responsibility for negative outcomes (see Moravcsik, 1994, Menon 2008, Rauh et al 2020; De Vries et al 2021).

Yet despite the conviction with which this view is held, empirical evidence on the extent of credit claiming and blame shifting in multilevel systems is surprisingly limited ¹. The contribution of this article is to focus on which level of government is *attributed responsibility* for positive or negative outcomes in the EU. This is important because there is good evidence that responsibility evaluations act as an important moderator of retrospective voting (Anderson, 2006). Democratic accountability in a multilevel setting therefore depends on citizens' ability to correctly attribute responsibility across multiple levels of government.

To what extent, and under what conditions, do governments in Europe's multilevel system claim credit for the work of the EU, and shift blame onto the EU to avoid responsibility themselves? In this article, I argue that variations in electoral incentives determine governments' presentation of the EU in their domestic public spheres. My argument is as follows: high levels of domestic Euroscepticism create a *rhetorical dilemma* for national governments. On the one hand, it incentivizes them to signal responsiveness to a more sceptical electorate;

¹A small but growing literature has explored scapegoating in the EU (see Heinkelmann-Wild et al 2020, 2023; Kriegmair et al 2022, Ladi and Tsagkroni 2019). This article extends the study of strategic communication in the EU to credit claiming and sharing.

on the other, blame shifting and explicit criticism of the EU is costly: it antagonizes voters that are supportive of integration, damages their reputation with international partners, and is a sign of negotiation failure on the European stage. I argue that national governments solve this rhetorical dilemma through the use of *credit claiming* – showing what they have achieved for their country without articulating clear positions on the EU either way. As citizens reward governments for ‘bringing home the bacon’ for issues they care about, governments are also more likely to claim credit for issues that matter most to their electorate.

I test these claims with an original dataset: heads of governments’ presentation of European Council (EUCO) summits back to domestic audiences. After each EUCO summit, all twenty-seven EU member states collectively sign off on the EUCO’s Conclusions, but then present them to their own national media, in their own language, and in their own way. Each statement in these speeches is classified for credit and blame by human hand coders. The result: a dataset of over 6,000 statements (paragraphs) from national incumbents’ presentation of EU summits between 2005 and 2018 classified for credit and blame. This original and targeted dataset allows me to conduct ‘within-case’ comparisons, in the sense that all national incumbents are presenting the same stimulus.

The findings demonstrate that governments respond to Euroscepticism at home by increasing the use of credit claiming in their communication, rather than criticizing and blaming the EU. They also show that national governments *do* frequently share credit with the EU, but do so for policy issues of lower public salience. For issues that are electorally salient to their domestic voters, governments are more likely to claim credit.

The article makes two central contributions to the literature on multilevel governance and democratic accountability. First, it challenges the view of national governments in the EU as opportunistic blame shifters. Brussels-bashing is in fact a costly rhetorical strategy, and governments are more likely to respond to domestic Euroscepticism by claiming credit rather than shifting blame. This contribution is particularly pertinent, given existing literature’s focus on blame shifting as the key rhetorical strategy available to opportunistic governments

(Heinkelmann-Wild et al 2020, 2023; Heinkelmann-Wild and Zangl 2020, Kriegmair et al 2022, Ladi and Tsagkroni 2019). Second, it shows that despite not fitting this stereotypical image, governments *do* use communication to shape attributions of responsibility to their advantage. Governments in the EU may not be blame shifters, but they are strategic in their communication and reluctant to share credit with the EU for issues their citizens care most about, even when the EU has clear competence in this area. I conclude that standard notions of electoral accountability based on performance voting are not just threatened by the complexity of multilevel systems of governance, but by the strategic communication of politicians within that institutional setup.

2 Credit and Blame in Multilevel Systems

Credit claiming is one of the key activities incumbents engage in to increase their likelihood of reelection (see Mayhew, 1974). By generating the belief that they are personally responsible for a decision or policy deemed desirable, incumbents increase their standing amongst voters (Lipinski, 2001). A large literature on economic voting shows that governments are judged on their performance in office, and that governments therefore have high incentives to claim responsibility for positive developments in the economy (Green and Jennings 2017). While the effectiveness of credit claiming depends crucially on whether voters deem the message credible and legitimate (Dolan and Kropf, 2004; Grimmer et al., 2014), credit claiming is widely used by elected officials across political systems and cultures (Samuels, 2002; Cruz and Schneider, 2017; Bonoli and Shinkawa, 2006).

Multilevel systems of governance are assumed to facilitate these attempts to appropriate credit. The division of competencies across local, national, and supranational levels introduce information costs that make it harder for citizens to allocate responsibility and therefore to reward or punish incumbents on the basis of past performance (Cutler 2004). Because voters' attribution of responsibility impacts their decision at the ballot box, national governments

will seek to influence these attributions through the use of strategic communication. As Anderson (2006, p. 450) notes: ‘multilevel institutions can encourage governments to engage in blame shifting and credit taking for economic conditions, as well as more more political outcomes’ .

While this view is widely held amongst political scientists, actual empirical evidence on the extent of credit claiming in multilevel systems is surprisingly limited. Scholars have shown how multilevel systems weaken economic voting, but do not directly measure nor evaluate the impact of strategic communication by politicians (Anderson 2006, Anderson et al. 2017). In the context of the United States’ multilevel federal system, a vast literature explores credit claiming by state legislators, but equates the concept to the appropriations of federal funds, rather than taking credit for policy outcomes more generally (see Mayhew 1974, Grimmer 2013, Grimmer et al. 2014, Levitt and Snyder 1997). In the context of Europe’s multilevel system of governance, a small but growing literature has explored blame shifting in the EU. Hobolt and Tilley (2014) empirically assess strategic communication by governments in the UK, Germany, and Ireland, and find that blame shifting is less prevalent than previously thought. Scholars have used EU statements in the media to explore the blame avoidance effects of delegation, the threat of non-compliance as a blame avoidance strategy, and how institutional responsibility for policymaking conditions the extent to which governments scapegoat the EU (Heinkelmann-Wild and Zangl 2020, Heinkelmann-Wild et al 2023; Kriegmair et al 2022). Other scholars have used parliamentary debates to explore the Europeanization of domestic blame games (Ladi and Tsagkroni 2019, Heinkelmann-Wild et al 2020).

These studies have made important contributions to our understanding of strategic communication in Europe’s multilevel system. They also share a number of characteristics. As their titles suggest, they frame their analysis of strategic communication in the EU around blame rather than credit. They also focus on highly politicized moments, such as the debt crisis (Hobolt and Tilley 2014, Ladi and Tsagarakoni 2019, Heinkelmann-Wild et al 2023),

the border and asylum crisis (Heinkelmann-Wild et al 2023, Heinkelmann-Wild et al 2020, Heinkelmann-Wild and Zangl 2020), and EU budget negotiations (Kriegmair et al 2022).

In this article, I provide an alternative approach to identify credit and blame in Europe’s multilevel system of governance: heads of governments’ presentation of EU summits to their domestic audiences. I focus on the EU as it is the polity most associated with the processes and institutional results of multilevel governance (Anderson 2006). I focus in particular on European Council (EUCO) summits. Several times a year, heads of government of all twenty-seven member states meet to set the EU’s political direction and priorities. These summits receive considerable media coverage, reflecting the institution’s huge agenda setting power (Alexandrova et al., 2014; Schneider, 2018; Puetter, 2012). While the Council publishes its own conclusions after each summit, the role of presenting them to European citizens falls to heads of governments who report back to national media on what has been achieved. This provides significant leeway to tailor their presentation to domestic audiences. These presentations of EU summits outcomes allow us to investigate which governments in the EU claim credit for outcomes decided and agreed on collectively at another level of government.

Through this approach, the article contributes beyond existing work in five major ways. First, it extends the focus on strategic communication in multilevel systems beyond blame-shifting to credit claiming, another crucial way governments can use multilevel systems to their advantage. Second, focusing on how different governments present the exact same stimulus (EUCO conclusions) maximizes comparability and provides an ideal way ‘to analyze ‘what national politicians say in a similar situation in response to similar events’ (Hobolt and Tilley 2014, p.108). Third, as my investigation period covers Council summits from 2005 to 2018 it is not limited to highly politicized moments like the economic crash, migration crisis, or EU budget negotiations, but also covers strategic communication in more ‘normal’ times. Fourth, this approach moves the study of credit and blame in the EU into ‘larger-n’ territory, with thousands of coded statements rather than a few hundred ². Fifth, the

²Of the work cited, the article with the largest sample of coded statements is Heinkelmann-Wild and Zangl (2020) who code 480 ‘Blame Attributions’

sample covers more member states, including previously ignored countries from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. In the following section, I develop a theoretical argument for explaining when and why national governments engage in credit claiming in Europe's multilevel system of governance. The argument also makes the case for why blame shifting - defined here as explicit attribution of responsibility for negative outcomes to EU institutions and/or other member states - might not be as prevalent as usually assumed.

3 Credit Claiming in the European Union

To what extent, and under what conditions, do national governments claim credit for the work of the EU, and shift blame onto the EU to avoid responsibility themselves? In this theoretical section, I present my argument. It goes as follows: (1) high levels of domestic Euroscepticism incentivise governments to signal responsiveness in their rhetoric to more sceptical domestic audiences. (2) However, blame shifting and explicit criticism of the EU is costly: it antagonizes voters that are supportive of integration, damages relationships with international partners, and is a sign of negotiation failure on the European stage. (3) This need to signal responsiveness to more sceptical domestic audiences, but reluctance to explicitly criticize and blame the EU creates a *rhetorical dilemma* for national governments. (4) Governments solve this rhetorical dilemma through the use of *credit claiming* – showing what they have achieved for their country without articulating clear positions on the EU either way. (5) As citizens reward governments for ‘bringing home the bacon’ for issues they care about, governments are also more likely to claim credit for issues that matter most to their electorate. Importantly this suggests that governments have incentives to respond to domestic Euroscepticism by claiming credit rather than shifting blame: ‘look what I have achieved for us’, not ‘look at what the EU is doing to us’.

3.1 Euroscepticism and Government Responsiveness in the EU

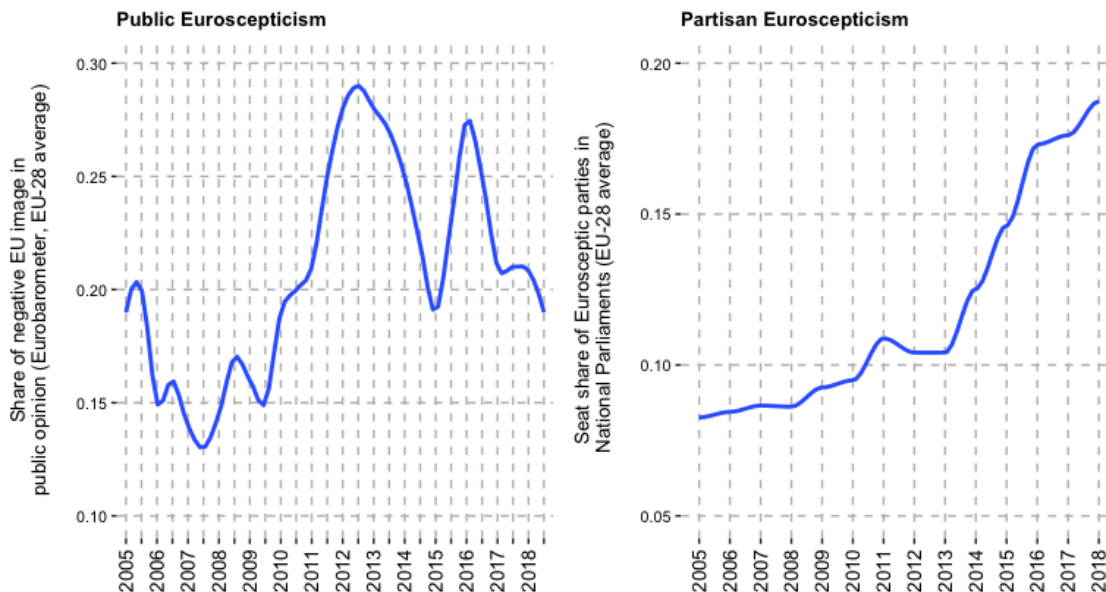
If European integration cooperation was once characterised by a ‘permissive consensus’, today it is characterised by a politicization that constrains elites on the European stage. Citizens now use politically meaningful channels like elections to express their preferences on the EU, often rewarding parties that share their more sceptical views (Hooghe and Marks, 2009; Hobolt and Spoon, 2012). Figure 1 showcases the increase in public and partisan Euroscepticism during a period of successive crises, plotting both the percentages of those attributing a negative image to the EU in the biannual Eurobarometer surveys, as well as the seat share of Eurosceptic parties in parliament³.

This increase in Euroscepticism is changing the behaviour of governments on the European stage. Scholars have shown how national governments in the EU signal responsiveness to more sceptical domestic audiences through their voting behaviour (Hagemann et al., 2017), their position-taking in negotiations (Schneider, 2018; Schneider and Slantchev, 2018; Wratil, 2018), and in their bargaining rhetoric (Wratil et al. 2022; Hobolt and Wratil 2020). An emerging literature also shows how Euroscepticism impacts the rhetoric of national leaders, with the conclusion that it affects the sentiment and complexity executives attach to references to the EU in their public communication (Rauh et al., 2020; Traber et al., 2019).

Instinctively, one might also think that governments would respond to more sceptical domestic audiences by attributing more negative outcomes to the EU in their communication. After all, not only does this rhetorical strategy signal congruence with an increasingly sceptical electorate, it could also offer a useful scapegoat to avoid responsibility for negative outcomes. However, I argue instead that far from being a costless rhetorical strategy, scapegoating the EU can in fact impose significant costs on national governments operating in complex multilevel systems of governance.

³The Eurobarometer question asks whether ‘the EU conjures up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative, or very negative image?’. The seat share figure uses the Chapel Hill Expert Survey to identify Eurosceptic parties as those scoring under 3.5 on the EU position question. The seat share of these parties is then calculated with data from ParlGov (Döring et al. 2022)

Figure 1: The increase in public and partisan Euroscepticism



3.2 The Costs of Shifting Blame

While blame shifting towards the EU is often presented as a costless rhetorical strategy (Menon, 2008; Hood, 2010), I argue instead that it imposes a series of costs that make it a risky choice for national governments. First, and most obviously, it can damage their reputation and credibility with other member states. In repeated games, a scenario that fits the EU and its multiple ongoing negotiations, players have to take into account the impact of their current action on the future actions of other players (Putnam, 1988; Barrett, 1992). Governments in the EU are thus incentivised to build and maintain their reputation with other member states: scholars have for example shown how reluctant governments are to table opposition votes in the Council (Hagemann et al., 2017). As criticism of collective decisions may be costly to their reputation – and thus their ability to achieve their goals in future negotiations – member states have an incentive to hold their tongue even when communicating outcomes they deem unsatisfactory. This is particularly the case at EU summits, high profile events where the concentration of media from across the continent means member states and supranational institutions are more likely to be made aware of how member

states communicate summit conclusions to their own domestic audiences (Alexandrova et al., 2012).

One could argue that public communication is unimportant to a country’s reputation: what really matters is how they behave in the negotiation room when cameras and microphones are switched off. Whilst I do not deny that what happens behind closed doors is crucial, I argue that public communication also matters for reputation. First, because it effects behaviour in the negotiating room. A large literature argues that governments can rhetorically entrap themselves and be forced to pursue certain policies because of public positions that become impossible to reverse (Elster 2017; Schimelfennig 2001). Another reason is because the EU is susceptible to contagion effects: the political climate surrounding European integration in one member state and reverberate in others (Malet 2022; Walter 2021; Martini and Walter 2023). Member states who fuel the flames of Euroscepticism by blaming Brussels are therefore unlikely to be viewed fondly by other governments also concerned about their own ‘constraining disensus’ at home (Hooghe and Marks 2009).

On top of damaging a government’s international reputation, EU scapegoating could antagonize as many domestic audiences as it pleases. In shifting blame towards Brussels’ supranational institutions, national incumbents signal congruence with their country’s growing sceptical constituency but also alienate the substantial chunk of their electorate that is supportive of European integration. Public opinion data shows that while skepticism towards the EU has grown (see Figure 1), it does not vastly outweigh pro-EU public opinion. A more accurate description is one of *polarization*. This is important because research in other multilevel systems shows that state senators representing divided constituencies tend to avoid clear position taking because it offers limited electoral returns (Grimmer, 2013a, 2013b; Grimmer et al., 2012). For mainstream parties on the right and the left, European integration constitutes a wedge issue that cuts across the dimension of political conflict where they are dominant, and scholars have shown that these mainstream parties therefore aim to avoid taking clear positions on the issue (Hobolt and De Vries, 2020). Blame shifting

towards the EU, as a clear form of Eurosceptic position taking, is thus unlikely to offer high electoral returns for governments with domestic audiences that are divided on the EU issue.⁴

Third, blame shifting may act as a signal of incompetence on the international stage. A growing literature shows how voters care about competence in international negotiations, reward governments who demonstrate it, and punish those who do not, for example those that voice threats then back down or display inconsistency between their words and their actions (Tomz 2007, Smith 1998, Schneider 2018). In the context of the Council, Schneider hypothesises that 'achieving no deal would *surely be a signal of incompetence*' (2013, p.487, emphasis my own). My argument here builds on that insight: shifting blame toward the EU is a tacit admission of negotiation failure. It suggests the national incumbent did not achieve what they set out to, and whilst it might be the best option when negotiations fail, it seems reasonable to assume that incumbents prefer situations in which they can claim victory, rather than one in which they have to shift blame for defeat. Finally, blame shifting is also difficult to do credibly, given national governments' position at the heart of the EU through their seat in the Council, and because the EU lack a clearly identifiable government to point the finger at (Hobolt and Tilley, 2014).

To be clear, this isn't to say that the EU doesn't receive criticism in domestic public spheres, nor that national governments will never criticize or blame its institutions. Opposition politicians have stronger incentives to criticize the EU (Heinkelmann-Wild et al., 2020), and national incumbents' domestic audiences may be sufficiently negatively aligned towards European integration to make blame shifting their optimal rhetorical strategy. Yet it does show that far from being a costless rhetorical strategy, 'Brussels-bashing' is unlikely to offer high electoral returns even for governments facing high levels of contestation over European integration at home.

⁴Note that blame shifting would theoretically offer high electoral returns in contexts where a large majority of the electorate is negatively disposed toward the EU. In practice though, this is materializes very rarely (if at all) in EU member states (see Figure 1) and I therefore focus on cases where electorates are divided on the EU issue, a much more common state of affairs.

3.3 Credit Claiming as the Solution to Governments’ Rhetorical Dilemma

National governments in Europe’s multilevel system of governance therefore face a *rhetorical dilemma*. On the one hand, increased Euroscepticism and its mobilization by Eurosceptic parties incentivizes them to signal responsiveness in their rhetoric. On the other, explicitly criticising the EU and other member states comes with high costs. I argue that national governments solve this dilemma by focusing on *credit claiming* in their communication: showing what they have achieved for their country on the European stage, without articulating clear positions on EU integration either way.

Credit claiming is particularly relevant in the context of the EU, because research in other multilevel systems shows how this communication strategy is favoured by representatives of polarized constituencies, for whom articulating clear positions is risky (Grimmer et al., 2012; Grimmer, 2013a, 2013b). As Figure 1 has shown, polarization is an accurate description of views on international cooperation, with both an electorate and a party system that is often bitterly divided on the issue. Research on governments’ rhetorical responses to this shift has largely focused on position taking, with the conclusion that national incumbents take more sceptical positions on integration as their electorate becomes more divided over the issue (Rauh et al., 2020). Yet this research ignores a strategy available to governments who want to present themselves as effective representatives in the EU without articulating a clear pro or anti EU positions: credit claiming.

It is also important to point out that sharing credit with the EU is not a pointless rhetorical strategy for national governments. In doing so, they signal congruence with pro-European domestic audiences, and maintain trust with the EU and other international partners, many of whom will be keeping an eye on how they communicate. Table 1 summarises the optimal rhetorical strategies for incumbents facing high or low levels of domestic Euroscepticism. National incumbents facing low levels of Euroscepticism *share credit* with the EU and other member states. National incumbents facing high levels of domestic Euroscepticism *claim*

Table 1: Governments' optimal rhetorical strategies

<i>Domestic Euroscepticism</i>	Low Euroscepticism	High Euroscepticism
<i>Attributional Strategy</i>	Credit Sharing	Credit Claiming
<i>Strategy Description</i>	Credit the EU and other member states for positive outcomes	Credit themselves or their government for outcomes that benefit their member state

credit themselves without sharing credit with other international partners, but also without explicitly blaming or criticising the EU and its institutions. Of course, national incumbents are not limited to one strategy: those facing low domestic Euroscepticism will also look to claim credit, and leaders facing high levels of domestic Euroscepticism will also engage in credit sharing. Yet the relative electoral returns of these strategies predicts that the balance in leaders' rhetoric will differ depending on the levels of Euroscepticism in their domestic public spheres. My first hypotheses therefore read as follows:

Hypothesis H1a: Governments are more likely to respond to domestic Euroscepticism by increasing their use of credit claiming strategies, than by criticizing or blaming the EU.

Hypothesis H1b: Governments are more likely to claim credit at EU summits if they face high levels of domestic Euroscepticism, than if they face low levels of domestic Euroscepticism.

Other work on political competition argues that parties compete by emphasizing certain issue dimensions (Petrocik, 1996; Riker, 1996). Some issues matter more to voters than others, and governments are rewarded for delivering on those that matter most (Soroka and Wlezien, 2010). The electoral return of credit claiming therefore depends on the salience of the issues for which governments claim credit. Of course, for national governments to frame the outcomes of international summits in a way that emphasizes what their citizens care most about, the agenda of these summits needs to be diverse. Analyses of the EUCO

agenda from 1975 - 2014 show that while it has traditionally been dominated by Foreign Affairs and Macroeconomics, it has also become more diverse over time, and increasingly includes issues that are salient to the public (Alexandrova et al., 2014). The diversity of the competencies delegated to the EU, combined with the salience of the issues discussed therefore provides the preconditions for governments to tailor their presentation according to citizens' priorities, not simply according to their views on European integration.

The effectiveness of credit claiming also depends on plausibility (Grimmer et al., 2014; Dolan and Kropf, 2004). Experiments from communication research show that over claiming can damage credibility (Rossiter, 1997) and survey evidence shows that citizens are capable of making sound judgments about responsibility in the EU (Wilson and Hobolt, 2015; Hobolt and Tilley, 2014). A national incumbent that presents the outcome of an EU summit by taking credit for every single positive outcome runs the risk of damaging the plausibility of their credit claiming. Governments therefore make strategic decisions about the issues for which to claim credit. How is this decision made? I argue that this choice is based on the salience of issues to their domestic electorates. To maximize the credibility and impact of their credit claiming, governments 'save' their use of credit claiming strategies for the issues their citizens care most about. For issues of high public salience, governments are more likely to credit claim; for issues that matter little to their citizens, governments are happy to credit the EU as a whole.

Three points merit further clarification. First, I am not arguing that the EU will exclusively be credited for very minor issues. Indeed, the European Council, as an agenda setting institution, by its nature deals with important issues that to a certain degree matter to citizens. Yet even within these 'big' issues are differences in salience. The central point here is not that governments never feel the need to share credit with the EU for salient issues, but that governments are likely to feel particularly pressured to show that they have 'brought home the bacon' for the issues that matter *most* to domestic audiences.

Second, whilst I argue that issue salience is likely to matter for credit claiming by both

Eurosceptic and pro-EU governments, I am not arguing that these two types of governments will be similar in *how* they claim credit. In particular, we would expect that credit claiming is made by Eurosceptic governments when they have blocked a decision, while credit claiming strategies are made by Europhile governments when they have pushed integration forward or placed their national priorities at the top of the European agenda. In the Appendix, I consider this perspective and shows that Eurosceptic governments are indeed more likely to claim credit for blocking decisions (see Table A10).

Third, I am not arguing that these rhetorical strategies are unconnected to any objective merit a government might have in obtaining particular outcomes at summits. Scholars have shown how governments in the EU are more successful in getting their way for issues that matter most to their electorates (Wratisl 2019). This is a feature of multilevel systems where logrolling is present and incumbents can 'exchange their partial control over issues that interest them little for greater control of those that interest them more' (Coleman 1966, 615). It is entirely possible - indeed likely - that governments claim credit for issues where they 'deserve' more credit, in the sense that they have actually devoted substantial negotiation efforts to that particular issue. The aim of this article is not to evaluate whether credit claiming by governments in the EU is warranted, but to explain when it happens and for which issues. In the same way that electoral incentives impel governments to focus their negotiations on the issues that matter to domestic electorates, they also incentivise communication strategies that claim credit for these salient issues. My second hypotheses therefore read as follows:

Hypothesis H2a: Governments at EU summits are more likely to claim credit for policy issues that are salient to their domestic electorate.

Hypothesis H2b: Governments at EU summits are more likely to share credit with the EU for policy issues that are of low salience to their domestic electorate.

4 Research design

4.1 An original dataset

To evaluate these hypotheses, I draw on an original dataset of publicly available speeches from heads of government presenting the outcome EU Council summits to their national media. Speeches are scraped from dedicated websites that store information on the press conferences and statements of national leaders across seven member states: Germany, France, the UK, Spain, Greece, Ireland, and Denmark. The investigation period covers EU summits from 2005 to 2018.⁵

The selection of these seven countries is driven by archival barriers and data availability considerations. Whilst all governments in the EU today have some sort of website on government communication, many websites simply do not capture speeches by heads of government in the aftermath of EU summits - I therefore only include sites that host speeches that are explicitly titled around these specific summits⁶. Additionally, to ensure the the argument is tested over a sufficient time frame, with variation regarding the key independent variables, I consider countries with at least ten years of records of speeches from EU Council summits going back from the 31st December 2018, the end of the investigation period. Through this selection process, I end up with the seven member states described above.

The countries in this sample cover important structural divisions within the EU: they are located in both the northern and the southern parts of Europe; include powerful member states and smaller ones; and include Eurozone and non-Eurozone countries. The sample covers both the economic and migration crises that have placed the European Union – and EUCO Summits in particular – firmly in the public spotlight (van Middelaar, 2013) but

⁵As speeches are frequently archived by these sites, I use the Wayback Machine to travel back to the website prior to archiving (see Rauh et al., 2020). This way I was able to retrieve most speeches, although a number of missing speeches is unavoidable. I also drop speeches from interim prime ministers and independents because they are less likely to respond to electoral incentives, and drop speeches from the British PM after the referendum of June 2016 given the uniqueness of member state exit. Table A1 and Figure A1 present details of the speeches and Section 6 in the Appendix analyses missing data patterns.

⁶The focus on EU summits is important to the research design as a way of maximizing comparability, as heads of government are presenting the exact same set of EUCO conclusions

importantly, they also include periods of lower EU politicization, allowing us to compare the communication of heads of government in different contexts. In the process of parsing text data from dedicated websites, I maintain the same paragraph structure as raw HTML documents. Speech subdivision into short paragraphs often proves beneficial in quantitative text analysis (Ferrara, 2019). Paragraphs are coherent units of text and, in this case, I judge them preferable to the use of single sentences, which might miss out relevant information; and to the use of full speeches, that encompass multiple policy issues and would therefore complicate testing hypotheses H2a and H2b. Altogether, the sample analysed in the main article includes 414 speeches from seven member states, divided into 6,012 individual paragraphs or ‘statements’.

Whilst the countries identified provide overall a rather satisfying representative sample of the EU’s member states, there is one clear omission: the lack of a government from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). This omission is not trivial, as these newer member states have become central to debates about Euroscepticism, democratic backsliding, and the future of the EU (see e.g. Kelemen 2020; Levitsky and Way 2010; Anna Vachudova 2020). Unfortunately, many of these countries do not publish government speeches after EU summits, but in two cases - Slovakia and Hungary - government websites have begun doing so in recent years (since 2011). Given the importance of CEE governments, I therefore collect available data for these cases, but do not include them in the main analysis, given the significantly shorter length of the investigation period and the smaller sample⁷. Instead, I include a section in the Appendix with robustness tests incorporating more recent data from these CEE countries, and a detailed qualitative analysis of these two cases. Concerns around generalisability are also addressed in more detail in the discussion section of the article.

The key idea behind this research design is that by controlling for the substance of the message, the dataset allows me to conduct a genuine comparative study of presentational *style* (Grimmer, 2013). The EUCO Conclusions are agreed by all member states and a

⁷I collect an additional 61 speeches, divided into 553 additional statements from Slovakia and Hungary

written record of what was discussed and agreed is made publicly available (Alexandrova et al. 2014, 2016). It therefore provides a significant constraint for *what* national incumbents can present, while allowing them leeway on *how* they present it. This original and targeted dataset provides a satisfactory way to compare how national incumbents allocate credit and blame in Europe’s multilevel system of governance and allows for within-case comparisons, in the sense that all incumbents are presenting the same stimulus.⁸

4.2 Classifying credit and blame

In this article, I use hand coding to classify each statement (or paragraph) in national leaders’ speeches for credit and blame, in a way that takes into account attribution. I use human hand coding rather than automated methods for three reasons. First, human hand coding remains the ‘gold standard’ of content analysis (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013) and if its costs are not prohibitive, it should be the default when performing content analysis. While the dataset used in this article is large, it is not so massive as to make full hand coding impossible. Second, the categories for classification are relatively nuanced, in a way that makes automated content analysis more challenging. Third, a large, fully hand coded dataset on responsibility attributions could be a useful resource for the academic community, for example as a training set for supervised learning models on much larger datasets where hand coding would be prohibitively expensive.

Statements are classified into four categories for attribution. The first is ‘descriptive’ where there is no attribution. The second is ‘credit claiming’, where governments credit themselves or their government for a positive action or outcome. The third is ‘credit sharing’ where a positive action outcome is attributed collectively to Europe, the EU’s institutions, or other member states. The final category is ‘blame shifting’, where responsibility for a negative situation is attributed to the EU or other member states⁹. Table 2 presents exem-

⁸It is worth reminding that whilst both intergovernmental, the European Council (where heads of government meet) and Council of the EU (where ministers meet) differ in their rules of procedure, in particular with respect to their use of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV). See section 7 in the Appendix for more details.

⁹To be clear, these definitions also includes individuals. So criticism of the President of the Commission

plary statements. In order to test hypothesis H2, statements are also classified according to their policy area in the Eurobarometer (EB) surveys.¹⁰ The Appendix presents the codebook used, as well as our definitions for credit and blame and further examples of coded attributions. To validate the classification, I run inter-coder reliability tests with native speakers of the language on 15 per cent of the sample.¹¹

4.3 Independent variables and controls

To operationalise the main independent variables to test H1a and H1b, I consider both public opinion on European integration (public Euroscepticism), and the seat share of Eurosceptic parties in national parliaments (partisan Euroscepticism). I consider both as scholars have been exploring how different configurations of public and partisan Euroscepticism can impact executives (see for e.g. Rauh et al 2020). Due to differences in electoral rules, it is not always the case that Eurosceptic public opinion translates into a serious electoral threat for the mainstream parties that tend to form governments. Scholars have also shown that the electoral success of radical parties *independent of public opinion* can affect the strategies pursued by their mainstream counterparts (Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020).

I measure public Euroscepticism with the Eurobarometer survey question which asks respondents whether the EU conjures a positive or negative image. The measure of public Euroscepticism is the survey-weighted mean of all valid responses by country, and gives us the proportion of respondents with a negative image of the EU. I use linear interpolation to cover time points between surveys (see Soroka and Wlezien, 2010). To operationalise partisan Euroscepticism, I use the seat share of Eurosceptic parties in parliament. Eurosceptic parties are identified using the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES), which contains an EU position

would be classified as blame shifting; and praising the contribution of other national leaders would be classified as credit sharing.

¹⁰The EB has a long running question on the Most Important Issue facing your country. Its policy areas are: Economic Situation, Unemployment, Inflation, Environment, Energy, Immigration, Crime, Terrorism, Pensions, Foreign Affairs/Defence, Inflation, Education, and Government Debt.

¹¹I calculate the inter-coder reliability score Krippendorff's alpha separately for each country, and for each coding category (attribution and policy issue). Krippendorff's alpha varies from 0.72 to 0.91 and averages 0.78 (for the attribution category) and 0.82 (for the policy issue category) across the full sample.

Table 2: Exemplary Statements

<i>Date</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Attribution</i>	<i>EB Policy Issue</i>
Oct 2011	Sarkozy (FR)	France has called for the integration and convergence of economic and fiscal policies. And that is what was decided today.	Credit Claiming	Economic Situation
Jun 2007	Ahern (IRL)	The Council welcomed the outcome of the G8 summit on combating climate change, in particular the commitment to the UN process and reducing emissions by at least 50 per cent by 2050. This is an area where the EU is providing real global leadership and will continue to do so.	Credit Sharing	Environment
Jun 2013	Rajoy (ES)	In relation to youth employment - another very important point for us - concrete measures were also adopted. The six billion euros dedicated to the Youth Employment Initiative will be disbursed in 2014 and 2015. This Initiative, as you know, was agreed in February, was a proposal of the Spanish Government. For Spain this means receiving almost two billion Euros.	Credit Claiming	Unemployment
Oct 2014	D.Cameron (UK)	That's the frustration. But that leads me on to frankly the downright anger about something that has come about at this EU Council. And that is the completely unjustified and sudden production of a bill for Britain of 1.7 billion pounds, that is supposed to be paid by by the 1st December. This is completely unacceptable.	Blame Shifting	EU Affairs
Mar 2015	Merkel (DE)	As far as the foreign policy agenda is concerned the issues of Kosovo, Middle East, Afghanistan and Africa were on the agenda.	Descriptive	Foreign Affairs

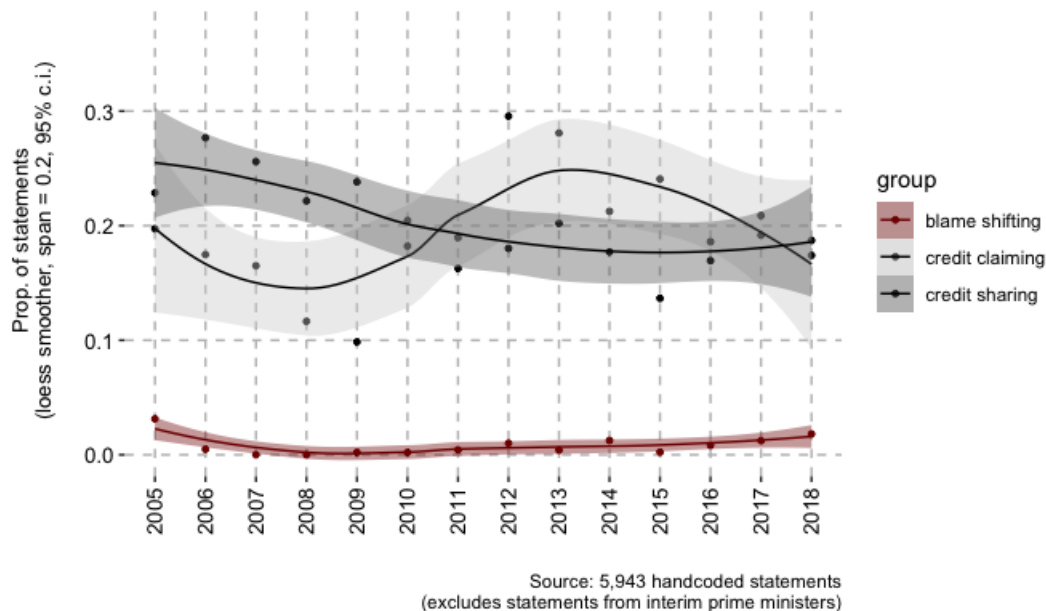
question on a scale from 1 (strongly opposed) to 7 (strongly in favour). I consider a party Eurosceptic if it has a lower score than 3.5, and capture the seat share of these parties in parliament, replicating a methodology used in previous studies (Rauh et al., 2020). The independent variable for H2 refers to the salience of policy issues to domestic electorates. To capture this, I use the Eurobarometer question ‘What do you think are the two most important issues facing our country at the moment?’ This question has been used to capture the issue priorities of European citizens (Alexandrova et al., 2014), and is widely used in studies of agenda setting (see Alexandrova et al., 2014; Baumgartner et al., 2010).

Finally, the models also contain a number of political and economic controls that might impinge on the rhetoric of elites. First, I control for economic indicators that could affect political speech (see Traber et al 2019) by including a measure of annual unemployment. I also capture the timing of elections by using a binary variable for election year. As countries holding the rotating presidency are particularly dependent on the goodwill and co-operation of other member states (see Quaglia and Moxon-Browne 2006) I also include dummies for whether a country holds the EU presidency at the time of the speech. As Eurosceptic and pro-EU governments may respond differently to the pressures of domestic Euroscepticism, my controls also include the governing party’s EU position and EU dissent from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. Unpopular governments may feel particularly pressured to ‘bring home the bacon’, I therefore also include a measure of trust in the national government from the Eurobarometer survey. Table A5 in the Appendix provides details on the operationalization of all independent variables in the model.

5 Analysis and Results

Given the nature of the data, where statements are nested within speeches by national incumbents, I run a series of multilevel logistic models to test my propositions. First, I use the hand coded dataset to create the dependent variables for my regression models. The

Figure 2: The increase in credit claiming in national governments' EU rhetoric



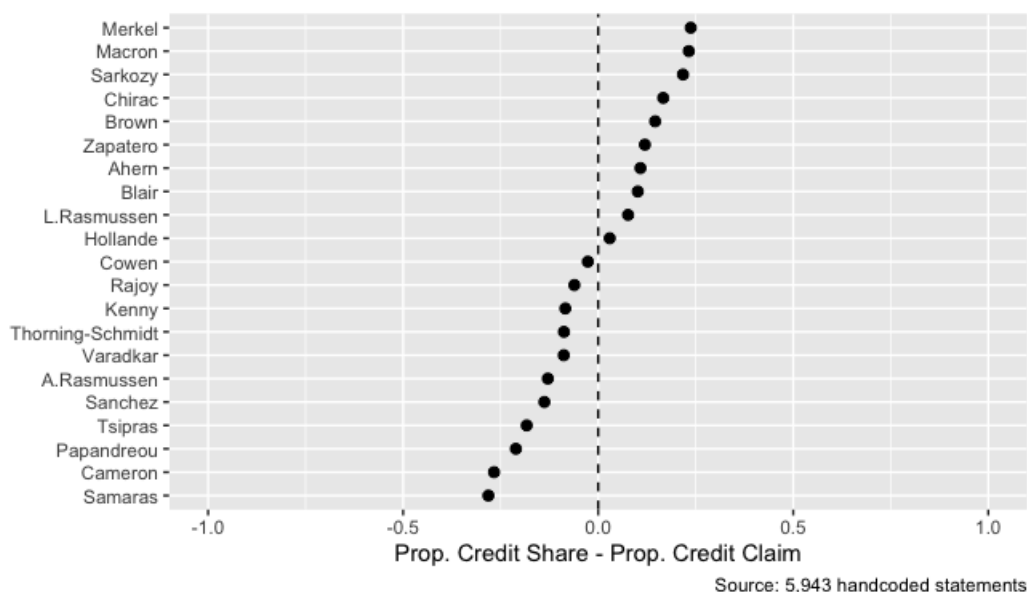
dependent variables for models 1, 3 and 5 is a binary variable that takes value 1 if the statement is an instance of credit claiming and 0 if not. The dependent variables for models 2 and 4 is a binary variable that takes value 1 if the statement is an instance of credit sharing and 0 if not. Models 1 to 4 include fixed effects for countries, and model 5 is a restrictive model including fixed effects for countries and random effects for individual incumbents.

Before analyzing the results of the logistic regression models, I first explore interesting patterns in the data. Figure 2 plots the proportion of statements classified as credit claiming, credit sharing, or blame shifting and highlights the increase of credit claiming in national incumbents' EU rhetoric between 2005 and 2018. It also shows that despite the increase in Euroscepticism during the investigation period statements that explicitly blame or criticize the EU are rare, the only exception coming from a handful of critical statements by Chirac in 2005, Cameron in 2014 and Tsipras in 2018.¹²

Figure 3 plots the balance of credit sharing and credit claiming in governments' rhetoric

¹²Out of 6,012 statements, only 41 are instances of blame. The majority of these come from Cameron, Tsipras, and Chirac. Note that figures 2 and 3 only include 5,943 statements as classified statements from interim Greek Prime Ministers are removed

Figure 3: Balance of credit sharing and credit claiming in national incumbents' EU rhetoric



– a national incumbent that shares credit more than she claims it would therefore have a positive balance, whereas an incumbent that claims credit more than she shares it would have a negative balance. It shows that far from all being opportunistic credit claimers, national incumbents often adopt mixed attributional styles in which they share credit with the EU almost as much as they claim credit themselves (and sometimes more). The figure provides additional face validity for the hand coding: known internationalists such as Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron share credit with the EU and other member states significantly more than they claim credit themselves. The plot also confirms that national incumbents who face high levels of domestic Euroscepticism such as the UK's Conservative leader David Cameron or Greek leaders involved in bailout negotiations with the Troika, claim credit significantly more than they share it. Figure 3 also illustrates differences within and between countries: all French leaders share credit more than they claim credit for example, and within the UK there are large discrepancies with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown net credit sharers and David Cameron a clear credit claimer.

Table 3 displays the results of our mixed effects logistic regression models. It provides strong evidence for the hypotheses outlined in the previous section. There is a strong and

robust relationship between the seat share of Eurosceptic parties in national parliaments (partisan Euroscepticism) and the attributional strategy employed by national incumbents. Increases in partisan Euroscepticism increase the likelihood of national incumbents claiming credit (model 1), and decrease the likelihood of national incumbents sharing credit with the EU (model 2). Likewise, there is a strong and robust relationship between public Euroscepticism and credit claiming in incumbents' rhetoric. Interestingly though, the statistical significance of the effect on credit claiming drops when including random effects for incumbents. To check whether the effect of partisan Euroscepticism is not driven by the UK, whose parliament hosts a particularly high share of Eurosceptics I include in the Appendix a robustness test that repeats the model whilst excluding the UK (Appendix A16). Results are robust, but with lesser levels of statistical significance. Finally, increases in salience increase the likelihood of incumbents claiming credit (model 3), and decrease the likelihood of incumbents sharing credit with the EU (model 4). These relationships remain robust and significant even when specifying more restrictive models, with fixed effects for countries and random effects for incumbents (models 5 and 6). The control variables are also worth commenting on. National incumbents with high levels of public trust are more likely to share credit whereas those with low levels of trust are more likely to claim credit, consistent with the view that domestic electoral pressure is likely to influence governments' presentation of the EU at home. In the Appendix, I also provide evidence that Eurosceptic governments are more likely to claim credit for blocking decisions (see Table A8). I also run robustness checks: models with fixed effects for both countries and incumbents (Table A12); models with random effects for both countries and incumbents (Table A13); models that include summit-specific random effects (Table A14); models with an interaction between public and partisan Euroscepticism (Table A17) and quadratic polynomial models where the covariate for year is squared to control for time trends (Table A18 - this model also displays the country dummy coefficients). These robustness checks confirm the significant effect of domestic Euroscepticism and issue salience on credit claiming by national governments.

Table 3: Fixed and Mixed Effects Regression Results

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Claim	Share	Claim	Share	Claim	Share
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Partisan Euroscepticism	0.028*** (0.006)	−0.022*** (0.008)	0.033*** (0.007)	−0.022** (0.009)	0.035*** (0.012)	−0.022** (0.009)
Public Euroscepticism	3.165*** (0.900)	0.192 (0.806)	2.125** (1.016)	0.976 (0.930)	1.412 (1.107)	0.976 (0.929)
Issue Salience			1.046*** (0.178)	−0.541*** (0.187)	1.294*** (0.195)	−0.541*** (0.187)
Public Trust in Government	−0.864*** (0.315)	0.702** (0.307)	−0.902** (0.354)	0.863** (0.345)	0.148 (0.411)	0.863** (0.345)
Governing Party EU position	−0.262*** (0.098)	−0.181* (0.105)	−0.560*** (0.118)	−0.013 (0.120)	−0.182 (0.188)	−0.013 (0.120)
Governing Party EU dissent	−0.005 (0.053)	−0.203*** (0.048)	−0.118* (0.062)	−0.095* (0.054)	−0.012 (0.080)	−0.095* (0.054)
Rotating Presidency	−0.267 (0.209)	0.713*** (0.174)	−0.418* (0.244)	0.582*** (0.209)	−0.276 (0.251)	0.582*** (0.209)
Unemployment	−0.057*** (0.018)	0.019 (0.017)	−0.058*** (0.020)	0.020 (0.019)	−0.044* (0.022)	0.020 (0.019)
Election Year	0.098 (0.085)	−0.248*** (0.084)	0.029 (0.097)	−0.189** (0.095)	−0.027 (0.101)	−0.189** (0.095)
Constant	−2.257*** (0.815)	1.026 (0.819)	−0.115 (0.962)	−0.444 (0.943)	−2.699* (1.435)	−0.444 (0.942)
Observations	5,943	5,943	4,544	4,544	4,544	4,544
Country FE (7)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incumbent RE (21)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note:

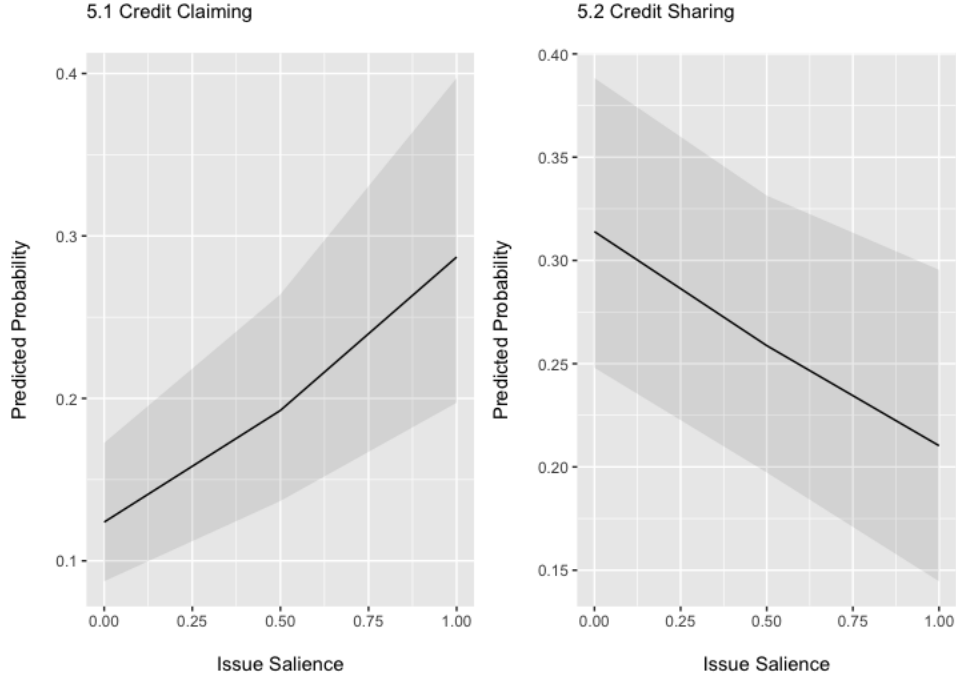
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 4: The balance of credit sharing and credit claiming differs for high salience and low salience issues



To further illustrate how the salience of issues affects the rhetorical strategies of national incumbents, I plot the balance of credit sharing and credit claiming for two policy issues that are amongst the most discussed at summits during the investigation period: the Economic Situation and the Environment. While the former was a hugely salient issue in a time period marked by the financial and Eurozone crises, the latter was a low priority for citizens for the duration of the time period (except for Denmark, where the Environment consistently ranks highly as a priority for citizens). Figure 4 shows how the balance of credit sharing and credit claiming differs for these two issues. In Figure 4.1, the majority of leaders have a negative balance, meaning the share of statements in which they claim credit is higher than those in which they share credit with the EU. By contrast, in Figure 4.2, the majority of incumbents share credit with the EU and its institutions more than they claim credit themselves. Finally, Figure 5 plots the marginal effects of increases in issue salience on the probability of claiming and sharing credit. The effects are clear. As issues become more salient, this increases the probability of national incumbents claiming credit and decreases the probability of incumbents sharing credit with Europe and its institutions.

Figure 5: Marginal effects of issue salience on credit claiming and credit sharing



6 Discussion

These results provide evidence of a strong relationship between domestic electoral incentives and the way governments attribute responsibility in the EU. Yet it is worth discussing the generalisability of these results. First, one could wonder whether the findings in this article are *summit-specific*. Governments may be reluctant to criticise the EU in the spotlight of summits, but may revert to much more blame shifting when back in the comfort of their nation-state. This is a valid point of discussion that I address in two ways. First, *even if* these results are only applicable to summits, they still remain significant. This is because summits are amongst the highest profile events of European integration, attracting considerable media coverage (Alexandrova et al. 2014; van Middelaar, 2013). However, I would go further still and argue that the ‘summit’ attributions described in this article are likely to be replicated in governments’ presentation of the EU more widely. This is because the costs of shifting blame towards the EU, while diminished outside the spotlight of international summits, remain significant.

To add plausibility to the idea that the patterns identified in this article are not simply summit-specific, the Appendix leverages EU communication by heads of government in a purely domestic setting: national parliaments. In section 9 in the Appendix, I identify EU statements by heads of government made in the House of Commons - a case where we might expect scapegoating given high levels of domestic Euroscepticism and the confrontational nature of parliamentary institutions like Prime Minister (PM)'s Questions. I first use validated dictionaries of EU level terms (Rauh and De Wilde 2018) to identify EU statements made by PMs between 1991 and 2018. I then use automated text analysis to compare their EU communication with their usual parliamentary communication. Rather than finding that PMs use more negative language when speaking about European integration (which would be consistent with a scapegoating argument), I find instead that British heads of government use *less* negative language when discussing the EU compared to their usual parliamentary communication (Figure A4). Whilst this is no 'smoking gun', and whilst I encouraged future research to analyse EU communication by national leaders in other domestic venues, these additional findings add plausibility to the idea that the findings described in this article are not purely summit effects.

Second, findings might be *country-specific*. Due to data availability, the study is limited to seven EU member states (nine including CEE countries from Section 5 in the Appendix). These additional data from Hungary and Slovakia confirm the key findings of the main article. Like the incumbents in older member states, the main rhetorical response in the aftermath of summits is to claim credit, and in many cases CEE incumbents (even Orban) do share credit with the EU and other member states. At the same time, there does seem to be more willingness, at least from some leaders, to criticise the EU and its institutions. Whilst caution must be warranted given the non-exhaustive list of member states, the sample does include countries from Northern, Southern, Western, and Eastern Europe; includes Eurozone and non-Eurozone countries, and includes larger and smaller member states. Taken together, the article provides a strong plausibility probe for the theoretical argument presented, one

whose implications should be tested on the full sample of EU member states' communication if and when additional data becomes available.

7 Conclusion

Multilevel systems provide opportunities for politicians to claim credit for themselves and shift blame onto other levels of government, yet there is little empirical work on when and how politicians engage in these rhetorical strategies. In this article, I addressed this gap by examining strategic communication by national governments in the EU, the polity most associated with processes of multilevel governance. The findings challenge the conventional view that the EU receives little recognition from politicians at other levels of government and that national incumbents frequently shift blame onto the EU. Instead, I show that governments' communication in a period of increased Euroscepticism is marked by credit claiming: 'look at what I have achieved for us', not 'look at what the EU is doing to us'.

This study highlights the key role of electoral incentives in shaping incumbents' strategic communication in multilevel systems. As public discontent towards the EU rises, and as it is mobilized by Eurosceptic parties, governments claim credit more. I also highlighted the key role of issue salience in governments' attributional style. As national incumbents cannot reasonably claim credit for every single positive outcome at the European level, they make strategic decisions on which ones to claim credit for to maximize their impact. For issues of lower salience, such as the environment and foreign affairs, incumbents are happy to share credit with other levels of government (the EU); for issues of high salience, such as the economy or immigration, incumbents are more likely to claim credit for themselves. Whilst caution must be warranted given the article's non-exhaustive sample of EU member states, the diversity of countries included in the article's speech data provide a strong plausibility probe for the theoretical argument.

These findings build on the growing literature on responsiveness in the EU. The pressures

for accountable and transparent decision-making at the European level, combined with the EU gaining competences to effectively manage such trans-border cooperation, means domestic electorates are likely to form more explicit preferences over such engagements. The literature to date has showed how governments signal responsiveness in the European arena through their negotiating behaviour and bargaining rhetoric in the Council (Hagemann et al., 2017; Hobolt and Wratil, 2020; Mariano and Schneider 2022; Schneider, 2013, 2018; Wratil, 2018; Wratil et al., 2022). I show that this responsiveness on the European stage also manifests itself in the way governments present the outcomes of key European summits back to domestic audiences.

Crucially, this study has implications for democratic accountability in multilevel systems, which rests on citizens' ability to correctly attribute responsibility across multiple levels of government. Public opinion depends to a considerable degree on elite cueing and these findings suggest incumbents use strategic communication to shape citizens' evaluations to their advantage. Future research should explore the consequences of these presentational strategies for citizens' attributions of responsibility and evaluations in multilevel systems of governance. On the one hand, by rarely crediting other levels of government for issues citizens care about, incumbents' communication is likely to be detrimental for public opinion towards these institutions. On the other, framing this communication more explicitly according to the interests of an incumbent's constituency may give voters more confidence that decisions made at higher levels of government are in their interest. This article has shown how governments use multilevel systems to shape attributions of responsibility to their advantage without resorting to the rather simplistic method of shifting blame 'upwards'. It therefore suggests that standard notions of electoral accountability based on performance voting are not just threatened by the complexity of multilevel systems of governance, but by the strategic communication of politicians within that institutional setup.

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Appendix - Credit Claiming in the European Union

1 Descriptive Statistics

Table A1 below presents the descriptive statistics for the data collected and used in the main article. It includes the national incumbents of France, Germany, the UK, Ireland, Denmark, Spain, and Greece. Overall, the dataset consists of 6,012 statements (paragraphs) taken from 414 speeches by twenty-three national incumbents in the aftermath of EU summits.

The press conferences are held in Brussels after the summit's outcome but the transcripts are taken from national government websites (see Table A1 for sources). These press conferences are delivered in the incumbent's native language, a sign that these are aimed at domestic audiences.¹ Note that I only include the head of government's initial prepared statement in the data, rather than responses to any questions. Note also that the source used is the government's website rather than the EU's website, which also hosts footage of press conferences². The logic underpinning these research decisions is to focus on governments' *strategic* communication - what they *want* to communicate to their domestic audiences after a Summit is concluded, rather than capturing responses to a journalist's tricky question that might catch them off guard.

Figure A1 plots a histogram on the length of speeches for each country, in tokens (words). The red vertical line represents the average speech length for the country. Figure A1 shows how the distribution of speech length differs across countries, but that the average speech length is rather similar across countries, usually between 1,000 and 1,500 tokens (words). The one exception is Ireland, where the average speech length is just over 2,000 tokens.

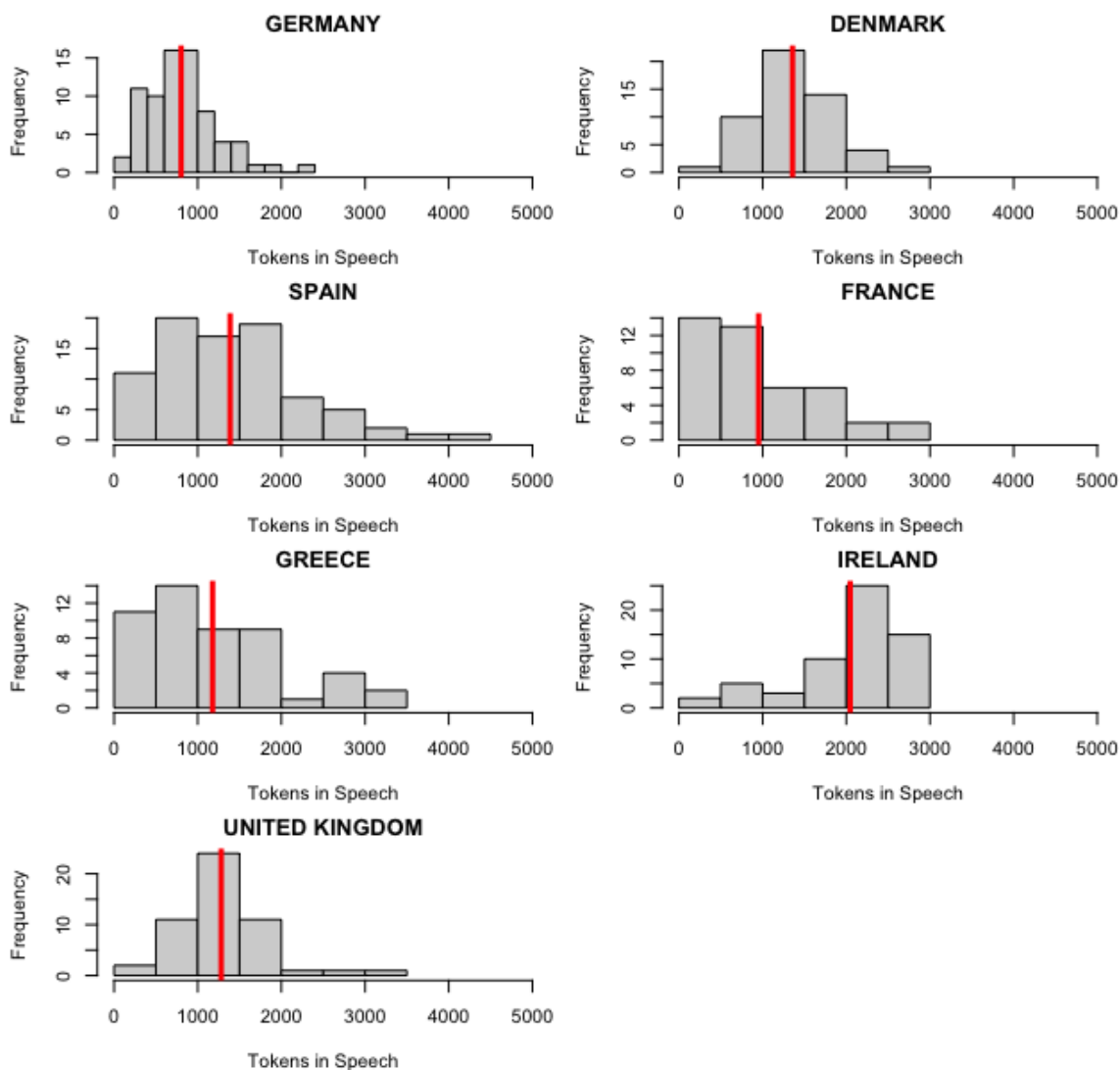
¹The statements are then translated into English for handcoding by automated translation software.

²In video format rather than text

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics

<i>Country</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Speeches</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Time period</i>
France	Macron, Hollande Sarkozy, Chirac	43	548	elysee.fr	12.2005 - 03.2018
Germany	Merkel	74	725	bundestkanzlerin.de	12.2005 - 03.2018
UK	Blair, Brown, Cameron	51	659	parliament.uk	03.2005 - 03.2016
Ireland	Varadkar, Kenny Cowen, Ahern	61	1,092	oireachtas.ie	12.2005 - 06.2018
Denmark	L.Rasmussen, Thorning-Schmidt, A.Rasmussen	52	703	ft.dk	10.2006 - 10.2018
Spain	Zapatero, Rajoy, Sanchez	83	1,524	lamoncloa.gob.es	03.2005 - 10.2018
Greece	Tsipras, Samaras, Papademos Papandreou Pikramennou	50	761	primeminister.gov.gr	10.2008 - 12.2018
Total	Twenty-three incumbents	414	6,012	n.a.	03.2005 - 12.2018

Figure A1: Length of Speeches in EUCOSpeech



Note: Red vertical lines plot the average length of speeches for each country. Length is in tokens (words)

2 Codebook

Thank you for helping to code EUCOSpeech, a dataset of statements in speeches by national leaders communicating the outcomes of European Council (EUCO) summits to their national media and national parliaments. This codebook explains how to code these statements. Whilst your coding will be done in English, the statements you are presented with (in column G) will be in the language for which you are a native speaker (German, Greek, French, Danish, Spanish).

Please code directly into the EXCEL file, where speeches have already been divided into separate statements. Note that the first and last paragraphs of each speech have been removed from the text corpus when these simply refer to introductions and conclusions of press conferences. A ‘statement’ refers to an individual paragraph in leaders’ speeches. Occasionally, due to the way in which speeches were collected, you may encounter clear formatting errors, for example a sentence that suddenly cuts off halfway through a statement. In these rare cases please correct and re-format the statement by merging it with the relevant cell and mentioning this in column J (dedicated to notes). Generally speaking, please leave the statements in the format in which national leaders have presented them.

The EXCEL file contains nine columns. Your role is to code Attribution in column H and Policy Issue in column I after reading the full statement (in the original language) in column G.

A2.1 Coding Attribution (Column H)

In Column H, we would like you to code the statement’s attribution of responsibility. Responsibility can be attributed for both positive outcomes (credit) and negative ones (blame). Responsibility can also be attributed to one’s self (e.g. claiming credit) or to others (e.g. sharing credit or shifting blame). We would like you to categorise the statements according to one of the four categories below. There are further details on each of these categories, with examples, later on in the codebook:

When coding statements, please take into account the following:

- When coding statements, please base your evaluation on what national leaders are communicating at face value, rather than on any subtext based on your knowledge of the country. For example, you may think that a statement has Eurosceptic undertones, but if the speaker is not explicitly criticising the EU, and /or its institutions then it should not be coded as an instance of blame shifting.
- Classification categories are mutually exclusive. Occasionally, there will be statements

Table A2: Coding Attribution

<i>Credit Claiming</i>	<i>Credit Sharing</i>	<i>Blame Shifting</i>	<i>Descriptive (No Attribution)</i>
Statements where governments <i>explicitly</i> credit themselves, their government or their country for positive outcomes or decisions.	Statements where governments <i>explicitly</i> credit the EU, its institutions, or other member state(s) for positive outcomes or decisions	Statements where governments <i>explicitly</i> criticize the EU, its institutions and/or another member state for negative outcomes or decisions.	Statements where there is no explicit attribution for credit or blame for a positive or negative situation

that you feel contain more than one of the attributions identified above. In this case, use your personal judgement and knowledge of the native tongue to decide what seems to be the dominant tone of the message (e.g. is this more an instance of credit claiming, or more an instance of credit sharing).

- When coding, please consider both retrospective and prospective attributions of responsibility. For example, “we will overcome the economic crisis thanks to the EU” should still be coded as instances of credit sharing. Likewise, statements such as “I will continue to fight to defend my country’s national interest on the European stage” should be coded as an example of credit claiming).
- Generally, when defining codes, let your decisions be guided by parsimony and reliability. The rest of this section provides more detailed descriptions of the four categories for classification, and examples of statements for each.

i) Credit Claiming

Our first category refers to statements where national leaders credit themselves, their government, or their country for a positive intervention, action or outcome. This includes, but is not limited to:

- National leaders highlighting their influence on the international stage by putting an item on the agenda and/or making an important contribution or intervention in the meeting
- National leaders claiming to achieve their country’s desired outcome through their negotiations with European partners

- National leaders using communication on the international stage to highlight their domestic achievements. This may be by benchmarking themselves against other European member states (e.g. showing that their economic growth rate is the highest in continent)
- National leaders communicating how an idea they have defended over the long term has become an EU policy
- National leaders explicitly highlighting their or their member state's leadership or contribution on specific issues in EU policymaking

Examples:

"So, I welcome the steps that Eurozone countries are committing to take today, but I have also said that Britain isn't in the Euro, Britain isn't going to be joining the Euro, and so it is right that we shouldn't be involved in the Euro area's internal arrangements. That is why I secured in December a commitment which carves Britain out of future Eurozone bailout arrangements, and why we are not joining the pact that the Euro area countries have agreed today." (D.Cameron (UK) 2015/1)

"For this reason, Spain has insisted from the beginning that this European Council takes decisions with real impact on three issues that I consider fundamental: unemployment, especially that of our young people; the financing of our small and medium enterprises, and, thirdly, the Banking Union. I know that this last issue is not easy for people to understand, but believe me it is fundamental to restore the flow of credit to the real economy." (M.Rajoy (ESP) 2013/1)

"In the area of Defense, we have agreed on the European Defense Fund's pilot project and the launch of the European intervention initiative on 25 June in nine countries, including France and Germany. This is a proposal I had personally made at La Sorbonne last autumn and Europe is thus endowed with real strategic capacity, and autonomy." (E.Macron (FR) 2018/6)

"What contribution has the Government of Spain made? The Government of Spain has made the following contribution: we have put the issue of the banking union firmly on the agenda, we have to talk about the financial system, but we also have to start talking about the fiscal union." (P.Sanchez (ESP) 2018/6)

ii) Credit Sharing

Our second category refers to statements where governments credit the EU, its institutions and/or other member states for positive outcomes or decisions. This includes, but is not limited to:

- National leaders highlighting Europe's or the EU's leadership in a particular policy domain
- National leaders congratulating the European Council or the EU collectively for decisions and actions (not simply discussions) on the European stage
- National leaders explicitly highlight benefits brought by the EU and/or European integration. This includes historical achievements such as peace or prosperity, democracy in Europe's sphere of influence etc
- National leaders thanking, congratulating or praising the work of the EU's institutions or its representatives or employees, for example the president of the Commission, the High Representative etc.
- National leaders jointly claiming credit with another member state (for e.g. national leaders from France and/or Germany Franco-German alliance)

Examples:

"The Council welcomed the outcome of the G8 summit on combating climate change, in particular, the commitment to the UN process and reducing emissions by at least 50 per cent by 2050. This is an area where the European Union is providing real global leadership and will continue to do so." (B.Ahern (IRL) 2015/3)

"This is, in the end, the crucial prize. It is important that we take action here in Britain, as tomorrow's climate change Bill will show. It is critical for the EU then to show leadership, as it did at the summit in a remarkable and ground-breaking way. For those who doubt the relevance of the European Union to today's world, last week's Council meeting and its historic agreement on climate change is the best riposte. It shows Europe following the concerns of its people, and giving real leadership to the rest of the world." (T.Blair (UK) 2007/7)

"At this summit, Europe has really come together on Libya. Today's conclusions endorsed the UN resolution agreed last week. They set out Europe's determination to contribute to that implementation of that resolution and the conclusions also recognise that lives have been saved by the action we have taken so far." (D.Cameron (UK) 2011/3)

"I am grateful to the Commission and would like to extend thanks to President Juncker for the speed and quality of their proposals on migration. That so many people come to us, shows that the distress in the world is great that there are terrible wars that drive people to flee, and other horrible situations in many countries, where people are forced to flee from great suffering out." (A.Merkel (DE) 2015/10)

”The value of the European Union once again becomes clear. This is a crisis that comes from the United States, from the financial system of the United States, and it is a crisis that will be overcome thanks to the European Union, its coordination capacity and its leadership capacity.” (J.Zapatero (ESP) 2010/10)

iii) Blame Shifting

Our third category refers to statements where governments criticize, express frustration at, or blame the EU, its institutions and/or other member state(s). This includes, but is not limited to

- National leaders communicating their disappointment or frustration at the outcomes of a summit, or of slow progress on particular issues
- National leaders expressing that an EU decision or policy will harm their member state and/or Europe as a whole
- National leaders criticising and questioning the benefits of European integration more widely
- National leaders ‘blaming Europe’ for a negative outcome or issue

Examples:

”That’s the frustration. But that leads me on to frankly the downright anger about something that has come about at this European Council. And that is the completely unjustified and sudden production of a bill for Britain of 1.7 billion pounds, over 2 billion euros, that is apparently supposed to be paid by 1st December. This is completely unacceptable.” (D.Cameron (UK) 06/2014)

”The Council nominated to vote Jean-Claude Juncker as the next president of the European Commission. Britain and Hungary opposed. We must accept the result and Britain will now work with the Commission president, as we always do, to secure our national interest. But let me be absolutely clear, this is a bad day for Europe. It risks undermining the position of national governments. It risks undermining the power of national parliaments and it hands new power to the European Parliament. It is therefore important that the European Council has agreed today to review what has happened and to consider how we handle the appointment of the next Commission president next time around.” (D.Cameron (UK) 08/2014)

iv) Descriptive (No Attribution)

Our fourth category refers to statements where none of the above is present. These will largely be descriptive statements, where there is no attribution for credit and blame. This

includes, but is not limited to”

- National leaders listing the policy issues and items that were discussed and/or noted in the EUCO meeting
- The announcement of a policy or decision without clear attribution for responsibility, nor an explanation of how the decision will benefit Europe or a member state,
- Expressions of desired actions or desired policy outcomes, rather than ones that have actually been taken (e.g. Europe ‘must’ or ‘should’ do something)
- National leaders announcing that the European Council has discussed, made a statement on a policy issue or reaffirmed its stance on said issue

Examples:

“We have a mandate for the spring summit, which is to develop a strategy to secure the energy supply. This is related to communications that the Commission will be doing on energy policy in early January. As far as the foreign policy agenda is concerned, the issues of Kosovo, Middle East, Afghanistan and Africa were on the agenda.” (A.Merkel (DE) 2015/3)

“In addition to those issues of international security and development, the Council conclusions and the special declaration on globalisation set out the challenges that the European Union must address on globalisation. We agreed to maintain our focus on economic reform, with a renewed focus on modernising the single market so that it enhances Europe’s ability to compete in the global economy. We must continue to work towards further liberalisation in energy, post and telecoms, where market opening could generate between 75 billion and 95 billion euros of extra benefits and contribute 360,000 jobs. Investment in research, innovation and education—and removing barriers to enterprise—are also essential.”

“Discussions also touched on the recent conference on the western Balkans migratory route and on the upcoming Valletta summit. This latter summit will aim to find agreement with African partners in a fair and balanced manner on how to tackle the root causes of the crisis, how to support development, how to provide for effective return and readmission and how to dismantle the criminal networks that are exploiting this situation and putting lives in danger. The European Council noted the importance of funding for international efforts to support refugees in Turkey and other countries. (E.Kenny (IRL) 2015/3)

A2.2 Coding Policy Issue (Column I)

In Column I, we would like you to code the statement according to the 15 policy issues mentioned below. This includes all the policy issues from the Eurobarometer’s ‘Most Important Issue’ survey question, plus two additional ones. These additional policy issues are:

- **EU Affairs:** for issues that relate to the internal workings and functioning of the EU and its institutions – for e.g. Treaty Negotiation, the EU budget, appointment of Commissioners, discussions of other EU institutions (e.g. Parliament), etc
- **N.A.:** statements where no policy issues are mentioned at all, or where so many are mentioned that it makes it impossible to pick just one (e.g. “today the Council discussed the economy, the environment, taxation, and energy”)

Classification categories are mutually exclusive. As the EU has competencies in certain areas more than others, and because the EUCO has a rather focused agenda (see Alexandrova, 2014; 2016) you will notice that certain policy issues (e.g. the Economic Situation, Foreign Affairs ...) come up more than others. Some of the policy issues above may not come up at all. As when coding attribution in column H, you may also encounter statements that cover more than one policy issue. In this case use the same approach: use your personal judgement to decide what seems to be the main policy issue mentioned in the statement. The table below reuses the examples from Section I of the codebook, and shows how statements could be coded for both Attribution and Policy Issue. Your job is to recreate something similar in the attached Excel. Thanks so much for your help!

A2.3 Notes(Column J)

Column J is reserved for notes. Feel free to use this column for anything you would like to bring to the attention of the researcher, but there are two notes in particular we would like to capture:

- If you have coded column H as Credit Sharing, and the unit being credited is not the EU or one of its institutions but another member state please use this column to note which member state(s) is (are) being credited
- If you have coded column H as Blame Shifting, and it is not the EU or one of its institutions being blamed but another member state, please note which member state is being blamed /criticized.

Table A3: Coding Policy Issues

Policy Issue	Likely topics / keywords
<i>Economic Situation</i>	Growth, Eurozone, economic policy, monetary policy, crisis, saving, investment, free trade
<i>Foreign Affairs/ Defence</i>	Peace, war, Libya, Balkans, EU enlargement, Afghanistan
<i>Environment and Climate Change</i>	Green, climate, CO2, climate, global warming
<i>Immigration</i>	Schengen, refugees, migrants, migration, smugglers
<i>Unemployment</i>	Jobs, unemployment, jobless, employment, work
<i>EU Affairs</i>	Lisbon, budget, QMV, MFF, Commissioner, President
<i>Government Debt</i>	Debt, deficit, Stability Growth Pact
<i>Terrorism</i>	Terror, attack, ISIS,
<i>Taxation</i>	Tax, Revenue,
<i>Education</i>	Schools, Universities, Research
<i>Health and Social Security</i>	Welfare, health, age, welfare state
<i>Rising Prices/ Inflation</i>	Cost of living, inflation, prices,
<i>Pensions</i>	Retirement, savings, pensions
<i>Energy</i>	Supply, gas, energy,
<i>N.A.</i>	n.a.

3 Interrater Reliability Tests

Interrater reliability tests were conducted over three rounds, with one handcoder coding the statement in its original language, and the other handcoder coding the translated statement (into English). The handcoders were PhD students at the London School of Economics who were also native speakers of the language (so for example, a French native speaker coded the statements by French incumbents, a Greek native speaker coded the statements by Greek incumbents etc). The codebook was tweaked after each round following discussion with the handcoders. The table below presents the results of Krippendorff's alpha and Cohen's kappa. The results are presented separately for the Attribution category (i.e. credit claiming / credit sharing / blame shifting - see the third and fifth columns) and the Policy Issue category (see the fourth and sixth columns.) These results correspond to 'substantial' agreement amongst coders (Landis and Koch 1977). Overall 920 statements were coded by two hand coders, which is just over 15 per cent of the total sample of 6,012 statements

Table A4: Results for Krippendorff's α and Cohen's k

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of statements</i>	<i>Krippendorff's α for Attribution</i>	<i>Krippendorff's α for Policy Issue</i>	<i>Cohen's k for Attribution</i>	<i>Cohen's k for Policy Issue</i>
France	100	0.72	0.80	0.69	0.76
UK	110	0.85	0.84	0.78	0.78
Germany	120	0.75	0.73	0.70	0.73
Denmark	110	0.76	0.76	0.74	0.73
Spain	220	0.83	0.88	0.78	0.81
Ireland	150	0.84	0.82	0.79	0.74
Greece	110	0.71	0.79	0.67	0.70
Total	920	0.78	0.81	0.74	0.76

4 Operationalization of Independent Variables

Table A5: Operationalization of Independent Variables

Independent Variable	Source	Description
Public Euroscepticism	<p>Eurobarometer. Q = ‘Does the EU conjure for you a negative or positive image?’”</p> <p>Question asked in Standard Eurobarometer (bi-annual survey).</p>	Proportion of respondents with a negative image of the EU. Values for missing months calculated with linear interpolation
Partisan Euroscepticism	<p>Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) used to identify Eurosceptic parties (below 3.5 on EU position question).</p> <p>CHES data available in waves 1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2019. Values for missing years calculated with linear interpolation.</p> <p>Seat share of parties identified with ParlGov database (Döring et al 2022)</p>	Share of Eurosceptic Parties in parliament. Includes all parties, not simply challengers in opposition (for e.g., the Conservatives in the UK or Fidesz in Hungary would be considered Eurosceptic parties for years when their EU Position falls below 3.5.)
Issue Salience	<p>Eurobarometer. Q = “What do you think are the two most important issues facing our country at the moment?”</p> <p>Question asked in Standard Eurobarometer (bi-annual survey).</p>	Proportion of respondents who place the issue amongst their two most important issues. Values for missing months calculated with linear interpolation.
Annual Unemployment	World Bank	Unemployment, total (% of total labor force - modeled ILO estimate)
Rotating Presidency	consilium.europa.eu	Binary variable – 1 for period where country holds the presidency, 0 otherwise

Table A5 (continued): Operationalization of Independent Variables

Independent Variable	Source	Description
Gov party EU position	Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). EU_POSITION = overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration in YEAR	Ranges from 1 (Strongly opposed) to 7 (Strongly in favour). Values for missing years calculated with linear interpolation.
Gov party EU dissent	Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). EU_DISENT = degree of dissent on European integration in YEAR	Ranges from 0 (Completely United) to 10 (Extremely Divided). Values for missing years calculated with linear interpolation.
Public Trust in Government	Eurobarometer. Q = "For each of the following media and institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it. – The (NATIONALITY) government" Question asked in Standard Eurobarometer (bi-annual survey).	Difference between proportion of respondents who 'tend to trust' and 'tend not to trust' the government.
Election Year	Election date taken from ParlGov (Döring et al 2022)	Relevant election is election that determines the (head of) government UK: General Election DE: Federal Election FR: Presidential Election ES: General Election DK: General Election, IRL: General Election GR: Legislative Election HU: Parliamentary Election SK: Parliamentary Election Election year is taken for calendar year (so for example, for the general election in Spain that took place on 20 Nov 2011, the whole year 2011 would be coded as election year).

5 Credit Claiming in CEE Countries

As mentioned in the main article, the selection of seven countries is driven by archival barriers, covering countries whose government websites capture press conferences after EU summits over a relatively long investigation period (at least a decade). Whilst this method yields a sample that covers important structural divisions within the EU, it omits countries from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) that joined the EU more recently. Unfortunately, many of these countries do not publish speeches after EU summits, but government websites in Hungary and Slovakia have begun doing so since 2011. I therefore collect available data for these cases, but do not include them in the main analysis, given the shorter length of the investigation period and the smaller sample size.

These cases are particularly interesting to explore how incumbents in CEE present the EU to domestic audiences. In Hungary, the government of Victor Orban is considered one of the most Eurosceptic to ever sit in the European Council (Hargitai 2020). Orban’s party Fidesz was even suspended from membership of the EPP party alliance in March 2019, following a Hungarian government campaign that openly attacked Jean-Claude Juncker. In Slovakia, the country is governed during the investigation period principally by the left-wing populist party SMER-SD. Altogether, I collect 553 additional statements (paragraphs) and code them into the same categories as the main article. I once again also use native speakers of the languages to run interreliability tests on 15 per cent of the sample ³. The table below summarises this additional data collection for Slovakia and Hungary

Table A6: Additional Data Collection for CEE Countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Speeches</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Time period</i>
Hungary	Orban	22	245	miniszterelnok.hu	03.2011 - 12.2018
Slovakia	Radicova, Fico, Pellegrini	39	308	vlada.gov.sk	02.2011 - 12.2018
Both CEE countries	Four incumbents	61	553	n.a.	02.2011 - 12.2018

³Krippendorff’s alpha in the Hungarian case is 0.73 for attribution and 0.81 for policy issue. Krippendorff’s alpha in the Slovakian case is 0.72 for Attribution and 0.78 for policy issues

Figure A2: Credit Claiming, Credit Sharing, and Blame Shifting in the Rhetoric of CEE incumbents

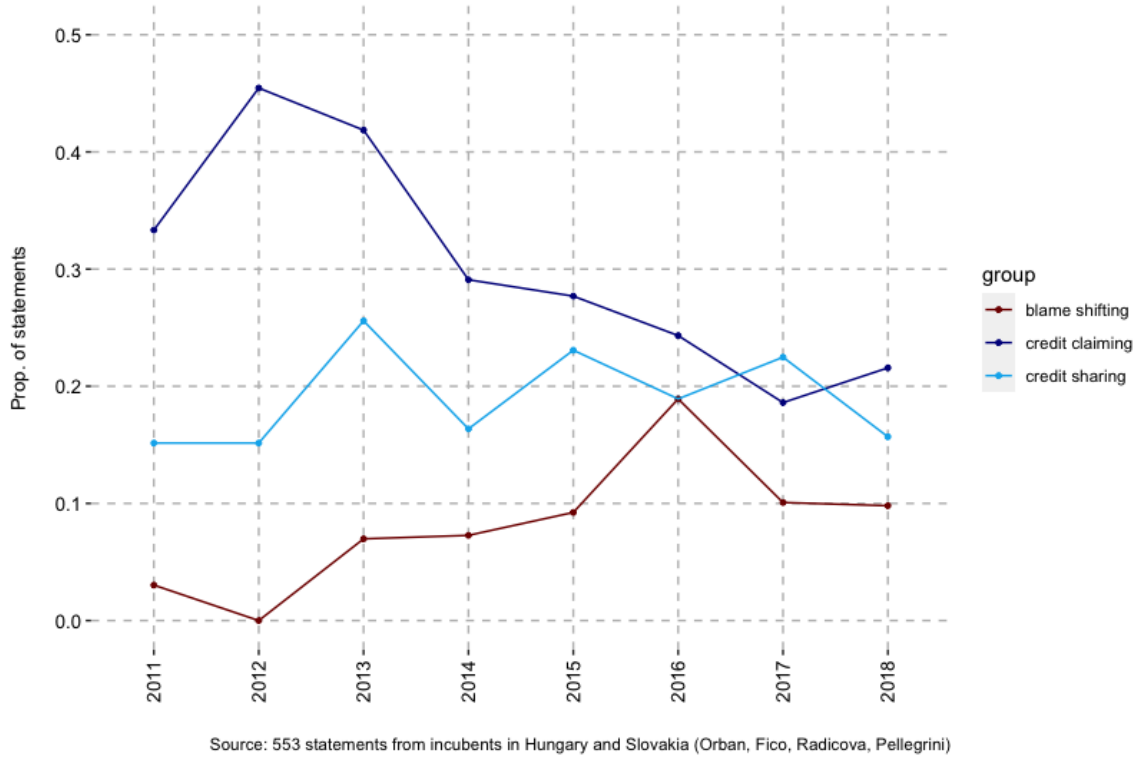
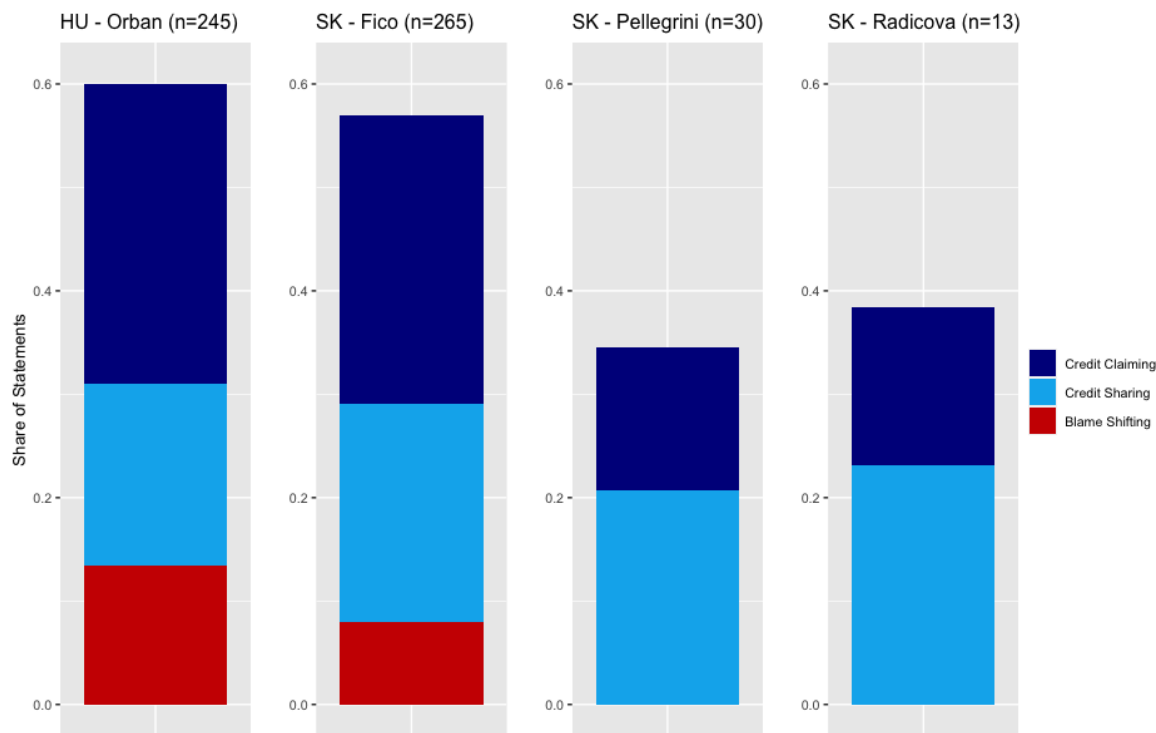


Figure A2 displays the share of statements from Hungary and Slovakia that fall into the three coding categories over time. The figure displays similarities with Figure 2 in the main article. In both cases, the most frequent category between 2011 and 2018 is credit claiming. In the summit of December 2016 for instance, Slovakian PM Robert Fico claimed credit for "convincing others that solidarity [in migration] can be expressed in other ways than immediately accepting mandatory quotas". At that same summit, Orban congratulated himself for his prescience: "the Hungarian migration proposal, which was previously classified as inhumane, impossible, and crazy, is now being seriously considered by the EU". In Table A15, I run robustness tests including this additional handcoded CEE data. The results remain robust.

The coding also highlights some of the specificities of the CEE cases. In particular, incumbents in Hungary and Slovakia (and particularly Orban) seem more willing to explicitly criticise the EU in the aftermath in summits. Indeed, whilst credit claiming is the most frequent category, the share of statements blaming the EU is higher in CEE, at least for some leaders. Figure A3 plots the share of statements that fall into the three categories for each of the four CEE incumbents separately. Whilst Radicova and Pellegrini have no

Figure A3: Rhetoric of CEE incumbents - Breakdown by leader



statements that explicitly criticise the EU, the picture is different for Orban and Pellegrini. Indeed, for Orban, over 10 per cent of his statements are instances of blame shifting, considerably higher than any other incumbent in our sample. This includes statements criticising the EU for its military impotence ("if Europe does not have adequate military power, it cannot win militarily... we can have a good heart, we can have a strong voice, but we do not have power") and others criticising the "attacks [with respect to migration] that almost violated Hungary's sovereignty at the summit". An analysis of these blame shifting statements shows that they relate mainly to the issue of immigration. Of the 54 statements that are instances of blame shifting, more than half of these relate to this issue ($n = 30$).

Altogether, the additional data from Hungary and Slovakia confirm the key findings of the main article, but show that CEE countries have specificities that would be valuable to investigate further in future studies. Like the incumbents in older member states, the main rhetorical response in the aftermath of summits is to claim credit, and in many cases CEE incumbents (even Orban) do share credit with the EU and other member states ⁴. At the same time, there does seem to be more willingness, at least from some leaders, to criticise

⁴Important to note that a qualitative reading of Orban's Credit Sharing statements show that these are done more by sharing credit with other member states, rather than crediting EU institutions

the EU and its institutions. Understanding whether this is a feature of incumbents in the region more generally, or whether the figure of Victor Orban is an outlier in his willingness to criticise Brussels could be a valuable avenue for future research on EU blame games and the domestic presentation of European integration (see Heinkelmann-Wild et al 2020, Zangl and Heinkelmann-Wild 2021).

6 Missing data patterns in EUCOSpeech

The data collection method of scraping government websites to identify speeches after EU summits leads to some missing patterns in the data. Table A7 outlines the degree of missingness for each country, from the start of the investigation period until the end, including the CEE countries from section 5. The extent of missingness varies from country to country, from virtually none in the case of Spain (two missing speeches), to more substantial in the case of France (42 missing speeches). This missing data could be problematic and introduce selection bias into our results: perhaps the relatively small amount of blame shifting we observe is down to incumbents simply refusing to hold a press conference after unsuccessful summits where they experience bargaining losses.

Table A7: Missing Speeches

<i>Country</i>	<i>Available Speeches</i>	<i>Missing Speeches</i>	<i>Time period</i>
France	43 (51%)	42 (49 %)	12.2005 - 03.2018
Germany	73 (90%)	8 (10 %)	12.2005 - 03.2018
UK	51 (71%)	21 (29%)	03.2005 - 03.2016
Ireland	60 (71%)	25 (29%)	12.2005 - 06.2018
Denmark	52 (66%)	27 (34%)	10.2006 - 10.2018
Spain	83 (98%)	2 (2%)	03.2005 - 10.2018
Greece	50 (81%)	12 (19%)	10.2009 - 12.2018
Hungary	23 (43%)	31 (57%)	03.2011 - 12.2018
Slovakia	41 (75%)	14 (25%)	02.2011 - 12.2018
Total	476 (72%)	182 (28%)	03.2005 - 12.2018

With that being said, having missing data *per se* does not prevent valid inferences from EUCOSpeech. The real problem is not so much the extent of the missing data but rather the missing data process (King et al 2021). The problematic case for unbiased inference arises

if the missing data process is *non-ignorable* (Hobolt and Wratil 2019), that is to say if there are systematic patterns in the missingness of the data that suggest that incumbents may be acting strategically to avoid communicating after an EU summit. Intuitively, missingness would be non-ignorable in our case if missingness is higher for incumbents facing high levels of Euroscepticism, for summits dealing with particularly salient issues, or for summits where the risk of bargaining losses is high. If this were the case, this would suggest that the missing data are non-random and introduce selection bias into our results.

To be clear, it is worth reiterating here that a speech being missing from EUCOSpeech does not mean that the press conference for that particular incumbent did not take place. All it signifies is that the transcript wasn't stored on the government website at the time. It is also worth noting here that missing speech data is a feature of Council politics in the EU. In debates in the Council amongst ministers and permanent representatives, for instance around 50 per cent of all actors do not speak during deliberations (Wratil and Hobolt 2019). Wratil and Hobolt undertake a process to check whether these missing data patterns are non-ignorable which we use as inspiration for our own analysis.

The question we want to address is whether there are patterns in missingness that could introduce selection bias into our results. We run a logit model to ascertain whether we can predict when a speech is likely to be missing. Our unit of analysis is a 'speech opportunity' which we assume is present for each country-summit dyad included in the investigation period. The dependent variable is a binary variable indicating missing speech, coded 1 if the speech is missing from EUCOSpeech and 0 if it is available. We include all the independent variables from the main model in the article (Table 3). Note that as our unit of analysis is the country-summit I code issue salience in a different way, whilst still using the Eurobarometer 'Most Important Issue' question. To do so, I first collected all the Conclusions from the European Council summits in the sample (a total of 86 conclusions/summits). I then coded them according to the issues that appear in the Conclusions from the 'Most Important Issue' question in the Eurobarometer survey. I do not put a limit on the number of issues that can be coded. Some summits just have one issue (e.g. Council Summit 172 in October 2015 that only covered the migration crisis (coded 'Immigration')). Others have up to six issues. The issue salience variable is then created as an average of the salience of all the issues discussed in that particular summit.⁵

On top of the independent variables from the main article, I add one important potential explanatory variable. To conclude whether missingness in the data is nonignorable, it is im-

⁵So for example, the Council Summit 156, on the 25 October 2013, contained discussions on 'the Economic Situation', 'Unemployment', and 'Immigration'. The issue salience for that summit in France is then the average (0.33) of the salience of these individual issues at the time (0.26 for Economic Situation. 0.43 for Immigration and 0.26 for Unemployment).

portant to determine whether summits with a higher risk of bargaining losses are associated with higher levels of missingness. Indeed, missing data may reflect an incumbent's desire to avoid explaining bargaining losses. I therefore code a variable *Risk Of Bargaining Losses* 1 for summits where these are present, and 0 where they are absent. This is of course a somewhat subjective evaluation: the Conclusions themselves do not make reference to whether gains from a particular summit are zero sum. I consider that a summit has a risk of bargaining losses if it falls into one of the following categories. First, I consider negotiations around the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF i.e. the EU budget) to present a risk of bargaining losses. As the MFF explicitly outlines which member states are net contributors and net recipients, and allows a clear comparison with the previous budget allocations, it is one of the clearest manifestations in EU politics of a case where some countries 'win' and some countries 'lose' (Schild 2008). Second, I consider a risk of bargaining losses for instance where a member state is engaged in high profile bilateral negotiations with the EU. Bilateral attempts at renegotiating terms present existing member states with an accommodation dilemma, and these attempts reverberate in the public spheres of other countries (Walter 2021). Altogether, across our sample of countries, I code three negotiations that fit this criteria: Ireland's negotiations surrounding the Constitutional Treaty after it was rejected by referendum, Greece's negotiations for a bailout, and the UK's renegotiation of membership terms, led by David Cameron before the in/out referendum. Altogether, 16 of the 86 summits (19 per cent) are coded as presenting risks of bargaining losses (6 for the MFF, 5 for the bailout, 4 for membership renegotiation, and 3 for the treaty)

I run five logit models, including the CEE countries from Section 5 above to boost the sample size. The first model includes the IVs from the main article, the second model introduces the *Risk of Bargaining Losses* IV, first for any of the cases (model 2) then for each case separately (model 3). The fourth and fifth models only consider *Risk of Bargaining Losses* from the demanding state's side (so the UK for membership, Ireland for referendum, and Greece for bailout - it excludes multilateral negotiations from the MFF). All models include country fixed effects.

The results are reported in Table A8. They show that there is little evidence that heads of government might be avoiding press conferences for summits that present them with difficulties. Higher levels of Euroscepticism (both public and partisan) have no effect on missingness, and speeches are in fact *less likely* to be missing from government websites for summits where the issues of that summit are salient. Crucially, there is no evidence that incumbents might be 'hiding' potential bargaining losses by not publishing speeches after summits where the risk for these losses was high. In fact, if anything we observe the opposite, speeches are more likely to be available for summits discussing the MFF ($p < 0.05$). Whilst speeches surrounding the summits around the UK's membership renegotiation are

Table A8: Logit models of Missing Speeches

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Missing Speech				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Partisan	−0.020	−0.021	−0.026	−0.020	−0.018
Euroscepticism	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Public	−2.019	−1.918	−1.678	−2.012	−2.140
Euroscepticism	(2.316)	(2.357)	(2.483)	(2.340)	(2.257)
Issue	−2.649***	−2.640***	−2.381***	−2.648***	−2.667***
Salience	(0.732)	(0.731)	(0.736)	(0.732)	(0.733)
Public Trust in Government	−1.141	−1.074	−0.908	−1.143	−1.126
	(0.976)	(0.980)	(1.004)	(0.977)	(0.978)
Governing Party	0.216	0.214	0.264	0.217	0.212
EU Position	(0.239)	(0.239)	(0.243)	(0.239)	(0.239)
Governing Party	0.011	0.014	0.012	0.012	0.019
EU Dissent	(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.125)	(0.124)	(0.124)
Rotating President	0.166	0.179	0.268	0.164	0.172
	(0.462)	(0.462)	(0.471)	(0.463)	(0.464)
Unemployment	0.002	0.005	0.014	0.002	0.002
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Election Year	0.404	0.405	0.358	0.404	0.412
	(0.254)	(0.254)	(0.257)	(0.254)	(0.254)
Risk of Bargaining Losses		−0.254		−0.084	
		(0.259)		(0.840)	
MFF Negotiations			−1.364**		
			(0.651)		
Bailout Negotiations			−0.284		0.264
			(0.411)		(1.195)
Membership Negotiations			0.857*		−13.559
			(0.465)		(622.254)
Treaty Negotiations			−0.824		0.387
			(0.688)		(1.365)
Constant	−2.693	−2.668	−3.051	−2.701	−2.682
	(1.862)	(1.862)	(1.903)	(1.864)	(1.859)
Observations	619	619	619	619	619
Country FE (9)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

slightly more likely to be missing for the whole sample ($p < 0.1$), it is unlikely to be down to Cameron 'hiding' potential bargaining losses, although scholars agree the British PM largely failed to get the reforms he desired from his negotiations in Brussels (Mölder, 2018). Indeed, in the models that only include *Risks of Bargaining Losses* from the demanding side (model 5), there is no evidence that speeches surrounding the UK's renegotiation were more likely to be missing than other UK speeches.

To be sure, since by definition we do not observe the unobserved part of the data, non-ignorable missingness cannot be fully ruled out (Wratil and Hobolt 2019). Overall, though the results in Table A8 suggest that missing speeches are unlikely to be the result of incumbents strategically avoiding a press conference or refusing to publish a transcript to hide bargaining losses.

7 Consensus and Qualified Majority Voting in the European Council

The EU consists of two intergovernmental institutions: the Council of the EU (or Council of Ministers), where ministers meet discuss, amend and adopt laws, and the European Council, where heads of government meet to define the general political direction and priorities of the European Union (Lewis 2014, Bulmer and Wessels 2015). Whilst both intergovernmental, their rules of procedure differ. In the Council of Ministers, qualified majority voting is the standard decision-making procedure in most policy areas since the Treaty of Lisbon (Hix and Hoyland 2022). In the European Council, deliberation and consensus-seeking have been institutionalized as core elements of intergovernmental decision making (Bickerton et al 2015, Puetter 2015). The decisions made by the European Council are thus typically achieved through consensus or informal agreements rather than formal voting procedures.

With that being in said, there are situations where the European Council can take a formal vote, in particular for the appointment of high-level EU officials. For instance, the Treaty of Lisbon states that "the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, shall propose to the European Parliament a candidate for President of the Commission" (article 17.5), that "the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, with the agreement of the President of the Commission, shall appoint the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy" (article 18.1), and that "the European Council shall elect its President, by a qualified majority, for a term of two and a half years, renewable once". (Article 15.5)

Whether a decision is taken by qualified majority has the potential to significantly change the credit claiming / blame shifting game. An outvoted government can easily blame others for a decision that goes against the country's interest. I therefore check whether any decision by the European Council is made by (qualified) majority vote during the article's investigation period.

To do so, I first collect official Conclusions from all 86 European Council Summits included in the sample. These were collected from the official Council website (consilium.europa.eu). I then read through the full set of conclusions to capture any reference to a vote being taken. Altogether, *only one summit included a vote*: that of June 2014, where the European Council agreed to nominate Jean Claude Juncker as President of the Commission. The vote passed at 26-2, with David Cameron (UK) and Viktor Orban (HU) voting against.

The rarity of deciding at the European Council through QMV was reflected in media coverage of this episode that described the vote as 'unprecedented' (Reuters 2014). In

the UK, certain newspapers spoke of a 'humiliating defeat' for the British Prime Minister (Guardian 2014). Importantly, the speech made by Cameron after this summit included some of the most explicit instances of blame shifting in the whole sample. The British PM described the decision as a 'serious mistake"... and that he wanted it "on the record that Britain opposed the decision". He concluded that 'this is a bad day for Europe, one that risks undermining the position of national governments, risks undermining the power of national parliaments, and hands new power to the European Parliament."

This observation suggests that the use of QMV could increase blame shifting by making clearer who has 'won' and 'lost' in negotiations. However, for now at least, this is a very rare occurrence at European Council summits. It does though have implications for government communication on the EU by ministers (rather than heads of government), who decide largely by majority in the Council of the EU and where opposition votes, whilst still rare, have become more common (Hagemann et al 2017, Novak 2013).⁶ Whilst this article has focused on heads of government as the most visible figures in domestic politics, analysing how ministers communicate about the EU (and how being outvoted changes their communication style) could be a valuable avenue for future research.

⁶In the period they investigate (between 1999 and 2011) Hagemann et al (2017) find that less than 2 per cent of votes in the Council of Ministers are opposition votes

8 Credit Claiming for Blocking Decisions

The main article provides evidence that national incumbents in the EU are more likely to claim credit for certain *issues*. In particular, governments are likely to claim credit for issues that are salient to their domestic electorates. However, the difference in what governments might claim credit for is not limited to differences between issues. In particular, a government may claim credit for *blocking decisions* and for stopping further integration in certain policy areas. Indeed, whilst the culture of consensus and deliberation in the European Council means forcing a vote on an issue is very rare (see section 7 above), that doesn't mean that governments cannot claim credit for blocking decisions through their negotiation skills, or even by threatening to use their veto. In particular, I hypothesize that Eurosceptic governments are likely to claim credit for blocking decisions.

To test whether Eurosceptic governments are more likely to claim credit for blocking decisions, I perform an additional round of hand coding for all Credit Claiming statements in the sample ($n = 1,316$). I code a binary variable *Blocking Decision* for all statements that make reference to blocking further EU integration in general, or for their country specifically. So for example, I consider obtaining or maintaining an opt out to be part of this coding category. Table A9 provides examples of blocking decisions in the sample. Altogether, 9.6 per cent of Credit Claiming statements are instances of blocking decisions, a small (but not unsubstantial) amount. Note that this sample includes the additional data from CEE countries (see Section 5 in the Appendix).

I run a logit model to test the hypothesis. The main independent variable 'Eurosceptic Government' is coded 1 for leaders of parties who receive less than 3.5 on the CHES 'EU Position' question and 0 otherwise. As in the main article, values for missing years are calculated with linear interpolation (see Table A5). Model 1 includes random effects for countries and incumbents, model 2 includes as controls all the IVs from the main regression table⁷ (see Table A5), model 3 runs the model without the country with the highest number of blocking statements: the UK. Finally, model 4 uses the continuous variable capturing the governing party's EU position rather than the binary 'Eurosceptic Government' variable.

Results show how Eurosceptic governments are more likely to claim credit for blocking decisions. This is true both when using the binary indicator (models 1 to 4) and the continuous indicator capturing parties' EU position (model 5). Results suggest that investigating what governments claim credit for (beyond which issues) could be a valuable avenue for further research).

⁷Note that I do not use EU position (from the CHES) as one of the controls as this is used to determine the 'Eurosceptic Government' variable. Model 4 uses this variable instead.

Table A9: Examples of Blocking Decisions

<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Statement</i>
G.Papandreou	28.10.2010	We have said that the proposal to remove a Member State's voting rights is unacceptable. Indeed, it is even more unacceptable that the right to vote can be completely abolished on all matters concerning the rights of the Member States and the issues on which we decide.
D.Cameron	19.03.2015	I vetoed a treaty that would have harmed Britain's interests I've stopped Britain contributing to the eurozone bail outs and we've stopped attempts to discriminate against those countries outside the Eurozone, not least with our successful legal challenge last month. This is my record in Europe. It's a record of standing up for Britain's national interest, for fighting Britain's corner every step of the way in Brussels and elsewhere.
V.Orban	20.02.2016	Things are getting worse in the West. More people still represent the policy that migrants should be allowed into the territory of the Union and that they should be distributed among the member states by legal means. The voice of those who represented this was extremely strong at the meeting. Preventing this will be the task of the coming weeks, and this will also be the topic of the March EU summit.
G. Brown	22.10.2007	The protections we have negotiated defend the British national interest. We are putting in place new procedures to lock in our protection of these interests. We will oppose any further proposals for institutional change in the European Union. We will lead the debate in Europe to move to a new agenda of new priorities that focus on the economic and social needs of our citizens.

Table A10: Logit Model of Blocking Decisions

	Without Controls	With Controls	Without UK	With EU Position
Eurosceptic Government	3.143*** (0.854)	2.425** (1.122)	4.135*** (1.378)	
Governing Party EU Position				−1.437*** (0.405)
Constant	−3.584*** (0.460)	−5.312*** (1.197)	−6.568*** (1.306)	3.680 (2.566)
Observations	1,316	1,047	899	1,047
Country RE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incumbent RE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

9 EU Communication in Other Venues

In the main article’s discussion section, I consider whether the findings in this article might simply be ‘summit-specific’. That is to say, that national governments may be reluctant to criticise or blame the EU at a press conference in Brussels, but may be more willing to do so in more domestic public settings, such as a national newspaper or TV show. Analysing how governments present the EU in other communication venues would add confidence to the generalisability of this article’s findings.

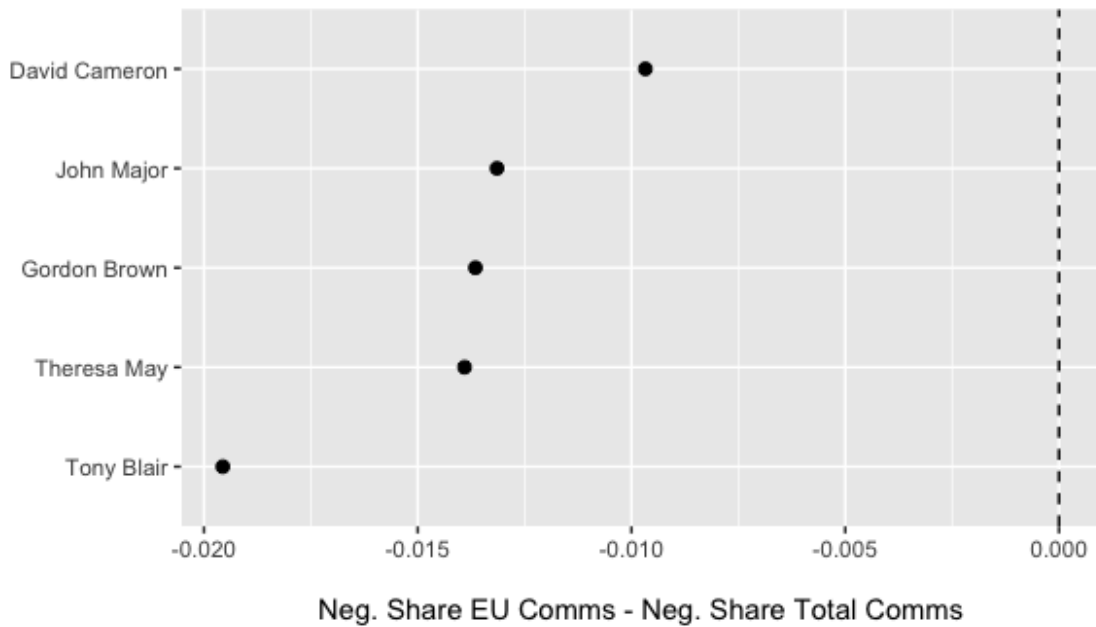
In terms of additional empirics, collecting supplementary media data simply for the purpose of this article would unfortunately be prohibitively expensive, involving substantial subscription costs to platforms such as LexisNexis or Factiva. However, I do add one piece of evidence that lends plausibility to the idea that the patterns we see here are not just summit specific. To do so I leverage EU communication by heads of government in a purely domestic setting: national parliaments. National parliaments are a key arena of domestic political contestation (Proksch and Slapin 2015). They are also arenas the media pay attention to, particularly during high profile plenary debates, where politicians are frequently described as ‘playing to the gallery’ to send a signal to voters (Osnabruegge et al 2022).

To add plausibility to the idea that governments do not endlessly ‘bash Brussels’ in more domestic communication venues, I take the case of the UK, a country with high levels of Euroscepticism where the confrontational nature of parliamentary institutions like PMQs present both opportunities and (seemingly) incentives for heads of government to shift blame toward the EU. I use automated text analysis to compare Prime Ministers’ EU communication with the rest of their usual parliamentary communication. If heads of government in the UK do indeed use plenary debates as an opportunity to bash Brussels and scapegoat the EU, then we would expect their EU parliamentary communication to be more negative than their usual parliamentary communication.

To perform this analysis, I use keyword in context (Benoit 2012) to identify all EU statements made by heads of government in the House of Commons between 1991 and 2018. I identify an EU statement as a three sentence passage where a PM makes a direct reference to the EU, using validated dictionaries of EU level terms (Rauh and De Wilde 2018). Through this method I identify 10,406 EU statements by national leaders (1,484 for John Major, 2,000 for Tony Blair, 488 for Gordon Brown, 2,750 for Cameron, 3,684 for May). I then use a sentiment dictionary (Young and Soroka 2012) to compare this EU communication to the rest of their parliamentary communication. To do so, I collect all 42,481 speeches made by these Prime Ministers during the same time period (1991 - 2018).

Figure A2 plots the difference between the share of negative words in PMs’ EU com-

Figure A4: British PMs Use *Less* Negative Language when Talking About the EU



Source: 42,481 speeches and 10,406 statements on the EU by PMs in the House of Commons (1991-2018)

munication minus the share of negative words in their total parliamentary communication. A positive value means PMs use more negative language when talking about the EU, a negative value means PMs use less negative language. The figure shows that British PMs actually use *less* negative language when talking about the EU compared to their usual parliamentary communication. This is true for both Labour and Conservative PMs, and for both PMs at the beginning and end of our investigation period. The figure also lends face validity to the method: David Cameron, whose party was wracked by infighting over Europe, has the smallest difference in negative tone between his EU communication and his total. Whereas for Tony Blair, considered one of the UK's most pro-European leaders, the difference is large.

To check whether PMs use parliamentary debates as an opportunity for credit claiming, I also identify the ten EU statements with the highest positive sentiment for each PM. I find that several of these statements are instances of credit claiming. Table A2 presents a selection of these statements. These include John Major claiming credit for his negotiations over the Maastricht treaty, and Tony Blair claiming credit for opt outs in matters of European defence. These examples show that at least in some cases the high levels of positive sentiment in EU statements is linked to national leaders praising themselves for positive outcomes delivered on the European stage.

Table A11: Examples of Credit Claiming in the British House of Commons

<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>EU Statement</i>
D.Cameron	23.03.2015	Just as we are acting in our national interest at home, so we have acted to protect our national interest in Europe, too: we have cut the EU budget for the first time in its history; we got Britain out of the euro bail-out schemes; we stopped attempt to discriminate against EU countries outside outside the eurozone, not least with our successful legal challenge last month.
J. Major	29.06.1992	It makes no commitment to the doubling of resources that the Commission had proposed. All Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the Maastricht Treaty. At Maastricht we won agreement to the principle of subsidiarity and its inclusion in the treaty.
T. Blair	24.03.2003	I would point out to the right hon Gentleman that, as a result of the agreement that we secured, there is no question of British forces being committed in any European defence effort without the express permission in each individual instance of the British Government.

These results should be interpreted cautiously given their reliance on automated methods which cannot definitely capture attribution of responsibility and therefore credit and blame. However, they do add some plausibility to the idea that findings in this article are not simply 'summit-specific'. Even in a purely domestic setting, incumbents in the UK (widely considered one of the most Eurosceptic countries) do not seem to use mentions of the EU as an opportunity to 'Brussels-bash' (otherwise we would expect the use of negative language to be higher for EU statements). In fact, these leaders use *less* negative language when talking about the EU compared to their usual parliamentary communication.

10 Robustness Tests

Table A12: Fixed Effects Regression Results

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Claim	Share	Claim	Share	Claim	Share
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Partisan Euroscepticism	0.028*** (0.006)	−0.022*** (0.008)	0.033*** (0.007)	−0.022** (0.009)	0.040* (0.021)	−0.035* (0.021)
Public Euroscepticism	3.165*** (0.900)	0.192 (0.806)	2.125** (1.016)	0.976 (0.930)	1.406 (1.161)	1.559 (1.061)
Issue Salience			1.046*** (0.178)	−0.541*** (0.187)	1.427*** (0.201)	−0.554*** (0.200)
Public Trust in Government	−0.864*** (0.315)	0.702** (0.307)	−0.902** (0.354)	0.863** (0.345)	0.483 (0.448)	0.688 (0.440)
Governing Party EU position	−0.262*** (0.098)	−0.181* (0.105)	−0.560*** (0.118)	−0.013 (0.120)	0.393 (0.263)	0.217 (0.308)
Governing Party EU dissent	−0.005 (0.053)	−0.203*** (0.048)	−0.118* (0.062)	−0.095* (0.054)	−0.100 (0.114)	−0.037 (0.122)
Rotating Presidency	−0.267 (0.209)	0.713*** (0.174)	−0.418* (0.244)	0.582*** (0.209)	−0.275 (0.255)	0.584*** (0.220)
Unemployment	−0.057*** (0.018)	0.019 (0.017)	−0.058*** (0.020)	0.020 (0.019)	−0.030 (0.024)	0.009 (0.023)
Election Year	0.098 (0.085)	−0.248*** (0.084)	0.029 (0.097)	−0.189** (0.095)	−0.026 (0.103)	−0.173* (0.098)
Constant	−2.257*** (0.815)	1.026 (0.819)	−0.115 (0.962)	−0.444 (0.943)	−6.082*** (1.807)	−1.986 (2.068)
Observations	5,943	5,943	4,544	4,544	4,544	4,544
Country FE (7)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incumbent FE (21)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A13: Random Effects Regression Results

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Claim	Share	Claim	Share	Claim	Share
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Partisan Euroscepticism	0.026*** (0.006)	−0.020*** (0.007)	0.030*** (0.007)	−0.018** (0.008)	0.031** (0.012)	−0.018** (0.009)
Public Euroscepticism	2.685*** (0.908)	0.768 (0.821)	1.604 (1.026)	1.765* (0.938)	0.204 (1.083)	2.080** (0.970)
Issue.Salience			1.047*** (0.177)	−0.562*** (0.186)	1.349*** (0.196)	−0.570*** (0.191)
Public Trust in Government	−0.847*** (0.312)	0.586* (0.305)	−0.877** (0.351)	0.676** (0.345)	0.179 (0.406)	0.558 (0.387)
Governing Party EU position	−0.257*** (0.096)	−0.210** (0.103)	−0.538*** (0.116)	−0.081 (0.120)	0.152 (0.193)	−0.096 (0.149)
Governing Party EU dissent	−0.014 (0.052)	−0.199*** (0.047)	−0.126** (0.061)	−0.103** (0.052)	−0.023 (0.084)	−0.096 (0.062)
Rotating Presidency	−0.261 (0.209)	0.712*** (0.174)	−0.410* (0.243)	0.574*** (0.208)	−0.283 (0.252)	0.593*** (0.214)
Unemployment	−0.045** (0.018)	−0.0001 (0.018)	−0.044** (0.020)	−0.009 (0.021)	−0.007 (0.021)	−0.016 (0.022)
Election Year	0.088 (0.085)	−0.236*** (0.083)	0.018 (0.097)	−0.171* (0.095)	−0.051 (0.101)	−0.153 (0.096)
Constant	−0.894 (0.811)	0.813 (0.795)	1.086 (0.955)	−0.229 (0.927)	−2.905** (1.378)	−0.225 (1.119)
Observations	5,943	5,943	4,544	4,544	4,544	4,544
Country RE (7)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incumbent RE (21)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A14: Regression Results with Summit Random Effects

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Claim	Share
	(1)	(2)
Partisan Euroscepticism	0.033*** (0.013)	−0.020** (0.010)
Public Euroscepticism	2.244 (1.367)	1.704 (1.091)
Issue Salience	1.427*** (0.207)	−0.545*** (0.197)
Public Trust in Government	−0.014 (0.448)	0.816** (0.366)
Governing Party EU Position	−0.266 (0.194)	−0.027 (0.125)
Governing Party EU Dissent	−0.028 (0.085)	−0.114** (0.058)
Rotating Presidency	−0.242 (0.270)	0.532** (0.221)
Unemployment	−0.063** (0.026)	0.009 (0.021)
Election Year	0.069 (0.118)	−0.145 (0.103)
Constant	−2.330 (1.491)	−0.460 (0.994)
Observations	4,544	4,544
Country Fixed Effects (7)	Yes	Yes
Incumbent Random Effects (21)	Yes	Yes
Summit Random Effects (86)	Yes	Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A15: Regression Results with CEE countries

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Claim	Share	Claim	Share	Claim	Share
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Partisan Euroscepticism	0.017*** (0.006)	−0.020*** (0.007)	0.022*** (0.007)	−0.020** (0.009)	0.020* (0.011)	−0.020** (0.009)
Public Euroscepticism	3.083*** (0.851)	0.192 (0.786)	2.103** (0.959)	1.064 (0.907)	1.104 (1.066)	1.064 (0.907)
Issue Salience			0.968*** (0.172)	−0.489*** (0.183)	1.247*** (0.190)	−0.489*** (0.183)
Public Trust in Government	−0.190 (0.289)	0.476* (0.289)	−0.345 (0.328)	0.595* (0.326)	0.454 (0.383)	0.595* (0.326)
Governing Party EU Position	−0.106 (0.087)	−0.230** (0.097)	−0.342*** (0.105)	−0.122 (0.111)	0.182 (0.169)	−0.122 (0.111)
Governing Party EU Dissent	0.032 (0.047)	−0.210*** (0.044)	−0.059 (0.056)	−0.135*** (0.050)	−0.005 (0.074)	−0.135*** (0.050)
Rotating Presidency	0.121 (0.169)	0.541*** (0.162)	−0.046 (0.201)	0.314 (0.197)	−0.091 (0.212)	0.314 (0.197)
Unemployment	−0.016 (0.016)	0.006 (0.016)	−0.021 (0.018)	0.002 (0.018)	−0.014 (0.021)	0.002 (0.018)
Election Year	0.070 (0.081)	−0.263*** (0.081)	−0.008 (0.092)	−0.205** (0.092)	−0.061 (0.097)	−0.205** (0.092)
Constant	−3.364*** (0.733)	1.387* (0.759)	−1.637* (0.868)	0.392 (0.873)	−4.854*** (1.319)	0.392 (0.873)
Observations	6,496	6,496	4,961	4,961	4,961	4,961
Country FE (9)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incumbent RE (25)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A16: Regressions Results without UK

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Claim	Share	Claim	Share
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Partisan Euroscepticism	0.018* (0.009)	−0.012 (0.011)	0.026* (0.014)	−0.012 (0.012)
Public Euroscepticism	2.520** (1.073)	1.248 (0.980)	1.510 (1.190)	1.248 (0.980)
Issue Salience	0.898*** (0.188)	−0.421** (0.195)	1.196*** (0.204)	−0.421** (0.196)
Public Trust in Government	−0.895** (0.365)	0.966*** (0.350)	0.244 (0.429)	0.966*** (0.350)
Governing Party EU position	−0.390** (0.171)	−0.218 (0.183)	0.342 (0.300)	−0.218 (0.183)
Governing Party EU dissent	−0.163** (0.073)	−0.102* (0.060)	0.076 (0.120)	−0.102* (0.060)
Rotating Presidency	−0.459* (0.244)	0.612*** (0.209)	−0.308 (0.254)	0.612*** (0.209)
Unemployment	−0.052** (0.021)	0.012 (0.019)	−0.035 (0.023)	0.012 (0.019)
Election Year	−0.050 (0.104)	−0.122 (0.099)	−0.108 (0.109)	−0.122 (0.099)
Constant	−0.918 (1.266)	0.689 (1.276)	−6.144*** (2.232)	0.689 (1.276)
Observations	4,062	4,062	4,062	4,062
Country FE (6)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incumbent RE (18)	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A17: Regressions Results with Interaction

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Claim (1)	Share (2)	Claim (3)	Share (4)	Claim (5)	Share (6)
Partisan Eurocepticism	0.026*** (0.006)	−0.022*** (0.008)	0.031*** (0.007)	−0.022** (0.009)	0.035*** (0.012)	−0.022** (0.009)
Public Eurocepticism	−2.153 (2.777)	−5.562 (3.399)	−5.406* (3.226)	−2.020 (3.750)	0.111 (3.579)	−2.019 (3.750)
Governing Party EU Position	−0.643*** (0.212)	−0.555** (0.237)	−1.088*** (0.244)	−0.214 (0.270)	−0.283 (0.321)	−0.214 (0.270)
Issue Salience			1.029*** (0.178)	−0.547*** (0.188)	1.287*** (0.196)	−0.546*** (0.188)
Public Trust in Government	−0.707** (0.326)	0.873*** (0.322)	−0.690* (0.367)	0.951*** (0.362)	0.154 (0.412)	0.951*** (0.362)
Governing Party EU Dissent	−0.015 (0.053)	−0.210*** (0.048)	−0.130** (0.062)	−0.100* (0.054)	−0.021 (0.082)	−0.100* (0.054)
Rotating Presidency	−0.265 (0.210)	0.726*** (0.175)	−0.406* (0.244)	0.590*** (0.209)	−0.281 (0.252)	0.590*** (0.209)
Unemployment	−0.061*** (0.018)	0.018 (0.017)	−0.063*** (0.020)	0.019 (0.019)	−0.045** (0.023)	0.019 (0.019)
Election Year	0.079 (0.086)	−0.265*** (0.084)	0.006 (0.098)	−0.198** (0.095)	−0.029 (0.102)	−0.198** (0.095)
Public Eurocepticism* Gov. Party EU Position	0.942** (0.465)	0.972* (0.556)	1.315** (0.534)	0.510 (0.618)	0.228 (0.597)	0.510 (0.618)
Constant	0.085 (1.411)	3.333** (1.546)	3.137* (1.629)	0.797 (1.770)	−2.054 (2.194)	0.797 (1.770)
Observations	5,943	5,943	4,544	4,544	4,544	4,544
Country FE (7)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incumbent RE (21)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A18: Regr. Results with Country Coefficients (from Polynomial Quadratic Model)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Claim	Share	Claim	Share
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Partisan Euroscepticism	0.031*** (0.007)	−0.015* (0.009)	0.031*** (0.008)	−0.022** (0.010)
Public Euroscepticism	3.138*** (0.895)	0.457 (0.818)	2.176** (1.023)	0.982 (0.946)
Issue Salience			1.197*** (0.187)	−0.563*** (0.189)
Germany	−1.085*** (0.263)	−0.100 (0.168)	−1.350*** (0.291)	−0.192 (0.190)
Denmark	0.415* (0.235)	−0.686*** (0.217)	−0.031 (0.264)	−0.479* (0.247)
Spain	1.528*** (0.307)	−1.001*** (0.250)	1.175*** (0.337)	−0.869*** (0.285)
Greece	0.584*** (0.206)	−1.060*** (0.227)	0.522** (0.232)	−0.865*** (0.254)
Ireland	0.932*** (0.201)	−0.885*** (0.169)	0.710*** (0.223)	−0.828*** (0.199)
United Kingdom	−1.217*** (0.350)	0.026 (0.341)	−1.464*** (0.424)	0.537 (0.387)
Year	−0.045 (0.060)	−0.039 (0.055)	−0.092 (0.074)	0.039 (0.068)
I(Year ²)	0.002 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)	0.007* (0.004)	−0.003 (0.004)
Constant	−1.087 (0.825)	0.956 (0.831)	0.819 (0.970)	−0.188 (0.962)
Observations	5,943	5,943	4,544	4,544
Pol. and Ec. Controls from Main Model	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01