

Publication

Executive power in European Union politics

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

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