

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY? ASSESSING THE STABILITY OF THE BELIEFS AND VALUES OF INDIVIDUAL BUREAUCRATS

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Draft outline

Abstract: *The settled view in the public administration literature is that the beliefs and the values of bureaucrats are largely stable, at least in normal times. Yet this understanding may do little more than reflect the availability or limitations of existing data. Using data derived from surveys of bureaucrats working in the same public institution conducted six years apart, this paper uses a new technique to test whether the beliefs and values of individual personnel do indeed remain the same over time. It finds not only that the perceptions, beliefs and values of bureaucrats can and do change, but that their beliefs and values are significantly more volatile than hypotheses derived from the two main theoretical perspectives would anticipate, while the hypotheses derived from a third new approach that emphasizes responsiveness are confirmed.*

Although their beliefs and values have attracted attention since Weber, bureaucrats are depicted as essentially conservative in much of the public administration scholarship. Not only are they wary about or opposed to changes to the status quo, their views, values and beliefs are thought to be relatively unchanging, at least in normal times. These assumptions inform multiple studies of bureaucrats and bureaucratic behavior. They are also enshrined in the main theoretical perspectives. While sociological institutionalism suggests that, according to a logic of appropriateness, individual bureaucrats invariably subscribe to pre-existing organizational norms, historical institutionalism anticipates long periods of stability where the views, values and beliefs of bureaucrats remain relatively constant, but are likely to be punctuated periodically by exogenous shocks that bring about change, adjustment and eventually a new equilibrium.

Curiously, although an alternative conception of the civil servant as a responsive individual, adaptable to new conditions and capable of learning, is not implausible, it has rarely been advanced. As a result, the conservative image of the bureaucrat has remained largely untested. In view of the practical difficulties involved in examining individual level change over time within a workforce of hundreds or thousands, the absence of such an investigation is perhaps not surprising. The availability of new data, however, makes such an enquiry possible.

This paper tests the dominant wisdom in the literature that bureaucrats are essentially conservative. Drawing on data from two large-scale surveys conducted within the same public administration – the European Commission -- at an interval of six years, it examines the responses of individual bureaucrats to determine whether they are in fact unchanging. The breadth of questions asked produced data that is sufficiently rich for it be possible to investigate a varied and extensive range of dispositions – not only views and beliefs in the sense of perceptions, but also values; that is, normative commitments. It finds, contrary to the

prevailing wisdom, that the beliefs and the values of bureaucrats can and do change over time. While there is little support at all for the sociological institutionalist perspective, the findings confirm some hypotheses derived from historical institutionalism; namely, that an external shock may produce change. That changes are also observed in the absence of an external shock provides further grounds for establishing an alternative to the conception of the civil servant as conservative.

The discussion that follows is organized into four sections. The first part reviews the existing literature and highlights the extent to which it depicts bureaucrats as conservative. It discusses several questions that have been unanswered or unaddressed by scholars. The second introduces the study of the European Commission, the two surveys, and the questions that they posed to the organization's workforce. The data and methods are described in the third. A fourth presents and discusses the results.

BELIEF AND VALUE STABILITY AMONG BUREAUCRATS: THE EXISTING LITERATURE AND BEYOND

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With perhaps a single exception, the prevailing wisdom in existing scholarship is that the beliefs and values of bureaucrats, where they are directly theorised, tend to be stable and unchanging -- at least in normal times. In the wider public administration literature, by contrast, the position is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, the beliefs and values of individual bureaucrats are important; on the other, they need to be subjugated and suppressed. Together with more practical considerations concerning the challenges associated with would-be research programmes, this approach accounts for the relative neglect of the substance of these beliefs and values in the wider literature.

Bureaucrats and the new institutionalisms

From discussions of bureaucrats ranging from socialization to attitudes to reform, two variants of the new institutionalism -- sociological and historical institutionalism -- are considered to offer theoretical perspectives on attitudes and behaviour. Both tend to suggest strong stability in the beliefs and values of bureaucrats.

Sociological institutionalism articulates this view most strongly. Emphasizing a logic of appropriateness that is defined at the system level, it holds that organizations tend to inculcate individual employees into pre-existing norms and values. When organizations confront changes in the external environment, for example, individuals configure their responses by interpreting them through these norms and values. The strong assumption is that the beliefs and values of bureaucrats, because they are aligned with those of the organization, are likely to be enduring.

Historical institutionalism takes a slightly different approach. It argues that long periods of stability are punctuated at irregular intervals by exogenous shocks. The latter disrupt the existing equilibrium, there is a short period of instability and adaptation, which is followed by movement towards and the establishment of a new equilibrium. At the individual level, the beliefs and values of bureaucrats remain stable for the most part -- during what might be described as normal times -- and change only with the advent of an external shock.

For both perspectives, stability is the normal state of affairs. Neither allows for the possibility that there is greater scope for bureaucrats to modify or change their beliefs or values, or that bureaucrats may be in fact be more adaptable in the way in which they interpret how the world is or how it ought to be. Neither seems able to countenance the possibility that bureaucrats may change their views through learning or in response to internally-driven reform programmes.

A third perspective, rational choice institutionalism -- the exception mentioned above -- is somewhat more dynamic and, in contrast to the two variants outlined above, is grounded in methodological individualism. Derived from public choice theory, it anticipates that bureaucrats will adopt attitudes or behaviour that are likely to advance individual interests or those of their bureaux either by maximizing budgets (Niskanen 1971), delivering prestigious or rewarding routine tasks (Dunleavy 1991), by expanding competencies, or increasing material or positional advantage (Bauer 2012; Kassim et al 2013: ch 8).

In practice, however, public choice accounts are also limited. From a Niskanen-style perspective, the motivation driving the behaviour and outlook of individual bureaucrats is invariant. Such an approach is not only conservative, but offers little insight into the substance of beliefs or values. The bureau-shaping model is more promising, but its value is perhaps limited to explaining the attitudes of individual bureaucrats to change (Gains and John 2010) or reform than to understanding beliefs and values other than as strategic outcomes.

Bureaucrats in the public administration literature

Sociological and historical institutionalism have been directly applied to the beliefs and values of individual bureaucrats. By contrast, the wider public administration literature has not tended to engage directly with the substance of what bureaucrats believe. The explanation is perhaps to be found in the preoccupation of scholars in the public administration tradition with behavioural characteristics

Arguably, this tendency started with Max Weber, who combined features of organizational structures and the behavioural characteristics of specialized bureaucrats in his ideal type of rational-legal authority (Weber 1921; Raadschelders 2000). Underlying the bureaucratic credo “sine ira et studio” (“without anger and fondness”) or the consideration that the most important attribute of an official is his or her technical expertise is the assumption that the behaviour of bureaucrats is routinely reinforced and therefore rendered predictable by the organizational environment. On the other side of the coin, learned and acquired administrative behaviour is thought to likewise reinforce and stabilize organizational environments (Simon 1950). The very purpose of establishing a particular administration as an organizational entity can be seen in bringing together a particular structure and specifically trained personnel in order to “mobilize bias” (Schattschneider 1960; Egeberg 2007) that would — in the form of routines or cultures — outlive and overcome individual contingencies and put the weight of the organization permanently behind particular collective purposes.

Moreover, in relating individual characteristics to organizational structures and purposes, individual beliefs, values and attitudes are conceived as constant and unchanging. The behavioural characteristics of individuals are systemized into distinctive motivational types (Downs 1967) in order to explain how specific organizations behave. Although the interaction between structures and the individuals have been extensively theorized and (perhaps to a

lesser degree) empirically researched under the labels of socialization or inculcation (Barnard 1968) or in conjunction with the emergence of the bureaucratic personality (Merton 1940), even in more modern accounts of public sector motivation research (Perry and Wise 1990) after a pre-entry and early-stage adaptation, the personality and beliefs of individuals are thought to reach a certain equilibrium in the permanent intra-organizational interaction, and thus are treated as stable organizational features—that can be observed, empirically researched and taken as determinants to explain organizational behaviour at the macro-level. There are a multitude of examples. The origin of concerns about representative bureaucracy were precisely the fear that the values of conservative bureaucrats would let them to sabotage new labour policies after a change in government (Kingsley 1944); and today the debate about matching the demographic features of a nation (or a supranational entity—see Murdoch et al. 2017) with its respective civil service is based on the hope that executive policies are subsequently influenced by individual attitudes in the aggregate (Wise 2003).

A similar assumption lies behind research on organizational culture (Hofstede 1998) or the public administration classics on the relationship between politicians and top civil servants (Aberbach et al. 1981) and in particular on the policy influence of administrative elites (Putnam 1973). While some doubts about the stability of elite attitudes have been raised (Putnam et al. 1979) the vast majority of approaches still embrace the idea—inspired by the behavioural revolution—that aggregating individual attitudes can explain political phenomenon at a macro- or collective level. Implicitly, even most recent accounts advocating the use experiments in public administration research (Grimmelikhuijsen et al. 2017) need to assume a conception of administrative man as cognitively consistent and stable in attitudes over time in order to justify the usefulness of what is envisaged as a new behavioural public administration approach.

As well as the strong behavioural orientation of the discipline, there is also a more pragmatic element accounting for the neglect of individual bureaucrats and the overwhelming expectation of stability in the attitudes and beliefs of civil servants. First, in order to develop explanations of policy outcomes where administrative features figure as determinants, analysts need solid ground to anchor their analytical strategies. Second, the resource limitations of “normal” comparative PA research should not be overlooked. In order to study attitudes and beliefs individual civil servants in huge numbers need to be interrogated. As well as problems of confidentiality and data protection, such research typically suffers a “synchronic” bias; that is, it needs to be carried out in a certain, usually rather limited time period. Repetition, still more diachronic research strategies, are expensive and rare.

TESTING STABILITY: BELIEFS AND VALUES IN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The possibility of conducting large-scale surveys within a major public bureaucracy presented a rare opportunity to make a significant contribution to understanding the beliefs and values of individual bureaucrats. In two projects on the European Commission conducted by the authors, the first carried out in 2008-2009, the second in 2014, a key ambition was to explore the beliefs and attitudes of personnel across the organization. There were several objectives. The first was to test the accepted wisdom that Commission is populated by zealous federalists, who joined the organization to ‘build Europe’, and who instinctually support the expansion of EU competences and therefore their own power. Although earlier studies had investigated the ideological commitments of Commission staff, they had been based on interviews with a

relatively small number of staff. The ‘European Commission in Question’ sought to use a large-scale survey. Staff were asked questions about their favoured conception of EU governance – an EU where the Commission is the government of Europe, the ‘Community method’, or an EU that is state-centric.

Since the responses to this question alone would not be sufficient, staff were also asked in respect of a number of policy areas where on a scale running from exclusively member state control at one end to EU control at the other, first, where they believed that decision-making authority *actually* resided and second, whether they thought it *should be* located.

A second objective was to look at the philosophical beliefs of Commission staff and in particular their values with respect to economic governance. Where Commission personnel stood had been the subject of debate. Reading across from the literature on national administrations, scholars had been keen to test for social democratic or neoliberal sympathies, and also to determine the extent to which economic preferences on the part of Commission staff, especially in senior levels or in some departments, influenced agenda setting or policy decisions. Borrowing the model used to examine party systems at the national level, staff were asked in the survey to locate themselves on an eleven-point scale running from 0 in support of state intervention to 10 in favour of the market.

An investigation of attitudes within the organization towards the role of the Commission within the EU system was a third objective. Although under the treaties the Commission was responsible both for policy management and policy initiation, Commission personnel had historically accorded a stronger priority to the latter. They identified more closely with the Commission as an *administration de mission* than as an *administration de gestion* (Pisani 1956). As the management functions of the Commission accumulated and the Commission expanded in size, the top leadership in the organization had sought to emphasize the importance of effective policy management and better personnel management. It was only with the Kinnock reforms enacted under the Prodi Commission, however, that there was a meaningful shift in this direction, although both Barroso I and Barroso II continued to stress the importance of both. A decade after the reforms, ‘The European Commission in Question’ sought to test opinion both on whether the Commission gave greater priority to policy management and whether policy management should be regarded as a priority. ‘The European Commission: Facing the Future’ put the same questions towards the end of Barroso II.

A fourth and final objective was to examine how Commission staff perceived the institutional position of the Commission within the EU system. In both surveys, staff were asked their views on a number of propositions concerning the relative power of the Commission, as well as that of the European Parliament, and the member states. The significance is that in the 2008 survey, respondents had the likely effects of the Lisbon Treaty in mind. By 2014, the Lisbon Treaty had been in effect for several years and the EU had implemented a series of measures in response to the financial and economic crisis.

The results of the surveys offered a panoramic view of beliefs and values across the Commission in relation to the constitutional position of the Commission, its institutional role, the locus of decision-making authority, and economic beliefs. Findings from ‘European Commission in Question’ are presented in Kassim *et al* (2013) and from ‘European Commission: Facing the Future’ in Connolly and Kassim (2015). Typically, challenging and contesting prevailing wisdoms in the literature, they also offered an insight into the beliefs and values of

Commission staff at two points in time: before and after the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, before and after the Eurozone crisis, and before and after Barroso's strengthened presidential control over the policy agenda.

Since the surveys were conducted on the condition of strict anonymity and directed at different samples – 'The European Commission in Question' was restricted to administrators in policy-related Directorates-General, while 'The European Commission: Facing the Future' was open to personnel in all staff groupings across the organization -- it is not possible to undertake a longitudinal analysis using the raw data from the two projects to discover whether the beliefs and values of particular individuals had remained stable despite these disruptions. However, it was possible to develop a technique that matched individuals at the two points in time that achieved this goal (Thompson, Connolly, Kassim and Bauer 2017).

DATA AND METHODS

Most of the questions in the two surveys were in a closed format, with specified response options to a structured set of items that were aimed at recording officials' views and opinions of their organization. The few open questions were provided to allow for more expansive responses where a wide range of possible answers were possible and to allow overall comments to be made about the Commission.

For the European Commission in Question (EUCIQ), the 2008 survey, the total population was drawn from the policy-related administrative (AD) staff in Brussels and Luxembourg in September 2008, which numbered 14,730. The target sample was designed to include all senior AD staff with managerial responsibilities (n=1,766) and a random sample of non-management AD staff across 31 Directorates General (DGs) (n=2,855). The random sample was proportionate to gender, age/length of service and member state, and disproportionate to the older member states (EU15) and newer accession states (EU12) in the ratio of 3:1, to ensure an adequate representation of the newer members who joined in 2004 and 2007.

Of this total target sample of 4,621 officials, the final achieved sample was 1,901, representing a 41% response rate of the target sample and 13% of the AD population. The actual numbers of staff within each grade was as follows:

- Cabinet members: 54
- Senior Management (Directors General/Deputy Directors General/Directors): 114
- Advisors/Assistants to Directors General: 81
- Middle Managers (Heads of Unit): 429
- Principal Administrator/Administrator: 1,149
- Others/prefer not to say: 74

The sample was weighted to reflect the population distributions. this ensured that the sample for analysis was representative of seniority, gender, age/length of service, nationality, EU15 / EU12 proportions, and DG (31 policy-related).

The second survey, European Commission: Facing the Future (ECFTF), conducted in 2014 survey, was addressed to every member in Brussels, Luxembourg, Joint Research Centre sites, Delegations, Representations and the Grange in Ireland including non-policy AD officials, temporary agents, contract agents and seconded national experts (n=31,100). The number of

responses totaled 5,631, representing a response rate of 18%. The actual numbers of staff within each grade was as follows:

- Cabinet members: 51
- Senior Management AD (Directors General/Deputy Directors General/Directors): 81
- Middle Management AD (Heads of Unit): 306
- AD official: 2279
- AST official: 1797
- Contract agent: 822
- Temporary agent: 99
- Seconded National Expert: 117
- Others/prefer not to say: 79

The data were weighted to reflect similar characteristics to the 2008 sample, including gender, EU15/EU13 (Croatia had joined since 2008) and category of official.

In order to make meaningful comparisons between the results from the two surveys and to maximise the chances that the responses examined are those of the same individuals, we sought to create ***matched cross-sections***. We restricted the comparison to respondents from the same member states, the same DGs, and the same staff grouping of administrators or policy officers. Given that six years had elapsed between the surveys, we also excluded those employees from the first survey who had retired by 2014 and from the second survey those who were too young to have been working in the Commission in 2008. This reduced the 2008 sample to 1,739 and the 2014 sample to 1,801.

Although it could be argued that this approach is second-best and that ideally we would survey the views of the same panel of individuals at each time point, it is important to recall that both panels and cross-sections suffer from the problem of non-response. This can cause biased estimates of average views and model coefficients, even when weighting is used. Moreover, panels are often affected by attrition, which is typically non-random, as well as conditioning effects, where knowledge and behaviour change as a result of questioning. Moreover, since the surveys were conducted on the condition of strict anonymity -- it is not possible to undertake a longitudinal analysis using the raw data

In our case, we have two cross-sectional datasets. Although we cannot be sure that the respondents in the first are the same individuals as those in the second survey, the low level of staff turnover – together with the use of the parameters described above -- increases the probability that this is the case. As a further robustness check, we use ***pseudo panels***. Here the comparison is between clusters of individuals at the two points in time, selected because they express average or proportional (for dichotomous questions) opinions. The use of pseudo-panels has several advantages where the interest is in aggregate change rather than change at the individual level, since there is an in-built assumption the samples match to some degree.

The pseudo panel clusters are developed using characteristics that are unlikely to change over time. Those with the same characteristics (year of birth, gender and educational background) are combined into clusters and matched across EUCIQ (2008) and ECFTF (2014) (see Thompson, Connolly, Kassim and Bauer, 2017). The clusters are as follows:

- Year of birth: 1943-56; 1957-1962; 1963-1967; 1968-1972 and 1973-1984
- Gender: male; female

- Educational background: Business/economics; STEM; Law; Politics/IR; Other (primarily humanities)

The use of the matched cross section data for 2008 and 2014 makes it possible to assess whether there have been changes in the views expressed– including changes in the distribution of responses – based on the responses of two samples of AD officials who were employed in the Commission at both points in time. The high response rates, weighting to achieve representative samples, and low level of turnover within the Commission workforce, provide a high degree of confidence. The analysis of the pseudo-panel data offers a robustness check. We can test whether on average the views of similar groups of officials – our clusters based on age, gender and educational background – have changed over the same period.

Hypotheses

We test several hypotheses that are based on expected shifts in attitudes, as well as instances where we would not anticipate change, and compare the results from the matched cross-sections with the pseudo panel datasets. Robustness checks are made in relation to: (i) the weighting of the samples; (ii) the composition of the clusters used to define the pseudo-panel, taking nationality as an alternative to birth cohort as a characteristic that is fixed between the two surveys; and (iii) taking a square root transformation in the calculation for the test statistics.

Constitutional change - Lisbon Treaty (agreed Dec 2007; implemented 2009)

H1: Relative institutional power in Europe

H1a: Commission has become more powerful

H1b: Commission losing power to the national capitals

H1b: Commission losing power to the national capitals

Institutional change – shift in the Commission’s traditional role as policy initiator

H2: Institutional change

H2a: Commission’s role is evolving in the direction of policy management

H2b: Commission’s role should focus on managing existing policies

Policy change – preferences over EU competencies in response to global events and policy priorities

H3: Locus of policy making

H3a, H3b and H3c: Agriculture, Asylum and Competition policy

H3d and H3e: Environment, Foreign and Security policy

Economic values – response to the crisis

H4: Economic values changing in response to the economic and financial crisis

RESULTS

Constitutional change

Three separate questions allow us to quantify any sense of power loss to member states and European Parliament due to the Lisbon Treaty: ‘the Commission is more powerful today than ever before’; ‘the Commission is losing power to national capitals’; and ‘the Commission is losing power to the European Parliament’.

Despite the formal shift in institutional power associated with the Lisbon treaty, there is no obvious evidence of change in the perceptions of Commission AD officials (see Figure 1a for the unweighted results for the matched cross section data). Based on the matched cross-section data, it seems that officials were both more likely to agree and disagree with the statement that ‘The Commission is more powerful ... ’ in 2014 than in 2008 but less likely to give neutral responses. There appears to be slightly less agreement and more neutral responses to the question of ‘The Commission is losing power to the European Parliament. The largest changes appear in relation to the question ‘The Commission is losing power to the national capitals’, where there seems to be more agreement and fewer neutral responses. These patterns are confirmed when we explore the results based on the pseudo panels (see Figure 1b), and based on the formal tests we are unable to reject H1a or H1c but accept H1b (Appendix Table 1).

H1a: Commission more powerful

Insufficient evidence for change – this result is consistent across matched cross-section, pseudo panel clusters and weighting.

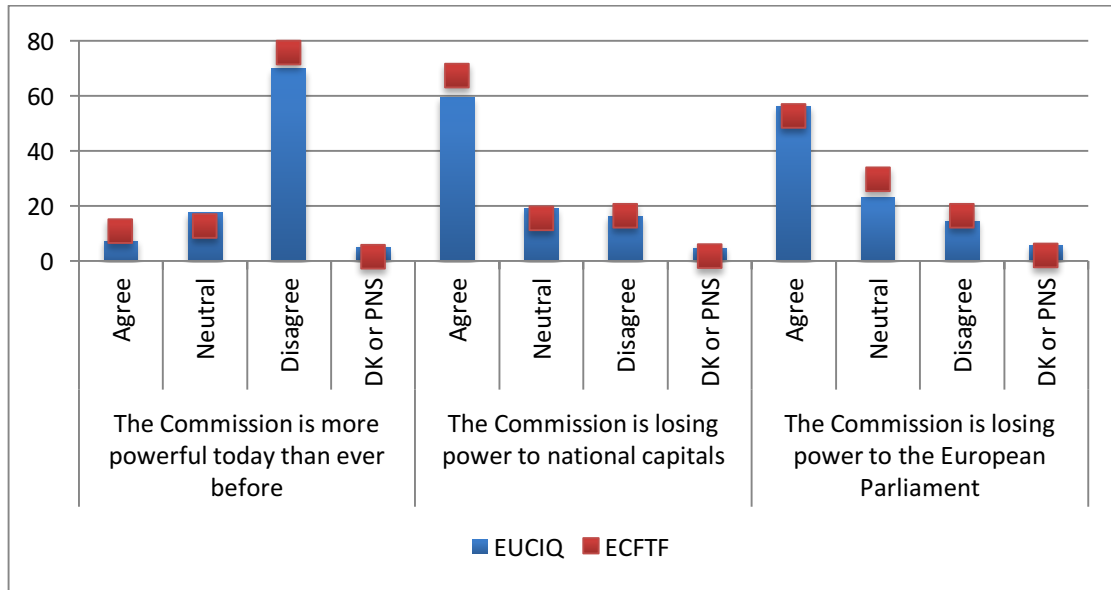
H1b: Commission losing power to the national capitals

Accepted - consistent across matched cross-section, pseudo panel clusters by cohort and weighting. However,

H1c: Commission losing power to the EP

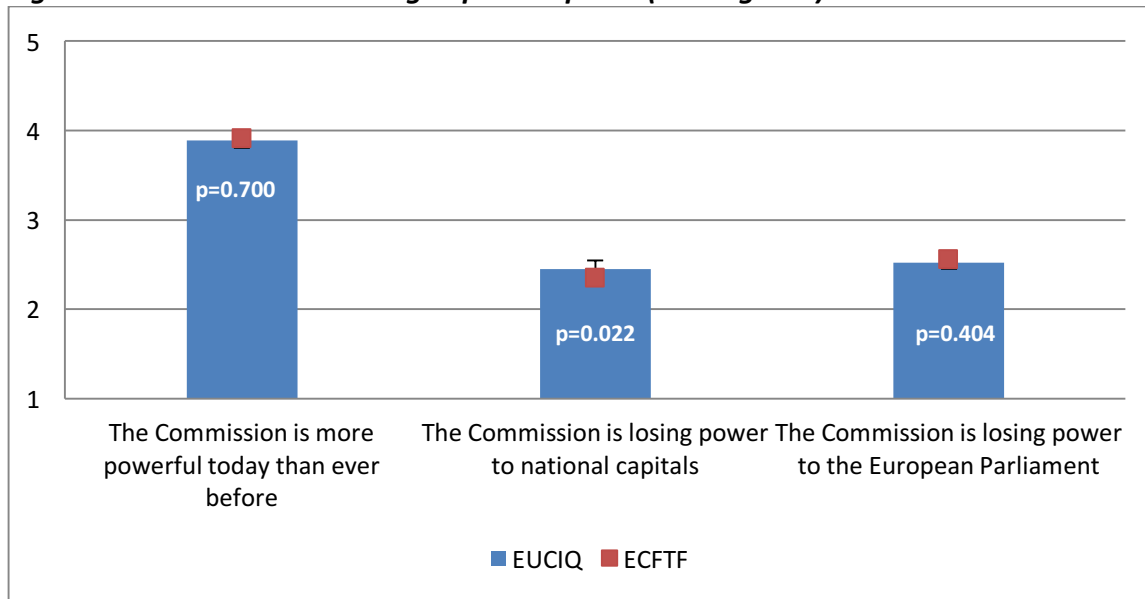
Insufficient evidence for change – although the matched cross-section provides evidence that there has been a shift in the opposite direction, the evidence from the pseudo-panel is insufficient to support this hypothesis, this is consistent across clusters and weighting.

Figure 1a: Constitutional change - matched cross section (unweighted)



Note: DK or PNS = Don't know or prefer not to say

Figure 1b: Constitutional change - pseudo panel (unweighted)



Institutional Change

Over the period in question, there have been important changes in the Commission's role particularly in policy initiation – often associated with the move towards less legislation associated with the shifting priorities of the Commission President (see Kassim *et al* 2016, Becker *et al* 2016). We explore this through an 'is' and 'should' comparison: 'The Commission's role is evolving in the direction of more policy management and coordination, and less policy

conception' and 'The Commission should focus primarily on managing existing policies rather than developing new ones'.

Based on the matched cross-section data there is evidence of change in the perceptions of Commission AD officials (see Figure 2a for the unweighted results for the matched cross section data). There is more agreement than disagreement with the first statement – an objective reflection of the shift in the Commission's role towards policy management and strong disagreement with the second statement a subjective reflection on what the Commission ought to be doing. These patterns are confirmed when we explore the results based on the pseudo panels (see Figure 2b), and based on the formal tests we accept both H2a and H2b (Appendix Table 2).

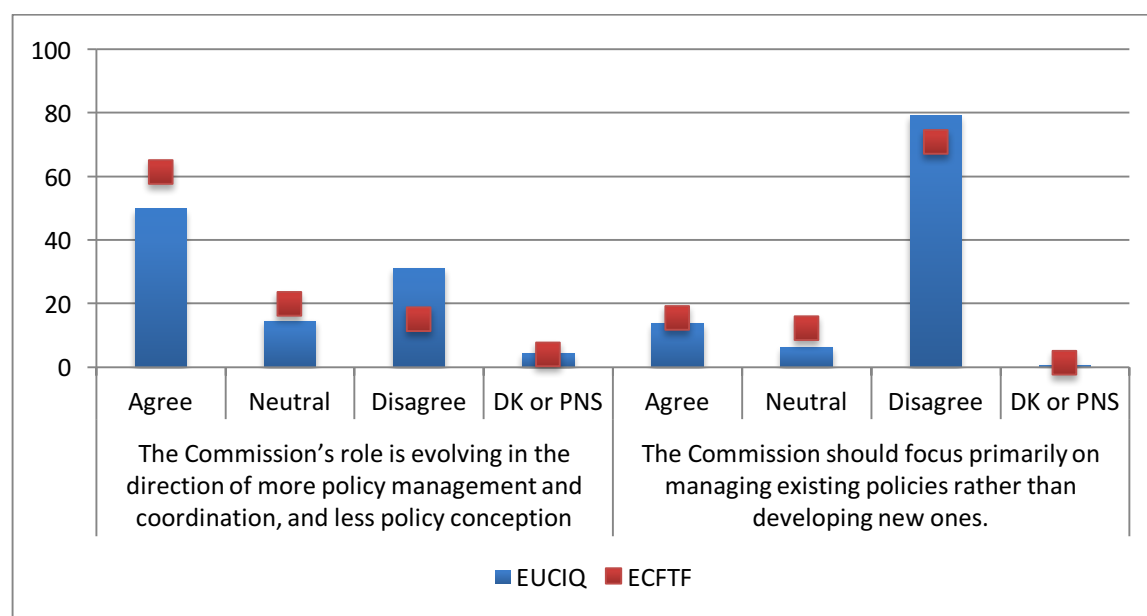
H2a: Commission's role is evolving in the direction of policy management

Accepted – evidence of a shift towards more policy management which is consistent across matched cross-section, pseudo panel clusters and weighting.

H2b: Commission's role should focus on managing existing policies

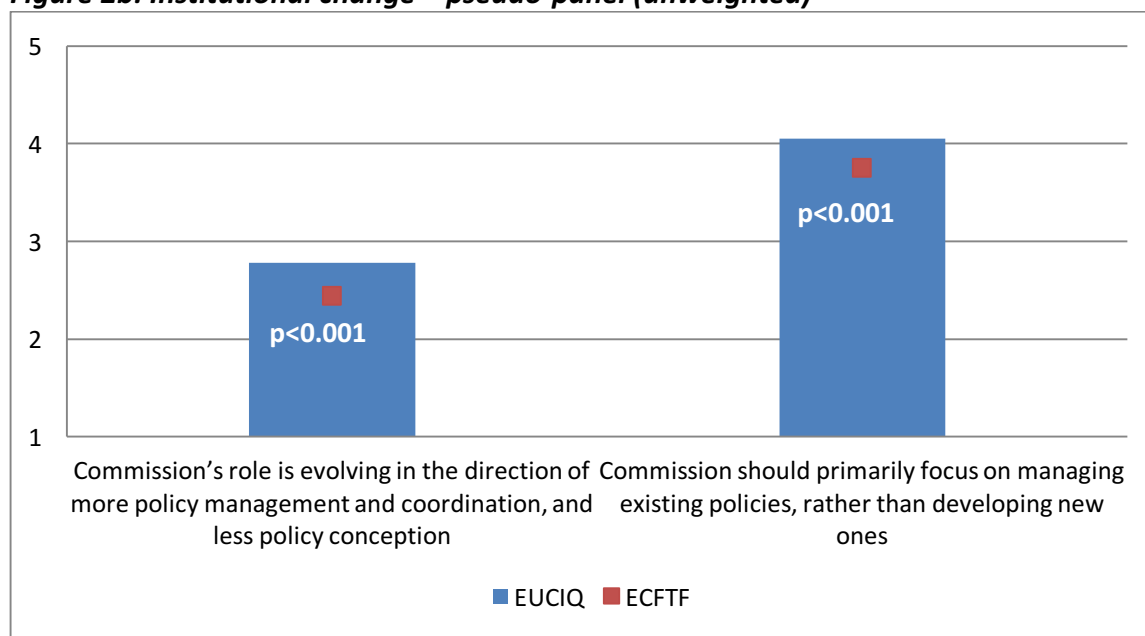
Accepted – evidence of a shift in believing the focus should be more on management which is consistent across matched cross-section, pseudo panel clusters and weighting.

Figure 2a: Institutional change – matched cross section (unweighted)



Note: DK or PNS = Don't know or prefer not to say

Figure 2b: Institutional change – pseudo-panel (unweighted)



Locus of policy making

The years between the surveys saw a series of policy challenges, most obviously the currency and sovereign debt crises but also ongoing negotiations on a global climate change agreement and the humanitarian crises associated with conflict in the Middle East. Preferences on the location of policy were explored through a set of questions which asked respondents where the thought policy competencies were currently located and where, in an ideal world, they would like them located: 'On a scale of 0 to 10: where 0 indicates exclusively at the national or sub-national level and 10 indicates exclusively at the EU level. Please start by giving us your own assessment of where each policy is decided and then indicate where in your view policy should be decided.' We use the difference between the two responses to capture the direction in which the respondents would like to see policy develop.

Five policies areas: agriculture, asylum/immigration, competition, environment and foreign/security, were explored in both surveys – results for the matched cross-section data are illustrated in Figure 3a. In only one of the policy areas, agriculture, do respondents indicate a preference for 'less Europe'. In the other 4 areas we see a preference for 'more Europe', though this is more muted in the case of competition policy where EU competencies are already firmly established. We observe very little change in preferences between 2008 and 2014 in agricultural, asylum and competition policy with statistically significant shifts, towards more policy making at the EU level, in environmental and foreign and security policy only. Our findings are confirmed when we explore the average values for each policy area using the pseudo-panel data, see Figure 3b, and based on the formal tests we are unable to reject H3a-H3c but accept H3d and H3e (presented in the Appendix Table 3).

H3a, H3b and H3c: Agriculture, Asylum and Competition policy

Asylum and Competition policy, there is insufficient evidence for change which is consistent across matched cross-section, pseudo panel clusters and weighting. But there is mixed evidence on Agricultural policy, where there is some evidence to suggest a shift in preference towards more involvement at the EU level.

H3d and H3e: Environment, Foreign and Security policy

Accepted – evidence of a shift in preferences towards more EU decision making in policy in these areas, which is consistent across matched cross-section, pseudo-panel clusters and weighting.

Figure 3a: Difference in where policy should be and is decided (-ve shift to member states, +ve shift to EU) – matched cross section

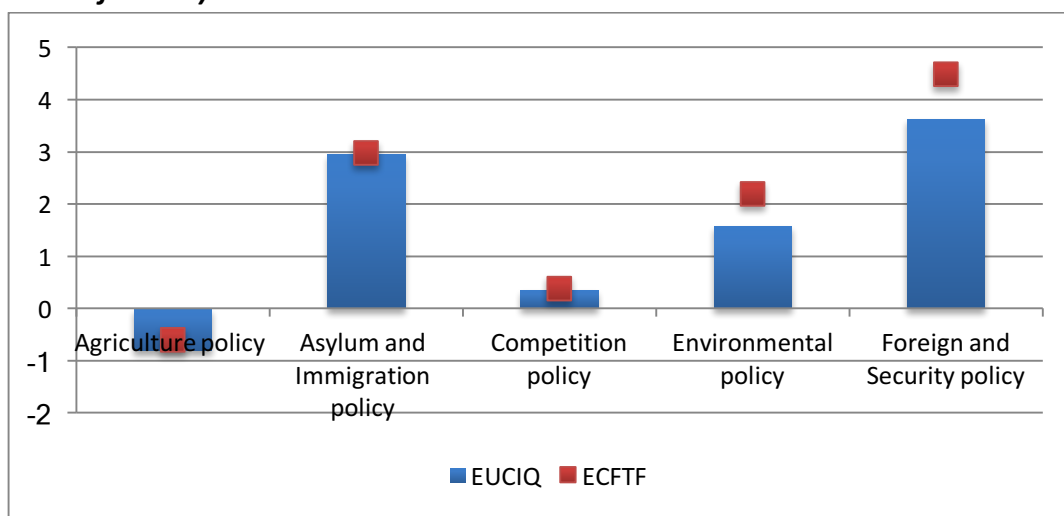
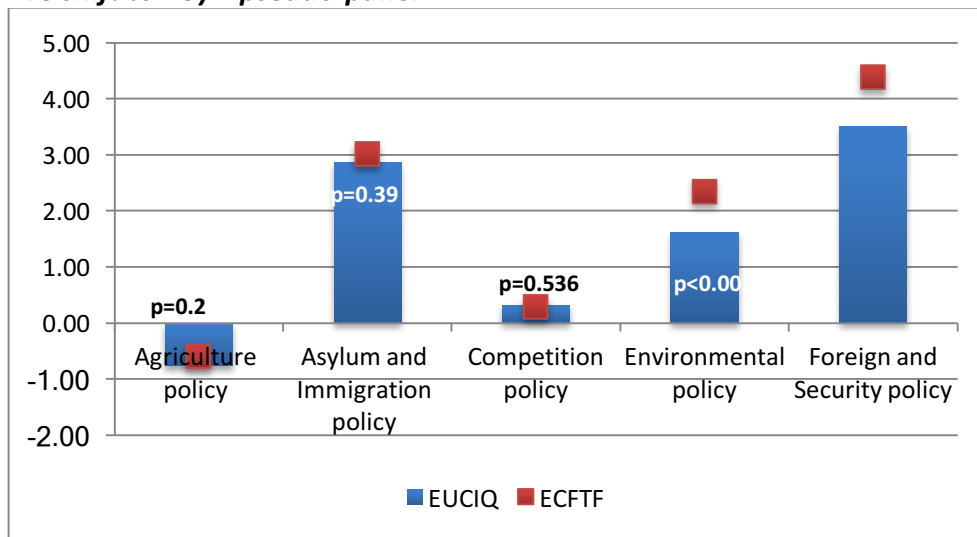


Figure 3b: Difference in where policy should be and is decided (-ve shift to member states, +ve shift to EU) – pseudo-panel



Economic values

One obvious way in which the economic and financial crisis may have affected beliefs is through preferences on the role of government. Economic philosophies were examined through the question: 'People often think of themselves in terms of their personal philosophical stance on economic issues. Some favour an active role for government on economic policy questions. Others look primarily to markets. Where would you place yourself in terms of economic philosophy on a scale of 0-10, where 0 represents a greater role for government and 10 a greater role for markets?'.

Based on the evidence from the match cross-section data (see Figure 4a) the economic values of AD officials in the Commission do appear to have changed between 2008 and 2014, with responses to the question on economic philosophy seeming to move towards more involvement of government. Views appear to be more polarized in 2014 than in 2008, there is very little difference in the distribution of preferences in the range 6-10, but the proportion offering the middle value 5 falls significantly and there is an increase in the shares offering values 2-4. These patterns are also observed when looking at the evidence from the pseudo panels (see Figure 4b), and based on the formal tests we accept H4 (presented in the Appendix Table 4).

H4: Economic values changed in response to the economic and financial crisis

Accepted - shift to government over markets, which is consistent across matched cross-section, pseudo panel clusters and weighting.

Figure 4a: Economic values – matched cross section

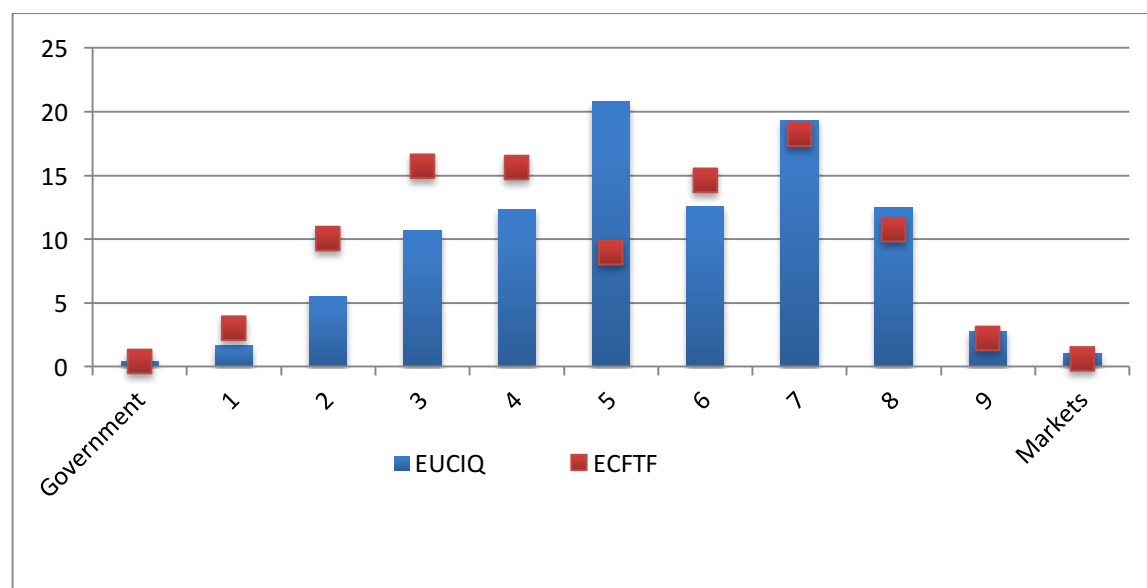
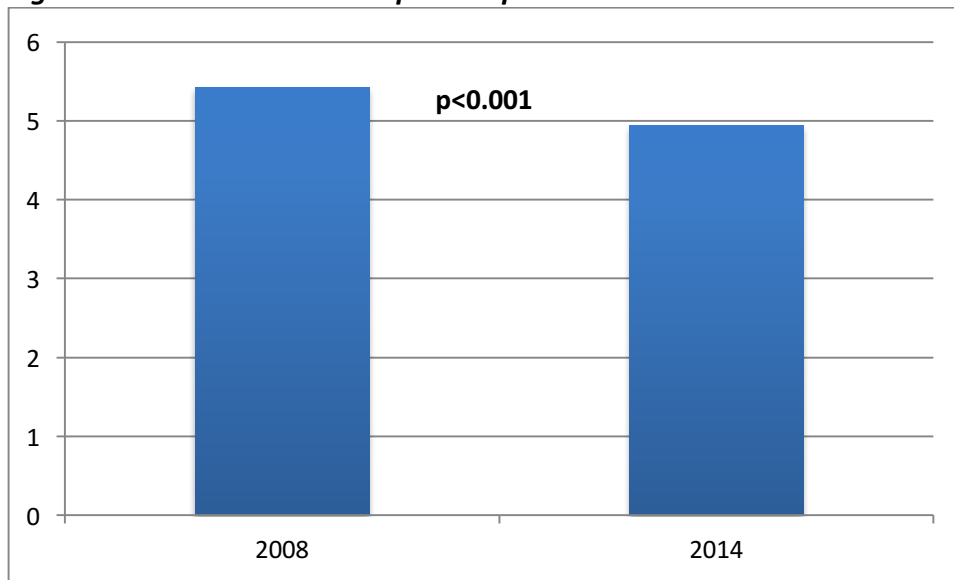


Figure 4b: Economic values – pseudo-panel



CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to make several contributions to the existing scholarship on bureaucrats and bureaucracy. First, it contests a widely held view in the literature and shows, contrary to the dominant perspective, that the beliefs and values of individual bureaucrats can and do change. Although the prevailing wisdom takes both to be stable, this assumption has rarely been tested empirically. Based on an analysis of responses from two surveys administered to the staff of the European Commission six years apart, this paper challenges this view. Over a range of beliefs and values relating variously to constitutional change, institutional change, the locus of decision-making authority, and models of economic governance, it finds variation in the extent to which the dispositions of individual bureaucrats remain stable. Whereas views on constitutional change and the relative power of institutions and actors showed little discernable change, there is increased recognition of a shift in the Commission's role and a greater acceptance of more policy management and less policy initiation, mixed views on where decision-making authority should be located in five policy areas, and a significant shift towards a greater role for governments over markets.

Moreover, although the changes in beliefs are important, the shifts in values are even more significant. It is not only that respondents believe that there has been a shift in the Commission's role, but that they think that the Commission *should* place a greater emphasis on policy management and not focus primarily on policy initiation. Moreover, a significant number who believed that markets should predominate in the economy now believe in a greater role for government. An essentially internal factor -- the efforts of Commission leadership to persuade staff and others that the Commission needed to be more sparing and more selective in the initiatives it proposed, given the political climate -- provides a plausible explanation for the first, while an external shock -- the impact of the financial and economic crisis -- may well account for the second.

Second, the paper shows that existing theoretical perspectives are of limited use either in explaining the change or in accounting for the variation within the range of beliefs or values. The results which include changes as well as stability in views offers no support for sociological institutionalism, which predicts no change along any dimension. Our findings are more consistent with historical institutionalism which predicts no change except in case of economic values where the crisis is an external shock and perhaps constitutional change. But we observe changes have occurred even without an external shock – both institutional change and in the locus of some policy areas. We see this as providing support for a third model, the adaptable or responsive bureaucrat – where views evolve in response to external and internal stimuli.

Third, the paper demonstrates the value of empirical data in advancing the understanding of bureaucrats and bureaucracy. At the most fundamental level, the collection of individual-level data makes it possible to validate or challenge conceptual and theoretical claims that have previously gone untested. It also shows the value of large representative samples. Although the two surveys were separate undertakings – confidentiality and data protection commitments prevented the collection of panel data – it was possible to pioneer a new technique, namely the use of matched cross-sections and pseudo-panels, in order to track change over time. The repeat matched cross-sectional data used in this study benefits from large representative samples taken from a relatively stable population and the pseudo panel provides an insight into any changes of views of the same sorts of people – based on age, gender and education background. The combined use of matched cross-section and pseudo-panel datasets allows both an assessment of changes over time and whether, on average, the same changes are also observed amongst groups of similar people over time. In this particular study, we tend to find no difference between the two sets of analysis, thereby strengthening the value of using good quality cross-sectional data, but this is likely to be sensitive to the low level of turnover in the underlying population of Commission staff. This method has significant advantages over the use of cross-sectional data alone. It only records a snapshot view and can only speculate about changes over time through retrospective imputation.

Finally, the paper challenges the behaviouralist preoccupation in the traditional public administration literature. The overriding concern with organizational structures and their capacity to constrain or normalize behaviour has led to a neglect of the beliefs and values of individual bureaucrats, the substance of those beliefs, and the extent to which they are important or consequential in shaping their approaches to work or the choice of policy options, their alignment with and their responsiveness to those of the institution, or whether their values trump those of the organization in the case of conflict. Mapping individual beliefs and how they change is an important step towards understanding these questions.

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Appendix

Table 1: Constitutional change

EC more powerful today	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t	p	Cohen's d	r	s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	3.92	0.024	1445	3.89	0.022	1750	0.025	0.033	0.778	0.437	0.027		0.895	0.932
Weighted	3.91	0.024	1455	3.89	0.024	1531	0.021	0.034	0.623	0.533	0.018		0.904	0.93
Pseudo panel Unweighted	3.89	0.044	50	3.91	0.026	50	-0.017	0.044	-0.388	0.700	-0.065	0.302		
Weighted	3.87	0.049	50	3.90	0.026	50	-0.035	0.045	-0.761	0.450	-0.119	0.385		
Square root transformation	21.48	1.247	50	20.71	1.004	50	0.774	0.866	0.893	0.376	0.094	0.724		
Power to national capitals	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t	p	Cohen's d	r	s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	2.41	0.026	1450	2.33	0.024	1743	0.085	0.035	2.415	0.016	0.066		0.985	0.985
Weighted	2.42	0.026	1459	2.33	0.025	1522	0.090	0.036	2.479	0.013	0.074		0.993	0.982
Pseudo panel Unweighted	2.45	0.047	50	2.34	0.029	50	0.110	0.046	2.368	0.022	0.385	0.340		
Weighted	2.48	0.053	50	2.34	0.029	50	0.131	0.052	2.529	0.015	0.425	0.293		
Square root transformation	13.55	0.767	50	12.47	0.597	50	1.075	0.520	2.066	0.044	0.212	0.736		
Power to EP	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t	p	Cohen's d	r	s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	2.47	0.023	1440	2.57	0.021	1741	-0.100	0.031	-3.193	0.001	-0.093		0.888	0.870
Weighted	2.50	0.024	1452	2.57	0.022	1519	-0.076	0.032	-2.350	0.019	-0.064		0.898	0.869
Pseudo panel Unweighted	2.52	0.036	50	2.55	0.027	50	-0.033	0.039	-0.841	0.404	-0.146	0.251		
Weighted	2.56	0.044	50	2.55	0.027	50	0.008	0.047	0.169	0.867	0.030	0.198		
Square root transformation	13.99	0.754	50	13.65	0.689	50	0.340	0.507	0.672	0.505	0.066	0.757		

Table 2: Institutional change

Is more focussed on policy mgt	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t p		Cohen's d r		s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	2.78	0.027	1627	2.46	0.021	1691	0.323	0.034	9.453	<.001	0.257		1.086	0.865
Weighted	2.81	0.027	1648	2.47	0.023	1475	0.339	0.036	9.637	<.001	0.271		1.095	0.868
Pseudo panel Unweighted	2.78	0.043	50	2.44	0.028	50	0.340	0.047	7.170	<.001	1.315	0.159		
Weighted	2.81	0.050	50	2.44	0.028	50	0.370	0.053	6.930	<.001	1.285	0.14		
Square root transformation	15.53	0.898	50	13.11	0.677	50	2.415	0.580	4.167	<.001	0.405	0.764		
Should be more focussed on policy mgt	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t p		Cohen's d r		s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	4.04	0.027	1691	3.74	0.024	1734	0.298	0.036	8.258	<.001	0.229		1.095	1.020
Weighted	4.04	0.027	1706	3.75	0.026	1516	0.295	0.037	7.868	<.001	0.221		1.099	1.017
Pseudo panel Unweighted	4.05	0.040	50	3.75	0.031	50	0.300	0.048	6.187	<.001	1.196	0.066		
Weighted	4.05	0.046	50	3.76	0.030	50	0.297	0.053	5.575	<.001	1.075	0.07		
Square root transformation	22.37	1.244	50	19.96	0.967	50	2.405	0.790	3.045	0.004	0.290	0.773		

Table 3: Locus of policy making

Agriculture	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t	p	Cohen's d	r	s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	-0.81	0.061	1546	-0.61	0.066	1586	-0.201	0.090	-2.235	0.026	-0.066		2.393	2.631
Weighted	-0.80	0.061	1551	-0.61	0.071	1390	-0.186	0.093	-1.996	0.046	-0.063		2.385	2.638
Pseudo panel Unweighted	-0.76	0.103	50	-0.60	0.096	50	-0.161	0.134	-1.199	0.236	-0.229	0.088		
Weighted	-0.77	0.099	50	-0.61	0.096	50	-0.164	0.132	-1.243	0.220	-0.238	0.081		
Square root transformation	-4.40	0.528	50	-3.39	0.406	50	-1.003	0.556	-1.805	0.077	-0.299	0.315		
Asylum and immigration	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t	p	Cohen's d	r	s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	2.95	0.072	1537	2.98	0.073	1590	-0.024	0.103	-0.236	0.813	-0.009		2.811	2.929
Weighted	2.99	0.072	1544	2.96	0.078	1390	0.028	0.106	0.264	0.792	0.009		2.816	2.913
Pseudo panel Unweighted	2.88	0.107	50	3.01	0.099	50	-0.131	0.149	-0.875	0.386	-0.179	-0.052		
Weighted	2.94	0.119	50	2.99	0.100	50	-0.045	0.156	-0.289	0.774	-0.058	-0.003		
Square root transformation	16.42	1.077	50	15.81	0.844	50	0.606	0.911	0.665	0.509	0.087	0.573		
Competition	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t	p	Cohen's d	r	s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	0.35	0.039	1551	0.37	0.041	1631	-0.023	0.057	-0.407	0.684	-0.010		1.546	1.675
Weighted	0.36	0.039	1558	0.36	0.044	1425	0.001	0.059	0.011	0.991	0.001		1.554	1.666
Pseudo panel Unweighted	0.33	0.065	50	0.28	0.052	50	0.050	0.080	0.623	0.536	0.120	0.077		
Weighted	0.35	0.065	50	0.28	0.054	50	0.069	0.086	0.812	0.421	0.165	-0.035		
Square root transformation	1.96	0.320	50	1.70	0.304	50	0.251	0.385	0.651	0.518	0.114	0.238		
Environment	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t	p	Cohen's d	r	s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	1.58	0.052	1549	2.19	0.063	1532	-0.604	0.082	-7.400	<.001	-0.300		2.034	
Weighted	1.57	0.051	1553	2.20	0.068	1336	-0.631	0.085	-7.413	<.001	-0.235		2.021	2.482
Pseudo panel Unweighted	1.62	0.082	50	2.34	0.095	50	-0.721	0.113	-6.388	<.001	-1.148	0.193		
Weighted	1.60	0.084	50	2.33	0.095	50	-0.732	0.110	-6.442	<.001	-1.151	0.202		
Square root transformation	8.73	0.581	50	12.02	0.599	50	-3.287	0.591	-5.565	<.001	-0.788	0.499		

Foreign and security	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test						
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t	p	Cohen's d	r	s.d.1 s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	3.63	0.074	1551	4.48	0.072	1582	-0.852	0.103	-8.254	<.001	-0.239		2.921 2.860
Weighted	3.68	0.074	1557	4.47	0.077	1380	-0.791	0.107	-7.397	<.001	-0.222		2.925 2.857
Pseudo panel Unweighted	3.50	0.128	50	4.38	0.101	50	-0.873	0.185	-4.722	<.001	-1.076	-0.299	
Weighted	3.56	0.137	50	4.37	0.102	50	-0.808	0.192	-4.217	<.001	-0.951	-0.271	
Square root transformation	20.12	1.274	50	23.58	1.274	50	-3.463	1.083	-3.197	0.002	-0.374	0.658	

Table 4: Economic values

	EUCIQ - 2008			ECFTF - 2014			Independent diff t test							
	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	n	mean	s.e.	t	p	Cohen's d	r	s.d.1	s.d.2
Cross-section Unweighted	5.46	0.049	1690	5.04	0.053	1659	0.419	0.072	5.838	<.001	0.167		1.999	2.148
Weighted	5.48	0.048	1710	5.07	0.056	1455	0.414	0.074	5.586	<.001	0.164		1.991	2.147
Pseudo panel Unweighted	5.42	0.091	50	4.95	0.082	50	0.475	0.079	6.012	<.001	0.775	0.585		
Weighted	5.43	0.093	50	4.97	0.082	50	0.468	0.086	5.428	<.001	0.751	0.521		
Square root transformation	30.18	1.795	50	26.75	1.473	50	3.431	1.041	3.294	0.002	0.284	0.814		