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Title

Supranational Bureaucrats' Attitudes to Organisational Change: Driven by Rational Calculation, Influenced by Formative Environments but Immune to EU Ideology

Abstract: Growth in membership and intensifying responsibilities require much greater adaptability in organisational structures and administrative arrangements at international than at national levels. The ongoing transformation towards multilevel governance seems to empower international organisations and thus shines a new spotlight on international civil servants. We know little, however, about what motivates this growing class of bureaucratic elite. Against this background, this article explores the question as to how officials of the European Commission relate to the recent management modernisation within their institution (Kinnock reform). Competing explanatory approaches (opportunity, socialisation and EU ideology) are used to develop hypotheses about the relationship between Commission officials and their acceptance of or opposition to administrative reform. The main finding is that the individual attitudes of Commission officials towards administrative change can best be explained by the opportunity model, which emphasises the rational calculation of individual costs and benefits. This finding has implications for how scholars of governance may conceive of the behaviour of international bureaucrats and their impact on organisational change and policy-making at international level.

Keywords: international civil servants, bureaucratic motivation, European Commission, management reform, change resistance, Kinnock reform

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1. Introduction[1]

International governmental organisations are playing a greater role in policy-making today than ever before (Barnett/Finnemore 2004; Biermann/Siebenhüner 2009). Resolving climate change, combating transnational terrorism, fostering democratic practices and human rights, fighting contagious diseases, providing stability on the financial market, establishing fair rules for international trade, channelling migration – few decisions with significance for the future of our societies are taken without the involvement of international organisations. The more the activities of international organisations encompass day-to-day policy-making tasks, the more urgent becomes the question as to who it actually is within these organisations that collects information, analyses problems, designs solutions, prepares decisions, supervises implementation and sometimes even adjudicates conflicts.

The answer to this question places officials in international bureaucracies at centre stage. One of the reasons that justifies the new interest in international civil servants is structural,[2] because the context in which international bureaucrats usually operate (and especially the lack of close parliamentary scrutiny and party-political checks) appears to leave them greater room for manoeuvre than their national colleagues. The greater one believes that international bureaucracies' autonomy has become, the more interesting become the bureaucrats operating in such international

[2] The discussion should be qualified as "new" because an "older" literature on international civil servants also exists: see Hammarskjöld 1961 and Phelan 1933, or Weiss 1982 for further references.

structures. A second reason for focusing on international civil servants has to do with our concern for the elites that govern or help to govern us (Aberbach et al. 1981; Aberbach/Rockman 2006; Putnam 1976). With respect to international civil servants, it is often argued that they are highly competitive as well as creative individuals and that they are "critical players in multilateral decision-making" (Yi-Chong/Weller 2008: 50). Thus, if it is true that a growing multinational bureaucratic elite is involved in an ever broader range of governance tasks, an understanding of the conditions under which these international civil servants are able to influence policy-making and of what drives their bureaucratic behaviour both become highly relevant research questions.[3]

Despite their apparent importance, we actually have little systematic knowledge about what motivates international bureaucrats, whether they have working ethics or attitudes that differ from those of the staff of national administrations, and what implications their motivational characteristics may have for international governance – either with a view of policy-making or to organisational change.

This article tackles some of these questions about multinational bureaucratic motivation. It does so by analysing the attitudes of officials of the European Commission – the European Union's central administrative body – towards organisational change. The Commission appears to be a good place to start investigating international bureaucrats' motivations because, in comparative terms, the Commission is the most independent among the international organisations (Haftel/Thompson 2006: 260ff.). If it is worthwhile knowing more about what systematically drives international bureaucrats' behaviour, Commission civil servants

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[3] See further references to this debate in Liese/Weinlich 2006, Mouritzen 1990 and Yi-Chong/Weller 2008; for critical accounts, see Johns 2007, Weiss 1982 or Vaubel et al. 2007.

– because of the potential relevance of their actions given the objective importance of the organisation they are working for – are one of the first groups to turn to.[4]

Specifically, the causes behind bureaucratic attitudes towards organisational change shall be analyzed. In the early 2000s, the European Commission underwent the largest organisational reform ever in its history. A 2006 survey found that only a small fraction of the Commission's managers welcomed the administrative modernisation, while the vast majority turned out to be unambiguous opponents of what is known as the "Kinnock reform" (Bauer 2008). After five years of operations under the new rules and procedures, the Commission staff still appears to be split in its assessment of the reform.[5]

The question, then, is how can one explain the individual attitudes of Commission officials towards organisational change. More precisely, why and when does staff accept or oppose the recent management modernisation within the European Commission? Answers may come from standard conceptualisations of the behaviour of Commission officials. They are frequently described as cunning "idealists" or even "ideologues" of the European integration process, always pushing for policy solutions to the benefit of supranational actors (Cram 1993; Haas 1958; Héritier 1997). Other accounts underline the effects of multinational staffing, where language confusion and diverse cultural heritages pose problems for internal coordination (Abélès et al. 1993; Bellier 2000; Michelmann 1978; Shore 2007). As I will show below, however, in

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[4] Today the European Commission has a staff of more than 40,000; more than the half of these (20,023) are regular officials, who are the empirical focus of this article. See Table 5 in the Appendix.
[5] As late as 2009, in a round of face-to-face interviews with top managers of the Commission, there is a broad spectrum of opinions ranging from "the Kinnock reform has been a success" and "the Commission has done an enormous job in reforming itself" to more gloomy positions such as "we have been overshooting" and the "effects for the organisation are disastrous". Out of 45 fully transcribed interviews, 9 can be rated as very critical, 14 as critical, 12 as neutral, 7 as approving and 0 as very approving, while 3 did not give an assessment or were not asked to.

the case of administrative reform, rather than pro-European "ideology" or "national socialisation", the driving force behind bureaucratic motivation among European civil servants actually follows a logic of utility maximisation. Even intensive administrative change is welcome if the calculable consequences are positive for the individual.

The article proceeds as follows. Following this introduction, the Kinnock reform will be briefly described (Section 2). I will then develop three competing explanations of staff acceptance (opportunity, socialisation, EU ideology) and their empirical implications (Section 3). Section 4 describes the research design, and Section 5 contains the empirical analysis, which is based on a simple statistical model using data from a recent attitudinal survey of Commission officials. The conclusion attempts to place the results in a broader theoretical and empirical context (Section 6).

2. The Kinnock Reform

The unprecedented resignation of the European Commission under allegations of fraud and mismanagement led to a comprehensive overhaul of the body's internal management procedures between 1999 and 2004.[6] This reform – named after the responsible vice-president Neil Kinnock – consisted of four crucial issues: personnel, strategic planning and programming, financial management, and transparency and ethics (Barzelay/Jacobsen 2009; Bauer 2007, 2008; Bearfield 2004; Ellinas/Suleiman 2008, 2011; Kassim 2004a,b, 2008; Metcalfe 2000; Levy 2006).

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[6] The major changes were implemented between 2000 and 2004, but the Commission was still busy coping with reform leftovers during the period 2004 to 2009 and even started some re‑reforming (especially in the area of staff appraisal; see Ban 2008, 2010).

The reform changed the Commission from a melange between Roman-German and Roman-French-style bureaucracy (characterised by input management and a strict division of labour, cf. Balint et al. 2008) into an administration moving towards (although not completely achieving) a New Public Management style that features pluriannual planning, increased vertical and horizontal coordination, and an output focus. More emphasis was put on visible, hands-on top management, as well as on performance indicators and audit, with the ultimate aim of enabling top-down management. In effect, the efficiency and resource-for-results focus actually intensified the need for internal coordination and central leadership (Balint et al. 2008; Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004; Schön-Quinlivan 2008).[7]

Take Strategic Planning and Programming (SPP) – one of the cornerstones of the reform. SPP means strategic priority-setting (on the basis of updated information about what exactly is done in the Commission and by whom), corresponding resource allocation, process monitoring, ex-post evaluation and – inherently related to these – adequate redistribution of financial and personnel resources on the basis of a programming cycle stretching over several years.

The SPP cycle is indeed a challenge. The means and needs have to be justified in the light of the targeted objectives. A detailed Annual Policy Strategy (APS) is drafted, discussed and agreed upon through a process that involves virtually all the layers of the internal administration in a huge communication and coordination

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[7] New Public Management is not a uniform model, rather more of a "theme" on management reform of the public sector (Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004). Christopher Hood describes its core features as "the idea of a shift in emphasis from policy making to management skills, from a stress on process to a stress on output, from orderly hierarchies to an intendedly more competitive basis for providing public services, from fixed to variable pay and from a uniform and inclusive public service to a variant structure with more emphasis on contract provision" (Hood 1995: 94). In the strict sense, the Commission variant is therefore not a full-fledged NPM reform because it maintains a robust hierarchy and also a strong focus on process.

exercise. The APS is translated into mission statements and work programmes for each Commission service and sets out specific objectives for directorates and units. In response, each DG or service requires Annual Activity Reports that include strategic evaluations of activities, expenditure and so forth up and down the hierarchy (Kassim 2004a: 48). Tasks like producing proposals for policy objectives, conceiving (measurable) progress and quality indicators, conducting impact assessment exercises, suggesting priorities, drafting corresponding reporting notes, and evaluating and communicating decisions back to the units and to staff together mean – at the very least – that all layers of staff in the Commission have to cope with intensive change.

The personnel area constitutes another centrepiece of the modernisation plan, given that budgeting, programming and coordination aspects have personnel implications and vice versa. The "linearisation" of careers, i.e. fewer obstacles to switching between staff categories and the proliferation of more but smaller promotion steps on the individual career ladder, as well as the new pension regime, were among the most contested issues (Bauer 2007; Kassim 2004a,b). The aims were to keep staff motivated until very late in their individual careers and to keep the costs for salaries and pensions in check.

Both in the area of personnel management and in the context of strategic planning or financial management modernisation, the Commission has changed from input- to output-style management. The top management is empowered to vertically set priorities and to monitor (and intervene, if necessary) early on in horizontal coordination and in the entire administrative policy-production process. This also means that lower layers in the hierarchy have to provide (much more rigorously than

in the past) the necessary information in a continuous and comprehensive way in order to enable senior managers to analyse, assess and potentially intervene with greater precision and effect.

In sum, the recent managerial reform in the Commission was both comprehensive and controversial and affected in a practical sense all the individuals working in the institution. A change of this magnitude is unlikely to leave public servants indifferent, given that they have to cope with the impact of change extensively in their day-to-day working lives.

3. Explaining Individual Attitudes to Organisational Change

To produce positive results, organisational change requires the personnel of an organisation to support it. Little or no acceptance of organisational change by huge parts of the personnel endangers not only the "success" of certain reforms, but in the medium- and long-term perspective even the survival of the organisation itself (Simon 1997: 144).

The question as to how and why staff oppose or endorse organisational change is thus of practical and theoretical importance. The Kinnock reform represented a landmark change for the Commission and its personnel. The question, then, is how – in the concrete case of the European Commission as an international administration – to theorise the potential relationship between individual Commission staff and management change. Which theoretical approaches allow us to derive systematic expectations about individual attitudes towards organisational change?

There is a rich tradition of studying what can be summarised as the belief systems of political elites. While international civil servants have not received much attention in research to date (but see Hooghe 2001 and Trondal 2010), national administrators, government leaders, party leaders and European parliamentarians have been studied quite intensively (Converse 1964; Derlien 1996; Hix 2002; Lau/Sears 1986).[8]

With respect to the question as to what explains the belief systems of political elites, there are two classical positions, one resting on economic theory and the mechanism of utility maximisation, the other on sociology and the mechanism of group dynamics, usually summed up as socialisation. Given their ontological origins, these two positions appear difficult to reconcile. Indeed, they have been set in sharp conflict with each other, i.e. as theoretical competitors, in order to explain individual attitudes. Currently, however, research informed by political psychology and neurobiology, among other disciplines, questions the usefulness of such a concept of mutual exclusivity (Checkel 2005; Mansbridge 1990; Sears 1993; Sears/Funk 1991; Zürn/Checkel 2005).[9] Researchers are thus starting to work on refining the classical positions (utility maximisation and socialisation) with a view to discovering ways to bridge the ontological gap between self-interest and social explanations (Hooghe 2001, 2005).

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[8] In the case of public officials, who are at the focus of this study, the rule of thumb is that the closer they are to the political sphere, the greater becomes the academic interest in their individual dispositions, social backgrounds, education, career paths and political attitudes (Aberbach et al. 1981; Aberbach/Rockman 2006).

[9] I confine my analysis to perspectives based on debates in political science and public administration. There are, however, studies in organisational sociology and organisational psychology that could contribute to the issue (for overviews of current debates, see Cunningham et al. 2002; Herscovitch/Meyer 2002; Piderit 2000). Organisational sociologists and psychologists attempt to explain general "readiness" for (any kind of) organisational or programme change on the basis of macro-organisational structures or micro-level, general individual dispositions (for example, job satisfaction or active/passive approaches to job problem-solving). The empirical objects of these studies are, as far as I can see, usually street-level bureaucrats working at the implementation level rather than elite officials working in policy planning (the focus of this study). Moreover, change is usually conceived as issue specific (policy content or specific procedures in the production of a particular service) rather than as a fundamental organisational shift such as the Kinnock reform.

Such "bridge" concepts are "cues", "reference systems" or "intellectual shortcuts" that can be conceived of as (relatively) stable ideological dispositions (Anderson 1998; Hooghe/Marks 2005). These have recently been put forward in order to explain preference patterns that have not as yet been made sense of by the dichotomy between self-interest and social embeddedness. I now turn to the development of the competing implications of each of these three explanatory programmes with the aim of explaining individual attitudes towards the Kinnock reform.

Opportunity

What I understand under the term "opportunity" is the core of "utility maximisation". Accordingly, the formation of preferences is subject to an individual cost-benefit calculation. As soon as opportunity structures change, individual preferences adapt to the altered circumstances ("logic of consequentiality"; see March/Olsen 1989: 160f.). The point, however, is that whatever the exogenous change, it should be perceived to have (concrete and relatively easily) identifiable consequences for the individual. In our case, the implication of an organisational reform for the "wellbeing" of an individual should lie in the professional opportunity structure it creates or, more precisely, it should be crucial whether organisational change is perceived as advantageous or disadvantageous for the job itself or for the career prospects of an individual.

The Kinnock reform produces and redistributes "professional" costs and benefits vertically. Put simply, the higher one's position in the hierarchy, the more positive one should feel about the reform. The reason is that, according to the logic introduced by

the Kinnock reform, managerial information has to be painfully produced at lower levels and then transported upwards in order to serve as the basis for improved organisational decision-making at the top. Although some of the rank and file see the new process as giving them a clearer understanding of the goals of their part of the organisation and of the expectations regarding their own performance, in general officials at lower echelons (middle management and lower) "pay the price" in terms of more coordination and more information production; top managers enjoy greater steering capacity because they have an apparently improved informational basis for their policy decisions. A similar argument can be made with respect to the redistribution of power among DGs and services. Moreover, given that the Kinnock reform restructures the entire career advancement system, people who feel disadvantaged by the new ways of doing things are unlikely to have much sympathy for the recent organisational changes.[10]

Opportunity hypotheses

Given that the administrative reform redistributes the costs and benefits of organisational change vertically and also affects individuals' career advancement, a first, twofold hypothesis thus focuses on hierarchical rank (H1 middle manager and H2 senior manager) and expects the following: the higher an individual stands vertically in the hierarchy, the greater will be his or her acceptance of the reform. The reform also creates a new planning logic which gives greater powers to "steering" Directorates-General like DG Budget, Internal Audit and the Secretariat-General. Thus, officials working for the latter units should endorse the reform more than their colleagues in other DGs (H3 DG type). A fourth hypothesis puts individuals'

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[10] Recently, management change studies have also begun to highlight factors such as unfairness and perception of mistreatment as causes behind resistance to change; see Folger/Skarlicki 1999.

perception as to whether their individual career is helped or hindered at centre stage: those who are convinced that their own career advancement has been negatively affected should demonstrate lower acceptance of the reform than those who see no such connection (H4 career prospects).

Socialisation

Sociology and psychology view the formation of preferences as an endogenous process. The core assumption is that individuals develop preferences by internalising norms and values from their social environment – often early on in their lives (Converse 1964; Johnston 2001; Loveless/Rohrschneider 2008; Rohrschneider 1994; Wildawsky 1987). The mechanism at work is usually conceived of as "socialisation". Socialisation is frequently equated with "group dynamic" effects, i.e. the way in which the norms and values of the in-group are adopted by a (new) individual. Often the "intake" of norms is thought to work automatically, especially in the formative years (social class, particular university education, particular discipline – e.g., if an individual is trained as a economist – etc.) (Checkel 2005, 2007; Zürn/Checkel 2005).

Applying this approach to our research question, one can argue, for example, that new public management reforms have come to be implemented first and most intensively in the UK and in northern Europe. Thus, Commission officials from these countries may have had the opportunity during their formative years to become familiar with crucial elements of this type of organisational concept, with the result that they can accept it more easily than officials who come from an "NPM laggard" country. The point here is that those who have previously been in contact with certain

kinds of change or the rhetoric surrounding such change may indeed demonstrate less opposition to it. The Kinnock reform imports (to some extent) concepts from business administration into Commission management. Accordingly, one should find that those officials with experience in the private sector are more in favour of the reform than those who have never worked outside public administration. In short, those individuals who have had the chance to learn how to handle NPM types of change should have fewer problems applying them within the Commission.

Socialisation hypotheses

A first socialisation hypothesis thus focuses on the relationship between national administrative traditions and individual reform attitudes. Because the modernisation of national public sectors has been pursued more intensively in some countries than in others, individuals from those countries that have embraced NPM reforms are also likely to endorse the Kinnock reform; the opposite is to be expected from individuals from NPM laggard countries (H5 administrative tradition).

A second set of hypotheses expects that work experience in the private sector or professional training in economics will heighten reform enthusiasm. The Kinnock modernisation is a mild variant of an NPM reform; professional experience in the private sector or training as an economist will have made an individual more familiar with similar management devices and cultures, and thus such individuals should endorse the Kinnock reform more than others who did not have the chance to learn to handle and apply private management rules and procedures (H6 work experience in private sector and H7 economist).

EU Ideology

Utility maximisation and socialisation attempt to establish a direct intellectual or practical link between a particular stimulus and an individual. However, "indirect" or "intermediate" factors may also be at work. The argument is that ("normal", rationally bounded) individuals (with limited resources) turn to "proxies", "cues" or "heuristics" as intellectual shortcuts in order to position themselves with respect to new features in their environment (Anderson 1998; Hooghe/Marks 2009; Simon 1997).

For example, whether or not somebody likes the actual process of European unification can be conceived of as a function of his or her conviction on a continuum between market liberalism and social interventionism. Against the background of this general proposition, Liesbet Hooghe examined whether Commission top officials' convictions as supranationalists or intergovernmentalists changed in accordance with the time they had spent working for the Commission, i.e. whether a kind of socialisation towards "supranationalism" takes place among individuals who work in the Commission (Hooghe 2001). Her answer is "rather not" (Hooghe 2001, 2005). Hooghe appears to have thus produced evidence that the crucial question about the *finalité* of the European Union (EU) is usually answered on the basis of relatively stable ideological dispositions that the officials "bring with them" and that "stay with them" throughout their careers. There may be some kind of selection bias when Commission personnel are recruited (Europhile Commission officials recruit other Europhile candidates). However, there is only weak evidence that officials *change* their views on the EU *as a result of* their working within the European Commission.[11]

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[11] Hooghe's truncated sample, the lack of panel data, the confounding influence of other factors, etc., make it very hard to prove the presence or absence of socialisation in any definitive way. In her 2005 article, Hooghe highlights the rapidly changing political and organisational environment as another

Officials thus appear to stick to their convictions with regard to their personal preferred governance order for the EU regardless of the fact that they are actually employed by an institution that obviously has a particular organisational interest in this issue. Against this background, I argue that one can use (stable) dispositions about the preferred governance structure of the EU (intergovernmental or supranational) as a shortcut for predicting Commission officials' attitudes to management change. In order to underline the specific character of the mechanism at work, I call this approach "EU ideology", because it is the political preference regarding the future of the EU that delivers the "cue" or "heuristic" for assessing management change.

The supranationalist narrative is that the Commission has been purposely weakened by the Kinnock reform. Supranationalists mourn the era of Jacques Delors and the then pro-active Commission and equate the Kinnock reform with a weakening of the institution and with the loss of its "original mission". The Kinnock reform is portrayed as a perfidious strategy of deliberate over-bureaucratisation that seeks to paralyse the Commission and distract staff from engaging in integrationist projects (Georgakakis 2010; Kassim 2004a,b).[12] Intergovernmentalists can be expected to have a different view. They are in favour of an "instrumental" Commission that sees its function in good management, not in policy entrepreneurship aimed at bringing about a federal Europe.

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factor: institutions in flux are never fertile ground for socialisation since the cues they provide are in flux as well (I am grateful to Liesbet for pointing this out to me).

[12] This is a view that is widely held within the Commissions' staff unions (Georgakakis 2007). As interview data from 2006 show, those who conceive of European integration as a project in need of a strong, independent and shrewd supranational agent fear that the Kinnock reform means that the Commission will lose its "political duties", "political priorities" and "political function" and that the "original mission [has been] forgotten". Furthermore: "Before the reform managers were experts in their domain, now they are only managers". The quotations are taken from Bauer 2008, p. 700.

EU Ideology hypotheses

The ideology hypotheses expect that individuals who lean towards supranationalism as their preferred model for the future European political order will exhibit rather low acceptance of the recent administrative changes within the Commission. Because the supranational logic of integration favours strong European institutions, and because the administrative reform has been interpreted as a weakening of the Commission (Bauer 2008), supranationalists should thus have little sympathy for administrative reform, while intergovernmentalists may well like it for the same reason (H8 supranationalism).

Accordingly, those officials who see the mission of the Commission in furthering European unification with the help of integrationist projects (according to a neo-functionalist logic) will show little support for the recent administrative changes (H9 entrepreneurs). Finally, those who entered the Commission on the basis of idealism for the unification project usually see the mission of the Commission as advancing and fostering European integration and – similar to the logic of the supranationalist argument – therefore have misgivings if the Commission as Commission focuses more on organisational management than on systemic advancement. EU idealists should therefore oppose rather than welcome the Kinnock reform (H10 EU idealism).

Table 1: Explanatory Approaches and Hypotheses[13]

Approach	Variable	Hypothesis
Opportunity hypotheses	H1 Middle manager	The higher the rank, the greater the reform acceptance
	H2 Senior manager	The higher the rank, the greater the reform acceptance
	H3 DG Type	Working in DGs assumed to benefit from the reform should lead to greater reform acceptance
	H4 Career prospects	If there is a perception of recent unfair career management within the Commission, then low reform acceptance[14]

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[13] More information about the hypotheses, including coding, can be found in the Appendix.

Socialisation hypotheses	H5 Administrative traditions	Individuals from NPM forerunner countries like the reform, those from NPM laggards dislike the reform
	H6 Experience in private sector	Work experience in the private sector should lead to greater reform acceptance
	H7 Economists	Education in economics should lead to greater reform acceptance
EU Ideology hypotheses	H8 Supranationalism	Supranationalists should exhibit lower reform acceptance
	H9 Entrepreneur	Those who see the goals of the Commission in entrepreneurship for integration should exhibit low reform acceptance
	H10 EU Idealism	EU idealists should exhibit low reform acceptance

4. Research Design

Opportunity, socialisation and EU ideology are three approaches to explaining staff acceptance of recent administrative change. Before proceeding with their statistical analysis, however, I will first describe the data source and the specification of the dependent variable.

The data stem from an attitudinal survey of Commission officials.[15] A total of 4,621 administrative (AD) staff were sampled (disproportionate stratified random sample), of whom 1,901 completed the survey (response rate 41%).[16] The questionnaire

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[14] Please note that the data allows us to make only an indirect connection between the individual's assessment of his/her career prospects and the individual's support for the Kinnock reform because the assessment of career prospects was asked for in the survey in the context of the effects of recent enlargements.

[15] The survey is called EUCIQ. It was carried out in September 2008 as an online, self-completion questionnaire (random sample) among career officials of the European Commission (Category I, see Table 5 in the Appendix). It was ensured that the sample is representative of seniority, gender, age, length of service, nationality (in particular EU15/EU12 proportions) and Directorates-General (31 policy-related DGs). The EUCIQ team is dedicated to studying the European Commission as an organisation in the governance context of the European Union of today. The initial sample included all senior staff with managerial responsibility, i.e. heads of unit upward (n=1766) and a random sample of non-managerial staff in 31 DGs (n=2855). The initial sample was intentionally disproportionate for EU15 (75%) and EU12 (25%), i.e. the EU12 was "oversampled" so as to make sure there would be enough individuals in the final data (at the time the survey was conducted, just 12% of Commission officials came from EU12 countries). Sampling was done with the help of DG Admin, while YouGov – a UK polling firm – managed the online survey. The final sample was (re-)weighted so as to reflect the real population distribution. In addition, after the closure of the online survey, the EUCIQ team conducted two kinds of follow-up face-to-face interviews. A total of 60 respondents out of a group of 124 were interviewed in spring 2009 on the basis of a semi-structured questionnaire. These had indicated in the online survey that they would be open to follow-up questions (self-selection). Moreover, 5 Commissioners, 28 cabinet members, and 45 senior managers and middle managers were interviewed in summer 2009.

[16] The total target population is 14,730 policy-related (i.e., no translators, etc.) AD staff based in the Directorates-General and other services of the European Commission in Brussels and Luxembourg.

consisted of about 30 mainly "closed" questions (with a considerable number of sub-questions) on backgrounds, role perceptions, attitudes towards European integration, internal operations, networks, effects of enlargement and impact of management reform. Note that for the present analysis I excluded officials that entered the Commission after the year 2000, which basically means that no individuals from Eastern European countries and from Malta and Cyprus (except for double nationality) are included in the data set. The reason is that the questions about administrative reform seek to compare the new status quo with the status quo ante, and newcomers are therefore not in a position to answer them. Subtracting those individuals who did not answer all the relevant questions (problem of missing answers), the sample size for the present analysis is n=707.

Dependent Variable

The basis of the dependent variable is a battery of questions in the EUCIQ survey concerning individuals' assessment of the impact of recent administrative change within the Commission. The general question was "We would like to ask your views on recent administrative reforms. Thinking of the administrative reforms implemented since 2000, what are your views on the following statements?" The stimuli conceived for fleshing out this general question were, for example, "I have become more efficient in my day-to-day work", "My unit/service has become more efficient", "Resources are better matched to policy priorities", "The new tools and rules reduce red tape and administrative load", and "Personnel management has become leaner and more focused".

This means that only "functionaries" are included in the sample, while temporary agents and staff on secondment, as well as the staff in the EU's missions abroad, were excluded, see table 5 in the Appendix.

With the help of principal component analysis (PCA), the dependent variable was constructed out of these seven questions, which all explore the assessment of the recent administrative reform. The PCA shows that all seven variables load to one factor. Their values can thus be extracted and interpreted as a single dependent variable indicating the general attitude to the administrative reform. These data constitute the dependent variable in the subsequent regression analysis.[17]

5. Empirical Analysis

Let us start with a look at the dependent variable, i.e. some descriptive statistics about the effects of administrative reform. The table below indicates the percentage of individuals in the sample who show a positive attitude towards organisational change (by agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement of the question), remain neutral or show a negative attitude (by disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement).

[Table 2 about here!]

Table 2: Assessment of Kinnock Reform in Percent

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[17] For details of the construction of the dependent variable and of the PCA, see the Appendix.
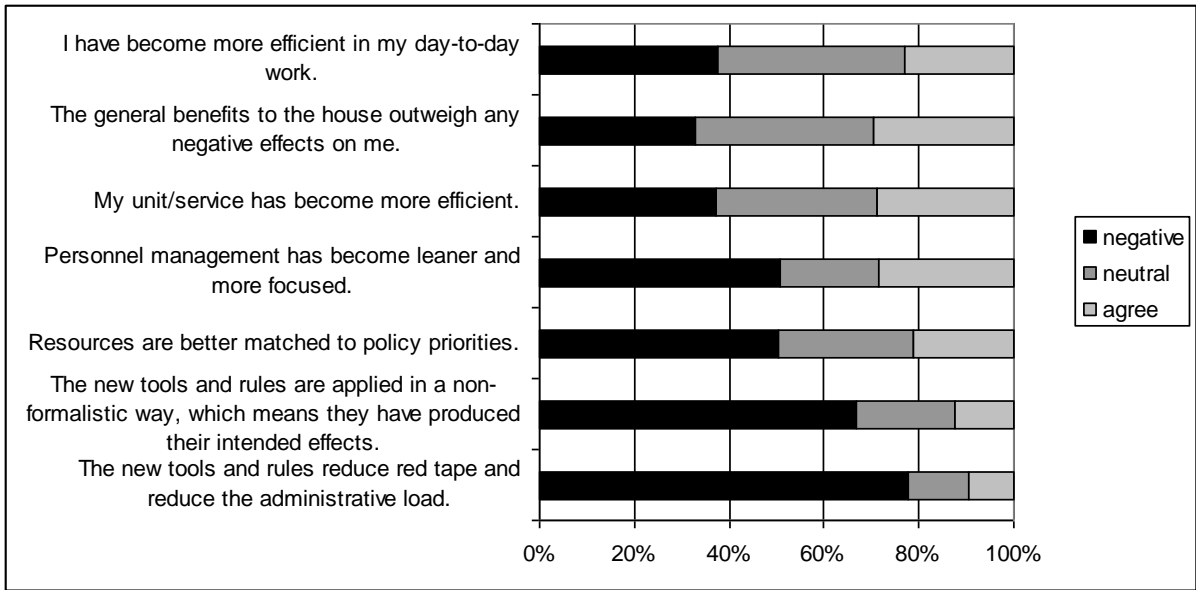
Note: Black: negative position towards the administrative reform, dark grey: neutral position; light grey: positive attitude.

Table 2 shows that with respect to each stimulus the share of negative assessments is greater than the share of positive assessments, albeit occasionally by a small margin. In four out of the seven stimuli the share of negative assessments is 50% or more; the last two items indicate 2/3 to 3/4 majorities of officials who believe that the Kinnock reform increased red tape and that the new rules and procedures are applied in an overly formalistic way. Table 3 – based on the same data – gives more detailed information. Aggregate assessment of the Kinnock reform always remains below 2.0 – with 4.0 being the highest possible value of positive assessment. The overall mean of the assessment of the Kinnock reform lies at 1.6, and thus 0.4 below a purely neutral position, which indicates an unenthusiastic attitude on the part of the officials towards organisational change.

[Table 3 about here!]

Table 3: Assessment of the Kinnock Reform – Mean and Standard Deviation

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N
I have become more efficient in my day-to-day work.	1.8	.96	0	4	845
The general benefits to the house outweigh any negative effects on me.	1.9	1.1	0	4	772
My unit/service has become more efficient.	1.9	1	0	4	814
Personnel management has become leaner and more focused.	1.6	1.1	0	4	836
Resources are better matched to policy priorities.	1.6	1	0	4	829
The new tools and rules are applied in a non-formalistic way, which means they have produced their intended effects.	1.3	.91	0	4	832
The new tools and rules reduce red tape and reduce the administrative load.	1.0	.93	0	4	849
Total*	1.6	.71	0	4	702

Note: The answer scale ranges from strongly agree (= 4) to strongly disagree (= 0); N = number of respondents. * Overall mean value of respondents.

How should one assess the result of a 1.6 mean attitude to the Kinnock reform, i.e. is the glass "half empty" or "half full"? Given the available qualitative accounts (Kassim 2004a,b, Levy 2006) and related quantitative research (Bauer 2008, Ellinas/Suleiman 2008, 2011), I think it is fair to say that on the basis of the results of these studies one would have expected even more hostility towards the Kinnock reform. As time went by and officials got used to the new procedures, original high levels of resistance decreased towards a more benign, though certainly a positive aggregate assessment.

Let us now proceed with the statistical analysis (OLS regression). The opportunity variables do well and as expected; senior managers (if compared to more junior staff), for example, do approve of the reform more than middle managers and other staff – which demonstrates the robustness of the argument that the higher an individual's position in the hierarchy, the greater the enthusiasm for the Kinnock

reform.[18] The significant relationship between steering DGs and reform acceptance is also impressive: the Secretariat-General, DG Budget and Internal Audit are strongholds of reform supporters.[19] There is also a clear confirmation that those who see their career prospects as being endangered tend to dislike the Kinnock reform. The socialisation variables do less well and the ideology variables actually do very badly.

Table 4: Regression models: Acceptance of administrative reform

	Model 1	Model 2
Opportunity		
H1 Middle Manager	0.139*	0.162**
	(0.081)	(0.080)
H2 Senior Manager	0.353**	0.341**
	(0.143)	(0.137)
H3 DG Type	0.508***	0.499***
	(0.141)	(0.138)
H4 Career Prospects	-0.341***	-0.355***
	(0.042)	(0.041)
Socialisation		
H5 Administrative Traditions	0.221***	0.209**
	(0.085)	(0.084)
H6 Work Experience in Private Sector	-0.101	
	(0.077)	
H7 Economists	0.203*	0.173*
	(0.108)	(0.095)
EU Ideology		
H8 Supranationalism	0.019	
	(0.042)	
H9 Entrepreneur	0.024	
	(0.032)	
H10 EU Idealism	0.059	
	(0.082)	
Control		
Loss of Power for the Commission	-0.146***	-0.136***

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[18] One could object that individuals at higher levels of the hierarchy may feel obliged to defend organisational decisions because of their greater responsibility for administrative policies and/or their proximity to decision-making processes. While carrying out face-to-face interviews with middle and senior managers, the EUCIQ team did not experience systematic caution or reservations on the part of those individuals at higher levels in the hierarchy. On the contrary, the most frank interview statements often came from higher rather than lower ranks. This frankness of top officials has also been experienced by others (see Hooghe 2001). So I have no reason to believe that higher ranks systematically suppress their negative opinions about reform in favour of demonstrating professional loyalty to "their" organisation.

[19] If we also include DG Administration in this group, the effect disappears. This indicates that officials in DG Administration see the reform more critically. This fits my interpretation that the Kinnock reform actually empowered DG Budget via the pluriannual financial planning and reduced the internal power of DG Administration.

	(0.046)	(0.045)
Time of Service	-0.018**	-0.024***
	(0.008)	(0.006)
Lawyers[20]	0.023	
	(0.087)	
Age	-0.009	
	(0.007)	
Female	-0.065	
	(0.092)	
Constant	1.798***	1.586***
	(0.379)	(0.210)
Observations	554	570
R-squared	0.24	0.23

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Administrative Traditions comes out strongly, i.e. individuals who are acquainted with a certain public managerial culture because they come from a NPM forerunner country (the model now applied in the Commission is in various respects similar to NPM) are more accepting of the Kinnock reform than officials coming from a NPM laggard country. Economists, as expected, are also more likely to support the specific administrative change the Commission has engaged in, while work experience in the private sector shows no significant coefficient.

None of the EU Ideology factors is significant. Whether individuals lean towards supranationalism as the governance model for the EU, whether they prefer an entrepreneurial logic of action for the Commission and whether they joined the Commission with a pro-integration idealistic impetus does not systematically determine their assessment of recent managerial changes within the European Commission.

With respect to our control variables, it should be noted that neither being female nor a lawyer has a significant impact on the individual's position towards administrative change. Since a well-known human disposition is that "old habits die hard", it was to

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[20] The category lawyers stands for lawyers, political scientists and engineers, i.e. non-economic-related education.

be expected that "time of service" is mildly significant, i.e. the longer one works inside the Commission, the more opposed one is to the Kinnock reform. However one should note that individual age is not influential as such, i.e. it is not the "elderly" officials per se who oppose recent managerial change, but those who have a longer duration of service. There is also a relationship between a diffuse feeling that the Commission has recently lost power and support towards the Kinnock reform. One can interpret this as meaning that those who are dissatisfied with the role the Commission has recently being playing – however diffuse that feeling is – also view the recent organisational changes critically. The logic behind this relationship might be a generally pessimistic disposition towards any kind of change (and thus also the Kinnock reform), so that such discontent would be categorically different to the explanatory mechanisms behind the opportunity, socialisation and ideology programmes.

Summing up, an individual's position in the Commission as an organisation (in terms of hierarchy and function), as well as his or her expectation of fair treatment with respect to career advancement, are strong predictors for this individual's opposition to or support for the management reform. Socialisation variables appear to complement, but not dominate this picture. The chosen "ideological cues" have no relevance whatsoever.

6. Conclusion

Even after more than a decade of "reforming the European Commission", Commission officials are not actually particularly fond of the management change that has been achieved. As our statistical analysis shows, the acceptance levels of

the Kinnock reform lean towards the negative. However, the harsh condemnation of the Kinnock reform in earlier interpretations based on qualitative studies and quantitative research (usually with smaller samples) is not backed by our data (Bauer 2008; Ellinas/Suleiman 2008; Georgakakis 2010; Kassim 2004a,b; Levy 2006). While the pathologies of the reform and the frustration of the staff who have to cope with the paradoxes of organisational change are still palpable, the passing of time and the establishment of new routines seem to have eased previous worries and reservations. Commission officials, however grudgingly, have by now halfway accepted the new state of the art in terms of the management culture inside their organisation. It thus appears time to "de-dramatise" the Kinnock reforms and to acknowledge that a kind of normalisation has taken place with respect to staff and their relationship to the recent wave of management changes. Or, in the words of one interviewee: "We will have to live with that. We learn to live with that."

The main question at the centre of this article was not how the Commission officials actually assess the Kinnock reform but how to best explain staff attitudes towards organisational change in general. Usually, rational or sociological hypotheses are put forward in an ad-hoc manner to explain the acceptance of administrative reforms within the Commission. As a consequence, little solid empirical (let alone statistical) knowledge has so far been available. The main aim was thus to systematically deduce hypotheses from three theoretical approaches and to put them to an empirical test. Three major implications – regarding evidence, theory advancement and prospects for related research, respectively – can thus be drawn from this analysis.

With respect to the evidence produced by the statistical analysis, the main finding is that the individual attitudes of Commission officials towards management change can best be explained by the opportunity model, which emphasises the rational calculation of individual costs and benefits. Hierarchical rank, organisational function and expectation of fair career treatment are the best predictors for acceptance of management change. Socialisation variables do less well. However, if the administrative system of one individual's home country has bought into New Public Managerialism, this "outside socialisation" increases the likelihood that this individual, as a Commission official, will support the Kinnock reform. Education as an economist also pushes the official in the direction of a more positive assessment, while work experience in the private sector makes no difference. Most interestingly, however, the data show very clearly that the acceptance of the reform is *not* driven by EU ideology. Variables that attempt to relate patterns of support or opposition to recent managerial reform within the Commission to individual attitudes about the future political order of the EU and the role of the Commission therein do badly. Those in favour of a strong, entrepreneurial Commission in a federal-like EU do not particularly oppose the Kinnock reform (although they were expected to) and neither does having joined the Commission as an integration idealist have a systematic impact on an individual's acceptance of the Kinnock reform.

This evidence has two consequences for theory development concerned with explaining international officials' bureaucratic motivations, in general, and their attitudes towards organisational change, in particular. First, the fact that both programmes – opportunity and socialisation – carry explanatory weight supports demands for efforts to better understand under which conditions the one does better than the other and once more underlines the futility of trying to set utility maximisation

and social embeddedness in stark competition with one another. Second, while working on "bridging" conceptualisations so as to overcome the utility-socialisation dualism may still be the way forward, the intuitively promising conceptualisation of EU ideology as a "proxy" for identifying the underlying pattern of support or resistance towards organisational change in international bureaucratic environments such as the European Commission did not actually turn out to be useful. While party-ideological positions have proved significant in analyses of national populations (Franklin et al. 1994; Hooghe et al. 2002; Weßels 1995), our results call into question the value of the cue concept for elites and, in particular, for supranational (and therefore culturally extremely heterogeneous) elites. The question of when and under which conditions attitudinal cues or proxies work in international constellations should be put on the relevant research agendas.

Taking the Commission sample presented as a representative sample for the emerging international bureaucratic elite, this elite appears, first and foremost, to be immensely professional. Ideological convictions are unlikely to be driving forces behind behaviour. If there is no direct threat, such elites embrace even dramatic organisational change relatively easily – even though this may mean more rules and paperwork or even a complete overhaul of the "management culture". It would not be surprising if future studies revealed that international civil servants accept change much more easily and more rapidly than their counterparts at national level. That is good news for potential organisational reformers, because resistance to change seems to have "objective" causes which should be open to positive manipulation through clever designs. Moreover, against the background of the importance Public Administration analyses give to organisational elites, their particular staff seems to equip international bureaucracies with an essential resource for playing an

autonomous role in international governance. It is thus not only time to discover international public bureaucracies as a new field of study (Trondal et al. 2010), but international bureaucratic elites, in particular, merit more systematic attention if our aim is to provide an adequate understanding of bureaucratic motivation in the emerging system of multilevel governance.

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Appendix

Table 5: Total Commission Staff by Various Staff Categories

			staffing	% of total staff
Commission staff	I.	**Officials (survey target population)**	**23 024**	**56.35,%**
	II.	Temporary agents	1 998	4.89%
	III.	Contract agents	6 040	14.78%
	IV.	Special advisors	57	0.14%
	V.	Local agents	3 087	7.56%
	VI.	National law contracts	230	0.56%
	VII.	Trainees	1 600	3.92%
	Subtotal (Commission staff)		36 036	88.20%
External staff	VIII.	Seconded National Experts (SNE)	1 164	2.85%
	IX.	Service providers	3 002	7.35%
	X.	Interim staff	657	1.61%
	Subtotal (external staff)		4 823	11.80%
Total			40 859	100.00%

Table 6: Factor analysis

Factor analysis/correlation		Number of Observations	=	707
Method: principal-component factors		Retained factors	=	1
Rotation: (unrotated)		Number of Params	=	7

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor1	3.47455	2.58536	0.4964	0.4964
Factor2	0.88920	0.09048	0.1270	0.6234
Factor3	0.79871	0.13606	0.1141	0.7375
Factor4	0.66265	0.18459	0.0947	0.8322
Factor5	0.47806	0.10069	0.0683	0.9005
Factor6	0.37737	0.05793	0.0539	0.9544
Factor7	0.31945	.	0.0456	1.0000

LR test: independent vs. saturated: chi2(21) = 1662.40 Prob>chi2 = 0.0000

Factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances

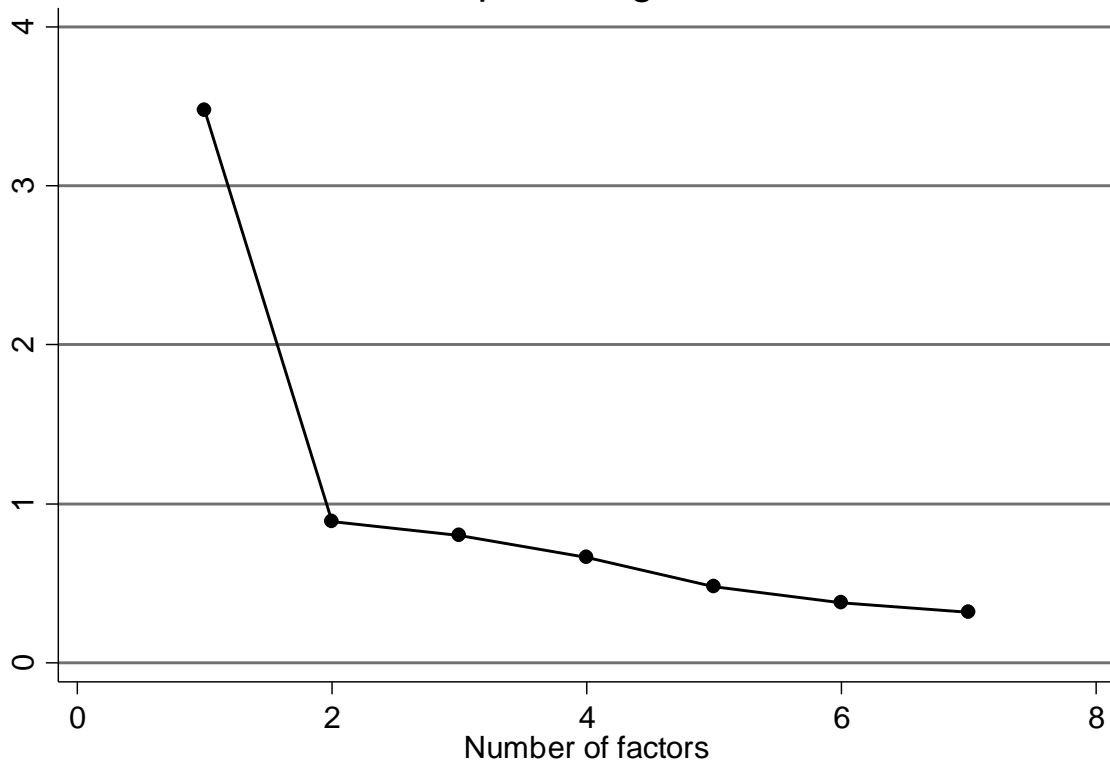| Variable	Factor1	Uniqueness
personalefficiency	0.7212	0.4799
personalcosts	0.5028	0.7472
unitefficiency	0.8127	0.3395
managementfocus	0.7387	0.4543
resources	0.7336	0.4618
formalisticreform	0.7332	0.4624
administrativeload	0.6478	0.5803

Table 7: Screen Plot

Scree plot of eigenvalues

Table 8: Independent Variables: Coding

Approach	Variable	Hypothesis	Data Source	Coding
Opportunity hypotheses	H1 Middle manager	The higher the rank, the greater the reform acceptance	EUCIQ 20: What is your current position?	1=middle manager, 0=other
	H2 Senior manager	The higher the rank, the greater the reform acceptance	EUCIQ 20: What is your current position?	1=senior manager, 0=other
	H3 DG Type	Working for a DG with an internal budget and administrative power leads to greater reform acceptance	EUCIQ 116: Which is your current Directorate-General/service?	1=DG Budget, DG Admin, Internal Audit Service, Secretariat-General, 0=all others
	H4 Career prospects	If there is a perception of recent unfair career management within the Commission, then low reform acceptance	EUCIQ 160: The consequences of enlargement for career development have been handled with equity and fairness.	0=very fair, 1= somewhat fair, 2=neither nor, 3=somewhat unfair, 4=very unfair
Socialisation hypotheses	H5 Administrative traditions	Individuals from NPM forerunner countries like the reform, those from NPM laggards dislike the reform	Cluster: UK, Scandinavia, East I = NPM forerunner, EU South (GR, F, ES) East II = NPM laggards (according to Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004)	1=laggards, 0=NPM forerunners
	H6 Experience in private sector	Work experience in the private sector should lead to greater reform	EUCIQ 10: Work experience outside the Commission	1=yes, 0=no

				acceptance
	H7 Economists	Education in economics should lead to greater reform acceptance	EUCIQ 7: Education – main degree subject	1=economics, 0=other subjects
EU-Ideology hypotheses	H8 Supranationalism	Supranationalists should exhibit lower reform acceptance	EUCIQ 128: Some argue that member states – not the Commission or European Parliament – should be the central players in the European Union. What is your position?	0=strong intergovernmentalist, 1=somewhat intergovernmentalist, 2=neither nor, 3=somewhat supranationalist, 4=strong supranationalist
	H9 Entrepreneur	Those who see the goal of the Commission in entrepreneurship for integration should exhibit low reform acceptance	EUCIQ 132: The more member states the EU has, the more important is the Commission's role as a policy initiator	0=strongly disagree entrepreneur, 1=sw disagree entrepreneur, 2=neither nor, 3=sw agree entrepreneur, 4=strongly agree entrepreneur
	H10 EU idealism	EU idealists should exhibit low reform acceptance	EUCIQ 2_4 reasons for joining the European Commission	1= commitment to Europe, 0=other reason
Control	Com Power Loss 1	Those who see the Commission as losing out politically should exhibit low reform acceptance	EUCIQ 224: The Commission is more powerful today than ever before	0=agree, 1=agree somewhat, 2=neither nor 3=disagree somewhat, 4=disagree
	Lawyers, Political Scientists and Engineers	Education in law, political science and engineering should lead to lower reform acceptance	EUCIQ 7: Education – main degree subject	1=law, politics or engineering, 0=other subjects
	Length of service	The longer the length of service, the lower the reform acceptance	EUCIQ 4: Year of entry to the Commission	Years of service
	Age		EUCIQ 123: What is your year of birth?	Years
	Female		EUCIQ 124: What is your gender?	1=female, 0=male