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Ophey, Kristina; Schwalbach, Jan

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

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Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Ophey, K., & Schwalbach, J. (2022). 'Bigger' after all? The Effect of Structural Policy Coordination Authorities on the Multidimensionality of Policy Output. *JCMS Journal of Common Market Studies*, 60(6), 1592-1610. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13334>

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'Bigger' after all? The Effect of *Structural Policy Coordination Authorities* on the Multidimensionality of Policy Output

KRISTINA OPHEY¹  and JAN SCHWALBACH^{1,2} ¹Cologne Center for Comparative Politics, University of Cologne, Cologne ²GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Cologne

Abstract

To be 'bigger on big things', Jean-Claude Juncker reformed the European Commission's organizational set-up by adding another hierarchical layer to its political sphere. Vice-Presidents shall foster coordination between departmental Commissioners when drafting policies so that these are more multidimensional in kind. Taking an actor-centred organization theoretical perspective, complemented by principal–agent reasoning, we conceptualize these as *structural policy coordination authorities*. We hypothesize that this organizational manipulation to a core executive's typical multidivisional set-up incentivizes silo-focused actors to coordinate more across policy sectors. Hence, the coordination dilemma that typically confronts core executives might be counteracted, resulting in more multidimensional policy output. Constituting a 'case in time', we assess whether Commission policy output has changed systematically after the Juncker reform. Using newly developed indicators for policy multidimensionality, we evaluate all legislative proposals developed under the Juncker and Barroso II Commissions. We find that proposals under Juncker are indeed 'bigger' than before.

Keywords: interdepartmental coordination; organizational reform; core executives; European Commission; ordinary legislative procedure

Introduction

When Jean-Claude Juncker became President of the European Commission in 2014, one of his stated goals was to develop policy proposals that are 'bigger on big things', hence more multidimensional regarding the different policy sectors actively involved in a proposal (Juncker, 2014). To this end, he installed what we call *structural policy coordination authorities* in Commission policy drafting to counteract turf-focused silo behaviour of individual policy departments. We provide a theoretical assessment of the impact of such a reform on the development of policy proposals and propose a new measurement of multidimensionality, which we apply to a comprehensive new dataset of policy proposals before and after the Juncker reform.

On the theoretical level, we look closely into core-executive agenda-setters' internal coordination game and its influence on policy output. Combining classical organization theoretical approaches (Egeberg, 2012; Egeberg *et al.*, 2016) and actor-centred institutionalism (for example Scharpf, 1997), we theorize how internal coordination is impacted by the underlying organizational set-up via actors' strategic behaviour. While a multidivisional organizational set-up is a functional prerequisite for public administrations to perform their tasks with sufficient specialization, it concomitantly disincentivizes interdepartmental coordination in a dilemmatic way. Instead, the default modus of coordination is 'negative' with turf focused actors trying to push through their policy sector's interests

(Mayntz and Scharpf, 1975; Scharpf, 1994), which overall results in smallest common denominator policies. Motivated by this persisting theoretical puzzle, we ask: How can core executives' typical *coordination dilemma* systematically be addressed, while keeping the necessary multidivisional organizational set-up?

From a public policy perspective, and taking into consideration that these proposals set the scene for subsequent interinstitutional bargaining in the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP), more 'positive' coordination is desirable. Policy proposals can only provide appropriate answers to complex political problems if they are developed with input from all the required expertise. Hence, for policy proposal development in any kind of core-executive system, it is of general interest to prevent self-interested policy departments and their respective political superiors from impairing multidimensional proposal development. This is even more true for the EU, which often is criticized for over-regulating small issues while not properly addressing 'bigger' issues. Thus, if the reform indeed led to systematically more multidimensional policy proposals, this might influence European Union (EU) policy-making – and its reputation – at large.

We specify three conditions under which core executives' coordination dilemma might be counteracted. The first two classical organization theoretical conditions – multidivisionality (parallel hierarchies) and hierarchical order – are necessary but not sufficient for the behavioural dimension to policy drafting. Drawing back on principal–agent modelling, we add another layer to the classical hierarchical order (Aghion and Tirole, 1997) as a third condition, which is theoretically promising to systematically intensify interdepartmental coordination: *Structural policy coordination authorities* or, in principal–agent terminology, *intermediary managers* who manipulate departmental actors' incentive structures such that coordination between sectors will be fostered.

We test our argument on a real-life example of political organizational design: the Juncker reform. The reform added intermediary managers to the Commission's classical core-executive set-up. Both the empowerment of Vice Presidents and of the Secretariat General (SG) were supposed to foster the development of more multidimensional policy proposals, which would then kick off the EU's interinstitutional OLP (European Commission, 2014b). We examine to which extent the characteristics of Commission policy output before and after the reform mirror these organization theoretical assumptions. To do so we generated a new dataset covering procedural and substantial details of all legislative proposals adopted under the Juncker and Barroso II Commissions. Applying newly developed indicators for policy proposal multidimensionality, our data allow examining in how far post-reform proposals are different from pre-reform proposals in the theoretically expected way. We find that policy proposals developed under the Juncker Commission are significantly more multidimensional than pre-reform proposals. Thus, organizational reform in the way examined might indeed help counteract core executives' typical coordination dilemma.

I. Rethinking the Theoretical Challenges of Interdepartmental Coordination in Core Executives

Agenda-setting political institutions kick off legislative negotiations with policy initiatives that address political problems. They steer the interinstitutional policy-making process with their first-mover advantages (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Laver and

Shepsle, 1996; Tsebelis and Garrett, 2000). Hence, agenda-setters' output (policy proposals) likely impacts that of the legislator(s) (adopted policies). This renders the initial proposal development a remarkable political power source. Yet agenda-setters' political steering capacity much depends on how thoroughly these proposals are prepared. Developing impactful legislative proposals is a resource-intense endeavour: anticipating legislators' equilibrium and collecting external stakeholders' input, drafting and negotiating proposals *internally* is highly complex and organizationally demanding. The great elephant in the room, for practitioners and scholars alike, is *coordination*.

Core-Executives' Quasi-Institutionalized Coordination Dilemma

We differentiate between a structural and a behavioural dimension of interdepartmental coordination. *Structurally*, core executives' organizational set-up is highly 'fragmented' (Blom-Hansen and Finke, 2020) and 'multidivisional' (Döhler, 2017), which is functionally necessary to ensure a sufficiently specialized division of work (Weber, 1978). Core executives are structured along vertical (hierarchical order) and horizontal (parallel hierarchies) lines across both core-executive spheres: the 'political' and the 'administrative'; both, qua their political output, *political* in kind (for example Blom-Hansen and Finke, 2020). The political sphere consists of a collective political body comprising all political superiors, typically a head executive and departmental superiors (Dunleavy and Rhodes, 1990). The head executive leads the entire institution and may design its organizational set-up and internal procedures. The departmental superiors are responsible for their respective policy area. All political superiors have administrative departments at their disposal to provide specialized policy expertise or horizontal technical support. All departments are subdivided into several organizational (sub-)entities on, usually, a handful of hierarchical levels.

Along vertical lines, this means a constant need for hierarchical and intradepartmental coordination. Though delicate and conflictual, there will always be a direct hierarchical superior authorized to take a final decision in case of a deadlock or a fight. Along horizontal lines, whenever core executives develop proposals that exceed the substantial lines of one policy department, interdepartmental coordination is necessary. This is particularly relevant for policy drafting as political problems do not know departmental lines. Departmental lines are unavoidably artificially drawn and show considerable policy over- or underlap. Consequently, developing policy initiatives that address complex, multidimensional political problems requires intense interdepartmental coordination. Given core executives' multidivisional set-up, this is, however, a highly demanding and resource-intense endeavour with immense quasi-institutionalized hurdles.

Behaviourally, core-executive interdepartmental policy coordination is conflictual by default. This is rooted both in the direct impact policy drafting has on policy departments' *raison d'être*: their (policy) turf, and in their strategic and self-interested behaviour. Although actors' interest structure is likely multifaceted, we assume their functional policy interest to be the most succinct part. This is because departmental actors' success crucially depends on how well they play their organizational role. Even if their functional interest is not their true driver (but rather beliefs, career, reputation, etc.), core executives' organizational logic is set up such that actors benefit from performing their turf-focused organizational role the best they can (Karagiannis, 2010).

Actors' organizational position influences their problem perception and preferences. They selectively filter political problems and draft policies from the point of view of their organizational role (see Murswieck, 2008; Senninger *et al.*, 2021; Simon, 1965). In a constant fight for resources with their organizational counterparts, they must showcase their relevance (Downs, 1957). In effect, core executives' organizational set-up as it were, prescribes a rather narrow focus on individual policy sectors: The more differentiated and specialized a core executive, the narrower its organizational entities' interests (Allison, 1971; Mayntz and Scharpf, 1975).

The implications from the interplay of these two dimensions of policy drafting are dilemmatic: while core executives' highly differentiated organizational set-up enables them to perform multiple functions, it concomitantly confronts them with an omnipresent internal coordination dilemma that disincentivizes multidimensional policy drafting (Mayntz and Scharpf, 1975). This default modus of 'negative' coordination is characterized by a minimum or small degree of interdepartmental cooperation and coordination. Yet, when facing the threat of a veto from another policy department, compromises become de facto unavoidable. Usually, this only happens very late in the process, typically around *jour fixe* meetings that involve political superiors to ensure collectivity. Since coordination had until then been 'negative' with minimal inclusion of other departments' interests, these compromises usually resemble smallest common denominator solutions and are focused on avoiding a veto (Mayntz and Scharpf, 1975; Scharpf, 1994). Thus, default proposals are mainly shaped by the leading department's policy interest, corrected by other departments' requested adaptations. Consequently, they are barely truly multidimensional – in contrast to political problems. From a macro perspective of public policy-making, this opens up space for the co-existence of contradictory policies, leading to an inconsistent policy landscape (Wildavsky, 1979, p. 132). To increase the default multidimensionality of core executives' policy proposals, interdepartmental coordination must be intensified. Ideal-typically, 'positive' coordination exceeds a coordination mentality that is primarily focused on last-minute veto-avoiding compromises and is highly inclusive at all stages of proposal development (Mayntz and Scharpf, 1975). In this modus, actors focus on the overall political output that goes beyond individual policy sectors rather than on individual turfs.

Structural Policy Coordination Authorities

Based on our elaborations so far, what are the conditions and prospects of moving the 'negative' default of core-executive policy coordination closer to the 'positive' end of the continuum? First, any organizational reform aimed at manipulating actors' incentive structures towards more interdepartmental coordination needs to maintain core executives' high degree of organizational multidivisionality. However, attempts to intensify coordination while keeping up the typical multidivisional organizational set-up, for example with loose ad-hoc solutions for individual projects or with committee structures, have proven unlikely to have lasting effects (Peters, 2015). Hence, organizational manipulation needs to go beyond interdepartmental self-coordination or project-based peaks of coordination.

Second, the chances for systematic and lasting interdepartmental coordination are low if not supported by structurally enshrined hierarchical power (Weber, 1978). Hierarchical

impotence is rooted in the political sphere. Yet, where political superiors themselves are organized along parallel sectoral lines, chances for intense interdepartmental coordination are limited as silo behaviour is, just as in the administrative sphere, incentivized by lacking short-term pay-off for self-coordination efforts (Scharpf, 1994). This holds true even with collective hierarchical corrective mechanisms like *jour fixes*. Neither is the head executive likely able to exert sufficient control over the departmental superiors and administrative machinery to push for intense interdepartmental coordination when and where policy drafting is led by departmental superiors. This phenomenon is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, a head executive's policy interests should be broad and multidimensional because their organizational position expects them to represent the collective interest. Second, they are, qua function, equipped with sufficient authority to select actions that affect the institution's organizational set-up in non-incremental organizational reforms. Thus, at least in the realm of policy drafting, there is a de facto divergence between *formal* power and *real* authority of core-executive heads (Aghion and Tirole, 1997).

Conceptualizing the core-executive political sphere as principal-agent setting with a basic delegation process between the principal (head executive) and their agents (departmental superiors) helps to shed light on this divergence. Qua their organizational roles, their ideal outcomes differ: the principal is interested in intense interdepartmental coordination to produce multidimensional policy initiatives that comprehensively address political problems. In contrast, the agents prefer keeping coordination and proposals as low and silo focused as possible. Since policy drafting is a particularly creative, expertise-dependent endeavour, the principal depends even more so on the departmental agents and has few control mechanisms. Therefore, the information asymmetry between a core-executive principal and their departmental agents is considerable. The latter are equipped with departmental workforce and expertise. This asymmetry translates into chances for agency loss and increases the more agents a principal must cope with. In core executives, multiple agents are specifically characteristic (Aghion and Tirole, 1997). Combined with the insight that actors' cognitive capacity to coordinate intensely with more than a few 'immediate managerial contacts' is limited (Gulick, 1937, p. 7), this renders the prospects of a principal's real policy coordination authority low.

To decrease the information asymmetry, the principal might install another layer of delegation in the political sphere. This is because substantially intense coordination efforts can only be expected from a political superior whose very organizational role is to foster interdepartmental coordination of related policy departments. Such a position or organizational entity needs to be located between the head executive and the departmental superiors. We call such actors *structural policy coordination authorities* (*intermediary managers*; Aghion and Tirole, 1997). They can be seen as institutionalized 'negotiated' coordination (Peters, 2015; Senninger *et al.*, 2021, p. 3). They will push for intense interdepartmental coordination as their success is defined by coordinating departmental agents' work to produce multidimensional policy proposals. Since they control fewer agents than the principal, they also can better assess policy proposals' substantive multidimensionality. An intermediary manager will thus be a more credible gatekeeper for bottom-up departmental policy initiatives than a principal could ever be. This is because being closer to the agents equips intermediary managers with (more) *real* authority. Overall, the installation of intermediary managers will structurally incentivize

interdepartmental coordination *even though* departmental agents might still prefer working in silos. Departmental actors' incentive structures should be sufficiently manipulated to make them behave less silo-focused and more cooperative. Ultimately, core-executive policy output might then exceed the smallest common denominator. Thus, our hypothesis reads as follows:

Imposing *structural policy coordination authorities* on top of core executives' typical multidivisional organizational set-up systematically increases the multidimensionality of their policy output.

This principal–agent inspired model considers both the structural and the behavioural dimension of core-executive policy drafting when adding another hierarchical layer to the political sphere. However, while the distance between multidimensional proposals addressing entire political problems and default smallest common denominator proposals should be significantly smaller than without these *structural policy coordination authorities*, hurdles for more 'positive' coordination will still exist. First, a certain amount of agency loss and information asymmetry will unavoidably remain. Second, intense interdepartmental coordination is very resource-intensive, which might, in practice, trigger strategic, self-interested intermediary managers to selectively invest these resources. Third, individual actors' capacities to coordinate their work will not increase just because intermediary managers are added to the organizational set-up. Therefore, unintentional coordination incapacity might de facto still impair more intense interdepartmental coordination.

II. The Juncker Reform: Imposing *Structural Policy Coordination Authorities* on Commission Policy Drafting

We test our hypothesis by analysing the impact of the Juncker reform on interdepartmental coordination in the European Commission, which has unique agenda-setting power in the OLP (Crombez and Vangerven, 2014; Finke, 2020). Regarding its organizational set-up and internal coordination, the Commission is characterized by intense organizational multidivisionality along hierarchical and sectoral lines (Blom-Hansen and Finke, 2020; Döhler, 2017; Dunleavy and Rhodes, 1990), which exposes it to the coordination dilemma described above. Though not fully comparable to its national counterparts, as 'normalized' core executive, it is subject to equivalent organizational mechanisms (Egeberg, 2006; Wille, 2013). The College of Commissioners, headed by the Commission President, constitutes the Commission's political sphere. Its administrative sphere is composed of policy (Directorate-Generals, DGs) and horizontal, technical departments (most prominently the Secretariat General (SG)). Just as with other multidivisional core executives, developing policy proposals requires huge coordination efforts along hierarchical and sectoral lines (Hartlapp *et al.*, 2013, 2014; Kassim *et al.*, 2013, 2017). The Commission not only represents a strong and relevant case to study core-executive policy coordination; if the Juncker reform indeed led to systematically more multidimensional policy proposals, it could serve as a role model for other core executives and its output might affect EU policy-making at large.

The organizational manipulations of the Juncker reform in late 2014 constitute a *case-in-time* empirical testing ground by the way they changed the Commission's

organizational set-up to incentivize more intense coordination (Kassim, 2016; on behavioural reactions: Bürgin, 2018; Opey, 2018). Juncker was certainly not the first Commission President who reached for increased coordination and more multidimensional policy output.¹ Particularly the idea of a College organized around groups of Commissioners working closely together with Vice-Presidents coordinating these efforts has been around for decades (Spiereburg, 1979). In contrast to previous efforts, the Juncker reform enshrined two *structural policy coordination authorities* in the Commission's organizational set-up. At the same time, it maintained the functionally necessarily high degree of hierarchical and sectoral differentiation. Following our hypothesis, these changes should reduce departmental actors' silo behaviour and foster more 'positive' coordination as per changed incentive structures. Ultimately, this should lead to systematically 'bigger' policy proposals under Juncker than under Barroso II.

Zooming into the political sphere, Vice-Presidents received the distinct task to coordinate policy development efforts of several Commissioners in project teams. This renewed and strengthened role of Vice-Presidents was underlined by being actively connected to Juncker's prominent agenda of ten political priorities. Located between the President and the Commissioners, Vice-Presidents are gatekeepers in policy proposal development. Whenever a Commissioner plans to initiate or finalize a development process, they depend on the green light from the responsible Vice-President. The College's organizational form and the Vice-Presidents' role description incentivize them to make actual use of their gate-keeping power. This is because their success will be defined by how well they foster coordination in their project team and not – as with Commissioners – by pushing 'their' proposals through. Consequently, Vice-Presidents will be keen to ensure that any green light is bound to intense previous cooperation between several Commissioners. The fact that Vice-Presidents (with two exceptions) no longer have a DG at their disposal further underlines that Vice-Presidents shall undertake and foster coordination efforts rather than develop own concrete policy proposals. To compensate, Vice-Presidents were allowed higher staff numbers than line Commissioners in their Cabinets and may also draw on the services of the SG (European Commission, 2014a, pp. 3–6, 2014b, p. 6). Thus, Vice-Presidents are neither incentivized nor de facto able to engage in-depth in technical policy proposal development. Yet, Vice-Presidents appear to be rather *differently* than *more* important than Commissioners as both roles are each functionally necessary. Put differently, the increased *hierarchy* within the College is based on more *horizontal* diversity of organizational roles.

In the administrative sphere, the Juncker reform reinforced another *structural authority*: the SG. It had always played an important role in the Commission, not least because of its ever-closer connection to the Commission President. Making the SG a service the Vice-Presidents can rely on, however, once more considerably attached it to the political sphere. The reform pushed the SG to take a more active role in policy coordination as policy development processes used to be dominated by the lead DG (Hartlapp *et al.*, 2013, 2014). Since the Juncker reform, the SG can and should actively invite further DGs early in the policy development processes to ensure all interested services get the chance to

¹This is for example illustrated by the rules of procedure under Barroso II: 'the department responsible for preparing an initiative shall ensure from the beginning of the preparatory work that there is effective coordination between all the departments with a legitimate interest in the initiative' (European Commission, 2010).

participate. This supports the idea of project teams within the College on administrative level.

III. Empirical Strategy²

Using official procedural data in EU legislative studies, especially in the realm of public administration, is rather rare (Kuipers *et al.*, 2014; see Rauh, 2021; Senninger *et al.*, 2021 are exceptions). Current research mostly relies on self-reported data with no direct measurement of policy output as dependent variable (Kuipers *et al.*, 2014). With view to the Juncker reform, studies have focused on actors' behavioural or strategic reactions in internal coordination (Bürgin, 2018; Opey, 2018). While interview evidence suggests that the Juncker reform indeed affected core-executive actors' behaviour, it similarly finds that they still tend to prefer working in silos. This is especially the case where the organizational structure does not sufficiently incentivize more cooperation (Opey, 2018). However, given that 'positive' coordination still is very resource-intensive and faces immense hurdles, these behavioural changes do not necessarily translate to changes in the Commission's default policy output. We investigate whether Commission policy output reflects the reported tendency of a change in actors' cooperation behaviour. To do so, we measure whether policy output under Juncker is systematically more multidimensional than under Barroso II and therefore whether behavioural changes are reflected in policy output.

We retrieve data on legislative proposals from EUR-Lex and OEIL homepages (latest access: 31 August 2019). Our over-time comparison comprises the Barroso II and the Juncker Commissions to ensure the highest possible comparability: both Presidents wanted to intensify coordination (European Commission, 2010, 2014c), faced contemporary political challenges, are comparable in party political weight, had the same number of Commissioners and hence worked under comparable general organizational preconditions. During the Prodi Commission, the College was still considerably smaller and the Barroso I Commission was transforming in terms of size. As policy portfolios on College level are roughly mirrored at the administrative level, this directly affects the degree of multidivisionality of the Commission and its internal coordination in policy proposal development.

Nonetheless, the Commission is not exogenous: not only did the President change between the two terms, but also many Commissioners, high-level administrative personnel, several organizational entities as well as, outside the Commission, the composition of the EP and the Council. It is impossible to control for all these factors and such changes appear with every new Commission and changing political majorities in the member states. However, the bulk of personnel inside the Commission administration remained the same over time just as several Commissioners.

Our dataset includes all policy proposals adopted between 1 March 2010 and 31 August 2014 (Barroso II) and 1 March 2015 and 31 August 2019 (Juncker), respectively, to examine a comparable period for both Commissions. For better comparability, we exclude all proposals that were later withdrawn in the OLP, while we included proposals that were still pending at the time of the latest update of the dataset. Pending proposals might

²Data and replication script for download: https://osf.io/m3be6/?view_only=5cecc518500264426992501ba95a3f2fb

or might not be withdrawn as the interinstitutional OLP proceeds. Since we are not investigating interinstitutional timing or efficiency, it is reasonable to include them as to maximize the number of relevant proposals in the dataset. It comprises 868 OLP proposals adopted by the Commission (490 under Barroso II and 378 under Juncker), of which 702 were already approved by the EP and the Council and 166 were still pending in the OLP.

Dependent Variable: Measures of Multidimensionality

To analyse the effects of the Juncker reform, we propose three quantitative indicators for a profound and robust measurement of the *policy multidimensionality* of Commission proposals. Policy multidimensionality refers to the degree to which policy proposals cover several different policy areas at the same time. All indicators can also be used to study other core executives' policy output in a comparative manner.

The first indicator (A) draws on the EuroVoc descriptor, which is a multilingual, multidisciplinary thesaurus that describes EU legislative proposals. Examples are the central objects of proposal (for example 'carbon capture and storage'), institutions involved (for example 'International Monetary Fund') or countries involved (for example 'Colombia').³ EUR-Lex's legal analysis contractor indexes all legislative proposals with EuroVoc descriptors to describe their content and the EUR-Lex unit performs a quality control on a sample of documents. Since the EuroVoc descriptor is not assigned by Commission staff, we have no reason to expect that its number has increased due to internal desirability.

Raw data is presented as strings. We use the number of descriptors with a range from two to twenty. Hence, we exclude proposals with missing values from the analysis. A significantly higher average number of EuroVoc descriptors ascribed to policy proposals should indicate a higher degree of policy multidimensionality. However, it is important to mention that the EuroVoc descriptors do not always make a clear statement about the scope of the proposal.

Therefore, indicator A is accompanied by a second indicator (B): the directory code. This indicator is also attributed by EUR-Lex's legal analysis contractor without involvement of Commission staff. It also describes the policy content covered in a legislative proposal, but in a more systematic way than the EuroVoc descriptor. The directory code assigns policy areas and sub areas (for example, area of freedom, security and justice, therein free movement of persons, therein crossing external borders) of up to four levels, with the highest level (the first two digits of the code, with two digits per level) indicating the broad policy area (mother area).

It is available both as string value and as eight-digit code. We take advantage of the systematic order of the digit-based code. We introduce a fine-grained scale from 0 to 5 to measure the degree of difference between the directory codes. 0 means there is only one directory code (because, per definition, there cannot be any difference). 1 or 2 are assigned if there are two or three, respectively, different directory codes that, however, do not show any variance in the mother area. 3 or 4 are assigned for two or three, respectively, directory codes that show (only) one difference between their mother areas. Finally, 5 means there are three directory codes, which is the maximum per proposal, and

³Table A3 in the Online Appendix lists examples for all indicators for illustration.

all of them show different mother areas. This allows discriminating sets of directory codes ascribed to different legislative proposals based on their degree of difference in the mother areas.

Indicator C is the number of EP committees documented to negotiate a Commission proposal. While indicators A and B measure multidimensionality of policy proposals directly, taking EP committees as a proxy is a more indirect way. It addresses the effect of Commission proposals on the following OLP rather than their policy characteristics. Using the number of EP committees to assess policy proposals' multidimensionality is reasonable in light of the interinstitutional character of the OLP⁴ because EP committees will be interested to engage actively in bargaining the proposals. Indeed, organizational changes in the Commission's DG structure were shown to have an effect on the internal workflow of related institutions (Christiansen, 2006). However, we have to keep in mind that it might take some time for the EP to adapt its inner ways of working. Thus, assuming that policy proposals of the Commission became more multidimensional, EP committees might not immediately align due to internal organizational hurdles or other reasons.

Models

We use indicators A, B and C as a dependent variable for an OLS regression to assess the extent to which policy proposals differ substantially between the two Commissions. Our main independent variable is a dummy variable that differentiates between the respective terms. However, there are several other factors that might have a structural impact on the multidimensionality of the policy proposals. Therefore, we control for a number of other variables in our analysis to attribute a possible effect with greater certainty to the Juncker reform.

Two of these variables are directly linked to the reform. First, the reform has identified certain broad policy areas⁵ where internal coordination should intensify particularly ('policy priorities'; Juncker, 2014). Thus, proposals assigned to these areas might be significantly more multidimensional than proposals outside of the priority areas. Second, the reform aimed at reducing departmental actors' silo behaviour. We suspect a difference between Commissioners who only joined under Juncker and Commissioners who had already served under Barroso II in that the latter may have found it more difficult to change their coordination behaviour. Therefore, a dummy variable controls for all proposals adopted under Juncker in a policy area led by the same Commissioner over both terms. Third, we also control for the time between the beginning of a Commission term and the internal adoption of a proposal. Furthermore, we run the regression with policy area fixed effects because some policy areas tend to have a higher baseline likelihood of being more multidimensional than others. Thus, our results do not depend on whether certain policy areas were addressed more or less frequently under the Juncker Commission.

⁴The same applies to Council configurations. However, the number of missing values on the OEIL website has been rather high. Therefore, we decided not to include them to preserve the consistency of the indicators.

⁵Table A1 shows the allocation of the Commissioners to the respective areas and Table A2 (both in the Online Appendix) the allocation to the respective directory codes.

IV. Results

Before we turn to the regression analyses, we look at some descriptive statistics on the measures of multidimensionality. Figures A1–A3 in the Appendix show the distribution of the three indicators. For both the EuroVoc descriptor (indicator A) and the number of EP committees (C), the average for the Juncker Commission is significantly higher than for the Barroso II Commission. The figure for the directory code (B) also tends to confirm our hypothesis. Looking at the distribution of the scale introduced above, about two thirds of all proposals have only one directory code. However, under Juncker, 41 per cent of all proposals show a variation in the directory code, while it was only 26 per cent under Barroso II. In addition, there is an accumulation in the other proposals of those to which two codes are assigned that differ in the mother area. Considering that there are significantly more proposals from the Barroso II period in the dataset, it becomes apparent that in each category where there is more than one directory code, there are proportionately more proposals from Juncker.

The results of the regression analyses confirm this trend (Table 1). Both indicators A and B show a significantly higher value under Juncker. For the EuroVoc descriptor (A), the average number is 1.74 higher under Juncker (model 1). Moreover, the expected effect of a participation of a Commissioner who served under both Barroso II and Juncker is

Table 1: Regression Models

| | <i>Dependent variable:</i> | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| | <i>EV count</i> <i>OLS</i> <i>(1)</i> | <i>DC Scale</i> <i>OLS</i> <i>(2)</i> | <i>EP committees</i> <i>OLS</i> <i>(3)</i> | <i>DC dummy</i> <i>logistic</i> <i>(4)</i> | <i>Merged scale</i> <i>OLS</i> <i>(5)</i> |
| Juncker | 1.739*** | 0.276* | 0.247 | 0.936*** | 0.090*** |
| Commission | (0.163) | (0.112) | (0.251) | (0.206) | (0.013) |
| Commissioner | −0.790** | 0.180 | −0.461 | −0.229 | −0.010 |
| Before | (0.288) | (0.197) | (0.444) | (0.334) | (0.023) |
| Days Since | 0.0004* | 0.0004*** | 0.001*** | −0.001*** | −0.00002 |
| Start | (0.0002) | (0.0001) | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.00001) |
| Juncker Topic | −0.206 | 0.440 | 2.042*** | 0.828* | 0.037 |
| | (0.340) | (0.374) | (0.524) | (0.374) | (0.028) |
| Issue Fixed | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Effects | | | | | |
| Constant | 6.467*** | 1.548*** | 2.572*** | −0.071 | 0.386*** |
| | (0.287) | (0.196) | (0.442) | (0.325) | (0.023) |
| Observations | 868 | 868 | 868 | 868 | 868 |
| R ² | 0.194 | 0.163 | 0.098 | | 0.166 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.173 | 0.142 | 0.074 | | 0.144 |
| Log likelihood | | | | −480.659 | |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | | | | 1,007.317 | |
| Residual S.E. | 1.912 | 1.308 | 2.945 | | 0.155 |
| F Statistic | 9.257*** | 7.498*** | 4.165*** | | 7.634*** |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

also significant: respective proposals have significantly fewer EuroVoc descriptors. Model 2 shows a significant positive effect of the Juncker Commission on the directory code scale (B). In this case, there is no significant effect of whether or not a Commissioner had served in both terms. However, a marginally positive effect of proposals falling under Juncker's political priorities, where coordination was particularly promoted, can be observed here. To test the robustness of this regression, we additionally operationalized the dependent variable as a dummy variable for a logistic regression (model 4).⁶ This test confirms that the result is not due to the assignment of the scale scores.

As indicators A and B are comparable proxies for the direct measurement of policy multidimensionality, we integrated them into a merged scale as a further robustness test. For this purpose, a ratio is calculated for each proposal for both indicators, where 1 corresponds to the highest and 0 to the lowest possible value on the scale. The average of both values is used as the dependent variable in model 5 and shows the same significant effect for the Juncker Commission as the previous models.

We expected that increased multidimensionality of policy proposals could also lead to more EP committees working on a proposal. Although on average more committees were indeed involved under Juncker, the difference is not significant (model 3). However, there is a significant positive effect for policy areas that belong to Juncker's political priorities. This finding could lead to the assumption that, for the further legislative process, the reform has had an impact only on core topics, whereas within the Commission it has already had an impact on all policy proposals. This indicates a potential relationship between the organizational reform within the Commission and the EP's internal ways of working. Further research on possible *interinstitutional* effects of the *intraorganizational* reform of Commission policy proposal development would therefore be desirable.

Robustness Assessment

As our models confirm our hypothesis of increased multidimensionality of Commission proposals adopted under Juncker, it is important to address whether we just catch a general trend of broader policy proposals of agenda-setting institutions. Needless to say, the Juncker reform has not been the only attempt to increase internal coordination and multidimensionality of policy output in core executives (Van de Walle *et al.*, 2016a, 2016b). However, such reform attempts are often geared to a specific policy area and often triggered by crises in this area (Knill and Steinebach, 2021). Furthermore, the perception of the success of such reforms varies widely and actual evaluation is often insufficient (Huxley *et al.*, 2016). The Juncker reform, in contrast, is a holistic reform across policy areas. Since our analysis controls for the policy area of the respective proposal, we can demonstrate an overarching effect. Although their degree of multidimensionality differs, there is a general post-reform trend of increased multidimensionality across all policy areas.

This picture is also confirmed when looking at the eight proposals with the highest score for the combined indicator (A and B): Seven of these proposals come from the Juncker Commission and cover different policy areas. These include, for example, European venture capital funds, CO₂ emission performance standards for cars and the

⁶In this case, a single directory code was coded as 0 and each type of different codes as 1.

import of cultural goods. Another indication of this is the lower number of proposals under Juncker: This ratio suggests that the overall policy output in fact is about the same for both Commissions, with output under Juncker delivered in fewer proposals that are, however, 'bigger' in return.

Furthermore, we use two statistical tests to assess the robustness of the results. First, we re-run the regression models from Table 1 with a year trend variable instead of the days since the start of the Commission to rule out a general trend towards more multidimensional proposals. Thus, analogous to the issue fixed effects, the additional models are supposed to ensure that the differences between the Commissions are not due to a change in the outside world. For all significant indicators from the previous regressions, the results are confirmed or even become more significant (see Online Appendix). Only the previously non-significant indirect indicator for the EP committees (C) turns significantly negative. This underlines, as discussed above, that it is not comparable with the other indicators.

To learn more about *which* proposals are more multidimensional, we also coded the directory codes along whether they fall within Juncker's priority areas. This reveals a clear difference between the two Commissions: under Juncker, more than twice as many proposals with more than one directory code had two codes from one of the respective areas. This is a strong indication that the increased multidimensionality also stems from the respective designated areas.

Conclusion

When Jean-Claude Juncker took office as Commission President, one of his declared goals was to reduce silo behaviour in policy proposal development to increase the multidimensionality of Commission output. To achieve this, he implemented an organizational reform that should foster internal coordination across policy departments by redesigning Vice-Presidents' organizational role in the College. Drawing back on theoretical approaches from both public administration and political science, we conceptualize them as *structural policy coordination authorities*. Our main hypothesis was that imposing these *structural authorities* on top of a core executive's multidivisional organizational set-up will incentivize actors to cooperate more and, in effect, systematically increase the multidimensionality of its overall policy output.

We quantitatively examined whether there is a significant difference between policy proposals before and after the Juncker reform with newly developed indicators for policy multidimensionality. We controlled for policy areas belonging to Juncker's political priorities and for policy areas that were led by the same Commissioner in both Commission terms. Overall, our analysis reveals substantial differences between pre- and post-reform policy output. What lessons can we draw from this and what implications do they have for the functioning of the Commission specifically and for coordination within core executives in general?

The indicators that directly target Commission policy output show that post-reform proposals are systematically more multidimensional. Against the background that also before the Juncker Commission, departments were supposed to coordinate across policy areas in proposal development, the organizational reform indeed seems to have influenced

internal coordination. At an abstract level, we thus show how organizational design offers a way to change the output of core executives.

However, this kind of reform is hard to implement and can only be systematically successful if it kicks in at the very beginning of the agenda-setting process. The concept we describe, based on the installation of intermediary managers, is a possibility of implementation that can be applied to other core executives. Nonetheless, several variables potentially intervene on the success of such a reform. The key decision maker might have constituency-driven interests that contradict the idea of the reform. This might clash with coordination efforts when bargaining processes already start during the creative phase of policy development. For this background, the measurable difference between policy multidimensionality across the two Commission terms also underscores the President's strong role as (very) first among equals and the direct connection between the reform and Juncker's political priorities. It remains to be seen to what extent this change will last when it may no longer be an important part of the political agenda under subsequent presidencies.

The new status quo of Commission policy output may also trigger intended or unintended consequences and opportunities in terms of national interests and hidden political agendas: A broader potential set of interests per proposal from different policy areas and countries might challenge entrenched structures of lobbying and influence. On the one hand, this could make the process more solution oriented. On the other hand, it could also lead to greater legitimacy of the policy-making process among the public. However, it is also possible that the process will be prolonged and, in some cases, a quick reaction to urgent problems might be slowed down. What is more, it might bear interinstitutional power potentials of internal organizational reforms. Where interinstitutional relations are strong, like in the OLP, political institutions, and agenda-setting institutions specifically, might indeed affect each other's ways of working by internal organizational reform. Interestingly, our indirect indicator (number of EP committees) does not show a significant increase under Juncker. Two factors might be crucial here. First, the reform addressed the Commission's internal organizational set-up. Even if the EP had wanted to adapt to this new way of proposal development, it could only have done so with a certain time lag. Second, the very initiation stage of a proposal already has a great impact on the multidimensionality of the policy outcome. This might question the actual usefulness of the number of EP committees working on a proposal as an indicator of the success or failure of the reform.

It is still promising for future studies to investigate potential effects on the further interinstitutional process following an organizational reform of a related institution. Future research could also examine to what extent comparable reforms on the national level show similar outcomes. Moreover, it would be to qualitatively zoom into the development processes of policy proposals under Juncker (following Hartlapp *et al.*, 2014). One interesting example is the proposal for a regulation 'for setting emission performance standards for new passenger cars and for new light commercial vehicles as part of the Union's integrated approach to reduce CO₂ emissions' (2017/0293/COD). This proposal symbolizes the linking of different policy areas such as environment and industry and already carries the integrative focus in its name. Moreover, it can also recognizably be assigned to the priority areas of the Juncker Commission.

Overall, this study exemplarily demonstrates the value added of taking an approach that unites the fields of public administration and political science by drawing back on classical organization theory and principal–agent modelling. Organization theory bears great potential for studying what influences the development of public policies within core executives specifically and in public-sector organizations in general.

Correspondence:

Jan Schwalbach GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Cologne.
email: schwalbach@wiso.uni-koeln.de

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

Data S1. Supporting Information

Appendix

Figure A1: Distribution of the EuroVoc Descriptor

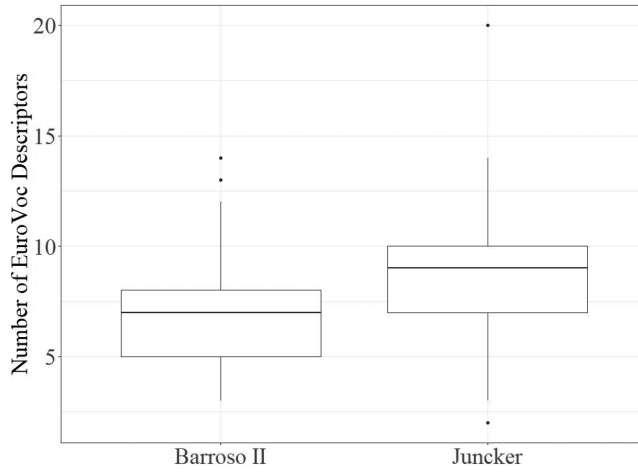


Figure A2: Distribution of the Directory Code Scale

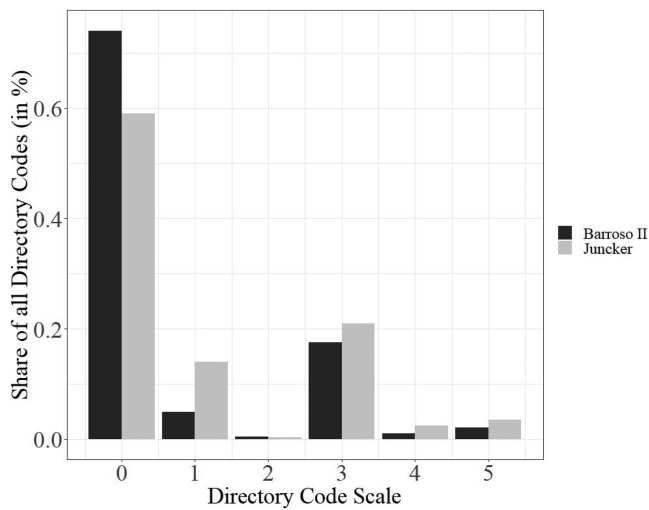


Figure 3A: Distribution of the EP Committee Variable

