

Reasserting the center of the nation state: How supranational institutions reshape the public sector

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This paper analyzes the impact of institutionalization at the supranational level on reforms that integrate and/or coordinate existing policy sectors at the domestic level. More specifically, we argue that the ongoing agencification of the European Union, where European agencies have been established with the aim of providing policy advice and fostering cooperation, has crucially strengthened cross-sectoral reforms at the national level. To examine our argument empirically, we apply hierarchical regression to an original dataset that measures reforms concerning policy integration and administrative coordination in four policy fields – environment, immigration, public health, and unemployment in thirteen countries (eight EU members and five non-EU members) covering the period from 1985-2014. Overall, the results of our research point to varying patterns of integration and coordination at the nation-state level and to the differential importance of agencification at supranational level.

Introduction

It is now widely accepted that national governments have delegated political authority upwards to the supranational level (Hooghe and Marks 2003), downwards to subnational jurisdictions (Hooghe et al. 2016), and sideways to independent regulators and private actors (Gilardi 2008; Maggetti 2012). Against this backdrop, we suggest that the dynamics of multi-level governance are more complex than usually thought. We claim that national governments in advanced democracies were also able to (re-)integrate and (re-)coordinate policy goals, instruments and

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their administrative structures. Such instances of integration and coordination are specific to policy fields. For example, in unemployment policy, they correspond to reforms that integrate policies for unemployment benefits and labor market activation and coordinate benefit and activation agencies (Bonoli and Champion 2011). In the field of public health, scholars have pointed to the integration and coordination of preventive and curative health policy sectors (Trein 2017a).

The integration and coordination of policy sectors occurred in parallel or deferred slightly to the period of delegation of political authority upwards, downwards and sideward that took place during the last 30 years. Researchers have inquired into the question of integration and coordination at the national level already long ago (Post 1935; Leake 1918) – for example during times of economic or political crisis. More recently, scholars have examined the dynamics of reforms that (re-)integrate policy goals and instruments and (re-)coordinate public sector organizations after new public management reforms. Two main approaches exist (Tosun and Lang 2017; Trein et al. 2017b). On the one hand, scholars have focused on the policy dimension, by referring to the policy goals and instruments to be integrated (Jordan and Lenschow 2010; Candel and Biesbroek 2016). On the other, researchers have taken a broader perspective and included administrative reorganization into the analysis (6 2004; Christensen and Laegreid 2007; Egeberg and Trondal 2016a). Precisely, scholars have analyzed the coordination of public sector organizations (Bouckaert et al. 2010) as well as the state's capacity to govern (Dahlström et al. 2011; Peters 2015) against the backdrop of the above-mentioned delegation of political authority and resulting fragmentation of the central state.

In starting from the insights to of this specific literature, we make a broader contribution to political science research by arguing that delegation and integration/coordination are interwoven phenomena. The institutionalization of a supranational level of governance, such as the EU and European agencies, does not only unravel the nation state but it does also come along with a “reassertion of the center” (Christensen and Laegreid 2007; Egeberg and Trondal 2016a, 585-587) at the national level. Specifically, we hold that agencification in the European Union (EU) – a macroscopic manifestation of supranational institutionalisation in the most advanced multi-level governance polity (Levi-Faur 2011, 818-22) – played a particularly important role for policy integration and administrative coordination reforms in different policy fields. In other words, agencification, a phenomenon which epitomizes upward delegation of political authority, also provided momentum for increasing the integration and coordination of

policy sectors at the national level. Over time, European agencies assist national policymakers to develop more harmonized processes and procedures to implement European rules (König and Luetgert 2009). Finally, patterns of coordination and integration reforms should differ across EU-agencified policy fields. Notably, we hold that the EU-agencification of a policy field should have stronger effects on policy integration than on administrative coordination reforms because EU agencification leads to a tighter intertwining between the European and the national level, and thereby it reduces the room for maneuver for horizontal coordination at the national level (Egeberg and Trondal 2016a).

To investigate our argument empirically, we analyze an original dataset that entails information about policy integration and administrative coordination reforms in four policy fields (environment, immigration, public health, and unemployment) across thirteen countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and U.S.) in the time span from 1985 to 2014. These policy fields pose acute challenges to policymakers and provides us with the required variation to examine our hypotheses. The multilevel data structure (policy fields nested in countries) allows us to investigate our argument across various policy fields. We estimated multilevel regression models in a time-series context to identify the impact of agencification. We also apply a battery of control variables, which vary at the sector and/or country level. A descriptive analysis of the data over time shows that the number of policy integration and administrative coordination reforms takes the shape of an inverse u-curve over time for our sample of policy fields and countries. The reform activity peaks around 2000 and declines after that. Reforms of policy integration are more frequent than administrative coordination reforms. The multilevel regression models support our theoretical argument. We show that the agencification of a policy field at the EU level increases the probability for national governments to pass reforms that increase policy integration or administrative coordination. Another important finding is that the presence of many regulatory agencies augments the probability that decision makers pass reforms for policy integration.

Policy integration and administrative coordination

This article aims at examining the impact of European agencification on the reorganization of national governments, notably through reforms that integrate and coordinate policy sectors. In the terminology of the governance literature, our argument focuses on the reorganization of the

public sphere (Bouckaert et al. 2010, 36-40), against the background of the delegation of political authority to other levels of government and beyond (Maggetti 2012; Hooghe et al. 2010; Jordana et al. 2011). Our aim is not to challenge the literature on delegation, quite to the contrary: we want to learn more about how governments reorganized the state and the policy process against the backdrop of fragmented political authority and in a context of multi-level governance.

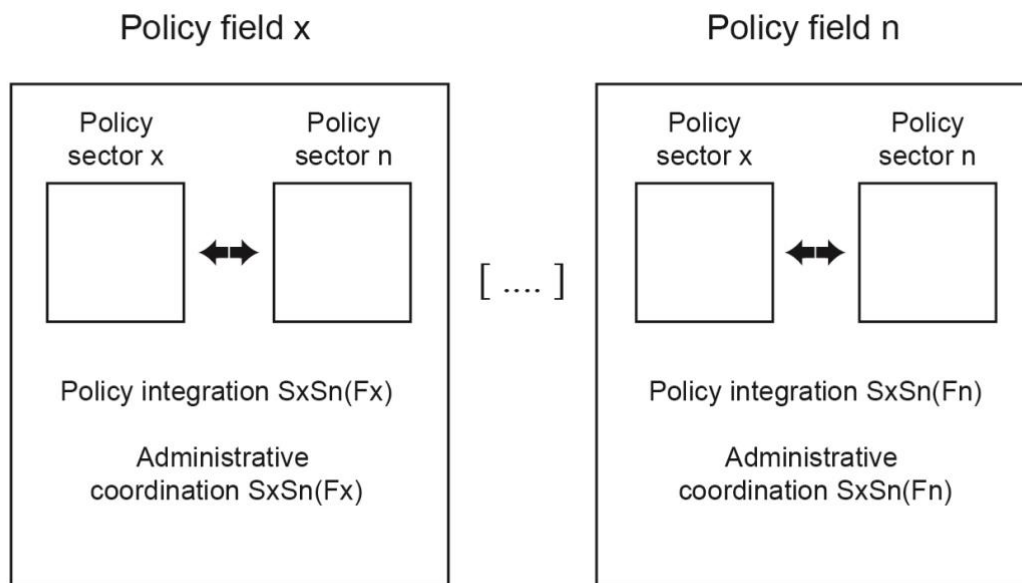
Our analysis takes a dynamic perspective. In other words, our dependent variables refer to reform activity over time at the level of the central state that concern a change in the relations between two policy sectors (e.g. curative and preventive medicine) within a specific policy field (e.g. health policy). Our approach is different to other comparative approaches to the study of integration or coordination. Previously, researchers used scales of coordination (Metcalf 1994; Jordan and Schout 2006) that distinguished different types of coordination output according to a Guttman scale, for example, from negative coordination to positive coordination, and from policy integration to strategic coordination (Braun 2008, 230-1; Bouckaert et al. 2010, 16). These scales are helpful to assess different coordination outputs and outcomes in detail but are too complex for encompassing comparative analyses. What is more, they tend to conflate the policy and the organizational dimensions. Therefore, we propose a more parsimonious conceptualization by distinguishing two analytical dimensions of the relations between policy sectors: policy integration and administrative coordination. We follow the previous literature, which distinguished policy-related and administrative elements of policy sector coordination, but use these two dimensions separated from one another.

1. *Policy integration*: This concept refers to the policy dimension. It covers policy reforms that aim at achieving cross-cutting policy objectives that transcend the borders of policy sectors (or subsystems) (Candel and Biesbroek 2016, 211-2; Jochim and May 2010). Policy integration reforms are usually enacted to deal with policy problems that require comprehensive solutions across existing policy limitations (Peters 2015, 4). Empirical instances of policy integration are legislative changes that connect or combine existing laws, or new political strategies that embody future visions or plans that clearly link various policy fields or subsystems ((Jordan and Lenschow 2010; Adelle and Russel 2013; Vandenbroucke et al. 2011; Trein et al. 2017a).
2. *Administrative coordination*: This concept pertains to the organizational dimension. It refers to reforms that change the relationship (Bouckaert et al. 2010, 36-40) between

sector-specific organizations with the goal to improve their coordination (Christensen and Lægveid 2007, 1059-60). It is important to distinguish the administrative realm from the policy dimension, as the institutional “stickiness” (Pierson 1998, 552-3) of public sector organizations makes such reforms likely to be rare events. Administrative coordination consists in introducing procedures aiming at avoiding negative spill-overs between policies, such as impact assessments or the co-signing of legislative proposals, the creation of specific coordinating agencies or units) (6 2004, 10; Bouckaert et al. 2010), or even the merger of administrative units or entire ministries (6 2004, 108), which would be a case of administrative integration (6 et al. 2002, 29-34).

To analyze policy integration and administrative coordination reforms empirically, we selected four policy fields: environment, migration, public health, and unemployment. We define these as larger policy fields, in the sense of strategic action fields constructed around specific policy problems (Fligstein and McAdam 2012, 5). In each field, we assess the policy integration and administrative coordination of policy sectors nested in the policy field. For the purposes of this paper, we consider sectors to be narrower, more formally institutionalized than policy fields (cf. Trein 2017c). For reasons of comparability and feasibility, we focus on the integration of and coordination of one pair of sectors per policy field (Figure 1), but we do not exclude the possibility that a reform may entail the integration/coordination of more sectors. It goes without saying that these two dimensions are potentially interrelated, that is, that policy integration reforms could lead to administrative coordination reforms (and vice versa). However, in this article we take this as an open question that can be examined by studying reform activity along these two dimensions separately.

Figure 1: Policy integration and administrative coordination



The empirical analysis presented in this article is based on an original multilevel dataset that accounts for reforms of policy integration and administrative coordination as regards environment, migration, public health, and unemployment policy. These policy fields pose important challenges – sometimes called “wicked problems” – to policymakers and underwent considerable policy integration and administrative coordination reforms in the last decades (cf. Table 2 in the empirical analysis section). Regarding environmental protection, the integration and coordination challenge is to incorporate environmental concerns into other policies, or to unhinge competencies from other policy fields and integrate them into a coherent environmental policy field (Jordan and Lenschow 2010). Concerning migration, the challenge is to deal with migration issues and include immigrants into society by integrating and coordinating competencies from different fields, such as immigration, social policy, and education (Entzinger and Biezeveld 2003). With respect to public health, a key challenge for policymakers is to integrate and coordinate preventive and curative as well as population- and individual- focused policies (Trein 2017a). In the field of unemployment policy, policymakers face the challenge of integrating and coordinating the sectors of employment promotion services with cash transfers, e.g., unemployment compensation payments and social assistance (Champion and Bonoli 2011). Before moving forward with the empirical analysis, next section discusses the theory that underpins our argument.

Multi-level governance, policy integration and administrative coordination

We argue that the institutionalization of the supranational level in multi-level governance polities can shape the extent to which national governments engage in reforms to increase policy integration and administrative coordination in a policy field. More specifically, the extent to which supranational regulatory authority affects a policy field in a given jurisdiction is expected to impact on whether national governments will reform the horizontal relationship between policy sectors. In the EU – the most advanced multi-level polity worldwide – the supranational institutionalization of regulatory authority can be at best equated with the ongoing process of agencification, which goes well beyond the boundaries of the Meroni doctrine and, in some cases, encompasses even direct enforcement powers (Scholten et al., 2017). Indeed, EU agencies fill in a governance space that was either empty or populated by transnational networks. While EU agencies remain network-based, they constitute a less-autonomous and more-accountable layer of governance than pre-existing European networks with respect to European institutions (Maggetti 2014). In particular, they refer and are connected with the European Commission more closely than to any other institution or actor (Egeberg and Trondal 2016b). In a nutshell, European agencies constitute the pillar of a progressively institutionalized politico-administrative order in the EU, which is also expected to reshape policy-making at the domestic level. The next section elaborates on the mechanisms at work.

How European agencification shapes policy integration and administrative coordination at the national level

Europeanization scholars have since long highlighted the impact of European integration on domestic political institutions and public policies (Börzel and Risse 2000; Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999; Radaelli 2000). Early Europeanization studies typically embraced a top-down perspective to analyze domestic changes following pressures from above. This perspective assumes a “misfit” between the European level and member states, which leads to a reactive adaptation of national institutions and public policies through the mechanisms of “inertia”, “retrenchment”, “absorption”, “accommodation”, or “transformation” (Bache 2003). Another stream of literature focused more explicitly on the “politics” dimension and investigated bottom-up and horizontal processes including mechanisms of policy diffusion, policy transfer and learning, which may produce a differential impact of Europe (Windhoff-Héritier et al.

2001). In this context, the concept of Europeanisation is broadly understood as “processes of (a) construction, (b) diffusion, and (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things” and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies” (Radaelli 2000).

In this article, we claim that the scope of this concept should be narrowed down to provide more analytical leverage for studying the impact of the EU on instances of policy integration and, respectively, administrative coordination at the domestic level. The multi-level architecture of the EU is characterized by interdependencies among actors operating at different levels and non-hierarchical forms of policy-making (Christiansen and Piattoni 2003; Jordan and Schout 2006). These interactions are being increasingly structured and formalized through networked organizations that are progressively institutionalized as a post-functional development (Hooghe and Marks 2003), whose most advanced (Levi-Faur 2011) and most supranationalized form (Egeberg and Trondal 2016b) – with respect to EU institutions – is represented by EU agencies. These agencies are precisely in charge of providing policy advice to EU institutions and supporting their policy-making process at supranational level, as well as fostering cooperation and harmonization among member states and contributing to the implementation of EU policies. This way they bring into being a complex system (Piattoni 2010) that requires, and the same time may foster, more integration and coordination at the domestic level in selected policy fields, following two mechanisms that can be considered as two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, they provide domestic actors with an opportunity to become rule-makers instead of rule-takers. An increased integration and coordination at the domestic level allows domestic actors to cooperate to “upload” their national preferences within EU agencies, which still function as networked organizations, and thereby influence the EU policy process through a new venue (Maggetti 2014). On the other hand, governments must devise a coherent national strategy and guarantee effective implementation to cooperate and effectively deal with pressures for conformity, which are “downloaded” from EU agencies (Scholten and Scholten 2016; Ruffing 2017). Such a coherent strategy requires a fine-grained integration and coordination among policy sectors within each policy field at stake. Therefore, we expect that sector-specific agencification at the EU level will generate policy integration and administrative coordination reforms at the level of member states, as follows:

- Main hypothesis: *The more a policy sector is agencified at the EU level, the higher the degree of policy integration and administrative coordination in that sector at the level of member states.*

It is possible that EU agencies, insofar as organizations in charge of promoting cooperation in a specific policy sector across levels of governance, will attenuate the capacity of member states to deal autonomously with the need for cross-sector coordination at one level, e.g. the national level (Egeberg and Trondal 2016a). This effect is expected to pertain to the organizational dimension of coordination, wherein conflicts, competition and turf wars may occur between public sector organizations situated at different levels of governance, whose competences overlap or even collide. Instead, no trade-offs are expected with respect to the policy dimension per se, which refers to the cross-sectoral integration of goals and instruments. Therefore:

- Corollary: *Agencification at the EU level is expected to have a stronger positive effect on policy integration than on administrative coordination.*

The observable implication of our main hypothesis is that the presence of a European agency in a given sector should increase the frequency of policy integration and administrative coordination reforms in that policy field at member state level. The observable implication of the corollary is that where a European agency is operative, the EU will have a positive impact on policy integration, while it may have a smaller effect, or no effect at all, on administrative coordination.

Further explanations for policy integration and administrative coordination at the national level

In addition to our main hypothesis and corollary, we need to consider other alternative or complementary explanations for why governments engage in more policy integration and administrative coordination. According to the literature, there is a number of factors that facilitate respectively block, policy integration and administrative coordination. For example, obstacles to coordination are manifold and comprise simple unwillingness to coordinate or even timing problems (Peters 2015, 26-44). For the purposes of this analysis, we focus on the main (eight) factors that are expected to explain variations in policy integration and administrative coordination, which are not related to the EU level, and are treated as control variables in this analysis. Four main factors can enable these reforms. Governments might decide to increase

policy integration and administrative coordination to respond to problem pressure in a policy field, such as rising unemployment rates. They might also want to reinforce integration and coordination between policy sectors when prior delegation to independent regulatory or executive agencies created an excessive fragmentation of the political system. The strength of political parties supporting specific issues (e.g. green parties with respect to environmental policy) may also favor these reforms. Finally, integration and coordination could be prompted by high debt rates and consolidation policies require reshuffling policy programs and public sector organizations and policy instruments. We also consider four factors that hinder policy integration and administrative coordination. The presence of strong subnational governments, a politicized bureaucracy that protects its privileges, and many veto points at the national level, are all factors that render cross-sectoral reforms more complicated. Moreover, we control for the size of the population in a country; for structural reasons, reforms concerning domestic policy integration and administrative coordination are less likely in larger countries (Trein et al. 2017a).³

Data on policy integration and administrative coordination at the national level across policy fields

A multilevel measure of policy integration and administrative coordination

To examine our argument empirically, we assembled an original multilevel time series dataset. We collected information on reforms of policy integration and administrative coordination in the four above-mentioned policy fields for the following thirteen countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the U.S. We chose these countries as they allow a systematic comparison of European with non-European countries and the EU-agencification with the non-EU-agencification of policy fields. We collected information on reforms in each sector during the period from 1985 to 2014. We selected 1985 as the starting year because the demand for (re-)integration and (re-)coordination in the public sector can be conceived as a reaction to New Public Management reforms that decentralized competencies to lower levels of government and independent and specialized authorities in the mid-1980s (Hood 1991; McLaughlin et al. 2002).

³ The theoretical underpinnings for including these control variables is discussed at length in a dedicated appendix, which can be obtained from the authors upon request.

Our dataset measures reform activity concerning policy integration and administrative coordination with two binary variables (0/1) that record relevant reforms per sector in a country and year (Table S3), which results in a dataset with 1560 observations on the dependent variable. This approach allows us to account for the multilevel and diachronic structure of our object of analysis. Thus, we created a dataset with reform activities per year that are nested in four fields and thirteen countries (Steenbergen and Jones 2002; Rohlfing 2008). Substantially, we focus on reforms that meet the criteria of policy integration and administrative coordination with respect to the challenges that we discussed before. We present the details of the operationalization in the Appendix (cf. Table S1). Based on secondary literature, policy reports, and documents, we compiled a timeline of reforms that operationalizes policy integration and administrative coordination for each country and policy sector. To ensure the high quality of data collection, we submitted a summary for each country and sector for review to a number of policy experts for each country and policy field.

Thus, *policy integration* and *administrative coordination* reforms are the ***dependent variables*** of this analysis. To operationalize our hypotheses, we use two ***independent variables***. Firstly, we create a dummy variable (0/1) that measures the *EU-agencification of the policy sector*. Precisely, if a country is a EU member we coded the variable “1” as of 1993 for environment (since then the European Environmental Agency (EEA) became operational), as of 1995 for public health (in this year the European Medicines Agency (EM(E)A) started to work), and as of 2005 for migration (FRONTEX (European Border and Coast Guard Agency) started to operate). For employment, we did not identify a proper EU agency.⁴ We only account for the first agency in the policy field and do not add additional agencies that were put into place later in the same policy field. Secondly, we create a continuous variable that takes into consideration the time *since when a sector has been EU-agencified*, which starts in the same years as reported above.

To account for the discussed competing explanations, we insert a number of ***control variables*** into the analysis, some of which vary at the sectoral and national level and others that vary at the national level only. At the sectoral level, we take into account the following variables. First, we account for the *problem pressure* with respect to the policy, using one key indicator for each sector. Notably, we focus on greenhouse gas emissions (OECD 2016c) for environment policy,

⁴ We use the information from David Levi Faur’s article who reports the year of agency establishment (Levi-Faur 2011, 818-22) as a starting point. We take the following year, which is when the agencies went operational.

the number of migrants for migration policy (OECD 2016b), the unemployment rate for employment policy (Armingeon et al. 2016), and childhood mortality (OECD 2016a) for public health. For reasons of comparability, we decided to focus on one key measure per policy field after considering and trying several compound variables for environment and public health. For each of these indicators, an increase in a value signals higher problem pressure. To ensure comparability of the data, we standardize the variable around a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. Second, we insert a variable that measures the *strength of the reference party* at the level of the policy field. We use strength of the main green party for environment, the strength of the main left parties concerning public health and unemployment, and the (reverse of the) strength of the main right party as measurement to indicate partisan support for more policy integration and administrative coordination in the respective policy field.

Then, we insert the following control variables that vary at the national level. First, we create a variable that measures the *scope of delegation to independent regulatory agencies* at the national level. Therefore, we created a count variable for number of independent regulatory agencies over fifteen policy fields (competition, electricity, environment, financial services, food safety, gas, health services, insurance, pensions, pharmaceuticals, postal services, security and exchange, telecommunications, water, and work safety), using the data by Jordana et al. (Jordana et al. 2011) that reports the year of establishment independent regulatory agencies (Table S1). We expect to find more policy integration and administrative coordination reforms in cases of wider delegation. Second, we use the degree of *self-rule* at the subnational level (Hooghe et al. 2016). The higher the self-rule is, the less policy integration and administrative coordination should we find at the national level. Third, we create a variable that measures the *politicization of the bureaucracy* in a country. Therefore, we create a simple index that ranks the bureaucracy of a country from little politicized (1) to very politicized (4) using the information on administrative traditions (Painter and Peters 2010). Then, we use the variable on political corruption in the Quality of Government Dataset (Teorell et al. 2017), which correlates highly with our index on politicization, and combine it with our politicization index through principal component analysis. The higher this variable, the more politicized is the bureaucracy of a country. Fourth, we use the dataset on political constraints to measure the veto points of the political system (Henisz 2000). The more veto points, the less likely reforms are in policy integration and administrative coordination. Fifth, we control for the national debt of a country (OECD 2016d). Larger debts increase reform pressure and thus the likelihood of more reforms concerning policy integration and administrative coordination. Sixth, we take into

account the size of the population (OECD 2016e). A larger population should result in less national policy integration and administrative coordination reforms.

Method of analysis

Due to the binary nature of our dependent variables, we estimate probit regression models. Since our data has a multilevel structure (reforms per year, nested in four sectors, nested in thirteen countries) we fit multilevel models (Steenbergen and Jones 2002), using the multilevel mixed-effects logistic regression estimator, which is built-in into the Stata package (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2012; Stegmueller 2013). Our dataset entails a number of variables that vary mostly at the country level and not between sectors. Thus, estimating three-level models comes along with a limited variance at the highest level of the multilevel data structure and does less effective estimates. To deal with this problem we collapsed the multilevel structure into 52 policy fields, four in each country.⁵ This allows us to estimate more effective models. We clustered the standard errors at the country level, which allows us to interpret the coefficients regarding decisions at the national level. To assess the robustness of our findings further, we use also mixed-effects parametric survival models.

Our data measures repeated reform events over time. This data structure entails the possibility that after some years and increased reform activity the probability to continue reforming policy integration and administrative coordination decreases. To account for potential time dependency of the observations in our data, we insert three time variables. We include three continuous time variables: t , which starts in 1985, $t^2/10$, $t^3/100$ – which provides an accurate control for time and has become standard in political science analyses (Gilardi 2010; de Francesco 2012).

Empirical analysis: The link between EU-agencification and domestic policy integration and administrative coordination

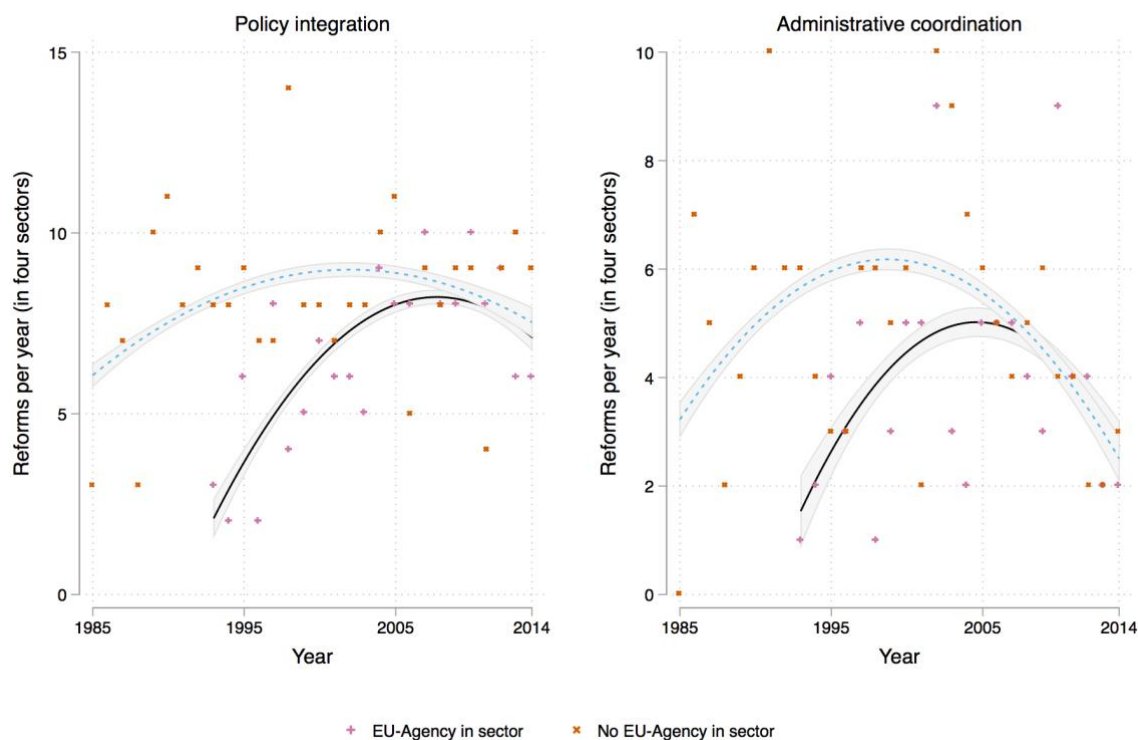
We will now turn to the presentation of our empirical analysis. We start with some descriptive results that provide a first illustration concerning our main argument. The plots of the reforms for policy integration and administrative coordination in four policy fields and thirteen countries show that reform activity in these countries evolved according to an inverted u-curve

⁵ The regression models do also converge when we estimate three-level models.

over time during the period from 1985 to 2014 (Figure 1). This simple description of the data suggests already that agencification at the supranational level was important in this process. In sectors without an EU agency, policy integration and administrative coordination reforms peaked around the year 2000. The establishment of a supranational agency is associated with an increase of national reforms to integrate policies and coordinate public sector organizations dealing with the issues of concern for these agencies. For instance, the establishment of the EU agency FRONTEX went with reforms in member states that integrated policies and coordinate public sector organizations as regards immigration admission on the one hand and immigrant integration on the other.

This implies that, along with the well-known phenomena denationalization upwards, downwards and sideways, (Gilardi 2008; Hooghe and Marks 2001), implying the relocation of authority at supranational level, the decentralization of decision-making capacity in favor of subnational governments, and the delegation of competencies to independent agencies and private actors since the mid-1980s, there was also an institutional dynamic that reinforced the policy integration and administrative coordination of policy sectors at the national level. This first finding corroborates our general argument about the intertwinement of these phenomena.

Figure 2: EU-agencification and national policy integration / administrative coordination



We now turn to the results of the regression analysis. Table 1 offers the results of the estimations for the dependent variable that measures policy integration. The coefficients for the main explanatory variable – the presence of an EU agency – point in the direction we expect and are statistically significant, even when we include all the control variables (Models 1-3, Table 1). The results are also robust if we use a very different type of regression model, for which all the coefficients remain significant statistically, except when we control for the number of regulatory agencies at the national level (Model 4-5, Table 1). This finding implies that the EU-agencification of a policy field directly reinforces the dynamics of reform activity regarding policy integration and administrative coordination at the national level. For instance, as a consequence of the creation of an European agency for environmental policy, national governments augmented the pace of reforms regarding environmental policy integration. In addition, our results suggest that the establishment of many independent regulatory agencies at domestic level increases the probability for reforms that increase policy integration between policy sectors. This finding lends comparative empirical support to the literature that suggested that delegation away from the central government should increase the demand for coordination (Pierre and Peters 2000; Peters 2015). Interestingly, high problem pressure seems to incentivize governments to pass less reforms concerning policy integration. This finding is surprising since previous analysis suggested a different effect for the case of unemployment policy only (Trein

et al. 2017a). This could indicate the existence of sector-specific patterns. Therefore, further research is necessary to compare the effect of problem pressure across different policy fields. Furthermore, our results indicate that more autonomy, e.g. self-rule for subnational and municipal governments, comes along with less reforms that integrate policies from different policy sectors. This makes sense, as with more competencies at the subnational level, policy integration at the national level can be complicated, for example due to coordination problems among federal units and between them and the federal state (Steurer and Clar 2015).

*Table 1: Regression coefficients for **policy integration**; standard errors in parentheses (clustered at country level)*

	Probit models			Parametric survival models	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
EU Agency	0.265*** (0.076)	0.308*** (0.066)	0.273*** (0.068)	0.229** (0.105)	0.053 (0.035)
Regulatory agencies overall			0.045*** (0.012)		0.149*** (0.030)
Regulatory agency in sector		0.027 (0.106)	-0.017 (0.111)	0.048 (0.047)	0.047* (0.024)
Problem pressure		-0.112*** (0.032)	-0.121*** (0.034)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)
National debt		0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.156 (0.130)	-0.001 (0.057)
Strength of reference party in parliament		0.002 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.001)
Self-rule		-0.032** (0.014)	-0.027* (0.015)	0.056** (0.024)	0.032 (0.039)
Politicization of bureaucracy		-0.064 (0.076)	-0.048 (0.078)	-0.113 (0.126)	0.078 (0.500)
Political constraints		0.921 (0.832)	0.824 (1.041)	-1.569 (1.239)	-1.005 (1.043)
Population size		0.005 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)	-0.008 (0.007)	0.347*** (0.028)
t	0.079* (0.045)	0.057 (0.069)	0.058 (0.072)		
t ² /10	-0.025 (0.038)	-0.017 (0.064)	-0.031 (0.065)		
t ³ /100	0.002	0.002	0.006		

	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.017)		
Constant	-1.349***	-1.657***	-1.841***	-0.388***	-0.874***
	(0.188)	(0.562)	(0.680)	(0.097)	(0.107)
Constant country				0.000	7.396
				(0.000)	(5.205)
Constant sector/country or sector	0.046**	0.011	0.012	0.018	0.000
	(0.019)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.002)
Observations	1560	1200	1200	1174	1174

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

The second part of our analysis concerns reforms increasing administrative coordination, i.e., reforms that change the relation among public sector organizations and administrative units between two policy sectors (Table 2). The regression estimates support the argument drawn from the descriptive statistics. Establishing an EU agency increases the likelihood of reforms concerning administrative coordination at the national level. The statistical estimates are less robust than the ones for policy integration but they are strong enough to support the theoretical mechanism that we put forward. In particular, following our second corollary, the creation of EU agencies as supranational organizations in charge of promoting cooperation across levels of governance was expected to have a stronger impact on policy integration than on administrative coordination at the domestic level. Regarding the control variables, the parametric survival models point out that the presence of more independent regulatory agencies increases the likelihood of reforms that coordinate policy administrative elements and public organizations from specific policy sectors. On the other hand, the probit models point out that countries with a larger population tend to have less reforms to coordinate administrative relations between policy sectors. Intuitively, this makes sense as large countries, such as the US, tend to have little reforms to change the coordination between employment related policy sectors nationally but would proceed with such reforms rather at the subnational level.

*Table 1: Regression coefficients for **administrative coordination**; standard errors in parentheses (clustered at country level)*

	Probit multilevel models			Parametric survival models	
	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
EU Agency	0.234**	0.186*	0.167	0.228***	0.029
	(0.101)	(0.105)	(0.102)	(0.071)	(0.037)
			0.027		0.154***

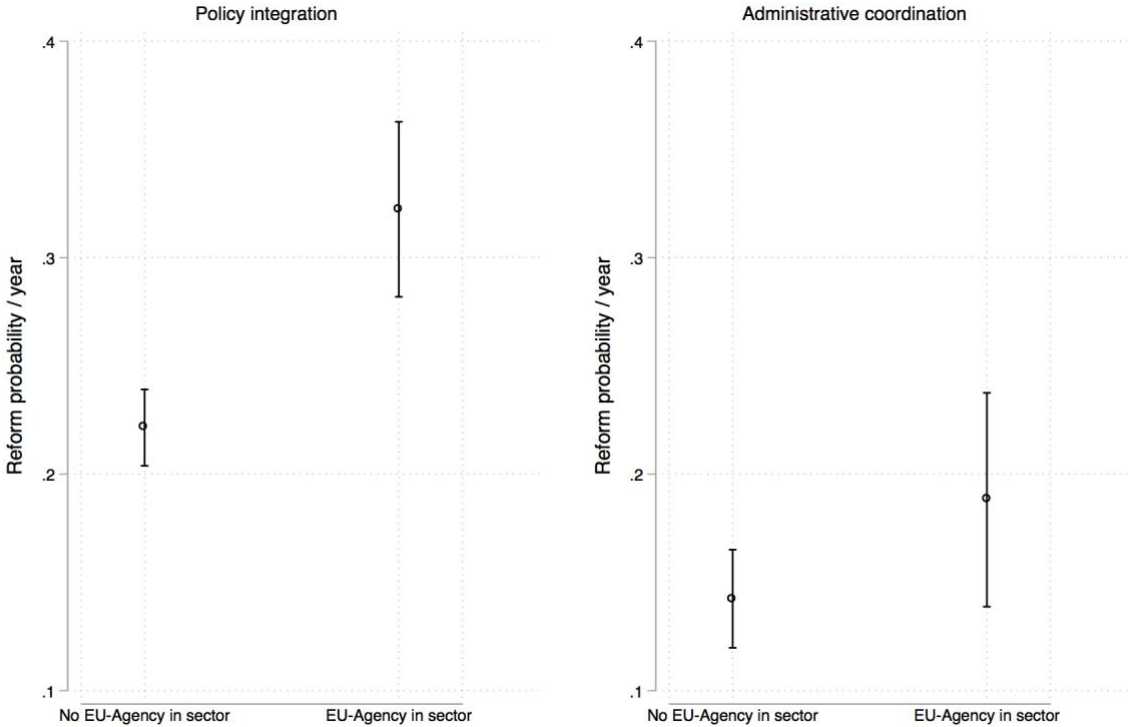
Regulatory agencies overall		(0.017)		(0.020)
Regulatory agency in sector	0.087 (0.114)	0.065 (0.124)	0.033 (0.037)	0.017 (0.018)
Problem pressure	-0.006 (0.043)	-0.010 (0.042)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.002)
National debt	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.146* (0.088)	-0.014 (0.063)
Reference party in parliament	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)
Self-rule	-0.018* (0.010)	-0.015 (0.011)	0.045** (0.019)	0.035** (0.018)
Politicization of bureaucracy	0.130 (0.090)	0.139 (0.090)	-0.224** (0.102)	-0.080 (0.106)
Political constraints	1.036** (0.491)	0.996* (0.545)	-1.654*** (0.479)	-0.431 (0.390)
Population size	-0.018*** (0.005)	-0.023*** (0.003)	0.008 (0.008)	-0.009 (0.009)
t	0.038 (0.030)	0.149** (0.061)	0.149** (0.064)	
t ²	0.016 (0.023)	-0.075 (0.058)	-0.084 (0.058)	
t ³	-0.010* (0.005)	0.012 (0.015)	0.015 (0.015)	
Constant	-1.531*** (0.118)	-2.375*** (0.534)	-2.490*** (0.507)	3.931*** (0.432)
Constant country				1.563*** (0.513)
Constant sector/country or sector	0.021 (0.017)	0.012 (0.013)	0.010 (0.013)	0.000 (0.000)
Observations	1560	1200	1200	1174

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

To improve the interpretation of our results, we are now going to turn to a graphical illustration of the main effects we are interested in. If we take a look at the marginal predicted mean values, we find that the change from EU-agencification to non-EU-agencification increases significantly the probability of reforms regarding policy integration and administrative coordination. If we fix all the other variables at their mean – which makes sense substantially

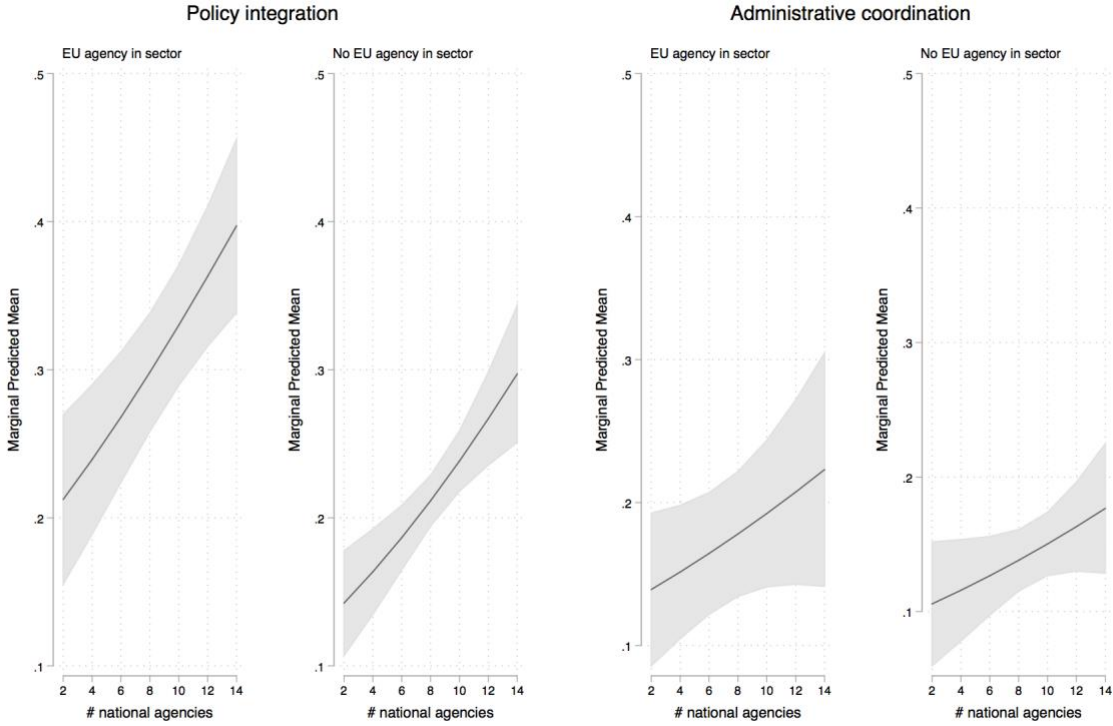
since these are all continuous variables – the predictions show that the change from non-EU-agencification to EU-agencification of a policy field increases the probability for a reform of policy integration of about ten percent per year and, respectively, the probability for a reform of administrative coordination of about five percent per year (Figure 3). Thus, the results clearly support the main hypothesis that we put forward. The EU-agencification of a given policy field reinforces reform activity in the sense of policy integration (above all) and administrative coordination (to a lesser extent) at the level of member states. Our analysis lends support to the argument that the institutionalization of the supranational level – namely when this process is embodied in a multi-level architecture such as in the EU (Christiansen and Piattoni 2003; Jordan and Schout 2006) – comes along with a re-configuration of the related policy field at the national level (Piattoni 2010), which in our case corresponds to an increase in policy integration and administrative coordination. Accordingly, the ongoing unravelling of national governments (Hooghe and Marks 2003), whose key institutional manifestation comprises the establishment of EU agencies, also triggers a reassertion of the center at the national level through (selective) policy integration and administrative coordination.

Figure 3: Marginal effects of EU-agencification and non-EU agencification of policy fields



What is more, our empirical analysis suggests that an extensive delegation independent regulatory agencies at the national level also increases the probability of enacting policy integration reforms, and to a lesser significant extent, reforms that concern the relations between public sector organizations. A closer look to these features reveals some interesting results. If the number of independent regulatory agencies increases from two to 14, the probability to pass reforms that integrate policies between different sectors doubles. In other words, the more independent exist over all kinds of policy sectors, from competition policy to work place safety, the more likely it becomes that governments decide to integrate policy sectors in the fields under investigation. This effect is cumulative with the impact of the presence an EU agency in the field and the overall results are similar concerning reforms for administrative coordination within a specific policy field, for which the estimates are less robust but the direction is the same.

Figure 3: Marginal effects of the number of independent regulatory agencies over EU-agencification and non-EU agencification of policy fields



In summary, our results provide some empirical insights on how the institutionalization of the supranational level – i.e. the establishment of an EU agency – reinforces policy integration and administrative coordination between specific policy sectors nested in larger policy fields the domestic level. We hypothesized that this effect could stem from two interwoven mechanisms according to which EU agencies provide a new venue to domestic actors to influence the EU policy process, provided that they are able to cooperate to “upload” their national preferences. And the same time, integration and coordination at the domestic level is also required to deal with the pressures for conformity that “downloaded” from EU agencies. Our empirical analysis provides considerable support to this argument, but the underlying mechanisms deserve further fine-grained in-depth research, namely through dedicated case studies. Moreover, we find that agencification at the EU level has a stronger positive effect on policy integration than on administrative coordination, a result which confirms our corollary and could indeed be linked to the potential conflicts, competition and turf wars that may occur between public sector organizations situated at different levels of governance. At the same time, our results also show that the EU-agencification of a policy field still increases reform activities concerning administrative coordination at the national level compared to non-EU-agencified sectors. This finding seems to imply that national governments – in the face of changing coordination practices in a policy field due to European integration in a broader sense, which cannot be easily detangled from other trends such as agencification – tend to change institutional structures at the national level, notably to calm administrative conflicts and inefficiencies as discussed in the literature (Egeberg and Trondal 2016a).

Conclusions

This paper starts from the classic argument about the transformative unravelling of the political authority of governments in nation states. However, by adopting a comparative perspective, we point to a concomitant phenomenon that deserves attention: the re-integration and re-coordination of policy-making at national level with regard to pressing policy challenges in the wake of these transformative processes. What is more, using a multi-level governance framework, we argue that that the two processes are mutually related: a “reassertion of the center” at the supranational level provides momentum to domestic reforms aiming to increase integration of policy goals and instruments as well as coordination of the administrative structures in various policy fields. Thus, we examined the impact of EU regulatory agencies – a macroscopic manifestation of the reassertion of the center at the supranational level – on

reforms increasing policy integration and administrative coordination at the national level. We conducted a comparative empirical analysis using an original dataset that compares reform activity concerning policy integration and administrative coordination at the national level in four policy fields, over a period from 1985 to 2014.

Applying multilevel modelling, we investigated the impact of the EU-agencification of a selected policy fields on the domestic dynamics of policy integration and administrative coordination. By including many control variables, our findings suggest that EU-agencification increases the unconditional probability of national governments passing reforms that reinforce policy integration and administrative coordination in a given field. Our analysis also demonstrates how the temporal dimension of EU agencification impacted on the reform activity at the national level. We find that the longer a policy field is EU-agencified, the more likely governments will pass policy integration reforms in that field. The impact of agencification on policy integration follows a linear pattern, which is consistent with the occurrence of a learning process, whereas policymakers tend to reform administrative coordination at the national level only in the period immediately after the EU-agencification of a policy field.

The first contribution of this paper is to draw attention to the dynamics of policy integration and administrative coordination at the national level in a period when most scholars have focused on the unravelling of the political authority of national governments. We absolutely agree with the observation that during the last three decades, the “classic” machinery of government in nation states transformed and shifted political authority upwards, downwards, and sideward. However, this process was neither homogenous nor univocal. Indeed, our analysis indicates that this fragmentation of authority came along with a process of reform that increased policy integration and administrative coordination at the level of national governments, notably concerning a number of pressing policy challenges in different policy fields. Our second main contribution relates to the significance of cross-level interactions in multi-level governance polities. We were able to show that the reassertion of the center at supranational level reshapes the reassertion of the center at the national level. Ironically, EU-agencification, which is deemed to be a component of the “dissolution” of nation states, played an important role in increasing the policy integration and administrative coordination of domestic policy-making.

Thirdly, our paper contributes to the literature on policy integration and public sector coordination by providing a cross-country and cross-policy theory-driven comparative analysis

of statutory changes in cross-sectoral policy integration and administrative coordination reforms. Admittedly, our data does not allow us to conclude whether there have achieved different degrees of policy integration, i.e. “strategical coordination” (Metcalf 1994; Braun 2008) in different countries. Nevertheless, our data enable to examine the variation in the intensity of reform activity concerning policy integration instruments and administrative structures from an empirical perspective. Since we made sure to include reforms that substantially touch upon policy field-specific integration and coordination issues, we are able to discriminate between countries and policy fields where the dynamic of policy integration and administrative coordination was strong (scoring high in our measurement) and countries and policy fields where this dynamic was weaker (scoring low in our measurement). In other words, our measurement provides a dynamic estimation of the commonly used conceptual scales of integration and coordination.

To conclude, we expect our argument to be applicable – *mutatis mutandis* – to non-EU members. In these countries, the agencification of a policy field at the EU level is not possible. Nevertheless, it is theoretically conceivable that competencies in a given policy field are transferred to another international organization so that the policy fields dynamics in these countries could be subject to mechanisms similar to those at work in EU member states. Furthermore, EU-agencification with respect to specific policy fields could also have an impact on non-EU countries, as it is the case of Australian regulatory policy in the field of therapeutic products (Maggetti et al. 2017).

Supplementary material

We collected the data, using the following scheme to code reforms of administrative coordination and policy integration. For each country and sector, we created a review sheet of reforms that we submitted to at least one expert in the policy field for review.

Table S1: Operationalization of policy integration and administrative coordination across policy sectors (dependent variables)

Policy field	Policy integration	Administrative coordination
<p>Environment (Object of integration: creation of a field of environmental policy; no purely sectoral integration of environmental concerns in other policies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National strategies and action plans for the integration of sustainable development policies - Framework legislation that integrates environmental matters of various sectoral policies - Environmental (framework) legislation that integrates formerly disperse legislation and reduces fragmentation - Constitutional law on environmental protection: - Central legislation that leads to harmonization of sub-national policy (in federal systems) - Environmental planning at ministerial level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transversal bodies for environmental policy at the level of the central government, with competences for formulating national environmental policy and coordinating the implementation of national environmental strategies - Inter-sectoral ministerial councils or working groups for environmental policy, e.g. “green cabinets” - Increase of the Ministry of Environment’s responsibilities of transversal coordination of environmental policy - Intergovernmental agreements and units for environmental policy (in federal systems) that delimit the respective responsibilities - Joint federal and sub-national bodies for nation-wide harmonization and/or coordination - Reorganizations of the central government that lead to integration of the environmental portfolio: - Reorganization at the level of regulatory agencies that lead to integration of competences for environmental policy or that create coordinative capacities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a public service for the environment or of sustainability units in the public service - Strategies for the promotion of employment in the environmental sector - Reforms that harmonize or coordinate administrative procedures regarding e.g. departmental environmental reporting systems or the development of sustainability action plans
<p>Migration (Object of integration: integration and coordination of immigration and immigrant integration policies and organizations)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration or coordination of laws referring to temporary and permanent residence - National action plans or strategies for immigration and immigrant integration - Integration policy action plan - Strategy to harmonize immigration and integration policies between sectors and levels of government - Labor market integration and education reforms that make further immigration benefits conditional on employment and education efforts of the applicant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization to integrate or coordinate different ministries and levels of government that are related to immigration and immigrant integration - Accumulating immigration and integration portfolios in one ministry - Creation of interdepartmental working groups - Councils to coordinate different ministries in the field - Commissioner for foreigners - Conditionality of immigration benefits for integration efforts - Organizations that bring together policymakers from different sectors and different levels of government at same time
<p>Public health (Object of integration: integration and coordination of curative and preventative elements of health policy)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reforms that include preventive measures into health the services paid by the general health insurance, such as screening programs - Health promotion and legislation with a focus on the coordination and integration of prevention and cure – either in general or with a focus on specific diseases - General and specific national health strategies (e.g., cancer, diabetes, HIV, tobacco, nutrition, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Network amongst hospitals with a particular focus on health promotion and prevention - National public health agency and ministry that includes sections for disease prevention and others that are responsible for curative aspects of health policy - Public organizations that coordinate the prevention and treatment of specific diseases and/or the policy advocacy for it

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategies that focus on health inequalities - Public health funds that allow organizations and levels of government to operate policy programs that coordinate or even integrate preventive and curative measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of institutions of health information - Inter-ministerial conferences and councils that coordinate preventative and curative aspects concerning certain diseases and/or risk factors, such as drugs, tobacco, cancer etc.
<p>Unemployment (Object of integration: integration and coordination of activation and benefit related policies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National strategies, action plans or reform packages that integrate active and passive labour market policies (e.g. “welfare to work” principle) - Employment policy reforms that introduce or enhance activation measures in employment policy - Reforms that integrate formerly separated social assistance and/or unemployment benefits, e.g. by creating an integrates system of income and employment benefits - Adoption of reforms that apply an activation approach to pension, family or invalidity policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of transversal bodies for employment policy at the level of the central government - Creation of intergovernmental agreements or units (in federal systems) for nation-wide harmonization and/or coordination of employment policy - Reorganizations of the central government that lead to integration of employment portfolio by merging the ministries responsible for various sectors such as employment, social affairs, health, etc. - Reorganization of implementation administrations that lead to integration of active and passive employment policy and/or services for employment and social assistance: - Creation of one-stop shop service centers that offer comprehensive services related to social assistance, unemployment benefits, and job placement - Introduction of an individualized approach to employment assistance - Integration of administrative procedures for both unemployment and social security administrations such as unified electronic declarations or social identification cards - Procedures that enhance or institutionalize inter-agency

		collaboration between unemployment and social security administrations
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Table S2: Operationalization of independent variables

EU agencification of field	Binary variable. Presence (1) or absence (0) of an EU agency in that policy field and year. We use the information from David Levi Faur's article who reports the year of agency establishment (Levi-Faur 2011, 818-22) as a starting point. We take the following year, which is when the agencies went operational.
Presence of agency in policy field	Binary variable. We coded the presence of an independent regulatory agency in that policy field using data by Jacint, Levi Faur, and i Marín (2011).
Sectoral problem pressure (z-standardized)	Continuous variable. To construct the variable, we use one indicator as a proxy for measuring the problem pressure on policymakers. We use unemployment rate for unemployment policy, greenhouse gas emissions per GDP unit for environmental policy, inflow of migrants for migration policy, and childhood mortality for public health policy. We are aware that the problem pressure might be more complex, especially in environmental policy and public health policy. We considered to create more complex indicators for these two policy fields but decided to not do that and to have harmonious measures for the four fields. To make sure that the problem pressure measurements are comparable for each of the four policy fields, we z-standardized the variable around its mean.
Strength/weakness of reference party	Continuous variable. Share of seats in parliament for the party interested in more reforms of policy integration and administrative coordination. Regarding environmental policy, we coded the share of the green party, the share of the left party for employment policy, the negative share of the right party, and again the left party for the public health (Armingeon et al. 2016).
Number of agencies in country	Continuous variable. We counted the number of independent regulatory agency in that policy field using data by Jacint, Levi Faur, and i Marín (2011).
Debt (% of GDP)	Continuous variable. Government debt as a percentage of GDP (Armingeon et al. 2016).
Self-rule indicator	Continuous variable. We use the Regional Authority Index. Precisely, we are using the data on regional self-rule. The higher the value in the dataset, the more autonomy subnational governments (states in a

Politicization of bureaucracy indicator	federation, regions, and municipalities) possess (Hooghe and Marks 2016). Continuous variable. This is a compound measure. We combine information on the politicization of the bureaucracy with Comparative research regarding administrative traditions in different countries, which contains information on the politicization of the bureaucracy (Painter and Peters 2010). The higher the value in the dataset, the more politicized is the bureaucracy in the country. We then conducted a factor analysis which uses data on corruption to create a standardize factor variable that considers the institutional structure and the actual level of corruption (Teorell et al .2017)
Index of political constraints (veto structures)	Continuous variable. Dataset on political constraints (Henisz 2000). There is an updated version of the data that covers all years until 2014.
Population size	Continuous variable. The information comes from the latest OECD database
t (time)	Continuous variable. Starts in 1985
t²/10	Continuous variable.
t³/100	Continuous variable.

Table S3: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Policy integration	1,560	0.2487179	0.4324086	0	1
Administrative coordination	1,560	0.150641	0.3578133	0	1
EU agencification of policy field	1,560	0.2641026	0.4409955	0	1
Sectoral problem pressure (z-standardized)	1,472	0	1	-0.3359295	9.582542
Prior delegation (Time)	1,560	.4480769	.4974562	0	1
Strength/weakness of reference party	1,560	13.69256	19.03723	-28.4	63.6
Number of national agencies	1,560	8.833333	3.417559	2	14
Debt (% of GDP)	1,492	71.45017	30.64158	19.51117	159.1395
Self-rule indicator	1,352	16.66686	5.215228	4.2	26
Politicization of bureaucracy indicator	1,496	-6.35E-09	0.8481077	-0.7772589	2.699676
Index of political constraints (veto structures)	1,560	0.8105908	0.0645344	0.3408506	0.8940727
Population size	1,544	4.939643	7.133874	0.3272	31.8857
t (time)	1,560	14.5	8.658217	0	29

$t^2/10$	1,560	28.51667	25.98523	0	84.1
$t^3/100$	1,560	63.075	72.55818	0	243.89

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