Legitimacy Crises and the Temporal Dynamics of Bureaucratic Representation*

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ABSTRACT

The representation of specific groups and social interests within (or by) the civil service has long been a concern of public administration scholarship. Yet, much of this literature focuses on representation at a single point in time. In this article, we propose a more dynamic perspective. In terms of theory, we postulate specific temporal relationships between triggering cues (e.g., a crisis event) and the representation decisions of civil servants. We specify two complementary mechanisms underlying these relationships: i.e. a sensemaking process whereby the perceived *meaning* and relative *salience* of distinct groups and interests changes over time; and a shift in bureaucrats' *discretion* to represent specific groups or interests changes over time. We illustrate these time-dependent processes using interview and survey data from the European Commission.

KEY WORDS: Crisis, European Commission, Representative bureaucracy, Sensemaking, Time.

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1. Introduction

A voluminous literature in public administration examines the drivers, implications and significance of whether and, if so, how bureaucrats represent a specific group or (set of) social interests (for reviews, see Kennedy, 2014; Riccucci and Van Ryzin, 2017). Despite the many insights offered, close examination of this literature reveals a strong reliance on cross-sectional research designs (Keiser et al., 2002; Wilkins and Williams, 2008; Meier and Morton, 2015, Badache, 2020), with a concomitant emphasis on representation across individuals and contexts at a single point in time (Andrews et al., 2015; Capers, 2018). An important limitation of existing scholarship, we contend, is that it gives insufficient attention to "how [representational] relationships change over time" (Meier, 2019: p. 52; Rosset et al., 2017).[1]

Ignoring temporal dynamics in studies of bureaucratic representation is a serious shortcoming since it "abstracts away from the temporal flow of much of organization life" (Langley et al., 2013, p. 4; Lawrence et al., 2001; Methot et al., 2017). Bureaucratic representation, we argue, is *not* a "state or enduring property of a social system" (Haack and Sieweke, 2018: p. 492). Rather, we expect civil servants to alter their representational decisions "when new environmental stimuli generate perceptions that are inconsistent with the beliefs and worldviews they previously held" (Haack and Sieweke, 2018: p. 493-4; Methot et al., 2017; Ashforth, 2020). This expectation is founded on the view that major events in an organization's environment provide triggering cues about the need and appropriateness of initiating corrective actions (Huy, 2001; Lawrence et al., 2001; Kunisch et al., 2017; Methot et al., 2017). Specifying the temporal relationships between these events and bureaucrats' representation decisions makes it possible to move beyond the widespread assumption of "temporal stability [in] attitudes toward responsiveness" (Rosset et al., 2017: p. 814; Meier et al., 2005; Meier, 2019).

The theoretical framework we propose is grounded in an event-driven, operational perspective on time (Huy, 2001; Lawrence et al., 2001; Kunisch et al., 2017). It builds on two complementary mechanisms. On the one hand, major events induce uncertainty and prompt a need to construct and interpret features of the new environment (Huy, 2001; Methot et al., 2017). A disruptive event at a specific point in time thus can cause organizations and their staff to "step

[1] A key exception is Meier et al. (2005), who show that major (in)formal adjustments to the goals of the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the early 1990s changed the extent of active representation among its staff. Gilad and Alon-Barkat (2018) also exploit a temporal shock in their analysis, but only have data for the post-shock period.

back from their behavior and subjectively evaluate it" (Methot et al., 2017: p. 14). Such 'sensemaking' process (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005) induces bureaucrats to question dominant behavioural scripts, roles and practices (Huy, 2001; Kornberger et al., 2019) – including those related to bureaucratic representation. This may affect not only the perceived *meaning* of specific representative roles, but also their relative *salience*. On the other hand, important events can fundamentally disrupt the structural frameworks underlying an organization's activities (Huy, 2001), including its level of formalization and hierarchy, control mechanisms, and so on. Organizations may thereby reinforce or reduce constraints imposed on bureaucrats' *discretion* to take on distinct representative roles. Central to both mechanisms is that they result in profound changes in the representation decisions of civil servants.

Our empirical analysis of these theoretical propositions relies on a case study of the European Union and its institutions – with central focus on the European Commission – before, during and after the European debt crisis. Recent work shows that this economic crisis had a strong influence on the legitimacy and authority of the European institutions (Polyakova and Fligstein, 2016; Seabrooke and Tsingou, 2019; Schmidt, 2020). Moreover, the cross-pressures arising from tensions between EU staff members' national and supranational roles make them particularly suitable for studies of bureaucratic representation. Using data from semi-structured interviews as well as surveys covering the years 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2018, our main findings are consistent with implications of the temporal imperative suggested by our theoretical arguments. Our analysis thus highlights the importance of temporal dynamics in future scholarship on representative bureaucracy.

2. Bureaucratic representation in temporal context: A theoretical framework

Our theoretical point of departure is that individual bureaucrats work within the limits of their bounded rationality. They (un)consciously rely on decision-making rules, roles and strategies that are "selected and learned by social processes" (Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier, 2011: p. 456). Crucially, such "socially structured and socially acquired knowledge [is] (…) invariant only over a particular society or a particular era" (Simon, 1990: p. 16). Consequently, assumptions about the nature of, and shifts in, this "social environment of cognition" (Simon, 1990: p. 16) are of key importance for understanding the goals and actions of organizations and their staff. If changes in the social environment at a given point in time induce a reorganization of established behavioural scripts, roles and routines (Huy, 2001; Kornberger et al., 2019), a direct influence on bureaucrats' decisions, performance and representation can be expected.

We posit that temporal changes in bureaucrats' decisions regarding their representative roles arise through two complementary mechanisms. The first is linked to the *meaning* and relative *salience* of distinct representative roles at the individual level (section 2.1), while the second relates to shifts in bureaucratic *discretion* at the organizational level (section 2.2). We focus on these two mechanisms because "the bare bones theory of representation" holds that salience and discretion are necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for representation (Meier, 2019: p. 40). Representation benefits from an increase in either salience or discretion, given a positive level of the other. Hence, a diachronic perspective on representative bureaucracy requires specifying temporal relationships between major events and the salience of, as well as discretion for, distinct representational roles.

2.1. The meaning and salience of representative roles

Major events causing a disruption in bureaucrats' social environment of cognition act as triggering cues for "a process through which interpretations of discrepancies are developed" (Louis, 1980: p. 241). Such events are known to increase emotional activation (Staudenmayer et al., 2002; Kunisch et al., 2017), and push civil servants to reflect upon the meaning of the event in relation to their actions and behaviour (Huy, 2001; Lawrence et al., 2001; Kunisch et al., 2017; Methot et al. 2017). The resulting 'sensemaking' activities (re)configure meaning, and thereby create a foundation for selecting "necessary behavioral responses to the immediate situation" (Louis, 1980: p. 241; Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). For civil servants, these activities are likely to involve how they interpret their personal (e.g., gender or race), departmental, epistemic and territorial (e.g., national versus supranational) representational roles. The *meaning* of distinct representational roles as well as who and what one may represent is altered. Such 'sensemaking' echoes arguments in psychological research that major events (such as bankruptcy or pandemics) challenge individuals' "sense of who they are" (Ashworth, 2020: p. 1) as well as their attitudes and value patterns (Raviv et al., 2000).

The sensemaking process triggered by disruptive events also bears on the *relative salience* of a bureaucrat's multiple representational roles by determining "which frame is perceptually activated" (Weber and Glynn, 2006: p. 1646; Gilad and Alon-Barkat, 2018). Distinct representational roles can be (de)activated as civil servants go "back and forth within their own experiences (…) during the sensemaking activities of a major change" (Huy, 2001: p. 608). As people deal with disruptive events by "conducting a search of their memory for prior decisions,

rules and circumstances" (Methot et al., 2017: p. 20; Huy, 2001), an individual's primary socialization experiences from upbringing or education may become especially important at this time. As a result, the relative position of representative roles in the prevailing "hierarchy of salience" alters (Stryker, 1968: p. 560), much like organizational socialization can change who or what one represents (Wilkins and Williams, 2008). This matters because salience is directly linked to the motivation for representation. That is, when the salience of a representational role is low, its mobilisation tends towards zero (Selden, 1997; Sowa and Selden, 2003; Meier, 2019). Hence, shifts in the salience hierarchy following disruptive events may affect the representative role civil servants take up.[2]

2.2. Bureaucratic discretion

Although their tasks and responsibilities are formally specified by mandates set out in legislation, bureaucrats often retain significant *discretion* in day-to-day decision-making. Discretion may be understood as a domain within which a bureaucrat can act and make decisions independently (i.e. without needing to follow the orders of a superior) or where detailed legal norms do not apply. Previous scholarship argues that the extent of discretion is central to a bureaucrat's potential for active representation of groups and social interests. When bureaucrats lack discretion, bureaucratic representation cannot occur (Selden, 1997; Keiser, 1999; Sowa and Selden, 2003; Wilkins and Williams, 2008).

Discretion by its very nature is contingent upon the presence or absence of organizational and institutional constraints, and thus is determined at organizational rather than individual level. These constraints include the level of organizational formalization and hierarchy, the presence and extent of control mechanisms such as legislative oversight, as well as the strength of professional values and political concerns (Scott, 1997; Keiser, 1999). Crucially, each and every one of these characteristics is open to change over time. For instance, an increase in the political sensitivity of policy areas over time may induce surges in the (desired) level of formalization and legislative oversight. Bureaucrats' responsiveness to specific representational roles is likely to be one such sensitive issue given the substantial legitimacy implications of staff representativeness (Gravier, 2013; Murdoch et al., 2018). Meaningful temporal dynamics can

[2] Consistent with this argument, Meier and Morton (2015) show that *cross-country* – rather than intertemporal – variation in the social groups that are salient to bureaucrats accounts for differences in how representativeness unfolds across countries.

thus be expected in the "political interests that demand to be represented" (Andrews et al., 2015: p. 9) as well as in how much discretion bureaucrats are allowed.

This proposition is especially important since increased uncertainty often "produce(s) a centralization of authority" within organizations (Billings et al., 1980: p. 314). Such centralization may arise because superiors seize authority (e.g., by implementing shorter lines of communication and direct control) or because subordinates cede authority (e.g., to reduce uncertainty about appropriate goals and actions) (Billings et al., 1980). Either way, strategic centralization of authority limits independent decision-making and discretion. Such reduced discretion, in turn, affects a civil servant's potential for active representation as it works to lower the position of specific representational roles within the overall hierarchy of salience.

2.3. Legitimacy crises and bureaucratic representation in the European Commission: A case study

The theoretical arguments set out in sections 2.1 and 2.2 are general in nature. We hold that they yield testable propositions that apply to bureaucrats in administrations at all territorial levels from local to (supra)national, and to bureaucrats of all types. We also consider that they apply to a variety of disruptive events, including economic crises and resource threats, natural disasters and pandemics, humanitarian and migration crises, or armed conflicts. All of these events have the potential to disrupt established behavioural scripts, roles and routines, and thereby trigger changes in representation decisions. We anticipate, however, that the direction and magnitude of any shift in bureaucratic representation depends on the nature of the event under evaluation (see also notes to Figures B.1 and B.2 in appendix).

Although the theoretical arguments set out above are generalizable, it is important to subject the hypotheses they generate to empirical testing. In the analysis presented below, we use a single case study of bureaucrats in one type of organization and focus on one specific category of disruptive events. Though only a first step, such a research design makes it possible to undertake a precise and detailed investigation. Future studies into the temporal dynamics of bureaucrats' representation should explore other types of administration or assess the impact of other types of disruptive event.

Our study investigates civil servants working in the European Commission.[3] A key issue concerning Commission staff relates to whom they represent. Inherent tensions exist between their national backgrounds and their supranational affiliation and role (Geuijen et al., 2008). Officially, Commission staff should act solely with the Commission's interests in mind, which implies taking on a supranational role. However, identification with a member state – and adopting a national representative role, even if passive – is hard to disregard in practice (Weiss, 1982; Geuijen et al., 2008). This holds particularly for civil servants on temporary secondment from their member state at the Commission.[4] Yet, it also affects permanent staff at least to some extent since they are nationals of a member state (Van Esch and de Jong, 2019; Gravier and Roth, 2020).

In our study, we focus on crises that bring the legitimacy of an organization or its institutions into question. Such crises are of direct theoretical relevance due to the legitimacy implications of bureaucratic representation (Gravier, 2013; Murdoch et al., 2018). Legitimacy is a key intangible asset of any organization, the gain or loss of which influences its "ability to garner important resources, such as capital and personnel" (Hamilton, 2006: p. 332). Furthermore, since legitimacy crises represent highly disruptive events where "followers revoke support and loyalty (…) and replace patronage with scepticism of an organization's structure and institutions" (Hamilton, 2006: p. 333; see also Habermas, 1975), they allow for clear empirical operationalization.

As discussed above, shifts in the social environment of cognition can trigger a sensemaking process prompting changes in the meaning and relative salience of a bureaucrat's multiple representational roles. When the triggering cue is an event undermining the European Commission's legitimacy, it leads to national environments unfavourable towards this organization (Polyakova and Fligstein, 2016; Bes, 2017). This point is reflected in, for instance, Gravier and Roth's (2020) 'rejection hypothesis', which holds that Euroscepticism in EU member states is linked to (potential) staff members' rejection of the Commission. As a result,

[3] Few studies of representative bureaucracy deal with "non-street level bureaucracies", even though the arguments "are likely to be applicable to many such agencies" (Meier, 2019: p. 54). Civil servants in International Organizations (IOs) are further removed from citizens, but the concept of representation can be linked to member states' national interests or an IO's supranational interests (Christensen et al., 2017; Gravier and Roth, 2020). Furthermore, more than 90% of staff in the European institutions are member state nationals. The cross-pressures linked to their national and supranational roles make them highly relevant for studies of bureaucratic representation (cf. Thompson, 1976; Meier, 1993).

[4] The 2006 'circulaire Villepin' in France, for instance, stresses the importance of a strategic approach to the secondment of French civil servants to the EU institutions (de Villepin, 2006).

the *salience* of a bureaucrat's supranational role is undermined in favour of his or her national role, and the supranational role moves down the hierarchy of (role) salience. Such hierarchy shifts naturally remain unobservable, but they might induce bureaucrats to emphasize national – rather than supranational – group affiliations and identities. A directly observable implication therefore would be a downward shift in supranational representation (left-hand side of Figure B.1 in appendix) in favour of increased representation of one's member state (right-hand side of Figure B.1 in appendix). This proposition is further substantiated by the fact that primary socialization experiences (i.e., from one's home country) often gain importance during major events (Huy, 2001; Methot et al., 2017). Consequently, when events undermine the European Commission's legitimacy, its civil servants may shift focus from the collectivity of the supranational organization towards the individuality of their country.

Hypothesis 1: Events undermining the European Commission's legitimacy increase the national representation of civil servants working in the Commission (at the expense of their supranational representation).

Our second mechanism relates to the level of civil servants' *discretion* to take on specific representative roles. Events that appear to challenge the European Commission's legitimacy may be exploited by a bureaucrat's home state to strengthen the representativeness requirement on 'their' nationals. Member state governments may wish to limit their nationals taking on supranational roles during turbulent times, and instead foster increased responsiveness to their home country (right-hand side of Figure B.2 in appendix). This might be achieved through increased informal pressure as well as augmented formalization and hierarchical control. Such interventions would reinforce any downward (upward) shift in bureaucrat's supranational (national) representation (i.e. *strengthening* the patterns in Figure B.1 in appendix).

Of course, the European Commission itself is not a bystander. Since its staff's responsiveness to their home country puts the very concept of an impartial, autonomous international civil service at risk, there exists a strong incentive to avoid international civil servants turning into 'Trojan horses' for their home country (Weiss, 1982; Geuijen et al., 2008). The European Commission thus may respond to events undermining its legitimacy by curtailing (extending) bureaucrats' discretion to take on a national (supranational) representative role (left-hand side of Figure B.2 in appendix). Given that staff regulations are fixed in the short term, this is likely to occur via increased formal oversight and hierarchical control. Such centralization of authority

(Billings et al., 1980) would mitigate any downward (upward) shift in bureaucrat's supranational (national) representation (i.e. *muting* the patters in Figure B.1 in appendix).

Hypothesis 2: European Union member states curtail the discretion of civil servants working in the Commission to take on supranational roles following events undermining the Commission's legitimacy, while the European Commission curtails staff discretion to take on national roles following events undermining its legitimacy.

3. Empirical analysis

The European Union (EU) is primarily an economic and monetary union (Juncker et al., 2015), and the European sovereign debt crisis "raised a set of systemic challenges for the European Union that questions the credibility and legitimacy of its governance" (Featherstone, 2016: p. 48). As discussed in Schmidt (2020), this crisis had at least some impact on the EU's input, output as well as throughput legitimacy (see also Polyakova and Fligstein, 2016; Seabrooke and Tsingou, 2019).[5] As such, this event can credibly be characterized as a legitimacy crisis in the sense of Hamilton (2006) and Habermas (1975: p. 46-47), which makes it a valid focal point for our empirical analysis.[6] Using interview and survey data covering the years 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2018, we study the implications of the European debt crisis for bureaucratic representation in light of our hypotheses. Section 3.1 describes the data sources (appendix A provides additional details), sections 3.2 and 3.3 present our main findings.

3.1. Research design and data

The empirical analysis employs a mixed methods design based on three complementary sets of data. First, quantitative information from Eurobarometer surveys of EU-wide public opinion is combined with information collected via web-based surveys among civil servants working in

[5] While *input* legitimacy arises from public participation in decision-making and *output* legitimacy is linked to the performance and outcomes generated by an organization, *throughput* legitimacy is associated with the processes and procedures that shape political decision-making (Schmidt, 2013, 2020). Our focus is on the more general concept of *organizational* legitimacy, which can be defined as the "generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995: p. 574).

[6] Economic shocks are just one example of events causing legitimacy crises. Other triggers might include police violence and racial profiling in the legal system. Such actions have created a severe legitimacy crisis for the US police in recent years, resulting in decisions to cut police budgets or even abolish police departments (Collins, 2020; Levin, 2020). Consistent with our theoretical arguments, this crisis of legitimacy for the US police also induced increased pressures for racial representation as well as demands to curtail police discretion with respect to its use of force (NBCnews, 2020).

the EU institutions. This is key to evaluating Hypothesis 1, as correlating stated preferences across both groups of respondents provides information about civil servants' potential for active representation of (supra)national interests (Murdoch et al., 2018). We take two complementary approaches. On the one hand, we compare data collected before and after the European debt crisis.[7] The 'before' set of surveys was fielded in January-April 2011 among Commission Seconded National Experts (SNEs) and December 2011 among the European population (Eurobarometer 76.4). The 'after' set of surveys was collected in March-April 2014 among EU officials (including SNEs) and January 2014 among the European population (Eurobarometer 81.1). These surveys cover respondents' preferences regarding the appropriate level of decision-making in the EU as an issue of sovereignty (details about question formulation and answer scales in Appendix A).[8] We then calculate the correlation coefficient for stated preferences across both respondent groups to assess the degree to which Commission SNEs *think* – rather than *look* – like their home country principals (for technical details, see appendix section A.3).[9]

On the other hand, we compare data collected on EU officials from countries experiencing severe recession during the European debt crisis – i.e. Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain – with those from all other member states. As economic crises increase (decrease) popular support for government intervention (market-based economy) (Graham and Sukhtankar 2004; Olivera Angulo, 2014), support for Hypothesis 1 would be reflected in a similar preference shift particularly among EU officials from the most affected countries. Our third set of surveys captures economic beliefs about state intervention versus the market (2008 and 2014) – as well as information on discretion in the workplace (2014 and 2018) – among EU officials (Kassim et al., 2013; Connolly and Kassim, 2016). The richness of these data makes it possible to undertake a comparison of EU officials from (un)affected member states using matched cross-sections (for technical details, see appendix section A.3). The information on workplace discretion is central to Hypothesis 2, which predicts shifts in bureaucratic discretion for those

[7] OECD data indicate that long-term interest rates peaked in all Southern-European countries between the fourth quarter of 2011 and the third quarter of 2012. Eurobarometer data show public concerns over 'the state of Member State public finances' peaked between November 2011 and May 2013.

[8] We focus on preferences towards EU- or national-level policy-making because such attitudes are important independently of preferences regarding specific policies or decisions, and they remain high on the political agenda.

[9] Our analysis here is restricted to SNEs since their dual affiliation at national and supranational level makes supra/national representation decisions of prime importance to them (Weiss, 1982; Geuijen et al., 2008). Our other datasets, however, allow verifying robustness beyond this specific staff category.

from countries severely affected by the crisis, or working in DGs with greater responsibility for handling the EU's crisis response (for technical details, see appendix section A.3).

A second source of data is qualitative and consists of three sets of interviews conducted by at least one of the authors. The first set of 29 interviews was collected between March 2011 and February 2012 among coordinators of member state officials' temporary assignments to the European External Action Service (EEAS). Respondents covered *all* EU member states and ranged in rank from Head of Unit to Director-General and in diplomatic rank from Counsellor to Ambassador. The second set of 245 interviews was conducted in 2014 among a stratified sample across the Commission hierarchy and a self-selected sample of non-management administrators. A third set of 16 interviews was conducted between August and October 2018, and covered *i)* Commission Heads of Unit supervising multiple SNEs, and *ii)* national officials with multiple EU institution experiences (e.g., as SNE or in Permanent Representation).[10] The interview guide for the first and third sets of interviews addressed the position and role of civil servants seconded to the European institutions, and whether/how the secondment process changed over time – which is central to Hypothesis 2. The interview template for the second set of interviews was broader, but included questions on Commission management, leadership and recruitment. To preserve anonymity, interviews are referenced by number and interview year.

The survey and interview data are complemented by documents from online news providers (e.g., Politico Europe) and specialized publications on the European Union (e.g., Euractiv). This makes it possible to cross-validate information obtained from our surveys and interviews.

Tables A.2 and A.3 in the appendix summarize our empirical strategy, and provide detailed information about which datasets are employed for which purposes throughout the analysis. This table illustrates that each dataset and analysis addresses different questions exploiting different time periods. While the lack of panel data is certainly a limitation (we return to this below), we believe that the rigorous triangulation of our various datasets and analyses allows them to say something more than each does individually. As such, our findings – discussed in the next two sections – provide a series of 'snapshots' that jointly contribute to highlighting the temporal dynamics at the heart of our research question.

[10] Appendix A provides further details about the selection and descriptive characteristics of the interviewees.

3.2. Findings Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 states that *national* representation for Commission officials strengthens at the cost of *supranational* representation with events undermining the Commission's legitimacy (see figure B.1 in appendix). We address this hypothesis by measuring the overlap between the policy preferences of Commission staff (in this case, SNEs) and the population in their home country *before* the onset of the European debt crisis (data from 2011) and *after* its most turbulent period (data from 2014). The results show a statistically significant – albeit substantively weak – correlation between both respondent groups' policy preferences in 2011 (r=0.12; p=0.027; N=369). A higher share of citizens in staff members' country of origin with positive (negative) attitudes towards the EU is associated with more positive (negative) opinions about cooperation within the EU among SNEs from that country. Importantly, this positive correlation – and thereby the potential for active national representation – nearly doubles in size in the aftermath of the crisis in 2014 (r=0.22; p=0.034; N=96). This increase is strongest for staff working in DGs dealing with the politically sensitive issues of taxation, budgets and social policies (from r=0.14 [p=0.184; N=89] to r=0.47 [p=0.067; N=16]) compared to all other DGs (from r=0.094 [p=0.117; N=280] to r=0.184 [p=0.101; N=80]).

Despite the small number of observations and limited statistical power, the difference in correlation observed at both points in time approaches statistical significance at conventional levels. Specifically, the Fisher r-to-z transformation gives a result of p=0.187 for the complete sample and p=0.108 for the subsample working in DGs dealing with politically sensitive policies (one-tailed tests given the directional hypothesis). In line with Hypothesis 1, the European debt crisis thus appears to have increased SNEs' potential for national representation at the expense of their supranational representation, which is consistent with national roles moving up civil servants' salience hierarchy.

Importantly, this finding extends beyond temporary staff members. Figure 1 and table 1 provide further support for Hypothesis 1 based on a matched cross-section of permanent administrative staff members. Specifically, we test whether staff from countries experiencing a severe recession during the European debt crisis changed their economic values more towards support for government involvement between 2008 and 2014, compared to staff from member states with less severe recessions. The underlying rationale is that such preferences reflect popular sentiments in those countries during the crisis (Olivera Angulo, 2014; Polyakova and Fligstein,

2016). Our theoretical argument would thus imply that staff from countries experiencing severe recession are more likely to move towards representation of national preferences than staff from unaffected countries (for a detailed theoretical justification, see section A.3 of the appendix). This is exactly what we find in figure 1. The Mann Whitney U test formally confirms that the distributions of recession and non-recession countries moved further apart from the period *before* to *after* the crisis. The combined evidence in table 1 concerning the fall in means, mean rank and sum of ranks likewise reveals that the shift in preferences across both points in time is much greater for staff originating from member states severely hit by the recession.[11] This is consistent with the increased potential for active national representation among Commission staff (Hypothesis 1).

Figure 1 and Table 1 about here

3.3. Findings Hypothesis 2

To evaluate Hypothesis 2, we employ our interview and survey data to assess Commission staff's (perceived) extent of bureaucratic discretion *before* and *after* disruptive events. A key finding from our interviews is that the European debt crisis made many EU member states more selective when it comes to sending out SNEs (Interviews 1, 10, 27 [2018]; Interviews 40, 172 [2014]). Convincing member states to part temporarily with talented staff became "*difficult, especially nowadays*" (Interview 38 [2011]). According to then Commission Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva, this remained a challenge even in 2016 given the "lasting effects of a financial crisis" (Clenad, 2016: p. 2).[12] Moreover, when staff are sent on secondment under tight financial constraints at the national level and legitimacy concerns at the supranational level, the expected 'payoff' from these decisions to member states receives more attention within national institutions. This aim was pursued in several ways.

[11] In similar vein, Van Esch and de Jong (2019: p. 179) show that the policy views of ECB governors during the first years of the European debt crisis "match quite closely with their countries' national economic culture". This contrasts sharply with the "strong consensus [which] existed among the central bank governors before the crisis" (Van Esch and de Jong, 2019: p. 184). Such development is consistent with Hypothesis 1, since ECB governors appear to have become more representative of their home country after the start of the European debt crisis.

[12] This is reflected in the number of SNEs working in the Commission, which by 2017 declined by 20% from a peak at just under 1100 SNEs in 2010/2011 (Interview 5 [2018]). Note that this drop corroborates a key characteristic of legitimacy crises, namely an organization's difficulty to acquire necessary resources such as personnel (Hamilton, 2006).

First, several member states reformulated their approach to the secondment process. This often involved a more targeted recruitment process, whereby home institutions either reach out to preferred candidates (Interviews 1, 10, 27 [2018]; House of Commons, 2012) or set up coordination sections dealing with secondment to the European institutions (Interviews 6, 10, 12, 13 [2018]; House of Commons, 2012). Increased emphasis was placed on secondment positions of particular value to the member state – either linked to its geo-political interests (Interviews 13, 27 [2018]; House of Commons, 2012) or its policy interests (Interviews 1, 6, 13 [2018]; House of Commons, 2012). These shifts in Member States' approach to Commission secondments reveal their desire for increased control over SNEs, which curtails these bureaucrats' discretion to take on a supranational role.[13]

Second, several respondents refer to higher informal pressure on SNEs aimed at reducing their discretion to take on supranational roles – while increasing their likelihood to take on a national role. For instance, one respondent indicates that "*the coordination section at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (…) has become more proactive*" (Interview 10 [2018]), while another comments that "*some ministries really expect a lot. I think they have high expectations of what SNEs can say and do*" (Interview 9 [2018]). Heads of Unit in the Commission were aware of this development, since "*we have to more closely supervise because of potential conflicts of interest"* (Interview 7 [2018]). Also higher in the Commission hierarchy developed increased acknowledgment of "*some problems with people from national administrations, SNEs, whose loyalty is questionable to say the least*" (Interview 108 [2014]).

Overall, evidence from the interviews shows that events undermining the Commission's legitimacy can induce member states to restrict bureaucratic discretion for supranational representation, and push for increased national representation (cf. right-hand side of Figure B.2 in appendix). Turning to the European institutions, the picture seems mixed at first. Many of our respondents notice no substantial differences in how the Commission treats its SNEs (Interviews 2, 6, 7, 8, 15 [2018]) except for "*very rare cases such as Brexit where a specific conflict of interest could exist*" (Interview 14; also Interviews 2, 8, 13, 16 [2018]). Closer inspection, however, shows that the Commission took active steps to centralize and formalize

[13] Note that these changes may also affect the meaning and salience of SNEs' national and supranational representative roles. Unfortunately, with the data at our disposal, it is very hard empirically to identify the extent to which Member States' secondment objectives and strategy restricted bureaucrats' values and discretion.

decision-making authority with the aim to curtail bureaucratic discretion and potential for active national representation.

First, the Commission appears to have limited the access of SNEs from certain member states to particular tasks. For instance, none of the 11 SNEs in the Task Force for Greece – which assisted the country in implementing reforms required in return for financial bailouts – came from southern European countries (European Commission, 2012). In similar vein, several British officials working on sensitive trade and financial services saw their SNE-agreements terminated early or not extended in the wake of the Brexit vote (Interviews 2, 13, 16 [2018]; Politico, 3 July 2017). A Commission spokesperson defended these decisions by arguing that "this is not about British nationals, but about people working for – and paid by – Her Majesty's Government" (Euractiv, 12 July 2017). One of our respondents likewise argued that "*we don't want to expose UK SNEs to unnecessary pressure or demands that they could not and should not reach. That is a very deliberate decision*" (Interview 8 [2018]). Importantly, this reflected a more general policy since the contracts of permanent and temporary Commission staff with British nationalities only (i.e. not those with dual citizenship) were reviewed on a case-by-case basis since March 2019. Such individuals were also moved out of EU delegations in third countries (European Commission, 2018) as well as the European Court of Justice despite the UK only leaving the single market and customs union at the end of 2020 (Bowcott, 2020).

Second, the Commission's secondment regulations formally prevent SNEs from representing the Commission or signing agreements with financial implications for the Commission. Yet, Heads of Unit have significant leeway in interpreting these rules since they "*must be more pragmatic and (…) get the job done*" (Interview 1; also Interviews 10, 13 [2018]). This leads to wide differences across units, whereby 'technical' issues prompt less oversight compared to 'political' or 'financial' issues (Interviews 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15 [2018]). Crucially, this tension between pragmatism and formalization shifted towards stricter formalization and oversight after the European debt crisis. The 2016 annual report from the Human Resources department of the EEAS, for instance, states that it was "developing and strengthening a coherent human resources' policy related to SNEs" to address that "the use of SNEs poses certain challenges" (EEAS, 2016: p.14). Similarly, the Commission's Secretariat General started requiring stricter and uniform adherence to existing limitations on SNEs' representation (Interview 4 [2018]) – thereby *de facto* increasing restrictions on SNEs' (as well as their immediate superiors') bureaucratic discretion.

Our survey data collected in 2014 and 2018 further substantiate the Commission's curtailing of bureaucratic discretion and potential for national representation after the debt crisis. Two questions in these surveys tap into respondents' self-perceived discretion (i.e. "*I have a choice in deciding how I do my work*") or proxy their potential for national representation (i.e. "*In order to get your job done, how frequently are you in contact with the following individuals or institutions outside the Commission? National officials in my home state*"). Table 2 summarizes the results separately for matched cross-sections and two respondent subsamples: a) those deriving from member states severely/weakly affected by a recession during the debt crisis (Panel I; N≈580-767 respondents versus N≈1800-2292 respondents), and b) those working in a DG directly involved / not involved in managing the response to the crisis (Panel II; N≈466-639 respondents versus N≈1914-2420 respondents). In each case, we report the number of observations, mean response rank on the respective questions' five- and six-point answer scales, and the details underlying a Mann-Whitney U-test.

Looking first at the 2014 data, we find that staff from severely affected member states report *less* autonomy in their work ($p<0.01$) and *less* frequent contact with officials from their home state ($p<0.01$) – compared to those from weakly affected member states. Yet, respondents working in DGs managing the crisis response report no difference in work-related autonomy and *more* frequent contact with officials in their home state ($p<0.01$) – compared to those working in DGs not involved in managing the crisis. A similar pattern still exists in the post-crisis 2018 survey, but the difference in home country contacts across both respondent groups largely disappears. Taken together, these findings are consistent with the qualitative observation that the Commission curtailed bureaucratic discretion and potential for national representation of staff from crisis-struck countries particularly at a time when this might induce conflicts of interest (cf. left-hand side of Figure B.2 in appendix).

Table 2 about here

Of course, a potential concern with analyses across distinct points in time is that other temporal shifts beyond the events we highlight might be driving the observed temporal dynamics. This cannot be ruled out. Yet, the consistency of our evidence across different groups of bureaucrats

and datasets (for Hypothesis 1 and 2), as well as explicit unprompted references by our respondents to the events under analysis (for Hypothesis 2) mitigate this concern.

These changes, as documented above, demonstrate that bureaucrats' representation decisions and discretion are affected by major outside events. The analysis shows that bureaucrats are not only sensitive to changes in their organizational environment, but that they are also responsive to them. This is an important finding for decision-makers and stakeholders, because it highlights a dimension of change that may otherwise remain hidden (see also Ashworth, 2020). Furthermore, this finding makes an important contribution to extant scholarship by underlining that temporal context matters in the analysis of representative bureaucracy, and that representation decisions made by bureaucrats need to be understood as dynamic. Although based on a single case study, the results carry implications for other bureaucrats who experience disruptive events in other bureaucracies.

4. Conclusion

Understanding when and why bureaucrats represent different groups or social interests has important theoretical, political and practical implications (Andrews et al., 2015; Meier, 2019). We address this question by examining the temporal relationships between major disruptive events and bureaucratic representation. Our theoretical argument holds that such events trigger adjustments in the perceived meaning and relative salience of distinct groups and their interests, as well as in the discretion available to bureaucrats to take on specific representative roles. The hierarchy of a bureaucrat's multiple representational roles is thereby reorganized across points in time (i.e. before/after the event), inducing shifts in their (potential for) active representation of specific groups and/or interests. Such dynamics in representation decisions are key to understanding why and how a bureaucracy can represent different groups or interests at distinct points in time.

Our case study on the European debt crisis uncovers findings consistent with shifts in the relative salience of especially (supra)national representational roles before/after this disruptive event. That is, we reveal increased potential for active national representation among civil servants in the EU institutions (see also Van Esch and de Jong, 2019), as well as adjustments in bureaucrats' level of discretion to take on (supra)national roles. From a theoretical perspective, these findings imply that the mutual relations of *both* staff members *and* (inter)national institutions evolve not only because one party in the relationship changes, but

rather because both agents and institutions are affected by a temporal breakpoint. These conjoint 'displacements' are found to have significant implications for bureaucratic representation over time.

Our analysis suggests several avenues for further research. In theoretical terms, one could look at alternative ways that time might matter for bureaucratic representation (e.g., path dependence and sequencing rather than switching representation of particular groups up/down; Pierson, 2004), or take into account when an event occurs "within a larger chronological series" (i.e. "temporal sequencing"; Sullivan et al., 2012: p. 427). More generally, our study points towards the need for a theory of context that covers *time* as well as *space*. While previous work has predominantly focused on contextual variation across space, our work exclusively highlights the role of time. A crucial aspect of future theoretical modelling would relate to similarities and differences in the effects of time and space on bureaucratic representation. Interactions of space and time – that is, whether and how the effect of time differs across space (and vice versa) – should likewise be central to the future research agenda.

From an empirical perspective, further generalization of our findings to other types of bureaucrats, international organizations (e.g., African Union, United Nations) and events (e.g., Covid-19 pandemic, 2015 Iran nuclear deal) is essential. Our arguments might also apply in a national context or with respect to more traditional sources of bureaucratic representation (such as gender or ethnicity), which highlights another route towards the generalizability of this study. Moreover, one important limitation of our dataset(s) lies in the absence of longitudinal individual-level data observing the same individuals at multiple points in time. Such panel data would allow stronger inferences regarding causality. They would also enhance researchers' ability to establish individual-level mechanisms. For instance, panel data may allow addressing whether bureaucrats change emphasis on specific identities during events affecting their organizational environment, or whether temporal dynamics in bureaucrats' self-perceived roles become reflected in their linguistic frames. While such panel data are not easy to obtain for bureaucrats in international organizations, similar predictions might be more easily testable for local or street-level bureaucrats.

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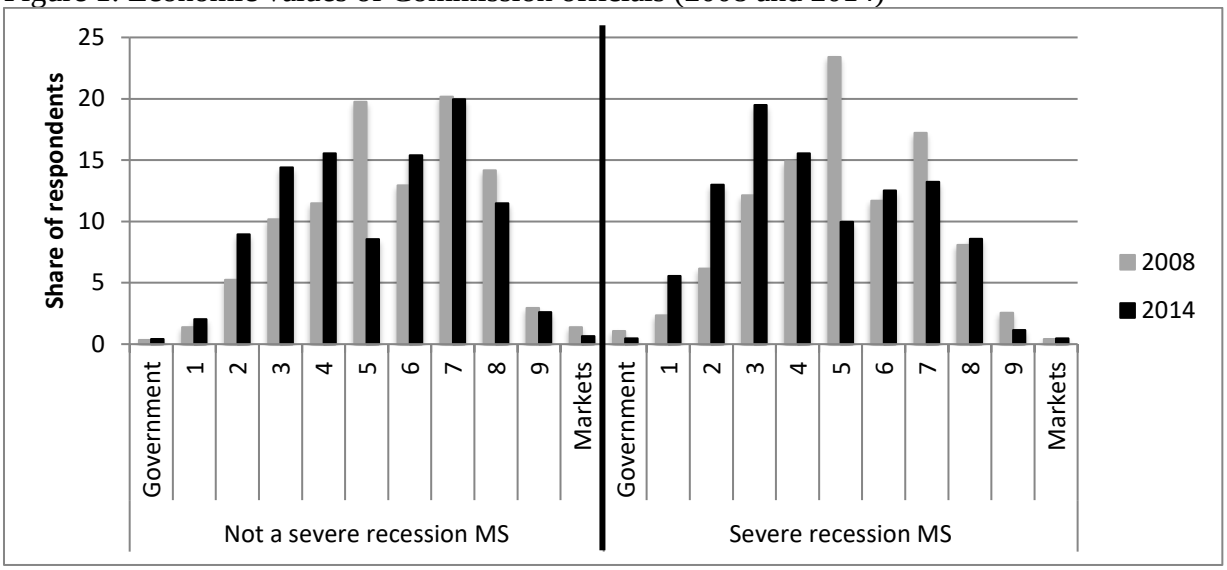
Figure 1: Economic values of Commission officials (2008 and 2014)



Note: Survey data from European Commission in Question (2008) and European Commission: Facing the Future (2014). The figure displays the distribution of respondents locating themselves along an 11-point scale for the question: "People often think of themselves in terms of their personal philosophical stance on economic issues. Some favour an active role for government on economic policy questions. Others look primarily to markets. Where would you place yourself in terms of economic philosophy on a scale of 0-10, where 0 represents a greater role for government and 10 a greater role for markets?" The right-hand side includes respondents from member states (MS) suffering a severe recession during the European debt crisis, while the left-hand side covers respondents from member states without a severe recession.

Table 1: Economic values of Commission officials (2008 and 2014)

	2008				2014			
	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mean	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mean
Not a severe recession MS	1220	878.63	1071923.50	5.60	1228	868.92	1067039	5.22
Severe recession MS	470	759.51	356971.50	5.10	431	718.10	309931	4.54
Mann-Whitney U	246286.50				216385.00			
Z	-4.55 ***				-5.64 ***			

Note: Survey data from European Commission in Question (2008) and European Commission: Facing the Future (2014). The table shows the details underlying a Mann-Whitney U-test comparing respondents from member states (MS) with and without a severe recession during the European debt crisis on their economics values (see note to figure 1 for question details). *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 2: Discretion and contacts of Commission officials (2014 and 2018)

Panel I: Respondents from MS with/out severe recession

	Discretion				*Home contacts*			
	2014		**2018**		**2014**		**2018**	
	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank
Not a severe recession MS	1820	1225.57	2292	1558.81	1800	1209.75	1837	1238.34
Severe recession MS	587	1137.12	767	1443.89	580	1130.76	608	1176.65
Mann-Whitney U	494913		812938.5		487348.5		530268.5	
Z	-3.11 ***		-3.573 ***		-2.656 ***		-1.95 *	

Panel II: Respondents in DGs (not) involved in managing crisis response

	Discretion				*Home contacts*			
	2014		**2018**		**2014**		**2018**	
	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank
DG not involved in crisis	1939	1200.02	2420	1537.83	1914	1165.93	1919	1205.13
DG involved in crisis	468	1220.49	639	1500.35	466	1291.42	526	1228.19
Mann-Whitney U	446009.5		754241.5		398933.5		470409	
Z	-0.663		-1.093		-3.901 ***		-2.494 **	

Note: Survey data from European Commission: Facing the Future (2014) and European Commission: Where now, where next? (2018). The table shows the details underlying a Mann-Whitney U-test comparing respondents from member states (MS) with and without a severe recession during the European debt crisis (Panel I) and respondents working in DGs (not) involved in managing the crisis response (Panel II). The left-hand side evaluates the question "I have a choice in deciding how I do my work" (five point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The right-hand side evaluates the question "In order to get your job done, how frequently are you in contact with the following individuals or institutions outside the Commission? National officials in my home state" (six-point scale from 'never' to 'daily'). *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$.

Legitimacy Crises and the Temporal Dynamics of Bureaucratic Representation

Supplementary Appendix

Appendix A: Data sources and research designs

This appendix provides further details about the various survey (section A.1) and interview (section A.2) data employed in the analyses, including the formulation of key questions and their corresponding answer scales. An overview of the data sources with their timing and respondents is provided in table A1. This table also includes information regarding the hypothesis for which the various datasets were used. Tables A.2 and A.3 summarize our empirical strategy, and provide more detailed information about which datasets are employed for which purposes.

A.1. Surveys

Data on EU-wide public opinion with respect to the appropriate level of decision-making in the EU was obtained from Eurobarometer 76.4 (December 2011) and Eurobarometer 81.1 (January 2014). The key question was phrased as: "For each of the following areas, please tell me if you believe that more or [on the contrary] less decision-making should take place at a European level". Respondent could indicate either "More decision making at European level" (coded as 1) or "Less decision making at European level" (coded as 2). Using these responses, we calculated the share of respondents per country that agreed with option 1.

Similar data regarding the policy preferences of Commission staff was obtained from two surveys. The first was fielded in January-April 2011 among Commission Seconded National Experts (N=379). The key question was phrased as: "Before entering the Commission, did you generally think that co-operation within the EU was advantageous or disadvantageous?" Answers were recorded on a five-point scale. The second was collected as part of 'European Commission: Facing the Future' project in March-April 2014 among EU officials (including SNEs). The key question was phrased as: "We are interested in your views on the location of decision-making authority on a range of policies. (…) Please indicate where in your view each policy should be decided." Answers were recorded on a scale from 0 (exclusively at the national or sub-national level) to 10 (exclusively at the EU level).

A third set of surveys included in our data was collected among EU officials (including SNEs) in 2008, 2014 and 2018 (Kassim et al., 2013; Connolly and Kassim, 2016). Three key questions were employed. The first gauged respondents' position towards greater government involvement in the economy (available in 2008 and 2014), and was phrased as: "People often think of themselves in terms of their personal philosophical stance on economic issues. Some favour an active role for government on economic policy questions. Others look primarily to markets. Where would you place yourself in terms of economic philosophy on a scale of 0-10, where 0 represents a greater role for government and 10 a greater role for markets?" The second question (available in 2014 and 2018) asked "I have a choice in deciding how I do my work", and was coded on a five-point scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Finally, the third question (available in 2014 and 2018) asked "In order to get your job done, how frequently are you in contact with the following individuals or institutions outside the Commission?

National officials in my home state". This was measured on a six-point scale including the options 'never', 'yearly', 'several times a year', 'monthly', 'weekly' and 'daily'.

In each case, we tested our hypotheses using matched-cross sections (results using repeated cross-sections are very similar and available from the authors upon request). Matched cross-sections differ from repeated cross-sections by imposing sample restrictions which satisfy the basis condition that respondents might reasonably be taken from the *same* population. For instance, where the response is taken from the earlier observation point, we impose that the respondent would not have reached statutory retirement by the second observation point (i.e. given the low rates of turnover in the Commission, they are likely to still be working in the organization). Similarly, for responses taken from the second observation point, we restrict the sample to those who started working in the Commission before the year of the first observation point. Whilst the resulting cross-sections do not have a panel structure, the restrictions imposed on the samples mean that *all* respondents included in the analysis have some common organisational reference points before and after the crisis.

A.2. Interviews

Our first set of 29 semi-structured interviews with 31 respondents was conducted with coordinators responsible for the temporary assignment of member state officials to the European External Action Service (EEAS) between March 2011 and February 2012. The respondent selection strategy was to be exhaustive and cover *all* (then 27) EU member states. Respondents ranged in rank from Head of Unit to Director-General and in diplomatic rank from Counsellor to Ambassador. They worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (25 out of 27 countries) or the country's Permanent Representation in Brussels (two countries). Respondents' length of affiliation ranged from 5 to 32 years, and most had at least some direct personal work experience in the EU institutions in Brussels (15 respondents) or their ministry's directorate for European affairs (eight respondents). The interview guide addressed, among other things, the position and role of civil servants seconded to European institutions, and whether/how the characteristics of the secondment process changed over time.

The second set of 245 interviews was conducted in 2014 as part of 'European Commission: Facing the Future' project. The respondents reflect a stratified sample of members of the Commission and their cabinets, middle and senior managers, and a self-selected sample of non-management administrators. More details about these data can be found on https://www.uea.ac.uk/political-social-international-studies/facingthefuture/data-collection-and-fieldwork. The interview template included key questions on Commission management and leadership, recruitment and Staff Regulation reforms, as well as EU enlargement.

A third and final set of 16 interviews was conducted between August and October 2018. It addressed respondents with either *i)* long-term experience leading Commission departments with multiple SNEs, or *ii)* repeated experience as a national official in the European institutions (e.g., as SNE or at a country's Permanent Representation). Respondents included one Commission HR official, three Heads of Unit as well as 12 current and/or former SNEs, and

covered eight member states and seven Directorates General. The interview guide addressed, among other things, the position and role of civil servants seconded to European institutions, and whether/how the characteristics of the secondment process changed over time.

A.3. Research design(s)

With respect to Hypothesis 1, we first of all rely on a measure for bureaucrat's potential for active representation proposed in Murdoch et al. (2018). They argue that "whenever one group (e.g., Belgian citizens) wants more/less of a certain policy relative to some other group (e.g., Irish citizens), public administrators representing these groups should – at the very least – replicate this preference ordering. This implies evaluating the cross-sectional correlation in the policy preferences expressed by EU administrators from a particular country and their country's population" (Murdoch et al., 2018: 393-394). The underlying idea is that a positive correlation between the stated preferences and attitudes of public officials and their principals captures the potential for public officials to think like their principals. We specifically calculate the share of respondents per country (and per survey) stating that more decision-making powers should be located at the European (rather than national) level. We then calculate the correlation between these percentages across both groups of respondents (i.e. civil servants and country population) *before* the European debt crisis as well as *afterwards*.

Our second approach to assess Hypothesis 1 takes inspiration from the observation that economic crises tend to increase popular support for government intervention (Graham and Sukhtankar 2004; Olivera Angulo, 2014). To the extent that civil servants represent their national principals' policy preferences, they would be expected to document a similar preference shift during/after crisis events. From the perspective of our theoretical model, the reason is that economic crises may not only change what it means to represent one's home country (since economic hardship will get a larger weight in one's assessment – or mental representation – of one's home country). It could also shift the relative salience of representing one's country relative to other potential representational roles (i.e. one's home country becomes more prominent among the set of representational roles). Consequently, we calculate the distribution of preferences for government intervention among respondents from member states with and without a severe recession *before* the European debt crisis as well as *afterwards*. Mann Whitney U tests are calculated to evaluate more formally any difference in the preference distributions before/after the crisis.

With respect to Hypothesis 2, we first of all rely on various sources of interview data. However, in a quantitative extension to this analysis, we verify the presence of any shifts in the self-perceived discretion enjoyed by Commission staff from countries most severely affected by the crisis, or working in DGs with greater responsibility for handling the EU's crisis response (this concerns: Commission President Cabinet, Secretariat General, DG COMP, DG ECFIN, DG EMPL, DG ENTR, and DG MARKT). From the perspective of our theoretical model, the Commission may view limitations on bureaucratic discretion more important whenever there are heightened concerns about staff taking on national representative roles. In the event of an economic crisis, this would be particularly the case in two settings: a) civil servants from

countries most severely by the crisis, and b) civil servants in DGs directly dealing with the crisis response (since for staff in these DGs any economic hardships in the home country would become more salient). Hence, we calculate the distribution of self-perceived discretion and contact patterns among respondents working in DGs with greater responsibility for handling the EU's crisis response, as well as among civil servants from countries most/least severely affected by the crisis. Mann Whitney U tests are again calculated to evaluate more formally any difference in the preference distributions across both points in time.

Table A1: Overview of survey and interview datasets

Surveys	Year	Respondents	Relevant Hypothesis
Eurobarometer 76.4	2011	N=26693 EU citizens	1
Eurobarometer 81.1	2014	N=27739 EU citizens	1
Commission SNE survey	2011	N=379 Commission SNEs	1
Commission in Question survey	2008	N=1846 Commission AD staff	1 & 2
Commission Facing the Future survey	2014	N=2623 Commission AD staff	1 & 2
Commission Where Next survey	2018	N=3746 Commission AD staff	1 & 2

Interviews	Year	Respondents	Relevant Hypothesis
EEAS interviews	2011-2012	31 coordinators for SNE assignments	2
Commission Facing the Future interviews	2014	245 managerial and non-managerial AD-level staff	2
SNE policy interviews	2018	16 Commission staff members with SNE experience	2

Table A.2: Datasets and empirical analyses to address hypothesis 1

Surveys	Year	Respondents	Detail	Mechanism
EU citizens Eurobarometer 76.4	2011	N=26693	"For each of the following areas, please tell me if you believe that more or [on the contrary] less decision-making should take place at a European level." (% agree with more)	A positive correlation between the stated preferences and attitudes of public officials and their principals captures the potential for public officials to think like their principals. This correlation increases before/after the debt crisis. That is, a higher share of citizens in each Member State feeling that more decision making should be at the EU level is correlated with more positive views about co-operation or believing that there should be more EU decision making in particular policy areas held by SNEs from the same country.
EU citizens Eurobarometer 81.1	2014	N=27739		
Commission SNEs	2011	N=379	"Before entering the Commission, did you generally think that co-operation within the EU was advantageous or disadvantageous?" (more positive views on cooperation)	
Commission AD staff Facing the Future,	2014	N=2623	"We are interested in your views on the location of decision-making authority on a range of policies. (…) Please indicate where in your view each policy should be decided." (more EU)	
Commission AD staff Commission in Question	2008	N=1846	"People often think of themselves in terms of their personal philosophical stance on economic issues. Some favour an active role for government on economic policy questions. Others look primarily to markets. Where would you place yourself in terms of economic philosophy on a scale of 0-10, where 0 represents a greater role for government and 10 a greater role for markets."	Staff from countries experiencing a severe recession during the European debt crisis changed their professed economic values more towards support for government involvement compared to staff from less recession hit countries. This is consistent with the fact that going back and forth within their experiences induces a change in the meaning and salience of their various representational roles.
Commission AD staff Facing the Future	2014	N=2623		

Matched cross sections: Respondents from either survey are included only if they were employed in the Commission in 2008, and aged 18-65 at the time of both surveys. We excluded those from the 2014 survey whose country (Croatia) was not a member of the EU at the time of the first survey.

Table A.3: Datasets and empirical analyses to address hypothesis 2

Surveys	Year	Respondents	Detail	Mechanism
Commission AD staff Facing the Future Where Next	2014 2018	N=2484 N=3232	"I have a choice in deciding how I do my work." Five-point scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.	Higher work-related autonomy reflects a higher general level of bureaucratic discretion.
			"In order to get your job done, how frequently are you in contact with the following individuals or institutions outside the Commission? National officials in my home state". Six-point scale including the options 'never', 'yearly', 'several times a year', 'monthly', 'weekly' and 'daily'.	Contacts with member states relate to bureaucrats' discretion to take on national roles and identities.

Matched cross sections: Respondents from either survey are included only if they were employed in the Commission in 2014, and aged 18-65 at the time of both surveys.

Table A.4: Descriptive statistics of respondents in matched cross-sections

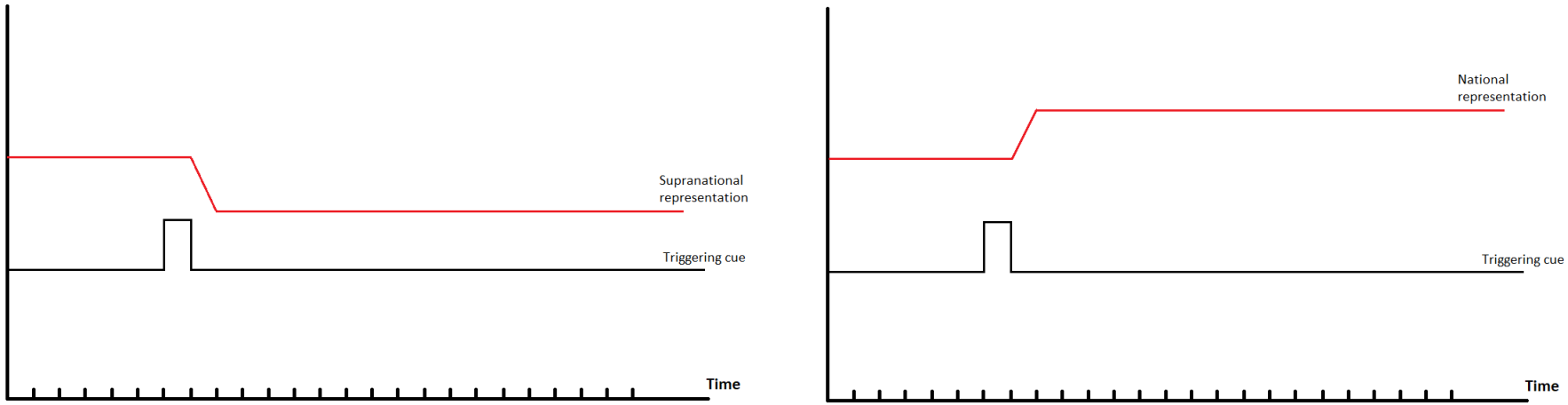
	Panel I: Matched cross-section 2008-2014			
	Not a severe recession MS		Severe recession MS	
	2008	*2014*	*2008*	*2014*
Male (%)	0.67	0.67	0.69	0.70
Age (mean)	43.99	48.36	46.58	50.28
Position				
Cabinet and Senior management	0.08	0.04	0.12	0.04
Advisor	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05
Middle management	0.22	0.13	0.23	0.12
Administrator	0.63	0.76	0.57	0.77
Other	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.02

	Panel II: Matched cross-section 2014-2018			
	Not a severe recession MS		Severe recession MS	
	2014	*2018*	*2014*	*2018*
Male (%)	0.61	0.58	0.68	0.65
Age				
Baby boomer	0.36	0.30	0.45	0.37
Generation X	0.58	0.62	0.50	0.57
Millennial	0.07	0.08	0.05	0.06
Position				
Cabinet and Senior management	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05
Middle management	0.11	0.13	0.10	0.12
Administrator	0.84	0.82	0.85	0.82

	Panel III: Matched cross-section 2014-2018			
	DG not handling crisis		DG handling crisis	
	2014	*2018*	*2014*	*2018*
Male (%)	0.64	0.60	0.59	0.58
Age				
Baby boomer	0.41	0.23	0.27	0.32
Generation X	0.55	0.64	0.61	0.61
Millennial	0.05	0.13	0.12	0.07
Position				
Cabinet and Senior management	0.03	0.04	0.15	0.12
Middle management	0.11	0.13	0.09	0.10
Administrator	0.86	0.83	0.76	0.78

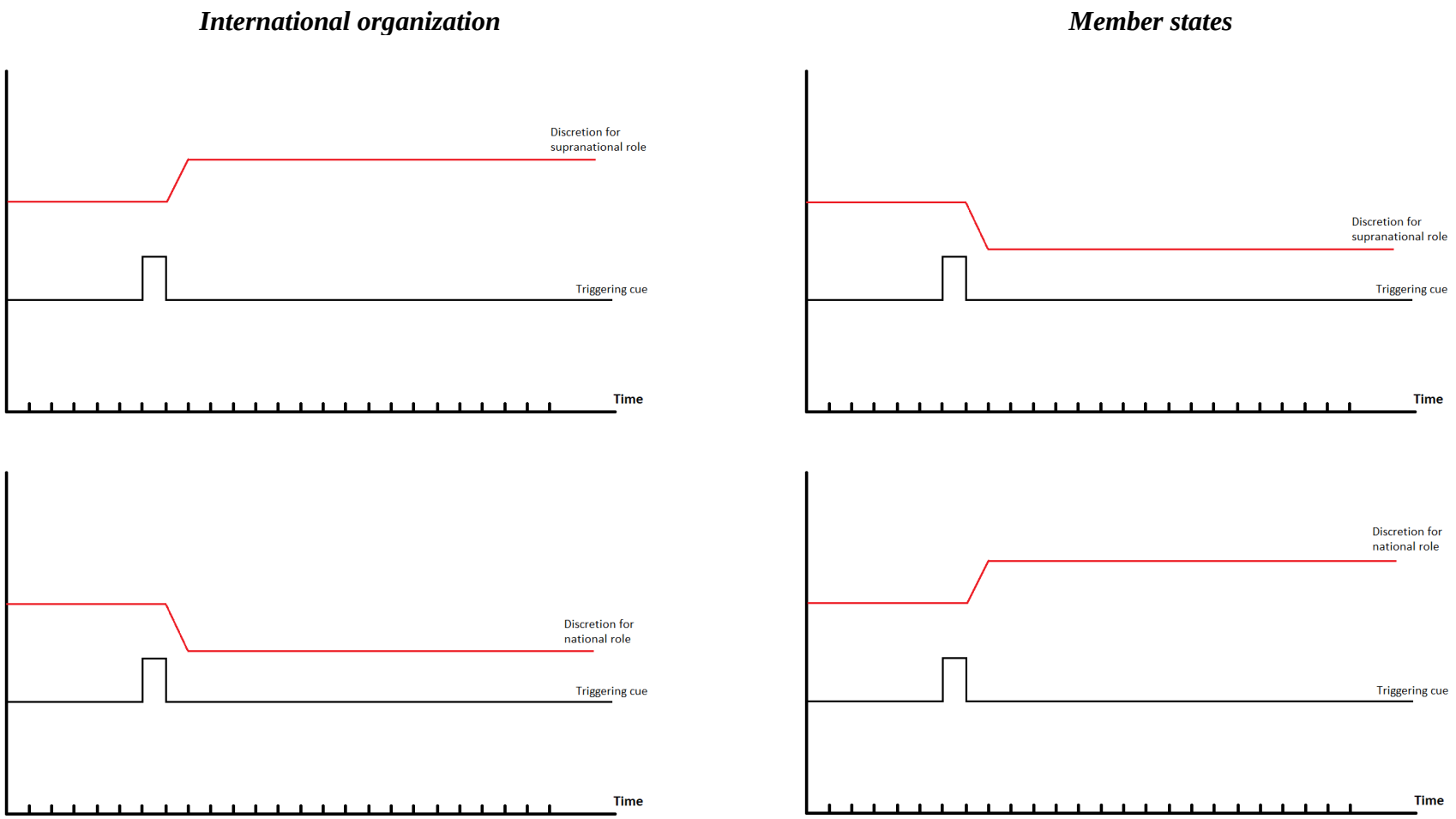
Appendix B: Graphical illustration of theoretical framework

Figure B.1: Legitimacy crises and (supra)national representation



Note: The figure illustrates the effect of a triggering cue at a particular point in time (here: a legitimacy crisis affecting an international organization) on bureaucrats' (supra)national representation while working in an international organization. The figure assumes a minimal response lag and a one-period rate of change with a specific magnitude. Of course, in reality, each of these elements may differ depending on the exact characteristics of the triggering cue as well as its impact on the meaning and salience of distinct representative roles. Presentation adapted from Monge (1990) and Methot et al. (2017).

Figure B.2: Legitimacy crises and discretion for (supra)national roles



Note: The figure illustrates the effect of a triggering cue at a particular point in time (here: a legitimacy crisis affecting an international organization) on bureaucrats' level of discretion to take on a (supra)national representational role while working in an international organization. The left-hand (right-hand) panel focuses on the response of the supranational organization (member states). The figure assumes a minimal response lag and a one-period rate of change with a specific magnitude. Of course, in reality, each of these elements may differ depending on the exact characteristics of the triggering cue. Presentation adapted from Monge (1990) and Methot et al. (2017).