

# POLICY DISMANTLING IN A MULTILEVEL CONTEXT: THE CASE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE EU

Charlotte Burns, Peter Eckersley & Paul Tobin



The University  
Of  
Sheffield.

NOTTINGHAM  
TRENT UNIVERSITY

MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester



The Leverhulme Trust

# THE EU WAS AN ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER IN EARLY-TO-MID-2000S

- The EU built a 'green myth' (Lenschow & Sprungk, 2010) to create a global identity
- Pioneering policies, e.g. Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)
- But the EU has faced a 'conglomerate of crises' over recent years (Falkner, 2016)

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS  
THE TRAJECTORY OF  
EUROPEAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
POLICY CHANGED IN  
THE PAST DECADE?

# EU ENVIRONMENTAL PROPOSALS (BURNS, ECKERSLEY & TOBIN) 1/2

- Analysed all 68 environmental proposals adopted 2004-2014
- Coded them 1-5 (1=less ambition, 2=neutral... 5=high ambition)



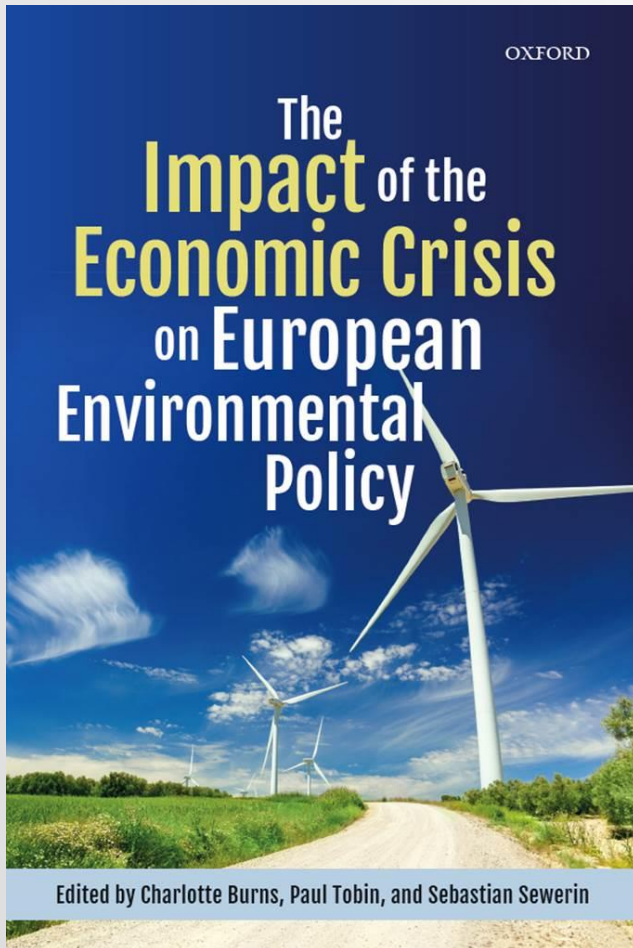
# EU ENVIRONMENTAL PROPOSALS (BURNS, ECKERSLEY & TOBIN) 2/2

**Table 2.** Intensity of environmental policy proposals 2004–2009, 2009–2014.

Intensity Score	2004–2009	2009–2014
5 (High Ambition)	0	0
4 (Moderate Ambition)	11 (30.6%)	4 (18.6%)
3 (Limited Ambition)	16 (44.4%)	9 (40.6%)
2 (Neutral)	7 (19.4%)	13 (28.1%)
1 (Negative Ambition)	2 (5.6%)	6 (12.5%)
Total	36 (100%)	32 (100%)

- Explanatory factors (46 interviews): crisis impacts; a preference for deregulation; diversity in member states; a 'mature body of legislation'

# EDITED VOLUME- USING 'INDEX OF POLICY ACTIVITY' (IPA)1/2



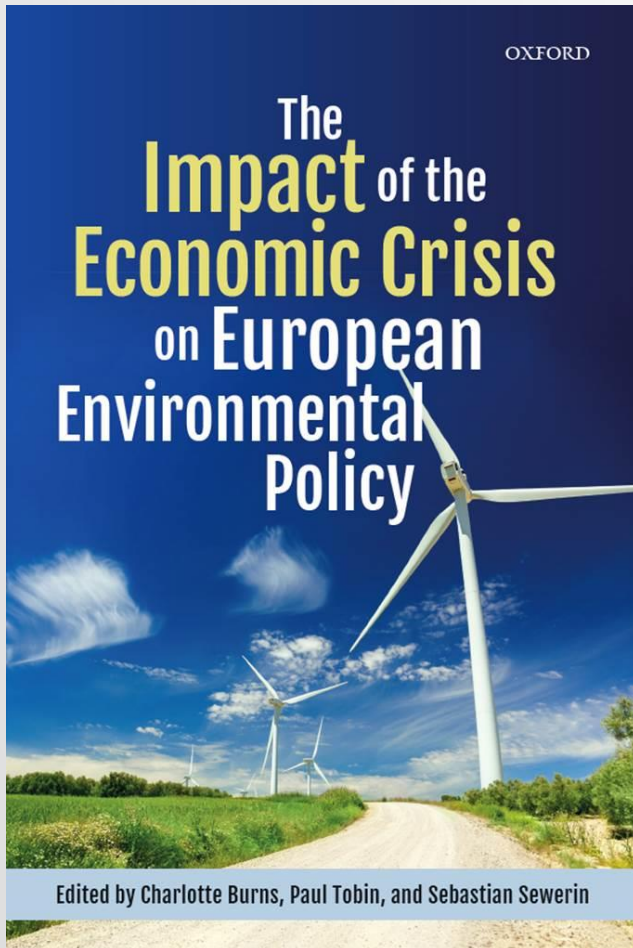
- What has been the 'direction' of change? Expansion, dismantling, or stasis?
- How has dismantling occurred?
- At what 'orders' has policy change occurred?

Charlotte Burns, Paul Tobin, and Sebastian Sewerin

	High visibility	Low visibility
Dismantling decision	Active dismantling	Dismantling by arena shifting
No dismantling decision	Dismantling by symbolic action	Dismantling by default

Figure 1.1. The four types of policy dismantling developed by Bauer and Knill (2012)

# EDITED VOLUME- USING 'INDEX OF POLICY ACTIVITY' (IPA) 2/2



- Environmental policy has been resilient, but increasingly defined by stasis, e.g. EU air quality policy (Gravey & Moore - ch. 2)
- Some expansion too- Denmark & Romania early on
- Most dismantling was 'low visibility'
- HOWEVER, the UK (Ch.4), Denmark (Ch.6), Romania (Ch.7) and Spain (Ch.8) showed 'active dismantling'
- Plus, Romania (Ch.7) and Spain (Ch.8) used 'emergency decrees' to pass legislation with less scrutiny

# THE EU IN A PROCESS OF DISINTEGRATION?

- There are too many factors to identify one causal root
- To what extent is the ambitiousness of European environmental policy resilient in this context?
- Is this disintegration producing, or perhaps the same as, new polycentric governance techniques?
- What does decision-making being pushed 'downwards' by the Commission mean for actors and the environment?
  - Multi-level governance as a theoretical framework
  - Multi-scalar analysis
- How widely are 'emergency decrees' being used?
- Has climate change pushed 'the environment' to the margins? Are 'plastics' starting to push out climate change?

# CASES FOR EXPLORATION

National and local actors within:

- The UK (climate leader 2008; legacy of austerity/Brexit?)
- Germany (env and climate leader reputation; diminishing recently?)
- Sweden (env and climate leader reputation)
- Italy (traditional env and climate laggard; hit by Eurozone crisis)
- Portugal (env laggard and climate leader; hit by Eurozone crisis)
- Ireland (traditional env and climate laggard; hit by Eurozone crisis but now growing again)



# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

- [Charlotte.burns@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:Charlotte.burns@sheffield.ac.uk) - @CharlieBEU
- [Peter.eckersley@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:Peter.eckersley@ntu.ac.uk) - @PEckersley
- [paul.tobin@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:paul.tobin@manchester.ac.uk) - @\_paul\_tobin\_

NOTTINGHAM  
TRENT UNIVERSITY



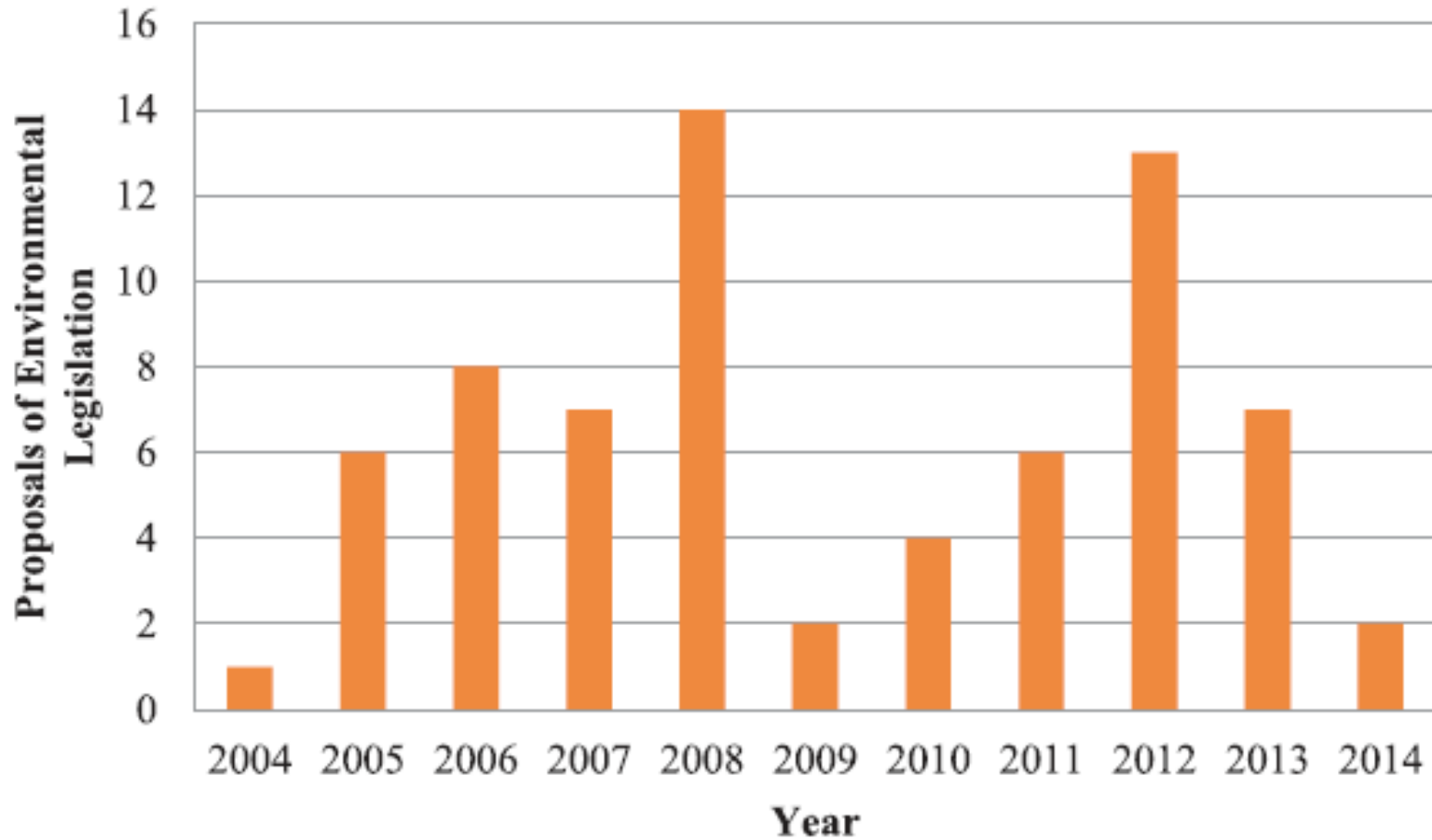
The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester

The Leverhulme Trust

# BURNS, ECKERSLEY & TOBIN (2019)



**Figure 1.** Environmental policy proposals by year, September 2004–July 2014.

NOTTINGHAM  
TRENT UNIVERSITY



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester



The Leverhulme Trust

# BURNS, ECKERSLEY & TOBIN (2019)

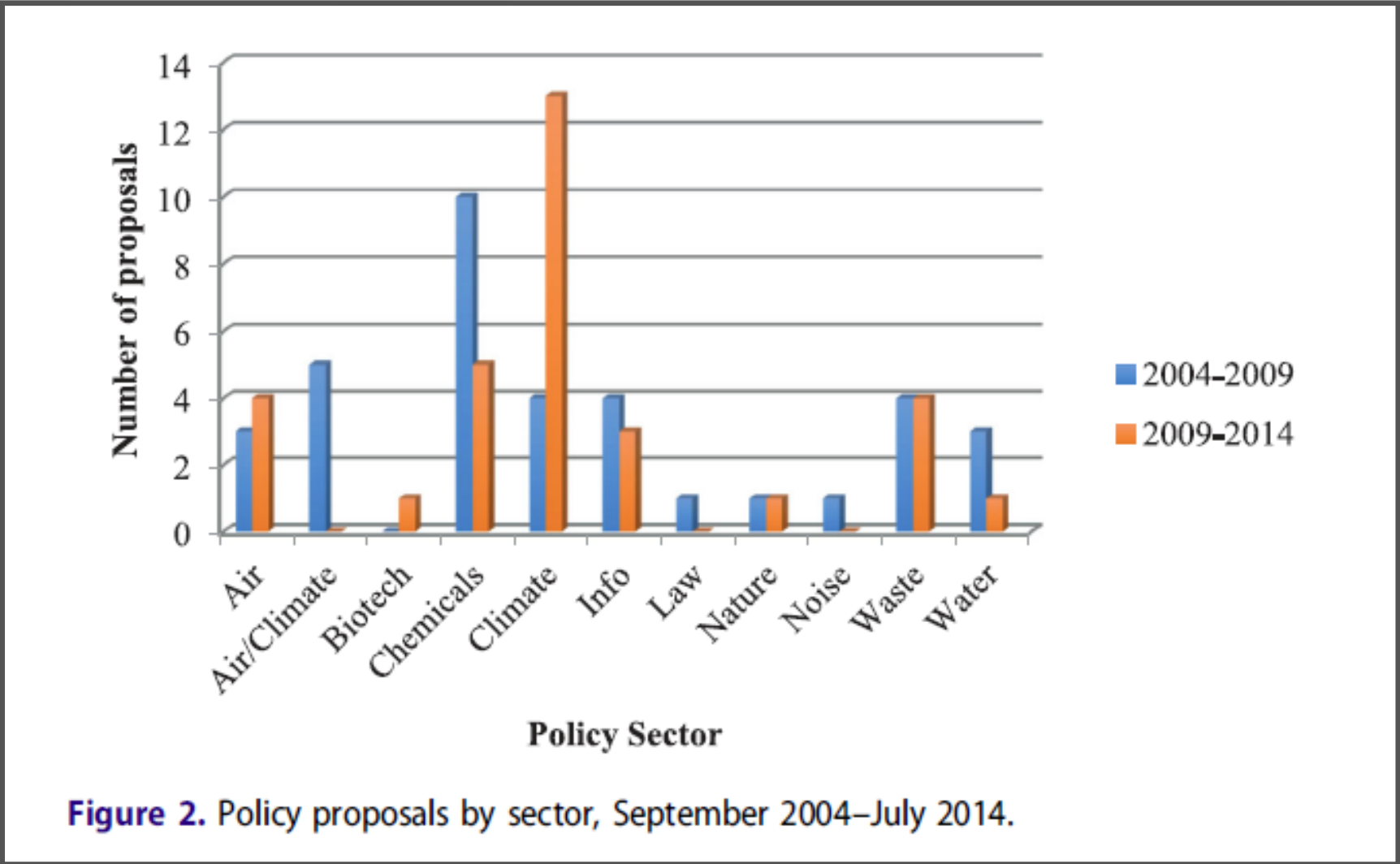


Figure 2. Policy proposals by sector, September 2004–July 2014.



The University Of Sheffield.

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

MANCHESTER 1824

The University of Manchester



The Leverhulme Trust