Masteroppgave

THE (MICRO) PROCESSES OF INTEGRATION
As
DIALECTIC OF STRUCTURE AND AGENCY
(The Case of Seconded National Experts within the European Commission)

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ABSTRACT:

Micro-processes of integration – i.e. how agents develop identities, properties and decision-making behaviours preferred by a particular institution – have been a topic of significant scholarly debate. Most previous work builds on one underlying theoretical framework and thereby excludes (potentially important) elements lying outside it. My thesis attempts to contribute to the ongoing debate by developing a *more holistic understanding* of these processes, based on the *dialectics of structure and agency* and thereby positions actors' decision-making behaviour on *a continuum* between 'structural idiocy' and 'structural entrepreneurism'. Theoretically, my model draws on institutionalist approaches of rational choice (RCI) – modified by Goffman's theory of dramaturgic action – and organisation theory, combined through a *synthetic*, 'both/and' logic of application. Analytically, it is operationalised as a mutually influencing relationship of social mechanisms of strategic optimising and role-playing, and calibrated by a number scope conditions – i.e. organisational design features, domestic variables, and exposure. By employing Seconded National Experts (SNEs) in the European Commission as its test case, the empirical illustration of modelled decision-making behaviour provides limited support for its predictions. That is, *both* strategic optimising *and* role-playing define SNEs' behaviour, and their relative strength appears to vary along the pre-defined dimensions.

KEY WORDS:

European Commission; Seconded National Experts; institutional theories; theoretical bridge-building; socialisation; strategic action; Goffman

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CHAPTER ONE

(MICRO) INTEGRATION AS DIALECTIC OF STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

Introduction

That (international) institutions matter is, by now, widely acknowledged by integrationalist and Europeanist scholars.[1] *Why* they matter – why an actor (be it a individual or a state) should behave in accordance with favoured norms of a particular institution – varies according to the theoretical anchoring of integrationalist scholars, and covers a wide range of reasons such as shaping of strategies, preferences, interests or identities (Haas, 1958; Young, 1989; Millward, 1992; Moravcsik, 1993; March and Olsen, 1998; Sandholtz and Stone Sweet, 1998; Risse *et al*., 1999; Checkel, 2001a; Christiansen *et al*., 2001; for a comprehensive overview, see Wiener and Diez, 2004).

Correspondingly, *how* institutions matter in these (micro) processes of integration – i.e. how an actor develops such identities, properties and decision-making behaviours as are preferred by a particular institution – is also subject of debate. The various explanations offered in the existing literature are, once again, linked strongly to the theoretical background of scholars proposing them (*ibid*). The most fruitful explanations, however, come from neo-institutionalist theories that argue the decisive saliency of various institutional structures (regulative, normative or cultural-cognitive; Scott, 2001).[2] For example, organisation theory sees institutions as *normative* structures, whose defining characteristics have (mostly) constraining (Haas, 1990; Hooghe, 2001a; Egeberg, 2003; Trondal, 2001, 2003) effects on actors' identities, conception of roles and behaviour.[3] Institutions supply behavioural "relevance criteria" – embedded in organisational role expectations (Egeberg, 2004: 4) – that guide actors (via (a degree of) "automaticity" and habituation; Checkel, 2005: 812) towards enactment of 'appropriate' behaviour. No internalisation of norms is envisaged in this

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1 Throughout my thesis, the guiding definition of institutions (both formal and informal) is that coined by Selznick in 1957, who describes them as "organizational arrangements infused with values beyond their instrumental utility" (Olsen, 2005: 4).

2 An overview of neo-institutional approaches is provided in Martin and Simmons (1998) and Aspinwall and Schneider (2000, 2001). On the socialising role of institutions, see special issues of Comparative Political Studies (2003) and International Organization (2005).

3 Roles may be perceived as normative expectations guiding behaviour (Scott, 2001), while decision-making may be seen as processes where premises are supplied and chosen (Simon, 1997a). I specify that the 'behaviour' referred to throughout my thesis is *organisational*, not personal (the latter is assumed to be put aside when an individual becomes a member of an organisation; cf. Egeberg, 2004).

approach. Socio-constructivist institutionalists, on the other hand, argue that institutions are defined by their *cultural-cognitive* structures (Wendt, 1999) that have constitutive effects on actors' identity, properties and behaviour (Risse *et al*., 1999; Checkel, 2001a, 2003b; Gheciu, 2005). Specifically, institutions are perceived to lead actors to internalise norms, rules and values, and towards making 'appropriate' decisions after a conscious thought because "it is the right thing to do, even though I didn't used to think so" (Checkel, 2005: 812). Finally, rational choice scholars see the role of institutions as *regulative*, and thus strictly constraining. Within such structures – if an adoption of norms does occur – it results purely as a result of agents' strategic and optimising behaviour (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Martin and Simmons, 1998; Shepsle, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2004, 2005; Sedelmeier, 2006).

It is clear that such accounts stand at opposing ends of the 'structure-agency' argument (for a concise overview, see Wendt, 1999; Fearon and Wendt, 2002). Nonetheless, such placing does not, I argue, automatically support the 'either/or' analytical dichotomy, commonly[4] practiced by modern integrationalist theories. For even though the former two approaches view actor's identities, properties and decision-making behaviour as resulting from *socialising* influence of institutional structures (thus following (a degree)[5] of 'logic of appropriateness' (March and Olsen, 2006b), and the latter – by identifying *agency* as a key element – defines actor's behaviour as strategic and consequential (where structures, at best, play only an intervening role), these three structures should not be understood as mutually exclusive. Rather, they – and consequently, I propose, also their *effects upon actors* – should be understood as forming a *continuum*, leading "from the conscious to the unconscious, from the legally enforced to the taken for granted" (Hoffman in Scott, 2001:51; see also March and Olsen, 2006a).

Inasmuch as the current empirical studies almost simultaneously provide evidence for, on the one hand, the strength of socialising effects, and on the other, their unevenness and weakness

[4] Notable recent exception is James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, who argue in "Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View" that " the most interesting research is likely to be work that ignores zero-sum interpretations of their relations and instead directly engages questions that *cut cross the rationalist/constructivist boundary* as it is commonly understood" (2002:52; italics added).

[5] Within the sociological institutionalist rendition, the influence of normative institutional elements does not trigger off invocation of 'pure' logic of appropriateness. Expounding the principle of 'bounded rationality', this perspective explains that the shift from logic of consequentiality to logic of appropriateness has only *begun*, since it involves only the process of appropriation of relevant *roles*, rather than the process of reflective internalisation of relevant norms, which is triggered off by 'pure' logic of appropriateness. Nonetheless, due to the fact that the process does *involve a degree of noncalculative behavioural adaptation*, I choose to regard it as operating also with (some) logic of appropriateness (Checkel, 2005).

(Zürn and Checkel, 2005), I argue that such divergence, in fact, points at shortcomings of analytical dichotomising. To that effect, the main contribution of my thesis concerns the development (end empirical illustration) of a holistic account that *incorporates* both effects, thus models behavioural adoption as a *continual*, rather than dichotomic, process.

1.1.Thesis' Research Question

As introduced above, my thesis' central aim is to elaborate upon the possibility that neither the socialising qualities of 'institutional effects', nor the 'optimising actor' argument *alone* can explain how institutions lead actors to form identities, adopt roles and make 'appropriate' decisions. Instead, and guided by recent suggestions concerning the role of strategic calculation and social influence within the dynamics of socialisation (Hooghe, 2001b; Schimmelfennig, 2002, 2003; Checkel, 2003b, 2005; Johnston, 2005; Zürn and Checkel, 2005), my thesis attempts to both theoretically answer, and empirically illustrate, the following question:

Q: Can actors' identities, properties and decision-making behaviour – rather than being singularly shaped *either* by socialising effects of an institution's structures, *or* through actors' strategic evaluation of costs and benefits from appropriate behaviour – be better characterised as issuing from their mutually influencing relationship?

Such formulation is, however, very general and implicitly subsumes socialising effects of both normative *and* cultural-cognitive institutional *structures*. While this arguably is "close to the common-sense meaning of socialisation" (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1045), it nonetheless presents considerable operational challenges (ibid, 2005: 1072). Consequently, since my thesis intends not only to theorise, but also empirically illustrate, a more holistic view of (micro) processes of integration, I will in the remainder focus on effects of *normative* structures only. These lead actors towards an adoption of *new role conceptions and decision-making behaviour* (or Checkel's Type I internalisation) (March and Olsen, 2006a; Simon, 1997a; Egeberg, 2003, 2004). The effects of *agency* I operationalise as a *strategic evaluation of immaterial costs and benefits*, directly accruable from the enactment of 'appropriate' roles and behaviour.

Finally, while there is an (assumed) causal chain linking behavioural roles (or strategic optimising) to actual decision-making behaviour, only behaviour is inherently observable. As a consequence, to empirically illustrate my theoretical claims, I select actors' manifested *decision-making behaviour* as my dependent variable. In the operationalisation of the model, behaviour will be measured via SNEs' perceptions of their loyalty and their actual work identity.[6] Consequently, I finalise my research question thus:

RQ: Can actors' decision-making behaviour in an institution – rather than being singularly shaped either by socialising effects of organisational 'role expectations', or through actors' strategic evaluation of costs and benefits from appropriate behaviour – be better characterised as issuing from their dialecticism?

1.2.Proposed Argumentation

As understood from my thesis's research question, I view the dialecticism of normative structures and strategic agency as a guiding rationale for behaviour adoption.

Analytically, my model is defined by its *dynamic* character, and thus fundamentally differs from static renditions of both the 'socialising powers of institutions' argument (which inherently views agents as passive beings or "structural idiots", Checkel, 2003b: 11), and the 'structure entrepreneurship' argument (which views any development of properties, dispositions and decision-making behaviour as driven solely by instrumental rationality of utility-maximising individuals; Shepsle, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2005). Further, by applying 'both/and' logic of analysis, my model attempts to enrich the existing theoretical apparatus and supplant the currently dominant 'either/or' logic and its ontological dichotomy.

Theoretically, I extrapolate my research question from two sources: *i)* from the understanding of modern sociologists and psychologists that all social action is defined by individuals' innate self-consciousness vis-à-vis structures within which they operate. Consequently, structurally framed explanations of how an individual develops properties, dispositions, sense of belonging and loyalty, as well as what shapes his/her decision-making behaviour, are

[6] Work identity is constituted as a composite of SNEs' preferences, work mandate and work ethics.

inadequate; the influence of "self-socialization" also needs to be accounted for (Zinnecker in Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1051; see also Sears, 1993; Taber, 2003). *ii)* From the contention that "there is little reason to think that human behaviour towards norms is either *always* self-interested or *always* a function of perceived legitimacy. (…) What is to stop someone from saying that he obeyed a norm for *both* reasons?" (Fearon and Wendt, 2002: 61-62 original italics; see also Jupille *et al*., 2003; Checkel, 2005).

Importantly: should one concede the reasonableness of both claims, (s)he ought to also accept that modelling actors' decision-making behaviour as resulting from an inherently *dialectic process* (of structure's socialising effects and actors' self-socialisation), offers a more accurate understanding than the current uni-directional accounts. Hence, and incorporating Hoffman's tenet of institutional continua (cf. supra), I will argue that any decision-making behaviour must be seen as a *continuum*, rather than dichotomy, between 'structural idiocy' and 'structural entrepreneurism'. Clearly, this line of argument directly implies I (must) construct my theoretical model with the conceptual tools of multiple theories (as single theories focus on either structure or agency and thus do not allow modelling the continuum between them; cf. supra). However, and critically, such combination posits selection of theories that are 'bridgeable', i.e. exhibiting sufficient degree of commensurability. Such bridge-building is facilitated when one views "theories pragmatically as analytical tools rather than meta-theoretical positions and empirical description of the world" (Jupille *et al*., 2003: 15). Following this recommendation, I will rely on two *neo-institutionalist approaches* (namely, rational choice and organisation theory), as these, in my view, contain sufficient overlapping, even complementing, analytical tools to warrant their integration in my model (ibid; see also Fearon and Wendt, 2002). Analytically, they will be combined through '*both/and*' *logic* of application (Jupille *et al*., 2003a; Checkel, 2005; Johnston, 2005; Zürn and Checkel, 2005)

Finally, I *empirically* illustrate my model using the case of the European Commission (Commission) and the body of its temporary officials – national experts, seconded to the European Union (EU) on temporary contracts (SNEs in Commission's phraseology). SNEs have, surprisingly, received little attention in studies of international (re)socialisation and Europeanisation (for exceptions, see Trondal, 2006a, 2007 and Trondal *et al*., 2007) and are, I argue, ideally suited to demonstrate the theoretical model's hypothesised dialecticism. *For one*, the EU is an environment defined by a high density of institutionalisation, which is a pre-

requisite for any socialising effects of structures to occur (Egeberg, 2004; Checkel, 2005; Johnston, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2005; Hooghe, 2005; Trondal *et al*., 2005). *Second*, the Commission has the "authority to select and groom its employees with minimal national interference [and thus elicits] strong reasons to expect (…) international socialisation to be effective" (Hooghe, 2005: 862). *Third*, while the Commission thereby presents the '*most-likely-case*' (Eckstein, 1975; King *et al*., 1994; Yin, 2003) *of structural effects*, the inherent structural tensions of the secondment system – coupled with its temporal limitations – not only make SNEs '*least-likely-cases*' (ibid) of EU-socialisation, but *also*, and crucial for assessing my thesis' hypothesised strategic calculation, *allow SNEs to act strategically* by calculating the costs and benefits of adopting Commission's roles of behaviour.[7]

1.3. Thesis' Aims

By attempting to answer the proposed research question (see page 4), my thesis has three ambitions:

i) To conceptualise a *dynamic model* of behaviour adoption;

ii) To propose a *synthetic*, '*both/and*' institutionalist approach, combining rational choice and organisation theory propositions;

iii) To offer an empirical illustration of the theory, methodologically designed as limited '*incorporation*'.

First Aim: Thesis conceptualises SNEs' adoption of Commission-specific behaviour as resulting from the interplay between two different rationales of behavioural adaptation: *semi-reflective socialisation* (i.e. defined by a degree of 'automaticity') (Checkel, 2005: 810) into Commission's behavioural role expectations, and *strategic evaluation* of costs and benefits of that adoption. Following the literature, these are operationalised via causal mechanisms.[8]

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[7] Interestingly, recent SNE-socialisation studies – such as Trondal *et al.* (2007) – hint at the temporarity of some (in this case supranational) (re)socialising outcomes. This appears to confirm hypotheses derived from a (cognitive) organisational approach regarding the instantaneity of behavioural adaptation within current organisational structures (Trondal, 1999). However, it can also imply a *degree of optimising* of 'logic of appropriateness' guiding SNEs' adoption of Commission's normatively defined roles of decision-making behaviour (Johnston, 2005), as promoted by my theoretical model.

[8] Mechanisms are "recurrent processes linking specified conditions and a specific outcome" (Mayntz in Checkel, 2005: 808). For this thesis, the term refers to "the intermediate processes along which international institutions may lead actors towards accepting norms, rules and modes of behaviour of a given community" (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1049).

The reliance on mechanisms not only allows for formulation of more finely grained hypotheses and measurement of their observable implications (Elster, 1989; Hedström and Sweberg, 1998; Martin and Simmons, 1998; Jupille *et al*., 2003), but also has an added benefit of such accounts being generally "quite compatible with different social theories of action" (Jupille *et al*., 2003: 19): highly relevant to my model since it incorporates two different actions: instrumental and bounded-rational/'practical'.[9] Pertaining the selection of causal mechanisms, it should be noted that – while numerous causal mechanisms can be identified – I apply the rule of parsimony and select two principal[10] causal mechanisms as my independent variables: those of *social influence* and *role-playing*. Additionally, I calibrate my model by factoring in following scope conditions of (i) *organisational design features*, (ii) *domestic variables*, and (iii) *exposure*. Each of these, I argue, is implicitly conducive to both social mechanisms, and thus relevant both for theorising, and empirical illustration, of their hypothesised dialecticism. In other words, while the model proposes that both social mechanisms are at work all the time, the degree to which each matters will vary depending on scope conditions (thus defining placement along the continuum between both mechanisms).

Second Aim: Thesis proposes a *synthetic*, 'both/and' institutionalist approach to the analysis of dialectically driven processes of Type I-socialisation, based on combination of rational choice and organisation theory. However, since socialisation can take place only in *social* (Johnston, 2001) and never in material environments, the classic rationalist tenet of 'cost-benefit calculation' is within my model re-defined to apply to social, *non-material* benefits and constraints.[11] To this end, I modify 'classic' rational choice institutionalism by incorporating Erving Goffman's social theory, whose core tenet of dialecticism between "manipulation and morality" (Branaman, 1997: xlvi) theorises that informal social values and norms, including moral concerns, produce strong effects on actor strategies (Schimmelfennig, 2003). In short, my model's theoretical synthesis is thus represented by a combination of *i)* Goffman's view on actors as "performers engaged in manipulative presentations of self, constrained by the

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9 For the purpose of my theoretical argument, 'practical'/bounded rational action *differs* from instrumental rationality since it, by definition, inherently assumes (a degree of) *appropriateness* in its logic (Checkel, 2005; for definition of 'practical' action, see DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

10 The notion of causal mechanisms must include causal chains with more than one link connecting the trigger with the effect. Hence, for a more complete account of processes of socialisation, it is necessary to look both at primary and secondary mechanisms (Zürn and Checkel, 2005). However, such complex operationalisation is beyond the scope of this thesis.

11 This modification can be justified by referring to recent arguments that calculations of subjectively perceived *social influence* can, under certain conditions, lead to actors' norm-consistent behaviour (Checkel, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2005).

script and the consistency of their roles" (Schimmelfennig, 2002: 417), and *ii)* organisation theory accounts of institutions' normative structures providing simplifying shortcuts, buffers and cues for making 'appropriate' decisions (Egeberg, 2003, 2004; Trondal, 2006a, 2007).

Third Aim: Thesis offers an *empirical illustration* of the theoretical model based on Commission's temporary staff. This analysis is methodologically designed as a (limited) two-step '*incorporation*' and employs data drawn from primary and secondary sources of both current and previous Commission SNEs. The primary data consist of author's in-depth interviews of current Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, British and Polish SNEs (N=13), conducted in March/April 2007, while the secondary sources are a combination of data from thirteen in-depth interviews of Norwegian and Swedish SNEs, conducted in 2004-2005, and papers (co)authored by Prof. Jarle Trondal (Trondal, 2006a, 2007; Trondal *et al*., 2007).

Importantly: through these three aims, my thesis aspires to explore *new conceptual tools*, designed to offer a more multi-faceted definition and *more testable operationalisation* of processes shaping decision-making behaviour. In doing so, it directly addresses the problem of "underspecified theoretical apparatus" within the field of socialisation and (European) integration (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1072) and at the same time answers calls for theoretical 'bridge-building' (Fearon and Wendt, 2001; Jupille *et al*., 2003; Checkel, 2005; Johnston, 2005; Zürn and Checkel, 2005).

1.4.Thesis' Structure

To conclude this introductory chapter, I present a concise overview of my thesis' five-fold structure.

After this *first*, introductory chapter, where I delineate the fundamental arguments, research question and aims of my thesis, the *second* chapter is dedicated to the theoretical underpinnings and construction, operationalisation and visual rendition of my thesis' proposed model. This second chapter first (Section 2.1) discusses reasons for – and ways to – invoke the proposed theoretical synthesis. It also presents the theories selected for this double-step synthesis: *rational choice*, modified (i.e. first step) by Goffman's social theory (Section 2.1.1) and (second step) *organization theory* (Section 2.1.2), as well as the method of

their synthesis (Section 2.1.3). Then, in Section 2.2, I offer a comprehensive account of Commission's structures and behavioural role expectations, together with the concept of secondment and SNE recruitment procedures. This is prerequisite information for the main part of this chapter (Section 2.3), dealing with the model's operationalisation and formulation of hypotheses. Due to the formulational difficulties connected to the operationalisation and formation of a dialectic model, I also offer its visual rendition (Section 2.4).

The following, *third* chapter addresses and defends the methodological (or study design) features of my thesis' research question, both from the perspective of the theoretical framework and the empirical illustration of the model. Specifically, Section 3.1 examines the problem of *commensurability* with respect to the selected theories and discusses the subject of *verification versus falsification* (which is crucial for the derivation of the appropriate empirical strategy). Then, Section 3.2 describes the *overall empirical strategy*, its *external* and *internal validity*, reviews the process of *sample selection* (noting on the potential problem of *self-selection*), and finally regards the crucial point of *causality* (versus correlation).

The *fourth* chapter contains the illustrating empirical analysis. The opening part (Section 4.1) puts forth empirical evidence of: *i)* SNEs' strategic calculations of (costs and benefits of) their secondment; *ii)* SNEs' behaviour activated by Commission's organisational structures. The identified presence of both elements suggests – as argued – that uni-theoretical explanations are insufficient. This finding, in turn, provides a vital starting point for the ensuing illustration of the six synthesized hypotheses. In Section 4.2, I then bring forward empirical findings suggesting that the relative strength of behavioural role expectations and strategic calculations of social influence (upon SNE decision-making behaviour) indeed differs under certain conditions (namely, organisational recency, education, chronological primacy and noviceness). This provides some support for the view that the development of roles, identities and modes of behaviour is best understood as interplay between strategic optimising and role-playing.

In the *fifth* and final chapter of my thesis I summarise its overall findings and touch upon some normative issues connected to supranational socialisation: notions of identities, questions of legitimacy and the relative roles and powers of national and supranational legislative bodies. I also discuss potential avenues of future research. Finally, should any

caveats arise during the theoretical discussion and/or analysis, these will also be addressed in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

SPECIFYING THEORETICAL APPARATUS

Introduction

My thesis questions traditional accounts of actors' integration based on *either* the effects of strategic action *or* structurally driven socialisation. Such 'either/or' accounts are now widely understood to provide an "underspecified theoretical apparatus" (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1072; see also Checkel, 2001a, 2005; Jupille *et al*., 2003; Johnston, 2005). Instead, my thesis proposes a more holistic – 'both/and' – account, which combines both effects in a dialectic relationship. While it thereby (arguably) attempts to come closer to the "common-sense understanding" of how actors behave in social contexts (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1045), it also faces major challenges. Indeed, how does one operationalise behaviour that is moulded by a mutually influencing relationship of structural socialisation and strategic action? What are the necessary conceptual tools to design such model? Consequently, in order to substantiate the proposed model, I need firstly to modify and/or develop conceptual tools that allow me to operationalise it; which, in turn, will generate testable hypotheses to empirically illustrate it.

The present chapter first considers the general issue of theoretical (in)commensurability, presentation of the chosen 'bridgeable' theories, defence of their selection and the method of their synthesis (Section 2.1). Then, I turn to a comprehensive account of necessary background information of identified cases (Section 2.2), crucial for operationalisation of analytical tools and formulation of guiding (synthesised) hypotheses (Section 2.3). The concluding Section 2.4 presents the model's visual rendition.

2.1. Towards theoretical synthesis

To combine strategic action with (Type I) socialisation and suggest this combination as a rationale for processes that shape actors' decision-making behaviour faces a considerable challenge. The reason is that both elements of this combination are steeped in different views of reality, are understood to be driven by different rationality, and have different levels of analysis. More specifically, *strategic action* – driven by a consequentialist logic of optimising

individuals within a material environment – is the rationale for *realist theories*, while *socialisation* is one of the key concepts of *constructivist theories* and describes a process of mutual interaction between individual and institutional structures through which (s)he becomes 'constituted' (or gains an identity). Nonetheless, while the ontological and epistemological differences of the respective (meta)theories are undoubtedly insurmountable, many social scientists have began to point out that "only in the rarest cases is there but one plausible account to explain an outcome" (Jupille *et al*., 2003: 17-18). This led scholars to look for ways of incorporating (potentially important) elements lying outside one's (chosen) mono-theoretical framework.

The best starting point, it is argued, to overcome theoretical *incommensurability*[12] is to search for such terms (e.g., dependent variables) in each theory as are mutually translatable. While finding such mutually translatable terms is, per definition, impossible at the level of abstract meta-theories, "finding ways to understand each other" is more real in a problem-driven, empirically-oriented perspective characterising the *middle-range* social scientific approaches (Jupille *et al*., 2003: 17-18; see also Checkel and Moravcsik, 2001; Zürn and Checkel, 2005; Trondal *et al*., 2007). This, I argue, singles out neo-institutionalist approaches as the most feasible alternative for theoretical synthesis and, ultimately, for advancing a more nuanced (and holistic) view of reality. One can think of four reasons why this is the case:

i) They subscribe to the notion that *institutions matter* (i.e. while offering different explanations of 'what' they are and 'how' they matter, institutional structures are commonly identified as one of (possible many) *independent/intervening* variables),

ii) They have behaviour as one of *dependent* variables,

iii) They are '*process oriented*' and

iv) They rely on *causal mechanisms* and *scope conditions* to formulate testable hypotheses.

Modelling SNEs' decision-making behaviour (within the Commission) as resulting from a mutually influencing relationship of agential strategic optimising and structural Type I-

[12] The commensurability issue pertains to the fact that "theories are different language systems with limited mutual translatability, [since] words (or scientific terms) have different referent (observables) in different theories, [which means] that comprehension is not simply a matter of fitting two different words to the same underlying phenomenon. Each theory does its own work at the data level – determining what are the relevant data – and if observations we aim to use to adjudicate among theories are themselves infected by the theory, this exercise is doomed to fail" (Jupille *et al.*, 2003: 17, based on Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*).

socialisation, I specifically rely on Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI) and organisation theory approaches. However, the strategic considerations in my model pertain to the attainment of *social influence*, which – per definition – is a *social*, not material incentive in a *social*, not material, environment.[13] Hence, as RCI is inherently ill equipped to operationalise such social influences (North, 1994), I modify RCI by incorporation of Erving Goffman's social theory. This, I argue, not only operationalises social incentives in a social environment, but also allows me to 'bridge' (modified) RCI with organisational theory, whose tenets specify 'appropriate' action in a socio-institutional environment.

2.1.1. Rational Choice Institutionalism and Erving Goffman's Social Theory

As one of the several approaches assembled under the umbrella of Rational Choice Theory (Pollack, 2006), RCI shares this theory's core assumptions regarding:

i) *Methodological individualism* (individual as the basic unit of social analysis),

ii) *Utility-maximising* (individuals' action is *rational* in character since it issues from calculations of expected utility and follows 'logic of consequentiality') (March and Olsen, 1989), and

iii) The recognition of various institutional or strategic *constraints* on individual choice (individuals strategically evaluate the alternative courses of action within the constraints of their environment).[14]

Crucially for my argumentation, both assumptions of *utility maximising* and *structural constraints* offer a 'space for theoretical dialogue', which is essential for the creation of conceptual tools to operationalise my model (Jupille *et al*., 2003). *Firstly*, while an individual is always viewed as driven by calculations of costs and benefits (thus acting consequentially and strategically), the concept of 'utility' need not be materialist; utility can also be of *immaterial* nature (*ibid*, see also Ferejohn, 1991; Johnston, 2001; Fearon and Wendt, 2002). Consequently, RCI allows for conceptualisation of 'immaterial' optimising (although it is ill

[13] Social influence could, naturally, be enumerated in material gains; however, that is not the concern of this thesis.

[14] At the same time, it *differs* from this so-called 'second-order' theory (Wendt, 1999) – understood in the sense of theory concerned with ontological and epistemological matters of social reality – by being 'substantive' and 'domain specific' in character. It identifies *particular* social systems (such as the EU, or, in the case of my thesis, the Commission) and its constitutive actors (Commission's organisational structures and the SNEs) as objects of its study, makes specific assumptions about them and formulates testable hypotheses articulating explicit causal or interpretative claims about their relationship. It thereby allows the generation of empirical evidence for its validation (Pollack, 2006: 3-5). This is not the case for second-order Rational Choice theory, which can be neither supported nor falsified by empirical evidence (Pollack, 2006).

equipped to offer adequate generic operationalisation of such activity; North, 1994). *Secondly*: while individual strategic action in RCI is understood to be exogenously constrained by the surrounding environment (i.e. structures), these constraints can be of physical (material) as well as *social or institutional* character (Granovetter, 1985). Vital with regard to my model, RCI thus does – as in the case of optimising – allow for the possibility that *normative* (and/or *cognitive-cultural*) structures influence individual action (ibid). However, as with agential optimising, RCI is again ill equipped to adequately operationalise the cultural and social constraints of strategic action (North, 1994).

This discussion illustrates that, a priori, there are no serious *assumptive* problems on the part of RCI theory to model behaviour as resulting from mutually interacting effects of strategic action and institutionally defined behavioural role expectations. However, it also makes clear that *practical* difficulties regarding operationalisation of non-material optimising within a non-material environment need to be addressed. To that end, I (partially) incorporate Erving Goffman's (1959, 1982) *theory of dramaturgic action* into RCI. Put succinctly, Goffman's theory ascertains that life in a social environment constrains agents by the script and the consistency requirements of the roles (or "framework of appearances") that they must maintain (Schimmelfennig, 2002: 417-422). While quite possibly believing the rightness of those roles' fundamental rules, actors do not internalise them nor are motivated by them; instead, they see them as "resources for strategies" which are to be "used, not followed" for their own advantage (Edgerton, 1985: 12-14). As a result, when an individual is in a (given) social situation, "he will have many motives for trying to control the impression [others] have of him (…) [and] he can influence this (…) by engaging in impression management" (Goffman, 1959, in Schimmelfennig, 2002: 423).

Goffman's theory – through its dialecticism of "manipulation and morality" (Branaman, 1997; xlvi) – thus conceptualises agents as 'performers' engaged in "manipulative presentations of self within a social environment" (Schimmelfennig, 2002: 417). In other words, underlying *norms* of behavioural roles *can be used strategically* to achieve, preserve, and even increase actors' 'standing' and/or influence (Schimmelfennig, 2002, 2003; italics added). It should be noted that, unlike in organisation theory – where organisational role expectations trigger certain behaviour through habituation and (a degree of) automaticity (Checkel, 2005: 812) – actors' behaviour in this case is *strategically aligned* to those frames (or structurally defined roles).

I argue that Goffman's theory of social action fulfils the necessary requirements for (partial) subsumation into RCI: that is, it conceptualises institutions as constraints and incentives, and social actors as strategically calculating agents. Also, it offers the necessary conceptualisation of soft causal mechanisms to operationalise strategic action as immaterial optimising. As such, it motivates my model's conceptualisation of strategic action as 'optimising of logic of appropriateness' (Johnston, 2005), and operationalises it as *optimising of social influence*, gained from 'behaving appropriately'. Moreover, strategic action now becomes adequately 'understandable' to the (organisational) concept of behavioural role expectations with which it is modelled to mutually interact (cf. infra). Specifically, by interpreting an organisational environment as a social situation for its actors, and accepting that the 'logic of appropriateness' defines it, 'making appropriate work decisions' is, therefore, a close proxy for "impression management" (cf. Goffman, 1959), and the "frameworks" are those appropriate role expectations as are encoded within each organisation's formal structure.

2.1.2. Organisation theory

In sharp contrast to RCI, organisation theory – along with institutionalist approaches also derived from cognitive/social psychology (Checkel, 2005) – adheres to the following tenets:

i) Adopts an *interpretivist* approach to how individuals and groups make sense of the social world of which they are part.

ii) Views (social) actors as engaged in 'practical' *action* (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991), which – while open to making choices in a systematic and purposeful manner – is driven by a '*logic of appropriateness*' that is institutionally defined (March and Olsen, 1996).[15]

iii) Adheres to a *holistic* conceptualisation (or "complex duality"; Hay and Wincott, 1998: 956) of actor-environment interaction. Actors are seen to alter, and respond to, their environment by taking calculated action, but they do so according to their beliefs and practices which have been formed by these very same environments (i.e. they are perceived both as *homo politicus* as much as *homo economicus*).

In its aim to understand how *different organisational contexts* contribute to the enactment of different identities, role conceptions and modes of behaviour, organisation theory perceives organisational members as individuals made up of a multitude of identities, roles and

[15] Acting 'appropriately' consists of conforming to the expectations of others, following established routines and conventions, and adjusting behaviour as a result of learning from previous experiences.

possibilities for action (or as 'multiple selves'; Elster, 1986), and argues that these are (de)activated by a particular organisational context (Trondal, 1999). In essence, institutions are viewed as normative constructions that shape the understanding, behaviour and preferences of agents (Scott, 2001) while agents 'play a role' depending on the organisational context. Given that agents' attention is scarce and they cannot deal efficiently and appropriately with all available information, one warranty for appropriate decisions-making behaviour – i.e. to trigger the 'right' role – is then to *formally* design the organisation horizontally and vertically so as to create "organisational borderlines [that act as] buffers to attention [and hence] biasing the information exposed to the decision makers" (Trondal, 1999: 11).[16] Consequently, the organisational context is viewed as a complexity-reducing mechanism that – formulated as "relevance criteria" (Egeberg, 2004: 4) – decomposes complex tasks into sub-tasks, which can be carried out within relatively independent units of governance. Moreover, inasmuch as identities, roles and decision-making behaviour are thereby seen as (organisational) context-specific, they are understood to be relatively easy to mould and re-mould by (re)designing those contexts: i.e. should the organisational context change overnight, it is assumed that identities, roles and behaviour change overnight too (Egeberg, 1994, 2004; Trondal, 1999).

This discussion implies first of all that to operationalise the 'role-playing' mechanisms of my model I must examine the basic organisational characteristics of the institution within which my agents interact. Clearly, each of the four organisational features specified in theoretical work (i.e. *organisational structure*, *organisational demography, organisational locus* and *institutionalisation*)[17] will have direct relevance to my model. Indeed, not only must the

[16] By biasing the information for actors' action, normative structures are, per definition, never neutral (Schattenschneider, 1975: 30).

[17] "*Organisational structure*" refers to the collection of rules and roles that specify who is expected to do what and how; such structures can be horizontally and vertically delineated (Egeberg, 2004). The horizontal *principle of specialisation*, f.e., denotes which questions should be horizontally linked, and which should be systematically kept apart (Trondal, 1999; see also Egeberg, 2004). Generally, four fundamental principles are distinguished (i.e. *purpose* (sector), *process* (function), *territory* and *clientele served*; cf. Gulick, 1937) and these are understood to promote different identities, roles and decision-making behaviour amongst organisational members. Further, the "*organisational demography*" pertains to the *composition* of organisational population (in terms of age, gender, nationality, education and length of service within the organisation). Length of service is often seen as most important (however, for its 'primacy' in re-socialising processes, it requires consistency of its effects over time; Egeberg, 2004), although proportions of organisational populations should also be given due consideration (as actors with similar professional and/or territorial characteristics can create 'enclaves' which interests may eclipse organisational effects; Egeberg, 2004). "*Organisational locus*" denotes the physical location of organisations and can play an important role by creating physical boundaries between those decision-making role expectations 'preferred' by a particular physical environment and those representative of an organisation located elsewhere. Finally, "*institutionalisation*" denotes the process of 'growing-up' through which an organisation acquires a distinct

organisational context (i.e. the Commission) within which my selected cases (SNEs) are embedded be institutionalised to develop socialising qualities necessary to induce appropriation of its preferred behavioural role expectations, it also has to be structured, staffed and located in such a way that its 'preferred' role expectations will be strong enough to not only compete with SNEs' previous organisational identities, roles and decision-making behaviour, but also to withstand their optimising.

Secondly, it transpires from the above examination that organisation theory – especially by adhering to the tenet of 'complex duality' between structures and actors (cf. supra) – allows for conceptualisation of *strategic optimising* of institutional structures, and therefore concurs with RCI. This entails the feasibility of my proposed (limited) incorporative approach, employed to model and validate my thesis' hypothesised dialecticism of strategic action and socialisation. Furthermore, the organisational operationalisation of socialising effects is also adequately 'understandable' to (modified) RCI's operationalisation of strategic action to justify their synthesis through both/and logic of analysis.

2.1.3. Theoretical model of synthesis

In the previous two sections, I argue to have established that there are not only fruitful "assumptive openings" within both theories to conduct a theoretical dialogue, but also feasible operationalizable possibilities for a carefully structured empirical dialogue (Jupille *et al*., 2005: 3). To this end, I believe to have shown that:

i) RCI and Goffman's social theory of action are sufficiently mutually 'translatable' to allow for a (limited) incorporation of the latter into the former.

ii) This allows me to re-conceptualise RCI's core tenets of strategic rational action and material environment in such a way as to render them (and RCI) 'understandable' to the 'language' of organisation theory.

iii) As a result, I can operationalise mutually understandable independent and dependent variables, apply the both/and logic of analysis to generate testable hypotheses,

iv) and thus theoretically develop and (empirically) illustrate the hypothesised model of dialectically driven (micro) processes of integration.

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identity, which "infuse(s) [it] with value beyond the technical requirement of the task at hand" (Selznick, 1957: 17). This is critical since socialisation can take place only in a densely institutionalised environment.

While this two-step synthesis represents not only the most 'demanding' theoretical dialogue available[18] but also the most 'hegemonic' in result[19], I maintain, however, that such theoretical dialogue is the only one capable of formulating hypotheses based on mutually influencing relationships.

2.2. Structures of European Commission and the Concept of Secondment

Prior to detailing the resulting model and its guiding hypotheses (Section 2.3), I firstly need to provide a comprehensive account of necessary background information of my cases, as this will be crucial for operationalisation of analytical tools and formulation of hypotheses. Consequently, this section elaborates upon the structures of European Commission and the concept of secondment,

2.2.1. Structures of European Commission

The European Commission (Commission) is the executive body of the world's most encompassing supranational regime (i.e. the European Union; EU). It holds agenda-setting powers and has a vocation to identify and defend the European interest over and above – and, if need be, against – particular member-state interests. Furthermore, its system of governance not only encompasses a complex web of organisations networking with member-state administrations – earning it a description of 'multi-organisation' – but, arguably, also mirrors the idiosyncrasies of the entire system of EU-governance: multi-level, multi-lingual, multi-national and supranational.

The Commission is formally organised by *horizontal* specialisation along three principles – i.e. *purpose*, *process* and *territory* (cf. Gulick, 1937). These are linked in a dual system of primary and secondary specialisations, where *purpose* and *process* are the primary principles, supplemented (indirectly) by the secondary principle of *territory*.

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[18] Others – in order of increasing difficulty – are competitive testing, additive theory and sequencing (Jupille *et al.*, 2003).

[19] It is based on (partial) absorption of the 'weaker' theory by the 'stronger'. Unfortunately, though, it is – again – the ontological and epistemological anchoring of the scholar doing the subsumation that decides which theory is to be subsumed. Giving these two caveats, there is a clear possibility that the new, derived, theory is weaker in its explanatory readiness than either of the 'original' theories (Jupille *et al*., 2003: 21), and 'contaminated' by scholar's subjectivity. Thus the internal validity of the study might be far from ideal. However, to control for such possibilities is beyond the scope of this thesis.

i) Following the primary principle of *purpose*, the Commission is pillarised *sectorally* into twenty-five Directorate Generals (DG), encompassing typical governmental portfolios as agriculture, trade, economy and finance, health and education, etc. Internally, each DG is designed vertically in a strict hierarchy running from a politically appointed Commissioner, through heads of divisions and units down to desk officers. This particular specialisation activates patterns of co-operation (and conflict) among Commission DGs *along*, rather than across, sectoral (i.e. departmental) cleavages (Egeberg, 2006). Thereby it tends to invoke *departmental logic* in decision-making dynamics, and triggers off enactment of specific portfolio (sector), DG and unit identities, roles and decision-making behaviour amongst its employees (Trondal *et al*., 2007). Organisational loyalties tend to also lie with units, departments and portfolios, rather than with the Commission as a whole (as is typical for such specialisation).

ii) The Commission's second horizontal principle of organisation is that of *process* – such as administration, legal service, personnel service, etc. While built as freestanding DGs, they oversee the internal functioning of the entire Commission and thereby work *across* sectoral cleavages. For all purposes, this principle – by encouraging horizontal integration of functional departments – "disintegrates" the principle of purpose (Trondal *et al*., 2007: 12) and activates both *departmental* and *epistemic logics* of decision-making behaviour. This leads to activation not omly of departmental, but also *epistemic* (i.e. independent expert) identities, roles and behaviour. Nonetheless, this principle can – due to its 'bridging quality' – at times evoke loyalty also towards the Commission as a whole.

iii) Finally, the principle of *territory* is also discernable in the Commission's formal organisation. However, due to its *indirectness* (i.e. through recruitment of *de facto* national officials, both on temporary basis – such as SNEs – and permanent basis – such as Administrator, Cabinets and Commissioners), this principle is secondary to those of purpose and process. Nonetheless, it can – arguably – open the departmental-epistemic axis of behavioural logics to the influences of territorially defined (i.e. *national* and *supranational*) logics. This can send "ambivalent signals to Commission's officials" (Hooghe, 1997: 105) about which behaviour is 'appropriate'; especially when affiliation to the Commission is ambiguous (i.e. as for SNEs, who have simultaneous affiliation both to the Commission and their domestic administration; cf. infra). Moreover, apart from blurring the primary-

secondary structure dichotomy of organisational embeddedness, such multi-logic of behaviour can (potentially) deactivate the "automaticity" trigger (Checkel, 2005: 810) of appropriate roles, thus leaving the official with no (or insufficient and/or unclear) buffers against information overload, which can impair his/her overall performance.

2.2.2. The concept of Secondment

Since the original intention of the first president Jean Monnet was to rely on a seconded, flexible staff of top experts, the High Authority was already in 1952 staffed by numerous SNEs from member-state governments (Duchêne, 1994; Trondal *et al*., 2007). While always a clear minority among Commission's staff, their number has steadily increased over the years and at present constitutes approximately ten percent of the eleven thousand plus workforce of Commission's technocrats (Statistical Bulletin of Commission Staff, 01/2007).

SNEs are recruited to the Commission through a rather opaque process, described as a "submarine approach" (Stevens and Stevens, 2001: 87) or an 'entry through the back door' (Trondal *et al*., 2007). It is the Director, or the Head of unit, of a DG who announces vacancies and, ultimately, also determines the concrete job description (EEA, 2002: 4). While the majority of vacancies are made public by informing the Permanent Representations of EU member-states in Brussels – which passes them on to the relevant national administrations – some are also advertised on the Internet and are open to direct personal initiatives. Interested national officials most often send their applications directly to the recruiting unit, which selects, interviews, and chooses the most suitable candidate (Statskontoret, 2001: 17-34). Upon gaining a secondment contract, SNEs are for its duration released from their domestic duties to work exclusively for the Commission. However, they remain that home administration's permanent (and fully paid) employees and are expected to return there (Commission Decision C (2004) 557).

The concept of secondment is based on a short-term contract (two years, with a possible extension of two more years). Its rules specify that (Commission Decision C (2004) 557):

i) SNEs are to exclusively follow the interest of the Commission and not to accept any tasks or duties from their respective home governments

ii) SNEs neither have the authority to represent the Commission externally nor to enter into any commitment on behalf of the Commission

iii) While the Commission covers some of their expenses, their salaries are in their entirety paid by their home government.

Clearly, the concept of secondment is riddled with ambiguities of multiple institutional affiliations and makes it difficult to unambiguously ascertain the hierarchy of SNEs' organisational memberships (Flora, 1999: 3). The ambiguity leads to a multi-layering of "relevance criteria" (Egeberg, 2004: 4) for 'appropriate' conduct, which leaves SNEs susceptible to four (partially) competing behavioural roles: departmental, epistemic, intergovernmental and supranational. Such 'multi-hattedness' (Trondal, 2006a) could, potentially, also weaken the "automaticity" logic of role enactment (Checkel, 2005), which, in turn, might open the effects of Commission's structures to the influence of strategic optimising by SNEs.

2.3. Dialectic Model of (micro) integration

2.3.1. Operationalisation

The issue of what, and how, shapes actors' decision-making behaviour has been consistently ascribed either to effects of strategic choice *or* socialisation. My thesis, on the other hand, incorporates both effects in a dialectic relationship. To operationalise this model, I apply specific social mechanisms and scope conditions under which their dialecticism will unfold (for a definition of such "mechanisms", see footnote 8). I rely on mechanisms as such models are generally devised to work "at an analytical level below that of a more encompassing theory" (Johnston in Checkel, 2005: 808), which is the only way to avoid the incommensurability issue (cf. supra). Moreover, since they are typically formulated as hypotheses, they offer more detailed explanations, which – in turn – increase theory's credibility.

More specifically, I model dialecticism of structure and agency by relying on formulation of hypotheses that invoke social mechanisms characteristic of selected theories of action: *i) social influence* (theory of rational, i.e. consequential, action) (Trondal, 1999) and *ii) role-playing* (theory of bounded-rational/'practical' action) (ibid).

i) Mechanism of strategic action

I choose to define the agential mechanism of strategic calculation as (an adequate amount of) *social influence*, attained by adopting (Commission) specific decision-making behaviour. This mechanism does not envisage any internalisation of (Commission's) norms and values for adoption of 'appropriate' behaviour. Instead, agents adopt such behaviour on the strength of their strategic calculation of social influence, identified by them as directly attainable from adopting such behaviour (Johnston, 2005). Generally, social influence is operationalised as various social rewards (e.g., respect, status, career advancement, etc.) and punishments (e.g., shaming and/or shunning 'on the job', lack of promotion, etc.) (Johnston, 2001; Schimmelfennig, 2002). Specifically for the purpose of my model, I measure social influence as SNEs' *career advancement possibilities* and *gaining professional (Commission-wide) contact network* (both social rewards) and *interruption* or *loss* of SNEs' *domestic career advancement* and *the reduction* or *loss of domestic professional contacts* (both social punishments).

ii) Mechanisms of structural socialisation

To account for effects of structural socialisation, I choose the mechanism of *role-playing*, which, according to organisation theory, leads actors to enact organisationally specific 'appropriate' roles and 'appropriate' behaviour. In view of the fact that the Commission is formally organised along the principles of *purpose*, *process* and *territory*, each with corresponding "relevance criteria" for role expectations (Egeberg, 2004: 4), SNEs are guided to act *departmentally* (as a representative of the unit and/or DG they are working for), *epistemically* (as an independent expert), *nationally* (his/her government's representative) and *supranationally* (representative of the Commission as a whole). Consequently, the operationalisation of role-playing (social) mechanism within my model includes four (ideational) behavioural roles: *epistemic, sectoral, national* and *supranational*.

Note that, in keeping with Elster's notion of the individual as 'multiple self', the actual behaviour invoked by these roles need not be constrained to one role. Indeed, by viewing individuals as capable of evoking several, partially contending roles either sequentially (Cyert and March, 1992), or/and simultaneously (March 1994), it explicitly adheres to the notion of their 'multi-hattedness' (Trondal, 2006a).

2.3.2. Formulation of Principal Hypothesis

As previously explained, rather than modelling SNEs' decision-making behaviour as shaped either by:

i) Strategic evaluation of social influence gained from 'behaving appropriately' according to Commission's norms and values (i.e. Rational Choice Hypothesis RCH: *Adopting Commission-specific decision-making behaviour increases SNEs' chances of furthering their post-secondment career and gaining useful Commission-wide contact networks*), or

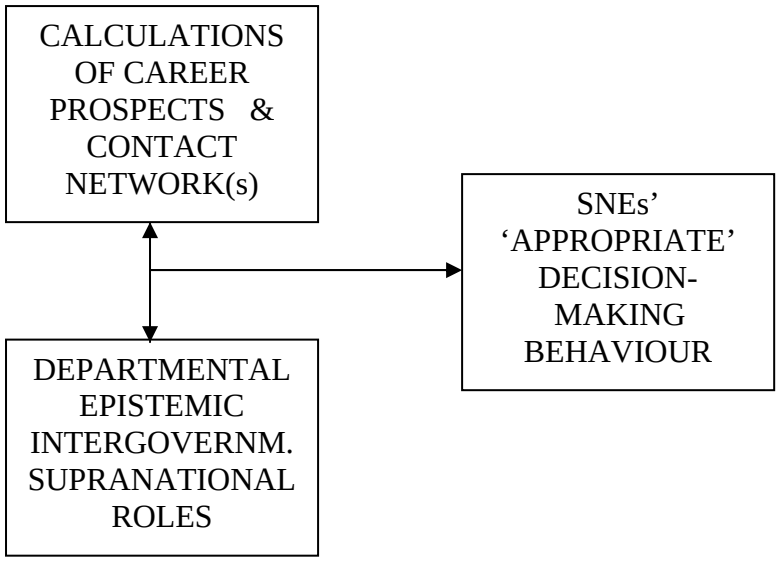
ii) Socialising effects of organisationally-borne behavioural role expectations (Organisational Hypothesis OH: *During their secondment, SNEs' decision-making behaviour is shaped by Commission's behavioural role expectations, designed to provide simplifying shortcuts, cues and buffers necessary for making 'appropriate' decisions),*

my model sees it as ensuing from a mutually influencing relationship of both above-mentioned social mechanisms. Hence – and by invocation of 'both/and' logic of analysis – I formulate thesis' main (synthesised) hypothesis (SH):

SH: ***During their secondment to the Commission, SNEs' decision-making behaviour is fostered by dialecticism of Commission's organisationally-borne role expectations and SNEs' strategic calculation of social influence.***

For the purpose of its conceptual clarity, and to alleviate its unavoidable formulational complexity, I offer its visual rendition in Figure 2a.[20]

Fig. 2a: ***SNEs' Decision-making Behaviour: Dialectic of Commission's Behavioural Role Expectations and SNEs' Calculation of Social Influence***



2.3.3. Scope Conditions – Calibration

To further calibrate my thesis' model, it is necessary to consider those scope conditions under which it can be argued that effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations (upon SNEs' behaviour) are, on the one hand, so strong as to eclipse SNEs' strategic calculation of social influence (accruable from adopting such behaviour), but, on the other hand, so porous as to admit that optimising. In other words, although *both* social mechanisms (i.e. role-playing and strategic optimising) are argued to be at work all the time, the degree to which each matters will vary depending on certain scope conditions. These thus define the placement along the *continuum* between both mechanisms (in this sense, as mentioned, my model reflects Hoffman's tenet of institutional continua; cf. supra). Guided by the relevant organisational literature (Gulick, 1937; Johnson 1987; Cyert and March, 1992; March, 1994; Egeberg, 1999a, 2006; Egeberg and Trondal, 1997; Trondal, 2006a, b), and as already

[20] Since my model conceptualises decision-making behaviour as resulting from dialecticism of *both* agential *and* structural mechanisms, it is, per definition, synthetic in its character. Hence, formulation of the above SH hypothesis is incompatible with the *ceteris-paribus* rule (or 'all else equal') that guides the traditional construction of hypotheses.

introduced in the *First Aim* in the Section 1.4. (p. 7), I calibrate my dialectic model to include the following scope conditions:

(1) Organisational design features (effects of *compatibility* and *recency* of organisational structures, i.e. primary and secondary embeddedness during the secondment)
(2) Domestic variables (effects of *education* and *chronological primacy* of organisational structures, i.e. between primary and secondary affiliation in time)
(3) Current Exposure (effects of *intensity* and *noviceness*).

I justify this selection by arguing that the element of (bounded) rationality, which delineates the dynamics of action in all of these, accounts equally for influence of both strategic *and* role-playing social mechanisms.

(1.) Organisational design features

The organisation theory perspective specifies that rules and roles of who does what, when and how within an organisation are given by the particular structural design of that organisation (March, 1994; Egeberg, 2001; see also footnote 17). Since different organisations can have different structures and hence also different behavioural role expectations, the structural variable is of paramount importance when analysing how (and why) SNEs during their secondment to the Commission adapt their behaviour from home- to Commission-relevant. Importantly, organisation theory distinguishes between two main types of structures, *primary* and *secondary*, which can be ranked according to their respective importance for actors' behavioural adaptation. Specifically, it is believed that the primary organisational structures – i.e. those of the main employer – are much more "demanding" (e.g., people are expected to spend most of their working time there) than the secondary ones (these usually engage people only part-time) (Egeberg, 2004: 6). Consequently, the impact of primary structures upon identities, roles and behaviour is considered much more profound than of those that are secondary. However, during SNEs' secondment to the Commission, 'primary' and 'secondary' structures become blurred, since they are full-time employees of *both* structures simultaneously.[21] As a result, the socialising influence of Commission' behavioural role expectations can, at best, be curtailed and, at worst, eclipsed by SNEs' strategic evaluation of their 'usefulness' to attain social influence.

[21] Commission: full-time measured *in work time* versus home administration: full time *in pay*.

(1.i.) Based on SNEs' affiliational ambiguity, I choose to calibrate the guiding hypothesis for the *compatibility of* Commission and domestic administrative *structures*.[22] Indeed, to detect any structure-driven (re)socialisation, the literature expounds that structures must be adequately incompatible (hence have different behavioural role expectations) (Egeberg, 2001, 2004). It follows then that the more compatible both structures are, the less likely there will be any re-socialisation (Egeberg, 2004; Johnston, 2005; Zürn and Checkel, 2005). Applied to the present setting, this entails that the compatibility[23] of structures across Commission and SNEs' domestic administrations reduces the likelihood of Commission re-socialisation[24] (Egeberg, 2004; Johnston, 2005; Zürn and Checkel, 2005). In that case, strategic optimising is likely to be the more decisive effect (relative to role-playing) in explaining any observed behavioural adaptation in SNEs. Reversely, SNE behavioural adaptation is likely to derive more from role-playing (relative to strategic optimising) when incompatibility between organisational structures of Commission and SNEs' domestic affiliation is greater. Consequently, I hypothesise that:

SH1: Increased incompatibility of Commission and SNEs' domestic organisational structures strengthens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon SNE decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

(*1.ii*) The principle of *organisational recency* holds that embeddedness into *current* structures defines agents' identities, roles and decision-making behaviour and overrides any (pre)socialisation from previous embeddedness. This derives from organisation theory, which maintains that identities, roles and decision-making behaviour are relatively easy to mould and re-mould (Egeberg, 1994, 2004; Trondal, 1999). This thus dictates that the current primary structures re-socialise employees and *de facto* generate replacement of previous roles of behaviour. However, the effect of recency pre-supposes an unambiguous primary and secondary affiliation. Due to SNEs' affiliational ambiguity, there is no such clear *temporal*

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[22] Naturally, controlling for *compatibility* of primary and secondary structures becomes relevant only if both of these structures are designed along the same principle. Only if primary and secondary organisational structures are designed to fulfil the same function, their (in)compatibility can be analysed.

[23] Note however, that this comparison of structures is not based on a factual account of their (in)compatibility. Rather, it is based on SNEs' *subjective* perceptions, thus making it a subjective, not an objective measure.

[24] One can also argue that such structural compatibility can be deliberately relied upon when designing the Commission, in order to sustain and underpin previously appropriated behavioural roles. This could be, for example, an interesting argument when explaining the saliency of SNEs' behaviour as independent experts or representatives of the given department/portfolio, rather than the Commission as a whole (see Chapter Four).

separation. As a result, the influence of current socialising structures might be curtailed, and/or contaminated by previous ones and can, ultimately, also be conductive to SNEs' strategic evaluation of social influence (derived from adopting such behaviour). Nonetheless, it remains possible to measure the influence of '*recency*' for SNE re-socialisation by investigating the degree of 'autonomy' from the domestic administration during SNEs secondment to the Commission. Indeed, the more autonomous (or separated) SNEs are from their home administration, the stronger Commission's role expectations can be expected to shape SNEs' decision-making behaviour (relative to the influence of strategic optimising of social influence). When, on the other hand, SNEs retain close ties to their home administration, any behavioural adaptation to the Commission's 'appropriate' behaviour is more likely to derive from strategic optimising (with a weaker influence of role-playing). Hence, I hypothesise that:

SH2: Greater autonomy of SNEs from their domestic organisation strengthens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

(2.) *Domestic variables*:

A crucial element in socialisation research generally – and, I argue, of particular importance within my study of SNEs' (re)socialisation within the Commission – is the extent and type of *domestic* pre-socialisation. Socialisation theories argue that the pace, process and outcome of socialisation inside the current environment is affected by socialisation within the previous environment (Hooghe, 2005; Johnston, 2005; Lewis, 2005). Hence, since SNEs enter the Commission "pre-packed" with "images and attitudes acquired over the years" in domestic educational and professional settings (Egeberg, 2004: 7), any (re)socialisation effectuated during their secondment might well be impacted by them. Consequently, I calibrate my model to control for the effects of *education* and *chronological organisational primacy*, and argue that both influence the strength of Commission's socialising powers to such extent as to open them to SNEs' calculation of social influence, derived from behaving 'appropriately'.

(*2.i*) To account for the effects of *education*, I argue that people's first and most intense period of socialisation occurs in institutions of education (Johnston, 2005; Zürn and Checkel, 2005). Hence, education can indicate whether – and how – particular SNEs will be led during their secondment into adopting Commission-preferred behaviour. For example, the nature and institution(s) of SNEs' education give them access to professional "enclaves" within the

Commission (Egeberg, 2004: 8). This might not only facilitate the adoption of Commission-specific behaviour, but can also assist SNEs in strategic creation of a valuable contact-network. In other words, education can supply SNEs with initial socialising and strategic 'short cuts', instrumental either for SNEs' socialisation into, or their strategic evaluation of, Commission's behavioural role expectations. Crucial, however, is whether or not the education 'moulds' SNEs in line with European – or Commission – identities, roles and loyalties, or national ones. Hence, in accounting for the effects of SNEs' education, I hypothesise that:

SH3: More 'Europeanised' education of SNEs strengthens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa for more 'national' education of SNEs.

(*2.ii*) Additionally, I argue that the temporal, or *chronological*, aspect of affiliational primacy plays an important role. For the *current* primary structures (i.e. second in chronological time) to extend such re-socialising powers as to eclipse pre-socialisation effects of *previous* primary structures (i.e. first in chronological time), requires consistency of its effects over time. The *length of embeddedness* within both structures is thus crucial (Egeberg, 2004). Specifically, the longer the actor's full and continuous affiliation to previous (primary) structures, the 'stickier' those behavioural role expectations – and the more difficult will it be to 'dislodge' them and affect re-socialisation. Ultimately, any *present* process of shaping actor's decision-making behaviour will then be – at best – open to, or – at worst – driven by, strategic calculation of social influence derived from it.

Applying this argument to the setting of my thesis, it can be argued that *only if* SNEs' prior primary (i.e. domestic) affiliation was *less than four* consecutive years[25] it could be expected that SNEs' 'appropriate' behaviour will be primarily shaped by structure-driven (re)socialisation. The effect of strategic calculation, though present, will be less salient. Otherwise (i.e. longer embeddedness in previous primary structures), SNEs' 'appropriate' behaviour is likely to be driven more strongly by their optimising of 'logic of appropriateness' (Johnston, 2005). Consequently, I hypothesise that:

[25] Four years is the maximum length of any secondment contract (Commission Decision C (2004) 557).

SH4: Longer previous embeddedness of SNEs in their domestic organisation weakens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

(3) Current Exposure:

Last, but not least, I calibrate my model by the influence of *current exposure*, which is of crucial importance for the assessment of current behavioural shifts among socialisees (Egeberg *et al*., 2003; Beyers, 2005; Hooghe, 2005; Lewis, 2005; Trondal, 2006a). There are several 'exposure effects' that could be applicable for my model: length, intensity, noviceness, etc. However, given that length of secondment is restricted by Commission regulation (cf. supra), I select *intensity* and *noviceness* for the purpose of my model. These two, importantly, are also directly connected to the previous discussions of SNEs' organisational affiliations.

(3.i) While there is a general 'length versus intensity' debate amongst scholars, I argue that only *intensity* has relevance in the assessment of current exposure effects on SNEs' socialisation. The reason, as mentioned, is that the time spent working in the Commission (i.e. max. four years) is not long enough for its role expectations to maximise their effects upon SNEs' behaviour and curtail their strategic optimising of them. Hence, it is the *intensity of interaction* with one's closest colleagues, of immersion into organisational life, and the importance of organisation-wide contacts on (and for) individual's everyday performance that is the salient issue within the analysis of structural effects upon SNEs' decision-making behaviour. That is, should SNEs feel isolated, lonely and/or 'on the side-lines' while working in the Commission, any adoption of Commission-relevant decision-making behaviour will more likely be the result of SNEs' strategic evaluation of, rather than due to, Commission's behavioural role expectations (i.e. role-playing). On the other hand, when SNEs have intense contacts with Commission co-workers, the effect of Commission's behavioural role expectations is likely to gain importance relative to strategic optimising. Consequently, I hypothesise that:

SH5: Less intense contacts of SNEs with Commission co-workers weakens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

(3.ii) Lastly, the scope condition of *noviceness* is – as all previous ones – intrinsically connected to conditions of structural compatibility and socialisation. Appearing 'competent' to colleagues and superiors in the unit, DG, Commission is paramount. Being a 'novice' – or having *no* "relevance criteria" to draw upon (i.e. being a true 'tabula rasa'; Inayatullah and Blaney, 1996; Trondal, 1999) – can lead organisational members to be particularly responsive to effects of 'the' behavioural role expectations, and lower their awareness of social influence, accruable from such behaviour. Specifically for SNEs, I argue that Commission's behavioural role expectations are most likely to have decisive effects on shaping (while limiting the optimising of) behaviour of those SNEs, who are 'novices' in the sense that they entered the Commission without public administration experience – and thus were not (domestically) 'pre-socialised' in the national government's structures.[26] It is thus expected that upon joining the Commission, these SNEs will be – to camouflage their noviceness – more ready to mimic permanent officials' behaviour. Consequently, they will be more susceptible to the effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations.

In relation, note also that Europeanist scholars analysing this exposure effect (e.g., Hooghe, 2005) observed that it often comes as a combined effect with *youth*. My empirical data include information from SNEs who fit at least one of those characteristics – i.e. either coming to the Commission without public administration experience and/or being young (e.g., two out of three British SNEs I interviewed were so-called 'fast-trackers', and under thirty years of age).[27] Hence, I hypothesise that:

SH6: Noviceness of SNEs strengthens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

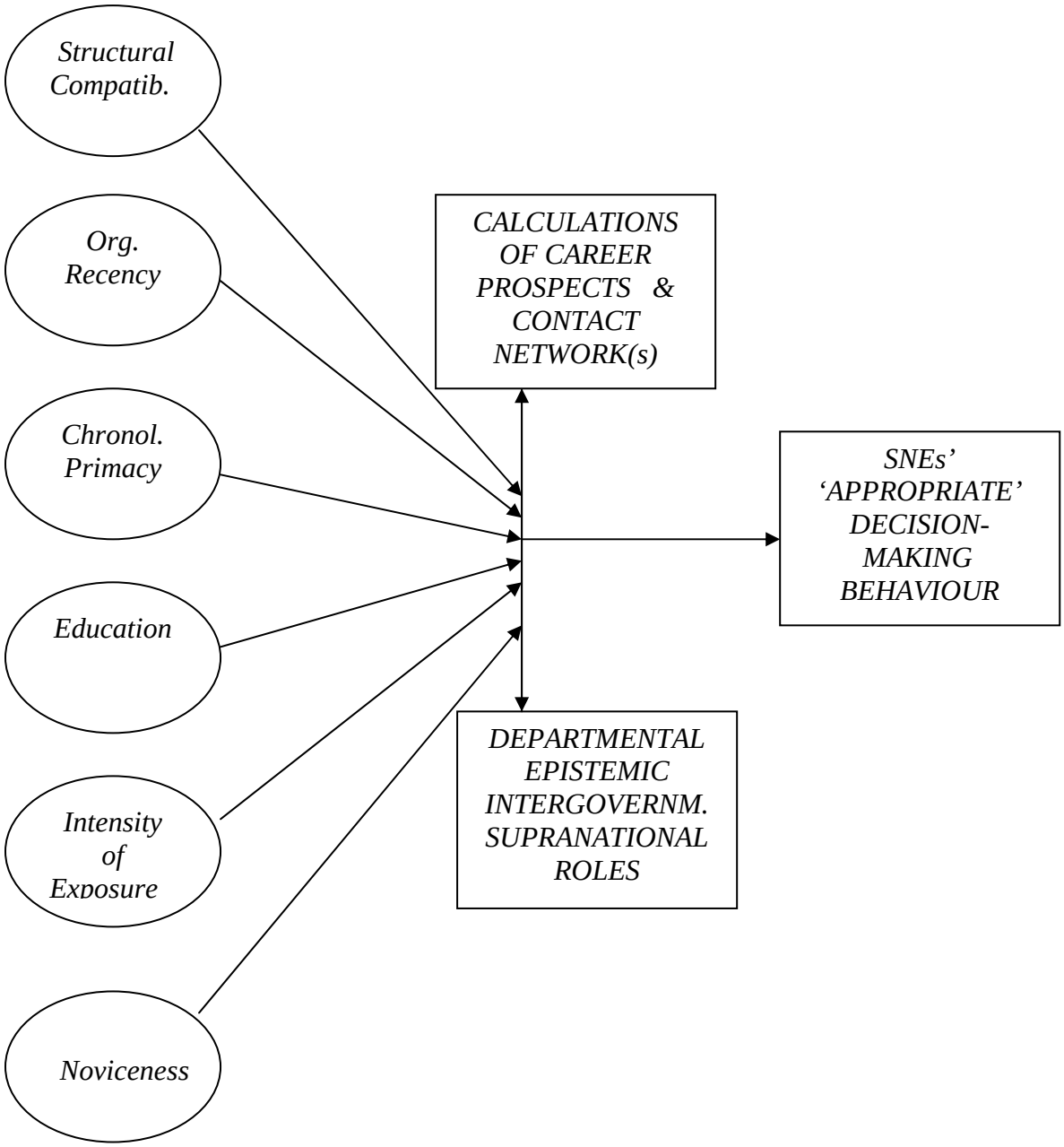
[26] Note that, apart from structural noviceness, SNEs could be exposed also to *'cultural'* noviceness – pertaining the meeting of two contending administrative cultures (e.g., differences between 'French' and 'Northern-European' bureaucracies) – upon their secondment to the Commission.

[27] 'Fast-track'–programme has been created by the British civil service to recruit young, talented and highly educated individuals into civil service (by passing stringent entrance examinations, not unlike those of EU's *Concour*s). There they are submitted to a demanding cross-sectoral 'apprenticeship', devised to 'groom' them for fast career advancement into the civil service highest echelons.

2.4. Visual Rendition of the Model

Since the complete model of processes shaping SNEs' behaviour is fairly complicated, I present its visual rendition in Figure 2.

FIG. 2: ***SNEs' Decision-making Behaviour: Dialectic Model Calibrated by Selected Scope Conditions***



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

While Chapter One of my thesis deals with the contextualisation and formulation of my thesis' research question and Chapter Two offers a comprehensive account of theoretical apparatus (from the discussion of applied theories to the operationalisation and formulation of guiding hypotheses), the present Chapter Three addresses and defends its methodological (or study design) features.

This firstly concerns the approach taken in developing the theoretical framework and the problem of commensurability with respect to the various theories I bring together (discussed in Section 3.1). This section also includes a discussion on the general subject of verification versus falsification, as deriving from the both/and approach taken in the theoretical framework and having relevance for my thesis' empirical analysis. Then, secondly, I turn to methodological issues relevant for testing the theoretically derived hypotheses and determining their robustness (Section 3.2). This section first of all deals with the overall empirical strategy (i.e. the choice for qualitative rather than quantitative research methods and its external and internal validity), subsequently reviews the process of sample selection (i.e. the reasons for – and methods of – case selection and the potential problem of self-selection) and, finally, discusses the important issue of causality (versus correlation).

3.1. Study Design at Theory-level

Traditional theoretical models of norm internalisation build on a single underlying framework (usually rationalist or socio-constructivist). This 'uni-theoretical' approach, per definition, excludes (potentially important) elements lying outside the chosen framework, ultimately leaving the researcher(s) to work with an "underspecified theoretical apparatus" (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1072). As more extensively elaborated in Chapter Two, my thesis's argumentation advances, on the other hand, a *multi-faceted* understanding of norm internalisation processes. This notion relies on combination of two institutionalist approaches

(rational choice (RCI) and organisation theory) under analytical application of 'both/and' logic.

While this multi-theoretical approach directly responds to the calls of institutional scholars for bridging the "methodological void" between these schools (Jupille *et al*., 2003; Checkel, 2005; Johnson, 2005; Zürn and Checkel, 2005), two crucial methodological issues need to be addressed before any bridging may be considered. *First*, it requires that theories can be fruitfully brought together (i.e. commensurability problem). *Second*, it entails determination of the "model of theoretical dialogue" (i.e. sequencing, subsumption, competitive testing or domain of application; cf. Jupille *et al*., 2003: 19-24).

With respect to the *first* point – i.e. commensurability – the divide between RCI and organisation theory is certainly real at the level of epistemology and ontology. Nevertheless, if regarded pragmatically as analytical tools, rather than substantive theories, they exhibit adequate amount of overlapping and complementarities to warrant their integration (Jupille *et al*., 2003; Checkel, 2003a; Jupille, 2005; Zürn and Checkel, 2005). Consequently, it ought to be possible to circumnavigate their epistemological and ontological divide and test them empirically by operationalising the theoretical argument via determination of social mechanisms (i.e. identifying basic elements that link different social phenomena together) and specifying scope conditions (or "applicability bounds", King *et al*., 1994: 101) for when certain social dynamics are more likely to materialize than others. Such mechanism-driven accounts of norm internalisation are specifically devised to work "at an analytical level below that of a more encompassing theory" (Johnson in Checkel, 2005: 808). Moreover, they are, in principle, "quite compatible with different social theories of action" (Mayntz in Checkel, 2005: 808). Note also that – in line with the common practice of mechanism-based approaches – the model is formulated as hypotheses. This has been argued to offer more detailed explanations, which – in turn – increases the theory's credibility (Johnson in Checkel, 2005: 808).

However, there exist many possible social mechanisms, distinguishable in four major groups: rational choice, cognitive, integrative, and interactive (all of which provide different dynamics and 'outcomes' as regards the construction of identities, role conceptions and modes of acting; Trondal, 1999). Including (if possible) all of them – while certainly leading to a model of internalisation that is very close to its "common-sense understanding" (Zürn and

Checkel, 2005: 1045) – would make my theoretical model *too complicated and opaque*, my *theory lacking parsimony* and rendering *empirical validation extremely arduous*. Consequently, it would be advisable to invoke "Ockham's razor"-principle[28] of theoretical parsimony (Moore, 2001) in order to eliminate mechanisms irrelevant for my argumentation. Specifically, my theoretical model includes two types of mechanisms: *rational* and *cognitive*/*integrative*.[29] This choice followed from the fact that they rely on different logics (strategic and bounded-rational/appropriate) to trigger them off, and thus address and explain different parts of the (hypothesised) dynamics of adoption of 'appropriate' behavior. At the same time, however, as more extensively discussed in Chapter Two and above, their underlying theoretical models (i.e. RCI and organization theory) have sufficient overlap to allow for the construction of an integrative model.[30]

Regarding the *second* methodological point – i.e. the "model of theoretical dialogue" – I execute a limited, two-step[31] version of the "*incorporative*" approach (Jupille *et al*., 2003: 25), based on identification of such group of scope conditions, as is understood to demarcate the "applicability bounds" (King *et al*., 1994: 101) of the new, 'incorporated' theory, created to explain the hypothesised dialecticism (of its causal mechanisms). This follows recent suggestions in the EU literature by, amongst others, March and Olsen (1998), Aspinwall and Schneider (2000) and Checkel (2001b), and has been argued to be profitable when we are attempting to ground claims of one theory into the foundation of other (Jupille *et al*., 2003), as is the case of my model (since I ground rationalist claims within the institutionalist foundation of socialisation into identity and/or roles of behaviour). Consequently, selected upon the understanding that these are inherently conducive to both (strategic and bounded/appropriate) rationalities of behavioural action, I argue that *compatibility*, *recency* and *chronological*

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[28] Ockham's (or Occam's) razor principle, attributed to the 14th-century English scholastic philosopher William of Ockham, states that "in explaining a thing no more assumptions should be made than are necessary" (OED, 2002: 1972).

[29] Due to the fact that the 'socialisation' effects of my model juxtapose two (partially competing) sets of cognitive scripts, its operationalisation must take into account not only cognitive, but also *integrative*, effects of its socialisation mechanisms.

[30] Even though literature maintains that (even a small degree of) logic of appropriateness within a hypothesized model can present methodological challenges for generation of exclusive and testable hypotheses (Peters, 1999), leading to (potential) subsequent analytical difficulties (Yin, 2003), I nonetheless believe that the analytical richness of effects modeled also on (a degree) of (limited) appropriateness balances out methodological difficulties tied with establishing its empirical validation.

[31] As delineated in the theretical chapter of this thesis, model's 'two-step' incorporation involves first the incorporation of Goffman's sociological concepts of social environment and 'manipulation and morality' into the rational choice institutionalism to account for calculations of social benefits, and second the incorporation of the modified rational choice mechanism and socio-institutionalist account of role-induced decisional behaviour.

primacy of organisational structures, *education*, and the *intensity* and *noviceness* (of exposure) are the relevant scope conditions to delineate the applicability of such incorporative synthesis.[32]

Finally, it is important to point out that the (methodological) choice to follow a limited *incorporation approach* has direct implications with regard to the possibilities of, and strategies for, assessing the empirical validity (and robustness) of my theoretical model.[33] That is, by drawing on multiple theories and limiting the validity of thus constructed theoretical models to a range of specific scope conditions, Popper's notion of *falsification* (Fetzer, 1993) is preferable to that of verification, since it identifies the "applicability bounds" of theories in question (King *et al*., 1994: 101). Still, it is clear that I here understand falsification more in terms of Lakatos' (1970) pragmatic reading of Popper's tenet. Posited concisely, Lakatos (1970) argues that in testing the relative validity of a theory, empirical observations contradicting its expected patterns do not invalidate it in its entirety, but rather identify particular *scope conditions* under which this theory may be valid (Motterlini, 1999; italics added). Hence, complete verification or falsification of model's synthesized theory thus is not intended in my analysis. Rather, I rely on conditional validity (or *partial falsification*). Even though uncovering the conditional validity of hypothesized dialecticism (between specified social mechanisms) may allow only for partial falsification of the synthesized theory, application of this weak notion of falsification ought to still be acceptable for critical testing of theories within social sciences. The reason, following Elster (1989), is that the mere existence and applicability of general laws are difficult to detect within social life and that statements regarding general and universal validity might thus well be untenable. Given this impossibility to proclaim universal validity, Elster (1989) further argues that only *conditional validity (or partial refutation) is possible*.

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[32] Theoretical implications of such 'incorporation', concerning the problems of absorption of 'weaker' theories are discussed in the appropriate section of theoretical Chapter Two.

[33] Contemporary studies of the European Union show a bias towards validation of theoretical arguments by verification rather than falsification. That is, scholars systematically attempt to support, i.e. verify, their theoretical argument, rather than make an extensive effort to test various theoretical approaches' relative validity – i.e. falsify them (Trondal, 2001; Jupille *et al*., 2003; Jupille, 2005; Keeler, 2005). Despite this bias towards verification, testing by falsification is often presented as a more viable alternative, because it "derives from the logical impossibility of verifying general arguments on the basis of verifying singular arguments" (Hovi and Rasch, 1996). Indeed, one can wonder how many supportive tests are sufficient to 'accept' a theory (cf. King *et al*., 1994).

3.2 Study Design at Empirical Level

Although the core contribution of this project involves development of a new (bridge-building) theoretical framework to analyse the (micro) processes of integration, once such framework is developed, it should be subjected to empirical testing (King *et al*., 1994). Still, a complete test of a *dialectic* model of the kind presented here requires extensive statistical data, which were beyond the reach of this thesis. Hence, I will merely provide a limited-sample *empirical illustration* of predictions deriving from the theoretical model. This is performed using data concerning Seconded National Experts (SNEs) in the European Commission. More specifically, the empirical analysis – carried out in Chapter Four – tackles the question of what shapes SNE decision-making behaviour during secondment in the Commission: i.e. the interaction (rather than singularity) of strategic action *and* role-play. In discussing the empirical approach below, I first describe the data and method of analysis (i.e. *qualitative embedded single-case case-study* research design, using *semi-structured interviews* and *text analysis*). Then, I explain the reasons to concentrate on SNEs in the Commission (including reflections on potential *self-selection*, *non-random* and *non-representative sampling*, together with *internal* and *external validity*). Finally, I consider the more technical, but crucial, issue of *causality* (versus correlation).

3.2.1 Method of analysis

My empirical analysis is of a predominantly *qualitative* nature. That is, it "relies on verbal (as opposed to symbolic or mathematical) presentation and primarily (though not exclusively) on non-numerical data" (Jupille, 2005: 214; see also King *et al*., 1994; Bryman, 2004). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches clearly have their merits – and stumbling blocks (for a discussion, see King *et al*., 1994; Bryman, 2004: 75-79 and Bryman, 2004: 279-288). Neither, however, is intrinsically superior to the other as regards the basic goal of any scientific research, which is "to make descriptive or explanatory inferences" (King *et al*., 1994: 7; Van Evera, 1997). The reasons why I focus on qualitative research methods in the present analysis are threefold.

i) While my theoretical model clearly motivates and structures the design and data of the subsequent empirical analysis, one of *the* crucial purposes of that empirical work *is to further develop the theory*, which is a characteristic feature of most qualitative research (Bryman, 2004: 266). That is, further "theoretical elaboration [is to] emerge out of the data collection" and analysis (Bryman, 2004: 287).

ii) The research subject – i.e. the micro-processes of norm internalisation – is not readily conducive to quantification or transfer into numbers amenable to statistical analysis. Indeed, my preoccupation concerns the '*process*' of socialisation. Such emphasis on "social life in terms of processes" is predominantly addressed by qualitative research (Bryman, 2004: 281).

iii) The *interaction* of social mechanisms studied here has not been subject to extensive empirical scrutiny before. This, on the one hand, necessitates sufficient flexibility in the research design to accommodate (minor) modifications and extensions of the research focus. Qualitative research is often deemed more flexible and amenable to changes of focus throughout the research (Bryman, 2004: 282-283). On the other hand, the relative lack of prior research implies that the present analysis can also be seen as a *limited-case pilot-study*, in which the detailed, in-depth nature of qualitative research (Bryman, 2004: 287) is essential. Later research can then build upon my data, findings and interpretations to, if desired, generate fully structured survey questionnaires or other, more quantitative research designs.[34]

The *main* tool employed in the analysis is *text analysis* of transcripts of *semi-structured* interviews with thirteen current Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, British and Polish SNEs in the European Commission (for reasons and methods of case selection, see below). The interviews, for which field-work occurred in the period March/April 2007, were semi-structured to allow for flexibility in terms of the interview guide, while at the same time maintaining sufficient influence on the topics discussed (Bryman, 2004). Additional, complementary topics raised by the interviewees throughout the interviews could thus be incorporated in later interviews and become an integral part of the study and its findings. Hence, rather than be rigid and fully pre-determined in terms of interview structure, the interviews were of a discursive and open-ended nature, albeit guided by the (pre-determined, though flexible) inventory of elements to be discussed. This naturally implies that not all topics are covered in the same order in all interviews, and that some topics may be covered

[34] This obviously does not imply that I believe there is a hierarchy in research designs with qualitative research of necessity being 'preliminary' to quantitative studies (as is all too commonly assumed; see Jupille, 2005). This should, however, not negate the fact that in-depth qualitative research can provide crucial information and insights to develop more structured, quantitative research designs amenable to large-N studies.

more extensively in some interviews compared to others.[35] All interviews were conducted face-to-face (with one exception, which was conducted via telephone due to time constraints and work-related travel of the interviewee at the time of the interview), as facial expressions and general body language may provide important *additional* information (impossible to obtain through telephone or online interviews) (Bryman, 2004: 477-478). Finally, all thirteen were conducted, recorded and transcribed by myself, such that inter-interviewer (and inter-transcriber) variability was not an issue.

This primary data source of thirteen self-conducted interviews was extended with a *secondary source* consisting of two elements. Firstly, I was able to use *transcripts* of further thirteen interviews of Norwegian and Swedish SNEs, conducted in 2004-2005 by Profs. Jarle Trondal and Torbjörn Larsson.[36] Secondly, I had access to three previous papers on SNE socialisation by Prof. Trondal (i.e. Trondal, 2006a, 2007; Trondal *et al*., 2007). As a consequence, I *triangulate* three sets of empirical sources (both primary and secondary), encompassing interviews (both secondary – Trondal and Larsson, 2004-2005 – and my own) and survey data (derived from Trondal, 2006a, 2007). Ultimately, the current use of these various data-sources thus also invokes a *multi-approach design* and triangulation of methods. This follows the suggestion that the use of various methodological approaches to study social phenomena is a necessity if we are to "understand the rapidly changing social world" (King *et al*., 1994: 5-6). This benefit of multi-methodological work holds all the more in socialisation research (Checkel, 2005a; Jupille, 2005).

3.2.2 Case selection

The empirical analysis, as mentioned, concentrates on the decision-making behaviour of a specific group of technocrats in the European Commission (i.e. national experts, seconded there on temporary contracts). This effectively implies a double choice. On the one hand, I look at the European Commission rather than (a set of) other international institutions. On the

[35] Some topics may even fall off the table altogether in certain interviews. The reason is that respondents should be left to talk freely whenever possible and abrupt shifts of attention to broach a new topic ideally are to be avoided. Hence, the interviewer should keep careful stock of what has been discussed, and what remains to be discussed. This is preferably done mentally since, for example, ticking items off on a list not only distracts respondents, but might also create the impression that 'all has been said on this topic'.

[36] While similarly concerned with issues of SNE socialisation, this data was, nonetheless, collected from a somewhat different research focus (i.e. influence of organisational structures). Consequently, the resulting data has slightly reduced applicability, which – if not employed with care – can decrease the internal validity of the study. However, since its main purpose is providing a test of robustness for my primary data, I argue this justifies its inclusion.

other hand, I focus on SNEs rather than permanent officials. Both choices need to be defended.

Although it has been argued that selection of one single case for analysis is often less than ideal and rarely allows for general inferences (King *et al*., 1994), I concentrate exclusively on integration of SNEs in the *European Commission*. This choice is driven by the fact that the European Union (EU) – and especially the European Commission – constitutes a '*best-case*' situation. Indeed, since socialising effects of structure upon actors' properties and decision-making behaviour are borne only in environments defined by a high density of institutionalisation (Checkel, 2005a; Johnston, 2005; Trondal, 2006a), this singles out the European Commission as the 'best-case' situation when analysing international organisations. The Commission – vested as it is with key initialising powers and the "authority to select and groom its employees with minimal national interference" – elicits "strong reasons to expect (…) international socialisation to be effective" (Hooghe, 2005: 862). Moreover, being the administrative apparatus of the EU, this level of governance exhibits a multitude of intervening characteristics (such as, for example, multi-culturalism, multi-linguism and multi-level system of governance), which makes it less likely for civil servants to retain their 'domestic' identities, role conceptions and modes of acting. While a 'most-likely' case such as the Commission provides a weak test for verification of a theory, it provides a strong case for falsification (if a theory fails when being confronted with the 'most-likely' case, it is unlikely to deserve further scrutiny; King *et al*., 1994). As such, analysing the European Commission as the 'most-likely' case provides valuable information (Eckstein, 1975; Yin, 2003), especially given my focus on (partial) falsification (cf. supra). I therefore follow this convention in the previous literature and concentrate on socialisation in the European Commission.

Unlike most previous work, however, I analyse the behaviour of *national experts seconded* to the European Commission on *temporary contracts*.[37] These have, surprisingly, received little attention in the socialisation and Europeanisation literature (for exceptions, see Trondal, 2006a, 2007; Trondal *et al*., 2007). Nonetheless, SNEs have a number of defining features that make them highly interesting for socialisation research:

[37] By taking multiple SNEs up in the analysis, my empirical analysis can be defined as an embedded *single case study* (Yin, 2003: 40, my italics).

i) SNEs – by the nature of secondment contracts – are only *temporarily* (maximum four years) detached to an (European) institution. This is important since the intensity (as well as length and/or quality) of 'exposure' is often seen as a crucial determinant of socialisation (e.g., Hooghe, 2005; Lewis, 2005; Trondal, 2006a).

ii) During their secondment, SNEs should "carry out their duties and behave solely with the interest of the Commission in mind" (Commission rules for SNEs, 2004; Art. 7:1), while they "continue to be paid by their employer" (ibid; Art. 1:2). SNEs thus have an "ambiguous organisational embeddedness" (Trondal, 2006a: 156). Crucially for my purpose, this questions the possibility of supplanting one (national) role by another (supranational) role, since it implies that the SNEs have to simultaneously navigate between two sets of role-expectations (which can (arguably) allow for a degree of rationality in evaluating one against the other under specific contexts).

iii) SNEs – should they wish to return to their home institution after their secondment – have to be taken back by this institution at a rank at least equal to the one they had upon leaving on secondment.

iv) SNEs are a ten-percent minority of Commission's 11.263 policy-making administrators (Statistical Bulletin on Commission Staff, 01/07).

v) SNEs do not have the same powers as permanent European staff (cf. Trondal, 2006a).[38]

The first three characteristics make SNEs '*least-likely'* cases for behavioural adaptation – providing a harsh test for structural effects (that is, if one observes the 'appropriate' behaviour within *this* group, it provides strong evidence in favour of Commission's socialising influence (cf. Eckstein, 1975; King *et al*., 1994; Yin, 2003). The latter two elements, however, leave SNEs susceptible to considerable social pressure (even policing) by the Commission to conform to its normative structures (as any benefits of their posting are, arguably, attributable

[38] For example, they are not allowed to sign financial decisions, nor should they represent the Commission on an official basis without the presence of a permanent member of staff (though the enforcement of the latter rule can in practice be, sometimes, left to an individual Head's of Unit judgement).

to their ability and will to conform). This, in turn, entails that *both* role-playing *and* strategic action can be stimulated. Since the theoretical model is structured to look at the *interplay* between these two social mechanisms, SNEs are, thereby, a perfect test case for it. Moreover, the duality and temporarity of their embeddedness is central to testing whether supranational institutions unambiguously eclipse the effects of prior domestic socialization, i.e. whether re-socialisation is singularly triggered off by the effects of Commission's organisational structures (as argued in Haas, 1958; Egeberg and Trondal, 1997; Laffan, 1998; Egeberg, 1999b), or whether they are porous enough to allow for effects of strategic optimizing (of 'appropriate' behaviour). Hence, my focus on SNEs is justified in the empirical illustration of my theoretical model. Moreover, focusing on their behaviour is thus also in compliance with required internal validity of my overall research design.[39]

The initial aim was to gather data by interviewing twelve SNEs of possibly *varying nationality* and *length-of-stay* within the Commission. Although twelve respondents were deemed the minimum number necessary to achieve reliable results (note that I also had access to a secondary data source with thirteen additional respondents; cf. supra), more interviews were unfeasible due to time and resource constraints. Moreover, for practical reasons concerning travel and interview location, potential respondents needed to be stationed in Brussels.[40] Bringing together these twelve respondents was, however, made significantly more difficult by the absence of a complete list of SNEs to be addressed. That is, while a complete list of all current SNEs exists and is maintained by CLENAD (the organisation defending the rights of SNEs), this list is not public. This first of all makes it very difficult to gain access to SNEs and acquire their cooperation. Secondly, it implies that, while information is publicly available on the size of the SNE population (cf. supra), no information on the characteristics of this population (for example, in terms of the distribution of SNEs over nationalities, DGs, gender, and so on) is available. As a consequence, whatever sample is finally constructed, it is impossible to gauge whether or not this constitutes a representative sample of the total SNE population. I discuss the consequences of this problem for the external validity and generality of my study below.

[39] Nonetheless, the basic tenets of the theoretical model should be equally supported among permanent staff of the Commission (or other international institutions for that matter).

[40] By design, some DGs, such as DG SANCO, EAC or ADMIN, etc, have offices also in Luxemburg.

Given that a complete list of SNEs thus was not available, individual respondents in my study were selected via a *snowballing* routine using two separate routes.

i) I emailed a letter with a plea for participation in a scientific study (see Appendix 2) to twenty-four Scandinavian SNEs (currently – i.e. march 2007) seconded to the Commission through the EFTA organisation. I compiled this list from names available on the official EFTA website. I received fifteen responses (response rate of 62,5 percent) in total. Interestingly, it included a positive response from *all* nine (hence response rate of 100 percent) Norwegian SNEs (which, perhaps, suggests an initial manifestation of *self-selection bias* toward 'helping one of us'). The remaining five offers came from three Swedish and two Islandic SNEs. Unfortunately, there were no responses from Finnish SNEs. While the response rate for Islanders was 100 percent (cross-checked on a later point with the Islandic embassy in Brussels), the response rate for Swedish SNEs wasn't possible to establish due to the fact that SNEs' e-mail addresses do not indicate nationalities (hence out of thirteen remaining SNEs on my original name list, it was not possible – apart from the obviously Finnish names – to establish who is Swedish, and who is of Finnish, nationality). From the total pool of fifteen positive responses, I selected four Norwegian respondents stationed in Brussels (their stay ranging from six months to three years). Both Icelanders and one Swedish SNEs, unfortunately, were stationed in Luxemburg rather than Brussels and thus could not be retained in the sample. I accepted offers from both remaining, Brussels-based, Swedish SNEs (first, and last, semester in the initial two-year contract). In the next step, all fifteen respondents were then asked whether they had any SNE-colleagues of other than Scandinavian nationality and whether it would be possible to obtain their contact details. This generated the name and contact details of two French SNEs who never answered my request, and one Dutch SNE (of Irish origin). This person was subsequently contacted and agreed to both participate in the study, and to provide two additional names of Dutch SNEs. Both were, in turn, contacted and agreed to participate (thus an overall 'Dutch' response rate of 100 percent; however – as with the Norwegian sample – (arguably) susceptible to self-selection bias).

ii) To complete my sample, I needed further three names. Therefore I contacted the permanent missions of all twenty-five remaining member-states plus Iceland (the Dutch and Swedish Permanent Missions were not contacted as I was at that time attempting to include SNEs of other nationalities than those already in the sample), requesting information and, if possible, contact details of SNEs of their respective nationalities. This led to response from six missions: French, British, Polish, Rumanian, Bulgarian and Icelandic. The Icelandic embassy offered two names, both of which, however, were of SNEs on my initial EFTA list and stationed in Luxemburg. Bulgarian and Rumanian missions informed me that at the present they do not have any SNEs seconded to the Commission. The Polish mission gave me a list of two names and the British mission forwarded my letter to all UK SNEs. Interestingly, the French Permanent Mission, on the other hand, first requested more information about the study and then unilaterally disregarded my request.[41] None of the other permanent missions acknowledged my request (and hence a very low response rate of 23 percent). Consequently, I contacted both named Polish SNEs (using the letter mentioned above) and one agreed to participate in the study (response rate of 50 percent). I also obtained nine responses from British SNEs (the response rate here is impossible to assess, as I never gained information about the exact number of British SNEs) and selected three of these (again based on their length of stay in the Commission (i.e. eight months, halfway through the initial two-year contract, and nearing the end of the extended period).

The final sample employed thus contains thirteen respondents: four Norwegians, two Swedes, three Dutch, three British, and one Pole.

The method employed to obtain the respondents implies there is a clear *problem of non-random selection* and *non-representativeness of the sample* (Bryman, 2004: 102). This raises obvious concerns about the *external validity* and general nature of the findings of the analysis. However, given the qualitative set-up of the study (cf. supra) and my primary interest in

[41] The French attitude is interesting, since it can be perceived as indicative of the lack of autonomy of French SNEs (which could be, arguably, corroborated by the case of 'non-answers' of the two French SNEs, contacted by me directly). This interpretation was, importantly, later supported by several of my interviewees, who have French SNE-colleagues in their units. This is also consistent with information noted in my secondary source, i.e. in the transcripts of thirteen Scandinavian SNEs, interviewed by Trondal and Larson in 2004-5.

analytical rather than statistical *generalization*, this is not a critical problem (Bryman, 2004: 102). Potentially of larger concern, however, is that there is also an element of *self-selection* in the final sample. Respondents were addressed by letter and then independently decided to either become an informant to the study, or not. It might well be that mainly SNEs at the extremes of the socialisation distribution (i.e. very high or very low socialisation) are more likely to respond to my request – as these are likely to care more about the issue and be more willing to share their experience. It is, however, extremely difficult to ascertain a priori whether this is actually the case (and, if so, which group is most likely to do so). Hence, the effects of such (potential) self-selection problem on the results of my analysis are, *a priori*, hard to predict. Nevertheless, my selection of respondents from the set of candidates did not rely on their (perceived) conformity of behaviour in line with Commission norms and rules (which was unknown to me at the time). As such, selection was unrelated to the central variables of the present study. Potential bias deriving from this self-selection should, however, be closely monitored in the data analysis to ensure reliability of the study.[42]

Finally, it should be mentioned that the majority of selected respondents showed interest in the results of the study. This provides the opportunity to present them an account of my (initial) observations and receive their corroboration or comments. This process of "respondent validation" (Bryman, 2004: 275) gives the possibility to attest the correspondence between my findings and the perspective of the respondents. While not without practical difficulties (e.g., defensive reactions of respondents, reluctance to be critical, and so on), it can provide additional credibility to my findings or provide additional insights.

3.2.3. Causality

According to King *et al*. (1994: 86), "identifying the mechanisms by which a cause has its effect (…) is a very useful operational procedure". This is effectively the ultimate goal of my model: namely, to determine and illustrate a set of causal inferences about micro-level integration (through the specification of social mechanisms; cf. supra). The identification of such "causal mechanisms requires causal inference", which makes the *concept of causality* of vital importance (King *et al*., 1994: 86; Hellevik, 1998; Yin, 2003; Bryman, 2004). The

[42] There is a second potential source of self-selection bias, which refers to individuals' decision to become an SNE. Out of thirteen SNEs in my sample, only one had been head-hunted by the appropriate ministry. The remaining twelve applied either directly to the heads of relevant units, had seen a vacancy on the intranets of their work places or had been informed that such an opening became available. The same occurs in my secondary data source: eight SNEs themselves applied for a position, while only two were asked to apply.

notion of causality – which pertains to establishing causal connections between variables, or those 'cogs and wheels' linking different events together (Elster, 1989) – can be seen as resting upon the proof of proximity in time and space of analysed events (King *et al*., 1994). Depending on the research strategy, the methodological literature identifies two ways of verifying its presence: *i)* statistically – by measuring empirically observable chains of correlations between events, or *ii)* by application of a replication logic on several sufficiently similar cases, which – if all cases turn out as predicted – provides compelling support for the initial set of propositions (Yin, 2003).

Still, proximity in time and space are insufficient to establish proof of "true" causation (that is, correlation may be a *necessary*, but is not a *sufficient* condition for causality). Other concerns pertaining "true" causality must be addressed, such as statistical control for (and elimination of) possible co-variation and spuriousness (i.e. the impact of a third variable on each of the two variables in the analysed relationship), or demand for a rich theoretical framework, necessary to identify scope conditions, under which a particular phenomenon is both *likely*, and *not* likely to be found (Bryman, 2004; Yin, 2003).

Following this line of argument, throughout this thesis, I adhere to the notion of causality as a purely theoretical construct, impossible to observe *with certainty* empirically (Hellevik, 1988; King *et al*., 1994; Jacobsen, 2002; Bryman, 2004). As such, the only way to prove it in empirical analyses is *indirectly*. More specifically, when from a theoretical point of view a phenomenon A can *only* be related to a phenomenon B as 'A causing B' (thus implying the theoretical impossibility of 'B causing A'), then a "persistent statistical correlation (…) [is] strongly indicative of a causal relation of some sort" between A and B (Salmon in Trondal, 2001: 91), and thus ought to be accepted as a weak validation of (theoretically argued) causal inferences.

Given that Elster's (1989) concept of 'cogs and wheels' (linking different events together) is synonymous with the notion of social mechanisms – which are, according to Hedström and Sweberg (1998) "unobservable analytical constructs" – the above argumentation implies that any causal explanation of events linked together by these mechanisms can be validated only theoretically. Thus I argue that the above-mentioned empirical validation method of causality applies also to the causality explanations involving social mechanisms. Consequently, since my thesis aims to illustrate its theoretical causal assumptions regarding to the social

mechanisms' analyses, it has to do so by measuring correlations of chosen variables, and by empirically proving scope conditions under which it is likely (and not likely) to manifest itself.[43]

3.3. Conclusion

By comprehensively discussing the issues of developing a relevant and sound theoretical framework, and of methodological requirements for empirically testing its robustness, I maintain to have touched upon all the necessary requirements for conducting (responsible) scientific research. Consequently, in the following chapter, I conduct an illustrative analysis of empirical data, collected to demonstrate the theoretical answers to thesis' research question:

Can actor's decision-making behaviour within an institution – rather than singularly shaped either by socialising effects of organisational 'role expectations', or through his/her strategic evaluation of them – be better characterised as issuing from their dialecticism?"

[43] Clearly, though, the ultimate goal of the empirical analysis should be validation/refutation of the theoretically derived hypotheses. Given the limited dataset available and the extensive data requirements to test a dialectic model as proposed here (cf. supra), I am constrained to merely illustrate the model.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

How Appropriate is 'Appropriate'?

"*It's a zoo here, a real zoo*" (Interview)

Introduction

SNEs are fully integrated into Commission's structures. Even though only a small minority within its administrative body, they are called upon to supply the necessary professional expertise, often lacking amongst the permanent staff (for discussion, see Trondal *et al*., 2007). As one British SNE succinctly put it: "*Many of the functionaries here said: "You are the only one who is credible here – because you are a SNE – because you are the only one who knows what we should be funding, because you know the country" It was a very positive view; sort of Thank God for the SNEs*" (Interview). Nonetheless, while thus having their worth clearly delineated by their knowledge, SNEs are expected to be, think, and act solely along Commission's ideals and working principles. Since these can (at times) differ from their prior experiences and expectations, how do they adopt such 'appropriate' identities, roles and decision-making behaviour?

My thesis argues that this happens through mutually interacting effects of Commission's role expectations for 'appropriate' behaviour and SNEs' optimising of social influence (derived from such behaviour). The present chapter puts forth an empirical illustration of this argument. However – as mentioned above, and further discussed below – the sample size is much too small to allow for empirical testing of the model. Rather, the following empirical analysis mostly illustrates how one could test such model – as well as it provides a first impression concerning its empirical predictions.

The present Chapter is structured in three main parts. Section 4.1 first illuminates that both constituting factors of my model (i.e. strategic action and role-playing) are actually individually present. Then, Section 4.2 analyses the six calibrated hypotheses, thus illustrating how both social mechanisms interact with one another. Finally, Section 4.3 briefly summarizes and discusses the main findings.

4.1. Social Influence and Socialisation through 'Appropriate' Roles

As traditionally theorised, there are two main rationales for adopting 'appropriate' behaviour: *i*) strategic optimising of costs and benefits (of such behaviour), or *ii)* structural socialisation. My thesis goes one step further and argues that these rationales should be combined rather than singled out. Of crucial importance, however, is to first establish their individual presence and influence upon the processes of actors' behavioural adaptation; only then can I attempt to account for their relationship. Consequently, this section is designed to offer (some) empirical substantiation of both effects.

4.1.1. Mechanism of Strategic Action: Social Influence

"Could this be seen as a career advancement?
It has to be; otherwise what am I doing here?"
(Interview)

In the strictest sense, there is no behaving appropriately for the *homo economicus*. Instead, (s)he adopts the behavioural rules following social or material incentives. Since such behavioural adoption is guided by logic of consequences, it does not require internalisation of norms. *Homo economicus*, per definition, is strategic and self-reflective (Juncos and Pomorska, 2006). In my setting, this implies that SNEs will behave in accordance with Commission's norms and rules after they – at a certain point in time – strategically evaluated the value of such behaviour and decided that benefits outweigh the costs. Consequently, SNEs' strategic optimising (of 'appropriate' behaviour) is operationalised as their seeking of *social influence*. Since this is measured via *i)* career possibilities and *ii)* professional contact networks, the strategic rationale for adoption of Commission-specific behaviour would be *to increase SNEs' chances of furthering their career and gaining useful contact networks* (RC Hypothesis; cf. supra).

i) I found a sound overall support for this mechanism. When investigating the first proxy of *career possibilities*, all thirteen SNEs of my primary sample (100 percent) readily admit that they work in the Commission for professional and career reasons: "*I think it is good for my profile. I need some new experiences on my CV, and I think this would look good*." (Interview) or "*What else? Otherwise what am I doing here?*" (Interview). The same finding transpired in the secondary data set. From thirteen respondents of Profs. Trondal and Larsson available to me, eleven (85 percent) viewed secondment as a good opportunity for

advancement of their careers. A representative answer here was: "*To have three years of international experience on one's CV will help you in one way or other*." Only one respondent was absolutely sure that the secondment would *not* lead to a promotion or career advancement after secondment.

Interestingly, the British SNEs in my primary data source gave the most business-like and direct answers. That is, while most non-British SNEs (i.e. seven out of ten) tried to modify these career views with additional explanations such as *"needed new challenges"*, *"being bored"* or *"not stretched enough"* in their pre-secondment posts, or wanting to also *"know how things are working from the 'other'* [i.e. European] *side"* (Interview), all three British SNEs were unambiguous about the future 'usefulness' of their secondment.[44]

The importance of career prospects to SNEs is further illustrated by the fact that most SNEs complain of a lack of 'home' interest for their experience. Only one third of my primary respondents (four SNEs, or 31 percent), and two of the secondary (15 percent) were satisfied with the interest their home institutions have shown so far – leaving more than three quarters of SNEs in both samples (twenty out of 26, or 77 percent) frustrated: "*It would give me some visibility, but they have no interest in the information I could provide*" (Interview). This is supported also by my textual source (Trondal *et al*., 2007: 19), quoting from a CLENAD report: "According to the study by the staff organisation for SNEs [it] appears that the SNEs often return to vacant posts which have limited relevance to the knowledge and skills gained on the secondment".

Finally, it is of interest to mention that only two of the thirteen SNEs within my primary data set (15 percent) mention losing out on internal promotions while on secondment, while this concern appears not to be voiced at all in the secondary dataset.[45] Their answers could be summarised thus: "*You go abroad and then it's nice in a way, but your career stands still and when you return home you are… everybody is a step further but you return to your old job*" (Interview). Such composition of answers suggests that the hoped-for career possibilities gained from secondment outweigh SNEs' perception of 'normal' promotion possibilities back

[44] This might well reflect the Euro-scepticism both of Great Britain and the British population in general. Moreover, it also testifies to the strong *'business approach'* culture within the British public administration (used by one of the SNEs to explain his view on the perceived deficiencies of the Commission's administration).

[45] A possible explanation might be that, as the interviews in the secondary data-source were conducted with a slightly different research aim, it was simply not included in the (rather concise) transcripts available to me.

home. This interpretation is also supported by SNEs' perceived lack of challenges back home (cf. supra).

ii) Regarding the second proxy **–** *professional and social contact networks* – further support for the social influence mechanism is unveiled. All thirteen SNEs in the primary data source (100 percent) maintain that networks are not only a way of working, but also have future value. When asked about supranational contacts as 'future investment', more than three quarters of interviewees (ten SNEs out of 13, or 78 percent) answered affirmative: "*People are working here to create networks, and a lot of SNEs are going back to their own countries and they set up their own private business, because they have this network*" (Interview), "*When I come back I will have a lot of contacts within the EU institutions, so I would like to be perceived as more important*" (Interview). Similarly, more than half of respondents from the secondary source (seven SNEs or 54 percent) attest the 'future usefulness' of networks One said that: *"Even though many claim that the expertise of SNEs isn't used once they are back, people come home, after all, and can contribute with contacts and such"* (Interview), while a second admitted: *"Yeah, my contact-net had become much bigger; this is one of the plusses in this work. And the contact network doesn't disappear, after all. Not sure yet when I'll go back, but it would be weird not to use them"* (Interview).

The main contacts gained by SNEs are within the respective units and DGs; additionally, they also mention other SNEs and "*field organisations*" (Interview). Intergovernmental contacts are, however, limited and mostly constrained to governments of countries that are not their own. The majority (eight SNEs in my sample; 62 percent) has very little, or no contacts with home, save for that initiated by SNEs themselves: *"I really miss the contacts… you need to know what's going on, really."* (Interview), or *"While in Brussels, I am not sure how will my network survive. I try to keep in touch, but all I get from my boss is "Sorry, I am too busy"* (Interview). This picture of the 'absent' home country thus concurs closely to that drawn above concerning the usefulness of their expertise (though the answers here are not differentiated enough to assess whether, and how many, SNEs see it as disadvantageous to their career). Finally, when discussing their social contacts, it transpires that the main contact line here is along the respective nationalities: "*Mostly Scandinavians and Norwegians. Not other nationalities, not really*" (Interview).

Cross-checking with my textual source, the information both on the *type of supranational* contacts and the *lack of domestic* contacts corroborates with mine. For example, Trondal *et al*. (2007: 20, italics added) note that "most contacts between SNEs and their home administration was a result of the initiatives of the SNEs, partly to allow the organisation to benefit from the experience they were gaining, partly in order not to be forgotten and thus *hoping to boost their career opportunities upon return*".

To conclude, it is obvious that both career *and* contacts are important to SNEs. While, across both datasets, an overwhelming majority of twenty-four out of 26 (or 92 percent) SNEs feel that secondment is beneficial for their careers, two-thirds (seventeen out of 26, or 65 percent) also stipulate the beneficial value of their supranational contacts. Both effects are slightly more prevalent in my primary dataset. Hence, the data clearly illustrate the presence of the mechanism of strategic calculation in SNEs, for whom social influence from secondment is an asset to be striven for and cultivated.

4.1.2. Mechanism of Structural Socialisation: Role-Playing

"Professionally I do what is expected of me"

(Interview)

Homo politicus behaves 'appropriately': either because 'it is right', or because 'that's the way things are done here'. As the introductory quote suggests, it is the latter rationale that stands central to this section (the former refers to Checkel's Type II internalisation, which is left outside my theoretical model; cf. supra). Organisation theory explains that actors, due to their limited cognitive capacities, require the guidance of organisationally specific role expectations to make 'appropriate' decisions (Egeberg, 2004). Inasmuch as the Commission is designed along the principles of *purpose*, *process* and *territory* (cf. supra), SNEs' behaviour will be shaped by the following four (ideational) behavioural roles: *i) departmental* (i.e. SNEs as representatives of their unit and/or DG); *ii) epistemic* (SNEs as independent experts); *iii) national* (SNEs as their government's representatives) and *iv) supranational* (SNEs working for Commission as a whole).[46] These can be measured via four different elements: *loyalty*, *mandate*, *preferences and concerns* and *ethics* (cf. Trondal, 2006a) (See Table 1).

[46] *Departmental Role* entails no politico-administrative control, only "administrative rules and procedures codified in portfolios". *Epistemic Role* has no politico-administrative leadership, only "professional expertise and the educational background, loosely knit to fixed mandates from the Commission *and* the

Table 1: ***Dimension of 'Appropriate' SNE Decision-Making***

Measure	**Departmental Role**	**Epistemic Role**	**National Role**	**Supranational Role**
Loyalty	To Own Portfolio	Discipline (Field of study)	To the Home Government	To The Commission
Mandate	Department and Unit Rules	Professional Discretion	By Home Government	Commission Leadership
Preferences	Dept. Concerns and Preferences	Professional Preferences	Dom. Concerns and Preferences	For the Common Good
Ethics	Departmental Ethics	Professional Ethics	Diplomatic Ethic	Community Ethics

Note: Adapted from Trondal (2006a: 148)

i) When asked about their loyalties while working in the Commission, the answer within my primary dataset was almost evenly split between all four roles (for one SNE, no information about loyalty is available). One third of interviewees (four SNEs; 25 percent) see themselves foremost as experts: "*Yeah, I am a seconded expert; and my loyalty is to my profession*" (Interview). Another four (one third) see themselves as loyal to their DG or unit: "*My loyalty is only to the projects we are doing here at the unit*" (Interview). Five (38 percent) explicitly mention their loyalty to the Commission as a whole: "*I am pretty loyal to the Commission*" (Interview). Finally, three (23 percent) remain loyal to their home-country: "*I mean you sign contract that you will work a hundred percent for the European Commission, which is true, but I get my salary from Norway, so…"* (Interview), *"Nominally, it* [loyalty] *lies with this DG; but my real loyalty lies with the* [British] *Treasury"* (Interview).

Interestingly, in certain cases, SNEs show a 'composite' of loyalties. That is, two SNEs in my primary sample supplement their epistemic loyalty with additional loyalty to portfolio (17 percent), one (8 percent) exhibits both departmental and supranational loyalties and one (8 percent) combines epistemic with supranational loyalties. Such 'composite' understanding of SNEs' loyalties is also observed in my textual source: "We observe an inbuilt conflict between the role as a departmental official ('DG/Unit Representative'), an epistemic official

member-state leadership". *Supranational Role* involves "Commission's politico-administrative leadership" and "strong 'cosmopolitan' identity". *National Role* requires government mandate, territorial identities, preferences and loyalties (Trondal, 2006a: 148).

('Independent Expert') and a supranational official ('Commission representative') among SNEs" (Trondal, 2006a: 156).

The secondary data show a more clear-cut loyalty pattern. An overall majority of SNEs (eight, or 62 percent) claims allegiance to the Commission: "*My loyalty lies here in the Commission"* (Interview). While the modal category in the primary dataset is likewise allegiance to the Commission, the relative strength of this group is thus somewhat more pronounced in the secondary data source. This comes at the cost of departmental and epistemic loyalties, which barely surface in this dataset. Merely one SNE (7 percent) mentions loyalty to the discipline.[47] The perception of being loyal to his/her home administration, on the other hand, shows the same tendency as in the primary dataset. One third of interviewees (four SNEs, or 31 percent) profess allegiance to their home ministries.

ii) The picture of *mandate perceptions* differs significantly from that of *loyalties*. Indeed, in my primary dataset, no respondents mention supranational or national mandates (compared to eight respondents professing such a loyalty; cf. supra). The number of SNEs stating that they work according to their professional judgment equals the number identifying constraints of departmental mandate (seven, or 54 percent, in each case). The great majority of the latter, however, express dissatisfaction with the feeling of being "*micro-managed"* (Interview) by the rules governing the unit and/or department: "*I'm an expert. If you want to use me, don't dump me into all the rules and procedures; that's loosing the time and throwing away my expertise because I'm not an expert in these kinds of things*" (Interview). At the same time, all point out that the leadership style of their Heads (of unit) and Directors is decisive in how these rules are implemented. This fact has also been corroborated by my textual sources (Trondal, 2006a; Trondal *et al*., 2007).

Interestingly, the differences between 'loyalties' and 'mandates' observed above for the primary dataset surface in broadly similar fashion in my secondary dataset. More specifically, in both cases, there is a shift from Commission and national 'loyalties' to more professional

[47] This need not necessarily imply that those allegiances are not present in the sample of SNEs interviewed in the secondary data source. As discussed earlier, I am relying on (rather compressed) transcripts of this secondary source that, at times, don't offer clear-cut information. As a consequence, they are at some points difficult to interpret accurately. This is further aggravated by the multi-lingual character of that data (mixed Swedish, English and Norwegian). Moreover, there may be a case of inter-interviewer (and inter-transcriber) variability at work here in the way the topic is addressed. Hence, the difficulty of accurately operationalising even Type I socialisation (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1045) entails that combining separate datasets – even when concerned with very similar topics – poses serious interpretational challenges.

and departmental 'mandate perceptions' (note that there is one SNE who's mandate could not be unambiguously determined from the compressed transcripts). While one half of the secondary dataset (i.e. six SNEs; 50 percent) follow the Commission's mandate (whereas eight, i.e. almost two-thirds, felt loyalty to it), the number of SNEs acknowledging a professional and departmental mandate (six in either case; or one half) is higher than those indicating professional and departmental loyalties (one and zero respectively). As in the primary dataset, SNEs draw attention to such constraints on their work as "*it's all about process, not substance"* (Interview), the rules are "*too hierarchical"* (Interview), and so on. Finally, while three SNEs (i.e. one quarter) were honest enough to say that its easy for them to follow departmental/professional mandate – because it either coincides with their national strategies, or they work on portfolio of no interest to their home government – no SNE mentioned intensions of being guided by his/her home institution. Such reading is supported also by my textual source (Trondal, 2006a).

iii) With respect to *preferences* and *ethics* the epistemic and departmental values again score highest (in line with the findings for mandates discussed above). Almost two-thirds of my primary dataset (eight SNEs, or 62 percent) say that – when working on their files – they have professional preferences: "*Here is a lot of personal responsibility for the right answer, because there isn't a precise legal basis for that, so you make sure*… [Interviewer: Do what's professionally correct?] …*Yeah, that's it.*" That consideration is closely mirrored by considerations of departmental preferences. Half of the SNEs (seven, or 54 percent) see themselves also as representing the preferences of their units – "*I work here and I would stick to this rule"* (Interview).[48] Additionally, slightly less than one quarter of interviewees (three SNEs; 23 percent) mention that there is a clear understanding amongst the staff regarding the superiority of their DG, which "*obliges to always perform your best"* (Interview). Such 'spirit of superiority' (or an '*elitist* esprit de corps') can be interpreted as an indirect, but clear, manifestation of departmental ethics. Finally, three SNEs (23 percent) – since their portfolios are based on a high interaction with member states – ascertain that they also invoke the 'community' (i.e. the EU) ethics: *"Half of the time you work for the Commission – that's the*

[48] It should be noted that when analysing SNE preferences, it was often very difficult to clearly establish their ranking as answers were typically (in eleven cases, or 85 percent) a variation of: *"I am an expert; professionally I do what is expected of me"* (Interview), or "*I just work as best as I can, and if I get a good result from my regions, then I feel I am doing really well*" (Interview). These, however, do not clearly separate the 'epistemic' from 'departmental' preferences. However, such a 'composite' of preferences is entirely in keeping with the sectoral specialisation.

procedural lot, and the other way is working on the content, and that is Europe" (Interview). None of the SNEs mentioned 'diplomatic' ethics.

My secondary data draws a largely similar picture regarding SNE preferences. More than half of SNEs (seven; 54 percent) sees their preferences as foremost departmental (most often their unit), but they also specify the 'professional' aspect of their preferences. As one Islandic SNE explained: *"It is a mix. It depends on who you are in meeting with. I try to defend the opinion of this unit."* No mention was, again, made of 'domestic concerns and preferences'. Regarding the work ethics, unfortunately, this data does not offer any clear indications, thus I was unable to cross-reference the findings from my primary dataset in this respect.

Finally, one additional information emerged from my primary data: namely, the awareness of many SNEs of the strategic (ab)use of departmental preferences. As one British SNE explains: "*There are real turf wars across DGs, and also every department with DG has vested interests, colliding with each other… This is a real zoo here; a real zoo*." This finding appears to represent a cynical variant of Schattenschneider's (1975: 30) claim that "organization is itself a mobilization of bias in preparation for action".

Overall, evaluating all four dimensions measuring SNEs' 'appropriate' behaviour, it is evident that the most salient roles of behaviour amongst the SNEs are those of an independent (epistemic) expert and of representative of his unit/department: i.e. epistemic and departmental roles. The supranational role (as a representative of the Commission) comes third. Like Trondal (2006a), I thus challenge previous work that stresses national loyalties among SNEs (e.g., Smith, 1973; Smith, 2001). Nonetheless, many SNEs seem to have a composite behavioural role repertoire, which also supports Trondal's (2006a) observation of SNEs' "multi-hattedness".[49] However, two interesting patterns emerge from both my (primary and secondary) datasets. *First*, using preferences, ethics and mandates as measures to gauge appropriate behaviour leads to comparable findings in terms of SNEs' identification. Hence, one could view these three as tapping into one underlying dimension (i.e. 'work identity').[50] Second, while at the level of *loyalties* territorial elements appear to play a (weakly) dominant role relative to epistemic and departmental issues, the reverse is true at the

[49] Interestingly, according to all but one SNEs in my sample (i.e. 92 percent), they have no problems to navigate both their private opinions on European Union and the affiliational ambiguity characterising their secondment, and clearly state "*While with the Commission, I work for the Commission"* (Interview).

[50] For this reason, I will also analyse them jointly in the remainder of the analysis.

level of *mandates*, *preferences* and *ethics* (or 'work identity'). Hence, it appears that the 'epistemic' role and perception of oneself is more salient in behavioural action while the (supra)national role often becomes more prominent when it concerns individuals' loyalties.

One potential explanation for this divergence could lie in SNEs' (ambiguous) dual embeddedness and the (partial) difference between the organisational structure of Commission and national governments. Indeed, the Commission is – just as national governments – built (chiefly) along principles of *purpose* and *process* (cf. Gulick, 1937). Hence, the formal structure of the Commission along these dimensions is highly compatible to that of the domestic institutions. This could imply that the epistemic and departmental behavioural roles guiding SNEs' behaviour remain largely unchallenged across these levels of governance. Hence, in terms of their work identity, they stay who they are (after all, they were hired as 'experts' on specific public policy issues). However, where both structures do differ is in the presence of the principle of territoriality, which is discernable only in the Commission. While this does not affect SNEs' 'work identity' – as experts in a given policy area – it can open for tensions along the territorial axis. From an agent-driven perspective (cf. Goffman, 1959, 1982), this could lead to SNEs' realignment to such 'frames' as have centrality and salience within their closest organisational context (and, being all policy experts in give field, this can only be the territorial axis).

4.2. Behaviour as Dialecticism of Role-Play and Social Influence

"It takes more or less a year to know how the rules are, but then, if I go back, then people say: "Can you work for me?"
(Interview)

The previous section illustrated that SNEs' decision-making behaviour is, indeed, under influence of *both* social mechanisms enclosed in my synthetic theoretical model. Social influence is a powerful incentive for national experts in the Commission. However, SNEs also enact Commission's 'appropriate' roles (as independent experts, representatives of their respective units and DGs and as supranational agents). These findings are in close correspondence with previous literature (e.g., Schimmelfennig, 2003, 2005; Trondal, 2006; Trondal *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, having illustrated the presence of both mechanisms, it is

clear that traditional, uni-theoretical accounts of behavioural adaptation exclude important elements lying outside their chosen framework. Thus, they, by definition, constrain scholars to use what Zürn and Checkel (2005: 1072) call an "underspecified theoretical apparatus".

This thesis proposes to redress this problem by providing a synthetic theoretical approach specifying the relation between both logics of action as dialectic – i.e. both mechanisms mutually interact and their *combined* effects shape SNEs' behaviour (see Chapter Two). The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to the empirical illustration of the hypothesised dialecticism. SNEs' actual behaviour in the Commission will, under my model, ultimately, be both strategic *and* appropriate and – in similar spirit to Hoffman's tenet of institutional continua (cf. supra) – be positioned along a *continuum* between "structural entrepreneur" and "structural idiot" (Checkel, 2003b: 11). As more extensively discussed in the theoretical Chapter Two, the relative strength of each mechanism varies depending on a number of scope conditions: *Organisational design features*, *Domestic variables* and *Exposure effects*. In the following six subsections, each scope condition will be briefly discussed, before the resulting hypothesis is confronted with the data.

Before I turn to the analysis itself, a few brief notes on the methodology and the scope of the analysis are required. Ultimately, I need to establish whether or not SNEs specific to a given scope condition (e.g., those autonomous from domestic institutions) differ in the importance they give to career and contacts relative to the Commission's behavioural role expectations from those that do not meet the criteria stipulated under that same scope condition. This would illustrate that both social mechanisms are at work, and differ in their relative strength under those respective conditions. Nonetheless, as this information is not directly observable, I am compelled to evaluate whether certain 'types' of SNEs (described by the scope conditions analysed) are, for example, more or less likely to state that their secondment is an important step in their career, or for building (inter)national contacts (i.e. strategic optimising of 'appropriate' behaviour). When/if these answers are indicative of actual behaviour (and the strength of the underlying perceptions), this will allow me to illustrate my six calibrated hypotheses.[51]

[51] Note also that we dichotomise our central variables. That is, either an SNE cares about his/her career and contacts, or not. The same holds for the conditions stipulated under our main scope conditions. For example, either an SNE is autonomous from his domestic organisation, or not (more details on how these variables are operationalised is given when discussing the respective hypotheses). This obviously leads to

Two final comments are required. *First*, given the limited size of the primary dataset, I merge both my primary and secondary data sources. Despite the potential problems it entails due to the slightly different research question addressed in the secondary dataset (cf. supra), this allows me to analyse twice as many SNEs (twenty-six rather than thirteen). Even so, the results from the analysis below cannot be seen as validating or refuting the theoretical model presented. Instead, they should be seen as *i)* illustrative of the basic methodological set-up required to test the model and *ii)* give some preliminary indications as to its performance. Second, it is important to repeat here that the Commission is – just as national governments – built along principles of *purpose* and *process* (cf. Gulick, 1937). As a result, the epistemic and departmental roles are largely 'comparable' across both institutions and not likely to be overly challenged when an SNE enters the Commission. This, however, is not the case for the territorial principle, which is only present in the Commission. Realignment of loyalties thus is most likely to take place on the territorial dimension (or can be expected to be most salient there).

4.2.1. Compatibility of structures

Different organisations can have different structures and hence also different behavioural role expectations. Following the literature, any structure-driven (re)socialisation is likely to depend on structures being adequately incompatible (Egeberg, 2001, 2004). Hence, I hypothesised that:

SH1: Increased incompatibility of Commission and SNEs' domestic organisational structures strengthens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon SNE decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

I thereby operationalise (in)compatibility of Commission and domestic institutions via the SNE's perception whether or not it took a long time to adjust to Commission way of working. When the SNE perceived such a 'clash of cultures', the domestic and Commission institutions are considered to be incompatible, and vice versa. Note that the analysis thus is based on the perceptions of the SNEs, rather than a factual analysis of the structures themselves. The results of this analysis using loyalty to measure 'appropriate' behaviour are summarized in

rudimentary measures – with associated inferential problems – but the limited size of the dataset does not allow me to look in more detail at the variation in the variables used to assess the model.

Column (2) of Table 2 in Appendix Four. The results when using 'work identity' are given in Column (2) of Table 3 in Appendix Five.

Starting in the bottom row of Column (2) in Table 2 (Table 3 has the same structure, and should thus be read similarly to Table 2), it can be seen that there are seventeen SNEs in the sample that perceived Commission structures as incompatible with their domestic institutions, and six that viewed both structures as compatible (no information was available for the remaining three SNEs). All other rows in Table 2 display how many SNEs in each of these two groups agree to the importance of both social influence proxies (i.e. the top two rows) and how many SNEs in each group feel a loyalty to each of the four behavioural roles (i.e. the next four rows) (clearly, in Table 3, these four rows display the number of SNEs whose preferences, mandate and ethics are linked to a given role). To clarify the reading of the table, I offer two examples. The "17 / 6" marked in the top row of Column (2) in Table 2 illustrates that all seventeen SNEs viewing the structures of Commission and domestic institutions as compatible (termed 'compatible' SNEs hereafter) as well as all six SNEs who viewed Commission and domestic structures as incompatible (termed 'incompatible' SNEs hereafter) agree that career motivations are very important for their stay as SNE in the Commission. The "12 / 4" in the second row implies that twelve 'compatible' and four 'incompatible' SNEs deem the construction of a contact network an asset of their secondment. The remaining rows in both tables have a similar interpretation for the four behavioural roles (i.e. where SNEs' loyalties or work identities lie, respectively, in Tables 2 and 3).

The results indicate that all SNEs testify to strong career motivations, while 'compatible' SNEs are only marginally less likely to attach high importance to building a network (four out of 6, or two thirds, versus twelve out of 17, i.e. 71 percent). In terms of loyalties, Table 2 illustrates that 'incompatible' SNEs are slightly more likely to have epistemic (four out of 17, or 24 percent, versus one out of 6, i.e. 17 percent for 'compatible' SNEs) and national (six out of 17, i.e. 35 percent, versus one out of 6, i.e. 17 percent, for 'compatible' SNEs) loyalties, while no differences occur for supranational and departmental loyalties. In terms of 'work identification', Table 3 likewise indicates few and, at best, marginal differences between both 'types' of SNEs, although 'incompatible' SNEs are marginally more likely to have a supranational work identification than 'compatible' ones (four out of 17, i.e. 24 percent, versus one out of 6, i.e.17 percent).

Given the near-marginal size of the differences (and the small sample size of one of the categories), *I therefore cannot confirm that perceived compatibility of structures is a scope condition driving the relative strength of strategic optimising and role-playing*. It might clearly be argued that this non-finding may (partially) derive from relying on SNEs' perceptions regarding the structural compatibility, rather than the factual analysis of those structures.

4.2.2. Organisational recency (SNE autonomy from domestic institutions)

Organisation theory holds that current primary structures generate replacement of previous roles of behaviour (Egeberg, 1994, 2004; Trondal, 1999). Still, due to SNEs affiliational ambiguity, the clear *temporal* separation of primary and secondary affiliation required to produce such effects is absent. Still, one might argue that this separation is clearer the more autonomous (or separated) SNEs' are from their home administration. Hence, I hypothesised that:

SH2: Greater autonomy of SNEs from their domestic organisation strengthens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

I measure autonomy by asking whether or not SNEs have frequent contacts with their home institution (as indicated by the SNEs themselves during the interviews). The results are summarized in Column (3) of Table 2 in Appendix Four (when using loyalty) and Column (3) of Table 3 in Appendix Five (when using 'work identity').

I first of all find that both 'types' of SNEs (i.e. autonomous and connected) confirm strong career motivations, and are almost equally likely to attach high importance to building a network (eleven out of 17; 65 percent, versus six out of 9, i.e. two thirds). However, unlike the previous analysis of structural compatibility, stronger differences now do occur when I shift attention to role-playing rather than strategic optimising of social influence. Indeed, in terms of loyalties, Table 2 illustrates that 'autonomous' SNEs are much more likely to have supranational loyalties (eleven out of 17; 65 percent, versus two out of 9; 22 percent for 'connected' SNEs) and much less likely to have national loyalties (three out of 17; 18 percent, versus four out of 9; 44 percent, for 'connected' SNEs). Also, 'connected' SNEs are almost three times as likely to have epistemic loyalty compared to 'autonomous' SNEs (one third versus 12 percent), while they are slightly less likely to have a departmental loyalty (11

percent versus 18 percent). The latter finding is confirmed when measuring appropriate SNE behaviour via their professed 'work identities' in Table 3. Indeed, seven out of 17 'autonomous' SNEs (i.e. 41 percent) claim to have an epistemic work identity, whereas this is the case for two-thirds (i.e. six out of 9) of the 'connected' SNEs. The order is reversed when looking at departmental work identities: two out of 9 'connected' SNEs (or 22 percent) versus nine out of 17 (or 53 percent) 'autonomous' SNEs. No effect is in Table 3 observed along the territorial axis.

These results are broadly in line with SH2. The more autonomous SNEs are from their domestic institutions (i.e. the fewer contacts they have with the domestic organisation), the more likely it is that they realign along the territorial axis. The Commission's role expectations concerning SNEs' decision-making behaviour along the territorial dimension thus appear to weigh stronger for 'autonomous' SNEs, compared to 'connected' SNEs. Despite this difference, both groups *are* calculating since career and contacts are deemed crucially important by both. *Hence, the relative importance of role-play and strategic optimising of social influence appears to differ across both groups*. Compared to 'connected' SNEs, 'autonomous' SNEs are closer to the 'role-playing' end of the hypothesised continuum between both mechanisms (consistent with SH2).

4.2.3. Education

Education is often regarded as people's first and most intense period of socialisation (Johnston, 2005; Zürn and Checkel, 2005). Hence, the nature and institution(s) of SNEs' education can be thought to provide with them the tools instrumental either for socialisation into, or strategic evaluation of, Commission's behavioural role expectations. As it is crucial whether or not the education 'moulds' SNEs in line with European – or Commission – identities, roles and loyalties, or national ones, I hypothesised:

SH3: More 'Europeanised' education of SNEs strengthens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa for more 'national' education of SNEs.

I measure 'national' versus 'European' education as a simple dichotomous variable. It is set equal to 'national' when the SNE did not have any education abroad, while it is 'European'

when the SNE had at least part of his/her education abroad.[52] The results are summarized in Column (4) of Table 2 in Appendix Four (when relying on 'loyalty') and Column (4) of Table 3 in Appendix Five (when using 'work identity'). Note that my secondary dataset was very sparse in terms of the information concerning respondents' education. As it could often not be established what and where respondents have studied, the number of observations here is significantly smaller than in the remaining analyses.

Looking at strategic behaviour first, it can be seen that the results are somewhat mixed. While slightly more 'European'-educated SNEs care about the benefits of secondment for their career (compared to 'national'-educated ones), the reverse appears to hold for the importance attached to building up contact networks while in the Commission. Interestingly, however, we once again observe noticeable differences when analysing SNEs loyalties in the bottom part of Table 2. That is, 'European'-educated SNEs are much more likely to have supranational loyalties (two-thirds, or 6 out of 9, versus one third, or 3 out of 9, for 'national'-educated SNEs) and much less likely to have national loyalties (one out of 9, or 11 percent, versus three out of 9, i.e. one third, for 'national'-educated SNEs). Epistemic and departmental loyalties are both more also likely for 'European'-educated SNEs. Table 3 shows that there are no observable differences between both 'types' of SNEs regarding their work identification.

Overall, it appears that the more 'European' SNEs' education, the stronger the Commission's role expectations concerning SNEs' supranational roles weigh – and the more likely it is that realignment along the territorial axis takes place. Still, as before, both European-educated and national-educated SNEs *are* strongly calculating in their behaviour (i.e. career and contacts remain crucially important to both groups). This suggests that the relative importance of role-playing and strategic optimising differs depending on where SNEs had their education. *Compared to 'national'-educated SNEs, 'European'-educated SNEs are closer to the 'role-playing' end of the hypothesised continuum between both mechanisms. The basic direction of these results thus is supportive of hypothesis SH3.*

[52] One of my Dutch SNEs was of Irish origin and moved to the Netherlands after his secondary education. Hence, as his higher education was in the Netherlands, he is categorised as 'European' education.

4.2.4. Chronological primacy

Longer full and continuous affiliation to institutional structures makes the related behavioural role expectations 'stickier' and more difficult to 'dislodge' and affect re-socialisation (Egeberg, 2004). Undoing and/or eclipsing pre-socialisation effects of previous primary structures (i.e. first in chronological time) thus requires consistency over time of the effects of current primary structures (i.e. second in chronological time). In effect, the relative length of embeddedness within both structures is a crucial factor (Egeberg, 2004). Consequently, I hypothesised that:

SH4: Longer previous embeddedness of SNEs in their domestic organisation weakens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

Since the secondment contracts to the Commission are at most four years long (cf. supra), I define this period of time as the cut-off between SNEs with strong and weak previous embeddedness. That is, SNEs are deemed to have a strong prior primary (i.e. domestic) embeddedness when they have held the post in their domestic institution for at least four consecutive years, while those with strictly shorter domestic affiliations are deemed to have a weak(er) prior primary embeddedness. The results are summarized in Column (5) of Table 2 in Appendix Four (when relying on loyalty) and Column (5) of Table 3 in Appendix Five (when using 'work identity').

It can first of all be observed that SNEs with more than four years of previous embeddedness ('previously embedded' SNEs henceforth) are more forceful in stating the importance of secondment for their future career and contact network. More specifically, all thirteen 'previously embedded' SNEs care about secondment as a career move (versus eight out of 10, or 80 percent, of 'non-embedded' SNEs) and nine regard the development of contact networks as crucial (i.e. 69 percent, versus 6 out of 10, or 60 percent, of 'non-embedded' SNEs). With regard to their loyalties, 'previously embedded' SNEs seem to align themselves more on the territorial axis than 'non-embedded' SNEs. Specifically, eight and four 'previously embedded' SNEs (i.e. 62 percent and 31 percent respectively) identify themselves as having a supranational or national loyalty, while the corresponding numbers of 'non-embedded' SNEs are four and two respectively (i.e. 40 percent and 20 percent). Moving to Table 3, the reverse appears to hold when analysing SNEs' work identity. In this case, 'previously embedded' SNEs mostly profess an epistemic or departmental identity, and only

one asserts a supranational work identity. In comparison, four out of ten 'non-embedded' SNEs claim to have a supranational work identity. Also, in both tables, it is obvious that 'non-embedded' SNEs are much more evenly distributed across work identities and loyalties than 'previously embedded' SNEs.

These findings are intuitively logical when one considers that both the Commission and national governments are primarily built along principles of *purpose* and *process*. Hence, SNEs with a long history in their domestic administration easily find their way and, in terms of their work identity, stay who they are (i.e. experts in a given policy field). SNEs lacking such previous experience face more unfamiliar constraints and are less likely to have a clearly shaped work identity as yet. However, the principle of territoriality is specific to the Commission. As a consequence, 'previously embedded' SNEs are likely to face tension only along this axis. Given their strongly established work identity as experts within a specific public policy field, realignment can thus only take place for loyalties, and along the territorial axis.

In conclusion, the territorial axis (both supranational *and* national loyalty) appears to more strongly influence 'previously embedded' SNEs compared to 'non-embedded' SNEs. However, given that the results also show that they are more likely to care about strategic incentives related to secondment, this may indicate that they are strategically using their awareness of the saliency of the territorial factor in the way they think best serves their purpose. In that sense, it is enlightening to see that half of the 'previously embedded' SNEs with a supranational loyalty had 'European' education while a quarter had a 'national' education; half of the 'previously embedded' SNEs with a national loyalty had 'national' education while only a quarter had a 'European' education.[53] *Assuming that education discloses information on SNEs' 'aim in life', this further corroborates with the fact that 'previously embedded' SNEs appear to be more actively engaging in "impression management" (cf. Goffman, 1959, see also Schimmelfennig, 2002) – in line with SH4.*

4.2.5. Intensity of contacts with Commission co-workers

Given the limited time of secondment, intensity of interaction with one's closest colleagues is likely to be more important than length of contact for potential structural effects upon SNEs'

[53] No information concerning the education of the other SNEs in this group is available.

loyalties, identities and decision-making behaviour. Only if SNEs are sufficiently immersed in the Commission's organisational life are its role expectations likely to maximise their effects upon SNEs' behaviour and curtail SNEs' strategic optimising of them. Consequently, I hypothesised that:

SH5: Less intense contacts of SNEs with Commission co-workers weakens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

The intensity of contacts between SNEs and Commission's permanent staff is measured by the extent to which the SNE feels isolated, lonely and/or 'on the side-lines' while working in the Commission. More precisely, I dichotomise the perception of contacts into SNEs with contacts and SNEs feeling lonely. The results are brought together in Column (6) of Table 2 in Appendix Four (when relying on 'loyalty' to measure SNE appropriate behaviour) and Column (6) of Table 3 in Appendix Five (when using 'work identity').

Opening the discussion of the findings, as before, with the importance attached to career and contact networks, there is very little difference between both groups of SNEs. For both 'types', nearly all SNEs state that the potential of career improvement and the development of a contact network are crucially important parts of their time in the Commission. In general, the same observation can be made regarding the loyalties and work identities that are expressed in both groups of SNEs. The differences between SNEs with and without intense contact to Commission co-workers are, at best, marginal. *I therefore cannot confirm that intensity of contact is a scope condition driving the relative strength of strategic optimising and role-playing.* However, similarly with the compatibility of structures condition (cf. Section 4.2.1), one possible explanation might be the reliance on SNEs' (subjective) perceptions of the intensity of their contacts, rather than their actual contacts.

4.2.6. Noviceness

The sixth and final scope condition identified in my theoretical model is noviceness. Being new in a given setting implies one has no 'relevance criteria' to draw upon (Johnston, 2005), which can increase susceptibility to effects of 'the' behavioural role expectations while lowering awareness of social influence (accruable from such behaviour). Hence, I hypothesised that:

SH6: Noviceness of SNEs strengthens effects of Commission's behavioural role expectations upon their decision-making behaviour relative to strategic calculations of social influence, derived from that behaviour – and vice versa.

I take into account two criteria to determine SNEs' noviceness. First, SNEs are considered novices when they arrive in the Commission without (or very little) public administration experience. Second, they are considered novices when they are young (cf. Hooghe, 2005) (i.e. under 30 years of age). My empirical data include information from nine SNEs who fit at least one of those characteristics. The results are given in Column (7) of Table 2 in Appendix Four (when relying on 'loyalty') and Column (7) of Table 3 in Appendix Five (when using 'work identity').

Examining the top two columns of Tables 2 and 3, it can be seen that SNEs are almost equally likely to see secondment as crucial for their future careers. A stronger divergence, however, occurs when we look at the importance attached to contact networks. 'Novices' are almost twice as likely to highly value such contact networks than those that arrive to the Commission with (extensive) public administration experience ('old hands' henceforth) (seven out of 9, i.e. 78 percent, versus seven out of 15, or 47 percent). This difference may, however, reflect that a significant share of 'novices' in the sample is young "fast-trackers". These are, almost by definition, highly career-minded and still very eager to develop a contact-network to further their later career.

Turning to the bottom half of Table 2, most 'novices' identify themselves by their epistemic (five out of nine, or 56 percent) or supranational loyalty (three out of nine, or one third). Very few of them profess national or departmental loyalties. For 'old hands', the picture is very different. Very few of these admit to an epistemic or departmental loyalty, but rather seem to align themselves along the territorial axis (with 60 percent and 40 percent stating a supranational or national loyalty respectively). Turning to Table 3, it transpires that, much like in the case of chronological primacy (cf. section 4.2.4.), the reverse appears to hold when analysing SNEs' work identity. In fact, most 'old hands' (i.e. two thirds) now argue to have a departmental work identification. On the other hand, most 'novices' have both a loyalty and work identity that is epistemic (56 percent in both cases). Given that these 'novices' mostly come from either the private sector and/or are 'up-and-coming' civil servants, such affiliation with their professional expertise seems reasonable.

How do these results tie in with my dialectic theoretical model? A similar argument than that in the case of chronological primacy can be thought of. 'Novices' are more likely to be a 'tabula rasa' (Inayatullah and Blaney, 1996; Trondal, 1999) when they come into the Commission. As such, they may be extremely aware of the importance to their future career of being perceived as an expert. Given that their professional reputation then is of very great value to them, it is through that identity that they can gain access to 'useful contacts' and legitimise their future career demands. Consequently, they align themselves to those 'frames' as have centrality and salience for them within their closest organisational context: i.e. that of an expert. They thence strategically use the expert role to best serve their purpose. As a consequence, rather than 'old hands' (as hypothesised under SH6), it appears to be the 'novices' in my sample that are more concerned with and active in "impression management" (cf. Goffman, 1959, see also Schimmelfennig, 2002). This, interestingly, ties in closely with Hooghe (2005: 871), who argues that (strategic) optimising behaviour "is most likely to trump socialization when an individual's career chances are at stake".

4.3. Conclusion

Upon reviewing the empirical findings of my analysis, a first conclusion that can be drawn is that SNEs' decision-making behaviour *is* under influence of *both* social mechanisms enclosed in my synthetic theoretical model. On the one hand, career and contact networks are deemed to be crucially important by a large majority of SNEs in both the primary and secondary sample – such that social influence should certainly be seen as a powerful incentive for national experts seconded to the Commission. On the other hand, Commission's behavioural role expectations (at the epistemic, departmental and territorial level) also matter – with the most salient roles of behaviour being those of an expert, representative of the unit/DG (departmental) and supranational civil servant. This clear presence of both social mechanisms in SNEs' behaviour strongly suggests that traditional, uni-theoretical accounts of behavioural adaptation are – at least when analysing SNEs in the European Commission (though most likely also more generally) – incomplete.

A second conclusion deriving from the analysis is that – despite the small sample size – there are *indications* of SNEs' behaviour in the Commission *being both* strategic *and* appropriate. It thus appears to be positioned along a *continuum* between 'structural idiocy' and 'structural

entrepreneurism', as brought forward by my theoretical model. Indeed, the relative strength of social influence versus Commission's behavioural role expectations on SNEs behaviour seems to vary depending on certain 'scope conditions'. *Particularly, it is SNEs' education, autonomy from domestic organisations, prior embeddedness and noviceness that appear important in this respect.* Incompatibility of Commission and domestic structures and intensity of contacts with Commission co-workers appear to have little or not influence.

Interestingly, the results are generally somewhat stronger for the 'objective' scope conditions in my model (e.g., SNE education, noviceness or chronological primacy) compared to the more 'subjective' ones (e.g., intensity of contact, compatibility of structures or autonomy from domestic institutions). One possible explanation for this trend in my findings might be that the scope conditions based on subjective perceptions of the SNEs involve a 'double' interpretation process. Not only do SNEs themselves interpret the central variable in the scope condition (e.g., intensity of their contacts), but I also interpret their interpretation.[54] This might induce too much 'measurement error' to allow for clear-cut results (especially in a sample as small as mine). As a result, future researchers should aim to minimize such bias by defining their scope conditions in the most objective way possible (this also avoids unwarranted variability across studies which is simply due to alternative understandings of the same topic).

Clearly, there are a number of caveats related to the limited size of the sample, dichotomous nature of the variables in the empirical analysis and so on (which have been mentioned repeatedly throughout). Hence, despite the (limited) supportive findings, further corroboration of these empirical results is obviously required to ascertain the validity of the dialectic theoretical model proposed in my thesis.

Finally, it should be mentioned that some SNEs admitted to have been briefed – albeit informally – about life during and after secondment to the Commission *prior* to their own stay. That is, while the majority of my (primary) respondents admitted not having received any *official* briefing, one third nonetheless answered that they talked to colleagues who had been SNEs before. As one British SNEs says: "*No, I didn't need any briefing. But when I*

[54] Additionally, even though all respondents in my primary sample spoke very proficient English, there may obviously be a linguistic filter at playas respondents during the interviews had to navigate two languages: their own and English. While respondents are used to this from their daily work, such language filter should nonetheless be taken into a consideration.

arrived here, a couple of really, really cynical SNEs kind of gave me the load down; it framed the perspective, and it kind of set the parameters within which I went through my time here." A Norwegian SNE explained: *"My home administration, they had an SNE here in 2003 – and I talked to him, and in a way he gave me some warnings on how things work, because how they* [i.e. the Commission] *plan work is not as they do at home."* Two further respondents mentioned that they have partners who were SNEs during the time of their own application, and that they "*talked about it at home when this opportunity came up*" (Interview). Within my secondary data, two SNEs had discussed their secondments with previous SNE colleagues, while one is married to a (then) currently seconded expert. Such 'informal briefings' are also mentioned in my textual sources (Trondal *et al*., 2007).

The presented finding is of significant importance, since it attests to the fact that an informal briefing has been had by *one third of the SNEs in my overall sample*. Not only does this indicate that those SNEs knew beforehand what are the Commission's 'behavioural expectancies', but it also suggests that, thereby, they were able to perform an optimising calculation of those roles' 'worth'. Consequently, one can therefore argue that these SNEs' have shown an *intent to purposefully adapt* to such roles as are 'appropriate' within the Commission and thereby performed an act of strategic calculation of 'logic of appropriateness' (Johnston, 2005). Ultimately, such 'preparation' for secondment can, arguably, question the overall validity of 'influencing effects of structural roles' argument. It would be interesting – and crucial – in future research to assess how this pre-secondment (informal) 'briefing' affects the results of SNE socialisation studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

As argued throughout my thesis, previous integration and socialisation research provides a uni-dimensional view of behavioural adaptation, since it does not take into account the sociological and psychological insights stressing the importance of 'self-socialization' within such a process. In contrast, my thesis attempts to develop a *more holistic understanding*, based on the dialectics of structure and agency, thus placing actors' actual behaviour on *a continuum* between strategic optimising and structural socialisation. As stated in section 1.3, my thesis specified three main goals: *i)* to design a *dynamic model* of behaviour adoption based on dialectics of structure and agency, *ii)* to analytically operationalise this model using two institutionalist theories via '*both/and*' analytical logic, based on the use of social mechanisms and scope conditions, and *iii)* to offer an empirical illustration of this dialectic model. I hereby claim that my thesis achieved all these three aims.

Specifically, in my model I conceptualise adoption of appropriate behaviour as being moulded by two different, but mutually interacting effects: strategic optimising and behavioural role expectations. Secondly, by combining rational choice institutionalism (RCI) – partially incorporating Erving Goffman's *theory of dramaturgic action* – and organisation theory through a 'both/and' approach, I have gained a theoretical anchoring for operationalising the model. The latter is then achieved by identifying two specific mechanisms of social influence and role-playing, and whose domain of application was delineated by the following scope conditions: compatibility of structures, organisational recency, education, chronological primacy, intensity of contacts and noviceness. Last, but not least, by presenting an analysis of SNEs' behavioural adaptation during their secondment in the Commission, I have offered an empirical illustration for that model, and thereby achieved also the third aim of my thesis.

My empirical analysis clearly illustrates both mechanisms of strategic optimising *and* role-playing being simultaneously at play in SNEs' adoption of Commission 'appropriate' behaviour. To conclusively ascertain the dialecticism of their relationship would require an extensive statistical dataset, not in my possession. Nonetheless, the limited data that were available to me, offer a suggestive indication of such tendencies, in line with my main

predictions. Specifically, I do find several indications that the relative strength of behavioural role expectations and strategic calculations of social influence (upon SNE decision-making behaviour) varies under different conditions. More specifically, it indicates that SNEs with longer previous embeddedness in their domestic organisation, with European education and who are more autonomous from their home institution appear to be strategically using their awareness of the territorial dimension in the Commission in a way they think best serves their purpose. Somewhat surprisingly, the same holds for 'novices' (while at odds with the specific hypothesis brought forward on this scope condition, it nonetheless supports the dialectic dynamics of the model). No such effects, however, were found when analysing the scope conditions of intensity of contact and compatibility of structures. One possible explanation comes to mind: these scope conditions were operationalised through SNEs' perceptions regarding their contacts and the compatibility of Commission-domestic structures, rather than their factual analysis. This, however, might have induced unwarranted measurement error.

The analysis presented in this thesis is, both at the theoretical and empirical level, open to a number of extensions. From a theoretical point of view, it is obviously limiting to focus only on strategic optimising and cognitive role-playing. While delineating the scope of an analysis is obviously advisable, it nonetheless implies disregarding certain potentially relevant elements (note that this was one of the central reasons for attempting to build my thesis' model in the first place). Specifically, I account neither for the role of *persuasion* (i.e. Checkel's Type II internalisation), nor for the role of *mimicking*[55] Hence, one further step in developing the theoretical model would be to attempt an incorporation of these additional elements. While their inclusion is likely to significantly complicate the analysis at both theoretical (e.g., incorporating persuasion would imply adding socio-constructivism) and empirical level (e.g., it would vastly increase the demands placed on the empirical dataset needed to test it), it also opens the door to (potentially) fruitful additional insights. For one, the order of persuasion, role-playing, mimicking and strategic action (in a sequential or simultaneous order) within the process can be more extensively analysed (Johnston, 2005). Also, it can facilitate understanding of which socialisation mechanisms should be considered primary and which secondary – thus leading to possible insights concerning causal chains

[55] Mimicking differs from rational, strategic adaptation in the sense that there is no means-end calculation involved (in fact, the 'end' itself would be uncertain as it occurs when one has not yet an idea of what (social) rewards might be reaped) (Johnston, 2005). On the other hand, it is obviously closely related to Checkel's (2005) notion of cognitive role-playing – except that it is not (solely) driven by institutional structures.

(Elster, 1989; Hedström and Sveberg, 1998; Martin and Simmons, 1998; Maier and Risse, 2003; Zürn and Checkel, 2005).

From an empirical point of view, it is first of all crucial to repeat that the current analysis was significantly curtailed by data constraints. Hence, as mentioned, a first important step would be to further assess the validity of dialecticism, defining the theoretical model proposed in my thesis. However, besides this methodological point, I firmly believe that the type of data employed in the present analysis allows for additional interesting applications. Indeed, research on SNEs has been close to non-existent in the literature to date. Nevertheless, compiling data on SNEs provides an opportunity to compare SNEs and permanent administrators (of a given institution). This would bring further contributions towards – and better empirical testing of – affiliational importance in the processes of (micro) integration and socialisation. Moreover, SNE-analysis is likely to be fruitful in mapping the (potential) evolution of organisational and normative structures within the home institution itself after the seconded staff members return from their international postings. Does the (potential) supranational socialisation of these civil servants' 'rub off' on the institution, or is it simply 'disregarded'? If so, how?[56] Third, given the often important role of (home-institution's) pre-socialisation (cf. Hooghe, 2005), it would be interesting to consider the SNE-recruitment process itself: i.e. what determines the choice to allow staff to take up SNE-positions, how do national institutions select their SNEs and how does all this affect the potential supranational (re)socialisation process.

As a final point, I wish to briefly raise two vital topics that have thus far remained unmentioned in my thesis. *First*, no mention has been made of the normative issues involving supranational integration and socialisation. This inattention to the normative implications of socialisation processes is not uncommon in the field of International Relations. For example, none of the contributions to the Fall 2005 special issue of International Organization pays any attention to it (except the concluding contribution by Zürn and Checkel [2005], who lament its absence). Clearly, however, supranational integration (and socialisation) introduces important questions of legitimacy and the relative roles and powers of national and supranational legislative bodies. This issue plays especially strongly in the European Union as European

[56] This links closely to Johnston's (2005: 1029) suggestion to analyse the evolution of "the international institution itself (…) as an agent in the socialisation process of human actors". Still, rather than regard the evolution of the *inter*national institution's organisational and normative structures, following SNEs over time would allow analysis of potential evolutions in *national* institutional structures.

institutions have the power to decide on certain topics even when their decision goes directly against the wishes and/or preferences of one (or more) of the member-states. Despite this wide-ranging power, however, the "European Commission is not accountable to national communities, and election campaigns for the European Parliament focus (…) rarely on European questions" (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1073). This forces the obvious question whether their decisions meet basic democratic standards. While one possible answer is to argue that supranational institutions are only agents in a principal-agent relation with the nation-states and thereby derive indirect legitimacy (cf. Moravcsik, 2002; Kahler, 2004), Zürn and Checkel (2005: 1073) undermine this argument by stating that "socialisation effects blur the principal-agent distinction", inducing "a significant accountability problem". Hence, while integration and socialisation are, in some aspects certainly desirable, "it is, normatively speaking, more ambiguous than it first seems" (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1048).

This normative question clearly goes to the heart of the integrationalist and socialisation story. Moreover, it strongly occupies the minds of many national politicians. For example, the 2003 Norwegian and Danish 'Power and Democracy' studies, were independently commissioned by the Parliaments of both countries to investigate, amongst others, the "internationalisation of domestic politics" stemming from their integration into European (and international) political orders (NOU 2003: 19; Togeby, 2003). Interestingly, the conclusions drawn were diverging. While both studies identified a high degree of 'internationalisation' in domestic legislative processes, the Norwegian study identified it as one of the major culprits of corrosion of (classic, representative) democracy in Norway. The Danish study, on the other hand, viewed it in more positive terms, namely as 'empowering' the individual citizen (NOU 2003; Togeby, 2003). Whether international integration and socialisation is – or can be – viewed as beneficial or detrimental to legitimacy and accountability thus appears to be – even when incorporating normative issues – ambiguous and somewhat dependent upon the level of analysis.

Second, unlike in most other branches of political science, comparative research is not well established in IR (Johnston, 2005). Most empirical work (including my own analysis here) concentrates on the EU (for an exception, see Acharya, 2004) for the simple reason that this is the most institutionalised international environment available and thus offers a best-case scenario to uncover socialisation. While analysis of such a most-likely case provides a strong

case for falsification (King *et al*., 1994), the mixed findings in the 'Europeanisation' literature suggest that empirical extensions beyond Europe might prove fruitful.

For one, Western-style institutions transposed into other regions with different cultures (e.g., ASEAN in Asia, MERCOSUR in Latin-America) may in themselves generate a 'clash of cultures'. Does supranational socialisation work similarly in such intercultural environments? How does it translate upon the domestic level (once again generating potential problems of legitimacy; cf. supra)? But even at a more basic level, it will be interesting to ask how – given my hypothesised dialectics between structure and agency – institutions develop depending on different underlying cultures. Are there any "systematic cross-regional differences" (Johnston, 2005: 1037) or do these "disappear if one looks at specific processes within institutions across regions" (Johnston, 2005: 1038)? While such comparative research is likely to be riddled with difficulties of a practical nature (e.g., access to respondents, barriers of language and cultural, and so on), the benefits in terms of increased understanding of integration (and socialisation) processes in different settings (and under varying scope conditions) might offer ample compensation. Consequently, I argue that further developments of theoretical, as well as methodological, apparatus should be flexible enough to allow steps towards a more comparative approach, currently absent from much of the integration and socialisation literature.

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APPENDIX ONE

Interview guide to Seconded National Experts at the EU-Commission

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Topic of interview:

Socialisation within the Commission.

Research questions:

RQ: Can actor's properties, roles and decision-making behaviour within an institution – rather than singularly shaped either by socialising effects of normative roles, or through his/her strategic evaluation of them – be better characterised as issuing from their dialecticism?

Background:

- What is your educational and professional background?
- Did you study abroad or in you home country?
- Is this your first posting as a seconded National expert?
- Where, and what type of the position did you hold prior to your EU-posting, and what is your current one here at the Commission? Is there a big difference between them?
- When, why and how were you recruited for the current SNE-posting to the Commission?
- What were your reasons for becoming a SNE?
- What was your opinion on the European Union (as a system, and as an idea) at the time of application? Why? Did it change during your posting? If so, why, and how?
- How long have you worked:
    1. at your home institution/unit, prior to your posting?

2. in the current EU-position?

Contact with home institution:

- Did your institution brief you on your role and its goals prior to your posting in the Commission?
- How often are you in contact with your home institution, what kind of contact is it and who initiates it? Are you satisfied with its frequency and forms, or do you wish for more? If so, what?

General institutional questions:

- How would you generally describe your daily work routine here? Re: degree of autonomy; work rules; workload?
- Does the routine deviate from the one you had back at home? If so, to what extent, and how? Are your perceptions generally valid amongst other SNEs working in your DG/unit/division/portfolio, or you "stand alone" on that?
- As a SNE, do you stand "apart", or there is no difference between the position of SNEs and the "permanent" staff at you DG/unit/portfolio? If so, why?
- Which contact(s) do you consider as the most important for you in your position as a SNE? Why?
- With whom do you generally interact outside office? Colleagues in your DG/unit? Own nationals? Other nationals?

Personal perceptions

- What kind of identity do you believe your DG/unit/portfolio carries: epistemic, departmental, intergovernmental, or supranational (European)?

- Seconded National Experts posted to such international institutions as the EU might experience conflict of interests and loyalties. Where does your loyalty foremost lie (to your profession, portfolio, home country, European Union as a system and idea), and why?
- Was it difficult to adjust your decision-making behaviour? Can you say why you adjusted?
- Do you think that your institutional affiliation back home might have been instrumental in shaping your present loyalty? If so, how, to what extent, and why?
- Is your loyalty stable, or does/did it shift? If so, when, and why?
- How would you define yourself as a SNE, and your performance here:

  As someone who adopts a certain role (supranational, national, epistemic?), or a combination of them (if so: which?)? Why: conscious calculation, perception of appropriate behaviour, or combination of both?
- Which of the affiliations – current and prior – do you regard as primary and which as secondary? Why?
- Do you have many professional contacts?
- After your posting here is finished, do you expect to return back to your home institution?
- Do you hope for promotion?
- Can you see yourself using your Commission contacts?
- Would you be interested to work again as a SNE? Why?
- **Is there anything else I should have asked you about? Is there anything else you would like to add?**

APPENDIX TWO

Initial Letter of Contact with Twenty-four SNEs, e-mailed on 05.03.07.

To whom it might concern.

From: Zuzana Murdoch
Berlin, Germany/Agder University College, Kristiansand, Norway
zuzanm04@student.hia.no

05. March 2007

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Zuzana Murdoch and I am a student on Master course in Public Administration and Leadership (specialisation: European Integration) at the Agder University College in Kristiansand, Norway.

I am currently writing my Master thesis, which deals with effects of Europeanisation at a micro-level, more specifically with how individual agents get socialised into European Union's institutions. Since my research topic requires individuals having affiliations both at the national and supranational level, I have decided – together with my supervisor, Prof. Jarle Trondal – that the ideal data would be that gathered from Seconded National Experts, currently working at the European Commission.

Since Prof. Trondal has already conducted a round of interviews at your institution on a similar topic in connection with the pan-European Connex project (in 2004/5), I would like to turn to you with a plea for co-operation. The extent of my thesis requires a data set from perhaps ten interviews of SNEs of different nationalities, and I would be extremely grateful should you find time – and will – to be interviewed. I am fully aware of your obligations and full schedules, but – due to the time constraints of my thesis, the interviews ought ideally be conducted within the time frame of weeks 13 (26. – 31.March), and 15 (09. – 14.April). However, within this time constrain, I am prepared to travel to Brussels whenever it might suit you.

The interview will last app.45 min, will be conducted in English, and the questions asked deal with interviewee's:

- Professional and educational background
- Contact with home institutions
- General institutional questions
- His/her personal perception on roles, identities and decision-making behaviour in the Commission
- Short personal accounts on how and why this adaptation occurred,
- What are their plans upon the conclusion of present secondment

I would also like to add some concrete information regarding my interviewing technique:

- The interviews are semi-structured (the interviewee speaks freely on above-mentioned themes) and will be taped (if allowed, naturally).
- To safeguard interviewees privacy, they will remain anonymous, gender-less, nor will they be identified by their DG-affiliation
- The only identification: by nationality and the length of secondment.

I would be very grateful should you reply positively to my letter.

To confirm your interest, and to arrange a date, please reply via e-mail.
My e-address is: zuzanm04@student.hia.no
Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate and contact me:
Either by (mobile) phone: on +47 90 67 66 07, or to the above-mentioned e-address.

Should you require references, please contact my supervisor:
Prof. Jarle Trondal
Institutt for statsvitenskap og ledelsesfag
Fakultet for økonomi og samfunnsfag
Agder University College.
His e-address: jarle.trondal@hia.no

Thank you very much.
Yours truly.

Zuzana Murdoch.

APPENDIX THREE

Letter e-mailed to Twenty-five (25) permanent missions on 07. March 07.

To whom it might concern.

From: Zuzana Murdoch
Berlin/Kristiansand
zuzanm04@student.hia.no

07.03.2007

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Zuzana Murdoch and I am a student on Master course in Public Administration and Leadership (specialisation: European Integration) at the Agder University College in Kristiansand, Norway.

I am currently writing my Master thesis, which deals with effects of Europeanisation at a micro-level, more specifically with how individual agents get socialised into European Union's institutions. Since my research topic requires individuals having affiliations both at the national and supranational level, I have decided – together with my supervisor, Prof. Jarle Trondal – that the ideal data would be that gathered from Seconded National Experts, currently working at the European Commission.

Therefore I would be very grateful should you help me to get in touch with your national experts, currently seconded to that institution. All I need is one, two names and their e-mail addresses, so that I could get in touch with them personally. The interviews will be conducted in English and will last app.45min. I shall travel to Brussels to conduct them. To guarantee the confidentiality clause, SNEs willing to participate will be identified solely by their nationality and length of their secondment; otherwise they will remain anonymous, gender-less and without DG-affiliation.

For purposes of correspondence, please use my email address: zuzanm04@student.hia.no

Should you require references, please contact my supervisor:
Prof. Jarle Trondal
Institutt for statsvitenskap og ledelsesfag
Fakultet for økonomi og samfunnsfag
Agder University College.
His e-address: jarle.trondal@hia.no

With hope of your understanding and co-operation,

Yours truly,

Zuzana Murdoch.

APPENDIX FOUR

Detailed results of empirical analysis

Table 2: Detailed results of empirical analysis (using loyalty to measure SNE 'appropriate behaviour)

	(1) Overall	*(2) Compatibility* [a]	*(3) Recency* [b]	*(4) Education* [c]	*(5) Chronological primacy* [d]	*(6) Intensity of contact* [e]	*(7) Noviceness* [f]
Career	24	17 / 6	15 / 9	7 / 9	13 / 8	9 / 10	15 / 8
Future contacts	17	12 / 4	11 / 6	7 / 5	9 / 6	9 / 9	7 / 7
Epistemic role	5	4 / 1	2 / 3	1 / 3	2 / 3	2 / 1	0 / 5
Departmental role	4	2 / 1	3 / 1	1 / 3	2 / 2	2 / 2	2 / 2
Supranational role	13	8 / 3	11 / 2	3 / 6	8 / 4	5 / 6	9 / 3
National role	7	6 / 1	3 / 4	3 / 1	4 / 2	2 / 3	6 / 1
Number of SNEs	25	17 / 6	17 / 9	9 / 9	13 / 10	11 / 10	15 / 9

Note: The number of roles is higher than the number of SNEs as some profess multiple roles (even though sometimes information is missing from certain SNEs concerning given scope conditions.

[a] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs that felt the domestic and Commission structure were incompatible (compatible).

[b] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs that lacked (have) contacts with the domestic institutions.

[c] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs with National (International) education.

[d] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs with more (less) than four years previous work experience.

[e] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs that lack (have) intensive contact with colleagues in the Commission.

[f] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs with (without) previous public sector experience.

APPENDIX FIVE

Detailed results of empirical analysis

Table 3: Detailed results of empirical analysis (using work identity to measure SNE appropriate behaviour)

	(1) Overall	*(2) Compatibility* [a]	*(3) Recency* [b]	*(4) Education* [c]	*(5) Chronological primacy* [d]	*(6) Intensity of contact* [e]	*(7) Noviceness* [f]
Career	24	17 / 6	15 / 9	7 / 9	13 / 8	9 / 10	15 / 8
Future contacts	17	12 / 4	11 / 6	7 / 5	9 / 6	9 / 9	7 / 7
Epistemic role	13	9 / 3	7 / 6	5 / 4	7 / 4	6 / 5	6 / 5
Departmental role	13	8 / 3	9 / 2	4 / 5	7 / 5	6 / 5	10 / 3
Supranational role	6	4 / 1	4 / 2	1 / 0	1 / 4	3 / 1	3 / 2
National role	0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0
Number of SNEs	26	17 / 6	17 / 9	9 / 9	13 / 10	11 / 10	15 / 9

Note: The number of roles is higher than the number of SNEs as some profess multiple roles (even though sometimes information is missing from certain SNEs concerning given scope conditions.

[a] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs that felt the domestic and Commission structure were incompatible (compatible).

[b] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs that lacked (have) contacts with the domestic institutions.

[c] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs with National (International) education.

[d] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs with more (less) than four years previous work experience.

[e] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs that lack (have) intensive contact with colleagues in the Commission.

[f] The first (second) number equals the number of SNEs with (without) previous public sector experience.