

EU Committees as Sites of Europeanisation

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46 pages

ISSN: 1503-3724

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Servicebox 422, N-4604 Kristiansand

Design: Agder University College

Cover and binding: Agder University College

Typesetting and printing: Agder University College

Introduction¹

A great amount of EU rule making and rule implementation are left to member-state authorities. However, the domestic governance of EU regulations are embedded into EU committees, composed of EU officials, member-state officials and external experts. EU committees are important arenas for EU regulative governance as well as melting pots of national and supranational government systems. This paper focuses on EU committees as sites of europeanisation that transform the behavioural practises, role perceptions and institutional allegiances among individual decision-makers. However, despite increased scholarly attention to EU committee governance (e.g. Schaefer 2002), their transformative potential has been largely neglected. I argue that EU committees provide an ample research laboratory for studying transformative dynamics of europeanisation of domestic civil servants. Europeanisation in this chapter denotes changes in decision-making behaviour, role and identity perceptions amongst national civil servants *induced* by EU committees.

This article is the result of an extensive comparative research project comparing domestic government officials attending the Commission expert committees (ECs), Council working parties (CWPs) and comitology committees (CCs).² Whereas most studies of EU committees are empirically limited to the comitology committees and covers only a few EU member-states, this project covers all three classes of EU committees and 14 small *and* large EU member-states, totalling 218 respondents (see below). The main conclusion drawn is that EU committees “matter” as to the behavioural patterns and role perceptions evoked by the committee participants but that domestic institutions are more important determinants in this respect. This article thus supports the conclusion that domestic institutions, rules and procedures significantly condition processes of europeanisation (Cowles, Caporaso and Risse 2001; Hèritier et al. 2001; Knill 2001).

Studies of EU committees have only marginally demonstrated and substantiated their transformative potentials. Most studies have focused on comitology procedures, legal typologies of EU committees, historical origins of comitology committees, the power of EU committees in EU decision-making, and descriptive presentations of the number of committees, the number of meetings, and types of participants (e.g. Pedler and Schaefer 1996; Van Schendelen 1998; Vos 1999). Some literature has also tried to understand EU committees in more generic terms (Christiansen and Hirschner 2000; Egeberg 1999; Joerges 1999; Maurer and Larsson 2001; Schaefer 2002). More recent literature has increasingly focused on how EU committee participants are *affected* with respect to their decision-making behaviour, role and identity perceptions. These studies demonstrate that attendance on CWP participants accompanies stronger inter-sectoral co-ordination behaviour than attendance on ECs. On the contrary, EC participants put more weight on intra-sectoral co-ordination behaviour than do CWP participants. Furthermore, these studies also show that domestic government officials attending EU committees put more weight on pre-existing role and identity perception than on new supranational ones. Supranational allegiances are indeed secondary to pre-established national and sectoral allegiances (Beyers 2002; Egeberg 1999; Lewis 2000; Schaefer et al. 2000; Trondal 2001). However, officials attending EU committees with a high degree of intensity tend to evoke supranational allegiances with particular strength (Trondal 2002). Finally, officials attending ECs often put more emphasis on sectoral role perceptions while CWP participants evoke national roles more strongly (Schaefer et al. 2000).

Notwithstanding observing significant transformative effects of EU committees, past studies also reveal the independent causal effects of domestic institutional characteristics (Beyers and Trondal 2003). The organisational structures of domestic ministries, agencies and permanent

representations in Brussels mould the decision-making behaviour and representational roles among the EU committee participants in particular ways (Egeberg 2002). Moreover, domestic government institutions are primary to the civil servants and accordingly have stronger transformative powers than most EU committees. In sum, past studies demonstrate that attendance on EU committees contribute to only weak, however significant, transformation of decision-making modes and institutional allegiances among national civil servants. Processes of europeanisation of domestic civil servants are affected by their secondary EU affiliations, however, significantly mediated and filtered by their primary institutional embeddedness within national central administrative institutions (Egeberg 1999; Hèritier et al. 2001).

The paper proceeds in four main steps. The next section outlines the basic empirical proxies and independent variables applied. How do we measure decision-making behaviour and role and identity perceptions among individual civil servants? Moreover, what operational explanatory variables do we employ to account for actual decision-making behaviour and role and identity perceptions? The third section describes and discusses the data and the methodology underpinning the study. Finally, the empirical analysis is presented. This analysis proceeds in the following way: First, I highlight the domestic institutions embedding the civil servants as well as the EU committees they attend. I also analyse the length and intensity of attendance on EU committees among our sampled officials. Second, I study the co-ordination behaviour evoked by these officials and make suggestive accounts of this behaviour. Third, the analysis heeds the role and identity perceptions enacted by the EU committee participants and provide plausible accounts of these. The final section concludes that the behavioural patterns and role perceptions evoked by domestic EU committee participants are primarily conditioned by their diverse domestic institutional affiliations and only secondary by the EU committees.

Explanatory proxies and dependent variables

Both European integration and national adaptation are “heavily conditioned by existing institutional arrangements” (Caporaso and Stone Sweet 2001: 221). This paper pleads for middle-range institutional approaches focusing on the conditional validity of general institutionalist arguments. To this end I emphasise particular “scope conditions” that may affect processes of europeanisation in particular ways. First, EU committees are assumed to be the *secondary* institutional affiliations embedding domestic civil servants. More time and energy are indeed consumed in domestic ministries and agencies where the civil servants have permanent positions. Notwithstanding our focus on the transformative effects of EU committees, the domestic government apparatus is the primary arena for decision-making, for co-ordination activities, for policy initiatives, formal voting and implementation as well as for officials’ loyalties and identities. EU committees are only secondary institutional arenas in these respects. However, *intensive and lengthy* participation within Commission expert committees, Council working parties and/or comitology committees may be conducive to supranational allegiances (Neyer 2000; Trondal 2002). This study demonstrates empirically that domestic officials attending EU committees with a “sufficient” level of intensity tend to supplement pre-established national and sectoral roles and allegiances with new supranational ones. Despite being strongly “pre-packed” before attending EU committees, intensive attendance is demonstrated to accompany additional supranational loyalties.

Recent institutionalist accounts of European integration borrow heavily from past neo-functional literature with respect to the dependent variables employed. Institutional literature has emphasised European integration as at least a two-dimensional phenomenon. Whereas neo-functionalists emphasised a national versus supranational dimension of personal

attitudes and loyalties, institutionalist analyses in addition focuses on the old functionalist dimension of sectoral versus territorial loyalties and behavioural practises. However, whereas functionalists like Mitrany argued that sectoral dynamics transcended the nation-state order, I argue that sectoral and territorial dynamics are inherently embedded in the formal structure of *both* nation-states *and* the EU institutions. Organisations such as domestic ministries and agencies, but also EU institutions and committees, are *horizontally and vertically specialised* according to particular principles. I argue that the EU Commission and the Commission expert committees are primarily organised according to the principle of sector. The Council of Ministers and the Council working parties, in contrast, are mainly organised according to an area principle. The comitology committees, located at the intersection of the Commission and the Council, have a more mixed organisational status. Still, the uppermost principle of organisation of the comitology committees, I argue, is area. Hence, different EU committees are organised according to different general organisational principles that mirror the formal organisation of most domestic civil services in Europe. Parallel to the organisational differences between the Commission and the Council, domestic sector ministries and agencies are mainly organised according to a sectoral principle. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in contrast, is mainly organised according to a geographical principle, being the “hard-shell” of the nation-state (Egeberg and Trondal 1999).

Accordingly, sectoral loyalties may stem both from the formal structure of domestic sectoral ministries and agencies, *and* from the Commission structure and the expert committees organised beneath it. Similarly, territorial loyalties and modes of acting may stem from the formal structure of the domestic Foreign Ministry, *and* from the territorial structure of the Council of Ministers and the Council working parties.³

European integration and processes of europeanisation has been measured along several operational dimensions in the literature (Olsen 2002). Among neo-functionalists these processes equal spill-over processes across sectors and the transfer of individual interests, loyalties and ways of acting towards the supranational level (Haas 1958). Empirical indicators used by neo-functionalists included cognitive and affective attitudes favouring European integration amongst politicians, bureaucrats and citizens, the emergence of non-territorial sympathies, loyalties, “we-feelings”, and the development of “system attitudes” or “community-mindedness” (Haas 1958; Lindberg 1963; Pollack 1998). Hence, neo-functionalists focus on the cognitive and affective shift and transformation of attitudes towards EU institutions.

This paper focuses on two dependent variables: the co-ordination behaviour evoked by domestic officials attending ECs, CWP and CCs and the institutional allegiances evoked by them. The following empirical proxies are applied to measure these variables:

Co-ordination behaviour:

- Co-ordination with the Foreign Office or other central co-ordinating bodies
- Co-ordination with other relevant ministries
- Co-ordination with all relevant departments within their own ministries
- Having clear instructions about the “positions” to take during committee meetings
- The content of these instructions: taking “positions” that are in the interest of their own Member-State, take “positions” that are in the interest of the member-states as a group, and/or “positions” that are based on their own professional expertise

- Contact with colleagues from other member-states, with Commission officials, with national or European interest representatives, and/or with MEPs or members of national parliaments

Institutional allegiances:

- The feeling of allegiances towards their own government, towards their own ministry, department or agency, towards the requirements of the policy arena in which they are working, towards their professional background and expertise, and/or towards the EU committee or group attended
- Their perceptions of the roles pursued by colleagues from other countries
- Their perceptions of the role of Commission officials' independence of particular national interests
- The extent to which the civil servants put much emphasis on proposals, statements and arguments from: colleagues and experts from their own Member-State, colleagues from other member-states, colleagues from large member-states or states in their own region, colleagues from member-states who share similar positions, representatives from the Commission, and/or interest groups and firms at the national and the European level
- Officials' attitudes towards European integration generally and European integration within their respective policy areas

Guided by the conceptual repertoire outlined above these dependent variables are accounted for by a carefully selected repertoire of organisational variables. Our organisational approach is multilevel in the sense that organisational factors both at the domestic and the EU levels are deemed important (Hooghe and Marks 2001). Assuming that institutions matter (Egeberg forthcoming), the question is how they matter, to what degree, in what direction and at what

pace (Börzel and Risse 2000: 4). The following independent organisational variables are applied to account for civil servants' co-ordination behaviour and institutional allegiances:

At the domestic level:

- The horizontal specialisation of domestic government institutions: I compare officials employed within the Foreign Ministry and at the Permanent Representation in Brussels (both mainly organised according to a territorial principle) and civil servants in sector ministries and agencies
- The vertical specialisation of domestic government institutions: I compare officials with different formal hierarchical positions in the domestic government machinery

At the EU level:

- The horizontal specialisation of EU committees: I compare officials who attend the ECs, CWPBs and/or the CCs
- The length of affiliation towards EU committees: I compare officials with different length of experience in the various EU committees
- The intensity of affiliation towards EU committees: I compare civil servants who have attended different numbers of EU committees, different number of meetings, and officials who consume different amount of time in EU committee meetings

In addition to these organisational factors, one rational choice variable is added to our analysis. I suggest that the likelihood that EU committee participants evoke supranational allegiances is affected positively by the expected career prospects gained from attendance (Hooghe and Marks 2001:149). If officials perceive that attendance on EU committees is detrimental to their careers, they may be less likely to evoke supranational loyalties and attach

positive attitudes towards European integration than if attendance on EU committees is perceived as having positive effects.

The above explanatory proxies are variables at the meso-level and the micro level of analysis. Meso-level variables constitute the immediate institutional environments relevant for decision-makers. The micro-level variable relates to the individual preferences of each official. Macro-level variables, in contrast, are excluded from the analysis, i.e. the membership versus non-membership distinction of nation-states as well as the length of EU membership of each country. Such macro institutional factors are assumed to affect the decision-making behaviour and the role and identity perceptions of each decision-maker less strongly than the meso- and micro-level variables suggested above (Trondal 2002).

Data and methodology

Since 1995 the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht has organised “Comitology seminars” for EU Member-State officials on the role of committees in the EU decision-making. In the spring of 1997 a group of researchers from the ARENA programme in Oslo and from EIPA started distributing a questionnaire⁴ to those seminar participants who had experiences from different EU committees. The questionnaire was designed to get an overview of the experiences of member-state officials in EU committees: in what kind and in how many committees they were involved, how frequently meetings were taking place, for how long the meetings lasted, what languages that were used, etc. The major part of the questionnaire focussed on the question of how member-state officials viewed the roles they performed in these committees, how well they were co-ordinated, and how they perceived the roles performed by other participants.

During the first day of the “Comitology seminar” the participants were asked to complete this questionnaire. By distributing the questionnaires at the first day of the Seminar, we minimised potential influences or “noise” of the seminar as such. In addition to the seminars held in Maastricht, EIPA organised a number of “Comitology seminars” in different member-states, particularly in those that had joined the EU during the last wave of enlargement in 1995. Unquestionably, this led to a very unbalanced sample towards the new member-states. In order to correct this, an effort was made in early 1999 to contact permanent representations of those member-states with very small number of respondents (N), asking them to complete questionnaires. This effort was successful in the case of Belgium and Spain, but did not result in larger N from the other member-states. The final composition of our sample is summarised in Table 1, distributed by member-state. This Table also reveals distributions by institution, differentiating between the Foreign Ministry, other sector ministries, agencies and the member-states’ Permanent Representations in Brussels.

Table 1 Composition of the Sample, by member-state and institutional affiliation
(absolute numbers)

Member state:	Institutions				Sum
	Foreign Ministries	Sector ministries	Agencies, etc.	Permanent Representations	
Austria.....	0	14	3	0	17
Belgium.....	2	20	7	0	29
Denmark.....	1	5	1	0	7
Finland.....	2	17	2	0	21
France.....	0	3	1	0	4
Germany.....	0	7	3	1	11
Greece.....	0	1	0	1	2
Ireland.....	0	1	0	2	4 ^a
Luxembourg.....	1	0	0	0	1
Netherlands.....	2	10	1	0	13
Portugal.....	5	3	1	0	9
Spain.....	55	5	0	0	60
Sweden.....	2	23	9	0	34
United Kingdom.....	1	4	1	0	6
Total N.....	16	163	34	4	218^a

^{a)} One respondent did not answer the question about institutional affiliation. In this and all following tables, N equals the number of respondents.

The sample cannot claim to be representative neither with respect to the member-states included, or with respect to the type of EU committees in which the member-state officials participate. From the total sample, 132 respondents participated in Commission expert

committees, 134 participated in Council working parties and 76 in comitology committees. Not unexpectedly, 61 respondents participated in at least two types of committees, and 31 respondents attended all three types of committees. Finally, as with all written questionnaires, there was a considerable number of missing items – respondents who did not complete all of the questions, even if – as was the case in our questionnaire – for most of the questions multiple choice answers were provided for. For this reason, the N will vary between the tables presented in the following section.

Empirical observations

The following empirical analysis is divided into three separate sub-sections. First, we reveal the domestic organisational affiliations embedding the officials as well as the EU committees they attend. Moreover, we show for how long periods of time they have attended EU committees and at what level of intensity they have attended. The next subsection studies the co-ordination behaviour evoked by the officials and applies organisational variables to explain this behaviour. Finally, we study the role and identity perceptions enacted by the committee participants and employ organisational variables to account for these.

The organisational embeddedness of EU committee participants

Domestic officials attending EU committees have their primary institutional affiliations within domestic political-administrative institutions and only secondary affiliations to the EU committees (Egeberg 1999). Table 2 shows the distribution of primary organisational affiliations embedding those officials studied here.

Table 2 Distributions of primary organisational affiliations (%)

Institutional affiliations:	
Foreign Ministry.....	7
Sector ministries.....	75
Agencies, etc.....	16
Permanent representations.....	2
Total N.....	217
	(100)
Formal positions:	
Director-General, Deputy D-G.....	20
Head/Deputy of Unit/Division.....	14
Head of Section, Senior advisor, advisor.....	66
Total N.....	208
	(100)

Table 2 demonstrates that the officials studied here are mostly employed within ministries other than the Foreign Ministry and in medium or lower rank positions. Moreover, our data (not presented in table 2) shows that EC participants are mostly recruited from sectoral ministries and agencies and less from the Foreign Ministries. CWP participants, in contrast, are recruited to a larger extent from the Foreign Ministries. However, the study of Trondal (2001) indicates that a larger proportion of EC participants than that unveiled in the above table is employed within domestic agencies and directorates beneath the ministry level.

For member-state officials participation on EU committees means consumption of scarce resources like time and energy that will not be available for domestic concerns and activities.

However, time spent on EU matters naturally vary with the place in the hierarchy of incumbents, as summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 Distributions of time consumed in committee work, by position (%)

	Position			
Working time spent on EU matters:	Director-General, Deputy D-G	Head/Deputy of Unit/Division	Head of Section, Senior Advisor, Advisor	Sum
15% or less.....	37	26	24	27
16-50%.....	43	44	44	44
51% or more.....	20	30	32	29
Total N.....	40	27	131	198
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

As could be expected, the major burden of EU committee work is carried by heads of section, senior advisers and advisers – that is, the middle and lower mid-level of member-states’ administrations. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents belong to this group. These observations are empirically supported by the studies of Egeberg (1999), Trondal (2001) and Trondal and Veggeland (2003). Surprisingly, a relatively large proportion (20%) of committee work is carried out at the Director-General and the Deputy Director-General level⁵ (cf. Institut für Europäische Politik 1987:72). This can partially be explained by the fact that it is common practice for top-level officials in EU member-states’ administrations to attend committee meetings in Brussels accompanied by lower level officials. Moreover, CWP participants report that they seldom attend committee meetings alone. Most of the time officials go

together with colleagues from their own ministry or from the permanent representations. The fact that 20% of the Director-Generals and the Deputy Director-Generals use much time and energy on EU committees may also be taken as an indicator of the importance assigned by member-states' administrations to EU matters. The fact that more than 60% of this top-level group spends almost a day or more of their weekly working time on EU matters supports this conclusion.

Length and intensity of participation on EU committees

We assume that the length and intensity of attendance on EU committees is conducive to the emergence of supranational allegiances. To substantiate this hypothesis, this section introduces different operational measures of the length and intensity of attendance on EU committees. First, table 4 reveals the distribution of length of participation amongst the sampled officials.

Table 4 Distributions of first time of arrival in EU committees (%)

Time of arrival:	
1996-1998.....	40
1991-1995.....	37
1977-1990.....	23
Total N.....	203
	(100)

Table 4 shows that most of the officials have participated on EU committees for relatively short periods of time. This, however, might partly be the result of sampling. A relative large proportion of those attending the EIPA’s comitology seminars is new-comers in the EU committees and have attended only few meetings. Still, some of the sampled officials have considerable experiences from the EU committees (23%).

Next, table 5 reveals the distributions of number of EU committees attended by these officials.

Table 5 Distributions of number of EU committees attended (%)

Number of committees attended:	ECs	CWPs	CCs
0.....	39	37	65
1.....	34	40	21
2.....	16	14	8
3.....	11	8	6
4.....	0	1	0
5.....	1	0	0
6.....	0	0	1
Total N.....	217	214	215
	(100)	(100)	(100)

First, table 5 demonstrates that more officials have participated in the ECs and CWPs than in the CCs. Secondly, the vast majority of the sampled officials have attended one or two

committees. Only a very small percentage of the officials have actually attended more than two committees. These observations might partly reflect the fact that officials at the permanent representations in Brussels are poorly represented in our sample. Lewis (2000) and Trondal (2001) show that permanent representatives attend considerable more Council working parties than officials coming from the capitals. Next, table 6 reveals the number of meetings attended per year in EU committees, and the duration of these meetings.

Table 6 Distributions of the number of meetings attended and the duration of meetings, by type of committee (%)^a

Number of meetings per year:	ECs	CWPs	CCs
1-3.....	49	15	36
4-8.....	30	31	34
8+.....	21	54	30
Total N.....	132	131	76
	(100)	(100)	(100)

Duration of meetings:	ECs	CWPs	CCs
½ day.....	6	11	10
1 day.....	58	60	65
1 day+.....	36	29	25
Total N.....	131	126	68
	(100)	(100)	(100)

a) Officials that have not attended the respective committees (coded 0 in table 5) are excluded from this table.

Table 6 demonstrates that EC participants mostly attend 1-3 meetings per year whereas CWP participants often attend more than 3 meetings per year. Hence, CWP participants seem to participate more intensively on EU committees than the EC participants. Moreover, data not presented in the above table shows that CWP participants use more of their working time on EU committees than do the EC participants. These observations are supported by previous studies (e.g. Trondal 2001). Next, table 6 reveals that most of the EC, CWP and CC participants attend meetings with an average duration of one day. However, a fairly large proportion of officials also reports that the meetings last for more than one day. These observations parallel the findings reported by the Institut für Europäische Politik (1987).

Before studying the co-ordination behaviour and institutional allegiances of the EU committee participants, table 7 reveals the distributions of assumed career prospects from EU committee attendance.

Table 7 Distributions of assumed career prospects due to attendance on EU committees
(%)

Helped a lot.....	15
Helped somewhat.....	35
Made no difference.....	48
Hindered my career.....	3
Total N.....	200

For most of the officials attendance on EU committees makes no difference with respect to their career prospects. The second largest group of officials, however, assumes that experience from EU committees has helped somewhat in this respect. As such, the effects on personal career prospects are diffuse or slightly positive.

The co-ordination of EU committee participation

The sectoral organisational structure of the European Commission and the overall territorial structure of the Council of Ministers lead us to expect different co-ordination behaviour among officials attending the ECs, the CWPs and the CCs. Officials attending the ECs are expected to be less subject to domestic co-ordination than officials participating on the CWPs and the CCs. The latter are more likely to participate in meetings with clearly co-ordinated “positions” from their respective domestic governments. A second reason to expect different co-ordination behaviour between those attending the ECs and those attending the CWPs and the CCs relates to voting behaviour. Generally, voting focuses the attention of decision-makers. Voting also signals expectations from the principals towards the agents with respect to representing agreed-on, and often written “positions”. Despite most EU committees seldom vote in any formal sense (Mattila and Lane 2001), the CWPs and the CCs are located in the “shadow of the vote” more clearly than the ECs (Golub 1999). Whereas EC participants are not expected to reach any agreements or formal decisions during most committee meetings, CWP and CC participants are expected to reach compromises, majority decisions and often consensus at the end of meetings. These differences as regards formal organisation and actual voting behaviour in the EU committees are assumed to accompany different co-ordination behaviour among the participants.

Table 8 applies different operational measures to analyse the domestic co-ordination behaviour among EU committee participants.

Table 8 Percent of officials who co-ordinate their “position” before attending different EU committee meetings^a

Empirical proxies:	ECs	CWPs	CCs
I have to co-ordinate with the Foreign Office or with another central co-ordinating body.....	20	47	43
My “position” has in fact been co-ordinated with all relevant ministries.....	28	47	53
My “position” has been co-ordinated with all relevant departments within my own ministry.....	38	55	59
I have clear instructions about the “position” I should take.....	28	35	46
I take the “position” I think is best for my country.....	63	72	66
I take the “position” i think is best on the basis of my professional expertise.....	43	43	34
If I have no instructions or if the questions are not important for my country I take the position I think is in the best interest of the member-states as a group	52	46	46
Mean N.....	110	119	62

a) This table covers value 1 on the following three-point scale: co-ordinating always or most of the time (value 1); co-ordinating about half of the time (value 2); co-ordinating rarely or never (value 3).

Table 8 demonstrates that different EU committees accompany different degrees of co-ordination among the participants. Generally, officials attending the CWPs and the CCs are better co-ordinated than officials attending the ECs. EC participants tend to take “positions” that are less strongly co-ordinated. This observation strongly supports the assumptions outlined above. When asked about what interests the officials pursue during committee meetings, most of the EC participants take the “position” that is in the interest of their own country. However, officials attending the CWPs put stronger emphasis on national interests than do the EC participants. On the contrary, the latter seem to take “positions” that are in the interests of the member-states as a group more extensively than do the CWP and CC participants. In sum, different EU committees accompany different co-ordination behaviour amongst the participants.

Moreover, officials attending the CWPs were presented several additional questions that paralleled those presented in the above table. The main conclusions to be drawn from these questions support the above conclusions. For example, CWP participants co-ordinate extensively with the Foreign Office as well as across several sector ministries; they often succeed in agreeing on clear-cut national “positions”, and the discretion available during discussions in the working parties is perceived as moderate. CWP participants also report that the Permanent Representation is informed when they attend meetings in Brussels. In sum, the CWP participants seem better co-ordinated than the EC participants.

Next, the respondents were asked to indicate their contact patterns prior to attending EU committee meetings.

Table 9 Percent of officials having the following regular^a contacts before participating in different EU committee meetings

Contacts:	ECs	CWPs	CCs
With colleagues from other member-states:			
- whom I respect for their expertise.....	20	21	15
- who have a lot of influence in the committee.....	8	10	13
- who are in a similar situation or have similar problems.....	33	35	34
With Commission officials.....	22	21	26
With domestic or European interest representatives.....	7	13	18
With MEPs I know.....	0	1	2
With members of my national Parliament who are specialists in my area of work.....	0	2	2
Mean N.....	111	123	66

a) This table covers value 1 on the following three-point scale: contacts almost before every meeting, or regularly (value 1); contacts sometimes, or when I think it could be useful (value 2); hardly ever (value 3).

Officials attending EU committees have more frequent contacts with colleagues from other countries who are in a similar situation or have similar problems than with officials from other countries who are respected for their expertise. This may reflect the dual need for coalition building and in-depth professional knowledge amongst EU committee participants (Mattila and Lane 2001). Furthermore, Commission officials are contacted by 23% of the officials (mean score). Contacts with MEPs, with domestic parliamentarians as well as with domestic or European interest representatives are pursued less frequently. These observations are largely consistent with the results presented in Table 13. Finally, no major differences can

be observed between participants in the ECs, CWPs or CCs with respect to their contact behaviour. The most significant difference is that CC participants seem to have contacts with domestic and/or European interest representatives more frequently than the EC and CWP participants.

The above tables have revealed significant differences between the co-ordination behaviour evoked by officials participating on different EU committees. Hence, EU committees seem to “matter” as to the decision-making behaviour of the individual committee members. However, the theoretical arguments outlined also emphasise that the effects of attendance on EU committees are likely to be modified and filtered by domestic government institutions. The following table reveals the bivariate effects of the domestic hierarchical positions of the officials.⁶ We expect that officials in top rank positions co-ordinate their “positions” more extensively and across different sectoral domains than officials in medium and lower rank positions.

Most of the bivariate correlation coefficients that are reported in table 10 (below) are insignificant. This partly reflects the substantive realities, but probably also the moderate N in our sample. Substantially, table 10 demonstrates that officials heed several different interests when attending EU committees. Officials in top rank positions emphasise more encompassing and overarching interests than officials in medium and lower rank positions. For example, officials in top rank positions heed interests of their own country as well as those of the other member-states more vigorously than officials in lower rank positions.

Table 10 Bivariate correlations between formal position and the extent to which the “positions” are co-ordinated (Pearson’s r)^a

Empirical proxies:	ECs	CWPs	CCs
I have to co-ordinate with the Foreign Office or with another central co-ordinating body.....	.08	.01	.07
My “position” has in fact been co-ordinated with all relevant ministries.....	-.03	-.01	.07
My “position” has been co-ordinated with all relevant departments within my own ministry.....	-.01	.11	.13
I have clear instructions about the “position” I should take.....	-.05	-.06	.07
I take the “position” I think is best for my country....	.22*	.04	.27*
I take the “position” i think is best on the basis of my professional expertise.....	.06	-.09	.24
If I have no instructions or if the questions are not important for my country I take the position I think is in the best interest of the member-states as a group...	.19*	.18	.30*
Mean N.....	105	114	60

*) p ≤ .05 **) p ≤ .01

a) The independent variable has the following values: Director-General, Deputy D-G (value 1), Head/deputy of Unit/Division (value 2), Head of section, senior advisor, advisor (value 3). The dependent variables has the following values: always or most of the time (value 1), about half of the time (value 2), rarely or never (3).

Civil servants often evoke multiple preferences, interests, roles and identities due to their multiple institutional embeddedness. Civil servants are multiple selves with several non-

hierarchical interests and allegiances (Elster 1986; Risse 2002). The evocation of one particular interest or identity does not necessarily trump another. By attending different institutions at different levels of governance officials learn to wear Janus-faces and to live with diversity and partially conflicting interests and loyalties (Lewis 1998). Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace (1997:279) picture a “continuous tension between the home affiliation and the pull of the collective forum”. However, particular interests and modes of decision-making behaviour tend to be evoked in some situations more than in others as demonstrated above (March and Olsen 1989; Simon 1957).

The complex mix of roles and identities

Domestic officials who attend EU committees spend most of their time and energy in domestic institutions and decision-making processes.⁷ Thus, we might expect their dominant institutional allegiances to be national more than supranational. However, “membership” in EU committees imposes *additional* obligations, possibilities and temptations on domestic officials, although of a secondary character. They are exposed to new agendas and actors, and are expected to look for common solutions (Egeberg 1999). We argue that officials participating in the CWP and in the CCs behave more like government representatives than officials attending the ECs. The main reasons for this is the territorial principle of organisation and the negotiating character of the two former EU committees (Egeberg and Trondal 1999). In the ECs, on the other hand, participants are expected to behave more like independent experts. Thus, *professional allegiances and sectoral role perceptions* are likely to be enacted fairly strongly among the latter.

Table 11 reveals the distributions of allegiances among EU committee participants.

Table 11 Percent of the officials who feel allegiance to, identify with or feel responsible to the following when participating in committees^a

Allegiances towards:	ECs	CWPs	CCs
My own government.....	65	76	69
My own ministry, department or agency.....	74	81	60
The requirements of the policy arena in which I am working.....	58	65	58
My own professional background and expertise.....	60	65	60
The committee or group in which I participate.....	39	57	44
Mean N.....	106	109	58

a) This table combines values 1 and 2 on the following five-point scale: to a very great extent (value 1); to a fairly great extent (value 2); both/and (value 3); to a fairly small extent (value 4); to a very small extent (value 5).

Table 11 shows that domestic officials who attend ECs, CWPs and CCs express more allegiance towards their own domestic government institutions than towards the EU committees in which they participate. As expected, supranational loyalties seem to be secondary to national allegiances (Franklin and Scarrow 1999; Hooghe and Marks 2001:55). However, some committee participants feel allegiances towards the EU committees, particularly among the CWP participants. As indicated above, this may partly reflect the fact that CWP participants are more intensively involved in the committee work than the EC participants. Moreover, those attending the CWPs tend to feel stronger allegiance to their own government than those participating on the ECs, although this difference is not significant. A remarkably large proportion of the CWP participants identify with their own sector administration, policy arena and professional background. This pattern is probably due to

their domestic institutional affiliations and to the high degree of functional specialisation of the CWPs that supplements the basically intergovernmentally arranged Council structure. Accordingly, domestic officials attending EU committees evoke a complex repertoire of roles and identities, especially those participating in the CWPs.

The respondents were also asked to indicate how they perceive the roles of their fellow colleagues within the EU committees.

Table 12 Distributions of domestic officials’ perception of the role of colleagues from other countries who participate in EU committees (%)

Roles:	ECs	CWPs	CCs
Mainly expert.....	33	11	6
Mixed roles.....	22	12	20
Mainly government representative.....	45	77	74
Total N.....	113	122	66
	(100)	(100)	(100)

As expected, table 12 reveals that civil servants who attend the CWPs and the CCs tend to consider other colleagues mainly as government representatives. EC participants, by contrast, tend to view other colleagues as having more mixed roles. Thus, considerably more CWP and CC participants than EC participants view their colleagues from other countries as government representatives.

Next, the respondents were asked to assess how much consideration they put on proposals, statements and arguments from different actors and institutions when attending EU committees.

Table 13 Distributions of officials who give much consideration to proposals, statements and arguments from the following when participating in different EU committees (%)^a

	ECs	CWPs	CCs
Colleagues and experts from my own country.....	87	84	81
Colleagues from other members-states who have demonstrated considerable expertise on the subject matter at hand.....	73	70	69
Colleagues from large member-states.....	38	38	30
Colleagues from member-states from my own region.....	42	46	48
Colleagues from member-states who share a similar position.....	61	71	68
Representatives from the Commission.....	57	60	57
Interest groups and firms I know from my own country.....	26	32	44
Interest groups and firms I know or have contact with at the European level.....	17	11	13
Mean N.....	113	121	66

a) Values 1 and 2 combined on the following five-point scale: very much consideration (value 1);, fairly much consideration (2); both/and (3); fairly little consideration (4); very little consideration (5).

No major differences can be observed between officials attending different EU committees as far as the above considerations are concerned. Generally, EU committee participants pay most attention to what their colleagues and experts from their own country have to say. This observation underscores the tendency indicated in Tables 11 and 12 on the primacy of national allegiances among the EU committee participants. These participants, however, also emphasise the points of view of colleagues from other member-states that have demonstrated considerably expertise on the subject matter at hand. Officials give considerably less attention to arguments from colleagues from large member-states, as well as from colleagues from member-states within their own region. The quality of the arguments presented by the committee participants – and thus argumentative interaction - is considered more important than the sheer size and geopolitical location of the member-states they represent (Eriksen and Fossum 2000; Neyer 2000:224). Moreover, the EU Commission is also considered more important than large member-states and member-states within their own region. This may be interpreted as reflecting supranational identifications among the committee participants. Finally, interest groups and firms are deemed considerably less important than colleagues from other member-states. By comparison, however, interest groups and firms from their own country are viewed much more important than EU level interest groups and firms. This observation underscores the general tendency unveiled by Table 13, namely that domestic EU committee participants pay more heed to domestic institutions than to supranational ones.

Next, the officials were asked to indicate the extent to which Commission officials act independently of particular national interests.

Table 14 Distributions of domestic officials’ perceptions of commission officials’ independence of particular national interests (%)

	ECs	CWPs	CCs
Mainly independent.....	81	70	79
Mixed roles.....	13	18	16
Mainly dependent.....	6	12	5
Total N.....	109	112	63
	(100)	(100)	(100)

Domestic officials attending EU committees seem to agree on the relative independence of Commission officials from particular national interests. Only a small minority, mostly among the CWP participants, reports that Commission officials act more in the interest of their country of origin. Hence, there is obviously a good deal of trust in the Commission as an independent supranational executive.

In sum, participation on EU committees tends to affect the institutional allegiances and role perceptions of the participants. Nonetheless, civil servants largely retain their national and sectoral identities when attending EU committees. An element of supranational loyalty does, however, supplement such pre-established allegiances to some extent. Moreover, we see that *arguing*, not only *bargaining*, is a salient feature of the EU committees. The intergovernmental perspective, picturing actors as having pre-determined and fixed preferences, has to be slightly modified and conditioned. Apart from being co-ordinating and regulative devices, EU committees are also transnational venues for communication and deliberation. Obviously, deliberation takes place among actors in which interests are moved

and reshaped on the basis of expert knowledge. Still, the above analysis also underscores the primacy of the nation-state as an important locus of identification.

Despite the lack of strong and long-lasting identification towards EU institutions, actors may evoke positive *attitudes* towards European integration. The following table shows the distributions of attitudes towards different aspects of European integration among the EU committee participants.

Table 15 presented below pictures EU committee participants as strongly pro-European. This finding is supported by previous studies (i.e. Pollack 1998; Trondal and Veggeland 2003). However, whereas neo-functionalist literature has interpreted such attitudes as reflecting the effects of EU institutions, critics have asserted that such attitudes might as well reflect processes of self-selection and pre-socialisation at the domestic level (Pollack 1998). The above table lends support to both assumptions. Officials seem to be strongly positive towards European integration when they first become involved in committee work. Since then, the majority (57%) of the officials does not change attitude in this respect. However, a large minority (35%) has become more in favour of European integration (cf. Trondal and Veggeland 2003: table 3). This latter finding may reflect intensive and sustained participation within the EU committees, as well as perceived career opportunities from such attendance.

Table 15 Distributions of officials’ attitudes to European integration (%)

“Do you think that co-operation within the EU has, generally, been advantageous or disadvantageous as far as you policy-/issue area is concerned?”	
- mostly advantageous.....	79
-both/and.....	17
- mostly disadvantageous.....	4
“Are you in favour of strengthening co-operation within the EU further?”	
- within your own policy-/issue area.....	87
- strengthening the EU in general.....	87
“When you got involved in committee work for the first time, did you in general have a positive or negative attitude towards the process of European integration?”	
- mostly positive.....	76
- mixed attitudes.....	14
- mostly negative.....	10
“Since then, have you changed your attitude in this respect?”	
- have become more in favour of European integration.....	35
- attitude unchanged.....	57
- have become less in favour of European integration.....	8
Mean N.....	201

Next, table 16 supports to some extent the interpretation from table 15 that intensity of engagement in EU committees accompanies supranational attitudes among those involved.

Table 16 Distributions of working time consumed in EU committees and change of attitudes towards European integration (%)

	Working time consumed		
Change of attitudes:	15% or less	16-50%	51% or more
More in favour.....	24	44	34
Unchanged.....	67	51	54
Less in favour.....	9	5	12
Total N.....	58	83	59
	(100)	(100)	(100)

Table 16 unveils a positive relationship between the amount of time consumed in EU committees and the likelihood of changing attitudes towards European integration. 34 % of those officials consuming more than 51% of their time in EU committees have become more in favour of European integration whereas only 24% of those consuming 15% or less of their time in EU committees have experienced similar attitude changes. An inverse relationship is observed amongst those experiencing no attitude change. Hooghe (1999) makes a parallel observation. She demonstrates that senior Commission officials are generally more supranationally oriented than newly hired Commission officials. Hence, supranational attitudes are likely to reflect processes of re-socialisation at the EU level more than processes of pre-socialisation domestically.

More generally, we assume that the multiple institutional embeddedness of individual civil servants affects their role and identity perceptions (Egeberg 2002). To test the *relative importance* of different institutional affiliations, the following regression analyses apply the

dependent variables from table 11 and the following independent variables: formal hierarchical position of each civil servants, the number of EU committees attended, the number of EU committee meetings attended, working time consumed in EU committees, the length of participation on EU committees, and the assumed career prospects related to attendance on EU committees.⁸ Five tables are presented below (17 – 21), on for each dependent variable. Each table covers three independent regression analyses – one for the EC participants, one for the CWP participants and one for the CC participants.

Table 17 Factors related to officials’ feeling of allegiance towards their own government.

A multivariate regression analysis (beta)^{a, b}

	ECs	CWPs	CCs
Formal position.....	.18	.10	-.03
Number of EU committees attended.....	.03	.19	-.12
Number of committee meetings attended.....	.04	.18	-.38*
Working time consumed on EU committees.....	-.15	-.32**	.20
Length of participation on EU committees.....	.04	.13	-.19
Career prospects related to EU committees.....	.03	.02	.24

*) p ≤ .05 **) p ≤ .01 R² = .05 R² = .12 R² = .20

- a) *The dependent variable in this and the following regression tables has the following values: to a very great extent (value 1), to a fairly great extent (2), both/and (3), to a fairly small extent (4), to a very small extent (5).*
- b) *The independent variables in this and the following regression tables have the following values: variable 1: Director-General, deputy D-G (value 1), head/deputy of unit/division (2), head of section, senior advisor, advisor (3); variable 2: one committee (value 1), two committees (2), etc; variable 3: 1-3 meetings (value 1), 4-8 meetings (2), 8 meetings or more (3); variable 4: less than 15% (value 1), 15%-30% (2), 30-50% (3), 50-70% (4), more than 70% (5); variable 5: 20 years (value 1), 19 years (2) ... 1 year (value 20); variable 6: helped a lot (value 1), helped somewhat (2), made no difference (3), hindered my career (4).*

Table 18 Factors related to officials' feeling of allegiance to their own ministry, department or agency. A multivariate regression analysis (beta)

	ECs	CWPs	CCs
Formal position.....	.07	.13	-.04
Number of EU committees attended.....	.15	.03	-.19
Number of committee meetings attended.....	.03	-.04	-.09
Working time consumed on EU committees.....	.04	-.20	.15
Length of participation on EU committees.....	-.01	-.19	.29
Career prospects related to EU committees.....	.03	-.09	.17
	$R^2 = .03$	$R^2 = .06$	$R^2 = .13$

*) $p \leq .05$ **) $p \leq .01$

Table 19 Factors related to officials' feeling of responsibility towards the requirements of the policy arena in which they work. A multivariate regression analysis (beta)

	ECs	CWPs	CCs
Formal position.....	.00	.12	.25
Number of EU committees attended.....	.00	.06	-.05
Number of committee meetings attended.....	.07	.02	-.23
Working time consumed on EU committees.....	.08	-.09	-.17
Length of participation on EU committees.....	.01	.12	.30*
Career prospects related to EU committees.....	.13	-.07	.00
	$R^2 = .02$	$R^2 = .04$	$R^2 = .21$

*) $p \leq .05$ **) $p \leq .01$

Table 20 Factors related to officials’ feeling of allegiance to their professional background and expertise. A multivariate regression analysis (beta).

	ECs	CWPs	CCs
Formal position.....	-.09	-.11	.16
Number of EU committees attended.....	.16	.07	-.02
Number of committee meetings attended.....	.08	-.17	.05
Working time consumed on EU committees.....	-.01	.17	.04
Length of participation on EU committees.....	.34**	.32**	.04
Career prospects related to EU committees.....	.04	.07	.04

*) p ≤ .05 **) p ≤ .01 R² = .011 R² = .10 R² = .04

Table 21 Factors related to officials’ feeling of allegiance towards the EU committee or group in which they participate. A multivariate regression analysis (beta)

	ECs	CWPs	CCs
Formal position.....	.08	.01	-.21
Number of EU committees attended.....	.09	.00	.09
Number of committee meetings attended.....	.03	.09	-.15
Working time consumed on EU committees.....	-.07	-.12	-.02
Length of participation on EU committees.....	.19	-.03	-.08
Career prospects related to EU committees.....	-.06	-.12	.00

*) p ≤ .05 **) p ≤ .01 R² = .05 R² = .02 R² = .09

The regression analyses demonstrate the independent causal effects of EU committees as to the role and identity perceptions evoked by the participants. These tables support the effect

generated by the length and intensity of attendance on EU committees (cf. table 16). More particularly, officials attending many EU committees and consuming much time on EU committees feel only weak allegiances towards their own government. Hence, intensive participation on EU committees seems, to some extent, detrimental to domestic institutional allegiances. In contrast, officials who have participated for long periods of time on EU committees feel responsibility towards their “own” policy arena and feel allegiances towards their professional background and expertise. Hence, the length of participation on EU committees seems to strengthen pre-established sectoral and professional allegiances. Finally, the regression analyses do not provide any solid explanation for supranational allegiances. Neither do the above analysis demonstrate significant effects of formal position within the domestic administrative apparatus (see also Hooghe and Marks 2001:156).

Concluding remarks

The study of European integration has increasingly shifted focus from the horizontal spill-over processes at the EU level and the grand bargains between the strong EU member-states towards the vertical blurring of governance levels across the EU – nation-state interface. This article has focused on one such site where government levels interact and affect each other – the EU committees. Going beyond the neo-functional versus intergovernmental dichotomy this study applies a middle-range institutionalist approach to the study of the europeanisation of domestic civil servants. This institutionalist account considers EU committees as the transmission-belt through which vertical integration of governance levels occurs.

The empirical observations presented above strongly support the proposed effects of the formal organisation of both EU committees and domestic civil services. First, sectoral identities, roles and co-ordination behaviour are evoked most strongly by those civil servants

employed in domestic sector ministries and agencies and among those officials who attend the Commission expert committees. The territorial allegiances and cross-sectoral modes of coordination are evoked more strongly amongst officials employed within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who attend the Council working parties and/or the comitology committees. Our study also supports the assumption that intensity of interaction within EU institutions accompanies supranational allegiances. However, our data reveals that domestic institutions are more important than the EU institutions as to mould individual roles and behavioural patterns. Finally, the regression analyses rule out the rational choice variable (career opportunities). Consequently, the europeanisation of public officials is determined by their multiple institutional embeddedness.

Recent literature argues that EU committees are sites of vertical and horizontal fusion of administrative systems and policy instruments (Egeberg 1999; Maurer and Larsson 2001; Trondal 2001; Schaefer 2002). We have demonstrated in this study that EU committees are indeed sites of europeanisation of individual civil servants. We demonstrate that the attention, actions, contacts, attitudes and loyalties of European civil servants are increasingly directed towards Brussels. However, we have also indicated that the re-socialising and transformative powers of the EU committees are filtered and biased by the national institutions embedding the EU committee participants.

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Endnotes

¹ This paper has been jointly financed by the ARENA programme (the Norwegian Research Council), the European Institute of Public Administration (The Netherlands), Agder University College and Sørlandets kompetansefond (<http://www.kompetansefond.com/>).

² Although the number of EU committees are unclear and always changing, Maurer and Larsen (2001:10) estimates approximately 600 Commission expert committees, 400 comitology committees and 270 Council working parties. Hence, the approximate number of EU committees is between 1200 and 1300. This estimate excludes committees in the European Parliament and committees elsewhere in the EU system.

³ Moreover, the educational backgrounds of civil servants may also affect their loyalties and preferences in particular ways.

⁴ The questionnaire was jointly developed by Morten Egeberg (ARENA), Jarle Trondal (Centre for European Studies, Agder University College), and Guenther F. Schaefer and his "Comitology team" at EIPA. By the end of 1999, 232 questionnaires had been completed. Of these, 8 were Norwegians, and in 6 cases it was impossible to identify clearly the Member-State affiliations of the respondents. Both these categories of respondents were excluded from the analysis. Our study is thus based on 218 completed questionnaires.

⁵ It could be argued that this may be the result of our sampling. The top level of the member-state administrations can not be expected to attend three days seminars. In fact, this top level may well be over-presented in our sample since it hardly constitutes 20% of a member-state's administration.

⁶ One additional and indeed important "domestic" variable is the ministry versus agency affiliation. This variable, however, is excluded from our analysis due to lack of sufficient statistical variation.

⁷ However, almost 30 per cent of the respondents reported that they spent 50 per cent, or more, of their working time on EU matters (see Table 3).

⁸ Collinearity diagnostics reveal no indications of extreme multicollinearity between the independent variables included in the regression analyses. Hence, each independent variable has independent causal effect on the dependent variables.