THE MANY FACES OF EU COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

Committees linking national administrations and the EU level play a crucial role at all stages of the EU policy process. The literature tends to portray this group system as a coherent mass, characterised by expert-oriented 'deliberative supranationalism', a term developed through studies of comitology (implementation) committees. This article builds on survey data on 218 national officials in 14 Member States who have attended EU committee meetings. We show that these groups do indeed exhibit important common features. Firstly, expert knowledge rather than country size plays a pivotal role in the decision making process. Secondly, across types of committee, participants evoke multiple allegiances and identities. Although loyalty to various national institutions is most frequently expressed, a considerable proportion also has a sense of belonging to the committees as such. However, we also demonstrate that there is significant variation among types of committee. Council and comitology groups both display behavioural patterns that are strongly intergovernmental in character, while Commission committees seem more multi-faceted in this respect. Although our primary aim here is to give a unique empirical account, our main observations are interpreted from an institutional and organisational perspective.

INTRODUCTION[1]

Committees are an essential part of the functioning of modern governance. Some committees are official, whilst others are unofficial or even ad hoc. They play a crucial role in the daily operation of the European Union (EU) system of governance by providing expertise in policy development and decision-making, by linking Member-States' governments and administrations with the EU level as well as by increasing the acceptance of European laws and programs in the member-states. EU committees are important arenas for EU governance as well as melting pots of national and supranational government systems. In various guises, committees are active at every stage of the political process within the EU machinery – assisting the Commission in drafting legislation, preparing the dossiers on which the Council takes decisions and supervising the implementation of EC law by the Commission. The latter are generally referred to as comitology committees, although the term is sometimes extended to include all committees.[2]

This article is the result of an extensive research project comparing domestic government officials attending Commission expert committees (ECs), Council working parties (CWPs) and comitology committees (CCs). For the first time, survey data that make it possible to compare in a systematic way how the three main types of EU committees really function are presented. One of our main observations is that sweeping generalisations on how the system works should be avoided. Rather than dealing with committees as a coherent mass that basically displays the same characteristics (as in Wessels' 'fusion thesis'[3]), our portrayal mirrors a system of governance with several faces. Firstly, Council groups appear very much as intergovernmental arenas in the sense that participants primarily seem to behave as representatives of their home governments. Officials advocate policy positions that routinely have been subject to coordination processes in their respective national administrations, and

they often bring with them instructions on how to act. We think that the general availability of interpreting facilities from all languages into other languages clearly symbolises the presence of highly intergovernmental components in this particular context. Secondly, we unveil that comitology committees exhibit many of the same basically intergovernmental features as the Council working parties. This is surprising since previous research tends to portray comitology as an arena in which participants proceed from being representatives of national interests to becoming representatives of a Europeanised inter-administrative discourse.[4]

Thirdly, our findings suggest that Commission expert committees represent a setting that is significantly different from the two former ones. Concerning expert committees, participants usually evoke in practice a broader repertoire of roles, thus, the behavioural pattern that follows become more multi-faceted than what characterises intergovernmental interaction. Moreover, expert committee attendants obviously have more leeway than those on other committees; they are not very much involved in coordination processes at the national level, and they seldom bring with them a clear mandate on how to act. In addition, the decision situation seems considerably more relaxed as far as language use is concerned: expert committees have, in common with comitology committees, that interpretation is usually available for only a few languages.

However, the picture of committee governance is more complicated than that. This article shows that EU committees also *share* some important properties. First, the role of expertise is pivotal across all types of committee. Participants assign more weight to arguments advocated by members who have demonstrated considerable expertise on the subject matter at hand than to views advanced by colleagues from large Member States as such. Given the huge amount of attention devoted to the formal voting power of the various countries in the Council, this is

an interesting result.[5] Secondly, a considerable proportion of the committee members express allegiance to the committee in which they participate, although this proportion is clearly smaller than the proportion who express loyalty to national institutions. This observation on *multiple* allegiances is important since it may contribute to diminish the controversy over whether loyalty transfer from the national to the supranational level takes place or not. While Wessels[6] asserts that, contrary to certain neo-functional assumptions, no such transfer has happened, Laffan[7] seems to take the opposite position. Thirdly, an overwhelming majority of national officials across committee types expresses trust in the Commission in the sense that they perceive Commission officials in committees to act mainly independently from particular national interests. A clear majority in fact holds Commission officials as among their main interlocutors during meetings. And, finally, 70 per cent say English is the language most frequently used in informal discussions.

Although the main purpose of this article is to report what we see as important findings from an empirical project, the observations referred above raise some crucial theoretical questions. How are the many faces of EU committee governance to be accounted for? The institutionalist turn in European integration studies focuses (or refocuses) on the role that institutions play in shaping actors' role conceptions, interests and identities.[8] However, one could argue that in order to specify the conditions under which this may actually happen one has to 'unpack' institutions (if we are dealing with 'concrete' institutions) to see how they are *organised.*[9] Thus, the marked difference between Council and comitology committees on the one hand, and Commission groups on the other, may be explained by the different organisational structures that we find in the two settings. The basically territorially arranged Council and comitology setting (in the sense that it builds on the representation of national

governments as such) imposes other role expectations on participants than the sectorally and functionally organised Commission.

Although the Council is basically structured according to territory, it is at the same time sectorally and functionally arranged at the ministerial and working party levels. We find a similar 'dual structure' in comitology committees. The organisational embodiment of 'functionality' across committee types may help explain the crucial role that expertise seems to play in all committee decision making. The sectoral or functional affiliation that participants have in common across nationality provides a shared frame of reference and a fertile ground for policy making based on expert arguments. Finally, since EU committees represent rather secondary organisational affiliations for most national officials (who use most of their time and energy in national institutions), it is no wonder that 'supranational' allegiances are only partly expressed. However, quite understandable from an organisational perspective, these allegiances do complement national loyalties.

The article proceeds in five main steps. The first section describes and discusses the data and the methodology underpinning the study. The second section reports on the time requirements and the availability of documentation for domestic officials who attend EU committees. The third section reports the interpretation facilities available for the committee participants and the languages actually used by them. The fourth section reveals the loyalties and identities adopted by domestic EU committee participants, and the fifth section shows how these officials are co-ordinated domestically.

DATA AND METHOD

Since 1995 the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht has organised seminars for member-state officials on the role of committees in the EU political process. In the spring of 1997 we started to distribute a questionnaire[10] to those participants in the seminars who had been involved in one or several committees at the EU level. The questionnaire was designed to get an overview of the experience of member-state officials in EU committees: In what kind and how many committees they were involved, how frequently meetings were taking place, how long they lasted, what languages were used, how committee meetings were co-ordinated, 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 they perceived the roles performed by other participants and how well they were co-ordinated and prepared before meetings.

During the first day of the seminar, those participants who had been involved in EU committees were asked to complete the questionnaire. By distributing the questionnaires at the first day of the Seminar, we minimised potential influences or "noise" from the seminar as such. Participation in the seminars in Maastricht was very unevenly distributed between different member-states. There were very few participants from the Southern Member-States, but regular participation from central European Member-States, the U.K. and Ireland. In addition to the seminars in Maastricht, EIPA organised a number of "Comitology seminars" in the member-states, particularly 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 the permanent representation of all the member-states from which we had a very small number of respondents (N), asking them to help us to get more completed questionnaires from these

member-states. This effort was very successful in the case of Belgium and Spain, but did not result in many additional completed questionnaires from the other member-states. The composition of the sample, by member-state, is summarised in Table I. The Table also shows the type of ministry the respondents came from, differentiating between the foreign ministry, other ministries, agencies and the Member-State's permanent representation in Brussels.

Table I about here

This sample cannot claim to be representative neither with respect to the Member-States included, nor with respect to the type of committees Member-State officials participated in. From the total sample, 132 respondents participated in 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 in all three types. Moreover, 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 I) show that expert committee participants are mostly recruited from sectoral ministries and agencies and less from permanent representations. Council working party participants, in contrast, are recruited to a larger extent from permanent representations and sectoral ministries.

Like in 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 tables in the following sections.

TIME REQUIREMENTS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTATION

For member-state officials, participation in EU committees means consumption of scarce resources like time, time that will not be available for national concerns. Table II shows that time spent on EU matters varies with the place in the hierarchy of a respondent.

Table II about here

As could be expected, the major burden of committee work is carried by head of sections, senior advisers and advisers, the middle and lower middle 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[11], Trondal[12] and Trondal and Veggeland.[13] Surprising is the relatively large proportion (20%) who come from the Director General or Deputy Director General level.[14] This can possibly be explained by the fact that it is common practice that, on important issues, the top level of Member-States' administrations will attend committee meetings in Brussels, often accompanied by lower level officials. It 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. Moreover, Council working party 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.

Involvement in EU affairs may affect one's attitude to European integration positively or negatively. If a member-state's civil servant spends a lot of his working time with EU matters, he or she may, for instance, get increasingly fed up with it or conversely develop an increased

appreciation of the importance of EU issues for Member-State administrations. The majority of the sampled officials had positive attitudes towards European integration when they first got involved in EU committee work. Table III shows that the majority of respondents did not change their attitude towards European integration later.

Table III about here

Only 8% indicated that participation led to a negative view on European integration. 57% did not change their attitude and 35% indicated that their participation led them to view European integration from a more positive perspective. Hooghe[15] makes a parallel observation within the ranks of Commission officials. She demonstrates that senior Commission officials are generally more supranationally oriented than newly hired Commission officials.

There are significant differences with respect to the frequency and duration of meetings between expert committees, Council working parties and comitology committees (see Table IV). 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[16] and Trondal[17] show that permanent representatives attend considerable more Council working parties than officials coming from the capitals. Moreover, almost half of the expert committees reported in our data meet only 1-3 times a year while 54% of the Council working parties meet 8 or more times a year, suggesting that involvement in Council working parties is very time consuming with frequent meetings. Hence, Council working party participants seem to participate more intensively on EU committees than expert committee participants. About 60% of all types of committee

meetings last one day, half-day meetings are rare, however more than 1/3 of the expert committees last more than 1 day. “The trend seems to move to one day meetings where Member State representatives arrive in Brussels in the morning and leave again in the evening”.[18]

Tables IV and V about here

We also found interesting differences with respect to the involvement of Member-State officials in EU committees between small, medium and large Member-State. We classified Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg and Sweden as small Member-States, Belgium, Greece, the Netherlands and Portugal as medium sized Member-States, and France, Germany, Spain and the U.K. as large ones. Table V shows, that the number of meetings attended per year was by far the highest for officials from small member-states. This is particularly the case for expert and comitology committees. In contrast, Council working parties are presumably attended by senior policy officials of large member-states who do not participate in expert and comitology committees but delegate these tasks to more ‘junior’ experts. In small member-states, as a result of the smaller size of their administrations, senior policy officials are at the same time the member-states’ experts.

Finally, a reasonable assumption would be that documentation is a necessary condition for policy preparation. It has been frequently reported, that documentation for committee meetings arrives only shortly before the meetings take place.[19] Table VI shows that in expert committees and comitology committees in well over 50% of the cases, documentation is in the hands of the participant a week or more before the meeting takes place. The situation in Council working parties is quite different. Two thirds of the respondents reported that

documentation arrives only a day or two before the meeting. This suggests that the pace of work in Council is the most intense and that Member-State officials are often confronted with documentation at the very last minute. In the case of comitology committees, 14% reported that documentation is only available at the time of the meeting. These are probably committees in the agricultural sector, which meet weekly or bi-weekly. These committees are dealing largely with routine matters where preparation of the participants is not required. The results suggest that the situation may not be as bad as it is often pictured: more than 85% of the participants have the relevant documentation in their hands before they arrive in the meeting room. And those attending meetings chaired by the frequently criticised Commission (expert and comitology committees), are in fact better equipped in this respect than those in Council groups.

Table VI about here

AVAILABILITY OF INTERPRETATION FACILITIES AND LANGUAGE USE IN COMMITTEES.

Participating in EU committees means communication. Today there are 11 official languages. From 1 May 2004 the number of languages will increase dramatically in the EU and the subsequent need for translation facilities. Hence, the communication- and language problems will increase significantly with enlargement. Communication both formally in meetings and informally during coffee breaks, lunches and in the hallways is an essential requirement for participating effectively in these meetings

Already today it is practically impossible to provide simultaneous translation facilities from all official languages into all others in all committee meetings. Common practice is often to

translate from 7, 8 or 9 languages in to 3 or 4 as Table VII shows. Participants may, with few exceptions, speak their own language, but they have to understand French, English or German, or perhaps Spanish or Italian in order to follow the discussions. In some cases the committee may work in only two or three languages with simultaneous translation only between these languages. Our respondents reported a few cases where committees worked in only one language. Table VII also shows significant differences between the different types of committees: In Council working parties, where communication is obviously most important as final decisions are prepared here, full interpreting facilities were available in almost 60% of the meetings. In Commission expert committees and comitology committees 57% and 68% reported interpreting facilities from 7 or 9 into 3 or 4 languages. Working in only 2 or 3 languages is found most frequently in expert and comitology committees. Expert groups sometimes work in only one language, but only in one of 20 cases. Interpretation facilities are clearly most important in Council working parties, however already today, in 40% of all Council working party meetings full interpretation facilities are not available. Still, Table VII indicates the intergovernmental nature of the Council working parties compared to the expert and comitology committees.

Table VII about here

Successful negotiations and discussions in committees do not depend solely on what happens in the committee room, but also on what happens during coffee breaks and in discussions in the corridors and lunchrooms and that is closely related to the capability of participants to communicate in other languages than their own. Not surprisingly we found a relatively high competence in foreign languages among those participating in committees (self-assessment of respondents), particularly in English, as Table VIII shows. 90% of non-native English

speakers are able to communicate somehow in English, and more than 80% can speak English good or very well. French capabilities are not as widely spread, yet there are still 150 out of about 190 non-native French speakers in the sample who somehow can manage to get along in French if necessary. The numbers are much lower for German. We differentiated between Germanic, Latin and other native language groups whereby Germanic languages include German, English, Dutch and the Scandinavian languages, except Finnish. Latin languages include French, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian. Greek and Finnish were categorised as other languages together with a few respondents, whose native language is not one of the community official languages. Surprising is the fact that the English competence ("good" and "very good") of native speakers of Latin languages is much higher than the French competence of native Germanic language speakers. English is clearly the most frequently used language in Brussels and it can be expected that this will further increase with enlargement. At least for our sample English has clearly become the first foreign language of member-state officials participating in committee meetings, indicating a linguistic convergence in the EU.

Table VIII and IX about here

It can be expected that this development will reinforce with enlargement since English has become the first foreign language in all the accession countries. Table IX underscores this impression that English has become the major language in Brussels in informal communications between Member-State officials. French is still important, but German is almost of no relevance. In meetings, however, Member-State officials prefer to speak their native language, but if they do not, they are more likely to speak English than French.[20]

MEMBER-STATE OFFICIALS' LOYALTIES AND IDENTITIES

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.[21] 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.[22] Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace[23] picture a "Continuous tension between the home affiliation and the pull of the collective forum". However, particular roles, identities and modes of decision-making behaviour tend to be evoked in some situations more than in others.[24]

National officials attending EU committees spend most of their time and energy in national administrations[25]. Accordingly, we expect their dominant institutional allegiances and identifications to be national when entering EU committees. However, "membership" in EU committees imposes *additional* obligations on officials, although for most of a secondary character. They are exposed to new agendas and actors, and are expected to look for common solutions.[26] According to Christiansen and Kirchner[27], "committees permit national officials to familiarise themselves with the nature of the EU's administrative system". However, officials participating in Council working parties and in comitology committees may be expected to behave more like government representatives than officials attending Commission expert committees. The main reason for this is the basically territorial principle of organisation underlying both Council and comitology groups. In the Commission expert committees, on the other hand, participants are expected to behave more like independent experts. Thus, *professional allegiances and sectoral role conceptions* are likely to be enacted fairly strongly among the latter.

Table X shows that national officials who attend different EU committees express more allegiance towards their own national government institutions than towards the EU committees on which they participate. Thus as expected, supranational loyalties seem to be secondary to national allegiances. However, some officials feel considerable responsibility towards EU level entities, particularly the Council working party participants.[28] Hence, a certain kind of 'supranational', or system, allegiance seems to be stronger among Council working party officials than among expert committee and comitology committee participants. Intergovernmentalism and 'supranationalism' thus seem not to conflict but to complement each other.[29] Moreover, the vast majority of the committee participants have positive attitudes towards European integration generally and within their "own" policy/issue area particularly. However, relatively few officials change attitudes in this regard due to committee participation (see table III above).

Table X about here

Also as expected, those in Council working parties tend to assign more weight to their relationship to their own government than those attending the Commission expert committees, although the difference is not very big. A remarkably large proportion of Council working party participants identify themselves with their own sector administration, policy arena or professional background. This pattern is probably due to the high degree of functional specialisation that accompanies participation in the basically intergovernmentally arranged Council structure. Hence, national officials attending EU committees evoke a complex role repertoire indeed.

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

Table XI about here

Table XI reveals that civil servants who attend Council working parties and comitology committees tend to consider other colleagues mainly as government representatives.[30] Commission expert committee participants, on the other hand, tend to perceive other colleagues as having more mixed roles. Here, only a minority (i.e. 45%) find that their counterparts behave mainly as government representatives. Thus, although role conceptions are highly multi-faceted across types of committee (cf. Table X), actual behaviour seems to mirror more clearly the prevalent organisational features of the various arenas.

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

Table XII about here

First, almost no major differences can be observed between officials attending different EU committees as far as the above considerations are concerned. Second, as to the relative priority given to the proposals, statements and arguments of other actors, one consideration seems to be more important than others: Officials attending EU committees pay most attention to what their colleagues and experts from their own country have to say. This observation underscores the tendency already indicated in Tables X and XI on the primacy of national allegiances among EU committee participants. Participants, however, also emphasise

the points of view of colleagues from other Member-States who have demonstrated considerably expertise on the subject matter at hand. Officials give considerably less attention to arguments from colleagues from large Member-States as such, and colleagues from Member-States within their own region. In support of the deliberative supranationalist account[31], the quality of the argument presented by other committee participants is considered more important than the sheer size and geopolitical location of the member-states they represent. 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 an element of supranational identification 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 considered much more important than EU level interest groups and firms. This observation underscores the general tendency apparent in Table XII, namely that national officials attending EU committees pay more heed to national institutions than to supranational ones.

In sum, what we see is that *arguing*, not only *bargaining*, is a salient feature of the system.[32] Hence, the intergovernmental perspective, picturing national actors entering EU arenas with predetermined and fixed preferences has to be slightly modified. Obviously, deliberation is taking place among actors in which interests may be moved and reshaped on the basis of expert knowledge.

Moreover, there is obviously also a good deal of trust in the Commission, as further underpinned by Table XIII.

Table XIII about here

National officials attending different EU committees seem to agree on the relative independence of Commission officials from particular national interests. Only a very small minority, mostly among the Council working party 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.

Thus, participation in 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-existing allegiances to some extent.

THE CO-ORDINATION BEHAVIOUR OF MEMBER-STATE OFFICIALS ATTENDING EU COMMITTEES

In the last section we have demonstrated that national officials attending Commission expert committees are probably behaving more like independent experts than when attending Council working parties and comitology committees. In contrast, when attending Council working parties and comitology committees, national officials perceive of themselves and their colleagues from other Member-States more as government representatives. The different role and identity perceptions of national government officials attending different EU committees may partly reflect different co-ordination processes at the national level. One difference may be expected between officials attending Commission expert committees on the one hand, and officials participating in Council working parties and comitology committees on the other. Officials attending expert committees are expected to be less subject to national

co-ordination. Officials attending Council working parties and comitology committees, on the other hand, are more likely to participate in committee meetings with clearly co-ordinated 'positions' from their respective national governments.[33]

The reasons for this difference are twofold: The formal organisation of the committees and the voting practices within them. First, the Commission expert committees are mainly organised according to sectoral and functional principles. The Council working parties and the comitology committees, although sectorally and functionally specialised, have a stronger territorial component in their organisational structures. Arguably, committees organised by territory accompany stronger co-ordination pressure on the participants than committees organised by sector and function.[34] Secondly, 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". In contrast to comitology committees, expert committees and Council working parties do not vote in any formal sense[35]. Council working parties are, however, located more clearly in the "shadow of the vote" than Commission expert committees.[36] Whereas expert committee participants are not expected to reach any agreements or formal decisions during most committee meetings, officials attending the Council working groups and the comitology committees are expected to reach compromises, majority decisions and often consensus at the end of meetings.[37]

Table XIV reveals different modes of policy co-ordination behaviour amongst EU committee participants. As expected, participants in Commission expert committees seem less co-ordinated nationally than officials participating in Council working parties and comitology committees. Officials attending comitology committees seem to be even better co-ordinated nationally than officials attending Council working parties, though the difference is not very

large. By comparison, officials in Commission expert committees tend to take 'positions' that are less strongly co-ordinated back home. Still, when asked whether national interests or professional considerations are deemed vital when deciding what 'positions' to pursue, no major differences are observed between officials participating in different EU committees. Council working party participants seem, however, to pay more attention to national interests than do expert committees and comitology committee participants.[38] These differences are marginal, however. The most significant observation is that in Commission expert committees, participants have much more leeway to follow "their" own position than in the Council working parties and the comitology committees.

Table XIV about here

CONCLUSIONS

The study of European integration has increasingly shifted focus from the horizontal spill-over processes at the EU level and the 'grand bargains' struck 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. In the first two sections we observed that many national officials spend a considerable amount of time and energy on EU committee work. In fact almost one third of our respondents use at least half of their working hours on preparation, co-ordination and participation in EU committees. Council working parties are more demanding in this respect than other EU committees. Officials from small Member-States seem to attend meetings more frequently than their counterparts from larger countries. This is due to the smaller size of their administrations.

Documentation is available earlier in Commission expert committees and comitology committees than in Council working parties where it commonly arrives only a day or two before meetings. Only a small minority receives documentation at the time of arrival. Interpreting facilities are more available in Council working parties than in other committees. For example, in the Council 59% report that all languages are translated into all languages while this holds for only 17% in other committees. English is by far the most frequently used language in formal as well as in informal meetings.

Moreover, as could be expected given the primary institutional affiliation of national officials, national allegiances are more clearly expressed than 'supranational' identities. However, a considerable proportion *also* feels loyalty to the committee(s) in which they participate. A clear majority expresses considerable trust in the Commission in the sense that they acknowledge its independence from particular national interests. Commission officials are among their most important interlocutors. Sheer intergovernmentalism is also transcended in the sense that the quality of the arguments seems more important than the kind of country the speaker originates from. The multiple roles and identities evoked by our respondents also point beyond a pure intergovernmental logic. In all kinds of committees they identify themselves heavily with sectoral and functional administrations and policy arenas. The government representative role is most clearly expressed in the Council and comitology settings. It is also in these settings that their positions and mandates are most clearly co-ordinated and instructed back home.

Recent literature argues that EU committees are sites of vertical and horizontal fusion of administrative systems and policy instruments.[39] We have demonstrated in this study that EU committees are indeed sites of Europeanisation of individual civil servants. We demonstrate

that the attention, energy, contacts, linguistic practices, attitudes and loyalties of European national civil servants are to a considerable degree directed towards Brussels. However, we have also indicated that the re-socialising and transformative powers of the EU committees are heavily filtered and biased by the national institutions embedding the EU committee participants. Last, but not least, we have shown that there are indeed *many* faces of EU committee governance.

NOTES

[1] This article has been financially supported by ARENA (the Norwegian Research Council), the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), Agder University College and Sørlandets kompetansefond (http://www.kompetansefond.com/)

[2] T. Christiansen and E. Kirchner, *Europe in Change. Committee Governance in the European Union* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2000).

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[8] M. Aspinwall and G. Schneider, "Institutional research on the European Union: mapping the field", in G. Schneider and M. Aspinwall eds, *The rules of integration. Institutionalist approaches to the study of Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2001).

[9] M. Egeberg, "An organisational approach to European Integration - What organisations tells us about system transformation, committee governance and Commission decision making", ARENA working paper 02/19.

[10] The questionnaire was jointly developed by Morten Egeberg, Jarle Trondal and Guenther F. Schaefer together with the „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 affiliation of the respondents. Both these categories of respondents are excluded from this analysis. This article is thus based on 218 completed questionnaires as indicated in table I.

[11] M. Egeberg, 'Transcending Intergovernmentalism? Identity and role perceptions of national officials in EU decision-making', *Journal of European Public Policy* 6/3 (1999) pp. 456-474.

[12] J. Trondal, *Administrative Integration Across Levels of Governance. Integration through Participation in EU Committees*. ARENA Report 7/2001.

[13] J. Trondal and F. Veggeland, 'Access, Voice and Loyalty. The Representation of Domestic Civil Servants in EU Committees', *Journal of European Public Policy* 10/1 (forthcoming in 2003).

[14] It could be argued that this may be the result of sampling. The top level of the Member State administrations can not usually be expected to attend three-day 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. See also Institut für Europäische Politik, *Comitology – Characteristics, Performance and Options*. Preliminary Final Report (Bonn 1987).

[15] L. Hooghe, 'Supranational Activists or Intergovernmental Agents? Explaining the Orientations of Senior Commission Officials towards European Integration', *Comparative Political Studies* 32/4 (1999) pp. 435-453.

[16] J. Lewis, 'The methods of community in EU decision-making and administrative rivalry in the Council's infrastructure', *Journal of European Public Policy* 7/2 (2000) pp. 261-289.

[17] J. Trondal, *Administrative Integration Across Levels of Governance. Integration through Participation in EU Committees*. ARENA Report 7/2001.

[18] G.F. Schaefer et al, 'How do Comitology Committees work: an insider perspective', in G.F. Schaefer (ed.) *Governance by Committee. The Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation*. (EIPA 2002) p. 154.

[19] Statskonsult (1999:6), *Norsk deltakelse i EU-komiteer. En oversikt over trekk ved forvaltningens deltakelse i komiteer og ekspertgrupper under Europakommisjonen*. (Oslo, Norway); SOU (1996:6), *Ett år med EU. Svenska statstjänstemäns erfarenheter av arbetet i EU.* (Stockholm, Sweden); J. Trondal (2001), *Administrative*

Integration Across Levels of Governance. Integration through Participation in EU Committees. (ARENA Report 7).

[20] It is interesting that 20% of the Spanish respondents use another language than their mother tongue in meetings. At the same time 45% use English in meetings while only 10% of the sample are English native speakers.

[21] J. Elster, *The Multiple Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986). T. Risse, 'An Emerging European Identity? What we know and how to make sense of it', in *Europe Transformed? The European Union and Collective Identity Change*. ARENA/IDNET International Policy Conference, 11 October 2002. E. Fouilleux, A. Smith and J. de Maillard (2002), 'Council Working Groups: Their role in the production of European problems and policies', in G.F. Schaefer (ed.) *Governance by Committee. The Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation*. Maastricht: EIPA.

[22] J. Lewis, 'Is the 'Hard Bargaining' Image of the Council Misleading? The Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Local Elections Directive', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 36/4 (1998) pp. 479-504.

[23] F. Hayes-Renshaw and H. Wallace, *The Council of Ministers* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1997) p. 279.

[24] J.G. March and J.P. Olsen, Democratic Governance (New York: The Free Press 1995). H. Simon, *Administrative Behaviour* (Second Edition. New York: Macmillan 1957).

[25] Almost 30% of the respondents reported, however, that they spent 50% or more of their working time on EU matters. See Table II.

[26] M. Egeberg, 'Transcending Intergovernmentalism? Identity and role perceptions of national officials in EU decision-making', *Journal of European Public Policy* 6/3 (1999) pp. 456-474.

[27] T. Christiansen and E. Kirchner, *Europe in Change. Committee Governance in the European Union* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2000) p. 9.

[28] J. Lewis, 'Is the 'Hard Bargaining' Image of the Council Misleading? The Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Local Elections Directive', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 36/4 (1998) pp. 479-504. J. Trondal, 'Beyond the EU membership – non-membership dichotomy? Supranational identities among national EU decision-makers', *Journal of European Public Policy* 9/3 (2002) pp. 468-487.

[29] T. Risse, 'An Emerging European Identity? What we know and how to make sense of it', in *Europe Transformed? The European Union and Collective Identity Change*. ARENA/IDNET International Policy Conference, 11 October 2002.

[30] G.F. Schaefer et al, 'How do Comitology Committees work: an insider perspective', in G.F. Schaefer (ed.) *Governance by Committee. The Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation.* (EIPA 2002) p. 158. E. Fouilleux, A. Smith and J. de Maillard (2002), 'Council Working Groups: Their role in the production of European problems and policies', in G.F. Schaefer (ed.) *Governance by Committee. The Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation*. Maastricht: EIPA.

[31] E.O. Eriksen and J.E. Fossum eds., *Democracy in the European Union. Integration through Deliberation?* (London: Routledge 2000).

[32] J. Lewis, 'Is the 'Hard Bargaining' Image of the Council Misleading? The Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Local Elections Directive', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 36/4 (1998) pp. 479-504. J. Neyer, 'Justifying Comitology: The Promise of Deliberation', paper presented for the European Community Studies Association (Sixth Biennial International Conference Pittsburgh 1999.

[33] J. Trondal, "Multiple Institutional Embeddedness in Europe. The Case of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Government Officials", *Scandinavian Political Studies* 23/4 (2000) pp: 311-341.

[34] M. Egeberg and J. Trondal, 'Differentiated Integration in Europe: The Case of the EEA Country, Norway', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 37/1 (1999) pp. 133-142.

[35] M. Mattila and J.-E. Lane, 'Why Unanimity in the Council? A Roll Call Analysis of Council Voting', *European Union Politics* 2/1 (2001) pp. 31-52. A. Tuerk and G.F. Schaefer (2002), 'Legislation and Implementation: theoretical considerations and empirical findings', in G.F. Schaefer (ed.) *Governance by Committee. The Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation*. Maastricht: EIPA.

[36] J. Golub, 'In the shadow of the vote? Decision-making in the European Community, *International Organization* 53/4 (1999) pp. 733-764. A. Tuerk and G.F. Schaefer (2002), 'Legislation and Implementation: theoretical considerations and empirical findings', in G.F. Schaefer (ed.) *Governance by Committee. The Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation*. Maastricht: EIPA.

[37] J. Lewis, "Is the 'Hard Bargaining' Image of the Council Misleading? The Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Local Elections Directive", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 36/4 (1998) pp: 479-504.

[38] E. Fouilleux, J.D. Maillard and A. Smith, 'Council Working Groups: Their role in the production of European problems and policies', in G.F. Schaefer ed., *Governance by Committee, the Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation* (EIPA 2002).

[39] M. Egeberg, 'Transcending Intergovernmentalism? Identity and role perceptions of national officials in EU decision-making', *Journal of European Public Policy* 6/3 (1999) pp. 456-474. A. Maurer and T. Larsson, 'Democratic legitimacy in EU politics – no way out for committees', in G.F. Schaefer ed., *Governance by Committee, the Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation* (EIPA 2002). J. Trondal, *Administrative Integration Across Levels of Governance. Integration through Participation in EU Committees*. ARENA Report 7/2001. G.F. Schaefer ed., *Governance by Committee, the Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation* (EIPA 2002).

TABLES

Table I: Composition of the sample, by member-state and institutional affiliation

Member-State	ministry or institution				Total
	foreign ministry	other ministries	Agencies etc	Permanent representation	
AUSTRIA		14	3		17
BELGIUM	2	20	7		29
DENMARK	1	5	1		7
FINLAND	2	17	2		21
FRANCE		3	1		4
GERMANY		7	3	1	11
GREECE		1		1	2
IRELAND		1		2	4[a]
LUXEMBOURG	1				1
NETHERLANDS	2	10	1		13
PORTUGAL	5	3	1		9
SPAIN		55	5		60
SWEDEN	2	23	9		34
UNITED KINGDOM	1	4	1		6
TOTAL N	16	163	34	4	218[a]

[a]) *One respondent did not answer the question about institutional affiliation.*

Table II: Time consumed in committee work, by position (%)

	Position			
Working time spent on EU matters	director general, deputy dir. general	head/deputy of unit/division	Head of section, senior advisor, advisor	Total
15% or less	37	26	24	27
15-50%	43	44	44	44
50% or more	20	30	32	29
Total %	100	100	100	100
N	**40**	**27**	**131**	**198**

Table III: Working time consumed in committees and change of attitudes (%)

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

Table IV: Frequency and duration of meetings in the 3 types of committees (%)

Number of Meetings per Year		**EC**[a]	**CWP**[a]	**CC**[a]
1-3		49	15	36
4-8		30	31	34
8+		21	54	30
Total	**%**	100	100	100
	N	**132**	**131**	**76**
Duration of Meetings				
1/2day		6	11	10
1 day		58	60	65
1 day+		36	29	25
Total	**%**	100	100	100
	N	**131**	**126**	**68**

[a]*) In this and all the following tables Commission expert committees are abbreviated with EC, Council working parties with CWP, and comitology committees with CC.*

Table V: Officials from small, medium and large member-states participating in all 3 types of committees

Number of Meetings per Year	EC			CWP			CC		
	small	medium	large	small	Medium	large	small	medium	large
1-3	3	3	5	3	1	1	7	2	2
4-8	8	5	1	4	4	2	3	5	4
8+	6	0	0	10	3	3	7	1	0
Total N	17	8	6	17	8	6	17	8	6

Table VI: Availability of documentation for the committee meetings (%)

Documentation arrival		EC	CWP	CC
A week before		64	20	55
A day or two before		32	70	31
At time of arrival		4	10	14
Total	**%**	100	100	100
	N	**110**	**132**	**71**

Table VII: Availability of interpreting facilities in committee meetings (%)

Interpreting Facilities		EC	CWP	CC
Translation from all into all languages		17	59	17
From 7 to 9 languages into 3 or 4 languages		56	37	68
Only 2 or 3 languages		20	3	15
Work only in one language		5	1	0
Total	**%**	100	100	100
	N	**118**	**132**	**71**

Table VIII: English, French and German capabilities, by native language groups (%)

Language Capabilities			Native Language Groups			Total	
			Germanic	Latin	Other	N	%
English	very good and good		98	78	100	**167**	88
	can manage		2	22	0	**22**	12
	Total	%	100	100	100		100
		N	**86**	**81**	**22**	**189**	
French	very good and good		51	60	69	**84**	56
	can manage		49	40	31	**65**	44
	Total	%	100	100	100		100
		N	**71**	**65**	**13**	**149**	
German	very good and good		41	25	14	**19**	35
	can manage		59	75	86	**35**	65
	Total	%	100	100	100		100
		N	**39**	**8**	**7**	**54**	

Table IX: Language use in and around meetings

		language most frequently used in committee meetings	Language most frequently used in informal discussions
French		15	19
Spanish		23	7
English		45	70
Other		17	4
Total	%	100	100
	N	**210**	**202**

Table X: Percentage who to a *great extent*[a] feel allegiance to (identify with or feel responsible to) the following when participating in committees

	EC	CWP	CC
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
Total N	**106**	**109**	**58**

[a]) Values 1 and 2 combined on the following five-point scale: 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).

Table XI: Officials' perception of the role of colleagues from other countries when participating in committees (%)

	EC	CWP	CC
Mainly independent experts	33	11	6
Mixed roles	22	12	20
Mainly government representative	45	77	74
Total %	100	100	100
Total N	**113**	**122**	**66**

Table XII: Percentage who give *much consideration*[a] to proposals, statements and arguments from the following when participating in committees

	EC	CWP	CC
Colleagues and experts from my own Member-State	87	84	81
Colleagues from other member-states who have demonstrated considerably 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 Member-State	26	32	44
Interest groups and firms I know or have contact with at the European level	17	11	13
Total 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).

Table XIII: National officials' perceptions of Commission officials' independence of particular national interests when participating in committees (%)

		EC	CWP	CC
Mainly independent		81	70	79
Mixed roles		13	18	16
Mainly dependent		6	12	5
Total	**%**	100	100	100
	N	**109**	**112**	**63**

Table XIV: Percentage of officials who co-ordinate their "position" *most of the time*[a] before participating in committee meetings

	EC	CWP	CC
I have to co-ordinate with the Foreign Office or 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 in 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 in the best interest of 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 question is not important for my country, I take the "position" I think is the best for the member-states as a group	52	46	46
Total N	**110**	**119**	**62**

[a]*) Value 1 on the following three-point scale: always or most of the time (value 1), about half of the time (2), rarely or never (3).*