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Abstract

This paper challenges widely held claims that international bureaucracies lack the potential to profoundly shape the behaviour, roles and identities of its personnel, and that the role of international civil servants are primarily shaped by where the officials come from. It is argued and empirically suggested that international bureaucracies may possess considerable clout to shape some basic behavioural perceptions among its personnel. The rise of what is phrased as 'actor-level supranationalism' among international civil servants suggests that international bureaucracies 'matter' and adds value beyond being mere secretariats of member-state governments – thus serving a 'common good'. Benefiting from a large and novel set of interviews with civil servants from the European Commission, the OECD Secretariat and the WTO Secretariat, 'actor-level supranationalism' is shown to rise through *internal and external* processes of socialisation and adaptation. Actor-level supranationalism is associated with four factors: (i) the length of tenure among international civil servants, (ii) types of prior institutional affiliations of these officials, (iii) size and scope of administrative capacities of international bureaucracies, and (iv) the power and autonomy of international bureaucracies.

Key words: Adaptation, common good, international bureaucracy, socialisation, supranationalism

Introduction: Actor-level supranationalism and the common good[1]

Modern governments daily formulate and execute policies with consequences for the common good (Hupe and Edwards 2012). With the gradual increased role of international bureaucracies in this regard – notably the European Commission (Commission) - one unresolved question is to what extent and under what conditions international bureaucracies are vehicles for the 'common good'. This is a sometimes favoured and sometimes detested role of international bureaucracies. Times of austerity and international crises tend to call upon international organisations to compensate for self-regarding governments. As an area of research, the extent to which and the conditions under which international bureaucracies serve a 'common good' has become increasingly vibrant, however, still offering inconclusive findings (e.g. Beyers 2010; Checkel 2007; Moravcsik 1999). This paper challenges widely held claims that international bureaucracies lack the potential to profoundly shape the behaviour, roles and identities of its personnel, and that the role of international civil servants are primarily shaped by where the officials come from (cf. Hooghe 2007 and 2012). It is argued and empirically suggested that international bureaucracies – also beyond the Commission - may possess considerable clout to shape some basic behavioural perceptions among its personnel. The rise of what is phrased as 'actor-level supranationalism' (see below) among international civil servants suggests that international bureaucracies 'matter' and adds value beyond being mere secretariats of member-state governments – thus serving a 'common good' (Moravcsik 1999; Radaelli and O'Connor 2009). The observations reported benefit from a large and novel set of 121 interviews with civil servants working in three international bureaucracies: the secretariat of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the secretariat of the Organisation for Economic Co-

operation and Development (OECD), and the Commission administration. An extensive use of quotes from the interviews is used to illustrate how and under what conditions international civil servants act as supranational actors.

Supranationalism has been studied particularly in association with the EU (Checkel 2007; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006; Ellinas and Suleiman 2011; Nelsen and Stubb 2003; Rosamond 2000; Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998; Somek 2001; Trondal 2007). A stripped-down definition of supranationalism was presented by Rosamond (2000: 204) as 'the development of authoritative institutions of governance and networks of policy-making activity above the nation-state'. An international organisation can thus be denoted 'supranational' when it constitutes an entity distinct from national governments and has a 'separate identity and loyalty and exercises some measure of genuine autonomous power' (Slaughter 2005: 22). A supranational mode of governance has furthermore been defined as a mode of governance in which international organisations possess jurisdiction over specific policy domains within the territory encompassed by member-states (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998: 8). These definitions of supranationalism relate mainly to the *polity* of international organisations, i.e. to institutions above the nation-state which possess authority and capacity to formulate and execute relatively independent public policy (e.g. Hooghe 2012: 91).

One way of approaching if and under what conditions international bureaucracies are vehicles of the 'common good' is to examine how and when international civil servants evoke the role as 'supranational actor'. Empirically this paper studies *actor-level* supranationalism in the three abovementioned international bureaucracies. Among these, the Commission has traditionally been conceived of as most supranational. This paper

considers the rise of common norms, values and goals inside international organisations ('actor-level supranationalism') to represent the 'common good'. In classic theories of European integration – such as neo-functionalism – it is assumed that one of the key driving forces of integration is the shift of individual loyalties from the national to the international level (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006; Rosamond 2000). International institutions are assumed to have a capacity to create a sense of community and belonging beyond the nation-state, i.e. they socialise staff (Checkel 2007; Deutsch 1957; Haas 1958). The enactment of a supranational role may thus imply that individuals report loyalty to and a sense of belonging to an international organisation, and share, and act according to, some norms, ideas, beliefs and goals of the organisation. This paper shows that actor-level supranationalism is present among civil servants in all three international bureaucracies studied. International bureaucracies are thus important vehicles of the 'common good'. Moreover, the Commission is not any different from the two other international bureaucracies in this regard. Yet, actor-level supranationalism takes several forms and can be explained by a variety of factors. Essentially, this study suggests that international bureaucracies may possess considerable capacity to shape their employees – both through behavioural and role internalisation and adaptation (see Trondal and Veggeland 2003).

Theoretically the paper departs from a classic neo-functionalist theory of European integration assuming that one key driving force of integration is the shift of individual loyalties from the national to the international level. International institutions are thought to have the capacity to create senses of community and belonging that are relatively independent of the constituent states. However, to theoretically 'normalise' international bureaucracies it may also be useful to apply classic models of bureaucracies in our

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understanding of international bureaucracy. Two models are easy targets: the model of *representative bureaucracy* and that of *Weberian bureaucracy*. These models are based on a set of assumptions as to the mechanisms involved in shaping norms and behaviours of civil servants. This paper suggests that actor-level supranationalism emerge through *internal* and *external* internalisation and adaptation processes to international bureaucracies. Actor-level supranationalism is particularly associated with four factors:

(i)   the length of tenure among international civil servants,

(ii)   types of prior institutional affiliations of these officials,

(iii)   size and scope of administrative capacities of international bureaucracies, and

(iv)   the power and autonomy of international bureaucracies.

The paper proceeds in the following steps: The next section clarifies conceptually how actor-level supranationalism can be empirically recognised as well as mechanisms that may help explain variations in this behavioural logic among international civil servants. The subsequent sections outline the methodology and data used to illuminate actor-level supranationalism, followed by an empirical section reporting key findings from these data.

Analytical components

I   Representative bureaucracy, Weberian bureaucracy and the supranational actor

The model of the *representative bureaucracy* assumes that the 'baggage' that civil servants bring with them into a bureaucracy profoundly shapes their behaviour, and furthermore that organisations perform better if their staff reflect the characteristics of their constituent populations (Andrews et al. 2005; Selden 1998). Civil servants' former institutional

affiliations, their educational backgrounds, their geographical origins etc. are assumed to affect the way they act at office. The bureaucracy will thus change its performance according to the composition of staff. This is the picture of the embedded bureaucracy that reflects society broadly speaking. As indicated by Hooghe in her study of the Commission (2007 and 2012), civil servants may share the international norms of an international organisation because of mechanisms in operation prior to the civil servants entering the organisation. Hooghe (2007: 64) concludes that more important than socialisation to international norms within the Commission is socialisation outside, and she states that '…several roads lead to Commission norms, but few run through international socialization'. Thus, the claims of Hooghe are a good illustration of a view which corresponds with the model of the representative bureaucracy, i.e. that what the civil servants bring with them into the organisation is of significance to its conduct.

By contrast, a *Weberian bureaucracy* model assumes that bureaucracies possess the capacity to shape staff through a set of mechanisms, e.g. socialisation (behavioural internalisation through established bureaucratic cultures), discipline (behavioural adaptation through incentive systems) and control (behavioural adaptation through hierarchical control and supervision) (Page 1992; Weber 1983; Yi-Chong and Weller 2004). These mechanisms ensure that bureaucracies perform their tasks relatively independently of the individuals who are employed. Causal emphasis is thus put on the internal organisational structures of the bureaucracies. The Weberian bureaucracy model provides a picture of formal organisation as creator of 'organisational man' (Simon 1965) and as a stabilising element in politics more broadly (Olsen 2010). According to this model, bureaucracies develop their own nuts and bolts quite independently of society. The model implies that civil servants may act upon

roles that are shaped by the bureaucracy in which they are embedded. An organisational perspective ascribes an autonomous role for pre-existing organisational structures to explain the emergence of new organisational arrangements, and their effects (Egeberg 2012). Organisational dynamics and decision-making behaviour is framed by the heritage of organisational structures (Radin 2012: 17). Organisations create elements of robustness, and concepts such as 'historical inefficiency' and 'path dependence' suggest that the match between environments, organisational structures, and decision-making behaviour is not automatic and precise (Olsen 2010). An organisational approach suggests that the supply of organisational capacities have certain implications for how organisations and humans act. This approach departs from the assumption that formal organisational structures mobilise biases in public policy because formal organisations supply cognitive and normative shortcuts and categories that simplify and guide decision-makers' behaviour (Ellis 2011; Schattschneider 1975; Simon 1965).

Hooghe (2007: 87) suggests that one weakness of international socialisation is that international organisations lack control over their members' life chances. She partly bases this claim on the observation that international organisations are generally thought to be more prone to having employees working for a shorter time period, many on short-term contracts. If a lack of control over the member's life chances is a salient characteristic of an international bureaucracy, it would undermine one of the key elements of the Weberian bureaucracy – namely the idea of stability through bureaucrats' lifelong careers. Hooghe thus assumes that an international organisation has limited capacity for shaping the roles, norms and behaviour of its civil servants, precisely because of the weakness of the key elements suggested by the Weberian model. We challenge this as a general characteristic of

international bureaucracies. Even international bureaucracies may possess considerable institutional capacity to shape their staff, also when the personnel is on temporary contracts.

Actor-level supranationalism is relevant for the Weberian bureaucracy model in several ways. Firstly, working in an international bureaucracy means that civil servants must 'leave their passports at the door', i.e. they are obliged to work for and represent the international organisation and not particular national interests. The WTO agreement refers to this as the 'international character of the responsibilities'.[2] The WTO agreement even states that the responsibilities of the staff of the organisation should be 'exclusively' international in character (ibid.). This reference illustrates the supranational affiliation of international civil servants. It is assumed that officials are exclusively loyal to the international organisation in which they serve. According to the definition of actor-level supranationalism suggested below, civil servants are assumed to be dedicated to the overarching mission of an international organisation. Furthermore, the presence of this behavioural logic assumes some sort of autonomy for the international bureaucracy in question. The international bureaucracy is not merely a powerless tool in the hands of national governments, but assumed to have its own 'organisational personality' which is played out within the overarching framework and goals of the wider international organisation (Trondal 2007).

II Actor-level supranationalism: an analytical framework

This section presents an analytical framework for the study of how actor-level supranationalism is enacted in international bureaucracies: (i) under what conditions are

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actor-level supranationalism likely to emerge among international civil servants, and (ii) how can we empirically recognise this behavioural logic when we see it?

(i)   There may be several reasons why international civil servants enact a supranational behavioural logic. This paper suggests a two-by-two analytical grid: This behavioural logic may be *adopted* and/or *internalised*; secondly, this behavioural logic may be caused by *external* and/or *internal* processes to the international bureaucracy. This paper thus makes an analytical distinction between actor-level supranationalism caused by the *internalisation* of roles and behavioural perceptions on the one hand (e.g. Checkel 2007; March and Olsen 1989), and actor-level supranationalism caused by behavioural and role *adaptation* through control and discipline on the other (e.g. Trondal et al. 2008). Secondly, we also make an analytical distinction between an *external dimension* – actor-level supranationalism originating from outside the organisation (e.g. Dehousse and Thompson 2012; Hooghe 2007; 2012) – and an *internal dimension* – actor-level supranationalism emerging from within the organisation (Beyers 2010; Suvarierol 2011). Before entering an international organisation civil servants can be pre-socialised into sharing the goals, ideas and norms of the organisation. They can also share these goals, ideas and norms after being re-socialised within the organisation. Their loyalty to the goals, ideas and norms can be affected by internal control and discipline (from within the international bureaucracy) as well as by external control and discipline (from member-state governments) (Beyers 2010; Checkel 2007; Trondal 2001) (see Table 1).

Table 1 A two-dimensional analytical grid

	External dimension	*Internal dimension*
Internalisation	Pre-socialisation nurtured outside international bureaucracies	Re-socialisation fostered by international bureaucracies
Adaptation	Pre-adaptation promoted by member-states	Adaptation facilitated by international bureaucracies

(ii)   How, then, do we recognise a civil servant's enactment of a supranational behavioural logic when we come across it? One way of approaching actor-level supranationalism is to analyse the 'international character' of civil servants' responsibilities. The international character of responsibilities means that the civil servants employ the 'internal logic' of the international organisation s/he is employed in (formal structure, portfolio, rules of procedure etc.). In order to follow a supranational logic s/he should be loyal to the mission and vision of the international organisation and show this loyalty by guarding against attempts, either by member-state governments or other actors, to direct the organisation in other directions.

(iii) Actor-level supranationalism entails that civil servants share a set of rules, norms, principles and codes of conduct that are relatively inducted, internalised and taken for granted (pre-socialisation or socialisation within the international organisation) (Checkel 2007). Furthermore, actor-level supranationalism can also result from civil servants strategically adapting to a supranational role because of

institutional incentives and rewards (cf. internal or external control and discipline). The civil servants are expected to become 'defenders of the system' and to acquire collective behavioural perceptions. Thus, the civil servants may acquire a distinct 'organisational personality' within international organisations. The appearance of actor-level supranationalism denotes actors' feelings of loyalty and allegiance towards the international organisation as a whole (Deutch et al. 1957: 5-6; Haas 1958: 16; Herrmann et al. 2004: 6). Therefore, when we seek to identify actor-level supranationalism we analyse the perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of the civil servants in the light of the norms and goals of the international organisation. We also analyse what the civil servant would do when confronted with issues where different behavioural logics may be in conflict. Do civil servants defend the goals of the international organisation in a situation where, for example, a member-state advocates preferences that run contrary to the goal and/or the rules of the organisation?

One should, however, be careful not to overstate the distinctions between different behavioural logics. The occurrence of one behavioural logic (i.e. the supranational) does not necessarily exclude the occurrence of another behavioural logic (see Trondal et al. 2010). For example, there is often a correspondence between the professional expertise of civil servants (an epistemic logic) and the 'international character of responsibilities' (a supranational logic). Of course, professional expertise is often a precondition for being able to perform the responsibilities in an international organisation. Furthermore, civil servants may be loyal to professional networks (an epistemic

logic) and to particular administrative units within the organisation (a departmental logic) as well as to the international organisation as a whole (a supranational logic) without any conflict between loyalties necessarily arising. Concomitantly, possible 'grey zones' between behavioural logics are reported in the 'results' section.

Data and methodology

The empirical observations benefit from synchronised comparative studies of permanent officials in the Commission administration, the WTO Secretariat, and the OECD Secretariat. The study is synchronised in the sense that the same interview guide has been applied to all three bureaucracies and with respect to the selection of administrative sub-units within each bureaucracy. The interviews were semi-directed, using a standardised interview guide that was applied flexibly during interviews. The interviews were carried out during 2006 and 2007 in Brussels, Geneva and Paris. All interviews were taped and fully transcribed. All interviewees are treated with full anonymity. Consequently, quotations from interviews are referred to as follows (Commission 2, WTO 15, etc.). The questions posed in the interviews were directed at measuring the behavioural perceptions among the civil servants. Key questions were the following: 'With whom do you regularly interact at work?' 'Does your nationality or the nationality of your colleagues "matter" with respect to your daily work?' 'Has an *esprit de corps* developed within your unit/division?' "To what extent do you identify with or feel a personal attachment towards the following institutions …?' 'What kind of roles do you regularly emphasise at work?'

Interviewees were selected from similar administrative sub-units in all three international bureaucracies in order to control for variation in policy sectors. These sub-units were first trade units (such as DG Trade in the Commission) and secondly the general secretariats (such as the Secretariat-General of the Commission). These bureaucratic sub-units also represent vertical specialisation, where the general secretariats represent the bureaucratic centres of international bureaucracies and the trade units represent one among several policy portfolios of international bureaucracies. Finally, interviewees were selected from different levels of rank in these sub-units – from director generals to executive officers. However, by concentrating on officials at the 'A' level we aim to study officials who are involved in policy-making activities. Two caveats are warranted: First, the selected cases are merely illustrative devices to examine one behavioural logic within international bureaucracies. Secondly, these cases also merely illuminate causal mechanisms of actor-level supranationalism.

Results: the supranational actor in international bureaucracies

Pre-socialisation and re-socialisation

Civil servants may share the norms of international organisations even before entering. These civil servants are predisposed to become loyal to the organisation's vision and mission quite quickly upon arrival. Moreover, if such pre-socialisation is salient, there is a potential for a biased (self-)selection among the respondents. In line with the idea of representative bureaucracy, the international bureaucracy will in such cases be representative mainly of the enthusiasts and true believers in the organisation. Some civil servants indeed start working for an international organisation because they truly believe in the organisation. The need to

be dedicated to the organisation is also emphasised in the following quotes from two WTO officials:

'We are the guardians of the book. We have to believe in what is in here, because if we don't believe, nobody believes. Then we might as well go home.' (WTO 9)

'I think we have to be committed to what the WTO is as an institution, which basically is for trade liberalisation, and so clearly you have to believe in that. Otherwise it could be very difficult, personally, if you don't believe in the goal of your organisation, that the WTO is an institution which basically is a force for good – you know, the goals of the WTO…' (WTO 3)

One OECD official indicates that s/he was pre-socialised into being enthusiastic, not about the OECD in particular but about international organisations in general:

'I think there was probably something philosophical in the beginning, because when I finished university, I was very attracted by the international organisations: the values, the mission, things like that.' (OECD 27)

Another OECD official indicates that his or her enthusiasm for the OECD and what it does comes from his or her prior experience in private sector:

'I am the treasurer of the OECD, and I have a business card. And I am proud of the OECD. That is one of the things I like about working at the OECD: I like what the OECD

does, it has a positive influence in the world. Coming from the private sector as an American, I am very much in favour of a lot of the things the OECD does – like free trade; like intelligent government policy over business, over taxation; having environment regulations that work, that businesses and people can work with. That governments can promote better policies in areas as taxation, thanks to the work that the OECD does, is very positive.' (OECD 23)

One WTO official stated that s/he believed in the GATT/WTO before starting working there, but s/he emphasises particular aspects of the organisation's mission:

'I believed that market access for products, and how countries become less dependent on money by helping them to sell abroad… I believed in that […] but across the border, random trade liberalisation… when I came, no I didn't think…But the GATT never stood for that either. The GATT was not about free trade, the GATT was about, the WTO is about, breaking down certain barriers and trade-distorted measures so that countries at least have more opportunity to sell abroad…' (WTO 2)

These quotes illustrate that pre-socialisation to the vision and mission of an international organisation can enhance the enactment of actor-level supranationalism. At the same time, pre-socialisation can take several forms. One important distinction runs between the 'true believers' – those who believe in the overall mission of the organisation, even as a 'force for good' – and the 'sector or portfolio enthusiasts' – those who believe in particular issues that the organisation deals with and in the organisation's role in solving and handling these

issues. In both cases, pre-socialisation seems to be an important factor in explaining the behavioural perceptions of these civil servants.

However, civil servants also seem to be affected by internal factors, i.e. they are socialised into the norms of the organisation through experience. This complementary form of socialisation is linked to the Weberian bureaucracy model, i.e. socialisation within organisations. The assumption is that international bureaucracies have a transformative capacity in shaping key ideas, norms, beliefs and behaviour among its personnel. In the following, we look in particular at how experience from working within an international bureaucracy can affect civil servants' commitment and loyalty to the organisation. We should also point out that pre-socialisation does not exclude the effect of re-socialisation: someone who shares the norms of the international organisation before working there may be further socialised within the organisation. To illustrate this dual mechanism, one civil servant responds:

> 'Oh yes, I am convinced. I saw… as a junior diplomat I participated in the making of this organisation. I saw this organisation being born. I was here in Geneva when the organisation was created, and I was here in Geneva when these agreements were negotiated. So I truly believe in the ideas.' (WTO 9)

This official thus relates his or her beliefs in the organisation to the close contact s/he had with the WTO in pervious jobs. A Commission official also mentions that his or her commitment to the EU began a long time before s/he joined the Commission:

'But I always bore in mind the possibility to work for the institutions, maybe not from 16 years old but certainly from 22 years old.' (Commission 20)

Q: 'So you became rather pre-socialised before you came here? It was actually a wish for you to come here?

I would say not politically, more as a civilian or a citizen of Belgium; I was very much conscious of the project of building Europe. From 1973, for instance, I experienced the first enlargement. … I was 26 and I thought "Wow, they are enlarging already". (…) And I knew about Jean Monnet […] and I thought "It's a big project, an important project, and it is a project *qui vient féderer les états*". It's politically a very difficult project but it is certainly a project I want to work for with my very small means, my very small competencies and capacities.' (Commission 20)

Q: 'Is it easy to follow that vision – your European vision – in your day-to-day work?

Yes, because the vision is very strong. My vision of what I want to do and of what the Commission wants to do is very coherent. They match one another. But also that vision is stronger than, let's say, the everyday life and problems I can have. That is my view. Some other people are more concerned with their own career.' (Commission 20)

These quotes illustrate how pre-commitment to the vision and mission of an international organisation can enhance the subsequent enactment of a supranational behavioural logic after being hired. The following quote from an OECD official illustrates how *long tenure* in an

international bureaucracy can foster a re-socialisation of staff towards actor-level supranationalism:

> 'Fundamentally, my impression is that when people have joined the OECD, and they have worked here for a while, they no longer behave as nationals of any particular member country, but they serve the interests of the organisation. And it doesn't really matter whether they are Canadian, Australian or Belgian – they work towards the common aim of the organisation.' (OECD 11)

When asked about his or her commitment to the goals of their organisation, two officials respond as follows:

> 'Yes, I think so. I mean I've spent 30+ years of my life here, so it would be bizarre if I did not. I do feel commitment to the organisation. [….] Yes, I feel a commitment. I think it would be difficult if you didn't believe in an open-rules-based trading system, that it was in the basic interest of humanity.' (WTO 1)

> '(…) But, as I said, I think that being an international civil servant and the more years you do that type of job, the more you tend to represent the organisation rather than individuals or divisions or whatever.' (OECD 16)

Socialisation into the norms of the organisation can also be illustrated by the following response from a WTO official when asked what kind of advice s/he could offer the members:

'Of course it has to be WTO-friendly, and then after a while you get… you cannot go against

the philosophy of what this institution stands for.' (WTO 2) In response to the question of

whether the WTO Secretariat should be the 'guardians of the treaties', one WTO official

clearly confirmed that s/he had taken on the role of a 'guardian'. However, s/he also

includes a more proactive role, i.e. as an agent for improving the system:

> 'I think this is what has been agreed, but I have my views, and I think there are things
>
> that should be changed in this agreement to make it fairer, to make it more effective,
>
> and I will be happy to defend my views. But I think it has to be changed by
>
> negotiation in this organisation. You are not going to change it by destroying the
>
> WTO. That is the message. I am the guardian of the book. The book is not perfect. So
>
> my task is to convince people that this book should be improved, here. That is the
>
> mission. The mission is to make a multilateral trading system which is fair, which is
>
> fair to the developing countries, and which is better than what it is now.' (WTO 9)

This quote illustrates both a sense of commitment to the organisation while at the same

time seeing the Secretariat's role as being more than a neutral facilitator. This WTO official

emphasises the role as a defender of the system, but s/he even includes in his or her role the

task of suggesting needs for change. Re-Socialisation within international bureacuracies can

also strengthen civil servants' feeling of being part of a collective, being part of something

important:

> 'I'm clearly an official of the Commission and I have loyalty to the institutions, to
>
> defend the position it takes, but at the same time I feel I am part of the bigger
>
> project. I am not just serving this President, who will leave at a certain point in time,

but we are also constructing Europe. And all the time this has taken different

strength and intensity.' (Commission 6)

Two other Commission officials emphasise that their feeling of belonging is aimed towards

European integration generally and not towards particular EU institutions or member-states:

'Definition-wise, I am working for the European Commission and, in a broader sense,

for the Union. So I wouldn't have any ideological problems working for the Council

Secretariat, for example.' (Commission 11)

'Well, it is the Community interest in the matter which is prime, and this interest of

the Community is not necessarily identical with the interests of any single member

state – even if you take them all together.' (Commission 14)

This last quote indicates that the civil servant sees the Community interest as something

more than the aggregate of member-state collective interests. It alludes to a belief in a

separate supranational interest – a collective EU interest relatively independent of member-

states. Similarly, Ellinas and Sulleiman's (2012: 165) recent study demonstrates that a

majority of top Commission officials share a general culture and attitude towards 'favouring

integrative solutions to European problems'.

Another Commission official illustrates beliefs shaped by the organisation, however, in this case re-socialisation within the Commission seems to have made him or her *less* dedicated to the 'EU project':

> 'I am more focused on what I do. I am very happy with the job I have, with the colleagues I have, I couldn't be happier. I have to struggle to remain faithful to Europe. I am still, but when I joined the Commission, I was for a very long time enthusiastic. I mean I was very proud working in the Commission. Not only proud, I thought we were going to take us very far. But today I am much more sceptical.'
> (Commission 24)

This quote illustrates that socialisation within organisations may sometimes result in less enthusiastic attitudes towards the organisation. Socialisation should thus not be conflated with the emergence of 'pro-norm behaviour' (Zurn and Checkel 2007) or 'pro-social' behaviour (Lewis 2007). Lack of organisational enthusiasm may more easily emerge when organisations faces periods of organisational enlargement or internal reforms, potentially challenging pre-existing norms and beliefs among the personnel (see Bauer 2012: 469; Dehousse and Thompson 2012: 126). 'Socialization processes do not necessarily entail harmony and the absence of conflicts' (Beyers 2010: 912).

Pre-adaptation and adaptation

Socialisation sometimes cannot occur fully if the mechanisms of internal and external control and discipline operate alone (Checkel 2007; Gheciu 2007). This section shows that control and discipline, through incentives and rewards, can contribute to shaping the roles of civil

servants and to enhancing the enactment of a supranational role. One aspect of actor-level supranationalism among international civil servants is their external representation of the international organisation. The enactment of a supranational role – as a representative of the international organisation as a whole – is evident in the following quote:

'It is obvious that when we are operating outside the WTO, in other intergovernmental organisations, then we are representing the WTO as an institution, and we have to be aware of that.' (WTO 1)

The WTO official indicates in this quote that s/he *has* to be aware of the supranational role; it is considered mandatory to represent the WTO as a whole. In their external representation, civil servants report that if they act in conflict with core rules of the organisation they may be subject to internal or external sanctions. When asked about how to behave when representing the WTO externally, one WTO official responds:

'Yes, of course you have to be careful not to say weird things and things that are totally just not acceptable, or contentious. To say things about the negotiations sort of… on some contentious issues… or to express a strong opinion that you support one view or another – that is dangerous and it is not to be tolerated. But it's not a question of asking permission. Now of course, to speak at conferences you have to get permission, for obvious reasons. But it's not so much that you send your statement to your boss to check.' (WTO 13)

When asked about the possible sanctions for going against these norms, the same official says: 'You are fired… or you are called in.' (WTO 13)

> *Q: 'Even though the assessments are made according to the WTO rules, do you, as a Secretariat official, have to be careful about making formulations such as "This is the best solution according to what I believe"? Because if that sentence is there, is there a risk that the paper will just be 'shot down' by the member states?*
>
> Oh yes, oh yes, there are things you have to be aware of and, you know, sometimes you get caught by surprise. There's a sensitivity that you weren't aware of and somebody reacts very strongly to something and you… "Oh, where did that come from?".' (WTO 15)

This quote shows that civil servants have to 'tread a careful path' because of the awareness and control of member-states. The following quotes from OECD officials are also illustrative:

> 'As an OECD person, you should be kind of neutral. I'm not working for the French or US government, I am working for the OECD. Period.' (OECD 26)

> 'It is quite imperative not to be biased by your nationality.' (OECD 15)

> 'So I am aware of the OECD line and agreed position, and I know it is incumbent upon me to reflect that agreed line and the conclusions of the work that we have done. It's not my position to bolster independent opinions on some policy issues that we have

not done any research on or where my research hasn't been done as part of an

agreed OECD process.' (OECD 17)

When asked if they all consider themselves international civil servants, one OECD official

responds: 'Yes. You have to, in that job; you wouldn't last long otherwise. We are not here to

represent our own countries in any way.' (OECD 2) In sum, external and internal control and

discipline seem to enhance the adoption of the organisation's norms among international

civil servants. Some officials seem to enact a supranational role in the form of 'guardians of

the system'. A quote from one WTO official illustrates this. S/he was asked whether the WTO

agreements amount to a kind of constitution that the civil servants have to relate to at all

times:

> 'Exactly! But I don't really think… I don't think I will ever come across someone who
>
> doesn't really believe in that. But some people have different views about… you
>
> know, some people look at it more from a developing-country perspective and other
>
> people from other perspectives. Some of the people might think that some of the
>
> rules are more or less equitable.' (WTO 1)

This quote illustrates that even though civil servants may become 'guardians of the system'

and have to constantly relate to the organisation's rules, they do not necessarily believe in or

agree with all rules. Internal and external control and discipline may foster a supranational

role among civil servants in the sense of 'guardians of the system', but the degree to which

the norms of the organisation have been internalised may still vary. Some are true believers.

For others the defence of the system is conditional.

Concluding discussion

This paper shows that 'supranational actors' are present among civil servants both in the WTO Secretariat, the OECD Secretariat and the Commission administration. International bureaucracies are thus important vehicles of the 'common good'. Moreover, the Commission is not any different in this regard when viewed from the perspective of civil servants' behavioural perceptions. Essentially, this paper challenges the claim that international bureaucracies lack the potential to shape some core behavioural perceptions among its personnel, and that the roles and behavioural perceptions of international civil servants are primarily shaped by domestic government institutions (see also Ellinas and Suleiman 2012: 172). The study suggests that international bureaucracies may possess considerable capacity to shape their employees – both through behavioural and role internalisation and adaptation. Actor-level supranationalism is also shown to rise through internal and external processes to international bureaucracies. Some officials arrive 'pre-packed' to international bureaucracies. However, we also find cases where socialisation seems to have taken place within the organisation and thus enhanced the civil servants' adoption of the organisation's norms, ideas and beliefs. Moreover, internal and external control and discipline make it imperative for the civil servants to 'stick' to the goals and rules of the organisation. The trust of international civil servants seems partly contingent on them being perceived as neutral by member-state governments. Actor-level supranationsalism may thus also reflect strategic adoption; it pays to be considered as 'neutral defenders of the system', as defenders of the 'common good' (see Ellinas and Suleiman 2012).

Actor-level supranationalism seems to be associated with four factors. First, *long tenure* (i) tends to facilitate socialisation and discipline civil servants towards serving the organisation's interests, for example due to career opportunities (Trondal et al. 2008). We see that many civil servants in the WTO have had long careers within the bureaucracy, accompanying actor-level supranationalism among these. Secondly, *prior institutional affiliations* (ii) seem to affect the enactment of actor-level supranationalism. Generally, prior interaction with international bureaucracies may foster pre-socialisation into international norms. These findings coincide with the conclusion that pre-socialisation can make international civil servants favourably disposed to the international organisation's norms (Hooghe 2007). One possible consequence of this is that there may be a bias towards dedicated civil servants in the recruitment to international bureaucracies. Third, the *size and scope of administrative capacity* (iii) and the portfolio of international bureaucracies seem to matter. Comparatively, the Commission administration stands out compared to the two other international bureaucracies, both by having a political leadership (College of Commissioners) and by having a sizable administration with a strengthened Secretariat-General (Kassim 2009). The WTO Secretariat is clearly the smallest bureaucracy of the three. Moreover, it is closely watched by member-state governments and operates within a narrower mandate than the Commission administration and the OECD Secretariat. Finally, the *power and autonomy* (iv) of international bureaucracies seems to matter. The three international bureaucracies studied here differ considerably in this regard. Both the Commission and the WTO produce hard law, i.e. binding rules, whereas the OECD is a soft-law producer, i.e. it makes recommendations, benchmarks, standards, guidelines etc. which are voluntary for member-states to follow. We may assume that this makes it more likely that the control of member-state governments is stronger on the WTO and the Commission than on the OECD. This may

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again favour actor-level supranationalism in the WTO Secretariat and the Commission administration because civil servants are encouraged to appear as neutral defenders of the system. Furthermore, the Commission has exclusive legal competences and thus clearly has the most *de jure* competences of the three bureaucracies. Arguably, this increases the probability that the Commission is more closely associated to a supranational interest than the two other bureaucracies.

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Notes

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[2] Cf. the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, Article VI.