

RE-DISCOVERING INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE INSTITUTIONS

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Word count: 9082

Date of manuscript: 01.04.2004

Keywords: European Commission, intergovernmentalism, OECD, public administration, supranationalism, transformation, transgovernmentalism, WTO

47 pages

ISSN: 1503-4356

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Servicebox 422, N-4604 Kristiansand

Design: Agder University College

Cover and binding: Agder University College

Typesetting and printing: Agder University College

ABSTRACT

Public Administration is in an era of change. This article aims at re-discovering one under-researched part of public administration, the executive arms of International Governmental Organizations (IGOs). These are referred to as International Executives (IEs). The article provides a conceptual mapping and an empirical illustration of three important dynamics of IEs – intergovernmental, supranational and transgovernmental dynamics. The study also offers a middle-range organization theory perspective that suggests five independent variables that foster the advent of supranational and transgovernmental behavior and roles among IE civil servants. The variables suggested are (H1) the organizational properties of IEs, (H2) the degrees of institutionalization of IEs, (H3) the recruitment procedures of the IEs, (H4) characteristics of the relationships between IEs and external institutions, and finally (H5) demographic characteristics of the IE civil servants. The empirical illustrations are drawn from the European Commission, the OECD Secretariat and the WTO Secretariat. The concern here is to theoretically account for and empirically illustrate the assumed relationships between the five hypotheses and the behavioral dynamics evolving among IE incumbents. The article argues that the IEs of the EU, the OECD and the WTO seem to share important behavioral dynamics due to several organizational similarities.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVES¹

Public Administration is in an era of change (Aberback, 2003). Increasingly, executive functions, like policy initiation, policy formulation and policy making, are transported from national executive institutions to International Governmental Organizations (IGOs).² Moreover, governance by IGOs penetrate still more areas and levels of national governance. This article aims at re-discovering one under-researched aspect of IGOs - International Executives (IEs) - and highlights five factors that impact on the behavior and role perceptions

of IE incumbents (see Table 2 below). IEs initiate, formulate and influence the policies and politics of IGOs, they are lead by a director-general (and sometimes by a political collegium as in the European Commission), and they are staffed by civil servants in permanent positions as well as on time-limited contracts. IEs are designed to make the IE officials stay loyal to the IGO rather than to their country of origin. The question targeted in this study is to what extent, how and why IEs challenge the existing Westphalian normative nation-state order based on territorial sovereignty (Gourevitch, 2003; Kegley and Raymond, 2002, 192; March and Olsen, 1998; Rosenau, 1996).

To answer this question a middle-range organization theory perspective is outlined specifying the conditions under which IE officials evoke role perceptions and behavioral patterns that transcend intergovernmentalism. The empirical illustrations have explorative ambitions and are drawn from the European Commission, the OECD Secretariat and the WTO Secretariat – the main executive bodies of the three respective IGOs (EU, OECD, WTO). The article hereby challenges claims like “comparing the Commission with international secretariats... would certainly be of very limited usefulness...” (Christiansen, 1996, 77).

Arguably, the three IEs studied share some basic organizational features as public interstate organizations that are organized according to well-known principles from domestic executive institutions and which have overlapping fields of jurisdiction with other IEs. However, these three IEs also differ with respect to the size and heterogeneity of membership, their main outputs (hard law and soft law), the top leadership of the administrative apparatus, as well as with regard to their geographical coverage: the European, industrial and global world, respectively. This study theorizes how the formal organization, institutionalization, staffing and external embeddedness of IEs impact on the behavioral dynamics among the IE incumbents.

Evidently, the international political scene has become increasingly organized in the post WWII period, reflected in the upsurge, institutionalization and impact of IEs (Finnemore, 1996; March and Olsen, 1998). The task of IEs has become increasingly that of an active and independent policy-making institution and less a passive technical servicing instrument for the governments (Lemoine, 1995, 28). This article argues that IEs are important, though not omnipotent, centers of gravity of most contemporary IGOs.³ However, beyond single-case studies there is a surprising dearth of theoretically informed comparative studies of the actual *internal dynamics* of IEs (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; Checkel, 2003; Gehring, 2003, 4; Gould and Kelman, 1970; Johnston, 2003; Mouritzen, 1990; Reinalda and Verbeek 2004; Rochester, 1986). Two main bodies of literature have combined theoretical innovation and empirical testing of IE dynamics. The first strand of research was the functionalist and neo-functionalist studies of the European Commission and the UN Secretary, inspired by Ernst Haas (e.g. Alger, 1963; Ernst, 1978; Wolf, 1973). The second body of research is the more recent institutionalist and social constructivist literature on organizations like the EU, the Council of Europe and NATO (e.g. Checkel, 2003; Zürn, 2003). Neither of these endeavors has systematically studied the executive arms of IGOs. Nor have these bodies of literature emphasized the relationships between generic organizational properties of IEs and the behavioral dynamics of the IE personnel (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986, 761). This study advocates that the internal dynamics of IEs may be accounted for by analyzing their organizational components (H1), their degrees of institutionalization (H2), their recruitment procedures (H3), their relationships with external institutions (H4), and demographic compositions of the personnel (H5). The argument forwarded suggests that these organizational characteristics foster the emergence of supranational and transgovernmental behavioral logics among IE incumbents (see Table 2 below).

Whereas some scholars picture the nation-state as weakened, hollowed out and fragmented due to the advent of IEs (e.g. Rosenau, 1997), others argue that IEs contribute to strengthen and integrate the nation-state as a coherent Westphalian system of territorial sovereignty (e.g. Biersteker, 2003; Moravcsik, 1998). Moreover, whereas some picture IEs as key motor in the transformation of nation-state institutions (Cowles, Caporaso and Risse, 2001; Wessels, Maurer and Mittag, 2003), others argue that the effects of IEs are moderate and associated with evolving dynamics of domestic change (Anderson, 2002; Olsen, 2003a). Such conflicting assessments represent more than standard academic turf-battles with regard to institutional transformations of political orders. We are in fact facing complex, puzzling and poorly understood relationships between IEs and domestic transformation (Bulmer and Burch, 1998).⁴ The question posed here is whether IEs are merely instruments for member-states or whether they are best conceived as transformative institutions contributing to supranational and transgovernmental governance.

Much recent literature assumes that the European Commission represents a critical case of transformation among IEs. The argument is that if we do not observe transformational dynamics within the European Commission we should not expect similar dynamics within other IEs (Johnston, 2003). This assumption is challenged by advocating that IEs are multi-dimensional administrative apparatuses, embodying contradictions and dilemmas that are difficult to solve and that affect how decisions are made. IEs are seldom unidimensional as suggested by realist and neo-liberalist theoretical orthodoxy, stressing the intergovernmental aspects of IGOs. This article challenges this theoretical orthodoxy by conceptualizing the diverse organizational components of IEs. They are not merely neutral tools used by member governments to fulfill prefixed preferences; they are also epistemic communities of

professional experts and socializing institutions that transform nationally oriented elites into community minded elites (Checkel, 2003; Haas, 1992; Lemoine, 1995). IEs are multi-dimensional organizations that should be analyzed by fine-grained operational accounts to understand their diverse *modus operandi*. They live with in-built tensions between at least three operational logics: (i) intergovernmentalism, (ii) supranationalism and transgovernmentalism (iii). Accordingly, IEs are partly vehicles of nation-state preferences (i), partly autonomous supranational institutions with vested interests, visions and drives (ii), and partly porous and segmented professional institutions where knowledge is discovered, developed, interpreted and spread (iii). This article theorizes conditions under which incumbents of IEs are transformed from mere intergovernmental officials into supranational and transgovernmental agents. Table 1 suggests three role perceptions that correspond to these three IE dynamics.

-- Table 1 about here --

Arguably, the internal dynamics of IEs are transformed to the extent that the role perceptions and behavioral patterns of IE officials move from row (i) to the rows (ii) and (iii) in Table 1. Hence, actor transformation implies that IE officials evoke supranational and/or transgovernmental behavior and roles (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996). The focus of this study is thus on the end-point of actor transformation, not on the process of it (Alderson, 2001). Moreover, it is also assumed a mutual relationship between actors' behavior and role: Acting in certain ways make actors better equipped to play particular roles, and by playing these roles the actor may over time take them for granted. Roles that are taken for granted may affect the roles that are played and the behavior evoked. We also suggest that actors are strongly transformed if they activate supranational and transgovernmental ways of behavior

and role perceptions in a more or less *routinized fashion* (Beyers and Trondal, 2004; Zürn, 2003). In sum, actor transformation implies that the roles and behavior evoked by IE civil servants are less biased by their country of origin than by their routinized supranational and professional affiliations, respectively. They become less focused on defending fixed national positions than by discovering and pursuing what is perceived as the ‘common good’ (supranational role) and scientifically correct (transgovernmental role), respectively.

The article is sequenced as follows: The next section outlines a middle-range organization theory approach that suggests five generic variables that are conducive to supranationalism and/or transgovernmentalism. The next section provides empirical observations of the behavior and roles evoked by civil servants of the European Commission, the OECD Secretariat and the WTO Secretariat. The concern here is to *illustrate* the assumed relationships between the five hypotheses and the behavioral dynamics among IE officials. The discussion concludes that the mix of behavioral and role dynamics within IEs are organizationally contingent and more complex than assumed by IR theoretical orthodoxy. IE officials are expected to perform increasingly more complex tasks of representation. The article highlights that IEs seem to share important behavioral dynamics due to several organizational similarities.

A MIDDLE-RANGE ORGANIZATION THEORY APPROACH

This study departs from a three-fold conceptualization of IEs as intergovernmental, transgovernmental and supranational institutions (Simmons and Martin, 2003). According to this conceptualization, IEs differ with respect to their degree of institutional autonomy and unity, and depending on the type of IGOs they operate within. Traditional intergovernmental organizations score low on both items by being non-unitary organizations constructed by

nation-states and without the authorization to issue binding decisions that go against one or several member-states. In addition, intergovernmental organizations uphold the territorial logic of the Westphalian order at the international level by a territorial principle of organization. IEs governed by a supranational dynamic, by contrast, score high on both items by being unitary organizations with autonomous spheres of sovereignty. Supranational IEs challenge the territorial logic of nation-state sovereignty by having acquired spheres of institutional autonomy (Cortell and Peterson, 2003; Egeberg, 2003b). Finally, IEs governed by a transgovernmental dynamic challenge the principle of institutional unity by being functionally de-coupled, porous and open institutions staffed by government actors from different factions and levels of government – i.e. domestic sector ministries and agencies. Transgovernmental IEs have shared institutional jurisdictions with other constituencies, and are internally marked by functional and intra-institutional patterns of co-operation and conflict (Rosenau, 1997).

This three-fold conceptual map may be transposed into a corresponding conceptual map of the behavior and role perceptions evoked by IE officials (see Table 1 above). The intergovernmental dynamic implies that IE civil servants evoke national roles focused on territorial sovereignty and statehood. The supranational dynamic implies that IE officials identify with the IE institution as a whole and act according to what is perceived as the ‘common good’. Finally, the transgovernmental dynamic implies that IE incumbents emphasize functional and professional interests, norms and rules and that they identify with their unit and portfolio rather than with the IE as a whole (Aggestam, 1999).

Many students of IEs adopt neo-liberalist and realist approaches and apply principal-agent theory to understand the baseline dynamics of IEs (Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger, 1996).

Basically, these rationalist accounts focus on patterns of co-operation and conflict among states and see IEs as vehicles for maximizing state preferences and for lowering transaction costs. Recent studies of IEs have made a combined ‘institutionalist and constructivist turn’ and rediscovered questions of actor socialization, complex learning and cognitive framing of norms and rules (Checkel, 2003; Trondal, 2001; Trondal, 2004). IEs are pictured as more than empty vessels and neutral arenas in which state representatives gather (Finnemore, 1996, 35). An equivalent rediscovery of institutions was made in the field of organization theory twenty years ago (March and Olsen, 1984). The independent variables outlined beneath benefit from this organizational and institutional school of thought. One additional criterion for selecting the independent variables is how successfully they have survived past empirical tests.

Formal organizations provide a codified and normative embodiment of their incumbents. In order to understand the process whereby actors adopt particular behavior and roles one has to unpack the normative structures surrounding them. Actors are bounded rational with limited computational abilities. Formal organizations provide cognitive and normative shortcuts and categories that simplify and guide actors’ choice of behavior and role (Simon, 1957).

Organizations provide cognitive maps that simplify and categorize complex information, offer procedures for reducing transaction cost, give regulative norms that add cues for appropriate behavior as well as physical boundaries and temporal rhythms that guide actors’ perception of relevance with respect to behavior and role (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; March and Olsen, 1998). Organizations also discriminate among what conflicts that are activated and what conflicts that are de-activated (Egeberg 2003b). By organizing civil servants into executive organizations within IGOs a system of “rule followers and role players...” are established above and beyond domestic executive institutions (March and Olsen, 1998, 952).

Five organizational variables are outlined in the following, specifying conditions under which IE officials are likely to adopt supranational and transgovernmental behavior and roles in a more or less routinized way (Zürn, 2003). Table 2 reveals how these variables play out in our selected cases: the European Commission, the OECD Secretariat and the WTO Secretariat:

-- Table 2 about here --

H1: Organizational properties

The first independent variable considered is the core properties of organizations. Formal organizations are normative structures “composed of rules and roles specifying, more or less clearly, who is expected to do what, and how” (Egeberg, 2003a, 117). Executive organizations are organized horizontally and vertically. Two important horizontal principles of executive organization are sector/purpose, function and territory (Gulick, 1937). Already Robert W. Cox and Harold K. Jacobson (1973) saw the organizational similarities between national executive institutions and IEs. According to Wagenen (1971, 5 – original emphasis), “[t]he *similarities* overwhelm the differences between national and international administration”. Most executive organizations, both domestic and international, are horizontally organized according to the principles of purpose and function. The argument here is that IEs organized by purpose and function are likely to accompany decision-making behavior and role perceptions that are functionally defined and not biased by territoriality. Hence, the territorial principle of Westphalia is transcended by a functional logic.

IEs cover different policy sectors. This article focuses on the trade sector and the research sector - two internationally oriented policy domains. Both sectors are covered by the EU, the OECD and the WTO, and interwoven by alleged contribution to increased trade and economic

prosperity (European Commission, 2000). Both sectors have also been increasingly subject to regulations and normative standardization from domestic governments and from the EU, OECD and WTO (Brunsson and Jacobsson, 2000; Finnemore, 1996; Woolcock, 2000).

One observation highlighted in previous research is that actors' roles are likely to be transformed in highly issue-specific situations (Zürn, 2003, 20). One reason may be that actors tend to be granted a great amount of leeway and autonomy in horizontally sector-specialized organizations. Sector specialization may accompany the emergence of epistemic communities of sector-experts who have shared understandings of causal relationships between means and ends, worldviews, roles and norms of appropriate behavior. Arguably, the horizontal specialization of IEs by purpose and function accompanies a need for exclusive and professional competences in order to act effectively within them. Moreover, such expert communities are less bound to territorial borders, and often loosely tied to particular organizations (Haas, 1992). Participants in such networks often have life-long commitments and careers attached to them, accompanying the emergence of transgovernmental expert roles among such officials (Haas, 1990, 42; Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger, 1996, 209). This argument implies that the WTO Secretariat, the OECD Secretariat and the European Commission may activate transgovernmental dynamics due to their horizontal organizational issue-specificity. Furthermore, this also implies that, for example, transgovernmental dynamics are stronger within DG Trade and DG Research of the European Commission than within the European Commission as a whole, and that transgovernmental dynamics are stronger within the specialized divisions of the WTO and OECD Secretariats than within the Secretariats as wholes. Hence, IE officials are likely to activate behavior and role perceptions that reflect their specialized and primary affiliations towards units and divisions to a larger extent than their affiliations towards the IEs as wholes.

Vertically, executive organizations are typically organized according to a specialized structure of rank. The European Commission, the OECD Secretariat and the WTO Secretariat are all vertically organized (see Table 2). The argument suggested here is that vertically specialized IEs have the potential for *disciplining and controlling* civil servants by hierarchy (Egeberg, 2003a). Hence, vertically specialized IEs are likely to have stronger impact on incumbents' behavior and role perceptions than less vertically specialized IEs (Bennett and Oliver, 2002, 425; Egeberg, 2003c, 137; Knight, 1970). Hence, a vertically organized IE that is horizontally specialized by sector, like the Commission, may activate transgovernmental and supranational behavioral logics by administrative command and individual incentive systems like salary and promotion. In sum, vertically specialized IEs that are organized by purpose and function are conducive to supranational and transgovernmental behavioral dynamics among the personnel.

H2: Institutionalization

The second independent variable analyzed is the degrees of institutionalization of IEs. Organizations and institutions should not be conflated. The institutionalization of formal organizations, whereby they become “infused with value...” strengthens their ability to impact on incumbents' behavior and role perceptions because institutionalized organizations have the ability to *socialize* incumbents towards an embodiment of purpose (Selznick, 1957, 17). An institution develops its own distinct dynamic (Cox and Jacobson, 1973, 7). “To be reckoned as ‘institution’, organizations should have a distinctive identity and a value in their own right” (Egeberg, 2003b, 7). Most IE civil servants have multiple institutional affiliations – some primary and some secondary to them (see H4). The primary affiliation of IE officials is the IE as such – and the departments and units underneath - while their secondary affiliations may be domestic government institutions – like ministries and agencies from their

country of origin – or professional institutions like universities where they are pre-socialized to professional life. Arguably, the stronger the institutionalization of primary institutions, the weaker the transformative power of secondary (external) institutions, notwithstanding the latter's level of institutionalization. In accordance with this argument, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998, 893) argue that the influence of domestic (secondary) institutions is reduced as the organizational structures of IEs become institutionalized. The next section argues that the European Commission is a strongly institutionalized organization, that the WTO Secretariat has a medium level of institutionalization and that the OECD Secretariat is fairly weakly institutionalized. Accordingly, Commission officials are likely to evoke supranational roles and loyalties more strongly than OECD and WTO officials (see Table 2).

H3: Recruitment procedure

Organizational autonomy is strongly dependent on the recruitment procedures adopted because different procedures for recruitment tend to affect actors' decision-making behavior and role perceptions differently (Mouritzen, 1990, 39). Findings suggest that supranational loyalties are contingent “on whether one is paid by ones country of origin or by the organization...” (Reinalda and Verbeek, 2004, 20). Basically, recruitment may be based on a merit principle, as in most Western democracies, and on a quota principle or other systems of patronage or *parachutage*, as in the top echelon of the American civil service (Ingraham, 1995, 9). Whereas the merit principle recruits neutral, permanent civil servants on the basis of competence, the quota principle typically recruits officials on more temporary contracts on the basis of, for example, political, sectoral or territorial loyalties (Bekke and van der Meer, 2000, 281-282; Ingraham, 1995, xix). The argument forwarded here is that, *ceteris paribus*, the merit principle applied to IEs foster supranational and transgovernmental roles and behavior more efficiently than the quota principle because there is no inherent territorial logic in the

meritocratic principle (Bennett and Oliver, 2002, 418). The national connection is upheld under the quota principle securing a staff loyal to the domestic constituency.

Intergovernmental organizations typically employ the quota principle and different systems of secondment in order to uphold geographical balances of posts and territorially loyal delegates, like in the NATO Secretariat and the UN Secretariat (Bennett and Oliver, 2002, 413; Mouritzen, 1990; Reymond and Mailick, 1986). The merit principle is central to the European Commission as well as to the WTO Secretariat. This principle secures institutional autonomy as far as recruitment to the IE is concerned and henceforth non-territorial loyalties among the incumbents. The quota principle is more central in the OECD Secretariat (see Table 2).

Studying officials in IEs implies studying officials who mostly have worked in national institutions prior to entering the IEs. This is particularly the case among a segment of the European Commission seconded on short-term contracts. The WTO does not employ seconded personnel to the same extent as the European Commission. In the WTO, permanent positions are the rule. Officials are recruited on the basis of merit, and the personnel tend to stay employed in the WTO once they have entered. In the OECD, a large and increasing part of the employees are seconded consultants and researchers. Furthermore, in the OECD apparatus the term 'permanent' has lost its significance since 70 to 80 percent is employed on time-limited contracts. The whole OECD secretariat may thus be considered a parallel administration (Marcussen, 2002). Assumably, seconded officials are less likely to become supranationally oriented than the permanent IE civil servants.

H4: Organizational affiliations

The fourth independent variable considered is the characteristics of the relationships that may develop between organizations. Both rationalist and cognitive accounts of IGOs "have been

rather silent on the role of domestic factors” (Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger, 1996, 221).

This study stresses the fact that IEs serve as parts of complex webs of organizations, including other IEs, member-state institutions, private organizations, etc. Different IEs may have institutionalized mutual relationships because of overlapping jurisdictions, overlapping members, and histories of co-operation (Cox and Jacobsson, 1973, 382; Haas, 1990, 27). Civil servants of IEs have typically multiple institutional affiliations - both nationally and internationally – that pose multiple cognitive frames, incentives and norms of appropriate conduct (March and Olsen, 1998). We assume that the behavior and role perceptions of IE civil servants are a product of their primary (IE) and secondary (external) organizational affiliations. Hence, there is a hierarchy of organizational memberships present (Flora, 1999, 35). The demands that these affiliations pose may conflict thereby inducing role and behavioral conflicts among the officials (Barnett, 1993). The status of primary and secondary affiliations is measured here by the length and intensity of affiliation to each of them. For example, most Commission officials as well as officials of the WTO Secretariat use a majority of their time and energy within their DG and Unit (European Commission) or specialized divisions (WTO Secretariat), and less towards other institutions. This implies that their IE portfolios govern their behavior and role perceptions more strongly than external organizations. One effect of intensive and long tenure within IEs is that these institutions become “real” in a social psychological sense to the officials. Both students of EU institutions and students of mass opinion conclude that actors tend to develop multiple identities, and that supranational, national and professional identities supplement each other. Different roles are activated in different situations, and they become partly meshed and blended into each other over time (Lewis, 2000; Risse and Maier, 2003; Trondal, 2004).

There is an inbuilt tension between a logic of recency and a logic of primacy. Whereas the logic of recency implies that recently evoked roles and behavior are likely to be evoked again (March, 1994, 70), the logic of primacy entails that roles and behavior that are evoked within primary institutions are likely to be enacted in secondary institutions as well. Arguably, the logic of recency may trump the logic of primacy if actors engage for long time and interact intensively within secondary (external) institutions. The logic of recency is also likely to affect actors' behavior and role if the size of the temporal gap between primary and secondary affiliation is sufficient. Hence, the amount of time spent in the secondary institution, and the amount of time passing between occupation in the primary and the secondary institution may condition the relative importance of the logic of recency and the logic of primacy (Johnston, 2003, 9). Consequently, *permanent* IE officials are likely to be affected by a logic of primacy whereas IE officials on *temporary contracts* are more likely to act on the premises of a logic of recency.

The logic of primacy is also conditioned by the degree of *organizational fit or mis-fit* between primary and secondary institutions (Cowles, Caporaso and Risse, 2001). “[I]nstitutions have non-synchronized dynamics” (Olsen, 2003b, 18). Our argument is that the greater the degree of organizational mis-fit, the more likely that the logic of primacy is acted upon. For example, the territorial logic of domestic foreign policy easily conflict with the sectoral logic of the Commission's research policy. The logic of primacy assumes that Commission officials, affiliated to DG Research, think and behave according to their DG portfolio more than according to their country of origin. Likewise, long-time employees of the WTO Secretariat are expected to think and behave according to their Division's portfolio more than according to their country of origin or other institutional affiliations. Organizational fit is more likely to

activate a logic of recency among IE officials which implies that supranational and transgovernmental behavior and role are only moderately evoked.

One proxy of organizational fit is the principles of horizontal organization of primary and secondary organizations (sector versus territory) (Gulick, 1937) (see H1). Stein Rokkan (1987, 212) argued that political institutions are often two-dimensional, organized along one territorial and one functional axis. One central organizing principle of the General Assemblies of IGOs is their territorial organization of political geography, mirroring the spatial structuring of state sovereignty. In contrast, the organization of IEs mirrors the sectoral and process organization of domestic executive institutions (see H1). The argument is that organizational mis-fit, for example between a sectoral and a territorial axis, is likely to challenge existing ways of acting and thinking among the civil servants (Egeberg, 2003a). For example, civil servants who were previously affiliated to domestic sector ministries (like a research ministry) are challenged when entering an IGO organized by territory – like the WTO and OECD general assemblies and committee systems.

Finally, the logic of primacy is conditioned by the *properties of actor interaction*. Actors may have dense, moderate or low level of interaction across organizational tiers. Interaction may also be formalized or based on informal codes of conduct. Role-change often follows from long-term and informal interaction (Lewis, 2003; Olsen, 2003b, 18). However, empirical studies of IE participants challenge the assumption that length of participation among IE officials accompanies a re-socialization of them (e.g. Ernst, 1978; Trondal, 2001). On the other hand, transactionalists and functionalists have argued that intensive and face-to-face interaction between state agents lead to the development of common identities and roles, and a shift towards a greater alignment with the IGO (Deutsch, 1957). Internalization and social

learning of roles occur through intensive repetition of role and action. Direct experiences of IEs increase the likelihood that civil servants evoke roles and behavior consistent with shared norms and values of the IEs (the logic of primacy). Jean Monnet believed that “men are changed by what they do” (quoted in Duchène, 1994, 376).

There may be clear and less clear boundary policing between organizations (Johnston, 2003). Actor interaction across organizational boundaries affects their perceptions of the permeability of these borders. For example, Commission officials may have intensive contacts with domestic officials and with OECD and WTO officials who work on similar issues. The argument is that boundaries that are perceived as unclear invoke ambiguous cues for action and role enactment. In such circumstances the logic of recency is likely to be guiding actors' roles and behavior. On the other hand, the clearer the perceived boundaries are between IEs and other institutions, the more likely that the logic of primacy is evoked.

H5: Demographic characteristics

Finally, organizations are composed of actors with demographic characteristics (e.g. education, tenure, age and nationality) that may guide actors' enactment of behavior and role perception. Assumable, the demographic profiles of officials are likely to penetrate their behavior in weakly organized and institutionalized situations. This argument gives the following “prediction”: *Ceteris paribus*, highly educated civil servants within porous expert organizations are more likely to evoke roles as independent sector experts than roles as national representatives (Cortell and Peterson, 2003, 6). Moreover, IE officials with an international education and with a multinational family background are more likely to be supranationally oriented than officials with mainly a national education and family. This is due to their parental and educational pre-socialization prior to entering the IEs. *Ceteris*

paribus, young IE civil servants are more likely to become supranationally and transgovernmentally oriented than older civil servants who have been subject to domestic pre-socialization over longer periods of time. Finally, the tenure of civil servants is likely to mould their decision-making behavior. Arguably, senior IE officials with life-long service are more likely to evoke supranational and transgovernmental behavior and roles than newly recruited IEs officials (Mourtizen, 1990, 44). Findings suggest that loyalty towards any IE is assumed to be a function of the IE officials' length of service (see H3) (Reinalda and Verbeek, 2004, 20).

A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The analysis presented below illustrates how the five independent variables affect the role and behavior of IE personnel. A systematic and critical test of the five independent variables warrants comparative data sets not yet available. Hence, the main purpose of the next section is merely to illustrate the “predicted” relationships between the five hypotheses and the behavioral dynamics among IE incumbents. The next section thus has modest explorative ambitions and does not give a systematic variable-by-variable test. The following discussion is empirically suggestive and illustrative, and benefits from secondary empirical material on seconded officials from different EU member-states and Norway (CLENAD, 2003; EFTA Secretariat, 2000; Smith, 1973; Smith, 2001; Statskontoret, 2001, 17). These data are supplemented by primary empirical observations from one research project on OECD officials (Marcussen, 2002) and one research project on national civil servants attending EU committees – the Commission expert committees, the comitology committees and the Council working groups (Egeberg, Schaefer and Trondal, 2003).

EMPIRICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

The European Commission

The European Commission, located in Brussels, is the core executive body at the heart of the EU. It houses about 20 000 officials, is vertically specialized into eight grades, headed by a collegium of Commissioners, and it is horizontally specialized according to purpose and function into 23 semi-autonomous *Directorate Generals* (DGs), a number of internal and general services, and several hundred Units. In several regards the Commission mirrors the functional and process organization of national executive bodies (Egeberg and Trondal, 1999; Lequesne, 2000; Stevens and Stevens, 2001, 166) (H1).

Despite the existence of several competing dynamics within the Commission, balancing between institutional autonomy and dependence on the member-states (Christiansen, 1997; Lequesne, 2000), this institution exhibits a strong supranational and transgovernmental *modus operandi*. Previous studies indicate an integral supranational identity among Commissioners and top Commission bureaucrats. A Study by Egeberg (2004) indicates that the College of European Commissioners is first and foremost governed by their sector portfolio interests (H1) and less by their external party belongings and country of origin. However, more intergovernmental dynamics strive constantly for attention within the Commission apparatus, for example, concerning budgetary matters and personnel policy (Egeberg, 2004; Hooghe, 2001; Kassim and Menon, 2004). Intergovernmental dynamics reflect partly the national origins of the Commission officials (H5) and partly elements of territorial organization within the Commission services, primarily at the Commissioner and Cabinet levels (Egeberg, 2003c; Egeberg and Trondal, 1999) (H1). By contrast, transgovernmental dynamics reflect the functional organization of the Commission DGs and Units and the professional expertise of the officials (H1).

The role perceptions and decision-making behavior of Commission officials is foremost accounted for by considering their sectoral Commission portfolios (Nugent, 2001). Moreover, functional roles and behavioral patterns in the Commission can be accounted for by considering the close interaction that Commission officials have with sectorally organized institutions outside the Commission, such as domestic sector ministries, industry and interest organizations (H4). Moreover, Egeberg (2003b) argues that sector roles and decision-making behavior among Commission officials may reflect their recruitment to the Commission. He shows that top Commission officials are recruited on the basis of merit and not on the basis of national flags, accompanying sectoral behavior that is closely associated with their Commission portfolio (H3). The meritocratic system is recently enhanced in the Staff Regulations with respect to internal promotion (Coull and Lewis, 2003). However, the merit principle is indeed challenged by recent and current enlargements of the Union (Kassim and Menon, 2004, 19; Stevens and Stevens, 2001, 95). Upholding a geographical balance of A-grade civil servants through secondment contracts may serve the purpose of upholding national allegiances among newly recruited top Commission officials from the new member-countries (H3).

Studies show that the horizontal specialization of IEs affects the role perceptions of the incumbents (e.g. Bennet and Oliver, 2002, 426). In the Commission the DG and Unit level are important carriers of identification and decision-making premises, partly due to low inter-DG mobility of personnel (Cini, 1996; McDonald, 1997). For example, decision-making within DG Trade is done by relatively small groups of policy experts (Woolcock, 2000, 394). Intensive in-group interaction is conducive to the emergence of in-group identifications, as was the case within Monnet's own circle of advisors (Duchêne, 1994). Similarly, Cini (1997, 86) observes that the identities of the statutory staff of former *DG Competition and*

Environment are directed more towards the DG level than towards the Commission at large. Hence, the horizontal organization of the Commission affects the role perceptions of the incumbents (H1). However, the Commission also exhibit intergovernmental logics. Egeberg (1996) shows that national allegiances are strongly emphasized by *seconded* Commission officials. These allegiances may be accounted for by considering their non-merit based recruitment to the Commission services (Hooghe, 2001) (H3).

There is one under-researched ‘Cinderella’ of the European Commission where intergovernmental dynamics may have ample chances of survival and viability: the parallel administration of *seconded* national civil servants (Trondal, 2004). Arguably, the emergence of supranational and transgovernmental behavior and roles among *seconded* Commission officials is indicative of the socializing power of the Commission writ large (Wolf, 1973, 365). According to the White Paper on European Governance issued by the Commission in 2001, “exchange of staff and joint training between administrations at various levels would contribute to a better knowledge of each other’s policy objectives, working methods and instruments” (European Commission, 2001, 13). This parallel administration was of paramount importance in the formative years of the Commission and will be extended substantially with the recent EU enlargement. The Commission has estimated a need of about 4000 new recruits from the new member-countries, mostly hired to non-permanent posts (Trondal, 2004) (H3).

Seconded national civil servants are heavily “pre-packed” and pre-socialized when entering the Commission. Their stay at the Commission is relatively short and the majority returns to prior positions in national ministries or agencies when their temporary contracts come to an end. *Seconded* personnel also remain paid by their employer at the national level when

working for this supranational executive (CLEENAD, 2003; Statskontoret, 2001).

Consequently, the Commission should be considered a secondary institution to most secondées. One should therefore expect these officials to be reluctant Europeans and hesitant to enact supranational roles while working for the Commission (cf. Lewis, 2003) (H3 and H4).

An early study of 36 former seconded Dutch officials to the Commission revealed that all of them retained a national loyalty when working in the Commission and “none indicated that [they] had ever come into conflict of loyalty” (Smith, 1973, 565). A later study of seconded officials from the Scottish Office of the UK central administration to the European Commission supports these arguments (Smith, 2001). Smith (2001) also observes that seconded officials reinforce their national administrative cultures and allegiances rather than becoming more supranationally oriented during their stay at the Commission. Similarly, studies of EU committees demonstrate that national officials attending EU committees evoke national roles more strongly than supranational and transgovernmental roles (Egeberg, Schaefer and Trondal, 2003). However, supranational allegiances are strengthened subsequent to intensive interaction within EU institutions (Trondal, 2003) (H2). However, studies also indicate that supranational and transgovernmental roles among seconded Commission officials reflect a pre-socialization dynamic at the domestic level prior to entering the Commission (Page, 1997, 60) (H4).

According to Cini (1996, 121), “the appointment of temporary staff encourages an intermingling of national and European administrators which itself has the potential to provoke a sort of process of Europeanisation at the national and sub-national levels”.

Moreover, seconded Commission officials are sector experts who work in highly sector-

specialized task roles within their respective DGs. Moreover, these roles fit well-known roles from national ministries and agencies (H4). According to a survey conducted by the EFTA Secretariat (2000, 1) among 18 Norwegian national experts to the Commission, “all but one had been working in the same unit during their contract period”. These factors help explain why seconded Commission officials retain sectoralized roles and develop transgovernmental role perceptions and modes of action.

The OECD Secretariat

The OECD was established in Paris on 30 September 1961. It included eighteen European countries, United States and Canada and replaced the OEEC, which administered the US-funded Marshall aid to European reconstruction. The official purpose of the OECD is to assure growth and employment in member as well as non-member-countries while maintaining financial stability. In order to reach this goal, the organization consistently works for trade and capital liberalization worldwide. Another major goal is the coordination of economic aid to developing countries.

By 2003 the OECD has thirty members and its activity areas have gradually spread to include almost all aspects of relevance for economic, political and social governance in the member-countries. This variety of activity is being dealt with in the over 200 committees and groups that provide the forums for informational exchange between national civil servants. Some committees like the Economic and Development Review Committee convene at least on a monthly basis. Others only rarely convene. Committees like the Economic Policy Committee and Working Party no.3 call together very senior civil servants from the member-states. Others have a more loose composition, which varies from meeting to meeting (H4) (Marcussen, 2002).

The work in the committees is supported logistically and analytically by the OECD secretariat, which employs about 800 academic staff to which one should add no less than 500 employed on an ad-hoc basis. A number of these short-term and project employed professionals are consultants paid by their member-state. To these numbers, one should add - 1.000 in other staff categories. The secretarial structure is a copy of the ministerial structure known from the member-states. It is horizontally organized into 11 issue-specific directorates, including directorates that deal with science and trade (H1). The Economics Department is by far the largest directorate, both with regard to finances and personnel. Attached are also semi-autonomous bodies such as the International Energy Agency. The Secretary General outlines the main objectives and strategies of the OECD and is also in charge of the daily secretarial business. The work of the secretariat results in a large number of analytical and statistical publications.

The OECD does not produce hard law that is directly applicable in the member-countries, such as the European Union. Nor does it dispense money like for instance the International Monetary Fund. The OECD is best known for its production of comparable data and analyses. One could argue that the main purpose of the OECD with its highly skilled Secretariat is to function as an ideational artist. In that capacity the OECD was supposed to think the unthinkable and to play around with new and challenging concepts. With a view to improve the general macro-economic and political climate in the member-countries, the OECD was also supposed to form a forum in which national high level representatives could enter into constructive dialogue (H4). In that capacity the OECD should act as an ideational arbitrator that helps initiate a common learning process in the national public administrations. Consequently, the OECD today welcomes more than 40.000 national civil servants in its

committees on an annual basis, thereby allowing for direct policy deliberation with a view to developing a common scheme of reference across national boundaries. Through moral suasion and continuous multilateral surveillance OECD civil servants as well as the large number of civil servants seconded from the member-states evoke transgovernmental and supranational roles and identities (H3 and H4) (Marcussen, 2002).

It has been argued that the OECD to a large extent acts as a trend-follower rather than a trend-setter (Marcussen, 2002). Consequently, the OECD, in competition with other IGOs, tends to reformulate existing trends and solutions in order to gain political legitimacy in the member-states. The OECD is presently preparing to welcome a large number of new member-countries from Central and Eastern Europe. This will challenge the dominant view and self-perception of the OECD as the rich-countries' club. For all these reasons it has been argued that the OECD is currently in an acute identity crisis with its purpose and direction badly understood.

In favor of an intergovernmental dynamic within the OECD Secretariat would count the organizational affiliation to member-states (H4), the de facto recruitment procedures (H3) and the low degree of institutionalization (H2). OECD personnel are not formally recruited on basis of their country of origin. Ideally, only merit counts in recruitment situations. However, as in most other IGOs the recruitment praxis in the OECD Secretariat favors certain nationalities at the expense of others. This means that the question of nationality also counts in the framework of the OECD. As a general pattern, compared to their budgetary contribution, the big member-states (France is the significant exception) are underrepresented among the OECD employees and the small countries are overrepresented. Overall, however,

the size of the member-country correlates with the number of OECD civil servants with origin in that country (H3).

An additional factor that talks in favor of a distinct intergovernmental dynamic within the OECD secretariat is the fact that the average seniority of OECD civil servants is only four years (H5). It seems that the average OECD civil servant consider the OECD post as being one step among others in a distinct national career since most return to their home countries after OECD employment. Given the large number of seconded personnel among the OECD civil servants, the short tenure of the average OECD civil servant and the fact that the large majority of OECD civil servants are employed on time-limited contracts, one could argue that it is possible to define the entire OECD secretariat as a parallel administration in the sense described above (H3 and H5). Finally, since the OECD secretariat, compared to the European Commission, is not primarily engaged in the production of hard law relatively few standard operating procedures and fixed mandates exist in the OECD Secretariat. The number of directly binding OECD decisions and international agreements is low and typically concentrated within very few issue areas. The OECD flexibly engages in the collection, transformation and diffusion of OECD-wide norms. This it does through various soft-law mechanisms, of which regular peer-review and surveillance is notorious (Marcussen, 2004a).

Other factors, however, may trigger a transgovernmental dynamic within the OECD secretariat. In general, the average OECD A-grade civil servant is well educated within his or her discipline (Marcussen, 2004b). S/he has yearlong professional experience within that discipline either from other IGOs or from their country of origin (H5). Furthermore, the OECD civil servant will be officially encouraged and rewarded to participate in and contribute to international academic conferences and scientific journals and reports. A

frequently evoked reason for working within the OECD Secretariat is the possibility of exploiting ones own professional curiosity. In this way, OECD civil servants tend to have strong loyalties towards specific issue areas and fields of expertise, such as research and trade.

Finally, some factors encourage the development of a supranational dynamic within the OECD Secretariat. As mentioned, the very *raison d'être* of the OECD is to make a decisive difference for the way national civil servants think and perceive of problems and solutions. The OECD itself is in the transformation business, i.e. it is engaged in the construction of world-views and perceptions among national civil servants. In some committees and some sectors outward-directed socialization practices may be more efficient than in others (Lerdell and Sahlin-Andersson, 1997; Marcussen, 2004c; Sahlin-Andersson, 2000). The effectiveness of such socialization may depend on the techniques applied by the OECD, such as information, deliberation, and peer-pressure (Zürn, 2003). It may also depend on the extent to which a unified, coherent and institutionalized OECD ideology has developed (H2). If it is possible to identify a certain OECD-way of doing things it will, *ceteris paribus*, be more likely that learning by OECD civil servants is unidirectional, harmonious and goal-directed (H2). An additional factor that speaks in favor of supranational dynamics in the OECD Secretariat is the fact that this Secretariat to an increasing extent has developed coherent strategies with regard to third countries. Thus, the OECD Secretariat, through its multiple outreach activities, is heavily engaged with non-member-countries with a view to assist, instruct, monitor, survey and supervise these (Marcussen, forthcoming). Such unified action towards the outside world may strengthen the development of a distinct OECD identity (H4).

The WTO Secretariat

The WTO Secretariat, located in Geneva, has around 550 regular staff and is headed by a Director-General. It is horizontally specialized into nineteen functional divisions (much like the European Commission), two divisions with information and liaison tasks and three divisions with support roles. The Secretariat is vertically specialized and the divisions are headed by a Director who reports to a Deputy-Director General or directly to the Director General (H1). The Secretariat supports and assists the WTO members during the day-to-day operation of the WTO agreements, during dispute settlements, and during trade negotiations. The Secretariat's main duties is to supply technical and professional support for the various councils and committees of the WTO, to provide technical assistance to developing countries, to monitor and analyze developments in world trade, to provide information to the public and the mass media and to organize the ministerial conferences. The Secretariat also provides legal assistance in the dispute settlement process and advises governments wishing to become members of the WTO.

We ask how officials of the WTO Secretariat perceive their own roles as employees of the Secretariat. It is assumed that the configuration of different role perceptions evoked by WTO officials has consequences for which actors, what kind of information and what networks are brought into the WTO decisions. Thus, the behavior and role perceptions of the officials of the WTO Secretariat may affect the dynamics of the WTO as a whole. WTO officials are recruited from the member-states, but do they perceive themselves to be national representatives (H3 and H4)? They are mainly educated in economy, trade policy and law, but do they perceive themselves to be primarily professional experts (H5)? They are employed by the WTO and are supposed to be loyal to this organization, but do they perceive themselves to be primarily WTO officials? The seminal study of Cox and Jacobson (1973) demonstrated that officials with long tenure in IEs tend to develop identifications with it (H5).

According to WTO's internal rules, the Secretariat has no formal decision-making power. Hence, the Secretariat does not have autonomous supranational authority. However, the relatively small Secretariat is involved in most of the work of the WTO and is essential for the functioning of the organization. Vacancies are the subject of open competition and advertised by means of vacancy notices, the distribution of which is made to all official representatives of the WTO (H3). Those attending the Secretariat possess post-graduate university degrees with an emphasis on trade issues (H5). The academic qualifications are often supplemented by at least five years of experience in national governments, IGOs, or other organizations or enterprises dealing with issues of trade policy and international trade relations. Thus, the officials have a variety of former institutional affiliations (H4). However, the professional staff consists primarily of economists and lawyers specialized in international trade policy (Yi-chong and Weller, 2004). The professionals seem to share "a core set of normative principles, practical know-how, scientific beliefs...." (Schemeil, 2004, 82). Hence, WTO officials have strong professional and sectoral affiliations – reflecting their educational backgrounds and their prior employment in other IGOs, enterprises or other organizations as well as in domestic sector ministries (H4 and H5). The average tenure among WTO officials is long because the transition from the GATT to the WTO "did not bring about significant changes in its Secretariat in terms of its personnel..." (Yi-chong and Weller, 2004, 5). This fact has strengthened a community of personnel and a consensus culture among WTO officials (H2 and H5). However, this practice of consensus is also brought about by the sheer substantive complexity of the issues dealt with among WTO officials. Shared professional knowledge seems to create a sense of belonging among the officials (H1 and H5) (Yi-chong and Weller, 2004, 6).

Intergovernmental, supranational and transgovernmental roles are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, these roles are likely to play out in different organizational contexts.

Furthermore, although WTO officials do not have formal decision-making power, they nevertheless are important in gathering, administering and processing information. Hence, they are important both as premise providers and in preparing decisions made by the member-states. However, at present there is a lack of empirical observations that may illuminate the mix of organizational dynamics underpinning the WTO Secretariat.

CONCLUSIONS

The Westphalian logic of territorial sovereignty is challenged more by some IGOs than by others. The intergovernmental logic of territoriality seems less salient in the European Union than in the OECD and the WTO. However, we cannot conclude that the same pattern is valid for the *IEs* of these IGOs. The mix of behavioral and role dynamics evolving within IEs are organizationally contingent and more complex than assumed by IR theoretical orthodoxy. IE officials are expected to perform increasingly more complex tasks of representation. The organizational approach suggested here has unpacked the organizational components of IEs in order to understand their nuts and bolts. Different behavioral logics are played out in the EU Commission, the WTO Secretariat and the OECD Secretariat due to different organizational properties (H1), different levels of institutionalization (H2), different recruitment procedures (H3), different organizational affiliations towards external organizations (H4), and different demographic characteristics among the personnel (H5). Nevertheless, due to similarities as well as differences on these variables (Table 2), these IEs seem to share important behavioral dynamics.

The empirical observations presented in this study indicate that supranational dynamics are associated with long tenure among IE officials (H5) and a high intensity of actor-interaction among IE officials who have the IE as their primary institutional affiliation (H4).

Supranationally oriented IE officials are also typically recruited on the basis of merit into permanent positions (H3). The WTO case also demonstrates that supranational dynamics may emanate from the issue specificity of IEs (H1). Highly specialized professionals seem to create a special loyalty that disregards national borders (H5). The analysis gives less clear-cut findings on how organizational properties (H1) and degrees of institutionalization (H2) are associated with supranational dynamics. Finally, this study indicates that transgovernmental dynamics are fostered by the vertical specialization and the horizontal sector-specialization of IEs (H1), by the meritocratic recruitment procedure (H3) and by the existence of a highly educated professional staff (H5).

A next pertinent question is how the internal dynamics of IEs affect domestic government institutions. What happens when strongly institutionalized domestic executives and strongly pre-socialized civil servants become locked into the organizational machinery of IEs? Are we indeed witnessing the emergence of a transformative international bureaucracy with an autonomous power towards supranationalism and transgovernmentalism? Or do we observe merely incremental institutional adjustments within the existing Westphalian order of territorial executive governance? Our analysis indicates that IEs are indeed complex, multifaceted and marble cake-like organizations with strong transgovernmental and supranational dynamics.

Table 1**Three role perceptions**

| | <i>Role perception</i> | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| | <i>(i) Intergovernmental</i> | <i>(ii) Supranational</i> | <i>(iii) Transgovernmental</i> |
| <i>Role ideal</i> | State-identity | IE-identity | Expert-identity |
| <i>Role base</i> | Territorial base | Community base | Own educational background and expertise |
| <i>Driving force</i> | ‘What is my state’s interest’? | ‘What is the common good’? | ‘What is scientifically correct’? |

Table 2**Correlates of organizational characteristics in International Executives:**

| | <i>The European Commission</i> | <i>The OECD Secretariat</i> | <i>The WTO Secretariat</i> |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| H1 <i>Organizational properties:</i> - vertical specialization - horizontal specialization | Highest By purpose and process | Higher By purpose and process | High By purpose and process |
| H2 <i>Institutionalization</i> | High | Low | Medium |
| H3 <i>Recruitment procedure</i> | Mostly merit, some secondment | Mostly secondment, some merit | Merit |
| H4 <i>Organizational affiliations:</i> - primary/secondary affiliations - organizational fit/mis-fit - actor-interaction | Primary and secondary Fit Dense | Mostly Secondary Fit Moderate | Primary Fit Dense |
| H5 <i>Organizational demography:</i> - Education and professional background - Tenure among IE officials | Highly Specialised Long | Highly specialised Low | Highly specialised Long |

NOTES

¹ This article is part of a project entitled “DISC: Dynamics of International Secretariats”. The financial support of the Joint Committee of the Nordic Social Science Research Councils and the CONNEX network at MZES is gratefully acknowledged. A previous draft was presented at the 12th. Annual Conference in Political Science, Tromsø, Norway, 11-13 January 2004. The authors are indebted to comments from the conference participants, Torbjörn Larsson, Martha Finnemore, Morten Egeberg and two anonymous referees.

² For simplicity reasons, we use the term International Governmental Organization (IGO) to describe the OECD, the WTO, as well as the European Union. These three organizations all have nation-states as their members. Nevertheless, the European Union in particular is also recognized to be much more than just an intergovernmental organization (e.g. Sandholtz and Stone Sweet, 1998).

³ In the EU Christiansen (2001, 49) demonstrate the increased ‘actorness’ of the Council Secretariat, particularly within the field of CFSP. Studies also show that the Commission’s power of initiative tends to be weakened during turbulent institutional periods, for example during the Enlargement process and the Convention process (e.g. Sverdrup 2000).

⁴ Among the puzzling observations is the fact that the volume of institutional change within the European Union seems larger than the corresponding volume of institutional change within the member-states (Wessels, Maurer and Mittag, 2003). Hence, transformational processes at the nation-state level seem imperfectly associated with transformational changes at the EU level.

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