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# How Supranational is Supranationalism? National and European Socialization of Negotiators in the Council of Ministers<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The central purpose of this paper is to explain why some officials involved in EU Council working groups have a more positive disposition towards European integration than others. The paper is inspired by the fact that many studies on European integration deal only occasionally with the attitudes and the ideas of those men and women who are involved in daily negotiations. Consequently, most studies employ member states or European institutions (e.g. the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament) as central units of analysis, and the description of European policy-making is therefore often based on a limited number of observations (small N-analysis). In this paper we propose disaggregating the Council into multiple observations: the officials involved in the Council working groups. In doing so we hope to obtain a more profound understanding of the attitudes of the Council negotiators. This systematic empirical analysis leads to the conclusion that the interaction between domestic and transgovernmental experiences explains a significant proportion of the variance along the supranational-intergovernmental continuum.

## 1 Introduction

The central aim of this paper is to explain why some officials involved in the Council working groups are more in favour of European integration than others. There are several reasons for looking at the origins of the negotiators' attitudes. First of all, it was shown in earlier contributions that these attitudes are held collectively to some degree. We know that North European negotiators are less supranationalist than South European negotiators, and that the founding nations are more supranationalist than the newer member states. However, these succinct findings and descriptions of attitudes towards integration call for a deeper and more thorough analysis. Are the factors north/south and founding member states/newer member states the only factors that explain the negotiators' position vis-à-vis the integration process? Or do we need to consider other factors as well? And more importantly *why* are some of the officials in the Council working groups more supranational than others?

Attitudes towards regional integration concern the level of governance (international, European, national, regional or local) considered to be the most appropriate for managing contemporary policy problems. Roughly speaking, two groups will be distinguished: those who restrain extensive common policies and solutions, and those who stimulate these policies by strengthening the role of EU-level policy-making. The first group can be considered as more intergovernmental, the second group as more supranational. Supranationalism is an attitudinal disposition that deals with the question whether or not supranational institutions are primordial to policy-makers or of "how political authority should be organised within the European Union." The central dependent variable is thus where officials place supranational institutions in the policy-making process.

There is one important assumption on which this paper rests: that attitudes are important for understanding human behaviour. This is not the same as positing a deterministic relation between attitudes and behaviour. In real life many other factors affect behavioural choices as well. However, a better insight in the origins of ideas, beliefs and attitudes can result in a better conception of policy-making behaviour itself. Moreover, as our data will show, the positioning of nations on the supranationalism-intergovernmentalism axis strongly conforms to what well-informed observers of EU policy-making perceive as trends in the member states' behaviour. There seems to be a substantial correlation between attitudes and behaviour.<sup>2</sup> Since the central units of analysis are officials, and more specifically their individual disposition vis-à-vis the integration process, this paper does not claim to provide a better understanding of specific policy events or the policy-making process itself. It is the variation of these individual attitudes on an intergovernmentalism-supranationalism scale which we intend to explain.

With this contribution we do not intend to construct yet another integration theory or a new approach to studying European policy-making. Its objectives are much more limited and modest. In order to understand the reasons why some negotiators are more supranational than others two well-known approaches to studying EU-politics, liberal-intergovernmentalism and new-institutionalism, are contrasted. Some hypotheses from these two approaches have been chosen and put to an empirical test. Basically two processes emerge as possible explanations: the principal-agency model, viewing officials as member states' agents; and a socialization perspective which posits that preferences, attitudes and interests are endogenously shaped and remoulded by the institutional setting within which the officials work. First, we will look more closely at these two theoretical tracks. The third section presents the hypotheses to be tested. The fourth section describes the data and the variables to be used, and finally the aforementioned theoretical ideas are confronted with the relevant evidence.

## 2 Explaining attitudes towards integration

### 2.1 Officials as agents of the member states

Previous research has shown that nationality is an important factor within the Council working groups. The fact that nationality plays a role is not surprising in itself, since these officials prepare the decisions to be taken by their ministers. Therefore, the Council itself imposes the importance of nationality and formally the officials are delegated negotiators representing mainly national interests. Thus, officials' attitudes are related to the national institutions by which they are employed.

This conceptualization has been elaborated extensively within liberal intergovernmental thought. It claims that the actors involved in the Council working groups work basically under a mandate of their state and that European negotiations evolve in two stages. This reasoning of state-centric models fits very well in a principal-agent logic; member state governments are the principals instructing the agents, the national negotiators. In the first phase the national interest is determined and fixed in a domestic political game, after which it enters the fray of European negotiations. National representatives are involved, therefore, in two different games: the domestic game and the European game. Putnam's two-level game has been used extensively to model this complex interaction between European and national decision-making.

Consequently the positions vis-à-vis European integration and the attitudes officials hold should be largely a function of some member state characteristics. Liberal intergovernmentalists, for instance, claim that big countries and countries that hold outlier preferences on public good provisions are relatively reluctant to encourage further integration. Smaller countries are considered to be more pro-integration than larger ones, since smaller countries are more greatly affected by the consequences of internationalization. Within the group of the bigger countries the case of the United Kingdom supports this view, but the case of Italy, however, which is traditionally a very pro-European member state, refutes it. The Benelux countries are seen as a confirmation of the liberal intergovernmental small state hypothesis, whereas the case of Denmark rejects this view.

Socialization is considered to be weak in liberal intergovernmentalist thought. Participation in Council working groups will have little or no impact on the officials and it has no significant effect on the attitudes of negotiators. Their positions are determined at the national level and it is this level that functions as their primary source of socialization; this is where attitudes are formed. Furthermore, national affiliations, interests and preferences are supposed to dominate the attitudes of officials, and the strengthening or the prevalence of national identities should result in less supranational attitudes.

This paper will not reject the importance of national identities, neither will it claim that the participation in EU-settings causes national officials to 'turn native'. We will show that national identities are important, but that they could in fact strengthen supranationalism as well. One of the conclusions will be that the sign of the relationship between national affiliations and supranationalism, as put forward by liberal-intergovernmentalists, has to be reconsidered.

### 2.2 A strong socialization logic

Two elements of the research on European integration stress the importance of socialization within a new emerging supranational polity. According to early neo-functionalists, participation in this new polity causes actors to develop new perspectives and definitions of the situation. Several authors argue that the national civil servants involved in the working group meetings are exposed to a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding, to an *esprit de corps*. Thus, member state representatives are being socialized as European actors. They internalize the Community's decision-making norms and enhance their disposition towards more integrative decisions.

More recently neo-institutionalists have elaborated on socialization. The central idea behind all neo-institutional thought is that the strategies and behaviour of actors are shaped by organizational and institutional settings. Neo-institutionalists differ in their opinions on how preferences, interests, attitudes and identities originate and change. This paper fits in the field of 'sociological institutionalism', which claims that norms and values are embedded within institutions and that individuals learn what their preferences ought to be from their environment (the logic of appropriateness). Actors follow 'scripts' and 'templates' and delineate from this the most appropriate behaviour.

Important within a neo-institutional reflection on the EU is the idea that attitudes are dynamic rather than fixed; they change as a result of participation in political decision-making. The questions then are: does participation in the new polity lead to changing perceptions, and, how do institutions trigger these changes? Another important feature of recent conceptualization is the idea that contemporary developments result in numerous horizontal and vertical relations between state and non-state actors and that different levels of governance interpenetrate and relate to each other. Thus, the institutional settings in which actors operate lack a clear and well-defined hierarchical power centre.

The neo-institutional conception, however, differs from the neo-functionalist view in several ways. Contrary to the neo-functionalist view on socialization, neo-institutionalists also emphasize the incapacity of institutions to shape the values, attitudes and political orientations of social actors. Insti-

tutional learning and socialization take time; individuals do not necessarily shift loyalty in response to a functional need.<sup>3</sup> Diverse institutional settings influence the actors' political values and it could be that various institutions affect values and orientations simultaneously. Officials do not behave in a purely national or supranational fashion and one single individual can have different roles and identities. Especially within the European Union with its fragmented multilevel governance, the diversity of institutional settings within which political actors work makes it rather difficult to disentangle the sources of socialization.

We will illustrate that national and European socialization processes do not necessarily contradict each other, and that on some occasions national socialization processes can even contribute to a positive disposition vis-à-vis supranationalism. The neo-functional idea that an increased participation in EU affairs results in supranationalism will be moderated, while the neo-institutional notion on the importance of socialization as such will be confirmed. We will focus particularly on the importance of national socialization, but contrary to the intergovernmental argumentation it will be shown that national socialization does not necessarily result in intergovernmentalism.

### 3 Hypotheses

These theoretical tracks enable us to test several hypotheses, which are summarized in Table 1. First, it is hypothesized whether a variable has a positive or a negative effect on supranationalism. Second, the logic behind these supposed effects has to be disentangled; is there a strong socialization logic, a weak one, or a mixed one, that is a logic in which both socialization and agency processes might be at work. Three sorts of variables are distinguished: 1) transgovernmental experiences at the European level; 2) variables referring to the national political and administrative context of officials; and 3) variables referring to individual experiences within the national political and administrative setting.

#### 3.1 Experiences in Council working groups

Two sorts of experiences can be distinguished, both of which focus on experiences in transnational settings: transgovernmental experiences, and the more specific experiences that negotiators had with EU-affairs.<sup>4</sup> This variable is the workhorse for the proponents of the strong socialization logic. In general it is supposed that transgovernmental experiences have a positive impact on supranationalism.

There are, however, various kinds of transgovernmental experiences, which could have different impacts on supranationalism. On the one hand, an official may have career experience within an international organization or European institution. Such experience is likely to result in a positive disposition towards supranationalism.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, an official may have worked in the diplomatic service or at an embassy. It is questionable whether such experience is really transgovernmental and whether it will strengthen supranationalism. One could equally presume that these experiences strengthen intergovernmentalism since diplomats are officially assumed to be experts in representing and defending national interests abroad.

Furthermore, one could argue that transgovernmental experiences as such are not that important. The transgovernmental setting of the European Union is so manifestly different from other transgovernmental settings that the unique experience of being involved in European affairs counts more than any other factor. As one learns more about the peculiarities of European policy-making, it becomes obvious that political processes within the European Union differ substantially from proceedings in traditional international organizations or from the policy-making processes in domestic settings. The consequence is that diplomats' and civil servants' traditional implementing role is transformed gradually into a policy-making role. The definition of 'national interest', therefore, becomes more dependent on interactions within the working groups rather than being solely dependent on domestic interactions.

#### 3.2 The national context of officials

*North-South* – A reading of recent and less recent articles on European policy-making points to the fact that many authors employ, implicitly or explicitly, the north-south distinction as a tool for understanding EU-politics.<sup>6</sup> One question closely related to the north-south issue is whether perceived economic benefits stimulate supranationalism. In essence, the European integration project is still very much an economic project and support for it can be evaluated in the light of the benefits which participants receive from it. The Internal Market Programme and EMU originated from a bargain between those countries that benefited from a large free trade area and those that benefited from the extension of redistributive structural policies.<sup>7</sup> The fact that supranational integration in the sense of an increased redistribution between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' is to the advantage of the southern states (e.g. regional and structural policies) should stimulate an overall positive disposition towards supranationalism. This positive effect of being South European points to a conception of negotiators representing hard-edged national economic interests and a weak socialization logic.

Nevertheless, it is possible to understand the north-south hypothesis from a strong socialization logic as well. Egeberg, following Hofstede, hypothesizes that North Europeans are culturally more adapted to Weberian forms of administration, which implies that they are more capable of making an abstraction of idiosyncratic socio-cultural characteristics. Southerners attach more importance to group norms and define themselves more as members of groups, which could imply that they assign more weight to the preferences of their mother country and to solutions that are successful at home. This leads to a less supranational position and reflects a strong socialization logic.

*Size* – Following Hooghe we hypothesize that the negotiators from small polities may favour supranationalism more than the negotiators that represent the bigger member-states. Representatives of smaller states know that their country is more intensely affected by the consequences of internationalization and they adapt themselves, therefore, more to the fact that national policy alternatives are largely constrained. Consequently, supranationalism is an option for these countries. Socialization implies then that officials from smaller states have learned that supranationalism is an adequate adaptation to externalities. A positive effect of size on supranationalism means that size constrains the range of national options and leads to a limited esteem for sovereignty.

The logic at work behind this supposed effect of size is less apparent. A positive effect of size is also expected within liberal-intergovernmentalism, which focuses on the fact that “national interests would lead one to expect large, self-sufficient and uncompetitive countries... to be relatively unwilling to accept stronger supranational institutions...” while “smaller countries might be expected to support strong supranational power.” To conclude, the expected effect of size is positive for both approaches irrespective of its interpretation – socialization or defending the national position.

*Length of membership* – Another hypothesis to be found in the literature is that the general publics of the founding member states have a more supranational attitude than those of the newer member states. Similarly, one could argue that the longer a state has been a member of the European Union, the more experience its civil service has had with it and that this makes the internalization of supranational values and norms more feasible.

The weakness of such a simple dichotomous concept is that it abstracts the spirit of the time and the motivation of the candidate at the moment of entrance. The founding member states (Benelux, France, Germany and Italy) established the European institutions during a period that was characterized by a permissive consensus and they had more socialization opportunities or years to learn the peculiarities of European policy-making. States that entered in the first wave (United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark) were

dubious about supranationalism when they became members and we assume, therefore, that these member states did not appoint supranational officials to the working groups. On the contrary, there are good reasons for assuming that they charged the most intergovernmental ones with representation and negotiation tasks. Although these officials had more time to become socialized than those that entered the EU at a later stage, they started off as more intergovernmental than the southern states (Spain, Portugal and Greece), which became members in the second wave. The latter favoured supranational policies (e.g. the extension of social and structural policies) from the very beginning.

Also in this case the logic is mixed. On the one hand, the amount of experience with the European Union refers to a strong socialization logic. On the other hand, it is possible that different member state governments appointed different sorts of officials and in doing so constrained socialization opportunities purposely.

*National elite orientations* – Hooghe hypothesizes that the views of Commission officials may be a reflection of values shared by the respective national elites. Indeed, most officials received their training and political education within national political systems. Thus, national civil servants and diplomats learned the appropriate values and orientations within the national elite to which they belong.

A national negotiator can also be considered an agent to whom national politicians have delegated the competence to perform tasks, in accordance with the orientations for which a national political elite has found its consensus. Also, Hooghe situates her hypothesis concerning national elite orientations within a principal-agent logic, which implies that national governments (the principals of the European Commission) will try to constrain the power of the European Commission (the agent of the national governments).

Again, whether we interpret this effect as a socialization effect or as that of purposive instruction of negotiators, the sign of the effect should be positive. That is, the more a national elite favours supranationalism, the more negotiators with the same nationality are pro supranational integration.

*The structure of the national polity* – Finally, we will analyse the structure of the national polity and whether an official's view is affected by constitutional features, territorial decentralization and the role of regions in the central government. The hypothesis is that negotiators that represent federal polities have fewer difficulties in adapting themselves to a supranational way of policy-making, because they are used to operating within a multilevel governance system at home. Hooghe says: “EU governance merely adds another protective layer of structuring, which pushes back the uncertain external environment.”

As a consequence, socialization takes less time and effort. This variable refers to a strong socialization logic.

There is another reason why federalism could stimulate supranational attitudes. One could assume that the negotiators that represent federal systems are more dependent on complex domestic coordination procedures than those that represent more unitary systems. The former have the difficult task of taking multiple interests into account. In such a situation supranationalism eases the negotiators' work since it expresses a good deal of diffuse support for the initiatives and proposals of the European Commission. As a result, less coordination with, and control by, the various domestic authorities is needed. After all, a defensive stance against European integration, such as that taken by the British and the Norwegians, requires more effort, more coordination and more control, a situation that officials from federal polities might try to avoid.

### 3.3 Officials' individual experiences with national politics

*Work experience within the national polity* – In contrast to the hypothesized positive effect of EU-experiences on supranationalism, we suppose that the longer officials have served in a national administration, the lesser their supranational disposition. Service in a national administration increases the chance that a negotiator internalized the values inherent to a domestic administrative and political system.

*National political and administrative culture* – The final hypothesis to be tested is the innovator/escapists hypothesis. The idea is that some negotiators are critical of the deficiencies of their own political system and that they therefore develop a positive expectation vis-à-vis European integration. This idea has been explored in public opinion research and it has appeared in other studies as well. A traditional example in this respect is Italy, where both the elite and the general public are largely supportive of European integration and where the state is relatively weak and considered to be unstable.<sup>8</sup>

## 4 Data and research design

### 4.1 Sample

In the first half of 1994 Belgian civil servants were interviewed, who, at that time, represented their country in about 170 working groups of the Council of Ministers.<sup>9/10</sup> About 110 Belgian civil servants from specialized ministries participated in the working groups on a part-time basis, which implies that

Table 1 Summary of the main hypotheses and operationalization of independent variables

Independent variables	Supposed Effects	Logic	Operationalization
<i>Transgovernmental experience</i>			
Experience in the working groups	Positive	Strong socialization	Years of participation in the Council
<i>National contextual factors</i>			
South European	Positive/negative	Mixed	Hofstede's distinction
Size	Positive	Mixed	Dichotomous variable based on a population criterion
Point of entrance	Positive	Mixed	Member states divided in three waves
National elite attitude	Positive	Mixed	Eurobarometer Elite Survey (1996)
Federal polity	Positive	Strong socialization	Indicator employed by Hooghe
<i>National experience</i>			
Low organizational self-esteem	Positive	Strong socialization	Seven items in Table 5
Work experience in national settings	Negative	Strong socialization	Years spent in the domestic state sector
Mixed: these effects are interpretable from both a strong and a weak socialization (principal-agency) logic.			

they worked only occasionally for the Council working groups. Furthermore, there were 21 diplomats and 13 civil servants who were part of the Belgian Permanent Representation, and 15 diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in all 49 representatives. The 13 civil servants belonging to the Belgian Permanent Representation functioned as liaison officials for the federal ministries of Agriculture, Finance, Transport, Development Aid, Foreign Trade, Economic Affairs, and Environment. These 49 diplomats and civil servants were involved in Council working groups on a full-time basis. The full-timers had been more exposed to the peculiarities of the European policy-making setting than the part-timers. Of this estimated total population of 159 Belgian civil servants and diplomats, a sample of 65 part-timers and 30

full-timers was drawn.

The total number of diplomats and civil servants in the Permanent Representations of the (then) 12 member states was estimated to be 300. 108 respondents representing the other member states of the European Union were interviewed.

Table 2 Distribution of respondents (N)

	13 Working Groups	Other Belgian Full-Timers	Belgian Part-Timers
Belgium	12	18	65
Great Britain	11		
Denmark	10		
Germany	12		
France	12		
Greece	8		
Eire	10		
Italy	11		
Luxembourg	4		
Netherlands	8		
Portugal	11		
Spain	11		
Totals	120	18	65

The subsequent multivariate analyses were carried out on two sub-samples: a multinational group sampled on the basis of their involvement in some working groups; and the Belgians as a separate sample. In Table 2 the first column represents the first sub-sample and the top row represents the second sub-sample. Both sub-samples enable us to make important comparisons. In the Belgian sample we can compare full-timers with part-timers, while in the multinational sample North and South Europeans, small and large member states, older and newer member states can be compared. From a data-analytic viewpoint the comparisons within the samples are independent of each other. However, the theoretical perspective makes a study of two different samples an interesting enterprise.

#### 4.2 Measuring supranationalism

Three items (see Table 3) were employed to measure supranationalism. They deal mainly with the proceedings within the working groups of the Council

and imply the strengthening of European policies and the European institutions in general. An objection could be that these items do not refer to the role and the functioning of other institutions, such as the Commission or the Parliament. However, we assume that since these items concern the concrete task and mission that a Council official has to perform, they fit well within the concept that we intend to measure.

The stimuli all appeal to the willingness and readiness to strengthen EU-level policy-making and the relative autonomy of the EU-level vis-à-vis the member states. This measurement instrument does not assume a priori that the Council is by definition something intergovernmental. Indeed, some elements in the Council proceedings are more intergovernmental (e.g. when unanimity voting is required) than others (e.g. when qualified majority voting is possible). Whether the Council functions in a more intergovernmental or a more supranational way is, in our opinion, also dependent on the national representatives' attitudes. Some are in favour of more extensive common policies, while others oppose this.

Table 3 Attitudes towards European integration, univariate statistics (percentages, means and standard deviations)

		agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	disagree	
GUIDE	In the working groups, the European Commission and the national governments representatives should take an active part in drawing up guidelines for the policies of member states.	26.1	17.5	18.4	10.5	11.4	15.8			Multinational sample ( $x = 3.40$ , $s = 1.78$ )
		48.4	22.1	14.7	5.3	6.3	3.2			Belgian sample ( $x = 2.08$ , $s = 1.39$ )
DIREC	In the working groups the representatives should develop a strong common policy and lay down clear directions for the national governments.	21.2	15.9	15.0	12.4	20.4	15.0			Multinational sample ( $x = 3.41$ , $s = 1.66$ )
		36.2	27.7	20.2	7.4	4.3	4.3			Belgian sample ( $x = 2.29$ , $s = 1.36$ )
EXECU	In the working groups the representatives should work towards a strongly united policy that strengthens the executive role of the European institutions.	18.9	13.5	18.0	18.0	19.8	11.7			Multinational sample ( $x = 3.41$ , $s = 1.66$ )
		30.9	18.1	27.7	11.7	8.5	3.1			Belgian sample ( $x = 2.59$ , $s = 1.42$ )

Table 4 Supranationalism (factor loadings)

	Belgians (N=95)	Multinational sample (N=120)
GUIDE	0.63	0.56
DIREC	0.60	0.79
EXECU	0.49	0.76
Eigenvalue	1.00	1.52

A first look at the univariate distributions in Table 3 shows a rather high degree of dissension in the multinational sample concerning proceedings within the working groups. Roughly speaking two groups can be distinguished: those restraining extensive common policies and solutions, and those stimulating the common policies and solutions by strengthening the role of EU-level policy-making. The Belgians clearly belong to the second group. A principal factor analysis was carried out in order to find out whether the three items belong to one dimension.<sup>11</sup> Table 4 shows the loadings of a principal factor analysis resulting in one factor for the two sub-samples.

#### 4.3 Operationalizing the independent variables

*Transgovernmental experience* – The number of years a respondent was involved in the various working groups was taken as an indicator of transgovernmental experience. The averages were: 9 years in the multinational sample; 12 years for the Belgian full-timers, and 11 years for the Belgian part-timers.

*Size* – Size is measured by a simple dichotomous variable dividing the multinational sample into small and large countries. Respondents representing a country with a population smaller or equal to 15 million were labelled small (Ireland, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Portugal and Greece, N=63), others were labelled large (France, Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, N=57).

*North-South* – For north-south we chose Hofstede's distinction, which divides the multinational sample into 'North Europeans' (Germans, Danish, Dutch, British, Irish and Luxembourgers, N=55) and 'South Europeans' (Belgian, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and Greek, N=65).

*Length of membership* – We constructed a theoretical variable which posits a priori that supranationalism should decrease in the following way: the founding member states should express themselves as the most supranationalist, the

states that entered in the second wave are less supranationalist than the founding members, but considerably more supranationalist than the states that entered in the first wave. Consequently, the original members received a code 1, those belonging to the second enlargement were coded 2 and the first wave received a 3, indicating the rising level of intergovernmentalism to be expected.

*National elite orientation* – To test whether the views expressed by our respondents were similar to those shared by the national elite we used, in order to make results comparable, the same indicator as Hooghe, which is based on the Eurobarometer elite survey of 1996 (see Table 7). A high score on this index points to a supranationalist nation, while a low score refers to an intergovernmental attitude.

*Federalism* – The last aggregate variable is again similar to the variable Hooghe employed for describing the extent to which a polity is federalized. With this index (see Table 8b) countries are coded on the basis of constitutional characteristics, territorial decentralization and the role of regions in the central government. A high score (7) indicates an extensive level of federalism, while

Table 5 Organizational Self-Esteem (all 5-point scales, factor-loadings)

	Belgians (N=95)	Multinational sample (N=120)
1. The internal coordination of the viewpoints of the different ministries in our country is chaotic.	0.68	0.76
2. In the administrations of my country there is not sufficient training for officials who have to take part in negotiations at a European level.	0.59	0.48
3. It often happens that I am not quite certain what point of view I should put forward in the working groups.	0.68	0.71
4. For officials it is very important that the preparation of a policy is easily surveyable. The structure of the administration in our country does not always add to this effect.	0.69	0.60
5. Most member states prepare themselves more thoroughly for the negotiations in Brussels than we do.	0.52	0.56
6. I only learnt how to deal with complicated European dossiers as I went along.	0.49	0.56
7. I always get very clear instructions from my ministry or my department as to what position I should take.	0.59	0.61
Eigenvalue	2.60	2.68



a low score (o) describes more centralized and unitary states.

*Organizational self-esteem* – The disposition vis-à-vis the national polity is made operational with the help of the scale 'organizational self-esteem'. The relevant items and factor loadings are presented in Table 5. The semantics of this scale and its relation to administrative culture have been discussed more fully elsewhere. From previous research we know that organizational self-esteem is very low among the Belgians and especially among the Belgian part-timers.

*Work experience in the national polity* – Finally we took the number of years a respondent served the national administration as a measure of domestic career experiences. Negotiators in the multinational sample served their state on average for 16 years, while for the Belgian full-timers the average is 21 years and for the Belgian part-timers it is 19 years.

## 5 Testing the hypotheses

The proposed hypotheses will be examined in two steps. First, we will look at the bivariate relations between the independent variables and supranationalism. For the multivariate analysis we have chosen an analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA) which takes interaction effects more explicitly into account.

### 5.1 Bivariate analysis

It turns out that within the Belgian sample transgovernmental experiences are not a factor to be considered. In both sub-samples the relation is weak and insignificant. This points to the fact that negotiators' attitudes are, at least in the Belgian case, not necessarily shaped by years experience in EU affairs. In the multinational sample national factors proved to be the most predictive. South Europeans are more favourable towards supranational solutions ( $\bar{x} = -0.09$ ) than their North European colleagues ( $\bar{x} = 0.68$ ). And, as expected, the representatives from the founding member states ( $\bar{x} = -0.12$ ) were still more more in favour of the ideal of European integration than the newcomers ( $\bar{x} = 0.60$ ). The hypothesis that the point of entrance has an impact is confirmed by a strong correlation. Representatives of states that entered in the second wave are considerably more supranational ( $\bar{x} = 0.18$ ) than those that entered in the first wave ( $\bar{x} = 1.02$ ).

Also, the relationship between national elite orientations and the respondents' attitudes is strong. Table 7 gives an overview for all nationalities

Table 6 Bivariate correlations of independent variables with supranationalism (correlations,  $p < 0.05$ ; ns = statistically not significant)

Independent variables	Multinational sample (N=120)	Belgian sample (N=95)
<i>Transgovernmental experience</i> (individual level data)		
Experience in the working groups	Ns	Ns
<i>National experience (aggregate level data)</i>		
South European	0.37	No variance
Size	Ns	No variance
Length of membership	0.43	No variance
National elite positive towards integration	-0.47	No variance
Federal polity	Ns	No variance
<i>National experience (individual level data)</i>		
Low organizational self-esteem	-0.19	-0.29
Work experience in national settings	-0.22	ns

Table 7 Nationality, enlargement, elite orientations, and supranationalism

Nationality	Point of entrance	Average elite attitude (Eurobarometer Elite Survey of 1996)	Averages multinational sample (rank)
Belgian	Founder	1.74	-0.91 (1)
Italian	Founder	1.24	-0.27 (2)
Greek	Second Wave	0.96	-0.19 (3)
German	Founder	0.71	0.67 (8)
Spanish	Second Wave	0.52	0.59 (7)
Dutch	Founder	0.33	-0.19 (3)
French	Founder	0.08	0.25 (6)
Luxembourger	Founder	-0.17	-0.04 (4)
British	First Wave	-0.33	0.95 (10)
Irish	First Wave	-0.52	0.69 (9)
Portuguese	Second Wave	-0.71	0.04 (5)
Danish	First Wave	-1.74	1.47 (11)

in the multinational sample and relates the data to the point of entrance. Most nationalities fit within the general trend shown by our bivariate data analysis. The Belgians and Italians are the most convinced supporters of supranationalism and the British and the Danish are strongly in favour of inter-governmentalism. There are two deviations for which we do not have an obvious explanation. The less pro-European stance of the Portuguese national elite is not reflected in our sample, in which the Portuguese belong, according to some of our hypotheses, to the supranational camp. The opposite holds for the Germans. Our hypotheses suppose that the German national elite belong to the supranational group, but this is not in fact the case.<sup>12</sup>

The bivariate relations with organizational self-esteem and experience in the national civil service confirm that national socialization experience is important. However, the sign of the relation is not always what we would expect. The analysis shows, as hypothesized, that a low organizational self-esteem stimulates supranationalism. This is especially the case for the Belgian sample. However, the multinational sample shows that the longer an official has worked within national settings, the more he favours supranationalism, a result which runs counter to our expectations.

Finally, before we turn to a co-variance analysis we would like to focus the reader's attention on two variables, federalism and size, which had a significant and substantial effect in Hooghe's research on Commission officials. In our sample, these variables are insignificantly associated with supranationalism.

There is a difference between respondents negotiating on behalf of small states and those representing bigger states, but the difference is not statistically significant. So size seems to be less important than hypothesized. Furthermore, supranationalism should increase as the level of territorial decentralization increases. The data does not confirm this idea. Tables 8a and 8b show the levels of supranationalism for diverse levels of federalism. It is clear that the three most federal polities (Germany, Spain and Belgium) express themselves as the most supranational, but there are considerable differences among these three. Furthermore, respondents of some non-federal polities (France and Italy) situate themselves more on the supranational than on the intergovernmental side and unitary systems are barely more intergovernmental than non-unitary polities.

Table 8a Federal, Non-Unitary, Unitary Polities and Supranationalism (multinational sample, N=120, averages)

Federal polities (Belgium, Germany and Spain)	0.07
Decentralized polities (Italy, Denmark, France and Portugal)	0.32
Unitary polities (Netherlands, Luxembourg, Greece, Ireland, and the UK)	0.35

Table 8b Supranationalism by Federalism

7 (Belgium)	-0.91
6 (Germany)	0.67
5 (Spain)	0.59
2 (Portugal, Denmark, Italy and France)	0.32
1 (United Kingdom)	0.95
0 (Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland and Greece)	0.12

## 5.2 Analysis of co-variance

*The misleading character of bivariate analysis* – Before we turn to the results of the co-variance analysis we will show, using some simple examples, the misleading character of the previous analysis.

First of all, interaction effects must be taken into account. Remember that we concluded, on the basis of bivariate statistics, that territorial decentralization or federalism and size are not related to supranationalism. It could be, however, that the overall relation between territorial decentralization and supranationalism fades out as a consequence of the fact that the strength of this relationship is affected by the size of the respondent's polity. The smaller a country, the more its decentralized character will affect supranationalism, and the larger a country the less decentralization will be related to supranationalism. This means, we hypothesize, an interaction effect of size and federalism on supranationalism. The correlations between federalism and supranationalism within the subgroups of larger and smaller countries confirm the idea that federalism is positively related to supranationalism within the subgroup of larger countries ( $r=0.36$ ,  $p=0.0041$ ) and that it has no importance in the subgroup of smaller countries ( $r=0.08$ ,  $p=0.5443$ ).

Second, disaggregating aggregated data can lead to misinterpretations of results. In Table 9 we compare the correlations of the five macro-variables for aggregated and disaggregated data. Part A shows the association of a measurement at the respondent level ( $N=120$ ) and part B the correlations for the aggregated data ( $N=12$ , which is the real measurement level). In general, correlations in the multinational sample are higher than in the aggregated sample. Even more important are the decreasing p-values; the lower p-values in the multinational sample are a consequence of the lower standard errors, which are, in turn, a result of the fact that the number of observations has been artificially increased by disaggregating the data. We tend to accept, therefore, relations between contextual variables at the respondent level too easily; relations that do not exist in a similar magnitude at the real measurement level

Table 9 Aggregated and disaggregated data (correlations,  $p < 0.05$ ; ns = statistically not significant)

Part A Disaggregated (multinational sample, N=120)				
	Entrance	Elite orientations	Size	North-South
Elite orientations	-0.71 ( $p=0.0001$ )			
Size	0.21 ( $p=0.0189$ )	-0.24 ( $p=0.0096$ )		
North-South	0.40 ( $p=0.0001$ )	-0.50 ( $p=0.0001$ )	0.10 ( $p=0.2553$ )	
Federalism	-0.41 ( $p=0.0001$ )	0.51 ( $p=0.0001$ )	-0.26 ( $p=0.0045$ )	-0.27 ( $p=0.0024$ )
Part B Aggregated (N=12)				
	Entrance	Elite orientations	Size	North-South
Elite orientations	-0.66 ( $p=0.0185$ )			
Size	0.30 ( $p=0.3409$ )	-0.27 ( $p=0.3868$ )		
North-South	0.30 ( $p=0.3409$ )	-0.50 ( $p=0.0936$ )	0.00 ( $p=1.0000$ )	
Federalism	-0.31 ( $p=0.32661$ )	0.46 ( $p=0.1360$ )	-0.18 ( $p=0.5814$ )	-0.32 ( $p=0.3119$ )

of these variables. To put it another way, there is a danger of overestimating the effect of nation-specific variables while underestimating individual level variables.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the use of aggregate data leads to the danger of measuring very

similar empirical aspects with different operationalizations. In Table 9 the national elite orientations are strongly related to the period of entrance. In the founding member states the national elite is still more supranationalist than in the newer member states. Of the newer member states the second wave is more supranationalist than the first wave. This applies to both the aggregate and disaggregated data, and it implies that we have to be careful with an analysis that was carried out with these two independent variables since they risk creating collinearity. The same observation can be made for the north-south distinction, which is strongly associated with the point of entrance and national elite orientations. The second enlargement included only South European states and the first only northern countries. These features of the data force us to: a) limit our ambitions for the multinational sample to carefully chosen, independent categorical variables, namely size, federalism and point of entrance, and b) be cautious with the interpretation of effects.

*The Belgian sample* – It is important to keep in mind that the variance on supranationalism is substantially lower in the Belgian sample than in the multinational sample. The standard deviation equals 1.07 in the multinational sample, while it is only 0.79 in the Belgian sample. Because of the relatively pro-European and homogenous character of the Belgian sample the proportion of explained variance is not expected to be very high.

For the Belgian sample we also make a distinction between full-timers and part-timers, two groups that differ substantially with respect to their working group experience. Consistent with the hypothesis on transgovernmental experience we expect full-timers to be more pro-European than part-timers.

Table 10 Co-variance analysis on the Belgian sample

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Experience in the working groups	Ns	Ns
Organizational self-esteem	9.54	Ns
Work experience in national settings	Ns	Ns
Full-timers/part-timers	Ns	Ns
Interaction effects		
Interaction: organizational self-esteem and level of involvement	Not tested	4.84
Model evaluation	F=2.90 (df=4, $p=0.0266$ ) R <sup>2</sup> =0.12	F=2.90 (df=4, $p=0.0266$ ) R <sup>2</sup> =0.12

N=95,  $p < 0.05$ ; ns = statistically not significant

Two models were tested (see Table 10). The significance of models 1 and 2 is comparable, so we will interpret the interaction effect of involvement and organizational self-esteem. Table 11 displays the average supranationalism by working group involvement and organizational self-esteem.

Table 11 Supranationalism by involvement and organizational self-esteem (Belgian sample, z-scores)

	Organizational self-esteem		
	High (N=33)	Middle (N=29)	Low (N=33)
Full-time involvement (N=30)	-0.47	-0.06	-0.68
Part-time involvement (N=65)	-0.16	-0.26	-0.82

The importance of a national socialization factor, namely organizational self-esteem is confirmed. This factor has a bivariate (see Table 6) and a first order effect on supranationalism (see model 1, Table 10). In general a low organizational self-esteem stimulates supranationalism. For a profound substantive interpretation, however, we have to take the experience with EU-affairs into account. The involvement within the working groups as such does not explain supranationalism, but the relation between organizational self-esteem and

Table 12 Co-variance analysis on the multinational sample

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Experience in the working groups	Ns	Not tested
Organizational self-esteem	Ns	Ns
Work experience in national settings	4.91	Not tested
Size	Ns	Not tested
Point of entrance	9.52	Not tested
Federalism	Ns	Not tested
Interaction effects		
Federalism and size	Not tested	3.11
Period of entrance, work experience in national settings and experience in the working groups	Not tested	6.23
Model evaluation	F=4.58 (df=10, p=0.0001) R2=0.32	F=4.99 (df=11, p=0.0001) R2=0.36

N=120, p<0.05; ns = statistically not significant

supranationalism does change as a consequence of involvement in the working groups. As can be seen in Table 11 the less an official was involved in the working groups, the more his low self-esteem goes together with supranationalism.

*The multinational sample* – For the multinational sample two models were tested; one without interaction terms and one with. In model 1, without interaction terms, only two factors had an effect: work experience in national settings and period of entrance. According to the second model we have to interpret two interaction terms of which one is a third-order effect. For the interpretation of the results see Table 13, parts A to C.

The effect of the interaction of size and federalism on supranationalism is rather complicated as it does not follow a clear linear trend. On the one hand, the data shows that federalism as such does not necessarily fit with supranationalism. Representatives of smaller polities are more supranational if they belong to a federal system (the Belgians) but the results differ for the unitary

Table 13 Interpretation of effects with the help of averages (multinational sample, z-scores)

A Supranationalism by size and territorial decentralization

Size	Territorial decentralization		
	Federal polities (N=35)	Decentralized polities (N=44)	Unitary polities (N=41)
Big (N=55)	0.63	-0.02	0.95
Small (N=65)	-0.91	0.68	0.12

B Supranationalism by period of entrance and experience in national settings

Entrance	Experience in national settings	
	Low (N=63)	High (N=57)
Founder (N=59)	0.14	-0.39
First wave (N=31)	0.89	1.24
Second wave (N=30)	0.21	0.15

C Supranationalism by period of entrance and involvement in working groups

Entrance	Working group experience	
	Low (N=65)	High (N=50)
Founder (N=59)	-0.06	-0.16
First wave (N=31)	1.02	1.01
Second wave (N=20)	0.22	-0.01

systems: the Dutch, Luxembourgers, Greek and Irish are more supranational whereas the Danish respondents are, despite the size of their country, more intergovernmental. The bigger non-unitary member states show a more supranational disposition than British respondents. So here it seems that territorial decentralization strengthens supranationalism. However, the Germans and the Spanish express themselves as less supranationalist than would theoretically have been expected.

Then there is a rather complex third-order effect. In order to keep the interpretation accessible we concentrated on the two second-order effects, which are encapsulated in the third-order effect. The third-order effect simply points to the fact that the two effects do not contradict each other.

The hypothesis that the founding member-states are the most supranationalist, followed by the states that entered the EU in the second wave and that the first wave states are the most intergovernmentalist is confirmed. However, within the three waves there are considerable differences when it comes to national career experience. Many years experience as a national civil servant stimulates supranationalism among the founding member states. For respondents from countries of the second wave the difference is less apparent. The opposite is observed for negotiators of the first wave: less experience in domestic administrations reduces intergovernmentalism. We obtain a similar picture when we look at working group experience. For those belonging to the first wave, working group involvement does not reduce their intergovernmentalism, whereas it stimulates the supranationalism of the founding member states and the second wave.

This leads to two conclusions. First, our hypothesis concerning the point of entrance is confirmed. Founding member states have had more socialization opportunities in European affairs and their representatives are consequently convinced of supranationalism. For representatives of the first wave, a limited exposure to the national administration weakens intergovernmentalism, but extensive involvement in the working groups does not stimulate more supranationalism. This confirms the hypothesis that the transgovernmental socialization opportunities of those belonging to the first wave are constrained. In comparison to the first wave, socialization turns out to be more successful for the second wave.

Second, we need to reformulate the initial hypothesis concerning the negative impact of domestic career socialization on supranationalism. To start with, involvement in the working groups is related to national career socialization. This points to the fact that transgovernmental socialization opportunities in EU-affairs are likely to depend on career socialization within national polities.<sup>14</sup> Experience in national settings only reduces intergovernmentalism for negotiators of the first wave. National socialization matters, but it does not necessarily matter in the sense that was hypothesized.

Furthermore, the amount of involvement in the working groups should not be overestimated. This can not be directly inferred from our analysis of the multinational sample. Within the Belgian sample, however, we observe the importance of a national socialization factor in the form of organizational self-esteem. This factor stimulates supranationalism among those who are less exposed to EU-affairs (the part-time officials). Thus a negative disposition towards the national apparatus has a positive effect on supranationalism, and this effect is more apparent among those with less European experience.

## 6 Conclusion and discussion

Supranational attitudes are substantially affected by an interaction between domestic and transgovernmental experiences. The analysis shows that an extensive career within the national administration does not necessarily have a negative effect on supranationalism. On the contrary, we found that in some cases the officials with more domestic administrative experience proved to be more supranational than those with less national experience. This effect interacts with the point at which a member state entered the European Union and the socialization opportunities this created for negotiators. For the founding member states many years experience in the national civil service strengthens the transgovernmental socialization opportunities in EU-affairs, which in turn has a positive effect on supranationalism. The respondents belonging to the first wave (the Irish, British and Danish) are still affected by a negative mood towards integration and consequently intense involvement in working groups does not have the expected positive effect. On the contrary, in this case those with limited national experience are a bit less intergovernmentalist. Finally, negotiators belonging to the second wave are positively affected by transgovernmental socialization opportunities. In their case, experience in national settings does not matter very much and the greater the number of years they have been involved in working groups the more supranationalism is stimulated.

In order to understand supranationalism fully we have to conclude that the national political and administrative culture has to be taken into account. This is reflected convincingly in the Belgian sample where a negative disposition vis-à-vis the national polity results in more supranational positions. This observation points to a socialization logic that is at work and it fits within the neo-institutional view that socialization is not necessarily a functional process. The Belgians are not only supranational because they consider the EU to be more efficient or effective. It is also a matter of their socialization within the national political and administrative apparatus.

We cannot conclude that those used to less centralized decision-making at home are more attracted by supranational decision-making. And yet this does

not imply that the formal institutional structure of the national polity does not matter. We infer this from comments made by Belgian officials about the national polity in 23 qualitative interviews. These Belgians emphasized that the constitutional reforms in Belgium had the most pervasive impact on their work. In contrast, the increasing impact of the European institutions was mentioned by only one interviewee. These qualitative interviews also showed that constitutional reforms are experienced negatively. Especially in the Belgian federal administration complaints about the increased complexity of the administrative and political system prevailed; the interplay between different agencies is inefficient or even absent; the involvement of a large number of ministries "increases the probability of bad instructions". Another indication of the impact of the structure of national polities on views about EU-governance came from our Italian respondents. Italians belong to a large, non-federal state, and they should therefore be disposed to intergovernmentalism. Together with the Belgians, however, the Italians belong to the most supranational group and although their constitutional systems are very different, both belong to very fragmented polities, characterized by many cross-cutting cleavages.

The non-interpretable effect of federalism implies that the hypothesis concerning federalism needs careful reconsideration. Are negotiators from federal polities indeed convinced that multilevel governance is more effective, and are they really more accustomed to policy-making at multiple levels? The scale of organizational self-esteem is a good starting point for elaborating on this. Belgians belong to one of the most decentralized and federalized polities of Western Europe. However, they are not unanimously convinced that their national multilevel system is efficient and effective and we cannot conclude that their political culture is well adapted to policy-making at multiple levels. Equally we can hypothesize that Italian respondents, for instance, are more supranational, not in spite of the absence of federalism, but because they consider their system to be too centralized and thus, in their opinions, lacking efficiency and effectiveness.

In fact, the problem with measuring federalism is also linked with the complications of using aggregate data. Is the federalism index an adequate operationalization of polity fragmentation? And more importantly, does it say something about how negotiators perceive their domestic polity? For fragmented (or small) polities, supranationalism could be an option in order to structure an uncertain environment, but it remains unclear whether individual negotiators are also convinced about this. Are officials from federal polities really used to rule making at multiple levels? Hence, federalism is not necessarily a sufficient indicator of fragmentation. In fact, when we employed federalism as an indicator we considered this contextual feature as an individual attribute of a respondent. The question, however, must dig deeper and

concentrate on the intervening mechanism between social structure and individual attitudes.

Finally, we must admit that our inquiry still has an explorative character and that more data is probably needed in order to confirm or falsify the proposed hypotheses. It would have been wonderful to have had samples of about 60 part-timers for all member states at our disposal. Comparisons and measurement would have been more elaborate and from a data-analytic viewpoint more sophisticated testing would have been possible. Of course, every research undertaking is to an extent an individual effort, but we think that more transnational links and talks could stimulate progress. For the sake of comparability we borrowed extensively from Hooghe's very interesting paper, but regret that we did not employ the same items and measurements in order to make results even more comparable. We did not include the variables that Hooghe used for testing principal-agency hypotheses, although this factor could have been more important for our sample (member state officials) than for her sample (Commission officials). In a similar manner we employed factors such as organizational self-esteem which could have been applied to Hooghe's sample. Let these final words not only be seen as regret or a critique, but rather as a plea for more cumulative empirical research by strengthening transnational coordination and cooperation.

#### Notes

1. This article was partly written while the author was a research assistant at the University of Antwerp. The research was made possible by a grant from the Fund for Scientific Research, Flanders, and was carried out under promotorship of Guido Dierickx. Ten interviewees of the ISPO (Interuniversitair Stuenpunt Publiek Opinie Onderzoek) carried out the interviews. A draft of this paper was presented at the Third Pan-European Conference on International Relations in the panel about "The European Union as a Negotiated Order" (Vienna, 16-19 September 1998, convenors: Ole Elgström and Mike Smith). The author wishes to express his gratitude to Ann Carton of the ISPO for her help with the field work, to Jan De Bock and Vincent Mertens de Wilmars of the Belgian permanent Representation for the crucial information they provided and to Liesbet Hooghe, Bart Kerremans, Lewis Carrafiello, Morten Egeberg, Peter Bursens, Jacques Tacq, Joanna Benfield, and two anonymous reviewers of *Acta Politica* for their valuable comments and suggestions.

2. The positioning of member states on our scale corresponds, for instance, fairly well with the record of no-votes and abstentions listed in the *European Voice*, 15-21 October 1998.

3. Neo-institutionalists reject the implicit notion of institutional efficiency in neo-functionalism. They posit that regional integration creates new policy problems (functional spill-over) which encourage the shifts of political loyalties to the supra-

national level (political spill-over). For neo-institutionalists institutions often lead to inefficient outcomes.

4. Transgovernmental relations are conceived as a subset of transnational relations, which include multinational organizations, international non-governmental organizations and transgovernmental networks among state officials. Transgovernmental relations are networks of governmental actors which deviate from the traditional image of inter-state relations between heads of state and governments. The concept covers governmental sub-units that handle relatively autonomously because national decisions and/or instructions are incomplete, imperfect or in some cases even absent. Thus, the actions of transgovernmental networks are rather independent of national policy-making.

5. In our sample only a small minority had previous experience within the European Commission (Belgians = 3, non-Belgians = 3). This small number prevents us from testing this hypothesis.

6. The distinction north-south is linked with issues such as deregulation and compensation of dislocation costs and structural policy-making, cultural heterogeneity, variance in power resources and differences in policy-making styles.

7. The distinction between net-receivers and net-payers could be an interesting independent variable as well. The disadvantage of this indicator is its very strong relation with the north-south dummy, an association that would create serious problems of collinearity within a multivariate analysis ( $r=0.68$ ,  $p=0.00001$ ). Consequently, we do not refer explicitly to the cleavage between net-payers and net-receivers, and have employed the north-south distinction as a proxy for it.

8. About Italy Gabel and Palmer say: "... the positive image of EC membership as responsible for Italy's economic resurgence coupled with public frustration over political reform, has been credited with Italians' widespread support for a more federal European integration." Deflem and Pampel also mention the Italian case: "... because of many scandals involving Italian politicians, Italian citizens may be expected to express less nationalistic and more pro-European sentiments."

9. Unfortunately, we do not have more recent and similar quantitative data at our disposal. However, from extensive feedback we received from the Belgian Permanent Representation and the Belgian Foreign Office we believe that the picture we sketch in the paper is quite stable over time. Thus, recent, more qualitative information confirms the quantitative analysis. Moreover, one has to bear in mind that the data concerns political culture and attitudes. It is well known that this type of data is rather stable over time and that it is generally not directly linked to the content of the policy agenda at a particular moment. To put it differently, cultural features are quite enduring. This brings us to a third comment. Despite the fact that the data itself was collected in 1994, the paper deals with a *problématique* that is not very time bound, namely the consequences of socialization of national officials, civil servants and politicians within a European polity.

10. For several reasons it was not possible to interview all officials (estimated population of 300) involved in Permanent Representations (PR). Because these officials have very busy schedules it was decided to draw a sample. It would not have been acceptable to ask an entire PR to be interviewed. To interview about one third of a PR

was more reasonable. Even then, several officials were unable to meet with us or refused to do so. For the multinational sample 142 officials were asked for an interview and 120 ultimately participated (response rate of 85%). At the Belgian level 105 officials were contacted and 95 interviews were carried out (response rate of 90%). Besides refusals there were some other important reasons for non-participation. Only 8 Dutch officials appear in the sample. The Dutch capital is just a few hours from Brussels and the Dutch can afford, therefore, to send 'national' officials to the working groups. Only five Greek officials could have been interviewed because the Greeks took over the Council Presidency during the period of our fieldwork. We tried to contact them again after their 6 months in office, but the personnel had been changed to a considerable extent (this was the result of the election held in Greece at the beginning of 1994). Only a few respondents from Luxembourg were available since Luxembourg has only a very small PR and cannot attend all working groups. For the composition and the functioning of working groups we refer to the specialized literature on the Council of Ministers.

11. To ensure reliable solutions the analysis was carried out for the two sub-samples separately. All scales in this paper were analysed also with the help of non-linear techniques, namely alternating least squares techniques, or ALS (PROC PRINQUAL procedure in SAS). This technique takes the ordinal character of the data into account and estimates missing values. The results presented in this paper are based upon traditional factor analysis which reveals almost the same results as the ALS-technique. For the further analysis we dealt with composite indices. Missing values on an item were replaced by the overall mean of that item (which leads to virtually the same result as the ALS-approach). Theoretically this does not affect the mean, but it could lead to an underestimation of the variance. In our data the variances were not affected.

12. An ad hoc hypothesis to explain the deviance of the German respondents could be that their responses were significantly more error prone than those of other nationalities. German response behaviour was more affected by missing values and were less consistent.

13. These observations point to a multi-level problem in the dataset. However, the small sample size prevents us from employing more advanced multi-level analysis.

14. The correlation between both variables for the multinational sample is 0.46 ( $p=0.0001$ ). This causes some problems for variance analysis which assumes orthogonal or non-correlated independent variables. In the case of experience in working groups and national experience these tolerances proved to be 0.70, meaning that these two independent variables are not completely orthogonal. The tolerances for other variables were higher (0.80 or more).

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## Conflicts, Agreements, and Coalition Governance

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### Abstract

In most of the theoretical literature on coalition governments, coalition formation is seen in isolation from what precedes and follows it. Although theoretical work increasingly views coalition formation in terms of policy bargaining, it is often depicted as a process during which parties are not very explicit about the policies they intend to pursue jointly. This paper is based on the idea that policy bargaining is not just a ritual dance, but is instead a real chance for parties to deal with substantive issues during coalition formation. In countries with a long tradition of coalition governments, but increasingly also in other countries, written coalition agreements are the tangible result of interparty and intraparty bargaining, and these agreements can be seen as the link between the formation of coalition governments and their lives. In this paper an approach is presented to examine this link. The central elements in this approach are: the set of controversial issues dealt with during coalition formation; the possible functions of coalition agreements in which these issues are included; and the effects of these agreements (?) during the life of governments. The approach is illustrated with a case study of a Dutch coalition government.

### 1 Introduction

One of the peculiar things about the theoretical development of coalition research is that although it has become increasingly realistic, it has continued nevertheless to be concerned with mainly two aspects of coalition governments: their formation and their termination. Even in countries known for frequent political crises and protracted government formations, however, it is the *life* of governments that accounts for most of the time of interaction between coalition members.

In this contribution I link the formation of coalition governments to their actual life. Coalition formation and termination are not seen as isolated phenomena or events, rather they are considered to be the elements of a continuous process, in which the end of one government is the beginning of the next.