

Beyond Supranational Self-Interest

Commission Officials and European Integration

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In search of Supranationalists¹

Interviewing in the European Commission's most powerful directorate-generals is carefully regulated, perhaps because the prey is much in demand, high-priced and occasionally somewhat threatening to the hunter. Visitors to DG IV (competition policy), for example, are chaperoned from the security guards' reception desk to the interviewee's office and back, to prevent undesirable individuals from roaming through secret competition files. On my dozen or so visits I eluded my chaperone only once. Security guards also man access to DG VI (agriculture)—as they do for virtually all Commission buildings. They collect passports, and data on profession, address and contact person, and they phone the contact person. However, the guards in DG VI allow one to make the journey up to floor five, seven or eight all by oneself. Yet the DG VI headquarters are intimidating in different ways. The floor plan is labyrinthian, the window-less and silent corridors with closed doors are endless, and the building's lopsided structure with multiple exits is confusing as it plunges from the hilltop on Wetstraat (Rue de la Loi) onto Joseph II straat (Rue de Joseph II) approximately 30 meters lower. Maybe because of this architecture, incomprehensible to the outsider, the ethos of ordered discipline, power and confident, skillful diligence is all the more palpable.

A visitor may be forgiven to perceive these fortress features as telling symbols of the Commission's strong institutional preference to strengthen supranationalism. The reality is much more complicated. As we will see, top officials in these strongholds vary appreciably in whether they support a supranational or an intergovernmental Union. Barriers to entry (and exit) in DG IV and DG VI do not keep out intergovernmentalist ideas.

Committed supranationalists exist in the Commission's top ranks—sometimes in unexpected locations and under surprising guises. And so, in-between interviews in power-exuding Commission buildings, I meet a passionate supranationalist. He serves in one of the socially oriented DGs. Perhaps because I had been targeting directors-generals and leading officials from the Commission's powerhouses, I had come to associate effectiveness among top officials with strong opinionating and a direct, combative, somewhat brisk style—softened by a worldly charm. This soft-spoken, silver-grey, slightly hesitant director in education does not fit the stereotype.² And yet it soon dawns upon me that this person is the personification of Jean Monnet's neofunctionalist strategy in which the European *fonctionnaire* is to play an active, apparently technical but decidedly political role.

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² Details have been altered to disguise the identity of the interviewee.

Interviewer: "What would you miss most if you were to leave the European Commission?"

Official: "What would I miss? I would miss that I could no longer contribute to what I think I am contributing to European citizens in general. I have been instrumental in creating Erasmus, Comett, Lingua, Socrates³ ... I believe that these are on balance good programs. I would no longer have the opportunity, then, to bring Europe to the citizens, to create European citizens, to bring this goal closer. I would miss that. Unfortunately, there are too many anti-European morons. And I mean by these not the convinced anti-Europeans, whom I respect. I mean those who turn anti-European when things go badly, to conceal party disunity, or to score cheap political points. [... Gives examples...] I am dead-set against such behavior. As long as I am here, my aim is to sensitize citizens so that they do not act like those anti-European morons who place self-interest above the interest of Europe."

...

I: "What are for you the most important challenges to the future of the European Union?"

O: "The most important task is to create some form of European Union, that is, a European society with opportunities for everyone. Nothing is more important. ... While the 20th century was the century of the muscle, the 21st century will be the era of intelligence, of the brains. So in an information society it is paramount to provide everyone with an excellent educational base. This will be the foundation upon which a good society can be built."

I: "Does the Commission have sufficient competencies to achieve this, or does she require more competencies, more resources?"

O: "We always need more competencies and resources."

I: "But is it wise to ask for these?"

O: "We must ask for them, because the day we no longer make demands signifies the end of the dynamic process [of European integration]. So, sure, I could be happy with my Socrates program, and live a simple life. That may be 'wise', but it also means the faltering of this dynamic process. I would, for example, not be responding anymore to what we currently define as the challenges for education in the year 2000. ... I believe that a society must adapt continually."

I: "You know of course very well that you will probably have to fight the member states or the idea of subsidiarity."

O: "That is not a problem. It would be a mistake to centralize all of [education policy]. Only someone who does not understand Europe could think along those lines; Europe means diversity. We need decentralization. We need subsidiarity. The problem is that one should not resort to decentralization and subsidiarity as a means to oppose European policy. Those who do not want European collaboration often resort to subsidiarity so as to do nothing. No, I am in favor of subsidiarity because I believe that the citizen wants policy making as closely as possible to her. And our role as Commission is to take initiatives, and to persuade member states that a young adult without knowledge of new technologies and computer science will be marginalized. And thus it is not our role to impose all these changes, but rather to develop clear arguments and make the fifteen member states realize that they need to prepare their educational systems in that direction. And they must especially be made aware that if the

³ These refer to student exchange programs.

German government prepares [for the 21st century] but the Portuguese government does not, there will be discrimination because there will be nothing left to protect the poor Portuguese [from competition in the single market]. That is our role. We have the opportunity to transcend [national interests], to be independent from the constraints that states and regions experience. We are free from constraints in that sense. And moreover, we can have a forward-looking vision, which is precisely our unique contribution.”

I: “What can you do when persuasion does not work?”

O: “Even if one is not legally competent, one should not abandon ideas lightly but continue to explain and persuade. I am convinced that, in a union, member states need to demonstrate a certain discipline. One member cannot simply say: ‘I do not like this, so I do not want it.’ In that sense, I am the ayatollah of the institutions. As much as I am in favor of subsidiarity, as much as I support decentralization and respect diversity, I am very much opposed to self-interested behavior. I say no to that, because this is what differentiates the European Union from other forms of regional integration. That was the fundamental choice between two destinies: the supranational route and the intergovernmental route” (Official, 070).

Since Ernst Haas’ *The Uniting of Europe* (1958) the history of European integration has been perceived as a contest between two fundamentally different strategies for collaboration in Europe: intergovernmentalism and supranationalism.⁴ Should political authority be vested in the member states and the Council of Ministers, or should supranational institutions like the European Commission and the European Parliament be strengthened? The protagonists in this ongoing play have long since been identified: the Member States defending national sovereignty on the one hand, and the European Commission guarding the common European interest on the other. Twice at least, this conflict between Member States and Commission broke dramatically into the headlines when powerful politicians of conviction took up the banner for one side. French president Charles de Gaulle collided with Commission president Walter Hallstein in the 1960s, and in the 1980s British prime minister Margaret Thatcher took Commission president Jacques Delors to task for overzealous integration.

Perceptions of these titanic struggles have deeply shaped the study of European integration. Much of the debate has evolved around the consequences of European integration for the autonomy and authority of the state in Europe. Almost invariably, the assumption that has underpinned this work is that the Commission has an institutional interest in advancing supranational empowerment. That is a major assumption. It presumes that the Commission as an institution is best served by increasing its own governmental capacity at the expense of member states. This is likely to be

⁴ As Haas pointed out, supranationality is an elusive concept—too often defined ad hoc by politicians, legal scholars or occasional observers. He settled for a definition that equates supranationality with a hybrid—or compromise—in which neither the federal nor the intergovernmental tendency has clearly triumphed (1958: 526). It is a type of integration in which more (independent) power is given to the new central agency than is customary in the case of conventional international organizations, but less than is generally yielded to an emergent federal government (p.34; see also Lindberg and Scheingold 1970: 14-21). The central feature of supranationalism is that decisions can be taken at supranational level, which bind member states. The degree of supranationalism increases—and approaches federalism—to the extent that these binding decisions are taken by independent European organizations, such as the European Court, European Parliament or an autonomous European Commission.

conditional upon the precise design of inter-institutional relations, particularly the balance between parliamentary and Commission empowerment, and political constraints, especially the pattern of opposition and support for deepening integration among public and political actors. Under certain circumstances, the Commission's institutional interest may be better served by the status quo than by deeper supranational integration.

Even if the Commission's institutional interest is invariably in favor of supranationalism, we know very little about how people with leadership positions in this institution conceive of authority in the European Union. In Chapter three I demonstrated that top officials hold very different preferences. In this chapter I explain why some officials advocate supranational governance while others want to keep authority vested in the member states. In section one, I review earlier studies that give credence to divergent preferences on supranationalism and intergovernmentalism among Commission office holders, and I argue that the root cause for variation lies in the Commission's inability to insulate its employees from outside influences. In the following sections I hypothesize about the sources of variation in top officials' preferences, discuss indicators and test hypotheses against the data.

I. DISCORD IN THE MONOLITH

Studies of European integration have scarcely paid attention to the motivations of Commission officials with respect to European integration. Yet, throughout the European Union's history, scholars have often provided decisive glimpses of discord in the institution, though they have found it difficult to explain such differences.

In his study of the European Coal and Steel Community (1958), Ernst Haas devoted a chapter on the ideology and activities of the members of the High Authority, the precursor of the European Commission. His analysis, of course, focused on the Commissioners rather than on the bureaucracy, but his insights are illuminating nevertheless. He contrasted Jean Monnet's activist, pro-federalist objectives with the restrained, passive-consensual and decisively non-federalist motivations of most other members. Haas did not systematically examine why Commissioners held particular views, though he hinted that economic ideology (whether one was for or against planning and dirigisme) and party-political and interest group connections might explain their preferences.

A decade later, in *Politics and Bureaucracy in the European Community* (1970), a study of the European Commission, David Coombes argued that probably only a minority of officials are committed supporters of supranationalism. While Haas identified seeds of discord as early as the beginning years of the ECSC, Coombes discerned growing dissension ten years later. In the early years of European integration, he said, "the main qualification for inclusion [as Commission civil servant] was to be 'pro-European'" (142), but by the late 1950s this had changed. Without elaborating on the source of his figures, he states that "it was suggested to us that the number of officials motivated in this way had been falling as a proportion of the total strength by about five percent a year since 1958." (213) Two different types of officials, neither of them necessarily wedded to the European idea, began to supplant supranationalists. One type, usually seconded from national administrations, consisted of "technicians"—often respected for their expertise, but suspected of being too conscious of their national background. But the most rapidly growing group was a crowd of young, usually highly specialized and talented officials, whose main motivation was to take up

challenges in difficult circumstances and beat the odds. So while the first group corresponded to the cliché of the pro-integrationist official, the second type seemed inclined to support intergovernmentalism, and the third entrepreneurial type was on the whole rather indifferent. Like Haas, Coombes did not examine the sources of this variation systematically, though his analysis suggested that timing of recruitment (pioneer or later years), type of recruitment (by national government or by Commission) and perhaps age (young versus old) may be associated with particular beliefs.

In the early 1990s, Marc Abélès, Irène Bellier and Maryon McDonald found that Commission officials themselves are fully aware of less-than-complete supranational support among their colleagues. One official bitterly remarked that “to proclaim one’s attachment to the European idea in the Commission inevitably leads to disaster” (quoted in: Abélès, Bellier, MacDonald 1993: 46). Though the purpose of the authors’ anthropological study is neither to chart nor to explain these sentiments systematically, their thick description conveys widespread discord—even lack of trust—among Commission officials concerning their reciprocal motivations on Europe. They illustrate how Commission officials pointed time and again at national differences as explanatory variables. Officials liberally employed national stereotypes (such as northerners versus southerners/ ‘latins’/ ‘mediterraneans’) to make sense of individuals’ behavior. Also, several officials singled out the detrimental impact of the first enlargement in 1973 on the unity of purpose in the Commission. British officials in particular were accused of introducing in the Commission a heretofore unknown attitude of turning to their national administration or other national networks for protection—and of intergovernmentalist tendencies that accompany this.

In the wake of the internal market program, studies of EU policy making and the effect of European decision making on national public policy have proliferated (Hanf and Soetendorp 1998; Mény, Muller, Quermonne 1994; Richardson 1996; Rometsch and Wessels 1996). The rules and practices of EU policy making induce supranational officials to interact with national civil servants, experts and interest group representatives through a dense web of committees and working groups. This complex institutional environment should influence Commission officials’ preferences and behavior in particular ways. Some argue that they are likely to be primarily motivated by their ties to sectorally or functionally specialized policy networks. For example, supranational officials in DG XI, which deals with environment, can be expected to share key values with environmental policy makers at national or subnational level. That tendency is strengthened by the crucial role of scientific and professional knowledge in sectoral policy making (Egeberg 1999; Egeberg and Trondal 1999). On the other hand, Laura Cram and others conceive of this highly complex policy-making structure as a set of variable opportunities and constraints for Commission actors. Cram assumes that “both the Commission as a whole, and its individual directorates, are constantly engaged in a strategy of ‘purposeful opportunism’ in their attempts to expand the scope of their competence”. However, the extent to which and how a particular service, and the officials within, pursues this general objective varies from policy sector to sector depending on the level of resources available, the range of other interests involved, and the decision rules (Cram 1994, 1997; see also Majone 1992, 1996). The bottom line for these scholars is that the Commission should be perceived as a multi-organization—not a monolith. This brings to the fore functional or sectoral differentiation and turf battles as sources of variation in officials’ motivations, and these may even overpower officials’ overarching allegiances to state, party or European unity.

During one of my interviews, a weathered top official in external relations, who entered the Commission in 1958, ponders over fading European commitment among his colleagues. He echoes

concerns raised by Coombes and reported by Abélès and his collaborators, and he adds material goals—money and career advancement—to the list of possible distractions from supranationalism:

Official: “The question is what are we here for. I think we are here to continue this patient and difficult job of making Europe tick. To make it work in all its variety and richness, while at the same time building a system that makes it impossible for people to get into each other’s hair again. The political message of making peace is certainly very central. My basic motivation is the fact that I was just old enough to experience the war. I think that plays a very big role. It is a gut feeling. It was traumatic for all those who lived through it. I think I have always felt [my childhood in the war] to be a very strong stimulus to make peace. Similarly, I have rather strong feelings about nationalism. I frankly hate the British for [their nationalism] because they are destroying what I have strongly believed in.”

Interviewer: “Do you feel this is difficult to explain to your younger colleagues here?”

O: “No, it is not difficult. The younger generation consists of excellent people. They are taking over now. I have always worked with great pleasure with young people. I also have very good relations with *stagiaires* and I think the young people are to a certain extent accessible for this so-called ideal. But not all of them are, because many are attracted by quick money and by career prospects. They may not have the conviction that this is the only way to [make Europe tick]. “

I: “Why, because this is an exciting environment and you can do things and there seems to be more space [than in national administrations]...?”

O: “Yes, whatever its finality, yes. And of course, then you get the intellectual jet-set, which can be quite counterproductive. When they are so imbibed with the pleasure of the mechanics, they forget what they are doing it for. So, it does not even need to be only money, it can also be the sheer pleasure of making the machine work well.“

I: “So when you said [earlier] ‘I enjoy diplomacy’, you mean you do because, for you, there is always something there that drives you.“

O: “Yes, and I am probably a bad diplomat because I always have a certain *engagement*. You have to do it for some good reason. And of course [for me] the reason is the same: [to make Europe tick]” (*Official*, 170).

The notion that top officials defend the Commission’s institutional interest largely hinges on the Commission being a strongly bounded institution capable of instilling within its employees a uniform set of norms. But is the Commission sufficiently insulated from the outside world to prevail upon its employees to be willing advocates of its interest? For Haas, Coombes and Abélès and his collaborators, the answer to this question is clearly no. In the post-Maastricht European Union, pressures on contemporary Commission officials have grown even more multifold and complex, as one official testifies:

O: “You have to realize that the Commission is a kind of filter. It is bombarded with hundred-and-twenty ideas and proposals by way of resolutions from the European Parliament. It is confronted with all kinds of suggestions from member states, from representatives of vested interests, quite legitimately because the Commission needs lobbies and organizations. The

Commission is a clearing house, a springboard of ideas. And this leads it to be in itself a first-stage compromise of so many influences” (Official, 217).

Such openness to diverse influences, proneness to outside ideas and dependence on internal compromise is hardly what one would expect from a unitary, pro-integration actor. There are several reasons why the Commission falls short of being a monolithic bureaucracy. Top officials’ diverse cultural and professional backgrounds; the Commission’s less than perfect control over recruitment and promotion, the fragmentation of decision making inside the Commission and interdependence with outside actors are not conducive to creating a homogeneous, single-purposive service. The Commission’s institutional boundedness is imperfect and variable from individual to individual—not encompassing and fixed. Haas, Coombes, Abélès and his collaborators, and Cram suggested some of these factors. Recent contributions to public administration have sought to specify more systematically the conditions under which employees actually defend institutional interests. This chapter is inspired by this literature to explain what makes some Commission officials advocate intergovernmentalist preferences while others support supranational governance.

II. TWO THEORETICAL TRACKS

Top officials work in a multifaceted institutional environment, of which the Commission is a central, but by far not the only setting. An analysis of top officials’ motivations requires a systematic understanding of the interplay between various institutional settings and individual top officials. I conceptualize this interplay along two theoretical tracks. One line of theorizing explores the extent to which basic orientations, or preferences, result from socialization (Converse 1964; Johnston 1998; Mughan *et al.* 1997; Rohrschneider 1994, 1996; Searing 1969, 1985; Verba 1965). A second line of theorizing examines to what extent preferences constitute a function of their utility to a priori material goals.⁵

Within the former school, the standard argument is that socialization is a gradual, slow process by which individuals, through countless experiences, internalize particular beliefs over time. For example, one may hypothesize that top officials who have worked in the Commission for many years are more likely to have internalized the Commission’s institutional interest in supranationalism. However, other socialization theorists have specified how critical junctures in people’s life may alter beliefs. For example, one may hypothesize that people who once went abroad to study or work—particularly as young adults—should be more favorable to socio-political arrangements transcending the national state. Some theorists of socialization utilize a definition of socialization that encompasses all but the most utilitarian experiences. I propose to limit socialization to those instances in which individuals change their beliefs for social reasons that cannot be attributed to direct material incentives or coercion.

The basic premise of the utility logic is that institutions have transparent calculable consequences for the ability of individuals to achieve their goals. Actors are rational, in that they want to maximize their individual life chances. Individuals are expected to bring their beliefs in line with the institutional opportunities that are available to them. The principal-agent model captures a

⁵ One may differ on the proper concept to be used to describe basic opinions of top officials to European governance: orientations, beliefs or views, or preferences. I have here chosen to use the concept preference. In my opinion, variation in use of these concepts has more to do with their roots in different subdisciplines of social sciences, as well as different generations of research, than with substantively different realities.

very common structure of opportunities; it specifies how principals—actors who create an agent to perform certain functions on their behalf—can constrain agency discretion (Bawn 1995; Pollack 1997; Ringquist 1995; Wood and Waterman 1993). For example, one may expect top officials who owe their appointment to their national government to be more reluctant to embrace supranational positions for fear of snubbing their career masters. Some scholars of utility maximization limit their notion of rationality to the maximization of economic self-interest. I propose to expand this notion slightly to include material goals that influence individual life chances; an important facet for top officials concerns goals related to career advancement. Under those definitional conditions, it becomes possible to separate utility-driven processes from socialization processes.

III. HYPOTHESES

These two lines of theorizing lead to a number of hypotheses. First, I argue that Commission officials may be influenced by experiences in four distinct, but complementary walks of life: socialization in the workplace, prior experience of living abroad, learning in the political system of their country of origin, and socialization through party-political connections. Second, I argue that top officials may adjust their preferences in response to national governments' influence on their career chances, mainly through their control over recruitment and their role in determining decision rules.

Career socialization

The most common assumption in neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist studies is that the European Commission has an interest in supranational empowerment, while member states have an interest in retaining maximal state sovereignty. Two hypotheses, relying on socialization logic, follow from this.

Commission career. The first hypothesis relates length of service in the Commission with support for supranationalism. This refines an assumption underlying the institutional interest argument, that Commission officials can be expected to live by Myles' law of "you stand where you sit". A socialization argument adds *time* to the equation: it takes time for institutions to shape preferences, and officials learn over time to "stand where they sit" (Rohrschneider 1994; Ross Schneider 1993; Searing 1994).

H1: Commission socialization. *The longer an official has worked in the Commission, the more he is likely to support supranationalism.*

State career. The second hypothesis associates length of career in a national administration with support for intergovernmental governance. There are several reasons why former national civil servants are likely to be skeptical of supranationalism. They have often been trained to develop a sense of "national public service", they are socialized into national administrative styles, and they are keyed into national networks. Conversely, one may expect officials without prior professional ties to state institutions to be more supranationalist.

H2: State socialization. *The longer an official worked for a state administration, the more he is likely to support intergovernmentalism.*

Transnational socialization

The multi-linguistic, cosmopolitan, and somewhat insular environment of the Commission places high demands on individuals. Officials must be adept at mustering resources from a heterogeneous and fluid environment. One may hypothesize that Commission officials with previous transnational experience feel more comfortable playing an independent and political role in a multinational Commission. Students living abroad or people working for international organizations are part of cosmopolitan communities where they learn to deal with different ways of thinking and living. What is more, they come to realize that expatriates have limited citizenship rights compared to nationals at home and they encounter barriers to participation in the host society. Only since the 1993 Treaty of European Union have European non-nationals obtained the right to vote and stand for elections, but then only for local and European elections. In a world of mutually exclusive national citizenships, transnationals are out of place.

H3: Transnational socialization. Transnational experiences (study or work abroad) induce to supranationalism.

Territorial socialization

“What an individual believes about the political process is learned from observation of that process” (Verba 1965). The political system—particularly during an individual’s formative years—helps shape how an individual thinks about politics. Even when she moves to a different political setting she will only gradually adopt new values (Rohrschneider 1994, 1996). In Europe, democratic politics is still mainly national politics. One must, therefore, examine the national political systems in which Commission officials learned to participate as citizens.

This argument relates effective size of political units to preferences to supranational governance. Smaller political units are most sensitive to economic, socio-cultural or political interdependence. They have greater need for supranational governance to control an uncertain external environment. Needs and perceptions of greater interdependence should therefore induce actors to demand deeper integration. Variations of this functional argument dominated early European integration studies, most prominently in the functionalist theory of David Mitrany (1966), and with important qualifications in Karl Deutsch’s transactional approach (1957) and neofunctionalist models (Haas 1958, 1964). The argument has recently been elaborated by Alec Sweet Stone and Wayne Sandholtz (1997; Stone and Caporaso 1997). So one may hypothesize that officials from political units that are more sensitive to interdependence should be more supranationalist than those from less interdependence-sensitive political systems. Two types of political units meet these criteria particularly well: small countries with open economies, and federal countries.

Small economies. International borders constrain life most patently in small countries. To produce wealth, quality of life and stability, they need resources from outside their national boundaries. Sovereignty has limited value for citizens of small countries. As Peter Katzenstein has shown, smaller democracies have learned that it is better to open borders to the external environment than to shield the society from the outside; in contrast, larger states search more readily for national solutions (Katzenstein 1985). European supranational governance promises to domesticate a wide range of resources in the long-term.

Federalism structures relations among a number of smaller, relatively autonomous and open political systems. It does for subnational political units what EU governance—on a larger scale, and

in a looser arrangement—offers to national states. From a federal perspective, EU governance merely adds another protective layer of structuring, which pushes back the uncertain external environment. Rather than a break with past national politics, European integration extends multi-level governance beyond national boundaries.

H4a: Territorial socialization: country size. The smaller an official's country of birth, the more he will support supranationalism.

H4b: Territorial socialization: federalism. The more federal an official's country of birth, the more he will support supranationalism.

Party socialization

Party identification has remained the strongest predictor of political behavior in West-European societies. It is more stable than other attitudes (Weisberg 1998). It tends to crystallize during the formative years of young adulthood and strengthens with aging (Converse 1976; Sears and Valentino 1997). So logically, where parties reposition themselves, younger partisans should be more likely to reflect newer party positions while older partisans should continue to support prior positions. This generational effect leads to the hypothesis that Commission officials who identify with a particular party family will reflect their party's orientations to European governance at the time of that socialization.

Parties' orientations to European integration have changed significantly since the creation of the European Union. While social-democratic support for European integration was originally at best lukewarm (see Haas 1958; Hix and Lord 1997), these parties have become more pro-European as the Union has developed into a more propitious arena for market regulation and redistribution (Marks and Wilson 1999). Parties on the economic right were initially supportive of European integration as a means to advance economic liberalization, but they have become reluctant because greater supranationalism may now strengthen the EU's capacity to re-regulate market forces. Christian-democratic parties used to form the bedrock of supranationalism, but they have become less enthusiastic as they have moved to economic and social conservatism (Haas 1958; Hanley 1994). On the basis of this partisan model, one may hypothesize that older socialists will show limited support for supranationalism but their younger colleagues strong support; older christian-democrats strong and younger party fellows weak support; older and younger liberals reluctant support; conservatives deepening skepticism.

H5a: Party socialization: general hypothesis. Officials with a party identification reflect that party's stance on supranational governance.

H5b: Party socialization: generational effect. Where parties reposition themselves on supranational governance, younger partisans reflect newer party positions while older partisans continue to support prior positions.

The central tenet of these socialization hypotheses is that learning is a key mechanism through which political preferences are shaped. On the other hand, a utility maximization logic draws attention to the possibility that rational actors bring their beliefs in line with the institutional opportunities available to them. In a world where the Commission is perfectly autonomous, top officials would reflect the institution's interest in supranationalism as such loyalty would most likely maximize their career prospects. In reality, a range of other actors may influence top officials' career chances. First and foremost among them are national governments, who are in a position to influence the

calculations of top officials through their role in decision making and, more directly, their input in recruitment. I use insights from principal-agent literature to hypothesize about how national governments may constrain the agent's preferences (Bawn 1995; McCubbins, Noll, Weingast 1987; Pollack 1997; Ringquist 1995).

National economic interest

A first hypothesis links national economic interest to support for supranationalism. Individuals who join the Commission cannot give up their nationality. Given the central presence of national states in EU decision making, it seems plausible that perceptions of national interests shape beliefs. Liberal intergovernmentalists conceive of the Commission and those who work for it as agents under control of their national principals. National governments are the ultimate bosses, and Commission officials should reflect national economic preferences. National economic preferences could plausibly be considered fairly fixed in that some countries have reaped net benefits from the expansion of EU competencies and supranational autonomy, while others have been net contributors over the past ten or fifteen years. If Commission officials are their national governments' agents, they should be inclined to support intergovernmentalism if their country is a net contributor and favor supranationalism if their country benefits.

H6: National benefit. The more an official's country of birth draws financial benefits from EU membership, the more he will support supranationalism.

National control over career advancement

The above hypothesis assumes that governments have perfect control over top officials' fate. The following two hypotheses make this assertion problematic. The most general principle underlying the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism is that national governments' overriding preference is to maximize benefits of international cooperation while minimizing sovereignty loss (Hoffmann 1982; Moravcsik 1993). National governments—irrespective of their particular and changing economic interests—should therefore be intrinsically in favor of populating the Commission with candidates who support intergovernmentalism.

The capacity to get the right people and to keep them there requires the power to hire and fire (Ringquist 1995). In the US system, control over the bureaucracy is ensured through the spoils system combined with mandatory approval by the Senate. Such control forms the backbone of the principal-agent argument. National governments in the European Union do not have formal control over senior Commission officials; the College of Commissioners selects top officials. Nevertheless, indirect control may give national governments leverage over top officials' careers in one of two ways.

Parachutage. National governments are usually consulted informally on top appointments. This national leverage is strongest for officials parachuted into positions of director-general or director from outside the Commission administration. Many (though not all) of these external candidates have ties with the national government that proposes them; more than half are former national civil servants or diplomats.⁶ It seems plausible that officials who owe their appointment to their national government will be more inclined to support national positions.

H7: Parachutage. Parachutage induces top officials to support intergovernmentalism.

⁶ Fifty-five percent of parachutists were in paid national service as civil servant or diplomat before entering the Commission, against 27 percent for non-parachutists.

National networks. A second means of indirect control may operate through national networks in Brussels. Some nationalities have a strong reputation of “club-ness”, which may be defined as a set of formal and informal networks within which members tend to act in concert. A variety of resources may contribute to clubness. One resource, often mentioned in anthropological research on the European Union, is national socio-cultural cohesion. Cut off from their home environment, individuals with strong national identities tend to socialize with compatriots. These informal national networks on golf courses, in bars or literary evenings easily become invaluable venues for professional contacts among compatriots (Abélès, Bellier and McDonald 1993). Clubness may also be a by-product of organizational and financial resources. The sheer concentration of administrative-financial resources in the larger national communities should enable them to better monitor and lobby Commission personnel policy. This argument is similar to that made by research on the presence, cohesion and effectiveness of state delegations to the US congress, which has found strong associations with population size, size of state bureaucracy and professionalism (Morrisroe 1998). Finally and most importantly, clubness may be the result of a deliberate policy by national governments to strengthen networks among expatriates in Brussels. Strong clubness turns nationality, and more precisely an active role of national governments in career decisions, into an asset for officials competing for professional advancement in the Commission. This reasoning is consistent with analyses that characterize the European Union as a consociational regime in which EU policy areas and Commission personnel are divided among member states (Gabel 1998; Taylor 1991, 1996). Officials from strongly networked nationalities should be best placed to excel professionally in a consociational system, where decision making is intergovernmental. Under the assumptions of a utility maximization logic, one may therefore hypothesize they are most likely to favor intergovernmental principles. Conversely, officials from weakly networked nationalities, should have an interest in favoring supranationalism because it increases their ability to build non-territorial networks.

H8: National networks. Officials from strongly networked nationalities will support intergovernmentalism, while those from weakly networked nationalities will support supranationalism.

Positional interest

The final hypothesis relates the position of an official within the Commission to support for supranationalism. The insight that bureaucrats have an interest in expanding their positional power is at the heart of neofunctionalist and new institutionalist analyses of the European Union, and it is also central to the new governance model. But how to strengthen one’s professional position is likely to differ from position to position. Officials in areas of strong EU competencies are not much dependent on national governments’ consent to get things done. But they need ongoing regulatory or financial autonomy, and these resources are better guaranteed in a supranational Union. In contrast, officials with limited regulatory responsibilities often find other attributes more essential than competencies or funds: access to information, mediation skills, capacity to use persuasion, and credibility to exert social pressure on national governments. For them, close interaction with governments is often beneficial—and so they may prefer more intergovernmental arrangements.

H9: Positional interest. Officials from DGs with regulatory autonomy will support supranationalism.

IV. DATA

I use multivariate linear regression to examine the relative power of these hypotheses. This section presents the dependent and independent variables used in the model.

Supranational or intergovernmental preferences: I compose an index variable *Supranationalism* of item one, three and four, which incarnate the perceived competition between member states and Commission aspects over political authority in the European Union.⁷ Item one states that ultimate authority should rest with the components (member states), not with the whole (Europe). Item three and four represent the supranational view that authority should be concentrated in the Commission. Item three, which states that the Commission should be the true government of Europe, simply iterates the supranationalist view. Item four compels the respondent to prioritize the intergovernmental and supranational role definitions for the Commission: administration or government? On a scale of 1 (intergovernmental) to 4 (supranational), the mean is 2.56 and the median is 2.33, which means that top officials on the whole are slightly bent to the intergovernmentalist pole though there is a sizeable minority of committed supranationalists.⁸

[TABLE 1 about here]

Career socialization: To measure European career socialization, I use *Commission Career*, that is, the number of years served in the Commission until the interview. Top officials have spent on average 18 years in the Commission, ranging from a few months to 37 years.

My indicator for national career socialization is *State Career*, which is the number of years served in state service, usually as national civil servants, prior to joining the Commission. Values range from zero to 28 years, with an average of six years, and a median of three years. Forty-two percent of officials never worked in the state sector.

Transnational socialization: I use a dummy variable for *Transnational Experience*, where Commission officials who studied or worked abroad are assigned a value of one. Forty-three percent has transnational experience.

Territorial socialization: *Federalism* is a composite index of three variables, which take into account formal constitutional provisions as well as informal practices. Values range from 0 (no federal experience) to 8 (full-fledged federalism). I calculate scores for each country, which I then allocate to Commission officials by nationality. The scoring refers to the situation at the time of the

⁷Principal components factor analysis identifies a single dimension, with Eigenvalue of 1.67 and 55.6 percent of variance explained. The factor loadings are -0.56 for member states, 0.85 for the Commission as government, and 0.79 for the Commission as more than an administrative body. So supranationalism draws strongly from the three items, which is why the correlation between the factor and the index is 0.99. These results support my contention that the items tap into complementary, though distinct aspects of political authority relations. A straightforward additive index conveys this conceptual message more transparently than a factor. (Cronbach's alpha for this index is 0.59.)

⁸The neutral value would be 2.5 for mean and median. The standard deviation is 0.676. The distribution is skewed to intergovernmentalism (skewness= 0.373), and flatter than a normal distribution (kurtosis=-0.448). More than 12 percent are radical intergovernmentalists, 18 percent moderate intergovernmentalists, against 17 percent radical and 16 percent moderate supranationalists; the remaining 36 percent balance the two principles. (Calculated by dividing the index in five categories: lower than 1.75/ 1.75-2.24/ 2.25-2.74/ 2.75-3.24/ 3.25 or higher.)

interview (1995-97). For the second variable, *Size*, I use population size of the country of origin of each senior Commission official. Values are expressed in millions.

Party socialization: The variable *Party Identification* is composed of a set of dummies for the main party families (*Soc*: socialists, *Christ*: christian-democrats, *Con*: conservatives, and *Lib*: liberals). To model the generational effect, I add interaction terms consisting of a generation dummy with each party family dummy. I report only two of the four potential dummies (*Young-Soc*, *Young-Christ*).

National economic interest: Estimates of who benefits from European policies are notoriously difficult. I use subjective and objective indicators. To measure perceptions I use data from an elite survey by Eurobarometer in 1996, in which elites were asked whether their country had benefited from EU membership. *National Benefit* is the proportion of respondents who replied “benefited”. I allocate scores to Commission officials by nationality. Support for European regulation and redistribution is often linked more narrowly to financial benefits. *Cohesion Transfer* is a measure for EU structural intervention, the EU’s largest redistributive instrument, by member state. I allocate country scores to Commission officials by nationality. In Table 2, I report only the latter indicator, which is by far the stronger of the two.

National control over recruitment: To test whether parachuted officials tend to be less supranational, I use *Parachutage*, a dummy variable with a value equal to one if an official was appointed from outside into a top position. To test the impact of more indirect control by national actors through national networks on officials’ preferences, I develop a composite variable *National Clubness*. I draw from descriptive accounts (Christoph 1993; Cini 1996; Grant 1994; Ross 1995), anthropological studies (Abélès, Bellier and McDonald 1993; Bellier 1994; McDonald 1997), primary sources, and my own interviews to gauge the effect of cultural cohesion, financial and organizational resources and intentional government policy. I divide the nationalities in three categories for *National Clubness* ranging from weak (1) to strong (3) clubs.

Positional interest: To assess the extent to which Commission officials wield autonomous power, I combine formal and reputational measures of Commission power in a composite index. For the former, I rely on figures compiled by Page on secondary legislative activity by the Commission (Page 1997). In addition, I use a reputational question posed to the 137 top officials to name the three or four most powerful DGs at the time of the interview. The measure for *PowerDG* is a ranking from one (weak DG) to eight (powerful DG).

V. EXPLAINING PREFERENCES TO POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Commission is a house with open doors. There is precious little evidence that top officials’ preferences are shaped by experiences or calculations in-house. Top officials’ preferences on the organization of authority in the European Union are mainly formed and reinforced through connections with actors external to the Commission: national bureaucracies, political parties, nationality-based networks in Brussels, and domestic political systems. Table 2 produces the results of the bivariate and multivariate analysis.

[TABLE 2 about here]

These findings run against strong presumptions among observers and many top officials alike that working for the Commission does not leave one untouched. In other words, those people believe

that Commission work encourages supranationalism—albeit gradually. “It is not the man that makes the job, but the job that makes the man. So when you are working in this environment, after a certain time, you become pro-communautaire” (Official, 058). We must therefore take care not to dismiss too quickly the Commission’s capacity to groom its employees. With this caveat in mind, the remainder of the paper examines key results for each hypothesis.

Commission versus State Socialization

The central assumption underlying much work on the European Union is that Commission and national governments embody opposite ends of the struggle between supranationalists and intergovernmentalists. The socialization logic refines this argument by predicting that the longer an official has served the Commission, the more likely he will endorse supranationalism. Conversely, the longer a top official had worked in state positions, the more likely he will still reflect the intergovernmental preferences of his prior work environment. The evidence that work experiences strongly influence the preferences of senior Commission officials is however mixed. While measures for State career are significantly associated with political preferences (Table 2, $r=-0.287$), the association with length of service in the Commission is weak (Table 2, $r=0.125$). Former national civil servants, diplomats or government ministers are most likely to be intergovernmentalist, and all the more so when they spent a considerable period ‘serving their country’. But—contrary to conventional wisdom—working in and for the Commission does not make individuals significantly more supranationalist over time. State institutions appear a far more effective socialization context than the Commission: a *prior* stint in the state sector leaves a far greater imprint on an official’s preferences than his *current* experience in the service. The bivariate correlation of 0.08 for State Career is quite high. And in the final model, State Career jumps to be the foremost predictor of officials’ preferences.

The theoretical implications are far-reaching. Advocates of the resilience of the state cannot be proven wrong. States have not been hollowed out by subnational and supranational influences; they are still capable of inducing individuals within their boundaries to take national interests seriously. Former state officials appear significantly less supranationalist (mean=2.32) than the average top official (mean=2.56), less than former businesspeople or ex-professors (mean=2.67) and significantly less than people who started their professional career in the Commission (mean=2.86). But such influence is not linear. Its impact is absent on officials with less than 10 years of state service; as a result, they are on average almost equally supranational as their colleagues without state experience (mean=2.66 as against 2.71 for non-state officials). The association becomes only powerfully negative for officials with a decade or more state experience (mean=2.32 for those between one and two decades state service, and even a low 1.97 for those with more than 20 years state service). State socialization—to the extent that it exists—works slowly.⁹

Supporters of the erosion of the state overestimate the capacity of the Commission to be a greenhouse for supranationalism, but a closer look at the data suggests qualified support for their

⁹ The most intergovernmentalist individuals among former state officials are, paradoxically, ex-diplomats with the European institutions. This goes against the “going native” argument, which states that people who work in and around EU institutions become more sensitive to EU values and norms (Beyers and Dierickx 1997; Christoph 1993; Cram 1997; Lewis 1998; Schneider 1997). This paradox appears a function of length of state service: ex-diplomats were in state service for 15 years on average, against 9 ½ years for purely national civil servants.

argument. When disaggregating the data, it becomes clear that the overall weak association between Commission career and supranationalism obfuscates non-linear effects. A generational effect, a cohort effect and the effect of enlargement on recruitment shape the relationship between supranational preferences and socialization. First of all, supranationalism drops precipitously among officials who entered the Commission after the pioneering generation of Commission officials (1958-1972).¹⁰ More than one long-serving official regrets the erosion of a sense of mission among top officials:

Official: “The European climate has changed enormously over the past thirty years. It is not the same anymore. I was discussing this with a visitor earlier this morning. I entered the Commission in the 1960s—of course, partly because the salary was quite handsome and because of the prestige of being a *fonctionnaire européen*. However, in reality I entered for the reasons I explained a minute ago [promoting a federal Europe]. It is very different for contemporary recruits. First of all, today’s recruits are much better qualified than I am; they have degrees that are four times more impressive than mine. But secondly, they enter the Commission almost by chance after having taken test upon test, and with a very small chance of success. To join the Commission has become an ordinary job—one out of so many others.”

Interviewer: “You do not detect much *engagement*?”

O: “They do not sense an *engagement*, because they have not known [the Europe before the European Union]. They are from a different generation.”

I: “Don’t you think, though, that these people may develop a form of *engagement*?”

O: “No, I do not think so. Of course, I cannot really talk for them, but I think that they miss the supportive external sentiment [I could rely on]. You know, for a number of years now the Commission has become the scapegoat of many problems. Brussels is the culprit for many ailments. In contrast, it used to be the case that, when I returned to my home country—

to visit family, friends, or for meetings—to come from the Commission was looked upon positively. Now, the Commission often carries a negative image. And so it is more difficult for new arrivals because they cannot be assured of that [permissive consensus of the past]” (Official, 053).

Secondly, stronger or weaker supranationalism among Commission officials appears to coincide with the arrival of new recruits. Cohort effects indicate that Commission officials start their job with pre-formed preferences that reflect the political climate to European integration at the time of recruitment. I divide forty years of EU history in six historical periods: supranational founding (1958-66), aftermath of de Gaulle crisis (1967-72), first enlargement (1973-79), Euro-sclerosis (1980-85), Delorsian Euro-optimism (1986-1991), and post-Maastricht Euro-malaise (1992-97). Commission recruits are out of sync with the political climate for three of the six periods. They are strongly supranationalist in the late 1960s, when the Commission was in retreat after French president Charles de Gaulle’s rejection of supranationalism. At the peak of Euro-phoria in the late

¹⁰ Age in itself is not a factor in explaining variation, which is not surprising given the relatively narrow range (45-66 year) among top officials. Greater supranationalism among longer-serving cohorts may also result from self-selection. Over time, intergovernmentalist officials may leave the Commission more readily than supranationalists. However, though the older generation as a group is more supranational than recent recruits, it is also more deeply divided. Standard deviations are greater for older cohorts (58-66: 0.696 and 67-72: 0.810) than for recent recruits (80-85: 0.502, 86-91: 0.671 and since 1992: 0.638) and the sample average (SD=0.676).

1980s and early 1990s, they are only marginally supranationalist. New recruits are less intergovernmentalist than expected after 1992, when tensions increased in the wake of the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and during the build-up to EMU and enlargement. One would need longitudinal data to disentangle the respective impact of cohort and Commission socialization, but Table 3 strongly suggests that cohort effects only partly account for the non-linear pattern in Commission preferences.

[TABLE 3 about here]

The linear relationship between Commission socialization and supranationalism is further confounded by the effects of enlargement. With each enlargement, some senior posts in the Commission administration are set aside for recruits from the new countries. To fill these posts quickly, the Commission brushes aside normal recruitment procedures and relies heavily on advice from national capitals. So recruits from new member states may reflect more directly the political climate in their particular country than recruits from established member states. Member states in the first enlargement wave (UK, Ireland, and Denmark) were reluctant to embrace supranationalism, so original Commission recruits from these countries should on the whole be more intergovernmentalist than concurrent recruits from the original six. The second wave of entrants (Greece, Spain, Portugal) were enthusiastic about EU membership, and so should be the Greek, Portuguese and Spanish recruits of the late-1980s. Finally, the third enlargement (Austria, Finland, and Sweden) took place amidst rising public criticism towards European integration, and so one would expect these recruits to be more intergovernmentalist. In other words, one should be able to link non-linear patterns in Commission preferences to these enlargement shocks. Table 3 provides partial support for this hypothesis. The original contingent from Denmark, UK and Ireland is more intergovernmentalist than most recruits for that period, and the first recruits from the southern countries are more supranationalist than their colleagues. However, officials from the latest three members lean strongly to supranationalism. In fact, Austrian, Swedish and Finnish top officials are more supranationalist than recent recruits from the first twelve members, and—even more surprising – than all Commission officials recruited since 1973 (except for the second enlargement). Furthermore, the enlargement effect weakens considerably for subsequent cohorts. While the special enlargement appointments for the UK, Denmark and Ireland until 1979 lean to intergovernmentalism, British, Danish and Irish officials appointed *after* 1979 are not more intergovernmentalist than their contemporaries from the original six countries. The general propensity to intergovernmentalism over the last fifteen years is driven by officials from the original six countries, not by recruits from first, second or third waves of enlargement.¹¹ So enlargement shocks, together with ebbs and flows in the general climate to European integration, go some way in explaining why Commission socialization does not follow a smooth linear trend.

¹¹ In addition, enlargement distorts the Commission socialization hypothesis indirectly. Two-thirds of top officials in the sample are still the ‘a-typical’ recruits of the initial enlargement appointments. For example, of the eighteen UK officials, twelve were appointed in the special recruitment wave after UK entry, and only three over the last ten years. So variation on the independent variable is limited. Controlling for nationality-specific variables creates many empty cells, which weakens measurements of association (Western 1995; Shalev 1997). This may induce one to underestimate Commission socialization. A test for the original six member states, where all top officials were recruited under normal procedures, shows that Commission career becomes a stronger predictor ($R^2=0.11$, $\beta=0.344^{***}$, $s.e.=0.008$) than State career ($R^2=0.094$, $\beta=-0.306^{**}$, $s.e.=0.015$).

All in all, work experiences help explain variation in supranationalism among top officials. Former state officials are less likely to support a supranational European Union, but long service in the Commission tends to reinforce supranationalism—at least among recruits from the original six members, where this effect is not distorted by the special circumstances of enlargement recruitment. The overall effect of career socialization on top officials' preferences concerning European governance is, however, at best moderately strong. The question then arises, how well do other hypotheses fare?

Transnational socialization

The transnational socialization hypothesis predicts that officials with greater transnational experience are likely to be more supranationalist. This hypothesis finds some support in the bivariate analysis (Table 3: $R^2=0.03$), but the effect is only medium-strong (significant at level 0.05). When one controls for other, far more powerful, factors this variable drops out. The reason for this is that experience abroad varies decisively by nationality, and this effect is picked up by country-level variables (especially National Clubness and to a lesser extent Federalism and Country Size).

Political socialization: Federalism and Small Country Size

The political socialization hypothesis conceives of the preferences of officials on EU governance as the product of what they learned in their domestic political environment. I hypothesize that officials from small countries or from federal countries, the two territorial entities most sensitive to external influences, are more likely to be supranationalist than those from large countries or from unitary systems. Both hypotheses find moderate to strong confirmation in the bivariate models and strong confirmation in the multivariate model (Table 2).

Whether an official comes from a federal or federalizing country is a powerful predictor of where he stands on European governance. Austrian, Belgian, German and Spanish officials are appreciably more likely to support supranationalism than officials from unitary countries like Denmark, France, Ireland, the Netherlands or Portugal. This effect remains very strong when controlling for other variables. The exceptions are the Italian officials, who are more supranationalist than one would expect from citizens of a unitary country. One may however argue that the Italian national state is relatively weak and authority is fragmented over a variety of territorial units—north-south, regions, towns (Hine 1993; Putnam 1993). While officials from smaller countries support European governance as a means to structure an uncertain external environment, Italians seem to want European government to substitute for ineffective national government.¹²

Country size becomes strongly significant only in the presence of controls (Table 2). The main reason is that federalism tends to dilute the influence of country size. Federalism breaks up large countries in smaller pockets of social and political life. Only for officials from unitary countries is the effect of size significant: $r = -0.51$ (significant at 0.01 level). The larger the basic unit of political and social life is in their home country, the more likely officials are intergovernmentalist. Or conversely, people from systems of multi-level governance—either through domestic federal institutional design or as response to their geographical interdependence with other political units—

¹² Officials from federal countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain) lean to supranationalism with an average score of 2.97; officials from non-unitary systems (Denmark, France, Portugal) without Italy are inclined to intergovernmentalism with 2.31, and including Italians with 2.48; unitary systems veer to intergovernmentalism with 2.42. The average score is 2.56.

are more likely to favor further diffusion of authority to the European level. Having grown up in an environment where authority is diffused disposes one to favor a greater shift of authority to the European Union.

Party socialization

The hypothesis that party identification may predict where top officials stand on the issue of EU governance finds only patchy support in the data. Though all signs go in the hypothesized directions, only the prediction that young christian-democratic officials reflect more Euro-skeptical preferences—in contrast to their older christian-democratic colleagues—finds significant support in the multivariate analysis.

[TABLE 4 about here]

These muted results appear to be a statistical artifact of the low numbers for most categories, which makes it difficult to attain statistically significant results. Table 4 reports basic statistics (mean, median, standard deviation) for each category. The trends hypothesized by the partisan model are reflected among the 105 officials: a gentle shift in favor of supranationalism among socialists; extremely high support among older christian-democrats but a sharp turnaround among younger party members; intergovernmentalist tendencies among conservatives and younger liberals; muted support among older liberals. So, though the partisan model does not find statistical support in these data, it would be premature to reject the hypothesis that party identification influences top officials' stance on the future of EU governance.

National Benefit

The hypothesis that officials' positions on supranational governance reflect the interests of their country does not find support in the data. The simple association falls short of significance ($p=0.14$), and the variable drops out in the multivariate model. Though, on the whole, officials from 'cohesion countries' (Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain) lean to supranationalism, there is considerable disagreement among them. And this variation muffles the effect of this variable.

Optimizing Career Advancement

Parachutage. I find no support for the hypothesis that people parachuted into top positions from outside the Commission bureaucracy should be more intergovernmentalist than are recruits from the Commission's middle management. The variable does not come close to significance (Table 2).

Why do national governments not take advantage of their apparent role in recruitment of Commission officials to insert themselves as masters over top officials' career chances? The reason lies with recruitment practices for top appointments, which make it unlikely that parachuted officials would be different from non-parachuted colleagues. Recruitment for top positions is deeply politicized. Virtually all top positions are informally subject to national quotas. The national Commissioner is consulted for appointments from inside as well as outside the Commission, and this blurs the distinction between parachutage and non-parachutage. There is no reason to expect national Commissioners to use different standards for internal than external candidates. A national government's capacity to influence the ideological outlook of top officials is a function of the willingness of national Commissioners to listen to their home government's preferences rather than to act independently. The variable Parachutage does not pick up these subtle dynamics. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, the involvement of national governments in the recruitment of top

officials is a one-off event. At most it enables national governments to restrict positional access to individuals with appropriate characteristics—such as party membership or national citizenship; however, it does not empower them to control preferences and decisions of appointees on an ongoing basis. This is particularly so because top Commission officials are protected by restrictive tenure regulations.

National Clubness. The hypothesis, that officials from nationalities with strong networks of support lean to intergovernmentalism because they should be best placed to excel professionally in an intergovernmental system, finds convincing support in the data. It is by far the strongest bivariate association. Although the variable weakens when controlling for other factors (particularly country size), it remains a key influence (Table 2). National networks may shape career opportunities directly by creating bonds between potential applicants, supporters, gatekeepers and recruiters on the basis of nationality. But they also matter in subtle ways for people at the top in that they provide social support, and perform instrumental functions, such as exchange of information, contacts with influential compatriots in and outside the Commission, and political opinionating. In their anthropological study of the Commission, Abélès and his collaborators characterize the role of national networks aptly:

“Each nationality has its club, its network, its association of European officials, its ‘church’, and they are especially frequented by those officials who are most destabilized by the multinational work environment. These happen to be more often Irish or Danish than German or Italian. Not all officials have a need to come home. Membership of the Irish club provides gossip, makes it possible to keep up with local news. Equally so, the Dutch, the Danes ... try to find in Brussels the pubs where they can bump up against one another – without having to make prior arrangements: a national habit. The Portuguese club groups ambassadorial diplomats and permanent representatives to NATO and the European Community. With its thematic dinners spiced up by reputable speakers, it performs a social and intellectual function. The French participate in political associations or, for the products of the Ecole Nationale d’Administration, in ‘old boys networks’. The Spanish form a small colony, but the nocturnal social life has had to give way to the exigencies of the [Brussels] climate and the work rhythm in the Commission. The British, members of a club in London, do not see the need to belong to a club in Brussels.” (my translation from French, pp.25-26)

In an intergovernmental polity, national networks constitute the single-most effective reservoir for high-quality information, support and power—essential ingredients for successful policy making. To the extent that officials are motivated by maximizing career chances, those who already rely on effective national networks have an interest in preserving, or further deepen intergovernmentalism. Officials from weakly organized national networks have an interest in supporting supranationalism, where national networks are likely to be displaced by supranational or transnational loyalties and interest aggregation.

Positional Interest

The positional interest hypothesis explains political preferences in terms of who controls decision making in particular policy areas: the Commission or the Council of Ministers. It predicts that policy areas with greater decisional autonomy for the Commission induce officials to be supranationalist. Concretely, officials in competition policy, agriculture, external trade or regional policy should be more supranationalist than those in education, culture or tourism. Support for the thesis ‘you stand where you sit’ receives only moderate statistical support. Power DG is weakly

associated with supranational preferences in the bivariate analysis. However, the parameter gains considerable significance with controls (Table 2, Models 1-2).

There are two reasons why the variable becomes powerful only in the multivariate analysis. One has to do with imprecise measurements, which depress the fit in the simple regression. The index automatically produces low values for more recently established DGs, because the formal indicators use data covering a 15-year period. Though the reputational score, which is less time-dependent, partly corrects the bias, some newer DGs may have artificially low values.

The main reason why procedural control becomes powerful in the presence of controls is that state career, national clubness and federalism otherwise crowd out the influence of positional interest for certain officials. Commission officials with a background that predisposes them to intergovernmentalism are *not* influenced by whether they work in a Commission-led or Council-dominated policy area. For officials with state experience, the association between supranationalism and their DG's power is non-existent ($r=0.04$, $p=0.708$). However, it is strong for individuals without national state experience ($r=0.33$, $p=0.024$): the more autonomous the DG, the more likely they are supranationalist. Similarly, officials from strongly networked nationalities are quite immune to incentives stemming from their functional position in the Commission ($r=0.04$, $p=0.666$). Federalism interacts with positional interest in a similar way. Officials from unitary countries lean towards intergovernmentalism irrespective of their position in the Commission ($r=-0.01$, $p=0.891$). But officials from federal countries are responsive to the opportunities in their DG: $r=0.48$ ($p=0.022$). All in all, the power and reputation of DGs help shape how office holders think about EU governance. But it makes only a difference for officials who consider national sovereignty *a priori* a somewhat artificial concept.

Conclusion

The sources of variation in senior Commission officials' preferences on European integration are to be found primarily outside the Commission. Among these external influences, socialization packs more power than utility. The widely spread assumption that the Commission is a greenhouse for supranationalism is proven wrong. Neither socialization nor utility in the Commission shape top officials' preferences decisively.

Senior officials in the Commission bring with them rich experiences, of previous occupations and prior political settings, and these are powerful predictors of their preferences on European integration. Two experiences in particular predispose them to intergovernmentalism or supranationalism: whether they were ever a state employee; and whether their country of origin is unitary or federal, or a large rather than small state. Individuals who once 'served their country' as state employees are likely to defend a European Union with member states as key pillars—an intergovernmental Europe. For them, national state sovereignty is practical: it stands for effective, efficient, and legitimate government. The main task of the European Union, and for position holders in the Commission, is to facilitate cooperation, help formulating common interests and suggest courses of action.

Another set of experiences tilts preferences powerfully in the direction of intergovernmentalism. Individuals from a political system where political authority is vested—not only in principle, but also in practice—in national central institutions, usually do not find much appeal in a supranational European Union. They believe that national state institutions are capable of

effective control over diverse policy areas. The political system that is most conducive to these beliefs is that of a large, unitary state. Political actors from such states risk losing real policy control to a supranational European Union. Actors from small countries and federal systems have far less to lose, and probably much to gain. Small countries *need* rule making at supranational level to domesticate otherwise uncertain international relations; federal countries are *used to* rule making at multiple levels, and supranational European governance extends these rules one level higher. Ultimately, supranationalism is a means for actors from small or federal political systems to gain low-cost access to large, relatively self-governing pools of resources.

Top officials' preferences on supranational governance are largely the sediment of prior experiences in work and domestic political environment. That does not mean that their preferences are irrevocably fixed by the time they take up a top position. Work in the Commission may alter their preferences. First of all, the longer they stay in the Commission, the more they are likely to become supranationalist. Commission socialization is present, though it is seldom able to neutralize prior socialization. Secondly, it matters where they work in the Commission. Officials in a Commission stronghold usually have bolder supranationalist preferences than managers of policy areas under Council control. Greater procedural control makes top officials strive for even greater Commission discretion, which is precisely what a principal-agent logic would predict: the agent seeks to shirk the principal's wishes whenever he can get away with it. But this utility logic is ultimately conditional upon specific socialization conditions: it works best when officials have acquired—through prior socialization—a certain distance from the sovereign national state. And so former state employees or nationals of a large, unitary country are likely to remain intergovernmentalist—whether they sit on powerful supranational competencies or not.

While the socialization thesis finds strong support in the data, the results are mixed for the principal-agent argument. This reflects, in part, limitations of operationalization. Yet the results are sufficiently robust to enable us to question two prevalent arguments. First of all, contrary to common wisdom, there is no evidence that parachuted officials are more intergovernmentalist than their non-parachuted colleagues. Parachutage, the appointment of candidates from outside the services in top positions, is not the instrument through which national governments are able to constrain supranational control. Secondly, there is no evidence that officials simply reflect the national economic interest of their country of origin. Though officials from beneficiaries of EU largesse tend to be more supranationalist, the factor is not sufficiently strong to survive controls.

The more compelling utility argument pertains to a subtle form of national control over top officials' career chances, through the organization of social and political life around EU institutions. Some nationalities—the Irish, Danish, or French foremost—have formed cohesive communities: powerful, multifunctional networks of support for expatriates in Brussels. National governments have only a limited grasp on how their nationals based in Brussels interact, organize and mobilize. And yet officials who happen to be members of such strongly networked nationalities are likely to embrace intergovernmentalism. They have a rational interest in adjusting their preferences in that direction because strong national networks are most effective—in fact, the single-most effective route to success—in an intergovernmental polity, where ultimate authority rests in the hands of national representatives rather than supranational actors. These national networks create links between particular officials from various EU institutions on the basis of nationality. They are the living proof of the lack of boundedness of the Commission—or of any other EU institution for that matter.

The common denominator of the three most generally applicable factors—prior work experience, political system of country of origin, and character of the national network in Brussels—has to do with officials' experience of national sovereignty. The more officials have encountered practical implications of national sovereignty, the more likely they are to embrace intergovernmentalism. The more they have found national sovereignty void of real political control—or without use for their career—, the more they are willing to shift authority from national governments to the Commission and the European Parliament.

Top Commission officials' preferences on EU governance are not easily understood in terms of a tug of war between Commission and Member States. Their thinking reflects the diversity of Europe—rather more so than the institutional interests of a supranational contender for political authority. When these 200 top officials enter their office in the morning, they bring with them preferences on European integration that have matured as a result of experiences from various institutional contexts in a system of multilevel governance (Marks, Hooghe, Blank 1996). They are tested, and occasionally reshaped, by their daily encounters with a diverse, contentious and fluid world. And so when I ask the soft-spoken, yet combative supranationalist official about his future professional plans, he makes a full circle:

“I would love to be mayor—the mayor of my village in France. It is the one thing I would like to do because that concerns a human dimension. To have opportunities to do things for people is a great gift; it is so real. When I studied Latin, I was always struck by the following little diversion. When Caesar crossed the Alps on his way to Gaul he stopped in a little village and dined with the chief of the village. Of course, they smoked a pipe near the fire and suddenly the chief told Caesar: ‘You have the world at your feet, you are a forceful figure.’ ... This was still the Roman Republic governed by three Consuls—one of them being Caesar... And Caesar responded: ‘No, I am only one of three Consuls, while you are the only chief here. You are the first, and I am the second or the third.’ You see, this chief could get things done [Caesar could only dream of]” (Official, 070).

**Table 1 : PREFERENCES TOWARDS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
(percent)**

Item (N=105)	Yes	Yes, but	Neu-tral	No, but	No	Mean*	Me-dian*
1. <i>The member states, not the Commission nor the European Parliament, ought to remain the central pillars of the European Union</i>	8 7.6%	26 24.8%	5 4.8%	36 34.3%	30 28.6%	2.14	2.00
3. <i>It is imperative that the European Commission becomes the true government of the European Union.</i>	14 13.3%	26 24.8%	5 4.8%	49 46.7%	11 10.5%	2.43	2.00
4. <i>The Commission acts too much as an administration, and not enough as the government of Europe.</i>	13 12.4%	38 36.3%	4 3.8%	26 24.8%	24 22.9%	2.40	2.50

* Values range between 1 (No) to 4 (Yes); neutral = 2.5.

* A high value on item 1 suggests intergovernmentalism, while high values on item 3 and 4 indicate supranationalism.

**Table 2 : SUPRANATIONALISM AMONG TOP COMMISSION OFFICIALS
(Bivariate and Multivariate Linear Regression)**

	<i>Correlation</i>	<i>Simple regression</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>
<i>Commission Career</i>	.125	.016	.019 (.011)	-
<i>State Career</i>	-.287***	.083***	-.202* (.011)	-.270*** (.009)
<i>Transnational experience</i>	.212**	.036**	.079 (.130)	-
<i>Political system</i>		.128***		
Federalism	.267***	.071***	.238** (.032)	.252*** (.028)
Size	-.178*	.032*	-.239* (.003)	-.282*** (.003)
<i>Party Identification</i>		.075		
Socialist	.065	.004	.101	-
Christian-Democrat	.093	.009	.130	-
Conservative	-.064	.004	.022	-
Liberal	-.044	.002	.047	-
Young Socialist	.042	.002	-.044	-
Young Christian-Democrat	-.102	.010	-.292** (.378)	-.183** (.240)
<i>Cohesion Transfer</i>	.145	.021	.158 (.064)	-
<i>Parachutage</i>	-.101	.010	-.077 (.181)	-
<i>National Clubness</i>	-.371***	.137***	-.180* (.086)	-.206** (.079)
<i>Power DG</i>	.151	.023	.183** (.030)	.144* (.028)
<i>R²</i>			.352	.312
<i>Adj R²</i>			.242	.270
<i>Durbin-Watson</i>			1.863	1.863

Note: N=105. Multivariate linear regression (constant included in equation, pairwise deletion of missing values).
 Entries are standardized regression coefficients (Beta) (OLS), with standard errors between brackets.
 *** p<=0.01 ** p<=0.05 * p<=0.10 (one-tailed, but two-tailed for correlations)

**Table 3 : SUPRANATIONALISM BY RECRUITMENT COHORT AND
ACCESSION WAVE**

	<i>Original Six</i>	<i>First Enlargement</i>	<i>Second Enlargement</i>	<i>Third Enlargement</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>1958-66</i>	+ .276 (21)				+ .276 (21) <i>SD</i> = .696
<i>1967-72</i>	+ .339 (7)				+ .339 (7) <i>SD</i> = .810
<i>1973-79</i>	+ .101 (14)	- .342 (18)			- .148 (32) <i>SD</i> = .649
<i>1980-85</i>	- .502 (8)	- .398 (4)	+ .283 (2)		- .362 (14) <i>SD</i> = .502
<i>1986-91</i>	- .273 (4)	- .315 (4)	+ .360 (9)		+ .052 (17) <i>SD</i> = .671
<i>1992-97</i>	- .231 (4)	- .231 (1)	- .231 (1)	+ .268 (8)	+ .053 (14) <i>SD</i> = .638
<i>Total period</i>	+ .061 (58) <i>SD</i> = .703	- .342 (27) <i>SD</i> = .431	+ .296 (12) <i>SD</i> = .688	+ .268 (8) <i>SD</i> = .776	<i>Mean</i> = 2.565 (105) <i>SD</i> = .676

Note: Values on the supranationalism index range 1-4, with 2.5 as neutral score. Cell entries indicate how much a group deviates from the average score for the population (2.565).

Number of officials in brackets; standard deviations for totals. Figures in bold refer to enlargement recruitments.

Table 4: SUPRANATIONALISM BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Older socialists</i>	12	2.652	2.500	0.719
<i>Young socialists</i>	13	2.641	2.666	0.626
<i>Older christian-democrats</i>	5	3.333	3.000	0.623
<i>Young christian-democrats</i>	7	2.309	2.166	0.390
<i>Conservatives</i>	6	2.388	2.333	0.712
<i>Older liberals/centrists</i>	6	2.555	2.666	0.501
<i>Young liberals/centrists</i>	12	2.472	2.333	0.695
<i>Non-partisans</i>	44	2.522	2.333	0.695
<i>All</i>	105	2.565	2.333	0.676

Note: Values on the supranationalism index range 1-4, with 2.5 as neutral value.

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