International Executives: Transformative Bureaucracies or Westphalian Orders?

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European Commission, governance, intergovernmentalism, international regimes, OECD, organization theory, public administration, sovereignty, supranationalism, WTO, political science

Abstract

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

Kurzfassung

Die öffentliche Verwaltung befindet sich in einer Ära des Umbruchs. Dieser Artikel untersucht einen wenig erforschten Teil der öffentlichen Verwaltung, nämlich den Beamtenapparat der internationalen Regierungsorganisationen. Diese bezeichnet man als Internationale Exekutive (IE). Der Beitrag legt eine Begriffsbildung und empirische Besipiele für die drei wichtigsten Dynamiken der IE vor – der zwischenstaatlichen, der supranationalen und der transnationalen. Die Studie bedient sich auch der Perspektive der Organisationstheorie mittlerer Reichweite, die fünf unabhängige Variablen vorschlägt, die das Verhalten und die Rollen der internationalen Beamten beeinflussen. Die Variablen sind (H1) die organisatorischen Charaktieritika der IEs, (H2) der Grad der Institutionalisierung der IEs, (H3) die Einstellungsverfahren der IEs, (H4) die Eigenschaften der Beziehungen zwischen IEs und externen Institutionen und schließlich (H5) die demographischen Eigenschaften der IE-Bediensteten. Die empirischen Beispiele stammen von der Europäischen Kommission, dem OECD -Sekretariat und dem WTO-Sekretariat. Der Artikel betont, dass sich aufgrund von organisatorischen Gemeinsamkeiten die IEs der EU, der OECD und der WTO offensichtlich wichtige Verhaltensdynamiken teilen.

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1. International Executives

Public Administration is in an era of change (Aberback 2003). Increasingly, executive functions, like policy initiation, policy formulation and policy making, are transported from national executives to International Governmental Organizations (IGOs).(1) Moreover, governance by IGOs penetrate still more areas and levels of national governance. This article studies one under-researched aspect of IGOs – International Executives (IEs) – and particularly the factors that impact on the behavior and role perceptions of IE incumbents. IEs initiate, formulate and often decide the politics of IGOs and they consist of civil servants in permanent positions as well as on time-limited contracts. The question targeted is to what extent, how and why IEs challenge the existing Westphalian normative nation-state order based on territorial sovereignty (Gourevitch 2003; Kegley and Raymond 2002, 192; March and Olsen 1998; Rosenau 1996). To answer this question a middle-range organization theory perspective is outlined specifying the conditions under which IE officials evoke different role perceptions and behavioral patterns. The empirical illustrations have explorative ambitions and are drawn from the European Commission, the OECD Secretariat and the WTO Secretariat – the main executive bodies of the three respective organizations (EU, OECD, WTO). The article hereby challenges claims like "comparing the Commission with international secretariats…would certainly be of very limited usefulness..." (Christiansen 1996, 77). The three IEs studied are most like units of analysis because they are all public interstate organizations which have overlapping fields of jurisdiction. They are also most different units of analysis because they use different techniques of decision-making (hard law and soft law) and they cover different parts of the world: the European world, the industrial world and the global world, respectively.

Evidently, the international political scene has become increasingly organized in the post WWII period, reflected in the upsurge, institutionalization and impact of IEs (Finnemore 1996; March and Olsen 1998). The task of IEs has become increasingly that of an active and independent policy-making institution and less a passive technical servicing instrument for the governments (Lemoine 1995, 28). However, beyond single-case studies there is a surprising dearth of theoretically informed empirical studies of the *internal dynamics* of IEs (Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Checkel 2003; Gehring 2003, 4; Gould and Kelman 1970; Johnston 2003; Mouritzen 1990; Rochester 1986). Two main bodies of literature have combined theoretical innovation and empirical testing of IE dynamics. The first strand of research was the functionalist and neo-functionalist studies of the European Commission and the UN Secretary, inspired by Ernst Haas (e.g. Alger 1963; Ernst 1978; Wolf 1973). The second body of research is the more recent institutionalist and social constructivist literature on organizations like the EU, the Council of Europe and NATO (e.g. Checkel 2003; Zürn 2003).

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Neither of these endeavors has systematically studied on the executive arms of IGOs. Nor have these bodies of literature emphasized the relationships between generic organizational properties of IEs and the behavioral dynamics of IE officials (Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986, 761). This article argues that IEs are the centers of gravity of most contemporary IGOs. The article also advocates that the internal dynamics of IEs are conditioned by their organizational components (H1), degrees of institutionalization (H2), recruitment procedures (H3), relationship with external institutions (H4), and demographic compositions of the personnel (H5). These organizational characteristics ultimately impact on the IE incumbents' behavioral patterns and role perceptions.

Whereas some picture the nation-state as weakened, hollowed out and fragmented due to the advent of IEs (e.g. Rosenau 1997), others argue that the nation-state is strengthened and increasingly integrated as a coherent Westphalian system of territorial sovereignty (e.g. Biersteker 2003; Moravcsik 1998). Moreover, whereas some picture IEs as key motor in the transformation of nation-state institutions (Cowles, Caporaso and Risse 2001; Wessels, Maurer and Mittag 2003), others conclude that the effects of IEs are moderate and associated with existing dynamics of domestic change (Anderson 2002; Olsen 2003a). Such conflicting assessments represent more than standard academic turf-battles with regard to institutional transformations of political orders. We are facing complex, puzzling and poorly understood relationships between IEs and domestic transformation (Bulmer and Burch 1998).(2) The question posed here is whether IEs are merely instruments for member states or whether they are best conceived as transformative institutions contributing to supranational and transgovernmental governance.

Much recent literature assumes that the European Commission represents a critical case of transformation among IEs: If we do not observe transformational dynamics within the Commission we should not expect similar dynamics within other IEs (Johnston 2003). This assumption is challenged by advocating that IEs are multi-dimensional administrative apparatuses, embodying contradictions and dilemmas that are difficult to solve and that affect how decisions are made. IEs are seldom one-dimensional as suggested by realist and neo-liberalist theoretical orthodoxy, stressing the intergovernmental aspects of IGOs generally. This article challenges this theoretical orthodoxy by unpacking the organizational characteristics and behavioral dynamics of IEs. IEs are not merely neutral tools used by member governments; they are also epistemic communities of professional experts and socializing agents of community minded elites (Checkel 2003; Haas 1992; Lemoine 1995). IEs are multi-dimensional organizations that should be analyzed by fine-grained operational accounts to understand their diverse *modus operandi*. They live with in-build tensions between at least three operational logics: (i) intergovernmentalism, (ii) supranationalism and transgovernmentalism (iii). Accordingly, IEs are partly vehicles of nation-state preferences (i), partly autonomous supranational institutions with vested interests, visions and drives (ii), and partly porous and segmented professional institutions where knowledge is discovered, developed, interpreted and spread (iii). This article theorizes some conditions under which incumbents of IEs evoke intergovernmental, supranational and transgovernmental behavior and role perceptions. Table 1 suggests three role perceptions that correspond to the above three IE dynamics.

Table I

The study of transformational change is important in times of change because these are periods when institutional dynamics are created and periods when they are easily observed (Rosenau 1997). Our focus is on the end-point of actor transformation, not on the process of it (Alderson 2001). Arguably, actor transformation implies that IE officials evoke supranational and/or transgovernmental behavior and roles (Greenwood and Hinings 1996). It is also assumed a mutual relationship between behavior and role: Acting in certain ways make actors better equipped to play particular roles, and by playing these roles the actor may over time take them for granted. Moreover, taken for granted roles may affect the roles that are played and the behavior evoked. Actors are strongly transformed if they activate supranational and transgovernmental ways of behavior and role perceptions in a more or less *routinized fashion* (Beyers and Trondal 2004; Zürn 2003). In sum, actor transformation implies that the roles and behavior evoked by IE civil servants are less biased by their country of origin than by supranational and professional affiliations, respectively. They become less focused on defending fixed national positions than by discovering and pursuing what is perceived as the 'common good' (supranational role) and scientifically correct (functional/transgovernmental role), respectively.

The article is sequenced as follows: The next section outlines a middle-range organization theory approach that suggests five generic variables that affect civil servants' decision-making behavior and role perceptions. The next section provides empirical observations of the behavior and roles evoked by civil servants of the European Commission, the OECD Secretariat and the WTO Secretariat. The discussion concludes that the mix of behavioral and role dynamics within the IEs are organizationally contingent and more complex than assumed by IR theoretical orthodoxy. IE officials are expected to perform increasingly more complex tasks of representation. The article highlights that the IEs of the EU, the OECD and the WTO seem to share important behavioral dynamics due to organizational similarities.

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2. A middle-range organization theory approach ⬆

This study departs from a three-fold conceptualization of IEs as intergovernmental, transgovernmental and supranational (Simmons and Martin 2003). According to this conceptualization, IEs may differ as far as their degree of institutional autonomy and unity are concerned, and depending on the type of IGOs they operate within. Traditional intergovernmental organizations score low on both items by being non-unitary organizations constructed by nation-states and without the authorization to issue binding decisions that go against one or several member-states. Intergovernmental organizations uphold the territorial logic of the Westphalian order at the international level by a territorial principle of organization. IEs governed by a supranational dynamic, by contrast, score high on both items by being unitary organizations with autonomous spheres of sovereignty. Supranational IEs challenge the territorial logic of nation-state sovereignty by having acquired spheres of institutional autonomy (Cortell and Peterson 2003; Egeberg 2003b). Finally, IEs governed by a transgovernmental dynamic challenge the principle of institutional unity by being functionally de-coupled, porous and open, composed of government actors from different fractions and levels of government – i.e. domestic sector ministries and agencies. Transgovernmental IEs have shared institutional jurisdictions with other constituencies, and are internally marked by functional patterns of co-operation and conflict (Rosenau 1997).

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

Most students of IEs adopt neo-liberalist and realist approaches (Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger 1996). More recent studies of IEs have made an 'institutionalist turn' and rediscovered questions of actor socialization, complex learning and cognitive framing of norms and rules (Checkel 2003; Trondal 2001). IEs are pictured as more than empty vessels and neutral arenas in which state representatives gather (Finnemore 1996, 35). An equivalent rediscovery of institutions was made in the field of organization theory twenty years ago (March and Olsen 1984). The independent variables outlined beneath thus benefit from organizational and institutional approaches. One additional criterion for selecting the independent variables has been how successfully they have survived past empirical tests.

Formal organizations provide a codified and normative embodiment of their incumbents. In order to understand the process whereby actors adopt particular behavior and roles one has to unpack the normative structures surrounding them. Actors are bounded rational with limited computational abilities. Formal organizations provide cognitive and normative shortcuts and categories that simplify and guide actors' choice of selected parts of their behavioral and role repertoire (Simon 1957). Organizations provide cognitive maps that simplify and categorize complex information, offer procedures for reducing transaction cost, give regulative norms that add cues for appropriate behavior as well as physical boundaries and temporal rhythms that guide actors' perception of relevance with respect to behavior and role (Barnett and Finnemore 1999; March and Olsen 1998). Similarly, the international society has been portrayed "as a community of rule followers and role players…" (March and Olsen 1998, 952).

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

Table II

H1 Organizational properties ⬆

The first independent variable considered is the properties of organizations. Formal organizations are normative structures "composed of rules and roles specifying, more or less clearly, who is expected to do what, and how" (Egeberg 2003a, 117). Executive organizations are organized horizontally and vertically. Two important horizontal principles of executive organization are sector/purpose, function and territory (Gulick 1937). Already Robert W. Cox and Harold K. Jacobson (1973) saw the organizational similarities between national bureaucracies and IEs. Most executive organizations, both domestic and international, are organized according to the principles of purpose and function. The argument here is that IEs organized by purpose and function are likely to accompany decision-making behavior and role perceptions that are functionally defined and less biased by territoriality. Hence, the territorial principle of Westphalia is

transcended by a functional logic.

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IEs cover different policy sectors. This article focuses on the trade sector and the research sector – two internationally oriented policy domains. Both sectors are covered by the EU, the OECD and the WTO, and interwoven by alleged contribution to increased trade and economic prosperity (European Commission 2000). Both sectors have also been increasingly subject to regulations and normative standardization from domestic governments and from IGOs such as the EU, OECD and WTO (Brunsson and Jacobsson 2000; Finnemore 1996; Woolcock 2000).

One observation in previous research is that actors' roles are transformed more easily in highly issue-specific situations (Zürn 2003, 20). Arguably, the stronger degrees of horizontal specialization by purpose and function the more exclusive competences are needed to effectively act within it. Hence, actors are likely to be granted a greater amount of leeway and autonomy in horizontally specialized organizations. Sector specialization may accompany the emergence of epistemic communities of experts who have shared understandings of causal relationships between means and ends, worldviews, roles and norms of appropriate behavior. Moreover, such expert communities are less bound to territorial borders, and often loosely tied to particular organizations (Haas 1992). Participants in such networks often have life-long commitments and careers attached to them, accompanying the emergence of transgovernmental expert roles among such officials (Haas 1990, 42; Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger 1996, 209). This argument implies that the WTO Secretariat, the OECD Secretariat and the European Commission all have socializing power on incumbents due to their horizontal issue-specificity. Furthermore, it also implies that DG Trade and DG Research of the European Commission have stronger socializing power on Commission officials than the European Commission as a whole, and that the specialized divisions of the WTO and OECD secretariats have stronger socializing power than the secretariats as such. Hence, officials of IEs are likely to activate behavior and role perceptions that reflect their specialized affiliations more strongly than their more general affiliations to the IEs.

Vertically, executive bodies are typically organized according to a specialized structure of rank. The argument suggested here is that vertically specialized IEs have the potential for *disciplining and controlling* civil servants by hierarchy (Egeberg 2003a). Hence, vertically specialized IEs are likely to have stronger impact on incumbents' behavior and role perceptions than less vertically specialized IEs (Bennett and Oliver 2002, 425; Egeberg 2003c, 137; Knight 1970). The European Commission, the OECD Secretariat and the WTO Secretariat vertically organized IEs. In sum, vertically specialized IEs and IEs organized by purpose and function are conducive to supranational and transgovernmental behavioral dynamics among the personnel. Accordingly, "[t]he *similarities* overwhelm the differences between national and international administration" (Wagenen 1971, 5 – original emphasis).

H2 Institutionalization

The second independent variable analyzed is the degrees of institutionalization of IEs. Organization and institution should not be conflated. The institutionalization of formal organizations, whereby they become "infused with value…" strengthens their ability to impact on incumbents' behavior and role perceptions (Selznick 1957, 17). "To be reckoned as 'institution', organizations should have a distinctive identity and a value in their own right" (Egeberg 2003b, 7). An institution develops its own distinct dynamic (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 7). Generally, institutionalized organizations have the ability to *socialize* incumbents towards an embodiment of purpose. However, most civil servants of IEs have multiple institutional affiliations – some primary and some secondary to them (see below). The primary affiliation of IE officials is the IE as such – and the departments and units underneath – while their secondary affiliations may be domestic government institutions – like ministries and agencies from their country of origin – or professional institutions. Arguably, the stronger the institutionalization of primary institutions, the weaker the transformative power of secondary (external) institutions, notwithstanding the latter's level of institutionalization. In accordance with this argument, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998, 893) argue that the influence of domestic (secondary) institutions is reduced as the organizational structures of IEs become institutionalized.

H3 Recruitment procedure

Organizational autonomy is strongly dependent on the recruitment procedures adopted because different procedures for recruitment are likely to affect actors' decision-making behavior and role perceptions differently (Mouritzen 1990, 39). Recruitment may be based on a merit principle, as in most Western democracies, and on a quota principle or other systems of patronage or *parachutage*, as in the top echelon of the American civil service (Ingraham 1995, 9). Whereas the merit principle recruits neutral, permanent civil servants on the basis of competence, the quota principle typically recruits officials on more temporary contracts on the basis of, for example, political, sectoral or territorial loyalties (Bekke and van der Meer 2000, 281-282; Ingraham 1995, xix).

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The argument forwarded here is that, *ceteris paribus*, the merit principle applied to IEs foster supranational and transgovernmental roles and behavior more efficiently than the quota principle because there is no inherent territorial logic in the former principle (Bennett and Oliver 2002, 418). The national connection is upheld under the quota principle securing a staff loyal to the domestic constituency. Intergovernmental organizations have typically employed the quota principle and different systems of secondment in order to uphold geographical balances of posts, like in the NATO Secretariat and the UN Secretariat (Bennett and Oliver 2002, 413; Mouritzen 1990; Reymond and Mailick 1986). The merit principle is central to the European Commission as well as to the WTO Secretariat. This principle secures institutional autonomy as far as recruitment to the IE is concerned and henceforth non-territorial loyalties among the incumbents. The quota principle is more central in the OECD Secretariat (see below).

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

H4 Organizational affiliations ↑

The fourth independent variable is the characteristics of the relationships that may develop between organizations. Both rationalist and cognitive theories of IGOs "have been rather silent on the role of domestic factors" (Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger 1996, 221). IEs serve as parts of complex webs of organizations, including other IEs, member-state institutions, private organizations, etc. Different IEs may have institutionalized relationships because of overlapping jurisdictions, overlapping members, and histories of co-operation (Cox and Jacobsson 1973, 382; Haas 1990, 27). Civil servants of IEs have typically multiple institutional affiliations – both nationally and internationally – that pose multiple cognitive frames, incentives and norms of appropriate conduct (March and Olsen 1998). We assume that the behavior and role perceptions of IE civil servants are a product of their primary (IE) and secondary (external) organizational affiliations. Hence, there is a hierarchy of organizational memberships present (Flora 1999, 35). The demands that these affiliations pose may conflict thereby inducing role and behavioral conflicts among the officials (Barnett 1993). The status of primary and secondary affiliations is measured here by the length and intensity of affiliation to each of them. For example, most Commission officials as well as officials of the WTO Secretariat use a majority of their time and energy within their DG and Unit (European Commission) or specialized divisions (WTO Secretariat), and less towards other institutions. This implies that their IE portfolios govern their behavior and roles perceptions more strongly than external organizations. One effect of intensive and long tenure within IEs is that these institutions become "real" in a social psychological sense to the officials. Both students of EU institutions and students of mass opinion conclude that actors tend to develop multiple identities, and that supranational, national and professional identities supplement each other. Different roles are activated in different situations, and they become partly meshed and blended into each other over time (Lewis 2000; Risse and Maier 2003; Trondal 2004).

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

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

according to their country of origin or other institutional affiliations. Organizational fit is more likely to activate a logic of recency which entails moderate transformation of behavior and role.

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

Finally, the logic of primacy is conditioned by the *properties of actor interaction*. Actors may have dense, moderate or low interaction across organizational tiers. Interaction may also be formalized or based on informal codes of conduct. Role-change often follows from long-term and informal interaction (Hopf 2002, 5; Lewis 2003; Olsen 2003b,18). However, empirical studies of IE participants challenge the assumption that length of participation among IE officials accompanies a re-socialization of them (e.g. Ernst 1978; Trondal 2001). On the other hand, transactionalists and functionalists have argued that intensive and face-to-face interaction between state agents lead to the development of common identities and roles, and a shift towards a greater alignment with the IGO (Deutsch 1957). Internalization and the social learning of roles and behavior occur through intensive repetition of role and action. Direct experiences of IEs increase the likelihood that civil servants evoke roles and behavior consistent with shared norms and values of the IEs (the logic of primacy). Jean Monnet believed that "men are changed by what they do" (quoted in Duchène 1994, 376).

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

H5 Demographic characteristics ⬆

Finally, organizations are composed of actors with demographic characteristics (e.g. education, tenure, age and nationality) that may guide actors' enactment of behavior and role perception. *Ceteris paribus*, highly educated civil servants within expert organizations are more likely to evoke roles as independent sector experts than roles as national representatives (Cortell and Peterson 2003, 6). Moreover, IE officials with an international education and with a multinational family background are more likely to be supranationally oriented than officials with a national education and family. This is due to their parental and educational pre-socialization prior to entering the IEs. *Ceteris paribus*, young IE civil servants are more likely to become supranationally and transgovernmentally oriented than older civil servants who have been subject to domestic pre-socialization over longer periods of time. Finally, the tenure of civil servants is likely to mould their decision-making behavior. Arguably, senior IE officials with life-long service are more likely to evoke supranational and transgovernmental behavior and roles than newly recruited IEs officials (Mourtizen 1990, 44). Loyalty towards any IE is assumed to be a function of the IE officials' length of service (cf. recruitment procedures)

3. A methodological note ⬆

The analysis benefits from comparing how five independent variables affect the role and behavior of IE personnel in three IEs. A systematic and critical test of the five independent variables warrants empirical data not yet available. There is a lack of empirical research on how IEs affect the behavior and roles of their incumbents. Hence, the next section has modest explorative ambitions and does not give a systematic variable-by-variable test. The following discussion is empirically suggestive and illustrative, and benefits from secondary empirical material on seconded officials from different EU member-states and Norway (CLENAD 2003; EFTA Secretariat 2000; Smith 1973; Smith 2001; Statskontoret 2001, 17). These data are supplemented by primary empirical observations from one research project on OECD officials (Marcussen 2002) and one research project on national civil servants attending EU committees – the

Commission expert committees, the comitology committees and the Council working groups (Egeberg, Schaefer and Trondal 2003).

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4. Empirical Illustrations⬆

4.1 The European Commission

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

Despite the existence of several competing dynamics within the Commission, balancing between institutional autonomy and dependence on the member-states (Christiansen 1997), this institution exhibits a strong supranational and transgovernmental *modus operandi*. Previous studies have indicated an integral supranational identity among Commissioners and top Commission bureaucrats. However, more intergovernmental dynamics strive constantly for attention (Hooghe 2001; Kassim and Menon 2004). Intergovernmental dynamics reflect partly the national origins of the Commission officials (H5) and partly elements of territorial organization within the Commission services, primarily at the Commissioner and Cabinet levels (Egeberg 2003c; Egeberg and Trondal 1999) (H1). By contrast, transgovernmental dynamics reflect the functional organization of the Commission DGs and Units and the professional expertise of the officials (H1).

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

Studies show that the horizontal specialization of IEs affects the role perceptions of the incumbents (e.g. Bennet and Oliver 2002, 426). In the Commission the DG and Unit level are important carriers of identification and decision-making premises (Cini 1996; McDonald 1997). Decision-making within DG Trade is done by relatively small groups of policy experts (Woolcock 2000, 394). Intensive in-group interaction is conducive to the emergence of in-group identifications, as was the case within Monnet's own circle of advisors (Duchêne 1994). Similarly, Michelle Cini (1997, 86) observes that the identities of the statuary staff of former *DG Competition and Environment* are directed more towards the DG level than towards the Commission at large. Hence, the horizontal organization of the Commission affects the role perceptions of the incumbents (H1). However, the Commission also exhibit intergovernmental logics. Egeberg (1996) shows that national allegiances are strongly emphasized by *seconded* Commission officials. These allegiances may be accounted for by considering their non-merit based recruitment to the Commission services (Hooghe 2001) (H3).

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

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Seconded national civil servants are heavily "pre-packed" and pre-socialized when entering the Commission. Their stay at the Commission is relatively short and the majority returns to prior positions in national ministries or agencies when their temporary contracts come to an end. Seconded personnel also remain paid by their employer at the national level when working for this supranational executive (CLENAD 2003; Statskontoret 2001). Consequently, the Commission should be considered a secondary institution to most secondêes. One should therefore expect these officials to be reluctant Europeans and hesitant to enact supranational roles while working for the Commission (cf. Lewis 2003) (H3 and H4).

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

According to Cini (1996, 121), "the appointment of temporary staff encourages an intermingling of national and European administrators which itself has the potential to provoke a sort of process of Europeanisation at the national and sub-national levels". Moreover, seconded Commission officials are sector experts who work in highly sector-specialized task roles within their respective DGs. Moreover, these roles fit well-known roles from national ministries and agencies (H4). According to a survey conducted by the EFTA Secretariat (2000, 1) among 18 Norwegian national experts to the Commission, "all but one had been working in the same unit during their contract period". These factors help explain why seconded Commission officials retain sectoralized roles and develop transgovernmental role perceptions and modes of action.

4.2 The OECD Secretariat ⬆

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

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

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

OECD does not produce hard law that is directly applicable in the member countries, such as the European Union. Nor does it dispense money like for instance the International Monetary Fund. The OECD is best known for its production of comparable data and analyses. One could argue that the main purpose of the OECD, its independent status and its highly skilled secretariat is to function as an ideational artist. In that capacity the OECD was supposed to think the unthinkable and to play around with new and challenging concepts. With a view to improve the general macro-economic and political climate in the member countries, the OECD was also supposed to form a forum in which national high level representatives could enter into constructive dialogue (H4). In that capacity the OECD should act as an ideational arbitrator that helps initiate a common learning process in the national public administrations. Consequently, the OECD today welcomes more than 40.000 national civil servants in its committees on an annual basis, thereby allowing for direct policy deliberation with a view to developing a common scheme of reference across national boundaries. Through moral suasion and continuous multilateral surveillance OECD civil servants as well as the large number of civil servants seconded from the member states evoke transgovernmental and supranational roles and identities (Marcussen 2002).

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

In favor of an intergovernmental dynamic within the OECD secretariat would count the organizational affiliation to member states (H4), the de facto recruitment procedures and the low degree of institutionalization (H2 and H4). OECD personnel are not formally recruited on basis of their country of origin. Ideally, only merit counts in recruitment situations. However, as in most other IGOs the recruitment praxis in the OECD Secretariat favors certain nationalities at the expense of others. This means that the question of nationality also counts in the framework of the OECD. As a general pattern, compared to their budgetary contribution, the big member states (France is the significant exception) are underrepresented among the OECD employees and the small countries are overrepresented. Overall, however, the size of the member country correlates with the number of OECD civil servants with origin in that country (H5).

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

Other factors, however, may trigger a transgovernmental dynamic within the OECD secretariat. In general, the average OECD A-grade civil servant is well educated within his or her discipline (Marcussen 2004b). S/he has yearlong professional experience within that discipline either from other IGOs or from the country of origin (H5). Furthermore, the OECD civil servant will be officially encouraged and rewarded to participate in and contribute to international academic conference and scientific journals and reports. A frequently evoked reason for working within the OECD secretariat is the possibility of exploiting ones own professional curiosity. In this way, OECD civil servants may have developed loyalties towards specific issue areas, such as research and trade.

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

to assist, instruct, monitor, survey and supervise these (Marcussen forthcoming). Such unified action towards the outside world may strengthen the development of a distinct OECD identity.

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4.3 The WTO Secretariat ⬆

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

According to WTO's internal rules, the Secretariat has no formal decision-making power. Hence, the Secretariat does not have autonomous supranational authority. However, the relatively small Secretariat is involved in most of the work of the WTO and is essential for the functioning of the organization. Vacancies are the subject of open competition and advertised by means of vacancy notices, the distribution of which is made to all official representatives of the WTO (H3). Those attending the secretariat possess post-graduate university degrees with an emphasis on trade issues (H5). The academic qualifications are often supplemented by at least five years of experience in national governments, IGOs, or other organizations or enterprises dealing with issues of trade policy and international trade relations. Thus, the officials have a variety of former institutional affiliations (H4). However, the professional staff consists primarily of economists and lawyers specialized in international trade policy (http://www.wto.org). Hence, WTO officials have strong sectoral affiliations – reflecting their educational backgrounds and their prior employment in other IGOs, enterprises or other organizations as well as in domestic sector ministries.

We ask how officials of the WTO Secretariat perceive their own roles as employees of the Secretariat. It is assumed that the configuration of different role perceptions evoked by WTO officials has consequences for which actors, what kind of information and what networks are brought into the WTO decisions. Thus, the behavior and role perceptions of the officials of the WTO Secretariat may affect the dynamics of the WTO as a whole. WTO officials are recruited from the member-states, but do they perceive themselves to be national representatives? (H3 and H4) They are mainly educated in economy, trade policy and law, but do they perceive themselves to be primarily professional experts? (H5) They are employed by the WTO and are supposed to be loyal to this organization, but do they perceive themselves to be primarily WTO officials? The seminal study of Cox and Jacobson (1973) demonstrated that officials with long tenure in IEs developed identifications with it (H2).

Intergovernmental, supranational and transgovernmental roles are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, these roles are likely to play out in different organizational contexts. Furthermore, although WTO officials do not have formal decision-making power, they nevertheless are important in gathering, administering and processing information. Hence, they are important both as premise providers and in preparing decisions made by the member states. However, at present there is a lack of empirical observations to illuminate the mix of organizational dynamics underpinning the WTO secretariat.

5. Conclusions ⬆

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

A pertinent question is also how the internal dynamics of IEs affect domestic government institutions. What happens when strongly institutionalized domestic executives and strongly pre-socialized civil servants become locked into the organizational machinery of IEs? Are we indeed witnessing the emergence of a transformative international bureaucracy with an autonomous transformational power towards supranationalism and transgovernmentalism? Or do we observe merely incremental institutional adjustments within the existing Westphalian order of territorial executive governance? Our analysis indicates that IEs are complex and multifaceted, marble cake-like organizations with different internal dynamics. The future research challenge is to theoretically explicate and empirically document the conditions under which different behavioral and role dynamics play out among IE decision-makers.

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Endnotes ⬆

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

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

Table I

Three role perceptions

	Role perception		
	(i) Intergovernmental	*(ii) Supranational*	*(iii) Transgovernmental*
Role ideal	State-identity	IE-identity	Expert-identity
Role base	Territorial base	Community base	Sector-specific base
Driving force	'What is my state's interest'?	'What is the common good'?	'What is scientifically correct'?

Table II

Distribution of organizational characteristics of International Executives

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