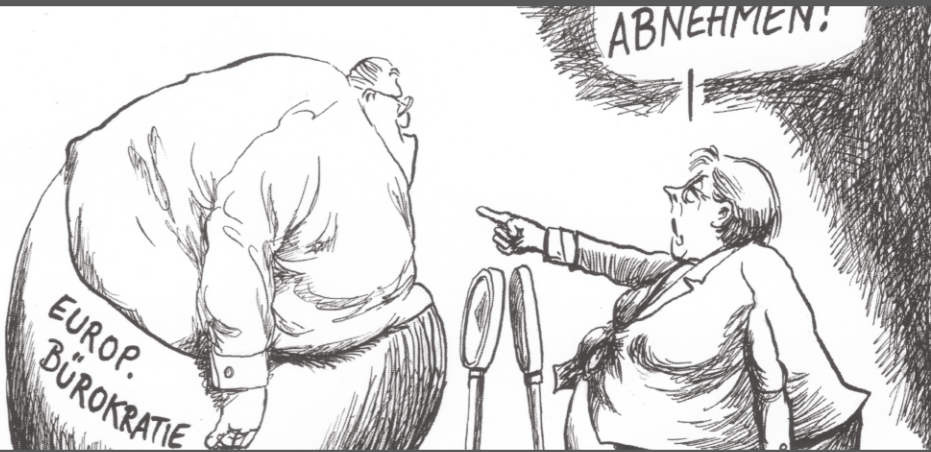# European Civil Service in (Times of) Crisis

## A Political Sociology of the Changing Power of Eurocrats



## Didier Georgakakis

# Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology

**Series Editors**
Carlo Ruzza
Department of Sociology and Social Research
University of Trento
Trento, Italy

Hans-Jörg Trenz
Department of Media, Cognition & Communication
University of Copenhagen
Copenhagen, Denmark

Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology addresses contemporary themes in the field of Political Sociology. Over recent years, attention has turned increasingly to processes of Europeanization and globalization and the social and political spaces that are opened by them. These processes comprise both institutional-constitutional change and new dynamics of social transnationalism. Europeanization and globalization are also about changing power relations as they affect people's lives, social networks and forms of mobility.

The Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology series addresses linkages between regulation, institution building and the full range of societal repercussions at local, regional, national, European and global level, and will sharpen understanding of changing patterns of attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups, the political use of new rights and opportunities by citizens, new conflict lines and coalitions, societal interactions and networking, and shifting loyalties and solidarity within and across the European space.

We welcome proposals from across the spectrum of Political Sociology and Political Science, on dimensions of citizenship; political attitudes and values; political communication and public spheres; states, communities, governance structure and political institutions; forms of political participation; populism and the radical right; and democracy and democratization.

More information about this series at
http://www.springer.com/series/14630

Didier Georgakakis

# European Civil Service in (Times of) Crisis

## A Political Sociology of the Changing Power of Eurocrats

palgrave
macmillan

Didier Georgakakis
Department of Political Science / European Centre for Sociology and Political Science (CESSP)
Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
Paris, France

*To Manue, Julie and Karine, and my students (former and future)*

# Acknowledgements

This book gives an account of field work and features papers, lectures and more generally, reflections spread over nearly 20 years. There are therefore many people to thank. The very large number of colleagues who agreed to review or comment on my work in one or another of the stages are thanked in each chapter (I hope I have not forgot too many), as well as the journals, in particular *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* and *Revue française d'administration publique*, which agreed to let me use the material for Chapter 4 free of copyright.

I would also like to thank Marine de Lassalle. Not only did she kindly authorize me to revise and translate the paper for *Actes* that we had produced together (Chapter 4) but she has also been a constant source of encouragement and support in the pursuit of my fieldwork on European actors, particularly the EU civil servants, whenever our collective adventure in building the Group of European Political Sociology between 2000 and 2007 in Strasbourg would leave us some time, as well as later, when I had entered the Institut Universitaire de France. Many thanks to my colleagues in these two institutions for their frequent support as well.

I would like to thank my colleagues of the European Centre for Sociology and Political Science (CNRS, Paris 1, EHESS), especially its two successive directors, Gisèle Sapiro and Jean-Louis Briquet for their support. The research centre ensuing from the merging of two centres created, one by Pierre Bourdieu and the other by Maurice Duverger, is a

# Contents

# List of Figures

# List of Tables

**xiii**

# 1

## Introduction: Moving Pictures

Let us begin with a few unexpected images taken from my field work. Against the background of a generalized, multiform European crisis, an episode unfolded between 2011 and 2013 that was missed by many, including by those observing European Union (EU) institutions and policies from the outside. In this episode, the European civil service was the subject of a statutory review that mobilized its trade unions and sometimes had them up in arms, along with many European civil servants. Several demonstrations were held, often between noon and 2 PM 'so as not to block the service'. Each of these demonstrations, usually on a rainy Brussels day, rolled out signs and banners such as 'Stop dismantling EU staff regulations' and 'Against the destruction of the European Civil service' – alongside more general and political mottos such as 'Delors, come back!', 'A stronger Commission for a better Europe' or 'No Europe, No Future'.

For the occasion, the trade unions, which had disagreed over the previous 15 years, set up a common front – equipped with an abundantly informed Web site – against the dismantling of the European civil service. Participation in the demonstrations varied from sometimes 200 persons to often many more, particularly for the several general staff meetings called by the EU civil servants unions' 'common front', which were attended by between 1,200 and 2,000 officials. About 75% of the staff went on a one-day strike at the European Commission, there were several other strikes among the Council officials and very serious strike threats were made in the EU Parliament, to mention only the most populated institutions, which were also those most concerned by the ongoing decision-making process.

These demonstrations are a radical shift away from most people's usual image of 'Brussels officials', seen as 'cold technocrats' contributing from their offices to pushing the EU's populations to strike or take to the streets to demonstrate against intransigent liberalization and austerity policies and/ or the flexibilization of labour laws. This image obviously does not take into account the complexity of the political-bureaucratic processes in which European civil servants are only one of the administrative cogs. More than that, it masks an enigma, and the key to this enigma opens up the deep reality of this group and highlights another crisis, not the usually discussed

economic and financial crisis, but the crisis of reproduction currently at issue in the institutional core of the EU, which affects the EU in return.

## Another Crisis

The above photos of European civil servants demonstrating are the image of the enigma. What could possibly have driven this group, reputed as elitist, into protest? Was it not enjoying a privileged situation and high income levels when a vast population was at the same time being severely hit by the crisis in many member states? Why were the group's representatives claiming that Europe was being dismantled, and spontaneously associating their movement – quite successfully in fact – with their group members, the history of Europe, its recent heroes (such as Delors) and especially its increasingly uncertain future ('No Europe, No future')?

The answers to these questions are anything but obvious. First, because just mentioning the European civil service, or the 'Eurocrats', produces such overreactions that the question is difficult to raise (and even more difficult to hear) in the face of the continuous flow of visceral and negative representations. Interpretation of these events, albeit confined to the Brussels bubble, has not been an exception to the rule. Whereas EU scholars have said nothing about these events, ordinary interpretations have been quite clear and categorical. Though the insiders' blog 'EurActive.com' (http://blogactiv.eu) explained quite neutrally that EU officials' unions were demonstrating both to defend their regulations and 'to restore their image', most of the many outsiders, including Eurosceptic blogs, claimed this situation to be nonsense, denouncing the outrageous wages earned by the 'European elites' or their 'functionaries' privileges'.

Member-state representatives in favour of a more drastic review (particularly the Dutch, as well as the British), for that matter, indulged in fanning the fire of the dynamics of this shift, when they ultimately refused the reform compromise, by publicly regretting that the review had missed the opportunity of rebuilding 'a modern, effective and dynamic civil service', implying that the service was old and costly to run. Politically speaking, their argument paid off all the more that

denouncing the European civil service was an activity shared by a very broad European assemblage, bringing together people with all sorts of anti-EU positions, aggregating nationalist and anti-neoliberal positions with, on the contrary, a more or less directly neoliberal and anti-civil service common sense, all of this fed by denunciation of the 'elites' – whether local national ones or international – which has taken a particularly strong turn in the past few years.

Seeking to solve the enigma of this mobilization by focusing only on the details of the review helps to escape the more or less conscious weight of these representations (see Chapter 9) but would also be missing a substantial part of the picture. The various technical measures affecting careers, wages and pensions provide important information, particularly for understanding the mobilization of secretaries, assistants and contract agents, as well as their general feeling that the European civil service was going to be devalued compared to the German or Scandinavian civil service, and more broadly, lose its attractiveness. But it is not enough to understand what was at stake and why the perception of a more or less progressive dismantling made sense to many people inside the European institutions.

A broader contextual picture also confirms that something had been happening beyond these singular demonstrations, particularly since the end of the 1990s and especially the so-called Kinnock reforms of the 2000s.[1] Beyond a set of reforms of the Commission's administration, the Kinnock reform and those that followed substantially redefined both the material and the symbolic conditions of the European civil service, and did so in a particularly burdensome context of political-institutional stalling and massive, successive enlargements of the Union to the countries of the former Eastern bloc. The ethnographic interviews I conducted at the time show that once civil servants were outside the official framework, their usually neutral façade often cracked open to reveal the bitterness of 'having entered the institutions to build Europe' and now

---

[1] Neil Kinnock, after having been leader of the Labour Party in the UK, became the European Commissioner for Administration and conducted an unprecedented reform that was supposed to modernize the European civil service and the Commission's administration after the resignation of the Santer College in 1999. For elements on this reform and references to the numerous papers and books to which it has led, see Chapter 5.

feeling that they were working at 'Procter & Gamble'. At staff meetings where President Barroso took stock with his personnel, the atmosphere was tense with reproach, particularly when the staff questioned him about the future and the construction of Europe, and about the sense of their mission. More generally speaking, the most specialized journalists also noted an ambient depression (Quatremer, 2013) with 'gently, even tenderly depressed civil servants' (Menasse, 2012) and the best analysts underscoring their feeling of deprivation and sometimes even of 'castration' (Bauer, 2008; Ellinas and Suleiman, 2008). Since the Kinnock reform, the most vocal civil servants' trade unions have systematically won elections to the Brussels committees. Many witnesses have pointed out that more and more employees have taken early retirement, except for those who were promoted by these winds of change and are clinging to their post. The close-ups are thus quite different from the pictures taken from a distance and converge in a diagnosis of what many in the EU institutions call a 'loss of meaning'.

Finally, even though the 2014 review was presented under its very technical and rather superficial aspects (the hierarchy had been careful to speak of a 'review' and not of a 'reform' in order to avoid opening Pandora's Box), the arguments for or against the review often raised more or less explicit questions ultimately touching upon the very definition of EU civil service, which had seemed settled, or at least docile, throughout the integration process since the 1950s. Should the European civil service be the vanguard of an ever closer Union, a functional equivalent of a state civil service as it had been conceived or justified at its beginnings, or on the contrary, should it be aligned with the most minimalist standards for the staff of international organizations? Is its separate status (in the sense of both social status and statutes) justified or can most of its work be accomplished by contract or national-administration agents? Should it be focused on building lasting compromises, and in doing so, on analysing and anticipating the EU's long-term stakes and problems, on making the very diverse interests converge, including those involved in defining European policies in all the sequences of the process, or should it on the contrary concentrate on the tasks involved in specific budget or 'project' implementations?

The assumption of this book is precisely that the enigma of these mobilizations is closely related to the mystery of the construction of this civil service as a collective 'at one' with the European institutions. Indeed, these mobilizations appear to us, well beyond the most immediate issues, to be the demonstration of a crisis in the social and political reproduction of the European civil service. Touching upon the same mechanisms through which the group was built as such, this crisis of reproduction weakens everything that the construction of the European civil service had made possible to establish: the definition of its function, the sharing and recognition of the sense of its mission, its collective force, its legitimacy in embodying a common European interest, all the way up to its very existence. This is what pushed its representatives to mobilize the group, not only to defend its material advantages (which would not have mobilized it in the same way) but more deeply, to act out one of the very principles of a collective construction that was tightly enfolded in European integration. According to Bourdieu (1994, p. 240), '[t]he (mental) representation the group has of itself can only be maintained through the incessant work of (theatrical) representation, through which agents produce and reproduce (albeit through mere fiction) at least the appearance of conformity to the group's ideal truth or ideal of truth'.[2] This is exactly what was at stake in the mobilization for or against the staff regulation reviews, and it far exceeds this particular issue.

This group, a recent civil service in Europe, is the fruit of a succession of compromises since the first draft statutes in 1952 (see appendix in Chapter 4), particularly among continental civil services, from which it had quite exceptionally succeeded in preserving a sort of quintessence of Hegelian administration at the European level, while resisting the wave of neo-managerial reforms that had made deep changes in administrations for 35 years. In the context of the crises in civil services and of its own successive reforms of the previous 15 years, it however had to face a series of social and cultural changes (imposition of a managerial culture over one of public service, of a linguistic monopoly over relative multilingualism, changes in the career model and in the characteristics that

---

[2] Quotation taken from the English translation (Bourdieu, 1994).

were valued), which, along with the ambient doubts and pressures on the EU, affected it profoundly. What is at issue in these changes is indeed much more than resistance to change, always thought of as 'necessary' by the reformers and numerous commentators; it is the group's collective power, its internal balances, and with them, the mechanisms for reproducing the capital and the values that had enabled it to exist, to become autonomous and ultimately, here, to embody successfully the permanence of the institutions and their capacity to define a common European, if not the general interest. This too is the group's 'ideal truth or ideal of truth'.

This is precisely why we will be speaking here of a crisis of reproduction. The current change is not just a change in values, in the sense of the group's dominant values or ideology; it affects the very process of the sociopolitical construction of the group and of its value, that is, more specifically, of the production and reproduction of the European bureaucratic capital that is the basis of the specific authority of European civil servants as a group. This capital had been based on material foundations such as guarantees of an economic and social status; it had also consisted, however, of expertise, knowledge of EU policies and more generally of the EU's inner workings (or the specific forms of a cultural capital), as well as of the capacity and experience of immersion in active multicultural networks (or the equivalent of a specific social capital). Depending on one's position in the group, this capital was also the source of a symbolic capital materialized as the embodiment of Community interest and the authority to speak, in certain circumstances, in Europe's name. As we will see, each of these dimensions has been reviewed, and, in the process, the bodies and the instruments of production/reproduction – such as status, staff policy, rules of recruitment, the production of legitimate images of the office or the distribution of posts – have also been fundamentally changed. From this point of view, this change has actually thrown into crisis the production of the group's history and of the legacy of technocracy, hence the possibility of claiming an elite status competing with or alternative to the national and economic elites, which was the group's founding compromise. Called into question, this technocratic legacy is no longer supported by the force of obviousness that previously legitimated it. Yet further – the ultimate sign of a crisis of reproduction – those who had

accepted its legacy are increasingly at odds with their heirs, who do not acknowledge their legacy or, in fact, do not even identify with it.

This crisis of social reproduction seems important to us well beyond its various manifestations since the end of the 1990s. European civil servants represent a pivot group in the social field of Eurocracy (Georgakakis and Rowell, 2013). Far from being its only actors, European civil servants coexist with just as many personnel including national and European policy professionals (commissioners, members of the European Parliament), diplomats and representatives of national administrations, representatives of economic and social interests, advocates of various causes, journalists, commentators and various organic intellectuals (experts, academics, think-thank members). But they have the singular characteristic of being the only ones living 'off and for Europe' according to Max Weber's expression, in a permanent and lasting form (often several dozen years of service, and sometimes even entire professional lives); they are also the only ones to found their position on the 'function' of tying all the others together.

Placed at the core of the procedure to manufacture the European compromise, this group – and what happens to it – hence sheds light on a hidden face of the broader crisis of Europe. Compared to the most prominent analyses, which interpret Europe's current difficulties as the product of macro-economic and policy divergences among the member states, this book lights up their other side by pointing to the undermining increasing precariousness of actors who had built their position on the fabrication of a durable convergence of the very different visions and interests (political, economic and social, intellectual) at work in the construction of Europe and its policies. There is no doubt that these two types of phenomenon are internally related, and the latter has important implications for the forms that the EU will take in the future.

## The Politics of Forming a European Body

How, then, can this crisis of reproduction be analysed? This is not a simple task. To start with, it supposes that the mystery of the very existence of this group is solved. The definition of this group, its existence

as a collective and more generally the recognition of its function, none of this is self-evident. While negative representations of the EU tend to portray it as a homogeneous block, the majority of analyses tend rather to see it as a sum of very different individuals and raise the question of how such different people can share identifications with the same body.

For an overall picture, these differences are important in many ways. Like in other organizations with an international staff, the more than 47,000 civil servants and temporary agents are first very diverse in terms of their nationalities. The issue of nationalities is in fact under scrutiny, because the geographical balance is considered a key aspect of the representative nature of the administration, something of concern among member states with regard to symbols and power. These differences involve varieties of administrative cultures, at least in terms of a 'grand' model of European administration (Stevens and Stevens, 2001) and of networking and information inside and outside the institutions. Institutionally, the staff also belong to very different institutions. Of more than 47,000 civil servants and temporary agents (see further for differences in status), 24,500 are appointed by the European Commission, around 7,000 by executive and regulatory agencies, 6,700 by the Parliament, around 2,000 by the Court of Justice, less than 1,000 by the Court of Auditors, more than 700 and 500 by the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, respectively, some 110 by the European Ombudsman and the European Data Protection Supervisor, and 1,600 by the new External Action Service (OJEU, 2015). These figures do not include contract agents. What staff members do within the institutions also varies. Scholars have identified dissimilar functions from the outset (Michelmann, 1978). There is indeed a difference between being legal adviser, auditor, assistant secretary, translator, manager or policy maker. More recently, institutions such as the Commission have promoted reflection on job types in their internal database. As a result, 30 job families have been distinguished, showing the significance of purely administrative and secretarial tasks compared to policy tasks or programme-related tasks. We should add that directorates have diverse cultures, resulting from their history and influenced by the sector's structure and specificities (Abélès et al., 1993; Cini, 1996b and 2007), with consequences in terms

of thinking about politics (from neoliberal to far-left), EU policies and identification (Egeberg, 1996; Hooghe, 2012; Kassim et al., 2013).

These differences determine different goals, interests, practices and institutional cultures, including those related to human-resource policies and management. There are however also differences in living conditions and life styles. To begin with, the institutions are not all located in the same city. Though Brussels and to a lesser extent Luxembourg are highly dominant (with more than 21,700 and somewhat less than 3,800 of the 25,000 Commission staff members, respectively, including contract agents), the circle widens when including the research centres that belong to the Commission, which are located in five European cities (2,600 persons, 1,450 of whom are in Ispra, Italy), autonomous agencies (in various cities) not to mention the nearly 4,000 agents working outside of Europe. Staff members in these various organizations also have a different *status*. In the case of the Commission, excluding agencies, one has to distinguish between permanent officials (23,964), temporary staff hired mainly for their technical skills or for the cabinets (1,086), contract staff (6,679) (European Commission, 2016), not to mention seconded national experts, trainees, service providers and interim staff members. Status is important because permanent positions are guaranteed only to officials, the very core of the group, whereas contract staff members have short-term contracts, although often doing similar jobs and sometimes having worked in the field for a long time.

With an average hiring age of 35, there are also differences between those who arrive after finishing their education, including graduate work, and those, more numerous, who come after having worked in the public or private sector. The share of diplomas, PhDs and studies abroad is high for middle- and high-level administrators, which is an indicator of homologies within these groups. School careers are also different, with scientists in high numbers behind the profiles of lawyers, economists or specialists in administration and policy (Kassim et al., 2013), and so are previous professional experiences, which include (more and more, even if they have always been present) careers in the private sector. The differences are also huge when looking at the hierarchy levels when they join the institutions. Between someone on a contract (Group 1, from the first grade) and an AD16, Scale 3

administrator (the top grade), the salary varies from €1,847 to €18,370 a month (both after taxes). These differences also have an impact on the quality of housing and the ability to accrue a long-term family legacy. Sociologists and anthropologists show that this dimension matters in a city like Brussels, where some districts such as the European Quarter, but also in the eastern and southern parts of the city, are considered to be 'ghettos for Eurocrats' (Cailliez, 2004; Laurens et al., 2012).

This diversity is not a problem in itself. This group is very far from being the only group marked by important internal differences, which is true for all groups (including academics) and for all civil services. Furthermore, many authors have in fact come to temper the diverseness. For Cris Shore (2000), these divergences are largely compensated by integration into a single caste, very close in its model to 'Nobility of State' and to French-style high administration, which according to him prevailed in the late 1990s. In a very different way, the work of Michelle Cini (2007) has shown that following the crisis of the Santer resignation, a common ethic was present in the rebuilding process. Carolyn Ban (2013) shows that those who joined after the 2004 enlargement did not bring their own administrative culture, probably because many of them had acquired experience abroad, often in the private sector. In the more serious analyses of networks within the Commission, Semin Suvarierol (2008, p. 721) shows that differences of nationality and culture, even including the so-called 'North-South divide', are partly weak arguments, and she refreshes the earlier assumption that for many, '[t]he ideal of civil servants "whose nationality [is] supranationality" . . . seems to be manifested in the everyday reality of the Commission'. Although in 1968, speaking of a 'European civil service' could still be considered 'wishful thinking' (Coombes, 1968), few people would take this view today.

From a more general sociological point of view, it is quite absurd to raise questions about the existence or not of this group, something that was the subject of debate for a long time. Perception of a group is a question of distance from the object (Boltanski, 1982); the more you see it from afar, the more it appears homogeneous, and the closer you get, the better you can observe their differences. Moreover, any social group is partly a fiction, but depending on the historical social process it is a fiction that materializes in the minds and the bodies of

those who comprise it, as well as among those who are related to it, be it indirectly and at a distance. According to historians and sociologists, a social group is indeed a collection of individuals who are more or less close in terms of economic or social position and whose original homology of positions is transformed into a social group through a process of social and political construction (Thompson, 1963; Boltanski, 1982). This process includes trade unions, political prophets and mobilization, as well as modelling by academics. Institutionalization by law contributed to a process of identification and embodiment, which finally resulted in the understanding that an individual is quite singular but also more or less immersed in the group, which is studied through its main 'hard core' in a sense of close to the point of attraction in physical science.

It remains however to be known how these dynamics unfold in the transnational and institutional context of Europe. This is the question on which this book is focused. The construction process is not that different here, even though it may be less complete and more fragile than for other groups. What changes has to do with the nature of what the group suppresses when building itself (here, national differences as well as political origins) and the fact of being at the core of power struggles directly dictated by the characteristics of European integration, which is affected in return.

The theory presented in this book is indeed that the European institutions, well beyond their establishment and their organization, had succeeded, sometimes against the wishes of certain large member states, in forming a kind of collective human resource, a group that was built by building Europe, to take a formulation by Bourdieu (1996) in connection with civil servants and the State. The singularity of the historical process of their constitution, their sociological and symbolic isolation and thereafter a set of socialization processes made it possible for a long time to forget the national, political and status differences existing among these members, to the advantage of a common identification with a new elite in the service of European integration. Even though to a variable extent, the feeling of a common belonging was developed, along with a transnational 'esprit de corps' and most of all a form of collective authority founded on the status of permanence, competence and independence, to use a trade-union watchword, the success of which shapes the group ethos in formation.

This is the very process that is threatened today in its foundations, not (or not only), as we will see, by external processes, but by policies and an internal power process that, for reasons of misreading or deliberate ignorance of collective phenomena, took the opposite course to that of the historical trend that had taken shape. This process does not imply a loss of power for all the civil servants. On the contrary, there are also winners in this process. But the change in model, roughly from that of a supranational-state civil service that did not speak its name to that of a function of undifferentiated international managers, has fundamentally changed the internal equilibria of the group and its collective capacity to embody European power legitimately without having to call up the force of the legal and/or financial arsenal, a situation that marks a radical shift from their 'enthusiasm' for building Europe (Page, 1997) and from the leadership they contribute to giving to the European Commission (Schmitter, 2005).

## Studying a Changing Power

To understand this, this book proposes to undertake a series of changes in perspective. Although the analysis is embedded in a theoretical perspective (Kauppi, 2005; Saurugger and Mérand, 2010; Bigo and Madsen, 2011; Vauchez and de Witte, 2013, among others), we will not seek here to claim attachment to a specific paradigm. Imposing or promoting a label, even though I have done so when arguing for a 'historical and political sociology of the EU' (Georgakakis, 2009), now seems to me too reductive; it often prevents being read for what you say and most of all, it is detrimental to the only approach that matters, which consists in knowing to what extent you will renew the research questions, shed a different light on objects than that of the official definitions (or more broadly than that reflecting what you knew or believed you knew) and above all, to what extent you will propose a theory that is consistent at both the theoretical and empirical levels and will enable a better understanding of the processes in progress. It is therefore preferable to underscore here what the construction of the object owes to various analytical and methodological traditions, and most of all to the

willingness to integrate them into a point of view at the geometrical crossroads, as Bourdieu often used to say, of various perspectives on the subject.

This book therefore draws on the literature of political science, as the point here is to deal with power issues and institutions. Both are the focus of this analysis, but the idea will be to do so by getting away from focusing on the big entities from a distance – the member states and the European institutions – and their supposed quasi-exclusive dialectics. The goal will be, on the contrary, to open the black box of one of these entities – the European institutions – in order to go, as in the past was done by anthropologists and a number of historians (Seidel, 2010), into the details of the construction of its main human resource. Institutions do not exist without the men and women who are at the core of their operations and embody them, and this is just as true of the European institutions, as was already shown a long time ago, particularly for the case of European policy making (Rosenthal, 1975). This book then invites us to renew our knowledge of the power of the European institutions by analysing, not their abstract power but the practices of power and legitimation that are at the core of their agents' activity and of their construction as a collective.

Yet unlike anthropologists, the idea is to do so less through a cultural lens (even though this is a very popular approach in 'multicultural milieus') than through a more sociological lens that takes into account the social-construction processes and more generally the structuring processes, and then the collective's relative deconstruction and destructuring. More precisely, I intend to do this as a sociologist of politics by showing the power issues involved in the social definition of this civil service and its recent changes, including cultural changes, and to develop a reflection on the very specific connection that attaches it to the European institutions. From this point of view, the book will complement the work that, inspired by close readings, assimilates the construction of a civil service with an elite (Haller, 2008) and even with a new State Nobility (Shore, 2000 and 2010). It is nevertheless distinguished from this work in that it seeks to give a better account of the internal diversity of the group and how the collective construction processes have

been interiorized by the actors in different ways. Published 16 years after Cris Shore's book, and therefore in the context following the managerial reforms, it reveals a very different reality than that of a triumphant group. The group is depicted in a critical phase, which may even be a potential deconstruction phase, and above all one caught in the crossfire of two antagonistic claims to universalism: that of a continental equivalent of a state equipped with a quasi-timeless civil service devoted to its construction, and that of Anglo-Saxon capitalism attached to more temporal (and often temporary) public agents, the main (if not the only) horizon of which is to serve the market.

Focused on a medium-term process and almost at the transition from one to another of these competing universalisms (Bourdieu, 1992), the book is also fed by history and in particular by a practice if not of history at least of archives, even if the following pages ultimately reflect fairly little of this. It does not present at length the archives scrutinized for quarrels over the staff regulations, the genesis of the trade unions, nor sufficiently the genesis of the esprit de corps analysed by Conrad (1992) and Seidel (2010), or even Bossuat (2011), whose book on Émile Noël, Secretary-General of the Commission for 30 years, contains important elements. But it does seek to expand on them, by specifying the more social and political processes of this collective construction (in the coproduction of its image, in the changes of *habitus* supposed by entry into the group, but also in the manufacture and interiorization of a singular type of authority to speak legitimately in the name of Europe) and the deconstruction processes involved in the practices of legitimation and formation, or more generally speaking, the tightening of the institutions' priorities around the functions of guardians of austerity orthodoxy.

From these various points of view, the book is innovative with respect to the academic output in the realm of European public administration, which has mushroomed in recent years, so much so, that one of its promoters, after a number of turns in EU studies, spoke of a 'public-administration turn'. Nonetheless, contrary to its origins more oriented towards law and history, the science of European public administration seems to have been mostly marked by a positivist turn, to the detriment of history and of a sociology privileging too often a form of naturalism of the good administrative model, and has done so around an ethnocentric

definition somewhere between the post-1980s US and British or Scandinavian administrations. The latter especially embrace, too often, views of the reform that consider the exceptionality of the European civil service as a pathology to be reformed. Fortunately, the authors of this trend, many of whom are cited above, do not all share this point of view, and by focusing on groups instead of organization and borrowing part of Bourdieu's conception of field theory and of bureaucratic elites (Wacquant, 2005), this book offers alternative perspectives and methodologies that are a modest contribution to the more general theory of the developments of a European bureaucratic space studied by Olsen (2003) and Egeberg (2015).

To accomplish this goal, this book made methodological decisions in two directions. The idea has been to multiply points of view and to build its reasoning in the movement of this multiplication. To be able to discover the common principle of a whole series of changes, ultimately played out in different problems (definition by others of one's identity, formation of a vocation to serve the European institutions, administrative reforms that are themselves different, EU enlargement), the case studies should, precisely, be multiplied, as well as the angles and methodologies, in order to account for the broader social space and the phenomena with which it is connected, as in Boltanski's (2005) reflection on the first analyses that he had conducted with Bourdieu on the state. It is also necessary to depart from the logic of the causes and from that which deals only with the *opus operatum*, and instead to explore the ongoing processes and struggles, the *modus operandi* that makes it possible to bring collective objects and processes into existence.

This point of view seems all the more useful in that the convergent tropisms of scientific positivism and neoliberalism tend on the contrary to focus attention on fragmented points to the detriment of any overall picture. This amounts to being interested in 'the policy of...' (often by reproducing its expectations) or only in individuals' preferences (whatever the vacuum of measuring instruments), but without proposing a bigger picture in which they make sense and take force. We propose to adopt a radically opposite attitude. The idea is on the contrary to multiply the points of view on the history, the symbolic dimension, the material dimension, on such and such a reform (the debates on

competency, those on the competitions, those on the enlargements, or on the staff regulations review) in order to reveal the common direction, which, although not necessarily appearing frontally in the details of each of these processes, nevertheless shares common structures, beyond the diversity of situations, and makes sense in the real world.

Once we have revealed the 'red thread' represented by the thesis of a reproduction crisis in the civil service bringing into play its possible breakdown, it would have obviously been ideal to reconstruct an investigation point blank and to put together a positive form of demonstration and result. It seemed however more intellectually honest to proceed more modestly and to start with the knowledge that 18 years of studies on the topic have allowed me, little by little, to perceive. This is what justifies the fact that this book brings together, as others do, a series of studies. Although these have never been published in English, they spread over almost 20 years of observation and in my view, ultimately plead, as strongly as other protocols, for the hypothesis defended here. Naturally, this involves several drawbacks. The relationship of each chapter to the overall intention of this book is sometimes only implicit, even though we have often set the stage of these studies in the chapter introductions. Sometimes the articles constituting the chapters do not include, by definition, the latest developments that this or that reform might have been the subject of in many publications. Books containing important data such as Kassim et al. (2013), Ellinas and Suleiman (2012), Ban (2013) and Wille (2013) are in a dialogue with this one.

There are two advantages to this, which override the disadvantages. First of all, that of making sense, hence of being in conformity with a definition of social sciences not reduced to a succession of disconnected projects, but on the contrary developing theses and points, and ultimately understanding phenomena that have remained obscure because of their complexity or the veil of political interpretations that covers them. Because it exists, the thesis defended here could be the subject of controversy, and this is desirable. It is precisely with controversy that professional and scientific work begins, much more than with collecting, with no hypothesis or epistemology, supposed evidence or previous citations in the form of self-consecrating litanies of little discussed literature.

The second advantage is to base the reasoning on the convergence of a rather considerable set of empirical material. By assembling studies from over a long period, the book also stems from varied materials and methods. These will be specified in the chapters, but we can already list our time spent in the Commission archives in Brussels, in Florence's European University Institute archives or Lausanne's Jean Monnet Foundation for Europe, analysis of official texts or field documents (*Journal du personnel* then *Commission en direct*, trade-union journals, official documents from DG ADMIN then HR), biographies of the directors, directors-general and deputy DGs, interviews with the personnel during each investigation (former directors-general, trade unionists, members of DG ADMIN then HR, ordinary civil servants, one hundred former applicants to the entry competition), not to mention constant monitoring of mainstream media and, particularly, media specialized on the subject. Added to this is significant direct and/or participating observation work, which has intensified since I left Strasbourg for Brussels ten years ago to share my time between Paris and Brussels. As a professor who has trained several hundred students of different nationalities in European affairs in Strasbourg, Wroclaw, Bruges and Paris, I have supervised a wealth of papers and internship reports, and organized or participated in innumerable Master's graduation ceremonies and meetings with alumni, all of these being occasions closely connected with the European Institutions' staff at different levels (from commissioners to the lowest-grade employees). I have also worked on preparing applicants of many different nationalities to the competitions numerous times in Paris, Brussels and in several Eastern European countries, which were all opportunities to discuss freely with them about their motivations for the idea of the service. Since an article I wrote on the 1997 strikes (Georgakakis, 2002c), I have regularly followed the civil servants' movements and observed general staff meetings or internal meetings at which President Barroso met with his personnel. I have taken part in numerous conferences, notably within the framework of the 'Rendez-vous européens' organized in Strasbourg by the French national school of administration (ENA), at which civil servants meet with experts (occasions to present themselves, to impose or reveal tensions among the different visions of civil service). My investment in defending the interests of the humanities and social sciences in the EU has allowed me to see things from

the other side. All of these experiences have given me the possibility of having rather free discussions with very large numbers of civil servants and of collecting material, which though not collected according to protocol, was much richer than that of the many formal interviews.

## Outline

The book is thus developed according to the following outline. It begins with a second chapter aimed at understanding the genesis and construction of the figure of the 'Eurocrat', between stigma and affirmation of differentiated European excellence. Although the myth of the Eurocrat may appear to be an illusion (European civil servants are far from being only Eurocrats, far from being homogeneous, far from making decisions independently from the European governments), the chapter shows that this illusion, like Durkheim's 'well-founded illusion', is rooted in the very process of the political construction of Europe, fabricated both by its opponents, putting this new emergent elite at a distance, and by partial appropriations by eminent members of the group, portraying it as a new administrative elite, technically skilled and well differentiated from national bureaucrats.

Chapter 3 is interested in the process through which European civil servants integrate their group and the collective values that it manufactures. We are thus posing differently the traditional question of the socialization of agents 'going native', which appears to us here as much more than adhesion to organizational rules or abstract values, namely as a process of entering a social class of servants of Europe, or more accurately, a *Stand* in Max Weber's sense. When they enter as statutory officials, agents get an individual and collective elite position whose permanence is guaranteed by staff regulations and an ethos linked tendentially to the service of Europe and public action, and so on. As an engine of the socialization process, the relationship developed between these agents and the 'class' is also a principle of variation among the officials, depending on their social-professional trajectory.

Chapter 4 reports on a prosopographical study (a collective biography) of directors-general and deputy directors-general of the European Commission (1958–2000). It shows that the European Commission,

far from being a moving and unpredictable 'multi-organization', can be analysed as a space of relatively structured positions based on the production and the uneven distribution of a partly autonomous 'institutional credit'. In doing so, the chapter studies both the emergence of a specifically European bureaucratic capital related to the social-historical differentiation process of a body of European officials and the competitions within the body that structurally oppose different types of director-general, such as those owning European credentials and those with a more national background, those with sectoral trajectories and those with a more general and political background.

How have these different trends, all related to the discreet but constant social genesis of the State body, been jeopardized, particularly since the 2000s? This is what the following chapter will explore. Chapter 5 thus analyses the debate about the required competencies, or 'key competencies', of European civil servants, which is one of the indirect consequences of the administrative reform of the European Commission. It shows that a new definition of competency based more on skills, and either personal or behavioural aptitudes, has become more important than knowledge more specifically connected to the context of the EU, a process that, though under apparently anecdotal forms, calls into question the social competences of EU officials and therefore their social authority as 'servants of Europe'.

By shedding new light on the new EU civil servants' selection process, in particular on its decisive first stage, that is, the open competition to enter into the EU institutions, Chapter 6 shows how the 'Custodians of Europe' are now becoming ordinary international managers. The new procedure promoted by the new European Personnel Selection Office, EPSO, is now based on two stages inspired by a culture of undifferentiated management, from which knowledge about the EU, and more generally speaking, everything that was previously used as indicators of expertise and multicultural skills are absent, when not replaced by counter-values, a change breaking with, or at least challenging the consecration model that was previously at the source of the 'esprit de corps', but also the 'symbolic capital' of the EU administrative elite.

Chapter 7 looks at how agents from the new member states have changed the EU civil service. The question has long been understood as

a cultural and political issue about how people coming from an administration developed east of the Iron Curtain fit into an administrative culture built on, or for, the other side. Following the recent work of Carolyn Ban (2013) showing that the relationship between the 'in-group' and the 'out-group' was the major point of tension in an administration that at the same time was being changed by administrative reforms, the chapter emphasizes a broader definition of culture as a power and domination issue whereby the problem of integration for many eastern newcomers is, as for others before them, that within the field of Eurocracy their position is mostly a dominated one, which has an effect on their strategies, both for the competition and for joining the bandwagon of the neo-managerial and liberal model.

Chapter 8 focuses on the fact that the changes in the EU administration in the context of an economic crisis present a mixed picture, breaking with common representations of an administration in charge, or conversely, a victim of austerity policies. Tackling successively the 2011–2013 Staff Regulations review and the revaluation of economic skills within the Commission since 2010, this chapter offers an analysis of the effects of the economic crisis on EU officials, underscoring the social struggles within the institutions and their consequences regarding the legitimation and delegitimation of their agents. Challenging the staff regulations again, while at the same time economic skills became those most valued, did not dismantle the group but generated the human and social conditions for a new political definition of the European institutions.

The conclusion opens two avenues to be explored: one on the sociological factors that drove the changes and pushed the group into a crisis, challenging the definition of the benchmark elite model (the elite of a state in the making/a global elite); the second on the implications of the crisis of reproduction for the definition of the scope of European public policies, for the State-building strategy that the best authors have anticipated since Delors's experience (Ross, 1995) and during the current crisis.

# 2

# A Contested Identity: Genesis of the Eurocrat Figure – Between Stigma and Affirmation of a Differentiated Supranational Body

When reading or speaking about the EU and its seats of power ('Brussels', 'Luxembourg', 'Strasbourg' and now 'Frankfurt'), it has become impossible to circumvent the figure of the 'European technocrat'. The figure takes different forms and an intensity that varies depending on the social spaces and circumstances: here he or she will be a gentle dreamer and there the overly powerful control arm of the bureaucratic engine and there again, a cosmopolitan technician bankrolled by the business world. There is no denying, however, that the social representation that has prevailed, in its most widely shared meaning, is that of a 'disconnected' agent with strong technical or expert skills dispossessing states or peoples by producing standards and regulations (in the broadest sense of the term).

Although it is ubiquitous, the figure has scarcely been analysed in itself. Overall, authors have sought to break with the myth of ultra-powerful European civil servants.[1] To argue against the myth, they re-establish – often rightly so – the sheer complexity of EU decision-making mechanisms to show the very relative power of European civil servants (for pioneers in European pubic administration, see Ziller, 1992; Quermonne, 1993). Others also distinguish technocracy from other forms of government (bureaucratic politics, epistemic communities, political decision-making) (Radaelli, 1999) or question the notably British 'conventional wisdom' that sees European functionaries as jurists who are activists for the European cause by offering an analysis of the complexity of their profiles and of their attitudes (Kassim et al., 2013).

Although these analyses ultimately make it possible to approach the vaster and more complex reality of the European bureaucratic field (Georgakakis and Rowell, 2013), they tend to ignore what it is that constitutes the force and persistence of the myth of a super-powerful European civil servant, when in fact, the myth of the Brussels technocrat could very well be instructive in itself. Like what Durkheim called a 'well-founded illusion', it may well derive its symbolic force and persistence from a set of sociological realities – starting with power struggles, including those to define what capital is legitimate for exercising power – being replayed in the theatre of European integration.

This way of examining the issue will not only contribute to a necessary deconstruction of the myth but it will also be a way to inquire into how identity and symbolic power are built for a group in a position to embody, more forcefully than any other, the European institutions.[2]

The following analysis would thus like to go beyond the debate on the real nature, or not, of the figure of the Eurocrat to explore how it is used,

---

[1] For an often rather amusing list of the false, mythical stigmas with which the EU has been saddled over time, see the blog 'Euromyths' at http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/ECintheUK/euromyths-a-z-index/, including for instance: Beaches, Bathing water – EU to ban our beaches, April 2014; Mustard, French – EU axes French mustard, Apr 2001; The Queen, dogs – Queen's corgis to be outlawed – Apr 2002; and Sex toys – Women to be forced to hand in old sex toys, Feb 2004.

[2] For similar perspectives on other objects see Lacroix and Lagroye (1992), and Dulong and Dubois (1999).

socially and politically. It will not be, as could ideally be expected, a systematic and compared analysis over time, or an analysis of the diversity of national spaces in which the figure is used. Based on the case of France, mainly on 1990s media corpus and on the memoirs of political Europe's major players, the less ambitious aim here will be to draw a first sketch of the figure and thus shed light on what it owes to its genesis and persistence, and to the considerable work of symbolic construction directly linked to the founding of the institutions and to the many political shifts that it might have brought about, and in fact continues to do so. On analysis, the image of technical ultra-competency embodied by Eurocrats seems indeed a by-product – more or less fully corroborated by the facts but crystallized and symbolically hardened for having been used in so many ways – of the very process of the reconfiguring of power involved in building Europe and of the new competitions engendered by the process.

The analysis will indeed show that the figure of the Eurocrat is the typical product of relational dynamics embedded in struggles dealing with the definition of Europe. If at first the figure might have been related to denouncing the temptation of a supranational Europe, its use then became a matter of routine and was extended – in this it is an indicator of European integration – to the whole of the players who, although not necessarily opposed to Europe, were positioned (or were rebuilding their role) as competitors of European Commission agents within the new configuration of European power. In this perspective, the Eurocrat figure is indeed a myth, or a reversed figuration of the democratic social structures placed at stake by European integration. Nonetheless, crystallization of the figure of the Eurocrat has another origin. Those competing with European civil servants are indeed not the only ones using this figure, nor is denunciation their only register. Although European functionaries are partly fighting and denying said figure, they are simultaneously, as if in reaction to it, peddling it. For a particularly heterogeneous and multicultural group, the stigma, and partially its inversion (this time in the sense of Goffman's stigma inversion [1963]), provides the framework of a collective image that would be difficult to impose from within. By paying tribute in deeds to founders belonging to the modernizing circles (Gaïti, 1998; Dulong, 1998), the

figure of the Eurocrat also offers a positive representation for agents who do not (or scarcely) come from 'State Nobility' and are at the same time immersed in a situation marked by strong tensions. In sum, the figure of the Eurocrat is, from the angle of its reappropriation, the product of the social work underpinning the invention of a group of specialists in European affairs, and of the stylization and demarcation processes to which it is connected: being a 'Eurocrat' is not, as we will see, being a technocrat, and even less a simple (national) bureaucrat.

This chapter aims to analyse successively these two processes, which intersect, hence respond to one another, but are also both the product and the instruments of the power relations at stake in differentiating European institutions and their servants.

# Denouncing the Eurocrats and Institutionalizing 'Resistances' to Supranationality

According to Katia Seidel (2010), whose work on the genesis of this group is by far the most stimulating along with that (less theorized but precursory) of Yves Conrad (1992), the term 'Eurocrat' was probably used for the first time by *The Economist* in 1961 (*The Economist,* 1961). There is no doubt that Altiero Spinelli's book *The Eurocrats* (1966) popularized its use as of 1966. To investigate the origins of the word any further back would be of little interest, but it can immediately be noted that the term was not at first necessarily pejorative. Difficult, indeed, to see a federalist as important as Spinelli as a Eurosceptic. It is therefore important, even prior to recalling how the term is used in a more favourable light by those most affected by it, to understand the reasons for which the figure that was established was rather the negative one. If it was built rather quickly and if it persisted as such, it is because it very soon became at different levels an instrument of political battles in the institutionalization of Europe. For political personnel, like for agents belonging to the broader circles aspiring to weigh in on their political field, the denunciation of European technocracy rapidly became an instrument to fashion or refashion one's position in the context of

political changes in which European integration was sometimes at stake, sometimes merely a pretext.

## Reflection of a Risk

Let us begin with the simplest approach. The figure of the Eurocrat is initially based on, and born of multiple cross-resistances to the risk of dispossession posed by European integration. Whatever form it ultimately takes, European integration is indeed grasped within frameworks, even though shifted from the state to a superstate authority, very similar to those that underpinned the construction of the state in Europe. Every time a state monopoly is called into question, or simply every time players believe they have detected its risk, resistance is particularly strong. This resistance has materialized in the hybrid nature of the European institutions but above all – this is symbolically embodied in the denunciation – depending on the period, the construction or the reactivation of the figure of a Brussels technocrat illegitimately pulling strings. This is particularly – but not only – the case in situations where there are tensions between state representatives and European-institution representatives.

The 'Iron Lady' thus often denounced the 'illegitimate technocrats' of Brussels. Less virulent than when he had denounced their anti-national policies in 1979, once he had become President of France, Jacques Chirac – himself trained at the well-known École nationale d'administration (ENA), which embodies French technocracy – was ironic in his appreciation of them, as for instance at a press conference in Madrid on 16 December 1995, when he stated: 'Technocracy is obliged to yield to a little discipline.' Before that, Charles de Gaulle had paved the way and fashioned a usage. Aside from his famous allusion to the international artificial language 'Volapük' at a 1962 press conference, Charles de Gaulle's harshest denunciation of European technocrats was issued in a private address to a group of French members of parliament:

> What would a supranational parliament sitting in Strasbourg represent, which would have no real handle on the national interests of Paris, Rome or Brussels? It would lead to nothing. One does not imagine a

'thingamajig' where technocrats recruited by co-option would rule the roost from their offices. One can make speeches about supranational Europe. That is not difficult: it is easy to be a lazy bum! (Addressed to a group of French parliamentarians on 9 June 1965, cited in Passeron, 1966)

Aside from the big debate on de Gaulle's attitude regarding European integration (Moravscik, 1999and 2000; Parsons, 2006; Warlouzet, 2011), several aspects of de Gaulle's opposition should be underscored. First of all, it was structured over time, since traces of it are found as early as at the time of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (see further). Moreover, it is part of an opposition between seriousness (something technocrats, according to de Gaulle, do not have) and dreams. What de Gaulle was denouncing was not a quiet bureaucracy but on the contrary, a bureaucracy of artists and adventurers (images reflecting those offered, but with a different intention, by the pioneers of European integration – see further). His following remarks at a 1954 press conference and those during his 1965 presidential campaign, which include the famous speech in which he made fun of their 'jumping on their chairs like mountain goats saying "Europe, Europe, Europe"', were typical.[3]

One saw working on [the treaty] synarchists who were dreaming of a supranational empire, politicians who believed that everything was lost if one did not yield to what was foreign, finally the sort of people who are always ready to sign up for a trip to the moon, secretly wishing the departure to be postponed. All of them wanted to be the prophets of Europe and each of them chose in advance some eminent function at the Commission, the Court, the parliament of the recommended system. But how can one believe in apostles if they submit their application to the boards of directors? (Press conference, 7 April 1954).

You have some who shout: 'But Europe, supranational Europe, all you have to do is put it all together, all you have to do is melt it all down

---

[3] See video archive at http://www.ina.fr/video/I00012536

together, the French with the Germans, the Italians with the English', etc. Yes, you know, it's convenient, and sometimes it's rather tempting; we are moving into pipe dreams, we are moving into myths, but they are only pipe dreams and myths. But there are realities, and realities are not dealt with this way. (Radio-television interview, 14 December 1965).

Finally, his denunciation of European technocracy was pronounced to the benefit of a national technocracy, which he wished to promote. Indeed, the 'Fouchet commission', which gathered 'experts' and would give rise to a 'Fouchet Plan', was having meetings all through 1961–1962. These were, it should be noted, particularly 'technocratic' practices. Moreover, the commission planned for the new Europe a Political Commission – the term is interesting – made up of senior officials from each member state. As underscored by Jean Lacouture (1986, p. 319), it was the Hallstein Commission that was 'the general's bête noire'. So, by drawing all the consequences of de Gaulle's being one of the initiators of the myth of the Eurocrat – at least in France – we can say that not only is the concept of the Eurocrat a by-product of the myth of the technocrat but also above all that it represents its reversed figure: dreaming versus reason, claim to power versus instrument of sovereignty.

Denunciation definitely set a course and laid down one of the main uses of this mythical figure. The course is now de facto reproduced in a succession of structural oppositions, no longer only between the states and the Commission but also between national parliaments and Europe. There are many possible examples. Questions to the Minister in charge of European Affairs during the French parliament question period or French parliamentary debates are generally an opportunity for members of parliament to underscore their duty to oversee Brussels technocracy. Outside of state parliaments, this opposition is also found in the tensions existing between the Commission and the European Parliament. To take an example from the mid-1990s – one among many – the Luxembourg Socialist Workers Party member of the European Parliament (MEP) Ben Fayot challenged the President of the Commission in the following terms: 'Eurocrats often forget the daily concerns of citizens, and they are likely to kill Europe if they do not

help them live better here, now and straight away' (*Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 25 October 1996).

## An Instrument to Open Political Opportunities

Added to these resistance-based denunciations are denunciations that have more to do with conquering positions. More generally – and this is one of the outstanding evolutions of the usages of this figure – reappropriation of the initial accusations appears, in a second phase, as related to the professionalization of a set of players in their denunciation of Europe or at least in their incantations to be vigilant, within the European political system as well as within national political systems. The figure of the Eurocrat thus becomes part of the European integration process in a different way, as the persistence of its usage goes hand in hand with the constitution of a configuration of players inventing their position through their discourse against technocratic Europe, when not sometimes more directly against the successive institutional forms of Europe (the EEC or Maastricht, for instance).

European integration owes its consistency to 'de facto solidarity', as Robert Schuman said, and others after him (Delors, 1996), but it also entails de facto solidarity among opponents to the EU and especially, within it, among those competing to become European commissioners or civil servants. This other type of denunciation needs to be qualified, of course. Sometimes the myth is used to serve the players' professionalization, sometimes, and most often, it is more modestly used as a window to a political or intellectual career with a distinguishing stance in national political markets. From this point of view, four places appear to have particularly contributed to make the myth part and parcel of a de facto community.

The first and most obvious one is where denunciation is used to serve distinctive political positions and sometimes actual careers, in the sense of interactionist sociology, within or against a political body. This was particularly the case during the juncture opened by the referendum for or against the Maastricht Treaty. An illustration of this is French politician Jean-Pierre Chevènement's differentiation.

The debates on Maastricht and denunciation of Brussels technocrats were an opportunity for him to break with the Socialist Party and launch his own brand (Verrier, 1996). Other examples can obviously be mentioned, whether French politicians Philippe Seguin and Charles Pasqua's distancing within their right-wing party Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) and their foundation of factions within the party, or Philippe de Villier's attempt to come out of the political woods. There are in fact many different media, places and moments in professions of faith and during campaigns. But there are also other fora: conferences, public speeches, platforms or mainstream books such as the collection '*Le bêtisier de Maastricht*' (Maastricht howlers) published by Chevènement jointly with the political cartoonist Plantu.

Added to this positioning on the national political market are changes in political professionalization on more localized institutional political markets. This was the case in France when institutions specifically in charge of controlling the European technocracy were set up. Admittedly euphemistic, these are the terms in which the missions of the French parliamentary delegation for the EU are described: '[with] the development of the European Community's transferring decision-making power to Brussels in a growing number of matters governed by law, there was an embryonic risk of "underinformation" from the parliamentary institution, a risk increased by the multiplicity and the technicity of the provisions of Community-derived law'. Born from an institution set up as early as 1958, the delegation's role seems to have increased since 1979. Judging by what it produces, there is no doubt that it contributes to making of its function of vigilance against technocracy a speciality within the parliament.

The figure of the Brussels technocrat also fits into the invention of the post of Minister for European Affairs and into its 'functionalization' – that is, the sociopolitical process leading to the materialization and the recognition of the position as a function within a system (Lacroix and Lagroye, 1992) – as a state's intermediary answering to national parliaments for the defence of democracy against technocracy (on the changes in administrative structures induced by Europe, see Lequesne, 1996a; Kessler, 1992; Oberdorff, 1992). Here again, there are countless examples. In answer to questions from the French parliament

members, Elisabeth Guigou, then French Minister of European Affairs, thus stated that 'national parliaments have their role to play in European integration in order to help make a human Europe and not a technocratic machine' (*Le Monde*, 12 October 1990, p. 10).

In this context, the minister's 'function' is more generally described, that is, also socially reconstructed, in a double role: on one side, defence or at least clarification of the Eurocrats' role, and on the other, public warnings addressed to the latter on behalf of the nation's parliamentary representatives or the people. To take just two examples, the following quotations by French MEP Alain Lamassoure are particularly good illustrations of this in various arenas.

> 'It is indeed advisable to tidy things up in order to avoid an excess of Community bureaucracy and technocracy' (French parliament, 28 October 1993), and, 'First, it should be well understood that Europe is all of us. Europe is not an anonymous technocracy, it is not "Brussels", it is not a kind of behind-the-scenes plot that would rule over all of us'(Speech at the inauguration of the information centre on Europe, Sources d'Europe, 1994).

To this professionalization directly linked to European integration (institution of a post specialized in European affairs in the government apparatus), it is necessary to add another process, which specifies it just as much, namely that of opening politically playable roles. This is particularly the case for the President of the Republic. Here again, the figure of the Eurocrat is rooted in the dual role that the President of the Republic can play, depending on the situation: defending European integration and thus tempering the image of Brussels technocracy, and distancing himself from the Eurocrats by championing the necessary return to democratic rules. There are traces of this in Valery Giscard d'Estaing's *Démocratie Française* (1976), in which advocating a break with 'techno-bureaucratic mentality' allows him to deliver a conception of Europe in line with the model of French democracy that he seeks to promote (p. 166).

But it was especially François Mitterrand (President of France from 1981 to 1995), in the circumstances of 1990–1992, who provided the

most numerous illustrations. Even more than the case of Giscard d'Estaing, the case of Mitterrand, who participated in the Congress of Europe in Hague in 1948 and played in favour of an ever closer Union throughout his long career, clearly shows how institutional reconfigurations take precedence over political considerations for or against European integration. These reflected the increasing weight in the trend of issues relating to Europe in the presidential function but especially the fashioning of a role of initiator of European integration, which signified, more particularly in 1992, the presidency's commitment to a high political ground and to the accumulation of own resources (consolidation of the president's 'reserved domain', extension of latitude and of spaces for initiatives) in view of his very likely new cohabitation with a cabinet of the opposing party. Here again, the myth of technocrats was perpetuated in the direction of a position oscillating between defending Brussels to public opinion and the reassurance of national sovereignty against technocratic abuse. This is corroborated by the following quotations taken from Mitterrand's foreignpolicy statements since 1990, documented by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which reflect various types of situations.

> So this considerable change will give rise to political institutions, political decisions and also a democratization of Europe. The European Parliament must have more power and competences. One should not call it the Brussels 'technocracy', too often a pejorative term, because there are remarkable persons there, there is Jacques Delors at the head of it all, he is a considerable man, governs these millions, these tens of millions, these hundreds of millions of men and women . . . (Paris, 10 November 1991, interview with Jean-Pierre Elkabbach on the TV channel *La Cinq*)

> That more oxygen should circulate in the wheels of the nation is in itself an excellent thing. And since you speak to me of technocracy, I expect these regional and local checks and balances to help us to contain it within fair limits. Will this progress be destroyed by European technocracy? I hope not. I am willing to fight with the help of those who, in France and elsewhere, wish to prevent this from happening. I will urge them to oppose vigorously whoever will want to put Europe on watch and to regulate even how to breathe or to sleep! (*Paris Match*, 6 May 1992)

The case of Jacques Chirac, who became president after Mitterrand, could just as easily be analysed, even though the circumstances were a little less suited to discourse on technocracy and though caution appeared to take precedence when speaking as a candidate. For the 50th anniversary of the French umbrella organization for agricultural unions and regional federations, the FNSEA, on 14 March 1996, he mentioned in particular 'that it [was] necessary to reduce the weight of technocracy'. But the case of Chirac can lead to analysing another usage of this figure. As a routinized figure, the myth of the Eurocrat appears more generally to serve the routinization of Gaullian charisma (Collovald, 2010). In fact, the heirs to Gaullism, mirroring the trend according to which households were turning increasingly in favour of European integration, had shifted their position and moved the figure into the framework of an opposition between the French parliament and the European Commission, between representative democracy and technocracy, when de Gaulle himself, as previously seen, had tended on the contrary to override parliament.[4]

Here again, there are numerous examples. Sometimes they are direct statements: 'The Europe of technocrats produces regulations; the Europe of politicians engenders only myths', declared French right-wing politician Alain Juppé (*Le Monde*, 12 October 1990, p. 10). Anti-technocrat discourse was used to re-establish bonds when faction-based divisions were threatening the RPR; for example, in an article in the French daily *Le Monde*, an important editorialist of the time, André Passeron, shows that Chirac followers openly and strongly attacked Jacques Delors's Socialist and Brussels Commission conceptions, which according to them were supranational, narrow and technocratic (*Le Monde*, 14 March 1996). It was also a tool to implement consensual tactics when a Gaullist leader was in government, such as then Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, who warned against Brussels's bureaucratic excesses when he made his general policy statement on 10 April 1993, qualified as a 'mysterious initiative' by *Le Monde* (10 April 1993).

The figure was also part of the politization of those political agents least equipped with political capital, who by denouncing the

---

[4] On these aspects, see Haroche (2013).

Eurocrats recycled their resources (in the following case, these will be intellectual resources) into the political debate. Independently of the fact that said debate was the product of mobilized circumstances – that is, in which the theme was mobilized on both sides of the political chess-board – the words of the Socialist politician Claude Allègre, a scientist beginning a political career, depicted all of its features in an op-ed in *Le Monde* on 18 April 1994:

> A Europe for men is what we want to build. To manage such a change, of course, it will undoubtedly be necessary to modify the behaviour of the Brussels technocracy and to regulate lobbying . . . We must change the intellectual attitude. We must depart from the Manicheism that has consisted, for ten years, in treating all those who propose new paths as anti-Europeans. We must stop thinking that the construction of Europe will happen only through technocratic and diplomatic means. We must also give up the idea that everything depends on Brussels.

> European integration must become democratic and cultural. Let us establish a monthly parliamentary debate on Europe. Let us organize meetings of Europe's driving forces – employers, trade unions, intellectuals. Let us incite our media to Europeanize itself. Let us devote more means to the flourishing of European scientific movements. It is by building a Europe of intellectuals, media, books, cinema and theatre that we will build the true cultural checks and balances that will offset the, alas eternal, technocratic trend.

## European Oracles Versus European Technocrats

If there is a subject that crystallizes fears or that causes uncertainty, especially since the 1990s, it is European integration and the euro. But Europe proves to be an even greater source of uncertainty with the emergence of 'prophets', in the Weberian sense of the term, giving shape to these fears. Reactivating the noble social identity of intellectuals versus power, many intellectuals, all of them clearly pro-Europe, have played the role of a sort of anti-technocratic vigilance committee, which has

contributed to feeding the figure and even more, to colouring it as their observations became 'references'. These were not just any intellectuals; they were the same ones who had tackled subjects such as the new lifestyles of the 1980s and the subsequent crisis in representation, and they were the ones most solicited by the media. They were not the initiators of the themes surrounding the Brussels technocracy, the origin of which was political, but the particularly important place of these themes in the 1990s offered them an opportunity to recycle their media capital, the major characteristic of which was to have to maintain it in a context where its value fluctuated according to the variations of the media agenda. The list of these intellectuals, based on periodicals and on publications on Europe, is relatively consequential since it goes from Edgar Morin to Dominique Wolton, whose essay *La Dernière Utopie* (1993), or 'the last Utopia', stood somewhere between scholarly and intellectual production.

These media intellectuals' interventions contributed, here again, to feed the myth by colouring it with characteristics inherent to their own very visible style. There was often nothing new about the theses since they followed in the tracks of a frequent political tactic of those defending Maastricht, which was to take the opposite line to that of those denouncing the technocrats (and treaty) in order to show that the treaty was the best way to fight against the technocrats. New words, 'concepts' ('the European techno-bureaucratic apparatus'), learnedly deciphered 'trends' ('the hyper-development of techno-bureaucratic Europe') and shock phrases emerged to serve the different standpoints. Thus Edgar Morin denounced the 'imbecility of the Brussels apparatus in a number of decisions' (Morin, 1992), and the political advisor Alain Minc stated: 'technocratic convergence criteria will be used as forceps if the European situation of the moment goes against this founding act' (Minc, 1992).

The journalistic space remains, of course, to be discussed. Although it would deserve a study in itself, a few – very provisional – indications are nevertheless possible. The usages of the figure are here again different, mainly depending on positions and circumstances. Sometimes the agents of the media world use the figure by agitating the ghost of the fear of a rebellion of the people against the elites. '[Among the measures to be taken for the 12-member Community to become the core of tomorrow's Europe], the first is to increase the powers of the European Parliament

(or else, beware of the citizens' rebellion against the "Eurocrats")', thus declared Jacques Lesourne in an op-ed in *Le Monde* (10 July 1991). Sometimes it consists in flattering lower human instincts as suggested by the 'technocratic virus' formulation used by the journalist Gérard Carreyrou when he interviewed François Mitterrand. The fact remains, to take only this latter case, that it is difficult to distinguish, on one side, requests for clarification to which journalists began to respond from the moment the topic – in particular during the debates on Maastricht – became a political issue and, on the other, their 'response' to the expectations of mainstream public opinion, anticipated as being Euro-pessimistic.

Although many other interpretations are possible, it will be noticed that the specialized journalists, those accredited by the Commission, find in these themes an opportunity to indulge in the art of portrayal in a quasi-ethnographic mode. Without any complacency but without any open accusation, they relish, often with 'humour' and 'detachment', shedding light on this very closed tribe of Eurocrats. Apart from Jean de La Guérivière's book (1992), the title of which, *Voyage à l'intérieur de l'eurocratie* (journey inside of Eurocracy) announces that it covers all the features of Eurocracy, the following excerpt from Bernard Brigouleix's article in *Le Monde*, '*Ces messieurs du Berlaymont*' ('These gentlemen of the Berlaymont', the Berlaymont building being the headquarters of the European Commission), is a good indicator (Brigouleix, 1984).

> European integration did not only give rise to great political hopes and to large technical dossiers; it also (and mostly, according to the scandal-mongers) brought about the appearance of 'Eurocrats', the 'stateless technocrats' referred to by de Gaulle. . . . In many regards, Eurocrats constitute a separate category, the members of an exclusive club. . . . It is the same for Community institutions as for the majority of public or private companies; quantitatively speaking, the jobs are distributed rather unequally. Some activity sectors, in particular subordinate ones, do not appear to lead necessarily to overwork or a heart attack. Others do, more so. In any event, it is rather badly taken, once a certain level of responsibility has been reached, not to display in all circumstances the both busy and resigned air of a senior executive harried by an inhuman workload. . . .

On the whole, an analysis of the many usages of this figure in the French context of the 1990s provides a good account of the many players who used it, and of the way and the situations in which they did so. From an instrument of opposition to Europe, the figure in fact morphed into a form of European common sense shared as much by those supporting a nation-based definition of European integration as by those advocating a Europe free of nations. The figure of the Eurocrat may have changed, but its banalization through multiple interactions among politicians, journalists and 'intellectuals' in national political and public spaces, indicates if not the group's success, at least that the concept of the European integration that it is in charge of building has spread. But even more so, it indicates the (neo)liberal direction of the roads taken by this integration, the now unanimous distancing of Brussels technocracy often converging with the more general distancing of bureaucracy and of the state.

## On the Euro-Functionary Side:Inverting the Stigma and Stylizing the Group

In a speech he delivered in 1981, Émile Noël, long-time Secretary-General of the European Commission, which owes him its administrative structure (Bossuat, 2011), declared, before trying to clarify the role of the institution: 'It's easy to be ironic about the Brussels or Luxembourg technocrats. The complexity of our institutions makes it hard for public opinion to really understand the role of European civil servants. It's easier to assume that they are privileged and to presume that they are useless' (Noël, 1981). Fifteen years later, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, then Commissioner in charge of Economic and Financial Affairs (1995–1999), tells in a book written while in office of how much he endeavoured to be 'simple, clear and as little "techno" as possible' at the French radio show *Club de la presse* to which he had been invited at the beginning of his term (Silguy, 1996, p. 116). This shows the endurance of Eurocrat denunciation. To the point that the collective image of European civil servants seems to have only been able to develop under frameworks set by their adversaries.

Yet far from being passive, Euro-functionaries contribute to spreading the myth in other ways than by defending themselves as 'compulsory

figure' (see box further). The myth also endures because they partly own it and sometimes even originate it by making it part of the work they undertake to define themselves. First of all, they use the term – openly, in the case of trailblazers such as Walter Hallstein, the first President of the Commission, or Robert Lemaignen, French commissioner from 1958 to 1962, both of whom readily embraced the term 'technocrat' – as a sort of Freudian slip by de Silguy when he underscored that 'in their own way, the lobbyists provide the "Eurocrats" with very often useful information' (Silguy, 1996, p.138) or, right within the Commission, to denounce their colleagues at DG Competition when their resources were being depreciated compared to those of the economists in the directorate, the stigma here reflecting objective positions of power in a given situation (Abélès et al., 1993). In addition, they contribute in many ways to fashioning its image – implicitly, through a set of practices intended to stabilize their position; explicitly, by stylizing it in a way that distinguishes them, as we shall see, both socially and from their national administrations.

This allows the assumption of a double game consisting in dissociating oneself from the figure without losing its advantages. For an emerging and still fragmented group, the stigma not only provides the possibility of an image expressing its collective power but also allows it to feel at one with the set of new practices to which the Euro-functionaries resorted to stabilize their position and to establish their power. Shaped into a style very close to that of the mythicized founding fathers (including voluntarism, a taste for challenges and work off the beaten path, a very large measure of pragmatism and so on), the figure also contributes to giving sense to upward-moving social trajectories in a public office invested with all the attributes (economic and symbolic) of 'people from the private sector'. Here again, the figure makes it possible to read, between the lines, the specificities of the institutionalization of political Europe, but this time on the side of the formation of the group, or more precisely of its hard core, which lays claim to its sustainability.[5]

---

[5] The term 'hard core' used by Luc Boltanski (1987) to designate the group of agents invested in the construction of the symbolic boundaries of the group of executives can be transposed to the analysis of European civil servants in the sense that they occupy a central position as much among the various actors of the European institutions as in the symbolic construction of their figure.

### A 'Compulsory Figure'

When commissioners or Euro-functionaries define themselves, it is often to respond to charges made against them. They thus take part, somewhat in spite of themselves, in the diffusion of the figure set up against them. Yves-Thibault de Silguy's book (1996), the back cover of which stresses that he is 'not a traditional Eurocrat', is a good example of this. Throughout his book, the French commissioner argues against the images connected to a 'European technocracy cut off from realities' (p.10). He writes that it is an 'ideal scapegoat' (because it is a faraway collective that cannot respond) (p.21); about the criticism in Paris of a 'Brussels-that-believes-it-can-impose-its-decisions-on-us' (p.65); of the idea that 'the Brussels Eurocrats claim to rule everything right into our plates and want to banish real cheese' (p.93), or of the 'mythical Brussels citadel' (p.98). Further along, he adds: 'Another equally frequent concern is about the Maastricht criteria. Ah, deflationary criteria for some, technocratic, or antidemocratic; you hear a lot of nasty stuff' (p.206). Or: 'Of course – all's fair in war and love – single-currency opponents are already being ironic about it. When one is not sure of having understood what something is about, or when one does not have the courage to plunge into technical details (but surgery or airplane piloting are also *technical*: Would you give up having your appendix removed, or your next trip to New York for this reason?), it is easier and more relaxing to make fun of the unfathomable complexity of the project. In about the same ironic and pedantic tone, in fact, that one might have used to disparage, in the case of excessive simplification, "technocrats' superb contempt of the subtleties of real life", or something similar. Admittedly, replacing national currencies that have centuries of existence behind them, at least in their principle if not their current name, is no easy thing. But it's nothing to drown in' (p. 213).

## Eurocracy in Practice

Reappropriation of the myth of the Eurocrat happens first implicitly, in the definition of the range of the practices Euro-functionaries resort to in order to impose themselves, particularly against the EU's state representatives. Under this aspect, the myth gives sense to practices that particularize the group and constitute the first foundations of a common 'culture' (Bellier, 1994). These practices are numerous, such as resorting to – or withdrawing into – technicality and law, which represented

important resources to impose, then consolidating a position to be made from end to end. They are particularly reflected in the Commission's abundant 'production' and can even be seen in attempts at justifications that, although intended to break with the myth of idleness, feed the representation of a Community 'machine'.[6]

To these practices already well analysed, it is necessary to add a few others that are linked to them. Not only do they, too, fall particularly under the criticism levelled against Brussels technocracybut they also objectively contribute to forging their contours and – as we will see further on – fit into the definition of the posts of European civil servants in the making. First it is the recourse to studies, which makes their appearance very early on in the repertoire of the Commission's technologies, quasi explicitly to thwart the state representatives' hostility and to allow the internal harmonization that the Commission needed. In *L'Europe au berceau. Souvenirs d'un technocrate*, Robert Lemaignen, one of two Frenchmen appointed to the Commission in 1957, wrote:

> Lastly, we needed to study objectively the probable reactions of governments and national administrations to an unprecedented institutional revolution. Against foreseeable hostilities, a legal defensive position simply based on the texts would have been vain and awkward. The general action guidelines we chose included, on the contrary, a complete and objective study of all the issues within the competence of the Commission, to be made in connection with national administrations and public opinions. (Lemaignen, 1964)

Recourse to studies was developed and in a way renewed in the production of reports or, their most publicized form, White Papers. Production of these reports represents the objectification of intellectual work that reflects the prototypical technocratic ideal of an alliance of power and expert reasoning free of political stakes. It was then no surprise, regarding the use of studies as resources and the complete symbolic system underpinning them, that what

---

[6] For an example, see Dewost, 1992.

prevailed was the image of a group that had taken refuge in an 'ivory tower', an image usually used to deride scholars.[7]

All the same, the ivory-tower metaphor is only strong because it gives sense to confidentiality practices that, here again, are a reflection of the figure as well as of 'Brussels' practices. The mystery – the principle that allows people to become specialists and is more broadly for Marx the very foundation of the power of state bureaucracy – can be understood here as a by-product of the practical need to be cut off from outside influence. Independently of the 'life style' that it reflects, the following excerpt testifies to a confidentiality that fits into the definition of the comfort of being with one's own kind and of demarcation from 'traditional' administrative practices, that is, national ones. At least at the College of Commissioners level, it testifies to group practices.

> One or two larger rooms were available at Val Duchesse. But we discovered on this occasion one of President Hallstein's working methods; he preferred, he said, a small, private room for deliberations and desired to limit to the fewest possible the number of collaborators who would be debating with us – basically wishing, insofar as possible, that the nine commissioners would be holding discussions only among themselves. . . .
> It was not only the very confidential nature of certain discussions that led to this habit; it was the fact that, in keeping with President Hallstein's doctrines, the atmosphere of international negotiations among ten or twelve persons was profoundly different from that of a learned assembly of one hundred persons, in the hubbub of people walking in and out. (Lemaignen, 1964, pp. 31–32)

Examples of an implicit appropriation could be multiplied. There is no doubt that the Euro-functionaries' frequent and strategic use of the concept of Community interest going against general interest as defined by national elected officials contributed to feed the representation, outside, of technocratic practices.[8] The spill-over theory and, more

---

[7] For other examples, see Dulong and Dubois, 1999, particularly Michel Mangenot's contribution on pp. 93–97.

[8] On this point, see in particular Lequesne, 1996b.

generally speaking, the functionalist schemas used by the Euro-functionaries are of the same order. They are such a part of their beliefs – or of their certainty of success – that calling them into question requires strong argumentation, as shown in particular in a speech by Jacques Delors calling to break with the technocratic ideal and the 'spill-over method' (Delors, 1996). Founded on the very practical constraints that marked the invention of the group and characterizes the European-integration process, this implicit appropriation unquestionably had the effect of feeding the image of a technically over-competent circle. All the same, added to this implicit appropriation was an explicit appropriation stemming from the group's significant stylizing work.

## Eurocracy as a Style

The definition of a style is the result of significant work by Commission agents when they publish or show themselves to the outside world. From this point of view, the nature of their productions has changed. The memoirs of former commissioners, some of which claim the term of technocrat, were for a long time the dominant form of communication to the outside, which constituted the opposite of a stake. As for the abundant communication work that now characterizes the Commission, it is based on denial of the image of technocrat while presenting a figure both regenerated and perpetuating the style of the founding fathers. These productions converge towards the definition of a style dissociated from that of the bureaucrat of 'traditional' administrations and resolutely anchored in an 'adventurous mind-set', socially built and positioned.

Robert Lemaignen's book (1964) is, once again, a particularly good example of the work of fashioning the group in the early days. His position is first of all the image of a commitment to the Community that was initially typical of agents who had not had top civil-servant careers or had at least been marginal to them. In 1957, Lemaignen was appointed by chance because Antoine Pinay refused the post in the hope of a future, more important political office. Otherwise, Lemaignen had previously taken part

in French Plan commissions (in which he met agents who would be his partners or collaborators), but as a representative of the economic world and of the French employers' union, CNPF (*Centre national du patronnat français*), in particular. This position, which was not atypical in such worlds as those of the French Plan commission or of Europe, where experience of the economic world and being atypical was a must, makes it possible to understand that the claim of a technocratic position could be gratifying. For agents accessing initially improbable political-administrative positions, this claim could represent an instrument that made it possible to offset a credit deficit, all the stronger that as members of the Commission, they had at first been symbolically degraded by those who held the highest positions in the political-administrative space – as evidenced by Charles de Gaulle's disparaging remarks.

Secondly, Lemaignen's work is particularly exemplary, beyond its claim in the term used in the subtitle – *Souvenirs d'un technocrate*, which means 'memories of a technocrat' – of the sense the actors have so far sought to infuse in the compulsory figure of a Eurocrat. The formulation shows that far from being passive, the Euro-functionaries' reappropriation of the stigma fits into an extensive work of redefinition (of oneself, of technocracy, of politics or of others):

> We ought to let etymology inform us better. *Tékhnē* is art, in its conception and its practice. And the wisdom of nations has long assured that politics is an art, a '*tékhnē*'. When polemics oppose technocrats and politicians, is this saying – and it seems probable – that politicians, when practicing their 'art', are more readily subjected to the impulse of feeling, while technocrats attach greater importance to the inexorable law of the facts? If such is the conclusion of this interpretation, let us note that, throughout history, emotional drives have caused people more misery than respecting the hard imperatives of reason.

> So go for 'technocrats'; may the eminent 'technocrats' alongside of whom I am proud to have worked for four years accept this sarcasm with lightness of heart and continue to walk towards the magnificent goal they are aiming for and continue to submit their actions as much to their heart's advice as to that of their good sense. (p. 11)

Under these various aspects, the work of redefining oneself is a good reflection, here again, of the processes by which an institutional figure comes into shape:manufacturing social representations specific to the roles and the positions, defining legitimate uses and boundaries with respect to the outside world, and so on. The particularities of this figure are thus shown throughout Lemaignen's book, in his account of his experiences as well as in his portraits of others and their 'qualities' – in every sense of the word. 'A polyglot, a subtle dialectician, [equipped with an enormous] listening capacity' (p. 28), Hallstein is also described as an 'architect of international institutions' (p.29). To put this in one formulation, this testimony – but others could be cited – is based on a set of more or less implicit structural oppositions:travelling versus immobilism, listening versus narrow-mindedness, grace and ease versus a finicky personality, enthusiasm and passion versus the Weberian-type ideal of a civil servant doing his job without passion, a taste for new techniques versus bureaucratic routine, youthfulness of spirit versus (heavy) administrative traditions and so forth. These oppositions make sense in the competitive context of a fight against administrations and in the combat being led by Euro-functionaries against the bias of their illegitimacy. But there is also correspondence with the social characteristics of the agents invested in the European institutions:a new upper bourgeoisie external to State Nobility in the process of converting its economic power into political-administrative positions but in a space forsaken by the latter.[9]

'Choosing Europe was an adventure' (p.127). This formulation by Lemaignen – but others could be quoted – is a good illustration of the conditions of EU commissioners' entry into service.[10] In 1964, it also reflected an attempt to make the new institutions part of a heroic history that the author wished to underscore as distinct. Thus the storyline of his memoirs as a technocrat is very close to the invention of a life as an artist and it is in fact in this prism that the style of these technocrats is anchored, as a sort of symmetrical opposition to the image of the gentle

---

[9] On large bodies' scorn of European posts, see in particular Kessler (1996). See too Philippe Mangenot's contribution in the same book.

[10] For other illustrations see in particular Hallstein, 1969; Monnet, 1976; Marjolin, 1986.

dreamer criticized by de Gaulle. Among the many possible traces, the quasi nostalgic description of the wandering life of the Community in its first few months, and that of a precariousness that put the Commission in an asking position very similar to that of an artist vis-à-vis his patron are significant in this respect: 'The Community was reduced, in order to cover its first expenditures, to requesting loans from the ECSC, which granted them with the best of good graces. But this asking position was neither pleasant, nor dignified' (p.36). Similarly, there is the imagery of a bohemian lifestyle (p.43) and of travel when recalling 'Trans-European Express' night connections. His annotations on his colleagues or collaborators were also an opportunity to describe the qualities of originality and of prophecy that often characterize a vanguard. Of Louis Armand as Chair of Euratom, for instance, he said: 'It was a pleasure to hear him clarify such a great variety of problems with apparently paradoxical, always original and often prophetic viewpoints'. Of François-Xavier Ortoli, he praised the merits and the qualities of his youth, and so on.

By feigning a social position, the figure was in fact subverting the political-administrative principles in force. Not content with developing the image of a trajectory off the beaten path, Lemaignen contributed in his own way to the spill-over theory by announcing the death of 'traditional' ways of administration and policy making:

> But it is no longer enough to bring a political Europe to life; to serve it, it is necessary to conceive and to build an entirely renewed administrative and political machinery that will be at the scale of the modern world ... We could think that one of the benefits brought about by European integration will be a necessary upheaval of the instruments of government and administration, which will be forced, in order to adapt to a new situation and new dimensions, to use the technical resources and the methodological lessons that today only politics – in the etymological sense of the term – neglects in its action. Wanting to make Europe is also wanting to do just that; it is definitely a mission worthy of France to feel passionately about this endeavour. (pp. 211–212)

In a particularly tense context – Lemaignen was publishing in the midst of the debate around the Fouchet Commission – in the end, it was

enthusiasm that prevailed. The conclusion of his work makes it possible, from this angle, to get a better understanding of another version of this style, namelythe 'militant' dimension in the principle of European commitment and the formation of symbolic resources suitable for the group. The pro-youth and anti-conservatism discourse in which this militant faith was embodied echoed the way of salvation represented by Brussels public office (as opposed, here again, to national public office) for the members of these rising social groups.

> Evolution towards European political integration is undoubtedly running up today against the conjunction of renewed nationalism and traditional administrative conservatism. But this opposition is numerically weak; neither the intellectual elites nor the young have forgotten that France has always been filled with enthusiasm for tomorrow's risks, never for yesterday's safety. Sooner or later – let us hope not too much later – it will have a passion for this Europe of the future, the first steps of which I have sought to describe. The European Economic Community, in its first version, has already had brilliant successes and serious problems: it has neither been elated by the former nor disheartened by the latter. It will still have to weather many storms full of lessons for the crew; it will defy them peacefully and, staying the course, will sail on towards its ideal: a powerful, modern and fraternal political Europe, which the world needs again to guide it. (pp. 216–217)

The above statements draw all the features of a stylization that has for the most part materialized. This symbolic fashioning replays the homologous stylizing work of French senior officials under the Fourth Republic, but although it is revealed in a space other than that of the Fifth Republic (on these aspects, see Gaïti, 1998 and 1999), the force of this revelation is identical. In a way almost homothetic – to use a geometrical metaphor – to the case of the senior civil servants appearing under Gaullism, here it links Euro-functionaries' personal achievements to this other prophecy represented by European integration. These are undoubtedly the symbolic origins, along with other more material and constant investments, of the partial myth of the European civil service inherited from a Frenchman (Mangenot, 2001).

Nonetheless, they have made sense and produced much broader effects. These definitions of the institution and of the group that holds it up with passion and openness to the world endured, then made sense in the objective changes and were undoubtedly called upon when creating a model attracting to it agents equipped with homologous aspirations beyond national borders. When in *Voyage à l'intérieur de l'eurocratie*, Jean de la Guérivière (1992) evokes large numbers of '*sciences po*' (political science) graduates entering the European Commission, who have a taste for languages, journeys and adventure, he is thus showing between the lines the relative homology of the institutional *habitus* and the work of making them converge (see Chapter 3) in the stylizing of a common figure of new senior civil servants.

The social characteristics connected to these representations of the function converge, in fact, with the characteristics of situations that particularize Community posts and the way they are shown. The surveys published in the late 1980s – and it is as published opinion that they are of interest here – thus highlight the Euro-functionaries' criticism of the slow administrative procedures, of the Commission's deficient prestige, but also their appreciation of the atmosphere, of the interest of their work or of their responsibilities (CEGOS survey published in *El País*, 2 November 1988).[11] Similarly, the Euro-functionaries' remarks cited in the work of anthropologists who studied the Commission in the 1990s show how much they build their image as part of a public office that has all the attributes of the private sector (flexibility, downgrading what is seen as 'ordinary' and so on) and places them socially in a position of a new elite that (at the time) is proud of itself: 'At the Commission, everything goes faster than in an ordinary administration. We move forward without turning back. It is as if we were driving without a rear-view mirror'; 'We have to forge on, the work pace is made of accelerations connected to the requirements of the situation' (Abélès et al., 1993).

---

[11] See too, the articles in the journal *Problèmes politiques et sociaux*, No. 713–714, 22 October – 5 November 1993.

There is no lack of places where this revisited figure turns up (essays, in-house journals, and so on). The image of an institution intended to attract newcomers, post profiles published by the DG in charge of administration and personnel, as well as testimonies of the accompanying actors (see box further) thus represent a good illustration of both the diversity of the benchmark models and the group's social-distinction strategies. The tone and the content of post descriptions are quite different from their equivalents in national or local public office. After having stressed that 'only the best are selected', the post description elaborates on the values of 'dynamism, initiative, competence in managing people and resources, and imagination', the 'stimulating career-advancement opportunities', and even praises the spirit of entrepreneurship at the limits of a an ideal type of 'commando' (this is also the register of the Commission's 'task forces'): 'The great diversity of the Commission's activities added to the relatively small size of the institution means that it is possible to reach a high level of responsibility very quickly and to have a motivating career'.

The following testimony of a 33-year-old Frenchwoman who is a Category A civil servant, goes in the same direction. It testifies to qualities of broadmindedness, and to the required taste for languages and travel: 'My classic university education in law and sociology opened the door for me to specialize in European law at the College of Europe in Bruges, where I discovered the wealth of living and working with different nationalities and languages.' It was her youthful vitality that had led her to the post – thanks to her 'summer job' experience when she was a student – then her career unfolded in enthusism and brought her into a position of responsibility. All of these are elements distinguishing careers within the Commission from those reputed to be all mapped out within the Administration: 'One of the features of this job, like of all Commission jobs, is the multinational and multilingual dimension. It forces you into salutary daily mental gymnastics.' But her conclusion is even more explicit. 'For me, who had a taste for public service, the European dimension is a privilege of which I never tire, for now.'

The image of a group of 'privileged persons' is on the whole not really surprising. Even outside of the objective conditions that distinguish Euro-functionaries (in particular their wages), this image draws its strength from

the stylizing accomplished and perpetuated by the group. It is one of its internal marks and works as one of the rare collective benchmarks, as can be seen in the group's mobilizations in the spring of 1991 or in the summer of 1998. But the 'Eurocrat' image also places them in a unique situation vis-à-vis a competitor to claim leadership with some success, when not a complete monopoly, in the legitimate definition of Community interest. In its form as reworked by the Euro-functionaries, the figure is far from being the least of assets for this.

---

**Post 'Profiles'**

We reproduce here the post profiles published by DG 9 (which today would be DG Human Resources) in 1997. To the post description of the category (here only Category A – today AD) a testimony is added.

CATEGORY A POSTS

Commission staff are the reflection of the cultural diversity of the European Union's member states. Its agents must be comfortable in an environment of multicultural and multilingual work, outside of their country of origin.

The jobs are open to young men and women who are nationals of an EU member state. Recruitment is mainly based on open competitions. To be admitted into one of these categories, applicants must show competence, initiative and motivation. Only the best are selected.

Those applying in particular for a post in Category A of the Commission *must show dynamism, initiative, competence in managing people and resources, and imagination*. As a new recruit at the Commission you have stimulating career-advancement opportunities. The majority of the posts offered to young graduates deal with administration and management in the broad sense, and many of the posts are open to graduates in all the disciplines.

A functionary can be dedicated as much to environmental legislation as to negotiations with a third country, or be in charge of implementing the Common Agricultural Policy . . . *The great diversity of the Commission's activities added to the relatively small size of the institution means that it is possible to reach a high level of responsibility very quickly and to have a motivating career.*[12]

. . .
Name: Isabelle X
Age: 33
Nationality: French

---

[12] Translation of the official text in French for the purposes of this book.

My basic university education in law and sociology opened the door for me to specialize in European law at the *College of Europe in Bruges, where I discovered the wealth of living and working with different nationalities and languages.*

From then on, I was determined to enter the competition for a position in the Community. Before entering the competition, I was an assistant at the College of Europe, then a member of the Commission Spokesperson's Service, in charge of explaining Community legal processes to journalists. It was my experience with the media, which I had acquired at the *Telegramme de Brest* during four *summer jobs* when I was a student, that had given me access to this post.

Once I had succeeded in the competition, I was able to remain in the service as a commissioner's spokesperson, then, in addition, to take responsibility for the press-review service.

So I follow taxation, Customs Union and consumer-protection issues to inform journalists of developments at every stage of the procedure (Council, Parliament, ETUC) in these sectors and of the decisions made by the Commission. I deal with the commissioner's media outreach (interviews, press conferences, travel and so on) and I give him all the information likely to interest him, depending on the issue or the institution's agenda.

One of the features of this job, like of all Commission jobs, is the *multinational and multilingual dimension. It forces you into salutary daily mental gymnastics.*

*For me, who had a taste for public service, the European dimension is a privilege of which I never tire, for now (Emphasis added).*

The denunciations on one side, and on the other the invention of a group, which requires differentiated practices and style, makeit easier to understand that the Eurocrat figure imposed itself. Beyond the public images, we would have to show that the myth also makes sense and takes root in the face-to-face relations Euro-functionaries maintain with the other agents of the field of Eurocracy (diplomats, lobbyists, journalists, experts and so on). It is no doubt fed by the 'discrete hostility' mentioned by Lemaignen (p.81) and sometimes by open resentment stemming from institutional struggles, feeding the representation of a huge and all-powerful group of Eurocrats. Although studying this public figure and its construction principles is from a partial angle, it at least enables restoring the very complexity of such processes and especially their anchoring in the very process of institutionalization of the EU. Far

from being just a communication problem, the distance in which Euro-functionaries have shrouded themselves and which is reflected in elections or Euroscepticism barometers is also a social distance. This is one of the paradoxes of the legitimation of the group among the European peoples, and more generally, of the institutions they embody. Against the background of battles within the field of Eurocracy, their elite image enables them to put up a united front and to stay the distance with respect to the other competitors of the field, notably the diplomats and those representing private interests. But this work on representations completely escapes them in the context of the political struggles being waged at national levels. Contrary to professional politicians, who are 'image- and symbol-manipulation professionals' according to Schumpeter's expression, they are not in a position nor in any condition allowing them to fashion or adjust this image in the political struggle on the ground, and they are handcuffed to political or media professionals who have long understood all the advantages that they can gain from denouncing these new 'technocratic elites', whatever their political stance.

# 3

## The Making of a Status Group: Reconsidering Socialization to the European Institutions

Studying the different uses of the Eurocrat image and the different ways (including positives ones) this is done are good means to shed new light on the symbolic construction of the group and of its sociopolitical assets. Nonetheless, understanding the sociohistorical construction of the European civil service implies understanding how 'these different people, with different cultures and backgrounds', according to conventional wisdom, 'form a group' and internalize the sense of a common belonging. Crucially, this involves reconsidering socialization to the European institutions from a more sociological perspective.

The socialization of European elites is, as a matter of fact, quite central to the theory of European integration. It is a key factor in the conversion of a set of players and social groups hypothetically supposed to bring about greater political integration. Although they are not the only ones involved in the process, European civil servants can be seen to

**53**

stand at its forefront, which makes them a borderline case for studying how the process materializes, the paths that it takes in their case, or by extrapolation, those that are closed to other groups.

Past and recent literature on this group mostly emphasizes the weakness of European institutions as a socialization body. According to this research, European civil servants have rarely been involved in socialization processes shared by all the institutions, as shown by their very heterogeneous standpoints on a whole set of issues (Hooghe, 2005 and 2001). The advantage of these theses is that they recall that the socialization (primary and partly secondary) of these agents actually takes place mainly within a national framework, or that European institutions, at least at a first level, are very far from being 'total institutions', which means that there is a great diversity of socialization processes.[1] Even independently of the methodological questions raised by these analyses (for example: Can a process be analysed based on its presumed outcomes? Is a postulated ideology the indicator of a conversion?), these theses neglect a relatively essential point when discussing socialization, that is, that socialization is not necessarily measured in terms of common political preferences, but more in terms of the formation of a *habitus*, more or less adjusted to the agents' respective social and institutional positions and to the practical situations with which they are confronted.

This slightly different way of formulating the problem results in highlighting a dimension that, other than in rare exceptions (Shore, 2010 and 2000), often escapes the analysis of European civil servants and their standpoints. This dimension underscores the processual dimension of socialization (Checkel, 2005; Baisnée et al., 2010), and in addition, the fact that the socialization of European functionaries does not consist only in their individual adaptation to the operations of a combination of organizations and to their characteristic ways of doing things and of thinking, but also in a more general process of entry into a class in the making of 'Custodians of Europe', to use Ellinas and Suleiman's expression (2012). It is therefore also in the relationship formed between the agents

---

[1] Cases of total institutions are analysed, for instance, in Goffman (1961) and Becker (1968).

and this 'class' of European civil servants or, more exactly, this 'status group' or *Stand* as Max Weber originally called it (namely, an individual *and* collective elite position, the tenure of which is guaranteed by statute, an ethos tendentially linked to the service of Europe and to *public* action and so on) that both the engine and the variation principle of the socialization process should be understood here.

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify this hypothesis and to underscore some of its consequences. We will examine the contribution of the European institutions to the institution of this 'class' and of the agents it comprises at various stages. We will start by recalling the collective dimension of this process by defining the contours, and in passing, the conceptualization, of the social group involved here. We will then underscore the way in which entry into the European institutions contributes to changing (differentially, depending on the trajectory) the objective position of agents entering the group. We will then look into a set of processes through which the ethos of European functionaries is produced, or more often, confirmed. Once these various points are clarified, we will indicate a few of the consequences of this way of posing the problem of understanding the EU civil servants' collective standpoint, their differential socialization or their relationship to the other groups populating the institutions (national civil servants, lobbyists and so on).

## A Status Group, or European Civil Servants as a Social Group

Before specifying in what way the socialization of civil servants is partly defined by a process of integration into a social group, we need to specify what we understand by 'group' and what form it takes in this case, at least in its general outlines. The existence of this group is not, in fact, self-evident, especially given the heterogeneity of the national sources of its members (see in particular Stevens and Stevens, 2001). For reasons related both to this characteristic and to the prism induced by the relatively dominant paradigms in this field of study, authors have focused mostly on the individual preferences of European civil servants or on the deep sectoral divisions existing within the European organizations – and more

particularly within the European Commission (see for example Nugent, 1997). Dealing with civil servants as a group is not meant to contradict what the literature as a whole has produced; rather, it consists in pointing out that what drives civil servants is just as much related to collective processes.

If we set aside the group's internal divisions, at least temporarily, it initially shows itself under various, more or less objectified aspects. European civil servants, whose perimeter is not the same as that of all the agents working in the European institutions (temporary staff, national experts on secondment, contract agents), are first and foremost distinguished from the others by the fact that their common legal statutes guarantee their tenure. Based on principles of independence and tenure regularly confirmed by European jurisprudence and commentaries, their statutes (also called 'staff regulations') include a set of rights and obligations that frame all agents' careers through to retirement (for a recent example, see Andreone, 2008), including privileges guaranteed by law, to use the classic Weberian definition. Two other important points are to be highlighted. First, the staff regulations have had deep effects across the EU institutions by creating a unique body across different organizations and agencies, something lawyers call 'statutory uniqueness', which is a major difference with other international organizations, which each have their own staff regulations. Secondly, although various attempts to unify all the European institutions (to include, beyond the EU, the Council of Europe or the OECD, for instance) have failed throughout history, the doctrine, often mentioned in jurists' commentaries, relies on the concept of a supranational body rather than that of a state civil service (see box below). Furthermore, European civil servants undergo a selection process specific to civil servants (imperatively recruited on the basis of a competition) when others are selected differently. Once they are recruited, they are appointed – we will discuss this term further on – to posts depending on their institution, that is, by what the Staff Regulations call the 'appointing authority'. Moreover, the group has its spokespersons, that is, the European civil servants' trade unions otherwise called 'socio-professional organizations', which represent them within the framework of Staff Regulations policy and in several staff-policy aspects (disciplinary boards, Promotion Committee, recruitment policies and so on). To enlarge their 'rank and file', the European civil servants' trade unions

do include other agents (contract agents, delegation staff and so on), but their watchwords always consist in invoking the values of the European civil service, in particular around the terms of 'competence, independence and permanence'.

**Status Group, Statutes and the State: Looking Back on an Archive**

*The doctrine underpinning European Civil Service law is the fruit of perpetual construction, and from the start, its statutes have been the subject of innumerable discussions, arrangements and reviews, not to mention volumes of case law. Their genesis has not been studied much (with the notable exception of Conrad,* 1989 *and* 1992*, and Mangenot,* 2008*,* 2012*), and most of the focus has been on some of its key actors, such as the French economist Jacques Rueff, a graduate of the École Polytechnique and a free-market thinker, who was in charge of the statutes when he was member of the Court of Justice of the ECSC. Rueff spoke of the supranational civil servants that had been instituted as 'a body of national civil servants whose nationality was supranationality' (cited in Mangenot,* 2012*). Here we present a lesser-known text by Maurice Lagrange, whose status as a jurist suggests that he was the founder of the doctrine. As indicated by one of the best administration historians under Vichy, before leaving for the European Union, Lagrange had been one of the main craftsmen of the 'national administrative Revolution', recommending in particular a single civil-service status, and he was rather typical of those civil servants who 'felt driven by a certain idea of the State and whose mission was to make it materialize' (Baruch,* 2014*). In one of the parts not reproduced here, the text further (taken from the Jean Monnet Archives, Lausanne, AMH 4/1/29) deals with the statutes as having to 'constitute the embryo of the future status of the future civil servants of the future European federation'. In the manner of a Foucauldian archive, many things are indeed deposited in this text.*

Luxembourg, 3 December 1953

A few reflections on the status of Community functionaries

A. *On the Need for Statutes*
There is traditionally a distinction between 'statutes' and a 'contract'. It is a specific legal distinction defining the nature of the agreement between an agent and an Administration. *Statutes* are a set of regulations unilaterally established by a public authority acting by virtue of its own power (legislative or regulatory), to which agents are subjected simply by reason of the act, also unilateral, by which they are invested (for instance, the act of appointment). All subsequent changes in the statutes are fully applicable to agents in office with no possibility of their claiming an 'entitlement' to the provisions in force when they entered the service. A *contract*, on the other hand, lays down the law of the parties. Its terms can only be changed under the conditions set in the

contract. It usually contains provisions regarding duration, notice and compensation in case of termination.

There can be (and there actually are) many ways to more or less draw the two systems closer together: a contract can almost completely refer to statutory provisions and even contain a clause by which the signatory accepts in advance any future change in the statutory regulations unilaterally decided by the Administration. (What, then, would be left of the concept of a contract?) Conversely, a statutory text can guarantee that entitlements will be maintained. While a contract can contain numerous guarantees (advancement, pensions, discipline and so on), statutes can only have very few.

But such distortions are not seen as desirable, because each of the two systems responds to a different object. The 'statutes' system is, in fact, simply the legal process best suited to the particular nature of public service and the need for *continuity* that it implies. General interest, which must always prevail, requires that agents entering the service should always be submitted in advance to any change that in the future might be commanded by the same general interest; it also requires that functionaries be completely independent from the outside and fully devoted to their job. This is why the very concept of a contract, which implies a free discussion between the parties regarding terms that neither of them will be able to revoke later, is ill-suited to public service.

Obviously, however, such subjection cannot be imposed on the interested parties without some form of compensation. This compensation is the stability, at least relative, of their situation; it is the *guarantee of a normal career*, which can be prematurely interrupted only in very specific cases: serious misconduct, physical incapacity, professional insufficiency, or pursuant to a general measure to release middle management with appropriate indemnification. These are the strictly indispensable conditions to be able to obtain from the interested party the required independence, the total devotion to public interest and the 'sense of State' that have constituted the greatness and the force of civil-servant bodies in the past, and which a 'contract', no matter how favourable, will never be able to bring about.

How, then, is it possible not to see the very special need to engender, as soon as possible, this state of mind within our Community, where the functionaries will have to be particularly disengaged from not only 'national' interests but also private ones?

. . .

This brings us to the conclusion that the real danger for the Administration is not the existence of Statutes (as long, obviously, as they are reasonable), *but its own weakness*. By forcing it to take its responsibilities while cautioning it against arbitrariness, the Statutes will ultimately strengthen its authority.

M. LAGRANGE
Advocate General to the Court of Justice
of the European Coal and Steel Community

Moreover, European civil servants are aware as a whole of belonging to this group, if only because they have to deal with or dispute the social representations of 'Eurocracy' established outside the EU. In fact, they share a set of common representations of their function and their resources. Many among them thus readily identify with their function of serving or embodying the definition of European general interest, no matter that the definition can take on very different forms at the individual level (European perspective, European added value, integration of points of view at the European level and so on). Given that as it stands today, the political structuring of the EU does not go through a monopolization process comparable to the one that enabled the formation of states, EU civil servants do not have a monopoly in embodying Community interest – others, such as national representatives, also wish to embody it (Smith, 2004), and this is precisely the struggle at stake in the EU bureaucratic field – but they have an unquestionable comparative advantage to claim it.[2] As confided to me by a civil servant connected to his national counterparts (male, age 40, French, political-science graduate of the Institut d'études politiques [IEP] in a French province and of the College of Europe in Bruges): 'Obviously, it's not always easy with my civil-servant colleagues from the member states, but ultimately I have no particular interest to defend, and I am the only one able to speak on behalf of the Community interest. Some may well be representing powerful member states, but they are basically no more than purveyors of a particular interest.'

In line with the recruitment policy that prevailed until the end of the 2000s, for staff with a high level of education and in lieu of expertise in European policies, competence has also been at the core of their self-representations. Would it be exaggerated to say that many of them think of themselves as the modern and transnational extension of the Hegelian myth of the civil servant as embodying 'the image of the reality of reason' against the material turpitude and interests of member states or those of

---

[2] For a discussion on the different dimensions of this process (Weber's monopolization of physical violence, Elias's of tax and monetary resources and Bourdieu's of cultural and symbolic resources) and their relationship with the legitimation of functionaries, see Bourdieu (1993).

economic and social groups? Yes it would, because given that they are accustomed to being criticized in the public arena, they are in the habit of not asserting this sort of thing publicly. Notwithstanding, survey protocols, by enabling a deeper exploration of the group's privacy, tend to show that the group does possess this self-representation to a significant degree (Ross, 2008). From this angle and as we have shown in the preceding chapter, the technocrat stigma with which they are saddled from the outside – and this is one more indicator of the group's materiality – was for a long time really not more than half a problem in that it implicitly referred to their intellectual and technical competence.

This being posed, the group's existence does not mean that it is monolithic, which needs to be underscored whenever its common forms are discussed. Like other groups, it is the product of the existence of a set of more or less similar (that is, also different) objective positions and of the social work involved in unifying the group. Where diversity is concerned, the functionaries' social position differs depending on the institution to which they belong, on their rank in the bodies of administrators or assistants and on the sector in which they work (one does not necessarily have the same conception of Europe when working in regional policy and when working in the competition sector). Even when they resemble one another or end up resembling one another, their origins (national, social, school and university) and their former socialization differ. The group is therefore far from being set in its forms; it evolves over history and partly changes as a result of institutional policies and of its own morphological transformations due, among others, to the successive European enlargements, which are obviously not negligible change factors. To give a few figures, the group has evolved considerably at the morphological level, from 280 agents in 1953, to 680 in 1957, to 11,000 in 1967 (Ferral, 2000, p. 414) and some 40,000 in the 2010s.[3] This

---

[3] These figures refer to functionaries and assimilated staff (temporary attachés) in all the institutions (European Communities, 2009). Nonetheless, since the resignation of the Santer Commission and more generally speaking, given the increased pressure exerted on European civil service by the member states, the question of the number of civil servants has become a significant political issue. It is therefore open to interpretation, depending, for instance, on whether agency staff is included or not.

growth has not in fact always been linear, as on several occasions the staff was actually reduced (when European Community managers were merged in 1967, for example). The successive enlargements have also made things change, in particular since the 1995 enlargement. If, as very rightly underscored by Carolyn Ban (2013), studying socialization involves not only looking at what the organization does to the individual but just as much at its opposite, then it is easy to understand that the European civil service is very likely to be somewhat different today from what it was 30 years ago.

For all that, neither this diversity nor these evolutions have led to the dilution of the group, at least so far (see Chapter 7 for the latest enlargements). Like the dynamics at work in other social groups, the tensions stemming from diversity are offset by unification processes. These processes are shaped by EU inter-institutional policies such as the Staff Regulations policy, the organizational chart, the training policies (a symbol of which at the inter-institutional level is the establishment of the European Administrative School), and of course, the recruitment policy, which – this will be discussed further on – has so far been one of the major unification instruments. But other, more social factors also have to be taken into account. Among these, the dynamics introduced by a decision-making process that includes many different places of consultation and of political coordination tend to limit dispersion (which does not mean that 'policy coherence', a major theme cutting across 'European governance' for the past ten years, has for all that been reached). Internal competition, which goes hand in hand with these coordination processes, is another factor feeding the group's unification trend. Contrary to a thesis implicit in most of the literature on the Commission (for instance Cram, 1994; Stevens and Stevens, 2001), this competition is indeed not necessarily centrifugal, no matter how intense. In the course of these internal struggles, practical competencies are fashioned or developed (such as acquiring greater expertise on a dossier, the ability to back it up, at least a partial understanding of the structure of the competition of which it is the subject, testing political weapons to make it happen) that credit European civil servants with a range of crucial advantages compared to other groups. In addition to the fact that they are tenured (which means that they have both the time and

a relationship to time more favourable than others' to achieve this type of learning), the fierceness of the internal competition, the commitment it requires or the fact that in the medium term it takes place in a relatively regular exchange of blows, information or support, all contribute to internalizing the stakes and to the group's closing up on itself. Being fortuitously part of a discussion between two civil servants suffices to understand the distance that separates them from the agents outside of their circle. Lastly, the group is periodically mobilized, in particular when the redefinition of its statutes or the entitlements connected to them are at stake. The organizations representing its interests contribute through their mobilizations and negotiations to maintaining the relative unity of the symbolic forms of the group, its 'missions' and its role, but also to making it part of the objectivity of its legal forms and wage structures.[4]

There is one last element, more rarely dealt with in the academic literature but which is nonetheless crucial: that of the relatively shared social position derived from belonging to this status group, that is to say again here, an administrative body located halfway between a social class and an occupational group, characterized by a statutory guarantee, in addition to certain privileges and a relatively high social position, one that is recognized and distinct from that of other groups. The group's identity, or more precisely the ways these agents are identified, is not, indeed, floating around in the air. The agents are held to, and limited by the social position derived from belonging to the group. By having been appointed (in their case for life) in these institutions, EU civil servants do not only enter an organization but a position of permanent administrative elite located somewhere between the international economic bourgeoisie (of different kinds) and State Nobility (Bourdieu, 1996). Although they are close to these two groups and have various forms of relations with them (social origins or destination, competition, compensation, circumvention and so on), our hypothesis here is that they are simultaneously distinguished from them by being rather what could be called

---

[4] These aspects are extensively developed in Georgakakis (2013b).

a transnational '*bourgeoisie de robe*'.[5] Unlike the international economic bourgeoisie, they owe their position to their cultural and informational (expertise) capital and to the tenure of their status as civil servant. Unlike State Nobility, the lion's share of their transnational dispositions and resources, and the interdependences attached to their position make them a body of out-of-state (and for some of them, anti-state) servants. This is a major element in analysing their socialization.

## Institutional Production of a Social Position

To understand what institutions do to agents, it is also necessary to overcome the temptation of seeing European civil servants as social agents occupying their position like any other job and, simultaneously, European institutions as authorities whose socialization 'function' is limited to integrating the former into an organization. Statutes institute, and do so socially as well. The effect of the institutions also seems to us more basically related to the fact that the agents and their position are instituted in the various social spaces represented by the society of the member state from which they come, by that of where they reside and live (Brussels and Luxembourg, in particular) and by the 'European society' that they imagine.[6] If institutions *socialize*, it is thus primarily because they act as agencies of a lasting distribution or redistribution of various types of economic and social capital, the effect of which is to propel (more or less forcefully, depending on their original position) the agents into convergent social positions. This assertion, which emphasizes the material grounds of the attachment to and belief in the institution, is in its principle far from being specific to European

---

[5] The expression '*bourgeoisie de robe*' designated, in the eighteenth century, the men working under those associated directly with the Parliament and falling into four categories: notary, procurator, advocate and judge, the two latter of the lower courts.

[6] According to the numbers provided by DG ADMIN in 2009, 84% live in Luxembourg or Brussels and the rest are distributed among the member states (in representations or agencies) and external delegations (approximately 5%).

institutions. Here, however, it provides a better way of understanding that under the apparent diversity of their origins, there is actually a strong homogeneity in the social positions objectively occupied by European functionaries. To say this differently, by exerting a homogenizing effect on these positions, the institutions produce both the objective social proximity of the agents forming a group and, symmetrically, the distance that separates them from others within the European circles.

To start with the most material aspect, even if it is not necessarily the simplest given that the issue is at the core of political controversy, entry into civil service first has an effect in its members' acquisition of economic capital. This appears in the salaries, at the administrators' rank, of between €5,000 and €12,000 a month minus tax, not including a series of allowances.[7] These salaries, guaranteed and progressive, are obviously decisive in the objective social position of these agents. But they have another dimension. From the start, these salaries, designed to recruit qualified agents and in a range likely to attract agents from the private sector (and in particular from sectors involved in European integration), have been the subject of controversy (Conrad, 1992), but also of recurring struggles and mobilizations against the member states in Council, like during the major strikes of 1981, then every ten years thereafter at the reopening of debates on the 'wage-adjustment calculation method'. It would be wrong to reduce this struggle to one of defending privileges in the usual sense of the term, even though this is also true. The controversies take on, for all sides, a 'physical' or visceral dimension, indicating that this is about an essential property of the body and its construction as such. Salaries are, particularly here where forms common to all are not self-evident, a way of materializing identity as a *Stand* member. For EU functionaries, they are, beyond material advantages, proof of their high degree of competence, a legitimate compensation for living as an expatriate and a way of guaranteeing their independence, in particular from possible corruption related to the economic stakes they are responsible for managing. They are also a social marker allowing them to compare themselves with other

---

[7] For a detailed view on EU civil servants' salaries, see Andreone (2012).

groups moving in international circles, notably in Brussels: they earn less than those working in multinational corporations, as much as expatriate functionaries and more than the functionaries of the member states, as shown by the supporting documents produced by the functionaries. In the summer of 1999, the Commission's Directorate-General for Human Resources hired a consulting firm to compare its civil servants' salaries in a study, which concluded:

> The EU net remuneration level is: *Lower* than the annual net remuneration of comparable grades in the five participating multinational companies; *Lower* than the annual net remuneration of comparable grades in the Permanent Representations of the five participating member states. However, the annual remuneration of EU non-expatriates is *higher* than that of the *national civil services* of all the five participating member states; *Close* to the average net annual remuneration of comparable grades, in the whole group of participating *international organizations*, but higher than the remuneration level of NATO (PLS Consult A/S, 2000, p. 14).

Although there is no doubt that these salaries, in particular in their guaranteed dimension, are a cornerstone here, the economic capital instituted by the institutions is also measured in terms of assets. Although there are no available numbers, freshly appointed officials can easily become home owners (even if this is not necessarily true for all of them). They are helped in this by the institutions, whether in a formal or abstract way, through their trade union (which in their range of services offers notarial assistance), or even indirectly, considering the credit granted to them by their status among banking organizations. Hence, the residential distribution of EU civil servants is not random but directed (by relations, real-estate agencies, colleagues). In the case of Brussels, these will be in particular the districts in the neighbourhood of the institutions, and those of the east and south of the capital, towards which officials tend to migrate as they move up in their career (see Table 3.1 below).

At another level, presence in the institutions also establishes Euro-civil servants in their acquisition of multicultural capital. EU civil servants are often already highly equipped with – notably institutionalized – cultural capital, as evidenced by the required level of education and the

**Table 3.1   Brussels districts ranked according to the number of European civil servants residing in them[8]**

| First 5 districts | Number of civil servants (total all institutions: 14,658) |
| --- | --- |
| *Brussels-city* | 2399 |
| *Ixelles* | 1939 |
| *Etterbeek* | 1753 |
| *Woluwé-St-Lambert* | 1727 |
| *Woluwé-St-Pierre* | 1611 |
| Last 5 districts | **Number of civil servants (total all institutions: 14,658)** |
| *Jette* | 148 |
| *Berchem-Ste-Agathe* | 69 |
| *Koekelberg* | 64 |
| *Ganshoren* | 50 |
| *Saint-Josse* | 44 |

*Source*: Gall (2004), *Bruxelles, Région-Capitale pour 450 Millions de Citoyens. Table redesigned by the author*

significant share of PhDs found in the institutions. The competitions tend, moreover, to increase this dimension in both its institutionalized and embodied form. Although the multiple-choice tests relating to European general culture no longer exist today, fluency in languages and judgement of the aptitude to move in cultural circles during the oral examination are still important factors. But in any event and at the level of presumed equal culture, entry into the institutions and especially experience within them thereafter clearly play in the direction of trans-nationalizing and developing this capital. This is perceived in the work within the institutions but also in the cultural life that goes with it. A quick read of international newspapers and magazines, and those of the group itself confirms this point: formerly the staff newsletter, today the *Commission en direct* in-house magazine, trade-union journals or

---

[8] The figures contained in this table date back to 2004, as this was the last year for which the Brussels population authorities distinguished the residence distribution of European civil servants in the city, after which the distinction was broadened to all foreign residents, not specifying whether or not they are Community agents.

expatriate magazines such as *The Bulletin*. The latter, for instance, features a combination of museum recommendations, multinational recipes or overviews of the outstanding artistic or cultural figures of the country that will be taking over EU Presidency before each rotating presidency (in forms that, to place them, would be the transnational equivalent of 'intelligence in action' as analysed by Pinto [1984] in the case of the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*). Added to this are the forms of this observable capital incorporated in the functionaries' command of intercultural-communication usages, which include abstaining from humour or witty remarks when in multicultural company, or on the contrary, the ability to pronounce one-liners from the other's culture in a more bilateral relationship and so on.

To continue, entry and a career in the institutions have an effect on the transformation of social capital, that is, the volume of available social relations. This is a twofold transformation. It is first due to integration into transnational networks related to the work context. But integration into the society of Euro-civil servants goes beyond that. Outside of work, group members recognize one another straight away, when they do not already know each other. Ethnographic observation clearly shows how, at a reception for example, there are those who 'are' and those who 'are not' (Shore, 2010). Although among younger officials the border is still thin, being among one's own kind is more restrictive at the higher levels. Agents then often mention their relationship with their counterparts by using the image of 'the club', an expression heard on several occasions to qualify this level, and in fact objectified in the 'leadership club' training policy imparted by the European Administrative School. When speaking to me about the Meeting of the Directors-General, a former director-general said it was a 'club', while another, surely to mark his distance from his interviewer, said to me: 'It is impossible to understand what happens when one is not a member of the club.' Whatever his or her hierarchy level, the position of Euro-civil servant gives access, in addition, to agents in homologous positions of power or mediation, within the economic world for example. Added to this is what could be called a process of recapitalizing national relations. The officials are rapidly in a position where they meet agents of their member state but in a very different position than the one they had previously held or would have held at the

same age and qualification. This happens when they are in professional positions of negotiations with civil servants of the member states or when they are requested for counsel. They are frequently found, in these cases, in a supercilious position, a position that can be read in judgements such as 'my countrymen are really incompetent about how institutions work; it is an accumulation of errors'. Still added to this are the non-institution contacts in the broader world of the expatriate community and in the framework of family life (parents of children's school-friends, neighbours, acquaintances from family cultural and sports activities).

At this first stage, it can be said that the institutions produce a position effect that places its civil servants in a transnational expatriate community, whatever their initial social background. This affects their life style and their way of thinking about the world (like the naturalism of transnational mobility, of linguistic diversity or of any element related to the group's common awareness), as reflected in the above-mentioned periodicals. This provisional conclusion must however be qualified with three important distinctions. The first is that the general point of view should not minimize internal differences. The endowment given by the institutions is unequal depending on the hierarchy level, and the members' position varies in terms of family origins and the spouse's position. Between the categories of deputy and senior administrator, or between administrators at the beginning of their career and those at the end of their career, there is more than just distance of hierarchy. Anthropological studies on the evolution of locations in Brussels according to career profiles are a good illustration of this. Once we have excluded the highest ranks, without any doubt those with the greatest inherited assets, we are not necessarily dealing with a truly upper bourgeoisie. As indicated in other work (Favell, 2008), Brussels is neither London or Paris and its western suburbs. Its interest, that is, all the illusions attached to it, is twofold. At the material level, Brussels is a secondary capital that allows agents originally from secondary social positions to have situations that they would not have elsewhere (if only because the real-estate market is much more affordable than in other capitals). Nonetheless, as the seat of a supranational political power in the making, it is invested with a dimension that authorizes many symbolic compensations, at least for certain fractions such as ascending

lower and middle bourgeoisies. Although the hypothesis would deserve many other developments (there are no available figures on the functionaries' origins), ethnographic references such as studies on those entering the institutions at least make this hypothesis extremely likely.

Lastly, there is some intersection with the private-sector expatriate community (in particular when they are lawyers, who are close under the two variables of economic and cultural capital). EU civil servants are distinguished from it by two elements, at least so far. On the one hand, they are the only ones with statutory tenure, so able to project their presence in the long term, which generates different de facto dispositions with respect to other agents who would otherwise be close (including within the EU machine, such as cabinet members, national experts on secondment, or those on temporary contracts, who are nonetheless assimilated in the statutes). The second is that they are the only ones to benefit from the group's own collective capital. Said differently, not only are they the only ones who are members of the groupbut they are the only ones to embody the European institutions, to benefit from the credit (variable, depending on in whose view) attached to the status of Eurocrat and, beyond representation, to have the authority to act on behalf of the European institutions and to use their resources, at least according to the competences that the institution recognizes in them.

# Institutional Production of an Ethos of European Public Service

A different viewpoint is then needed to understand what gets played out with the acquisition of this position. The institutional manufacturing of the 'servant of Europe' class is not due to material endowments only. Sense-making effects are particularly important here. Entering the institutions, progressing within them, and ultimately being authorized to embody them at various levels requires having a whole set of social competences established, such as being in conformity with the group's ethos and its members' *hexis*. The Euro-civil servant's 'career' – in the bureaucratic and interactionist sense

of entering the group – which for the majority of confirmed civil servants is a long one, consists in more than just moving through successive positions.[9] It should be understood here as a succession of stages at which they are recognized as having the competence to embody the institution; this is Weber's *Amtscharisma*, or the charisma of office (or if Bourdieu is preferred, the symbolic capital of the civil service), which enables them to practise. Our hypothesis is therefore that it is in relation to this future, and thus to both the objective and subjective probability to move through the successive stages and the work on oneself that this involves, that the institution forms the dispositions that allow the agents to be in conformity with what is expected of them and become, so to speak, all the more apt to embody the institution that they are inhabited by it, hence less through reasoned or rational indoctrination than in the circular form of the tacit promise given to those judged most promising to elect them into the minority of those who will have greater access to the core of the system, the 'saint of all saints', as it was referred to during our visits to the institutions.

There is obviously nothing specific about this process. It is the basis of the open competition (or *concours*) to become a civil servant as a social form (for a fine analysis on the case of the French ENA see Eymeri-Douzans, 2001a) as well of socialization into other institutions, as shown in sociological studies on the church (Suaud, 1978; Lagroye, 2006). To understand this process in the particular context of the European institutions, a few misunderstandings need to be dispelled. If such a process is possible, or in any case has been until now, it is possible in a peculiar form and, in this case, despite a set of seemingly opposite and contradictory types of pressure. Everything seems to concur to designate the institutions as not having the capacity to manufacture a relatively homogeneous body of civil servants, and in fact, this is often where observers often stop.[10] For a long time, institutional policies in this area

---

[9] The two simultaneous senses of the career (the bureaucratic sense of the administrative career, and in reference to interactionist sociology, the sense of entering a group) are important for understanding the European socialization process (or its habituation effects). For developments of the 'European career' in the interactionist sense, see Georgakakis (2002b).

[10] Hooghe (2005), for example. For a broader panorama of the literature, see Eymeri-Douzans and Georgakakis (2008).

did seem quite weak. Historically, training policies, for instance, were not seen as fundamental, no more than defining group memory, not in any case beyond commemorating the founding fathers. More than in the body as such, it has been within directorates-general with very different ways of functioning, and more generally, as underscored by the best analysts, with very different organizational 'cultures' (Abélès et al., 1993; Cini, 1996a and 1996b) that civil servants have been trained in, or learned the institutional standards. It is safe to say that overall, the processes of defining the European civil service have never been self-evident.

As noted in the far-too-rare studies by historians on the subject (Conrad, 1992; Dumoulin, 2007; Mangenot, 2008), the very existence of a European civil service seemed highly improbable for a long time. It would have almost been a contradiction in terms: Can there be a civil service without a state (Coombes, 1968)? Historically, its existence has in fact been widely disputed. It was not included in the founding fathers' project. Jean Monnet's famous (and especially frequently celebrated) statement according to which the European institutions constituted a 'laboratory' in which a new kind of man would be born is very largely retrospective. As president of the ECSC, he had not planned to institute a specific civil service and it was if not against him at least without him that it invented itself, at least at the beginning. It is more the outcome of collective processes than of a plan. In fact, the very conception of this plan ran up against the will of member-state representatives. In the various intergovernmental bodies where the project of a European civil service was being debated, the representatives of France often dragged their feet. At a deeper level, member states could be said to have always sought to control it, through high-level appointment policies and more generally through the process, in fact never completely controlled, of defining the proper form of the group. Whether from the member states or from the European institutions, the agents mobilized by this matter thus often projected this 'new' civil service as an extension of their own. This perception was not just a form of mimetic naturalness. It was a major domination-related stake in the sense that the effect of the processes aiming to bring about this reality was to confer a key position on the agents of one's member state.

This competition among models has had effects on the body-manufacturing policy instruments. There are therefore significant variations in the way competitions are designed. As stated by a former member of the selection board, interpretations are shared regarding the need for high-level staff, but they diverge about the indicators to measure it. For some (for example the members of one of the six founding countries, excluding the Netherlands) it is all about the contestants' culture. 'Just think', a former selection-board chair told me,

> that I asked a question about the Treaty of Westphalia. Do you know what the contestant replied? He asked me if the EU had been involved! What they do now is verbal and numerical reasoning, like in business schools, as if that measured anything of the intelligence and the capacity of people to work for Europe. It's absurd! Imagine, now we even have a consultant explaining to us how to recruit our colleagues.

For another (a Dutchman), 'skills' are what matters, and more broadly an aptitude for management.

> At the time when the competitions were set up, I remember the English or the Dutch complaining when confronted with questions like 'Aida: an opera by Verdi', which had nothing to do with the institutions to which the participants were applying! In France, the answer was simply: 'This is culture'! The English then understood that this had to be changed because regulations hostile to the English had been manufactured. So they took over DG ADMIN, and gradually verbal-and-numerical-reasoning tests began to appear, then the Dutch tried to weigh in with psycho-technical tests, because that's what they do in the Netherlands.

To this 'Empire instinct' (Charle, 2001) and its effects on the definition of the forms of the group must be added the objective differences depending on the structures, in particular linguistic, through which the reality of the group is grasped. Many sociologists have shown how much a name is inherent to the identity principle. This is not so obvious here. Although in French, the term *fonction publique européenne* (European civil service) has no problems attached to it, in English the

terminology varies. When looking at the words accounting for the appointment of civil servants, it turns out rather quickly that the term 'appointment' takes on rather different meanings depending on who is using it. In French, an official is 'named' (*nommé*), that is, is given a name, matched with the title of European civil servant, placed in registry-office language right after the family name. This name – as well, in fact, as the career – is conferred on him or her by '*l'autorité investie du pouvoir de nomination*' (the authority invested with the power of nomination). In German, things are close in the sense that they correspond to the German terminology of public office, but it is not nomination in the sense of name, but rather assignment to the service (*Amt*). In English on the other hand, a civil servant is 'appointed', which means that his or her job does not derive from his or her name but from a 'job position' like any other job position. From this we understand that European civil service, for lack of its own language, is deprived of the symbolic instruments that would allow the homogeneity of the body and exist in the majority of the continental nation states.

All the same, a complete set of representations of the function has been established. Produced in the competition among the organizations and by staff policy, also largely based on the fact that for a long time the institutions had got into the habit of recruiting in the entourage of the institution's staff who had already been trained and had a proven appetence for the European project (this will be discussed further on), the function has taken on forms objectified as much in the public-office and the trade-union journals as in the memoirs of civil servants. The institutional portraits in the 'people' section (called 'Our stories') of *Commission en direct* make it possible to map it rather precisely.

### Staging Common Wealth

The 'people' section of the European institutions' in-house magazine, *La Commission en direct*, with a circulation of more than 40,000, is good material for grasping the work of building the group's values (in both senses of the word, beliefs and capital). It combines the search for internal cohesion and that for external legitimacy by forming a set of values based on the denial of political struggle. Particularly reflecting the values of 'hierocratic'

groups, that is to say founded on faith more than on violence according to the Weberian distinction, they rely on a trade (and work) ethics and on placing value on its members' personal richness and enthusiasm (close to bliss or ecstasy in the religious sense of the terms).

The articles might be expected to be mostly intended to shed light on bureaucratic-type features (qualifications, service, organization, standards and so on). But these portraits highlight completely different features. Of course, the portraits are of good civil servants, but they are mostly about defining their vocation and their 'trade' in the sense of almost a craftwork ethics. Many of those observed in the late 1990s mention how the work is organized – this is one of the implicit features of the interview – but rational organization shows up as craftsmanship, a non-industrial construction, unlike what the visions of Brussels bureaucracy might lead to believe. This ethics of step-by-step construction is found in how civil servants develop conceptions when they are interviewed about their relationship to Europe. Many say that the idea is worth defending, that it takes time and so on, but the idea is mostly found in the promotion of 'small-scale trade'. For example, a 52-year-old Italian carpenter points out that the success of his work requires 'patience and perseverance'. This ethics is also revealed through their hobbies. Many are collectors. While this is intended to show these members' personal richness, another will mention 'painstaking work' (*'travail de fourmis'*) (No. 95). Many also take upgrading courses outside of work, in languages or data processing for instance, or are enrolled in 'leisure' activities.

Independently of hobbies, the trade ethics is revealed in how the trajectories are reconstructed, like that of a deputy at DG III (Industry) whose job it is to apply directives on standardizing the techniques of materials and who comes from a line of builders. A link is explicitly established between his father, a building contractor and the modest contribution to European integration that he wishes to make. But at the same time the work is not measured, as it is all about turning yourself over to the institution and this is experienced with enthusiasm, as reflected in a civil servant's saying that she 'take[s] work home for evenings and weekends' and in another's story that when commissioned to convert pay rolls to the euro, he enthusiastically spent New Year's Eve at the Commission. There is the Spanish designer who got into Europe to 'contribute to something' (No. 86). It is quite striking to note that the discourse on modesty regarding the work in the ongoing construction is accompanied by discourse on the long term of European integration. Here again – but this has already been noted by Marc Abélès and IrèneBellier (Abélès et al., 1993) – urgency and the long run to the future are closely combined, as if working on accumulation and investment was a constituent part of European capital.

Breaking just as much with the bureaucratic ideal-type of civil servant who does his or her job with no hatred or passion, these portraits are characterized

by efforts made to give the institution a human form. But beyond this aspect, this human dimension is connected to the individuals' personal richness, passion and enthusiasm, which breaks with the categories generally associated with power and allows them to assert successfully – this is the assumption – the monopoly over Community interest that the majority of authors have shown as being at the core of Commission agents' resources.

The personal richness brought out by the portraits can be seen in many ways, in particular through the many extra-work activities. There are countless hobbies. They can be collectors, as previously stated, but also involved in all sorts of sports or cultural activities. These could be music or dance, and there is no symbolic hierarchy between classic culture and contemporary culture. Many highlight their 'offbeat' experiences. To take a few examples, a chauffeur at the Council was formerly a singer and bass player in a 1970s rock band (No. 88), two other agents (a translator and an administrator) had participated as interns in the making of a rock band in the late 1970s (No. 93), a German parliamentary assistant was conducting a jazz choir and an usher was a drummer in a band (No. 108). The same tone was adopted in the interview of the Commissioner for Agriculture. When he was asked what was most attractive about his job, he answered that it was 'fascinating and marvellous to see young people wanting to live for the European idea' and that their 'euphoria [was] an invitation to work for Europe'. This faith is not only faith in Europe, it is displayed as such and in itself in a whole series of activist-type experiences outside of the institution, as in the case of an EU pensioner become environmental activist (No. 83), or that of a former financial correspondent at DG XI (Environment) who set up a not-for-profit organization to help Rwanda (No. 107).

*Source: La Commission en direct*, No. 83 to 110, second semester, 1999

These portraits are all the more important to consider that they provide access to a major process. The exemplarity reflected in them is true beyond these 'paper portraits'. These portraits owe their existence to the institution, as much from the point of view of the sociomorphology of the body as a whole as from that of the individuals who make it up. Among other means, the process of recruitment of the members of the body here is central enough to be a useful analytical tool. Here again, recruitment has taken variable forms over time (for a recent overview, see Christensen, 2015). It has also been fragmented, in the sense that parallel to the 'big competition' among the thousands applying to become administrators, there are competitions in specializations (health,

data processing, etc.). But until the 2010 reform when radical shifts were made (see Chapter 6), they were all based on a few common principles. As a provisional analytical framework, it might be said that the competition represents a transaction between on the one hand, an institutional policy contributing to select agents, and on the other, forms of *habitus* adapting to the format and more generally to the more or less explicit values contained in the process. These effects should then be understood on each of these sides.

Selection, first of all, thus turned out to be particularly drastic for a long time. In the big competitions 15 years ago, only 1 out of 100 applicants were selected, making the EU 'more selective than the ENA'. The rate today seems to be around 2.3%, as indicated by the Director-General of ADMIN (Chêne, 2008). Until then, applicants had been tested through a combination of multiple-choice questions, and written and oral examinations. Applicants who had passed these examinations were then placed on a reserve list and were to be tested, figuratively speaking, for recruitment by the interested DG itself (about 80% of applicants having succeeded in the first stage, according to EPSO figures). The tests were moreover a good indicator to recall that although the competition recognized skills and competencies, it also recognized, as other competitions do and perhaps even more so, a social competence to embody the institutions and group belonging. The highly criticized questionnaires on general knowledge that were being used in the early 1990s favoured agents who were already equipped with considerable international culture and at the same time were a sort of active pedagogy intended to produce a smaller European culture common to the group, and more broadly to support a shift from national ways of thinking to European ways of thinking. Today, things are basically the same: the tests on verbal and numerical reasoning are less for testing competence (in terms of intellectual level) than for testing capacity of yielding to the international standard being used in management schools. From this point of view, the model has changed, but not the function of the competition, which is to impose a European civil servant role – yesterday, related to European culture and today, related to international management.

In this *concours*, like in others (Bourdieu, 1996; Oger, 2008), the oral examination is obviously also a critical feature. As explained by a Belgian competition trainer who has been a member of the selection board several times, the oral examination is particularly a test of and about the 'person':

> An oral examination differs from a written examination or a preselection process. Preselection will test your knowledge, your knowledge on Europe, the institutions, Community policies, but an oral examination is much more than a few questions about Community policy. It is also to see, to test your qualities as a person, to test your qualities as a future head of unit. You need to have certain qualities to lead a team, to carry out staff evaluation, for instance. And the selection board, usually made up of at least three, at most four members, will question you on the basis of a small catalogue of obviously secret questions, questions to see whether you a fast enough thinker. Do you have a sense of analysis, can you detect a problem in a question and so on . . . I also say that an oral examination is not only designed to communicate with the members of the selection board, it is also and I would say mainly, a kind of marketing pitch. You have to sell yourself to a selection board; it's not just about coming and saying 'Greetings, Ladies and Gentlemen' and answering questions. No. It starts as soon as you enter the room, when you present yourself. . . . You have to convince the members of the selection board that you have the required qualities and that you are a person to be shortlisted.

The job of recruiting staff in their image is supported by the structure of the selection board, which, in addition to the personality of its chair (usually but not exclusively an official), is made up equally of officials in charge of a portfolio and of staff-committee representatives, in other words union representatives. It also has a very particular resonance here, given the structural weakness of the group (very few board members are specifically educated for this purpose, there is no preliminary training course and the training policy is scarcely geared to the European specificity of the job) and the fears raised by the successive enlargements regarding the structure of the staff. The integration of ten new member states may have been a rather particular period on this point, but it was very

far from being the only one. The 1995 enlargement, notably allowing the integration of Swedish, Finnish and to a lesser extent Austrian officials, is remembered by many agents in charge of this issue as a major cultural shock. Under these conditions, the selection-board members rather tend to make the hiring system secure – without this being explicitly thought of as such – by supporting agents already sufficiently equipped with the group's modal properties to guarantee their integration (by analogy and for other institutions, see Pinto, 1984). Although there are no available figures to produce a detailed sociological state of the population, it can be said, on the basis of interviews with selection-board members, that to limit the risk of difficult integration, the boards select agents for whom they can be sure of their European dispositions (embodiment of the competence, multicultural dimension, intimate knowledge of the European political game):

> We have to make do. In any event, the result of the last competitions that I've overseen since '98 is very clear. Between two-thirds and three-fourths of the persons have knowledge about the EU, its way of doing things, the fields in which they worked directly or indirectly as interns, temporary assistants, in-house or outside consultants and so on. So, on the one hand, vacancy notifications are published everywhere and we get an enormous amount of applications, but at the end of the day, when you look at the result, it is inevitable that people who have managed to get a foot in the door and penetrate the fortress have an advantage.

And yet the competition is not only a selection process. It is also a social activity in itself, and the contestants need to do quite a lot of work on themselves. The fact that it lasts so long – a year and a half – is a major factor from this point of view. The effect of this lengthy period is a relatively long-lasting projection into the probable role, thus the interiorization of a first level of the dispositions that constitute it. This duration, and the effect that it induces, matters all the more that given the difficulty of the competition, most agents go through the process several times before succeeding in it. Some applicants define as an 'applicant career path': a European Master's degree, an internship in

the institutions, and a first competition; if failed, back to a European function, if possible in Brussels, and a second competition; then to become a contract agent, a third competition. At each of these stages, during which the objective probability of being hired increases, more is at stake than just revising the subjects of the competition itself. Getting used to the ritual practice of submitting to the judgement of possible peers is part and parcel of the beginning of a career.

Moreover, a substantial part of the subjects in the competition have other social functions than just that of testing knowledge. Here again, and as shown in the best works on the EU civil-servant open competition, tests that appear to be testing knowledge actually seldom do (for European comparisons, see Dreyfus and Eymeri-Douzans, 2006). Reviewing European policies makes it possible to be placed in the more general whole of what the Union does (when later, the fragmented organization would make this situation more difficult) but also to grasp the recurring principle of its political instruments, European successes, the conditions in which the process is blocked, in short, the many factors related to becoming acclimatized to the practice of European reality, to developing the aptitude to circumvent their difficulties (with methods consisting of taking small steps and playing for time) or to practise the art of 'harmonious reconciliation of opposites' that was characteristic of Gothic architects in the Middle Ages (Panofsky, 1951) and that is so useful in the practice of European policies. The many questions on the Staff Regulations and on the codes of good practice are among the elements that make it possible to interiorize the rights and duties, and the principles of the career, in short, basically everything that differentiates the future function from a 'job' in the private sector.

In addition to the effects specific to this content, the effects of the competition are also in the fact that the majority of the contestants are trained for it upstream. They do this on their own, by absorbing the available literature (handbooks for preparing the competition, especially the multiple-choice questions including the famous '250' published by one of the European-public-office unions) or by visiting more than regularly the European Web sites (*Europa, Scad+*), which also contain

a batch of elements enabling them to be gradually initiated. And they do this in a group, whether relatively organized around a coach (someone who has succeeded in the entry competition, an official) or often more informally around a Master's alumnus of the same class, or someone else. Here again, the collective dimension is anything but negligible for understanding the effects in terms of separation from those who are not part of the group and of interiorizing the values. In the group discussions, what is tested is 'self-presentation', the scope of the probable subjects and the right way of dealing with them, but obviously, as well, as the tests are taken there is a progressive division of the group into those who have an objective chance of being 'in' and the others, with all the effects implied by this division.

Contestants are also prepared through courses sponsored by their own state, by schools (the ENA in France, for instance, or the College of Europe in Bruges) or by consulting firms. Through these they learn how to act during an interview and how to dress ('Men should wear a tie, women should wear a suit or a dress, but a sober, neutral one, not like for a wedding') and how to present themselves and their resume. The following relatively long citation taken from a preparation course facilitated in the capital of a new member country by a former selection-board member belonging to an EU-officials union is a good illustration, from this point of view, of a set of standards of conduct that, insofar as they refer to collegial propriety, are out of the realm of testing for knowledge and instead deal with the virtues of the role that needs to be played: the right distance from the selection board, the right tone, the required qualities such as ability to be concise, a manifestly analytical mind, but also making one's personal trajectory part of a natural dynamics moving towards the function of servant of Europe.

> Be modest, okay? Be modest. In any of your qualities, you can mention that you work in a team, or that you are head of a unit and that you have a gift for leading discussions, or meetings, that your work requires you to travel abroad. But you mustn't start pumping up your qualities to such a level that all the members of the selection board will be saying 'Oh my God!' Neither should you talk about your qualities when you are

presenting yourself. Not necessary. Stick to your studies, your professional experience. . . . The selection board, after your presentation, the selection board will ask you: 'But Sir, Madam, why you are here? What is your motivation for coming to Brussels, when you are having a fantastic life in [capital of an Eastern European country]? Why do you absolutely want to come to the Commission?' Correct answer: the salary. I didn't say you couldn't say this because it's true. And I believe I was in a third country and we had 350 applicants to interview and out of the 350 only 2 said, 'Yes, but in addition to all I've just said, I am also coming to Brussels for the money.' To say this you have to be brave, and the selection board will appreciate it. Don't think that the selection board will say, 'This guy's not even hired and he's already thinking of the money.' No, it's natural, it's perfectly human. When you talk about your motivations, be inventive and innovative. This means that you should not always talk about the same thing: 'When I was a child I always thought about the construction of Europe and now I am seeing my dream come true.' This is not very convincing, it may be true but it doesn't work, you have to come with something that will touch the selection board. For example, 'in my everyday life or in my family we were always facing farming, agricultural problems, and I always wanted to know a little more than others about agricultural policy'. I'm inventing now, on the spot, I'm not saying anything new, but all the same, be a little inventive in this, but don't start with the Europe dream. Remember mobility: when you're explaining your motivation don't be afraid to say that you've already worked abroad; this is another point in your favour. There are points that you get for your knowledge, but also points for behaviour, motivation, mobility and as stated in the notice of competition, aptitude to work in a multicultural environment. And how can this be measured? Well it's knowing languages, or you've already worked a fair number of years abroad. That is, it's not about having been born in [capital of an Eastern European country], studied in [capital of an Eastern European country], worked in [capital of an Eastern European country], and having gone on a trip to Glasgow. That's not it, when you don't have that or you have nothing to say, don't talk about it and wait and see if the chair will maybe ask you a question about it. But if you have experience, point it out, it's one more point for you … Okay, after the presentation, after the motivation, the chair will call on the other members of the board to ask you questions either on the field, or general questions, on Europe, but also mostly about

your qualities. You have some paper, I've already said this, so use it. If there is an answer that should be structured, structure it. You have paper, so? How do you structure an answer? It's pretty simple: you write 1, 2, 3. Because you will get points if you are concise in your answer. If you can convince the board that you can structure an answer. I mean, you should not start giving your answer with, 'There are three elements here: first . . . second . . . , third . . . Oh, wait, I forgot something.' That won't work. If you begin to structure, stick to your limits and don't correct yourself afterwards, it gives a bad impression. There is also something a fair number of applicants use, which it is the black-out system, when you 'draw a blank'. Well you can use this only once, but if you start to use it for all the questions, I'm rather afraid that the result will not be good.

To grasp everything that this process produces, it would be necessary here to provide even more elements on how applicants are also made to work on their resume, as well as, in the course of their preparation, on their profile, their way of envisaging, or not, their possible entry into the career (there is a big margin between those who register for the competition and those who ultimately take it), all of these micro-processes that repeatedly contribute to reconstructing their identity through an authentic 'work on oneself'. To conclude on this stage, let us simply add this: once you have passed the competition successfully, you still need to be hired. There is nothing automatic about getting hired, and according to EPSO figures, one-fourth of those who have succeeded in the competition are not hired. This makes it easy to understand that given the road they have travelled, officials ultimately believe in their excellence and incorporate the distance that institutes them in the form of an administrative elite able to keep away from (and stand up to) partners of the European political game (representatives of private interests, civil servants representing member states). This is all the truer that under certain conditions, internal promotions within the institutions, hence one's position in the body, go through the same processes (working on oneself, multinational screening related to having a variety of higher-ranking administration officials). As we have shown elsewhere, there is thus a trend towards convergence of the profiles around the possession of European institutional capital (see Chapter 4 in this book).

# Why *Habitus* Matters or What It Means to Become 'European'

Whether by producing the objectivity of their social position or under the effect of the magic of the transactions that allow entering an EU career then moving up in it, the institutions definitely contribute to forming a transnational *Stand* defined, at least so far, by a set of dispositions (both collective and incorporated) that are appropriate for the relational context and the probable spectrum of situations in which an EU administrator moves. What, however, are the consequences of this way of stating the problem of our understanding of the socialization of European institutions, and what is its contribution, at least in this assumption, compared to that of the existing literature? We would like to indicate three possible avenues.

The first consists in changing the focus regarding the level at which the effects of this socialization occur. The socializing effect of the institutions is not related to preferences in the sense of preferences that can be measured via a questionnaire, for instance, but to a deeper structure. As indicated by LiesbetHooghe (2005), political preferences are mostly developed by previous socialization. In addition, it is unlikely that individual ideological preferences are strongly predictive of the practices of European functionaries. Many claim to be left-leaning (which is in line with having a strong cultural capital and with the ethos of public service, but obviously not always easy to grasp, given the variety of meanings this can have depending on the country), while it is difficult to attribute really left-leaning policies to the institutions. In any event, even though political identifications are unrelated to European socialization, it is nonetheless necessary to take a closer look at the lenses through which the world and Europe are seen and at taste-based (rather than opinion-based) judgments in connection with the specificities of this position. Setting aside for the moment the differential dimension of socialization (see further on), we can indicate a few of their common forms on the basis of ethnographic observations and/or the literature.

The first consequence of this position is to fashion a shared elitist set of meanings or, if preferred, a point of view from the top. This disposition is

not specific to European elites (far from it), but it is fed here by the twofold effect of objective social distance as expatriates and the interiorization of the function of maker of a European higher general interest. Thus, this high perspective, which is also a relationship to the long-term vision of European integration, predisposes one to see in the issues defined as social a form, belonging to a past that is on its way out (versus other issues for which Europe is reputed to be more successful, such as environmental ones), of cultural specificity (that is, potentially residual) or of member states' political disruption. This is also true for reforms made or in the making (by accepting their 'inherent sacrifices'), for the 'crises' (perceived as 'cyclical') or for the sense of a general philosophy of history regarding the decline of the nation state, and symmetrically, faith in the success of Europe's major works (peace, the euro, unification of the market and integration of the new countries). Useful examples of all this are provided in the interviews cited in George Ross's work (2011).

This disposition may seem Utopian, or the idea may be to build a new universalism, but it implies a realistic balance, that is, not only the sense of caution attached to the position of administrator but above all an intimate knowledge of the structure of the political game in one's sector, that is, of the positions of each of the partners (member-state representatives, various groups), hence of the limits of the game or of what is playable, or where the balances lie. The disposition (which generates the distance between those of the machine and all others) is more decisive than the ideological positions for understanding the practices insofar as it is the condition of their individual and collective success. This here is another dimension of Europeanness, as shown in an interview with a former director-general, who stated:

> In fact, what is very important for a director-general or Commission director, is for directorial tasks to be as multinational as possible. It is very important that collectively, we are able to appreciate the sensitivities of the various events. In my profession, I was chief, after all, of ten directors-general around me, practically all of different nationalities in a Community of 15 countries at the time, and nonetheless on important subjects I had a good perception, thanks to my staff, of what the sensitivities were on subjects on which mistakes could be made.

More than being a univocal definition of Europe, the disposition also plays in the direction of a shared attachment to the European machine, up to and including perfectly embracing the internal differences, whether ideological or sectoral. Although most authors are surprised by the diversity of ideological preferences and often see in it the sign of the very great heterogeneity of the personnel, these divergences can on the contrary be seen as the indicator of a *shared* combination of the agents' 'commitment' to the institutional policy lines of their DG or sector. As divergent as the positions of an Internal Market DG official and those of a Social Affairs DG member may seem (at an equal level of responsibility), or of an External Relations DG and a Development and Cooperation DG official, they ultimately mark the same attachment to the general approach which, as a result of more or less complex internal negotiations (and with oneself), is that of their DG. If we add to this that there is often a relation of relative homology between the agents' properties and those of the DG that they occupy (Robert, 2007a and 2002; Chapter 4 in this book), we understand that attachment to the institution is very largely underestimated in analyses of officials' divergences, as are in fact the continuity effects produced by this attachment, given the rules that officials impose on themselves. Under these various aspects, we understand that the collective orientation of European functionaries is drawn along a slope that has much less to do with their ideology, wrongly assumed to be mainly neoliberal (except in certain DGs), than with their situation. From this point of view, it is their social and transnational distance, their attachment to the machine and the configuration of external pressures that lead them, according to the bicycle theory in force in these circles ('if you stop pedalling, you stop'), to support the smallest agreements (always easier to reach when they are about deregulating than about re-regulating) and to play the way the dominant political wind is blowing (the Lisbon process, for instance). Although this European disposition, all too broadly outlined here, is obviously not the only variable in the decisions that are made, and even less so in the 'major' decisions, for the purpose of this assumption it is part of the variables (more influential than political preference or even than the very conception of Europe) that matter in the micro-decisions made by EU administrators, which are the large majority of all decisions.

The second contribution of this perspective consists in a better under-standing of the differences among officials not by looking at a supposed given (nationality, age, even gender and others), but by opening an avenue to grasp the different relationships that agents might have with institutional socialization. This is the case under the twofold aspect of the variation of their socialization according to their original trajectory and to their process of entry and progression in the institution. A first avenue, scarcely taken in the literature, thus consists in pointing to the difference between original dispositions and the social position offered by the institutions. Here as in other groupings (a party, the church), what the institution offers indeed takes on an extremely different sense depending on the agents' social background, whatever their nationality. Put simply, the European institutions thus include agents who owe everything or almost to the institution and others for whom the position does not ultimately offer much more than the position they would probably occupy elsewhere. The relationship to the institution is not completely the same depending on whether one became administrator after having entered as an assistant translator and thus after a long both horizontal and vertical progression, or on the contrary, one was recently recruited following an experience in the private sector, such as in com-munications consultancy or business law, for instance. Although this does not prevent sharing the same values and beliefs, these carry very different weight, given that the objective attachment to the institution that embodies them (that is, also the capacity to leave it without a second thought) is itself very different.

These differences are seldom experienced in an explicitly utilitarian way (except in the event of a definite break with the institution, when agents leave it or adjust to the disappointment of not having been recruited). In the majority of cases, they are more finely, but also more imperceptibly based on what this acquired position means given the social trajectory over the longer term. From a general point of view, entry into the European institutions is the outcome of variable social strategies. To take the principles listed by Viktor Karady (1995) for reconversions, it can be push-related (in the case of agents whose original position has disappeared, as in the example of colonial officials analysed by VéroniqueDimier [2001a and 2001b]) or, on the contrary,

pull-related (like the administration 'seconds' analysed by Michel Mangenot in his dissertation [2000]). The fact remains that their socialization has every chance of being different depending on the distance between the probable point of arrival drawn by the trajectory and the position objectively (and subjectively) conferred by the institution.[11] The European institutions are not immune to the differential dimension of socialization highlighted by the most recent sociology breakthroughs (Darmon, 2007). For a Frenchman whose mother was German, belonging to the upper middle bourgeoisie, a 'good student' like those succeeding in the Erasmus programme (Lazuech, 1999), having supplemented his original multicultural dispositions with others through travels abroad and experience of European circles in his home town (or better yet, his commitment to an organization promoting Europe), what the institution offers in the twofold form of a secured entry into a transnational class and of the European 'mission' has the full value of a 'finishing touch'. For a Finnish woman whose parents are diplomats and who intended to enter the world of diplomacy, entry into the European institutions, which, she told me, 'was not really my plan at the start, but in the end it's grown on me', then her marriage to a French head of unit, is a 'transformation' consisting in no longer seeing herself as representing her country but as a 'European', which, she added, 'is not all that obvious in Finland' but which, supported by social and linguistic dispositions (five languages without being a linguist), opens onto a probable superb career (as assistant of a DG, then head of unit, probably later cabinet member, etc.). For a young Pole, whose former diplomat of a father later succeeded rather well in international business and for whom entry in the institutions mostly means success in an international career outside of Poland, the position of bureaucrat and the acquisition of the ethos of European civil service supposes an improbable metanoia, unless the institution supports him

---

[11] This point would be too long to develop, but there are a number of factors here that are linked to the articulation between social background and national *habitus*, such as socially and nationally differentiated constructions of the European stakes or variations in the social significance of an administrative career from one country to another, which are significant depending on whether one is dealing or not with countries where the higher echelons of administration have been taken over by social elites. On this latter aspect, see Eymeri-Douzans (2006).

in his own repentance (as in this case by denouncing the old bureau-cratic practices through Europe's New Public Management and cele-brating the new Europe reunified against the usages of the 'old Europe' countries).

Regarding differential socialization again, we should therefore add the variations resulting from the differential experience of the process. Indeed, all the agents did not scrupulously follow the same path to enter the institution. This is the case of revelation of a 'European vocation' (which would be an avenue to explore later on) even long before the preparation. To give an example, a former College of Europe student who even independently of his social background (Schnabel, 1998) acquired or improved his practical sense of multi-cultural relations and of service of Europe on the one hand, and on the other a computer specialist recruited ad hoc through a competitive process are not quite on the same starting line in terms of their capacity of being in the institutions like a fish takes to water. There are analogous disparities in the competition process and even more so in career devel-opment. These aspects have been discussed above in the form of a standard ideal. It is therefore necessary to point out that all agents do not necessarily go through the same screening processes and do not invest in the same types of preparation. When there are specialty-based competitions or competitions as an effect induced by the desired balance among nationalities, for instance, agents can find themselves completely out of kilter. The words of this trainer for the training days given when new recruits are welcomed describe an obviously extreme aspect of this: 'The majority do have rather convergent profiles, but sometimes it's quite surprising: I had a woman who had passed the entry competition who had not understood that she would no longer live in Slovakia but in Brussels.'

The same differences can be observed in the process of career progres-sion. Assessments by superiors and chances of promotion are partly localized, in the sense that they depend both on one's particular relation-ship with one's superiors and on a sector's 'culture'. An agent whose career has developed entirely in a single DG does not completely have the same vision (or the same resources and the same career probabilities) as an agent who has had a more cross-cutting or political career, as is well

shown by the case of directors-general. Another factor is the chance of getting through the bottlenecks that punctuate a career – a rather classic problem at the European Commission. An illustration of this is in what agents call the 'glass ceiling', that is, the illusion of the possibility of moving up on the grade scale when in fact the probability is related to other contingencies (such as support from their capital, the party in government or the qualified commissioner's cabinet, not having the right flag, or even, more recently and in a completely different form, equal-opportunity policies).[12] In this case, belief in the institution and in its new official values (such as for example transparency or competence-based promotion) is all the less probable that the objective probabilities of breaking through the ceiling are relatively limited. Again, this is not specific to the European institutions, except that here resources come into play (and in particular political and national support), which are very largely repressed, in the construction of the role of a qualified and independent European civil servant. Identifying this different relationship to one's career thus opens an avenue to gain better understanding of what is being played in loyalty and 'exit' according to Albert Hirschman's terminology (1970), a fundamental relationship in that the question of loyalty is central to the neo-functionalist literature.[13]

Given that in the final analysis thinking of what is common makes it easier to pose what is related to the differences, a perspective with greater focus on the *habitus* makes it possible, in conclusion, to outline a few hypotheses on the socialization of other personnel. Like in other analyses, the study of civil servants thus underscores time as a fundamental dynamic of European socialization. But here time is not related to an

---

[12] For a long time, the highest positions were called 'flag posts' insofar as for practical economic reasons, national balances were not renegotiated at every turnover. The post of DG Agriculture was thus considered as always to be given to a French national, Competition was for an Italian and so on. This practice was formally brought into question under the Prodi Commission.

[13] These issues also naturally open the question of the circumstantial variation of socialization, whether the variation is connected to circumstances in which the role and the competence of Euro-functionaries are being redefined (as currently) or to circumstances of a more political nature, particularly those seen as 'crisis' or expansionary situations as during the Delors Commission, or the 'crisis' of Santer's resignation, or referenda situations. These questions are examined in past (Georgakakis, 2000, 2002b) and ongoing work, so I have decided not to focus on them here.

'exposure effect'; it has more to do with interiorizing the behaviour connected with both the stability of the social position and the coherence of the trajectory. From this point of view, the effects of socialization to Europe clearly play out very differently depending on whether or not one is dealing with agents whose career has been long enough to have been tenured. In the case of agents whose status is not legally guaranteed, these can have capital that is ultimately relatively similar to that of European civil servants (economic, multicultural and social capital); they can also have a career structured in stages comparable to those of European functionaries (entry into insider groups, passive then active participation in European 'miracles' and so forth). Conversely, there are others whose trajectory does not culminate in Europe. Their presence in Brussels, in the lobbies, the permanent representations at Parliament, even in the College of Commissioners is less the result of an investment than of the accumulation (primitive or not) of international capital directed towards the conquest of a position in Washington or Rome, which is the case for ambassadors for instance. This will not necessarily prevent them from knowing how to play the European game, but their overall prospects and their investment in the definition of Europe, whatever they are, are very likely to be different.

The relationship between trajectory and position, nicely underscored by the case of civil servants, also opens an avenue to other groups whose relationship to Europe is just as cleaved by the vocation of civil service. Among those surrounding the European institutions, there are agents whose European vocation is as much related to civil service – as much as for the Euro-civil servants, as in the particular example of how journalists or special-interest representatives who have converted to defending citizen causes see themselves. (For journalists, see Baisnée, 2003 and 2002; Bastin, 2003 and 2002. On special-interest representatives, see Michel, 2005.) Others, on the other hand, are more clearly in the function of economic assistants, and it is more in opposition to the public-service model (or the share of the state model contained in the role of European civil servant) that they see themselves (which does not in any way prevent them from generalizing their issues as public issues when they are lobbyists or when they are on the payroll of the institutions as consultants). When for the

former, going through the institutions under one status or another can be a vocation, this is not the case for the latter. Parliamentary assistants are, from this point of view, a good textbook case, as shown in the work of SébastienMichon (2005). Their position places them at the centre of the two dispositions that enable them (or not) to reconvert at one phase or another.

We understand by the same token that if socialization to Europe generally produces the conditions for integration, it does so according to differences and proximities (or even elective affinities) that are ultimately largely cleaved along lines other than national. The overall balances between these cleavages are not without effects, if not on decisions at least on the general mood on which the agents draw to build consensuses. By the same token, the change in functionary models advocated by the Kinnock reform, which has consisted in drawing more from the private-sector model while decreasing, de facto, the entrepreneurial capacity of the European staff (that is, what EU Studiesliterature has called the European Commission's 'entrepreneurship'), is very likely to produce effects that go beyond just the civil servants to affect the broader aspect of the milieu and, probably beyond that, the sociological structure of the EU's institutional space.

# 4

# Genesis and Structure of European Bureaucratic Capital: Senior European Commission Officials

In the preceding chapter, we showed that the forming of the European civil service as a group did not rely, or not only, on the socialization of individuals to the organizations, but more generally on forming a common *habitus* related to the social position as *Stand* member. This allowed us to show that the modalities of interiorizing the group's common values varied considerably. There are different ways of taking on the function, and interiorizing the common *habitus* depends on a set of variables. While studies so far have often insisted on national origins (Hooghe, 2005 and 2012; Kassim et al., 2013), we seek here instead to underscore the potential impact of the social trajectory, and thus the variations between the social position conferred by the position of European civil servant on the one hand, and on the other the original position and/or probable position outside of the European civil service. The 'oblate' status as per Bourdieu, in the sense here of someone who does not belong to the order of the transnational elite and finds him or herself promoted to it, is from this point of view a key variable in adhering to the group and to its common values such as they are constructed by its spokespersons. The more the institution recognizes and consecrates the individual in a position that promotes him or her

socially or enables him or her to continue on his or her ascending slope, the more the individual will tend to put him or herself at the service of its dominant values. The more he or she holds these resources from outside or the more he or she has objective chances to find a higher social position (materially or symbolically) as is the case of competition specialists for example, the more, on the contrary, he or she is in a position of freedom and the more the consecration effect conferred by his or her position of European civil servant is diminished.

This pattern makes it possible to show what has been confirmed by many quantitative studies, as well as by our own interviews and ethnographic observations. The major share of civil servants does not come from the dominant fractions of Europe's dominant class, which on the whole do not choose to work for Europe. Homologously across the countries, Commission agents are consecrated in their career through partly alternative trajectories. These can be, for example: a person born into the middle class who is a good student but not sufficiently well-positioned socially to integrate the circle of national elites; an internationalized militant who has developed a vocation for public service difficult to 'sell' in the national or wider international space; children of binational couples or binational couples seeking in Europe a point of stabilization beyond national borders. To these can be added a range of social exit strategies, whether drawn in by the European magnet or pushed in from the outside for external reasons (political, social or economic reasons). This process, which historically was very strong during the first recruitment waves, has been changed by the institutionalization and routinization of European posts, but it is still the social basis that makes it possible to understand that the emergence of a model of new elites in the making, alternative to those of the member states and of the business world, was for a long time both a common reference and an engine.

Nonetheless, to understand all the complexity of the relationship between the group and the individual, hence his or her preferences, we also need to consider another variable: that of their position within the group and the ability to enjoy its distinctive specific authority capital, that is, to accumulate it and in return, to embody it. Indeed, we see this dimension to be essential here. It enables us to see that one of the engines of the construction of the group (and of its possible

deconstruction) is related to the ability to forge and reproduce a capital of authority that is specific to it. More specifically, it shows that the existing diversity is not only a diversity of attitude or individual diversity, that is, related to free will or to chance, but a diversity structured by the unequal distribution of this resource. To say this differently, we see the agents' probable standpoints as depending not only on preferences or values determined by their origins (Hooghe, 2012) or position (Ellinas and Suleiman, 2012) – to take points of view that are usually opposed – but on their position (which in fact integrates the two preceding dimensions) in the space of relations and competition drawn by the organization (in this case, the Commission) or more largely in the field of Eurocracy.

Analysis of the European Commission's directors-general, particularly before the reform, that is, from 1958 to 2005, appears to us as a good example with which to outline the demonstration of such an assumption. The posts of director-general, which are the highest in the administrative hierarchy, are interesting to study for several reasons. For a long time, they represented role models for the administrators, embodying the spirit of the institutions in the administration's chain of command, as shown by historians, strong figures who spoke for the group, including sometimes by standing in solidarity with the strikes and demonstrations initiated by more modest civil servants (Georgakakis, 2002c). But there are also those whose appointment was mostly under the member states' control and are examples of the vicissitudes of the EU administration, as shown particularly in the Anglo-Saxon literature (Michelmann, 1978). What the analysis shows is that despite the fact that they have possessed their member state's support as a resource, directors-general have strongly differentiated themselves from national bureaucrats, particularly by building their own symbolic capital and the capacity to embody the Community interest. They have not done so, however, according to modalities related to their trajectory and to the sector at the head of which they were placed; instead they have designed a complex opposition structure among themselves, between more technical and sectoral profiles and others whose position has proven to be more connected to a general political authority. There are hence two competing ways to embody the

highest European administration. These are the two aspects that this chapter will explore successively.[1]

> This chapter is based in particular on a survey of the European Commission's directors-general and deputy directors-general under an ongoing research programme on 'European elites' conducted within the Socialist Group in the European Parliament in 2001 with the Maison Interuniversitaire des Sciences de l'Homme d'Alsace (CNRS UMS 2552). The programme consists in building a database on European commissioners and their heads of cabinet, directors-general and deputy directors-general of the European Commission directorates-general and Secretariat-General, as well as on the main European Parliament posts (president, vice-presidents, quaestors, committee presidents and group chairs), those of the European Council and those of the permanent representations. This database includes records providing social-biological properties (age, gender, birthplace and nationality, marital status and so on), career elements (successively occupied posts), diplomas and places of education, engagements (organizational, political and European), publications and honours, and so on. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) – which leads to structuring the space of positions around axes opposing forms of capital and careers – and the classification have been implemented by Pierre Nordemann (whom I thank once again) and are based on the variables described in the appendix at the end of this chapter.

## Genesis of a European Institutional Capital

If national civil servants have been able to accumulate a symbolic capital depending on their capacity to embody the general interest, it is thanks to an extremely long social-historical process that is part and parcel of how

---

[1] This chapter was written with Marine de Lassalle, to whom I would like to express my thanks and appreciation, and was originally published in French in a slightly different form in Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales (Georgakakis and de Lassalle, 2007a), which I thank for their authorization to republish it copyright-free. Thanks also to Frédéric Lebaron for his help and comments.

civil servants have 'constituted their point of view as universal by constituting the state' (Bourdieu, 1993). It is then necessary to examine the genuine tour de force signified by the Commission officials' relatively successful claim that they embody the 'Community interest'. Whatever the legal-philosophical forms taken by the definition of this overarching general interest, the success of this claim is linked to various processes, not the least of which is the construction of this group in the form of a separate body. We shall not re-examine here in detail the various processes of objectifying the group (as self-representations and figures, as a field of representation of one's interests, as own staff policy), nor the various interiorizing modalities that allow agents from very heterogeneous national backgrounds to claim the same collective capital. For this latter aspect, we would however like to show here that the professionalization of Commission agents, for which careers of director-general are good indicators, has gone hand in hand with the genesis of a form of specifically 'European institutional or bureaucratic capital', that is to say a form of personal credit based on credibility and trust, and functioning as a symbolic authority or better, a credential sufficiently distinct to ultimately condition access to senior positions.

Like the processes that between the late medieval and early modern times led to the construction of a civil service that was guarantor of public order and general interest, as distinct from the king's house (Bourdieu, 1997), the construction of the European civil service as a separate body is related to a process of demarcation (this time from states of origin), which though not yet complete in all points, is largely embodied in the group's morphological properties.

## *Building a Body and Denationalizing the* Habitus

Studies have often stressed the multinational (Michelmann, 1978) or multicultural (Abélès and Bellier, 1996) features of European civil servants, but it is necessary to measure simultaneously the social work that make the latter, although having been socialized in their respective member states, suppress in practice their original state loyalties (which does not mean that they cease to exist). This progressive separation work is shown,

in its objectified form, in the Commission's progressively built internal standards. For example, commissioners pledge to serve only European interests. In addition, the Staff Regulations updated in 2004 lay down the principle according to which '[a]n official shall carry out his duties and conduct himself solely with the interests of the Communities in mind; he shall neither seek nor take instructions of any government, authority, organization or person outside his institution. He shall carry out the duties assigned to him objectively, impartially and in keeping with his duty of loyalty to the Communities' (European Commission, 2004, Article 11, p. I–8). The significance of this principle is reinforced by legal experts' commentaries making it the foundation of European civil service, and it is constantly reactivated not only in and by very abundant case law but also by a singular process of juridictionalization (establishment of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance of the European Communities, and since 2005, the European Civil Service Tribunal) (Maggi-Germain, 2005).

Added to this coding is an abundant 'literary' production that in the manner of the Chinese historiography analysed by Balazs (1968), reproduces, with all the effects that can be expected from this practical pedagogy, a set of standards that tend to specify the European nature of this civil service and its allegiance customs. This was the case of the Europa Web site in the late 1990s, which in line with transparency policies, was constantly referred to by civil servants during interviews or in internal debates on the Commission Intranet. It has also been the case, for longer, of the EC's trade-union or official internal magazines, like *Commission en direct* (see previous chapter). These magazines, which exist largely to spread the ethos of European civil service, regularly cite the founders' words and highlight the 'value' of model agents who embody the group and by the same token produce its 'richness', notably thanks to their multicultural virtues. Genuine instruments of 'life-stylization', in which daily-life recommendations are also presented (for housing, for instance, or culture and leisure activities, always emphasizing their 'European' nature), these periodicals enable European officials to incorporate everything they need for implementing their specific *Amtscharisma*, or charisma of office (or of service), to use Max Weber's term (see Chapters 2 and 3).

## Émile Noël Obituary

Ever since Greek Antiquity (Duplouy, 2006), obituaries have always been an important tool in the social construction of elites. The described virtues of the deceased are also prescriptions for the living and an important symbolic stage in producing and reproducing a group. The institutions of Europe are no exception to the rule, and a number of obituaries are delivered in institutional arenas or published in the EU in-house journals *Courrier du personnel* then in *Commission en direct,* illustrating this process and the cardinal virtues to be celebrated. Among these, obituaries for Émile Noël – who was not director-general but was Secretary-General of the Commission for 30 years and then at the zenith of European High Administration – are particularly remarkable and pull together all the strings of what these values were until the mid-1990s. The speech delivered on 28 November 1996 by Klaus Hänsch, at the time President of the European Parliament, deserves to be read in full.

By celebrating 'a great man of Europe' and a 'major European', he indicated the key message of his speech: 'It is Europeans of conviction and action who best make us become aware of our debts, as of our duties'. This was followed by the recent part of Noël's career. 'A perfect example of a brilliant subject educated in the best schools of the French Republic, he entered, very early on, what would be a superb European career, moreover at a time when the very idea of a European career was unimaginable . . . for lack of institutions for such a thing! He was therefore part of the very small circle of pioneers of Europe, its first supporters and its most faithful and most obstinate servants'. When supplying the details of Noël's career, he then underscored that 'he was the very incarnation of the new Europe's pilot institution', then he quoted Jean Monnet from memory, praising his 'tenacity [and] modesty to put rigour into the structure of the Community institutions and flexibility into their operation'.

Then came his portrait of the man who embodied civil service. 'From every point of view, Émile Noël leaves an example for this European civil service, which in fact he largely contributed to create', he said, after having quoted Émile Noël's way of defining civil service: 'A civil servant, he used to say, cannot claim to be an actor in the full sense of the word, but he is more than a witness, more than a collaborator, from the moment he too considers himself as committed to the highly political action that is European integration.' Finally, he paid 'tribute to Émile Noël's analysis and reflection capacities. Expert, among all, of the "cogs and wheels of Europe", to which he devoted one of his most famous books, Émile Noël showed an inventive and creative spirit, always ready to put institutional resources at the service of political objectives'. Ending with his 'vision of the future', he concluded that Émile Noël 'remain[ed] present at our side in the pursuit of the European adventure' (Emile Noël collection at the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence, DC 18-06).

Coding and stylizing re-materialize in the practice of internal relations, which are organized along the lines of self-controlled processes that tend to denationalize the function. These processes can be seen for example in how the public-office posts are distributed. Save in exceptional circumstances often rapidly corrected, a political sector (Single Market or Environment, for instance) is never under the responsibility of a commissioner and a director-general of the same nationality. Directors-general, like senior officials (directors, and in certain cases heads of unit, even though under less direct control), are the subject of distribution ensuring a relative balance of nationalities. In the case of 'flag directorates-general', that is, when the post of director-general is regularly occupied by an official of the same nationality (DG Agriculture was for a long time French, DG Competition for a long time German, DG Internal Market Italian and so on), this was offset by the appointment of deputy directors-general or at least directors of a different nationality (see tables in the appendix).

### The High Distinction of EU Senior Officials

These self-controlling mechanisms are expressed in the interview of a director-general who organizes his thinking about the profile of a good director-general according to the various types of relations in which he is involved. It should be noted that in addition to the distinction processes leading to specifying strictly European competences, directors-general are assimilated to a 'club', which is rather symptomatic of the exclusive group that it is and its (fulfilled) claim to a status of excellence. 'I may be churning out banalities, but a good director-general must first have political sensitivity, in the literal meaning of the term. This political sensitivity consists in having a political dimension of the subjects and missions to which he is assigned. But it is also having a political personality with regard to the subjects he is dealing with. Ultimately, what is expected of him is for him to have a particularly informed sensitivity with respect to his country of origin . . . What is very important for a Commission director-general is for directorial tasks to be as multinational as possible. It is very important that collectively, we are able to appreciate the sensitivities of the various events. In my profession, I was chief, after all, of a dozen directors-general, practically all of them of different nationalities . . . and still I had a good perception, thanks to my staff, of what the sensitivities were on important subjects on which mistakes could be made. So this is a first point. Another aspect, I think, to being a good director-general, is that you have to be truly European-minded. This may be acquired or innate, but you still need to feel you are a stakeholder, of course, in this adventure. Third point, there

> has to be, I'd say, good feelings among ourselves. This is a directors-general club; we have huge amounts of things to do together, to negotiate together . . . If we don't want the cabinets to take over, this means reaching agreements and making arrangements among ourselves, which then means having authority in the club but also being a communicator. And I believe this is important, very important. You need to be recognized as one of the strong elements of the club. And then the third point, obviously, is that whatever the size of your directorate, you need to know how to oblige your collaborators. . . . And then, uh, this is somewhat related to the first point, a good director-general is a man who has succeeded in establishing a bond, not necessarily of confidence but of trust with his commissioner, and that often depends more on the individual than on anything else. You either know how to do that or you don't' (former French director-general).

Although they largely depend on interpersonal relations and mutual trust (with commissioners, peers, departments), the internal control processes that lead to denationalizing posts are seen in the conflicts resulting from their transgression or when the 'model' risks being called into question. To take a few examples, the conflicts that opposed the commissioners in charge of administrative reform and the European public-office trade unions when the staff regulations were being reformed between 1997 and 2004 were thus partly focused on the risks of renationalizing the Commission entailed by granting directors-general greater latitude in the appointment or appraisal of collaborators. More and more, senior officials' appointments are also monitored (that is, also overseen) by the trade unions, who are against reforming the Commission, or by semi-scientific work denouncing parachuting practices. Similarly, these issues are also a key factor in the institution of policies to fight against corruption, no matter that corruption appears to be particularly prototypical of a moment in the development of bureaucracy.[2] The scandals denouncing the cronyism that led to the resignation of the Santer Commission are a good illustration of this while also showing the increased influence acquired by the media as an oversight method. From this point of view

---

[2] In the way functional corruption is analysed by Pierre-Étienne Will (cited in Bourdieu, 1997), as ultimately intended to 'keep the machine running'.

it is symptomatic – the scandals testify to a true 'frame break' in Erving Goffman's sense (Goffman, 1974) – that the Édith Cresson affair was focused on her 'dentist from Châtellerault' and a series of perks accorded to her French entourage. In other words, it was mostly the national character of her cronyism that led to a scandal (Clarisse and Quatremer, 2005).[3]

The result of all of this – and living conditions should probably be added here (wages, life in Brussels, children's enrolment in 'European' schools) – is that without disappearing, the relationship to the state of origin takes on more distant forms. Significantly, in a euphemism mixed with humour, civil servants speak about their country of origin as 'the state [they] know best'. Contrary practices are particularly stigmatizing. A commissioner can rarely openly assert a national position – on this subject, a cabinet member told me in an interview of a session where a commissioner from a new country declared among his peers that the policy being discussed was against the position of his state: 'It blew our minds, X [his commissioner] said that in 20 years at the Commission, he had never seen anything like this.' Distance with regard to states of origin is a 'point of honour' that is expressed in demarcation practices (like the Irish director-general saying that he has spoken French all his professional life). This does not preclude participating in national networks or keeping original political ties, but everything indicates that this is expressed in a form increasingly related to the private, even secret sphere.

## A Compliant Morphology

The population of directors-general, whose appointment is subjected to the oversight of member states, is prototypical of how these demarcation processes fit together with the differentiation of the body. The morphology of directors-general seems at first to be connected with that of national senior officials, but this proximity, or this comparable character, takes on a singular meaning here. In this world, which

---

[3] For a broader perspective, see Georgakakis (2001).

historically was built on the basis of an assertion with respect to national civil services (when not entirely against the states) and which made competence one of its watchwords (with independence and permanence), these homologous properties, to which an excellent command of languages is added, give European senior officials all the tokens of a 'comparative advantage' enabling them to 'keep their distance' from the political and administrative staff of member states.

Although for a long time these posts were of very relative interest, in particular to French senior officials more spontaneously attracted by large bodies and particularly the financial compensation attached to them, as were the 'alternatives' these European posts could represent to those potentially offered in a national career (in the French case, for example, liberal officials at the time of the country's *'planification'* [or 'Plan'] policy, or Pierre Mendès-France followers during the Gaullist regime [Mangenot, 2005], they nonetheless allowed the institution to get high-level personnel comparable with that of member states. The Commission's directors-general thus come, in their great majority, from public careers. They are from either high European civil service, or high national civil service, in which they have spent all or part of their career before their entry into the Commission. Out of the 203 directors-general and their deputies for which we reconstituted at least five years of their career previous to their appointment, it turns out that only 3% never held a position in either national or European civil service.

The classification we have implemented allowed us to develop a typology of the career paths of directors-general (and their deputies) previous to their appointment. There are two major categories and several minority profiles. The first category includes 77 directors-general and deputies who worked in the European Commission for a large part of their career before their appointment (79% on average). Their careers as a whole are very diverse since on average they worked in four DGs previous to their appointment. Their appointment was the outcome of an already long career, since they were appointed at an average age of 52.6, after 26 years of (known) career, during which they very often worked in a European commissioner's cabinet, usually a denationalized one. This category largely reflects the most recent directors-general (and deputies). The second category (57 individuals) groups directors-general

(and deputies) whose career had mainly unfolded in national civil service before they were appointed (82% on average). Overall, they had not previously worked in a European cabinet. On the whole, they pursued a more specialized career than the directors-general (and deputies) of the first group (29% versus 14% for those coming through the Community). They are mostly individuals who took part in the beginnings of the European Commission.

There are other, more minority profiles. The 'specialists' category comprises 26 individuals who on average have spent 81% of their career in the same DG to which they were appointed. These directors-general and deputies also have a very Community profile since overall, they have spent 77% of their career there before their appointment. Some directors-general and deputies (17 in all) worked in permanent representations, having pursued there more than one-fourth of their career on average (for the rest, nearly half of their career took place in national civil service). Thirteen individuals had careers mainly in the private sector (73% on average). Like the directors-general and deputies of the second group, they remain in their post for a long time (8.5 years on average) but are appointed at a young age (47 on average, versus 49 for those with a career in a national civil service). Six other directors-general and deputies have in common a political career previous to their appointment. On average, they spent one-third of their career as a national politician and one-third in national civil service, with a 45% specialization rate. The seven remaining individuals had atypical careers and do not fit into any of the standard profiles described above (Figs 4.1).

In terms of their social origins, nothing makes it possible to affirm that these civil servants differ from national administrative elites. Of course, there are binational characteristics here and there. These are valued, and they feed the European image of a few major directors-general. This is the case for example of Eneko Landaburu Illarramendi, a Spaniard born in Paris, or of Gianluca Di Gioia, both of whom underscored their binational origins or family trajectories marked by structuring experiences abroad (sons of ambassadors, diplomats, private-sector executives abroad, even political refugees and so on). But these are relatively rare. Although a position
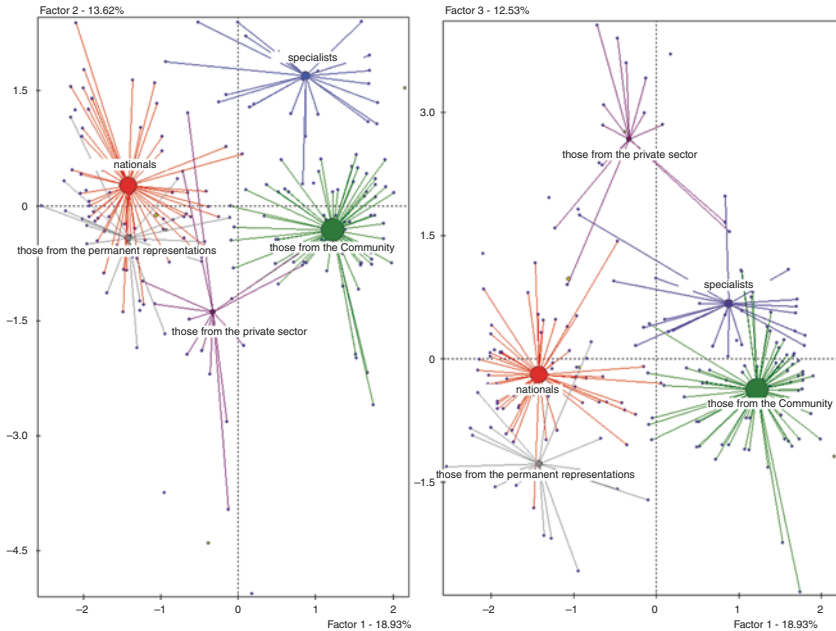
**Fig. 4.1** Typological analysis

in a national administrative space where a divergence with national or economic policy might historically have mattered in mechanisms of conversion to Europe (Mangenot, 2005), social origins do not necessarily appear as cleaving, as shown by the case of French inspectors general (Rouban, 2002).

This homology may also involve conformities with national models of administrative excellence (German directors-general have very often been PhDs with experience as university lecturers, the British have all been to prestigious colleges in Oxford or Cambridge, a number of the French are graduates of the École nationale d'administration [ENA] and so on), but it should simultaneously be observed that these persons' profile tends to melt into relatively homogeneous frameworks that cut a very different figure from national specificities. From the point of view of age and gender, the profiles of European senior officials are thus very close, more than their national counterparts are as a whole.

### Who are the Commission's Directors-General and their Deputies?

Directors-general or deputy directors-general are mostly men, with women accounting for only 3.4% of directors-general and their deputies over the 1958–2005 period, which reflects the traditional rarefaction of women as one rises in the hierarchy – but here this is a caricature, for institutions that moreover adopted affirmative-action policies in the 1990s (on this point see for example Stevens and Stevens, 2001, p. 110). The average age at which a post is taken up as a ratio of the nationality of informed individuals is also very homogeneous: approximately 50 for directors-general and 51 for deputy directors-general, and variations of this average age according to nationalities are rather small. If only nationalities are taken into account when there are enough directors-general or deputy directors-general that an average age is significant (N≥5), the difference between the youngest directors-general and the oldest at the time of their appointment is of a little more than two years (age 50.4 for the oldest [the Germans] versus 48 for the youngest [the French]). This dimension is in great contrast with the difference between a French director and a German director in their respective national systems. In Great Britain and in France, leaders are identified early and their careers are often fast ones – this is characteristic of the French 'model', where being an ENA graduate or one from the École Polytechnique is a decisive factor and there are large bodies. In other countries, on the other hand, civil servants climb the hierarchical ladder slowly and at some point some of them get jobs and grades in 'high administration' elsewhere. In countries like Germany, Italy or Belgium, one does not reach the highest positions of directors-general in central administration until they are ten years from retiring or later (Eymeri-Douzans, 2001b). The last indicator is education level. Even though school careers, diplomas or forms of training are important national 'markers', it should be noted that in terms of diploma level (N=168), 39% have a doctorate and 20% have the equivalent of a post-graduate degree, for the large majority in law, economics, and/or political sciences broadly speaking.[4]

In any event, these elements make it possible to call into question a series of myths about the specificity of European high administrative staff (men from the private sector, international bourgeoisie). Only a few directorates-general, such as DG Economic and Financial Affairs or DG

---

[4] The other 41% are distributed as follows: 6% have an engineering degree, less than 20% an undergraduate degree and nearly 15% a higher-education degree of undetermined level.

Investments, are concerned by this latter model, and they are statistically marginal cases within the Commission (which does not mean that they do not carry any weight).

Nonetheless, these data do not invalidate the hypothesis of differentiation between European and national civil servants. On the one hand, as we have seen, the posts have a homogeneity that is sometimes in great contrast with the diversity of national situations for equivalent posts. In other words, we are seeing an objectification of these specific roles in typical careers. In addition, and above all, the overall figures tend to mask the autonomization effects, in particular those related to the structuring and differentiation of a symbolic capital specific to the space of directors-general.

## Differentiation of Specific Symbolic Capital

Exercising their function gives directors-general, although they are strongly linked with the states, every opportunity to no longer be completely national agents. This is all the more the case when for reasons of morphological recruitment changes, trajectories and resources are structured and legitimated, tending to alter the hierarchy of internal 'values'. From this point of view, a prosopographical analysis makes it possible to establish a set of indicators that reveal forms of capitalization specific to the body.

Because they contribute to forming, and in return, to conforming legitimate representations that are used in this space, the ways of placing careers in an attractive light, life stories or professional memoirs are a first element to demonstrate these capitalization processes. Demarcation with respect to states, placing value on the European vocation, in short, everything that makes it possible to confirm that the agents' trajectory is as it should be to make them able to embody Community interests, are the mainstay of the founders' memoirs, and the work of writing and rewriting the mainstay of their 'foundation'. These writings have built models that despite the alteration of profiles and the relative evolution of political stakes endure in the more recent commissioners' writings

or memoirs.[5] These mechanisms are not only valid for the major figures and texts. Based on agents' declarations, *Who's Who* entries record these 'identity strategies' just as much, as shown when comparing the entries in a national *Who's Who* with those in a European one.[6] In the latter, which are great examples of the field effect, European experiences, membership in European organizations, mention of a foreign degree, fluency in foreign languages and so on are clearly more integrated.[7]

Beyond a strategic play in the usual sense of the term, this reflects more deeply the result of work on oneself that comes with the substantial change in social and political resources required by these functions, retranslated as 'competence' and 'independence', to use two keywords of the slogans of European civil service.[8] From this point of view it should be stressed that these words, like the values that they embody, are particularly important in this space.

### Values, Visions and Appointments

In a world that still gives individuals a lot of importance (from this point of view it is less in line than it is said to be with a full model of bureaucracy), these values are revealed in the portraits drawn of 'major' directors-general by the interviewees: 'Me, I remember directors-general who did not let anyone on their turf, not a head of cabinet nor even a commissioner. It was certainly the case of Frisch at DG VIII. It was the case for a guy like Daniel Strasser, who was director-general of Budget for a long time. He was a French senior official who knew his budget perfectly and he was the boss there. He didn't let anyone on his turf. He would not let a cabinet interfere in what was his job. The commissioner or the Commission set the general guidelines, and he was the one to implement them. And today, this is being increasingly called into question (Former director, German).' Another example, that of Eneko Landaburu, frequently mentioned in the interviews: 'I mean, a guy like Landaburu for instance, who went from Structural Funds to Enlargement, to RELEX and so on. So of course, he's

---

[5] This can be read for example in the interviews or the 'memoirs' of civil servants or commissioners, who often oppose the European spirit to the national.

[6] Such as The European Companion (1991 to 1994), DPR Publishing Ltd., London.

[7] On biographical entries as a strategic variation of identity, see also the box in the Chapter 3.

[8] On the trade unions of European civil servants, see Georgakakis, 2012 and 2013b.

had enormous support, probably from certain member states, from commissioners with whom he might have worked or because of decisions he might have made...but the thing is, he's a guy who is objectively good. He's very good, and everyone recognizes that he is. As long as he continues to have support and as he's not the victim of some national balancing adjustment, of a change in majority or whatnot, he will be someone still being used by the institution because he's good (assistant to director-general in another directorate-general than Landaburu's).'

As part of a feedback effect of the valuing of their competence, directors-general speak about the teams that they came to build in equivalent terms.'It was one of those rare occasions where we could choose...be the one to set up a directorate-general, that is, be the one to choose all your first collaborators...When we set up DG Fisheries, Gallagher was appointed director-general, there was a post of director to which I was appointed, and Gallagher and I said to each other, we must now be completely open, in particular to the new member states. Gallagher, who's Irish, being the director-general, there remained the Danish and the British. And Gallagher and I always said "We want to make a directorate-general with the best."... we'd said, we have to choose people who are not necessarily specialists in fisheries, but who have initiative and innovation capacities. At some point the United Kingdom, which had just joined the Community, had said there had to be British A4 appointments, they had provided names. Gallagher and I went to see both British commissioners to explain to them that this was a miscalculation. We had to appoint young people, very brilliant ones, who would pursue a fast career. We were not mistaken, we appointed them...We appointed two or three Britons to A5, A6 and A7 grades, not even an A4, who have all become directors...and one will be appointed director-general...at a very young age. In other words, they pursued fast careers but they were extremely brilliant people...able to integrate, to make a synthesis of what Great Britain, Denmark and Europe were and our vision of Europe. Because at the time we really had the vision of a united Europe. When blue Europe was built, clearly that was the most determining element for having a Europe...a true Europe before its time, with seas being accessible except for a small band reserved for local fishermen...so that Europe could be made on the sea and without borders. We had taken the best and made no mistake...We did the same thing when the Spanish were appointed and...in the end we were all in solidarity with one another' (interview of a former director-general).

It would be wrong to take these words as statements of principles with no further consequences. These portraits indeed reflect the possession of a set of properties (university degrees, post tenure, internal political

resources, international resources or know-how) that can be accounted for in a prosopographical analysis.

This integration work, certainly variable depending on the sector and the nationality, is seen in particular in the downward trend in direct appointments (that is, from a national civil-servant post) by the states of directors-general whose legitimacy is declining. Although the frequency of the enlargements make them mechanically natural (about half of them are due to the 'entering' countries), direct appointments amount to 28.6% of the appointments between 1958 and 1973, 26.5% between 1974 and 1985, 21.9% between 1986 and 1995, and 11.8% between 1996 and 2005. Conversely, the weight of internal careers, 'in-house' as they are known in the indigenous language (in a dynamics that, at least apparently, goes against the 'king's house'-to-bureaucracy evolution [Bourdieu, 1997] that characterizes the genesis of the modern state) has tended to increase. The share of long careers within the Commission and more generally of experience in the European institutions has increased over time. Measured relative to the average career structure, the 'Community career' share grows (33.4% in 1958–1973, 39.3% in 1974–1985, 42.3% in 1986–1996 and 56.3% since 1996) as the 'national career' share decreases (55.2% in 1958–1973, 43.6% in 1974–1985, 36.4% in 1986–1996 and 28.5% in 1996–2007.

Additionally, the average age of directors-general and their deputies at the time of their appointment has been rising continuously, which indicates that it is henceforth necessary to have greater capital than before to occupy the most central positions of the field. Thus over the 1958–1973 period, the average age at the time of appointment was 46.1, 49.3 over 1974–1985, 50.9 over 1986–1995 and 52.5 in 1996–2007. This indicator can be associated with that of the increased propensity of appointed directors-general to have accumulated varied experience in a greater number of sectors. Although this is directly correlated with the age at first appointment, it also reflects the need to have an increasingly broad experience related to command of a greater number of sectors (knowledge of the dossiers, constitution of relations, learning of specific roles and so on). Thus, whereas the average number of sectors worked in previous to the first appointment was 2.6 over the 1958–1973 period, it was 3.8 in 1996–2007.

This 'experience' also goes hand in hand with the accumulation of a political capital specific to the Commission. For a director-general, for example, having been member of a commissioner's cabinet, much more than of a minister's, thus becomes an important condition, and over time an increase is observed in appointments to leading posts of agents who have been part of a commissioner's cabinet (Joana and Smith, 2002). In the years 1958 to 1973, 17.9% of directors-general and deputies had been part of a commissioner's cabinet. They were 28.6% in 1974–1985, 24.4% in 1986–1995 and 43.5% in 1996–2005. To put it differently, having been part of a cabinet and acquired the dispositions to European politics that this involves appears more and more to be a prerequisite. By examining transitions through a commissioner's cabinet it is possible to observe simultaneously a process of euphemizing and/or progressively diluting the national resources. Since 1958, increasing value (measured by the rate of appointment to a post of director-general or assistant to director-general) has been given to those who have transitioned through the cabinet of a commissioner of a different nationality than theirs. There were none before 1973, 3 (out of 14 having been part of a cabinet, or 21%) in 1974–1985, 2 (out of 10, or 20%) in 1986–1996 and 17 (out of 37, or 46%) in 1996–2005. Lastly, having been member of the cabinet of a President of the Commission is not a neutral factor, and this tends to reinforce the fact that the weighting of resources is increasingly unrelated to just national rationales.

**Two Prototypical Directors-General**

*The two directors-general described below had, at the time of the investigation, very strong reputational indices and were considered by several interviewees to be exemplary directors.*

**Alexander Schaub.** Born in 1941 in Germany, son of an engineer, married to a Belgian, he began his career at the Federal Ministry of the Economy after having studied law and economics in Germany and in Switzerland. With a doctorate in law and a diploma from the College of Europe in Bruges, he had been at the Federal Ministry of the Economy for only two years when he was recruited to the cabinet of Ralf Darhendorf (Commissioner in charge of Research, Science and Education, Statistics and Information) in 1973. He then began the first part of his European career as a cabinet member. He became member of the cabinet of Commissioner Manfred Brunner (Energy and Research, Science and Education, 1974–1980), then was 'denationalized'

to become head of cabinet for Commissioners Étienne Davignon (Internal Market, Industrial Affairs and Customs Union, 1980–1981) then Gaston Thorn (President of the Commission, 1982–1984) and Willy De Clerq (International Relations and Trade, 1985–1988). He then began the second part of his career, in which he moved upward rather quickly in the hierarchy of posts and directorates-generals. Appointed Director of DG External Relations and Trade Policy in 1988, he was promoted to Deputy Director-General in 1990 at DG Internal Market and Industrial Affairs. He stayed there seven years before he was appointed Deputy Director-General for DG Competition in 1998 and Director-General at DG Internal Market in 2002.

**Horst Reichenbach.** Born in 1945, he studied in Germany, as well as in London and the United States, where he got his doctorate in economics. After a brief experience as researcher-professor, he moved upward, alternating posts within directorates-general and as cabinet member, initially favoured by his membership in Germany's Social Democratic Party; he was Ecofin administrator from 1975 to 1977, member of the financial coordination task force from 1977 to 1980, member of the cabinets of Commissioners Christopher Tugendhat (Budget and Financial Control, Staff and Administration) and Carlo Ripa di Meana (Institutional Affairs, Information and Communication, Culture and Tourism) until 1986. He then briefly became head of unit at DG Structural Instruments (1987) then made just as quick a transition from chief of staff of Commissioner Karl-Heinz Narjes (Industrial Affairs) to the economic services, for which he was head of service in 1989. He then became Director of DG Budget until 1994, returned to a commissioner's cabinet (head of cabinet for Monika Wulf-Mathies, Regional Policy) then became director-general of DG 24 (Consumer Policy and Health) in 1997–1998 before being appointed director-general of DG Staff and Administration.

# The Space of Senior European Civil Service and Distribution of Institutional Capital

The structuring of the European Commission proceeded from the relatively stable set of properties of directors-general and the genesis of in-house institutional credit; it was also objectified in the differential distribution of this credit within this space. Indeed, everything indicates that this distribution was in no way random or due to the 'uncertainty' that characterizes European policies for many analysts and with them,

part of the Europe professionals (at least in the intermittent fractions of this group [Georgakakis, 2002a]). As in any partly structured political space, there is a share of uncertainty, in particular because there is also rallying and mobilization, even if often in different forms than those occurring in the majority of strongly constituted national spaces. But focusing on this uncertainty (as in fact on the 'fragmentation' of European policies) leads to obscuring the rather strong inertia found in this space, which is particularly revealed by a statistical analysis of the directors-general. First, inertia in the distribution of institutional credit, which notably opposes posts (and with them, sectors) considered as key to the EU to others more specifically national. Then, the inertia related to the evolutions of the structure over time, which leads to defining 'trends' or substantial slopes (such as relegating certain sectors to the benefit of others to which importance is enduringly attached), which although not necessarily related to political 'choices' strictly speaking, do not for all that have less implications for the 'leanings' adopted by top senior officials or to which they rally.

## The Commission as a Bipolar Social Structure

Neo-institutionalist work has underscored the existence of structuring polarities within the Commission, but these polarities have scarcely been connected with the properties of the agents populating this space (Hooghe, 2000 and 1999; Christiansen, 1997). Yet when focusing on the modes of sectoral differentiation and connecting them to the typical trajectories of the whole of directors-general (and deputies) over 50 years, two types of opposition are rather clearly perceptible.

The first type of opposition distinguishes agents whose capital structure is marked by an accumulation of experiences in Community institutions from agents whose resources are more related to the existence of a national political-administrative capital. The first pursued their entire career in the European institutions, and for the very first, since entering the ECSC or Euratom administrations later merged into the Commission. Added to these are those whose Community career since their appointment (to a directorate-general post) is longer than their

national career. These are opposed to agents whose capital of political and administrative relations is more connected to a maintained proximity with domestic spaces. Added to those whose Community career is shorter than their national career, are those who had never worked at the Commission before their appointment, a distinction being needed in this latter case between those who were 'socialized' in the Commission through membership negotiations or work in Permanent Representation, or even national posts specializing in European issues, and those who have no hands-on knowledge of the Commission. The second type of opposition distinguishes the more 'technical' profiles from the more 'political' ones. The technical profiles are characterized in particular by the often mono-sectoral dimension of the leaders' former occupation involving high specialization and by the administrative dimension of their capital (measured by a less substantial transition through ministerial or Commission cabinets, for example). Conversely, the 'political' profiles are characterized by greater inter-sectoral mobility and the more political structure of their capital, marked in particular by a greater proximity to commissioners and by more frequent transitions through cabinets. Lastly, a third opposition is observed between private careers, rather specialized ones, and other diversified careers (mainly public).

This system of two-by-two oppositions draws a space that gives a good account of the political and administrative reality of the Commission, as much from the angle of its demarcation as from that of its proximities with the structure of national spaces of top administration – the opposition between 'technical' and 'political' profiles is found, for example, in the majority of the latter. But most of all, it makes it possible to reconstitute a mapping of the Commission that makes sense, given the connections between the properties of directors-general and the directorates-general (that is, also the type of policy) of which they are in charge. By coupling these dimensions, it can indeed be shown that the DGs whose managerial staff is strongly 'communitized' and marked by high mobility in several Commission sectors as well as in cabinets (Community/diversified DGs) are *structurally* opposed to the DGs whose managerial staff is more connected to the states and more specialized (national/sectorized DGs) (Figs 4.2 and Figs 4.3).
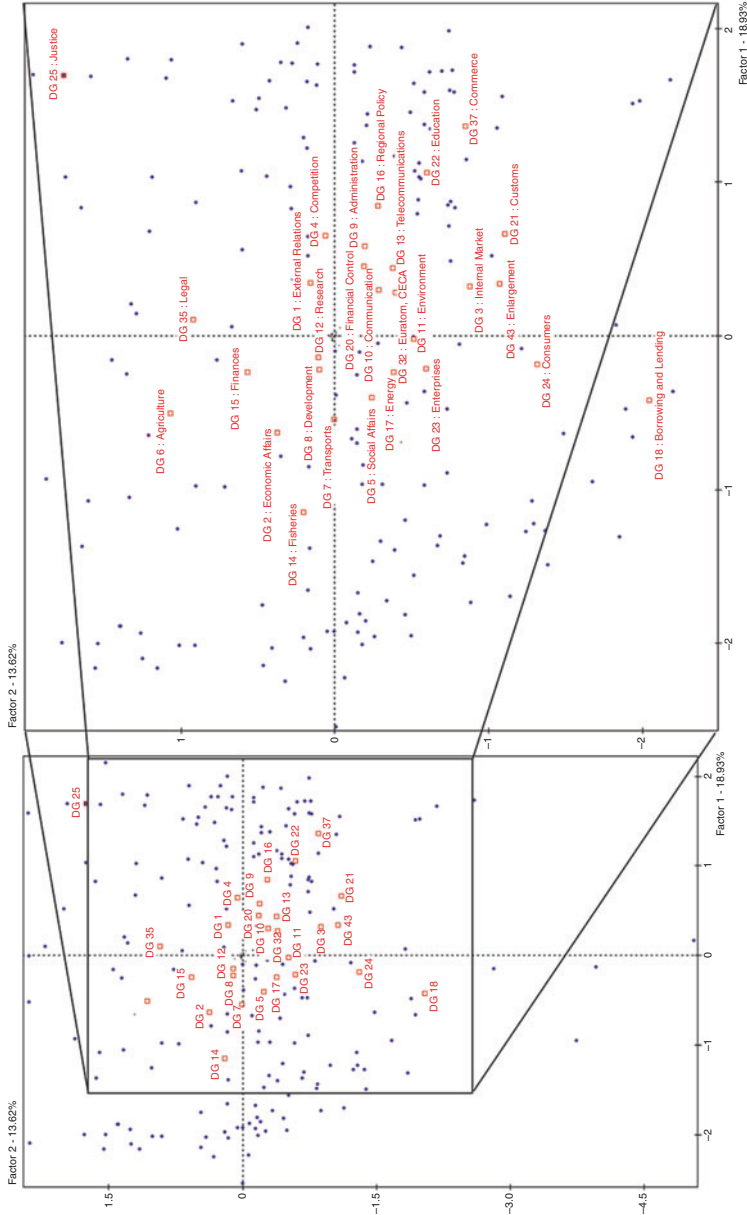
**Fig. 4.2** Graph of the Distribution of Individuals and DGs in Factorial Analysis Graph 1–2 (with Zoom)

**Fig. 4.3**   Graph of the Distribution of Individuals and DGs in Factorial Analysis Graph 1–3 (with Zoom)

The mode of distribution of these DGs and their managerial staff is thus hardly due to chance. In the part of the space structured by Community profiles, a first set can be distinguished that includes the DGs in charge of the 'major' EU policies – such as Competition, Trade, Internal Market, Regional Policies and Enlargement – and of the internal 'management' of the Commission (Administration, Budget, Communication). The most typical of this group are DG Competition, DG Administration, DG Trade and DG Regional Policy.[9] If we take as an indicator the relative share of time spent in each type of career, we note that managers spent a significant part of their career within the Community institutions: 65.8% for DG Competition managers (versus 29.1% spent in a national administration), 67.2% for DG Regional Policy (versus 19.2%), 49.4% for DG Enlargement (versus 13.2%) and 79.0% for DG Trade (versus 17.1%). Much of DG managerial staff is marked by its mobility between the political and administrative sectors of the Commission, in particular the sectors considered most prestigious (mainly External Affairs, Internal Market, Competition). The index of mobility between sectors is systematically higher than the average (3.2): 3.9 for DG Competition, 3.5 for DGs Regional Policy and Enlargement and 5.7 for DG Trade.[10] It also converges with the 'cabinet transition' indicator, which shows that DGs Competition and Regional Policy get rates higher than 50% and that 75% of the managers of DG Trade or Enlargement transitioned in a cabinet. Lastly, still regarding cabinet transition, while the share (over the whole of the period) of those who transitioned in a national cabinet relative to those who transitioned in a 'denationalized' cabinet is 2 for 1, with DG Trade and Enlargement being in the average, whereas it is reversed for DG Competition (3 nationals for 5 denationalized) and Regional Policy (3 denationalized for 2 nationals).

---

[9] DG Education and Culture (EAC) is a somewhat separate case. Although it is responsible for popular programmes such as ERASMUS, its position in the symbolic hierarchy of policies has been so far rather distant from that of DG Competition or Regional Policy.

[10] The index of mobility between sectors measures the number of professional sectors occupied, whatever the type(s) of career, before first appointment to a post of director-general or deputy director-general.

The structure of the capital of directors-general is close in the DGs reserved for the internal affairs of the Commission such as DG Administration or Budget. These latter have staff equipped with a slightly specific form of this capital, marked by the accumulation of 'in-house' resources. These DGs are thus characterized by the promotion of agents having pursued a slow and regular career within multiple sectors of the Commission – in particular those related to its internal management – as deputy directors-general, whereas directors-general have, added to their good knowledge of the internal channels at the Commission, transitioned – even briefly – in a cabinet and have more varied experiences within or outside the Commission. In any event, the agents of these DGs have very similar careers in terms of time spent in Community institutions (65.3% for DG Administration, 50.6% for DG Budget, 60.0% for DG Financial Control) or of mobility (4.0 for DG Administration, 3.5 for DG Budget, 3.2 for DG Financial Control), but they are distinguished from the former by their lower rate of cabinet transition (2 out of 13 for DG Budget and 1 out of 4 for DG Financial Control) except for DG Administration (5 out of 11), which is distinguished from the two others by its relatively higher position in the DG hierarchy.

These DGs are also those whose personnel is most equipped in terms of education capital (DGs External Relations, Competition, Regional Policy, Administration, more than half of whose managerial staff has a doctorate) and has a twofold competence, in law and in economics (External Relations, Competition, Administration).[11] Out of the 10 individuals who transitioned in DG Research, 6 have a doctorate, but most of them in the exact sciences. More generally speaking, this DG has in its majority staff with a twofold competence, in the exact sciences and in economics. In DG Communication, 7 of the 13 managers have a doctoral degree, but primarily in political science, which is the dominant competence in the DG, along with law. DG Social Affairs and Employment is dominated by a twofold law/social sciences competence. Beyond these atypical cases, the twofold law/economics competence is

---

[11] The assertions on education capital still need be confirmed by more exhaustive data on staff diplomas and degrees. It should also be noted that there are more doctors in law in the old and prestigious DGs (RELEX, COMP, Market) and in some more recent ones (Regio), they are just as many as doctors in economics.

prevalent everywhere, but less clearly than in the most prestigious DGs. Some are characterized by a dominant competence: economics for DG Economic and Financial Affairs, and law for DG Internal Market. Conversely, DG Agriculture is characterized by a lower rate of 'non-specialized' doctors among directors-general and their deputies, and by a higher percentage of engineers or doctors in technical fields (agricultural engineers, doctors of agronomy).

Within this group, there are of course differences, in particular regarding greater or lesser specialization. Unsurprisingly, the legal department occupies a position where the capital of a specialist matters more, as is the case for DG Justice in 2007, which holds a rather extreme position (given how recent DG Justice was in 2007, this position is not however significant). This is to a lesser extent the case for DG External Relations, for which diplomatic capital has almost always been prioritized, or DG Competition, the central position of which will however be noted.

All things said, on the whole, this relatively circumscribed area is a place where European institutional capital is concentrated. Its salient features are education abroad, transitions in a cabinet reflecting forms of denationalization of a trajectory, mobility and a spiralling rise allowing an accumulation of various sectoral experiences and relations, and these features are retranslated into credit (a 'good director-general', a 'great negotiator', a 'man capable of synthesizing' and so on) granted to those who occupy these positions. In a Commission for which one of the keys of the organization resides in its dynamics and in inter-sectoral or inter-departmental compromises, this credit, of the 'horizontal' type, unlike vertical or sectoral credit, offers the director-general important resources and reflects accession to the most prestigious DGs. Moreover, the relatively weak dispersion of the positions will be noticed, aside from some cases like that of DG Justice, already mentioned. Within this area, the variation that separates sectors like Competition and Regional Policy, despite everything that opposed them during the early years of implementation of structural funds, is much lesser than that separating DGs whose policies are related to more targeted 'categories' of Europeans, like DG Health and Consumer Protection, or Agriculture at the other pole.

Symmetrically, the other pole of the space invites a convergent inter-pretation. In the part of the area that corresponds to the possession of more national resources, one indeed finds either state-controlled sectors (health [Hassenteufel, 2004] and agriculture [Fouilleux, 2003]), or EU policies that are not (or not yet) salient EU policies, either because attempts in this direction have run up against resistance from the states (as for instance the attempts, scarcely achieved for the moment, to make Community industrial policy autonomous), or because the stakes are still very national (this was the case for a long time for Energy and Transport), or because there are difficulties in politically and symboli-cally embodying a policy.[12] This area includes, indeed, much more sectoral DGs, in which the managerial staff is more specialized. The typical DGs here are Economic Affairs, Industrial Affairs (Enterprise), Social Affairs, Agriculture, Energy and Transport, and Fisheries.

It would be mistaken to consider these latter as smaller DGs than the former. The case of DG Agriculture suffices to be convinced of this. Not only was it perceived for a long time as the 'holy of holies' by the agents who worked there but its budget remained, until the recent definition of financial prospects for 2005–2009, the leading Union budget. All the same, the managers of these directorates-general cumulate several con-vergent properties that are opposed to the first pole. The share of their national career is (relatively) much greater than the share of their Community career – 54.1% at DG Agriculture (versus 39.2%), 53.3% at DG Transport (versus 29.9%), 44.5% at DG Economic Affairs (versus 31.4%), 61.5% at DG Fisheries (versus 21.9%) – their career is marked by rather low mobility between sectors (2.3 for Economic Affairs, 2.5 for Agriculture, 2.2 for Fisheries, 2.5 for Energy, 2.7 for Social Affairs, 3.4 for Transport) and they transition relatively less frequently through commissioners' cabinets (3 out of 16 for DG Economic Affairs, 5 out of 20 for DG Agriculture, 2 out of 12 for Transport, 3 out of 9 for DG Social Affairs).

---

[12] Resistance from the states was described during an interview with a former DG in Industrial Policy, and is also discussed in Cohen (1995). For the difficulties in embodying a policy politically and symbolically, there are for instance difficulties in having the policy embodied at the highest political level in the case of Fisheries, as discussed in Lequesne, 2001.

Compared to the Community pole, greater dot dispersion is also observed. This is the case of the significant difference between DG Agriculture and DG Health and Consumers (SANCO), as previously mentioned, which reflects in particular the very different statuses of these directorates-general. The former is 'historical' and is traditionally managed by specialists whose career has often been very long. To take a few known examples, the Frenchmen Louis Georges Rabot and Guy Legras remained at its head 20 and 17 years, respectively. DG SANCO both has a more recent status and is less structured. Its position in the non-specialized pole does not necessarily reflect the stakes it stands for —which became salient with the mad-cow disease and the definition of the 'precautionary principle'—but rather the fact that it is a transition DG. Like in other recently set up directorates-general, its managerial staff were not able to 'carve out a career' in it. So managers with a non-specialized profile were appointed to it who were equipped with this institutional capital and had previously worked in very different sectors; they would not remain very long at DG SANCO before taking their retirement from the Commission or being moved to a post in another DG.

Another example of these strong differences is the case of DG Investments (DG 18), which is perceptible in Factorial Analysis Graph 1–2 but even more so in Factorial Analysis Graph 1–3, which accounts for the public/private axis. The study of the careers of DG managers shows that they come from the private banking sector or contributed to its privatization when banking was part of the public sector. But these same areas express just how much this type of career is marginal within a population marked by the 'public' aspect of their former occupations.

## Trend Inversion in the Hierarchies

The evolutions of this space of positions are also instructive. Generally speaking, European integration has come with a series of important changes, to say the least, over the last 20 years, which have included: relaunching the single market, reforming the Common Agricultural

Policy, the successive enlargement policies and implementing the euro. Although these changes make it difficult in abstracto to determine the general direction of the evolution of the structure of positions within the Commission, it shows that as this space became autonomous the value of European institutional capital within it rose and, in the same movement, the formerly prestigious pole of national and sectorized DGs were relegated to the benefit of Community and diversified DGs.

The question of variation in the weight of directorates-general and with it, of those who manage them is not self-evident. Aside from the statistical questions that it raises, this weight can vary according to specific political situations since relative liability, or lesser stability of the posts (hence of the oppositions) – or some of them – is noted relative to what can be found, for instance, in national administrations.[13] More than in national spaces, the position occupied by a directorate-general, hence by its directors, is to some extent dependent on changes in situations, and in particular on how agendas play out as seen in negotiations of what under Jacques Delors were called 'packages' – then Agenda 2000 and today financial prospects, or more recently, the Commission's annual priorities. This is a key element in reputation effects, hence in the calculations that govern applications to become director-general and appointments to this post.

> At the time, people also fought depending on the directorate-general. Some were perceived as more attractive or gravitational because they were fully responsible for developing a policy. People wanted at all costs to get into such or such directorate-general because there was work there, because it was being talked about and because it was a way to show their capacities in view of future careers. If we take Fisheries, it's true that at one time it was very attractive because it involved, for one, policy making and two, doing something new that was related to a field practically unknown outside of the member states and that the member states wanted to keep as their turf . . . which they lost. Now that things have been completely

---

[13] Statistical questions can be raised because of the narrow population base. When a post can be confused with a single biographical trajectory, any variation is immediately sensitive. At the same time, the effects of political situations are also probably accounted for.

solved, its attractiveness has dwindled. It's true that there are still very gravitational DGs, like DG Foreign Relations, DG Development, Finances, because of the euro's implementation. Internal Market was a huge directorate-general but it has lost some of its attraction because from now on it is about managing a policy . . . There is one DG that has become important, Transport . . . especially since it became Transport and Energy. (interview, former assistant to director-general)

All the same, despite these variations linked to specific situations, statistical analysis reveals rather heavy trends in the distribution of institutional capital. Our study of the genesis of European capital showed a growth trend in the weight of European variables in the structure of the capital of directors-general. This trend has been accompanied over time by a reconfiguration of directorate-general positions within the space of relations (Fig. 4.4).[14]

Comparison within the space of directorates-generals in different situations shows a gradual redistribution of the posts depending on these evolutions. In the first years (1958–1973), the important DGs were relatively close and were directed by directors-general whose capital structure was rather more national, particularly in DGs External Relations, Agriculture and Internal Market. Several indicators attest to this: 'super commissioners' to the vice-presidencies of the Commission (Agriculture, External Relations, Internal Market), and directors-general perceived as those who matter.

So, at the very start, for years, there were three absolutely extraordinary, really outstanding guys . . . obviously they were Emile Noël, who stayed until 1986, and then at the time Michel Gaudet, the head of the legal service, was also a commissioner, ah, Michel! He was amazingly unbiased, and nobody ever suspected Noël or Gaudet of representing French interests, that was unthinkable! And the third really great one was Edmund Wellenstein, a Dutchman who was in charge of external relations. These were the great, the really great ones . . . in a completely separate category . . . [because of] their professional capacities, the contribution of their work, their never defending

---

[14] For a more general overview of the differential character of this trend depending on the period, the original nationality and the sector, see Georgakakis and de Lassalle (2007b).
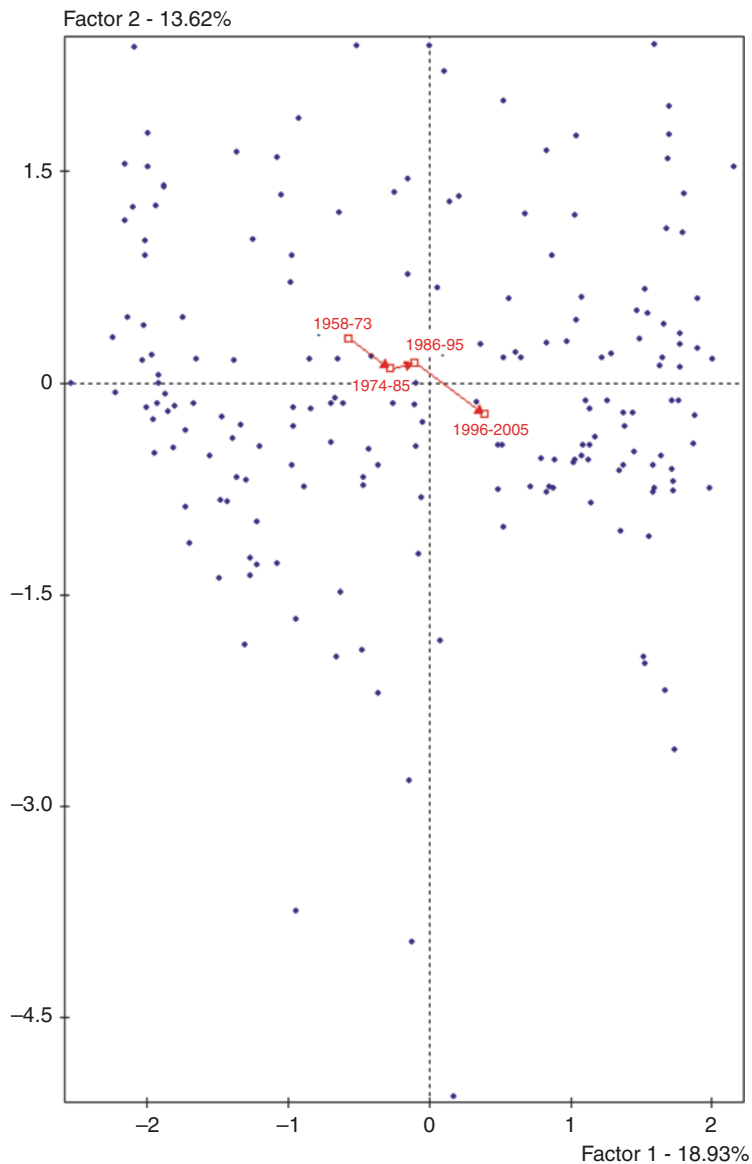
**Fig. 4.4**   Shift of the centre of gravity of the whole of the directors-general space

national ideas [unless these] promoted the Community idea, and thirdly, their way of dealing with their people. For a great leader, it is essential to be respected and liked by the people who work for him. . . . There were surely others, a guy who was also a great director-general, also for a long time a spokesman, who stayed until the Jenkins presidency, was Bino Olivi, who had to leave because he had said a number of things about the English, true things, but since this was a guy who never hid his opinions, he had to go when Jenkins arrived . . . and this was beyond any doubt a loss for the Commission, for he knew the subjects, he was a jurist, and a professor at the time, but he knew everything that was happening at the Commission, fabulously well. He was friendly with all the important officials. He also knew all the journalists very well. He was called the Madonna Mediteraneana because he tended to put on airs, but he was respected everywhere, Bino Olivi . . . Who else . . . ? Yes, of course, there was Rabot, for a long time Director-General for Agriculture . . . all of this was . . . there were senior officials with exceptional qualities too, but in a different way. . . . there were others like Fernand Braun, Fernand who started to develop an industrial policy without calling it that, Fernand, for example at Internal Market, worked really, really well . . . surely I'm forgetting some. . . . (former director-general).

Conversely, young DGs occupy positions at the other pole. This is the case of Finances or Budget, which were not very important directorates-general at the time and they would not become so until the time of Community recovery and monetary policy. The same applies to Competition, the position of which on the Community axis can be interpreted, not as the index of a high political stake, but as that of its relatively little weight at the time.

In the economic-revival situation (1986–1995), the space was redistributed. The pole of national careers is still important, but the DGs located at the Community pole take on more weight. In other words, although the institutionalized sectors remained important, those under development seemed rather to be entrusted to directors whose capital structure was more Europeanized. This trend became stronger in 1997–2007. *Today's dominant DGs*, which still include External Affairs, but also Competition,

Energy and Transport, Research, Regional Policy and Enlargement, all are located on the Community side of the space.

These evolutions would undoubtedly deserve to be specified by taking into account a denser social history of European policies. But they show that this process tends to cleave the sectors between those following this general evolution and those for which conversion of the capital does not happen. Two examples related to rather big DGs show this. While External Relations tends to follow the movement, this is much less true for Agriculture.

DG External Relations, known as DG RELEX, is thus characteristic of a process of shifting from the second 'pole' towards the first. From 1958 to 1987, the career profiles of this DG's managers were strongly marked by a national logic, even if they had specific careers, with a very highly diplomatic dimension. They were often diplomats, in post at a ministry of foreign affairs or of the economy, and/or abroad in an embassy or – though more rarely – in an international organization. Starting in 1988, the trend was completely reversed and the weight of those who pursued all or most of their career in the European institutions became the majority as of the 1990s. There were on the one hand, the same as in the typical careers of the 'political' directorates-general (Competition, Internal Market), many managers who had transitioned through cabinets and/or specific directorates (Internal Market, Competition, Development, Investment), and on the other hand, 'in-house' agents who had pursued their entire career at DG RELEX (Fig. 4.5).

Evolution has been much subtler in the case of DG Agriculture. There is no denying the weight of Agriculture. For a long time it accounted for most of the Union budget, and it was not until the financial prospects for 2005–2009 that it was relegated to the second place in the Community budget. All the surveyed players underscored, for example, the crushing weight of Agriculture in the 1960–1970s, both quantitative and political. All the same, its evolution in the long term goes rather against the trend of Europeanizing the capital of the directors-general of the Commission.
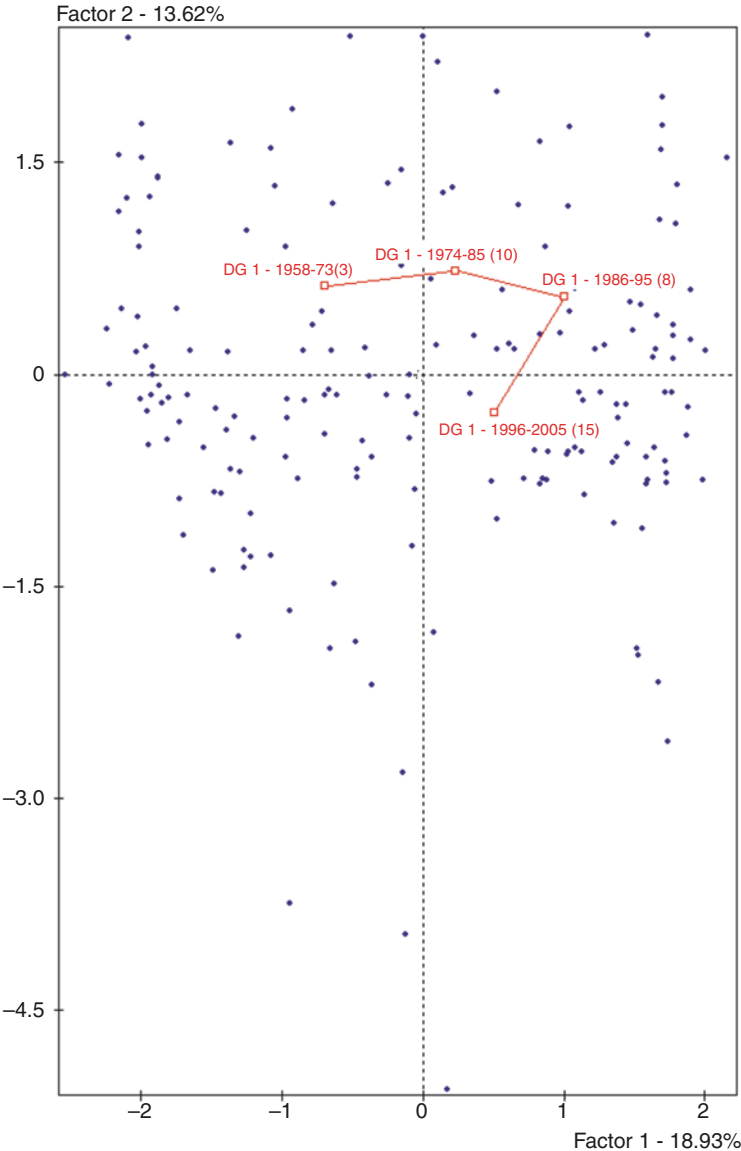
**Fig. 4.5** Structural evolution of DG ROLEX (between 1958 and 2005)

### A Very 'National' DG: The Special Case of DG AGRI

DG Agriculture is, as we all know, a strongly nationalized directorate-general. It is notably characterized in particular by continuous French presence. The case of Louis Georges Rabot (an official at the French Ministry of Agriculture from 1944 to 1957, he would be Director-General at Agriculture from 1958 to 1978) is prototypical from this point of view. This is also true for his successors. Claude Villain was born in 1935, and was a graduate in economics and law from the University of Paris. A senior economic official since the 1950s at the French Ministry of the Economy and Finances, a specialist in agricultural-market issues and an adviser in President Valérie Giscard d'Estaing's cabinet in 1973, he was appointed director-general in 1978, where he would stay until 1982 before going back to national functions. To some extent this was also the case of Guy Legras and Jean-Luc Demarty. Guy Legras was not a specialist in agriculture, but he was a specialist within the French administration in Community relations and as such, embodied the will to run this post from a national position. Born in 1938 and an ENA graduate, he had been a senior official at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1967. He was on secondment to the OECD in 1974, at Permanent Representation from 1977 to 1979 and with the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) in 1980. He was then once again in office at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs before being appointed director-general in 1983, where he would stay until 2001 before becoming DG at DG1.

Finally, Demarty is a 'specialist' in agriculture whose appointment marks a form of return to the national tradition of the directorate, even if his career has been communitized since he entered the Commission as a member of Jacques Delors's cabinet in 1989. A rural engineer in water and forestry (École polytechnique [1974], École des Eaux et Forêts [1976]), he was mission head at the French Ministry of the Economy before joining Jacques Delors, for whom he was cabinet member between 1981 and 1984. Member of the cabinet of President Delors from 1989 to 1994, he was then briefly a member of the cabinet of Edith Cresson in 1995, briefly main adviser to the Deputy Director-General for DG Research, and in 1998 he was appointed Director at DG Agriculture, at which he would become Deputy Director-General in 2000. Nevertheless his appointment was interpreted in Brussels as a return to tradition made possible by the position of 'la France', which would ultimately have to fall back on a traditional directorate in a situation where it would not have obtained much of anything (see the

case of François Lamoureux, placed in a position of 'hors classe' adviser instead of getting a new director-general post), a strategy that was given all the more latitude to adopt because the agriculture sector was no longer perceived as strategic (because of the sanctuarization of expenditure at DG Agriculture and competition from DG Trade). In fact, the political-administrative capital of the former director was slightly less important than that of his French predecessors Figs 4.6.[15]

## Weight within the Structure and Personal Inclination

It would be simplistic to claim that the political leaning of a public policy is reduced to the director-general's position. Even if the latter carries unquestionable weight, which is recalled by the sociology of organizations and the sectoral monographs of European policies, leaving it at that would amount to indulging in a history of great men and neglecting the entire circuit of policy definition – from the complex relations there can be between a commissioner and his director-general, the latter's anticipation capacity and the outcome of consultations with member-state representatives to the structure of the sectoral networks and of the investments authorized by those who populate them. Nevertheless, the strong correlation between the structure of the capital and the posts occupied, like the structure of opposition drawn in the space of relations, can lead to a few working hypotheses as a conclusion.

This is first of all the case for the correlation between possession of this capital and the probability of embodying a set of supranational standards. Indeed, a perspective focused on European capital makes it possible to break with the opposition between former socialization and socialization in the institution that is echoed in the international literature, by showing the strong relationship between the two – while allowing, in the process, a better integration into the analysis of the mechanisms of identity reconstruction that are one of the methodological problems in interviews focused on searching for the determinants of political

---

[15] Post-graduate work in Waters and Forest, for instance, is considered a relatively low rank in the École polytechnique.
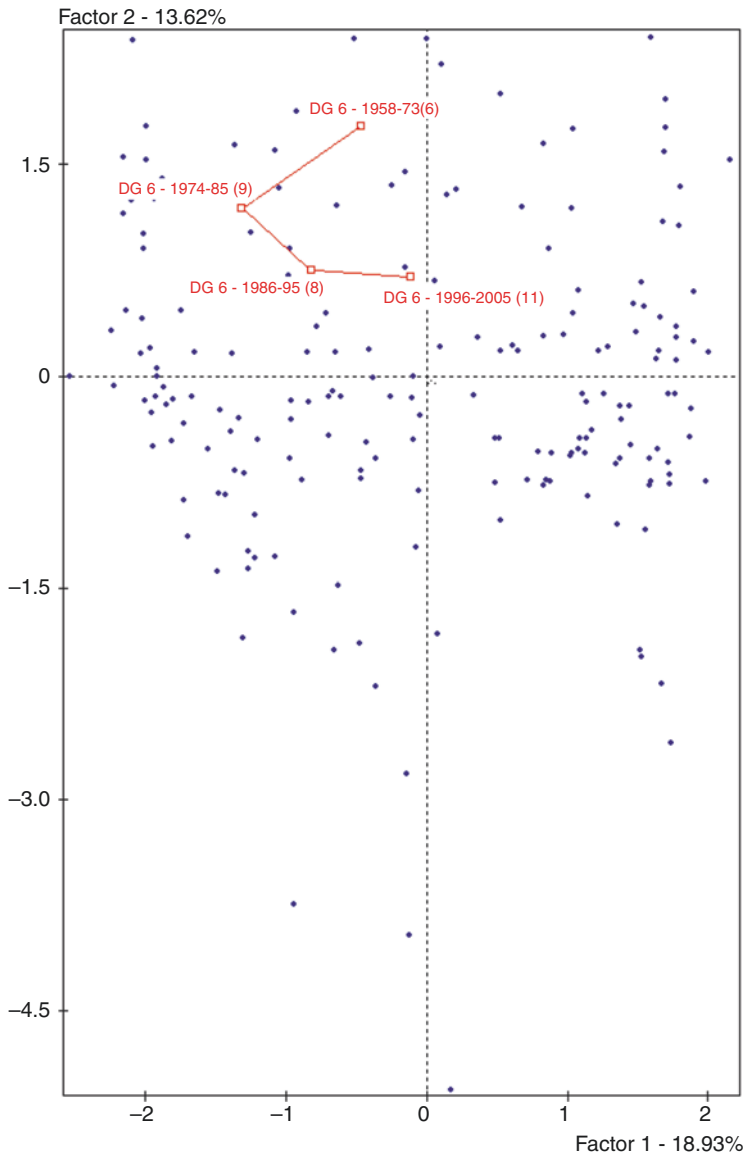
**Fig. 4.6**   Structural evolution of DG Agriculture (between 1958 and 2005)

attitudes, especially when dealing with high administration officials spontaneously inclined to euphemize their personal political beliefs. This break is all the more essential that, as seen here, there is also a strong correlation between the possession of this capital and the occupation of posts within the DGs that 'have the wind in their sails' or are regarded as DGs of the future. Under these conditions – this is one of the effects of the causality of the probable in this type of space – the agents placed in these posts are not only inclined to being 'loyal' to the system of institution standards (more communitization, mistrust of the particular interest of states, when not of the state form itself) but they also tend more to renew or raise it as a top priority under the principle of 'coordination' of European policies, as in the wish to develop simultaneously the market and redistribution in the Delors years or, thereafter, the 'spirit' of the Lisbon process and of competitiveness.

This makes it easier to understand the successive shifts that will bring directors-general of different political origins around to embracing very convergent political choices. These shifts do not necessarily imply a political disavowal or a reconversion of beliefs thought as such, but on a first level, they are much less perceived in the more general process of conversion to the institution, with all that this implies in terms of virtuous compliance with supposed 'needs'. It is in these micro-conversions and in acquiring, just as progressively and differentially depending on the position, the capacity to project the institution's collective position and its 'interests', much more surely than in positions of ideological doctrines that European top senior officials' preferences are constructed. The same applies to the collective slope or the ripple effects that occur within the European Commission. The latter presents a force of inertia vis-à-vis the political changes that can mark situation-specific policies on the agenda – as in particular the more or less significant political power struggle within the Council – an inertia which is forged and is reinforced in the shifts in the structure over time towards a set of policies strongly equipped with institutional capital (and in particular Internal Market, Competition and Trade).[16] It is around them and their

---

[16] For the record and regardless of the differences that these terms can cover in the absence of a unified political market, the 1998 summit revealed that 12 out of the 15 countries were under social-democratic government.

constitution as 'model policy' that the key trend structured itself – this is characteristic of a 'mainstream' effect – and with it either the relegation or the rallying of other at first more distant policies. To take a few examples, this type of dynamics could explain why policies fundamentally as opposite as competition policy and regional policy were in the 1990s, have tended to merge around the reference to competitiveness.

The relative autonomy of these mechanisms makes it possible to understand that through a structural aversion effect, the Commission can be frequently attributed political positions contrary to those that actors have sought to defend when outside of the Eurocratic field – either the 'socialist-leaning' position alleged by Margaret Thatcher or today, 'neoliberalism' from the French point of view. This perspective makes it possible to point out oppositions in which the Commission's 'objective slant' has been constructed and thus to raise once again the issue of its '*neo* or *ordo*liberalism'. In this sense, it is less about doctrinal liberalism (as shown by the marginal situation of DG 18 [Borrowing and Lending]) than about situation-related liberalism, notably linked to the practical need, as required by the job of European official, of keeping away from the states' various points of view. It is less a radical slant than a tendency that – in the twofold absence of a contrary political will within the Council and of social forces sufficiently strong or constituted as such – condemns the formerly more interventionist and redistributive policies and instead rallies actors behind the economic models of competitiveness (such as Regional Policy) and of regulation (such as Social Policy), or to have their existence reduced, as in the case of Agriculture, to their particularistic interest or – something that (at least in routinized EU situations) compromises their longevity even more – to 'national blocking'.

## Methodological Appendix

This study is based on a Groupe de Sociologie Politique Européenne database built between 2000 and 2005. It was funded by the Maison Interuniversitaire des Sciences de l'Homme d'Alsace and benefitted

from the work of colleagues from the research centre whom I would like to thank, in particular Marine de Lassalle, who co-chaired the project, Valérie Lozac'h, Philippe Juhem, Virginie Schnabel, Sébastien Michon, Willy Beauvallet and again Pierre Nordemann for the statistics part. We extracted from the database all 242 individuals who have occupied during their career a post of director-general or deputy director-general. The number of individuals for whom we have no information on their career prior to appointment is small (21 out of 242). To be able to work on this database, which contains a lot of textual data, we developed a coding system, in particular of the individuals' careers. The coding of the posts year-on-year informs on the activity sector (private, national public, European Commission, permanent representation – 9 categories), the hierarchy level and the activity sector (overlapping, for the first, with the DG numbers – about 50 categories in all).

**Calculated Variables**

Based on the information available in the database, we calculated a number of indicators, in particular for the career prior to appointment as director-general or deputy director-general.

*Indicators of Career Prior to Appointment*

- **Share of career specialization** prior to appointment: this is the share of the previous known career in the same sphere of activity as that of first appointment as director-general or deputy director-general.
- Number of different spheres of activity prior to appointment. This is the **indicator of career diversity**.
- **Share of career prior to appointment spent in various sectors**:

    ○ National private
    ○ International private

- ○ National public
- ○ European public (European Commission)
- ○ International public
- ○ National political and trade-union
- ○ European political
- ○ European national (permanent representations)
- ○ European international (Council of Ministers, General Secretariat of the Council – GSC)

**Principal Component Analysis (PCA)**

The variables we used to build this space (active variables) are the 11 variables indicating the individuals' careers prior to appointment as director-general or deputy (share of career specialization, indicator of career diversity and share of career prior to appointment spent in various sectors). These indicators allowed us to create a space representing the career of the individuals of our database, placing more or less specialized careers and more or less European careers in opposition.

*PCA Standard Data*

We had 202 active individuals for the analysis because we selected those for whom we had sufficient information on their career. These were the directors-general (or deputies) we used to build our analysis space. We left out Colette Flesch (entered as an illustrative individual), because of the particularity of her career path, which influenced the construction of the space too significantly. Indeed she is the only person in our database of directors-general (and deputies), most of whose career was in European politics (more than 65% of her known career as a MEP concurrently with national or local offices). Including her in the analysis would have amounted to artificially building a second factorial axis around her career profile, to which she would have contributed more than 82% (Fig. 4.7).
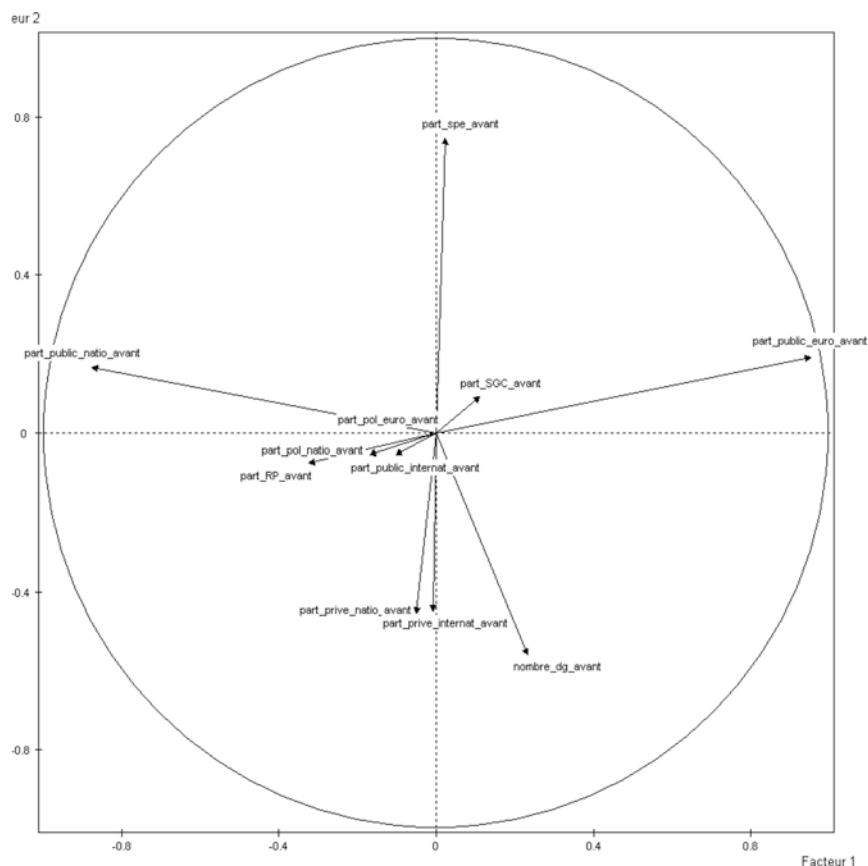
MATRICE DES CORRELATIONS

| | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 | C11 | C12 | C13 | C14 | C15 | C16 | C27 |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| C7  | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | |
| C8  | -0.10 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | |
| C9  | -0.07 | 0.11 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | |
| C10 | 0.01 | -0.24 | -0.08 | 1.00 | | | | | | | |
| C11 | 0.07 | -0.28 | -0.11 | -0.78 | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| C12 | -0.05 | -0.08 | -0.03 | -0.07 | -0.18 | 1.00 | | | | | |
| C13 | 0.04 | 0.02 | -0.03 | 0.02 | -0.16 | -0.03 | 1.00 | | | | |
| C14 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | |
| C15 | -0.07 | -0.10 | -0.03 | 0.09 | -0.23 | -0.05 | -0.04 | 0.00 | 1.00 | | |
| C16 | 0.04 | -0.03 | -0.01 | -0.05 | 0.04 | -0.01 | -0.01 | 0.00 | -0.02 | 1.00 | |
| C27 | -0.30 | -0.08 | 0.05 | -0.11 | 0.13 | -0.02 | 0.05 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 1.00 |

| | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 | C11 | C12 | C13 | C14 | C15 | C16 | C27 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|

VALEURS PROPRES
HISTOGRAMME DES 11 PREMIERES VALEURS PROPRES

| NUMERO | VALEUR PROPRE | POURCENTAGE | POURCENTAGE CUMULE | |
|--------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|----|
| 1  | 1.8930 | 18.93 | 18.93  | ******************************************************* |
| 2  | 1.3620 | 13.62 | 32.55  | ******************************************** |
| 3  | 1.2535 | 12.53 | 45.08  | **************************************** |
| 4  | 1.0571 | 10.57 | 55.66  | ********************************** |
| 5  | 1.0478 | 10.48 | 66.13  | ********************************* |
| 6  | 0.9955 | 9.96  | 76.09  | ******************************** |
| 7  | 0.9145 | 9.14  | 85.23  | ***************************** |
| 8  | 0.8677 | 8.68  | 93.91  | **************************** |
| 9  | 0.6089 | 6.09  | 100.00 | ******************* |
| 10 | 0.0001 | 0.00  | 100.00 | * |
| 11 | 0.0000 | 0.00  | 100.00 | * |

**Fig. 4.7** Construction of the factorial space by active variables and dispersion of the individuals. * The labels in Figures 4.7 and 4.8 are explained in the text following Figure 4.7.

*Factorial Design*

Our search for a threshold between the eigenvalues of the various axes indicated that we needed to study the first 3 axes, which in all assembled more than 45% of the total variance of the scatterplot.

On the first axis of Figure 4.7, which represents nearly 19% of the total variance of the scatterplot, there is a clear opposition between the two variables, 'part_public_natio_avant' (share of previous national public) and

'part_public_euro_avant' (share of previous European public). This axis thus expresses the two possible types of careers of a director-general (or deputy) before his or her appointment: a career as a national civil servant, or a career within the European Commission.

The second axis, representing 13.62% of the variance of the scatterplot, shows the opposition between the variables 'part_spé_avant' (share of prior specialization) and 'nombre_dg_avant' (number of previous DGs), the latter being correlated with the variables 'part_privé_natio_avant' (share of previous national private) and 'part_privé_internat_avant' (share of previous international private). Axis 2 thus shows the opposition between more or less specialized careers, the more diversified careers corresponding rather to careers in the private sector.

The third axis, with a 12.53% variance, is particularly influenced by the variable 'part_privé_natio_avant' (partly correlated with the variable 'part_spé_avant'), which is opposed to the variable 'nombre_dg_avant'. This axis thus distinguishes rather specialized careers in the private sector (national or international), the more diversified careers having been in other sectors. This axis however is less meaningful for our analysis, and we only present results on this axis when they are remarkable (Figs 4.8).

*Illustrative variables*

We have a number of illustrative variables for which we wished to know their positioning in this space. This allowed us to find possible correlation relations between our illustrative variables and the construction variables of the factorial space.
The most interesting illustrative variables to study were:

- Nationality: to see the positioning of the various countries in their choices of directors-general (and deputies).
- Transitions in the various DGs: to observe the structural differences among the DGs through the trajectory of their directors-general and deputies.
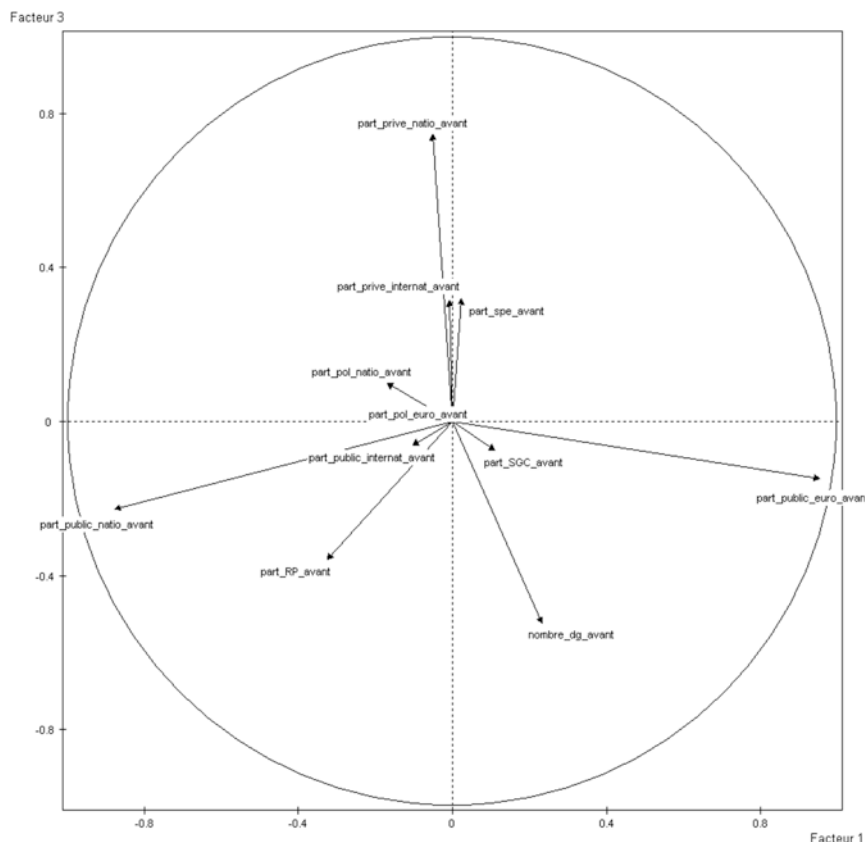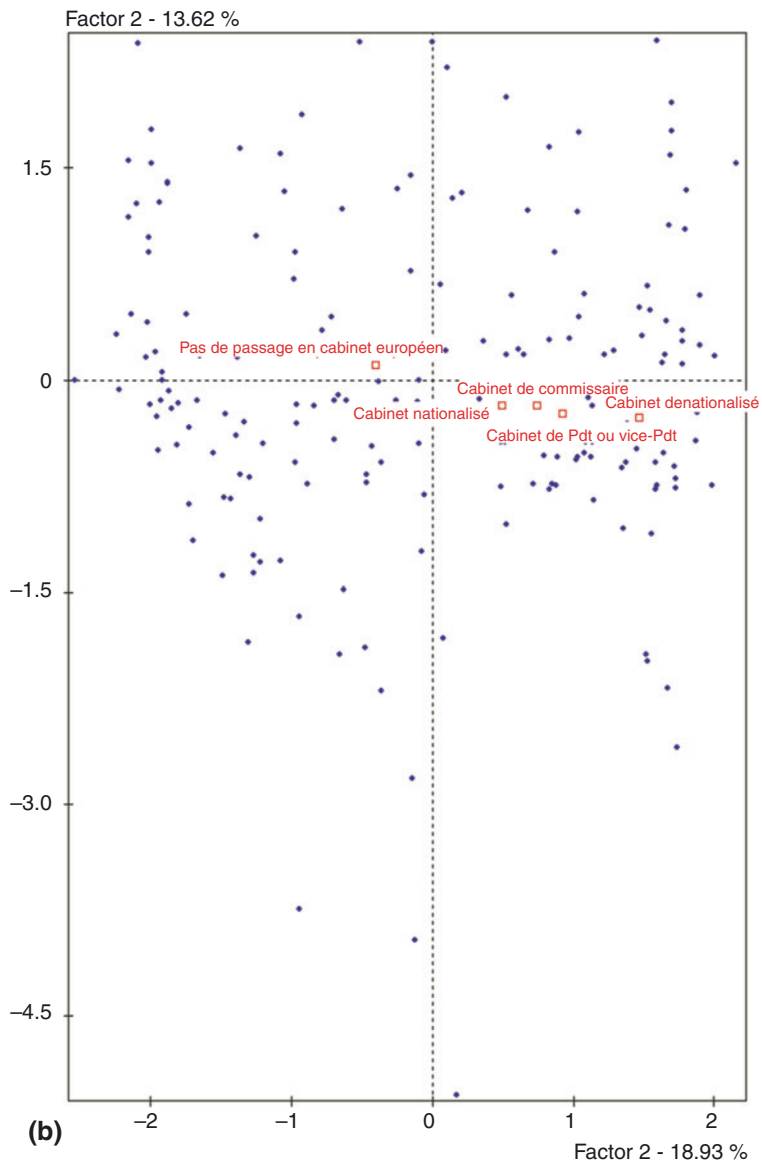
**Fig. 4.8** Distribution of the variables within the space

- Having studied abroad or not, and in what geographical area (Europe, USA or both): to detect the presence of reinforced European or international capital.
- Having transitioned or not in the cabinet of a European commissioner (and in particular a denationalized cabinet or the cabinet of a President or Vice-President): appreciably reinforces the European capital of directors-general and deputies.
- Evolution over time of the career profiles of all directors-general and deputies: to detect the structural evolutions of the European Commission.

Factor 2 - 13.62 %

No studies abroad

USA

Europe

Europe and USA

Factor 2 - 18.93 %

(a)
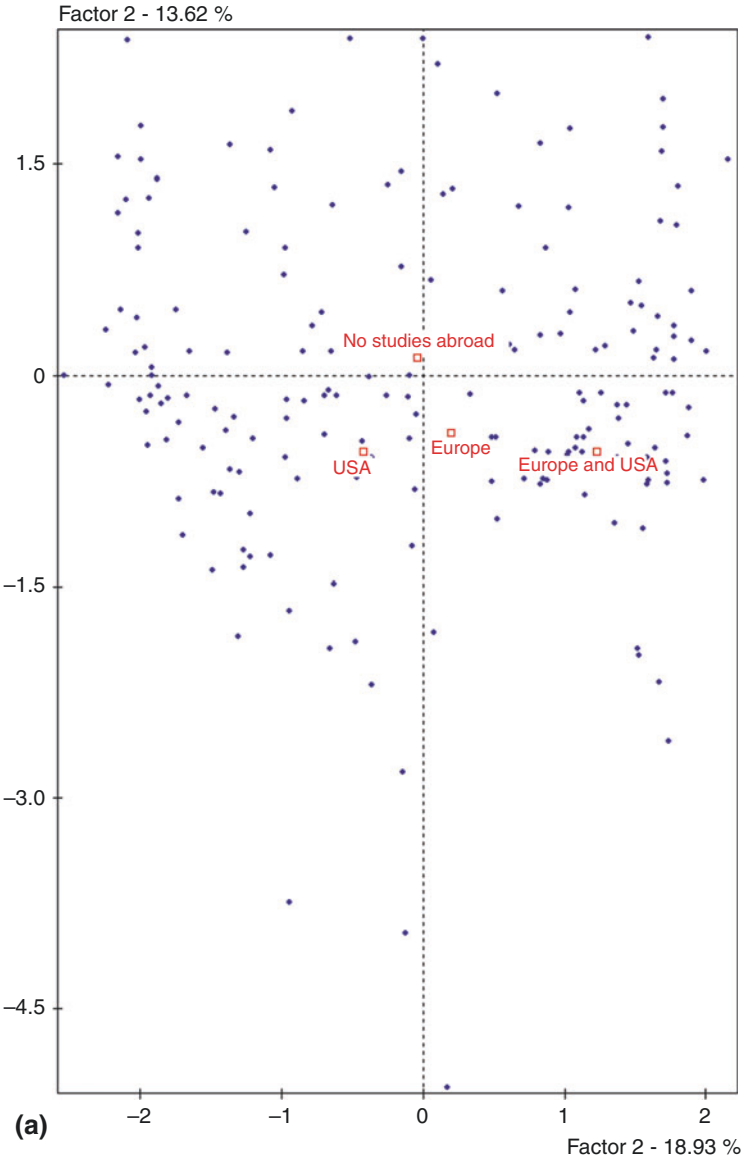
**Fig. 4.9** Distribution of the places of study within the space

**(b)**

- Evolution over time of the career profiles of the directors-general and deputies of the various DGs: to observe the strategy evolutions of the various DGs (staff numbers are between brackets in the graphs; some DGs are not presented, because their staff numbers are too low; in addition, some represented DGs have only a few individuals per period. These graphs are thus rather fragile and must be used only to retrace the main DG evolution trends) (Figs 4.9a, b).

### Classification

For an overall view, we decided to develop a typology of the career paths of the whole of the directors-general and their deputies previous to their appointment. For this we developed a classification of the whole of the individuals, a classification that we then partitioned such that it kept the maximum possible amount of the information on the scatter-plot dispersion (so that each subset is as homogeneous as possible and as distinct as possible from the other subsets). A partition into 9 classes of individuals is thus that which enabled us to have the maximum amount of information.

# 5

## Soft Skills Versus Expertise and Knowledge: The Changing Core Competencies of European Civil Servants

Much has been written about the so-called Kinnock reform, a major administrative reform kicked off in 2000 by the publication of the Kinnock White Paper, named after the British Vice-President of the European Commission placed in charge of the reform. Like the majority of observers, we can even say that this reform outstripped, by far, all those that had preceded it (Stevens, 2003; Kassim, 2008b and 2004). Its scale owes a lot to singular historical circumstances, in particular the conjunction of long-repressed reform desires and the internal 'crisis situation' brought about by the resignation of the Santer Commission. The Kinnock reform was certainly not the first of its kind. Several reform projects had been previously led, particularly of the Commission's administration. A typical example in the late 1970s was the reform implemented following the Spierenburg report, named after the former Vice-President of the High Authority of the ECSC, but there were others, less well-known, which had been entrusted – already – to expert committees.[1] After the end of Jacques Delors's term and more generally

---

[1] See the case of the Poullet Committee, named after a professor at Louvain University, which was entrusted by a committee chaired by Émile Noël to direct a study on the Commission's organization in 1972. There were already references in the study to 'management', 'task forces'

speaking of the European Union's economic-recovery period, however, much greater criticism of the Union had emerged. Of particular note was that of the Commission's financial management and of the problems raised by the famous 'submarines', namely, jobs financed by Community programmes because there were no budget items to cover them. For Jacques Santer, the former Prime Minister of Luxembourg who had followed Delors, administrative reform was thus an important part of his mandate. In the context of the 1995 enlargement, which brought in Austria, as well as Sweden and Finland – whose commissioners, significantly, were given the budget portfolio (Anita Gradin) and the administration portfolio (Erkki Liikanen) – the seeds of administrative change were already there. Several reforms began to be implemented in 1997–1998 with explicit names like 'Sound Efficient Management', 'Map 2000' or 'DECODE' (*Dessiner la Commission de demain*, or 'designing tomorrow's Commission'), not to mention the Caston report, a confidential document containing some rather radical recommendations such as the possibility of dismissing civil servants. Leaks from this report before it was published had stirred up mobilization against the Liikanen reform. Given the situation, the reform ran up against strong, united opposition from the European public-office trade unions and staff associations (OSPs) (Georgakakis, 2002c). After the spring 1998 staff mobilizations, negotiations had been reopened and had led to a consultation process that was a rather good illustration of European compromise-building practices by high-level groups.[2] In 1999, the resignation of the College of Commissioners chaired by Jacques Santer, however, brought about a break. The resignation had multiple causes, notably political ones. It was not just the logical consequence of administrative dysfunction, as the reformers or their allies often claimed. Nonetheless, this historical first was a shock to many actors involved in the European institutional spheres, and it served as a useful political alibi. Without going into detailed interpretations of the 'crisis', the

and so on (EUI, 1972). We can also note that an examination of Commission functioning had resulted in a report by the so-called Screening Group in 1974, and that in 1975, the Commission had set up a 'management and evaluation method' service (EUI, 1976). For a useful summary overview of this history, see GRAPSE (2001).

[2] This process resulted in the so-called Williamson Report, named after the former Secretary-General of the Commission, David Williamson, who had chaired the reflection group (Williamson et al., 1998).

independent experts' report, focused on the Commission's mismanagement, became one of the 'focal points' of the interpretations. Though the problems that the European Commission was accused of having were real, many of them were due less to poor administration than to a classic process of bureaucratic growth, and the Commission could have approached them from this perspective.[3] But this did not happen. On the contrary, the administrative-mismanagement argument became a rallying point as well as useful contention for those advocating administrative managerialization, something that so far had been relatively contained compared to the situation in member states. With the 'crisis effect' added to the relative structural weakness of the EU's administration, this latter was placed under the twofold oversight of the member states, which were expecting budgetary cuts, and of the European Parliament, which was exercising more and more control, so the reformers were able to reach beyond the (otherwise heterogeneous) circle of the actors whose interest lay in the reform, and rally all those who, within the European Union institutions, were seeking collective salvation (Georgakakis, 2013a). Under these conditions it is no surprise that the reform initiated in 2000 spread over a broad spectrum. In fact, it is a mistake to speak of the Kinnock reform in the singular, as it includes a number of very different chapters. First and foremost, it was a reform of the officials' statuses, whereby Categories A, B, C and D distinguishing the different public-office grades were replaced by two bodies, administrators (AD) and deputies, or assistants (AST), and in a classic process of externalizing the highest cost of the reform to the newcomers, the entry level of administrators, now recruited as Category AD 5, was lowered. It was also a budgetary reform, which, among other changes, established management and budget preparation by activity (GPA and EBA) and a new programming cycle, and decentralized management within the directorates-general. The reform was also related to human resources, including recruitment, training and career evaluation. Finally, it was a set of more or less formal rules connected to transparency, responsibility and ethics – in short, a series of elements that changed the framework of administrative practices in the more general context of

---

[3] On the problems related to bureaucratic growth, see Bourdieu (1997).

promoting 'new European governance'.[4] All of this led to the 'normalization of the European Commission' (Wille, 2013) and brought about deep changes in the culture within the organization as well as in its staff's margin for manoeuvre, leading in turn to massive, severe criticism or bitter feelings, as exemplified by the following excerpt from a letter to the editor of GRASPE, the journal of the reflection group on European public service (Letters to the Editor, GRASPE, 23 October 2008):

> What is the real justification for the policy of compulsory mobility of staff at all levels, which is destroying a very substantial part of the professional expertise of the services of the Commission, and quickly leading to widespread professional incompetence? Isn't it enough having ex-ante and ex-post controls of expenditure? What is the justification of the elimination in the EPSO Competitions of questions about the EC itself? Doesn't it lead to a longer time for recruited personnel to be acquainted with the policies and working methods of the Commission? What is the real justification for the policy of progressive externalization of tasks to executive Agencies, and of the increase of working contracts as temporary staff, instead as permanent 'officials' or 'other agents'? . . . To me, these problems look like a programmed qualitative degradation of the European Civil Service, to put the Commission in the hands of National Administrations, consultants, and lobbyists. This de facto degrades the powers on paper of the Commission (of initiative, of management, etc.).[5]

Although the main episodes of this reform have been extensively analysed, several of its indirect by-products still remain in the shadows. Among them, the debate on the required competencies, or 'core competencies' (also referred to as 'core competences'), of European functionaries put on the agenda of various staff policies (Human Resources, Training, Recruitment) in the early 2010s particularly deserves to be analysed. Indeed, in the case of the EU, what the linguistic compromise within the institutions calls 'competency' (often referred to as 'ability' in official

---

[4] For a good overview, see CEC (2007).

[5] The Reflection Group on the Future of the European Civil Service, GRASPE, (*Groupe de Réflexion sur l'avenir du Service Public Européen*) is a group of European officials that has been publishing a newsletter since January 2001 and organizes reflection seminars on administrative reform in the institutions.

European Communities literature) is a rather central concept. It is on the basis of competency, in the broad sense of expertise (legal or academic), rather than on the incarnation of political power, that the position of the agents populating the European institutions – hence the position of the institutions themselves – has been built. Competency is a strong legitimation factor, particularly for European civil servants, whose figure is, historically, sociologically and legally speaking, built around this value.[6] As indicated by the best observers (Cini, 1996b; Robert, 2002), for a long time competency in a dossier, based on experience garnered from the post, on technical training or on both, was a strong resource for European civil servants, a resource to which were added long-term vision and the ability to embody a European point of view that has been neutralized with respect to the particular interests of socioeconomic groups and member states. This makes it easy to understand that there might be a problem in promoting a new definition of competency based more on 'skills' – that is, in the institutions, 'soft skills', or cross-cutting personal or behavioural aptitudes – than on knowledge, more specifically knowledge connected with the public administration, the policies or the context of the EU. For many civil servants, this change is one of the elements contributing to the 'qualitative degradation of the European Civil Service' denounced in the letter to the editor cited in the introduction to this chapter, when not to the 'castration' involved in the European civil service, which is one of the perceptual schemas of the effects of the Kinnock reform (Bauer, 2008; Ellinas and Suleiman, 2008).

Does this authorize saying, to emphasize this feature, that diffusing this new skills-based model might be contributing to killing European civil service? The question cannot be ruled out. New Public Management, to take the generic category, is in its effects far from always being an element of stronger civil service.[7] There is abundant literature to show this (for

---

[6] For the legal aspect, see Article 27 of the Staff Regulations for officials of the European Communities, which has remained unchanged since 1968 (see for instance European Commission, 2004, Article 27, p. I–14). For recent contributions on these aspects, see Maggi-Germain (2005) and Andreone (2008).

[7] For the variable nature and very diverse forms of acclimatizing New Public Management, see in particular Hood (1991) and more recently Eymeri-Douzans (2008).

example, Peters, 2001), particularly related to the often mentioned case of Great Britain (for example, Wright, 1995; Page, 2007). The conditions governing its application – whether for reasons of the reformers' ideology, blind conformity or 'learned ignorance', or for 'crisis effect' reasons (as in this case, the effect of the resignation of the Santer College for 'mismanagement') – are hardly ever protections. The fact remains that the criticism cannot truly be judged, nor can reflection on the subject truly be developed without discussing in what way the new model kills, or might kill, and what is involved, more specifically, in the competencies at stake.

The purpose of this chapter is to specify the contours of the problem. Initially by relativizing some of its apparent stakes, and in particular the pragmatism-versus-theory (or concrete-versus-abstract) and old-versus-new dichotomies that structure the major part of the debate on this subject. Then by formulating the working hypothesis that the henceforth important position occupied by skills, under its anecdotal exterior, rather basically questions the *social competency* of EU administrators. The true stakes involved in the definition of a new competency paradigm are revealed by calling into question, both officially and concretely, the ambiguity in which EU administrators' competency was associated with their position of power and with their legitimation practices, a questioning that, formulated in sociological terms, touches upon the very foundation of their collective trajectory as a body and on their 'servant of Europe' *habitus*. By developing the specifics of this hypothesis, we hope to gain a better understanding of the knee-jerk (that is, specifically body-related) reaction engine that is triggered here. Based on this case, we also hope to contribute to an analysis of the more general stakes involved in the reform of administrative competencies at work in many administrations (Hood and Lodge, 2004; Lodge and Hood, 2005), a reform that, although often more silent and discrete than others (staff-regulations, wage or managerial reforms), we perceive as affecting the very core of administrative practice and its political status.[8]

---

[8] This chapter presents reflections arising from a series of field surveys on EU civil service and institutions that have been conducted for about ten years. Drawing for its theoretical aspect from the sociology of social groups and from the social history of civil service and of state formation, this research is empirically based on various materials: interviews (N = 30); archives (Jean Monnet Foundation for Europe in Lausanne, European University Institute in Florence and the European

# Core Competencies at Stake

The definition of key competencies has become a major stake in the reform policy driven in particular since Neil Kinnock's White Paper (Kinnock et al., 2000). Although the White Paper does not provide a definition of the competency of European functionaries, who are however required to be 'highly competent', as regularly pointed out, it does contain several guidelines directly connected to its definition. This is particularly the case for how a 'culture based on service' is defined, for 'efficiency' as a key requirement and for references to the Commission's 'human-resources policy'. The new human-resources policy henceforth establishes connections, much more formally than ever before, among its various sectors (recruitment, training, staff evaluation and promotion) as well as between these various sectors and the overall objectives of the reform of a 'culture based on results'. In the same vein but more recently, the question of the functionaries' key competencies has been raised, this time more explicitly and generally.

The growing weight of this reflection is seen in particular in the work of the Holmquist group, named after the Director-General of Internal Market (Swedish, economist by training) who steered it and had brought together several directors-general to think about adjustments and extensions to the Commission's administration reform. The report of the 5 June 2008 seminar (European Commission, 2008a) thus suggests, among other recommendations, that a 'more wide-ranging, more modern management of human resources, based on competencies, could be

developed'. About these competencies, the following meeting indicated, under the heading 'Training/Skills', the specifications to be complied with under the next Commission, as well as in the medium term, including:

5.1. Develop a more rigorous learning and development strategy, linked to the new core competences, so that current personnel meet the new profile within the next decade and provide the necessary leadership for incomers. This implies a substantial further increase in funding.

5.2. The content of training should be designed as a key management tool, to bridge the gap between current performance and the core competence package. Training should lead staff towards accepting more mobility, more flexibility in the definition of their tasks, more attention to personal development throughout their career, and more commitment to having the skills to dialogue with the outside world.

. . .

5.8. Training should be targeted at skills that can be useful in other jobs: staff will also be motivated to try new things or work in different environments if they are prepared for new challenges (European Commission, 2008b).

There would be no point in seeking a standard list in an original framework document, but the definition of key competencies and their adjustment to the objectives of the reform are at work in various HR policy sectors (recruitment, training and staff evaluation). The taxonomies structuring these policies (which can be observed in the content of training, in expectations from the competitions and so on) show that the share of skills, understood as personal aptitudes and based on general know-how, has been very largely developed, often to the detriment of other competencies based on knowledge, such as in particular elements of European general culture, and even of knowledge of the context in which European policies are to be implemented, their constraints or their key actors. Indications provided under the reform of the recruitment policy (which precisely planned to remove the multiple-choice questions [MCQs] on European policies and administration, after having abolished a few years earlier the questionnaire on general culture to the benefit of testing verbal and numerical reasoning) are fairly prototypical. In an official statement in the early 2010s, the EPSO

explained, for instance: 'The institutions are looking for candidates who are talented, highly motivated and highly qualified in their field, and who have the following competencies in particular: Analysis and problem solving . . . Communication . . . Delivering quality and results . . . Learning and development . . . Prioritising and organising . . . Resilience . . . Working with others' (EPSO, 2012).[9]

At first sight, the way these skills are formulated is a reflection of practical practicality. For those promoting them, they are the 'pragmatic' expression of a necessary 'concrete' sense as opposed to so-called theoretical and abstract knowledge. In the case of the new recruitment policies, the idea that has gradually taken over is that what is needed is not specialists on Europe, but good administrators or good 'on the job' managers. In the case of training policies, the argument is similar. In a nutshell, given that the Commission staff is already well trained in terms of knowledge, considering the Commission's very selective recruitment and the high education level of its administrators (and often of their deputies), staff should be trained to deal with the 'concrete realities' of administration and management. Moreover, this should be done with 'modern', 'game-based' methods diametrically opposed to 'academic courses', and do so by calling on consulting firms that have proven themselves in the business world.

Although ultimately not very public, criticism of these arguments takes on symmetrical forms. For many civil servants, in particular from the countries of the south or Germanic, but also many of those with an education in law or political science, highlighting skills is a typically 'Anglo-American' form of management based mainly on positivist and summary behaviourism as opposed to having a vision, general culture (in this case, European), or more simply, a command of the minimal elements of the human and political context that are useful for practising European policies, which is precisely the

---

[9] EPSO is the inter-institutional body in charge of recruitment established in 2003 to rationalize the selection procedures, notably to address problems that might have previously stemmed from the organization of the competitions, the institutional disparity of recruitments or preparations for enlargement.

concrete dimension of their activity. Too standardized and too close to a business model – the functionaries are divided on its legitimacy (many of them chose a lifelong no-turning-back career in the institutions because of a 'vocation' very different from that found in a private career) – focusing on skills is one of the more general aspects of the 'loss of meaning' said to be now affecting the European institutions and more particularly the Commission. In short, the divide is rather deep and impermeable.

## Practice Versus Theory? Modern Versus Old?

To understand what is at stake here requires posing the problem differently. To do so, we have to start by distancing ourselves as much from the indigenous discourses as from the presuppositions that we might spontaneously feed as analysts. Two recurring oppositions need particularly to be qualified.

The first is an opposition between a framework of supposedly 'intellectual' competencies (the knowledge and capacities to fully understand a dossier, the content of the policies, a European culture and so on) and another, postulated as one of 'practical practicality' (skills). The two sides of this opposition, however, raise a problem. Interpreting the progression of skills as a 'defeat of thought' comes first from an intellectualist presupposition. There is nothing obvious, in fact, about the 'general culture' at stake in administrative competency – developed as much in France as in Germany (Eymeri-Douzans, 2005), as in Great Britain at a time when the Oxbridge model was valued – having anything to do with intellectual dispositions, strictly speaking. The academic literature on French administration competitions offers, here, a good instrument to break away from this view (Bourdieu, 1996; Eymeri-Douzans, 2001a). Although general culture has thus far been a founding element, it is no less, in this case, a tool that makes it possible at the same time to evaluate a candidate's belonging to a social class and very practical competencies (quite largely inherited) such as the ability to be resilient, to argue by using the rhetoric of general interest

and to take on the role of a top administrator in its legitimate forms (including by keeping the proper distance from the role). Testing general culture during the competitions is from this point of view mostly a 'rite of institution', as said by Bourdieu expanding on the 'rite of passage' of the world of anthropology, allowing the winners to become what they already partly were. Even in the minds of those amending the competition, general culture and knowledge were regarded as material for testing practical aptitudes such as the ability to pose problems and to solve them, to make choices, to screen information, to substantiate one's reasoning and to legitimate the choices made (if necessary with legitimate references), and never in an intellectual-type, or even worse, an academic-type way (Oger, 2008). In the case of the EU, the now disappeared MCQs on general culture filled analogous social functions, such as that of checking for a candidate's belonging in the more or less imagined community of Europe in the making, or even in a class of senior civil servants of Europe in the making. The MCQs were also designed – regardless of what is now thought of as its absurdities – as a way of testing a candidate's capacity to distance him or herself from a national mode of reasoning (a highly valued capacity given the very heterogeneous national formats governing the construction of European problems and more generally speaking, for formulating problems in Community-interest forms), and to get his or her bearings in the multicultural environment of the European institutions and become a part of it. In short, far from strictly intellectual or knowledge-related stakes, the test mostly filled the twofold function of testing for practical dispositions and for consecration.

Opposite to the intellectualist illusion, the pragmatic illusion raises quasi-symmetrical interpretation problems. Generally speaking, the literature on the political rhetoric more than abundantly shows that the 'pragmatic necessity' argument often consists in dressing up highly ideological instincts or drives. As we have just seen, here this argument is based, moreover, on a vision from much too high an altitude (when it is not more directly a knee-jerk rejection) of what general culture and 'knowledge' are in the administrative models claiming them. On a more practical level, it also presupposes that

agents within the Commission are recruited from among graduates just out of university or that it involves agents already trained in European policies, which is partly debatable. The average age of recruitment is about 35, and EPSO indicates that 80% of the candidates have on average more than four years of professional experience (Chêne, 2008, p. 18; EPSO, 2009). Moreover, the diversification of the competition, which includes increasing numbers of ad hoc competitions by profession (data-processing specialists, translators and so on) or by policy (research, health and so on), has resulted in a very unequal weighting of competencies depending on whether they are related to European culture or to administrative culture. Under the effect of their contractualization, the agents working today in the European institutions have moreover neither the same status nor the same competencies, nor the same motivations, before even considering the 'vocation' factor. Previous experiences of Europe, finally, are very different. In short, although the ideal successful candidate defined as a young College of Europe graduate is very much in people's minds, it is very far from objectively defining the majority of the recruited population, which points to a very different relationship to the knowledge possessed when entering the institutions. Added to this is that training in the skills is often perceived as the opposite of what it claims to be, that is, as ultimately very abstract rather than practical for the job. There are also problems in focusing on cross-cutting aptitudes not specific to the characteristics of the jobs in the institutions. In the feedback document addressed by the staff representatives on the training issue, there is therefore much reference to wanting more specific training directly connected with the needs of the work in the institutions and to wishing to get back to the sense of their mission (Comité Central du Personnel, 2009).

It will also be useful to break with another dichotomy, that of the modern-versus-old opposition, or that of managerial 'modernity' versus the old model, which here structures a substantial part of the positions. Put straightforwardly, skills are less an innovation than a stylizing (and partly a translation into English managerial language) of matrices that were already very much in existence, but which the instruments of the reform re-characterized as

explicit, organized, and if not completely monopolistic, at least quite hegemonic.

Taking a detour through history will be very useful here. Between 1962 and 1965, on the initiative of Staff Committee representatives of the three communities, a whole series of reflections emerged on the ratings in the career-development reports used to determine promotion. In the provisional Staff Regulations Committee, a working group was thus formed on the application of Article 43, which provided that '[t]he ability, efficiency and conduct in the service of each official, with the exception of those in Grades A1 and A2, [would] be the subject of a periodical report made at least once every two years'.[10] The working group's report set forth a series of demands regarding the methods used for the ratings in these periodical reports, the phases of the latter as well as on how these are imparted to the official whose advancement is being appraised, but it is obviously interesting when it brings up the elements produced for the appraisal. While the so-called overall appraisal gives only a level of appraisal (Excellent, Very good, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory), the so-called analytical assessment, which the institutions would be free to adapt according to the Staff Regulations provisions, is of greater interest. It comes under three headings: Ability, Efficiency and Conduct in the Service. The second includes 'quality and quantity' of work, and the third 'sense of responsibility', relations in the service (with superiors, colleagues, subordinates, third parties), punctuality and overall behaviour. As for the Ability heading in which we are interested, it lists items hardly any different than those found today. These are:

(a) Knowledge required for the particular post
(b) Communication ability (oral and written)
(c) Ability to understand and assess the problems
(d) Adaptability
(e) Initiative
(f) Aptitude to organize own work

---

[10] Grades A1 and A2 were those of director-general and of deputy director-general, respectively.

(g) Aptitude to organize others' work
   (European Commission, Historical Archives, Bac 144/1992)

For a slight change in point of view and change of date, the list of training courses available in 1973 is also interesting (European Commission, 1973). It is organized into 16 sections:

|  |  |
|---|---|
| I. | Language courses |
| II. | Data processing |
| III. | Cycle of economic training and recycling |
| IV. | Course on public economic calculations |
| V. | PPBS (Planning Programming Budgeting System) |
| VI. | Project assessment |
| VII. | Statistics |
| VIII. | Management techniques |
| IX. | Communication and meeting-facilitation techniques |
| X. | In-depth study of communication techniques |
| XI. | Seminar on Community countries |
| XII. | Training at entry into the service |
| XIII. | Administrative writing |
| XIV. | Seminar for secretaries |
| XV. | Further training action |
| XVI. | Preparation for a change in category |

Resemblance with current training modules is striking. Skills were already prevalent, even though the word itself had yet to be brought into this world. Numerous forms of practical training (meetings, communication, writing techniques and so on) were on offer. There was a course on management techniques that included a section on management and a broader section around work organization (intercommunication and information channels) and team work. In passing, the commentary notes that this module was first introduced at the request of a number of civil servants the previous year. Conversely, there are some noticeable differences. On the one hand, French was the dominant language in the training courses, as it was, so it seems, the language of the administration. The course on administrative writing was thus aimed at 'officials who wish[ed] to improve their writing knowledge in

the administrative domain'. Only the module (required by the enlargement) on knowledge of the new member states, which by the way is no longer on offer, was dispensed exclusively in English (with possible translation for those who were not English-speaking). This course, and this is a difference with the current situation, no longer exists despite the integration of 12 new countries. But the main difference lies in the courses more directly focused on knowledge, like the induction courses lasting up to four weeks at the College of Europe for Grade A officials in the fields of 'Community law and political sciences' and the courses on 'upgrading knowledge in economics'.

Analysing these comparisons shows that this change was not a complete reversal of direction. At this first stage, it rather seems to be the product of a threefold effect: the disappearance of elements relating to the context of the member states and to the content of the policies, including those dispensed by officials in charge of the dossier as is done in many practice schools; the linguistic turning point that, via management, sanctions the domination of the English language, particularly in the categorizations of good administrative behaviour; finally and more generally speaking, the more general context of the managerialization of the practices and of the policy of promoting a new management culture common to the Commission, which at the material level (institutionalization of dedicated organizations, increase in the budgets) as well as the symbolic level contributed to making these instruments much more important, even to changing them into major issues, which they were undoubtedly not as much, by far, ten or twenty years earlier.[11]

## The Stakes Involved in Redefining the Social Competency of European Functionaries

Once the problems arising from these dichotomies are pointed out, their recurrence needs to be examined, as well as the conditions of their particularly strong resistance to being solved. Far from being anecdotal, these

---

[11] On the development of the human-resources policy in the institutions, see in particular Soret (2008).

false oppositions are in fact a symptom of other stakes, in particular those involved in the sociopolitical problem raised by the introduction of skills, namely, that of the distribution of power via the definition, the legitimation and finally the allocation of skills, defined as the authorization to act and to be recognized as legitimate in doing so. To put this differently (and this is our hypothesis), officializing the domination of skills in staff policies boils down to calling into question the local forms of the ambivalence on which the competency of the staff in the European institutions was based. By crediting categories explicitly based on the rationality of international management as opposed to the more magic or religious one of the fulfilment prophecies, it affects the processes that had previously governed the production of the body of functionaries as an elite body and, in the context of staff generation and renewal during the 2000s, its reproduction.

To understand this, it is useful to start with a quick theoretical refresher. For sociologists, competency essentially refers to two things that in the real world are conflated: a set of aptitudes for and in the job and, simultaneously, the possession of a capacity to exercise power legitimately (even legally, in the case of a legally defined competency), or for instance what Pierre Bourdieu (1996) calls 'social competency' or Neil Fligstein (2001) 'social skills'. This is to say that the definition of competencies is at the core of power relations. In connection with general culture, Pierre Bourdieu thus observed:

> '*Culture générale*' is also that confident relationship to specialized, particular, parcelized knowledge and its bearers that is afforded by the sense of having (had) access to the one true foundation, to *science*, matrix of all specific *techniques*, which are left to mere agents of *execution*. This undoubtedly explains the apparent wastefulness which leads to the requirement that countless useless facts be learned, and at the same time to a much longer period of schooling than would be necessary to gain the skills strictly necessary for a particular job. (Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 88–89)

By pointing out '[t]his contradiction between technical and social demands, between the competence required by the technical description of a job and the competence socially required by the

demands of legitimations' (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 89), the formulation highlights the duplicity of competency as aptitude and legitimation of a position of power. In this sociological definition, competency refers to an incorporated practice that can be seen in acts much more than in discourse, and the effectiveness of which, or if preferred the social magic of which is allowed by this ambiguity. This ambiguity is also the mainstay of urge-driven and ambivalent positions that can be taken on the subject of competency. Linked to the distribution of the resources within the social space, the anti-intellectualist urge is connected, for example, to the fact that, although summoned to convert to intellectual values (at least seemingly), those in dominant positions the furthest away from the public area (which is the closest to these intellectual values) scorn those who hold them and even more those who are their main craftsmen, as also observed by Bourdieu. There are moreover relations of homology between these same persons in dominant positions and agents placed in positions where, deprived of the objective possibility of owning these values in sufficient quantities to have the legitimating status that they confer, have no other choice, in order to occupy in turn legitimate positions, than to disqualify these values and reverse their very order.

This definition has the merit of clarifying both the stakes and the structure of the debates between general culture and skills. General culture, especially European general culture (including in particular a cross-cutting view of EU policies) is in this particular case at the basis of the formation of a European administrative elite in the form of senior European official, that is, the privileged agent of the European Idea of the formation of the political system supposed to serve it. It confers the assurance, or a critical comparative advantage in the practical command of relations to others, that makes it possible to keep at a distance national, technical or sectoral particularisms (and the agents representing them) that European officials deal with in the performance of their function. To put this differently and use the linguistic register of inheritance, which in this case is adapted, possessing general culture is the basis for the legitimation of a position of testamentary *executor* (of the prophets and the founding fathers, of a higher interest and so on)

diametrically opposed to the function of undifferentiated *executant* on which skills are based.

Posed as such, this formulation makes it possible to avoid two pitfalls (Robert, 2007b; Eymeri-Douzans, 2008; Georgakakis and de Lassalle, 2007b) – the first consisting in seeing skills as the product of a functional need and the second in seeing them as the rational and methodical application of a political agenda intended to destroy civil service – and to understand the allegiance of those who, much more in the form of an impulse than in that of a rational calculation, are invested with subverting the pre-existing model of a European elite defined in the form of senior European official. To state this differently, it is the relationship with the definition of civil service as a new nobility (Shore, 2000) – that is, both a greater or lesser objective distance and a more or less (dis) enchanting experience with its members – and even more generally with the 'old regime' (understand here the one before Santer, or the Delors period) that is at the basis of reactions to the model of competency, whether positive or negative.[12]

Although we cannot undertake here a systematic study of the relative positions of those defending skills in the institutions, we can nonetheless draw up a first list of predispositions to believing in the model. To start with their official promoters, that is, the members of the administration and human-resources sectors that implement them, it should be stressed that there is more than a sectoral interest in maximizing institutional or budgetary status. It is just as necessary if not more so to take greater account here of a form of individual and collective revenge, although surely seldom thought of as such, due to the fact that for a long time, the administration and human-resources sectors were not among the most popular, notably compared to the 'nobility' of Policy Makers or of the negotiators of the major directorates-general populated with agents more in conformity with the then dominant model. From this point of view, the 'mission', clearly given greater value since the Kinnock White Paper,

---

[12] Participating observation shows here that Community circles are still buzzing from the 'old regime' experience, some calling it the golden age, others on the contrary expressing resentment with regard to the arrogance of the president's entourage or of the senior officials close to power.

to modernize civil service around categories equipped with all the external attributes of modernity and managerial scientificity, offers the less 'noble' the attraction of a desirable and functional revolution.

For other, albeit converging reasons, a good part of the officials entering the service (in no way limited to agents from the new member states, many of whom share, for that matter, sociological dispositions analogous to those of the old countries) are placed in homologous positions.[13] This dimension also makes it possible to understand the force of the generational cleavage at work in these issues. The question is not whether these competencies are modern, as we have seen, but that this apparent modernity shifts the table of previously legitimate values, so much that many agents at the end of their career or recently retired no longer identify with them, while those entering the service consolidate their position by fitting into them. It also makes it possible to understand a cleavage more clearly related to educational competencies. Although general culture stood for a long time as a supporting competence for lawyers, who for a long time were many and dominant within the Commission, it was less valued among economists, for whom, on the contrary, knowing how to deal with numbers, the capacity to quantify objective movements (as tools do – this will be discussed further on) is an additive competency. From this point of view, it is probable that as in other cases of public administration, diffusing these models within the Commission (much more so, for that matter, than in the Council or, significantly, in the Court of Justice) has something to do with the growing weight in higher-level posts of economists and agents from management schools relative to lawyers (Georgakakis and de Lassalle, 2013). Significantly, the three members of the Holmquist group were not only Swedish, British and French but two were also economists (the third was an ENA-educated grammarian), in other words, anything but exemplary agents of the figure holding a doctorate in law that marked

---

[13] In our ongoing survey on recruitment, several members of the selection board have stressed that a considerable share of the agents from the new countries put on the short list had followed rather traditional *cursus honorum* studies (College of Europe, major graduate schools, universities known for the quality of their European studies), which is also confirmed in the summary of the EPSO survey on applicants' motivations (EPSO, 2009).

the model of the German-style high administrator (Daviet-Vincent, 2006) that dominated within the Commission for a long time.[14]

Posing the problem in this manner also begs specifying the share of so-called cultural cleavages in proximity to the skills model. On the representation side, and to follow the path indicated by anthropologists of the Commission, the debate on skills refers rather significantly to cleavages that are part of the ordinary culturalist typifications, the meshing of which is particularly dense and activated at the Commission: French on one side and British on the other or, in a broader form, South versus North, or henceforth even Old Europe/new Europe. In these dichotomies, the representation of 'British pragmatism' is opposed to 'French verbosity' or in its reverse form that of the French-style 'vision of Europe' to that of the Anglo-Saxon 'race to the bottom'. These kinds of oppositions can of course be multiplied ad infinitum.

It is useless to spend time deconstructing these dichotomies, because in fact a young Frenchman, an economist moving forward in a DG like DG Market, that is, also working exclusively in English, is also very likely to speak the language of pragmatism versus 'Daddy's Europe of yore', when a polyglot Briton with a long career in the European institutions no longer maintains close connections with his country of origin or is even sympathetic to the administrative reforms that have characterized it in the past 20 years. On the other hand, these culturalist dichotomies are a good symptom of the empire urges involved in defining the group. The agents working on these issues have indeed often projected this 'new' civil service as an extension of their own. This perception is not just a form of mimetic naturalness. It is a major domination-related stake in the sense that the effect of the processes aiming to bring about this reality is to confer on the agents of one's member state a key position, as much because of the symbolic advantages attached to embodying the model as because of their legitimate command of the practices.

---

[14] In these aspects, the situation is comparable to that within the member states. For an overview of the positions of juridicism and economism with regard to management and more broadly the relations between these two disciplines, see among others, Caillosse (2003).

From the point of view of the political engine of this reform as well as from that of the effects of perception, it should thus be noted that the distribution of the commanding posts in staff policy has rather become favourable to the British and the countries of the North these past ten years (for example, a Finnish, British and Estonian commissioner in charge of administration, a British then Danish – then again British – director of EPSO or the fact that several key positions within the training policy are British, not to mention that outside influences such as New Public Management and CIPD are Anglo-Saxon).[15] This is not, however, the absolute rule – the last three directors-general of administration were German, French and Greek. This objectification as a nationality is obviously very far from sufficient as an analysis, given that modes of allegiance to member states are often complex, particularly for agents who sometimes have several dozen years working in the European institutions, who are often scrupulous about balances or have become masters in the art of denying their national origin.[16] Neither does anything indicate, here again, that the change of model is the fruit of rational political calculation. Nonetheless, this factual situation has effects on the perception of the problem. This is due to the linguistic turn at work in the various staff-policy tools, like having established the 'skills' designation, contributing to objectify the domination of a new model, hence exacerbating perceptions born of the more or less great proximity with the reputedly 'Anglo-Saxon' newly dominating model.

In this specific context, the tension boded by this turn is all the more probable that it has sensitive political significance. The domination of a reputedly 'British' model involves a different definition of Europe and its institutions, hence of the function filled in them by the functionaries, that is, the definition and, here again, the legitimation of what they are. Although it is quite clear that within the institutions, the British were able to benefit from the Blair years (Kassim, 2008a) under the twofold aspect of his 'European opening' and his social liberalism, fairly well

---

[15] About the Danish director of EPSO, C. Ban (2010b) noted his very important role in undertaking the radical reform of the entrance competition.

[16] See Chapter 3 in this book.

adapted to the objective position of European functionaries and to the judgements of political taste that it implies, the 'British influence', or what is seen as such, remains marred for many civil servants with suspicion about the reality of the British 'European commitment', which was a strong internal value for a long time and has, precisely, been called into question in the new context focused on management. Added to this, pell-mell, are the memory of denunciations of Europe as being a *super*-state (which in this particular case prevents European functionaries from projecting themselves completely as *super*-functionaries) and the basic structure of a 'market-based approach', which is a heavy structure in the British approach to Europe and remains so for its current elites (to the detriment of the functionaries' political office) (Schmidt, 2009; Charle, 2001). This definition tips the scales on the side of a more traditional definition of European functionaries as international civil servants, and even tallies with the definition of a manager of a general secretariat or an execution agency, which is diametrically opposed to the definition of a pioneer in the construction of a new political form (whatever, for that matter, the final form). It is obviously not European functionaries' 'self-image' that is in question here but more basically, here again, their credit and their practical resources, that is, their social position relative to other agents, like the national civil servants or the lobbyists, but also their vocation and with it, all the social and historical work of constructing the body to which individual positions were adjusted, which is now reversed.

## Objectification of Competency, Break with the Founding Ambiguity and Reversal of the Group's Collective Trajectory

To understand this turn, it is both necessary to leave the register of history made into a thing in order to question history made into a body so as to make more visible the ambivalences constituent to the sociohistorical compromise that was previously at the basis of the definition of a European administrator's competency. An analysis makes it possible to understand that

it is not only because it changes its abstract model but because managerial rationalization breaks in practice with the ambiguities on which European functionaries' competency was based (between policy and administration, instrumental rationality and quasi-religious vocation, and of course national origin and service of the European interest), and on which the reconfiguration of competencies is likely to produce its strongest effects.

Ambiguity is in fact here a founding property. There was never a proper definition, as such, of a good European administrator. This is less due to a historical accident than to the complex political stakes involved in the definition. Beyond the problem raised by the congruence of administrative national 'models' and assuredly at the theoretical level, knowing what civil service is without a state, defining this new civil service reputed to hold a potentially higher European interest would have supposed a hypothetical political resolution both of the acceptance of its *supra*national status as of the empire struggles being played out on its model. Under these conditions, it is not completely surprising that the classic false scientific administrative debate on European civil service (does it refer to the old-fashioned French, German or British model? a bit of this, a bit of that?) has often taken the shape of a debate on 'how many angels can dance on the head of pin'. The ambiguity can be thought of as being, in its way, functional – as was later its qualification as French or continental when it came to reforming it after the Santer Commission crisis.

The institution of a European administration was thus the subject of many a historical hesitation. These hesitations were as much due to the persons at the head of the institutions as to the often conflictive relationship with those governing the member states. While Hallstein clearly wanted an administration to be set up, Monnet's idea was, it seems, different, and it was rather through a series of byways that European administration was forged under the ECSC (Conrad, 1992; Dumoulin, 2007; Mangenot, 2008).[17] Member states were far from favourable to a European administration. It can even be said that, with historical

---

[17] It will be noted here, however, that the term of functionary was preferred by Monnet as from 1952, as shown in a 6 October 1952 memo of the high authority on the remuneration of agents (Archives of the Foundation Jean Monnet, Lausanne, AMH 4/1).

variations, all of them were at one time or another unfavourable: France at least at the beginning then under Gaulle; Great Britain often and particularly under Thatcher, before getting high-level posts at the Commission; Germany, even though its representatives were reputed to be the most European, as was Helmut Kohl, who nonetheless criticized European administration as being a 'bureaucratic Moloch'.

These various obstacles were circumvented in the form of a non-choice and undoubtedly of a non-policy, at least in an explicit and orchestrated form, based on valuing academic competency and expertise (that is, very high qualifications) coupled with checking for a European vocation; in other words, this was less the work of producing a body to be assumed by the institutions than the work of selecting and supporting the *habitus*.[18] The various works in these circles published between the 1950s and the 1980s testify rather well to this established fact, as does the academic literature focused on nationality issues (Coombes, 1970; Michelmann, 1978). While insisting on the need to develop common sentiment, Cesare Balladore Pallieri, director of the ECSC administrative-staff division, suggested, among other examples, that the problem should be posed 'at the base', that is, at the level of 'the religion of Europe and integration', which according to him, was to be promoted in the officials' initial training in their member state (SAARBRUECK, 1956).

At this stage of the game, the exemplarity of the top leaders (founding fathers, commissioners and so on) and the recruitment policy appeared as very largely dominant instruments, to the detriment of other human-resources instruments (training, rating), and gave agents relative freedom once they were integrated (in the strongest sense of the term). Recruitment was thus always regarded as an important moment of the body factory (Ban, 2010a). Initially, recruitment happened through

---

[18] This form of 'orchestration with no conductor', or even what in a neo-barbarism could be called a 'soft *habitus* policy', makes it possible to understand the apparent paradox between on the one hand, the existence of a commune well demonstrated by anthropological work on the Commission and, on the other, the absence of 'proof of synthesis', which is just as precisely observed by Ann Stevens if we stick to the classic elements of producing a body (Stevens, 2003, p. 86).

European and administrative political leaders' personally approaching those who had been their close collaborators in their previous functions, whose trust they could secure and whose compatibility with their vision of the European plan could be tested. The Jean Monnet archives in Lausanne thus include much correspondence and memos on ECSC staff training referring to this personal dimension, along with the share of political interventions weighing in on the fledgling institutions.[19] All the members of the High Authority were in fact invited to be part of the recruitment process. This practice was thereafter continued and was an important factor in the institution of the European Economic Community.[20]

Thereafter, recruitment was partly neutralized in the form of a competition, but the latter still reflected the same process for manufacturing a new specifically European elite, under the twofold process of socialization *in actu* allowed by the long preparation time of the competition (or the many attempts) and of the selection of a *habitus* structured by the (multi)cultural provisions provided by the tests (see Chapter 6).

Added to this is what could be called a policy of exemplarity based on the figure of leader of Europe then later on portraits aimed at developing cardinal values. It should be underscored here that while formally, the European Commission seemed a hierarchized administration, it was also experienced as a community of project or destiny, within which there was relatively little distance between the combat led by the commissioners and the directors-general and those of the staff as a whole.[21] Symptomatically, strikes over staff issues were often joined by directors-general. As for the exemplarity of the leaders, it can be seen in the stylizing of commissioners' official biographies, which until the Prodi years rather clearly highlighted their European investment and their intellectual or expert competencies, in particular through their list of publications or conferences abroad, as can be discovered when

---

[19] Archives of the Foundation Jean Monnet, Lausanne, AMH 4/3.

[20] On these aspects, see in particular Dumoulin (2007) and the administration-related audio archives at the European University Institute in Florence.

[21] On directors-general's solidarity with the first big strikes of 1971, see the Emile Noël papers, archives at European University Institute in Florence.

examining issues of the in-house journal, *Courrier du personnel*.[22] Portraits of staff members in this journal then in the one that replaced it, *Commission en direct*, showed the same process: focused on the long-term view, the dimension of craftsmanship at the service of an idea and architects to implement it, passion in a quasi-religious dimension of the job and so on. Compared to these strong dimensions, staff policy in itself did not appear to be a major dimension, which undoubtedly fed into the perception of non-management of the Commission administration (Spence and Stevens, 2006).

In some ways, the reform called this compromise into question, both negatively and positively so to speak. Negatively, the reform used the Santer Commission's resignation and the experts' report on mismanagement to break with the prevailing dominant paradigm. Inclinations to reform had in fact emerged before the crisis, and these are what actually led to the latter, rather than the crisis leading to reform (Georgakakis, 2000, 2001 and 2009). Notwithstanding, the Santer crisis allowed a definition to be imposed of a European administration manager when it had been previously defined, at least in terms of representation, as a mission-based administration (with which it was obviously very far from coming to terms). The terms are important here. To say this differently, the discourse of the Kinnock reform largely delegitimized the model of a high-level administrator, located at the border of policy and administration, with eyes riveted on the prophetic objective of building a political Europe, founding its position on expert reasoning and the European interest to the benefit of a new 'good manager' figure equipped with a battery of instruments, the source of legitimacy of which is the economic world, no longer the testamentary executor of timeless figures, but the executant of Europe's temporal and political authorities (the Council and the College of Commissioners). Positively, the reform discourse was forging the model of an ethical and more modest, average administrator, devoted to the service of Europeans (rather than of Europe). Argumentation in favour of this evolution also upholds that the

---

[22] Back issues of *Courrier du personnel* are available at the European Community Archives, Brussels.

Commission should have a culture of service, must be at the service of citizens and so on, particularly because Europeans need this, all the more in view of their growing scepticism. Nonetheless, the Delors model tends to contradict this, in that it had given Europe a plan, and dreams and hopes to Europeans, who were not Eurosceptics, or at least less than today when they are no longer being offered perspectives.

It remains to be said that imposition of this new model came not only from the discourse but mostly from a whole set of practices. The different aspects of the reform first contributed to reinforcing the place of strictly administrative practices, as much because of the new rules (from the hardest form of budgetary rules to the softer form of codes of conduct) as because of the morphological effect of the increase in the posts reserved for management entailed by the reform, not to mention that the effects of self-censorship caused by fear of auditing (Bauer, 2008; Ellinas and Suleiman, 2008), changes which made the turn from 'mission administration to management administration', according to the coined expression, change the practices considerably. From this point of view, it should be added that the diffusion of skills was played out less on the ground of a battle of ideas than on one more naturalized with a functional obviousness of the change in practices required by the new environment. Significantly, it was without much public polemics or calling into question – unlike what might have occurred in the realm of status or wage policy – that work on the body was characterized in training schemes (symptomatized by their game, role-playing or situation-simulation practices) and now in the recruitment stages.

## The Ambivalences of Standardization

To conclude, how can the long-term effects of this model be discussed? Between the reformers' enthusiasm and the lamentations of the reformed (or at least some of them), the analysis incites to proceed in two directions.

The first consists in relativizing the changes induced by the diffusion of the new categories. Not everything is new, as seen above, and undoubtedly the change in the categories of administrative competency is less radical than it appears to be, even though stressing these categories has

been without any doubt reinforced by the advocated 'culture of service'. Between the production of a policy and the realities of its implementation, there is often more than a gap. The Commission is no exception to the rule, even though it should be noticed here that the circuit between the promoters and the consumers of the reform is rather short. For that matter, while the diffusion of these categories is powerful in the case of certain policies (such as training and recruitment), it is less so in others, and with variable effects depending on the job within the organization. Very important in the process of making these categories happen, the much disputed competency-assessment report gives senior-ranking officials, it seems, much more leeway than it advocates firmer categorizations. Studying the success of these categories in the policies that have used them does not preclude examining their concrete implementation. The case of the new recruitment policy begs questioning. On the one hand, it is clear that the reform championed by the Director of EPSO proceeded from the will to break with the old model and its elitist drifts (Ban, 2008). On the other, functionaries are not for all that any less the main actors of the process. It is not impossible that the classic ways of reproduction, or at least of the preservation of the values of the body, will continue to be perpetrated, even though it cannot be denied that the organization of the new process considerably limits the selection board's control over the selection. Moreover, the strengthening of staff policy and its simultaneous 'corporate' turn (European Commission, 2009) partly changes the game.

So it is undoubtedly by pointing to the more general process of standardization and the broader effects of the fight over classifications that it brings about that we are given a chance to specify the answer. Indeed, standardization comprises many and various facets. On the one hand, this 'return to standards' relegitimizes, in opposition to the 'pathology' of corruption or to elitist exceptionality, that which in the field of representations can represent a source of credit. On the other, standardization is a reflection of dedifferentiation of European bureaucratic elites from economic elites, or if preferred, a dedifferentiation of high public bureaucracy from the technocracy of private enterprises. In this sense, the will to break with the elite (or elitist) dimension associated with the formulation of the new culture of service, or even to democratize, in the case of recruitment,

needs to be further examined. By favouring the psycho-technical tests and methods of international management, there is less democratizing than favouring agents trained by and hailing from international management, in short, this is more like taking part in the age-old combat between the economic and the intellectual bourgeoisie, or even between the '*noblesse de robe*' (nobility acquired from office, often purchased) and the '*noblesse d'épée*' (older, knighted nobility), without necessarily understanding the stakes or the illusions involved in it. One last aspect remains to be stated, which holds the others together and for which we will only outline the entanglement, namely, that of the symbolic function and in particular the intellectual resources that have made it possible for administrators to embody, rightly or wrongly, a form of general interest. By affecting the process of ordination by recruitment as well as the legitimation practices, it affects, in one of the last bastions of a sanctifying definition of the administration and of its work, the foundations of cultural capital as one of the limits of the public/private distinction.

# 6

# Reforming EU Open Competitions or How the 'Custodians of Europe' Now Mimic International Managers

EU bureaucratic policies and reforms have promoted a new 'culture' that has had significant effects on the sociological foundations of the transnational Weberian *Stand*, which historically and politically, had thus far been the mainstay of EU civil servants. This is at the very least a crisis of reproduction, if not a process of de-objectification, both of which are worth studying. In this chapter, I would like to examine a crucial aspect of these sociopolitical reproduction issues by shedding some light on the selection process of EU civil servants, in particular on its critical first stage, namely the open competition to enter the EU institutions, or as per the traditional linguistic compromise of the EU institutions, '*concours*' (henceforward designated as 'Concours').

**173**

To draw attention to the shift represented by the new Concours and the problems that it has raised, we can juxtapose two statements as an epigraph. The first is by Francis Bacon: 'Knowledge is power'. The second statement, made with disenchanted humour, is by someone who got through the new EU Concours: 'We used to be clever monkeys; now we are only monkeys'. This is to say that the status of expertise and knowledge (of Europe, of its policies, of its formal and informal rules), which had been at the core of the technocratic model and its legitimation, has been radically changed by the new recruitment rules.

Indeed, since 2010, the selection process has shifted, in a way emblematic of the EU civil-service turn from 'mission' to 'management', to use a symptomatic expression in vogue in the European milieus since the mid-2000s. The former competition format was quite typical of the continental compromise on which this *Stand* (and many others before that) had been built. Consisting of a European knowledge-based multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ), a dissertation and an oral examination on the institutions, followed by a face-to-face interview with members of the selection board, it was devoted to testing the applicant's vocation to serve Europe and his or her ability to embody 'European capital' through his or her knowledge of EU institutions and policies, general culture, expertise-based reasoning and understanding of the rights and duties connected to the EU civil service. The new format promoted by the current selection authority (EPSO) set up under the Kinnock reform has since been based on two stages clearly drawn from a culture of undifferentiated international management. The first step now consists of a computer-based test (CBT) including exercises similar to those of the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), an IQ test and a behaviour-related MCQs, and no longer includes questions on European policies, culture or institutions, while the second step consists of a day-long session in an assessment centre, where what is mainly observed through several exercises is the candidates' personal soft skills and management skills.

The aim of this chapter is not to describe the new EU open competition or the process from which it was drawn (Ban, 2010a and 2010b), nor its morphological effects, which unfortunately would need a battery of different studies and data. Neither is it to produce a comparative

policy evaluation of the two models, which would involve many other issues in terms of budget, practical organization and comparison of results (a question in itself). The research question here is directly linked to the topic of this book and is based on an ongoing broader inquiry based on ECSC and EEC archives, ethnographic observations (in particular during training sessions and official debates on the topic), about 80 interviews with applicants (30 informal ones and 50 formal ones) and about 10 with members of the selection board of the past ten years.[1] This chapter shows to what extent these changes are breaking, or at least challenging, the consecration model that was previously at the source of the 'esprit de corps' as well as the 'symbolic capital' (both in sense of Bourdieu) of the EU administrative elite. While observing the radical change in status of dimensions such as European culture, sense of civil service or embodiment of the general interest to the benefit of a 'soft-skills-based win-for-life competition', as one interviewee put it, the chapter also points out that these changes have nothing to do with democratization – often the official explanation – but has led instead to de-differentiating this elite by moving it into greater conformity with the elite of the 'new spirit of capitalism' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007) that has been embraced across Western countries.

After a first historical part focusing on the invention of the Concours in the context of the European institutions, the chapter will study the sociological significance of the former format and will emphasize processes such as the making of a European body through profile selection, socialization and consecration, which all used to be key differentiation vectors. It will then show by contrast the break introduced by the reform of the open competition and will draw a few lessons from the diversity of positions expressed about the new spirit it embodies.

---

[1] I facilitated about 20 one-day training sessions over ten years at the French ENA. The ethnographic dimension is also fed by informal conversations I have had with my more than 500 students in European studies in Strasbourg, Bruges and Paris. Debates include several sessions at the 'Rendez-vous européens de Strasbourg' and a debate at the ENA in Paris with Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič, Director of EPSO and chairman of its board in 2011.

## An Open Competition for All Seasons?

Let us start by putting the EU Concours into a broader socio-historical context and by breaking with a few usual (and dubious) spontaneous perceptions. Among the different legends about the EU civil service, the open competition for entering the EU institutions was frequently presented and perceived as a typically French legacy of the European civil service. This legend was in line with the evolutions within the institutions, particularly the European Commission. After the Delors era, and even more after the resignation of the Santer Commission, there was intensive propaganda in favour of changing the administrative model and moving from the supposed French 'technocratic' model to a 'new' and 'modern' culture (Georgakakis, 2013a). Propaganda sometimes works and, indeed, many of my interviews have confirmed this general perception of the Concours as it was commonly seen (often with negative connotations).

Reference to this legacy is only half true, however. The EU's 'Concours-based recruitment' has a much broader history revealing a very simple sociological compromise. This first part provides some background elements intended to show that the former EU Concours were quite specific and quite different from the legend (even if the latter was probably part of the consecration process at a given moment). Given that the EU civil service is at the crossroads of many administrative traditions, the forms of the EU open competition have often been disputed, historically as well as politically speaking. Technical problems, as well as the usual (equivocal) problem of the balance of national models, have been at stake for a long time. As has often been the case in the field of staff policy, the consequence has been that the Concours was more a cultural compromise resulting from an incremental process than a clearly planned project, at least until the 2010 reform. Moreover, despite its 'single model' façade, for a long time the Concours was a relatively diverse and, to some extent, rather flexible form of recruitment.

## A Few Background Elements

Before studying the EU Concours, it is important to look at a broader historical picture of this social form. The Concours was born outside of Europe. Interestingly, given the imperial dimension of the EU, according to several authors, it is an old Chinese invention from the seventh century. The recruitment of a relatively small group of 'mandarins' was indeed a key issue for imperial China, and probably explains the extraordinary duration of this regime.[2] The ancient Chinese competition has been studied by several authors, including historians such as Étienne Balazs (Balazs, 1968; Balazs and Wright, 1964) and Pierre-Étienne Will (2000), as well as the sociologist Robert M. Marsh (1961). Most of them have emphasized the socio-logical dimension of the competition. The prestige of the Concours, the importance accorded to culture, art, memorization and written skills in the selection, the high level of selection and the long years of training for achieving it (Marsh [1961] significantly wrote that 'applicants worked furiously for years') have been the basis of a unique model of administrative elites. Moreover, despite the abundant and constant criticism of the system (basically around its artificial consistency or its monopoly position), the decline of the Empire is interpreted to have resulted from a break in the mechanics of the competition related to the Emperors' will to increase their control by appointing their own staff. Many internal conflicts occurred, made the position rigid on all sides and contributed to destroying the political administration of the Empire from within.

This model, now interpreted as a 'state building' model (to some extent comparable, then, with what was said about the EU in the 1990s), fascinated European thinkers during the Age of Enlightenment. For them, it consisted in what they called a 'non-inherited nobility', which seemed an alluring alternative to inherited nobility. The parallel is again

---

[2] There were about 25,000 'mandarins' in China's central administration and as many in the countryside, for a population of about 400 million at the end of the fifteenth century, a ratio very similar to that of the EU relative to its citizens.

interesting when comparing the new national European State Nobilities. Whatever the case, the 'Western model' of Concours was clearly imported from the Chinese experience as was demonstrated a long time ago, in 1943, in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (cited in Gernet, 1997). Many exams based on this model were experimented with in the eighteenth century, for the first time in Prussia under French influence (see also Bull, 2010). The British East India Company also produced a major impact in 1832, and in 1870 the competition model became dominant in the UK before crossing the Atlantic Ocean in 1883. The story of the Concours in Europe is fascinating from the angle of the circulation of ideas. Each country was so inspired for its model from its competing neighbours that it is difficult to map the circulations of influence. The French Concours of the late nineteenth century, that is, the period when the meritocracy model of the republican administration was invented, was strongly influenced by both the Prussians, winners of the 1870s war, and their law-based bureaucracy (Bull, 2010), and the British civil service, in particular through the Northcote-Trevelyan Report (Dreyfus, 2010). The institution in 1945 of the ENA in France as one of the main schools to access the country's '*grand corps*' changed the symbolic status of the Concours, but not really its principle and its form, nor the fact that there are many different Concours for accessing public service in France.

Most of the key elements of this type of competition are equivalent across borders. In every country, the open competition was set up to break ties with politicians (or broadly speaking, holders of political authority) and to increase the efficiency of the administration by testing the skills and the public vocation of the administrators to be recruited. From this point of view, it is important to note here that in theory as well as in the practices of the members of the selection boards, the exercise was not designed as a school examination, but as a way to enter state administration, where testing the candidates' capacity to embody the state and its continuity beyond political change was crucial. Contrary to the new ideologically inspired opposition between 'knowledge' and 'professional skills', in this first Concours, considered as a tool to guarantee the officials' written, arguing, negotiating and problem-solving capacities, there was also

no difference between the two. An oral examination – added for the first time in the UK – was introduced to allow more flexibility in the final step in order to recruit persons who would be a good fit with the organization. To ensure their independence, civil servants progressively managed to obtain a monopoly over the process of their recruitment (for a broader view on open competitions in European countries, see Dreyfus and Eymeri-Douzan, 2012).

## Statutory Genesis of the Open Competition for European Civil Service: Between a Supranational Spirit and Internal Struggles

The open competition to enter the European institutions is the result of the convergence of these historical influences with the requirement to recruit persons able to respond to the particular challenges of European integration. Strictly defined, the story of the Concours begins with the *statut*, the French word for staff regulations, which also means 'status'.[3] As shown by Yves Conrad (1989), the establishment of a *statut* and a civil-service career system was not an idea of Jean Monnet, who preferred 'high-ranking but temporary agents'. But it was not long before the project of a *statut* was prepared. A '*règlement général provisoire du personnel*' (provisional general staff regulations) was drafted in the summer of 1952, which became the '*statut*' of agents in September (AMH 4/1/19), and as of October 1952, the contractual dispositions were designed as temporary (AMH 4/1/7).[4] In a note aimed at distinguishing these agents from contractual agents written by Maurice Lagrange, a French lawyer and Advocate General at the Court

---

[3] Here, I prefer to use the French word. It was the one in use in the 1950s and 1960s within the institutions, but it also includes meanings that are different from those designated by 'staff regulations'. Beyond legal considerations, a *statut* implies, sociologically, a 'status position', which is not the case with the English translation. From a more structural linguistic perspective, the signifier also implies the state, which is of crucial importance for understanding the specificity of this civil service and its servants. Further on, I will do the same with 'jury' (instead of 'selection board', which has a different sociological meaning).

[4] All the references beginning with 'AMH' are archives from the Jean Monnet pour l'Europe Foundation in Lausanne, which can be consulted on site. The numbers are the archive call numbers. The other call numbers between brackets are from the European Commission archives.

of Justice (on Lagrange and the 'French connection' of public lawyers at the beginning Europe, see Mangenot, 2006), and commented on 6 October 1952 by Richard Hamburger, the Dutch Chief of Staff at the High Authority, the Concours is mentioned as the normal way for entering the institutions, with several flexibility clauses (AMH 4/1/10 – see also an abstract of this recommendation in Chapter 3). A series of duties is listed, including one indicating that agents must respect the supranational dimension of their functions.[5] In this first project for a *statut*, there is nevertheless no mention of recruitment, as noted by Hamburger (AMH 4/1/16).[6]

The question came up later, when the new staff regulations came into force on 1 July 1956. We do not have the details of the discussion about the Concours at the Commission of the Four Presidents – the one at which staff regulations were debated – but we know from historians of the European civil service that the Concours as well as the staff regulations were promoted by several members of the High Authority, in particular Paul Finet, a Belgian trade unionist, in order to prevent Monnet, and more broadly the French, who were considered at the time as having the most powerful administration, from having a free hand on recruitment and the staff rules (Conrad, 1989).[7] Technically speaking, part of the model was ultimately less French than borrowed from an Italian professor of administrative law, Guido Zanobini (CEAB 12 404).

---

**Context of the First Recruitments**

To understand the situation, it is important to consider the various problems that might have been involved in populating the ECSC. A sort of retrospective illusion may lead us to think that it was mostly about reaching a balance among nationalities, which was particularly important for the institutions to be successfully accomplished. But the conditions were quite different at a time when it was much more difficult to bet on their

---

[5] '*Les agents sont tenus au respect du caractère supranational de leurs fonctions*' (AMH 4/1/11).

[6] Here it is important to note that both Lagrange and Hamburger contributed to the development of the *statut*, with a difference. Lagrange, who had been in charge of staff issues since 1937 in France, including under Vichy, differentiated high-level officials from the others. Hamburger found this to be unfair and recommended the *statut* for all.

[7] The Commission of the four Presidents comprised the presidents of the High Authority, the Council, Parliament and the Court of Justice and was a major ECSC decision-making body.

sustainability and power. The vocation to join the new European institutions was therefore anything but obvious, and the new institutions brought together an unlikely assemblage of people mixing European militants and technicians of the sector, but also various sorts of pariahs (social as well as political in different ways, in the aftermath of World War II). This is particularly well shown in Mauve Carbonell's work (2008) on the members of the High Authority. The archives of the Jean Monnet Foundation for Europe in Lausanne (in particular AMH 4/3/) are very clear on the issues related to staffing the ECSC and confirm Conrad's and Seidel's work (Conrad, 1992; Seidel, 2010). At the very beginning, Monnet and the members of the High Authority decided to hire persons from their own circles. As in many nascent administrations, personal referrals were however numerous. Most of the letters of recommendation contained interesting profiles and values, often more related to Jean Monnet as a person and his past close relationship to the United States than to a purely European vocation. Nonetheless, the will to participate in the construction of Europe was one of the key arguments used by candidates. Bringing in talent was not all that easy, and many of these spontaneous vocations were not of the highest order (many, but not all; there were those like Georges Berthouin, for instance, Monnet's right-hand man, who was however at the time very young and in a peripheral position in the French administration). In addition, several persons solicited by Monnet refused to follow him to Luxembourg. For instance, the French political scientist, Maurice Duverger, even though he ultimately became an MEP at the end of his life, and the lawyer Paul Reuter, considered to be one of the major penmen of the Schuman Declaration, both refused. 'By leaving my occupation now', wrote the latter, 'I am likely to accept a lower position for material gain, to which I remain more sensitive than it may appear. By not taking my place on board this boat that I saw being built, my greatest regret is to not have the joy of working with you on a useful endeavor, the only one of its kind among those by which we are solicited, but should not everyone be satisfied with what they know how to do (AMH 4/3/146)?' Many high-level Steel and Coal managers, engineers or workers who feared the adventure, as they often wrote, also turned down the offer.

In any case, when the first *statut* of the European civil service was implemented in 1956, the setup of the Concours came to the table. From the start, the method of selection allowed several possibilities: *concours sur titre* (depending on the qualifications) or *concours sur épreuve* (depending on a test). For the latter, there were also two cases: a test, and written and oral exams, particularly for secretaries' linguistic skills; or in other cases, there was

**Notification of the first Concours at the ECSC** (CEAB, 1 1381)

DIVISION DU PERSONNEL
DE L'ADMINISTRATION
------------

Secrétariat

------------

RS/aw

Luxembourg, le 28 novembre 1956.

COMMUNICATION AU PERSONNEL
----------------------------

Il est porté à la connaissance du Personnel de la Haute Autorité que des avis de concours généraux pour les postes énumérés ci-après ont été publiés dans l'édition N° 27 du Journal Officiel de la Communauté, paru le 29 Novembre 1956:

| N° du Concours | Nature des fonctions |
|---|---|
| 1/L | – 3 traducteurs en langue allemande |
| 2/L | – 2 traducteurs en langue française |
| 3/L | – 2 traducteurs en langue néerlandaise |
| 4/L | – 2 traducteurs en langue italienne |
| 5/L | – 1 interprète de langue néerlandaise |
| 6/L | – 1 interprète de langue anglaise |
| 7/A | – 1 chef de service à la Division des Finances |
| 8/A | – 1 Membre de la Division des Finances |
| 9/A ) | |
| 10/A ) | – 3 Membres de la Division des Problèmes Industrials |
| 11/A ) | |
| 12/B | – 2 rédacteurs dans les services du Groupe d'Inspection |
| 13 et 14/B | – 2 rédacteurs à la Division des Statistiques |
| 15/A | – 1 Membre de la Division des Statistiques |
| 17/B | – 1 assistante sociale à la Division du Personnel et de l'Administration |
| 18/B | – 1 correcteur de langue italienne |
| 19/B | – 1 correcteur de langue néerlandaise |
| 20/B | – 1 correcteur de langue française |
| 21/B | – 1 rédacteur à la Division du Personnel et de l'Administration (bureau des Prélèvements) |
| 22/B | – 1 rédacteur-comptable à la Division du Personnel et de l'Administration (Administration Financière) |
| 24/B | – 1 chef de fabrication au Service des Publications de la Division du Personnel et de l'Administration |
| 27/C | – 1 mécanicien pour l'entretien des machines de bureau |
| 28/C | – 1 technicien – électricien |
| 29/C | – 1 aide-opérateur pour la manipulation des installations d'interprétation simultanée |
| 30/C | – 1 technicien pour l'entretien général au Service Matériel et Installations de la Division du Personnel et de l'Administration |
| 31/C | – 1 opérateur-mécanographie |
| 32/C | – 14 secrétaires sténo-dactylographes de langue allemande |
| 33/C | – 15 secrétaires sténo-dactylographes de langue française |
| 34/C | – 5 secrétaires sténo-dactylographes de langue italienne |
| 35/C | – 5 secrétaires sténo-dactylographes de langue néerlandaise |

only an interview of the candidate. Juries (the selection boards) were made up of the head of the relevant service, two agents with the appropriate technical skills and one agent designated by the chairman and agreed on by the Staff Committee. In the second case, the jury was from a higher level. It was made up of one member of the administrative commission (the one deciding whether the post was open or not and making the final statement on the results of the Concours), one representative of the working group, one director in charge of the post, the staff director and, again, one person appointed by the chairman and agreed on by the Staff Committee. In both cases, the selection proposed an order of selection to the administrative commission, which made the final decision. At the end of November, a first series of positions were open for the Concours, as shown below.

## Beyond the Doctrine, Incremental Reforms

Throughout the entire history of the Concours, many issues have been raised. The duration of the open competition, three months, established since October 1956 in a note (1/059), often made it difficult to set a meeting of the jury, or selection board. A number of legal issues were also raised. To solve them, the French *Conseil d'État* (state council) was referred to several times (the archives have also kept a guide to the French '*attaché de prefecture*' corps) as well as the Italian one, with reference to Italian public administration probably being pushed by Cesare Balladore Pallieri, an Italian official who was appointed Staff Director and furthermore strongly influenced the definition of civil service.

In October 1963 (CEAB2, 3559, 04), the fact that the jury was to be chaired by a member of the High Authority, the different steps between an open position to effective recruitment and other factors led to a need of reform, particularly regarding the institution of a permanent jury. Another important step was the merging of the institutions. At this crossroads, the first President of the EEC Commission, Walter Hallstein, who also played a major role in building a European civil service that would be independent and competitive vis-à-vis those of the member states along a path quite close to what was called the 'State Building Strategy' under Delors, insisted on making European civil service more homogeneous across institutional

differences. As in many other aspects, fear of the other institutions' being absorbed by the EEC Commission made a completely homogeneous Concours unthinkable. When the 'big' Concours to enter the European Commission in the 1990s was instituted, other questions were raised, such as nationality and gender balances.

A permanent feature was the tension surrounding the wish of selecting EU officials through neutral procedures and that of finding persons who, beyond their competencies, were expected to embody these institutions and prove that their involvement was a long-term commitment. From the beginning, applicant interviews were considered a good compromise for solving this tension, especially when recruiting administrators. At another level, the Commission was in a period in which it was connected with universities in many aspects, which had important effects on European law and more broadly on European studies (Bailleux, 2014). In this context, one of the ideas was to prepare future officials for their European vocation as soon as they had graduated, more specifically through an official open preparation session such as at the Pantheon-Sorbonne University in the 1960s (Bossuat, 2011).

The story of the Concours after its birth is an incremental story punctuated by changes and challenges from a number of member states – demands to change the balance of the examination, for instance – sometimes even challenging its very existence. Once Great Britain and Denmark joined the EU, the specificity of the administrative model was often contested; interestingly, the Emile Noël collection at the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence contains a speech that he delivered in London at the time of the enlargement, in which as secretary-general he promoted the spirit of European civil service, the intention being to prevent any problem with the model. The problem would come up the 1980s and more so during the 1990s, when the British and the Danish had consolidated their position within the institutions, and also after the first waves of 'new public management reforms' in their own countries (or in the Netherlands, rallying the Dutch to the cause). The British were for instance against testing 'general culture', which was supposed to be French, whereas French diplomats backed '*culture générale*', though on the whole, British candidates succeed better with general culture

than without it, and French candidates were less successful with it than without it.[8] In this context, the test on European culture disappeared to the benefit of numerical-reasoning tests, then reappeared a few years later... to disappear again.

From the start, there were many technical issues in setting up the selection, particularly with the development of the big Concours drawing more than 50,000 applicants in the 1980s. Following suspicion of fraud, some were cancelled, such as in the late 1990s, in a climate of high tension between the College and its staff (Georgakakis 2000). At the same time, the European enlargement period through to 2000 contributed to diversifying the Concours, each of the institutions developing its own staff, especially in the Commission, which had an enormous range of distinct specialities (law, public administration, economics, agriculture, research, health and medicine, information technology and so on). Depending on the jury, the oral examination also included questions on management, work experience and skills, though always mixed into broader questions on EU policies and policy instruments. As said by a Dutch interviewee who was a former jury chair, the oral examination was a 'cultural compromise' of various traditions.y

## Building the Symbolic Capital and the Esprit de Corps of an Alternative Elite

A social sciences perspective assimilating the Concours to a rite of institution cannot be taken for granted in the case of EU administrations, particularly given the cultural diversity of its staff and the diversity of the more or less implicit definition of what good administration is. As we have seen, there was also a great variety of open competitions, with differences depending on the institution, the type of post, the speciality and the period (Christensen, 2015). The overall framework of the

---

[8] We are using nationalities (the British, the French), even though these positions were also supported, if not pushed, by a number of member states and their representatives in Brussels. Actually, the position of British or Danish civil servants as individuals were often nuanced, some of them being proud of speaking French and distancing themselves from their national models, for instance.

Concours contained, however, enough key common features and regular subjects to convince that beyond the founding compromise, the Concours functioned as a *modus operandi* to form a group unified by a relative esprit de corps, but also by a common symbolic authority to embody the European interest. This seems to be even more the case that the open competition was the only single common reference and provided distinctiveness in a context where there was no specific school framing the process. Specific schools such as the College of Europe were exceptions and never in a monopoly situation, like the ENA in France, or one of oligopoly as in other countries (Schnabel, 1998). To understand the process, it is important to point out that the Concours consisted of three different, complementary dimensions: that of a selection process, of course, but also of a socialization process and of a consecration process.

Regarding the first dimension, the process was highly selective, as it is still today. The probability of succeeding was low, between 0.5% and 1%. This had an impact, as we will see, on the consecration power of the process. In any case, the selection process was meant to select agents possessing a set of academic, as well as social skills including a series of skills related to specifically European aspects. The part on European general knowledge was removed during the 1990s to the benefit of standardized verbal- and numerical-reasoning tests (via multiple-choice questions, or MCQs) and for administrators, of dissertations focusing for the most part on European subjects (treaties, statutes, European policies and their instruments and so on). The final oral examination was designed not only as a way of double-checking the previous parts of the competition but above all to evaluate aptitude to fill the post, specific knowledge, EU knowledge and what the calls for applications described as a 'good ability to adapt to multicultural environments'. This latter criterion was important. Though never explicitly, an applicant reproducing his or her national stereotype too obviously stood a poor chance of passing the oral examination before a board made up of officials of other nationalities. Questions on founding fathers' names, for instance, were not questions about history but designed to check that an applicant was able to think out of the box of his or her national references. A French applicant proudly answering 'Monnet, Schuman and Delors' would be more poorly assessed than one citing 'Adenauer, Monnet and Spinelli', for instance. In the same vein, a former president of the jury told me the story of

a Frenchman with the best results in the first two stages, but so focused on pure knowledge and embodying his French '*Grande École*' style during the oral examination that no member of the jury finally found him eligible to work in the European environment.

This emphasis on European knowledge and culture was however in line with the will to recruit applicants with expertise, academically certified if possible. From a historical point of view, it came to be known that the first president of the Commission wished to be surrounded by high-level lawyers close to German senior bureaucracy, a model that was not in contradiction with the French model of technocrats, even if on different bases. The German definition of knowledge is closer to a specialist and academic (Humboldtian) style while the French style involves more cross-cutting skills and rhetorical competencies, but both imply a legitimation of senior civil servants based on the certification (or the display) of technical competencies, whether in law, economics or hard science. Beyond the cultural compromise, the development of expertise has been an extremely important resource for building European civil service. Deprived of the resources of state officials, such as that of embodying the physical force of a state, European civil servants developed alternative resources that were more or less adapted to their position in the middle of member states and economic interests (see Chapter 2). But the sense of expertise also has to be nuanced. As shown in interviews and training manuals, the expertise at stake was also European expertise, reflecting the need for a European civil servant to embody the general interest of Europe and not the culture of a specific member state, and to solve problems beyond particular interests. All of this led to placing value on distanced cultural dispositions and understanding of the European dimension of Europe.

Finally, and contrary to the new official discourse on culture, the skills being tested were also closer to social skills than to those usually tested in a purely academic exam. According to many interviews with members of the jury and applicants, testing general culture, for instance, was not about testing knowledge but rather a tool for grasping the applicants' skills in terms of ability, vivacity, art of exposing an argument, writing and, in the oral examination, speaking. The oral examination also ensured that the 'selected' would have a few cardinal dispositions (distance from national stereotypes, listening capacity, ability to verbalize knowledge when

analysing problems, ability to work and more generally to live in an expatriation context and so on), which would enable them to evolve lastingly within the European institutions or to represent these in the outside world. In some cases, depending on the nationality, the criteria were even closer to a skills-based definition. In his training book for the former Concours, Robert Gielisse, an EU head of unit (at the time) from the Netherlands defines the following criteria: 'insight and creativity, communication skills and sensitivity, credibility, powers of persuasion and firmness, effectiveness' (Gielisse, 2006, p. 174). What he writes under 'knowledge of the work field' clearly shows differences with purely knowledge-based exams. Although the knowledge part is the 'main course of the interview', an expression clearly in phase with the symbolic added value at stake, he underscores that this is only half of the grade and that the six criteria he has given will be tested. Moreover, after having recommended not to be too technical even on technical issues, he gives an idea of the knowledge required: 'a good way of preparing yourself for the interview is to look at the Web site of those DGs dealing with that field [the one for which the candidate is applying]. Follow also the specialized press and some more general English/French (*Times, le Monde*, etc.)' (p. 177). Another part is on the general and specific EU context, including Staff Regulations, which were considered a cornerstone. The MCQs on European culture were an attempt at building a European culture to open future civil servants' minds to something other than their own national culture. The linguistic skills needed in practice played an important role per se, but also a role in promoting the diversity of European culture and the multiculturalism making good servants of Europe.

All the same, even though the selection process singled out different types of persons, particularly given the number of specialized competitions, it legitimized a common model where cultural capital was a central piece or even the overall framework.[9] The population favoured by the Concours form

---

[9] As we know, the reality of frameworks are particularly manifest when they are disrupted. Complaining about the fact that the level of the new generation was falling, a former (German) member of the jury in the early 2000s told me, quite upset: 'Can you imagine? When we were talking about peace policies, I asked him something about the Treaty of Westphalia, and he answered that he did not remember if that was after or before Amsterdam!'

was clearly from the middle class with an international background, confirmed by academic credentials and ability, but at the same time, it was not necessarily from the highest stratum of the middle class, in particular in the biggest member states, where the dominant classes did not invest in permanent positions in the European institutions. The major emphasis placed on European values and the European professional context de facto targeted people having invested in Europe, or able to do so before being invested by it.

Beyond the selection of profiles, in this model the Concours was also an important socialization moment. The duration of the open competition – about two years between registration and results, sometimes more – was important. The Concours preparation time was also enormous for another reason. Very few applicants succeeded the first time around. Most of the time, it took at least three tries to be successful. At the time, when the big Concours were set up only three or four times every ten years, it could be said that applicants spent a substantial time of their life facing the competition. When the competition was reformed, this was widely criticized in the name of an understandable human argument, namely that the applicants were under particularly high pressure for an excessively long time. Sociologically speaking, however, time is an operator for converting those involved and helping them into a change of status.

As a matter of fact, applicants spent a long time working on the basics of required common knowledge (treaties, legal grounds, policy instruments), but also on understanding their environment. The MCQs included many questions on Staff Regulations, also a subject of study, as well as questions on historical or contextual elements of Europe. Contrary to what is often argued, this did not imply that applicants were to be converted, ideologically speaking. The idea was to give them a sort of sense of their new community, with shared references, a minimum common background and so on. In a context where there was no common school, all of this played the role of front-load socialization (Ban, 2013) to embody their new position, and more broadly, the role of a European civil servant open to the diversity of cultures within the institutions.

It was not just socialization to knowledge of Europe. It was also a form of group exercise. This is where the role of training sessions came in. Some of these were (and still are) part of a 'market' made up of several entities: private institutes selling training sessions, universities

training their students, permanent representations or services of foreign or European ministers, as well as European civil-servant trade unions, in different capitals but mainly in Brussels. The training was a socialization tool, not only in its content but also as a collective act (meeting with other applicants, meeting with trainers belonging or having belonged to the institutions, circulation of what was being said unofficially about the institutions and how they worked). It was also important for those already working in the circles of the institutions within the field of Eurocracy. In addition, applicants worked collectively in private sessions. Frequently in the interviews, applicants have talked about the people they already knew on the day of the examination, particularly, but not only in Brussels. To say this differently, there was a network of applicants, old ones and new ones, giving each other advice or information, acting as a second circle of the institutions and their staff.

Last but not least, the Concours was also a consecration process. People were empowered by succeeding in it. Considering the high selection level, they were given the feeling of a high level of merit and excellence, differentiating them from others ('We knew that of the thousands of persons, only some of us would survive', would the interviewees proudly explain, or bitterly when they failed). This feeling also stemmed the form of the competition, and the fact that the knowledge-based legitimation gave them a specific distinctiveness as member of this new European elite. General culture, knowledge and, typically here, European culture used to be core elements and would make the accepted applicants distinctly proud of their success.[10] In many interviews, the oral examination was referred to as a debate on European integration or policies, with applicants describing how they argued anxiously but intellectually with members of the jury. This was typical of the elite's culture-based legitimacy, placed consistently at the top of the order of symbolic values.

To understand the consecration effect of the Concours, it is first crucial to emphasize its institutional nature, which marks a significant

---

[10] I am not ignoring the fact that people might well insist on the academic dimension because they are interviewed by . . . an academic. Nevertheless, interviews conducted in the private sector by the same scholar gave different results.

difference with selection into a private organization. Codification had always weighed heavily in the Concours procedure. It existed from the start and seemed to be the product, on the one hand, of the legacy of the Concours, with all its law-based roots promoted by the Commission's in-house lawyers, and on the other hand, of the need to define common rules for selecting officials from across different institutions, nationalities, and definitions of Europe and what its servants should be. While codification in a national system is a way of ensuring the continuity of civil service, here it is a way of ensuring that the same definitions will be shared across the substantial differences likely to emerge among the different persons involved in the recruitment process.

Here again, the archives are very instructive. They contain many documents reporting on meetings among institutions, joint committees including the staff, instructions to set rules regarding the members of the jury, not only of their composition but of the modalities and criteria with which they were to comply. To say this in the words of sociology of institutions, the publication of the Concours included an infinity of sedimented institutional investments. For the applicants, a careful reading of the 'Avis de Concours' (Notice of Competition) was already a first step.[11] This was not only a socialization matter (integrating the rules of the Concours, the main values and so on) but also an official act officializing their willingness to become an official, so to speak. As an applicant said, 'When you read the Avis de Concours, that's really something, everything changes; you are now determined to officialize that you want to become a European official'.

Another important aspect of this consecration process was the 'recruitment by peers' system. This system is important, legally speaking, but also sociologically speaking, as when being accepted into standing nobility. At first, selection was made by a top executive. Then, the jury was chaired by a member of the High Authority and acquired significant autonomy. Later, the jury was usually made up of a senior official, sometimes a retired director or director-general, and two administration

---

[11] Here again, the translation tends to diminish the importance of the official dimension included in the term 'avis'.

members working in the services, as policy makers for instance, and two members of the staff committee belonging to the trade unions. In the former Concours, the jury was not an abstraction, seated at a distance or virtual, because the last step was to meet face-to-face with the jury. This face-to-face meeting with the whole of the board sometimes turned into a confrontation. Some interviewees told of their agonizing battle to convince a member of the board who had stood against an argument they had developed and of how they had managed to 'win' or 'make their point'. But beyond that, the fact remains that the winners seemed to feel accepted by their new peers in a way close to a knighting process. Applicants felt they were being consecrated directly by the institution's delegate before them and consequently entered the group, if not the European civil service, as if entering a religious order.

Finally, there was also a ritual-like, even sacred dimension. The location of the first examination was a big hall (for instance, the Heysel Stadium in Belgium) with a 'cathedral-like atmosphere' (as described by many interviewees), with thousands of people in it, all there for the same reason, sharing the same fears (most of them mentioned the impressive and intimidating environment of the former first stage of recruitment). Moreover, the exercise was highly ritualized: finding one's seat, remaining silent, waiting for everybody, waiting for the subject to be passed around, remaining silent once again, watching the organizers open the envelope then distribute its contents to thousands of tables and people, waiting again, being authorized to take up one's pencil and so on. Not everyone followed this ritual, of course, but it was part of the institutional memory and was at least partly reproduced in other staff-selection mechanisms. The collective dimension ('we suffered together') was important. The series of tests and field events also used to be organized along a symbolic line, starting from a collective area and ending in an individual meeting with (and de facto within) the institution.

At the end of this part, it can be said that the open competition worked as a rite of institution, the function of which, beyond selection, was to separate people likely to be accepted for entry from the others. As such, it probably contributed to closing the institution by forging its autonomy and empowering those going through it. As a consequence, the Concours contributed to making a new elite that was clearly

differentiated from national administrative elites through the importance it gave to European culture and knowledge, but also from the economic and business elite through its institutional dimension and the production of a 'charisma of service'. [12]

**Meeting the Criteria Through the Concours**

*It is hard to imagine the former Concours and disconnect from the legends built around it, and at the same time grasp its rite-of-institution dimension. The preparation manuals are good indicators, while they are also one of the applicants' socialization instruments* (Gielesse, 2006; Bezirtzoglou, 2007). *Nonetheless, the following long excerpt from an interview with a man who had chaired the jury on many occasions, was German and had worked at the European Commission for 30 years, explains some of its dimensions, including its procedural and law-based aspects, the cultural compromise of the test and even the reproduction effect within the circle of those who have the vocation or the experience of working in the context of European policies. The interview was conducted in Brussels in 2007. This interview is a unique opportunity to understand and experience the pace and the expectations of the process, so we have cited it at greater length than the other interviews.*

So today, in the *avis de concours* [Notice of Competition], the first sentence says that the oral examination is intended to test the candidate's capacity to assume the described such or such office. Because you're also testing them for knowledge in the field and in European general culture, and for the multicultural environment.

Well, each time we run a Concours, the jury has to agree on the weight of each of the criteria. So we have to refer to the *avis de concours*. In today's *avis de concours*, there are these four different criteria: aptitudes for the office, specific knowledge, EU knowledge and adaptability to working in a multicultural context.

So we have 40 points for the oral examination. How do we distribute them over the four criteria?

So there's a first evolution here with a clear tendency to give general qualities more importance than to knowledge. Because knowledge has already been tested in the preselection tests, or in the written examination.

---

[12] Just as a reminder, in Weberian theory, charisma of service is quite different from political charisma. It is related to the authority of a priest and to what makes him able to order the ritual in church (Weber and Eisenstadt, 1968). This concept also looks at the source of the symbolic capital in Bourdieu's Theory of State (Wacquant, 2005).

. . .

The way the interviews go is as follows; this is more or less how I did it the last time.

We set out one hour per applicant: 45 minutes for the interview, 10 to 15 minutes for evaluation and say, 5 minutes between candidates.

The jury arrives in the morning. There's a file for each of the seven candidates who will be tested that day. In the file, their application, their resume and so on. There's their work in the written exam; for instance, one of the topics was the provisions in the constitution draft in the area of foreign relations as proposed by the Convention on the Future of Europe.

So there's this written work with the grades given by two anonymous graders with the jury sheet, and the grade signed by the chairman of the jury. There's the test in the main language with a grade annotated by outside consultants (because I don't speak Hungarian or Maltese).

And when the candidate gets there, he has to give the Concours secretary a resume summarized into one page, A4 format.

We get that page too; it's an updated resume because between the beginning of the Concours and the oral examination a year has gone by.

The candidate gets there: Hello Sir, are you Mr. So-and-So? Congratulations for having got this far in the Concours, there have been so many candidates and now you're in the final stretch.

The purpose of this oral examination is to select from the 20 candidates still running the best 15 who will be shortlisted.

To do so, we must now move on to the oral examination, which aims to... and I state the four criteria. And then I tell him that the interview is conducted according to an identical plan for every candidate. So after my presentation, we give him the floor and he presents his resume; at some point, three or four minutes later, we take some time to ask him questions to clarify his resume. And since we have a domain that's extremely broad, 'European public administration, internal actions and so on', we have to find a specialization for him. We'll find the applicant's specialization through our questions about his resume.

Then we move on to knowledge in the domain he is supposed to know best, then the EU, and through all these questions we'll be evaluating his capacities to serve the office and his experience of multicultural spheres and how he sees it all.

**DG**: But how do you do that?

**PJ**: Hang on! At the end of the interview, if he has a question for the jury, that's when. Then we give him the floor.

So depending on his specialization, that's more or less easy to do. If he studied international relations, he has some knowledge in the trade field so

we tell him what the trade-policy priorities are, what the instruments are if any, the place of the member states and the Commission in international negotiations, and so on and so forth.

Then we can ask him: Is fishing a common Community policy? Yes, good. So what are its goals, what are its instruments, what are its problems? Now, that's a broad base of questions that we can try out and reformulate.

For aptitude for office, I first look at motivation, reasoning capacity; it's 'is he being consistent?', it's his ability to synthesize. You get all this through the questions, the stress management.

That is something you mostly see in the juries because there are men and women, of course, and so women often tend to say 'oh, poor thing, you've stressed him out, you've unsettled him', so there's the motherly instinct coming into play. I consider that this warrants being noted.

So we have stress management, motivation, team work, and we try to see, if he's already worked in a team, his appreciation of that.

So of course if we ask him directly – this happened in a previous jury – 'Are you a team worker?' They all say 'Yes!' so we kind of have to invent something different.

Then, adaptability to a multicultural environment, the first thing we have to find out is whether they've already had some experience with that. In their country of origin, did they ever deal with multicultural-type problems, and was a Slovak in charge of the gipsy minority? Or immigrants or whatever. Or have they ever lived, studied, worked abroad? Are they open to linguistic knowledge? Do they understand that to gain access to another culture they have to learn the language?

It's quite difficult because of course everyone will have an official speech on multiculturalism. But it's hard to grasp.

**DG**: But doesn't this favour... it so happens that I sometimes work in Poland and we know that people who have lived abroad, many of those are, after all, of a certain social level, so those whose father was a diplomat...

**PJ**: Yes, he was a member of the *Nomenklatura* who managed the switch to privatization at the perfect moment! We don't make the slightest mention of this. But this kind of person can be favoured by that. But there are many who benefitted from the ERASMUS programmes. In fact, I already said this at the last EU-15 Concours: ERASMUS is a fabulous success.

Okay, we can't get rid of all the limiting factors. We have to make do with them. In any event, the result of the last competitions that I've over-seen since'98 is very clear. Between two-thirds and three-fourths of the persons have knowledge of the EU, of its way of doing things, of the fields in which they worked directly or indirectly as interns, temporary assistants, in-house or outside consultants and so on.

## Breaking with Social Reproduction?

To what extent was this model a source of social reproduction? The answer is more complex than it may first seem. On the one hand, people who knew European affairs, had been trained for them in academic programmes, or had been working in the field of Eurocracy more or less closely to the institutional centre, or working with it, had greater access to the open competition (at least for non-specialized positions of administrators). More than one-third of the applicants declared that they had worked in the institutions, and another share probably worked around or in connection with the institutions.[13] People already close to the centre were also most likely to be interviewed and, as far as we know, to be recruited.

On the other hand, from the start, the European open competition broke away from the consecration path of national elites and tended to build a new elite corps clearly differentiated from national administrative and transnational economic or business elites. The typical national elites had still been holding temporary positions in cabinets or benefited from direct appointments by member states at the higher levels (see Chapter 4). But there were less of these at mid-level administration posts and especially among officials recruited on the basis of the Concours. The model also favoured persons belonging to the middle class located at the cultural pole of Bourdieu's social space. They did not belong to the 'most dominant of the dominant' but were rather like a second-order transnational elite with, most of the time, a vocation for civil service breaking with transnational business elites.

This ambivalence may suggest that the new form of Concours introduced in 2010 has an equally ambivalent effect. Although it clearly breaks with the social reproduction of the alternative European elites in the making, there are some doubts about the fact that it encourages democratization as we will see further in this chapter. What is at stake is more

---

[13] This number is drawn from a questionnaire addressed to 10,000 persons and published by EPSO in 2010.

likely a change in the legitimation of an elite model imitating, in this case, the international neoliberal model of transnational business managers.

## A Radical Break

The processes driving the recruitment reform were diverse. It is indeed difficult to believe that every aspect was considered or anticipated, and, on this subject as well as more broadly on all administrative issues after the 2000s and the Kinnock reform, there was strong belief in and fascination with the private-sector and US model. The motives were probably based in part on wishing to solve practical problems such as the number of applicants and litigations, whereas another part was probably more ideological (Ban, 2010b, 2013).[14] Finally, for the sitting Commissioner (a Slovak social democrat, former diplomat) and, more generally, for the staff-policy subfield, recruitment was not a priority compared to bigger issues such as the review of the staff regulations or the reform of the calculation method for wages. That left the director of EPSO a free hand to introduce a radical reform and to throw himself into an unprecedented communication campaign.

The form of the new Concours (including the exercise model) was extensively presented by EPSO in a salutary transparency effort (http://europa.eu/epso/index_en.htm), and various new manuals completed the information in great detail (see for instance Dross et al., 2013; Baneth, 2016). Briefly, the reform consisted of two main points. The first was to eliminate all testing related to European culture and knowledge of Europe, European law, economics or public policies, as well as knowledge of public administration, beginning with European public administration. The second was to replace all testing in forms belonging to the classic continental model, including dissertations and anything resembling a conversation with the jury, with a model that was partly outsourced and inspired by the

---

[14] The fact that the reform was steered by a team (led by a Briton who was a former member of the Kinnock Cabinet) oriented by a clear will to break with any Oxbridge model or European equivalent (College of Europe), and simultaneously with little expertise in recruitment systems for civil services other than in the United Kingdom or the United States probably played a role, in particular by importing the British post-Thatcher 'fast stream' model and by outsourcing part of the job to private companies under contract.

private sector, considered a 'modern way of selection'. As a consequence, the reform divided the new open competition into two stages. The first now consists in computer-based testing including three tests: verbal and numerical reasoning (similar to the GMAT), abstract reasoning (similar to an IQ test) and situational judgement tests. For the small percentage of applicants succeeding in the first stage, the second one consists of a day-long set of essentially skills-based tests in an assessment centre.

Leaving aside opinions on this reform, it is important to note here that both the rhetoric and the practices of the new recruitment format define the exact opposite to the former model in most of the different dimensions previously highlighted. To take a few emblematic dimensions, general culture, knowledge and, typically here, European culture, which used to be core elements, clearly appeared as a target. In a message promoting a conference on the EU Concours in London in March 2010, EPSO wrote: 'We will also provide information about our new selection procedures for graduate entrants. From 2010, these are changing and move away from the traditional EU-knowledge testing towards a competency-based model which we feel is needed to find candidates with the ability and potential that we want to help develop modern Europe' (University Association for Contemporary European Studies e-mail list, March 2010). EPSO people explained at several conferences that 'there [was] no need to learn and to have knowledge in the age of the Internet' and so that any knowledge on EU institutions was no longer useful. This phrasing was used as a selling argument in the British press and would become reality, even at the second stage of the selection, which was supposed to be more balanced (and is very often pitched as such). The idea that knowledge could be a vector for the values of the European civil service was not in the picture. The new doctrine considered that given that there was no consensus on the European project, promoting European values was from another age, and the skills-based model imported from the private sector much more neutral.

The choice was made to put the emphasis on the equivalent of the GMAT and psychometric testing centred on intelligence and behaviour, to be delegated to external consultants, and this became the exclusive methodology of the first stage. This type of positivist testing is the exact opposite of the contextual approach taken in the former Concours format. It is based on the problematic belief in the existence of pure intellectual faculties

(this was even presented here as a new meritocratic element), which raises, beyond all the probably solved problems regarding confidentiality and data protection when externalizing a public competition to a private consultant, several quite surprising issues, particularly in the light of official European values. Even in the private sector, psychometric tests are generally used as part of a battery of other tests and during an ongoing career at certain stages, not as the basis of tests opening to lifetime employment, eliminating more than 95% of the candidates from a permanent public position (which is also the case of the British 'fast stream' used within a career). These kinds of tests are also less meritocratic than often presented. Even if the major part of the continent still recruits its civil servants based on tests ultimately closer to what the former Concours was, these new tests are very common in business schools, where students are trained to take them. To use some direct observations taken from studying about 40 resumes of persons qualified for the second stage and from field work in training students (further investigation will obviously be valuable), I have noted that persons from a business school or equivalent have a twofold advantage. Not only do they succeed better than persons with a background in law, political science or European studies (proportionally to other candidates), they are also not victims of a self-censorship effect making them think that the test is not designed for them. Finally, historically, the intelligence question has raised many issues. The French inventor of the IQ, Alfred Binet, had wanted to use his test to improve education for all at the beginning of the twentieth century, but in the United States, in the 1920s and the 1930s, this type of test was used to support eugenic and racial theories favouring White Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian males.[15] Although we may understand that this (socio-)genetic past has been forgotten and whitewashed by having been legitimized in private-sector recruitment, there remains a

---

[15] Criticism of the origins and the politically very problematic uses of these methods is widely known. Criticism of IQ tests has been the subject of many contributions in the field of social sciences and the humanities, in particular since the publication of Stephen Gould's book, *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981), which won several awards. In the French-speaking world, see Paicheler (1992), and more recently, it has been the subject of television shows such as '*QI: Histoire d'une imposture*' aired in 2012 on the Belgian TV channel RTBF and the French channel France 5. For elements on the social history of this type of test and the problems it raises for applicants to US universities, see Lemann (1999).

question on the bias (in terms of class, gender and race) possibly introduced by this monopolistic methodology at the first stage, as well as on the message addressed to the candidates for European office.

Beyond selection, the new format also reversed several important points in the socialization dimension. First, as underscored by EPSO, the new procedure would consist of 'much quicker competitions with fewer steps in the procedure and an annual cycle of competitions for the most common job profiles'. This 'fast stream' type approach was presented as more comfortable for the applicants, which is probably the case. According to some interviewees, this was an argument proudly expounded by the director of EPSO when applicants were seated, waiting for their test in the assessment centre the first year of the new format. Compared to the former version, this 'fast stream' method, however, lessened the period of time previously devoted by the applicants to internalizing European official roles and values (contained for instance in the European public policies and the staff regulations) and confirming their vocation (or their calling). Similarly, the collective dimension was broken. The first stage was made up of individual tests in a CBT test centre where there was no relationship with the community of other applicants, nor with the European civil servants. On the contrary, during their computer-based test in the CBT test centre, applicants were no different than those taking quite the same tests for the private sector or national bureaucracies. In short, this was, here again, the opposite of a separation process typical of rites of passage. In the new format, the training sessions were to be less important, even if ultimately the training market did not disappear at all, especially in Brussels. If the intention was to bypass trainers (in particular for the institutions), new books appeared once again on the shelves of Brussels bookstores, some by people within the institutions, some by consulting firms.

When candidates prepare for the open competition, they no longer stuff themselves with knowledge on European policies, but it would be mistaken to believe that they do not learn by heart the right way of answering, which includes substance as well as all the modes of reasoning expected in the new tests. The selection process in the assessment centre, and particularly the structured interview, are good illustrations of what this is about. Examination in the assessment centre is divided into four

exercises (case studies, group exercise, structured interview, oral presentation), the purpose of which is to test the following competencies: Analysing & Problem Solving; Communicating; Delivering Quality & Results; Learning & Development; Prioritizing & Organizing; Resilience; Working with Others; and Leadership. Contrary to the former tests, in which Gielisse (2006, p. 176) said the oral presentation was the 'main course' and required technical expertise, the oral presentation is now related to a case study on documents and, according to several of my interviewees, actually does not require any technical training or knowledge of the institutions. Leaving this latter exercise aside, the others are more instructive, particularly the structured interview, which tests all the other skills except analysing and problem solving. Here each competency is usually tested through two completely unrelated questions. To get an idea, we can take questions out of one of the manuals (Baneth, 2014, p. 347 ff.), which are very close to what was reported to me during interviews, such as 'Describe a time that you led a team who were demotivated'; 'Talk me through a time that you significantly contributed to another person's personal development'; 'Tell me about a time that you had a large amount of information to analyse'; or 'Tell me about a time you received valid negative feedback'. Here again, the point is not to judge the questions themselves – their statement alone sometimes produces effects of redoubtable criticism – but to understand that their socializing effects are extremely different than previously. Like before, the candidates learn histories by heart, but they are in fact small histories related to themselves and their professional past, staged to adapt to the expected good behaviour and to project an image of themselves matching the new criteria: the candidate must 'praise the contribution of others', 'show concern for the emotional state of others', 'manage own workload effectively', not to mention the questions related to learning and resilience, which usually lead to confessions ('I was not good there, but since then I've understood and this has made me a better person'). The values inculcated by the process are thus clearly far from the former ones, if not the polar opposite of them (in the area of culture, of the sense of serving the collective cause and so on), and although quite culturally branded, they are undifferentiated from those of other jobs and there is no European context to them.

Moreover, we are very close here to confession pedagogy as described by Foucault (1976), creating subjects in both senses of the term: individuals (rather than members of a group), and submitted to the institution (rather than becoming a peer in a collective adventure).

Finally, the consecration process was also totally reversed in its different symbolic dimensions. The concept of peer consecration tended to disappear, to the point that the Court of Justice had to cancel an EPSO decision in the first open competition set up under the new format (Pachtitis v European Commission).[16] In the reformed version, the jury members are considered to have no role in the testing of the first stage (which was outsourced). More generally speaking, members of the selection board tended to be pushed aside. Their role in the first stage remained small, and for the second one, they were constrained by many rules and mandatory guidelines, and strong limitations to their leeway as a jury. They did not decide collectively about who would be on the short list, which was the result of a calculation of the different grades. The applicants never faced the jury as such, but only a couple of its members, different ones for each test in the assessment centre. One member of the jury told me about the structured interview included in the second stage: 'You give grades skill by skill, whatever your overall judgement on the candidate's capacities. You are just a machine.' Another one told me: 'Can you imagine? EPSO made difficulties about giving us the list of laureates, and we had to beg for it.' Significantly, the interviews I had with members of the jury (one with Carolyn Ban, whom I thank for the meeting) were not easy to get, with some asking for rigorous anonymity, which was quite different from the interviews I had previously conducted with members of the selection board. The two I saw, with different geographical and academic backgrounds, also told of tensions between EPSO and the jury, which sometimes led to some improvement.

---

[16] On 15 June 2010 the Civil Service Tribunal issued a judgement in case F-35/08, Dimitrios Pachtitis v European Commission, which ruled in favour of Mr Pachtitis, a candidate in a competition organized in 2006/7 (Greek translators – AD5) and concluded that only the selection board, and not EPSO, had the power to choose the questions for pre-selection tests. Read the full judgement at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62008FJ0035.

In terms of the symbolic impact, there was no equivalent of an oral examination or conversation with the board along the 'Grande École' format. Even though the intentions were generous, the fact that the open competition became a routinized one-year process and was set up every year broke with its exceptional dimension, which is the efficient one for the consecration process. Even though much more professional in this aspect, the new format was no longer the big event it used to be. The cathedral atmosphere, the ritualization, the symbolic path from external and national halls to an oral examination inside the European institutions no longer exist, and nothing re-creates this 'extraordinary' and quasi-sacred status, which was central for transmission of the officials' 'charisma of service'. Opposite to candidates telling of their emotion while participating in this institutional act and ritual, interviewees now say that the whole thing has a 'business as usual' dimension. For some this is better, for others this is worse. One told of his experience of the new computer-based testing under a rather extreme form (the incriminated testing centre is no longer being used, as I was told by an administration EPSO board member), but this was also very emblematic of the desacralization at stake. After having told me that he was lost in a sordid place, he added: 'Then a young lady with a foreign accent opened the door and told me that I had to wait a few minutes . . . then I was led to a kind of cubicle with a computer inside. I did my job. When I got out I felt very strange and even bad in that sordid street. It was just like getting out of a sex shop or worse'. In the end, the EU open competition no longer resembles a Concours, in the historical and sociological sense of the term, but is more like a selection for a job, which deeply alters the social and political signification of the civil service and the conditions to identify with it.

## 'Attracting the Best Talents' or 'Destroying the European Civil Service from the Inside'?

The new format clearly breaks with the 'Custodians of Europe' model (Ellinas and Suleiman, 2012). But does it introduce any democratization? It is a bit too soon to answer this question, and the comparison with the case of Soviet Union, which decided to produce a new elite through the

systematic destruction of cultural capital (Tomusk, 2000) should at least invite to caution. So far, there is no clear indication of democratization. In fact, on the contrary. In the first year of the new format, the gender gap was much greater (which sociologically was not surprising considering the room given to maths). If the reform was a shock for many Masters' in European studies (and conversely an opportunity for business schools), neither did the new format change the circle of persons willing to take the Concours, considering that the motivation of these persons is mainly based on deeper factors than having a job or earning money.[17] More surprisingly, the new format, which according to many was supposed to favour the British for its fast-stream inspiration and absence of 'European content', had disastrous results for British candidates whose success rates were among the lowest and declined after 2010, which was quite unexpected, even if sociologically understandable based on the above. The British candidates most interested in the EU Concours are those (including many young women) who have been trained in European Studies, speak foreign languages and/or own cultural capital, none of which is relevant in the new population target. Understanding what is at stake also involves setting a different hypothesis. The change seems more likely to be related to the legitimation of a model. Moreover, here the model selected to be legitimized was clearly the new international and private model of managers or executants, in the pure neoliberal style of public administration.

A good indicator to understand this is to work on how the new format has been received. Initially, the reform did not spark impassioned reactions from people in and around the EU institutions. Nonetheless, there are in fact strong differences between those in favour of the new format and those opposed to it. To report a few of the 'off the record' comments I heard during my ethnographic studies, the decision to discard the questions covering EU policies was, for some, deeply problematic. One director told me: 'What a load of bullshit! With these tests, we are simply going to recruit idiots.' Some take a less radical position but argue that the pendulum has

---

[17] To give a very partial indicator, for the very last open competition, 12 out of the 14 French applicants who succeeded in the public administration test came from the Institut d'études politiques (IEP) (most of them from Strasbourg), the College of Europe or an equivalent school.

swung too far: 'The Trivial Pursuits form was probably too disconnected from the reality of the work within the institutions, but so is the exaggerated importance now given to management skills. Very few of those recruited will become managers.' Others agree with the official EPSO arguments in favour of a modern and skills-based system. The comments included: 'It's faster and probably more humane than the one I passed'; 'Many of the questions on European culture were really ridiculous, like the number of stars on the flag, or the first female Green Party MEP.'[18] The trade unions, which initially supported the reform, have recently woken up and are arguing for the Staff Committee to appoint the members of the Selection Panel as well as raising concerns about potential problems stemming from eliminating examination of European knowledge in the new open-competition format.

What people stand for in this reform is less interesting for judging normatively whether it is a good reform or not. Beyond the fact that opinions are not good indicators, what is striking in the interviews (which were focused not on opinions but on experience of the open competition) is the place taken by beliefs, and also EPSO's communication, for instance, about the French identity of the previous format, about the silly questions previously included in the MCQs, often using the same examples and so on. The interviews are, however, useful. Indeed, in reading them it is difficult to see a clear cut difference among the nationalities. When civil servants talk about their Concours, when it was the former format, they mention that in fact, they have more or less the same system in their country. These differences between generations are not self-evident, except in one point. The young who are against the new format are at the same time quite fatalistic: 'It's a lottery, but this is the new selecting fashion and I don't think it will change.' Older persons are in a sense more rebellious, such as this now retired woman: 'This has to be stopped, these people are just killing Europe.'

All of this clearly shows that the essential opposition in the field is around the model of what a good official is. To summarize drastically, one side considers that it was time to break with the Chinese mandarin style, but also with the French style of administration, which was considered by many,

---

[18] It is important to note here that these examples taken from interviews are among to the many used by EPSO in its information campaign.

particularly after the Delors era, as the dominant style. On the same side, some people think more or less cynically that an official does not need to know anything, 'except to press the button when ordered to', and say things like 'knowing the treaties won't help you do your Excel job'. For the other side, the reasons are quite similar but with other arguments: 'I'm not surprised by these new tests; the new model is the Procter & Gamble one.' For some of them, it is incomprehensible that people come 'into the House' with no knowledge about the EU: 'Can you imagine? I was debating with a newcomer and he asked me what the Treaty of Lisbon was. I thought it was a joke, until I realized he was really asking!' Once again, these comments do not matter here for answering the question of what the best way would be for a good EU civil service, but they clearly show new cleavages and new power issues typical of a crisis of reproduction.

---

**Perceptions of the Concours**

*A more systematic qualitative analysis is ongoing. Here are nonetheless a few interview excerpts.*

**Male, French, age 30–40, professional experience in Canada**. *And in fact you regret that general culture has been removed from the test?*

[Hesitation.] Well, that always depends on what civil service you want. I think that both would have been a good thing: a verbal and numerical MCQs and another MCQs on general culture, to see how the person has integrated all sorts of knowledge, on history, the arts, I do think that's important, according to my idea of what an international civil servant or a European civil servant should be. I think that at the administrator level, it's essential. Personally, I believe that the Anglo-Saxon turn was taken since Liikanen, then Kinnock really killed it, and I know because coming from Canada, here we're going towards the exact same system. At the time I had also entered competitions for Canadian diplomacy, at the time, a long time ago, and then no matter what your education, you could be a civil engineer or a PhD in international relations. No one really had much of an advantage over anyone else when you were taking the diplomacy competition, essentially based on verbal and G-Math-type numerical questions, so probably whoever is better at maths would have a greater chance of succeeding than anyone who had always been driven towards international relations, or of building their career in international organizations.

**Male, German, age 40–50**. *The question about the Concours quickly turns into an answer on the Kinnock reform*.

The Kinnock reform, something that makes the EU less attractive, there are good and bad ideas. I mean let's say in a former . . . there is a former notion about civil servants, that civil servants are lazy, not achievement oriented and so on. I mean we always have to live with the fact that promotion and achievement are not as easily measurable than in the private sector, so coming with private-sector ideas, as perhaps Mister Kinnock tried, with all his consultants, it's not that easy, even in his country of origin, which has an excellent civil service, perhaps the best service in the world, at least among the three or four best ones, with Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, France, I don't say Greece. Even if these countries complain about bureaucracy, all the powers in London, London's maundering about red tape, but avoiding red tape, making an international administration more efficient, I have other ideas, let's say, than Mister Kinnock.

**Male, German, age 50–60**. *What do you think of the reform of the Concours?*

I think the system was malfunctioning, and they preferred to have people who knew all the super-complicated procedures. There were about 30 decision-making procedures which they all knew: Council, Parliament, this or that committee, this or that sort of majority, under what conditions . . . And there were guys there who like Chinese mandarins had learned that all by heart, and you wasted one year, two years preparing all that. They all succeeded and now we see that they were little robots without the slightest vision but with a mechanical working discipline, and we've seen that they aren't the right colleagues to have [laughter], they are neither flexible nor creative. Now I think it's the reaction. *Was it clearly seen that there was a problem?* Yes, yes, clearly. Now you have accountant types, people with not the slightest bit of passion but who are fine with the mechanics of the apparatus system, mentally transplanted COMECON apparatchiks [laughter].

**Female, German, age 30**

But I don't know the details, actually, the only thing I know really, I know that they'll probably go a little, well . . . the Concours at the time was, it was really the French method, it's learning by rote and I don't really like that, I think that it requires, it requires preparation that's not necessarily, that doesn't need thinking, that doesn't really ask that people think and be critical, just learning things by heart, so then

deviating from that system, that's good, I believe. And if I'm understanding, I don't know but I know they're going to put up assessment centres too and I've done that so I know just a little. If it's done right I think we'll get to...know people better and at the end of the day that's what, we don't just need bureaucrats who are capable of dealing with a subject all alone and are super-intelligent, but we also need people who can communicate, who have some experience, and especially for internal communication, but external too. So I think that for the image of the Commission and to really move forward in a direction maybe more with more the private spirit, even if that's debatable, but I think that we need more people who are capable of communicating and are capable of cooperating and move things forward.

**Male, German-British, age 30–40**

And yeah, to end with maybe, it's true that earlier one felt that the MCQs, the Concours format was very Franco-French, oh surely yes, maybe you know that this year, in fact, that's changed, the Kinnock system, well, it hasn't fundamentally changed, they did the modelling, now it's on a computer and so that's good, they took out the knowledge questions, well there were certainly some questions that weren't relevant, of the type 'What is the European capital of 2015?' or something like that, 'who was it in '97?', that's really pathetic, 'how many unmarried women were there in the last Commission?' so those are useless questions, but on the other hand, for a European civil servant, it would be good to know what the Treaty of Nice or of Lisbon is, so I think they could have found enough intelligent questions for a future European civil servant, to justify a knowledge test. It was just a few questions that were lame, but as such I think it's not stupid to test basic knowledge, but well, that's over [laughter].

# Conclusion

As a conclusion, a few lessons could probably be learned for the EU and its historical development. The process leading to the new Concours and more broadly, the building of a new European public service is much more complex than a plot led by a few Britons (as some officials say) 'to destroy Europe from the inside'. The will to reform also proceeds from technical aspects, beliefs and unconscious drivers, and compromises,

even if not really controlled by the usual checks and balances for many reasons. So the plot theory would probably be a mistake of the same order as the idea that the former model was French, which is not historically correct. Notwithstanding, the new trend (which is also embedded in other transformations of the EU civil service studied in this book) clearly breaks with a path close to a State-building process, going through the making and the differentiation of a new elite through cultural capital and its consecration (Bourdieu, 1997). Therefore, this transformation is far from being neutral and has political consequences, beyond the staff, for the definition of the EU.

But the case is also interesting far beyond the EU. The entire underlying debate shows that something other than a de-elitization process is at stake. In the name of de-elitization, what is at stake here is the destruction of a second-rank elite, and in this case a new elite of bureaucrats in the making. Following neo-Marxists, it could be considered that this second-order class of elite is the servant of the transnational capitalist class (Sklair, 2001; Robinson, 2001). But in another approach (more inspired by the socio-genesis of the State by Bourdieu or Reinhard [1996]), it could also be considered that this new elite in the making is competing with the national administrative and political elites as well as with the transnational economic and business-class elite, whose power is growing with globalization. Consequently, the meaning of this de-elitization could be very different. What is at stake can, in this perspective, appear as an undifferentiating process aimed at breaking the barriers with the world of business and its agents. In this sense, the battle between the French and the British style, which is actually nonsense, appears to be reflecting more unconscious drives related to a bigger power struggle. In this struggle, former Empires matter because they have expectations over what is going on. The real battle, however, is a more transnational struggle around the global neoliberal order and its domination over any bureaucracy, including the ones of European institutions. This is an interesting paradox for European institutions, often suspected of being the Trojan horse of the new global neoliberalist wave.

# 7

# How Domination Matters: New Internal Struggles and Integrating European-Enlargement Newcomers

After having studied how a succession of fragmented but convergent reforms has changed the social conditions of EU civil servants' power, we would like to reconsider the question of the effects of enlargement. Enlargement has indeed been repeatedly used as an argument by reformers to justify the need for reforms. New and completely different people were arriving, and it was urgent to make room for them in a reformed administration. The argument was also used by many officials regretting the 'good old times' of smaller and culturally more convergent European institutions. Many legends were also circulating on their supposed profiles, which were further qualified by Kassim et al. (2013). In any event, integrating the newcomers from Central Europe was, sociologically speaking, an important issue in terms of reproduction.

How, then, have the agents from new member states been integrated into the EU institutions and how have they changed the group and the balance of power within it? The question has long been taken as a cultural and political issue, that of how people coming from an administration developed east of the Iron Curtain fit into an administrative culture built on, or for, the other side. Carolyn Ban's recent work (2013)

on the European Commission provides new interesting input by showing that the relationship between the 'in-group' and the 'out-group' was the major point of tension in an administration that at the same time was being changed by administrative reforms. The purpose of this chapter is to build on this hypothesis and therefore to put greater emphasis on the definition of culture as a power-and-dominance issue. The problem of integration for many eastern newcomers is, as for others before them but in another context, that they are in a mostly dominated position within the field of Eurocracy, which has an effect on their collective strategies, both for the competitions between the 'subgroup' and the out-subgroup whose construction was becoming a stake, and for joining the bandwagon of the neo-managerial and liberal model. The three following observations will help to elaborate along this line.

## Ethnographic Observation 1, DG Translation, April 2009

Spring of 2009. The European Commission Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) holds its annual staff meeting at the Charlemagne building. An official with whom I am acquainted lets me in. The room is full and there are mostly women in it, which reflects the demography of the DGT. The stage is rather wide and high, and on it are a set of distinguished persons/managers, the great majority of whom are men over 50. The director-general, a man in his mid-fifties, delivers a speech presenting the directorate-general's main policy areas, shown on a giant screen. When done, he gives the floor to the public for their questions. A young woman of between 30 and 35 stands. In a steady and deliberately confrontational tone, she says in English that she is not used to this kind of meeting because she comes from a new member state and has been recently instated, and she is surprised that no one has introduced themselves. So she asks the director-general if he would be so kind as to introduce himself. She then asks who the people on the stage are and if they are 'managers', as she believes, could they also introduce themselves. Lastly, she notes that the assembly is made up mainly of

women, as is, she (rightly) believes, the DGT, and she asks why there are so few women on the stage, especially if those sitting up there are indeed directors. There is some applause, and part of the public is between embarrassment and amusement. The official who let me in turns to me and says in the most noncommittal way that he can: 'You should find this interesting. This kind of situation has become rather frequent.'

## Observation 2. Training Session at the European Administrative School (2012)[1]

This is a two-day training course intended to integrate newcomers into the institutions, all nationalities, all institutions and all statuses included. A group of about 20 trainees can take this training course within a year of their integration, sometimes later. The goal of the consultants in charge of the training is to assist the trainees in adapting to the new work context (there is practically no mention of the institutions), the cultural and human differences, as well as to ease personal tensions due to their expatriation, their entry into the institutions, the workload and fitting into a new organization and its hierarchy. Included in their reflexivity-based methodology is a set of maps showing the various definitions of Europe, a map of the battles waged since the nineteenth century, a map of the use of Latin, a map of garden gnomes, and a map of the path taken by Primo Levi when he returned from Auschwitz, initially towards the east then looping around to the west. The participants are asked to choose one map, to state the reasons of their choice, what it evokes and why it embodies a definition of Europe that is important to them. After others, and after other choices, a young Czech woman who is an assistant selects the map of Primo Levi, whom she says she does not know, but explains that the path illustrated on the map goes through her city. She is moved to the point of tears and beyond; the

---

[1] The European Administrative School is part of the EPSO and was set up under the Kinnock reform to have an in-house training centre common to the different European institutions.

consultant asks her what it is that moves her; she explains that it is 'the recognition', it is the fact that 'we are all linked together in Europe, between the east and the west'. 'And this moves you?' asks the consultant with compassion. 'Yes, we are like the others now, this map is forgiveness, yes, it is forgiveness'. The trainer wishes to react, but remains silent before the collective emotion raised by the scene.

## Observation 3. An Aside

Same context, a different session. The afternoon exercise is to get the participants to speak about democracy in the offices. Many, mostly among the assistants, find that they are not sufficiently informed and that they do not have enough say on the policy lines, and that the hierarchy is burdensome. A young female Czech assistant who has lived in Brussels for a long time plays the card of connivance or complicity with the facilitators (she belongs to the service that deals with the consultants). 'There is too much hierarchy, it is still too "vertical", it is the old administration, it is not efficient'. A Romanian administrator, 35–40 years old, former judge, explains simply and without a trace of arrogance, in substance, that in an administration not everything can be discussed and most of all, that one cannot make decisions about everything, and that the idea of a hierarchy can, after all, also be functional. The administration as such is not supposed to make decisions; it is supposed to make sure that the laws are applied. During coffee break, the young Czech assistant has a discussion with the facilitator, who is originally from Serbia but has also been in Brussels for a long time. The trainee's education level or social position before expatriation is not comparable to the former judge's. The young Czech assistant is quite agitated and is trying to get the consultant to agree with her. When I approach, she appeals to me: 'See? This is typical of newcomers! They have that culture, it's the old regime, it's embedded in their heads. They're in the hierarchy, the rules have to be applied, democracy is not in their genes; they're from another age!'

At first sight, these three observations of different situations (speaking up publicly, speaking as a part of group dynamics and an aside) mostly

show the heterogeneity of the staff from the new member states. What is there in common, other than unity of place, between the translator and the former judge, both of them Czech assistants, one of them just arrived and the other sailing from contract to contract within the institutions? Leaving aside, at least temporarily, their rather unexpected characters, 'non-standard' up to a point, what is there in common between a standpoint defying the hierarchy, one deploring it to be the apostle of new management and justifying it as a principle of good administration, and the emotion raised by feeling 'like everyone else'?

At first glance, nothing. Especially when seeking to account for what is being expressed here in reference to the most commonly used criteria. None of the big culturalist or institutional 'variables' are able here to explain the differences reflected in these standpoints, no more, for that matter, than the apparent homologies. This is not, in fact, completely surprising. As shown in other research, it is in fact quite difficult to get agents from the new member states integrated into the EU administrations to exist as a homogeneous category. Given the sizes of the new member states (not to mention their economies or their current and past social systems), the sociology of their elites, their modalities and tempos of exiting the regime, their reference to past policies or the relations that these agents might have among themselves, everything invites a scholar to not in any way consider these agents as a unified entity. Without even mentioning their social trajectories (which should in fact be more widely studied), they otherwise also hold very different institutional, professional, statutory and hierarchical positions.

It would however be rather absurd to evacuate from the start the idea that beyond their individual divergences, these cases can have homologies at the level of their sociological structure, just as it would be rather incongruous to write off the force (hence the potential effects) of interpretations and of legends, and most of all of their different political uses to which the entry into the institutions of agents from the new countries has given rise in the EU's institutional circles. The enlargement has in fact brought about an unprecedented in-block entry, far more important than the more conventional waves from three countries that had marked the 1972 and 1995 enlargements. Interpretations of this 'phenomenon' have labelled it as a block,

including in the accompanying recruitment and integration policies.[2] The 'newcomers group' has thus been mobilized on various occasions, whether by the agents already there, the policies targeted at them or the various moral entrepreneurs in Howard Becker's sense (1963), positioning themselves to represent this group. As shown in the best work, there are moreover many homologies among the nationals from the new member states integrated into the institutions. Within the European Commission, the preponderance of women within the recruited population and their majority use of English and sometimes Russian but not of French are common features (Ban, 2013). Surveys on attitude show that motivations to integrate the European civil service are in the case of newcomers somewhat more related to the 'job' (level of remuneration, job security and so on) than to a European commitment or to their belief in market values, which as a trend differs sharply with the ethos that had thus far characterized the members of the European civil service, more likely to be closer to public intervention and authority. There would be no end of examples from interviews or observations attesting to the importance of an us-them relationship, of an in-group and an out-group, even to oppositions between the 'incumbent' agents and the newcomers from the new countries, an observation found in more general investigations on the effects of enlargement on the esprit de corps and the effectiveness of the institutions (which is readily criticized by the veterans [Kassim et al., 2013, p. 250 ff.]) or attesting to differences within and between the newcomers and the others (Kassim et al., 2013, p. 255).

How then, can the contrasted realities reflected in these preliminary observations and findings be understood? How much, up to what point or on what material basis could these agents form a group when so many differences stand between them at the start? Most of all, what could motivate some of them (enough to authorize thinking of them as a group), beyond their attitudes, to take positions against the practices or

---

[2] At least this is how things have been presented since the end of the 1990s. It is not necessarily true in all the dimensions. The population ratio between the 2004/2007 enlargement and the UK, Ireland and Denmark wave was actually quite close, for example.

despite expected blowback and simultaneously, positions in the direction of greater adhesion to the doctrines of liberalism or management? What difference does it even make from the point of view of the present and coming configuration formed by the staff of the institutions?

We will not indulge here in an umpteenth defence of the interests of a sociological perspective in terms of field to discuss European complexities. In this specific case, we would prefer to provide an illustration. The nature of the puzzle presented above indeed changes quite significantly if we no longer look at these agents in terms of isolated variables, but in terms of their relative position (and of their trajectory) in the field of Eurocracy. It also changes if we construct these standpoints (or at least some of them) as the result of individual or collective mobilizations generated on the basis of this system of positions and oppositions, that is, as the product of the relational dynamics resulting from the battles for the occupation and the reproduction of positions of power within this field.[3] As shown by field sociology, including in its strategist definition (Fligstein, 2001), standpoints depend much more on positions in a structure than on the singular properties of individuals; on the collective level, they are moreover seldom independent from the mobilization processes that combine these positions and set them in motion to 'subvert' or on the contrary 'preserve' the modalities of dominance in the field.

Placing these agents from the start as agents moving in the field of Eurocracy has a first advantage of avoiding the hazardous dichotomies that sometimes make these agents individuals and sometimes members of a pre-existing group (institutions, cultural group); but above all, this change of focus begs two assumptions arising rather simply from the definition of a field simultaneously as a structured field of force and as a field of struggle. At the structural level (or, if preferred, that of the field of force), first of all, we will thus make the assumption that beyond individual and national differences, the population of newcomers represents a family of dominated positions in the field of Eurocracy. As an extension of the dominance effects identified by Carolyn Ban (2013)

---

[3] This being said, there is no denying that there can be other possible interpretations in individual cases, whether psychological or sociological, related to their former trajectory.

when she evokes the gender dimension of enlargement (which consists, well beyond national cultures, in the entry of a relatively young woman into a world dominated by older men) or to some extent the use of French (one of the weaknesses of which is that it has been constructed and perceived as the language of the old elite), the idea will thus be to try to pose the objective matrix of this collective position and to indicate in what way, and especially according to what relative modalities it defines a family of dominated trajectories. At the level of the field of struggle, we will then make the assumption that the standpoint and, beyond, the mobilization dynamics are constructed based on this collective position. The idea will then be to observe to what extent the processes of collective identification and in particular all those that lead to aligning positions according to an established-versus-marginal opposition are working with this position structure and to show tangible demonstrations of this, in particular in the battles, both historically and circumstantially at stake, for defining the properties that are legitimate for holding positions of power and for their reproduction.[4]

To perform this analysis, we will endeavour to connect two different fields (and two different types of approaches). The first consists in an analysis, of a social-morphological type, of the distribution of positions of administrators then more specifically those of directors of the economic sectors in the European Commission. The second consists in a more monographic analysis of the mobilizations of the European officials' trade union Generation 2004, formed in 2011 to embody the Commission newcomers, which ultimately became the leading union in the Brussels Commission in June 2015. These elements will enable us to specify the established-versus-marginal relationship that characterizes many of these positions and the dynamics, sometimes of subversion and sometimes of rallying to the dominant model.

---

[4] To avoid a too lengthy discussion, we touch on this aspect rather quickly, but the purpose of the incidental clause here is to dissociate the often a-historical dimension from the uses of the concept of field in US sociology, and simultaneously to explain the political plasticity of mobilization phenomena, which without being free of heavy structures, can be the product of versatile tactical activities.

# A Family of Dominated Positions in the Field of Eurocracy

The 'newcomers', in every sense of the term, represented by nationals of the new member states are, by definition, objectively likely to be in a tendentially dominated position. It remains however to be seen to what extent, collectively, and according to what modality. Nothing proves at the start that the properties of the agents from the new members are necessarily 'dominated' from the point of view of their social, educational or professional trajectory. It could even be thought, on the contrary, that the selection (and self-selection) processes here are likely to attract agents who are more than well-equipped in various dimensions (education level, international and linguistic capital) when it is not a question of properties directly involved in the definition of European bureaucratic capital.[5] To understand the importance, but more especially the modalities of the dominance relationship that by assumption collectively defines this set of trajectories, it is therefore necessary, before looking at the feelings and resentments involved in it, to pose their objective matrix, starting with the overall dimension of the position of power in the field. As shown by the sociology of mobilizations, it is indeed not 'frustration', a word very often used in the case of 'newcomers', that is at the basis of the heterodox mobilizations, but distance from power. This distance can, in the case of a bureaucratic and political organization, be relatively clearly objectified, albeit not always completely, in the distribution of posts and of the various distances revealed by it, both comprehensively and in the relational distribution of properties that gives the

---

[5] We showed elsewhere that one of the characteristics of commissioners from the newly joined countries is often to have taken part in the membership negotiations and to be often better equipped with 'European institutional capital' (investment in the EU, knowledge of the specificities of the game, social capital specific to the field and so on) than commissioners from the other countries. On the other side of the spectrum, and to borrow from another study, many applicants to the competition come from European studies curricula, including those that provide the greatest consecration (College of Europe of Bruges and of Natolin, major European universities, Political Studies Institutes of Paris and Strasbourg, London School of Economics). For a more quantitative overview showing similar education levels but greater internationalization, see Kassim et al. (2013).

greatest chance of accessing these posts; in this second aspect, a 'new-comer' is not completely him or herself when he or she has properties consistent with the new definition of bureaucratic legitimacy (for example, here, a man, English-speaking, a manager with experience in the private sector abroad, rather than a woman, French and Russian speaker, and having mostly experience as a translator or in the bureaucracy of her country). The distribution of managerial posts and statutory grades by nationality, and, in greater detail, the relational structure of the proper-ties of the directors of the economic sectors at the Commission will constitute, from this point of view, two good introductions to determine the relative position of newcomers in the field.[6]

## Distribution of Posts and Grades by Nationality

The distribution of posts and grades by nationality is a good indicator of the both objective and subjective distance from positions of power. It can be objectified at the general level by comparing posts by status, by staff category and by grade (and as we will also do, by grade group). This can be done as a ratio of the source population to bring out indices of disproportionality (Kassim et al., 2013, p. 45).[7] The EUR 15/EUR 12 ratio stands at 79.1%/ 20.9% demographically speaking, and at 67.9%/32.1% politically speaking, objectified by the number of voices at the Council (before the implementa-tion of the Lisbon Treaty). This can also be done by comparing groups of nationalities, that is, by showing the objective differences between nationals from the established countries and the newcomers, at equal demographic (population) and political weight. Without forgetting that the figures of the institutions can be problematic, in particular because they are necessarily slanted by the will to show the best geographical balances, adding up these

---

[6] It goes without saying that we are not confusing the space of the Commission and the space of the field of Eurocracy. The Commission sub-space is however a good indicator to grasp the chances of accumulating European bureaucratic capital, in a space where the other positions (positions of the member states at the Council, lobbyists), except for that of the President of the European Council, are not very favourable to the new member countries.

[7] This indicator highlights in particular that the large member states are particularly under-represented in the lowest categories of the grade of administrator.

indicators has the advantage of highlighting both massive phenomena, which in a some way imparts the morphology of the overall structure, and other, finer ones pointing to the relational structures and based on the practical confrontations that the comparison is likely to generate.[8]

For the first figures, we can thus start with distribution among posts of assistants/administrators.[9] These show that the population of new-comers is very far from being dominated at this scale, as there is not a majority of assistants for a minority of administrators. Moreover, the ratio is different from that of the old member states. In 2015, nationals from the newly integrated countries amounted to 1,758 assistants out of a total of 9,774, that is, 17% of total assistants. On the other hand, they were 3,029 out of 13,557, or 22.30% of all administrators. From the point of view of the internal morphology of the staff, the variation is 1 to 2 for the new countries, when it is 1.38 for the old ones, this figure requiring, however, to be qualified according to nationalities, given the very high share of Belgians and Italians in the assistants contingent, or 2,751 and 1,121, respectively). The population of nationals from the new countries is thus in its great majority a population of administrators, or to put it differently, of managers in positions of aspirants.

|        | Population (%) | In European Commission | AD grade        |
|--------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| EU12   | 20.9           | 1,758 (17%)            | 3,029 (22.3%)   |
| EU15   | 79.1           | 8,219 (83%)            | 10,548 (77.7%)  |
| Total  | 100            | 9,977 (100%)           | 13,557 (100%)   |

---

[8] We recall here that geographical balance is a provision of the Staff Regulations (Art. 27) and that compliance with it is the subject of constant monitoring by the member states, who frequently apply pressure on the institutions to obtain rebalancing. This was the case in particular of the Polish through their diplomatic representation or parliamentary questions (see for instance parliamentary question Krzysztof Lisek (EPP) E-6586/09). In this context, one can think that if newcomers appear to be dominated in the public HR report figures, then they will be even more so in figures less favourably directed toward establishing a balance. In addition, we are not ignoring here the plentiful and often suggestive literature on representative bureaucracies. Our approach here is distinct, however, in that it does not prejudge that public policies are applied in connection with the territories, but that standpoints, including standpoints beyond the territorial or social interests highlighted by this literature and the rallying dynamics on other subjects, reflects above all the relational structure of which the agents are a part, which is, among other things, a structure of domination.

[9] European Commission, *Statistical Bulletin*, April 2015.

Distribution by gender, beyond gender differences, is a good indicator of the structures of objective domination, given the disproportion between the number of women at the top of the hierarchy and more generally speaking, though to a much lesser degree, in the category of administrator. Although men account for 57% of the contingent of administrators, they are, in the case of nationals from the new countries, 46%, or 1,419 out of a total contingent of 3,029. The variation between men and women in the whole of the population is thus less important than what was shown by the recruitment figures analysed in 2013 by Ban.[10]

When fine-tuning these findings at the very top of the hierarchy, namely Commission directors-general and deputy directors-general, one observes that the share of members from the new member states was little more than bare bones in 2015. They were 3 directors-general out of 42 – a Slovak, a Lithuanian and a Pole (all of them men) – two in non-political directorates-general (Joint Research Centre, DGT) and the third at DG Agriculture (where he had previously been deputy director-general for six years, a good indicator of the conditions that allowed him to access this post).[11] On the other hand, they were 10 out of 37, including one woman (a Bulgarian) occupying the post of deputy director-general. Comparing this with the situation in 2012 shows, however, a significant evolution insofar as then, there was only one Polish director-general (at Education). We will note that the deputy directors-general from the new member states do not belong to the most important directorates-general (Competition, Economic and Financial Affairs, Inner Market). Except for an Estonian at the General Secretariat, deputy directors-general from the new countries were distributed as follows: 1 at Development and Cooperation, 1 at Agriculture, 1 at DGT, 1 at Employment, Social Affairs

---

[10] The tables of the Commission HR report indicate 'male' staff. Women are therefore 43% of the administrators' staff and this ratio climbs to 54% for only staff from the new member states.

[11] These figures were available on the Europa Web site in May 2015: ec.europa.eu/civil_service/about/who/dg_en.htm. As we showed in a previous investigation related to Chapter 4, the posts of assistant to director-general have a symbolic value but can reflect rather different political weights, which, to be more precise, oscillate between strong collaboration with the director-general, collaboration in a given sector (a sub-portfolio, so to speak) or more relegated – stand-by or end-of-career – positions).

& Inclusion, 1 at Eurostat, 2 at Health, 1 at Regional Policy and 1 at Communications Networks, Content and Technology.

Distribution by grade is a particularly important indicator for grasping the position. Indeed, it reflects three complementary dimensions. The first is that of the position in one's career, hence of the relative position on the promotion ladder, which is an indicator of personal success, but which as such scarcely opens to recognition processes (agents speak little about this among themselves, and tend collectively to gloss over it). But it is also an indicator, if not of the probable function of head of unit and especially of director and director-general, of the objective probability of occupying this post. By being directly related to the wage scale, it is also an indicator of social position. For the record, categories between AD 13 and AD 16 open on posts of director at the institutional and political level and from the economic point of view, with monthly wages of between €11,500 and €18,000.[12] Categories from AD 9 to AD 12 are middle management at the organization level (heads of unit) and are paid between €7,100 and €11,500, and the categories from AD 5 to AD 8 are entry-level posts paid between €4,300 and €7,100.

There are, however, large disproportions among these groups. The first group, that of AD 13 to 16, has a residual proportion of agents from the new member states, with 144 out of 2,983 in the category as a whole, or 6.2%, quite far, to say the least, from their demographic or political weight. The internal structure of this distribution is also instructive. We must start by underscoring the extreme scarcity of the highest categories, and in particular of the highest, AD 16. There are two 'new entry' agents, both of them men, one Polish and the other Hungarian, out of the 36 agents. Their weight in the structure does not call for much comment, and probably even less so when compared with the number of Belgians at the same grade (3, for a population 10 times smaller than the aggregate population of all the countries). At the level just below that, the relative weight of the newcomers does not give the same results; it is more balanced, which attests to a policy of progressive rise to power: 30 agents from the new countries out of

---

153, or very slightly less than 20%, which is not too discrepant with the population ratio. But the situation is even more emblematic when taking the two categories below. Here, the indicator is of prime importance, since it indicates the rotation potential, hence the hope, both objective and subjective, of being able to offset in the medium term the inequalities revealed in the balance at the highest grades. Here disproportion is high, insofar as they are only 39 out of 517 in AD 14 and 73 out of 517 in AD 13, or 7.5% and 14%, respectively.

|  | AD 13 – 16 | AD 9 – 12 | AD 5 – 8 |
|---|---|---|---|
| EU12 | 144 (6.2%) | 488 (10.03%) | 3,029 (53%) |
| EU15 | 2,839 (93.8%) | 3,377 (69.41%) | 2,680 (47%) |
| Total | 2,983 (100%) | 4,865 (100%) | 5,769 (100%) |

If we look at the other groups of grades, the results make it possible to draw the characteristics of the pyramid even more clearly.[13] As regards middle management, here again, they indicate small shares, 488 out of 4,865, or very slightly more than 10% of the contingent. To put it differently, the rotation of the rotation is more than weak, as not that many agents are apt to move to the next category up in the next ten years. It may have been guessed (by those who are still following) that this is not without implications for the base of pyramid, which is extremely broad. Nationals from the new member countries are 3,029 out of 5,709, or 53% of the total staff in the category, or more than the majority of the contingent and a more than double disproportionality.

These results are important in themselves. They show that nationals from the new member states are at the bottom of the administrators' ladder and objectively out of step. They have all the necessary competencies (academic credentials and qualifications) and were consecrated by a particularly selective competition, but collectively, they are all located at the bottom of the ladder, with, as said by an interviewee, a

---

[13] The HR report table does not allow fine tuning the analysis to sectoral distribution or by DG. There is a nationality/DG table, but it includes all categories, including assistants, which makes a sufficiently fine analysis difficult.

'view from below, a crushing view' on the career ladder and the levels to be climbed, particularly in the most numerous grades, AD 5–6, which are a product of the reform (on this point, see below). Without going into the details of the staff policies, we should nevertheless remember that the conditions for promotion are connected to a regularly disputed system that despite the declarations in force since the 2004 reforms makes it problematic to implement merit-based promotion. This is all the more the case that the alternatives are rather weak: the possibility of being promoted via an external competition for a higher grade has been virtually closed to currently employed agents since the competition rules were changed to the detriment of knowledge of the job and of how Europe works; internal competitions are extremely rare and take place especially in end-of-term situations of the Commission, which statistically give tenure preference to cabinet members in the high grades. When it comes to analysing the distance to power and at the very least the distance to positions of power, the indicator is altogether quite clear. But these results are even more revealing in comparisons.

Comparing the new member countries is not completely relevant, if not for the variations, but these can be interpreted mechanically, between the latest new member countries (1 Croatian in the first group) and others. In fact, Bulgarians and Romanians are in shares comparable with Cypriots for quite different population ratios, and above all, the staff is mostly concentrated in the very first categories, AD 5–6. But it is mostly when comparing them as a whole with the old member states that the figures are enlightening, and perhaps even more so when leaving out the three largest countries.[14] For 30 Poles in the first group, there are 284 Spaniards, whereas their objectified political weight is the same and the population variation is 1.5 points as a ratio of the whole of the EU. The share comes out even higher when comparing with the 301 Belgians, the 207 Greeks or the 166 Portuguese, whose population is more than three times smaller in the EU. Comparing these

---

[14] Great Britain and France, in particular, are characterized by an imbalanced demography, with many managerial posts for a small contingent of administrators at entry grades.

latter countries to the Czech Republic (14) and Hungary (18), which have an identical population, is just as enlightening.

|       | Administration | Director-General | Deputy DG    |
|-------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| EU12  | 46%            | 3 (7.14%)        | 10 (27.02%)  |
| EU15  | 57%            | 39 (92.8%)       | 27 (72.98%)  |
| Total | 100%           | 42 (100%)        | 37 (100%)    |

Given these figures, there is no need to continue to multiply examples. But we must on the other hand insist on the symmetrical aspect of the two pyramids formed by the statutory demography of the agents from the old member countries and from those newly integrated. Crushing in the higher and intermediate levels, the share of the agents from the old member countries is crushed in the lower levels. Conversely, a majority in entry-grade administrator positions, hence in a ratio of total disproportionality at the bottom of the ladder, the population is, as seen above, an ultra-minority with a numerically rather weak rotation potential, and in any case sufficiently low to think that the plays for promotion are designed to last a relatively long time. From this point of view, the positions of newcomers are not completely dominated positions, but unlike the positions of applicants – that is, mostly entering managers whose objective chances of occupying positions comparable with those of the countries of the old 15-country Europe – they can seem very weak. Conversely and by numerical effect, managers from the old member countries are in extremely dominant positions, but their reproduction potential and their capacity to continue to dominate the machine is reduced at the lowest levels, where the recruitment conditions of young recruits, that is, to remain within the sociological framework, the conditions of reproduction, reflect a 'disturbing' situation according to terms used by the hierarchy of human resources at the Commission.[15]

---

[15] This was reported to me by a civil servant in a national administration. It cannot be ruled out that this definition of the situation might also be a way to press for renationalizing the competitions. This is indeed being claimed by Great Britain and has generated debate at the Commission, in particular between those who support the positions or the managerial style promoted on the other side of the channel and those who defend the spirit of an autonomous European civil service, to put it briefly.

Without presupposing the differences in trajectories before entry into the institutions or the conditions for mobilization (see below), we can nevertheless think that this structure is what produces the fact that there are objective conditions for a potential cleavage to be wedged between those who are established and the rest.[16]

## Directors from the New Countries and their Trajectory

While the distribution of statutory posts is not a complete surprise for 'newcomers', it does deserve to be fine-tuned by other indicators. One could think that the dominance relationship plays out in other dimensions. One could undoubtedly at first expect, to say this in the terms of the mapping of the field of Eurocracy, the probability of being located in the line of tenure in the institutions (that is, of accumulating strong social capital within the field, knowledge of the individual private aspect hence of the capacity to control the game, or internal recognition by the agents of the field) to be relatively weak. As we have seen, this dimension must however be tested at various levels. Many agents who are counted as 'newcomers' have other resources – dual nationality, economic or political immigration that led them to the institutions and sometimes to work in them, university careers or within the academic bodies that consecrate European bureaucratic capital – which result in the fact that newcomers in the institutions are not necessarily newcomers in the field. But at least two other dimensions at the core of the tensions of the field of Eurocracy deserve to be analysed. First, location on the private/public axis, or if preferred, the legitimacy based on consecration of and by the business world or the market, and that based on consecration of and by the state (or its supranational equivalent), which has existed from the

---

[16] A future part of this work will consist in working on the figures of the preceding enlargements to see to what extent they are comparable or not. The assumption is that they are not completely, and, in particular, that integration occurred in parallel to a continuous flow from the old member states in a context in which the career structure at the time from A 8 to A 1 was much more favourable to promotion (at least to A 3), which presents a different configuration. This remains however to be verified.

start and the relationship of which has changed gradually over time.[17] In addition, there is the opposition between more 'political' careers and more 'technical' or sectoral ones. As shown in the case of directors-general (see Chapter 4), this is quite a structuring opposition in the sense that it rather clearly separates agents who have accumulated cabinet experiences, sectoral mobility or cross-cutting responsibilities and who can claim to embody the most prestigious positions of the European civil service from those whose trajectory and legitimacy are more technical and sectoral and whose chances of accessing the most dominant positions are lesser.

To test this hypothesis, we put aside analysis of the overall figures by nationality, and try to locate it in the more general structure of the space of positions within the Commission. To do so, we borrow here from another ongoing study being conducted with Frédéric Lebaron (whom I thank here for authorizing me to use this work and for his involvement in the following statistical processing) on the elites of the economic governance of the EU. This work, which aims to chart the positions in this subfield, indeed includes data on the agents of the Commission's economic directorates, which are good indicators of the finer modalities of positions of power or of possession of the legitimate capital to occupy them. In the context of the crisis, posts in the economic directorates have acquired even greater prestige and have contributed to accelerate the trend of the legitimacy of economistic capital (see Chapter 8). The idea is then to find out in what way newcomers are part of this trend or counter to it, and if in these directorate posts their profiles are different from the directors from the old member countries. This dimension is in fact not only important for the agents directly involved and whose profile will be studied here. It is also important for what they represent to others, and in particular the AD 5–7 grades. As shown elsewhere, director posts effectively embody models; hence the status representative of their figure is not neutral in what they induce about exemplary trajectories, the chances of success and so on.

---

[17] As shown with Marine de Lassalle (Georgakakis and de Lassalle, 2013), the balance between education level in public law versus in management or economics was reversed over time to the benefit today of greater advantage to the latter.

We will not go into the details of the analysis here, but we will offer some of its elements. We made a systematic study of the hierarchy (directors-general, deputy directors-general, directors) of the economic and social directorates, including the General Secretariat, that is, Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN), Budget, Trade, Competition (COMP), Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (EMPL), Enterprise and Industry (ENTR), Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD), Inner Market and Eurostat.[18] The individuals, indexed in the 2012 edition of the organization chart, were coded according to general indicators, school trajectories and careers, including work experience in the field of Eurocracy, making it possible to differentiate the careers on the axes. For example, we sought to highlight former professional experiences, sectoral mobility, transition through the private sector, through cabinets in a member-state government or at the Commission and so on.

Analysis of this subpopulation shows two rather important results. The first is the scarcity of directors from the new countries in the selected functions; they are 9 out of 74, or 12% (actually, each directorate comprises on average about 7 managers, and among them, a representative of the new countries, including Cyprus and Malta).[19] Further analysis shows a specificity of their profiles. Multiple Correspondence Analysis of the whole of the directors reveals a structure around two axes.[20] Axis 1 is rather simply interpreted as an axis of European bureaucratic capital, distinguishing on the left the modalities of relative externality and on the right, the modalities indicating high circulation in the most central positions of the Commission before being appointed director. Axis 2 is interpreted as an axis specific to modalities indicating scientific training, national administrative experience

---

[18] The presence of DG EMPL was justified both by comparison and by the fact that we started out from the assumption that it seemed absorbed by the others. This obviously needs to be fine-tuned or corrected in the final stage of the investigation.

[19] We note by comparison the very Europeanized profile of the Maltese director at DG Enterprise: College of Europe with a specialization in competition law, former legal officer at the department of EU affairs of her country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then at the Embassy of Malta in Brussels (which includes Permanent Representations), she entered as Head of European Commission representation in Malta.

[20] Thanks once again to Frédéric Lebaron for producing this statistical analysis.

combined with international professional mobility and a position within Eurostat. It therefore singles out particular professional and scientific resources related to industry and national administration, hence specific professional trajectories (statisticians and so on).

When projecting the variable distinguishing the old from the new as an additional element of the analysis, the 'newcomers' modality has a strong relative specificity. It is clearly located to the left of the first axis and at the top on the second, indicating a twofold specificity: less equipped with European capital, newcomers are also overrepresented among directors with scientific and industrial professional careers.

The small numbers would require great caution when interpreting the trends, but from a few elements of the analysis of the variables, two by two in absolute value, we can observe certain features, like a very high share of doctorates (4/9 against 12/65), the weight of a career in national administration (5/9 against 4/65) and international organizations (3/9 against 10/65), the weight of mono-sectoral activity in the economic sector (7/9 against 40/65).

To take a few examples, Signe Ratso, an Estonian, director at DG Trade, has the profile of an economist with a very high level of experience in trade issues and in the WTO, including experience of the EU from the standpoint of her member state, where she was deputy director at the Ministry of the Economy before joining the Commission as main advisor of the director-general at DG Trade and becoming director of WTO-OECD issues in the same directorate. István Pal Székely, a Hungarian director at DG ECFIN, has a very highly internationalized profile as well high-level administrative and political experience in his member state. A Doctor of Economics at Cambridge University and later two years' experience as a researcher in Bonn, his resume includes several European experiences as temporary consultant at DG ECFIN then at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. He then worked at the United Nations economic-information department for four years, before becoming director-general for research at the Hungarian National Bank. After that, he became part of the economic studies and research directorate at DG ECFIN, directly after an eight-year experience as head of division at the IMF. Miroslaw Zielinski, the Polish director at

DG TAXUD, accumulated posts in his member state (director-general of customs administration, customs adviser to the Polish deputy premier, under-secretary in charge of WTO customs policy at the Ministry of Labour), which he alternated with a seven-year experience at the World Customs Organization before entering the Commission directly as Director of Customs Policy. The director at DG COMP, Paul Csiszár, whose career as an independent lawyer at a consulting firm in the United States and in Central Europe followed his doctorate and experiences in the United States, is somewhat atypical.

## Producing a Collective Status?

While the objective distribution of positions and types of profile provides a rather clear picture of the differences, hence of possible tensions in the field, we still need to understand the mobilization of these positions and its effects on identifications and probable standpoints. The trade unions of European civil service are a good testing ground. We will not reiterate here analyses we made elsewhere (for example, in Kauppi and Madsen, 2013 or Le Theule and Leprêtre, 2012), but we can briefly recall that the trade unions of European civil service contribute to the processes of objectification of civil servants as a group; moreover, historically, they were built less on a national and geographical basis than on political-type trends, and they frequently played a part in the integration of newcomers at the time of the preceding enlargement waves.[21] The field of trade-union representation (according to Boltanski's now classic expression [1987]) has changed remarkably since the 1990s; a series of internal scissions broke the Social-Democrat (Union Syndicale), Social-Christian (SFIE) and corporatist (FFPE)

---

[21] An examination of the trade-union newsletters shows thus not only integration of the newcomers into the trade-union lists and into the trade unions but also their integration into the sociability circles that go hand in hand with the trade unions. While there were a few jolts with the 1995 enlargement, which encouraged new trade unions like the TAO/AFI for example, they did not upset the structure of the field of trade-union representation.

triptych that had structured it for a long time. Oppositions to the administrative reform of the 2000s known as the Kinnock reforms also gave rise to important tensions and new scissions, and finally led to changing the internal correlation of power to the advantage of the most critical trade unions.[22] But the integration of new countries since 2004 has raised other challenges. On the one hand, and whereas in their eyes it had not posed a major problem during the preceding enlargements, integration was quickly seen as a problem by the main trade-union leaders to the point of their appearing as an element of the 'trade-union crisis'. In addition, the content of the Kinnock reform proved particularly unfavourable, and this difficulty seems to have freed up a space that was taken over by new trade-union organizers exploiting, if not completely, a geographical division, at least the injustices felt by the 'group' of civil servants having entered after 2004. The success of the trade union Generation 2004, which expressly asserts its post-2004 generation legacy, constitutes, from this point of view, a good area to analyse mobilizations (by those who are instituted as its partial representatives as well as by those who are external or opposed to it) focused on this group. To understand how a group is objectified starting from a family of positions and trajectories, and what effects these processes have on the perceptions and strategies at work within the field, we propose to reconsider here the competition and coproduction processes at work and what they imply from the point of view of strategies within the field.

## From the Prophecy to the Problem

Before looking at the conditions that enabled the institution of Generation 2004, it should probably be recalled that the question of enlargement and that of the integration of the agents from the new countries were built, and

---

[22] Union Syndicale, for a long time the majority union and which had played a major role in the negotiations of the 2004 reform thus took a great loss. Since the reform, one of its extractions (Renouveau et Démocratie, or R&D, born of a scission in the 1990s), opposed to the reform and to the compromise being negotiated by Union Syndicale, became the majority union at the Brussels Commission.

mostly 'manipulated' by others. As is known, one of specificities of dominated groups is to be an object-class (Bourdieu, 1977). Although above we were able to relativize the 'dominated' nature of the newcomers' situation by placing it in an applicant-versus-established relationship to which a strong demographic opposition was added, we can say that this situation of object-class, thus activated by others more than active, is a good fit, in any case until it was remobilized by Generation 2004. The category from this point of view was built at the administrative level with the appearance of the categories EUR 10 then EUR 10+2, for example, and their distinction from EUR 15 in recruitment policy and more broadly in human resources.[23] But it should be added that it was also at the core both the content and the rhetoric of Kinnock's reform, which produced wide-ranging effects on various levels.

The characteristic of a field is to be structured by history, and to be so under the twofold relationship of history made into a thing and of history incorporated ('*l'histoire faite chose et l'histoire faite corps*' in Bourdieu's language). Without going into the historical details, the Kinnock reform durably affected the field of Eurocracy, and more specifically the fraction of permanent civil servants of the EU under various modalities. Among several aspects, reforming the career and its grades changed the terms and conditions of employment in the European civil service. From the point of view of history made into a thing (here, salaries), the compromise that was defended by the Union Syndicale, that is, the Social-Democrat trade union that had, at the time, a strong position and was particularly involved in negotiating the reform, consisted in maintaining the main part of the statutory provisions and the unicity of the statute, an essential part of the definition of civil service as a *Stand*, in exchange for two elements. On the one hand, the entry grade and the corresponding wage scale were lowered. Previously, civil servants entered at grade A 8 on a scale where the highest grade was A 1, with monthly wages of about €6,000. After the reform, they entered at grade AD 5 on a scale

---

[23] We did not examine here how the integration of civil servants from the new countries was made part of the enlargement negotiations. This may be necessary for comparison purposes with other enlargements. For different reasons, notably of time and space, we however leave aside here the details of the genesis of the category to focus on its effects.

going up to AD 16 with entry wages at €4,300. In addition – this is important considering what we mentioned above about the assistant/administrator ratio – the assistants in place, as we saw, can go at the end of their career up to grade AST 11, which draws a salary, for the highest level, of more than €10,000.[24] On the other hand, there was the massive entry into force of a whole set of public-management precepts rather largely inspired by the post-Thatcherian British model and involving merit-based promotion (which, incidentally, was presented as a way of offsetting the disproportions that would be engendered by the first measure).

Essential in terms of history made into thing, the change in scale also had important symbolic effects. In fact it established a divide between civil service of before the reform and civil service of after the reform. Even more, it contributed to consecrate the civil servants who were already in their *Stand* status, hence their status as heirs to the former generations, while downgrading, symmetrically, the categories of after the reform. This break was moreover largely reinforced by the rhetoric of the reform, which justified the 'cultural change' that it wished to introduce as the result of the need to break with the mismanagement supposed to have characterized the preceding College and had led to the resignation of the Santer Commission, and, simultaneously, of the enlargement.[25] On this last point and in substance, the argument on which the necessary change was then based consisted in saying that EU civil service would now be serving 500 million citizens and that it was going to integrate new agents en masse; these being implicitly of foreign or different cultures, they (or more precisely 'they') would be better integrated into a renovated culture, a culture more specifically in line with international standards. This discourse fed into a broader conception defended by young British

---

[24] To go in the direction of what was developed in the first part, this means for example that a little more than 500 Belgian assistants at grades between AST 8 and 11 earn as much and more than the little more than 80% of the contingent of Polish administrators, that is, the 600 Poles at grades AD 5 and AD 8.

[25] We recall here that it was the verdict of the Committee of Wise Men, a verdict that independently of any factual element on the substance of the 'problems' or the 'affairs', according to Pierre Lascoumes's distinction (1997), allowed a collective verdict rather a than a nominative one, which was more problematic politically.

civil servants close to Neil Kinnock aimed at opposing the 'age of the prophets' to the 'age of the pragmatists'. This 'pragmatism' was based on the following reasoning: there is no more cultural consensus, all the less so after the Santer crisis; there are now very different cultures and more broadly very different relations to Europe, so the culture needs to be recast in a form both less specific and especially more in line with the new 'universalism' of international (that is, Anglo-American) standards.[26] This negation through the reform of the former specificities of European civil service, except to interpret them as a corruption factor, must be particularly underscored here, all the more that it is fairly invisible to the newcomers or even to observers who are unaware of the internal transformations at work since the post-Delors period. Indeed, it enables us to understand that perceptions of their integration into the institutions were ultimately largely pre-formed by the discourse of the reformers, who, whether in good or bad faith, introduced them as agents of change. However, the managerial elements, even though it had been possible to pre-empt them as a chance of quasi-redemption after the symbolic disaster of the Santer resignation, were partly turned around when it came to implementing them to appear if not exclusively negative, at least as a break that was ultimately quite unfavourable for European civil service, its autonomy, its unity, its effectiveness, the value and confidence granted to its leaders and so on, in spite of what had been 'saved' in the statutes.[27] So to put it differently, enlargement and the integration of new civil servants happened in a context where the values of European civil service embodied in the figure of the senior civil servant attached to building the EU politically, with which many of the agents in place identified with more or less distance, singularly under Delors, were largely disqualified to the benefit of a new administrative model justified by the enlargement: officially presented as the agents of change, the agents from the new

---

[26] The literature on public management has shown that the claims of 'pragmatism' have frequently reflected very ideological motives.

[27] In other words, to formulate it sociologically, an objective moment of devaluation of the symbolic capital of the agents of European civil service, which is based on their capacity to embody European general interest.

countries were all the more likely to become de facto responsible for it in the eyes of the agents in place.[28]

    This prism, which singularly activates the 'we-they' dialectics, is important to understand, and in fact less as a feeling than as a schema, that is, a reference giving sense to judgements in practical situations. Whereas at the start many civil servants welcomed quite favourably the principle of enlargement, particularly in the name of European values, this schema of understanding resulted in their seeing the arrival of their new colleagues as a potential threat and later, in their interpreting the slightest integration-related mishap as retrospective evidence of their 'foreignness', so well described by the reform. The recruitment policy can in fact be interpreted as an institutional illustration of this ambivalence.[29] It was fairly clear for many of the actors involved in this policy that recruitment was to be made progressively and that agents should be recruited on the basis of compatibility with the dominant model of European public service. It had been decided to privilege entry at the starting grades, according to quotas that would probably not be necessarily met the first time around.[30] The competition, which would be radically changed thereafter, was not changed until after the first waves of recruitment, which allowed new entrants to benefit for a while from socialization (on front-load socialization, see Ban, 2013). The members of the jury, or selection board, were sensitive to their responsibility to be careful, as said by one of my interviewees, 'not to destabilize the system'.[31] Later, we were able to observe reservations about the

---

[28] As in any enlargement, these could also fear that their promotion would be slowed down, given the needs of geographical balance.

[29] We are borrowing here from an investigation of broader scope on the entrance competition for the European institutions. This study is based on ten interviews with members of the jury, or the selection board, on their participation in about 30 preparation sessions for the competitions, including a good 10 of them in the framework of the EUR 10 competitions, as well as on 80 interviews with applicants.

[30] The analysis would deserve a more objective comparison of the various enlargements. This assumption is however based on statements by the actors involved in this policy who interpret these restrictions as the consequence of the 1995 enlargement, which had experienced difficult integration and sometimes the departure of high-level officials from the Scandinavian countries. On this point, see also Casula Vifell and Sundström, 2010.

[31] Ethnographic interview with a member of the selection board during a preparation session in Budapest.

recruitment (for the record, the competition only made it possible to be put on a short list, from which directors-general would later draw for their recruitment) and an institutional policy aimed at prioritizing recruitment of colleagues from the new countries on the short list, a practice, here again, that would differentiate the 'groups' and give birth to resentment.[32]

Under these conditions, the trade-union leaders had little reason to depart from this interpretation. Although the trade-union journals in 2004 and 2007 showed a form of benevolence with regard to welcoming new members, they simultaneously showed that the crux of the debates lay elsewhere, particularly in the severe fights (the leaflets of the time denouncing others' lies, multiplying clarifications) over the interpretation of the reform, presented as balanced by the Union Syndicale, as disastrous by others, and the first legal cases and appeals on the new statutes following the integration of staff recruited through the previous competitions, but hired under the new scale. But the 2006 trade-union elections were marked by new elements. It took longer than usual to reach the mandatory quorum of 65% of the staff, and most of all, the election results revealed that more than 1,000 blank votes had been cast. A trade unionist told me in 2009 that he had 'never seen anything like it in his 20 years working at the Commission', namely that the Poles had voted by roll call massively for Poles, whatever the lists. In a special issue that the newsletter of the GRASPE (Reflection Group on the Future of the European Civil Service) devoted to trade unionism in European civil service following these elections, the 'crisis of the Union's representation' was in question, and the leaders of the main trade unions were asked to comment on what had happened.

**GRASPE**: How do you explain the blank votes?

---

[32] Many DGs were at first reluctant to welcome newcomers, so mandatory quotas were set for hiring from the EUR 10 before drawing from the EUR 15. This made it very complicated at the beginning to hire EUR 15 persons. To circumvent this restriction, some of the services targeted in particular persons with dual citizenship or who had already had very Europeanized career paths.

**Giovanni Sergio** [then a Union Syndicale leader]: The thousand blank votes is something new. You must realize that we have just experienced a major change with the new Staff Regulations, which are often seen in a negative light. The trade unions that were against the reform resorted to electoral politics, which brought about changes in the electorate. The arrival of a new population from the new member states also changed the personnel's sensitivity towards trade unions. This probably led to an increase in blank votes. It might also be that the contract agents, who vote, but whose pay and working conditions are different than those of civil servants, have a different sensitivity. (GRASPE, 2007, p. 8)

In the interviews conducted at the time, perceptions could be more colourful. Many of the new agents were seen as passive, though internal differences were underscored. 'Those who were connected to the 1977 Charter and the younger ones are worlds apart. [The latter] swear only by Americans.' Some of them were suspected of being obsessed by their return home. 'This is a different generation, much more individualistic. Many seem to come to make money and run off. With their wages they can have a castle built in Poland. Before, if you did not feel European, you became European. For them, the idea of going home seems very strong.' Another one explained the difficulties of mobilizing the newcomers that many were passive and did not want to commit.

In an unsigned article in the special GRASPE issue, one author underscored the need of recasting trade unionism: 'The fourth observation is that the political parties and the trade unions are having trouble reflecting the diversity of their rank and file. And the rank and file is very diverse, all the more so that this diversity is variable depending on the problem.' Gender, age, social stratum, origin, religion, trade and education . . . are important differentiators when the political and trade-union personnel is often male, old, middle class and so on. To draw an analogy with political parties trying to integrate elected officials from a migrant background, did the European public-office trade unions really try to integrate militants from the new member states? And if not, how could the personnel from these

countries really believe that their problems would be understood and taken into account?' (GRASPE, 2007, p. 15).

Significantly, the trade-union representatives interviewed in the GRASPE newsletter reflected the gap between those already represented and the newcomers. Jean-Louis Blanc of the FFPE, the independent trade union set up in 1962, was French, a graduate of the ENA, the French national school of administration (class of Voltaire, which was that of François Hollande, Dominique de Villepin and many other well-known figures in the French field of power); Franco Ianniello, who was the founder and long-time head of Renouveau & Démocratie (R&D), was Italian, and told in the GRASPE issue of his arrival at the Commission in 1971; and Giovanni Sergio informed that he had entered the Commission in 1967, also in the context of Europe with six member states. This also brings us to understand the great discrepancy of the positions existing on the axis of permanence in the field of Eurocracy.[33]

## Foundation of Generation 2004 and Mobilizing the Newcomers According to the Marginal-Versus-Established Prism

This was the state of the field when Generation 2004 was founded. One of the advantages of the field concept is to be able to explain both the macro dynamics (such as the tensions underpinning the definition of the legitimate model of civil service) and the micro dynamics, as well as their reciprocal relationship. Focusing on the more micro dimension when analysing the making of Generation 2004 shows how the objective tensions of the structure of the field make sense for the actors, how they are mobilized in readings that become collective and change, in conditions that the analysis makes

---

[33] Ethnographic interview during the presentation of *La fonction publique européenne*, published by the École nationale d'administration / Centre des études européennes, Brussels, 2008. For the second edition, see Le Theule and Leprêtre, 2012.

it possible to specify, to a modus operandi likely to produce lasting effects on the field.

Although Generation 2004 is very strongly identified with civil servants from the new member states, the circumstances of its foundation and its key claims refer more clearly to the issue of the Staff Regulations reform. The date 2004 and the post-2004 generation play rather clearly on this ambiguity and its purpose is to represent the broader group of civil servants incorporated under the new Staff Regulations provisions, described by one of the founders during my interview with him in June 2015 as 'young civil servants of the greatest quality, but who do not have proper recognition'. Even though it benefited from the support of many voters from new member states, the trade union was set up as the result of processes in which the first driving elements were Spanish and, at their forefront, their first leader. He was among the agents who had passed the Concours before the reform and had been put on the short list later, that is, under the new conditions, in fact much more unfavourable to the new civil servants. In the context of the competitions of the trade-union field, he was soon approached by trade unionists from R&D, who were particularly involved at that time in denouncing the reform supported by their still dominant trade-union competitor, Union Syndicale. His entry into the civil service occurred in a context of successive struggles, appeals to the Court of First Instance of the European civil service, involving several groups of militants.

The cases were different among several groups of plaintiffs, but the common struggle, made of hope (a rather favourable plea by the advocate-general of the Court of Justice) and mostly of many dis-illusions (defeat in first instance, then again two years later on appeal, in connection with the administration on this subject) had contributed to unify the causes. One of its founders, who has militant capital constituted in Spain within civil-society movements, says he had several 'revelations' allowing him to become aware of what the struggle had in common and that it was necessary to form a broader association of the members of the new member states and to take the struggle in a political direction. This was done in the framework of R&D, which was diffusing the Centeno case and the watchwords of those who were qualified as 'those shipwrecked

by the reform'.[34] In their leaflet of December 1, 2008, that is, less than three weeks before the Court's verdict (which would be unfavourable), R&D asked for 'justice for all those shipwrecked by the reform; equal treatment and non-discrimination of the staff; decent employment conditions for all', terms, as we will see, that would be broadly taken up thereafter in the discourse of Generation 2004.

In the political struggle, those 'shipwrecked by the reform' made a number of moves (preference votes aimed at privileging candidates likely to defend their cause on all the lists, a letter signed by 800 people to Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič), which gradually put them on the scales of trade-union representation. It was in this context, and because of the feeling of being ultimately dropped both by the administration and the trade unions, that the break was made at the time of the 2012 trade-union elections. The last 'revelation' consisted of a 'class awakening' consisting in thinking that it was necessary to focus on the newcomers and to do so with new discourse and means, notably by mobilizing exclusively in English when the tradition of the administrative policy and the discourse of the trade unions was for their majority in French or bilingual, and with lists radically open to candidates from the new countries.

At the 2012 elections, and even though they came out of nowhere, the Generation 2004 lists got 20% at the Commission.

> We managed to express something that was latent and that the others refused to take sufficiently into account...The trade union's concern is recognition of those who entered after 2004. We have brilliant, very qualified people who are not recognized like the others. There are even some who enter at the first AST grades with a masters' degree to work as

---

[34] There is a clear presentation of the Centeno case at www.renouveau-democratie.eu. The Centeno case was submitted to the Court of First Instance on 3 February 2005 (Case reference: T-58/05: Centeno Mediavilla and Others v Commission of the European Communities –OJ C 93, 16.04.2005, p. 38). To sum up, the case contested the grading upon recruitment of laureates from competitions published in the Official Journal before 1 May 2004, but who were recruited after this date. These people were not recruited to the grades published in the notices of competition, but to much lower grades. The case was presented as a group of 17 individual cases, each argued separately, but with common pleas. The court ruled against the plaintiffs, who appealed, and on 22 December 2008, the court dismissed the appeal.

administrators and who are seen as a sub-category . . . Then it placed at the core of their claim that 'recognition that a mistake has been made would make it possible to reproduce the unity of civil service. (interview with one of its first leaders, June 2015)

Since the trade union's success, there has been talk of another subdivision, Generation 2014, that is, the generation after the statutory review, which in fact would bring about more losses in terms of pension and purchasing power. The first generation of leaders made way to a second one, which some say is even more radical.[35] In any event, the trade union's goals are clear and this latter acts as an imaging agent of the potential tensions produced by the objective structure of the positions, including in its strong emotional dimension. The declaration of the trade union's goals on the home page of its Web site is a first example:

## Welcome to Generation 2004

We are a progressive and fast-growing EU staff association.

We aim at a unified European Public Service that is based on **fair, just and motivating employment conditions** and that is respected for its efficiency, effectiveness and the equal opportunities it offers to all employees of the EU institutions.

We denounce the **systematic legal and practical discrimination of post-2004 staff** vis-à-vis their pre-2004 peers, in particular enforced through non-recognition of relevant professional experience and a promotion and career system that largely favours seniority over merit and performance.

We will continue our **campaign against injustice and inequality in the EU institutions** until concrete actions are being taken by the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament (other institutions and agencies may follow) to reduce these inequalities and narrow the career gap!

---

[35] Given the schedule of trade-union elections, I have had to postpone interviews with the new leaders.

**Join us in our struggle for management change** in the EU institutions!

(Generation,2004 Web site, home page, http://generation2004.eu/)

Renegotiation of the Staff Regulations has thus become a central issue:

'After the Reform' is also 'Before the Reform': Since the 2014 reform misses to address any of the 2004 failures, Generation 2004 will continue to work towards a ***true*** reform of the Staff Regulations, one that will make the European Public Service a model for others rather than a subject of scorn and ridicule. To be sure, this will take a lot of patience and hard work, but the extent of the damage done in 2004 and now 2014 demands an in-depth re-working of the whole affair. (Generation 2004, 2013)

The trade union's mobilization work, which in the following example invites its sympathizers to testify by answering a questionnaire, is a good reflection of the social and political work aimed at forming a group, homogenizing world views and manufacturing tools that might objectively weigh in on the mechanisms for identifying its members and its voters. The questions were:

– Are you a hardworking person willing to give an extra effort in your work while not receiving support from the system?
– Are you pessimistic about your professional future and feel deprived of true career opportunities simply because you joined the institutions at the wrong time?
– Do you feel discriminated as an official coming from the newer (post-2004) Member States by the 'take it or leave it' attitude of the Commission when as a fresh laureate it only offered you the possibility of employment at the lowermost grade irrespective of your age, qualifications and vast experience?
– Do you believe that the Commission has proven to be the least attractive employer among all the EU institutions, by interpreting existing rules in a non-transparent way with detriment to big categories of staff? Sounds familiar? You disagree? Then please, go

and write it down! The survey is open here until Friday 05 December. (Generation, 2004, 2014)

The narration of the actions involved at the time of the last reform is even more emblematic of old-versus-new oppositions and of the denunciation of those already established, on which the trade union was playing.

> Whilst the so-called ***Front Commun*** (of old unions), were entertaining you with their demagogic theatrics at the Berlaymont foyer and spamming you with their crocodile tear communications announcing gloom and doom, we could witness directly a lot of 'hugging and tears of joy' amongst these fellows when the fateful deal was formally sealed . . . much to their delight! Since this was obvious when the last strike was (irresponsibly) called for by the established unions, it would have been ridiculous to participate. Thus Generation 2004 did not break the strike. Generation 2004 simply took it for what it actually was: A MERE COMEDY by the unions to justify their very *raison d'être* as 'unions'! (Generation, 2004, 2013, p. 1)

The list of candidates for the Staff Committee elections shows, however, that members from the new member states were not necessarily in a dominant position, and paradoxically rather dominated in electable positions. For these elections (based on a roll-call and proportional vote), the various competing lists included male-female couples – a holder of the post and a substitute. Out of the 57 candidates, those from the new countries achieved a slight majority: 14 out of the 27 chief candidates, 15 for the substitutes. In the first 10, the ratio was less favourable, 4/10 for the holders (two Italians, a German and two Greeks) and 7/10 for the substitutes (a German, an Italian, a Spaniard, two French nationals and one Swede).

Since then, Generation 2004 has had a contrasted history. After the 2015 election it became the leading public-office and staff association (OSP) in the European Commission at Brussels (excluding other sites), and one of its members from a new country was elected at the Brussels Local Staff Committee. At the same time, one of its founders joined the

European Parliament to work for the Nigel Farage Group, which raised eyebrows. More importantly, its new Maltese leader was the author of an anti-Semitic aggression that caused quite a stir in the European milieus, and he faced serious disciplinary action.[36] After his resignation, a German official from Ispra, PhD in economics from Cambridge University, was elected as the new chair.[37] In its letter of July 2016 addressed to President Juncker, the trade union commented on Brexit, however, to show that the line had been maintained. The union's letter began by underscoring that they were 'firm believers in the European project based on solidarity, justice and opportunity for all. But to stay calm [they needed] to finally get a clear sign that HR [took their] legitimate concern about a growing staff divide seriously and that it [would] do something about it.' They went on with statements typically reflecting the manufacturing of the new internal division opposing the 'old' and the 'new' generations and models, stating:

> The Brexit has been a public relations disaster of the first order for the EU and was partly caused by a serious image problem of the European Institutions and of its civil service. In 2013 when Cameron complained publicly that one-third of EU civil servants earned more than 10,000 euros a month, we pointed out in a widely ignored pamphlet that the EU institutions were internally divided with an elite group of civil servants hired before 2004 monopolizing power, revenue and prestige, while the rest of the staff gets up to a third or less benefits for often doing the same type of work and very often, even working harder.

Then, before concluding on pensions: 'So remember, we are not all in the same boat. We are in a flotilla of boats, some of them ramshackle and not seaworthy, caused by a break-up of solidarity and a divide-and-rule policy which goes back to the Kinnock reform in 2004, the same Kinnock whose EU luxury pension may now be in danger due to the Brexit.'

---

[36] See https://www.neweurope.eu/article/stephan-grech-assaults-elderly-woman-says-hitler-should-have-exterminated-all-the-jews/ and http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/56840/stefan_grechs_victim_seriously_traumatised#.V5n7kWVTAfs.

[37] http://generation2004.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/G2004-Newsletter-No-13.pdf.

# Tentative Conclusions: Objective Position, Represented Position and Political Standpoint

How is it possible to determine the effects that this overall position in the social field of EU institutions and the at least partial mobilizations can have on forms of identification, standpoints, hence the future evolutions the Commission? As seen in this chapter, nothing would be more dangerous than to individualize a group position under an a priori and already-there form. The homology of the positions and the existence of a family of trajectories are to be related to positions that can be different in the field. Nor are the modalities the same of the meeting between the social dispositions and the former trajectory, and this field. To borrow from our study on the competition for entering the institutions (Chapter 6), the standpoints change. For a young woman who was recruited directly from her country and considered that 'it was no longer possible to live there', and was consecrated by the competition, and another, who had already worked in the private sector on the other side of the Atlantic, the significance of being consecrated by the competition, the modalities of which have in fact been recently enormously changed, is quite different. Mobilizations do not happen all by themselves, but in terms of the state of the power struggles constituted in subfields of the field of Eurocracy, where the policy struggles are found, which have consequences on the individual accumulation of capital, and of the more general power struggles of the bureaucratic field as a whole. As we have just seen, the mobilization work carried out by Generation 2004 depends on initiatives mostly by agents who can be considered dominants of the dominated (at least in terms of date of arrival, country of origin and its relative size, and previously accumulated political and militant capital) and who mobilize under conditions highly dependent on the state of competition within the field of trade-union representation.

Even though they are related to different origins, motives and filters, we can however wonder if, without thus being necessarily thought of as such, the standpoints that can be found do not accurately reflect the ongoing reproduction crisis and especially the upward trend of the new dominant model, which is directed to changing the European institutions into an international institution. The trends revealed by analyses

of the preferences are a first series of indications, even though they underscore that the gaps are not essential, but proportional. But the mobilizations that we have just perceived lead to another series of indications, as seen in the positions voiced during the movements around the Staff Regulations review between 2011 and 2013. The agents from the new member states each took very different positions. Some of them were fully present in the mobilizations of the *Front Commun* against the reform, that is, of the established trade unions denounced by Generation 2004. During the general meetings, the trade unionists in fact got into the habit of integrating English discourse in order to integrate the newcomers more, which is an innovation, given that the language of human resources and particularly of the trade unions until very recently was exclusively French.[38] Notwithstanding, the forces seem mainly distributed over two other positions. Although this is impossible to quantify, a significant percentage, as in other countries, remained mostly passive, considering, at least if we believe both the trade-union spokespersons who sometimes had trouble anticipating and representatives of DG Human Resources who were relying on a weak mobilization, that the conditions were sufficiently advantageous to not have to mobilize. In this second group, we do not necessarily find agents converted to neoliberalism, but more a form of implicit faith that the institution and its Slovak commissioner of the time would find the best acceptable compromise.

Lastly, those mobilized by the Generation 2004 struggle mostly played the card of subversion of the rules of the field and of the established trade unions. In the framework of the mobilizations, the trade union sought to draw attention to the specific case of post-2004 agents, even if that meant making proposals clearly breaking with the balances of the trade unions. In addition to its positions, Generation 2004 sent a letter to the permanent representations, many members of which were asking for drastic reduction measures. It is not important here to know whether these proposals were justified or not in their substance, or tactically adroit; what matters, on the other hand, is to stress the exoteric standpoint and its effects. Initially, beyond any

---

[38] I was able to personally observe four general meetings during the review negotiations.

question, it accentuated the divide that might have existed in the trade-union field. When he reported on the revision process, Günther Lorenz, President of Union Syndicale Brussels, wrote:

> On several occasions, the representatives of Generation 2004 tried to use a Council-staff general assembly to defend their cause and to formulate their own specific claims . . . The majority of colleagues recruited after 2004 made no mistake of this and massively took part in the strikes and other actions, despite Generation 2004 messages inviting them to break the strike. Such behaviour by a group claiming to represent the staff is completely irresponsible, shameful and inadmissible. The corporatism of Generation 2004 is preoccupying, because it risks breaking solidarity and undermining future actions. (Union Syndicale Fédérale, 2013)[39]

Another effect of these disruptive positions is a change in the figureheads. What is specific about the field, as reminded above, is a struggle for the definition of the legitimate properties to exercise power within the field, that is, the field of Eurocracy, to speak in the name of Europe and place oneself in a suitable position to embody European general interest. From this point of view, the designation of a model, or more broadly the fascination for what is embodied by such or such a model is a good indicator of the changes of balance in this struggle. Moments of struggle and of reforms are thus usually moments when figureheads stand out. In the 1980s, it was that of Ludwig Schubert, a senior official, a German Social-Democrat economist and a trade unionist qualified as the father of the method (and for many, the kingpin of the single currency). During the process of the Kinnock reform, the director-general figure of Horst Reichenbach, tempering the enthusiasms of the Kinnock cabinet, reflected the figure of senior civil servant, lawyer, whose career was also devoted entirely to Europe. While these figures are not denounced as such, the old-versus-neo opposition goes however with the promotion of new values breaking away from these old elites

---

[39] See also a more detailed reaction sent to the Permanent Representations by Union for Unity (U4U), http://www.u4unity.eu/document1/LettreU4U_G2004_20130114.pdf.

characteristic of a *Stand*, to the benefit of new values, often in fact American and international.

Although in the following excerpt from a report on the first meeting of the new commissioner with the OSPs on 21 November 2014 the idea was for Generation 2004 to position itself favourably in view of future negotiations, we can also stress the qualities attributed to the new commissioner, and even the quasi-fascinated recognition of a form of charisma (hope, model and so on) that informs the new figure embodied by the commissioner, promoted by the alternative trade union (italics added).

> The meeting was a very cordial and *positive event*, with Mrs Georgieva proving to be a *warm and open person* as well as a *good, attentive and patient* listener.
>
> She (and her staff) appear to have 'hit the ground running', demonstrating an excellent grasp of staff issues and engaging into some *serious* discussion on a number of *concrete* matters, beyond the usual pleasantries which normally characterize such initial meetings.

The report continues with the stand taken by the Generation 2004 leader of the time:

> As Generation 2004, we were delighted to hear Mrs Georgieva identify 'post-2004' as one of the main problems which she was aware of. Indeed, during his intervention, Stefan Grech – Chair of Generation 2004 – remarked his satisfaction after so much time during which the post-2004 problem had been denied by the administration as if there was indeed no such problem.
>
> Grech went on to remind the Vice President that she had inherited a deeply-divided civil service, a large portion of which (post-2004) felt hurt, demotivated and outright betrayed. At this point, as shown during the post-2004 conference held only a few days before, all OSPs were agreeing on this and were calling upon the Commission to act as soon as possible to address a decade of injustice. Grech concluded by expressing the *trust* of Generation 2004 in Mrs Georgieva and *confidence* that she will indeed muster the political will to address the post-2004 issue once and for all; **COURAGE Vice President Georgieva** – you will find us four-square behind you. **Where there is a will there is a way, but where there is a political will, then there is a highway.** Generation, 2004, 2014)

This was not the first time that a commissioner from the East was in charge of administrative questions. It was the third, successively, since Neil Kinnock's departure. But Šefčovič and Siim Kallas were men who had occupied high posts in national administrative and/or political career paths. Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva's trajectory and what she embodied were in fact different.

A student (MA in Political Economy and Sociology in 1976), PhD in Economics (1986) and professor in a variety of positions between 1977 and 1993 at the University of National and World Economy in Sofia (the name of which, as translated in the directories, was Karl Marx Higher Institute of Economics until the end of April 1990), that is, a central institution, she did not follow a national career path, but an international one, initially in the private sector, at Mercer Management Consulting and Worldwide Human Resource Networking, both promoting talent management. She entered the World Bank in 1993 as an environmental economist for Europe and Central Asia, and rose to become manager then director, before being director in other sectors then Vice President of the World Bank Group. It was from (and from the glory of) this post that she went from Washington to Brussels. Šefčovič's initial trajectory was similar: a graduate in economics in Bratislava, he then studied for five years at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations before getting a doctorate in law. He would get another doctorate in international and European law between 1996 and 2000, but Šefčovič's career diverges on a different aspect. Indeed, he became a diplomat of his country in the successive definitions of the state that he represented (Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, then Slovakia). His progressive specialization in European issues led him to play a role in the enlargement negotiations, and he represented his country in Brussels. Interestingly, it was this position, and basically the capital he acquired then within the EU institutions, that led him into Slovak politics through European politics by standing for European elections (and getting, as his resume says, the highest number of votes among the elected Slovaks). Before him, Kallas had embodied a different path, also as an economist, but mostly as a member of his national political elite, including a substantial part of his trajectory under the former regime. A specialist in finance and credit, he entered the ministry of finances of the Socialist republic, became its

savings-bank director, then a little later member of the Supreme Soviet of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. President of the Estonian central bank in 1990, when the first Estonian currency was minted, he then founded a centre-right party, liberal from the economic point of view, which led him to occupy the positions of Foreign Minister and Budget Minister before being briefly Prime Minister, then joining the Commission as vice president.

As shown, although the three were educated under the system of the former regime, they differed in what followed. First, Georgieva and Šefčovič are younger than Kallas, but the first had leading international functions. Her work as a consultant made her move in one of the five or six largest global, that is, Anglo-American HR consultancy firms – this was also important back in 1992 – working (today through talent management) to build an international market of executives and leaders. Her style, illustrated by the fact that she chose to quit her high World Bank post on a day's notice in order to get her country out of a bad stretch, also brings her laudatory biographies in the international press in English, such as *The Companion to the European Commission* (European Voice, 2015), widely read in European milieus, which stated: 'Georgieva seems to have left behind a consistently positive impression. Many described her as a woman who manages with iron fist inside a velvet glove, someone of inexhaustible energy who can chafe at slow process' (p. 17).

This of course does not mean that the commissioner will necessarily produce a political change. But as a woman from a new country with a past in the private sector and international organizations, she embodies more the 'new model' than the former one, which put together with the new values promoted by the key competencies, the forms taken by the new recruitment policies, the progressive abandonment of French as the staff-policy language and of the law as a model to the benefit of management rhetoric, the increased fragmentation of the trade-union field, the distribution of power on internal Commission issues . . . and the pyramid structure of the Commission staff observed above, a collection of processes, suggests that an in-depth sociological change is in progress, in which the agents of the new countries are, by the way, as much its instruments as its always willing drivers.

# Appendix: Report on the Statistical Studies on the Actors of European Economic Governance (with Frédéric Lebaron)

### Studied Population

We factored in the whole of the directors of the economic directorates of the Commission in 2012. These are *n*=74.

Among them, 9 are from the enlargement (one of them having dual nationality).

### Active Variables of the Analysis

Were considered as active variables of the analysis the 10 following variables:

– Gender
– Sector in t (directorates: ECFIN, Budget, Trade, COMP, EMPL, ENTR, TAXUD, Inner Market, Eurostat, General Secretariat)
– Place of education: In his or her country/EU/ Somewhere else
– Major discipline: Law + Political Science, Humanities/Economics, Management + Law/Sciences
– Previous experience in an administration: European/National/Other international
– Occupied a cross-cutting position (Yes/No)
– Sectoral mobility: Mono-sectoral economics/Multi-sectoral and mono-sectoral politics
– Transition in the private sector: Lawyer/Banking-finance*/ Other industry-service/Not informed
– Transition in a cabinet: Commissioner/Minister*/ None
– International mobility: European delegation/National delegation/ Other delegation, Unspecified/No international mobility/ International organization

Modalities with an * were defined as passive because of their very low frequency.

[It would be necessary, for clarity of construction, to regroup them. Here is what I propose:

**General indicators (12)**: gender (2), directorate (10),

**Education trajectory (6)**: place of education (3), major discipline (3)

**Career indicators (17):** previous administration experience (3), cross-cutting position (2), sectoral mobility (2), private (3), cabinet (2), international mobility (5)]

This gives importance (with half of the modalities) to the mobility and previous experience indicators.

## Analysis of Specific Multiple Correspondences

Q=10 active questions
K'=35 active modalities

We will interpret here the first two axes, which are slightly detached (Table 7.1).

## Interpretation of Axis 1 (horizontal)

The most contributive variables are: previous experience in an administration (19.9%), main place of education (14.2%), international mobility (13.8%), sector (13.1%), cabinet (10.8%).

**Table 7.1** Table of eigenvalues

| Trace of the matrix:<0} 2.56351 | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number | Eigenvalue | Percentage | Cumulative percentage |
| 1 | 0.250 | 9.8 | 9.8 |
| 2 | 0.226 | 8.8 | 18.6 |
| 3 | 0.189 | 7.4 | 26.0 |
| 4 | 0.174 | 6.8 | 32.8 |
| 5 | 0.160 | 6.3 | 39.0 |
| 6 | 0.140 | 5.5 | 44.5 |
| 7 | 0.139 | 5.4 | 49.9 |
| 8 | 0.131 | 5.1 | 55.0 |
| 9 | 0.127 | 4.9 | 60.0 |
| 10 | 0.118 | 4.6 | 64.6 |

The axis is therefore strongly related to those variables indicating the previous professional path.

Axis 1 opposes (on the left, negative values): international administration (14.6%), mobility other delegation, unspecified (10.9%), other place of education (6.4%), ECFIN (4.9%), cabinet no (3.6%) to (on the right, positive values): horizontal mobility (9.3%), EU education (7.7%), member of a commissioner's cabinet (7.2%), lawyer (6%), general secretariat (5.2%), European administration (4.8%).

Axis 1 is rather simply interpreted as an axis of European bureaucratic capital, distinguishing on the left the modalities of relative externality and on the right, the modalities indicating high circulation in the most central positions of the Commission before being appointed director.

## Interpretation of Axis 2

Previous experience in an administration (29.4%), sector (16.2%), experience in the private sector (15.3%), education major (14.5%), mobility (9.9%) are the most contributive values.

Again, we find here the previous professional trajectory, but also with the education-major variable.

The axis opposes (below, negative values): other place of education (3.7%) to (above, positive coordinates): national administration (23.9%), industry (11.8%), sciences (10.5%), professional mobility (9.9%), Eurostat (7.8%).

Axis 2 is interpreted as an axis specific to modalities indicating scientific training, national administrative experience combined with international professional mobility and a position within Eurostat. It therefore singles out particular professional and scientific resources related to industry and national administration, hence specific professional trajectories (statisticians and so on).

<div align="center">

# 8

</div>

# Both the Pilot and a Victim of Austerity? How the European Commission's Administration Changed under the Economic and Financial Crisis

What are the effects of the 'economic and financial' crisis on the EU's administration?[1] Although there has been much debate on the effects of the crisis on the EU, the question has taken a back seat to a sort of institutional geopolitics essentially aimed at declaring the victory of the EU Council, the European Central Bank (ECB) and,

---

[1] We will stick here to a generic definition of the crisis as 'economic and financial'. This does not mean that we underestimate its many definitions, the disputes that have governed these 'definitions of the situation' and of 'the problems' revealed by it or, especially, the effects that they might have had on solutions and reform policies at various scales. To our knowledge, such a study has yet to be undertaken.

more rarely, the European Commission.[2] This chapter would like to offer another point of view, that is, more from the floor of these administrations and looking more specifically at the policies that have been applied to them, as well as at their consequences on the position of their agents and their social and political power.

This point of view is quite useful in this context. It could obviously be thought that the effect of the crisis on the EU administration has travelled a singular, even exceptional trajectory. As an administration with no State – other than the member states – and above all no possible public debt, the EU administration does in fact have many specificities. Moreover, it has been placed in the middle of the collective resolution of the financial crisis, then of the debt crisis in the euro area, to the point of being more spontaneously perceived as the prescriber of austerity and public-deficit reduction – and their noxious effects – than as a 'victim'.

The following analysis tends however to show that these views need to be qualified with a number of nuances. The EU administration is actually rather similar to the administrations of the EU countries, which while not having been victorious in the crisis, have not had to face a diagnosis of their 'responsibility'. The EU's administration is far from having deteriorated under the fire of austerity measures – which are judged, incidentally, in very different ways – but its agents have nevertheless been the subject of a Staff Regulations review process that included real cost-saving measures, the political outcome of which remained uncertain for a long time.[3] The economic-crisis situation has however also led to another change. Although

---

[2] Many books, chapters and articles have been published since the first version of the present chapter. This literature confirms the reframing in European studies of the classic dichotomies on institutions: Bickerton et al. (2015); Verdun (2013); Savage and Verdun (2016); Bauer and Becker (2014). But there are also new cross-cutting perspectives: Matthijs and Blyth (2015); Seabrooke and Wigan (2016); Henriksen and Seabrooke (2015); Ban (2016). There are many presentations in ENLIGHTEN (European Legitimacy in Governing through Hard Times: The Role of European Networks, EC Horizon 2020), Work Package 1: Power, Ideas and Networks, May 2016, including by Vivien Schmidt, Ramona Coman, Frederik Ponjaert and Amandine Crespy, many of whom have also opened stimulating perspectives.

[3] The Brussels institutions use either 'review' or 'revision' to designate the process. In this chapter, we have opted for the first.

the EU institutional staff as a whole has been affected by these measures to varying degrees, the economic situation has also reinforced part of the staff, in particular for those whose competency is based on economic and financial expertise. Cutting across the European institutions, these latter seem indeed to have been given new legitimacy, and they are ultimately the winners of the current changes among all the agents belonging to the subfield of Eurocracy in charge of European economic governance (Georgakakis and Lebaron, 2016).

As a relatively circumscribed whole of 40,000 permanent civil servants, the EU administration is therefore a good case to analyse for the more general effects of the economic crisis on the transformation of administrations. In fact, these effects can mostly be seen in the nuances of the, although not always radical, at least disputed nature of the reforms, and ultimately, well beyond the technical aspects, in the changes that the economic situation has entailed in terms of redistributing the agents' and the administrations' legitimacy. Moreover, the analysis shows that these effects do not appear out of nowhere or as a direct consequence of the economic situation, but rather in relative continuity with and, more particularly here, under the constraint of the history of the struggles to define 'good administration' as applied in the field of the EU's institutions since their beginnings.[4] In the end, the major question that arises is thus that of the measure of autonomy in which these battles unfold, a variable that has constantly been at work here and could well be, beyond this case, one of the divides in the different reorganizations of administrations in Europe.

By successively reconsidering, first, the process of the latest Staff Regulations review of the European civil service, then the recent upscaling of the economic sectors and their agents within the European Commission, this chapter aims at building a sociopolitical analysis of the recent evolutions in European administration

---

[4] Conceptualizing the EU institutions as a field enables going beyond an analysis of inter- and intra-administration competitions to the advantage of a larger matrix, more focused on the distribution of forms of legitimacy and authority among the actors and groups involved (Georgakakis, 2012).

and of the policies being more broadly applied to administrations in a period of economic crisis.[5]

# A Review Under Constraints

One of the characteristics of reflections focused on crisis effects is to minimize the continuity at work in crisis processes (Dobry, 2009). The Staff Regulations review conducted between 2010 and 2013 was no exception to this rule. The economic crisis provided a convenient argument and, at least potentially, changed the state of the forces and anticipations weighing on the EU's administration policy. But this undoubtedly happened less in the form of a radical break than in continuity with the series of blows and jolts that had played out in the subfield of European administration policy in the previous 15 years and under the structural constraints of the internal distribution of its forces before the review got started.

## Adjust or Dismantle: The Debate on the Latest Review

Before discussing these processes, a brief presentation is needed of this latest review of the European civil service Staff Regulations and the state of the debate to which it gave birth. Indeed, the Staff Regulations review conducted between 2010 and 2013 was a turbulent process. The term 'reform' had been carefully avoided, it seems, so as not to recall the

---

[5] At the empirical level, this chapter is part of broader research on the history and sociology of European civil service and draws from various sources: institutional and trade-union archives for the history; interviews; direct observation of the social movements; participant observation of academic or professional debates; for the past five years, the systematic collection of staff mail, leaflets and memos from management and unions addressed to the staff; and Web sites devoted to the reform. For the first part, there is complementary reading in Georgakakis (2002c, 2007, 2013a and 2013b). The second section reflects the first results of ongoing work on a comparative history of the reforms. The key actors have been referred to anonymously. The second part takes and updates the data of work done jointly with Marine de Lassalle on senior managers of the Commission (Chapter 4 in this book; Georgakakis and de Lassalle, 2013) and continues with the very first results of ongoing research with Frédéric Lebaron.

manoeuvring of the Kinnock reform ten years earlier. Nonetheless, the staff organized strikes and general meetings, and there were strong institutional tensions among and within the various institutions. The process mobilized the staff as it had not done since the 2000s, and for a number of civil servants at the end of their career it even reminded them of the big strikes of the 1980s.

The review process culminated in a series of measures: a commitment to reduce the staff by 5% over the following five years; a change in the indicators used in the wage-adjustment calculation method; an increase in the working time and in the retirement age; containment of social spending; blocking of automatic career promotion at the highest level; increased dismissal possibilities based on performance; supervision of the types of function; institution of a new body of secretaries; and increased monitoring of the application of Staff Regulations in the different institutions.[6] Even if they were the outcome of a compromise that had been long and difficult to reach, these measures were far from neutral. Although they affected neither the essence of the Staff Regulations nor the wage scale, which had been largely re-examined during the mid-2000s reform by reviewing the number of working hours and of years and rates of contribution to social security, they induced rather heavy consequences in terms of purchasing power and attractiveness, and had an unquestionably broader effect on the material and symbolic foundations that made civil service appear as the occupation of a new transnational elite in the making. Above all, the compromise, considered 'honourable' by many, left in the shadows what had come under fire during the process and was sometimes narrowly avoided: a much more drastic reduction in job quotas and in the total payroll; the possibility of excluding secretaries from Staff Regulations; the containment of management-level job quotas and intervention on appointment conditions and so forth. The review, a component of the debate on the financial

---

[6] For more details, see the excellent chronicles of the European administration published by the *Revue française d'administration publique*, particularly numbers 142 (RFAP, 2012) and 148 (RFAP, 2013). Independently of its positions, the most complete documentation (texts, assessments and positions during the process) is available on the Web site of the union U4U: http://u4unity.eu/sta12j.htm).

outlook of the Union, also ran the risk of removing the negotiations from debates relatively internal to the actors of the subfield of EU staff policy and placing them in a political debate of greater scope on the functions and legitimacy of the European civil service. The potential infringement of the relative autonomy of staff policy was particularly extreme at this moment, which was qualified as a crisis at various levels and in which neither Europe nor its servants were accorded strong public legitimacy.

This can be seen in the rather negative reactions of the detractors of the review. In the mobilization process, but also at the outcome of the process, the unions did not hesitate to declare that the European civil service was being dismantled and to mobilize on the basis of explicitly political dimensions. Of the arguments advanced in this direction and developed in many forms, none could be more specific than the leaflet published on line by the Joint Inter-institutional Front of the Staff Representatives against the reform, 'STOP dismantling EU Staff Regulations':

> The Reform of the Staff Regulations is being presented by the Commission as justified by the requirements of the present-day situation and tuned to various registers such as showing a good example to the Member States, reducing costs, renewing the salary adjustment method, pleasing the press and public opinion . . . y
>
> The Staff Unions, gathered as a Joint Front, do not agree with the Commission's false motives and refutes the need to re-open the Staff Regulations.
>
> Nevertheless they are ready to negotiate with the Commission in order to at least temper the most negative aspects of her proposals, to defend the action capacities of the Institutions, to improve the working conditions and the career prospects of staff and to counter the vague desires of the Council.
>
> The European civil service has already gone through drastic and long lasting restrictive measures to create savings during the 2004 Reform.
>
> The economic and budgetary arguments do not seem to us to be the real reasons for this reform. The motivation is more political: there is an underlying desire to reduce the size of the European Civil Service and to weaken it. . . .

Finally, in the midst of the budgetary, financial, economic and social crises caused by the inability of the national political decision makers to regulate the global financial markets, the Commission needs to convince the Member States to strengthen the only instrument able to help them confront this situation: the European civil service.

In fact, the European civil service remains the only instrument able to make the European Union function and the only entity with the necessary dimension, the competence and the legitimacy to bring viable solutions to the crisis being faced by a number of Member States. The speech of President Barroso on the EU reflects a salutary recognition of this fact, even if it comes late in the day and has not yet been transposed into concrete actions.

Also, instead of the draft presented by the College of Commissioners, proposal which greatly weakens all the Institutions and their staff, the Staff Unions are proposing to the Commission an alternative, more effective approach, which allows for the preservation of the current and future action capacity of the European civil service and to maximize the use of the resources.[7]

The general meetings and strikes had a rather good turnout. According to union estimates shared by the qualified services, 75% of the Commission staff went on a one-day strike.[8] The precariousness of contractual employees, placing secretaries in greater precariousness, the newcomers' wish to upscale their situations, fear of downgrading, and Europe and the Commission's rediscovered political motivation – significantly, a 'Delors, come back!' banner was rolled out – were among the many different reasons that mobilized a large part of the staff in its different fragments: young/old, precarious/tenured, secretaries and

---

[7] The common Web site is no longer accessible, but there are still traces of it on the Web site of the majority union at the European Commission: http://www.renouveau-democratie.eu/2011/11/stop-dismantling-eu-staff-regulations-%C2%AB-package-4%E2%80%B3-for-a-real-reform/ and the full text of the union statement is available at http://www.renouveau-democratie.eu/documents/statuts/reforme_2012/111110_paquet_4_front_commun_en.pdf

[8] There were about ten general meetings of the staff at the Commission between 2010 and 2013. The author was able to observe several of them directly.

intermediate levels. At other levels, there were also concerns regarding the lessening of the prestige attached to the European civil service, hence of its attractiveness. As confided by a member of DG Human Resources and Security (DG HR), for a civil servant at the end of his or her career, the attractiveness of EU careers and pensions would no longer be an advantage compared to those of the civil servants of large member states such as Germany (this had already been the case, before the review, for Great Britain, Luxembourg and several Scandinavian countries). For others, competency would no longer be a guarantee in the long run.

A sign of the battles being fought over the definition of what a 'servant of Europe' was and should be, these measures were however far from being criticized by everyone. In fact, the Commissioner's cabinet and DG HR endeavoured from the start to show that ultimately, these were simply adjustment measures, as indicated by Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič on several occasions. This argument was accepted by part of the staff – a share impossible to quantify – in particular among staff from the new member states, who considered that this was a more than acceptable situation compared to the reforms some of the member states were undergoing. This is most probably why the staff association Generation 2004, born from the problems raised by the 2004 Staff Regulations and demanding that they be fixed (in particular the depreciation of European civil service entry grades), negotiated separately, something that rarely occurs, to discuss upgrading post-EU-enlargement careers. Positions were much more entrenched elsewhere, in particular among the delegates representing the member states within the 'Working Party on the Staff Regulations', and even among permanent representatives who had taken hold of the issue.[9] The divide was such that some delegations rejected the compromise that was ultimately accepted. Although formulated as a model of European language of diplomacy, a joint statement by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Austria and Denmark appended to

---

[9] The press is an indicator difficult to handle; in particular, it is difficult to interpret it as 'reflecting' public opinion. Much more probably, it was one of the instruments of the conflict, as shown by a series of articles and their publication at key moments of the process. See for instance, *The Economist*, 2013.

the adoption of the text specifying to the Council the reasons of their negative vote is a good illustration of the will to move in the direction of much more drastic solutions:

> The review of the Staff Regulations was an opportunity to modernize the EU civil service, to rein in administrative spending and to ensure that the EU institutions will be able to afford their future commitments on pensions and salaries. This is an opportunity that only comes every few years. Unfortunately, after nearly two years of intensive work by all parties, and despite broad agreement for those objectives, our delegations felt that the compromise presented did not match the comprehensive reforms which many Member States are already delivering in their domestic civil services. All of our public services are changing and the EU civil service will be left behind at its peril. A modern, effective and dynamic civil service is vital for the EU to be able to deliver on important issues which matter to our citizens. We should not under-estimate how strongly the public's support for the EU is linked to their perception of the EU Civil Service. In the next few years, we will continue to work constructively to ensure that EU citizens have the EU civil service they should expect, one that reflects our 21st century EU and one that the EU can afford to maintain.[10]

We will not settle this debate, but we can nonetheless show that this review, which was conducted in an economic-crisis situation, was just one of the episodes of a longer-term battle in which the stakes were to define the political and social status of the European civil service. For some, the crisis was to be an opportunity to further rationalize (or to circumscribe) this civil service, hence to finish what had been started with the Kinnock reform. Those defending the European civil service explained that on the contrary, it had already been sufficiently weakened by the preceding reforms and that to weaken it further was to be deprived of a

---

[10] Quoted in a letter from the UK's Rt. Hon. David Lidington MP, Minister for Europe, to William Cash MP, Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee, 31 October 2013. http://europeanmemoranda.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/files/2014/06/18638-11_Min_Cor_31_October_2013_Lidington-Cash.pdf, accessed on 5 June 2015.

pivotal instrument of the European system in the context of a crisis in which the EU had a strong role to play.

## Staff Regulations with a History

It is easier to understand how these positions were crystallized and the climate of sharp internal tensions in which this happened by placing this Staff Regulations review process both in the long historical perspective of how this civil service was structured over time, and in the more recent perspective of the ruptures induced by the massive reforms of the 2000s.

First of all, the Staff Regulations issue had been very important since the beginning of European administration. It might even be said that for an ultimately rather improbable civil service, the foundation of its Staff Regulations, which had been debated since the beginnings of the ECSC and into the 1967 merger of the communities, was a nodal point.[11] From the legal standpoint, Staff Regulations became the source of a genuine body of European administrative law, comparable with that existing in the majority of European countries. As such, it has been nourished by abundant jurisprudence, which notably led to establishing a tribunal of European civil service. Moreover, this legal body has been largely commented and celebrated, including in reference to its founding fathers and their will to constitute the equivalent of state civil service or of its main principles (Andreone, 2008). Staff Regulations had a major impact at the sociological and political levels. They provided the staff with multiple assurances of their independence and permanence. In a context in which entering the European institutions was perceived as a risk, it offered a significant number of social benefits to support the attractiveness of its posts. By stating a set of rules and obligations, the Staff Regulations of European civil service contributed to confer to the civil servants of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) then of the European Economic Community (EEC) an economic and social status of transnational elite in the making; they

---

[11] On the history of the merger, see in particular Conrad, 1992, and Mangenot, 2012. On the more general history of the beginnings of EU administration, see Dumoulin, 2007, and Seidel, 2010.

were thus equipped with a comparative advantage compared to civil servants of national administrations and to senior executives of the economic and industrial world, that is, their main partners and competitors (Gravier, 2008; Chapters 3 and 4 in this book).

Against this background, it was no surprise that the battles fought over the status and the wages defined crucial moments in the history of the staff and of its representative bodies. In 1972, 1980, 1991 and 1997, important social mobilizations had contributed to the construction of the European civil service both in terms of status and law, and more generally, in terms of identifications. It is important to note that these mobilizations, although sometimes highly disputed, especially in 1972 and 1980, were ultimately successful for the institutions' agents. This remained true until 1997, when Commissioner Erkki Liikanen's reform project was withdrawn after a period of intense mobilization. It was in the context of these latter mobilizations that a German senior official who was also leader of the European Public Service Union (EPSU) proposed the wage-indexation method that in the end was appended to the Staff Regulations. The method essentially amounted to a stable compromise (because it did not require yearly renegotiations) on the remuneration of European civil servants, whose wages would then be calculated based on the evolution of the cost of living and on the evolutions of the wages of civil servants in benchmark countries. Sociologically speaking, what professionals in the field henceforth called 'the method' had been elevated as a strong symbol of the rationality (Cartesian, of course) of European civil servants.

This line of history has nevertheless taken a different turn in the past decade. After the resignation of the Santer Commission, what is commonly called the Kinnock reform was given the goal of changing the culture of European administration in various domains including human resources and financial management, and involved a reform of Staff Regulations that would convert the four existing bodies (following an ABCD model similar to France's) into two bodies – administrators and deputies – and substantially review the pay scale for the entry grades. This sweeping reform did not come about easily. It generated serious tensions between the Commission staff and the members of the Staff Regulations group in charge of this issue for the Council. As reported by

a unionist, one member-state representative went as far as to declare, before the negotiations, 'this time, there will be blood'. Within the Commission, tensions were also high between the Commission's cabinet and the staff, which gave several advance notices of strikes before the Directorate-General for Administration (known at the time as 'ADMIN', today as 'HR' for Human Resources and Security) became, along with the majority union at the time, EPSU, the focus of the social and political compromise on which the reform was built. On the one hand, most of the Staff Regulations and their material advantages were preserved, at least for the officials in service, and on the other, changes in the career ladder were accepted (with entry at a much lower grade) as well as in the core of the 'new public management' paradigm aimed at 'changing the culture' according to a model mainly of British inspiration.[12]

Combined with a political situation in which doubt was being cast on the European project and the institutions were being rebalanced, notably around the Council and the major member states, these reforms had a significant impact. Beyond the formulation of 'moving from a mission-based administration to a management-based administration' profusely used by the actors and commentators with very different interpretations (ranging from 'age of reason' to 'loss of meaning'), several indicators testify to a crisis of social reproduction in a context of generation change and staff growth. New divisions also appeared among different segments of the staff: between the officials and growing numbers of the contractual employees for example, but also between agents having entered before the 2004 Staff Regulations reform and those having entered after it (whether or not from the new member states). Moreover, the reform agenda is still ongoing, with the idea of containing, or reducing, civil-service staff and replacing its members with contractual employees as has

---

[12] The abundant literature on new public management shows that there is not just one model. Comparing such reforms, in particular those of the various member states and of the United States, reveals that at various levels and in spite of the supposed tradition of cultural compromise, the British model was established and henceforth dominates at the Commission. For a solid summary on the comparison of reform models, see in particular Eymeri-Douzans (2011). On the Commission's reform policies and their effects, see among the substantial literature, the theme-based issue of the *Revue française d'administration publique* (RFAP, 2010).

been done in various member states. This threat is attested by the 'agencification' process that has been intensified within the Commission, such as recently in DG Research & Innovation. Beyond its technical aspects, the Kinnock reform had thus changed the general climate within the institutions and led to a radicalization of the different positions, in particular those of union staff representatives. Divided at the time of the reform, the European civil-service unions now faced a fragmentation that would be upsetting the political and conceptual differences that had characterized them 15 years earlier. Starting in the late 1990s, the (relatively good, though not tension-free) relations that they had maintained with the Commission's senior management began to worsen and became particularly strained, just as, at another level, their capacity to mobilize new employees deteriorated, particularly after the big European-enlargement waves. In short, although the Kinnock reform established the representativeness of unions and professional organizations from the institutional standpoint, it contributed to complicating it from the political standpoint.

Recently the economic and budgetary crisis context also increased tensions between member-state representatives and the European civil service. Particularly in 2009, the Council's Committee of Ministers refused to vote in favour of the annual wage adjustment that was to result mechanically from 'the method', and this led to a legal battle before the European Court of Justice (Levasseur and Roques, 2012.

## The Battle for Staff Regulations and Decision-making Autonomy

This history enables a better understanding of the meaning of what was played out in this process and also makes it possible to temper 'the crisis effect' on the review process. It also shows that it was not completely unlikely that touching the Staff Regulations and the wage-calculation method simultaneously would turn the review into a very sensitive matter. The economic-crisis situation was not, however, void of effect. It obviously served as a core argument. But this aspect is ultimately ambivalent insofar as it played in favour of both sides; although it

justified the intended cost-savings, it also legitimized the need to limit the cost-saving measures in order to avoid breaking up an instrument deemed central (at least by a substantial number of the actors involved) to solving the crisis, and this was undoubtedly a major element in the final stretch of the political negotiations. The crisis was definitely a factor, but in a different way, namely as a 'definition of the situation', which, consistently with the change in balances that had occurred since the Kinnock reform, weighed on the distribution of power within the field in charge of staff policy, and in the process, on the space of what was thinkable – and above all, of what was negotiable – which delimited the strategies at work.

The Kinnock reform changed the order of things, of course, but not only through the concrete measures that it engendered. It also did so, more generally, by redefining the problem of the European civil service as a management problem (as had just supposedly been shown by the Santer Commission crisis) more than a problem of law or policy, which it had remained for a long time. This change affected not only the staff-policy paradigm but it affected at the same time the properties required to conduct it or to occupy positions of power in this domain. Without entering into the details of the trajectories, the weight of agents equipped with profiles of economists or managers had become, since the reform, much more important in the sector and within the key posts of DG HR, as well as more broadly, among actors who had a say on these matters. This aspect became greater, this time in the sense that it was more salient in the context of the economic crisis and simultaneously of the financial outlook, which became more generally debated from the standpoints of the side advocating austerity and the side advocating economic stimulus.

Briefly, the subfield of the field of Eurocracy in charge of European administration, namely here the group of actors involved in the review of Staff Regulations and wages, comprises different agents. Within the Commission, which institutionally speaking has the initiative of proposing a review, we can distinguish political agents – the Commissioner and probably, to a lesser degree, his cabinet members – and those working at DG HR in the entourage of the Director-General or of her Deputy Director-General. As a former member of the Commission President's cabinet, this latter seems to have had a leading role in the review. As

regards the Council, the agents are more generally national civil servants representing their member state at the 'Staff Regulations group' and cumulating this mission with others, often budgetary in the case at hand.[13] At a higher hierarchical level, decisions can be referred to member-state ambassadors. At the European Parliament, the Staff Regulations are submitted to elected representatives. Finally, the unions are stakeholders in the process but with no decision-making power; they are consulted with by the Commission, and when they are not or the Commission proposal is threatened at the Council, they mobilize in the various institutions.

At first sight – that is, through the lenses of hard-line institutionalism – these different actors sometimes represent the member states (within the Staff Regulations group, which nevertheless includes representatives of DG HR) and sometimes 'supranational' institutions. There are other cleavages, also of strategic importance: oppositions between a more political cluster of actors (ambassadors and cabinet members) and a more technical cluster; oppositions between permanent members of this sub-field (including 'veterans' of this issue, some of which are member-state and Parliament representatives) and actors who are rather newer in the sector or only passing through (including from the Commission); oppositions, finally, between agents educated in public law (and having the vocation of a lawyer or administrator) and others, more 'budgetary' or 'administrative'. Although they are not necessarily opposed at all points, these agents usually favour indicators in line with their competency and legitimacy when identifying and dealing with problems by prioritizing, for instance in the case of the last of the just-mentioned cleavages, legal balances or budgetary savings.

These cleavages made a difference. It could have been expected that implementation of the Lisbon Treaty would be an advantage for the Commission given that the new treaty entailed in particular that Staff

---

[13] For the record, the Council is organized into 139 working parties in charge of preparing decisions for the Group of Permanent Representatives, and the ambassadors and deputy ambassadors, before they are submitted to the ministers, who in the end rule on few points, given that the compromises adopted at the lower echelons are regarded as Point A and simply validated thereafter.

Regulation questions should henceforth fall under ordinary procedure, that is, joint decision making. The Parliament, often mostly in line with the Commission on institutional matters, should have added weight to the Commission actors' position, all the more so here that Member of European Parliament (MEP) allowances and expenses henceforth depended on the EU budget and that the European Parliament's rapporteur had longstanding connections with the institutions' staff policy. This institutional advantage seemed, however, to be rather limited. Under the crisis effect and, more generally, under pressure from those states advocating austerity during the negotiations on the financial outlook, but also from the experience acquired by certain members of the Staff Regulations group during the preceding reform, the side most in favour of a drastic reform initially seemed particularly strong and united, to the point that the Commission might withdraw its proposal. Conversely, the forces wishing to defend the European civil service seemed weaker at the start. The first proposal made by the Commission was thus considered, on the side of the unions and professional organizations, as very cautious and even sometimes as over-anticipating the Council's wishes; for the member-state delegates, these proposals were regarded on the contrary as not providing in the crisis context the necessary rebalancing with respect to national administrations. Under these circumstances, the negotiators felt at first as if they were trapped between the staff representatives and those of the member states, who at the start were relatively united.

It is not very likely that the macro-political assumptions circulating made any difference here, in this case the assumption that the Commission President's weakness or his supposed wish to be reappointed led him to encourage the Commission to align with the positions of the most critical member states. A much more convincing factor would seem to be the change in balances within this political subfield. As regards the Commissioner and his team, there are different elements to be observed. From the standpoint of his personal political position, Commissioner Šefčovič, who had formerly been Permanent Representative of Slovakia, did not carry the same clout as Neil Kinnock, even though both had also been Vice-Presidents of the Commission. His contacts as former permanent representative probably did, however, make a difference in a later phase of the process. His head

of cabinet having been his deputy permanent representative in his preceding posts, there was also some accumulated experience on the member-state side, all the more so that other cabinet members had represented their member state within the Staff Regulations group at the time of the Kinnock reform, hence had stood up before, if not 'against' the Commission in the former institutional battles.[14] At DG HR, the question was not defended by the 'veterans' of the issue; the Greek director-general, who had longstanding experience within the DG, seemed to remain rather in the background, especially compared to her deputy director-general, a Portuguese man with stronger political resources as a former deputy chief of staff to the President of the Commission. It is thus likely that the originators of the reform under-estimated the force of the member states' demands as well as of that of the unions. Whereas the latter seemed divided since the preceding reform and to have lost ground from the point of view of their political representativeness, several negotiators of the Kinnock reform appeared on the side of the Staff Regulations group and had managed to rally strong internal cohesion against the 'privileges of Eurocrats'. The weight of economists on both sides of the institutions involved also appeared to be stronger than in other situations. Within the Council's Staff Regulations group, many came from the financial and budgetary services of the member states, whether directly from their capital or from their permanent representation. But compared to what it still was at the time of the Kinnock reform, the weight of lawyers had declined among the main originators and negotiators of the reform within the Commission.

This change in the playing field makes it possible to understand the starting point of the negotiations and simultaneously the contradictory interpretations to which they would lead depending on the different positions, namely, the feeling of a fair balance on the side of the initiators of the review, and a feeling of betrayal on the side of the delegates of the member states and of the unions. Even though for the Commission the idea was to find a technical solution for the method applied to upscale wages and for a few elements aimed at completing the

---

[14] On the profile of permanent representative, see Chatzistavrou, 2012.

previous reform (Levasseur and Roques, 2012), this new balance (or rather imbalance) of forces was more than likely to politicize the process, taking it out of a what was more internal management within the field of the actors involved. As a consequence of this, on the one hand the unions joined together in their mobilization, and on the other, tensions rose among the institutions. Due to the dynamics generated on both sides, the situation thus appeared particularly problematic for a while. Whereas the institutional situation and the nomination of a Parliament rapporteur (a German social democrat permanent to the field and connected with the Commission's staff-policy network) seemed at first favourable to the staff, the reformers with the most drastic positions benefitted from strong political support by joining with the ambassadors under the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER). At a very far shot from the initial consensus inclinations, the Commissioner thus had to threaten that the proposal be withdrawn and probably had to establish contacts 'at the highest level', as expressed by the actors (that is, the entourage of heads of state and government), in order to break up the front of the member-state representatives in the form of a cleavage between the member states with a more Europhile political tradition or who through the stability pact had enshrined the Commission as a regulator, and those who to the bitter end refused the compromise (see the above-cited statement).

We hence understand that all in all, it was the sociopolitical process, much more than the technical dimension of the adjustments justified by the crisis, that was the engine driving the evolution of the review, no matter that it was not completely anticipated by all the protagonists. The crisis effect here played more in the direction of politicizing and redistributing the weight and investment of a series of actors (initially, the delegates of the member states, then the very high levels of the Commission and of the member states labelled as 'Europhile'). This is also to say that the process constantly flirted with the limits of the autonomy of the subfield, which was eroded in the politization process before being reconstructed from the top. This change in the position of the large member states could only lead the delegates most invested in the battle to propose that their superiors refuse the compromise – probably while waiting for the next blow. On the Commission's side,

there nevertheless remained a disagreement between the agents in charge of staff policy and the union representatives, not to mention the widening divides within the staff regarding what was perceived as legitimate or not to demand, that is, in the end, the stability of the definition of civil service and its meaning. In this sense, the impact of the economic crisis on the European civil service may have lain here less in the Staff Regulation changes in the legal sense, than in a new episode of the weakening of its social and political status and its cohort effect (motivation of the agents, capacity to innovate or intervene in new fields, defensive reflexes or even wait-and-see attitudes and so on).

## Another Transformation: Recapitalizing the Competency of Economists

The effects of the crisis on how the administration has been restructured cannot, however, be reduced to reform policies. The crisis refers to a critical economic situation in which priorities are redefined and through them, the criteria of good (or henceforth useful) administration and of the properties that can legitimately embody it. This aspect was of particular importance within the European institutions insofar as their function was redefined under the impact of a crisis that was not only labelled as economic and financial but very quickly became a 'euro crisis'. By compromising the foundations of what had been established as one of the very pillars of the EU, the economic situation unquestionably contributed to changing the EU's institutional and policy balances. It had been generally recognized that the European institutions were to play the role of guarantor of economic stability, and this had gone hand in hand with recognition of the 'central', but also political role of the ECB, with the rise to power of institutions like the Eurogroup and the adoption of a new treaty on budgetary stability setting a new distribution of competencies and establishing new institutions and administrations, such as the European Stability Mechanism or, more indirectly, the European Central Bank (ECB) banking-supervision mechanism. Beyond these political transformations, all of this had significant consequences at

the administrative level. Along with an increase in the numbers of agents in charge of 'European economic governance', with key importance conferred on their task, and growth in the volume of their activity and relations with their partners in the member states, the competency of economists, mainly financial economists, stepped in to renew the managerial turn that had been in the making for several years.[15]

## From the Transformation of the Bureaucratic Capital . . .

Here again, it is useful to place this transformation in a longer historical perspective by looking at the evolution of the definition of legitimate competencies within this administration as it appears in the distribution of responsibilities. The history shows that the competencies of economists were upgraded more in the form of a shift than of a break, and that the shift was encased in other transformations, such as in particular the managerial turn. The evolution of the profiles of Commission directors and directors-general is a good barometer and a good indicator of the bureaucratic legitimacy in force, and it corroborates the evolution of the functions of middle management at the Commission.

As we showed in Chapters 3 and 4, it is wrong to consider that the European Commission was largely dominated by lawyers, as claimed by part of the literature – British in particular, on a rather ethnocentrist mode (Stevens and Stevens, 2001); and as a counterpoint, Kassim et al., 2013). In the institutions of the EEC, thus largely devoted to the economy, economists were obviously there from the start and are still there today. But during their constitution, the institutions were in fact structured by founding the authority of their servants on what was then

---

[15] We are well aware here that the analysis would beg studying who the economists are, and in particular to what theoretical-ideological credos they are attached, as well as more finely their relationship with the field of economists (Lebaron, 2000). This analysis is part of the ongoing programme, but in line with my work with Marine de Lassalle (Georgakakis and de Lassalle, 2013) and more generally in the field of Eurocracy (Georgakakis, 2012), I have privileged here the lawyer/economist axis in general, which seems to me a first relevant indicator of the change in register of the legitimation of this group.

the prevailing bureaucratic capital throughout the continent, that is mainly, in many countries, legal training. This was particularly true in Germany and of the first president of the European Commission, Walter Hallstein, whose career as a lawyer had been exemplary and had made a number of positive impacts (Vauchez, 2013). But this choice could also have reflected the situation in other countries, such as France, where under the twofold upshot of the after-effects of the war and the impact of the rise to power of the École nationale d'administration (ENA, the French national school of administration set up in 1945 to train senior civil servants), lawyers (publicists in particular) could see Europe as a new land of choice, or if preferred, as an opportunity to reconquer over here the state functions that they had lost or were losing over there.

Against this background, although the commissioners – that is, the more political staff – included many economists, bureaucratic legitimacy leaned more clearly towards the law. Except for the position of secretary-general held for a long time by the ENA graduate Émile Noël (Bossuat, 2011), the majority of key posts of the first Commission were indeed occupied by lawyers. This was the case of DGs that had a strong legal dimension such as DG Internal Market and DG Competition (Pieter VerLoren Van Themaat; Willy Schlieder), and obviously the Legal Service, but also of the cross-cutting ones such as DG Administration and DG Budget. More surprisingly, DGs such as DG Economic Affairs were also headed by lawyers, at least at the beginning. Helmut Allardt, the first Director of Economic Affairs, was a lawyer, as were the two Italians who succeeded him in this post, Franco Bobba and Ugo Mosca. At another level, directorates such as the current DG External Relations was also long held by lawyers – the express will of Walter Hallstein, himself a diplomat and lawyer in international law, might be seen reflected here.

The fact that they took over these different posts seems less, however, the outcome of a group takeover strategy *in itself* and *for itself*, here by lawyers for lawyers, than the product of a longer-term process of founding an administration in conformity with those of the member states, comparable to them, and above all able to stay the course. The conflicts between the Hallstein Commission and certain member states – the first of which was De Gaulle's France – are well known. They definitely had

consequences. The strategies underlying the appointment of these very high-ranking officials, in these early times when state pressure on posts was still rather weak, were basically co-opting procedures largely involving Hallstein and Noël. These latter's goal was to be surrounded by staff certain to have not only a European inclination, as has often been pointed out, but also more particularly an irrefutable bureaucratic competency (especially vis-à-vis the outside world). In this context, the Prussian model of lawyers at the service of 'the greater interest' (Daviet-Vincent, 2006) was likely to offer legitimate resources (especially vis-à-vis the outside world). Although later, member states would weigh in more strongly on appointments, they could only do so within the framework of a compromise with the President and the Secretary-General of the Commission, who contributed to reproduce the general direction of these appointments.

In any event, the dominant position of lawyers was increasingly called into question. In the first two contexts of European integration (in the period between 1958 and 1985), directors-general trained in law took precedence over economists. After 1973, this became a relative trend (only involving the domination of 'just' lawyers over 'just' economists). Starting in 1985, the balance was reversed. Under the Delors presidency, there was a surge in economics graduates while lawyers, to some extent, declined in numbers, a process that was stabilized in the context of 1996. What was even more manifest in this context was that the balance that seemed to characterize the holders of this new bureaucratic capital tended to break. Although more and more lawyers were supplementing their law degree with a degree in economics or another discipline (such as political science, international or European studies, or public administration), this was not as true for the economists, who while between 1973 and 1996 had 'studied law', no longer did so after that.

The trend was then amplified. An analysis of the university degrees of the Commission's directors-general in 2014 shows that training in economics has henceforth durably taken precedence over legal training. Two-thirds of the directors-general of the DGs in charge of policy making are indeed graduates in economics (14 out of 21) whereas lawyers have been reduced to a very small share (4 out of 21). Out of the 31 sitting directors-general in the spring of 2014, 15 were trained as

economists versus 8 as lawyers, 7 of which with additional degrees, mainly in political science or from the College of Europe or the ENA's international cycles.[16] Significantly, this share is very high among the French while all the Germans except one (at DG Home Affairs) are economists. The remaining directors-general have a scientific degree (5) or other, such as in art history, these being mostly British.

What is the situation at other levels? Briefly, outside of listing the degrees, it can be said that the bureaucratic capital is no longer linked with the legal capital.[17] Lawyers at the Commission still have an aura of prestige, but increasingly in their role as experts within the Legal Service or DG Legal Service and less as general administrators, which is what they had been previously. We could even think that the relatively good health of the Commission's specialized legal bodies coincides with a shrunken arena in which the effects of believing in legal capital are felt (on consultants, see Vauchez and de Witte, 2013). In the Commission's general structure, management functions have increased considerably, and they are at the origin of the majority of posts opened between 2000 and 2010. Heads of unit, formerly considered the key players in Commission initiatives and the true writers of the Commission's normative production, found their tasks to be increasingly connected to team management and less and less to their previous – inextricably linked – policy and legal work (Ellinas and Suleiman, 2008; Bauer, 2008). From the standpoint of internal policy, we observe that legal policies were quite clearly directed towards simplifying and clarifying the law and towards reducing the number of texts, sanctioning the '*acquis communautaire*' (the EU's body of law) rather than its extension. In short, law became as much a problem as a resource, and did so at the very time when, particularly between 2000 and 2010, the recommended policy solutions fell more under soft law, governance and 'good

---

[16] These summary numbers were established based on information available on 15 July 2014 at http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/about/who/dg_en.htm.

[17] Even though with its 'SysPer2' information system the Commission has recently started giving very interesting figures on this subject, which show for example that the share of legal training is 13% versus 10% for economic training, 4% for microeconomics and 5% for macroeconomics (DG HR Report, 2013, p. 17), the training of civil servants as a whole remains to be analysed on the methodological level.

management'. For a figure on the transformation of internal vocations and legitimacies, a study has indicated that more than 66% of the staff, all categories included, stated that they would like to be managers (European Commission Staff Survey 2013, p. 63).[18] We may very well know that the term 'manager' means, for the majority of respondents, exercising responsibility, but in fact it is mostly management skills and experience that are required to fill a management post. Moreover, in the reform of the entrance competitions, having minimal knowledge on EU institutions has completely disappeared as a requirement, and in fact, the EU recruitment body now seeks to establish its legitimacy by approaching management schools.

*... to the Agenda Effect*

It is within these more general transformations that the new credit conferred by the crisis on administrators equipped with economic and financial skills comes in. The institution's discourse is a first indicator of this. Indeed, it is not just discourse, which is in fact always subject to a possible 'decoupling' of what is said and what is done, and this is one of the great classics of reform policies.[19] It is also a practice, the effect of which, if not always the goal, is to confer credit, and here to re-evaluate the number of situations in which economic stakes are a priority. Without going into detail here, a study of the State of the Union speeches – namely, the speeches addressed by the President of the Commission to the European Parliament, the symbolic importance of which (including in the name it has been given since 2010 in reference to the US presidency) has increased significantly in the current situation – shows a very strong focus on the role that the Commission intends to play during the crisis. In the president's 2011 speech, particularly, the text deals essentially with economic policies (in terms of both the content and the place materially occupied by the subject in the text as a whole) and differs sharply from the more general goals that guided the

---

[18] Survey managed by the GfK consulting firm, with approximately 14,000 respondents.

[19] On decoupling in the case of EU administration, see Schön-Quinlivan, 2011.

Commission in the previous years.[20] Furthermore, whereas the Commission's claim to be the 'government of Europe' had long ago been suppressed in favour of a 'governance' discourse, more euphemistic and toned-down in its form (Georgakakis and de Lassalle, 2007b), the president did not hesitate – a true 'symbolic power grab' as we say in sociology – to use the economic situation as grounds to redefine his role and how the institutions were to be interpreted. 'Indeed', thus stated the president, 'within the Community competencies, the Commission is the economic government of the Union, we certainly do not need more institutions for this'.[21]

This institutional discourse – in the literal meaning of 'which institutes' – is important insofar as it symbolically redefines the Commission's place with respect to the EU's various institutional and political partners, as well as its internal priorities, that is, the symbolic hierarchy of its functions, also referring to its services and its internal functions. But it is important as well because it finds the conditions for immediate fulfilment in and through the bureaucratic machinery, which is what the Commission is above all. Even independently of the relative 'presidentialization' that marked the Barroso presidency (Kassim et al., 2013; Wille, 2013), since the 2000s the President's address to Parliament has been more than taking a political stance and establishing goal-based management; it has become the basis of the policies led by the Commission and has been developed in all the administrative literature related to the programming and implementation of its policies. Examination of the Commission work programme, at the forefront of this literature, makes this perfectly clear:

---

[20] For example 'prosperity, solidarity, security and freedom, a stronger Europe in the world', taken from the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Annual Policy Strategy for 2008 (EUR-Lex, /* COM/2007/0065 final */), http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2007:0065:FIN.

[21] SPEECH/11/607 on 28/09/2011

> Recently the Commission has put forward a radically new agenda covering deeper surveillance of Member State budgetary and economic policies, in particular for Euro area Member States, the fundamental reshaping of supervision and financial regulation, and action to ensure that EU structural policies bring immediate benefit. The recently adopted package to increase economic governance (the 'six-pack') represents a major new task for the Commission. Realising all of these new policies will require a major shift in the way that the Commission works. It will require the reallocation of resources and the need to build up an even deeper working partnership with Member States. The creation of a Commission Task Force to help Greece implement its EU/IMF programme and to re-orient and accelerate spending under the EU's Structural Funds is just one example of new roles for the Commission which stem directly from crisis management.[22]

These policies, aimed at strengthening economic and financial priorities, have thus had effects on the morphology of the administration. This can be observed, for example, in the policy of post reallocation, which favoured the economic directorates, particularly DG Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN) in recent years. Although the overall policy goal was to control expenditure and led to a slight reduction in the number of posts, the policy of reallocating job quotas revealed an interesting trend: management jobs, which had tended to skyrocket under the Kinnock reform, now tended to be reallocated to public-policy goals. This was particularly true in the economic directorates. In DG HR reports, the reallocation of resources to DG ECFIN to face the financial crisis and cover the task force set up for Greece was again frequently cited, but above all quantified. The 2013 report (European Commission, 2013), for example, notes that the Commission reallocated 155 permanent job quotas in 2012, 32 of which were allocated to DG ECFIN and 15 to DG Internal Market and Services (MARKT), in charge of the financial services. Moreover, 93 job quotas that were temporarily

---

[22] European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Commission Work Programme 2012: Delivering European renewal, COM(2011) 777 final.

allocated to DG ECFIN were turned into permanent ones to cater for financial crisis management (European Commission, 2013, p. 10). DG ECFIN, as well as the Greece Task Force, ultimately used an exemption procedure to recruit. On the whole, although the growth of DG ECFIN staff had been slow between 2004 and 2010 (European Commission, 2011, p. 28), it took a leap between 2010 and 2014 to reach nearly 700 permanent posts, or a nearly 40% increase.

This upward trend does not mean that the economic directorates (here mainly MARKT and ECFIN) have large Commission-staff battalions, as the Joint Research Centre does, and DG Translation and outside Commission delegations do, for example. Far from it. But the movement informs on the new legitimacy of economists and of their recruitment. The public legitimacy that has been granted to the recruitment of economists has become so great that it now functions as an argument to defend a policy of high wages, and yet this wage policy is the more-than-sensitive subject of the anti-European-civil-service debate. The weekly *The Economist,* even though it regularly criticizes the excessive number of European civil servants, was the first to relay the institution's discourse on the need to have economists on board and the problem of being able to offer civil servants competitive wages versus those in the financial sectors as the reason for the Commission's recruitment difficulties for the new posts open to recruitment (Mahony, 2012). Even outside of these directorates, economist or chief-economist profiles have gained in importance, whether in other DGs or in the public debate.[23]

This new legitimacy also turns up in perception indicators among the staff. To stay within ethnographic references, Commission agents are tending to feel excluded from the process and are often discouraged in many sectors unrelated to the immediacy of the crisis, particularly those involving the Commission's 'left hand', namely, according to an expression used by Bourdieu in connection with the state, the most

---

[23] This calls up the rather unorthodox position taken by Jan in 't Veld in October 2013, criticizing the negative effects of the EU austerity policies (Veld, 2013).

'spendthrift' sectors (social, education, and so on).[24] 'We no longer matter' or 'We have to justify our projects by linking them to the crisis and showing that they will have an economic impact in the very short term', confide the civil servants of the non-economic and non-financial sectors, who have been de facto depreciated by the general movement. In the context of containing the size of the staff and making the economic directorates a priority, pressure has increased on other DG posts and many feel that their sector has been disinvested or is being twisted out of its initial raison d'être. Conversely, agents of the economic and financial sectors feel like they are on a roll. Hence, apart from more qualitative indicators, the barometers of troop morale published in the staff survey show differences between the winning DGs and the others.[25] By the same token, we can guess the political consequences on the public policies in which these institutions are most likely to be invested – that is, also on the policies in which their staff feels invested – hence the changes in the space of possibilities of European public policies to come.

On the whole, the Staff Regulations review and, simultaneously, the prioritization of emergency measures against the economic crisis within the European Commission are more an intensification of existing trends than an actual break from them. Highly structured by history, these transformations are an invitation to break with 'crisological' interpretations aiming to explain (or justify) changes by the urgency and critical nature of the situation, and to consider that the ongoing change is less the product of external elements than of competition mechanisms opposing, here, various civil services (national and European), but also various understandings of European civil service, including within the

---

[24] For a quick definition of the two sectors, see Wacquant (2010): 'The second opposes what Bourdieu, riding off Hobbes's classic portrayal of the ruler, calls the "Left hand" and the "Right hand" of the state. The Left hand, the feminine side of Leviathan, is materialized by the "spendthrift" ministries in charge of "social functions"– public education, health, housing, welfare, and labour law – which offer protection and succour to the social categories shorn of economic and cultural capital. The Right hand, the masculine side, is charged with enforcing the new economic discipline via budget cuts, fiscal incentives, and economic deregulation.'

[25] This is particularly true for DG MARKT, but less so for ECFIN, where there are complaints about the new pressure and the workload.

EU. In any event, by renewing the space of struggles and of compromise in which the civil servants' legitimacy to act is defined – as a whole as well as relatively, among themselves – the economic situation is not a neutral factor. Observation of the long term leads on the contrary to thinking that, although different, the two observed trends in fact make up one system. On the one hand, and even though the effects have remained relatively contained compared to other situations in the member states, the calling into question of the status of civil service and the attacks levelled against it show that neither its legitimacy nor its relative autonomy can be taken for granted, and this ultimately goes in the direction of the trend to delegitimize public service that has marked the past 20 years. But this trend does not produce the same effects in every sector, sometimes going opposite the trend by reinforcing the economic sectors and here, singularly, control over the economic policies of the member states. It could well be that while sharing a set of features with the realities of the member states, what is occurring at the level of the EU administration informs us on the 'new' and in fact neoliberal forms of the state in the making (Wacquant, 2010).

# 9

# Conclusion: Neoliberalized Neoliberalists? The Weakening Sociological Foundations of a Pivot Group and European Political Order

Much emphasis has been placed on the European crisis and its major and most visible actors (heads of state and government, presidents of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and others), and on their political difficulties to reach agreement on tensed issues such as Greece, asylum and so on. This focus, however, neglects deeper sociological factors taking hold of the EU machinery. Among these, this book has pointed to another crisis, which, though more discreet than the one in the spotlight, has had a direct impact on the EU engine and its capacity to renew the European project, namely, a crisis of reproduction affecting the European civil service and its 40,000 agents.

The EU civil-servants corps was designed as the only body of permanent agents of Europe to be the equivalent of a state civil service; in other words, an independent, competent and visionary base to stabilize the numerous political and economic conflicts of interest stemming from an 'ever closer Union'. But a series of processes has put this human infrastructure through deep changes that have progressively brought it much closer to the staff of a classic international organization than to the custodians of a transnational State in the making. This move, which

appeared in a charged context of management reforms, enlargements, institutional changes and the euro crisis, represents a significant shift with a number of consequences in terms of power, frustrations, internal tensions among the staff and around the definition of European public policies, and more generally, on the institutions' capacity to embody a European future.

A radical interpretation will probably see in this change one of the paradoxes and one of the contradictions of neoliberalism. The neo-liberalists (represented by the European civil servants) will have ultimately been neoliberalized. The proposition is not wrong, in the sense that the model being imposed has much more to do with the neo-managerialized forms of the liberal state than with the values and the forms of capital of a State public office (here, potentially supranational) in the making. But however pertinent it is from a general point of view, this biter-being-bit or boomerang-effect interpretation raises two problems. First, that of essentializing this group as neoliberal, for, as we have seen, although there is no doubt that there are neoliberalists in the EU institutions and that they produce effects, not all European civil servants are neoliberal, in fact probably the majority are not, at least not in ideological forms that they own up to. The group is made of tensions and of many European civil servants, and rather represents a kernel of resistance to this trend, which is the outcome of a process much more complex than that of the supposed will of the group of permanent agents of Europe. The second problem is, above all, that this catchphrase obscures the fact that other paths than neoliberalism (Warlouzet, 2018) were, and probably still are, possible for Europe, even though the past political decade has undoubtedly accelerated the process. It is therefore necessary to examine the engines and the political effects of the sociological transformation analysed here.

In this conclusion, we would like to organize the strands of the analyses presented in this book around two questions, that of the dynamics that brought this change about and that of their consequences, from the point of view of both the power of Eurocrats and the changes in the European construction of which they were the custodians.

# Beyond Political Myths: Social Process and Elite Reproduction, and Battles

The question of the crisis in the European civil service is seldom tackled head-on in European spheres. On the contrary, the institutional discourse has tended to develop a new, more 'modern' culture. At the more 'practical' level of staff management, there is scarcely any attempt to examine the big picture of what is being experienced by the personnel; rather, the effort is to drive the change and to adjust it when it becomes obvious that the ongoing reforms are producing perverse effects. Consequently, save for trade-union mobilizations or groups like the GRASPE[1] (Reflection Group on the Future of the European Civil Service, set up in the context of the reforms), little is expressed in a public form, particularly during formal interviews or questionnaire-based surveys, on the question of the effects of the change in paradigm. In these 'public' situations, most of the time civil servants are in line with the bureaucratic ethos of discretion and, as good servants of Europe, 'constructivist' by nature, they work to produce reality effects showing them as an upright, resilient elite, even when their world is in great turbulence.

Expressions of this crisis are nevertheless recurrent, almost systematic, and are sometimes convered more pointedly when 'among one's own' or in situations of greater confidentiality. They are often very straightforward among the older, more oblique or fatalistic among the younger and much more natural among those from the founding countries and those from the South than among those from the East, and they often designate causes and above all, who is to be blamed. My observations here overlap with those of George Ross about the European elites' perceptions of the crisis (Ross, 2011). Political authority, and particularly its weakness, is most often seen as responsible for the worsening trend of the function and its Europe-building vocation. Member states and their leaders no longer have a project for Europe, and even less for its institutions, which they have been trying to foil since the end of the

---

[1] GRASPE Web site: http://graspe.eu

Delors era; they are demanding 'short-term savings that are detrimental to the long-term stakes'. In the same vein, others draw attention to the poor quality of EU leaders since far too many years, particularly at the head of the Commission. Santer managed his mandate poorly and precipitated drastic remedies that broke the dynamics impelled by Delors. Prodi raised political agitation with no real substance and, most of all, left Kinnock a free hand to impose an Anglo-Saxon model. Barroso was a neoliberal and subjected the institutions to the markets and to the member states, if not to the United States. For others, the current dismantling of the EU civil service is part of a plan to break Europe from the inside. Here, the British, who might have been thought for a moment to embody the 'new Europe' administrative model, are those often designated as being the first to blame. 'This takes the cake, after all that was done to integrate them', said a retired civil servant who, at the time of my interview (in 2004) had sent a right of reply to *European Voice*, the European English-language journal that preceded *Politico*, to criticize the Kinnock reform, which the journal had presented too favourably. This feeling was exacerbated during the Brexit period. 'After having broken Europe from the inside for years, they are breaking it from the outside by destroying its political legitimacy', said one. Another one, not as angry: 'It's insane when you think about it! They are leaving after having imposed their administration model on us.'

In this book, we sought to detach ourselves from these two visions – as much from the enchanted, pragmatic and triumphant modernity as from the indictments or lamentation – to underscore the disconnect generated by this 'cultural change' running counter to the historical process of the construction of the EU body. From this point of view, it does not seem to us that these off-the-record and off-the-scene reactions should be taken literally. Typical of a group in formation, their 'us' and 'them' is, in this context of strong redefinition and crisis, symptomatic of reaffirmation. It also reveals incorporated realities, as indicated by their often visceral nature. These are first the reflection, ultimately rather typical, of a quasi-Hegelian bureaucratic *habitus*, opposing the embodiment of reason to (politically driven) political authority and its vicissitudes. But these reactions are also diametrically opposed to

technocratic arrogance (which does not mean to say that it is not expressed elsewhere, particularly among those who stand to gain from the ongoing process). Expressing mostly a feeling, if not of defeat at least of weariness from swimming against the tide, they are from this point of view very close to a form of hysteresis of *habitus*. Trained and socialized to a world (often with the feeling of taking part in the manufacturing of a new and better one), these agents are as if taken over by the reality of a world significantly different from the one into which they had projected themselves and of which they thought they were among the key players.

These perceptions and the sociological crisis they express are very important to underscore, as opposed to what their detractors often do in the style of 'they'll get over it' or 'it's the old Europe'. They stem from the deep historical and sociological processes leading to group formation studied in Chapters 2 to 4, and of their being jeopardized, as studied in Chapter 5. And as such, they not only clarify the social significance of the internal crisis at stake, they also enable a better understanding of the engine driving it. This engine is not just the result of complex strategies and political compromises in favour of this or that variant of new public management, it is more deeply the result of the realization or materializing in the bodies of the battle between two competing models of universalism: one connected to the definition of a State and the general interest embodied by permanent bureaucrats displaying independence from the markets and the member states, and basing their competence to build Europe on law, expertise and command of arcane institutional matters; and the other, where the main goal is to be in line with the new international elites serving the markets and to not embody 'common European values', even less to build a State, whatever the form, at the European level. This debate is indeed the very opposite of an abstract debate of ideas. Although definitely a fight for an 'ideal of truth', it owes its force to the fact that it is incorporated into the body (up to the visceral reactions that it elicits) and in the very (re)definition of the group personifying it, to use Bourdieu's formulation mentioned in the introduction.

From this point of view, the transformation taking place is less due to more or less external and independent causes (such as the world-wide triumph of neoliberalism and new public management, which

however takes on very different forms here and there, the return of intergovernmentalism and so forth) than to a set of internal, inextricably linked political and sociological processes, even though it feeds and is fed by these external causes. More specifically, this turn is driven at the same time by institutional changes and policies (with more or less clearly defined agendas and goals, the beliefs on which they are based, the negotiations that they generate in various arenas at various scales) and by strictly social practices and strategies related to the definition of the group, its struggles to be represented and given meaning and, at a more individual level, to be placed within the group or among other elites.

The idea implicitly defended in many discourses according to which the model used to be French and has become British is typical of a political space in which empire strategies are played out aiming to extend one's model in the EU. But this idea is ultimately something of a caricature and, taken at face value, says relatively little about what is happening. As we have seen, the French may have played a part in 'the invention of the European civil service', but others had also weighed in, particularly those of the six original nationalities, forging a compromise that was more continental than French. In the genesis of the model, there had been Belgians pushing for a status of the function against Monnet and the French, whose government representatives were far from supporting the existence of a supranational civil service and often completely opposed to it, while Walter Hallstein pressed for a strong bureaucracy based on the senior officials' legal capital rather than on a German model and was undoubtedly backed by Émile Noël. The European civil service is much more the result of a continental compromise than a transposition of the model of the French national school of administration, the ENA. Many of those who had invested Europe had partly positioned themselves against state elites, but in a field of struggle that pushed them to borrow some of their features in their manufacturing of European technocracy and of its social image. Similarly, the idea according to which the change in model is the product of an ideological struggle is too restrictive, even though ultimately, the outcome of the struggles certainly materialized one ideology (here clearly neoliberal) over any other. A German conservative will not necessarily favour this

evolution when a Briton or a Dutchman claiming to be progressive will most likely be promoting it.

Although focusing on this empire struggle is very largely a myth, it is no less revealing. It testifies first to the fact that these processes are the product of rallying to representations of the world, a classification struggle in which the stakes are to credit one legitimation model or another. From this point of view, even though the model today is neither French nor completely British (in addition, the British civil service underwent deep changes before and after the neoliberal reforms), these models embody an attraction capacity, hence conversely a repulsion capacity directly connected to the competition of the two above-mentioned universalisms. Denouncing the supposedly French model constituted a flag to rally those who wished to change the dominant internal order and to redefine the EU civil service in another form than that of a state-type elite. In a meeting organized in 2008 by a trade union highly opposed to the reform (Renouveau et Démocratie), an Italian civil servant, author of a short book in which he promotes the new culture, literally blurted out in a conference mostly oriented towards defending the European civil service that '[EU civil servants] will have no more of this ENA model', as if it had been the dominant model in the EU. Similarly, the Santer crisis that precipitated the entry of new public management was the fruit of longer trends begun at the end of the Delors era that were intended to redefine the balance of power (Georgakakis, 2013a). Much of what was played out in the denunciation of a visionary technocracy building a State to the benefit of a 'pragmatic and efficient' bureaucracy devoted to the market reflects this quasi-urge-driven dimension.

The difficulty here is that the turn is the outcome of countless internal battles and micro-moves. These classification struggles are indeed being played out not only in different situations (including successive crises – the Santer resignation crisis, the euro crisis and many others) but also in multiple arenas and policies (which here connect a number of major EU evolutions in subsectors of human-resources policies such as the definition of competencies or recruitment, or major negotiations on the statutes, with their micro-moves and micro-renunciations and sometimes micro-betrayals), which make the big picture disappear and

dispossess some of the actors of a reading of the game and the stakes. Moreover, as it develops, the process produces its own inertia not only in policy instruments – as historical neo-institutionalism would say – but in minds and bodies as well, by redefining the space of possible solutions around a single legitimation model. We analysed the demonstration of these processes in greater detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

These various case studies also show that the supporting or joining forces, and more broadly the strategies deployed here are less, in practice, pure political strategies than strategies largely embedded in more or less conscious social strategies to acquire or defend positions within the group and more broadly as elites vis-à-vis other, national and international elites. Those most eager to build the new model were not socially well-established Britons or basking in the success of their years spent in the institution, but others who were feeling declining social status and had been promoted by their member state within the institutions, not particularly thanks to their internal reputation – seldom very good, to tell the truth, if not to recognize that they were 'good communicators' or in one case that 'he would make an excellent car dealer'. These judgements, clearly of a class-judgement nature, are revealing of what is being performed here, but with effects quite opposite to those that could be expected, the contenders here often being the armed branch of the new capitalism and its methods. This prism thus sheds much light on the drivers of what was being brought about and sometimes on the surprising positions adopted by some. Many of those who supported the process did so to save the status and with it the model of a statutory civil service as a cornerstone, even if it meant giving up everything else to those promoting the new model. Many (not necessarily all) of those who pushed the new model into management or recruitment did not do so for ideological reasons, but because they were quite convinced that a 'pragmatic' response was required to meet the need to open the civil service to new profiles. Many of those who think today that the pendulum swung much too far were also convinced that it was necessary 'to modernize in a changing world' and restore an elite status symbolically degraded after the affairs that had led to the resignation of the Santer Commission. Many of those who today are making the enlargements (in particular those of 1973, 1995 and 2004) responsible for having upset

the playing field were their defenders, sometimes comrades in arms and especially their convinced craftspersons.

But at some point in the changes accomplished, the partial fence that had made these social-strategy plays relatively internal to the group was called into question. A statement of the type 'I came to Europe to change the world and I find myself working at Procter & Gamble' is thus rich in meaning. Part of the group was confronted with an ideal of truth at odds with the one that had nourished their vocation. This is what is ultimately shown by regressions to the vision of Franco-British wars of another age. The stakes are indeed by far much higher than those of former empires, now provincialized, approaching something much closer to a global power struggle, in which the EU is precisely just a province and a battlefield. What is being played in the definition of the legitimate model of civil-service elites, particularly of the one that had assumed the qualifier of European civil service, is their position in and vis-à-vis the other world elites, in a field of wider competition among transnational elites and their new empires (Dezalay and Garth, 1996). Well, in this competition, it seems that the collective represented by the EU civil service is now facing a kind of alternative that partly escapes it even though it is the outcome of the above-mentioned multiple social strategies: either preserve the model that made them be what they are, in this case a kernel of resistance and an alternative within the ambient movement, but at the risk of being marginalized in its elite status; or join the dominant model of the undifferentiated international manager, but in blind conformity and based on a position that can only place them on a jump seat, as structurally subjected and even submitted, like the agents of other international organizations, to the 'true' elites, in particular the economic ones.

## Back to Politics: The Changing Power of Eurocrats and the Changing European Union

From this point of view, the crisis of reproduction currently at work is definitely related to power issues, and the latter intrinsically mix the power changes of the 'Eurocrats' with Europe's.

By exploring identity, or more precisely the forms of identification with this group and with European integration, this book has therefore explored, in several directions, the redefinition of these agents' power. The processes studied here first involve the group's collective force and affect, precisely, its collective status. Like any group – and this has been sufficiently underscored – the European civil service has never been homogeneous, but the fact that it contributed to Europe's integration and better policies, albeit in a greater variety of modes, modes less 'magic' than might have been believed, was a source of identification and an engine for action. Original, institutional, sectoral and other positions might well have been diverse, but they seemed to be oriented by the relatively convergent direction of agents who were building themselves by building the Union, as seen in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. The processes studied in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 thus show that a succession of other internal tensions was added to those that might have already existed, without this direction having been redefined. The collective was thus undermined in multiple ways: institutionally by the multiplication of agencies and organizations; in their status by the multiplication of contracts and status changes (which led to agents with a status, without a status, with the status of before or after 2004, and now of before and after 2014); and sociologically by the discrediting and fractioning of the representative trade unions or of any other spokesperson, such as Émile Noël or directors-general who took a stand in favour of their personnel until the late 1990s. In the context of the political wanderings that have characterized the European Union since the mid-1990s, no one truly placed themselves in a position to give direction, and quite the contrary, the new internal management made it their job (particularly at the Commission) to break with all that might have been connected with a direction or a vision of long-term political objectives (on which practically no one in fact agreed), to make the yearly management plan of each directorate-general the main horizon of the institutions' agents. Moreover, new tensions have arisen – which are increasingly threatening the collective as such: tensions between generations; between agents from the 'old countries' and those from the new ones; between those who passed a 'true' European competition and the others; between those convinced that it is necessary to adapt (albeit by

regressing) to the dominant international model and those who think that preserving the status is to continue to defend the progress to come (back); and between those who belong to the economic sectors related to managing the euro or to boosting growth and those who are the subject of sectors that are no longer priority sectors, starting with the most social sectors of EU policies.

In a fragmentation process, the group is also weaker because the individuals comprising it no longer seem to enjoy the same room for manoeuvre. The case of the Commission's civil servants is, here again, enlightening even though these changes are experienced less strongly by the civil servants of other institutions, who can be thought to be tendentially winning over the first, except over those in the ECFIN sector (Chapter 8). Directors-general, who used to be the institution's 'charisma of office' incarnated, are no longer the 'role models' they used to be (Chapter 4). They are said to be more and more subjected to the politics of increasingly political commissioners or of the President of the Commission's Chef de Cabinet, terrorized by their financial responsibilities, hesitant about 'taking initiatives', a political keyword within the Commission (on these aspects, see also Ellinas and Suleiman, 2008), except for those who on the contrary are riding the wave by converting the policies they are in charge of to the new dominant paradigms. At the intermediate level, heads of unit are experiencing homologous changes; in addition, mobility has done away with what was the core of civil servants' power: not only their expertise on dossiers (Cini, 1996b) but also their control over the stakeholder networks, as one says today, that is, the direct partners of the policy under consideration. Added to this are the moral effects, which affect not only those producing public policies but other agents, such as the translators, they too subjected to the externalization of their activity and of that which constitutes their motivation to work. The administration may well be claiming that it wishes to develop an esprit de corps, but this seems difficult when they are simultaneously breaking the social processes on which it was based.

These changes have very important symbolic effects, which are another dimension of the changing power of the Eurocrats. The power of bureaucracy and its agents is not just a matter of budget, law or procedure. The symbolic dimension is a component of the power of

bureaucracy, even though more in the form, as said above, of charisma of office than of political charisma. Here, this charisma stemmed from the embodiment of a European neutrality and overarching vision, located at a point of intersection of the various interests, and it was the product of practices, acquired and reproduced in the competition and in successive promotions, as well as in the small strictly European miracles, consisting precisely in being recognized as having managed to lastingly integrate points of view within a compromise particularly hard to establish. This capital tends to be less important compared to that of a good manager or good negotiator (which does not in any way include the idea of a lasting and balanced compromise). This process is particularly visible at the Commission and in what has been called the turn from 'mission-based administration' to 'management-based administration'. It is well known that the Commission has never been a real 'mission-based administration', considering its size and its even more wide-ranging set-up. But it was thought of and perceived by its members as such, and the word 'mission' previously made sense in relation to the collective belief in the 'transcendental' mission of Europe inherited from the European prophets and founding fathers.

Conversely, this less Messianic and more organized dimension was reassuring, particularly in the countries converted to a more 'executant' than 'executor' administration model (Chapter 5). New forms of charisma have emerged, in particular related to being a good manager. Outside consecration authorities have also changed, and they are less and less linked, in terms of public recognition, to the quasi-internal journals than to the *Financial Times* or, today, *Politico*, in more of a US style. Nonetheless, the question is not to plead for this or that model according to one's desires, but to examine the power mechanisms involved in this process. Although in the current situation and particularly after the scandals that led to the resignation of the Santer Commission the new figure of European manager might have been reassuring here and there, it raises other questions at a more structural level. The new 'good manager' charisma is no longer in fact at all specific to the group. Where in the time of the group's construction the group members defined themselves as a continental compromise of what was best to take from other civil services while defending their

status as a vanguard differentiated by these very models, with their own modes of internal consecration (even though this was obviously not everything), the manager model imitates the international trend (often with some delay) and puts the group members in a position where there is no alternative consecration with respect to those with whom they are dealing, when they are not more directly encouraged to take some mobility time off to go and recredit themselves in the private sector.

Power being by definition relational, this has obviously had effects on the agents with whom the civil servants are concretely related, starting with those who contribute to the manufacture of European policies in the institutional field. The absence of consecration degrades them compared to those who were in positions of contenders in this field. The power of the institutions also stems from their capacity to manufacture supernumeraries, that is, agents who while not able to access the functions of permanent officials build their position and more broadly their life, or part of it, on the basis of a horizon in which civil servants were the model. This may no longer be as much the case, and many of those in this position have joined the ranks of the old song according to which European civil servants are well paid for what they do rather than being the first relays to the institutions. Others, surer in their position as partners, are complaining about the loss of expertise ('Now, to get a good report we turn to the OECD rather than to the EU') or the damage caused by mobility. ('They changed our direct partners who knew the networks and the issues. Now we have people who are passing through. We keep cordial relations but in fact, we don't build much of anything anymore.') All such statements suggest that there is a loss of credit in the millions of face-to-face relations that are the basis for manufacturing European policies.

Conversely, other agents of the field, and even more when they are outside the field, are turning up as the primary beneficiaries of these changes. As shown with rare precision in Dezalay's work (Dezalay and Garth, 1996; Dezalay et al., 2015), major business lawyers are consecrated by the major LL.Ms or LL.Ds, particularly those from the leading US universities. Even though these have always been part of senior officials' credentials, they now represent the major point of attraction

in the social field of Eurocracy, when not simply in a tendential monopoly situation, especially when there is also experience in other international enterprises. By losing the partly autonomous conditions of their consecration, the civil servants are in much more dominated relationships compared to those who have these social resources outside the field. All of this obviously has practical consequences on their competence to act, their autonomy, their independence and the directions they are likely to take, in particular with respect to the new 'role model' coming in from the world of finance. The case of former Commission president José Manuel Barroso now working for Goldman Sachs is an illustration of this. Although the move has largely been interpreted as a conflict-of-interest problem, which it is more from a moral than a legal standpoint, most of all it is blatantly revealing of the current trend, which says that belonging to these big international companies is, for the so-called European elites, a form of consecration much greater than that of exercising the highest European public office. What the EU civil-service trade unions say when denouncing Barroso as 'discrediting the institutions' makes sense; in the battle for symbolic credit and credentials inside the institutional field, the winners are clearly, at this time, the outsiders.

These micro-situations testify on a more macro level to important power changes *within* Europe. I have previously shown (Georgakakis and Rowell, 2013) that the field of Eurocracy was structured by different polarities opposing agents equipped with the capital of permanent officials, to those who are more intermittent, as well as agents with experience in law and public policies to agents whose authority is based on business rather than the State or any equivalent. These positions are also related to ways of thinking and of practicing in Europe. Considering their weight in this field, the changes affecting the civil servants located on the State pole, even though to a lesser degree than diplomats from the member states, are affecting the whole of the field and testify to switchover effects in the quantities of political battles being waged in the field. A few examples of this can be cited. The civil servants' collective force stemmed from the fact that they could occupy very different positions in the field. The lesser their links among themselves, the lesser their collective force. The less their legitimacy exists as such,

the more alliances with representatives of the member states or of private interest is necessary. The more they have to imitate the managerial model, the more their connections with the private sector are valuable and valued, which once again changes, a little bit more, the balance of interdependences in a social field where private-sector interests are already much stronger than the embryo of an 'EU civil society' (Kalm and Johansson, 2015).

This has consequences for the priorities of European policies, particularly in the long-term areas of social issues, education and basic research, more difficult to promote across the board than economism and the pursuit of short-term growth indicators. At a time when most analysts were celebrating the 'leadership' of the Commission and the 'policy entrepreneur' status of its civil servants as in the mid-1990s, there could be hope, even though the agents in charge of social issues were already in a dominated position (Robert, 2007a), that there would be greater consideration of social issues in EU policy development and a will to offset the law of the market. Regardless of the major political balances, this seems even more unlikely now that the field of Eurocracy and the countless interactions that define it have shifted towards a model of legitimacy that rules out such concerns. This is not a symbolic issue in the weak sense. These switchovers are not just image issues. The symbolic stakes obviously materialize in the changes in practices and feed on one another. With modes of consecration now escaping the civil servants to be more on the side of the positions of those of the more intermittent fractions of the field, different practices are also taking over: less of those related to integrating points of view into compromises and more bargaining; less of those built over and for the long term and more of those for the short term; less of those founded on the symbolism of the common project and more of those based on purely accounting considerations. This also has an effect on the practices of legitimation in broader circles and their public perception. One can perfectly understand that the model and the practices of legitimation of European priests, here of the European Saints and Prophets, seeking to promote the legitimacy of Europe in thousands of situations could be contested in many countries. One can however have doubts about a legitimation now reduced to imitating a global economic or financial authority, particularly in a

context of prolonged crisis (Guiraudon et al., 2015) and Euroclash (Fligstein, 2001).

Challenging the autonomy of the institutions and their capacity to create alternatives, these changes are finally related to the very dynamics of the European project, hence to the very power *of* institutional Europe. If there is one point towards which the history and the historical sociology of the State and that of international relations and European integration converge, it is of course the pivot role of administrators. The history and sociology of the State (Bourdieu, 1993; Reinhard, 1996; Descimon et al., 1997) has shown that the form of institutions have often depended on them, as well as on their capacity to make the construction dynamic endure, and the theory of international relations (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001; Barnett and Finnemore, 2004) and particularly of European integration (Schmitter, 2005) makes these actors pivots and genuine engines. From the point of view of French sociology of institutions (Lacroix and Lagroye, 1992; Dulong, 2012), we could say that the institutionalization of this European body went hand in hand with its functionalization, that is, the recognition and materialization of its function as engine in the dynamics of European integration observed in the so-called neo-functionalist theory. In a certain way, the process being played out is undoubtedly, beyond its loss of power and its delegitimation, that of its de-functionalization. The translation problem raised by the term '*fonction publique*' (which is translated into English as 'public office' and not 'public function') is indeed the translation of this problem. And in this case, it simply means that the State-building strategy that was anticipated in the mid-1990s as a renewal of neo-functionalism (Ross, 1995) has been deeply weakened in its human foundations.

It could well be imagined that the crisis of this engine group is really a blessing in disguise, and that it is opening the door to a rebirth of European democracy. Yet the problem seems more complex in the European case. This de-functionalization of agents who had based their collective position on their function as vanguard and simultaneously as bond and binder among the interests and the various transnational fields taking part in European integration is occurring in a context where many other agents who had been thought of as supporters of the process are actually much less so than had been believed. Few national political elites

are truly supporting European integration. The economic elites support it when the goal is to maximize industrial and financial profits, but have done the opposite when the idea was to rebalance the market through policies intended as more favourable to workers. It has become increasingly difficult for an intellectual to support Europe with the same previous enthusiasm in a context of growing inequalities and counterproductive economic measures in the countries of the South, and now the poor results in providing for refugees. If deprived of their collective and symbolic force, the civil servants are no longer in a position to embody the future of Europe and diffuse it in a permanent form through the multiple relations that they used to maintain in their various networks and public-policy fields, who will do it? If their authority is now reduced to the subsidies that they are likely to distribute in a blind application of the policy of indicators, or to their capacity to force compliance, more or less brutally, with the rules emerging from the compromises with the big member states and economic interests in emergency situations, who will embody the message and support the process, already complicated enough, of the legitimation of the European project? Who else, then? Democracy, of course, but it remains largely to be invented within this framework primarily designed to be indirect democracy relying on a bureaucratic field in charge of all the mechanics implied de facto by the production of common policies at a transnational level.

As we can see, the crisis of reproduction of the civil servants is a different crisis than the one being talked about, and in it, the future of Europe and its citizens is being played; it is slower, more discrete and less visible (including for many of those experiencing it), and it does not take on the public form of the dramaturgy of the great collapses involved in the successive 'last-chance negotiations', but the future of Europe and its citizens is nonetheless directly linked to it.

<div align="right">Brussels, 18 July 2016</div>

# References

Abélès, M. and I. Bellier (1996), 'La Commission européenne: du compromis culturel à la culture politique du compromis', *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 431–436.

Abélès, M., I. Bellier and M. McDonald (1993), 'Approche Anthropologique de la Commission', unpublished report to the European Commission, Brussels.

Andreone, F. (2012), 'Les droits pécuniaires des fonctionnaires et agents de l'Union européenne: mythes et réalités', in *La fonction publique européenne*, 2nd edition, École nationale d'administration /Centre des études européennes, Strasbourg, pp. 209–224.

Andreone, F. (2008), 'Les grands principes de la fonction publique européenne', in *La fonction publique européenne*, École nationale d'administration /Centre des études européennes, Strasbourg, pp. 45–56.

Bailleux, J. (2014), *Penser l'Europe par le droit. L'invention du droit communautaire en France*, Dalloz, Paris.

Baisnée, O. (2003), *La production de l'actualité communautaire: éléments d'une sociologie comparée du corps de presse accréditée auprès de l'Union européenne (France, Grande-Bretagne)*, Doctoral dissertation in Political Science, Institut d'Études Politiques de Rennes, Rennes.

Baisnée, O. (2002), 'Les journalistes accrédités auprès de l'Union européenne: correspondants à l'étranger ou généralistes spécialisés? Logiques et paradoxes du poste de Bruxelles dans la presse française et britannique', *Réseaux*, No. 111, June, pp. 102–130.

Baisnée, O., H. Michel and C. Robert (eds) (2010), *La fabrique des 'Européens'. Processus de socialisation et construction européenne*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Balazs, E. (1968), *La bureaucratie céleste: recherches sur l'économie et la société de la Chine traditionnelle*, Gallimard, Paris.

Balazs, E. and A.F. Wright (1964), *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy: Variations on a Theme*, edited by A.F. Wright and translated by H.M. Wright, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Ban, Cornel (2016), *Ruling Ideas: How Global Neoliberalism Goes Local*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Ban, Carolyn (2013), *Management and Culture in an Enlarged European Commission: From Diversity to Unity?*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Ban, Carolyn (2010a), 'La fabrication des nouveaux "eurocrates". Auto-sélection, sélection et socialisation des fonctionnaires de la Commission européenne des nouveaux pays membres', in Michel, H. and C. Robert (eds), *La fabrique des 'Européens'. Processus de socialisation et construction européenne*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Ban, Carolyn (2010b), 'Reforming the Staffing Process in the European Union Institutions: Moving the Sacred Cow out of the Road', *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 76, No. 1, March, pp 5–24.

Ban, Carolyn (2008), 'Recruiting and Selecting Staff in the European Institutions: Moving the Sacred Cow out of the Road', Paper prepared for Annual Meeting of the University Association for Contemporary European Studies, September, Edinburgh.

Baneth, A. (2014), *The Ultimate EU Test Book 2015*, John Harper Publishing, London.

Baneth, A. (2016), *The Ultimate EU Test Book 2016*, John Harper Publishing, London.

Barnett, M. and M. Finnemore (2004), *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY.

Baruch, M.O. (2014), 'De Vichy à la Communauté européenne de Antonin Cohen', *Critique internationale*, No. 63, April-June.

Bastin, G. (2003), 'Les professionnels de l'information européenne à Bruxelles. Sociologie d'un monde de l'information (territoires, carrières, dispositifs)',

Doctoral dissertation in Sociology, École normale supérieure de Cachan, Paris.

Bastin, G. (2002), 'Les journalistes accrédités auprès des institutions européennes. Quelques signes du changement dans un monde de travail', in Georgakakis, D. (ed.), *Les métiers de l'Europe politique. Acteurs et professionnalisations de l'Union européenne*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, pp. 169–94.

Bauer, M.W. (2008), 'Diffuse Anxieties, Deprived Entrepreneurs: Commission Reform and Middle Management', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 691–707.

Bauer, M.W. and S. Becker (2014), 'The Unexpected Winner of the Crisis: The European Commission's Strengthened Role in Economic Governance', *Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 213–229.

Becker, H.S. (1968), 'The Self and Adult Socialization', in Norbeck, E., D. Price-Williams and W.M. McCord (eds), *The Study of Personality: An Interdisciplinary Appraisal*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, pp. 194–208.

Becker, H.S. (1963), *Outsiders*, Free Press, New York.

Bellier, I. (1994), 'La Commission Européenne: hauts fonctionnaires et culture du management', *Revue française d'administration publique*, Vol. 70, April-June, pp. 253–262.

Bezirtzoglou, C. (2007), *La voie de la réussite aux examens oraux de l'union européenne – 2e édition*, FFPE – European Civil Service Federation, Brussels.

Bickerton, C.J., D. Hodson and U. Puetter (eds) (2015), *The New Intergovernmentalism: States and Supranational Actors in the Post-Maastricht Era*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Bigo, D. and M.R. Madsen (eds) (2011), 'Introduction to Symposium "A Different Reading of the International": Pierre Bourdieu and International Studies', *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 219–224.

Birgouleix, B. (1984), 'Ces messieurs du Berlaymont', *Le Monde*, 25 June 1984, Paris.

Boltanski, L. (2005), *Rendre la réalité inacceptable. À propos de 'La production de l'idéologie dominante'*, Demopolis, Paris.

Boltanski, L. (1982), *Les cadres. La formation d'un groupe social*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris. Translation: (1987), *The Making of a Class: Cadres in French Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Boltanski, L. and E. Chiapello (2007), *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by G. Elliot, Verso, New York and London.

Boltanski, L. (1987), *The Making of a Class: Cadres in French Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge MA.

Bossuat, G. (2011), *Émile Noël, premier secrétaire général de la Commission européenne*, Bruylant, Louvain-la-Neuve.

Bourdieu, P. (1997), 'De la maison du roi à la raison d'État, un modèle de la genèse du champ bureaucratique', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 118, No. 1, pp. 55–68. Translation: (2004) 'From the King's House to the Reason of State: A Model of the Genesis of the Bureaucratic Field', *Constellations*, Vol. 11, pp. 16–36.

Bourdieu, P. (1977), 'Une classe objet', in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales. La paysannerie, une classe objet*, Vol. 17–18, November, pp. 2–5.

Bourdieu, P. (1996), *La noblesse d'État*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris. Translation by L.C. Clough: (1996) *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Bourdieu, P. (1994), *Raisons pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*, Le Seuil, Paris. Translation: (1998), *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.

Bourdieu, P. (1993), 'Esprits d'État: genèse et structure du champ bureaucratique', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 96, No. 1, March, pp. 49–62. Translation by L.J.D. Wacquant and S. Farage (1994), 'Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field', *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March, pp. 1–18.

Bourdieu, P. (1992), 'Deux impérialismes de l'universel', in Fauré, C. and T. Bishop (eds), *L'Amérique des Français*, François Bourin, Paris, pp. 148–155.

Bourdieu, P., L.J.D. Wacquant and S. Farage (1994), 'Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field', *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March, pp. 1–18.

Bull, H.P. (2010), Recruitment and formation of civil servants in Germany: University studies and 'State examinations' from 1723 to 2010, contribution to the international symposium, 'Les concours administratifs: de la plasticité d'une forme institutionnelle', Toulouse, May 6–7.

Carbonell, M. (2008), *Des hommes à l'origine de l'Europe: Biographies des membres de la Haute Autorité de la CECA*, Publications de l'Université de Provence, Aix-en-Provence.

Cailliez, J. (2004), *Schuman-City: des fonctionnaires britanniques à Bruxelles*, Cahiers migrations, Academia Bruylant, Louvain-la-Neuve.

Caillosse, J. (2003), 'Les figures croisées du juriste et du manager dans la politique française de réforme de l'État', *Revue française d'administration publique*, No. 105–106, pp. 121–134.

Casula Vifell, Å. and Sundström, G. (2010), '"Loin des yeux, loin du cœur". Recrutement et trajectoires des fonctionnaires suédois dans l'"Union européenne", in Michel, H. and C. Robert (eds), *La fabrique des Européens. Processus de socialisation et construction européenne*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

CEC (2007), Governance Statement of the European Commission, 30 May, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/synthesis/doc/governance_statement_en.pdf.

Chang, M. and J. Monar (eds) (2013), *The European Commission in the Post-Lisbon Era of Crises: Between Political Leadership and Policy Management*, Peter Lang, Brussels.

Charle, C. (2001), *La Crise des sociétés impériales. Allemagne, France, Angleterre (1900–1940)*, Le Seuil, Paris.

Chatzistavrou, F. (2012), 'Des diplomates comme les autres? Les représentants permanents auprès de l'Union européenne ', in Georgakakis, D. (ed.), *Le champ de l'Eurocratie: une sociologie du personnel de l'UE*, Economica, Paris, pp. 85–111.

Checkel, J.T. (2005), 'International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework', *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 4, October, pp. 801–26.

Chêne, C. (2008), 'Qu'est-ce qu'être un fonctionnaire européen ?', in *La fonction publique européenne*, École nationale d'administration /Centre des études européennes, Strasbourg, pp. 7–21.

Christiansen, T. (1997), 'Tensions of European Governance: Politicized Bureaucracy and Multiple Accountability in the European Commission', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 73–90.

Christensen, J. (2015), 'Recruitment and Expertise in the European Commission', *West European Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 649–678.

Cini, M. (2007), *From Integration to Integrity: Administrative Ethics and Reform in the European Commission*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Cini, M. (1996a), 'La Commission européenne: lieu d'émergence de cultures administratives. L'exemple de la DG IV et de la DG XI', *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. 1, No. 3, June, pp. 457–73.

Cini, M. (1996b), *The European Commission: Leadership, Organisation and Culture in the EU Administration*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Clarisse, Y. and J. Quatremer (2005), *Les maîtres de l'Europe*, Grasset, Paris.

Cohen, E. (1995), 'L'Europe entre marché et puissance: le cas des politiques de l'Industrie', in Muller, P. (ed.), *Politiques publiques en Europe. Actes du colloque de l'Association française de science politique, 23–24 mars 1994*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

Collovald, A. (2010), *Jacques Chirac et le gaullisme: Biographie d'un héritier à histoires*, Belin, Paris.

Comité Central du Personnel. (2009), *États généraux de la formation*, May, European Commission, Brussels.

Conrad, Y. (1992), 'La Communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier et la situation de ses agents. Du régime contractuel au régime statutaire (1952–1958)', *Jahrbuch für Europäische Verwaltungsgeschichte*, Vol. 4, pp. 59–74.

Conrad, Y. (1989), *Jean Monnet et les débuts de la fonction publique européenne. La Haute Autorité de la C.E.C.A. (1952–1953)*, Ciaco, Louvain-la-Neuve.

Coombes, D.L. (1970), *Politics and Bureaucracy in the European Community. A Portrait of the Commission of the E. E. C.*, Allen and Unwin, London.

Coombes, D.L. (1968), *Towards a European Civil Service*, Chatham House, London.

Cram, L. (1994), 'The European Commission as a Multi-Organization: Social Policy and IT Policy in the Community Social Policy', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 1, No. 2, fall, pp. 195–217.

Darmon, M. (2007), *La socialisation*, Collection '128′, Armand Colin, Paris.

Daviet-Vincent, M-B. (2006), *Serviteurs de l'État, les élites administratives en Prusse de 1871 à 1933*, 'Europes centrales' collection, Belin, Paris.

Delors, J. (1996), *Combats pour l'Europe*, Economica, Paris.

Descimon, R., J-F. Schaub and B. Vincent (eds) (1997), *Les figures de l'administrateur. Institutions, réseaux, pouvoirs en Espagne, en France et au Portugal, 16e–19e siècle*, École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris.

Dewost, J-L. (1992), 'Intérêts nationaux et intérêt communautaire dans les décisions de la Commission et du Conseil', *Revue française d'administration publique*, No. 63, July-September, pp. 371–382.

Dezalay, Y. and B.G. Garth (1996), *Dealing in Virtue: International Commercial Arbitration and the Construction of a Transnational Legal Order*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Dezalay, Y., D. Bigo and A. Cohen (2015), 'Enquêter sur l'internationalisation des noblesses d'État. Retour réflexif sur des stratégies de double jeu', *Cultures & Conflits*, No. 98, summer, pp. 15–52.

Dimier, V. (2001a), 'Leadership et institutionnalisation de la Commission européenne: le cas de la DG VIII (1958–1975)', *Sciences de la Société*, No. 53, May, pp. 183–200.

Dimier, V. (2001b), 'Du bon usage de la tournée: propagande et stratégies de légitimation au sein de la Direction Générale Développement (1958–1970)', *Pôle Sud*, No. 15, November, pp. 19–32.

Dixon, K. (2005), *Un abécédaire du blairisme. Pour une critique du néolibéralisme guerrier*, Éditions du croquant, Vulaines-sur-Seine.

Dobry, M. (2009), *Sociologie des sciences politiques. La dynamique des mobilisations multisectorielles*, 3rd edition, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris.

Dreyfus, F. (2010), *L'invention de la bureaucratie. Servir l'État en France, en Grande-Bretagne et aux États-Unis (XVIII-XX siècles)*, La Découverte, Paris.

Dreyfus, F. and J-M. Eymeri-Douzans (2012), 'Introduction', *Revue française d'administration publique*, Vol. 2, No. 142, pp. 305–306, https://www.cairn.info/load_pdf.php?ID_ARTICLE=RFAP_142_0305.

Dreyfus, F. and J-M. Eymeri-Douzans (eds) (2006), *Science politique de l'administration. Une comparaison européenne*, Economica, Paris.

Dross, N. et al. (2013), *Préparer les concours européens*, La documentation Française, Paris.

Dulong, D. (2012), *Sociologie des institutions politiques*, La Découverte, Paris.

Dulong, D. (1998), *Moderniser la politique: Aux origines de la Ve République*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

Dulong, D. and V. Dubois (eds) (1999), *La question technocratique. De l'invention d'une figure aux transformations de l'action publique*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Dumoulin, M. (ed.) (2007), *La Commission européenne, 1958–1972. Histoire et mémoires d'une institution*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Duplouy, A. (2006), *Le Prestige des élites. Recherches sur les modes de reconnaissance sociale en Grèce entre les Xe et Ve siècles avant J.-C.*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris.

Egeberg, M. (2015), 'EU Administration: Center Formation and Multilevelness', in Bauer, M. and J. Trondal (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of the European Administrative System*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Egeberg, M. (1996), 'Organization and Nationality in the European Commission Services', *Public Administration*, Vol. 74, No. 4, pp. 721–735.

Ellinas, A.A. and E. Suleiman (2012), *The European Commission and Bureaucratic Autonomy: Europe's Custodians*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Ellinas, A.A. and E. Suleiman (2008), 'Reforming the Commission: Between Modernization and Bureaucratization', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 708–725.

EPSO. (2012), 'Guide to Open Competitions (2012/C 270 A/01)', *Official Journal of the European Union*, Vol. 55, September, pp. 1–28.

EPSO (2009), Candidate motivation survey 2008, summary, March, European Commission.

EUI (1976), 'Commission Jenkins', Historical Archives of the European Union, Paper File Code EN–2932, European University Institute, Florence, http://archives.eui.eu/files/documents/8000.pdf.

EUI (1972), 'Comité de coordination de l'étude sur le fonctionnement interne des services de la Commission (dit comité Poullet, professeur à l'université de Louvain: travaille sous la présidence d'Émile Noël suite à un contrat entre la Commission et l'Association universitaire de recherches en administration. Y participent pour la Commission J.-C. Paye, H. von Verschuer, D. Cardon, M. Lahnstein, Edmund Wellenstein, R. Ruggiero . . .', Historical Archives of the European Union, Paper File Code EN–2525, European University Institute, Florence, http://archives.eui.eu/files/documents/7970.pdf.

European Commission (2016), Statistical Bulletin on 01/02/2016: Distribution of staff by employment type and directorate-general, Brussels, http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/europa_sp2_bs_dist_staff_en.pdf.

European Commission (2013), *Human Resources Report 2013*, European Commission, Directorate-General Human Resources and Security, Brussels.

European Commission (2011), *Human Resources Report 2011*, European Commission, Directorate-General Human Resources and Security, Brussels.

European Communities (2009), *General Budget of the European Union for the Financial Year 2009: The Figures*, Office of the Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

European Commission (2009), *Human Resources Report 2009: Towards a Qualitative and Forward-looking Management of Staff and Competencies through Professionalisation of Human Resources Management*, European Commission, Directorate-General Personnel and Administration, Brussels, http://sidtu.org/SID-UNION-FILES/SID-PDF-DOCS/Human-Resources-Report–2010.pdf.

European Commission (2008a), Note aux directeurs généraux et chefs de service, SEC (2008) 2022, 5 June, Brussels.

European Commission (2008b), 'Modernisation of the Commission's Human Resources: Synthesis of ideas following debate on papers by the groups chaired by Jörgen Holmquist, Robert Madelin and Robert Verrue, Director Generals Meeting on 23 October 2008', in GRAPSE (2009), *Cahier de GRASPE*, No. 13, April, pp. 38–46, http://graspe.eu/grasp13.pdf, accessed on 5 July 2016.

European Commission (2004), *Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Communities. Conditions of Employment of other servants of the European Communities*, http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/toc100_en.pdf.

European Commission (1973), *Courrier du personnel*, No. 242, 21 February.

European Voice (2015), *The Companion to the European Commission – European Voice: A Weekly Review of the Union*, International Press Centre, Copenhagen.

Eymeri-Douzans, J-M. (2011), 'Logiques de la réforme administrative en Europe: une nouvelle gestion publique "pour toutes saisons" ou des acclimatations nationales ?' *Gestion et finances publiques*, No. 7, July, pp. 459–463. Translation: (2011), 'NMP reforms legacy: A common praxeologic, a variety of acclimatizations, a renewed bureaucratization', in Eymeri-Douzans, J-M. and J. Pierre (eds), *Administrative Reforms and Democratic Governance*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 9–26.

Eymeri-Douzans, J-M. (2008), 'Les réformes administratives en Europe: logiques managérialistes globales, acclimatations locales', *Pyramides*, No. 15, pp. 71–94.

Eymeri-Douzans, J-M. (2006), 'Conclusion: Pour une sociologie politique comparée des institutions et de l'action publiques', in Dreyfus, F. and J-M. Eymeri-Douzans (eds), *Science politique de l'administration. Une comparaison européenne*, Economica, Paris, pp. 269–83.

Eymeri-Douzans, J-M. (2005), 'La machine élitaire. Un regard européen sur le "modèle" français de fabrication des hauts fonctionnaires', in Joly, H. (ed.), *Formation des élites en France et en Allemagne*, Éditions du CIRAC, Cergy, pp. 101–128.

Eymeri-Douzans, J-M. (2001a), *La Fabrique des énarques*, Economica, Paris.

Eymeri-Douzans, J-M. (2001b), *Pouvoir politique et haute administration. Une comparaison européenne*, European Institute of Public Administration Publications, Maastricht.

Eymeri-Douzans, J-M. and D. Georgakakis (2008), 'Les hauts fonctionnaires de l'Europe', in Belot, C., P. Magnette and S. Saurugger (eds), *Science politique de l'Europe*, Economica, Paris, pp. 285–312.

Favell, A. (2008), *Eurostars and Eurocities: Free Movement and Mobility in an Integrating Europe*, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

Ferral, P-A. (2000), 'Mythes et réalités de la fonction publique communautaire', *Revue française d'administration publique*, No. 95, July.

Finnemore, M. and K. Sikkink (2001), 'Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics', *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 4, June, pp. 391–416.

Fligstein, N. (2001), 'Social Skill and the Theory of Fields', *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 19, No. 2, July, pp. 105–125.

Foucault, M. (1976), *Histoire de la sexualité. Tome 1. La volonté de savoir*, Gallimard, Paris. Translation by R. Hurley (1978), *The Will to Knowledge – The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, Penguin Books, London.

Fouilleux, E. (2003), *La politique agricole commune et ses réformes. Une politique à l'épreuve de la globalisation*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

Gaïti, B. (1999), 'Décembre 1958 ou le temps de la révélation technocratique', in Dulong, D. and V. Dubois (eds), *La question technocratique. De l'invention d'une figure aux transformations de l'action publique*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Gaïti, B. (1998), *De Gaulle prophète de la Cinquième République (1946–1962)*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris.

Gall, Y. (ed.) (2004), *Bruxelles, Région-Capitale pour 450 Millions de Citoyens. Rapport final du Bureau de liaison Bruxelles-Europe*, Brussels, December.

Generation 2004 (2014), *Generation 2004 Newsletter*, No. 9, November-December, http://generation2004.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/G2004-Newsletter-no–9.pdf, accessed on 2 June 2016.

Generation 2004 (2013), *Generation 2004 Newsletter*, No. 1, December, http://generation2004.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2013_12.pdf, accessed on 2 June 2016.

Georgakakis, D. (2013a), 'Technocracy is Dead. Long Live Bureaucracy! On Some Recent Changes to the Civil Service and the European Commission', in Chang, M. and J. Monar (eds), *The European Commission in the Post-Lisbon Era of Crises: Between Political Leadership and Policy Management*, Peter Lang, Brussels.

Georgakakis, D. (2013b), 'The institutionalisation of the European administrative corps as a transnational elite', in Kauppi, N. and M.R. Madsen (eds), *Transnational Power Elites: The new professionals of governance, law and security*, Routledge, Oxon and New York.

Georgakakis, D. (2012) (ed.), *Le champ de l'Eurocratie: une sociologie du personnel de l'UE*, Economica, Paris. Close version in English: Georgakakis, D. and J. Rowell (2013), *The Field of Eurocracy: Mapping EU Actors and Professionals*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke

Georgakakis, D. (2010), 'L'administration de l'Union européenne à la croisée des chemins', *Revue française d'administration publique. Où en est l'administration de la Commission européenne ?*, Vol. 1, No. 133, pp. 5–16.

Georgakakis, D. (2009), 'The Historical and Political Sociology of the European Union: A Uniquely French Methodological Approach', *French Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 3–4, September, pp. 437–455.

Georgakakis, D. (2002a) (ed.), *Les métiers de l'Europe politique. Acteurs et professionnalisations de l'Union européenne*, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Georgakakis, D. (2002b), 'L'Europe sur le métier. Pour une sociologie des professionnels des questions européennes', in Georgakakis, D. (ed.), *Les métiers de l'Europe politique. Acteurs et professionnalisations de l'Union européenne*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, pp. 9–32.

Georgakakis, D. (2002c), 'Une mobilisation formatrice: les eurofonctionnaires contre la réforme du statut (printemps 1998)', in Georgakakis, D. (ed.), *Les métiers de l'Europe politique. Acteurs et professionnalisations de l'Union européenne*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, pp. 55–84.

Georgakakis, D. (2001), 'Les instrumentalisations de la morale. Lutte antifraude, scandale et nouvelle gouvernance européenne', in Briquet, J-L. and P. Garraud, (eds), *Juger la politique*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, pp. 263–286.

Georgakakis, D. (2000), 'La démission de la Commission européenne: scandale et tournant institutionnel (oct. 1998 – mars 1999)', *Cultures & Conflits*, No. 38–39, pp. 39–71.

Georgakakis, D. and M. De Lassalle (2013), 'Where have all the lawyers gone? Structure and transformations of the top European Commission officials' legal training', in Vauchez, A. and B. De Witte (eds), *Lawyering Europe: European Law as a Transnational Social Field*, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, Oxford.

Georgakakis, D. and M. De Lassalle (2007a), 'Genèse et structure d'un capital institutionnel européen: Les très hauts fonctionnaires de la Commission européenne', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 1–2, No. 166–167, pp. 38–53.

Georgakakis, D. and M. De Lassalle (2007b), *La 'nouvelle gouvernance européenne'. Genèses et usages politiques d'un livre blanc*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg. This book has been translated in part into English: (2012), *The Political Uses of Governance: Studying an EU White Paper*, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Toronto.

Georgakakis, D. and F. Lebaron (2016), 'The field of European economic governance and austerity policies (2010–2015)', paper for the ENLIGHTEN workshop 'European Legitimacy in Governing Through Hard Times: The Role of European Networks', Institut d'études européennes, Brussels, 30–31 May.

Georgakakis, D. and J. Rowell (2013), *The Field of Eurocracy: Mapping EU Actors and Professionals*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Gernet, J. (1997), 'Le pouvoir d'État en Chine', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 1, No. 118, pp. 19–27, http://www.persee.fr/doc/arss_0335–5322_1997_num_118_1_3220.

Gielisse, R. (ed.) (2006), *European Open Competitions: A Roadmap to Success*, Centre des Études Européennes de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Giscard d'Estaing, V. (1976), *Démocratie française*, Fayard, Paris.

Goffman, E. (1974), *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, Harper & Row, New York.

Goffman, E. (1963), *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Penguin, London.

Goffman, E. (1961), *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, Anchor Books /Doubleday, New York.

Gould, S.J. (1981), *The Mismeasure of Man*, Norton & Company, New York.

GRASPE (2007), *Cahier de GRASPE*, N° 10, July, http://graspe.eu/grasp10.pdf, accessed on 2 June 2016.

GRAPSE (2001), 'Trente ans de reformes à la Commission: pour quel avenir ?', *Cahier de GRASPE*, No. 1, January, pp. 34–43, http://graspe.eu/grasp01.pdf, accessed on 5 July 2016.

Gravier, M. (2008), 'Professional Statutes and Identity Types: A Sociological Reading of the Statute of European Civil Servants', in Becker, P. and R. Von Krosigk (eds) *Figures of Authority: Contributions towards a Cultural History of Governance from 17th to 20th Century*, Peter Lang, Brussels, pp. 285–314.

Guérivière (de la), J. (1992), *Voyage à l'intérieur de l'eurocratie*, Le Monde Éditions, Paris.

Guiraudon, V., C. Ruzza and H-J. Trenz (2015), *Europe's Prolonged Crisis: The Making or the Unmaking of a Political Union*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Haller, M. (2008), *European Integration as an Elite Process: The Failure of a Dream?*, Routledge, London.

Hallstein, W. (1969), *Der unvollendete Bundesstaat: europäische Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse*, Econ, Düsseldorf.

Haroche, P. (2013), *Théorie réaliste de l'intégration européenne. Les conditions de la transformation d'un système international en système interne*, Political Science PhD dissertation, Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University, 30 November.

Hassenteufel, P. (2004), 'L'européanisation par la libéralisation? Les réformes des systèmes de protection maladie dans l'Union européenne', in Hassenteufel, P. and S. Hennion-Moreau (eds), *Concurrence et protection sociale en Europe*, Presses universitaires de Rennes, Rennes.

Henriksen, L.F. and L. Seabrooke (2015), 'Transnational Organizing: Issue Professionals in Environmental Sustainability Networks', *Organization*, 13 October.

Hirschman, A.O. (1970), *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline* in Firms, Organizations, *and States*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Hood, C. (1991), 'A Public Management for All Seasons?' *Public Administration*, Vol. 69, No. 1, pp. 3–19.

Hood, C. and M. Lodge (2004), 'Competency, Bureaucracy, and Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis', *Governance*, Vol. 17, No. 3, July, pp. 313–333.

Hooghe, L. (2012), 'Images of Europe: How Commission Officials Conceive their institution's Role in the EU', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 88–111.

Hooghe, L. (2005), 'Several Roads Lead to International Norms, but Few via International Socialization: A Case Study of the European Commission', *International Organization*, 59:4, October, pp. 861–98.

Hooghe, L. (2001), *The European Commission and the Integration of Europe: Images of Governance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Hooghe, L. (2000), 'Euro-Socialists or Euro-Marketeers? EU Top Officials on Capitalism', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 62, No. 2, pp. 430–454.

Hooghe, L. (1999), 'Supranational Activists or Intergovernmental Agents? Explaining the Orientations of Senior Commission Officials toward European Integration', *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 435–463.

Jabko, N. (2005), 'Comment la France définit ses intérêts dans l'Union européenne', *Revue française de sciences politiques*, Vol. 55, No. 2, pp. 221–242.

Joana, J. and A. Smith (2002), 'Cultures nationales et institutions communautaires: les cabinets des commissaires européens', *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 371–390.

Kalm, S. and H. Johansson (eds) (2015), *EU Civil Society: Patterns of Cooperation, Competition and Conflict*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Karady, V.G. (1995), 'La conversion socio-professionnelle des élites: deux cas historiques en Hongrie', in Broady, D., M. De Saint Martin, M. Palme (eds), *Les élites. Formation, reconversion, internationalisation. Actes du colloque de Stockholm, 24–26* September *1993*, Centre de Sociologie de l'Éducation et de la Culture/Forskningsgruppen för utbildnings- och kultursociologi Lärarhögskolan, Paris and Stockholm, pp. 87–103.

Kassim, H. (2008a), 'A Bid Too Far? New Labour and UK Leadership of the European Union under Blair', in Hayward, J. (ed.), *Leaderless Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Kassim, H. (2008b), '"Mission Impossible", but Mission Accomplished: The Kinnock Reforms and the European Commission', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 648–658.

Kassim, H. (2004), 'A Historic Accomplishment? The Prodi Commission and Administrative Reform', in Dimitrakopoulos, D.G. (ed.), *The Changing European Commission*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp. 33–62.

Kassim, H., J. Peterson, M.W. Bauer, et al. (2013), *The European Commission of the Twenty-First Century*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Kauppi, N. (2005), *Democracy, Social Resources and Political Power in the European Union*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Kauppi, N. and M.R. Madsen (eds) (2013), *Transnational Power Elites: The New Professionals of Governance, Law and Security*, Routledge, London.

Kessler, M-C. (1996), 'Les grands corps face à l'Europe', in d'Arcy, F. and L. Rouban (eds), *De la Vème République à l'Europe: Hommage à Jean-Louis Quermonne*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris.

Kessler, M-C. (1992), 'Vers un modèle administratif européen', in Muller, P. (ed.), *L'Administration française est-elle en crise ?*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

Kinnock, N. et al. (2000), *Reforming the Commission – White Paper. Vol. I: White Paper. COM (2000) 200 final/2*, Vol. I, 5 March 2000, European Commission – COM Document, Brussels.

Lacouture, J. (1986), *De Gaulle, tome 3: Le Souverain 1959–1970*, Le Seuil, Paris.

Lacroix, B. and J. Lagroye (1992), *Le Président de la République. Usages et genèses d'une institution*, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, Paris.

Lagroye, J. (2006), *La vérité dans l'Église catholique. Contestations et restauration d'un régime d'autorité*, Belin, Paris.

Lascoumes, P. (1997), *Élites irrégulières: Essai sur la délinquance d'affaires*, Gallimard, Paris.

Laurens, S., F. Marchan and M. Van Criekingen (2012), '"Il faut de tout pour faire un monde clos". Genèse historique, délimitations matérielles et symboliques du "quartier européen" à Bruxelles, 1960–2010', *Actes de la recherché en sciences sociales*, Vol. 5, No. 195, pp. 78–97.

Lazuech, G. (1999), *L'exception française. Le modèle des grandes écoles à l'épreuve de la mondialisation*, Presses universitaires de Rennes, Rennes.

Lebaron, F. (2000), *La croyance économique: les économistes entre science et politique*, Seuil, Paris.

Lemann, N. (1999), *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.

Lemaignen, R. (1964), *L'Europe au berceau. Souvenirs d'un technocrate*, Plon, Paris.

Le Theule, F-G. and J. Leprêtre (eds) (2012), *La fonction publique européenne*, 2nd edition, École nationale d'administration /Centre des études européennes, Strasbourg.

Lequesne, C. (2001), *L'Europe bleue. À quoi sert une politique communautaire de la pêche ?*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris.

Lequesne, C. (2004), *The Politics of Fisheries in the European Union*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Lequesne, C. (1996a), 'Union européenne et coordination gouvernementale. *Quid novi* en France ?', in d'Arcy, F. and L. Rouban (eds), *De la cinquième République à l'Europe*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, pp. 259–77.

Lequesne, C. (1996b), 'La Commission européenne entre autonomie et dépendance', *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. 46, No. 3.

Levasseur, C. and C. Roques (2012), 'La révision statutaire de 2011–2012′, in Le Theule, F-G. and J. Leprêtre (eds), *La fonction publique européenne*, 2nd edition, École nationale d'administration /Centre des études européennes, Strasbourg.

Lodge, M. and C. Hood (2005), 'Symposium Introduction: Competency and Higher Civil Servants', *Public Administration*, Vol. 83, No. 4, December, pp. 779–787.

Maggi-Germain, N. (2005), 'Les fonctionnaires communautaires et l'intérêt général communautaire', *Revue Études européennes – dossier n° 6*, April.

Mahony, H. (2012), 'EU commission struggling to attract top economists', *euobserver*, 26 March, https://euobserver.com/political/115704, accessed on 8 June 2016.

Mangenot, M. (2012), 'D'où vient la fonction publique européenne: les origines d'un modèle 1952–68', in Le Theule, F-G. and J. Leprêtre (eds) (2012), *La fonction publique européenne*, 2nd edition, École nationale d'administration /Centre des études européennes, Strasbourg, pp. 37–49.

Mangenot, M. (2008), 'D'où vient la fonction publique communautaire? Les origines d'un modèle (1952–1968)', in *La fonction publique européenne*, École nationale d'administration /Centre des études européennes, Strasbourg, pp.23–32.

Mangenot, M. (2006), 'Le Conseil d'État et l'Europe. Conditions et effets d'un ralliement', in Raimbault, P. (ed.), *La puissance publique à l'heure européenne*, Dalloz, Paris, pp.173–190.

Mangenot, M. (2005), *De l'État à l'Europe. Les hauts fonctionnaires français aux origines des institutions européennes*, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Mangenot, M. (2001), 'La revendication d'une paternité: les hauts fonctionnaires français et le "style" administrative de la Commission européenne (1958–1988), *Pôle Sud*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 33–46.

Mangenot, M. (2000), *Une Europe Improbable: les hauts fonctionnaires français dans la construction européenne, 1948–1992*, Doctoral dissertation in Political Science, Institut d'Études Politiques de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Marjolin, R. (1986), *Le travail d'une vie, Mémoires (1911–1986)*, Robert Laffont, Paris.

Marsh, R.M. (1961), *The Mandarins: The Circulation of Elites in China, 1600–1900*, Free Press, Glencoe ILL, reprinted in 1980 by Arno Press, New York.

Matthijs, M. and M. Blyth (eds) (2015), *The Future of the Euro*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Menasse, R. (2012), *Der Europäische Landbote: die Wut der Bürger und der Friede Europas*, Paul Zsolnay, Vienna.

Michel, H. (ed.) (2005), *Lobbyistes et lobbying de l'Union européenne: Trajectoires, formations et pratiques des représentants d'intérêts*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Michelmann, H.J. (1978), 'Multinational Staffing and Organizational Functioning in the Commission of the European Communities', *International Organization*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 477–496.

Michon, S. (2005), 'Passer par un groupe d'intérêt. Entre pis-aller d'une carrière européenne et rite d'institution', in Michel, H. (ed.), *Lobbyistes et lobbying de l'Union européenne: Trajectoires, formations et pratiques des représentants d'intérêts*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Minc, A. (1992), 'Maastricht, l'accessoire et l'essentiel', *Le Monde*, 29 April.

Monnet, J. (1976), *Mémoires*, Fayard, Paris.

Moravcsik, A. (2000), 'Le grain et la grandeur: les origines économiques de la politique européenne du général de Gaulle (2ème partie)', *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 73–124.

Moravcsik, A. (1999), 'Le grain et la grandeur: les origines économiques de la politique européenne du général de Gaulle (1ère partie)', *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. 49, No. 4, pp. 507–544.

Morin, E. (1992), 'Maastricht. Espoirs et peurs d'Europe', *Le Monde*, 1 July.

Noël, É. (1981), '"La fonction publique européenne", allocution prononcée le 25 octobre 1981 à l'occasion de la remise de la médaille Robert Schuman par Gaston Thorn, président de la Commission', in OPOCE (1988), *Hommage à Émile Noël*, Office des publications officielles des Communautés européennes, Luxembourg.

Nugent, N. (ed.) (1997), *At the Heart of the Union: Studies of the European Commission*, MacMillan, London.

Oberdorff, H. (1992), 'L'administration face aux enjeux de la construction européenne', in Muller, P. (ed.), *L'Administration française est-elle en crise ?*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

Oger, C. (2008), *Le façonnage des élites de la République. Culture générale et haute fonction publique*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris.

OJEU (2015), *Budgets: Definitive adoption (EU, Euratom) 2015/339 of the European Union's general budget for the financial year 2015*, Official Journal of the European Union, Brussels, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015B0339&from=EN.

Olsen, J.P. (2003), 'Towards a European Administrative Space?, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 10, No. 4, August, pp. 506–531.

Page, E. (1997), *People Who Run Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford: Clarendon.

Page, E. (2007), 'Where Have all the Powers Gone? The UK Top Civil Service in Comparative Perspective', Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Hyatt Regency Chicago and the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers, Chicago, August 30.

Parsons, C. (2006), *A Certain Idea of Europe*, Cornell University Press, Cornell.

Panofsky, E. (1951), *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, Archabbey Press, Latrobe PA.

Passeron, A. (1966), *De Gaulle parle. 1962–1966*, Fayard, Paris.

Paicheler, G. (1992), *L'Invention de la psychologie moderne*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

Peters, G. and J. Pierre (eds) (2001), *Politicians, Bureaucrats and Administrative Reform*, Routledge, London.

Pinto, L. (1984), *L'intelligence en action. Le Nouvel Observateur*, Éditions AM Métailié, Paris.

PLS Consult A/S (2000), in cooperation with Danish Management Forum, Comparative Study of the Remuneration of Officials of the European Institutions, Summary, June, http://ec.europa.eu/reform/pdf/salaries_study_en.pdf.

Quatremer, J. (2013), 'À Bruxelles, la grande déprime des eurocrates', *Libération*, 6 February.

Quermonne, J-L. (1993), *Le Système politique européen, des communautés économiques à l'Union européenne*, Montchrestien, Paris.

Radaelli, C. (1999), *Technocracy in the European Union*, Addison Wesley Longman, Harlow.

Reinhard, W. (ed.) (1996), *Power Elites and State Building*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

RFAP (2013), *Revue française d'administration publique. L'évaluation des politiques publiques: état(s) de l'art et controverses*, Vol. 4, No. 148.

RFAP (2012), *Revue française d'administration publique. Les concours administratifs en questions*, Vol. 2, No. 142.

RFAP (2010), *Revue Française d'administration publique. Où en est l'administration de la Commission européenne*, Vol. 1, No. 133.

Robert, C. (2007a), 'L'impossible "modèle social européen"', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 1, No. 166–167, March, Le Seuil, Paris, pp. 94–110.

Robert, C. (2007b), 'Les transformations managériales des activités politiques', *Politix*, Vol. 3, No. 79, pp. 7–23.

Robert, C. (2002), 'La construction des compétences en situation d'incertitude. L'exemple du service PHARE', in Georgakakis, D. (ed.), *Les métiers de l'Europe politique. Acteurs et professionnalisations de l'Union européenne*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, pp. 85–120.

Robinson, W.I. (2001), 'Social Theory and Globalization: The Rise of a Transnational State', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 30, No. 2, April, pp. 157–200.

Rosenthal, G.G. (1975), *The Men Behind the Decisions: Cases in European Policy-making*, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD.

Ross, G. (2011), *The European Union and its Crises through the Eyes of the Brussels Elite*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Ross, G. (2008), *European Elites Reflect on the EU's Crises*, European Consortium for Political Research Workshop draft, April, Rennes.

Ross, G. (1995), *Jacques Delors and European Integration*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Rouban, L. (2002), *L'Inspection générale des Finances 1958–2000: quarante ans de pantouflage, Les Cahiers du CEVIPOF*, No. 31, September.

SAARBRUECK (ed.) (1956), *La fonction publique européenne: statut futur, formation, perfectionnement. Colloque de Sarrebruck, 7–10 novembre 1955*, Universität des Saarlandes. Institut pour la Comparaison et le Rapprochement des Droits Européens, Brussels, p. 305.

Saurugger, S. and F. Mérand (eds) (2010), 'Mainstreaming sociology in EU Studies', special issue *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Special Issue.

Savage, J.D. and A. Verdun (2016), 'Strengthening the European Commission's budgetary and economic surveillance capacity since Greece and the euro area crisis: a study of five Directorates-General', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 101–118.

Schmidt, V.A. (2009), 'European Elites on the European Union: What Vision for the Future?' in Gamble, A. and D. Lane (eds), *The European Union and World Politics: Consensus and Division*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Schmitter, P.C. (2005), 'Ernst B. Haas and the Legacy of Neofunctionalism', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 255–272.

Schnabel, V. (1998), 'Élites européennes en formation. Les étudiants du "Collège de Bruges" et leurs études', *Politix*, Vol. 11, No. 43, third quarter, pp. 33–53.

Schön-Quinlivan, E. (2011), *Reforming the European Commission*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Seabrooke, L. and D. Wigan (2016), 'Powering Ideas through Expertise: Professionals in Global Tax Battles', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 357–374.

Seidel, K. (2010) *The Process of Politics in Europe: The Rise of European Elites and Supranational Institutions*, Tauris Academic Studies, London.

Shore, C. (2010), 'Une approche anthropologique des phénomènes d'européanisation et de supranationalisme', in Baisnée, O., H. Michel and C. Robert (eds), *La fabrique des Européens: processus de socialisation et construction européenne*, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.

Shore, C. (2000), *Building Europe. The Cultural Politics of European Integration*, Routledge, London.

Silguy (de), Y-T. (1996), *Le syndrome du diplodocus. Un nouveau souffle pour l'Europe*, Albin Michel, Paris.

Sklair, L. (2001), *The Transnational Capitalist Class*, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

Smith, A. (2004), *Le gouvernement de l'Union européenne: une sociologie politique*, Réseau européen droit et société, Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, Paris.

Soret, B. (2008), 'Structure des carrières et encadrement', in *La fonction publique européenne*, École nationale d'administration /Centre des études européennes, Strasbourg.

Spence, D. and A. Stevens (2006), 'Staff and Personnel Policy in the European Commission' in Spence, D. and G. Edwards (eds), *The European Commission* (3rd edition), John Harper Publishing, London, pp. 173–208.

Spinelli, A. (1966), *The Eurocrats: Conflict and Crisis in the European Community*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore.

Stevens, A. (2003), 'Une simple amélioration ou une modernisation radicale? La réforme de l'administration de la commission européenne', *Revue française d'administration publique*, Vol. 1, No. 105–106, pp. 81–94.

Stevens, A. and H. Stevens (2001), *Brussels Bureaucrats? The Administration of the European Union*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Suaud, C. (1978), *La Vocation. Conversion et reconversion des prêtres ruraux*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris.

Suvarierol, S. (2008), 'Beyond the Myth of Nationality: Analysing Networks within the European Commission', *West European Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 701–724.

*The Economist* (2013), 'The gourmands of Brussels', 2 November.

*The Economist* (1961), 'The Eurocrats', 29 July.

Tomusk. (2000), 'Reproduction of the "State Nobility" in Eastern Europe', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 21, No. 2, June, pp. 269–282.

Thomson, E.P. (1963), *The Making of the English Working Class*, Victor Gollancz, London.

Union Syndicale Fédérale (2013), *AGORA, Le magazine du Service public européen et international*, No. 69, September.

Vauchez, A. (2013), *L'Union par le droit. L'invention d'un programme institutionnel pour l'Europe*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris.

Vauchez, A. and B. De Witte (eds) (2013), *Lawyering Europe: European Law as a Transnational Social Field*, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, Oxford.

Veld (in 't), J. (2013), Fiscal consolidations and spillovers in the Euro area periphery and core, European Economy, Economic Papers 506, October, European Commission, Brussels, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/economic_paper/2013/pdf/ecp506_en.pdf.

Verdun, A. (2013), 'Decision-Making before and after Lisbon: The Impact of Changes in Decision-Making Rules', *West European Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 6, pp. 1128–1142.

Verrier, B. (1996), *Défection et production de frontières partisanes: l'exemple de la construction du Mouvement des citoyens*, doctoral thesis, Institut d'études politiques de Strasbourg, unpublished.

Wacquant, L.J.D. (2010), 'Crafting the Neoliberal State: Workfare, Prisonfare, and Social Insecurity', *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 25, No. 2, June, pp. 197–220.

Wacquant, L.J.D. (ed.) (2005), *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics: The Mystery of Ministry*, Wiley, Hoboken NJ.

Warlouzet, L. (2011), *Le choix de la CEE par la France. L'Europe économique en débat de Mendès France à de Gaulle (1955–1969)*, Comité pour l'Histoire économique et financière de la France, Paris.

Warlouzet, L. (2018), *Governing Europe in a Globalizing World: Neoliberalism and its Alternatives Following the 1973 Oil Crisis*, Routledge, London, UK.

Weber, M. and S.N. Eisenstadt (1968), *On Charisma and Institution Building*, edited and with an introduction by S.N. Eisenstadt, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Will, P-E. (2000), 'Science et sublimation de l'État en Chine pendant la période impériale tardive', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 133, No. 1, pp.13–25, http://www.persee.fr/doc/arss_0335–5322_2000_num_133_1_2674.

Wille, A. (2013), *The Normalization of the European Commission: Politics and Bureaucracy in the EU Executive*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Williamson, D. et al. (1998), 'Rapport du groupe de réflexion sur la politique du personnel (Williamson Report), 6 novembre 1998', in EUI (1998–2001), *Reform documents* 28 Feb 2001 – *final versions*, code PL–58, European University Institute, Florence, http://archives.eui.eu/en/fonds/240353?item=PL–05.02–58.

Wolton, D. (1993), *La Dernière Utopie. Naissance de l'Europe démocratique*, Flammarion, Paris.

Wright, V. (1995), 'Le cas britannique, le démantèlement de l'administration traditionnelle', *Revue française d'administration publique*, No. 75, July-September.

Ziller, J. (1992), "Les mythes de l''eurocratie'", *Revue française d'administration publique*, No. 63, July–September.

# Index