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Orientations to European Integration among Senior Commission Officials

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ABSTRACT

The European Union is a polity-in-the-making where political actors contend about basic questions of governance. While students have begun to map contention among public, parties and private interests, little attention has been paid to how office-holders in the Commission conceive of European integration. Using interview data collected from 140 senior Commission officials, I identify contention along four dimensions: whether the EU should have supranational or intergovernmental institutions, democratic or technocratic decision making, promote regulated capitalism or market liberalism, and whether the elite should defend the European public good or be responsive to various interests. My findings challenge EU theories that conceive of the Commission as a unitary actor with a pro-integration agenda.

What conception of Europe do top administrators in the European Commission entertain?[*] Most studies of the Commission, the executive-administrative body of the European Union, focus on the college of Commissioners, that is, the twenty high-profile politicians appointed for five years by national governments and European Parliament to give direction to the Commission.[1] This study examines the political beliefs of the elite permanent officials, the Commission's 200 top career civil servants of A1 or A2 grade. I use data I collected between July 1995 and May 1997 from extensive interviews with 140 of them, and mail questionnaires from 106.[2] In conjunction with the political College, they have a constitutional obligation to play a political role in the European Union, most prominently because they have exclusive competence to initiate and draft legislation. These directors-general, directors and senior advisors provide leadership to 4,000 Commission administrators; they direct negotiations between the Commission on the one hand and Council working groups, the European Parliament and interest groups on the other; they promote the policies of their directorate in relation to private interests, politicians and public; they report directly to the political Commission.[3]

In the first section of this article I synthesize Commission officials' beliefs on European governance along four dimensions. In the following section I examine the distribution of all orientations on these dimensions and I complement quantifiable data with a focused interpretative reading of the interviews to develop a typology of "images of Europe" held by senior Commission officials. My basic argument is that top Commission officials hold articulate - but contending - views about the future of the European Union. This goes against the grain of European integration studies that conceive of the Commission as a unitary actor with a pro-integration agenda. Divergent views about Europe's future among leaders of the European Union's high-profile supranational institution also question the boundedness of the Commission, that is, its capacity to shape its officials' beliefs.

DIMENSIONS OF CONTENTION

National politics are conducted within the parameters of historic settlements about basic questions of governance. These have to do with how authority should be organized, the scope of authoritative regulation in the economy, and the role of societal interests in government. While such national institutional settlements may be conditional or implicit, they are usually tangible enough to shape political activity and policy choices in fairly predictable ways. The European Union, however, is a young polity where political actors have only begun to address these fundamental questions.[4] How do top Commission

officials, as professional players in the European arena, conceive of European governance?

My survey taps the following four features of governance in the European Union:

- Locus of authority (European institutions or member states): a supranational or intergovernmental Europe?

- Principles of authoritative decision-making: a democratic or technocratic Europe?

- Politics and market: European regulated capitalism or a free-market Europe?

- Public interest and societal input: a Europe with an elite speaking for the general European interest or a Europe with elites responsive to contending interests?

I examine these features with the help of an exploratory factor analysis on responses by 106 officials. Factor analysis assesses the degree to which particular items tap the same concept. If officials respond in similar ways to two questions, then these issues are seen as being conceptually related. Appendix I lists 17 items pertaining to various aspects of these four proposed dimensions. Respondents indicated whether they agree without reservations (4), agree with reservations (3), disagree with reservations (2), or disagree without reservations (1). I deliberately omitted a neutral point, and as a result only a very small number of respondents (on average 2.5 percent, and for one item 4.7%) insisted on neutrality or abstained; I allocate them a value of 2.5.[5] To minimize the risk of acquiescent responses, these items were randomly distributed among a total of 32 items, which also contained questions on internal coordination in the Commission and profiles of bureaucratic behavior.

The first dimension concerns the locus of authority in the European Union. The accumulation of authoritative competencies at EU level has eroded national sovereignty and disturbed the allocation of authority across levels of government in national states.[6] This development has provoked contention about the appropriate locus of authority. Should it be vested in the member states and the Council of Ministers, or should supranational institutions like the European Commission and European Parliament be strengthened? In the language of students of European integration, should the European Union be governed primarily in intergovernmental or supranational fashion?[7] This echoes center-periphery tensions that shaped territorial politics in many national democracies, most transparently in federal countries.[8]

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Of the seventeen items on the questionnaire, four speak directly to contention concerning the locus of authoritative control (appendix). Item 1 asks whether ultimate authority should rest with the member states or with Europe; item 2 broaches the issue of subsidiarity, arguing that the strength of Europe lies in effective government at the lowest possible level. Items 3 and 4 postulate that the Commission should be the true government of the European Union, and that it should act less as an administration and more as the government of Europe.

Structuring authority in Europe is not only a matter of privileging an institutional architecture over another. It also involves a basic choice between decision-making principles: should the European Union be democratic, like its member states, or technocratic, like other international organizations for economic cooperation? The deepening of European integration has led to a politicization of EU decision making. The roots of this development go back to the mid-1960s, when Jean Monnet's method of piece-meal problem solving through technocratic bargaining was thwarted by French president Charles de Gaulle. From then on, European decision making has alternated between technocracy and principled political conflict about the general premises of European integration. Until the mid-1980s, decision making was predominantly confined to elites, but it has since been opened to a variety of interest groups and, increasingly, wide-ranging, public debate.[9] As actors whose influence largely depends on expertise, top Commission officials have a direct stake in the technocratic/democratic debate.

Several items touch upon officials' orientations on this issue. Item 5 invokes a technocratic Europe, with the Commission cast in the role of efficient administrator. Item 6, which states that the Commission should concentrate on maintaining the internal market, also taps this belief. Item 7 provides a litmus test for "democrats". It raises the question whether the European Union should become a normal representative democracy, where, in analogy with national political systems, the European Parliament has full legislative powers, even if this might cost the Commission its exclusive right to propose legislation. The Commission's monopoly of initiative has been the bedrock of Monnet's decision mode of elitist, expert-based problem solving. A top official willing to give up this unique power in exchange for parliamentary powers unambiguously favors a democratic Europe.

The third dimension refers to relations between politics and market. To what extent should market activity be regulated at the European level, and to what extent – if at all - should the European Union redistribute from rich to poor? What form of capitalism should Europe adopt? As European integration

has deepened, the traditional left/right struggle has spread from national politics to the European arena – though recast in a somewhat more market-friendly language.[10] Political actors in the European Union have different projects for capitalism in Europe. At one end of the ideological spectrum stand European market-liberals. They seek to insulate the European-wide market from political interference by combining European market integration with minimal European regulation. This grouping brings together neoliberals who want minimal political interference at whatever level and nationalists intent on sustaining state sovereignty. Opposing them are proponents of European regulated capitalism, who want legislation at the European level to create something akin to social democracy. How does this fundamental cleavage structure the orientations of top Commission officials?

Six items of Appendix I are directly relevant to the dimension political regulation/market liberalism. The bottom line is whether "Europe should be more than a common market" (item 8). This sets the stage for more targeted probing of officials' mindsets: do Commission officials wish to regulate the common market in social-democratic direction or do they prefer economic liberalization? These contrasting ideological choices are represented by item 9 (unique model of society), which summarizes former Commission president Jacques Delors' definition of European regulated capitalism, and item 6, which suggests that the Commission should restrict itself to policing the internal market. Items 10 and 11 ask Commission officials to contemplate the consequences of ideological choices for policy making. What is their stance on the bedrock of the anti-neoliberal program - cohesion policy, which aims to reduce regional inequalities in the European Union through structural programming and currently absorbs 35 per cent of the EU budget (item 10)? And how do they evaluate the influence of (neo)liberal stakeholders - big business - on European policy (item 11)? Given that European regulated capitalism requires strong central authority in a wide range of policy areas, while market liberalism calls for European presence in selected areas like competition policy only, proponents of European regulated capitalism should be in favor of a strong, autonomous Commission. They should want the Commission to have a clearly articulated strategy or blueprint for the future (item 12). They may in addition support more powers for the European Parliament (item 7), as the latter has been an ardent supporter of key policies of European regulated capitalism, including regional policy, environment, social policy, and R&D.

Finally, which conception of the public interest should senior Commission officials represent? Should they embody a higher European interest or should they be the agents of stakeholders in European policies - national and subnational administrations, public and private interest groups and

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increasingly, the public? Should the Commission insulate itself from contending interests or should it be responsive? The relationship between civil servants and their interlocutors is a defining feature of each civil service. French fonctionnaires tend to take a detached, slightly superior attitude towards "particularistic" interests.[11] British civil servants are inclined to consult but like to have the last word. German Beamten administer through dense, stable networks with organized interests. American bureaucrats work hard to nurture relationships as stakeholder support largely determines policy success.[12]

Like national civil servants, European officials define their relationship with those who claim a stake in EU public policies. But as employees of an organization at the nexus of the national/ international boundary, they are, like their counterparts in international organizations, more vulnerable towards stakeholders than national officials. They have a harder time justifying what their "added value" is. National civil servants can credibly claim to speak for the public interest, that intangible though influential notion of the public good (especially in Europe). International civil servants, however, are likely to be asked to specify which public and which interest they defend. Furthermore, officials in international organizations face powerful alternative loci of authority in the form of national governments. National communities may ultimately be imagined[13], but a diversity of experiences reinforce their imagined boundaries: national anthems, welfare services, legal systems, constitutions, local government structures, memberships in the United Nations and the EU Council of Ministers. International communities are invented as well, but the notion of international public interest has a shallower base in reality. International officials perceive a tension between being responsive to the actual world of national actors and representing the abstract realm of the international community.[14] How do Commission officials relate to their interlocutors–interest groups and national governments? Does a "European interest" transcend particular interests, or does it emerge out of close collaboration with such interests?

Items 13 and 14 measure the officials' stance towards particularistic interests. Do private interests, including trade unions, farmer organizations, industry, environmental lobbyists, disturb the proper functioning of European government? Do egoistic member state interests threaten the European project? Officials who conceive a distinct European public interest should be worried about the preponderant influence of particularistic interests on the Commission. The most cited threat to Commission autonomy is capture by national interests, which is measured in item 16 (for individual officials) and 17 (for administrative services in the Commission). Officials may also be vulnerable to industrial interests, first and foremost corporate interests ("big business") (item 11). Officials skeptical of a transcendent European public good should be more

positive towards particular interests – national or sectoral. This view is stated in item 15, which argues that the best advice usually comes from affected interests.

The results I report here are based on the principal component method and varimax rotation, though the results are robust across alternative methodological choices.[15] Factor analysis substantiates that top Commission officials' orientations on European governance can be validly conceptualized along these four dimensions.[16] The results in Table I include all factor loadings of .30 or higher. The four factors explain a rather high 47.4 percent of the variance. A closer analysis of the results helps us to refine our arguments.

Indicator (N=106)	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV
Too often nationality interferes in official's judgment (16)	.77			
Certain DGs are dominated by nationalities and this hurts the Commission's legitimacy (17)	.68			
Special interests disturb the proper working of European government (13)	.63			
Commission is too much administration, not enough the government of Europe (4)	.55			-.49
Some egoistic member states threaten European project (14)	.39		-.37	
No united Europe without mature EU cohesion policy (10)		.77		
Commission needs vision, blueprint for future (12)		.65		
Commission should preserve unique model of European society (9)		.62		
Europe should be more than a common market (8)		.55		-.37
Commission should concentrate on maintaining internal market (6)			.73	
Commission should concentrate on administering efficiently (5)			.70	
Member states should remain central pillars of EU (1)			.51	.47
Commission should support full legislative powers for European Parliament (7)		.35	-.43	
Best advice usually comes from interests directly affected (15)			.41	
Subsidiarity- more power at lowest level, not for Brussels (2)				.72
Commission should become true government of the European Union (3)	.31			-.59
Too much influence of big business (11)	.32	.34		.44
Eigenvalues	2.23	2.18	1.92	1.72
Variance explained	13.1	12.8	11.3	10.1

Factor I: Public Interest and Societal Input: Eurofonctionnaires versus Responsive-Euroservants

Factor II: Politics and Markets: Political-Regulators versus Market-Liberals

Factor III: Principles of Decision Making: Technocrats versus Democrats

Factor IV: Allocation of Authority: Intergovernmentalists versus Supranationalists

The first factor refers to whether Commission officials should speak for the general European interest or be responsive to the interests of major stakeholders - national and sectoral or functional interests. Five statements load strongly on this factor, which explains 13.1 percent of the variance. The most remarkable finding is that officials who fear control by national interests tend to be apprehensive about special (that is, sectoral or functional) interests as well. The relatively high loading for the last item - too much influence of big business - underlines that officials do not make a conceptual distinction between public and private stakeholders. What matters are contending beliefs about how to deal with the outside world, not officials' particular stance on national or industrial capture. Commission officials make a distinction between nationality as one source of influence on European policy making, and member states as the constituent units of the European constitutional structure. This dimension taps divergent views on the former, while the supranational/ intergovernmental dimension (fourth factor) synthesizes contention on the latter.

Factor II is the politics/market dimension, juxtaposing those who favor a more egalitarian, social-democratic European Union against those supporting a free trade area (or common market). This factor is most powerfully determined by officials' stance on EU cohesion policy, the flagship for proponents of European regulated capitalism. Interestingly, the internal market item fails to load strongly, suggesting that the internal market program is not a major bone of contention between market-liberals and those who favor a social dimension in European integration. As we will see, Commission officials associate this item with a different kind of choice about Europe: whether Europe should be technocratic or democratic. These results support the argument that left-wing views go hand in hand with greater enthusiasm for political integration. Proponents of a social-democratic European Union want a more strategic political Commission (item 12) and they support more powers for the European Parliament (item 7). This factor explains 12.8 percent of total variance.

The third factor expresses contention about whether Europe should be governed according technocratic or democratic principles. Five items score high on this factor, which explains 11.3 percent of the variance. "The Commission should concentrate on maintaining the internal market" (item 6) is the leading item on this factor, closely followed by the item stating that "the Commission should concentrate on administering things efficiently" (item 5). Top Commission officials believe that one has to make a trade off between policy efficiency and democracy. Those who give priority to the internal market and to efficient management want technocratic decision making. Their trusted partners are professional experts from member state bureaucracies (item 1 and

item 14) and from directly affected interests (item 15). They distrust elected politicians in the European parliament (item 7).

Factor IV captures the traditional conception of European integration as an ongoing debate about contending institutional futures for the European Union–an intergovernmental Union where authority is vested in its constituent units, or a federal-type structure where the supranational center has significant autonomous authority. Items on subsidiarity (item 2) and on member states as central pillars (item 1) on the one hand and on the Commission as the true government (item 3) on the other hand have very high scores, and they carry diametrically opposite signs. Not surprisingly, item 4 (Commission acts too much as an administration, not enough as government of Europe) and item 8 (Europe should be more than a common market) also have a high negative score. Proponents of intergovernmentalism believe that big business has too much influence on European policy making. The fact that this item (11) scores highest on this dimension corroborates neofunctionalist theories, which have conceived of transnational business as key supporters of deeper European integration.[17] Factor IV explains 10.1 percent of the variance.[18]

Factor analysis is useful in discovering the structure underlying political beliefs. It helps one to make sense of a complex social reality by identifying underlying patterns. But it does so at a cost. It does not tell anything about the Commission officials' stances within each dimension. To examine substantive variation in the views of Commission officials one needs to disaggregate the four dimensions into the individual items that constitute them. Are most officials supranationalist and Euro-socialist - as is often claimed in public discourse? To what extent are they technocratic? How many feel strongly about defending a European public interest?

IMAGES OF EUROPE

These four dimensions are not purely artifacts of quantitative analysis. They tap into coherent images of Europe, which are very clearly articulated by Commission officials themselves. I use two methodologies to explicate more systematically the various ideal Europes of top Commission officials. One way is to construct scales for each dimension.[19] Table II reports various statistics including minimum and maximum values, quartile values, mean, standard deviation and skewness of the distribution. The other approach is to develop Weberian ideal-types, expressing each of the four dimensions, that are based very directly on the conscious understanding that Commission officials themselves have about their political world. For the latter, I draw from the transcripts of interviews with 140 officials.[20]

Table II -   Images of Europe : Distribution of Commission Officials on Four Dimensions (quartiles)

N=105	Allocation of Authority Intergovernmentalists vs Supranationalists	Principles of Decision making Technocrats vs Democrats	Politics and Market Political- Regulators vs Market-Liberals	Public Interest and Societal Input Eurofonctionnaires vs Responsive- Euroservants
Max. Value	3.80	3.40	4.00	3.25
75 %	2.80	2.60	4.00	2.50
50 %	2.40	2.40	3.33	2.25
25 %	2.20	2.00	3.00	1.75
Min. Value	1.20	1.20	2.00	1.00
Mean[a]	2.43	2.35	3.37	2.15
St.Dev	.502	.439	.554	.589
Skewness	-.229	-.176	-.671	.105

[a] Values range between 1-4.

Allocation of Authority: Supranationalists versus Intergovernmentalists

Senior Commission officials rule out a Europe of sovereign nation-states. The following response is as far as "Euro-skeptical" officials go: "The problem is to find an efficient institutional construct - I am not only thinking of economic efficiency, but also of political efficacy. We know very well that, politically, we need to go beyond the nation-state." (Official 027.) Senior Commission officials wish to create a common structure of authoritative decision making in Europe–no interviewee goes beyond intergovernmentalism to assuage Euro-skeptical nationalism. However, they are divided on where the main locus of authoritative decision making should lie - with the Council (intergovernmental) or the Commission (supranational) - and to what extent competencies should be pooled - minimally (intergovernmental) or more extensively (supranational).

As a group, Commission officials are lightly bent to the supranational pole: mean and median dip just below the neutral value 2.5. However, 25 percent of the interviewees prefer intergovernmentalism (Table II, column 2, 75% quartile), as becomes clear when we look at the statistics for the individual items.[21] 46 percent of the interviewees reject the view that the Commission should become the government of the European Union, almost 23 percent categorically and 24 percent with some reservations (item 3). 32 percent

support the radical intergovernmentalist statement that member states should remain the central pillars, not the European Parliament or the European Commission (item 1). Furthermore, most top officials appear wary of further competencies for Brussels: 13 percent unconditionally support subsidiarity, and 49 percent underwrite it with reservations (item 2). No doubt, this high level of support is partly conjunctural. Since the Maastricht referendums, popular resistance to further EU expansion has induced many political actors, including Commission officials, to embrace subsidiarity. However, the strong association of this item with the four other items on this dimension suggests that support for subsidiarity is rooted in more fundamental intergovernmental convictions. Even if the Maastricht "shock" were to ebb away, support for subsidiarity would not. Among the leadership of the most visible supranational institution, largely intergovernmental designs find considerable backing.

What are the key conceptual differences between Supranationalists and Intergovernmentalists?

Europe as End or Means. For a Supranationalist, the dominant issue in the European Union is the future of European integration. "I am not in the business of right-wing or left-wing policies. ...Whether we promote European integration is what counts. ... [Ideology] is the wrong axis. We are most divided on another axis: pro-integration or anti-integration." (Official's emphasis 058.) An Intergovernmentalist does not share this zest to build Europe: "For me, it is something realistic, concrete, and inevitable." (Official 120.) A Supranationalist fears and fuels the debate between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism, while an Intergovernmentalist worries and waits for the constitutional storm to subside so that he can get on with the job. A Supranationalist rejoices talking about the Commission's role in the EU; an Intergovernmentalist quickly turns to his policy dossier.

Activism or Mediation. A Supranationalist loves a good institutional fight, in which he invariably comes down on the Commission's side: "I love everything having to do with defending the prerogatives of the Commission vis-à-vis Council and Parliament." (Official 070.) An Intergovernmentalist finds such institutional tug of war a waste of time and energy: "I am interested in better policies - that is important. The part played by the Commission - minor problem.... Fighting for the Commission's prerogatives is counterproductive and ridiculous." (Official's emphasis 120.) According to an Intergovernmentalist, the Commission should not confront member states but act as "an independent, balanced clearing house for ideas, a springboard for ideas." When national governments overlook their partners' interests and sensitivities, the Commission should step in to remind them of the common

ground: "You need a consolidated basis of consensus and, as it is written into the treaties, the Commission can and often does play this role." (Official 217.)

Political Leader or Agent to National Principals. A Supranationalist is convinced that only the Commission's political leadership can advance European integration. That makes the role of a Commission official so different from that of a civil servant in an international secretariat, or in the Commission's intergovernmental alter ego, the Council Secretariat: "[A Commission official] is there to formulate European policies and to get fifteen member-states behind a certain policy line. The Council itself is incapable of doing the work. And our colleagues in the Council secretariat are not policy-makers; they are [only] good for finalizing compromises; they are a secretariat. They do not have the mentality of coming up with policy proposals. As a Commission official, on the other hand, one has to learn very early on that there must be a political drive, and one must exchange views and then one has to decide. And this is what the people in the Council [Secretariat] never learn: to decide. Commission people have to decide. They have to say: 'This is the line I propose, and this is my price.' Next, they have to go to the member states and fight for it." (Official's emphasis 182.) For an Intergovernmentalist, the political objectives should be set elsewhere: "I am an official servant of the European construction. I have tried to make Europe as relevant as I could in the various policy areas I have been responsible for. Yet I am convinced that this construction must remain very attentive to national sensitivities ...We know very well that the national states must maintain a very important place in the [European] construction." (Official 027.)

Principles of Decision Making: Democrats versus Technocrats

Most Commission officials believe that the era of benevolent technocracy in the tradition of Jean Monnet has come to a close (Table II, column 3). Mean and median scores are well below the neutral point. The standard deviation is lower than for the three other dimensions, which indicates that there is broad agreement among top officials.

However, this consensus is not unequivocally in favor of a democratic polity. The litmus test for top officials concerns their attitude towards the European Parliament, key symbol of a democratic Europe. The item forces them to weigh their positional interests against their democratic conviction by asking whether the Commission should support the European Parliament's bid for full legislative powers even if the price for the Commission would be to lose its monopoly of initiative (item 7). 36 percent of the sample think the Commission should, though less than 8 percent without reservations, while 61 percent disagree. Many Commission officials fear that greater democracy will

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make European policy making less effective. That is why opposition against trading the Commission's initiative for greater parliamentary powers is so strongly associated with support for prior attention to the internal market and sound administrative management (items 6 and 5). However, when it comes to the crunch, only a small minority wants unconditional priority for these policy objectives - 11 percent for the internal market and 17 percent for sound management. Most officials are conflicted about the desirable balance of democratic principles and functional imperatives. What are the central bones of contention between Democrats and Technocrats?

Promote a Polity-in-the-Making or Build a Functional Organization. In the eyes of a Democrat, the Commission should first and foremost encourage Europeans to become citizens: "I believe that is our task: to make of subjects [sic] active members of the European Union. My role is to introduce the citizen in Europe." (Official's emphasis 070.) A Technocrat believes that the Commission's role is to deliver good policy and to implement it efficiently. European integration can only be built on sound functional results: "Let us concentrate on the essential, first of all, which is making sure that [the internal market] operates properly. And if you can get it to operate properly, then you can demonstrate the superiority of a European solution, and new political perspectives may open up. [Unfortunately], the history of the Community over the last twenty years has been a fuite-en-avant." (Official's emphasis 016.) Opening up the policy process to public, parties and politicians should be done with due reticence.

Representative Democracy or Enlightened Elitism. A Democrat has a positive view of politics: "We officials stand on expertise and we think we are great, but the person who goes out and faces the electorate, is elected and defends [her voters'] views in a democratic process on a continuing basis deserves admiration. Where would democracy be without the people who are willing to face the choice of their fellow citizens? ... I love going to the [European] Parliament and exchanging views with parliamentarians." (Official 030.) A technocrat feels ambivalent about the political process, because political conflict greatly complicates expert-based problem solving. "[I would accept greater democratic input] provided you can do it in a way which retains the capacity to take important decisions effectively. The problem is that the institutional debate [about greater parliamentary powers] runs parallel to the substantive debate we try to engage in. We often get institutional results that, in the name of democracy, actually make it harder to achieve what the Community needs to achieve. This is false democracy." (Official's emphasis 016.)

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Politics and Market: Political-Regulators versus Market-Liberals

European market integration entails the elimination of national barriers to trade and distortions of competition, and common policies to shape the conditions under which markets operate. However, from the start, the institutional set-up has privileged the former - market-liberalizing policies - over the latter - market-correcting regulation.[22] While the latter requires legislation and thus political agreement among national governments, the basic principles of liberalization are laid down in the Treaties. They can be extended, without much political debate and under the guise of mere rule application or adjudication, by the European Court of Justice and the European Commission. The Commission, with strong competencies in competition policy, external trade and customs, has been highly instrumental in deepening the asymmetry between the market-making and market-correcting sides of the integration process.

Notwithstanding this powerful institutional bias, no interviewed Commission official is willing to support a Europe limited to a free trade zone. Very few would describe themselves as ardent market liberals. On the scale for Politics and Market, the distribution is heavily skewed in favor of political regulation. Mean and median scores are well above 3 (Table II, column four). More than one out of four officials score the maximum value of 4.

Most Commission officials strongly support political regulation of the integrated market. 47 percent give unconditional support to Delors' project of European regulated capitalism, which entails an extensive welfare state, social dialogue between both sides of industry, a redistributive regional policy, and industrial policy (item 9). For 46 percent, extensive redistribution through cohesion policy deserves full support, and another 31 percent give qualified support (item 10). All in all, Commission officials as a group seem bent to the regulated capitalism end. And yet, within these parameters of a generally favorable attitude to European political regulation, there is real disagreement on how and how much Europe should regulate capitalism. One out of five officials distances himself from the majority view: 20 percent reject cohesion policy (item 10) while 2 percent abstain, 14 percent do not agree with Delors' European societal model (item 9) and another 4.7 percent abstain or insist on a neutral position. So how does the Europe of a Political-Regulator differ from that of a Market-Liberal?

European Social Model or Liberal Market. Disagreements between Political-Regulators and Market-Liberals are rooted in distinct views of the future European society. A Political-Regulator is defending a third way for

Europe: "I am proud that I have participated with Jacques Delors, as one of his lieutenants, in constructing a certain model for the European Union, where the values are solidarity, cohesion, local empowerment, empowering the citizen in regions and localities. ... This is not a free trade area, not simply the creation of a market for 400 million inhabitants ... We are defending a cultural model, neither the Japanese model nor the American model, but the social market economy, the Rhine model. And that idea is shared from the south of Spain to the north of Sweden." (Official 025.) This is not the worldview of a Market-Liberal: "I have combated public interventionism, protectionism and overregulation. That has been my mission to date, that has been my ambition." (Official 114.) A Market-Liberal fights Olsonian rent seeking and protectionism; only a liberalized market can provide the conditions for economic growth and greater welfare in Europe.

Center-left or Moderate-right. Behind these visions, one can discern left-right tensions concerning the relationship between state, market and society, but devoid of the polarization associated with traditional class politics. A Political-Regulator has strong doubts about the market as a self-correcting mechanism. The state, at whatever level, is indispensable to reduce benefits for winners and costs for losers: "We should operate in those parts of the European spatial economy that the market does not reach or that the market has let down. I would get into a wild argument with the rightwing about the market. Maybe the market would be so long coming [to save these deprived areas] that by the time it gets there, there won't be any people left to save." (Official 057.) For a Market-Liberal, priority is to stimulate growth through private initiative: "The benefits are in the greater market as such, and in the opportunities we can create [through a liberalized] market." (Official 055.)

Few Political-Regulators discard market ideas, and they are uncomfortable with a language of class struggle. Rare is the official who criticizes the influence of big business. Only 28 percent do, and most of them only mutely (item 11), but a Political-Regulator is significantly more likely to do so than a Market-Liberal.[23] Moderation too on the side of the Market-Liberal, who is reluctant to insulate market-making policies from social policies: "How can you take that view [separate economic liberalization from social policies]? The fact is that whatever you do has implications and repercussions in other areas." (Official 010.) Supporters of Thatcherite views on state and market are hard to find in the Commission. A Market-Liberal, commenting on the neoliberal preferences of the British conservative government in 1995, draws the line: "The UK government has a problem. The House [i.e. the Commission] continues to work as if that viewpoint did not exist, because it is not part of the history of the [European integration] process." (Official 010.)

Political Mobilization or Exploiting Institutional Asymmetry. A Political-Regulator is political mobilizer by necessity. He fights against a liberal bias in the institutional set-up. So he mobilizes forces sympathetic to European regulated capitalism inside and outside European institutions. A Political-Regulator pays special attention to the European Parliament. Unlike a Democrat, who supports the institution as an integral component of a democratic polity, a Political-Regulator has pragmatic reasons to fight for greater parliamentary powers. The European Parliament has traditionally supported environmental regulation, redistribution and social policy. "We have the European Parliament that helps us a lot... [The European parliamentarians] are our objective allies, even though they are often not very comfortable allies." (Official 047.) A Market-Liberal, on the other hand, is aware of his privileged position under current rules: "There is no question that the balance has changed [in the European Union], that there is much greater emphasis on creating greater opportunities [through liberalization] rather than giving out money [to support industries]. Some people are pushing more than others in that direction, and I am one of them." (Official 010.) A Political-Regulator supports further powers for the European Parliament more readily than a Market-Liberal.[24]

Public Interest and Societal Input: Eurofonctionnaires versus Responsive Euroservants

Senior Commission officials have a difficult time balancing the European public good and national or functional demands. As a group, they emphasize mutual dependence between actors, and prefer decisions reached through persuasion rather than imposition or unilateral action. They are significantly closer to the responsiveness side of the scale: mean and median are well below 2.5 (see Table II, column 5). For Responsive Euroservants, networking, partnership, and openness to a variety of views and forms of governance are essential.

However, there is considerable variation among officials, as evident from the relatively high standard deviation (.589, the highest of the four scales). One out of four Commission officials lean to a European civil service at arm's length of stakeholder interests (Table II, column 5: 75% quartile). Given the central role of national governments in European decision making, Commission officials are particularly concerned about capture by national interests. More than 29 percent regret the influence of national considerations on colleagues' judgment, 39 percent are wary of national influence on particular Commission services. Networking makes the Commission vulnerable to capture, and so mutual dependence could become Commission dependence. For a Eurofonctionnaire, insulation becomes a buffer against capture. What are the

key conceptual differences between the ideal Europe of a Eurofonctionnaire and that of a Responsive Euroservant?

Identity. A genuine Eurofonctionnaire steps out of his nationality to become a-national: "It is of course wrong to say that one does not have anymore a passport, a nationality ... But it is also true that one should try to lose one's national identity - no, not to lose it but to make abstraction of it. I have many links with [my country], but my thinking is not anymore like a [countryman]." (Official 080.) Out of the mélange of different national cultures a new identity emerges. The contrast is great with a Responsive Euroservant, who seeks to highlight the different components in the mélange: "I like my service to be a microcosm of the Community. I like my colleagues to reflect the diversity within the Community. ... There is some wonderment in that. There is a certain mystery as to how people with such different backgrounds can work together." (Official 030.)

Commission Cohesion or Independent Mind. Creating the true European in spirit and mind is not sufficient for a Eurofonctionnaire. An official should give priority to the unity of the European civil service, not to his own ideas. "I find very often that people have their own agenda and they push it through regardless of what the Commission thinks. If the Commission wants to work as a whole, it should be much more coherent than it is now." (Official's emphasis 055.) A Eurofonctionnaire is abhorred by the infighting in the Commission. Of all officials, 46 percent finds that current levels of infighting hurt the Commission's legitimacy, but this perception is considerably stronger among Eurofonctionnaires where more than 70 percent subscribe to the statement against 27 percent of the Responsive Euroservants.[25] For a Responsive Euroservant, on the other hand, the Commission is an arena where priorities can be pursued, not a purposeful actor in its own right with whom one should invariably identify. Unity and team spirit are not unconditional virtues. Innovation comes from small groups of creative people, who are usually Commission insiders but they may also be drawn from outside. "If you put together a few people who are visionnaire, a Commissioner, a head of unit, or director ..., you can get things done." (Official 022.)

Making or Taking Cues. A Eurofonctionnaire does not simply act upon requests, but is in the business of identifying priorities from a European vantage point. "What is relevant is the image one has about oneself, and about the policy one is making. That is where a Commissioner and a director general must lead, and you can give the staff the opportunity to collaborate in that. That is what public interest is. Outside influences do not weigh [very much]." (Official 058.) A Responsive Euroservant finds it hard to believe in a separate European viewpoint. He takes cues from people and interests around him.

CONCLUSION

How are top Commission officials oriented to basic issues of governance in the European Union? How do they think about the organization of political authority in Europe, the scope of European authoritative regulation in the economy, and the role of national and societal interests in European decision making?

In this paper I attempt to shed light on these questions both quantitatively and qualitatively. In a factor analysis of 106 officials' responses to items measuring political orientations, four dimensions capture almost half of the variation. These dimensions correspond to coherent images of Europe as articulated by the same Commission officials during in-depth interviews. First, should the European Union be supranational - with powerful, autonomous supranational institutions like the Commission, the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice - or intergovernmental - with authority primarily vested in the member states? As a group, top Commission officials are slightly bent to supranationalism, but one out of four supports an intergovernmental design. For a Supranationalist, the pursuit of deeper European integration - "an ever closer political union" - is the prime objective, and he believes that political leadership in this venture should come from the Commission. An Intergovernmentalist perceives European integration as a means to reduce transaction costs for international cooperation, where the Commission's role is to mediate among member state interests. Second, should decision making be technocratic - as in most international organizations and as during much of the European Union's history - or democratic - as in the European national states? Half seeks to keep democratic principles and functional-technocratic imperatives in balance. Yet one quarter clearly prefers more democracy - even at the expense of the Commission's unique powers of legislative initiative. And another quarter defends technocratic principles for fear that greater democracy would make European policy making less effective. A Democrat believes that the European Union is a polity-in-the-making, where choices should be subject to political debate and the Commission should promote politicization. For a Technocrat, European integration can only be built on sound functional results; introducing cooperation problems into the world of politicians, parliaments and public greatly complicates rational, expert-based problem solving. Thirdly, to what extent should market activity be regulated at the European level? Commission officials overwhelmingly prefer regulated capitalism to unfettered capitalism. However, at least 20 percent oppose the majority view. Political-Regulators and Market-Liberals alike eschew radicalism, with the former embracing class compromise and market competitiveness and the latter

refraining from Thatcherite neoliberalism. While a Political-Regulator seeks to strengthen European authority to craft a unique social model for Europe in-between the Japanese and the American way, a Market-Liberal wants to reinforce selective supranational surveillance of the liberalized market in order to eliminate protectionism inside the Union and towards third countries. Finally, how should top Commission officials balance the European public good with national and functional interests? As a group, Commission officials are most comfortable with an approach that emphasizes responsiveness to major stakeholders in European policies. However, there is considerable variation - more so than on previous dimensions. Though very few ardently advocate primacy for the European public interest, about one quarter gives it more weight than the interests of stakeholders. European identity, unity and team spirit in the Commission, and a calling to lead are for a Eurofonctionnaire the building blocks of a European public function. Respect for Europe's diversity, the Commission as a privileged arena for action rather than a unitary actor, and a calling to be responsive are central principles for a Responsive Euroservant.

Top Commission officials have divergent orientations to European governance. These divisions appear similar to those that run through parties, governments and citizens in Europe, though we lack comparative data to evaluate this premise systematically. On a practical level, these findings call into question popular beliefs about the Commission bureaucracy as single-mindedly pro-integration, unreceptive to calls for greater democracy, motivated by its own ideological agenda (portrayed by some as socialist, and by others as neoliberal), and giving priority to an abstract European interest.

The results raise conceptual questions about the EU institutional setting within which Commission officials operate. First, they cast doubt on EU studies that conceive of the Commission as a unitary actor. The Commission is not capable of prescribing officials' orientations. Fifty years after its creation, the Commission does not have powerful mechanisms for selective recruitment, socialization or cognitive association that may produce a more unitary "mindset".[26] Secondly, the fact that career officials harbor sharply delineated, opposing images of Europe - not simply vague or inchoate clusters of beliefs - is consistent with claims that European integration has become a conscious political struggle between explicit, contending projects for institutional reform of the European Union. Top Commission officials participate in the politicization of European decision making. Thirdly, to the extent that contention among Commission officials reflects divisions among political actors in Europe, they appear less aloof from public debate than often assumed. Within the complex European institutional setting, the Commission emerges as

a particularly porously bounded institution, into which officials are to some extent able to import and advocate their own interests and ideas.

So how do they come to think the way they do? What makes some officials support supranationalism and others intergovernmentalism? Why do some want more democratic decision making in the European Union, while others defend technocratic principles? Why are there so few market-liberals? Mapping and categorizing how top Commission officials think about Europe's future is a necessary, but insufficient step to answer these questions. To understand the sources of variation we need to examine carefully how interests and ideas from their current environment and past experiences affect their views on Europe's future. That requires systematic causal analysis.[27] In this article, I seek to clear the path for such research.

Senior Commission officials interpret, live and help reshaping European governance day by day. Rather than being insulated, they are aware of the fundamental issues that divide Europe's parties, public, and governments. They are active participants in these debates.

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Endnotes

[1] Luciano Bardi and Gianfranco Pasquino. 1994. *Euroministri: Il governo dell' Europa.* Milano: Il Saggiatore; Kent J.Kille and Roger Scully. 1997. "Institutional Leadership and International Collaboration: Evidence from the United Nations and the European Union." Paper delivered at the 1997 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 28-31, 1997; Christiane Landfried. 1996. "Beyond Technocratic Governance: The Case of Biotechnology." Paper prepared for the Conference "Social Regulation through European Committees", European University Institute, Florence, 9-10 December 1996; Andrew MacMullen. 1997. "European Commissioners, 1952-95." *At the Heart of the Union. Studies of the European Commission.* Neill Nugent ed. London: MacMillan, 27-48; Edward Page and Linda Wouters. 1994. "Bureaucratic Politics and Political Leadership in Brussels." *Public Administration* 72, 445-59; George Ross. 1995. *Jacques Delors and European Integration.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; Gerald Schneider. 1997. "Choosing Chameleons: National Interests and the Logic of Coalition Building in the Commission of the European Union", Paper prepared for the European Community Studies Association, Seattle, May 28-June 1, 1997.

[2] At the end of the interview, I left a questionnaire, containing behavioral questions and 32 statements measuring attitudes to controversial issues. By May 1997 I had received 106 questionnaires out of maximum 140. So the questionnaire sample is a subset of the interview sample. A comparison of these samples on key characteristics (nationality, DG, length of service, Commission cabinet experience, education, prior state service, parachutage) reveals no sample bias (non-parametric chi-square tests). It is of course possible that these 106 interviewees are not representative of the total population of top Commission officials. As socio-demographic data for the Commission's top officials are not published, it is difficult to test sample bias. The one exception is nationality, which can be tested relatively accurately. Though the Commission does not use formal national quota, it seeks an informal "geographical balance" in the top layers of the administration, which is based on the distribution of seats in the Council of Ministers. Using this rule as yardstick, French, British and to some extent Italian and Dutch citizens appear overrepresented in my sample of 106 officials, while nationals from the second (Greek, Portuguese and Spanish) and third enlargement (Austrian, Finnish and Swedish) are underrepresented. However, the chi-square

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statistic falls short of rejecting the null-hypothesis that the distribution in sample and population is the same (alpha=.13).

[3] I use masculine pronouns. The she-form would create a false impression of gender balance. Of the 140 interviewed officials, only nine are women, and six of them have gained A1-A2 status since 1995.

[4] Simon Hix. 1995. "Parties at the European Level and the Legitimacy of EU Socio-Economic Policy." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 33, 4:526-51; Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks. "The Making of a Polity. The Struggle over European Integration." *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*. Herbert Kitschelt, Peter Lange, Gary Marks and John Stephens eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (forthcoming); Philippe Schmitter. 1996. "How to Democratize the Emerging Euro-Polity: Citizenship, Representation, Decision-Making." Instituto Juan March, unpublished paper.

[5] Though there are very few "neutrals", it is technically possible that the manner in which they are treated influences the results. I reran the factor analysis for the following three alternatives: (a) neutral position as missing value, (b) recalculation of the 4-point scale to a 5-point scale, with 3 as neutral position, (c) for each item, neutral position as the average value of that item (instead of a uniform 2.5). These factor analyses produce the same four dimensions, the same variables loading on these dimensions though with slightly different factor loadings. The results are virtually identical to the ones reported in Table I.

[6] James Caporaso. 1996. "The European Union and Forms of State: Westphalian, Regulatory or Post-Modern?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34, 1:29-52; Gary Marks, Liesbet Hooghe, Kermit Blank. 1996. "European Integration since the 1980s. State-centric Versus Multi-Level Governance." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34, 3:343-378; Thomas Risse-Kappen. 1996. "Exploring the Nature of the Beast: International Relations Theory and Comparative Policy Analysis Meet the European Union." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34, 1: 53-80; Wayne Sandholtz and John Zysman. 1989. "1992: Recasting the European Bargain." *World Politics* 42:95-128; William Wallace. 1996. "Rescue or Retreat? The Nation-State in Western Europe, 1945-93." *Political Studies* 42: 52-76.

[7] Alberta Sbragia. 1993. "The European Community: A Balancing Act." *Publius* 23, 23-38.

[8] See Hix (1995), "Parties at the European Level".

[9] See Hooghe and Marks (forthcoming); Helen Wallace. 1996. "The Institutions of the EU: Experience and Experiments." *Policy Making in the European Union*, Helen Wallace and William Wallace eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 37-68; Schmitter (1996).

[10] Hooghe and Marks (forthcoming) for a detailed analysis. See also: Simon Hix and Christopher Lord. 1997. *Political Parties in the European Union*. London: MacMillan; Martin Rhodes and Bastiaan Van Apeldoorn. 1996. "Capitalism versus Capitalism in Western Europe", *Developments in West European Politics*. Martin Rhodes, Paul Heywood and Vincent Wright eds. New York: St. Martin's Press, 171-189; Stephen Wilks. 1996. "Regulatory Compliance and Capitalist Diversity in Europe", *Journal of European Public Policy* 3, 4:536-59.

[11] Ezra Suleiman. 1984. *Bureaucrats and Policymaking*. New York: Holmes & Meier.

[12] Edward Page. 1985. *Political Authority and Bureaucratic Power*. Whitstable: Harvester Press; See also: Joel Aberbach, Bert Rockman, and Robert Putnam. eds. 1981. *Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Joel Aberbach and Bert Rockman. 1995. "The Political Views of US Senior Federal Executives, 1970-1992." *Journal of Politics* 57, 3:838-52; Barry Z. Pozner and Warren H. Schmidt. 1994. "An Updated Look at the Values and Expectations of Federal Government Executives." *Public Administration Review* 54, 1:20-24; Ezra Suleiman and Henri Mendras eds. 1995. *Le recrutement des élites en Europe*. Paris: Editions La Découverte (Collections 'Recherches').

[13] Benedict Anderson. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

[14] Abélès, Marc, and Irène Bellier. 1996. "La Commission européenne: du compromis culturel à la culture politique du compromis." *Revue Française de Science Politique* 46, 431-456; Edward Page. 1997. *People Who Run Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[15] Oblique rotation produces the same four factors. Correlations among the factors are presented in footnote 18. In footnote 5, I report on the marginal effect on the outcome of various treatments of missing values.

[16] Each factor has an eigenvalue of more than 1.5. The standard Kaiser's criterion requires a minimal eigenvalue of 1.0, which would have withheld six factors for 17 variables (with 61 percent of variance explained). A scree plot demonstrates a downward kick in the curve of variance explained after the fourth factor.

[17] See Ernst Haas. 1958. *The Uniting of Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press; for an overview, see Laura Cram. 1997. "Integration Theory and the Study of the European Policy Process." *European Union: Power and Policy Making*. Jeremy Richardson ed. London: Routledge, 40-58. For recent neofunctionalist analyses, see Sandholtz and Zysman (1989), and Maria Cowles-Green. 1995. "Setting the Agenda for a New Europe: The ERT and 1992." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 33,4:501-26.

[18] Oblique rotation demonstrates that these four factors can be considered orthogonal. The one marginally significant deviation from orthogonality concerns factors one and two, which suggests that those favoring a more social-oriented EU are also more likely to be believers in the European public interest (sign .04, one-tailed). The correlation matrix with oblimin procedure gives the following results:

	Factor I	*Factor II*	*Factor III*
Factor I	1.000		
Factor II	.169**	1.000	
Factor III	.013	-.133*	1.000
Factor IV	.050	-.071	.092

** p<.05, * p<.1 (one-tailed significance)

[19] Scale items are selected on the basis of the exploratory factor analysis (all items with factor loading of .40 or more), values are added and the sum is divided by the number of items. Each scale meets the standard criterion of scaling reliability (Cronbach's alpha). The Locus of Authority scale consists of items 2, 3, 11, 12 and 1 (Cronbach's alpha=.54). The Decision Making scale consists of items 9, 5, 1, 6 and 15 (Cronbach's alpha=.55). The Politics and Market scale has items 10, 12, 8 (Cronbach's alpha=.59) (item 7 is excluded because there is virtually no variation and the distribution is highly skewed (mean=3.9)). And finally, the Public Interest scale consists of items 16, 17, 13 and 4 (Cronbach's alpha=.66).

[20] Donald Searing makes seminal use of this methodology to unpack British MPs' understanding of their political roles: See Donald Searing. 1994. *Westminster's World. Understanding Political Roles.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

[21] For reasons of space, statistics on individual items are not reported in tabular form, but they can be obtained from the author: lhooghe@chass.utoronto.ca.

[22] See Fritz Scharpf. 1996. "Negative and Positive Integration in the Political Economy of European Welfare States." (15-39) and Wolfgang Streeck. 1996. "Neo-Voluntarism: A New European Social Policy Regime?" (64-94) *Governance in the Emerging Euro-Polity.* Gary Marks, Fritz Scharpf, Philippe C.Schmitter, Wolfgang Streeck eds. London: Sage. Also Stephan Leibfried and Paul Pierson eds. 1995. *Fragmented Social Policy: The European Union's Social Dimension in Comparative Perspective.* Washington: Brookings Institution.

[23] The mean scores of top and lowest quartile of the Politics/ Market scale are significantly different (Bonferroni, sign. at .05 level).

[24] Although the mean scores of top and lowest quartile do not pass the Bonferroni test (p=.13).

[25] The full item is "A Commission which tolerates this much infighting among its staff will eventually destroy itself". Percentages refer to those who agree or agree with reservations.

[26] The relative weakness of such mechanisms is borne out by a systematic analysis of the sources of variation on each dimension (see last footnote.)

[27] This work is in progress. For an explanation of variation on the supranational/ intergovernmental dimension, see my "Supranational Activists or Intergovernmental Agents? Explaining Political Orientations of Senior Commission Officials to European Integration", EUI Florence, RSC Working Paper, No 98/36, 1998. For an analysis of the sources of variation on the political regulation/ market liberalism dimension, see my "Euro-Socialists or Euro-Marketeers? Explaining Contending Orientations to European Capitalism Among Senior Commission Officials." Paper presented at the Conference for Europeanists, Baltimore, Feb 26-March 2, 1998.

Appendix – Indicators for Factor Analysis

1. The member states, not the Commission nor the European Parliament, ought to remain the central pillars of the European Union.

2. The strength of Europe lies not in more power for Brussels, but in effective government at the lowest possible level.

3. It is imperative that the European Commission become the true government of the European Union.

4. The Commission acts too much as an administration, and not enough as the government of Europe.

5. The Commission should concentrate on administering things efficiently.

6. The Commission should concentrate on maintaining the internal market.

7. The Commission should support the European Parliament's bid for full legislative powers, even if the price would be to lose its monopoly of initiative.

8. Europe should be more than a common market.

9. Europe has developed a unique model of society, and the Commission should help to preserve it: extensive social services, civilized industrial relations, negotiated transfers among groups to sustain solidarity, and steer economic activity for the general welfare.

10. No united Europe without a mature European cohesion policy.

11. European Union policy is too much influenced by big business.

12. The Commission cannot function properly without a vision, a set of great priorities, a blueprint for the future.

13. Pressure groups and special interests, like trade unions, farmers organizations, industry, environmental lobbyists, and so on, disturb the proper working of European government.

14. The egoistic behavior of some member states threatens the very survival of the European project.

15. The best advice on a proposed policy usually comes from the interests directly affected.

16. Too many Commission civil servants let their nationality interfere in their professional judgments.

17. It hurts the Commission's legitimacy that certain DGs tend to be dominated by particular nationalities, such as agriculture by the French, competition by the Germans, regional policy by the Spanish, environment by the north.

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