HAL
open science

Entries : Expert Groups; Socialisation ; Managerialisation ; Political Advisors

Cécile Robert

To cite this version:

Cécile Robert. Entries : Expert Groups; Socialisation ; Managerialisation ; Political Advisors. Dictionary of European actors, 2015. halshs-03183972

HAL Id: halshs-03183972

https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03183972v1

Submitted on 1 Apr 2021

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Cécile Robert. Entries : Expert Groups; Socialisation ; Managerialisation ; Political Advisors. Lambert Abdelgawad, Elisabeth; Michel, Hélène. *Dictionary of European Actors*, Larcier, 2015, Dictionnaires Larcier, 9782804471682. ⟨halshs-01103067⟩

Expert groups

In the Council of Europe (CoE) and in the European Commission (EC) alike, expert groups are one of the emblematic features of European governance. In the CoE, they have existed for a long time (Kiss, Vignes, 1955): expert groups worked for instance on the Bern Convention and on trafficking in human beings within the framework of the Convention bearing the same name. They are elected by the Parties to the Conventions to assist in the implementation process. At the Community level, the Commission itself creates its own groups to receive assistance with its initiatives. The groups are aimed at collecting a wide range of information and viewpoints on future European policies among their targets. While overall these groups have very rarely been the subject of dedicated studies, the Commission's expert groups have occasionally been investigated by scholars looking to identify on the types of knowledge that have shaped European public policy since its inception (Rowell, 2012), to understand how worlds of expertise are structured around the Directorates-General (DGs) (Horn, 2008), and to analyse the uses of these bodies by the Commission in its relations with institutional partners (Douillet, de Maillard, 2010 ; Robert, 2010). This entry will most specifically focus on the latter, laying emphasis on the sociology of their actors, which as we will see sheds light on some facets of the government by expertise that has developed at the European level.

Expert groups and the reform of European governance

The first characteristic shared by the 771 groups of the Commission (listed on the website of the Secretariat General in November 2013) lies in the fact that they bring together three types of actors: national civil servants (who are the most numerous – in 2012, they were represented in 80% of the groups); representatives of "public and private" interests" (connected to industrialists, corporations, NGOs and trade unions – they are found in 61% of the groups); and experts from academia (found in roughly a third of the groups). The composition of the groups is one of the most visible manifestations of the distinctive definition of expertise that they represent, claiming to have the status both of objective knowledge and of a representative reflection of the stakeholders' views. Likewise, at the individual level, the future experts are always recruited in function of their specialised knowledge and of their (national, sectoral, professional…) allegiances.

These groups now reflect a trend towards the introduction of a "consultative" dimension into expertise, a phenomenon that has been particularly noteworthy over the past decade (Robert, 2013b). Conducted in the name of democratisation (European Commission, 2002a), this reform is based on the idea that expertise must be more "representative" and "pluralistic" to retain its usefulness and legitimacy: in addition to the rise of expert groups, this has resulted in the increasing externalisation of expertise. In this sense, it should be related to a range of structural, often managerial transformations that have called into question the role of knowledge and internal expertise within the Commission: it is also the product of an institutional policy of construction and solicitation of the "organised civil society", which in the 2000s turned expertise into a prominent mode of consultation.

Expert groups as channels for the consultation of organised civil society

These developments have caused growing conflicts surrounding expert groups between the Commission services, some NGOs, unions and associations brought together in the Alter-EU network, and increasingly numerous parliamentarians. The latter criticise the criteria used for the selection of

experts – which contribute to the overrepresentation of industrial and business interests and of large corporations. Figures suggest that fifty-two per cent of expert members of the groups created between September 2012 and September 2013 are corporate and industrial representatives; against 3% respectively for small and medium-sized businesses and unions. These actors are also superior in number in the groups of many important DGs (including Internal Market and Services, Taxation and Customs Union, and Enterprise and Industry) (Alter-EU, 2013).

These conflicts deserve examination on two accounts: first, they display the activity of an "organised civil society", which is far from submitting passively to this expertise-based participatory policy, but instead contributes to defining its meaning and scope. By showing that the definition of expertise is the object of social and political struggles, they invite us to reflect on the effects of selection and framing in expertise apparatuses and in the Commission's uses of them. The definition of expertise that is formalised by the services in these debates (all knowledge is necessarily situated) contributes to making the expertise of economic actors with a stake in European regulation not only essential but also legitimate. Additionally, the costs specific to participatory procedures, together with those of expertise, weigh very unevenly on EU-level structures of representation that are all the more unequally endowed as the investments of private actors in the production of expertise have increased. Lastly, the members of these groups face constraints inherent to their role, justified in the name of expertise, and which contribute to demonetising if not de-legitimating "representative" practices and resources (Robert, 2013). Actors such as the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) have for instance complained about the downplaying of conflicts and the systematic disqualification of minority positions in these groups, and about their own difficulty in having their specific "representativeness" recognised.

The experts' trajectories and "careers"

Focusing analysis on the backgrounds and trajectories of individuals selected as experts yields complementary and partially converging findings. This analysis remains incomplete, as it is difficult to access institutional data, but it sheds light on the role played by several social properties – dispositions to work abroad, academic titles, multipositionality, familiarity with the European space, former experience of expertise in international bodies (including OECD, ILO, CoE) – in access to, and especially success in these positions of expertise. While the existence of a group does not mean that all of its members may participate on equal footing, this experience in expertise also takes on different meanings according to the social histories of the actors. For many experts (around two thirds of the sample under analysis – see Robert, 2013), expertise is an experience that is reproduced, under the condition that they manage to conform with the standards associated to the role they are meant to play in this position. Reappointment in expertise positions, which sometimes comes with a promotion (in more visible and prestigious groups, or as president), is more generally part of the "rewards" offered to experts, mainly in the European institutional space (access to institutional data, European programmes and funds, contracts, etc.). Due to the modalities of the access to these expert groups and of transition after such experiences, actors who are already familiar with European institutions are eager to work in closer contact with them tend to be recruited and placed in central positions.

The recruitment patterns at work in these groups thus tend to have converging effects of selection, as a result of which individuals and organisations value similar resources and postures. A stint as expert can serve as a gateway to access more lasting positions in the European space, which suggests that this sociology of experts should be related to that other types of "permanent" professionals in the European space, and to the study of expertise in other European organisations such as the CoE. This larger-scale analysis of expert trajectories would enable us first to understand how expert groups contribute to the construction of a network of Commission partners, but also to achieve a better grasp of the circulation of experts between European organisations and ultimately of the possible constitution of a space of expertise at the European level.

Cécile Robert

References

ALTER-EU, *A Year of Broken Promises. Big Business still put in charge of EU expert Groups, despite commitment to reform*, Brussels, 2013

DOUILLET, A-C. et DE MAILLARD, J., « Les comités d'experts, une ressource institutionnelle pas toujours maîtrisée : le cas de la DG justice, liberté, sécurité », *Politique européenne*, 32, 2010, pp. 77-98.

GORNITZKA, Å. and SVERDRUP, U., « Access of Experts: Information and EU Decision-making », *West European Politics*, 34(1), 2011, pp. 48-70.

HORN, L., "Organic Intellectuals at Work? The Role of the High Level Group of Company Law Experts" in VAN APELDOORN, B. et al. (eds.), *Contradictions and Limits of Neoliberal European Governance: from Lisbon to Lisbon*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

KISS, A.-C. et VIGNES D.-H., « Le Conseil de l'Europe », *Annuaire français de droit international*, vol. 1, 1955. pp. 425-454.

ROBERT, C. (dir.), Dossier « Les groupes d'experts européens », *Politique européenne*, 32, 2010.

ROBERT, C., *Politiques de l'expertise. Une sociologie politique des usages de l'expertise à l'échelle européenne*, Mémoire pour l'habilitation à diriger des recherches, Université Lyon II, 2013.

ROWELL, J., *Une sociologie des catégories de l'action publique en Europe : L'instrumentation des politiques sociales européennes*, Mémoire pour l'habilitation à diriger des recherches, Université de Strasbourg, 2012.

Regulation

European Commission, Report "Democratizing Expertise and Establishing Scientific Reference System", in *European Governance. Preparatory Work for the White Paper*, Bruxelles, 2002a.

European Commission, *Communication on the collection and use of expertise by the Commission – Principles and guidelines*, COM(2002) 713 final, 11.12.2002, 2002b.

European Commission, *Communication from the President to the Commission. Framework for Commission expert groups: Horizontal rules and public register*, C(2010) 7649 final, 2010.

Socialisation

Concerning the European Union (EU) and more recently the Council of Europe (CoE), the question of socialisation was for a long time mainly posed by international relations scholars, who were eager to measure and in sometimes explain the appropriation of a range of norms by actors exposed to the institutions or working within the institutions: support to the European integration process for the EU (Checkel and Zürn, 2005), democracy and human rights standards for the Council of Europe (Schimmelfennig et al., 2008). In a more directly sociological perspective (Michel and Robert, 2010), I approach European socialisation as one "of the [multiple] socialisation processes through which an individual is constructed by the global and local society in which he lives, [and] in the course of which [he] acquires ways of doing, of thinking and of being that are socially situated" (Darmon, 2007, 6).

This approach seeks to achieve a finer conception of the product of socialisation, and entails a broader interest in the various ways in which social actors appropriate Europe as a political and institutional system and translate this appropriation into discourses and practices. This sociological take on socialisation as a plural and boundless process also suggests looking at relationships to Europe within the context of the social histories of individuals to understand how the latter mediate and shape them.

Channels, agents and products of European socialisation

In the 1990s, studies conducted by anthropologists in the Belgian capital were the first to propose approaching the Brussels environment in the broader sense as a locus of socialisation. They emphasised the specific place of professionals of Europe in the city and the distinctive social practices of these expatriates (Shore, 2000). Researchers who subsequently adopted this perspective investigated how the European institutions contribute to transforming and producing the social positions of their agents, through cultural activities, education or real estate consulting (Georgakakis, 2010). Other studies emphasised the importance of sociability (in cafes and gyms) and the construction of a self-sufficient community in these places, in the professional and European socialisation of journalists and consultants. Lastly, research on European schools, such as the College of Europe in Bruges, the "lobbying schools" of Brussels or those aimed at members of the European Trade Union Confederation, has shed light on distinctive forms of socialisation, like the "bodily socialisation" that is developed in negotiation simulation exercises or in the learning of the diction required to perform simultaneous interpretation. By highlighting the diversity of the agents and channels of the socialisation to which these actors may be exposed (Michel and Robert, 2010), these studies also invite us not to perceive it solely as the learning of institutional norms. Until now applied exclusively to the EU, this approach should also enable scholars to gain broader insights on European identity and citizenship and on the action of the CoE. Several complementary insights also deserve mention.

First, in methodological terms, this conception of socialisation goes beyond the study of those who gravitate in and around the institutions to include the citizens, with a focus on how they appropriate and perceive Europe as a political space. It also leads us to observe that these – ordinary and professional – representations of Europe cannot be reduced to support or hostility towards European integration (qualitative studies have shown that such attitudes relate to a global vision of the EU that only small fractions of the public have – see Gaxie et al, 2010); they take many other forms. These includes the shared representations of certain European objects and concepts constructed by EU professionals, like the notion of "general European interest" and the Commission agents' attachment to compromise, the legitimacy of lobbying practices for the vast majority of interest representatives and their institutional partners, and the definition of what is political and what isn't.

In this perspective, the analysis of European socialisation processes also shows that many of the ways of seeing and making the EU are not specific to institutional actors; they are often shared by

their auxiliaries and partners: experts, specialised journalists, researchers, professionals of interest representation… Emphasis on the existence of shared modes of action and beliefs often perceived as self-evident in the Brussels space calls into question the ability of the Commission to play the role of a central force, leading its partners to align themselves with its practices, and more generally the forms of the autonomisation of the political and institutional European space to which these socialisation processes contribute (Georgakakis, 2010).

Europe in social trajectories: processes, driving forces and conditions for the success of European socialisation

As studies on the sociology of socialisation have pointed out, actors are permanently subjected to a variety of social trials, which in turn predispose them to life new experiences differently. It follows from this that European socialisation processes cannot be analysed without taking into account the social properties and trajectories of the individuals concerned. This approach has found echoes in early studies on socialisation within institutions, which emphasised the weight of the national variable to account for the adoption of different postures by Commission agents or national civil servants at the Council although they were exposed to the same socialising environment. Yet, a finer sociography of the populations under study shows that national origin is not the sole determinant of their relationship to Europe: for instance, the contrasting attitudes of European trade unionists from France and Germany are not so much the result of a cultural divide as the product of distinct, if not opposed social backgrounds, educational careers and trajectories in activism. Likewise, interview surveys conducted on different types of citizens – young immigrant working-class French citizens, foreigners from the EU living in major European capitals – regarding their representations and uses of Europe show that these citizens construct themselves through references to their professional and family situations, or to their experience as a foreign citizen or an immigrant (Duchesne, 2010). Lastly, the study of the social experiences brought up by interviewees as relevant to the construction of their relationship to Europe yields insights on the socialising dimension of European policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy for farmers, the Erasmus programme for students, and mechanisms of coordination of national policies (Open Method of Coordination) for the national civil servants involved in them.

Attention to the social histories of actors in the study of European socialisation also requires a different perspective on its driving forces and processes. This is exemplified in studies that emphasise the elite dimension of some of the most prized competences at the European level, such as dispositions to live and work abroad, showing that the forms of knowledge and know-how that come into play in the political and institutional work done in Brussels and Strasbourg are not necessarily specific to these places and learned there; they are acquired at an earlier stage, and more often in some regions of the social space than in others. In addition to evidencing the social selection at work in the access to the European political space, which has also been noted in studies on the College of Europe and on recruitment competitions, this approach opens new perspectives on the social conditions for the success of European socialisation. In other words, by examining the way in which past experience lead actors to perceive the practices, norms and values that prevail in the European institutional and political space as legitimate and desirable, this approach to socialisation offers an alternative to the usual interpretations of this conformity in terms of “strategic adjustment” or, on the opposite, of “conversion” to Europe.

Cécile Robert

References

CHECKEL, J. T., « International Institutions and Socialization in Europe : Introduction and Framework », *International Organization*, 59, 2005, pp. 801-826.

DARMON, M., *La socialisation*, Paris, Armand Colin, coll.128, 2007.

DUCHESNE, S., (dir), Dossier « L’identité européenne entre science politique et science fiction, *Politique européenne*, 30, 2010.

GAXIE, D. et al. (dir.), *L'Europe des Européens. Enquête comparative sur les perceptions de l'Europe*, Paris, Economica, 2010.

GEORGAKAKIS, D., « Comment les institutions (européennes) socialisent. Quelques hypothèses sur les fondements sociaux de la fabrique des euro-fonctionnaires », *in* MICHEL, H., ROBERT, C. (dir), *La fabrique des « Européens ». Processus de socialisation et construction européenne*, Strasbourg, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2010, pp. 129-167.

MICHEL, H. et ROBERT, C. (dir), *La fabrique des « Européens ». Processus de socialisation et construction européenne*, Strasbourg, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2010.

SHORE, C., *Building Europe. The Cultural Politics of European Integration*, London, Routledge, 2000.

SCHIMMELFENNIG, F., et al., *International Socialization in Europe: European Organizations, Political Conditionality, and Democratic Change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Political advisers

Created upon the initiative of Roy Jenkins, the sixth President of the European Commission (1977-1981), the Lacroix group became the Forward Studies Unit in 1989, during Jacques Delors's first term of office. In 2000, under the presidency of Romano Prodi, the Unit was renamed GOPA (Group of Political Advisers). Since 2004 and the arrival of José Manuel Barroso at the helm of the Commission, it has been called BEPA (Bureau of European Political Advisers). These name changes reflect a tumultuous albeit largely undocumented history. Transformations in status, missions and methods of operation primarily attest to its very strong dependence to the successive presidents under whom it has operated, and to its struggles to find its place within the European Union (EU) administration. On the other hand, changes in the presidential conceptions of the function of foresight at the European level also reflect more far-reaching transformations, concerning for instance the role of the Commission in the invention of the European project and the institution's relationship with science and expertise, both internal and external.

The President's men: close to power, far from decision-making

From the Lacroix group to the BEPA, an unchanged feature of the Commission's foresight structures is that they have always operated under the direct authority of the President of the Commission. With the exception of a short period under the presidency of Jacques Santer, during which the Forward Studies Unit reported to the Secretariat General of the Commission, they have been perceived as instruments at the service of the President. This relationship of dependence and proximity to the head of the executive manifests itself in diverse ways.

First, as far as recruitment is concerned, in comparison with other services and Directorates-General (DGs), the structure has a particularly high proportion of staff coming from outside the Commission, employed under various types of temporary contractual arrangements. This was an openly stated objective of the Forward Studies Unit, which sought to achieve a balance between civil servants and external experts (from national administrations, but also from universities and the private sector). The compositions of the GOPA and then BEPA have been roughly identical. This outward-looking policy also facilitates recruitment in the personal (partisan, national and professional) networks of the President. These experts share similar conceptions of the EU and of EU public policy, in line with the President's approach. While members of the Forward Studies Unit and to a lesser extent of GOPA shared a commitment to federalism, those of BEPA tend to be economic experts, often with experience in the private sector and views of the role of the EU in regulating the market close to those of the European People's Party (EPP). The experts recruited may also be close partners with whom the President has a trusting working relationship: Jérôme Vignon (head of the Forward Studies Unit) was a member of Delors's cabinet, Ricardi Levi (director of GOPA) was Romano Prodi's spokesman, and Carlos Tavares (director of BEPA) was formerly a member of Barroso's government.

The relation of this structure to the presidency is also a key factor in understanding its place in the institution. Its position sometimes allows it to contribute to Commission initiatives – due to its political audience, its ability to intervene at a very early stage of the policy-making process and its wide range of competences. It also situates it in the midst of the tensions between sectors and of the conflicts between the administration and the College. Not clearly identified or perceived with defiance by the other services as the "eye" or the "armed wing" of the president, it has no specific area of competence (with the exception of activities of consultation on ethics – European Ethics Committee – and on inter-faith dialogue since the early 1990s). Likewise, it cannot claim either to hold a monopoly over an internal expertise that lacks consistency due to staff turnover, and faces competition from some of the most prominent DGs (Internal Market, Agriculture, Economic and Financial Affairs, External Relations, etc.).

Methods and subjects of European foresight: a fluctuating scope and varying ambitions

That it has been so difficult for foresight at the highest Community level to become institutionalised and autonomous is also, if not mainly due to the variety of the missions that have been entrusted to the foresight units by the successive presidents.

While in 1981 "reflecting on the future" was only one of the three missions of the Lacroix group (second to the more demanding tasks of "monitoring negotiations at the Council" and "co-ordinating the Commission's actions"), the introduction of the Forward Studies Unit marked the beginning of a boom for this form of expertise: in addition to receiving increased financial and human resources, it was assigned an essential role by the President, consisting in "developing its strategy [for the post-1992 years] based on an evaluation of the major trends in the economy, society and the external environment of the Community" (Forward Studies Unit archives, February 1989). The Forward Studies Unit was involved in major reforms (the implementation of the single market, structural funds), in charge of conducting exploratory studies on longer-term strategic issues, in the fields of foreign policy, enlargement as well as European citizenship; lastly, it was also a place of contact with a number of figures embodying the European civil society: representatives of religious communities (Massignon, 2007), prominent intellectuals ("European Cultural and Scientific Symposia", 1994) and executive members of the European Round Table of Industrialists (Endo, 1999). Little used by the Santer Commission, partly because internally it was still perceived as a legacy of the Delors years, the Forward Studies Unit nevertheless pursued its reflection on the possible futures of the European project and the means to strengthen its legitimacy, through the White Paper on European Governance (Georgakakis, de Lassalle, 2007), until the arrival of Romano Prodi.

Through its subjects, its methods and its ambition, this form of foresight is the product of a specific moment of European construction, serving as a weapon for a Commission that was able to have a strong influence on the European project due to the institutional and political context of the Delors presidencies, and as a laboratory for a then unprecedented reflection on the meaning of the EU beyond its economic achievements. Lastly, it is connected to a particular historical type of European civil servant – one who is keen to see himself as an expert and a visionary and sees in the practice of foresight an opportunity to put his skills to work and fulfil his vocation. Conversely, the very different context of the past decade appears to have favoured a form of expertise that stands in sharp contrast with the one that prevailed at the time of the Forward Studies Unit.

The structure was indeed reformed in 2000 and then in 2004 to "meet the needs of the new President more effectively". A symbol of these transformations was the shortening of the time allocated to the elaboration of expertise commissioned to the "political advisors" between the GOPA and the BEPA. This relates first to the nature of the process and its political ambition: due to the weakening of the Commission's position beginning in the mid 1990s, and to the broader context of lower national support to the European project, the BEPA was no longer a space for the intellectual exploration of the means and avenues for extension of Community competences, but a place for the "relevant and timely production of information and advice" "upon request from the President", and "based on the working programme established by the Commission at the beginning of the term". Between 2010 and 2014, the BEPA has mainly worked on economic subjects, on the neighbourhood policy and on climate change. The necessity of producing short documents (factsheets, talking points) in very little time regarding subjects in which the "political advisers" are not specialised creates a new relation to expertise: in contrast with previous practices, it also echoes concurring trends such as the devaluation of academic knowledge as a model of knowledge production and of the expert as a professional figure for European civil servants.

Cécile Robert

References

DRAKE, H., *Jacques Delors en Europe. Histoire et sociologie d'un leadership improbable*, Strasbourg, PUS, 2002.

ENDO, K., *The presidency of the European Commission under Jacques Delors. The politics of shared leadership*, London, Mac Millan, 1999.

GEORGAKAKIS, D. ET DE LASSALLE, M., *La 'nouvelle' gouvernance européenne. Genèses et usages politiques d'un livre blanc*, Strasbourg, PUS, 2007.

LES CARREFOURS DES SCIENCES ET DE LA CULTURE, *En quête d'Europe*, Rennes, Editions Apogée, 1994.

MASSIGNON, B., *Des Dieux et des fonctionnaires. Religions et laïcités face au défi de la construction européenne*, Rennes, PUR, 2007.

Index of names

Barroso, José Manuel
Delors, Jacques
Jenkins, Roy
Levi, Ricardo
Prodi, Romano
Santer, Jacques
Tavares, Carlos
Vignon, Jérôme

Managerialisation

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the administrations of the European Union (EU) and of the Council of Europe (CoE) began reforming their internal functioning. On multiple aspects (recruitment, budgetary and programming procedures, relations with interest groups and NGOs), these reforms contributed to transforming the nature of their agents' everyday work and collective contribution to the action of these institutions. These reforms implemented over the past decade have a number of similarities and generally borrow principles and catchwords of the New Public Management (NPM), whose influence on public and private organisations in the late twentieth century and today has been documented largely (Bezes, 2009; Eymeri, 2008). That the NPM has been so successful does not mean we should see it as a new *doxa* that is liable to prevail everywhere with the same effects (Robert, 2007): in order to understand its local appropriations, it is necessary to examine the strategic uses and importations of managerialisation.

The reforms of the European Commission and of the Council of Europe in the 2000s: a managerial turn?

The report "Building Greater Europe without dividing lines", commissioned to the Committee of Wise Persons by the heads of state and government of the CoE in 1997 and published in 1998, marked the starting point of a set of reforms of the Council's administration in the 2000s. At the EU level, the White Paper on *Reforming the Commission* (or Kinnock report, in reference to the British Commissioner responsible for the project between 2000 and 2004) was a cornerstone, along with other orientation documents such as the White Paper *on European Governance* (EC, 2001), the communication on *Better Lawmaking* (EC, 2002) and the *Green Paper on European Transparency Initiative* (EC, 2006).

The new management dimension shared by these reforms lies both in their stated objectives and in the concrete changes they bring about. They are first carried out in the name of a necessary improvement of efficiency: the administrations are asked to improve their performance, which means measuring it better – by setting up evaluation systems from the individual to the organisational scale – and to reduce their costs. The latter incentive is the result of human resources policy (wage moderation, rationalisation of promotions and careers, externalisation of some tasks) as well as in the Commission's case of a limitation of public intervention, particularly in the field of regulation (the programmes *Better regulation* in 2002, then *Smart regulation* in 2010 call for preliminary impact studies before launching new initiatives and promote alternatives to regulation such as co-regulation and self-regulation).

These reforms also lay emphasis on accountability: having become more autonomous, agents and services must in exchange systematically account for their activities. In the Commission and in the CoE, this translates in practice into financial and budgetary decentralisation, making the services responsible for their expenses and for fulfilling the management and reporting tasks entailed by this new responsibility. In both cases, this reorganisation comes with the introduction of new "programming cycles" aimed at rationalising administrative work and giving procedures a key role in achieving its modernisation.

As they are expected to be able to show at any time how they spend their funds and whether they are achieving their goals, the administrations must also be more transparent: in the Commission, open data policies on the beneficiaries of EU funding, the consultation of interest groups and experts by the Directorates-General and the revision of the codes of conduct and ethics for staff are all part of this effort (EC, 2006). This transparency more generally relates to the promotion of a "culture of service" (Georgakakis, 2010). The CoE and the Commission must also show their commitment to a

better service through the institutionalisation of a “dialogue” with “organised civil society” for the EU administration, and more specifically with NGos for the CoE.

The uses of managerialisation in EU and CoE administrations

Numerous studies have shown that NPM-influenced reforms are almost always presented by their importers as means to modernise the organisations in which they are implemented. This suggests a possible interpretation of the recourse to these reforms: introduced at a later stage at EU level when compared to national administrations where they were implemented ten to twenty years before, they were promoted in the context of what was perceived as a crisis. Regarding the CoE, observers described a crisis of growth (both the staff and budget doubled between 1990 and 2000) due to the enlargement (Balducci, 2008), which disrupted the organisation’s day-to-day functioning, and more fundamentally called into question its role and its methods of action. In the Commission, it was the resignation of the Santer college following management problems that allowed developing reform projects that had been pushed back by the unions to find a new audience. Additionally, while the enlargement occurred later than in the CoE, the debates it fuelled regarding the future of the EU and the diminishing weight of the EU administration in the institutional power struggles contributed to making of this period a time of doubt for the Commission about its place on the European stage.

Along with this context, the emphasis on the new and universal character of the managerial reforms in the discourse used to promote them (offering to the administrations the prospect of becoming “as efficient as companies”), and their intention to put them (back) at the service of their publics make them a well-suited resource for the legitimation not only of the reforms but of the administrations that implement them. In the case of the European administration, the managerial reform is also intended to remedy a “moral” crisis. As Michelle Cini (2007) has shown, the objective is to promote a new shared culture based on ethics, through revisions of the codes of conduct of European civil servants and commissioners and incentives on transparency and “good administration”.

In addition to serving as a means to evidence the ability of administrations to meet the demands of a new (geo)political context, management is also the instrument of the redefinition of legitimate competences in these universes (Robert, 2007). The discourse on reform does not recognise any specificity to public administration, and in particular holds that it is no different in nature to commercial activities (in a logic of service). Conversely, it justifies the alignment of professional competences (in which expertise in law and in EU and CoE policies played a central role) with those of the private sector, as is exemplified by the reform of the competitions for access to European civil service positions (Georgakakis, 2010). Furthermore, research appears to indicate that decentralised management and the rise of procedures and reporting have significantly transformed the day-to-day work of civil servants (Balducci, 2008; Bauer, 2008). The latter, and in particular the Commission’s agents, have as a result been increasingly anxious in the face of the “bureaucratisation” of their environment and frustrated due to their reduced capacity to shape and steer European public policy. This suggests a complementary interpretation of these managerial reforms and of the contexts in which they have been implemented: they appear indeed not so much to legitimate the administrations as to redefine their roles and missions – in the EU’s case, this has meant reduced political ambitions.

Cécile Robert

References

BALDUCCI, M., « Le Conseil de l'Europe au milieu du gué : l'impact des techniques avancées de management sur une organisation de juristes », *Revue française d'administration publique*, n°126, 2008, pp. 293-306.

BAUER, M. W., « Diffuse anxieties, deprived entrepreneurs: Commission reform and middle management », *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15(5), 2008, pp. 691-707.

BEZES, P., *Réinventer l'Etat. Les réformes de l'administration française (1962-2008)*, Paris, PUF, 2009.
CINI, M., *From Integration to Integrity. Administrative Ethics and Reform in the European Commission*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007.
EYMERI-DOUZAN, J-M., « Les réformes administratives en Europe. Logiques managérialistes globales, acclimatations locales », *Pyramides*, n°15, 2008.
GEORGAKAKIS, D., « Do skills kill ? Les enjeux de la requalification de la compétence des eurofonctionnaires », *Revue française d'administration publique*, n°133, 2010, pp. 61-80.
ROBERT, C., « Les transformations managériales des activités politiques », *Politix*, n°79, 2007, pp. 7-23.

Regulation

Council of Europe, *Final report of the Committee of Wise Persons to the Committee of Ministers. Building Greater Europe without dividing lines.* CM(98)178, November 1998
European Commission (2000b), *Reforming the Commission – A White Paper*, COM(2000)200
European Commission (2001), *European Governance – A White Paper*, COM(2001)428
European Commission (2002d), *European Governance: Better Lawmaking*, COM(2002)275
European Commission (2006), *Green Paper on European Transparency Initiative*, Brussels, COM(2006)194

Index of names

Kinnock, Neil
Santer, Jacques