

## WHY STRONG COORDINATION AT ONE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT

### IS INCOMPATIBLE

## WITH STRONG COORDINATION ACROSS LEVELS

### The case of the European Union

Morten Egeberg

Jarle Trondal

The European Union (EU) inherited 'indirect administration' from classical international organizations: policies adopted by the international organization are subsequently to be implemented nationally by member states themselves, and not by bodies owned by the international organization. This arrangement has often led to legislation being incorporated and applied rather differently across countries. In order to harmonize implementation practices within the EU, we have witnessed a development from 'indirect administration' to more 'direct administration' in the sense that national agencies work closely with the European Commission, EU agencies and sister agencies in other member states, partly by-passing national ministries. Thus, stronger coordination across levels may counteract strong coordination at the national level. This 'coordination paradox' seems to have been largely ignored in the literatures on EU network governance and national 'joined-up government' respectively. The ambition of this paper is twofold: Firstly, the coordination paradox is theoretically and empirically illustrated by the seemingly incompatibility between a more direct implementation structure in the multilevel EU administrative system and trends towards strengthening coordination and control within nation states. Secondly, the paper suggests that organizational hybrids are ways of coping with the coordination paradox.

**Key words:** Coordination paradox, organizational hybrids, EU administration, implementation, joined-up, multilevel

## **The coordination paradox**

‘Better coordination’, meaning creating more consistency among decisions horizontally as well as vertically, is usually a stated goal in modern political-administrative systems. Recent administrative doctrines have shared a near universal agreement on the desirability of ‘better coordination’. What is often not realized, however, is the impossibility of combining strong coordination of implementation processes at one level of government with strong coordination across levels. In order to illustrate our argument, we use the multilevel European Union (EU) polity as our case in this paper. The EU inherited ‘indirect administration’ from classical international organizations: policies adopted by the international organization are to be implemented nationally by member states themselves, and not by bodies owned by the international organization (Hofmann 2008). Such an arrangement, characterized by relatively weak coordination across levels, allows for corresponding strong coordination at the national level. However, at the same time, this has often led to legislation being incorporated and applied rather differently across countries (Treib 2014). In order to harmonize implementation practices within the EU, we have witnessed a development from ‘indirect administration’ to more ‘direct administration’ in the sense that national agencies work closely with the European Commission (Commission), EU agencies and sister agencies in other member states, partly by-passing national ministries (Egeberg and Trondal 2009a; Egeberg et al. 2015). This partly de-coupling of national agencies from ministerial departments shows that stronger coordination across levels may counteract strong coordination at the national level. This ‘coordination paradox’ seems to have been largely ignored in the literatures on EU network governance and national ‘joined-up government’ respectively. Wolfgang Wessels (1997) came perhaps closest to this

argument – however, without specifying the underlying mechanism – when suggesting that the lack of co-ordination in Bonn may have been a prerequisite for advancing the wider ‘European cause’. Poor national coordination is thus not necessarily a ‘management deficit’ (Metcalf 1994) but rather a requirement for coordination across levels. The tension between, on the one hand, central steering and policy coordination across levels of government and, on the other, regional/local autonomy and coordination is a well-known topic in research on federal states and central-local relations within unitary states (e.g. Pierre and Petes 2005; Fenna 2012). However, the underlying organizational mechanisms of the ‘coordination paradox’ seem underspecified so far.

The ambition of this paper is twofold: Firstly, this coordination paradox is theoretically and empirically illustrated by the seemingly incompatibility between a more direct implementation structure in the multilevel EU administrative system and trends towards strengthening coordination and control within nation states. Secondly, the paper suggests that organizational hybrids are ways of coping with the coordination paradox.

The paper is organized as follows. It departs by introducing some basic organizational variables that might help to clarify how various organization (implementation) structures tend to shape coordination processes. Next we shortly present the original multilevel implementation structure of the EU and its consequences before we look at what the literature tells us about the current EU arrangement and its implications for administrative coherence at the national level. Then we revisit the literature on public sector reform at the national level. Over the last years it has been occupied with reactions to New Public Management (NPM) reforms. While NPM reforms led to more fragmented governments, such as semi-detached regulatory agencies, post-NPM reforms have aimed at ‘reasserting

the centre', or what has been termed 'joined-up government' or 'whole of government'.

Interestingly, although the latter reform efforts clearly seem to be at collision course with the developing EU implementation structure outlined above, this contradiction seems to be unaddressed in the existing literature. Finally, we discuss how various hybrid structural solutions at both levels could be interpreted as ways of coping with the 'coordination paradox' in practice.

### **An organizational approach to coordination processes**

An organizational approach emphasizes the role of organizational factors in coordination processes. We do not claim to be able to provide a complete or comprehensive explanation of such processes and their outputs. A multitude of factors might be relevant in this respect. Rather, the argument is that organizational factors (independent variables) might *intervene* in coordination processes (dependent variables) and create a *systematic bias*, thus making some process characteristics and outputs *more likely* than others (Gulick 1937; Simon 1965; March and Olsen 1984; 1989; Meier 2010). Organizational factors include organization structure, demography, culture and location. In this paper, however, we have chosen to concentrate on the role of the organization structure, about which, in our opinion, the most promising research findings have been revealed so far.

'Organization structure' can be defined as a collection of role expectations with regard to who are supposed to do what, how and when. In this sense, the organization structure is a normative structure that is analytically clearly separated from decision behaviour or process (Scott 1981). A particular organization structure may be expressed in an organization chart;

whether people actually behave according to the chart is an empirical question. Why should we expect people to behave in accordance with their respective role expectations? Several mechanisms contribute to connecting structure and coordination behaviour: First, 'bounded rationality' means that decision-makers are unable to consider all possible alternatives and their consequences (March and Simon 1958; Simon 1965). They therefore need to simplify the world. Organization structure may provide systematic and predictable selection of problems, solutions and choice opportunities (March and Olsen 1976). Thus, a perfect match may occur between the individual's need for simplification on the one hand and the biased selection that the organization structure offers on the other. Second, organizations are incentive systems in which participants may find it rational to act in accordance with their respective role expectations in order to achieve higher salaries and promotion (Scott 1981). Third, and finally, organizations may also be seen as collectivities in which role compliance is deemed as appropriate behaviour on moral grounds (March and Olsen 1989).

In addition, theorizing the relationship between organization structure and coordination processes means that we have to be able to identify generic dimensions of structure that might affect decision behaviour in systematic and predictable ways. We have to 'unpack' organizations in order to identify such dimensions. If one is interested not only in *if* structures matter but also in *how* they matter, one, arguably, has to take a closer look at their structural characteristics (Egeberg 2012): First, capacity should be taken into account. To what extent do we find departments, units or positions devoted to a particular task? The idea is that in an information rich world systematic interest articulation, problem attention and problem solving are highly dependent upon the degree to which such activities are underpinned by organizational capacity. Second, we should look for how an organization

structure is specialized. By horizontal specialization we mean how work is planned to be divided horizontally within or between organizations. The idea is that organizational borders help to coordinate activities within entities, but tend to hamper such activities across entities. According to Gulick (1937), horizontal specialization may take place by geography (territory), purpose (sector), function (process) or clientele. For example, the assumption is that territorial specialization tends to focus decision-makers' attention along territorial lines of cooperation and conflict, and to create policy consistency within geographical units while inducing variation across such units. Sectoral specialization, on the other hand, is thought to trigger sectoral cleavages, however, at the same time, fostering policy standardization *within* a particular policy field across territorial units. By vertical specialization we mean how tasks are thought to be allocated vertically within or between organizations. For example, by hiving off regulatory tasks from a ministry to a semi-detached agency one may hope for less political interference in individual decisions, more emphasis on expertise concerns, and more involvement of particularly affected interest groups.

Third, the organization structure may be the role incumbent's primary or secondary structure. The primary structure is a structure within which a decision-maker is expected to use most of his or her time and energy. While a ministry department constitutes a ministry official's primary affiliation, his or her membership on committees or in organized networks makes up secondary structures since participation is expected to be part-time. The assumption is that although secondary structures might affect actual decision behaviour, the impact is assumed to be significantly less profound than in primary structures. Fourth, a hybrid structure combines components from various organizational forms, making it compound and composite in nature. Hybrid structures typically take the form of 'layering',

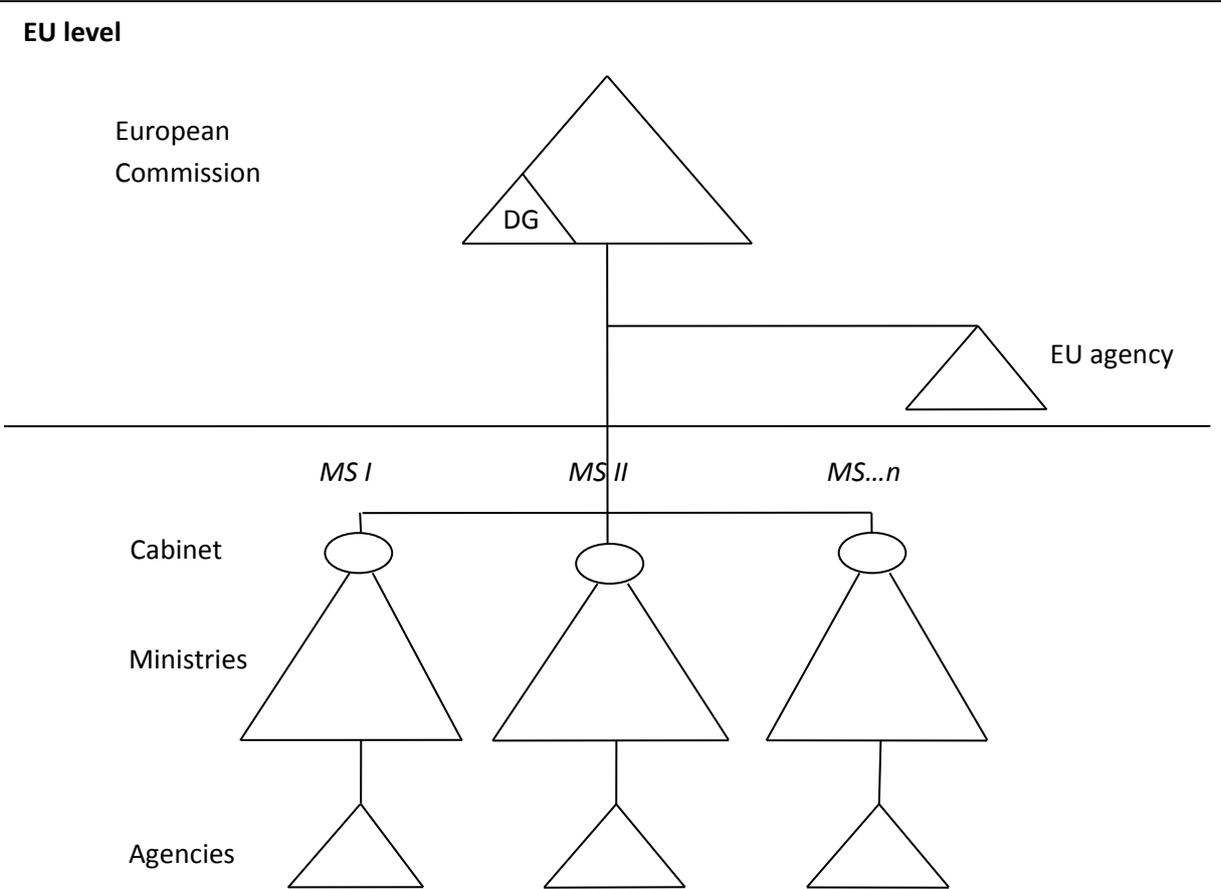
whereby new forms are layered upon existing forms rather than replacing such forms (Thelen 2003).

### **A multilevel implementation structure based on territorial specialization**

As mentioned, the EU and its predecessors inherited much of its multilevel implementation structure from classical international governmental organizations (IGOs): Like in IGOs, adopted EU policies, e.g. legislation, are to be implemented nationally by member states themselves, and not by bodies owned by the international organization. This kind of indirect administration (Hofmann 2008) ensures national governments a certain amount of discretion as regards policy content at the *transposition* stage as well as at the *application* stage. Member states enjoy (in principle) ‘administrative sovereignty’ because implementation takes place through the ordinary government/ministry – agency relationship, also involving the national parliament, if deemed appropriate or necessary. Thus, arguably, indirect administration as such does not challenge profoundly the very consistency and coherence of national political-administrative systems. In organizational terms, and seen from the EU level, the underlying principle of specialization is territory, or geography, i.e. implementation is supposed to take place via a set of territorially delimited ‘sub-units’, namely the member states as such (cf. Figure 1). According to theory (see above), such structuring makes policy coordination and consistency *within* territorial units more likely, however, at the same time, it entails less coordination and consistency *across* such units. Empirical studies do support these expectations: A vast literature on EU implementation, particularly on transposition (where data are more easily available), shows that national

implementation of EU policies varies considerably across member states. The factors most emphasized in order to explain uneven implementation are member states' institutional traditions, administrative capacities and political preferences (for literature reviews, see Sverdrup 2007; Treib 2014). Not least at the application stage, where EU legislation is to be practiced and not only written into national law books, significant variation between countries seems to occur (Falkner and Treib 2008). Although the coming about and changing of EU implementation structures are not the topic of this paper, it is reason to believe that implementation deficits and considerable variation across member states constitute parts of the background for a changing multilevel implementation structure, to which we now turn.

**Figure 1 EU implementation structure: territorial specialization**



**National level**

*Key: MS=Member State*

*DG=Directorate General*

**A multilevel implementation structure based on sectoral specialization**

Issue-specific transnational networks of national agencies have been observed for a long time, both inside and outside the EU (Majone 1996; Slaughter 2004). Although information

exchange, e.g. on 'best practice', may have some influence on agency behaviour, such adaptation is, in case, highly voluntary and horizontal. It is hard to argue that it might threaten national coordination and cohesion seriously. However, over the last couple of decades one has observed that nodes have emerged within European networks: the Commission has entered networks already there, or has encouraged network-building in areas without a network, or networks of national agencies have got an EU agency as their hub (Majone 1996; Dehousse 1997a; Eberlein and Grande 2005; Eberlein and Newman 2008; Jordan and Schout 2006; Thatcher and Coen 2008; Levi-Faur 2011). A study that compared the 'node-based' EU network with the OECD network within the competition policy area, showed that the slightly hierarchized EU network was deemed considerably more active and influential (Danielsen 2013). Even a modest secretarial role may empower the Commission or EU agency vis-à-vis national agencies due to tasks such as agenda-setting or preparing policy proposals. But being EU-level bodies, in charge of implementing EU policies, may also help to justify a somewhat superior role within networks, e.g. with regard to issuing guidelines, interpreting law, etc. (Wockelberg 2014).

One important implication of slightly hierarchized EU regulatory networks is that national agencies can be seen as 'double-hatted'; meaning that in addition to serving their respective parent ministries, they also find themselves being parts of a multilevel EU administration in charge of practicing EU policies and, to some extent, preparing it. Under the second hat, national agencies usually deal with the Commission and EU agencies *directly*, thus not via their parent ministry as is typical for indirect administration (Egeberg 2006; Trondal 2011; Bach and Ruffing 2013). At the comitology and transposition stage, the respective ministries usually take the lead, although involving the relevant agencies to a considerable degree. In

the application phase, on the other hand, ministries tend to be more at a distance (Egeberg 2006). The latter seems to be particularly true in situations where the Commission harbours superior capacity and expertise relative to a member state administration, which may often be the case as regards new member states (Martens 2008). However, at least in well-resourced administrations, the parent ministry seems to take the lead also at the application stage if dossiers become highly politicized and contested. It also strengthens its role the more its organizational units duplicate those of the agency (Egeberg and Trondal 2009a; Wockelberg 2014).

On the other hand, through networks, national agencies may find peers and allies outside the national context, a development already foreseen by Majone (1996: 273). The strengthening, and partly hierarchizing, of EU regulatory networks have been shown to affect the national ministry – agency relationship in significant ways: By taking part in such networks, national agencies become more autonomous and empowered in relation to their respective parent ministries, also in the policy formulation phase. It may be particularly noteworthy that this happens even in well-resourced national administrations such as the Dutch and German ones (Yesilkagit 2011; Danielsen and Yesilkagit 2014; Bach and Ruffing 2013; Bach et al. 2014; Maggetti 2014).

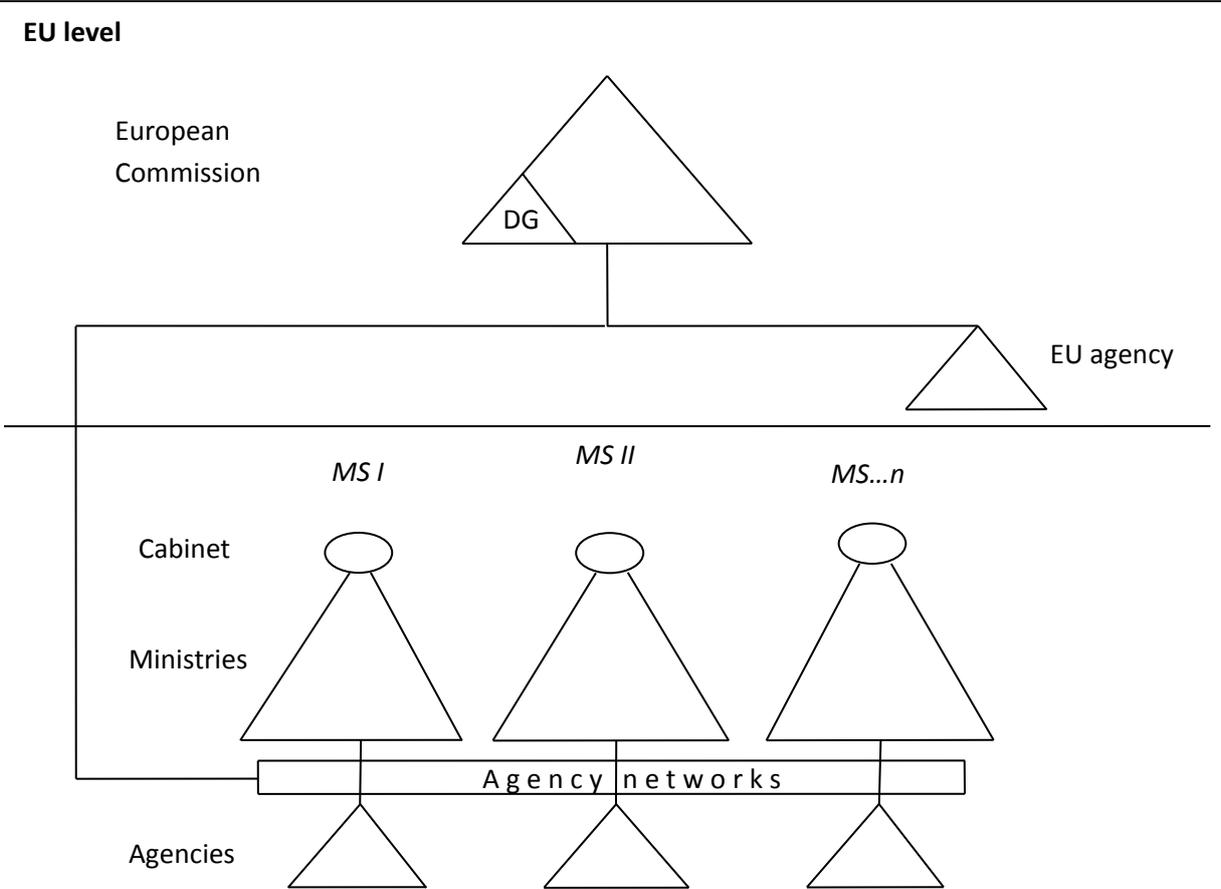
Whether the proliferation of EU agencies has contributed to retaining national control over regulatory processes or rather to supra-nationalize and sectorize them has been contested in the literature. One important factor indicating a high level of governmental control over EU agencies is the numerical dominance of national government representatives on agencies' management boards (Kelemen 2002; Kelemen and Tarrant 2011). However, studies have revealed that management boards have weaknesses that might undermine

such a control function: e.g., they meet relatively seldom, they have too many members attending, and government representatives seem on average to be less prepared for the meetings than Commission representatives (Busuioc 2012; Busuioc and Groenleer 2012). In addition, government representatives are typically coming from corresponding national agencies rather than from ministries (Suvarierol et al. 2013). And we know that, in general, agency personnel are more sheltered from political steering than their colleagues within ministerial departments (Egeberg 2012). Concomitantly, government representatives are not that often instructed from back home (Buess 2015). Other studies have shown that EU agencies, rather than being vehicles for national control, have become closely linked to particular Commission departments, which usually see themselves as ‘parent’ directorates-general (DGs) (Egeberg et al. 2015). EU-agency managers attach more weight to the concerns of the Commission than to those of any other institution, and they perceive the Commission as the most influential actor in their task environment (Egeberg and Trondal 2011). Thus, since delegation from the member states to EU agencies has been more common than delegation from the Commission to such agencies (Dehousse 2008), what we witness is, arguably, further supra-nationalization of regulatory networks in which EU agencies constitute nodes. Such a development entails centrifugal forces within member states, thus challenging the government/ministry – agency chain of command.

In organizational terms, and seen from the EU level, the underlying principle of specialization in this case is purpose or sector; i.e. implementation is supposed to take place via a set of sectorally delimited sub-units (cf. Figure 2). According to theory (see above), such structuring is expected to trigger sectoral cleavages, however, simultaneously fostering standardization and uniformity *within* a particular policy field across territorial units. A multilevel

implementation structure of this kind seems to rest on two institutional conditions: First, national agencies should be organized at arm's length from their respective parent ministries ('vertical specialization'), thus making agencies available for direct coupling to supra-national bodies. Second, adequate administrative capacity at the supra-national level should exist in order to give a steer to the implementation process (Egeberg 2006). A growing literature on EU implementation at the application stage indicates that regulatory networks ('sectoral specialization') in fact do contribute to harmonizing guidelines and practices across countries, as expected (Eberlein and Grande 2005; Egeberg and Trondal 2009a; Groenleer et al. 2010; Maggetti and Gilardi 2011; Gulbrandsen 2011; Maggetti 2013; Versluis and Tarr 2013). Interestingly, however, a recent and comprehensive review of EU implementation studies did not take into consideration the move from a territorially based implementation structure to a more sectorally based one as an explanatory factor (Treib 2014). Such a move is particularly relevant for understanding what happens in the application phase since the national political leadership is partly circumvented in the sectorally based structure.

**Figure 2 EU implementation structure: sectoral specialization**



**National level**

Key: MS=Member State

DG=Directorate General

**Reasserting the centre: ‘joined-up government’ at the national level**

One persistent theme in public administration and administrative policy is whether a government portfolio should be organized as an integrated ministry or as a dual organization

composed of a ministerial department and one or several semi-detached agencies (Verhoest et al. 2012). 'Agencification' has, partly due to the New Public Management (NPM) wave, been high on the agenda of administrative policy-makers for at least two decades. However, recent studies have indicated a pendulum shift from NPM reform measures towards 'joined-up government' in public sector organisations. The latter is seen as a wide-ranging administrative doctrine geared towards reducing fragmentation of the public sector and public service delivery (Christensen and Lægreid 2007b). In organisational terms this shift has accompanied ambitions to build action capacities within government(s) generally and ambitions towards stronger political coordination of sub-ordinate agencies particularly. Increased *national* administrative coordination in this sense has been interpreted as a reaction to problems of governing a 'decentred public sector' (Peters 2004: 131). Reasserting the centre has had at least two ingredients: First, an *ambition* to centralise executive powers within national governments, and secondly to concentrate *power resources* around national executive heads (Dahlström et al 2011). A vast literature has indeed documented a *de facto* strengthening of executive powers within national governmental institutions. One observation is an enhanced coordination role for prime ministers' and presidential offices (e.g. Christensen and Lægreid 2007a; Poguntke and Webb 2005). Moreover, this administrative doctrine and administrative reform trend departs from ideas where administrative systems are conceived primarily as *national* instruments and where coordination within government institutions is based on some kind of administrative sovereignty. As a consequence, this post-NPM scholarship has not raised questions about how increased coordination at one level (nationally) may affect coordination across levels.

Western democracies have thus faced a pendulum turn in public sector reforms towards increased ambitions to coordinate the central administration horizontally and vertically. As a reaction to the 'let it go' approach during the NPM era, one major response has been to 'building greater coordination and strategic capacity for presidents and prime ministers and using that capacity for controlling the remainder of the public sector' (Bouchaert et al. 2010; Dahlström et al. 2011: 16). In addition to increased ambitions towards ministerial control of government agencies, emphasis has been on increased horizontal integration of national services. This has manifested itself in agency fusions and agency networking (Christensen and Lægreid 2007b). Observing trends towards the strengthening of national political control, Dahlström et al. (2011: 12) see two additional organizational changes: both a general trend towards more political appointees in administrative positions and the use of political advisors for the purpose of coordinating central government institutions vertically – notably between the political and administrative echelons (Richards and Smith 2006; Peters 2013; Hustedt and Salomonsen 2014).

As a contextualization of this reform trend, the history of the European Commission also documents periods where Commission Presidents have launched *ambitions* to reassert the centre inside the Commission. Best known, perhaps, is the legacy of the Delors Commission (1985-95), characterised by presidential steering and a relative disregard of administrative routines (Kassim 2006). Newer studies show how the Barroso Presidency has reasserted the Commission centre through a mix of increased Presidential *ambitions* to steer the administration and increased administrative *capacities* in the Secretariat General (SG) of the Commission administration (Trondal 2012). Similarly to 'whole of government' reforms at national level, one ambition underpinning recent Commission reforms has been to increase

vertical and horizontal co-ordination and coherence within the institution. This trend, however, only supplements a relatively weakly coordinated sector administration dominated by 'silos'. Re-engineering the Commission apparatus is not done overnight. Despite ambitious policies to reform and coordinate the Commission during the last decade, the results so far have been modest. The crucial organizational principles of the Commission remain largely unchanged, leaving much influence to the lead DG (Hartlapp et al. 2014: 252).

### **Living with the coordination paradox**

This section suggests that both governments and the EU may cope with the coordination paradox by establishing hybrid organizational solutions. Hybrid structures serve as organizational compromises between the need for coordination across levels in a multilevel (implementation) structure based on sectoral specialization and ambitions for increased national coordination within executives. Hybrid structures may thus be seen as organizational bridges between real-world organizational developments that collide.

Interestingly, building such organizational compromises to accommodate such incompatible demands on public sector organizations has been largely overlooked by two literatures: both the public sector reform literature and EU studies. Strong coordination at both levels have been seen as instrumental in several ways, i.e. as 'capacity to shape policy-making and lock out other interests' (Hartlapp et al. 2014: 20; Jordan and Schout 2006: 4). The 'governance turn' in public administration studies did not accompany reflections on how multilevel systems may reshape domestic administrative life (e.g. Bouckaert et al. 2010: 264). The larger 'system consequences' of state reforms were overlooked. Similarly, the wicked

problem literature also largely neglected the wicked institutional architecture of multilevel systems, by largely having a horizontal focus on policy areas that cut across established boundaries (e.g. Conklin 2006). Neither did the vast Europeanization literature capture the integrated nature of public sector organizations across levels (e.g. Bulmer and Burch 1998; Dehousse 1997b; Graziano and Vink 2007; Kassim et al. 2000). The EU and the member-states were treated largely as separate but mutually interdependent systems, where the EU 'hit' the member-states in various ways (Kassim et al. 2000: 254). The concept of multilevel governance perhaps came closest conceptually by acknowledging the mutually interdependent nature of institutions and policy-making processes, but an actor-centred ontology at the same time prohibited appreciating the organizational basis of a multilevel administrative architecture (e.g. Hooghe and Marks 2001; Trondal 2015). Moreover, recent NPM literature has also neglected how trade-offs between political-administrative autonomy and control is associated with coordination *across* levels (e.g. Christensen and Lægreid 2006: 4). Successfully, this literature has illuminates effects of agencification on domestic coordination, accountability, legitimacy, autonomy, etc., albeit not on coordination across levels (Van Thiel et al. 2012: 417). As argued above, processes of agencification inside sovereign states and within the EU system may have profound implications for the politico-administrative order in Europe and for how we should understand it. National agencies organized at arm's length from their parent ministerial departments and which also in practice are partly de-coupled from direct steering from these departments constitute an administrative infrastructure for 'agency capture'. Essentially, national agencies may become building blocks of a multilevel EU administration (cf. Figure 2).

EU member-states have installed various hybrid structural solutions to compensate for the side-effects of highly specialized administrative structures coined by independent agencies on arm's length distance from ministerial intervention. This section briefly suggests how public administration embedded in multilevel systems tends to live with, balance and combine different and poorly orchestrated structures. Since the mid-nineteenth century, outsourcing a department from a ministry and transforming it into an agency outside of the ministry, as well as returning this kind of body back into the ministry, has been a key administrative policy instrument (Egeberg and Trondal 2009b). There is reason to assume that the interweaving of national agencies with EU's administration and networks will impose constraints on the use of this administrative policy instrument. For instance, the EU may have formalized requirements that there shall be an agency in an administrative area that is organized at arm's length from the ministry in question. In addition to formal rules, patterns of behaviour that have developed over time within EU networks may impose constraints on the room of maneuver for administrative reorganization of the kind that is mentioned here.

Instead, hybrid structural solutions are observed within nation states (see Lægreid et al. 2014: 4): Notable examples are organizational duplication, redundancy and overlap, coordination committees that supplement existing administrative fragmentation, and political appointees in administrative positions. These 'hybrids' can be seen as compensatory measures and organizational capacity building in practice. For example, by building organizational capacity within ministerial departments that partly overlaps agency staff ('duplication'), political steering of agencies may be strengthened without integrating agencies into ministries (Egeberg 2012). We have also seen the rise of larger offices that

serve the chief executive, such as the *Bundeskanzleramt* in Germany (Fleischer 2011) and the Cabinet Office in the United Kingdom (Smith 2011). The Finnish government has installed a so-called programme management system to identify cross-cutting issues (Kekkonen and Raunio 2011). The Swedish government has installed what they call national coordinators ('tzars') to better handle 'wicked problems' that cross cuts existing sector ministries (Statskontoret 2014). Such organizational compensatory mechanisms are interpreted as efforts attempting to find ways of restoring the capacity to govern from the centre (Dahlström et al. 2011: 17). In short, task forces, duplication and overlap, new procedures, committee structures, and enlarged institutions are organizational solutions installed to compensate for sectoral and vertical specialization in the primary structure, however, without fundamentally challenging such specialization (Christensen and Lægreid 2007). So-called 'post-NPM reforms' are 'seen as supplementary adjustments producing increased complexity in public sector organizations' (Lægreid and Verhoest 2010: 290). Beyond organizational structures, hybrid structures may be supported by mechanisms that include softer measures, such as re-establishing 'common ethics' and 'cohesive cultures' in the public sector (Christensen and Lægreid 2011).

Thus, post-NPM reforms have not changed the primary structure through vertical de-specialization of agencies subordinated to ministerial departments (Christensen and Lægreid 2006). The organizational compromise has rather made it possible to retain a primary administrative infrastructure that allows EU coordination across levels: national agencies have kept some leeway and *room of policy manoeuvre across levels* (Van Thiel et al. 2012: 423). Hybrid structural solutions are organizational solutions to the coordination paradox, offering governments better coordination and control of regulatory agencies - while at the

same time retaining an implementation structure across levels based on sectoral specialization (cf. Figure 2).

Also the EU has 'accepted' the emergence of hybrid organizational forms. Not having its *own* agencies to implement EU legislation at the national level, the Commission has instead, as the second best solution, 'adopted' domestic agencies in so doing, making them 'double hatted' in practice (Egeberg 2006). The Commission thus also seems to manage to live with the tension between the wish for uniform implementation across member states while at the same time not seriously interfering in national 'administrative sovereignty'. This may not be a perfect organizational solution for the Commission in order to acquire uniform practicing of EU policies across member countries, but might be considered satisfactory given Europe's administrative legacy from the past.

## **Conclusion**

The ambition of this paper has been twofold: Firstly, the coordination paradox has been theoretically and empirically illustrated by the seemingly incompatibility between a more direct (sectoral) implementation structure in the multilevel EU administrative system on the one hand, and trends towards strengthening political control and coordination ('joined-up-government') within member states on the other. A move to a more sectorally based and 'direct' multilevel implementation structure seems to be conducive to more uniform application of EU law across countries. However, such a structure, at the same time, presupposes a certain de-coupling of national agencies from national hierarchies in order to allow their re-coupling to EU-level bodies. It follows that such a development is at a collision course with national governments' attempts to enhance policy coherence and consistency

within their own territory. Secondly, the paper has suggested various organizational hybrids that may be ways for EU member-states as well as for the EU for coping with and living with the coordination paradox. Essentially, this does not 'solve' the fact that real-world organizational developments are incompatible. Hybrid structures are merely organizational bridges between two opposing quests for 'better coordination'.

Hybrid structures typically take the form of layering upon pre-established forms rather than replacing such forms. In our case, government desires for more political control of agencies have not lead to vertical de-specialization; i.e. transforming agencies into ministerial departments. This would probably have been the most obvious alternative in order to achieve more hierarchical control (Egeberg and Trondal 2009b). Instead of replacing the semi-detached agency, one has added compensatory steering measures, like overlapping organizational units within the respective parent departments, in order to be able to monitor more closely agency activities. While such organizational duplication is positively associated with actual political control over agencies, it nevertheless still allows agencies to take part in EU multilevel network governance (Egeberg and Trondal 2009a). From the European Commission's point of view, 'double-hatted' national agencies, meaning agencies that are both serving national ministries *and* EU-level bodies, represent organizational solutions that seem conducive to more uniform application of EU law across member states while at the same time not profoundly challenging national coordination systems.

## Acknowledgement

This paper has been financially supported by the Norwegian Research Council ('EuroDiv: Integration and division: Towards a segmented Europe?') and the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization.

## References

Bach, T. and E. Ruffing (2013) 'Networking for autonomy? National agencies in European networks', *Public Administration* 91(3): 712-26.

Bach, T., E. Ruffing and K. Yesilkagit (2014) 'The Differential Empowering Effects of Europeanization on the Autonomy of National Agencies', *Governance* DOI: 10.1111/gove.12087

Bouckaert, G., B.G. Peters and K. Verhoest (2010) *The Coordination of Public Sector Organizations*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Buess, M. (2015) 'European union agencies and their management boards: An assessment of accountability and democratic legitimacy', *Journal of European Public Policy* 10.1080/13501763.2014.881299.

Bulmer, S. and M. Burch (1998) 'Organizing for Europe: Whitehall, the British State and European Union', *Public Administration* 76: 601-28.

Busuioac, M. (2012) 'European agencies and their boards: Promises and pitfalls of accountability beyond design', *Journal of European Public Policy* 19(5): 719–36.

Busuioc, M. and Groenleer, M. (2012) 'Wielders of supranational power? The administrative behaviour of the heads of European Union agencies', in M. Busuioc, M. Groenleer and J. Trondal (eds.) *The Agency Phenomenon in the European Union*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 128-51.

Christensen, T. and P. Lægreid (eds.) (2006) *Autonomy and Regulation*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Christensen, T. and P. Lægreid (eds.) (2007a) *Transcending New Public Management*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Christensen, T. and P. Lægreid (2007b) 'The whole-of-government approach to public sector reform', *Public Administration Review* 67: 1059-1066.

Conklin, J. (2006) *Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems*. Chichester: Wiley.

Dahlström, C., B.G. Peters and J. Pierre (eds.) (2011) *Steering from the Centre*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Danielsen, O.A. (2013) *On the Composite Dynamics of Transnational Regulatory Spaces*. PhD Thesis, University of Bergen.

Danielsen, O.A. and K. Yesilkagit (2014) 'The effects of European regulatory networks on the bureaucratic autonomy of national regulatory authorities', *Public Organization Review* 14: 353-71.

Dehousse, R. (1997a) 'Regulation by networks in the European Community: The role of European agencies', *Journal of European Public Policy* 4(2): 246-61.

Dehousse, R. (1997b) 'European integration and the nation-state', in M. Rhodes, P. Heywood and V. Wright (eds.) *Developments in West European Politics*. Houndmills: Macmillan Press.

Dehousse, R. (2008) 'Delegation of powers in the European Union: The need for a multi-principals model', *West European Politics* 31(4): 789-805.

Eberlein, B. and Grande, E. (2005) 'Beyond delegation: Transnational regulatory regimes and the EU Regulatory state', *Journal of European Public Policy* 12(1): 89–112.

Eberlein, B. and A.L. Neuman (2008) 'Escaping the international governance dilemma? Incorporated transgovernmental networks in the European Union', *Governance* 21(1): 25-52.

Egeberg, M. (ed.) (2006) *Multilevel Union Administration*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Egeberg, M. (2012) 'How bureaucratic structure matters: An organizational perspective', in B.G. Peters and J. Pierre (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Public Administration*. London: SAGE.

Egeberg, M. and J. Trondal (2009a) 'National agencies in the European administrative space: government driven, Commission driven, or networked?', *Public Administration* 87(4): 779-90.

Egeberg, M. and J. Trondal (2009b) 'Political Leadership and Bureaucratic Autonomy. Effects of Agencification', *Governance* 22(4): 673-88.

Egeberg, M. and J. Trondal (2011) 'EU-level agencies: New executive centre formation or vehicles for national control?', *Journal of European Public Policy* 18(6): 868–87.

Egeberg, M., Å. Gornitzka and J. Trondal (2015) 'The Quest for Order. Unravelling the relationship between the European Commission and European Union agencies', *Journal of European Public Policy* (forthcoming).

Falkner, G. and O. Treib (2008) 'Three worlds of compliance or four? The EU-15 compared to new member states', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46(2): 293-313.

Fenna, A. (2012) 'Federalism and intergovernmental coordination', in B.G. Peters and J. Pierre (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Public Administration*. London: SAGE.

Fleischer, J. (2011) 'Steering from the German centre: More policy coordination and fewer policy initiatives', in C. Dahlström, B.G. Peters and J. Pierre (eds.) *Steering from the Centre*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Graziano, P. and M.P. Vink (eds.) (2007) *Europeanization. New Research Agendas*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Groenleer, M., M. Kaeding and E. Versluis (2010) 'Regulatory governance through EU agencies? The role of the European Agencies for Maritime and Aviation Safety in the Implementation of European Transport Legislation', *Journal of European Public Policy* 17(8): 1212-30.

Gulbrandsen, C. (2011) 'The EU and the implementation of international law: the case of 'sea-level bureaucrats'', *Journal of European Public Policy* 18(7): 1034-51.

Gulick, L. (1937) 'Notes on the theory of organizations. With special references to government in the United States', in L. Gulick and L. Urwick (eds.) *Papers on the Science of Administration*. New York: Institute of Public Administration, Columbia University.

Hartlapp, M., J. Metz and C. Rauh (2014) *Which Policy for Europe?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Hofmann, H.C.H. (2008) 'Mapping the European Administrative Space', *West European Politics* 31(4): 662–76.
- Hooghe, L. and G. Marks. (2001) *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Hustedt, T. and H.H. Salomonsen (2014) 'Ensuring political responsiveness: politization mechanisms in ministerial bureaucracies', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 80(4): 746-65.
- Jordan, A. and A. Schout (2006) *The Coordination of the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kassim, H. (2006) 'The Secretariat General of the European Commission', in D. Spence (ed.) *The European Commission*. London: John Harper Publishing.
- Kassim, H., B.G. Peters and V. Wright (eds.) (2000) *The National Co-ordination of EU Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kekkonen, S. and T. Raunio (2011) 'Towards stronger political steering: Program management reform in the Finnish government', in C. Dahlström, B.G. Peters and J. Pierre (eds.) *Steering From the Centre*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.
- Kelemen, R.D. (2002) 'The politics of 'Eurocratic' structure and the new European agencies', *West European Politics* 25(4): 93–118.
- Kelemen, R.D. and Tarrant, A.D (2011) 'The political foundations of the Eurocracy', *West European Politics* 34(5): 922–47.

Levi-Faur D. (2011) 'Regulatory networks and regulatory agencification: towards a single European regulatory space', *Journal of European Public Policy* 18(6): 810-29.

Lægreid, P. and K. Verhoest (eds.) (2010) *Governance of Public Sector Organizations*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lægreid, P., T. Randma-Liiv, L.H. Rykkja and K. Sarapuu (2014) 'Introduction: Emerging coordination practices in European public administration', in P. Lægreid, T. Randma-Liiv, L.H. Rykkja and K. Sarapuu (eds.) *Organizing for Coordination in the Public Sector*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Maggetti, M. (2013) 'The politics of network governance: The case of energy regulation', *West European Politics* 37(3): 497-514.

Maggetti, M. (2014) 'The Rewards of Cooperation: The Effects of Membership in European Regulatory Networks', *European Journal of Political Research* 53(3): 480-99.

Maggetti, M. and F. Gilardi (2011) 'The policy-making structure of European regulatory networks and the domestic adoption of standards', *Journal of European Public Policy* 18(6): 830-47.

Majone, G. (1996) *Regulating Europe*. London: Routledge.

March, J.G. and J.P. Olsen (1976) *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations*. Bergen: Scandinavian University Press.

March, J.G. and J.P. Olsen (1984) 'The new institutionalism: Organizational factors in political life', *American Political Science Review* 78: 734-49.

March, J. G. and J. P. Olsen (1989) *Rediscovering Institutions*. New York: The Free Press.

March, J.G. and H.A. Simon (1958) *Organizations*. Chichester: Wiley.

Martens, M. (2008) 'Administrative Integration through the Back Door? The Role and Influence of the European Commission in Transgovernmental Networks within the Environmental Policy Field', *Journal of European Integration* 30(5): 635-51.

Mathews, F. (2012) 'Governance and state capacity', in D. Levi-Faur (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meier, K.J. (2010) 'Governance, structure, and democracy: Luther Gulick and the future of public administration', *Public Administration Review* 70 (Special Issue): 284-291.

Metcalfe, L. (1994) 'International policy co-ordination and public management reform', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 60: 271-90.

Peters, B.G. (2004) 'Back to the centre?: Rebuilding the state', in G. Gamble (ed.) *Restating the State*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Peters, B.G. (2013) 'Politicisation: What is it and why should we care?', in C. Neuhold, S. Vanhoonacker and L. Verhey (eds.) *Civil Servants and Politics*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pierre, J. and B.G. Peters (2005): *Governing Complex Societies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave

Richards, D. and M. Smith (2006) 'The tensions of political control and administrative autonomy: from NPM to a reconstituted Westminster model', in T. Christensen and P. Lægreid (eds.) *Autonomy and Regulation*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Scott, W. R. (1981) *Organizations. Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Simon, H.A. (1965) *Administrative Behavior*. New York: Free Press.

Slaughter, A.-M. (2004) *A New World Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Smith, M. (2011) 'The paradoxes of Britain's strong centre: Delegating decisions and reclaiming control', in C. Dahlström, B.G. Peters and J. Pierre (eds.) *Steering From the Centre*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Statskontoret (2014) *Nationella Samordnare*. Stockholm: Statskontoret.

Suvarierol, S., Busuioc, M. and Groenleer, M. (2013) 'Working for Europe? Socialization in the European Commission and agencies of the European Union', *Public Administration* 91(4): 908–27.

Sverdrup, U. (2007) 'Implementation', in P. Graziano and M.P. Vink (eds.) *Europeanization. New Research Agendas*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thatcher, M. and Coen, M. (2008) 'Reshaping European regulatory space: An evolutionary analysis', *West European Politics* 31(4): 806–36.

Thelen, K. (2003) 'How institutions evolve. Insights from comparative historical analysis', in J. Mahoney and D. Rueschemeyer (eds.) *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Treib, O. (2014) 'Implementing and complying with EU governance output', *Living Review of European Governance* 9(1): 1-47.

Trondal, J. (2011) 'Domestic agencies in an emergent European Executive Order', *Journal of European Integration* 33(1): 55-74.

Trondal, J. (2012) 'On Bureaucratic Centre Formation in Government Institutions. Lessons from the European Commission', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 78(3): 425-445.

Trondal, J. (2015) 'The European administrative system reassessed', in M.W. Bauer and J. Trondal (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of the European Administrative System*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Yesilkagit, K. (2011) 'Institutional compliance, European networks of regulation and the bureaucratic autonomy of national regulatory authorities', *Journal of European Public Policy* 18(7): 962-79.

Van Thiel, S., K. Verhoest, G. Bouckaert and P. Lægreid (2012) 'Lessons and recommendations for the practice of agencification', in K. Verhoest, S. Van Thiel, G. Bouckaert and P. Lægreid (eds.) *Government Agencies*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Verhoest, K., Thiel, S.V., Bouckaert, G. and Lægreid, P. (2012) *Government Agencies*, Houndmills: Palgrave.

Versluis, E. and E. Tarr (2013) 'Improving Compliance with European Union Law via Agencies: The Case of the European Railway Agency', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51(2): 316-33.

Wessels, W. (1997) 'An ever closer fusion? A dynamic macropolitical view on integration processes', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 35(2): 267-299.

Wockelberg, H. (2014) 'Political servants or independent experts? A comparative study of bureaucratic role perceptions and the implementation of EU law in Denmark and Sweden', *Journal of European Integration* 36(7): 731-47.