The meeting format as a shaper of the decision-making process: The case of the EU Employment Committee

Renita Thedvall

The meeting format as a shaper of the decision-making process: The case of the EU Employment Committee

Renita Thedvall

The meeting format as a shaper of the decision-making process:
The case of the EU Employment Committee

Renita Thedvall

Tel. 08-674701
e-mail: renita.thedvall@score.su.se

Abstract

This report analysis how the meeting format shapes the decision-making process, especially in transnational committees such as the Employment Committee in the European Union. The Employment Committee is a committee where the members fly in from the member states to conference rooms in Brussels a number of times a year to negotiate on employment issues. The meetings are then almost the only time where the members meet face-to-face.

I focus on the importance of meetings face-to-face. In particular I emphasise how the decision making process is shaped by the limitation of time. Bureaucratic organisations such as the Employment Committee is also guided by rules both written and unwritten. I give examples of how these rules shapes the process. I especially focus on the how the transnational character of the Employment Committee meetings shapes the decision making process such as the conflicting roles of being a national or a European representative, the different languages spoken and the different bureaucratic cultures that meet.

Introduction

In the Western world today people at top positions such as politicians and civil servants or company managers live under extreme meeting pressure. Discussions, negotiations, deliberations and decisions are almost entirely performed in meetings (van Vree 2002:3). This is especially true in the context of EU. Decisions, negotiations and discussions between the member states and the European Commission are for the most part performed in meetings. It is a way to organise transnational actors. I have followed the work in a particular committee in the EU, the Employment Committee, during 1 1/2 years. I have taken part in the meetings first as a trainee (and researcher) at the European Commission and second as part of the Swedish delegation (also see Thedvall 2005a, 2005b). The Employment Committee also referred to as the EMCO, works for the most part with the European Employment Strategy (EES)[1], which is a step towards constructing EU employment policy. The content of the strategy is proposed by the European Commission, discussed and negotiated in the Employment Committee, decided on in the Council of Ministry, and endorsed by the European Council.

In the report I study the meeting form as a way to organise transnational actors. I focus on how the meeting format shapes the decision-making process. One aspect that is particularly important in the shaping of the decision-making process is the timing in bureaucratic organisations, for example the length of the meetings and the considerations that have to make to co-ordinate with other meetings.

Decision-making in organisations

Decision-making is part of individuals' everyday life. Should I cross the street here, should I have potatoes or pasta for dinner, should I apply for the PhD candidate programme and so forth? Decision-making may be done in different forms. Individuals' decision-making may be done by reasoning, comparing pros and cons, by drawing lots, or consulting oracles or god. However, this report is about the decision-making process in formal organisations where the acts of reasoning or making decisions are

---

[1] For more information on the European Employment Strategy see for example Behning & Serrano Pascual 2001, Barbier 2001, Biagi 2000, De la Porte & Pochet 2002, Foden & Magnusson 1999, 2000, Goetschy 1999, 2001, Goetschy & Pochet 1997, Jacobsson 1999, Jacobsson et al 2001, Keller 2000, Lafoucrière 2000, Serrano Pascual 2000, Thedvall 1998.

performed in groups. Decision-making in groups may be done by drawing lots or consulting oracles the most usual ways of deciding in the EU is by reasoning and compromising to a consensus decision or by majority vote.

There are several theories on decision-making in organisations, especially on what possible choices the actors involved have. Langley et al. state that the literature on decision-making may be placed in a continuum between theories based on decisions by rational choices and theories based on decisions by coincidence (Langley et al. 1995:261). In theories based on rational-choice the actors are presumed to make informed rational decisions without interference of values, norms or the cultural setting. It is based on the Weberian 'ideal' form of the bureaucrat (Weber 1946:196). The idea of individuals being able to state precise objectives, knowing what technology supports what alternative, and having clear preferences has later been criticised by several (Simon 1961[1957]:xxiv, Perrow 1986[1972]:123 and Cohen et al. 1982[1976]:24, Douglas 1986:8). Cohen et al. argue that actors are not able to have full understanding of processes or premises and that preferences often are problematic and the technology unclear (1982[1976]:25). In fact, if individuals' rationality were full, as Perrow points out, their premises could not be shaped other than by force (Perrow 1986[1972]:123).

In theories on decision-making by coincidence decisions are perceived to be made through the coincidence of the meeting of actors as individuals, the decision-making problem at hand, and a particular setting. One such model, though not exactly coincidental, is the garbage-can model of organisational choice (Cohen et al. 1982[1976]:26). Cohen et al. argue that decision-making in organisations is relational. Decision-making is determined by the relationship between problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunities. Decisions will have different outcomes depending on the set of problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunities occupying different garbage-cans (Cohen et al. 1982[1976]:26-27). The garbage-can symbolises here that decision are coincidental rather than based on rational choices. Cohen et al. discuss in terms of *limited* or *bounded rationality* where the 'bounded rational' choice is based on the possible choice opportunities in that particular garbage-can (Simon 1961[1957]:xxiv). This is different from a rational-choice theory were there is an indefinite amount of choices. Limited or bounded rationality may also refer to the idea that rationality is different in different contexts (Malinowski 1922:156-157).

As Langley points out in the first model, the rational-choice model, the organisational decision-making is sequential and driven by diagnosis while in the second model the organisational decision-making is anarchical and driven by events (Langley et al. 1995:263). I discuss the decision-making process as driven by events. The event being the meeting. However, I do not exactly use the garbage-can model. As others have pointed out the garbage-can model explains the apparent disorder in decision processes but it does not take into consideration the organisational structure that channels participation, problems, solutions and choice opportunities. One place in which the decision-making process in organisation is most visible is in meetings (Pinfield 1986:386 in Langley et al. 1995:262, Schwartzman 1989:125). The meeting itself might be seen as an organisational ceremony in Meyer and Rowan's terms "that sustain and shape the more concrete 'products, services, techniques, policies, and programs' of the firm" (Meyer and Rowen 1991[1977]:340).

Meetings

Meetings may be defined in different ways. They may be defined as a part of a civilising process where conflicts are solved in discussions rather than in arms (van Vree 1999). They may be defined by their degree of formalisation. They may be defined by their purpose as for example making decisions, giving speeches or putting forward information. The latter two definitions are at focus here. We begin by the degree of formalisation.

Goffman distinguishes between conversional encounters and meetings. According to Goffman the difference is that in meetings there is a chairperson that manages turn-taking and relevance (Goffman 1983:7). Boden defines meetings as planned gathering where the participants have a perceived role, where it is some forewarning of the event, and where the event has purpose, a time, a place and an organisational function (Boden 1994:84). Schwartzman distinguishes between scheduled and unscheduled meetings (1989:62-64). Scheduled meetings have a set time, a high formality and the participants are formally responsible, while unscheduled meetings have no set time, a low formality and the participants are not formally responsible to other groups (Schwartzman 1989:63). These are all aspects of the degree of formalisation. In that sense the meetings I have studied may be seen as instances of bureaucracy. Bureaucratic in the Weberian sense in that they are governed by explicit rules, the participants are regarded as expert and the product of the meeting are written

documents (Weber 1946:196-244). In fact, the Employment Committee meetings may be termed *bureaucratic meetings* not making too much of Weber but still sorting these meetings from other types of meetings.

Meetings may have different objectives or no objectives at all. They may have the purpose of giving information. They may be social events or speech events with no explicit purpose other than sustaining the relationship among the participants. As Myers points out, the meetings of the Australian aborigines Pintupi were "…not so much representing a social grouping as constituting it" (Myers 1986:444). And finally, meetings may also have the purpose of making decisions.

The Employment Committee meetings have all the purposes above in one way or another but their explicit purpose is to come together and decide what they think on certain subjects and then write their opinion. It does not mean that decisions are actually made in the meeting as pointed out by for example Boden (1994:84) or Kuper (1971:17). It may be that the actual decision is made somewhere else, in the corridors or in a restaurant during lunch. Nevertheless, it is in the meeting that it is formalised and put into written form (see for example Langley et al. 1995:265).

What is it then in the meeting format that shapes the decision-making process? One of the features that shape the decision-making process is the constraint of the meeting format. In meetings people have to meet face-to-face in a place. This also puts pressure on the timing since meetings cannot be indefinite. Another feature is the written and unwritten rules for that makes decisions. How it is done and when it is done also shapes the decision-making process.

Apart from these features that exist in meetings both inside organisations and between organisations there are features that are particular to the meeting of members from different states, in this case member states from the European Union. One feature is the roles[2] of the individuals who attend

---

[2] A note on 'roles' and the self. I make a difference between the individual's roles and the individual's self. I perceive the individual as being 'constructed' in her or his meeting with the environment. Martin (1997:247) proposes the idea of an *interface zone*. The interface zone is a space where the possibilities and capacities of individuals are endless, since the surrounding environment changes in different contexts (Martin 1997:247, also see Thedvall 2004:133-134). The individuals' selves were constructed in the interface zone of all these different roles as well as other factors and it is what makes the members who they are. In that sense there is no conflict between the roles. Here I am not interested in how the individuals change or how they achieve a self. I am interested in the 'roles' as such. I am only interested in the individuals' personalities if they affect the 'roles' in the meeting.

the meetings. In meetings inside organisation they may have the role of representing the workers or the management, or being an expert in a certain area. In the Employment Committee meetings there are several conflicting roles at play because of the inter/trans-state character of the meeting such as the members representing both the state and EU as well as being both experts and politicians. Second, the different languages spoken in the meetings create problems in understanding each other. Third, the members' preconceptions of other members bureaucratic cultures make them expect certain answers or ways of presenting. Further below, I discuss the written and unwritten rules, the different roles of the individuals and the specific features of an inter/trans-state committee. I begin by the constraints of the meeting such as time and place.

Constraining the meeting: time and place

This section is focused on the organisational features in and around the meeting that are not explicitly written down but that constrain the decision-making process. These are the dimensions of time and place. The time because of the time pressure of only meeting two days at a time and having to take into consideration the decision-making process in other committees and councils. The place because the meeting format as such demands a place where the members can meet. I begin by discussing why it is important to meet face-to-face.

The importance of meeting face-to-face

The meeting pressure, at least in the Western world, has not decreased despite the age of technology. We now have the Internet, e-mail and virtual conferences, but we still persist on meeting face-to-face (Garsten 1994:144). In fact, Boden argues that electronic communication only will expand communication not replace face-to-face communication (Boden 1994:81).

There may be several reasons for this. Goffman concluded several decades ago that there is something that happens when people come into each other's presence. According to Goffman it is easier for people to read each other's purposes and intents when having a visual face-to-face encounter (Goffman 1983:3). As Nickerson states the face-to-face communication have the highest media richness compared to other medias such as electronic bulletin boards (Nickerson 1999:37). In fact, Nickerson conclude that the use of electronic communication where there previously has been face-to-face communication often results in ineffective ways to

communicate the purpose (Nickerson 1999:36-37). Electronic media, especially in the written word, may make disagreement even more severe because of the lack of being able to read peoples intent and purpose (Boden 1994:81).

Meeting face-to-face may also has other reasons than the possibility to read peoples intents or to prevent miscommunication. Hasselström argues in her dissertation on financial brokers that the face-to-face meeting cannot be replaced by technology when it comes to building trust between analysts, brokers, and traders (2003:81). This may also be observed in the Employment Committee. The lunches or dinners surrounding the meetings were opportunities for members to talk and make friends. Since the place of the meetings was in Brussels and people from the member states flew, drove or took the train to the meetings, the members did not go home after the first meeting day but stayed in Brussels. The dinners then had the potential to become a time for strategising and making allies. The fact that the meetings were in Brussels also meant that the meeting as such was one of the only places where people met. They did not have any face-to-face everyday contact. Decision-making by corridor was not as easily done as "inside" an organisation. The meetings were also the only formal decision-making arena. This made the meetings even more important.

Limited time

Time was another feature that shaped the decision-making process. Time may be discussed in many different ways but here I refer to clock-time or standard time[3]. The introduction of standard time was central for being able to make appointments, scheduling working time and to set up meeting time. Time constrained the meeting. The Employment Committee and Indicators group meetings for example were as a rule two days long beginning at about 10 in the morning and ending about 6.30 in the evening with one and half hour lunch brake from around 13 o'clock.

Apart from time organising the meeting (or the meeting organising time) the meetings were also interrelated with different activities. As Boden points out meetings "…derive their very existence from a perceived need to hold a specific gathering at a specific time in direct relation to the unfolding activities of an organization and its complex environment" (Boden 1994:83). The Employment Committee meetings depended on

---

[3] Standard time was first introduced by the railroad companies to make possible a timetable for the trains running between cities and countries (Kern 1983:12).

linear time and appeared in rhythmic order during the year. Some of the meetings were for discussion and some for decision-making. The pressure to decide was based on the relations the Employment Committee had with other meetings such as the Council meetings. The members were dependent on other groups, committees and Councils and what time schedule they were on. In one Indicators group meeting this problem with time was illustrated. The President of the Indicators group said[4]:

> I prefer to finalise the discussion in this meeting because otherwise they [the Employment Committee] will not get it [the document] in advance for the Employment Committee meeting on 22 November (Indicators group 20011107).

The Commission representative pleaded:

> We know it's not an easy question. We saw this extraordinary meeting as a meeting to prepare and then come back to this on 15 and 16 November. We plead on this that we come back otherwise we are heading towards disagreement in the Employment Committee" (Indicators group 20011107).

Finally it was decided that they should conclude in this meeting but the question should be discussed in the next meeting and the President would present any new developments orally in the Employment Committee on 22 November.

If the Council had asked the Employment Committee to agree on a report, proposal or opinion before a certain Council meeting the Employment Committee had to do so regardless if they felt they were 'ready' or not. This was often a yearly process. First the Council members decided what the Employment Committee should do. Then, the Employment Committee members discussed and negotiated. Finally the Employment Committee members decided on an opinion. In fact, the meetings may at some level be in circular time. The meeting work programme of a year may be compared to the circular process of farming, first farmers sow, then it grows and then the farmers harvest. However, while farmers are depended on the weather and the seasons for their deadlines during the year the deadlines for the Employment Committee were constructed in the organisation. And in organisations things seem to be important to finish before the summer holidays and in the end of the

---

[4] This "citation" and other "citations" in the text are not real citation if not indicated by citation marks. The statements are from my notes from the meetings. I have not been able to capture every word but I have chosen to write *a [member state's] delegate said* or *the president of the Employment Committee said* since I have captured a way of talking in the committee meetings that is not my language.

year, i.e. every half a year. So it happens this coincide with the half-year Presidencies in the EU.

The time pressure was not only evident in relation to other meetings and Councils. The time pressure and how it shaped the decision-making process was also apparent during the meeting days. Some questions were discussed more thoroughly since they were discussed early in the day while other had to be pushed through because the day was ending. Often the interpreters were booked until 6.30 and then they left[5]. That meant that the meetings ended if not before then usually right after 6.30. In one meeting the President of the Employment Committee said:

> We loose the interpreters at 6.30. Can we conclude soon so that we will have time on the macro economic dialogue (Employment Committee meeting 20011120).

A half an hour later the President of the Employment Committee said:

> Can we continue in English? Or should I try to draft a proposal? We are now only in English. The interpreters are gone (Employment Committee meeting 20011120).

The meeting ended just 10 minutes later. The fact that the interpreters had left and that the meeting day should be over speeded up the time for making a decision.

Bernard, one of my colleagues at the Commission gave me another example of this as we were walking back to the Commission from an Ecosoc meeting. I asked him about the Employment Committee meetings. He said that they were always long because when the floor opened for the members they all wanted to give their opinion. He said, with a slight bitterness, that last year when they were discussing the guidelines they had 8 (of 18) guidelines left when it was one hour left. It took them one hour to go through the remaining guidelines. And that was without the interpreters. He wondered why they could not be that quick always (20010917).

The time limit also shaped the decision-making process in other ways. The time limit was sometimes used as an excuse not to re-open areas that were already decided on even though some of the members wanted to re-open. I often heard, especially in regards to the quality in work indicators an urge not to re-open by the Presidents of the Employment Committee and the President of the Indicators group. The President of the Indicators group once said:

---

[5] If they stay a minute longer they have to take the next day off since there are rules on how many hours the interpreters can interpret and how many hours they must rest between.

> We don't want to re-open the four already decided on. If you have something new to add then it's ok but otherwise it's for the Employment Committee to decide. Otherwise we will have to sit here for days. Is that ok for you? … Ok (Indicators group meeting 20011107).

As we have seen the limit of time in the meetings and the time pressure from other groups shapes the decision-making process by organising the decision-making to the end, when there is no more time.

The rule-based meeting

Formal decision-making in the EU is made in formal meetings such as working groups, committees or councils. Every time a decision has to be made members from the member states fly to the meetings in Brussels or some other place in Europe to come to agreements. As we have discussed above the meetings are almost the only place where member states and the Commission meet face-to-face.

I have argued above that the Employment Committee meetings may be seen as instances of bureaucracy in the Weberian tradition. The meetings have formal rules and roles (Meyer et al. 1994:181). The formal/bureaucratic meetings are generally structured in the same way. The meetings are established by decision, there are written rules of procedures, the participants are predetermined and the product of the meetings have to be written documents in the form of minutes and opinions that may be saved and filed.

However, there are also informal rules, or in March et al. (2000:18-20) terms unwritten rules, that shapes the decision-making process. March et al. describe unwritten rules as norms (2000:20). I prefer to make a difference between norms i.e. internalised by individuals and unwritten rules that are more explicit than norms. These unwritten rules are specific to the Employment Committee meeting and have to be learnt. They could also be written down.

Established by decision

When a committee in the EU is formed there are Council decision to be made and rules of procedures to be formulated. As Schwartman points out: "One of the features of many formal meetings is the development or use of procedures for ordering and regulating debate and discussion" (1989:80). The Employment Committee was legally formed by a Council decision based on the Treaty of Amsterdam (Council of the European Union 2000:21-22). The Council decision specified the task of the Committee, the

membership, how the Committee should operate, that they may establish working groups for their assistance, and how they should operate with other bodies. The task of the Employment Committee was among a few other responsibilities to work with the European Employment Strategy. The members were two from every member state with two alternates. The members should be selected among senior officials or experts that have 'outstanding' competences in the field of employment (Council of the European Union 2000:21-22).

The Committee should be governed by a chairperson elected for two years chosen among the members. This was a new rule. The committee had existed in three years but under another name, the Employment and labour market committee. During that time the Commission had chaired it. This was changed now. That meant that the Commission lost some of its power. Earlier they had had the people drawing up the documents and the people writing the opinions in the house. Now the opinions of the Committee were prepared by the President, who was elected among the members that in practice meant among the member states. The chairperson should also be assisted by four vice-chairpersons. Two of them were elected from the Committee and served for two years. The remaining two were one, a representative from the member state holding the Presidency and two, a representative from the member state holding the next Presidency.

All these factors shaped the decision-making process. The equal number of members from every member state meant that one member state could not outvote another member state. An alternative to having an equal number of members from every member state could have been to base it on the population in the member states. The fact that the chairperson was elected among the member states, instead of the Commission, also changed the power in who wrote the draft opinions of the Committee.

The Council decision also stated that the Committee should establish their "rules of procedures". The Council decision determined who could be in the room and how they could operate. The Rules of Procedures specified for example the voting system, how many were authorized to be present and so forth.

Rules of Procedures

The rules of procedures as well as the Council decision were a way to organise the meeting. It was a form of ritualisation that was written down in documents known to everyone in the meeting. The rules of procedures

included specification such as who pays for expenses for the members; or that the President of the Employment Committee would be replaced by one of the vice-Presidents in case of absence. It also included more substantial rules that were important for the decision-making process. Rules, which said that the President of the Employment Committee should be assisted by a steering group. This Steering group should include the vice-Presidents, high-ranking officials from the Commission and the Support team and should take place the day before every Employment Committee meeting where they go through the agenda. The Steering group had the power to change agendas and prepare or decide to bring out new documents in the midst of the meetings and thereby changing situation for the pre-planned national opinions.

The President of the Employment Committee was also to handle all the relations with the Council as well as the coordination with the Employment Committee's sister committees: the Economic and finance committee (EFC), the Economic policy committee (EPC), the Social protection committee (SPC) and the Education committee[6]. The President had an important and powerful part to play in the Committee. He/she prepared together with the Support team the agenda. He/she decided together with the Committee when to meet, handled all the relations with other institutional bodies and represented the Committee at different occasions. In that way the formal rules of the President's responsibilities made her/him an important individual in the decision-making process. The decision-making was shaped through her/him in the agenda setting, the proposal for opinion writing and through the contacts with the other groups.

There was also rules set up that was not followed. One such rule was that no delegation should consist of more than four persons. The delegations were almost always represented by the two members. It was only occasionally that there was only one member. Some member states, such as Sweden, almost always had the alternates with them. The Swedish delegation also sometimes had someone from the Ministry of Finance, so often there could be five people from Sweden. During the meetings the Swedish alternates often looked up things that may be used as arguments and then passed them on the Swedish members. They were a back up resource that not all member states thought were important.

---

[6] For more information on these committees and their relation to the Employment Committee see Jacobsson and Vifell 2004.

There were also other rules that were not followed. In the rules of procedures it was said that simple majority vote should apply but in practice it was consensus decision-making. Having said that, sometimes if the President was unsure of how to conclude because some member states had not said anything in the meeting he/she asked all members to give their vote: yes or no.

However, when I say consensus decision-making that is not completely true. It is not consensus as if the members discuss and deliberate until everyone is happy. It is more of a majority consensus-making or compromise. This was made clear in one of the Employment Committee meeting when one of the member state delegates wanted inscribed in the opinion that only the majority of the committee wanted the indicator since they did not agree. Another member state delegate answered that they understood the point but that most decision in the Committee were decided on by majority (20011121). Member states in minority position had the right according to the rules of procedures to have their opinion annexed to the reports, proposals or opinions but as the other member state was hinting there was always majority vote. However, this was hardly ever expressed in the reports, proposals and opinions. It was the President's job to keep track of who was against and who was for and then give a suggestion for a conclusion. If everyone could agree on the conclusion then the document from the Committee reflected that conclusion, not the disagreements that had led up to it. The documents were almost always written as if it was consensus. Consensus decision-making shaped the decision-making process since it might water-down decisions to be able to satisfy all members. On the other hand, it might also mean that minority opinions were given room if members who did not have strong opinion in the case were not forced to make a decision by having to place a vote.

Apart from the Rules of the procedures for the Employment Committee there were annexed the Terms of reference to the Employment Committee's working groups: the Ad hoc group and the Indicators group. The Indicators group was established to assist the Employment Committee to select and develop indicators "required to monitor the Employment guidelines". The terms of reference of the Indicators group regulated the work, the number of members, who would be President and where the Support should be placed. The Support team of the Indicators group was the same as for the Employment Committee and the President was one of the vice-presidents of the Employment Committee. The Indicators group's task was to develop indicators and statistics.

All these different rules constrained the way in which decision-making was made. Even though some rules were not followed there were informal rules of how it usually worked in the Committee.

The Work programme

Apart from the rules that shape the Committee and the rules that govern the Committee there were also rules for what should be discussed. The Committee together with the Commission gave a proposal on what should be on the work programme for the year. The work programme was based on the political agendas of the two Presidencies of the year, the agendas of the Council and the agendas of the Commission. However, the work programme was to a large extent effected by the sitting Presidency. The different Presidencies have different policy areas that they give priority to. This also affected the work at the Commission, since they had to prepare documents for the meetings.

The Employment Committee members discussed the work programme, which was then decided on in the Council. The work programme defined the work in the Committee. There might be changes during the year but if the Council members had asked the Committee members to agree on an opinion in a certain area before a certain date they had to do so. This shaped the decision-making process and what knowledge the decisions may be based on.

Unwritten rules when presenting

Some of the unwritten rules in the Committee were the rules that had to be followed in presentations. These rules had to be mastered to able to give the argument and influence the policy process. The members had to know when to speak, what to say and how to say it. As Schwartzman points out a formal meeting needs, apart from rules of who starts and ends meetings, who has the right to call and so forth, "…a series of rules and conventions for ordering and regulating talk…" (Schwartzman 1989:70). Boden continues on the same note and argues that "Meetings are, by the very nature, talk. Talk, talk, talk and more talk. But who talks when, to whom, and for how long is no casual matter" (Boden 1994:82). According to Richards (1971:2) these rituals are one of the features that distinguish a council, i.e. a formal meeting, from other gatherings when people exchange views (Richards 1971:2).

I am interested in how the members talk in the meetings and how talk is regulated. Here, I will discuss the rules that may be observed in the Committee meetings. These rules were not explicitly expressed or written down but had to be learnt by the members either through learning-by-doing or by someone explaining them to them. They were rules that the members had to know to be able to put forward their opinion in the group. However, these rules were only possible to learn at the meetings or by asking someone before (until now).

As I was walking to one of the Indicators group meetings with two Swedish members of the Indicator group, Marie and Annika, we discussed the meeting rituals. It was both Marie's and Annika's first time at the Indicators group meeting and I asked them jokingly if Anders, another Swedish member, had informed them about the rituals at the meeting: how they asked for the word, that they had to speak in the microphone, and so forth. He had not. I explained to them how to ask for the word in the meeting. I told them that they had to put the member state sign on its end. I continued: When the President gives you the word, you put on the microphone and put forward your opinion. You have to speak in the microphone because otherwise the interpreters cannot hear and interpret. They wondered how to put on the microphone. I answered that I am not sure but I thought that you pressed a red button on the side of the microphone. They asked if the President began with Belgium and then went country by country in alphabetic order. I answered that the members were given the floor in the order of their signalling that they wanted to talk. Not everyone has to talk and sometimes not everyone does. I continued and said that sometimes the President might not be sure which opinion was in majority and then he/she might ask everyone to give their opinion. I carried on and explained how the meetings were structured: When the President had ringed the bell and he/she went through the agenda and informed if there were any changes. When the agenda was approved we turned to the points of the day. The President always gave the word to the Commission representative first. The Commission representative presented the report that the civil servants at the General directorate had prepared and then the floor was given to the members. The Commission representative was there to defend the Commission document but many times with work in progress the Commission was also eager to have suggestions from the member states.

During dinner that evening Marie and Annika gave Anders a hard time for not telling them how to do in the meeting. They informed him that I had

been at their service. Anders answered that I had now earned my place in the Swedish delegation (20021105).

The meeting, as a place of decision-making, is formed in different ways. In the Employment Committee it is stipulated what their areas of interest are, who will be members, who will suggest what to discuss and so forth. The meeting may be seen as the garbage-can where only certain set of problems, solutions, choice opportunities and participants are available. However, the garbage-can does not stand by itself. The Employment Committee meetings are also dependent on other meetings, as we have seen above.

The rules of the meeting may be seen as rituals. Power discusses in terms of rituals of verification (1999[1997]). What he suggests is that audits do not function as tools to evaluate practices and businesses in an objective manner. More accurately, they are rituals that give the impression of verification. In the same way the rituals or rules for making the decisions in the Employment Committee may give legitimacy rather than knowledge for the decision. In the Employment Committee it is not that the indicators produced are robust or politically neutral that make them legitimate but fact that the decision has been made in a correct manner: in a meeting, with a president, through consensus-decision (see for example Meyer and Rowan 1991[1977]:43-44).

However, it is not only rules and rituals that shape the decision-making process even though they are important to legitimise the decision.

Meeting translocally

Other factors that shaped the decision-making process, due to the inter/trans-state character of the meeting, were the conflicting roles of the members, who represented their member states and the EU, as well as being both experts and as politicians[7]. In addition the different languages spoken in the meeting and their interpretations made it more difficult for the members to understand each other. Another feature that made it problematic for the members to understand each other was the different ways of presenting in the meeting. The members came from different bureaucratic cultures where different ways of presenting – short and 'effective' or long and 'elegant' and everything in between – were encouraged. Meetings were a way to organise transnational actors. But

---

[7] Also see Tamm Hallström (2004:114) discussion on the expert role in ISO committees.

what did it mean for the decision-making process that the members were from different member states?

Conflicting roles?

The members of the Employment Committee and of the Indicators group were all civil servants serving their member state or the Commission. In that sense they may be seen as a homogenous group. There have been discussions on, in relation to power of the bureaucracy both in the member states and in EU, if there should be 'representative bureaucracy' i.e. a bureaucracy that represents the characteristics of the population (Kingsley in Peters 2001:89). However, the civil servants in the Committee were recruited, according to the Weberian tradition, by merit rather than by representation. The people I hung around with in the Commission and in the Swedish delegation were all middle or upper class (not to say they had always been), well educated and all white. The people at the Commission also often spoke several languages, at least three. Several of them had experiences of working or studying abroad and may be described in Hannerz's terms as cosmopolitans, i.e. "people who sees the experience of cultural diversity as a value in itself" (1996:10). They were used to moving around in different cities in Europe taking part in meetings and conferences as part of their work.

But even if they all were bureaucrats they came from different bureaucratic traditions and bureaucratic cultures, which were visible in the meetings, as we shall see below. The members had different national traditions in presenting their opinion, which were sometimes opposing each other. This challenged the idea of creating a European meeting where everyone may be understood. At the same time they had to agree as Europeans. The fact that the members had to present national opinions and represent their member state also had other consequences. It challenged the idea of them being their as experts. If they had dual roles both as state representative and EU representatives they also had dual roles both as experts and as politicians.

Apart from these roles they also attended the meeting as individuals with different fears and preferences. Some people seemed shy when presenting while other could go on forever (regardless of "national" stereotypes). Having sympathy or not for a person might also be of importance for the decision-making process. The President of the Indicators group once said to me that he wished he could conclude in favour of a one member state in the Indicators group meetings once in a while because the member was very

well argued and bright and he was liked in the group. However, the politics he represented was not favoured by most of the others. On the other hand people knowing you might also be negative. The member of the same member state in the Employment Committee was not very liked by several of the other members both because of his politics and his manners.

Here I am not interested in how the individuals change or how they achieve a self. I am interested in the 'roles' as such. I am only interested in the individuals' personalities if they affect the 'roles' in the meeting. How all these different roles were used had consequences for the decision-making process.

Being a national or a European

What does it mean that the members are state representatives and, at the same time, committee members? In the meeting the members were there as representatives of member states or the Commission. The Commission represented the European and worked in the interest (or at least should) of the whole of EU. The Commission produced the background documents and as producers of the document they tried to defend it in the Employment Committee. The member state representatives defended their national opinions, prepared "at home" in relation to the Commission documents. Apart from these different positions clashing against each other the Committee members also had to agree as a group. They had to form decisions that may be accepted by all. The members had to take on different roles at different occasions in the decision-making process. The members from the member states had to be both nationals and Europeans.

These different roles became most distinct in the role of the Presidents in the Employment Committee and the Indicators group. The Presidents were elected among the member state representatives. While being a President her/his work was to represent the Committee, not a member state. Her/his role was dual already there because even if her/his perspective should be the Committee's perspective he/she still was part of a member state delegation and took part in the preparatory meetings preparing for the Employment Committee meeting in the member state.

Nevertheless, regardless of her/his national affiliation the President's job was to help the Committee agree as a group. In the work of the European Union the Commission is understood to represent the EU while the member states are understood to represent their nation-states. The President's work was to try to bring the different positions in line with each other and find a

position that could be accepted by all. This discussion pertains to the idea of creating a European identity. This idea is embedded in the idea of supranationalism, i.e. of the creation of a European state (see for example Shore 2000:54).

However, let us return to the transnational elite. They travelled back and forth between Brussels and their member states or worked in Brussels and called somewhere else home. This transnational elite was constructed partly by the different meeting that needed their attendance. As Nanz points out: "The increasing mobility of Europeans has produced 'transnationalised' spaces of professional and everyday life experience that transform one's sense of belonging" (Nanz 2000:290). This means that the roles of the individuals cannot be seen as either national or European in the context of the European Union and especially the context of the Employment Committee. Rather the members' roles in the meetings, was sometimes to defend the national position and, sometimes to make a European compromise. It depended on at what time in the decision-making process the members were. When the members were discussing and negotiating they might have conflicting roles and defending national position but when the decision had to be made they had to assume compromising roles and decide on an EU position.

Being an expert or a politician

As stipulated in the Council decision the Employment Committee should consist of high-ranking officials or experts. In the Swedish delegation all the members in the Employment Committee, the Ad hoc group and the Indicators group were civil servants in the Ministry of Industry. They had been appointed on their merits of being experts on employment and labour market policy. The members from the Commission were also civil servants or Eurocrats as they were sometimes labelled.

These civil servants worked with policy development. They were not street-level bureaucrats as discussed by for example Herzfeld (1992), Ahrne (1989), Lipsky (1980). The members of the Committee were not the people that would try to implement the politics. Their job was to try to assist the politicians with information and tools to evaluate policies and make new once. They were seen as experts that would give the politicians expert advice, i.e. based on scientific facts and politically neutral. A long tradition in the Western world is to distinguish between the civil servant and bureaucrat as the expert and the politician or ruler as the public representative in government (see for example Weber 1946). The idea is

that civil servants are rational, and rely on scientific knowledge for decision-making (Herzfeld 1992:74). The politicians or rulers on the other hand base their decisions on political values and ideologies. This assumption has of course been challenged and with this a discussion have opened on who actually has the power to make decisions, the civil servants or the politicians (Peters 2001:222). Peters points out that especially transnational organisations such as the European Union makes it easier for bureaucrats to have their own agenda since much of the standards of service come from the public bureaucracy rather than from the political level of government (Peters 2001:222-223).

However, Peters conclude that even though the bureaucrats have gained more power to influence decisions in the decision-making process this power has improved the quality of policy position (Peters 2001:220). I will have to take his word on that. I do not feel in liberty to say if they have improved or not. The point to be made though is that the civil servants working in the Employment Committee were part of the decision-making process and as such they had the possibility to make their input both as experts and individuals with values and ideology. In the Employment Committee the experts' role was also made even more problematic because the member state members had to act in the name of the state and present a national opinion. The traditional idea of the difference between the civil servant who is the expert and the elected politician who make policy is blurred (see for example Weiss and Wodak 2000:76). The members did not only have to put forward their expertise on indicator and statistics and the employment situation in their member states. They also had to keep track on where in the diagram their member state would end up if a certain indicator was chosen. As the President of the Employment Committee put it:

> I think we have two questions here from the Ministers: How bad is my country going to look? How does this relate to the Luxembourg process [i.e. European Employment Strategy]? (Employment Committee 20011120).

The dual role of the members as both experts and politicians shaped the decision-making process by guiding the discussions and the negotiations in the meetings in such a way that both arguments of expertise and arguments of political goals were used in the meetings.

Mixes of language

Another element that shaped the decision-making process in the Committee was the mixes of languages. Language was important since the defining of

concepts and the writing of opinions were the most important part of the Committee's work and also the 'materialised' part of the work. Language use is a form of power. As Bourdieu (1977:170-171) argues the power to name things is the power to organise and give meaning to experiences. However, to name things and give meaning in different languages creates certain problems. During the meetings at least English, French and German (in the Indicators group) and often Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Greek (in the Employment Committee and the Ad hoc group) were spoken with interpreters translating directly at the meeting. The speakers of other languages had to use one of these languages. The Presidents always began the meeting by telling which languages were available:

> You may speak in French, German, English, Italian, Spanish, Greek and Portuguese and you may listen to English, French, German, Italian and Spanish" (Employment Committee 20011120).

The mixes of languages had consequences for the understanding of each other. The interpreters did not always know the correct term to use in the discussion so the members had to make their own translations of the translations. It was also always difficult to listen to long contributions that were translated because sometimes the point was lost on the way. During lunch in one of the Indicator group meetings (20020429) I asked two of the Swedish delegates if they spoke French. Susanne did not and Malin did a little. Susanne pointed out that it sometimes was difficult to understand what was said during the meeting despite the translations. However, this was not discussed as a big problem. Nevertheless, they had reflected on it in regards to their own use of English. The Swedish delegation did have an informal policy to speak in English even when the Swedes could have demanded translation (as in the Council meetings) since they believed that their point would get through better in English.

English was also the mostly used language as an interim language. In fact, informally it was agreed that English should be the only language spoken in the Employment Committee but as we have seen this was not the case. However, the documents were discussed in the English version. When an opinion from the Committee was to be sent to the Council the members had to agree on the wording of the opinion. The President usually guided the members by going through the document paragraph by paragraph. To be able to understand what consequences a sentence might have it was important to know English well. To be able to suggest new sentences you also had to know English well. The English mother tongue speakers always had a bit of an advantage since they also had the authority when new

suggestions were on the table. They were trusted to have the competence to say: "this does not mean anything in English" or "in English it has another meaning". As I met the new President in the Employment Committee half a year after I finished my fieldwork I asked him how it was to be President. He said that it was interesting but one of the most difficult tasks was to make suggestions to new drafts since his mother tongue was not English.

The use of English by non-mother tongue users also had other consequences. The English used in the EU context had to be made simple. Mark, a native English speaker working in the Employment Committee Support team, sometimes complained that his English was deteriorating since he had been working in the Commission. He had to write simplistic English that all the members could understand. In his home country the writing of English text was considered an art form but in the Commission he could not use and train his skills because then the non-native speaker would not understand. I heard from others that it was the same with French, the other official Commission language. In fact, there is a new language developed in the context of EU. It is discussed as Eurospeak (Shore 2000:134) both by scholars and the informants themselves. It is a multi-lingual technical expert discourse, which is influenced by both French and English (Bellier 2000:66). As an informant in Shore's book said: "Ours is a language of compromise… we are creating a new language: a Euro-pidgin language" (Shore 2000:181).

Apart from the simplistic English and French, Eurospeak is characterised by an overabundance of Euro-acronyms and legal concepts such as the *acquis communitaire*[8], which is not even translated into English (Shore 2000:188-189). Eurospeak may then be seen as a common language shared by the members in the Employment Committee. However, this was truer of the Commission members than the member from the member states. Even if documents were discussed in simplistic English the translation of the words also had to be anticipated. In one of the drafting sessions, one of the German delegates pointed out that there was no proper German translation of "quality in work". He said that we had to find a wording that would make sense in German (Employment Committee 20011004).

The mixes of languages shaped the decision-making process. In the meetings there had to be interpreters that translated the different languages. There may be misunderstandings due to fact that the members were

---

[8] The "acquis," as it is informally referred to in the Commission, is the name of all EC's legislative acts.

working in different languages in a context where wordings were very important. And even though they shared some degree of Eurospeak/or the English language the concepts still had to be translated to make sense in the members' home countries.

Bureaucratic culture

In the decision-making process it was not only the language as such that made people understand each other or not. As Vandermeeren (1999:275) points out non-native speakers tend to interact according to socio-cultural norms, which govern their use of their first language. This is also valid in the context of the Employment Committee meetings. Even though a majority of the members used English as their second language the speech style of presenting an opinion differed between different member states. The different techniques in presenting became especially clear when people spoke their own language, which was then interpreted.

Some members presented their opinion by giving long speeches while others set out three points and then present them in an 'efficient' manner. These differences were often referred to as national differences pertaining to culture. Susanne, a Swedish delegate, said with a smile on her face: 'If everyone was as quick as the Swedes the meetings would be over much sooner'. Malin, another Swedish delegate, continued and said that she had difficulties in concentrating when other member states spoke for a long time. Susanne and I agreed.

Among my colleagues at the Commission the talk of national differences was certainly if not a daily subject then a subject discussed several times a week. One of the first days I was in the Commission, Mark (a Brit on secondment from the British Parliament working in the Support team) and I went out for a beer. We were talking about national differences. Mark gave an example from the Employment Committee meetings. Mark said that the French, the Italians and the Spaniards always begin their presentation at the meeting by thanking the people who had written the paper while the Swedes and the Finns went directly to the point. He said with a laugh that the French, Italians and the Spaniards had not even the time to put their headphones on before the Swedes and the Finns finished their contributions (20010915).

The Swedes and Mark seemed to have a similar view of how Swedes were in the meetings. As Herzfeld points out "…people everywhere adopt rhetorical strategies on the basis of a presumed 'national character.' Their

efficiency lies not in their recognition of some unchanging reality, but in their appeal to the conventions of collective self-representation. A German bureaucrat might feel some pressure to demonstrate 'efficiency,' a Brit to show impatience with 'excessive bureaucracy,' a French civil servant to argue in the idiom of 'rationality' (Herzfeld 1992:72).

However, the members did not always live up to the stereotypes. The Swedes as well as many other member state delegations, not just the Southern Europeans, did thank the Commission for producing the document and so forth. In fact, thanking the Commission seemed to be a shared conversation style. As Vandermeeren points out a group that meet regularly are able to negotiate a conversation style that is acceptable to all (Vandermeeren 1999:275). This should not be exaggerated though. In the Employment Committee meetings there were hardly a common conversation style even though there were some shared features and EU acronyms regarding employment and labour market policy.

The different ways of presenting had different consequences. The long presentations caused some members not to listen to the whole contribution while short presentation had the consequence that some did not have time enough to put their headphones on, as exemplified above. The attention span seemed to differ. While some members thought it was most important to make their point as fast as possible others valued making their point in long elegant sentences. This seemed by the first group to be a waste of the others time and therefore not always worth listening to.

Concluding discussion

This report has been about the decision-making process in meetings. Meetings are important to study since it is in meetings organisations, especially transnational organisations, become most visible. In this case the meeting is almost the only place where member states and the Commission meet face-to-face since people are dispersed all over Europe. It is in the meetings that different political institutions of the EU and members states meet and build the European Union.

When decision-making processes are considered in organisation theory it is possible to focus on the structure and/or the actors. This report has been about the structure: How the meeting format shapes the decision-making process. I have discussed different factors. Two factors that constrain the meeting as such are the place and the time of meeting. The fact that the members have to meet face-to-face makes the place important. I have

discussed how meeting face-to-face is important for building relationships and trust. The time of the meeting shapes the decision-making process for two reasons. First, the time is limited by the fact that the members have to meet face-to-face in meetings. The members cannot stay indefinitely in the meetings. Second, because the meetings are depended on other committees' and councils' meeting cycles.

Formal meeting, or bureaucratic meetings as I prefer to name them, often have rules about who may take part in the meetings, who will be chairperson, when and where the members will meet, who sets the agenda, what they will discuss. These rules are written down and explicitly expressed. In this case both the Council decision and the rules of procedures are such rules. Meeting may also have unwritten rules such as different rituals when taking the floor in the meeting. These rules are not written down, but they could be and that is why I call them rules instead of for example norms. I have described these different rules in relation to the Employment Committee. The rules in the meeting have a ritualising effect. They are rituals of verification or rather *rituals of legitimation*. It is not the knowledge and the indicators produced in the committee that makes the decision legitimate but the fact that it is decided in the right way: in a meeting, with a chairperson, through consensus decision-making and so forth.

However, it is not only rules and rituals that shape the decision-making process even though they are important to legitimise the decision. There are other factors especially in a transnational committee such as the Employment Committee that are important. These are the different roles the actors have to assume, both as nationals and as Europeans, and both as experts and politicians. The mixes of languages are another factor that influences the way the members understand each other. The same goes for the differences in bureaucratic cultures that are visible in the different ways members present their opinions. All these different structural factors affect the decisions made in the Committee.

The conditions for transnational policy-making are in this way affected by the meeting format since it is in the council, committee and group meetings that EU policies are discussed, negotiated and decided on. It is in the meetings where the members from the European Commission and the member states meet face-to-face and it is in the meetings where the formal decisions are made. In this sense, meetings become a particularly important arena for study in transnational organisations since it is in the meetings the

transnational organisation is given concrete form. Transnational organisation have in common that their practice is performed in meetings. The Council of the European Union may have a Council building but the building is mainly made up of meeting rooms. The only more stable organisational form except the meetings are the committee, group and council meetings' secretariats. The member states' members and the Commission members move in and out of the meetings and the meetings become the place where EU policy is decided on.

References

Ahrne, Göran. 1989. *Byråkratin och statens inre gränser.* Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren.

Barbier, Jean-Claude. 2001. Assessing the European Employment Strategy: Some Preliminary considerations. Presentation to the Seventh Workshop on

Behning, Ute & Amparo Serrano Pascual (red.). 2001. *Gender Mainstreaming in the European Employment Strategy*. Brussels: ETUI.

Bellier, Irène. 2000. The European Union, Identity Politics and the Logic of Interests' Representation. In *An Anthropology of the European Union. Building, Imagining and Experiencing the New Europe*. Irène Bellier and Thomas M. Wilson (eds.). Oxford: Berg. (pp 53-74)

Biagi, Marco. 2000. 'The Impact of the European Employment Strategy on the Role of Labour Law and Industrial Relations'. *The International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*, 16(2).

Boden, Deirdre. 1994. The Business of Talk. Organizations in Action. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, Michael D, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen. 1982 [1976]. People, Problems, Solutions and the Ambiguity of Relevance. In *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations*. James G. March and Johan P Olsen (eds.). Bergen: Universitetsforlaget.

Council of the European Union. 2000. *Council Decision 2000/98/EC.* Official Journal of the European Communities.

De la Porte, Caroline and Philippe Pochet (eds.). 2002. *Building Social Europe Through the Open Method of Coordination*. Brussels: PIE Peter Lang.

Douglas, Mary. 1986. *How Institutions Think*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Foden, David and Lars Magnusson (eds.). 1999. *Entrepreneurship in the European Employment Strategy*. Brussels: ETUI.

Foden, David and Lars Magnusson (eds.). 2000. Contested Territory. Entrepreneurship in the European Employment Strategy. SALTSA Brussels: ETUI.

Garsten, Christina. 1994. *Apple World. Core and Periphery in a Transnational Organizational Culture.* Stockholm: Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology, 33. Dissertation.

Goetschy, Janine. 1999. 'The European Employment Strategy. Genesis and Development'. *European Journal of Industrial Relation*, 5 (2), pp 117-137.

Goetschy, Janine. 2001. The European Employment Strategy, Multi-level governance and policy coordination: Past, Present and Future. Unpublished paper.

Goetschy, Janine & Philippe Pochet. 1997. 'The Treaty of Amsterdam: A New Approach to Employment and Social Affairs?'. *Transfer*, 3(3), pp (KOLLA).

Goffman, Erving. 1983. 'The Interaction Order: American Sociological Association, 1982 Presidential Adress'. *American Sociological Review,* 48(1), pp 1-17.

Hannerz, Ulf. 1996. *Transnational Connections. Culture People Places*. London: Routledge.

Hasselström, Anna. 2003. *On and Off the Trading Floor. An inquiry into the everyday fashioning of financial market knowledge.* Stockholm University: Dissertation, Department of Social Anthropology.

Herzfeld, Michael. 1992. *The Social Production of Indifference. Exploring the Symbolic Roots of Western Bureaucracy*. London: The University of Chicago Press.

Jacobsson, Kerstin. 1999. *Employment Policy in Europe: A New System of European Governance?*. SCORE Research Report 1999:11.

Jacobsson, Kerstin, Karl-Magnus Johansson, Magnus Ekengren. 2001. *Mot en europeisk välfärdspolitik? Ny politik och nya samarbetsformer i EU*. Stockholm: SNS Förlag.

Jacobsson, Kerstin and Vifell, Åsa. 2004. New Governance Structures in Employment Policy Making. Taking Stock of the European Employment Strategy. In *Economic Governance in the EU*. Linsenmann, Meyer and Wessels (eds.). Houndsmill Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave.

Keller, Berndt. 2000. The New European Employment Policy or: Is the Glass Half-full or Half-empty?. In *Transnational Industrial Relations in Europe*. Reiner Hoffman et al. (eds.). Dusseldorf.

Kern, Stephen. 1983. *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Kuper, Adam. 1971. Council Structure and Decision-making. In *Councils in Action.* Audrey Richards and Adam Kuper (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lafoucrière, Céline. 2000. The European Employment Strategy. The Third Pillar: Adaptability. *ETUI working paper DWP* 2000.01.03.

Langley, Ann, Henry Mintzberg, Patricia Pitcher, Elizabeth Posada and Jan Saint-Macary. 1995. 'Opening up Decision Making: The view from the Black Stool.' *Organization Science,* 6(3), pp 260-279.

Lipsky, Micheal. 1980. *Street-Level Bureaucracy.* New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922 (1984). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.* Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press Inc.

March, James G, Martin Schulz and Xueguang Zhou. 2000. *The Dynamics of Rules. Change in written organizational codes.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Martin, Emily. 1997. Managing Americans – Policy and changes in the meanings of work and the self. In *Anthropology of Policy. Critical perspectives on governance and power.* Cris Shore & Susan Wright (eds.). London: Routledge.

Meyer, John W and Brian Rowan 1991[1977]. Institutional Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. In *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis.* Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (eds.). London: The University of Chicago Press.

Meyer, John W, Richard W. Scott, David Strang and Andrew L. Creighton. 1994. Bureaucratisation Without Centralization: Changes in the Organizational System of U.S. Public Education, 1940-1980. In *Institutional Environments and Organizations. Structural Complexity and Individualism.* Richard W. Scott and John W. Meyer (eds). London: SAGE Publications.

Myers, Fred R. 1986. 'Reflections on a Meeting. Structure, Language, and the Polity in a Small-Scale Society.' *American Ethnologist,* 13(3), pp 430-447.

Nanz, Patrizia Isabelle. 2000. In-between Nations: Ambivalence and the Making of a European Identity. In *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other.* Bo Stråth (ed.). Brussels: P.I.E-Peter Lang.

Nickerson, Catherine. 1999. The use of English in electronic mail in a multinational corporation. In *Writing Business. Genres, Media and Discourse.* Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini and Catherine Nickerson (eds.). Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Ltd.

Perrow, Charles. 1986[1972]. *Complex Organizations. A critical essay 3rd edition.* London: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Peters, Guy B. 2001. *The Politics of Bureaucracy 5th ed.* London: Routledge.

Power, Michael. 1999[1997]. *The Audit Society. Rituals of Verification.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Richards, Audrey. 1971. The Nature of the Problem. In *Councils in Action.* Audrey Richards and Adam Kuper (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schwartzman, Helen B. 1989. *The Meeting. Gatherings in Organizations and Communities.* London: Plenum Press.

Serrano Pascual, Amparo (ed.) 2000. *Tackling Youth Unemployment in Europe.* Brussels: ETUI

Shore, Cris. 2000. *Building Europe. The Cultural Politics of European Integration.* London: Routledge.

Simon, Herbert A. 1961[1957]. *Administrative Behavior. A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization.* New York: The Macmillan Company.

Tamm Hallström, Kristina. 2004. Frivilligt för de starka – standardiseringsarbete i praktiken. In *Den organiserade frivilligheten.* Magnus Boström, Anders Forsell, Kerstin Jacobsson and Kristina Tamm Hallström. Malmö: Libers förlag.

Thedvall, Renita. 1998. Flexibel Arbetskraft som EU fråga - aktörer, arenor och perspektiv. Report.

Thedvall, Renita. 2004. 'Do it yourself:' Making Up the Self-Employed Individual in the Swedish Public Employment Service. In *Learning To Be Employable. New Agendas on Work, Responsibility and Learning in a Globalizing World.* Christina Garsten and Kerstin Jacobsson (eds.). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thedvall, Renita. Forthcoming 2005a. *'Eurocrats' at work: Transnational co-operation and cultural dynamics in the construction of EU employment policy* (preliminary title). Dissertation.

Thedvall, Renita. Forthcoming 2005b. "Quantifying the qualitative": att översätta politik till siffror (preliminary title). In *Kloka regler? Kunskapen i regelsamhället.* Karin Fernler and Claes-Fredrik Helgesson (eds.).

Vandermeeren, Sonja. 1999. English as a lingua franca in written corporate communication: findings from a European survey. In *Writing business. Genres,*

Media and Discourse. Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini and Catherine Nickerson (eds.). Harlow, Essex: Longman.

van Vree, Wilbert. 1999. Meetings, Manners and Civilization. The Development of Modern Meeting Behaviour. London: Leicester University Press.

Weber, Max. 1946. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Translated, Edited, with an Introduction by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Weiss, Gilbert and Ruth Wodak. 2000. Debating Europe: Globalization Rhetoric and European Union Unemployment Policies. In *An Anthropology of the European Union. Building, Imagining and Experiencing the New Europe.* Irène Bellier and Thomas M. Wilson (eds.). Oxford: Berg. (pp 75-92)