

## Two Worlds of Europeanisation – Unpacking Models of Government Innovation and Transgovernmental Imitation

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### Keywords

educational policy, EEA-agreement, European Commission, Europeanisation, governance, leadership, network approach, Norway, OECD, organization theory, RTD policy, sovereignty, UNESCO, political science

### Abstract

Whereas domestic public policy is increasingly penetrated by international organisations, domestic government institutions seem less adaptive. This puzzle triggers the following question: To what extent is the Europeanisation of domestic Research and Higher Educational policy (R&E policy) crafted by domestic government? Put more starkly, how intimate relationships exist between domestic government decision-making and domestic policy? The rationale of this article is to unpack two supplementary models of Europeanisation. First, a model of 'Europeanisation by innovation' derived from an organisation theory perspective emphasises a tight coupling of ministerial decision-making and R&E policy. Secondly, a model of 'Europeanisation by imitation' derived from a network approach advocates a loose coupling of government decision-making and R&E policy through transgovernmental processes of imitation. Reporting from the area of R&E policy and based on survey data on civil servants in the Norwegian Ministry of Research and Education (MRE) (N = 190), this study indicates that Norwegian R&E policy has become Europeanised whilst the decision-making processes of MRE has become only moderately Europeanised. The analysis merely indicates a partial de-coupling of MRE decision-making and the Europeanisation of R&E policy. The Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy seems only partly steered and forged by the domestic top ministerial leadership, and partly affected by the import of policy models from international governmental organisations.

### Kurzfassung

Während die interne Politik zusehends von internationalen Organisationen durchdrungen wird, scheinen nationale Regierungsinstitutionen weniger anpassungsfähig. Diese Ungereimtheit zieht folgende Frage nach sich: In welchem Ausmaß ist die Europäisierung nationaler Forschungs- und höherer Bildungspolitik (F&B-Politik) durch die Regierungen geformt? Krasser formuliert, welche enge Verbindungen bestehen zwischen der Entscheidungsfindung nationaler Regierungen und der internen Politik? Dieser Beitrag enthüllt zwei ergänzende Modelle von Europäisierung. Zuerst unterstreicht ein Modell der "Europäisierung durch Imitation", abgeleitet von einem Netzwerk-Ansatz, eine lose Koppelung der Entscheidungsfindung von Regierungen an ihre Forschungs- und Bildungspolitik durch transgouvernementale Imitationsprozesse. Aus dem Bereich der Forschungs- und Bildungspolitik berichtend und basierend auf Umfragedaten von Beamten des Norwegischen Forschungs- und Bildungsministeriums (MRE) (N=190), macht diese Studie kenntlich, dass die norwegische Forschungs- und Bildungspolitik europäisiert wurde, während die Entscheidungsprozesse des MRE lediglich moderat europäisiert wurden. Die Analyse gibt bloß eine teilweise Entkoppelung der MRE-Entscheidungsfindung und der Europäisierung der Forschungs- und Bildungspolitik zu erkennen. Die Europäisierung der norwegischen Forschungs- und Bildungspolitik scheint nur teilweise durch die oberste ministerielle Führungsebene gesteuert und geschmiedet zu sein und scheint teilweise beeinflusst durch den Import von Politikmodellen internationaler Regierungsorganisationen.

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## Introduction <sup>↑</sup>

Current literature pictures two complementary models of territorial nation-state governance in an era of accelerating Europeanisation. The first model argues that territorial governance by nation-states is severely challenged and hollowed out by multiple cross-border networks and transactions (e.g. Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003; Kohler-Koch, 2003; Rosenau, 1997; Wessels, Maurer and Mittag, 2003). The second model claims that territorial governance by nation-states is upheld despite the existence of multiple cross-border networks, and that processes of Europeanisation ultimately is crafted by government executives (Holsti, 2004; Moravcsik, 1998). The *main rationale* of this study is to unpack the causal mechanisms underneath these models. The *secondary aim* is to illustrate the empirical validity of each model within one domain of nation-state governance – research and higher educational policy (R&E policy).

This article poses the following question: To what extent is the Europeanisation of public policy governed by domestic government institutions? Put more starkly, how intimate relationships exist between government decision-making and public policy (Kohler-Koch, 2003, 11)? Reporting from the area of R&E policy, the research question is phrased as follows: To what extent is the Europeanisation of domestic R&E policy crafted by domestic government? The main rationale of this article is to unpack two models of Europeanisation of domestic public policy. The secondary ambition is to illustrate these models within the domain of R&E policy. The research hypothesis is that the decision-making of the Norwegian Ministry of Research and Education (MRE) ultimately forms Norwegian R&E policy ([H1](#)). The alternative hypothesis is that R&E policy is loosely coupled to MRE decision-making and forged by the dynamics of transgovernmental imitation ([H2](#)).

The scarce empirical data available, however, render thorough empirical testing of these hypotheses impossible. The empirical observations presented below merely suggest that Norwegian R&E policy reflect a mix of government innovation and transgovernmental imitation. Norwegian R&E policy is ultimately the result of governmental decisions to innovate and transgovernmental processes of imitation. The empirical observations benefit from a survey, conducted in 2003, on the decision-making behaviour among Norwegian MRE civil servants (N=190).

Domestic public policies are increasingly penetrated by abrupt and piecemeal transformational pressures from IGOs. This tendency is documented in the recent power and democracy-studies in Denmark and Norway, and also observed within the field of R&E policy (Geri, 2001; Tøgeby et al., 2003; Østerud, Engelstad and Selle, 2003). Moreover, whereas some scholars picture IGOs as key motors in the transformation of nation-state policies (Cowles, Caporaso and Risse, 2001; Kohler-Koch, 2003; Wessels, Maurer and Mittag, 2003), others advocate that the IGO-effect is moderate and strongly associated with existing domestic government institutions, traditions and practices (Anderson, 2002; Holsti, 2004; Olsen, 2003a). These contending conclusions reflect the complex, puzzling and poorly understood linkages between IGO-dynamics and nation-state transformations (Radaelli, 2004). Among the paradoxical observations is the fact that domestic policy change seems imperfectly associated with institutional transformations at the EU level (Olsen, 2003a). At the more generic level, these puzzles highlight poorly understood dynamics between the formal organisation of government institutions and the public policy crafted by it (Egeberg, 2003). This article suggests that two worlds of Europeanisation of R&E policy are fostered by two supplementary causal mechanisms: First, 'Europeanisation as innovation' is seen as crafted by the government organisation and leadership ([H1](#)), and secondly, 'Europeanisation as imitation' is fostered by loosely coupled transgovernmental networks ([H2](#)).

Since World War II the level of international co-operation in the field of R&E has increased substantially among European scientists, universities and nation-states, notably within the EU. Arguably, the Norwegian case is *critical* because the EU membership versus non-membership distinction has become a continuum rather than a clear-cut dichotomy. Nation-states have different forms of affiliation to the EU as well as different degrees of interaction with different Union bodies (Egeberg and Trondal, 1999; Stubb, 1996). Due to the EEA agreement and several supplementary sector-agreements([1](#)), Norwegian decision-makers have become half-way members of the decision-making cycles of the European Commission (Trondal, 2004). Despite having rejected full EU membership, Norway is currently an associate member of the EU through various sectoral treaties and agreements with the Union on areas like in the Justice and Home Affairs, Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Internal Market and R&E. In the field of R&E the distinction between EU membership and non-membership is ambiguous due to Norway's participation in EU's educational and research programmes (Olsen, 1998; St.meld. nr. 40 (1993-94)). The Norwegian participatory status in the EU resembles that of the EU member-states in the field of R&E. Consequently, EU governance has become increasingly relevant for Norwegian R&E policy. Still, Norway remains formally a non-member of the Union with no voting rights in the Commission, the Council of Ministers or the European Parliament. Hence, Norway represents an important laboratory for studying processes of Europeanisation of R&E policies. This owes to the fact that Norwegian R&E policies are *less likely* to be affected by EU policies than that of other EU member-states.

The dependent variable of this study is the Europeanisation of domestic R&E policy. The next section highlights two worlds of Europeanisation. These two models differ with respect to the underlying independent variables causing domestic policy change. Arguably, the Europeanisation of R&E policy reflects government decisions to innovate (H1) as well as transgovernmental processes of imitation (H2). Both these causal mechanisms produce the same end-product: domestic policy convergence, signifying that domestic public policy is becoming increasingly penetrated by and similar to EU policy. Hence, the same empirical observations (Europeanisation) may reflect different causal mechanisms (H1 and H2).

Different yardsticks are suggested in the literature to measure Europeanisation (Olsen, 2003b). Scholars measure Europeanisation by focusing on particular processes of policy shaping, policy-making, policy implementation, and policy re-formulation at the domestic level of governance (e.g. Rometsch and Wessels, 1996). Other scholars emphasise particular institutional and constitutional traits of the EU together with aspects of institutional adaptation at the national level (e.g. Egeberg, 2001; Knill, 2001). This study, however, measures Europeanisation mainly by particular aspects of *policy output*. The degree of Europeanisation is measured by assessing the degree of *convergence in policy content* across levels of governance. The content of politics refers to the problems to be solved, the objectives to be reached, the normative basis for solutions, as well as the instruments applied for implementation (Bennett, 1991, 218). Overall, the Europeanisation of domestic R&E policy goes largely beyond legal ‘harmonisation’ and transposition. Policy convergence has more to do with the advent of similar policy goals and policy rationales across levels of governance. Hence, our assessment of policy convergence derives from official policy documents, not from legal texts. *Extensive Europeanisation* signifies existing core-properties of domestic policy being replaced by a comprehensive new supranational policy. *Moderate Europeanisation* implies a merger or integration of supranational and national policy (Hèritier, 2001, 44).

The article proceeds as follows: The next section outlines two complementary models of Europeanisation that advocate different causal mechanisms of policy change. The first model of ‘Europeanisation as innovation’ builds on an organisational theory perspective emphasises an intimate and causal relationship between ministerial governance and policy dynamics (H1). Assuming a less intimate relationship between government decision-making and R&E policy, a model of ‘Europeanisation as imitation’ is suggested. This model derives from a network approach (H2). The third section introduces the empirical record. The empirical analysis proceeds in two steps. Step I accounts for the Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy on the basis of existing bodies of research. Step II analyses the decision-making behaviour of civil servants in the Norwegian MRE. The empirical analysis indicates that present Norwegian R&E policy has become increasingly Europeanised (Step I) whilst the decision-making processes of the MRE has become only moderately Europeanised (Step II). The analysis thus *indicates and illustrates* a de-coupling of government decision-making (Step II) and actual processes of Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy (Step I). The Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy seems only partly steered and forged by the Norwegian government (H1) and more strongly associated with transgovernmental processes of imitation through IGOs such as the European Commission, the OECD and UNESCO (H2).

## 1. Two Worlds of Europeanisation <sup>↑</sup>

We may envisage two distinct worlds of Europeanisation of R&E policy. First, a world of ‘Europeanisation as innovation’ advocating a causal chain between government decision-making and R&E policy (H1), secondly, a world of ‘Europeanisation as imitation’ claiming that Europeanisation is fostered by transgovernmental processes of imitation that is loosely coupled to government decision-making (H2). Arguably, the Europeanisation of domestic R&E policy reflects inbuilt tensions between policy innovation and imitation. This section suggests one reform-optimistic organisation theory perspective to account for the model of ‘Europeanisation as innovation’ (H1). Secondly, a reform-pessimistic network approach is advocated to account for the model of ‘Europeanisation as imitation’, picturing a loose coupling of government decision-making and R&E policy through transgovernmental processes of imitation (H2). Combined, H1 and H2 maximise the criteria of analytical parsimony and power in accounting for the Europeanisation of domestic R&E policy (Wildavsky, 1987, 4).

### H1: Europeanisation as innovation <sup>↑</sup>

This model of Europeanisation derives from an organisation theory approach by assuming a direct and intimate relationship between the formal organisation of public administration, the decision-making processes being evoked and ultimately the public policy produced (Egeberg, 2003). This approach shares the classical assumption of Samuel E. Finer, namely that “the regime type influences the politics of the regime” (Qvortrup, 2003, 135). This is a reform-optimistic perspective arguing that the R&E policy observed is a direct product of wilful political-administrative leaders who have comprehensive insights into and power over administrative reform processes (Christensen and Lægreid, 2002, 24). Comprehensive or first-order reforms of R&E policy are crafted by powerful executive institutions with relevant means-end knowledge and considerable political and administrative resources (March and Olsen, 1989).

This perspective departs from the assumption that formal organisational structures mobilise systematic biases in public policy because formal organisations provide cognitive and normative shortcuts and categories that simplify and guide decision-makers’ behaviour and role enactment (Schattschneider, 1975; Simon, 1957). Organisations provide cognitive maps that simplify and categorise complex information, offer procedures for reducing transaction costs, give regulative norms that add cues for appropriate behaviour as well as physical boundaries and temporal rhythms that guide decision-makers’ perceptions of relevance with respect to public policy (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; March and Olsen, 1998). Government officials resemble the ‘administrative man’ faced with computational limitations with respect to the potential mass of problems, solutions and consequences present (Simon, 1957). Owing to the bounded rationality of decision-makers, the horizontal specialisation of government organisations systematically reduces the attention of decision-makers into a limited number of relevant considerations (Gulick, 1937). Moreover, by carving the organisation into vertical hierarchies of rank and command the decision-making behaviour evoked by civil servants is guided by the political-administrative hierarchy through disciplinarian and control (Lægreid and Olsen 1978, 31). According to Wildavsky (1987, 6), “[h]ierarchy is institutionalized authority”. Public policy is thus the result of hierarchical imposition and horizontal departmentalisation of organisational structures where mutually exclusive groups of participants, problems, alternatives and solutions reside (Olsen, 2003a). This perspective also departs from an instrumental approach that sees political and administrative leaders as instruments which may be utilised to realize desired goals (Egeberg, 2003).

In the case of Europeanisation of R&E policy, this process is pictured as forged by the Norwegian government apparatus (the MRE), having its own organisational capabilities, permanent staff, routines, economic resources, distinct reform-language, and shared mental maps. The Europeanisation of R&E policy becomes an embedded bureaucratic routine forged by the horizontally and vertically organised Ministry. The government apparatus is not a neutral tool available to the political majority in office, and there is not a neat separation between a political and an administrative sphere of governance. R&E policy is crafted by the vertical ministerial hierarchy of political will and administrative command, and convened within horizontally specialised ministerial units and divisions (Gulick 1937).

According to this perspective, processes of Europeanisation of domestic policy are not driven by “voluntary” imitation among individual civil servants. Rather, R&E policy has emerged as an independent policy area supported by a formal administrative apparatus with established routines for reform, permanent staff, formalised infrastructure and economic resources (Kehm, 1999, 373; Teichler, 2004, 2). Whereas the first European universities had strong links to the global Catholic Church, present day universities are government agencies in the pursuit of domestic policies for research training and the production of excellent candidates. Moreover, IGOs like the OECD and increasingly also the EU have set new standards and rules for R&E policy to which domestic R&E policies should comply. IGOs are not neutral vessels that merely aggregate the R&E policies of the member-states but transformative institutions with independent R&E policies, administrative capacities and fiscal resources to reform the R&E policies of the member-states (Marcussen, 2002). Mechanisms of Europeanisation are increasingly the result of international hard laws (like EU directives), international financial incentive systems (like EU’s Framework programmes), and international soft laws/standards (like those in the Bologna process). Hence, the conception of ‘Europeanisation by innovation’ implies that domestic R&E policies are crafted by legal rules, codified norms and routinised standards established by domestic government *and* IGOs (Brunsson and Jacobsson, 2000; Kohler-Koch, 2003; Olsen, 2003a).

According to this perspective the decision-making behaviour of MRE officials is likely to be reflected in the R&E policy crafted by this Ministry. The Europeanisation of R&E policy is thus fostered by an *ex ante* Europeanisation of decision-making behaviour among the MRE civil servants. Moreover, observed correlations between (i) government decision-making and (ii) R&E policy indicate a *causal* effect from (i) to (ii).

## H2: Europeanisation as imitation

There is a growing literature on governance by network, or ‘governance without government’, which champions that public policy is less intimately associated with government hierarchy and less bound to the nation-state (Bogason and Toonen, 1998, 214; Kohler-Koch, 2003). Networks are seen as “informal, intricate and unstable with an unlimited number of participants” that contribute to mutual interpenetration of actors, problems and solutions from different branches of government (Van Warden, 1992, 30).

Domestic civil servants, university rectors and individual researchers constantly engage in transgovernmental networks that transcend the control of the domestic ministerial leadership (Jönsson, 2001, 205). These networks blur several government levels, notably the national and supranational levels of government. Transgovernmental networks cut across territorial borders and involve domestic civil servants as autonomous, interdependent and interwoven partners (Marin and Mayntz, 1991, 18).

Transgovernmental networks may be normative networks providing norms of appropriate R&E standards, and they may be epistemic networks with shared assumptions of causal relations between for example the organisation of university systems and the production of excellence (Haas, 1992). Transgovernmental networks may be strongly institutionalised, providing the participants with shared preferences, identities and beliefs, and they may be loosely connected issue networks with few endogenous dynamics (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992). Transgovernmental networks foster the emergence of complex, overlapping and interconnected webs of actors, problems and solutions that cross-cuts and challenges domestic governance (Kohler-Koch, 2003, 12). Arguably, domestic civil servants may adopt shared perceptions of appropriate R&E policy by participating in transgovernmental networks (Sahlin-Andersson, 2002). Often based on informal and interpersonal actor-constellations, the frequency and intensity of contact among the network-members may cause a transgovernmental socialisation of the participants (Börzel, 1998, 259; Rhodes and Marsh, 1992, 184). Studies suggest that tightly coupled networks may develop distinct norms, rules and practices that contribute to an international standardisation of policy (e.g. Brunsson and Jacobsson, 2000). Transgovernmental networks represent webs of poorly co-ordinated government institutions and decision-makers, accompanying uneven and fragmented processes of Europeanisation of public policy within different domestic government institutions (Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch, 2004). Consequently, the emergence of transgovernmental networks are likely to contribute to fragmented, segmented and loosely coupled domestic R&E policies.

Transgovernmental networks are sometimes formalised within IGOs, like the DG Research of the European Commission and the web of EU committees (Marcussen, 2002; Trondal, 2004). Formalised policy networks tend to change from being pure *exchange relationships* of independent actors to become institutionalised networks that socialise the network participants towards shared perceptions of appropriate policy standards (Egeberg, Schaefer and Trondal, 2003; Richardson, 1996; Sahlin-Andersson, 2002, 45). IGOs like the UNESCO codify, compare and categorise reform concepts and integrate national officials in webs of expert committees where they become partly re-socialised into cosmopolitan advocates of international policy doctrines (Sahlin-Andersson, 2002). Domestic administrative institutions and civil servants embedded into formalised transgovernmental networks tend to engage in international copying of best practices and imitate international standards of appropriate R&E policy (Massey, 2004, 25).<sup>(2)</sup> In EU phraseology, formalised transgovernmental processes of imitation is labelled the Open Method of Coordination targeted on “a process of mutual learning based on peer pressure” (Kaiser and Prange, 2002, 4). Processes of imitation of best practice tend to reduce local search for innovative solutions simply because there seems to be an inbuilt tension between imitation and innovation (Olsen, 2004, 6). In sum, the conception of ‘Europeanisation by imitation’ advocates that the Europeanisation of domestic R&E policy is less forged by domestic government decisions to innovate than by loosely coupled processes of imitation where government institutions and civil servants imitate what is perceived as legitimate and efficient European standards of R&E.

For centuries the norms, resources, organisational capacities, routines and personnel pertaining to the formal organisation of domestic public administrations was loosely coupled to domestic government. Particularly, the field of research and higher education was loosely coupled to nation-state governance (Weick, 1976). Since medieval times one endogenous aspect of R&E has been its insensitivity to national borders and national governance (Scott, 1998; Teichler, 2004). During these periods, students and university teachers were internationally free floaters between the best universities in Europe (Amaral, 2001, 124). Moreover, in the middle ages the Catholic Church, through the international Church administration, the Catholic educational system and the common Latin vocabulary, was an important facilitator of organisational standards of R&E throughout Europe.



National top civil servants were socialised into European cosmopolitans through the Catholic Church. European universities also contributed to secular learning and socialisation of national civil servants and contributed to shared notions of appropriate policy standards among top civil servants in Europe (Knudsen, 2002). According to this picture, R&E policy in Europe was subject to transgovernmental diffusion and learning among individual civil servants, researchers and students. There was a lack of domestic organisational capacities, recourses, routines and traditions for instrumentally manipulating the R&E policy. Henceforth, R&E policy was loosely coupled to domestic governance.

This conception of ‘Europeanisation by imitation’ emphasises Europeanisation of R&E policy as the outcome of transgovernmental diffusion and learning of shared standards, often limited to small groups of civil servants engrained into transgovernmental networks that share some basic perceptions of appropriate R&E standards (Knudsen, 2002, 38). These processes of transgovernmental imitation are less guided by government steering than by learning processes among pan-European circles of civil servants and by external actors such as management consultants, independent ‘think-tanks’ and academics (Knudsen, 2002, 39; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000, 20). Europeanisation also resulted from endogenous processes at the university and faculty level, de-coupled from government actions and initiatives from supranational institutions (Van der Wende, 1997a). Hence, “[p]rocesses of internationalisation are neither supported nor effectively hindered by government actions...” (Gornitzka, Gulbrandsen and Trondal, 2003, 26). This is the century-old mode of “voluntary” Europeanisation where domestic R&E policy mirrors those of neighbouring countries, governments and ministries (Engel, 2003, 244). “Due to lack of trial-and-error learning across time, actors often search for learning across space – internationally – in order to reach desired goals” (Gornitzka, Gulbrandsen and Trondal, 2003, 27).

## 2. Method and data

The empirical observations offered in [Step II](#) of the empirical analysis are based on a survey among A-level civil servants in the Norwegian MRE (officials involved in policy-shaping duties which require a university education). The survey, conducted in 2003, is based on a standardised questionnaire mailed to all A-level civil servants of the MRE (281). The response rate of the survey is 68 per cent, giving a sample of 190 respondents. This response rate equals the response-rate in similar survey studies in the Norwegian central administration (e.g. Christensen and Egeberg, 1997).

As indicated, the empirical analysis follows in two steps. Drawing on existing bodies of empirical research as well as Green and White papers from the Norwegian government and the European Commission, [Step I](#) reports on the Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy. [Step II](#) applies the above survey data to analyse the decision-making behaviour of the MRE officials. One methodological caveat is needed: Evidence of correlation between the decision-making behaviour of MRE officials ([Step II](#)) and the Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy ([Step I](#)) is merely an *indication* of causation, not proof thereof. Hence, the main ambition of the following empirical analysis is only to illustrate [H1](#) and [H2](#), not thoroughly test them. Correlations can be causally related either ways. For example, a creeping Europeanisation of R&E policy may foster a *post hoc* Europeanisation of government decisions. However, our interpretation is the orthodox one ([H1](#)): Evidence of a perfect match between decision-making processes and policy dynamics is interpreted according the organisation theory perspective.

### 3. Research findings

#### Step I: The Europeanisation of R&E policy

The European Commission has weak legal, administrative and financial capacities for reforming domestic administrative policy (Olsen, 2003a). However, the post WWII period has witnessed a proliferation of IGOs of which some have demonstrated capabilities for changing domestic R&E policies, notably the WTO, UNESCO and the European Commission (Gornitzka, Gulbrandsen and Trondal, 2003). The European Commission has directed increased attention to the formal organisation of the executive bodies within the member-states in order to secure effective implementation of EU *aquis communautaire*.

Today, the R&E policy of the EU has become increasingly complex and penetrates large aspects of academic life (Trondal, 2002). Recent White and Green Papers from the European Commission, particularly on the “European Research Area” (ERA) initiative, reflect a strong determination and commitment to develop and strengthen an independent EU policy of R&E (e.g. European Commission, 2000). According to the European Commission (2000, 7), “[w]e need to go beyond the current static structure of ‘15 + 1’ towards a more dynamic configuration”. Efforts towards EU co-operation in the field of higher education are more recent than in the field of research. Yet, a comprehensive supranational EU policy of R&E has gradually emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. Whereas EU initiatives in R&E were mainly supportive to nation-state policies prior to the 1980s, 1983 witnessed the emergence of a ‘supranational turn’ in R&E policy (Trondal, 2002). This turn has gained increased momentum thereafter (Beukel, 2001; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2001, 187; Field, 1997; Ruberti, 2001). The Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties have later confirmed this supranational shift, however, counterbalanced against the Maastricht principle of *subsidiarity* (Beukel, 2001). Reflecting this supranational turn, European ideas and visions increasingly dominate the Commission’s arguments for closer EU co-operation in R&E (e.g. European Commission 2000). Less emphasis is put on arguments of supplementing, strengthening and co-ordinating national policies of R&E (Beukel, 2001).

This supranational turn in R&E policies does not include the parallel intergovernmental “Bologna process” aimed at constructing a “European Higher Education Area” (De Wit and Verhoeven, 2001, 186). The Bologna declaration (1999) is an inter-state process calling for a new architecture of European higher education. Its ambition is to create an open European area for higher education, create systems for international recognition of degrees, strengthening intra-European mobility and the competitiveness of European higher education internationally. The launch of the European Commission “ERA” initiative on January 18, 2000 (European Commission, 2000) follows up the intergovernmental declarations from Bologna and has introduced new dynamics to EU’s R&E policies (Hackl, 2001; Van der Wende, 2001). The ERA initiative is pictured as “the most ambitious effort yet to co-ordinate and integrate research policy in Europe” (Banchoff, 2002, 13). ERA is also an effort to move EU’s research policy from mere redistributive towards more regulative measures. In order to implement the ERA, the Commission adopted the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP) on February 21, 2001 (Council of the European Union, 2001; European Commission, 2001). The primary focus of the 6<sup>th</sup> FP illustrates this supranational turn: Focusing and integrating Community research; structuring the European Research Area; and strengthening the foundations of the European Research Area (Council of the European Union, 2001, Annex 1). Both the ERA and the 6<sup>th</sup> FP indicate that the European Commission has become inspired by the “Bologna process”.

After centuries of internationalisation of the university institution, nation-states increasingly define R&E politics as endogenous to their territorial sovereignty (Frölich, 2004; Neave, 2001, 17). The R&E policies of IGOs like the European Commission increasingly penetrate domestic R&E policies of the member-states (Trondal, 2002). IGOs are indeed transformative institutions with independent impact on domestic standards of appropriate R&E policy (Olsen, 2003a). For example, Finnemore (1996) reveals that the widespread trend of establishing national research councils reflects the fact that countries adopt OECD and UNESCO standards of how to administer research activities. IGOs are both transgovernmental epistemic communities and transgovernmental normative communities that re-socialise national civil servants (Trondal, Marcussen and Veggeland, 2004). Those domestic civil servants participating in IGO expert meetings become carriers of R&E policy standards (H2). IGOs are transformative institutions where R&E standards are imported, adjusted and exported as well as arenas where national civil servants learn about them. The increased power of IGOs within the field of R&E policy has caused Norwegian MRE officials to re-direct their attention, energy and resources towards the activities of the IGOs (see the next section). EU governance has become vital for Norway in many respects (Olsen, 1996). The Norwegian government adapt to EU regulations and standards on a daily basis (Claes and Tranøy, 1999; Egeberg and Trondal, 1997; Jacobsson, Læg Reid and Pedersen, 2004). Moreover, Norwegian MRE civil servants and officials from the Norwegian Research Council participate in Commission expert committees and comitology committees on a weekly basis. One of the most notable effects of EU governance in R&E is that MRE officials participate, interact and learn directly at the EU level in relation to the FPs (Olsen, 1998; Statskonsult, 1999; Trondal, 1998).<sup>(3)</sup> Studies demonstrate that the Norwegian Research Council participate most heavily within the EU committees compared to other Norwegian directorates (Trondal, 1998).

Studies also indicate that the net tendency of domestic policy adaptation towards EU's R&E policy is probably more convergent than divergent (Green, 1997, 179). In the Norwegian case, one convergent trend is that Norwegian policy-makers and policy documents have directed increased and enduring *attention* towards the emerging EU policies of R&E. An increased Norwegian awareness of intra-European student and research mobility, particularly through inter-institutional agreements, is an apparent policy effect of EU's R&E programmes (Innst.S.nr. 337 (2000-2001), 16; Olsen, 1998; St.meld. nr. 27 (2000-2001); St.prp. nr. 1 (2001-2002), 152; Van der Wende, 2001). Another development in Norwegian R&E policy that most directly relates to EU's R&E policy have to do with the question of student mobility and inter-institutional co-operation (Gornitzka, Gulbrandsen and Trondal, 2003; Van der Wende, 1997b, 238). EU's emphasis on organised student and research mobility in Europe is reflected in a greater emphasis put on the implementation of a harmonised degree structure (ECTS) and a harmonised grade structure (bachelor and master) from the Norwegian government. Also, the deadlines and aspiration-levels of the Norwegian R&E policy is increasingly mirroring EU's deadlines and aspiration-levels, notably the objectives set out at the Lisbon European Council in March 2000. In the shadow of the EU ambition of achieving 3 per cent of GDP to be spent on research by 2010, the present Norwegian MRE minister has voices similar ambitions.

The Norwegian R&E policy seem to be in transition (Trondal, 2002). The Europeanisation of the Norwegian higher educational policy is mainly targeted at organised student mobility through the ERASMUS networks, now embedded into the SOCRATES context (Gornitzka, 2003). Moreover, the research priorities of the Norwegian government are increasingly becoming similar to those of EU's FPs (Trondal, 2002). Examples of compatible research goals and initiatives are several. Among them are the establishment of Centres of Excellence, the implementation of 'excellent young researchers' and the initiative to establish a Nordic Research Area (NRA).

The launch of ERA and NRA has accompanied plans to create a European Research Council (ERC) and a Nordic Council for Research and Innovation in 2005. In addition to provide opportunities for transgovernmental research funding, these supranational Research Councils may provide arenas for European benchmarking exercises and for socialising national research council officials.

Norwegian R&E policy thus adapts to the R&E policies of the EU. However, there is room left for national governance. For example, the recent Norwegian White Paper on R&E considers EU's ERA initiative largely supplementary and supportive to pre-existing Norwegian policy priorities (e.g. St.meld.nr. 27 (2000-2001)). Moreover, the Norwegian Research Council (2001a, 1) states that it "is generally in agreement with the proposed specific programmes implementing the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme". The Research Council (2001b, 1) also agrees "with the overall Scientific and Technological Objectives as well as the main targets for the new Framework Programme...".

Despite the supranational turn in EU's R&E policy the corresponding Norwegian R&E policies have become incrementally adjusted to it. At present, Norwegian policies of R&E seem also strongly penetrated by broader intergovernmental processes in R&E, notably the "Bologna process" and the WTO negotiations on the "General Agreement on Trade in Services" (GATS) (Field, 1997; Van der Wende, 2001) (H2). There are several unresolved questions when it comes to the status of R&E in a global economy with multilateral trade liberalisation. One of the most pertinent issues relates to the global free trade agreements and whether higher education should be treated as "public good" or "tradable services" (Mallea et al., 2001).(4) The Bologna declaration has led to greater emphasis on accreditation, mobility and lifelong learning. The GATS negotiations have put additional emphasis on the commodification of R&E, moving from a conception of 'education for free' to 'education for fee'. These aspects are also introduced in recent Norwegian White Papers on R&E. Whereas Norwegian R&E policies have traditionally rested on a mix of academic, cultural, political and economic rationales, recent reforms have been increasingly biased towards uni-dimensional arguments of cost-effectiveness and societal utility. Current Norwegian R&E policy should therefore be considered the result of existing national priorities and broader global trends towards the commodification and organisational de-regulation of R&E institutions (Trondal, 2002). The next section aims at illustrating how decision-making processes within the Norwegian MRE may account for the Europeanisation of the Norwegian R&E policy already described.

## Step II: Decision-making behaviour among MRE officials

Our survey data reveals that every third Norwegian MRE official work on EU dossiers (33 per cent). (5) By comparison, Egeberg and Trondal (1997) report that an increased percentage of Norwegian civil servants, at the ministerial level, work on EU dossiers (24 per cent in 1976 and 33 per cent in 1996). Another indicator of Europeanisation of decision-making behaviour is the extent to which civil servants copy European standards of best practice. Whereas 68 per cent of the Norwegian civil servants did this in 1996, 66 per cent of current MRE officials report that they copy models or best practice from other European countries (Egeberg and Trondal, 1997, 347).(6) Similarly, 45 per cent of the MRE officials report that they copy models and best practices from IGOs.(7) These findings indicate that transgovernmental processes of imitation (H2) are important mechanisms of Europeanisation within the Norwegian MRE. These observations also indicate that bilateral imitation (among states) is more important than multilateral imitation (through IGOs). "Norway seemed to reform some time after Britain" (Olsen, 1996, 16) (H2).

Finally, 46 per cent of the MRE officials report that they are affected by the EU and/or the EEA agreement, mirroring the general tendency that Norwegian civil servants increasingly participate in EU institutions and become penetrated by EU institutional dynamics (H2) (Egeberg and Trondal, 1997, 351; Jacobsson, Læg Reid and Pedersen, 2004; Trondal, 2004).<sup>(8)</sup> However, comparative studies also indicate that Norwegian civil servants are less internationally oriented and less active participants within EU institutions than Danish, Finnish and Swedish government officials (Jacobsson, Læg Reid and Pedersen, 2004; Trondal and Veggeland, 2003).

Table 1 reveals the national and international contact patterns among MRE officials.

#### Table 1

The contact pattern evoked by MRE officials is clearly associated with the vertical MRE hierarchy by the fact that their contacts are strongly directed towards their own politico-administrative leadership (H1). The contact pattern is also strongly associated with the horizontal ministerial organisation by the fact that the amount of contact is stronger within than across ministerial borders. Notably, whereas 67 per cent of the officials have contacts with agencies beneath their own ministry, only 16 per cent report contacts with agencies underneath other ministries (H1). Moreover, the contact patterns are directed more strongly within their own ministry than towards IGOs. The most important contact-point internationally is the European Commission, OECD, UNESCO and the Nordic Council of Ministers (ordered by preference) (H2). Finally, MRE civil servants have more contact towards 'other IGOs' (15 per cent) than towards the Norwegian Parliament (7 per cent). These findings *indicate* that transgovernmental imitation (H2) indeed supplement government innovation within the realm of the domestic government apparatus (H1).

The MRE officials were also asked to indicate if they have participated in EU committees "one time or more" during the last year (2003). Ranked by frequency, 22 per cent reported participating in other international committees and 13 per cent in Commission expert committees. However, few MRE officials are active participants in these international committees. While 24 per cent report giving oral presentation in 'other IGOs' "fairly often or more", 15 per cent report giving oral presentations in Commission expert committees "fairly often or more". This level of activity is slightly below average compared to officials from other Norwegian ministries, let alone officials from other EU member-states (Beyers and Trondal, 2004).

Next, Table 2 reveals the concerns deemed important to MRE officials.

#### Table 2

Civil servants have several organisational affiliations and cues for action, and also multiple role expectations (Jacobsen, 1960). Table 2 clearly shows that MRE civil servants take into account several considerations when making decisions within their own portfolio. Notably, Table 2 demonstrates that the decision-making behaviour of MRE civil servants reflect the vertical specialisation of the MRE by the fact that they emphasise signals from their 'own' politico-administrative leadership (H1). MRE officials are also Weberian bureaucrats who take into account procedures and laws, and they are professional experts who emphasise professional considerations. Furthermore, MRE officials are 'modern' civil servants who emphasise modernisation and reform. Considerable less importance is assigned to the interest of other countries and IGOs. Those IGOs considered important are (ranked by preference) the EU, OECD and UNESCO. In sum, the decision-making behaviour of MRE officials is governed by multiple concerns, notably by government

hierarchy and the horizontally organised units and divisions, professional considerations and rule compliance (H1).

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In addition, the MRE officials were invited to assess claims concerning the degree of behavioural discretion available to them. According to H1 the decision-making behaviour evoked by government officials are guided by formal rules and codified norms. The data, however, indicates that whereas 61 per cent of the MRE civil servants report that they “always” decide on the basis of their professional expertise, 38 per cent act on behalf of hierarchical instructions. Moreover, whereas 26 per cent of the officials claim that they “always” choose what decisions they should take, 17 per cent “always” have clear instructions about what decisions they should take. Hence, contrary to H1, the degree of behavioural discretion available to MRE officials is fairly great. At the same time, the majority of the officials are governed by clear rules and practices (71 per cent)(9). Hence, despite MRE officials consider themselves as professional experts with behavioural discretion at their disposal (H2), they are also governed by ministerial rules, established practices and hierarchical command (H1).

To underscore the above observations, Table 3 reveals the institutions deemed important by MRE officials.

#### Table 3

MRE officials generally perceive their own politico-administrative leadership as important. Notably, the administrative leadership is considered more important than the political leadership, reflecting their corresponding contact patterns (Table 1) (H1). Hence, those assessments reported in Table 3 reflect the vertical and horizontal organisation of the MRE: Officials have more contact with their own politico-administrative leadership than with other ministries, and more contact with agencies beneath their own Ministry than with agencies below other ministries. Importantly, the Norwegian Parliament is considered important to 63 per cent of the officials. Hence, despite few MRE officials have personal contacts with the Parliament (Table 1), this institution is deemed important. This observation suggests that the Parliament may affect ministerial decision-making through anticipated reaction (H1). Finally, Table 3 demonstrates that IGOs are considered less important than domestic government institutions. MRE officials consider the European Commission and ‘other IGOs’ as the most important IGOs. A trend towards wider international research and educational co-operation beyond the EU is also observed in other European states (Van der Wende, 1997b, 234).

The MRE officials were also invited to respond to the following assertions:

#### Table 4

Consistent with the findings in Tables 1, 2 and 3, Table 4 demonstrates that the decision-making behaviour of MRE officials is strongly guided by their domestic leadership, their professional expertise and ministerial rules and practices (H1). Table 4 reports that the majority of MRE officials do not consider IGOs as more important today than “earlier”. In fact, bilateral contacts with governments in other countries are deemed equally important as the European Commission and the ESA.

The final question targeted is to what extent H1 and H2 explain the Europeanisation of the decision-making behaviour of MRE officials. The Europeanisation of decision-making behaviour is operationalised with the following two proxies: (i) the amount of working time used on EU dossiers and (ii) the extent to which MRE officials are affected by the EU and/or the EEA.

In the following OLS regression analyses, H1 is tested by the two following proxies: (i) Formal rank position of MRE officials, and (ii) the extent to which MRE officials have leadership tasks. H2 is measured by the following two proxies: (iii) the extent to which MRE officials copy models from other countries and from (iv) IGOs.

Table 5

Table 5 reveals few significant coefficients and should thus be *interpreted with caution*. One notable observation is that involvement in EU/EEA related work is associated with copying models from other countries and particularly from IGOs (H2). Furthermore, MRE officials with leadership tasks and MRE officials in top rank positions are affected and involved less strongly in EU/EEA related work than officials with no leadership tasks and officials in low rank positions. These latter observations indeed challenge H1. Hence, the MRE is most strongly Europeanised among those officials that engage in transgovernmental processes of imitation, notably by importing models from IGOs (H2), and particularly in the lower echelons of the ministerial hierarchy. According to Teichler (2004, 17), this observation resembles a partial de-governmentalisation of R&E policy.

## Conclusions <sup>↑</sup>

Teichler (1996, 341) considers research on the internationalisation of domestic policies of R&E as "occasional, coincidental, sporadic or episodic". By contrast, the scholarly field of Europeanisation represents a growing research industry (e.g. Radaelli, 2004). This study illuminates a mixed picture of Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy. We are witnessing creeping supranational R&E policies at the EU level, especially related to the question of European mobility of students and researchers and inter-European networking generally (Step I). However, despite the emergence of creeping supranational R&E policies Norwegian R&E policies have adapted only moderately towards these policies (Step II). The supranational turn in EU's R&E policy has not yet contributed to a radical Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy. Norwegian R&E policy is not replaced by a comprehensive new Community policy but is supplemented by different policy elements, particularly from the EU. This conclusion correspond to more general observations that, "[t]here are no signs ... that point towards changing the core responsibility of the nation-state in (higher) education" (De Wit and Verhoeven, 2001, 225).

Combining the insights of Step I and Step II from the above analysis, the Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy (Step I) seems partly de-coupled from the decision-making processes of the MRE (Step II) (H2). The Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy seems only partly steered and forged by the top ministerial MRE-leadership. The transgovernmental diffusion of administrative policy ideas has accompanied a loose coupling of government decisions and R&E policy (H2) (Van der Wende, 1997b, 233). These conclusions support Green (1997, 171), claiming that "[n]ational educational systems have become more porous in recent years. They have been partially internationalised through increased student and staff mobility [and] through widespread policy borrowing [transgovernmental networks] ...". The Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy thus resembles the model of 'Europeanisation by imitation' (H2). The mere fact that the MRE officials reported that UNESCO and OECD are more important than the Norwegian Parliament, demonstrates that transgovernmental processes of imitation are indeed an important mechanism of Europeanisation of MRE policy (H2).

However, the Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy seems also to be fostered by government decision-making and policy innovations (H1). However, the Europeanisation of R&E policy seems less coupled to government control than assumed by the organisation theory orthodoxy (H1). Processes of Europeanisation of Norwegian R&E policy seem to reflect learning and voluntary imitation within transgovernmental networks and only partly hierarchical imposition and innovation.

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## Endnotes <sup>↑</sup>

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(1) The European Economic Area (EEA).

(2) Such processes may be more or less conscious: It may be based on a utility-maximising calculus or borrowing best practice from others, or on a cognitive process of imitating environmental demands.

(3) The Commission committees and the comitology committees assist the Commission in relation to thematic and horizontal programmes under each FP.

(4) This involves officials devoting some, fairly much and very much of their working time on international issues.

(5) This involves officials devoting some, fairly much and very much of their working time on international issues.

(6) This involves officials collecting ideals very often, fairly often or sometimes.

(7) This involves officials collecting ideals very often, fairly often or sometimes.

(8) This involves officials who are affected to a very great extent, to a fairly great extent and somewhat.

(9) Value 1, 2 and 3 combined on the following five-point scale: very clear rules and practices (1), fairly clear rules and practices (2), both/and (3), I have to use fairly much discretion (4), I have to use very much discretion (5).

## Table I

**"Can you estimate how often you had contacts with the following during the last year"?\_\* (per cent)**

The political leadership (Minister, State Secretary and/or Political Advisors)	54
The administrative leadership (Director General, Secretary General)	86
Other sections or department in MRE	93
Other ministries	61
Agencies beneath the MRE	67
Agencies beneath other ministries	16
The Norwegian Parliament	7
The European Commission	10
The Council of Ministers	1
EFTA's Surveillance Authority (ESA)	2
Other EEA/EFTA institutions	7
Other IGOs	15
Mean N	177

\* Values 1 and 2 combined on the following five-point scale:  
very often (1), fairly often (2), both and (3), fairly seldom (4), very seldom (5).

## Table II

**"What importance do you assign to the following concerns when doing your work?"\_\* (per cent)**

Signals from the political leadership (Minister, State Secretary, Political Advisors)	83
Signals from the administrative leadership (Director General, Secretary General)	88
Professional considerations	95
Proper procedures, current law	92
Modernisation and reform	71
The interests of IGOs	29
Mean N	157

\* Values 1 and 2 combined on the following five-point scale:  
very important (1), fairly important (2), both and (3), fairly unimportant (4), very unimportant (5).

## Table III

**"How important are the following institutions when central decisions are made within your portfolio?"\* (per cent)**

Own political leadership (Minister, State Secretary, Political Advisors)	86
Own administrative leadership (Director General, Secretary General)	92
Other ministries	39
Agencies beneath the MRE	35
Agencies beneath other ministries	10
The Norwegian Parliament	63
The European Commission	20
The Council of Ministers	12
EFTA's Surveillance Authority (ESA)	12
Other EEA/EFTA institutions	13
Other IGOs	18
Mean N	154

\* Values 1 and 2 combined on the following five-point scale:  
very important (1), fairly important (2), both and (3), fairly unimportant (4), very unimportant (5).

## Table IV

**"Please consider the following assertions"\*: (per cent)**

"The European Commission has become more important than earlier within my portfolio"	27
"Other EU institutions have become more important than earlier within my portfolio"	22
"EFTA's Surveillance Authority (ESA) has become more important than earlier within my portfolio"	16
"Other international organisations have become more important than earlier within my portfolio"	26
"Bilateral contacts with governments in other countries have become more important than earlier"	31
Mean N	168

\* Values 1 and 2 combined on the following five-point scale:  
very correct (1), fairly correct (2), both and (3), fairly wrong (4), very wrong (5).



## Table V

**Factors relating to 1) the amount of working time officials use on EU dossiers, and 2) the extent to which officials are affected by the EU and/or the EEA agreement (beta) a, b**

	Working time on EU dossiers	Affected by the EU and/or the EEA agreement
(i) Formal rank position	-.07	-.21
(ii) Leadership tasks	-.09	-.16
(iii) Copying models from other countries	.16	.24*
(iv) Copying models from IGOs	.39**	.34**
R2 =	.27	.31

\*) p .05    \*\*) p .01

a) Diagnostics of collinearity between the independent variables in this table unveil no indications of extreme multicollinearity

b) *The dependent variables have the following values:*

Very important (value 1), fairly important (2), both/and (3), fairly unimportant (4), very unimportant (5).

*The independent variables have the following values:*

*Formal rank position:* Executive officer (1), higher executive officer (2), principal officer (3), assistant director general (4), deputy director general (5), director general (6), and positions over director general (7).

*Leadership tasks:*

Yes (1), No (2).

*Copying models from other countries and from international organisations:*

Very often (1), fairly often (2), sometimes (3), fairly seldom (4), very seldom (5).

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