EUROPE'S QUIET ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE OF MIGRANT INTEGRATION

Tracing EU-facilitated Learning in the European Integration Network

Julius Wersig
DPhil in Social Policy | University of Oxford | St Antony's College

Europe's Quiet Administrative Governance of Migrant Integration.
Tracing EU-facilitated Learning in the European Integration Network

Julius Wersig
St Antony's College | Submitted for the degree of DPhil in Social Policy | Trinity Term 2019

ABSTRACT

Amidst the so-called refugee and migration crisis, the 'European Integration Network' (EIN) was established in 2016 as a European Union soft-governance practice. The thesis analyses how administrators learn in soft-governance networks, studying in particular what mechanisms are involved in facilitating different types of learning and conditions under which they operate best. Studies on micro-level roots and mechanisms of learning are surprisingly scarce. Relying on 50+ interviews with EIN practitioners and documents, this thesis finds that facilitated networking and 'soft' interactions result in updating individual administrators' beliefs regarding policy instruments ('instrumental learning') and their paradigmatic frames ('paradigmatic learning'). This is triggered, amplified, and sustained by transformational conduits. Professional trust within peer groups determines which instruments administrators choose. Meanwhile, informal, emotionally-charged interactions with stakeholders frame instruments. Updated frames may in turn penetrate a trusted peer group with a specific instrumental focus. Alongside the organic interaction of conduits, their purposive activation in two ideal-type practices is explored: (i) platforming, recurrent interactions within a formal network structure, and (ii) elevating, accelerated experiences within network subgroups. The European Commission asserts itself in learning by managing the network and encouraging members with aligned paradigms and organisational resources to co-shape these practices. In particular elevating activates conduits that establish direct paradigmatic experiences resonating in subsequent networking. Findings are probed by exploring learning about Portuguese migrant one-stop-shops and Swedish collaborative governance. The probes underscore a social dimension of learning. Ties created at the elevating stage iterate back to the platform and compound network effects as peer groups re-shuffle and gateways open. Overall, the focus on administrative learning contributes to better understanding how soft governance operates quietly under the political or legalistic surface. Under the right conditions, exchange on policy instruments and frames about migrant integration appear more successful than posited by other studies.

Keywords

EU soft governance • learning practices & conduits • administrative networks • migrant integration

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without intensive discussions as well as encouragement to appreciate (and deal with) complexity and ambiguity, this dissertation would not look the same. And it would be about a tiny domestic challenge in the public management of labour markets. I am therefore indebted to Bernhard Ebbinghaus for moving from assessor to supervisor and providing guidance at all stages of this process. Your rigorous and thoughtful reading of my – often lengthy – material and your help in streamlining my writing were key for the project. I am also thankful to Paola Mattei for supervising the first year of the DPhil, as I was moving from labour markets into integration policy and from public management to governance and learning. Likewise, my assessors' feedback at all formally examined stages of the DPhil has played a vital role. Whether this was about the puzzle or research question, hypotheses, indicators or generally about bringing in the bigger picture and getting the details right – thank you, Christina Boswell, Marek Naczyk, and Duncan Snidal. Obviously, I am not forgetting colleagues and friends from DSPI and the Politics of Social Policy Research Group who gave feedback at various stages. I am grateful for the generous support of my studies by DSPI, particularly for supporting work on a topic that unfortunately not all social policy scholars recognise as a social policy challenge yet. This work would not have been possible without my interviewees. Thank you for your time and effort, whether it was carving out 20 minutes, replying to emails, sending material in languages I can barely read or being straight-talking about your experiences. I appreciate the work you do for improving integration policy, sometimes with significant political obstacles. Beyond the project, my cohort, the St Antony's community and excellent coffee at the Brew have made my time in Oxford worthwhile. Friends and family always had my back. Fortunately, Judith was a few steps ahead in getting her DPhil, helping me navigate through the Oxford limbo and weird customs more smoothly. I am glad that Yael re-calibrated the importance of the DPhil, making this individual project a bit of a group undertaking and a significant management and planning exercise.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT 1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2
TABLE OF CONTENTS 3
TABLES AND FIGURES 6
TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS 7
PREFACE 8
1 INTRODUCTION 9
1.1 MOTIVATION, PUZZLE AND RESEARCH QUESTION 9
1.2 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND CORE DEFINITIONS 12
1.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY 15
1.4 EMPIRICAL CASE BACKGROUND 18
1.5 CHAPTER OUTLINE 20
2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES ON GOVERNANCE AND LEARNING 27
2.1 EU OPEN COORDINATION AND NETWORK-BASED GOVERNANCE 27
2.2 CONCEPTUALISING LEARNING AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE 32
2.2.1 INSTRUMENTAL LEARNING 35
2.2.2 PARADIGMATIC LEARNING 37
2.2.3 CONSEQUENCES AND MEASUREMENT OF LEARNING 39
2.2.4 SUMMARY 43
3 TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK OF LEARNING WITHIN SOFT GOVERNANCE 44
3.1 TRANSFORMATIONAL CONDUITS 45
3.1.1 PROFESSIONAL TRUST 47
3.1.2 PEER GROUPING 50
3.1.3 SECRECY AND INFORMALITY 52
3.1.4 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT 54
3.1.5 EMOTIONAL CHARGING 57
3.2 CRISIS CONTEXT: QUALIFYING THE CONDUITS 60
3.3 SITUATIONAL ACTIVATION OF CONDUITS – ON THE FACILITATION OF LEARNING 64
3.3.1 THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AS FACILITATOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION AND LEARNING PRACTICES 64
3.3.2 PLATFORMING PRACTICES 67
3.3.3 ELEVATING PROCESSES 71
4 EMPIRICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH 80
4.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON A SINGLE CASE AROUND LEARNING 80
4.2 CASE SELECTION 82

4.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS 85
4.4 SUMMARY OF EXPECTED IMPLICATIONS AND INDICATORS 89
5 BACKGROUND OF EU MIGRANT INTEGRATION GOVERNANCE 92
5.1 LEGAL ORIGINS AND ESTABLISHMENT 92
5.2 POLITICAL UPGRADE OF NCPI NETWORK AMIDST THE MIGRATION CRISIS 97
5.3 FROM NCPI NETWORK TO EIN ARCHITECTURE 100
6 CORE MECHANISM COMPONENTS: CONDUITS OF LEARNING 107
6.1 CRISIS CONTEXT 107
6.2 PROFESSIONAL TRUST 111
6.3 PEER GROUPING 116
6.4 SECRECY AND INFORMALITY 125
6.5 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT 129
6.6 EMOTIONAL CHARGING 133
6.7 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSITIONS AND THEIR INTERACTIONS 134
7 SITUATIONAL FACILITATION OF LEARNING: ACTIVATING CONDUITS 137
7.1 PLATFORMING 138
7.1.1 NETWORK MANAGEMENT AND BASELINE MOTIVATIONS 138
7.1.2 CONTENT-LEVEL ACTIVITIES 151
7.1.3 DISCUSSION 158
7.2 ELEVATING 162
7.2.1 STUDY VISITS 162
7.2.2 NETWORK SIDE-STEPPING 167
7.2.3 DISCUSSION 172
7.3 EFFECTS OF EIN-LEVEL FACILITATED LEARNING BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL 174
7.3.1 CAPABILITIES 177
7.3.2 STYLE 179
7.3.3 STRUCTURES 181
7.3.4 DISCUSSION OF LEARNING EFFECTS BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL 182
7.4 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING PROCESSES – BRINGING TRANSFORMATIONAL CONDUITS AND SITUATIONAL SETTING TOGETHER 184
8 LEARNING ABOUT PORTUGUESE ONE-STOP-SHOP GOVERNANCE 190
8.1 MECHANISM CONTEXT 190
8.1.1 INTEGRATION POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT 191
8.1.2 OSS-APPROACH OF NATIONAL IMMIGRANT SUPPORT CENTRES 194
8.1.3 DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS EU-FUNDED BEST-PRACTICE 197
8.1.4 IMPLICATIONS 201
8.2 GRADUAL LEARNING ABOUT OSS GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE EIN – THE ROLE OF PLATFORMING AND ASSOCIATED CONDUITS 203

8.3 ACCELERATED EXPERIENCES SUSTAINING LEARNING – THE ROLE OF ELEVATING AND ASSOCIATED CONDUITS 209
8.4 PROCESS OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS 214
9 LEARNING ABOUT SWEDISH COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE 223
9.1 MECHANISM CONTEXT 223
9.1.1 SWEDISH INTEGRATION POLICY – HIGH AMBITION, MAJOR CHALLENGES 224
9.1.2 SUPPORT GROUP NETWORK'S COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE RESPONSE 228
9.1.3 IMPLICATIONS 231
9.2 GRADUAL EMERGENCE OF SGN INTO EIN CIRCUITS – THE ROLE OF PLATFORMING AND ASSOCIATED CONDUITS 232
9.3 ACCELERATED LEARNING AND COMPOUNDING OF SOCIAL EXPERIENCES – THE ROLE OF ELEVATING AND ASSOCIATED CONDUITS 237
9.4 PROCESS OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS 249
10 CONCLUSION: QUIET ADMINISTRATIVE LEARNING AS SOFT GOVERNANCE ENGINE 253
APPENDIX 270
i CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS 270
ii INTERVIEW GUIDELINE 272
References 274

TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Types of Learning 34
Table 2: Summary of Propositions 90
Table 3: Empirical Indicators/ Required Qualitative Evidence 91
Table 4: Emergence of Integration as EU-Level Topic 97
Table 5: Structural EIN Properties 101
Table 6: EIN Activities 2016-18 105
Table 7: Network Management Activities 144
Table 8: Learning Indicators beyond the Individual 175
Table 9: Intensities of Acting 176
Table 10: Portuguese CNAI Activities 198
Table 11: Implications of Institutional and Policy Environment 202
Table 12: Platforming: Entities and Activities, Conduits, and Implications 204
Table 13: Elevating: Entities and Activities, Conduits, and Implications 209
Table 14: Best Practice Portugal and According Interactions 215
Table 15: Implications of Institutional and Policy Environment 231
Table 16: Platforming: Entities and Activities, Conduits, and Implications 232
Table 17: Elevating: Entities and Activities, Conduits, and Implications 238
Table 18: Best Practice Sweden and According Interactions 250

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework 14
Figure 2: Stylised Model Administrative Learning 44
Figure 3: Towards a Crisis – First-Time Asylum Seekers in Europe 108
Figure 4: EIN Peer Grouping 118
Figure 5: Portuguese Historical Migration 194
Figure 6: Number of Asylum Applications in Sweden 226
Figure 7: Cumulative Number of Open Asylum Cases in Sweden 227

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACIDI ACIME ACM	Portugal's High Commissioner for Migration (ACM) – previously ACIME/ ACIDI (High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities/ Intercultural Dialogue)
AMIF	Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund, EU funding scheme, previously INTI and European Integration Fund
CBPs	EU Common Basic Principles on Immigrants' Integration
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CLAII	Local information points for migrant information in Portugal
CNAI	National immigrant support centres in Portugal
COCAI	Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs in Portugal
COM/ Commission	European Commission
Council	Council of the European Union
DG (HOME)	European Commission Directorate-General (Migration and Home Affairs)
EIN	European Integration Network
EU	European Union
EWSI	European Website on Integration
INTI	Preparatory Actions for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, EU funding scheme, later: AMIF
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
MPG	Migration Policy Group, Brussels-based think tank
MPI	Migration Policy Institute, Washington D.C.-based think tank
NCPI/ NCPIs	(Network of the) EU National Contact Points on Integration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
OSS	One-Stop-Shop
SGN	Support Group Network, originally Sweden-based migrant NGO
TCN	Third-Country National

PREFACE

Over the last few years, millions of displaced individuals have found a place to stay in the EU. Now, following upon challenging migration experiences, these inviduals have to settle into the hosting societies, which in many cases might become their long-term home. The politically-charged migration and refugee debates are shifting towards integration questions and governance issues at national and European scale.

About a year before starting this PhD in autumn 2016, when the so-called European refugee and migration crisis peaked and became the most salient social policy challenge in Europe, I was working for my then-employer with national and sub-national authorities on solving immediate challenges of arriving migrants. Here, I witnessed implications of unclear responsibilities, lacking governance, administrative inertia, and limited communication between authorities. However, I also experienced how slowly emerging administrative interactions across domains and hierarchy and beyond the formal protocol became one way of learning from each other and for solving pressing issues. This was a process of significant friction within a nation state. It was also a process of partial trial and error, which is one practical reason why I was keen to explore the foundations of administrative learning.

Now, the same questions re-surface for the governance of migrant integration at European scale. Although this project remains literature-driven in tackling crucial theoretical and empirical puzzles, personally, it is an exercise of sensemaking and understanding practical impediments for better mutual learning and governance, both of which have very real implications for millions of individuals.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 MOTIVATION, PUZZLE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

For more than two decades scholars have been investigating how political authority is exercised within Europe's multi-level governance. Increasingly this happens via softer and more flexible new modes of non-authoritative steering (Héritier and Lehmkuhl 2008; Héritier and Rhodes 2011). These focus on areas where legal competences of the European Union (EU) are limited, policy positions of member states are heterogenous, or debates are politicised. Here, the EU's approach of exerting influence shifted towards networked discussions with the help of guidelines, timetables, indicators, benchmarks, best practices, target setting, monitoring, evaluation, and peer review (Zito and Schout 2009).

The ever more cross-cutting and complex, yet softer logic of governance implicitly or explicitly refers to mechanisms of (mutual) learning. It also underscores the importance of bureaucratic politics and individual motivations, beliefs, and actions (Gilardi and Radaelli 2012, 1, 8-9). Formal and informal networks populated by administrators are at the core of this (Bolleyer and Börzel 2010; Eberlein and Grande 2005; Sørensen and Torfing 2007). Yet curiously, as pointed out by Kassim et al. (2017, 653–54), as a traditional public administration topic, learning of administrators at the micro-level tends to be black-boxed in governance analyses.

Even when untangling the concept of (administrative) learning from the concept of governance, it remains vague and elusive. Although most scholars agree on the presence of learning, its properties are a "minefield" (Levy 1994) and "bricolage" (Freeman 2007). Meanwhile, scholarly reviews turn out "eclectic" (Dunlop and Radaelli 2017, 304) given the diversity of conceptualisation and categorisation possibilities (Bennett and Howlett 1992; Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007; Dunlop and Radaelli 2013; 2018a; 2018b; Moyson, Scholten, and Weible 2017; Zito and Schout 2009). This *conceptualisation problem*, the logic of administrative learning within new governance instruments, is the first issue this thesis tackles.

The second issue is a more empirical one about *conditions for, mechanisms, and results of learning*. This relates to the perennial question of how alleged "mere talk", for instance in networks, influences how European stimuli unfold impact. Although learning is the most popular explanation for how soft governance comes about, it remains empirically understudied (as problematised by e.g. Barcevičius, Weishaupt, and Zeitlin 2014; Geddes and Scholten 2015; Héritier et al. 2001; Moumoutzis and Zartaloudis 2016; Moyson, Scholten, and Weible 2017; Radaelli 2008; Vagionaki 2018; Zeitlin 2015). In particular micro-foundations of mechanisms through which soft agreements, rules, and understandings develop in transnational setups – often untangled from actual decision-making among policy makers – are not well understood (Dunlop and Radaelli 2017; Gilardi and Radaelli 2012).

One learning-focused, practical governance tool that has received widespread attention is the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) (European Council 2000). As legalistic policy making reached its limits following the EU enlargement in 2004, the OMC's overall premise was to contribute to European-level strategic alignment when dealing with heterogenous positions and nationally-dominated issues (Zito and Schout 2009). These included for instance employment, social inclusion, or economic policy. The pairing of *new* heterogeneity and *continuous* interdependence of the EU led Sabel and Zeitlin (2012b, 8) to identify a potential "machine for learning" and ideal type of "experimentalist governance". Here, policy could be defined in broad and provisional strokes, and then be tested and refined with a focus on practical experiences of policy delivery (Eckert and Börzel 2012; Sabel and Zeitlin 2008; 2010; 2012b).

Indeed, de-politicising issues and going technical via, among others, benchmarks, peer review, reporting, and monitoring are core components of the OMC and align with iterative mutual learning and the above-mentioned move towards bureaucratic circuits (Laffan and Shaw 2005; Radaelli 2003). The OMC thus attempted a "technocratic fix to wicked transnational policy issues" (Lodge 2007, 360), that is, policy issues associated with diverging paradigms or frames of thinking and lacking communication about these frames, rather than disagreement about scientific facts

(Hall 1993, 279–80; Schön and Rein 1994). Alongside the formal OMC, methods of open coordination have been applied as "open coordination in disguise" (Radaelli 2008, 242) or "quasi [OMCs]" (Carrera 2014, 150), commonly in the form of "non-binding, unofficial institutions" such as transnational administrative networks (Sabel and Zeitlin 2012b, 3).

Overall, the empirical reality of the OMC was sobering, for instance regarding learning beyond elites, high requirements placed on participants, or a lack of visible policy change (e.g. Chalmers and Lodge 2003; Freedland et al. 2007; Heidenreich and Zeitlin 2009; Laffan and Shaw 2005; Lodge 2007; 2008; Mulcahy 2011; Radaelli 2003; 2008; Radaelli and Dunlop 2013). However, emphasising lacking effectiveness and (macro) outcomes of OMC-style practices overlooks the importance of empirically understanding the generation of learning – different mechanisms unlocking it and different forms it may take at the micro level and in its micro foundations. A defining characteristic of learning may well be non-learning, unlearning, or, beyond the individual, blocked learning (Dunlop, Radaelli, and Trein 2018b; Hedberg 1981; Levy 1994). Removing the normative twist and policy-change focus that several studies have taken helps to understand what really happens within new modes of governance.

Hence, this thesis is framed by the puzzling lack of a theoretical understanding of learning mechanisms, including social mechanisms that shape various types of learning. The thesis is furthermore motivated by the scarcity of empirical contributions to the study of micro-level and underlying dynamics of administrative learning. These are essential to understand under which conditions learning unfolds in soft governance instruments, prominently represented by OMC-style networking. The thesis accordingly asks the overarching research question: *How do administrators learn in soft-governance networks, in particular, what mechanisms are involved in facilitating different types of learning and under which conditions do they operate successfully?*

The main contribution of the thesis is building a framework that sheds light on mechanisms driving different forms of learning. This framework is then run through in-depth empirical probing. The dependent variable is the respective type of individual-level learning of administrators, whilst

situational (e.g. networking structures) and transformational (e.g. conduits such as informal interactions) factors are proposed as explanatory parts of the mechanism. This aims at advancing the knowledge of often quiet dynamics under the political surface in policy spaces dominated by member-states. This engages in depth with mechanisms that fill governance, namely learning of administrative actors. What drives and shapes learning has so far remained a theoretical and empirical puzzle. This thesis provides a fresh approach to both challenges. Upon opening this micro-level black box, also the impact of quiet administrative steering or the role of EU-facilitated interactions such as networks for delivering governance, may be recalibrated.

1.2 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND CORE DEFINITIONS

Before embarking on the empirical investigation, the thesis necessitates an upfront clarification of core definitions. Likewise, I sketch the conceptual framework for empirical probing. Both, definitions and conceptual framework, are further elaborated in the theory chapters. Overall, this thesis is interested in a governance phenomenon and how this function comes about in soft law policy areas. I define *governance* as the process of enabling collective action through cross-cutting coordination and cooperation in a policy area (Rhodes 2007; Slaughter 2004). This implies the presence or emergence of a steering dynamic that abridges horizontal (e.g. across organisations or entities such as states) or vertical layers (e.g. European vs. domestic vs. local) of authority and is therefore interdependent (Héritier and Rhodes 2011).

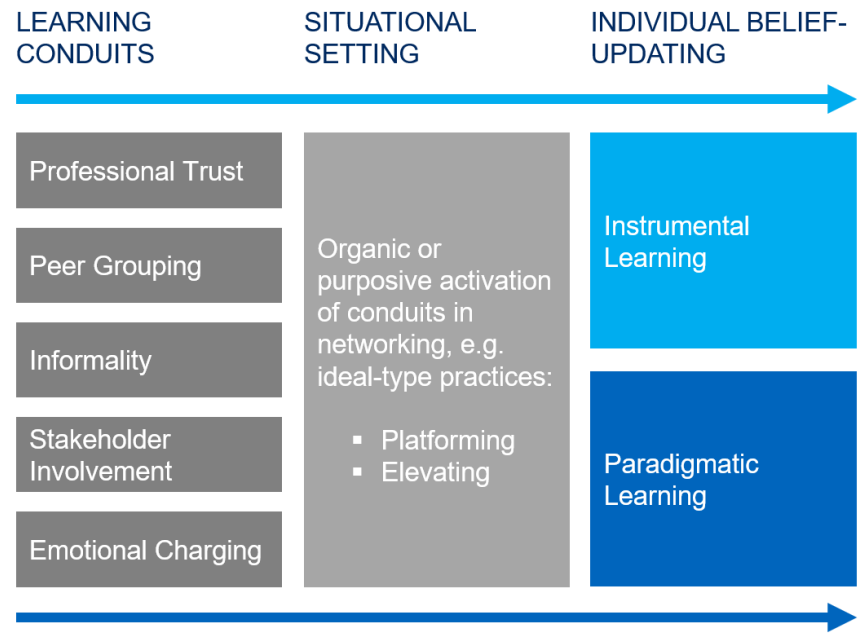
One core tool of new modes of governance, that is, governance in areas without the presence of a natural (legal) authority that can foster coordination and cooperation, are governance networks. I focus on *transgovernmental networks* and define them as institutionalised forms (regular interactions, somewhat formalised membership) of interactions that bring together administrative actors from various member states (Eberlein and Grande 2005; Slaughter and Hale 2011). These networks remain non-hierarchical even where involving EU institutions like Council or Commission (Bolleyer and Börzel 2010).

One main outcome of interactions in networks is argued to be administrative learning or policy learning. I define *learning* broadly as belief updating of individual actors involved in the network (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013). This remains at the micro level and does not necessitate any kind of change action beyond the individual (Levy 1994; Lodge 2007). Learning is the dependent variable and two forms of learning are commonly discussed in the literature and developed further in this thesis (Argyris and Schön 1978; Bennett and Howlett 1992; Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007; Hall 1993; Levy 1994; May 1992; Moyson, Scholten, and Weible 2017; Zito and Schout 2009). *Instrumental learning* is defined as updating beliefs on approaches for achieving broader policy goals, the means (or indeed instruments) for achieving a pre-defined end. *Paradigmatic learning* focuses on more fundamental beliefs that may commonly include re-defining the very goals of policy. It is about programmatic framing and social embeddedness of instruments. Yet, crucially, both learning types, including an allegedly simpler instrumental one, are located in a social construct where rationality is bounded. Although I do categorise learning that way, the thesis generally takes a constructivist approach of accepting interviewee accounts on what constitutes belief updating for them as a social reality. Moreover, it is important to note that learning as defined here remains normatively neutral, that is, not all learning outcomes may be significant or socially desirable. Likewise, also non-learning may still constitute a form of learning (Levy 1994), for instance in cases of satfisfaction with a status quo or lacking will or capability to learn.

In terms of the independent variable(s), I study *situational* and *transformational* factors that facilitate individual action formation (here: learning) (Hedström and Ylikoski 2010). As transformational factors I explore what I call *conduits*. Conduits are located between scope conditions of a mechanism (Checkel 2003) and forms of aggregation mechanisms, which are commonly underspecified in the literature (Dunlop and Radaelli 2017). Thus, I understand them first as (social) structures that enable learning. Second, conduits shape the propensity of individuals to update beliefs and, more importantly, shape the content of these beliefs. Conduits are hence treated as mechanism components or sub-mechanisms. While conduits may emerge organically, they may also be furthered, amplified, or sustained by the creation of specific learning situations.

I discuss these situational factors primarily as so-called *practices* – patterned and repeated interactions that are identifiable by participants (Pouliot 2015). Facilitated networking and managed learning session or attempts of teaching (e.g. by the Commission or Commission-orchestrated third parties) are considered practices. The thesis theorises two ideal-type practices, which are challenged and refined in terms of their applicability in the empirical chapters.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The first ideal-type is *platforming*, which I define as long-running, recurrent interactions within a formal network structure. It implies a multi-annual perspective of exchanging views within meetings of a full network or conferences and formally representing a network member state. Platforming picks up a range of approaches around the EU and its networks as exchange orchestrators and transfer structures (Abbott et al. 2015; Nugent 1995; Padgett 2003; Radaelli 2000).

Elevating stresses breaking out from the platform to interact (and potentially learn) differently and in accelerated ways. Such processes entail experiential learning, for instance study visits on the ground, or interactions with network sub-groups and stakeholders. Here, network members are elevated and iterate insights and explored connections back to the platform. The logic aligns in broad strokes with experimentalist governance and theories of (re-)framing experiences (Sabel

and Zeitlin 2010; Schön and Rein 1994; van Hulst and Yanow 2016). The transformational learning conduits as well as situational practices yield specific propositions and observable implications. These are introduced in Chapters 3 and 4.

Beyond theoretical terminologies the policy space to be investigated, migrant *integration* is a conceptually complex, politically charged, and highly contested term (indeed, definitions tend to include this complexity as a defining characteristic[1]). I understand integration as an applied and policy-related term, socially constructed by the policy actors that the thesis explores. This implies a broad understanding of a "process by which immigrants and their children become participants in the life of their country of destination" (MPI 2019). This may encompass cross-cutting social policy questions (Freeman and Mirilovic 2016; OECD and EC 2015; 2018). Rather than working with a fixed and narrow understanding of what these policy questions are, I try to understand how interviewees construct and frame the term. Partly, the framing of integration policy is actually an element of wider, paradigmatic forms of learning as such and hence part of the dependent variable.

1.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Mechanism research requires a specific methodological approach, centred around the selection of an adequate case (detailed in Chapter 4). To uncover learning dynamics within soft forms of governance, the research design needs to account for detailed, micro-level processes. It is crucial to appreciate how a dependent variable, here specific forms of learning of individual administrators, comes about, rather than just observing correlational evidence. This implies conceptual and empirical complexity, which is best tackled in qualitative cases studies. Thus, I propose the in-depth analysis of a single empirical case (Gerring 2007; Mahoney and Goertz 2006; van Evera 1997).

Given the puzzle, a need to understand practices and processes that shape learning, I identified a case that represents European-level network-based interactions in the tradition of the above-introduced OMC: soft governance practices with an explicit learning focus. Meanwhile, in terms

[1] For instance, Geddes and Scholten (2015, 43) define integration as "range of policies and actions involving a wide variety of actors across levels of governance (sub-national, national and international) that focus on forms of adaptation (socially, culturally, politically, economically) by both migrants and host societies. Issues that are raised include thorny questions about the boundaries of national citizenship and (…) accommodation of cultural diversity within multicultural societies."

of analytical leverage, to establish the veracity of a causal process, I opted for a narrow focus on a case that could best illustrate pathways of learning (Gerring 2007), even at the cost of potentially sacrificing generalisability or representativeness (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 144ff.). Case selection was purposive and of the most-likely kind, that is, I was expecting to find evidence for learning dynamics. While I propose an overarching case, I embed plausibility probes to refine the findings. This was driven by the fact that the case study should be representative for a European-level network of national public servants, which implies an inherent multi-level logic in how the network operates. Embedded probes are useful both for practical reasons (it appeared unfeasible to carry out an in-depth qualitative study that cuts through all layers of all network members) and analytical purposes (strengthening analytical power by preliminarily probing some theorisations from broader findings in more specific contexts) (Trampusch and Palier 2016).

Given hitherto poorly understood learning of administrators as the individuals filling trans-governmental, soft-governance networks, I was looking for a case that would meet the criteria of being a non-hierarchical, European-level network in an area of soft law and with primarily administrative membership. In line with an OMC-style mission, I also sought to explore a network with a mandate stretching beyond a purely epistemic one (e.g. of discussing or producing research) to cover the entire realm of learning types. Ideally, I also wanted to cover a policy area with serious practical learning needs to increase the likelihood of observing any dynamic at all.

Based on these criteria I chose the European Integration Network (EIN). The background of the policy area is described below, while case selection is discussed in Chapter 4. As a recently (re-)established European-level network with a clear mutual-learning mandate, the EIN is populated by administrative actors instead of stakeholders or researchers and crucially, it is active in a politically salient and contested policy area: refugee and migrant integration. It is also a network that faced strong delivery demands in the face of the so-called European migration crisis, providing an interesting context to the inner workings of soft governance under pressure.

Beyond a birds-eye analysis of the network and core mechanisms of learning, I explore two embedded constellations as learning illustrations within the EIN: Portugal and Sweden. I probe how EIN-related learning unfolds in and around these two countries, including the active creation of learning opportunities for other network members. Once again, the constellations are a purposive and most-likely selection that should indeed illustrate ideal-types of learning and learning facilitation both at instrumental and paradigmatic scale. I was furthermore looking for a broad usage of learning instruments within the selected network (i.e. not only conference-style interactions). Thus, the studies cover the Swedish collaborative refugee and migrant integration system with a focus on municipal and NGO involvement, while the Portuguese system additionally emphasises a state-run managerial approach with one-stop-shops.

The analysis of the overarching case and the embedded constellations is conducted with process and practice tracing. The approach is all about uncovering "how" and "why" questions and thus a mechanistic understanding of causation (Bennett and Checkel 2015a). Process tracing connects data to reconstruct mechanisms of often singular activities and their causal implications (Bennett and Checkel 2015a). Meanwhile, practice tracing emphasises activities that have a recurrent, typical character known to practitioners (Pouliot 2015). In particular practices are useful to understand learning dynamics in the context of this thesis as they align with theories of networking. It also fits available data of policy professionals engaged in regular interactions and mutually recognisable ways of doing things (Pouliot 2015, 237–238, 251-53). Overall, the approach works via formulating expected implications, developed in Chapters 3 and summarised and backed by indicators in section 4.4, and refining propositions with empirical data.

In terms of empirical material, the project relies on interview and document data, the latter primarily for triangulation. The type of data aligns well with qualitative tracing: interviews with specialists on or participants in the researched practices are the primary type of data collected for this thesis (Beach and Pedersen 2013; Tansey 2007). The goal was to reconstruct events and dy-

namics towards decisions and actions. Insider interpretation was considered a good proxy for observing how such processes or practices unfold (Pouliot 2015, 245–48). I pursued semi-structured interviews with 53 individuals who were purposively sampled to cover the full depth and breadth of networking interactions and learning mechanisms within the selected case. A thematic analysis was carried out with the collected data to uncover patterns and causal pathways. Further material for analysis included grey literature, including meeting summaries, agendas or reports, as well as informal notes of interviewees.

1.4 EMPIRICAL CASE BACKGROUND

As derived from the literature and briefly explained above, I opt for the EIN and the associated policy area of refugee and migrant integration as a case study. Below, I illustrate why the policy area is an ideal target for studying soft governance. I also explain why the EIN as a focal point for learning and engine of soft governance provides rich data for studying various learning mechanisms. Both case background and wider policy area are discussed in depth in Chapter 5.

Given the recent scale of migration into the EU, migrant integration is currently a major societal challenge across Europe. Migrant integration links into social benefits and labour, education, or socio-cultural participation. Furthermore, migration experiences, in particular for individuals seeking refuge, may add short-run demands in healthcare, housing, or childcare. Likewise, integration involves a broad range of actors. These include, amongst others, local service administration, semi-public spaces around NGOs or experts, the private sector, or transnational government. Meanwhile, those actors experience and contribute to significant multidirectional feedback, for instance between local and national arenas (Dekker et al. 2015). How and where integration is tackled varies across countries. Almost everywhere however, migrant integration remains identity-laden and linked to national sovereignty (Boswell and Geddes 2011; Carrera 2014; Council of the European Union 2004b; Geddes and Scholten 2015).

Around 2015/16, these cross-cutting challenges were amplified in the wake of the so-called European refugee or migration crisis, which is increasingly being recognised as an integration and

administration crisis with significant redistributive consequences and epistemic uncertainty (Börzel 2016; Geddes 2018; Laffan 2016, 923). Uncoordinated responses of EU member states led to chaotic scenes even at inner-European borders. Member states retreated to national solutions and refused to put European-level legal activities into practice (Börzel 2016; Börzel and Risse 2018, 91ff.; Buonanno 2017). Evidently, overarchingly, European governance was lacking.

Despite its limited legal mandate for direct activities in migration but particularly in integration policy (Carrera 2014; Geddes and Scholten 2015; Scholten et al. 2015), the EU actively tackled this governance gap. Interviewees should later describe this as seizing a window of opportunity for showing to be politically in charge. Amidst the crisis, the Commission formulated coordinative aspirations and ideals that moved beyond refugees and migration and focused on anticipated challenges in integration policy (EC 2016). As member states struggled, the Commission filled in and approached the topic both in vertical terms of strengthening EU policy influence and support, down to the local level, as well as in horizontal terms of increasing member state alignment (Geddes and Scholten 2015, 44; Mulcahy 2011). This included a push for knowledge development in several areas (including education or labour) and the effective and efficient use of funds. It also covered a strategic orientation towards multi-level coordination, stakeholder involvement, and collaborative governance approaches within member states, partly picking up strategic aspirations formulated in earlier stages of European policy exchange (Carrera 2014; Collett 2015; EC 2016; Eurofound 2015; Geddes and Scholten 2015). Crucially, the core method to reach better governance of integration policy was identified as mutual learning, primarily within a network.

The thesis hence studies a specific mode of governance in integration policy that the Commission proposed in the context of the crisis. The Commission re-established the "Network of National Contact Points on Integration" as "European Integration Network" (EC 2016; EC/EIN 2016). More than providing a knowledge infrastructure or the involvement of boundary organisations like think tanks, international organisations or epistemic communities (Geddes and Scholten 2015), the EIN's updated mission underscored a framing of migrant integration as a "problem of

Europe" (Geddes and Scholten 2015, 47ff.) and mutual learning as its solution approach. Administrators are orchestrated by the Commission to learn from specific, practical experiences of other network members – yet, experiences pre-filtered and often supported by the Commission.

The EIN provided new relevance to a network of administrators, which about a decade earlier had been set up as a component of a non-formalised OMC without typical monitoring tools and limited, primarily epistemic output (Carrera 2014; Mulcahy 2011). While the EIN predecessor still formally existed in 2015, that network remained dormant with integration coordination and learning happening – if at all – bilaterally. Most member states approached the crisis without updating or transferring practices and lessons learned on the ground to other contexts, the very reason the original network had been established for. Not least, the perceived non-relevance of the previous network took integration policy as a "problem of Europe" off the table in several countries and the EU lost entry points to engage member states in learning.

Today, alongside standard network meetings, the EIN employs several novel managerial tools including experiential learning, delivery-stakeholder involvement, face-to-face interactions with policy recipients or participatory and less formal workshops. It focuses on operational cooperative practices and mutual learning around managing policy delivery, arguably meta-level strategic learning on embedding these approaches and facilitating exchange more generally, rather than pushing legal policy. The formal and informal shifting of network interactions and the facilitating role of the Commission give scope to revisit limitations of previous open coordination and engage with its underlying mechanism: learning.

1.5 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 2 provides a literature review around governance and learning, the two conceptual guardrails of this research. It starts with perspectives on soft governance and new modes of governance, with an emphasis on multi-level governance. This covers the empirically oriented OMC literature and experimentalist governance as juxtaposing approaches. Shortcomings of these concepts are carved out – namely, non-regulatory, less legalistic and decision-focused but more operational

learning practices driven via a network. This triggers a discussion of networks as one mode of governance, particularly those with more administrative outlook. Although networks are closely associated with the concept of governance, their inner workings and management have not been at the focus of creating learning, let alone governance as such.

Next, the chapter moves towards the conceptual frame of the thesis – namely, that both soft-governance dynamics in networks and European-level creation of governance are by-and-large about learning. Given the over-theorised yet elusive character of learning, a detailed discussion distinguishes between instrumental and paradigmatic learning, including properties, underlying motivations, and actual learning process as key dependent variables of this research. The chapter also draws distinctions regarding consequences of learning. This re-emphasises individual-level belief-updating, rather than studying policy diffusion or large-scale outcomes.

Chapter 3 develops the analytical framework of how the dependent variable is influenced. The focus is on micro-rooted transformational conduits which form the wheelwork of learning and may be further activated or interact in facilitated situational setups. Overall, conduits are about triggering, amplifying, or sustaining learning, or even translating it into contexts beyond the individual. They may emerge organically or be furthered by design. The chapter discusses these conduits and expected implications for learning within the network one by one. They include professional trust between administrative actors, peer grouping and gatewaying dynamics both between individuals and reflecting more macro-level factors, secrecy and informality of interactions in the network, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging of interactions. The crisis literature and its ties with accelerating and shifting learning contextualises the research. For each conduit, propositions regarding the influence on instrumental and paradigmatic learning are outlined. These are refined in the empirical chapters.

Two ideal-type situational settings that facilitate conduits are introduced: "platforming practices" and "elevating processes". Platforming builds on research about the Commission's role in managing networks and typical interactions in the orchestration of platform members, arranging

of interactions, agenda setting and content delivery of a knowledge baseline. Most of this is argued to activate those sides of conduits that feed primarily instrumental learning and provide baseline trust and ties for paradigmatic learning. Platforming references the network management literature to differentiate opportunities of the Commission to steer the network despite a limited legal mandate. Actively involving politically aligned member states to co-invest and push respective national approaches in platforming and subsequent elevating is one steering logic.

Elevating is described as a breakout (e.g. in the form of a study visit) from the platform and invokes a constructivist literature covering (re-)framing, the power of social interactions and deliberation, as well as discourse emerging from experiential processes. Design opportunities, ways to shape how and what participants of elevating breakouts learn, are located with the organising team, which includes the Commission and actively approached, hosting member states. Activated conduits touch both instrumental and paradigmatic learning, with the latter becoming a clear objective of the process. Also, the iterative link of elevating and platforming is emphasised, where elevating is theorised to increase network density and trust at the platform stage.

Chapter 4 lays out the empirical and methodological approach required to effectively and efficiently tackle the research question. First, the use of a qualitative, in-depth case study is motivated, the key argument being that micro-level processes such as learning cannot be studied via the proxy of macro-comparative outcomes (e.g. policy diffusion). Then, case selection is discussed, describing the EIN as an ideal illustration for OMC-style, soft learning practices. Subsequently, data collection and analysis are introduced. Here, (practice) tracing relies mainly on interview data with practitioners and a thematic analysis of interview transcripts. Beyond describing the methodological steps taken, the chapter provides a summary of propositions developed from the literature in Chapter 3 and expected implications to be empirically explored. This includes a list of empirical indicators for each of the propositions.

Chapter 5 starts the empirical analysis by providing the historical and legal background of the network. This is crucial to understand how and why it got re-established and re-vamped its

working approach. The chapter explains the peculiar policy character of migrant integration – limited EU authority and strong national involvement – and the working method as quasi-OMC in a decade-long back-and-forth between member states and EU. It locates the EIN within further instruments and policies of migrant integration. Then, the political upgrade of the pre-existing network is discussed as a political window of opportunity for the EU to get a foothold in integration and reinvigorate network members. The chapter lastly introduces the formal working structure, typical interactions, and internal governance of the EIN, which reflects a normal expert working group but with side-roads regarding study visits and a stronger mutual learning mandate. Descriptive examples for these interactions are provided as background for tracing-oriented chapters 6-9.

Chapter 6 assesses transformational conduits. First, the crisis context was crucial to re-invigorate the network and allowed reflexive and more paradigmatically oriented learning via study visits in the first place. Second, professional and trusted interactions over time are key for genuine instrumental exchange and deeper forms of learning but can be accelerated through joint elevating experiences away from the platform. Here, professional and personal ties are built or strengthened. Third, peer grouping is an important dynamic within the network, but can be permeated in a staged process and via individual relationships. In a gatewaying-dynamic, alleged laggards can approach actors that connect them to higher performing circuits. This compounds network ties.

Fourth, informality of interactions is key for open exchange and thereby for deeper forms of instrumental and paradigmatic learning. It also facilitates positive group pressure ("naming") and provides scope for talking about failure as a component of policy-review. Fifth, stakeholder involvement helps to underscore the network's beacon function in integration policy and brings in content-level input and managerial-organisational capacity. Importantly, this has a connecting function: member-state representatives develop ties into the multi-level space of integration policy and the Commission attains an access point into "problematic" countries. In particular when on the ground, stakeholder involvement in small working groups helps to translate, amplify, and sustain joint experiences. Hence, they assist in shifting paradigmatic frames of administrators. Sixth,

emotional charging is conducive to powerful experiences during study visits and supports direct frame reflection and later exchange and deliberation on instrumental and paradigmatic issues within delegations – on the platform or in domestic contexts.

Chapter 7 explores today's EIN by moving through ideal-type situational practices (platforming and elevating). The chapter puts empirical material against expected implications and expectedly emerging or activated conduits. Platforming covers structural and managerial activities of providing a space where learning interactions and trust-building over time emerge. On this organisational layer, the Commission's role is accentuated given limited resources and interest from the member-state side. Platforming includes content-level activities taking place directly on the platform like network meetings and (technology-based) supporting instruments. It serves an orientation function for technical, instrumental learning. The availability of information and personal interactions leads to gradual comparative pressure amongst peers. Network meetings and evolving personal relationships are a source of political and symbolic leverage "back home", not least through privileged contacts and information. Overall, this provides a baseline for mutual, bilateral elevating activities to explore further instrumental learning and, importantly, a baseline of trusted professional interactions and peer grouping for paradigmatic learning.

Departing from the platform and feeding back into it, elevating is about two learning tools: study visits, as orchestrated by the Commission in alignment with well-performing member states, are frame-reflection experiences by design. Here, emotional, personal interactions in small teams on the ground and facing policy-recipients have a profound impact and connect technical learning with paradigmatic thinking. There is also greater willingness by participants to mutually open up and shift their frames compared to platform interactions. On the other hand, network side-stepping by pairs or small groups of countries with strong politico-administrative, cultural as well as personal fit is more about mutual exploration of political and symbolic elements of learning and a parallel deepening of context-sensitive technical learning. Both instrumental and paradigmatic learning are eased through the informal character of these interactions.

The chapter also analyses network outcomes, which emphasise developing joint vocabularies and frames of what matters, rather than directly shifting policy. Yet, there were instances of improving capabilities through the network (e.g. analytics, information attainment) as well as learning about and shifting styles of policy management and delivery. There were even some examples of structural domestic change, mostly regarding one-stop-shops. The chapter culminates in proposing a refined view on mechanism components around individual learning in a networked environment and discusses intermediate findings. This is probed in Chapters 8 and 9.

Chapter 8 illustrates and probes the theorised overarching process. It covers learning dynamics around Portugal within the EIN, paying attention to Portuguese one-stop-shop (OSS) administration. The chapter outlines the historical background of the Portuguese integration system, the focus being the gradual, longer running emergence of the OSS idea as supported by the Commission over the years. It then moves through networking practices to identify key entities and activities and to work through observable implications. This illustrates primarily mechanisms around instrumental learning. Overall, the probe confirms the overarching analysis but emphasises specific aspects, including the complementary role that a member state can play for Commission-led orchestration of activities and gateway functions of member states for idea transfer, Portugal being the toehold for CEE member states. It also substantiates ideas about individual, social, and informal interactions and personal commitment of actors.

Chapter 9 explores a second constellation, Sweden, as a model for collaborative governance with a strong impetus from NGOs and regional government and how this model spread into the EIN. This is a phenomenon of all-around learning and frame-reflection. Most of the instrumental learnings are amplified through direct social experiences with policy recipients and the emotional character of these interactions. This moves directly into systemic embedding of instruments, hence a paradigmatic dimension of learning. Sweden is an illustration of joint learning on the ground and bottom-up policy development as driven by a migrant NGO in conjunction with sub-national authorities. The emphasised elevating experience originates significantly from the very presence of

the platform EIN as a beacon in integration governance. The approach got primarily traction in the wake of the refugee crisis and via the EIN, which contrasts gradual learning in the Portugal probe.

Chapter 10 summarises the findings and connects evidence developed via the case study with the literature and puzzles that motivated this project. This includes a discussion of the proposed mechanism and its defining forces, limitations and applicability. Overall, the role of administrative learning as an overlooked engine of governance in soft-law areas is underscored. This also covers how learning can be created by activating or working through transformational conduits as well as purposively iterating elevating processes from platform practices. Here, the Commission plays a facilitating role, yet also benefiting from support of selected, high performing member states. A range of conduits comes into play at various points and need to be made more explicit in research on soft governance. One important example regards gatewaying dynamics and higher density peer groups, arguably a conduit where macro (e.g. diffusion) and micro (e.g. trust or socialisation) dynamics overlap.

The conclusion proceeds with avenues for future research, including novel comparative dimensions and rigorous testing. Lastly, practical implications are discussed. Core recommendations cover ideal-type elevating processes, here primarily the provision of more time for deliberation in small groups and structural support for bilateral exchange. Big brother schemes may be effective if working through gatewaying logics. Also, platforming should be sustained but needs to sort out strategic and operational issues – this includes the technical infrastructure but more importantly EIN membership. There might also be opportunities of mixing up the operating logic of elevating and platforming, hence activating additional conduits at the platforming stage. This could work through design-thinking workshops with policy recipients. Interviewees have expressed interest in the results of the study since they have not yet conducted a qualitative review of their interactions. This DPhil should therefore have practical relevance for the EIN and other EU networks.

2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES ON GOVERNANCE AND LEARNING

This chapter discusses theoretical approaches within which the conceptual framework is rooted (Chapter 3). The overarching research question requires engaging with accounts around governance and the role of networks in the EU, which includes studies on the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) that are more practice-oriented. Then, perspectives contributing to mechanisms around learning are covered. These mechanisms are the engine of soft and experimentalist governance and remain understudied.

2.1 EU OPEN COORDINATION AND NETWORK-BASED GOVERNANCE

The project is rooted in perennial debates about multi-level governance in the EU (Hooghe and Marks 2001) and new, soft governance beyond traditional rule making (Héritier and Rhodes 2011). I define governance as interdependent steering (*coordination*) and production (*cooperation*) of policy within complex systems for enabling collective action (Héritier and Rhodes 2011; Rhodes 2007; Slaughter 2004). Hence, governance describes interaction processes within and between actors and the institutional landscape of a system such as the EU. It is then about how these processes contribute to solving problems that have to be tackled in continued interdependence (Rhodes 1997; 2007). This definition acknowledges that political authority is disaggregated and requires practices of actors engaging with each other, commonly beyond the nation state (Slaughter 2004). The EU might be the most entrepreneurial setting for these flexible problem-solving and decision-making practices, circumventing limitations of Community Method and intergovernmental agreements (Bartolini 2011, 5).

Nowadays, decision-making involves actors on different levels and interconnected political arenas. Their interactions move along a continuum from “mutual adjustment” to “hierarchical direction”, the former horizontally oriented, the latter vertical and becoming ever more subtle (Börzel 2010; 2016; Scharpf 2001). Likewise, there is a vast Europeanisation literature, studying

how and under which conditions European governance interactions unfold domestic impact[2]. This literature has shifted to exploring effects of non-binding EU stimuli[3].

Within this nexus, a lot of ground has been covered regarding *regulatory* governance and associated Europeanisation, often involving administrations, third-sector or private actors (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006). Here, scholars have dealt with complex and implicitly enforced principal-agent relationships (e.g. Börzel 2010; 2016; Diedrichs, Reiners, and Wessels 2011; Héritier and Lehmkuhl 2011; Osborne 2006; Radaelli 2008; Scharpf 2001) or with non-hierarchical orchestration via intermediaries in an interplay of multiple principals (e.g. Abbott et al. 2015; Abbott and Snidal 2010; Blauberger and Rittberger 2015a; 2015b).

It is therefore no surprise that the study of networks as one mode of governance has focused on regulatory purposes as *the* paradigm of governance. European governance of more direct state capacities has received far less scholarly attention and it remains unclear how (soft) governance is exercised where untangled from regulation. Leaving the scope of regulation implies at least to some degree leaving a shadow of hierarchy, too. Research remains doubtful whether soft coordination that moves towards even softer tools such as learning can work without threats of sanctions or control systems (Héritier and Lehmkuhl 2008; Héritier and Rhodes 2011; Lodge 2007).

Börzel (2016) acknowledges that regulatory governance approaches have led to a dramatic commitment-compliance gap in recent EU crises, including migration, where joint ambitions were strong, but domestic follow-through failed. She argues, that regulatory handling is not fit to deal with redistributive, identity-laden topics which are "not only about policy [but] about who we are and who belongs to us" (Börzel 2016, 9). As this implies politicised domestic discourse, intergovernmental coordination under a softened shadow of supranational hierarchy might be the only way

2 E.g. Knill (2001); Knill and Lehmkuhl (2002); Héritier et al. (2001); Bach, Ruffing, and Yesilkagit (2015); Jordan (2003); Lægreid, Steinthorsson, and Thorhallsson (2004); Goetz and Meyer-Sahling (2008); Mathieu (2016).

3 E.g. Moumoutzis and Zartaloudis (2016); Radaelli (2008); Barcevičius, Weishaupt, and Zeitlin (2014); Zeitlin (2015); Featherstone and Radaelli (2003); Börzel (2016); Maggetti and Gilardi (2014); Geddes and Scholten (2015); Heims (2016); Egeberg and Trondal (2009); Vagionaki (2018); Mulcahy (2011).

to approach these issues (Börzel 2016, 26). Hence, there is an argument to be made for a "sociological" shadow, rather than a classical legal one (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013). This entails "codes, identities, collective memories, lock-in mechanisms and roles that also alter the default conditions [- i.e. Scharpf's (1994; 1997) rules of the game -], but through the logic of appropriateness of organisational sociology" (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013, 611–12). Coordination, the key property of governance, would here be taught and learned through socialisation in institutions and interactions.

This is where various types of learning and its underlying mechanisms come into play. Increasingly, instruments of and structures or spaces for non-authoritative coordination in the EU have been worked with (Diedrichs, Reiners, and Wessels 2011; Radaelli 2008). One illustration where soft governance is untangled from regulatory rule-making could be the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) (European Council 2000) and associated practices ("quasi-OMCs", Carrera 2014). The OMC is a new mode of governance under particular scrutiny by academics and practitioners alike ever since being established (Laffan and Shaw 2005; Radaelli 2008). The method brought together various forms of soft, learning-based coordination in areas such as employment, social inclusion, or economic policy.

The method was established with the understanding that working towards the overall strategic vision of European cohesiveness and competitiveness, old legalistic approaches to policy-making at a European scale no longer sufficed. Complex policy issues had to be de-politicised to allow at least some discussions on smaller components of issues at stake (Radaelli 2003, 19–20). At the latest with EU enlargements and a lack of parallel macro-reforms, legal instruments of European integration shifted to instruments of exchange and learning: conduits for mutual learning and new "first-order instruments" have now been networked discussions with the help of guidelines, timetables, indicators, benchmarks, best practices, target setting, monitoring, evaluation and peer review (European Council 2000; Radaelli and Dunlop 2013; Zito and Schout 2009, 1104). The OMC became the attempt of a "technocratic fix to wicked transnational policy issues" (Lodge 2007, 360), hence aiming to deal with issues commonly associated with diverging paradigms or frames

of thinking and lacking communication about these, rather than disagreement about pure facts or scientific proof (Hall 1993, 279–80; Schön and Rein 1994).

Following high expectations[4], the OMC has been diagnosed with weak outcomes, not least because change appeared limited without direct or shadowed hierarchical authority to foster commitment (e.g. Chalmers and Lodge 2003; Freedland et al. 2007; Heidenreich and Zeitlin 2009; Laffan and Shaw 2005; Lodge 2007; 2008; Radaelli 2003; 2008). Already by the mid-2000s, "the disillusionment with [the OMC] has been at least as great as the disenchantment with the Lisbon vision" (Radaelli 2008, 240–41). The method was described as "window dressing", "red herring" (Zeitlin, Barcevičius, and Weishaupt 2014, 2) and exchange lacking behavioural impact (Zito and Schout 2009, 1114). Meanwhile "OMC academic literature [became] a thriving cottage industry" (Radaelli 2003, 16) theorising potential Europeanisation and learning. Substantial gaps between expectations and reality regarded both policy practice and theory. In particular, learning remained understudied theoretically and empirically (Gilardi and Radaelli 2012; Zito and Schout 2009).

In the following years, the OMC was described as an approach to experimenting and iterative learning on the ground, oriented towards practical aspects in fields with structural obstacles (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008; 2010; 2012b). Here, experimentalist governance argues that change can still take place through local innovation and front-line experiences (Sabel and Zeitlin 2012b, 14). This emphasises the role of "non-binding, unofficial institutions" such as networks (Sabel and Zeitlin 2012b, 3). Empirically however, it seems that the experimentalist OMC has mainly provided opportunity structures for cognitive convergence of elites, rather than learning from innovative activities on the ground (Radaelli 2003, 46; 2008).

The referent object of experimentalist governance is the transformative power of (voluntary) learning from policy execution and managerial involvement for better regulation and improved

[4] Radaelli (2003, 39) abridges tha "the OMC has considerable potential for learning (…) [Participation] and local knowledge should provide a platform for bottom-up learning, whereas peer review and benchmarking (…) can generate cross-national policy diffusion and learning. Turning to the metaphor of the method as a radar, the idea is that the network structure (…) enables policy-makers to detect innovative solutions"

monitoring capacity (Sabel and Zeitlin 2012b, 5–6). Experimentalism focuses on recursive refinement following implementation experiences. It enhances regulatory framework rule-making for implementation by local units and emphasises provisional goal setting and subsequent peer review (Eckert and Börzel 2012; Sabel and Zeitlin 2012b, 1–2). Experimentalism essentially describes an ideal form of deliberative governance based on learning.

This thesis focuses on conceptualising mechanisms towards learning, within such iterating, flexible and arguably vague governance modes and of potential change beyond legislation (Laffan and Shaw 2005, 4–6; Radaelli 2003, 15). This takes OMCs as one ideal type on a spectrum of policy coordination approaches. In fact, methods of open coordination have often been applied as "open coordination in disguise" (Radaelli 2008, 242) or "quasi [OMC]" (Carrera 2014, 150), sometimes rather under the mentioned sociological shadow of hierarchy (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013). Transnational networks have been identified as the essential basis for such practices (Bolleyer and Börzel 2010; Maggetti and Gilardi 2011; Peters 2015; Slaughter and Hale 2011).

The thesis explores rather transgovernmental than transnational networks (Börzel 2016, 11; Eberlein and Grande 2005). These are defined as populated by government administrators and as being commonly non-hierarchical even when involving central EU institutions like Council or Commission (Bolleyer and Börzel 2010). As with OMCs, scholarly attention has over the last two decades shifted away from political towards bureaucratic structures and the demands that cross-cutting issue complexity places on public authorities (Trondal 2010). One prominent way of understanding networks can be as platform of learning where actors are activated, orchestrated, or exposed to isomorphic pressures to explore their environment and draw lessons for their home turf (Sørensen and Torfing 2007; Torfing 2012). Hence, a structure-oriented view of governance via networks (Stone 2004, 560–61) conceptually close to the exchange platform OMC. Moreover, networks may mediate or amplify learning and facilitate transfer or diffusion processes among

their members and beyond (Maggetti and Gilardi 2014; Stone 2004). Learning is one core mechanism of individual action formation within networks and within governance more broadly, yet still a poorly understood one.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISING LEARNING AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Learning is a defining characteristic of the heterogenous but interdependent EU, which has been described as a "machine for learning" (Sabel and Zeitlin 2012b, 8). The logic of soft governance and networks introduced above implicitly or explicitly refers to mechanisms of or related to learning (Gilardi and Radaelli 2012, 1). Networked policy makers and administrators were alluded to in Heclo's (1974, 305–6) assessment that governing is "not only [about] power", instead "policy-making is (…) collective puzzlement on society's behalf". He calls these interactions "social learning expressed through policy". Later literature on policy networks, advocacy coalitions, or epistemic communities also revolves around learning.

Most scholars define learning as belief updating (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013; Gilardi and Radaelli 2012) and I share this reduced and broad understanding[5]. However, belief updating is shaped by pre-existing and/or deeper beliefs as such (Hall 1993, 277). Hence, systemic thinking, convictions, or ideology ease or mitigate an updating process. Likewise, institutional or macro-social factors may frame underlying beliefs (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; Schön and Rein 1994). Depth and breadth of belief updating accordingly differs across learners (Gilardi 2010; Moyson, Scholten, and Weible 2017). Both belief updating and underlying convictions are defined on a continuum of rational, cognitive elements and more interactive social experiences (Bennett and Howlett 1992). Learning may result from teaching, to being a conscious processes, to being more organic, or even unintended (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013, 599–600). Motivations to engage in learning may hence consciously or unintendedly diverge. Stone (2004, 549) furthermore notes that the capacities for learning within a network are commonly "uneven and imperfect".

[5] I do not buy into one model for testing. Rather, I explore empirical dynamics by borrowing implications from the broader literature. This suits Moyson, Scholten, and Weible's (2017, 174) advice to avoid confirmation bias. Also, learning is "bricolage", i.e. assembling and making sense of knowledge by transcending epistemological traditions, cf. Freeman (2007, 485ff.).

Instruments driving processes of learning in networks reflect wider characteristics of new modes of governance. Here, instruments used to wield governance within networks include "less stringent (…) incentivisation, bargaining, persuasion, information provision, monitoring and model function and naming and shaming (…) whilst command and control (…) play a minor role" (Héritier and Rhodes 2011, 168–70). While most scholars agree on the presence of learning, its definition and conceptual properties are a "minefield" (Levy 1994) and reviews turn out purposefully "eclectic" (Dunlop and Radaelli 2017, 304) given the diversity of approaches (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013; 2018b; Freeman 2007; Zito and Schout 2009)[6].

Most typologies share a rough-cut distinction between two types of learning outcomes: (a) an information-focused and rational one and (b) a deeper, belief, conviction or value-oriented type linked to social-constructivist notions. In simple terms, the first is about the means or instruments suited for achieving a policy goal, the second primarily about the ends or programmatic framing for instruments. I use this differentiation throughout the thesis, calling the dimensions "*instrumental*" and "*paradigmatic*". Research once emphasised instrumental forms of learning and has shifted into behaviouralist notions and a constructivist strand of intersubjective reality. This implies that even within instrumental learning, things happen within a social construct where rationality is bounded, information incomplete, and mental capacity constrained (Moyson, Scholten, and Weible 2017, 164; Zito and Schout 2009, 1107).

There are obviously peculiarities to scholars' theorisations. The two primary types of learning may also be called thin and thick (Bennett and Howlett 1992), simple and complex (Levy 1994, 283ff.), or simple-tactical and deep (Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007, 460), while May (1992) or Moutmoutzis and Zartaloudis (2016) distinguish between instrumental and social learning at the micro-level. Associated dichotomies of meso-level organisational learning include single and

[6] There exist a range of broad literature reviews, e.g. Bennett and Howlett (1992) or Dobbin, Simmons and Garrett (2007), Zito and Schout (2009), Moyson, Scholten and Weible (2017) or Dunlop and Radaelli (2013); (2018b); (2018a). Most scholars lament, not much has been changed since the early 1990s – there is still a wide variance in who learns what and how and to what end. Issues persist even more in measuring outcomes, cf. James and Lodge (2003); Volden, Ting, and Carpenter (2008).

double-loop learning (Argyris 1976; Argyris and Schön 1978, 20ff.)[7]. Also more expanded typologies implicitly keep the twofold frame. One example are Radaelli and Gilardi's (2012) four types aggregated from the literature (Table 1 below). Three can be read as single-loop, (1) instrumental learning for technical improvement of delivering a policy, (2) political learning as advantage seeking, or (3) symbolic learning to add spin to an idea. These are contrasted with what they call (4) social-reflexive learning, which implies paradigmatic preference shifts.

Table 1: Types of Learning

LEARNING TYPE	MECHANIC OF BELIEF UPDATING	MICRO-FOUNDATION	ROLE AND USE OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION	MOTIVATION
Instrumental/ technical	New evidence of policy shows what works (at home, abroad)	Pressure to deliver (analysis of domestic performance or lesson from abroad)	(Bounded) rational updating of beliefs	Improve policy and tools (effectiveness/ efficiency)
Political	New evidence or ideas about strategic actions of others	Organisational competition for control of a field in which performance is hard to track	Strategic, or substantiating, or symbolic	Gain political advantages
Symbolic	New clues or ideas about what seems to provide legitimacy	Supranational institutional environment in which organisations seek legitimacy	Symbolic	Gain legitimacy
Reflexive social	Actors change preferences	Legitimacy crisis, identity transformation, socialisation	Reflexive, broad social usage	Learn how to learn

Source: adapted from Gilardi and Radaelli (2012, 7–8)

As described in Table 1 (above), learning types (which are the dependent variable of this research) differ in how they unfold, why the mechanism is triggered (i.e. the foundation of the micro-level mechanism), what role the eventual acquired knowledge plays, and crucially what the original motivation for learners is. These latter factors hence relate to the explanatory dimensions of this thesis. Below, I discuss the two main types used for this thesis (instrumental and paradigmatic)

[7] The second loop is about refining the framework (i.e. deeper, underlying logic) of the first loop which is an instrumental exploration of performance improvements. The second loop is also described as "true learning", yet both loops presuppose some cognitive reflection, cf. Deverell (2009, 185).

but do also take stock of more expanded theorisations such as political or symbolic learning and related motivations of administrators.

2.2.1 INSTRUMENTAL LEARNING

Instrumental learning is about (bounded) rationality in policy-making and putting evidence to work (Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007; Gilardi 2010). As Checkel (2001, 561) puts it for EU-level interactions, learning shifts "strategies (…) not preferences" and such strategies are pursued based on "given, fixed interests" (Checkel 1999, 548). In terms of the actual mechanism of instrumental learning, Gilardi and Radaelli (2012, 4–5) distinguish between classical rational approaches of Bayesian updating and mental shortcuts:

First, in the rational Bayesian model, a person has socially shaped priors or core beliefs that, once confronted with evidence, lead to posteriors that are rational within a bounded context. The construction of the posterior, i.e. learning, is about collecting new information. Along this classical theorisation, individuals should assess the underlying statistical distribution of finding specific evidence, i.e. they should seek out a significant number of data points before drawing conclusions. Depending on how strong prior beliefs are, such collected evidence may or may not significantly update these priors.

Meanwhile, second, referencing Tversky and Kahneman's work[8], psychological ideas of heuristics, cognitive biases and mental shortcuts share the logic of updating (Gilardi and Radaelli 2012, 4–5). However, they place higher weight on single pieces of evidence or intuition without considering underlying statistical distributions. Success cases or cases of failure, or also things that were observed or are easier to remember, prove sticky[9], particularly in faster-paced setups, accelerated decision-making and associative thinking. Similarly, instead of considering a representative sample, individuals may read outliers or short-term trends as conclusive (Dobbin, Simmons, and

[8] Cf. e.g. Tversky and Kahneman (1973); Kahneman and Tversky (2000); Kahneman (2011).

[9] Buzzwords from experimental psychology, many introduced by Kahneman and Tversky (2000), include for the former the likes of framing, priming, or halo-effects, for the latter availability heuristics or anchoring.

Garrett 2007, 460–61; Dunlop and Radaelli 2017; Gilardi and Radaelli 2012, 5). Rationality becomes coloured by heuristics and frames tie in with deeper, more paradigmatic forms of learning.

Beyond the mechanism, a conceptualisation of learning needs to answer "why on earth would an actor (…) want to learn?" (Radaelli 2009, 1147). This regards micro-foundations and motivation of learners which precede the actual learning experience. For instrumental learning this regards primarily practical pressures to deliver (e.g. in the context of a crisis) and therefore the ambition of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of policy and in particular specific policy instruments. There are two further forms of alleged learning, political and symbolic one, that in terms of their belief-updating logic rely on an instrumental way of picking up and reacting to new evidence (Zito and Schout 2009). Yet, the motivation and micro-foundation for engaging in what one may call learning is a very different one. Whether they indeed constitute genuine learning is contested, in particular, symbolic learning may rather be rooted in knowledge utilization and political functions of knowledge (Boswell 2009).

Hence, May (1992) references political learning as improving control of a policy field. While there is a strategic-rational orientation, this political side is distinguishable because its logic is not necessarily about policy improvement (i.e. effectiveness or efficiency as discussed above) but gaining or sustaining power and learning from others how to do so (Gilardi 2010; May 1992). Meanwhile, Boswell (2006; 2008b; 2009) provides evidence on how the political side of instrumental learning actually leads to symbolic uses of (scientific) knowledge. She distinguishes (a) a strategic, legitimising usage to extend the reach of political actors into the bureaucratic-regulatory space or to increase the popularity of elected policy makers and (b) a substantiating usage to reconfirm or provide weight to specific policy stances (Boswell 2008b, 472)[10]. Not least, symbolic blame shifting or avoidance as well as signalling support political power (Hood 2002; Howlett 2012).

[10] See DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 148) who, referencing Meyer and Rowan (1977), argue that when innovations or novel policy spreads, at some point this becomes about legitimacy provision instead of performance improvement.

Besides symbolic uses of evidence, there may also be symbolic rational learning as such (DiMaggio and Powell 1983): this re-affirms that signalling legitimacy through using a piece of knowledge is more important than the performance of a specific tool that was learned about. Outcomes of such learning may not or only unintendedly align with better policy. Again, it may also be considered a stretch to argue that learning takes place if the motivation and micro-foundations of this process are not aligned with belief-updating beyond a signalling function. In particular for symbolic learning, this is conceptually ambitious. Given the constructivist setup of this thesis, I accept interviewee accounts that point to symbolic or political motivations, uses of knowledge, and potential updating of beliefs. The emphasis of this thesis will nonetheless remain on the two main forms of instrumental and paradigmatic learning as genuine belief-updates rather than absorbing and putting to work tactical information.

2.2.2 PARADIGMATIC LEARNING

Instead of refining instruments, paradigmatic learning is about the goals of policy and a change of preferences. This regards deeper, often social reflexivity about policy approaches and overarching questions including learning itself (Gilardi and Radaelli 2012)[11]. It is also more about identity than information. This connects with frame reflection and the idea that dominating policy paradigms that build on definitions and assumptions are socially, argumentatively, or institutionally framed realities (Scholten 2017; Schön and Rein 1994; van Hulst and Yanow 2016). It also links into paradigmatic shifts in behaviour and interactions within a social setup (Hall 1993). Also norms, communication, discursive structures, and persuasion shape preferences without material incentives and come into play both at the micro-foundation and the actual process of paradigmatic learning (Checkel 1999, 548–50; 2003; 2005). Yet, this is not to say that this implies an absence of power or interests in social interactions around allegedly softer and wider preferences and ideas (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011, 5; Scholten 2017, 347).

[11] Learning about learning to learn is arguably particularly deep reflexivity or meta-learning, cf. Freeman (2007, 477–78).

One key question is how paradigmatic learning is enacted. In terms of micro-foundations and motivation of learners, paradigmatic learning departs from a more social logic (goals and preferences as expressed through policy feel inadequate, e.g. within a group of individuals) than instrumental learning (policy issues require technical policy improvement). Rather than delivery pressure, deeper identity or legitimacy crises may trigger actors to wanting to learn how to learn (Gilardi and Radaelli 2012). Here, Checkel (2001; 2003, 212; 2005) or Gilardi and Radaelli (2012, 3–4) emphasise micro-level interactions with persuasion and argumentation but particularly socialisation, the "[induction of] actors into the norms and rules of a (…) community" (Checkel 2005, 804)[12]. Repeated interactions, for instance in networking, might lead to Europeanisation of domestic policy if policy makers are socialised into or learn at paradigmatic scale about their interconnectedness (Radaelli 2008, 240)[13]. Gilardi and Radaelli (2012) see experimentalism as advocated by Sabel and Zeitlin (2008) and new modes of governance (Héritier and Rhodes 2011) in a reflexive social bracket of learning how and where to learn. This move beyond improving instruments is the essence of the definition of paradigmatic learning that this thesis works with.

Socialisation touches upon professional ethos and the role that sub-groups of particularly active individuals may play (Checkel 2003; Dunlop and Radaelli 2017, 311ff.) – the likes of entrepreneurs, brokers, or experts can shift underlying belief infrastructure. Beyond socialisation, also identity or legitimacy crises might shake up common social practices and frames that actors are rooted in. This may tie in with instrumental strategies of blame avoidance (Howlett 2012) or conforming to value systems (Majone 1997). They might also trigger shifts in deeper belief systems, assumptions and coping strategies (Hood 2000; Lodge and Wegrich 2012) or biases of judgement (Moyson, Scholten, and Weible 2017, 165).

[12] Cf. DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 152–53) who focus on socialisation as isomorphic force across entities, implicitly this ties in with learning to fit a certain profession.

[13] Moumoutzis and Zartaloudis (2016) note that research is inconclusive in how socialisation and social learning fit together and caution to keep them apart. Cf. Hooghe (1999) who finds impact of socialisation for supranational vs. intergovernmental orientations within the Commission, which could be seen as underlying belief-structures.

From a sociological perspective, the above relates to basic premises of exposure to alternative narratives about in and out-groups (Tajfel 1982a; 1982b; Tajfel and Turner 1986) as well as content-related policy-narratives (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011). Thus, certain questions of belonging may shape political or policy paradigms. An administrator coming from a corporatist public service tradition may primarily accept gateway actors from a similar background and comparable causal assumptions about serving the public (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). These cultural factors have been found to influence micro-level identification patterns that shape beliefs and belief updates (Cini 1996; Hood 2000; Peters 1997). Narratives about alleged causal forces may work similar to causal assumptions if persuasive enough (consistent, coherent, plausible) and fitting actors' interests and cognitive configuration (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011, 5–6)[14].

Consider a shared administrative identity, European public service motivation, shifting loyalty, or even an emerging identification with Europe that Commission or national public officials might experience (e.g. Egeberg 1999b; Hooghe 2010; Meyer et al. 2014; Sager and Overeem 2015; Trondal 2001; Vandenabeele and van de Walle 2008) [15]. This might transform how rational processes play out by shifting the basis of calculations (Checkel 2001). Not least, priors or rational evidence may be charged at the social or emotional layer or substituted altogether, exchanging a difficult question (which policy is better?) for a simple heuristic (do I feel sympathetic to the policy recipient/ administrator?) (Kahneman 2011, 82ff.; Kahneman and Shane 2002)[16].

2.2.3 CONSEQUENCES AND MEASUREMENT OF LEARNING

There remains a question of how and where beliefs translate into outcomes. This sub-section highlights why the dependent variable of this thesis actually opts to stop short of considering consequences of learning beyond the individual. Rather than being part of the analysed mechanisms,

[14] While narratives are on the social learning end, underlying logics may include significant cognitive elements (logical, plausible, preference alignment). While Boswell, Geddes and Scholten (2011) focus on rational elements (legitimise actors or preferences or provide cognitive support) of bringing in expertise to shift narratives in migration policy, there is arguably an entire affective-evaluative dimension that influences preferences, legitimacy or narratives as such, cf. Tajfel (1982a); Tajfel and Turner (1986).

[15] This is not to say primary identities are abandoned, but spending time away from a home institution may lead to complementary identities, cf. Egeberg (1999b, 470).

[16] Think of an impressive encounter with a charismatic leader – who, however, might lack topic expertise. Here, seeking emotional consistency, being unjustifiably impressed on a cognitive content-dimension aligns with halo effects while seeking cognitive ease by answering more intuitive, easy questions is a substitution heuristic.

potential learning outcomes at the meso or macro layer are used as additional evidence to describe what happens at the underlying learning stages.

Working on learning outcomes, Levy's (1994, 283) definition of learning[17] explicitly "does not require (…) policy change" and puts individual beliefs and potential behavioural impact first. Even behavioural impact may not be reflective of effectively acquired new beliefs if facing a wicked decision setting (Hogarth, Lejarraga, and Soyer 2015). Similarly, Lodge (2007, 356) reiterates indirect policy impact of non-hierarchical governance. Such impact likely unfolds as a collectively significant long-term framing effect on broader policy discourse and individual administrators' peer-reviewing activity. Yet, "this is not to say this translates anywhere further than the individual" (Lodge 2007, 356). Meanwhile, Dobbin, Simmons and Garrett (2007, 462) remind us to watch out for change and evidence of learning intentions to distinguish it from mindless emulation. Also, Hall (1993, 278–79) defines learning tightly as assimilation of new information *and* application in subsequent policy change actions. He then distinguishes degrees of changes, describing outcomes driven by instrumental forms of learning as first and second-order and those driven by social learning as third-order change.

Regarding paradigmatic learning, outcomes are close to what experimentalist governance describes as deliberative forms of participatory democracy, bottom-up policy input, or iterative policy refinement in interactive fora (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008; 2010). This is certainly hard to measure and about social practices and values emerging once administrators engage with their domestic environment. This outcome can be consistent with lacking visible policy change unless formal macro-policy would be redefined. This would point to focusing on the behaviour of micro-units, like administrators, or at least their stated behavioural intentions.

Contrasting this cautious approach, there is an entire literature stream of instrumental learning analysis: policy diffusion (Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007; Marsh and Sharman 2009).

[17] "I define experiential learning as a change of beliefs (or the degree of confidence in one's beliefs) or the development of new beliefs, skills, or procedures as a result of the observation and interpretation of experience." The observation and interpretation of an event shifts individual beliefs, only then, belief changes might influence behaviour, cf. Levy (1994, 291).

This focuses on policy outcomes and causes of change (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013, 599–600) with learning theorised as one mechanism of many[18] through which ideas, information, or a full policy move from one macro-context to the next. Learning impact is commonly considered comparatively limited (Garrett, Dobbin, and Simmons 2008). A typical outcome that motivated diffusion research is policy convergence or organisational homogenisation (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Holzinger and Knill 2005; Knill 2005). Scholars theorise reasons for convergence as endogenous, rational and knowledge-focused lesson drawing (Rose 1993) or exogenously driven policy transfer or being taught (Benson and Jordan 2011; Dolowitz and Marsh 1996; 2000).

Given its macro-emphasis, the diffusion literature is out of scope for this thesis. While I acknowledge country peer-groups, entrepreneurship within networks, or also some macro outcomes, this is primarily analysed in its micro-foundations of interacting officials and their institutional background. Only where helpful, diffusion of specific ideas is studied to help understand learning, not vice versa (Gilardi 2010). Hints at diffusion are taken as indicative pieces of evidence for learning types and preceding micro-level behaviour.

Already within the micro-meso nexus, exploring the impact of learning can be challenging (Dunlop, Radaelli, and Trein 2018a; Levy 1994, 291). As Stone (2004, 558) admits, many ideas "capture the political imagination (…) but fall by the wayside". There are cognitive biases and a significant gap between cognitive and behavioural shifts required to trigger change (Levy 1994; Moyson 2017). Newly acquired knowledge may be used to substantiate a position or institutionalise discourse on a specific policy (Scholten 2017). Also, absent actions may signal learning (Bennett and Howlett 1992). This re-iterates why I focus on the mechanism that leads to belief updating and only then, as feasible, on behavioural impact.

[18] Other theorised isomorphic mechanisms include normative pressure, competition, imitation or coercion or interactions, emulation and borrowing, imposing of innovation or entrepreneurship, cf. e.g. Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett (2007); Volden, Ting, and Carpenter (2008), Gilardi (2016; 2010), Bennett (1991); Simmons, Dobbin, and Garrett (2008); Padgett (2003); Page (2003); Radaelli (2000); DiMaggio and Powell (1983).

This thesis assumes that behavioural intentions can best be captured where relating to the work reality of administrators involved in network-based learning. An according operationalisation disaggregates transfer objects with a focus on organisational-administrative variables, primarily policy management. Here, some authors emphasise structural change (Lægreid, Steinthorsson, and Thorhallsson 2004; Rhodes and Visser 2011), others focus on stylistic change including cultural aspects that constrain rationality (Hood 2000, 9), others explore improved capabilities (van de Walle et al. 2016) or a mix of those (Knill 2001; Pollitt 2016).

Learning can be challenging, starting from problem perception, via problem definition, to analysis and exchange, often facing rigid actor preferences – before even considering outcomes (Bennett and Howlett 1992; Moyson, Scholten, and Weible 2017, 165). Hence, the benefit of exploring the micro-level behavioural translation into a proximate organisational context of an actor lies in dealing with concerns around non-learning, unlearning or blocked learning[19]. Non-learning due to satisfaction with the current state of affairs, lacking will or capability is a common outcome to consider (Heclo 1974, 312; Levy 1994, 289–91). Coming from an organisational learning perspective, Hedberg (1981) explored unlearning as actively forgetting practices over time, while Argyris and Schön (1978) mention subtracting useless information from organisational knowledge. Blocked or significantly delayed learning are about updated beliefs remaining at the individual layer once facing organisational, institutional, socio-political or cultural barriers. Ideas developed amongst experts may need time to get into leadership circuits that define an organisational agenda (Rose 1991) and struggle when facing domestic coalitions (Mulcahy 2011, 184) or institutional hierarchy (Dunlop 2017; Dunlop and Radaelli 2018b). This might be a crucial issue for soft governance among administrators, where individuals in an EU network might not be equipped with required leverage to permeate domestic frictions (Vagionaki 2018). Slow change over time and adjusting original lessons learned to avoid impasses fall into this bracket.

[19] Gilardi and Radaelli (2012, 10), Dunlop and Radaelli (2017) or Howlett and Cashore (2009) point out this methodological challenge. If not learning as null-hypothesis is not specified, everything could be learning. They point to the relevance of the time frame of observations – learning may become differently visible and in the long-run almost unavoidable.

2.2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has developed a view on administrative learning as the engine of new modes of governance. This micro focus on governance is underdeveloped in the literature. Meanwhile learning as a distinct concept has arguably been overtheorised, both as an individual learning process as well as in a wider context of diffusion studies. The latter are out of scope for this thesis and according theory only supports conceptualising (and empirically appreciating) what happens at the level of administrators in networks. Working towards an empirically applicable concept, the chapter has identified two primary forms of (individual) learning in the sense of updating beliefs. These are the two shapes the dependent variable is conceptualised to take. First, *instrumental learning* (information-focused, rational, instrument-related) and second, *paradigmatic learning* (deep, reflexive, preference or goal-related). This simplifies and abridges the broad range of theories on related updating processes that has been discussed (hence, how these types of learning are enacted and which underlying motivations influence these processes).

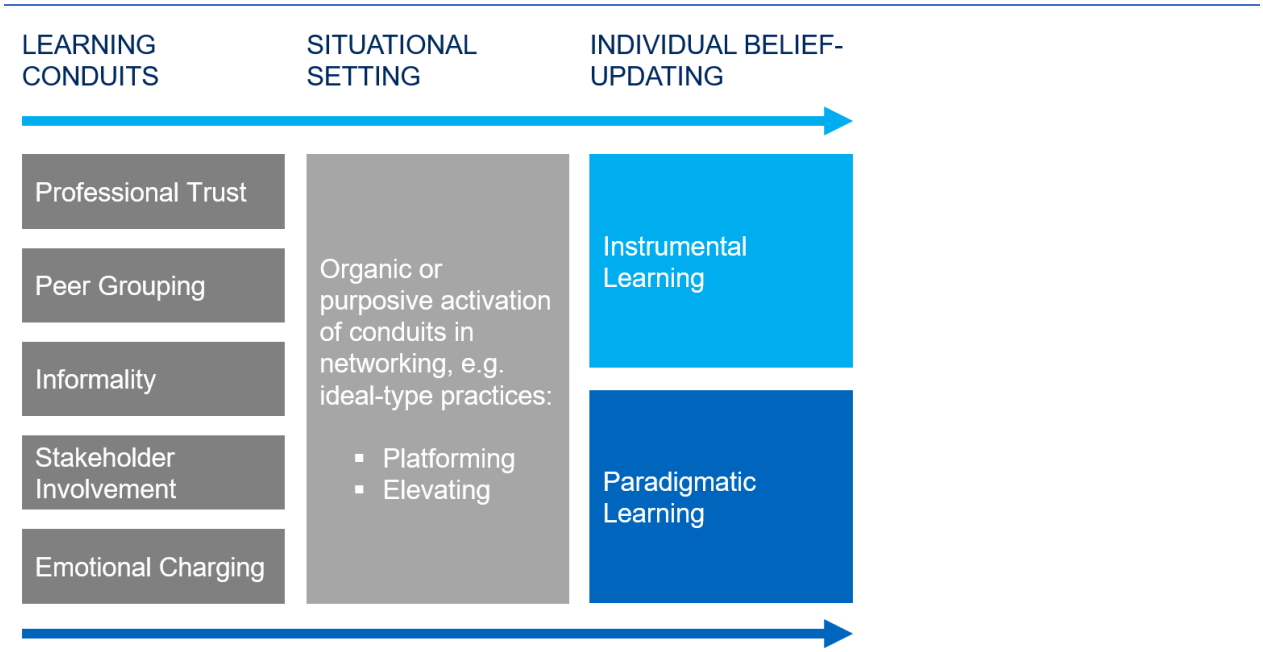
For instrumental learning, the literature posits that motivations tend to relate to strategic moves regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of policy or tools, or to gaining political or symbolic (e.g. legitimacy) advantages. Prior motivations for paradigmatic learning rather revolve around reflexive learning how to learn, questioning assumptions and identity that associate with specific goals and according instruments. In terms of actual learning dynamics, the literature – also regarding instrumental learning – has moved towards bounded rationality and a social-constructivist view. This is taken into account when deriving the analytical framework and identifying potential causal triggers, amplifiers, or sustainers – which I call transformational conduits – in the next chapter. Empirically, this implies a constructivist appreciation of interviewee accounts as socially constructed and individually perceived reality.

3 TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK OF LEARNING WITHIN SOFT GOVERNANCE

This thesis puts forward a conceptual framework (Figure 2 below) of how governance is quietly enacted, amplified, and sustained within a network of administrators. This builds on a mechanism of learning, which is commonly studied from a recipient's perspective either driven by experience and sensemaking or as learning from others. These dimensions are intertwined and while learning might happen accidentally or by changing circumstances and interactions over time, it might also result from an orchestrated practice, like teaching.

The main argument of this thesis is structured around the idea that ideal-type networking practices matter if they work through specific conduits of learning. These conduits are transformational factors that provide underlying structures and context for interactions of administrators in European transgovernmental networks and that can amplify or sustain learning. The conduits may be used within an active creation of a situational context, here, facilitation of interactions by the Commission. Specific conduits are proposed to associate with specific types of learning and the situational context can support this link to a potential learning outcome. This dependent variable, individual belief updating, accentuates either instrumental or paradigmatic learning.

Figure 2: Stylised Model Administrative Learning



Below, conduits are explored one by one before discussing the relevance of contextual factors. The chapter proceeds with discussing the active usage of selected conduits by proposing two ideal type situational settings, recurrent engagement on a network platform ("platforming") and accelerated learning breakouts on the ground ("elevating"). At the end of each (sub-) section expected observable implications of conduits, context, and situational setting are proposed. These core propositions operationalise the conceptual framework and are taken into empirical investigation.

Several scholars have been pushing to return to Coleman's "bathtub" (Coleman 1990). This is about appreciating micro-level sub-mechanisms for understanding macro-associations, here between European-level governance practices and learning (Dunlop and Radaelli 2017; Gilardi and Radaelli 2012; Hedström and Ylikoski 2010). For instance, Moyson, Scholten and Weible (2017, 166) emphasise the lack of research on both cognitive and social processes of learning and how organisational and institutional factors foster or impede them. I do not use the full bathtub framework as such, because the dependent variable of this thesis remains "within" the bathtub – I focus on the micro-level, individual learning. Yet, it is still useful to analytically consider various roles that situational, action formation, and transformational mechanisms may play within a broader mechanism such as "soft governance". Thus, I explore transformational conduits that route individual-level learning into specific directions (instrumental, paradigmatic) or potentially even behavioural and organisational impact. Only then, I discuss the situational structures that create social or institutional frames for both conduits and individual-level action.

3.1 TRANSFORMATIONAL CONDUITS

This section details transformative contributors that shape both the propensity and content of individual belief-updating. Some may arguably also unfold transformative functions of translating beliefs into action and potentially into higher-level learning, that is, (motivation for) initiative taking beyond the individual. The conduits sit in-between overall scope conditions for the mechanism to work at all (Checkel 2003) and separate aggregation mechanisms, something underspecified in the literature (Dunlop and Radaelli 2017). I treat them structurally, hence, as channels through which

learning micro-foundations connect to the process of learning or as the grease of learning mechanisms as such. This is close to studies on structural conditioning of the policy process (Checkel 1999; Risse-Kappen 1996). It also aligns with views on repeated practices or patterns, rather than singular processes (Pouliot 2015). The proposed conduits are:

1. *Professional trust* – the human dimension of peer officials rooted in a comparable ethos or certified background and interacting over time.
2. *Peer groups and gateways* – the logic of node connections and proximity and thereby more likely flows of emotion, information or more paradigmatic learning.
3. *Secrecy and informality* – insulation from external scrutiny allowing open interactions and exploration of politically non-feasible solutions shielded from public or principals.
4. *Stakeholder involvement* – bringing in externals and experiences from the ground, including a bottom-up challenge of purely administrative perspectives and culture.
5. *Emotional charging* – touching upon systems that cognitive learning builds on and as a foundation for interactive and social learning at paradigmatic scale.

In theory, there is a sixth conduit that one could conceptualise, and which would tie in with the above discussions on governance: The *multi-level embeddedness of actors* – both representatives and stakeholders contributing to network activities. This conduit is not developed separately because its logic is inherent in conduits 1, 2 and 4. The conduits are not mutually exclusive, rather they may strengthen each other or interfere at different stages, depending on context or their purposive activation. For instance, professional trust and peer grouping are likely mutually reinforcing. The same applies for informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging. Yet, once a trusted peer group is established, emotional charging may be experienced more strongly within this group. Likewise, informality may be beneficial to build trust with those who are formally at a more distanced position, including stakeholders.

Overall, the conduits' logic is about charging up or amplifying certain experiences, sustaining them as well as connecting single components required for learning. They all include sociologically oriented dimensions, yet they are also about logically expected steps towards learning under certain conditions. A number of potential interactive dynamics are described from a theoretical angle below, but will ultimately be refined by the empirical reality and a proposed overall path towards varieties of learning.

3.1.1 PROFESSIONAL TRUST

Reliance on a professional ethos of peers is about consistent relationships and predictable, professional behaviour over time. Peters (2015, 123) advocates that the narrowness of a policy domain defines the effectiveness of interactions such as learning or networking. In particular, small and stable communities like networks with individuals sharing professional backgrounds (Checkel 1999, 548–49) can develop an identity or cooperative culture that will allow its members to anticipate future decisions and avoid network failure (Klijn and Koppenjan 2012, 12; Rhodes and Visser 2011, 122; Risse-Kappen 1996, 70–72). This is about "understood meanings" creating energy for coordination and communication (Egeberg 2007, 80). It is closely associated with ideas of socialisation into a coherent professionalism – potentially furthering isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 152–53) – and into European exchange that facilitates social learning and reflexive pragmatism (Checkel 1999; 2001; 2005; Scholten 2017; Schön and Rein 1994). In particular a "human dimension" within networks may ease a depoliticisation of specific topics through trusted interactions (Börzel and Heard-Lauréote 2009, 142) or going technical based on mutual professional logic (Geddes and Scholten 2015). It also links to general actor predispositions to both listen and potentially move (Dunlop and Radaelli 2018b, 264) that are easier to develop within a close-knit community of administrators with higher contact quality and serious deliberation on a level playing field (Checkel 2003, 210ff.).

If then, beyond socialisation towards content-level vocabularies or problem definitions, learning and active participation are internalised as abstract values, professional norms and something peer officials and the professional community stand for (Brehm and Gates 1997; Majone

1997; Risse-Kappen 1996, 68–69), the likelihood of engaging in exchange is strengthened. In the sense of cognitive framing, only with the shared belief that learning is possible, might it indeed be possible. And only with a basic openness to frame reflection in trusted interactions, can deeper forms of learning be enacted (Scholten 2017, 349).

Empirically, Shipan and Volden (2006; 2012, 791–92; 2014) have shown that government capability, understood as legislative professionalism, and expertise condition what is taken from interactions. This focus on consistent relationships and positions over time is close to the "grim trigger" in rational choice, i.e. interactions, where cooperation promises higher payoffs than immediate defection (Axelrod 2000). What is harmful to others remains unconsidered (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011).

Peters (2015, 6) calls this genuine working together "based on normative agreement", a thought close to positive coordination (Scharpf 1994). This is crucial where learning is rooted in bargaining (Dunlop and Radaelli 2018b, 265). Higher density of interactions is also hypothesised to improve the likelihood of policy diffusion as such (Bulmer and Padgett 2005) but particularly of deeper forms of social learning (Checkel 1999, 549; Lodge 2007). Not least because feedback effects can strengthen trust and increase the value of peer beliefs (Lane and Bachmann 1998). Even without genuine trust, interdependencies of actors as repeated interactions are typical of governance networks in a specific policy realm and can have the same effects (Hanf and Scharpf 1978).

Thus, the focus of any kind of actively employed governance instrument attempting to lubricate the learning machine should take upward spirals of trust building into account. For Klijn and Koppenjan (2012, 7) trust is then more a coordinative than a commitment tool and asset for good network outcomes. This fits with recursive learning in experimentalism, where a network moves jointly towards a solution space by inducing actors to explore controllable or strategical uncertainty and active doubt production for iterative improvement (Sabel and Zeitlin 2012b, 2, 10, 14). Exploring diversity or failure can only work within trusted relationships. Peters (2015, 125) describes in particular "lower level interactions" and coordination among bureaucrats, instead of

politically selected executives "at the top of silos", as more powerful than clashing policy ambitions or cross-imposing solutions.

Professionalism is linked to what Dunlop and Radaelli (2013, 602–3) call certification, the easy identifiability of potential teachers who possess a certain social legitimacy – this obviously regards the Commission (representatives) as institutionally legitimised actor, but potentially also any of the network representatives if they bring in political, administrative, or scientific endorsements. Similarly, research on epistemic communities (Haas 1992; Stone 2012) or advocacy coalitions (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993) shows that trust in mutual expertise and shared causal policy beliefs and/or basic paradigms may matter for agents and communities to fulfil a given role efficiently; and potentially yield learning (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013). Finally, mutually recognised professionalism is reflected not only at the network layer but involved officials also take it into domestic or other transnational fora. Actors' multi-level embeddedness is thus both a crucial contribution to building trust and showing professionalism in the first place as well as a field where this trust is re-applied.

Core Propositions

I expect that developing trusted relationships amongst administrators over time contributes significantly to the emergence of learning, in particular in a network setting. The two core propositions, one each for the two ideal-type dependent variables, are here building on each other – trust emerging with regards to instruments lays the foundation for paradigmatic exchange as well. Both instrumental and paradigmatic learning necessitate some degree of trust. Trust expectedly associates with more intensive peer grouping but also stakeholder exchange and is therefore important for broader conducive factors towards learning.

Proposition 1a: *In terms of instrumental learning, professional trust leads to a higher predisposition of administrators to listen to colleagues, understand them based on an emergent joint vocabulary, and most notably believe their technical arguments (or at least trust their honesty as they put forward information on policy instruments).*

Proposition 1b: *In terms of paradigmatic learning, professional trust is the foundation of deeper layers of exchange. Recurrent technical exchange among professional peers shows that mutual learning efforts are genuine and learning as such is possible both of which are necessary conditions for paradigmatic types of exchange within this group of individuals.*

3.1.2 PEER GROUPING

Peer groups and gateways are known from theoretically informed network studies (Kadushin 2012) as well as from diffusion research (Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007, 461; Gilardi 2016, 15). Peer groups are about particular features that tie two or more individuals or higher-level units closer together, while gateways are understood as multi-adaptable units or individuals opening or connecting units that would otherwise stay apart. Overall, this aligns with an emphasis on interactions between dyads rather than primarily investigating the group level in collaborative networking (Stevens 2018, 97–98).

Peer grouping can be viewed from the perspective of country representatives or policy brokers (Howlett, Mukherjee, and Koppenjan 2017) such as the Commission in terms of gatekeeping or -waying. In terms of countries, geographic proximity is considered too blunt of an indicator – for improved learning countries might for instance seek out diversity of experiences (Gilardi 2016, 12; Sabel and Zeitlin 2010; Shipan and Volden 2012, 789–90). Both institutionalist scholarship (Peters 1997, 77–78, 86) and more constructivist (Checkel 2003) approaches factor in administrative traditions, language and culture, or political stance of a country to understand how individual representatives would position themselves *vis-à-vis* others in a network or organisation (Cini 1996; Freeman 2007, 480; Hood 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). Regarding migration and integration policy, consider for instance comparable problem pressure facing comparably weak administrative capacity across southern Europe (Buonanno 2017).

Similarly, the broader framing of migration and integration discourses tends to be nationalised. Overlaps between various national paradigms might therefore be even more crucial (Geddes and Scholten 2015; Thränhardt and Bommes 2010). Volden (2016) highlights that in particular for

learning from failure, ideological similarity – alongside professionalism – is key in explaining diffusion of policy lessons. With longer tenures within a network or the European arena, socialisation will also be at work and likely further the development of individual-level peer relationships that ease multi-directional learning from others' experiences (Börzel and Heard-Lauréote 2009; Moumoutzis and Zartaloudis 2016). In particular in smaller sub-groups or enclaves, i.e. proportions of an organisational population, joint backgrounds like regions, professions, or interests likely emerge (Egeberg 2007, 78–80). This individual or organisation level peer-grouping may tie in with higher-level peer groups as well.

Peer groups matter for comparability of experiences and predispositions that shape rational pushes for learning (and arguably propensity to translate them into action). This is about leading and lagging, peer pressure and naming and shaming as a form of informal punishment in case of non-compliance with alleged best practices (Radaelli 2000; Rhodes and Visser 2011; Stone 2004; Trubek and Trubek 2005). Moumoutzis and Zartaloudis (2016) discuss this as a distinct mechanism of how non-binding stimuli translate to change. They pick up Olson's (1971) distinction between pressure originating from publicity (e.g. country-level peers) and from person-to-person friendships (e.g. individual peers). They argue that shaming works via an instrumental channel of publicity and information, while peer-focused stimuli build on a constructivist, social logic around trust and professional ethos. Both channels tie in with reputation, prestige, recognition, or trust to be gained or jeopardised – whether at the individual or organisational levels (Rhodes and Visser 2011, 108–9). Implicit peer supervision and dynamics towards learning goals also resolve inherent tensions of soft, deliberative policy exchange via learning versus monitoring, reporting or benchmarking (Radaelli 2008, 246). This type of gradual pressure combines smoothly with (and to some degree requires) secrecy and informality (Lodge 2007, 359). Besides this internal dimension of peer groups, such groups also matter beyond the network in terms of connections with stakeholders across various levels. Network members may each become beacons of integration policy coordination or go-to actors as well as potential gateways.

Core Propositions

I expect peer grouping to be a relevant conduit for engaging in serious deliberative interactions and pushing administrators to at least consider persuasive efforts and best practices at all networking stages and at various degrees of depth (instrumental and paradigmatic). In short, peer grouping channels clear pressure on how things are done from a technical point of view. Yet, this precedes general social interactions that may at subsequent stages of exchange open paradigmatic perspectives. Peer grouping is in that sense building on and contributing to professional trust as well as conduits such as emotional charging which necessitates some density of interactions.

Proposition 2a: *Regarding instrumental learning, peer grouping increases pressure to learn about concrete policy tools because within peer groups, a comparability of contexts and ideology also strengthens a perceived transferability of instruments.*

Proposition 2b: *Regarding paradigmatic learning, persuasion around paradigmatic shifts tends to be at least seriously considered or deliberated on if happening within a specific peer group of an administrator (individuals within the social in-group shift their stance) or country-level peer group (e.g. macro-level policy shift in a country).*

3.1.3 SECRECY AND INFORMALITY

Secrecy and informality provide an environment for reflexivity and deeper learning beyond instrumental exchange. Both strengthen socialisation into an in-group of like-minded individuals with the potential of having open interactions and argumentative persuasion about the outside world and even about settings actors are coming from (Checkel 2003; 2005; Dunlop and Radaelli 2018b; Tajfel and Turner 1986). In this sense, giving up the role identity and associated frames of a country representative formally engaged in bargaining, and becoming a peer administrator engaged in informal, open communicative action and arguing, makes a difference for interaction outcomes (Lodge 2007; Risse and Kleine 2010, 713). Given this logic, secrecy and informality are a cross-cutting conduit and amplify other conduits' effects. Yet, for informality to unfold pressure, some interaction intensity of network members is required in the first place (Lodge 2007, 348).

Checkel (1999, 549; 2003, 213) hypothesised that insulation from direct political pressure and exposure unlocks social learning by removing interaction barriers. Insulated in-camera settings also give more room to serious argumentative persuasion. Linking back to peer grouping, this may also be an opportunity to switch or relate to new groups, breaking away from institutionalised insulation given a country's political stance on a topic. Checkel (2001) further highlights empty or at most symbolic rhetoric when public scrutiny and the risk of losing face come in. Hence, deeper preference shifts become harder[20]. Blaming costs are particularly relevant in OMCs and decision-making within DG Home (Bartolini 2011, 10)[21].

Rhodes and Visser (2011, 108) summarise all this as commitment devices and "glue that holds together (…) governance" in providing procedural certainty with a degree of flexibility. Here, according to Bartolini (2011, 11), meta-learning, not on the topic but on other actors' "preferences, compromises and exchanges" can take place and "widen the range of mutual concerns and (…) a commitment to the governance process itself, [implying] also potential costs of bad reputation, or being 'blamed or shamed' for failure". Similarly, in more secretive settings, benchmarks which are commonly focused on convergence of success stories, not negative lessons or learning from failure, can be made more effective. Positive stories may actually hinder holistic innovation (Radaelli 2003, 42), making the informal exchange on failure crucial. Not least, it may simply be easier to "believe what you hear" regarding practices or strategies (political and technical learning) if outside influences are somewhat removed.

Core Propositions

I expect informality to enable exploring ideas without cognitive constraints. This allows discussing failure, once administrators are pushed out of their comfort zone during field trips. I also expect enabled transitions into previously unattainable peer groups by informally exploring both mutual

[20] Risse and Kleine (2010) propose that low transparency and stronger certainty of positions and values tend to align as a condition of reflexivity, for instance in negotiations.

[21] Specifically, these may be audience costs in public settings, cf. Lohmann (2003), or professional standards within a *domestic* policy domain. On the latter, Levi-Faur (2010, 6) sees social and professional norms as "regulatory in nature".

simple concerns and deeper frames. Here, informality interacts with conduits such as peer grouping and professional trust. It thus formally influences the very structure of network interactions, more so than the above introduced softer factors within the network (professionalism or peer grouping). This implies a structural conditioning of preferences and interactions in the network and according learning outcomes, both at instrumental and paradigmatic scale.

Proposition 3a: *Regarding instrumental learning, reduced intensity and frequency of official positioning (formal country positions) and political strategising as well as reduced public scrutiny should remove factors that constrain a tableau of technical solutions. Instead, with information on the full set of policy approaches attainable in informal interactions, instrumental learning should be broadened in scope and deepened in terms of available detail. Regarding the latter, trust in the forthrightness of peers be positively associated with informality.*

Proposition 3b: *Regarding paradigmatic learning, it is crucial that underlying priors of instrumental learning may be debated outside formal circuits. This regards failure of instruments which often stems from a misfit with wider policy paradigms in a country which can now be discussed. Informality also weakens the role of formal country-level peer groups (which are at least partially structured along policy paradigms) and opens opportunities for administrators to bond more personally. This should make different world views a possible discussion topic.*

3.1.4 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Secrecy and informality can be both at odds with or leverage the fourth conduit, stakeholder involvement and stakeholder mix in a network situation. Stakeholders are understood as network external actors that either influence or are influenced by the network's activities. Risse-Kappen (1996, 68–71) builds on Habermas (1981) in arguing that spaces of "informality and non-hierarchy [give] more space (…) for communicative action". He also invokes Majone (1989), arguing that the strength of soft governance is rooted in a less hierarchical setup conducive for argumentative deliberation with true mutual challenging. Bringing stakeholders with inherently diverging ideas and preferences into networks is therefore beneficial for deeper forms of paradigmatic learning,

helpful for more functional problem-solving in an experimental sense, and not least for stakeholder statisfaction (Verweij et al. 2013). It is also closely aligned to the Commission's operating logic, which despite avoiding to step on member states' toes actively engages actors like think tanks or consultancies, which may influence knowledge transfer, inject specific narratives, or even shape policy delivery (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011; Cini 1996).

In theory, the wider the range of actors and the broader their backgrounds, the better for deliberation and learning (Dunlop and Radaelli 2018b, 260) and for potential subsequent implementation activities. Several scholars emphasise how tapping into local knowledge and involving social actors is crucial for effective multi-level OMC-style exchange that explores usable knowledge and experiences and diffuses successful ones (Borrás and Jacobsson 2004; Radaelli 2003, 24–26; 2008). Here, amongst third parties, street-level bureaucracy in particular is commonly not reflected in European-level networks but essential for top-level regulatory policy refinement (Sabel and Zeitlin 2010). Likewise exemplary would be exercises where policy makers directly involve citizens (Voorberg et al. 2017). In the case of networks in migrant integration, consider for instance direct interactions with refugees in discussing personal experiences of arrival practices instead of just collecting data on transition times. However, this ideal of both effective and legitimate bottom-up learning is hardly reached in practice (Radaelli 2003; 2008, 245).

Involving experts likely benefits the scientific quality of discourse and instrumental value when exploring policy options, but they can also be used to justify or substantiate specific narratives that a coordinating entity desires (Boswell 2008b; 2009, 7–8; Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011, 7–8). A symbolic function of involving externals may even stop short of the content-level and be only about signalling the legitimacy of a forum (e.g. a network) or institution (e.g. the Commission) and the perceived competence of these units based on committing to the primacy of expert knowledge (Boswell 2008b; 2009). Being knowledgeable or knowing the knowledgeable is a source of legitimacy for the Commission as technocratic entity (Boswell 2008b, 478–79).

Overall, stakeholders may help to scope and define for instance integration policy as something the EU should deal with (Geddes and Scholten 2015, 42–43).

For network in migrant integration, this may hence include migrant organisations or NGOs that are not research-oriented but lend credibility to the network as a go-to place. On the expert side of stakeholders there are a range of "boundary organisations" that are part of a semi-institutionalised research-think-tank nexus in migrant integration, including the Migration Policy Group, the Migration Policy Institute, the International Organisation for Migration, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development or the European Migration Network as research sibling of the EIN (Carrera 2014; Geddes and Scholten 2015, 42; Mulcahy 2011). Professional consultancies also support the Commission.

However, in practice, involving externals may also have a different effect on the coherence of the network in-group and impede exchange. Moreover, there is some tension as the stronger involvement of, for example, NGOs or researchers extends the availability of solutions, yet it could also create and aggregate awareness for problems and coordination needs in the first place[22]. Stakeholder involvement and decisions on when and how to involve them are therefore a crucial governance architecture decision and instrument. The leading role resides with the teacher, in European soft governance arguably the Commission, who needs to balance "scientific quality and social, economic, and political preferences" when involving stakeholders and experts to be effective (Dunlop and Radaelli 2018b, 263).

Core Propositions

I expect stakeholder involvement to be decisive for transforming the content level of what is being learned – extending the range of considered policy instruments and thinking about embedding or framing instruments systemically. Particularly during study visits, stakeholders either contribute direct inputs or, if part of a delegation around an administrator, may serve a function of translating practices observed in one context for the context of the administrator. Also, in terms of social-

[22] The logic aligns to Shipan and Volden (2006) who propose a "pressure valve" and "snowball-logic".

interactive processes stakeholders are crucial to (a) push network members out of their comfort zones and amplify observations, particularly, when meeting policy recipients, and (b) help network members in sustaining these observations into a domestic context. Stakeholders are hence associated with opportunities of emotional charging (beyond the content perspective). For this in turn, the conduit "stakeholder involvement" necessitates some degree of informality. Beyond learning, for the Commission, stakeholders also fulfil a symbolic supporting function that sustains the network's right to exist and deal with specific issues.

Proposition 4a: *Regarding instrumental learning, stakeholders push administrators out of their comfort zones to consider a wider range of policy instruments. Stakeholders amplify information that they deem important and bring it to the attention of administrators. Next, this information is translated for the given context of an administrator and lastly, stakeholders support administrators once taking this updated technical information outside the network.*

Proposition 4b: *Regarding paradigmatic learning, the amplification, translation, and sustaining of information on policy instruments is commonly embedded in highly personalised impact stories and frames, referencing direct experience of policy, and the role an instrument may play from a more systemic policy perspective.*

3.1.5 EMOTIONAL CHARGING

Emotions are helpful both for amplifying and sustaining the other conduits. Reputation and professional rituals or connections (peer groups) and their dynamics are clearly tied to emotions (Jasper 2011, 289-290, 294-295). Heclo (1978) describes emotional and intellectual rather than functional gains from simple network participation. For specific learning activities – namely field visits where administrators and stakeholders, including policy recipients, meet face-to-face – emotion matters for substitution heuristics or halo effects (Kahneman 2011; Kahneman and Shane 2002) as well as for mechanisms that access deeper layers of learning. In particular social, interactive learning (Checkel 2001; 2005) requires affective notions – not least to shift priors of policy professionals, deconstruct frames tied to actor identity and make room for serious deliberation

(Checkel 2003; van Hulst and Yanow 2016, 105). Without affective circuitries, the logic of in-grouping as a baseline of socialisation and social learning only builds on cognitive and evaluative factors (Checkel 1999; Tajfel 1982a; Turner 1981).

This subsection borrows ideas from psychology and neurosciences to explore how emotion, mood, or affect[23] may underscore learning primarily at the elevating stage of networking. There have been significant advances on the link between hot, emotional or affective "go" and cool, logical "know" cognitive processes (Metcalfe and Mischel 1999)[24]. This relates among others to issue framing, including overlaps with frame reflection, communication, persuasion and reflexive learning (DeSteno et al. 2004; Druckman and McDermott 2008; Martino et al. 2006; Nabi 2003) as well as frame attachment (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, 102) or decision-making and political judgement (Marcus et al. 2005; Schwarz 2000).

Primal emotions are theorised to include four comfort zones (seeking, lust, care, play) and three negative circuitries (fear, rage and anger, sadness and panic) (Panksepp 2011)[25]. Learning may tie in with several, though seeking seems fundamental for exploration and eagerness to learn (Oudeyer, Gottlieb, and Lopes 2016). An emotional stimulus commonly associates with better attention and motivation or memory which tie in with durability and significance of learning outcomes (Pekrun 1992; Schwarz 2000). A teaching unit can direct this stimulus and make cognitive experiences more significant at the individual level (Craig et al. 2004), for instance charging up a technocratic exchange with emotional identity-markers.

Circuitries beyond "seeking" may actively be touched upon by specific learning experiences, in the EIN for instance personal interactions with refugees or visiting a refugee camp, which may trigger care, anger, or sadness. Feelings taken from such situations matter as there tends to be mood

[23] There is no terminology consensus. I use "emotion" loosely as less rationalised and interchangeably with affect or mood. Generally, affect describes a short-lived emotion itself, usually reacting to a stimulus, whereas mood can subtly persist over time. Brader and Marcus (2013) or Jasper (2011, 286–87) draw out distinctions based on duration and ways of feeling them.

[24] Cf. Slovic and Peters (2006) for a differentiation focused on risk assessments (affect heuristic of risk as feelings vs. risk as analysis). The distinction is an old one: "from the very outset of Western thought, reason and emotion were understood as the two fundamental qualities of human nature", cf. Brader and Marcus (2013, 1), referring to Plato and Aristotle.

[25] Originally tied to survival, hence a neural process that patterns intense interactions, cf. Panksepp (1998; 2011).

congruence (Bower 1981) at play when recalling or evaluating facts: a negative mood will lead to more negative reflections and overestimating the probability of negative outcomes, for instance regarding a policy activity (Johnson and Tversky 1983; Schwarz 2000, 433–34)[26]. A similar logic applies for persuasive appeals that are more effective when combined with emotional tones that match a recipient's emotional state (DeSteno et al. 2004). There is also evidence that mood influences strategies of individual information processing which is a core element of learning. Positive mood associates with referencing pre-existing knowledge and using heuristics, while a negative one makes it more likely to systematically process details bottom-up (Schwarz 2000, 434)[27].

Differentiating types of negative emotions, Marcus et al. (2005) find that anxiety and distress hint at referring to frames for coping with danger and novelty, while anger could create aversion and an avoidance of learning as information absorption[28]. However, anxiety can also promote considering opposing viewpoints and compromise while aversion over recurring conflict leads to opposition and defending priors (MacKuen et al. 2010).

Linked to emotions is the mental state of confusion as cognitive imbalance (D'Mello et al. 2014). If individuals face pieces of information that do not fit or reach an impasse, their attention usually improves and underlying emotional systems are activated to solve the problem (D'Mello et al. 2014, 154). Difficulty and confusion thus become an opportunity for learning with greater depth, for Kahneman (2011), cognitive strain activates a thoroughly calculating "system 2"[29]. This is certainly relevant in the case of significant exogenous and possibly internalised crises. Kamkhaji and Radaelli (2016) argue, building on Morís et al. (2014), that under certain circumstances and lack of prior experience, these crises trigger fast-paced associative learning, almost automatic reactions with surprise overlaying cognition (and limited cognitive requirements).

[26] Johnson and Tversky (1983) focus on affect and risk assessments (negative emotions would yield more pessimistic risk views and vice versa), crucially finding that such emotion can be triggered by completely unrelated information.

[27] The former aligns with Kahneman's (2011) system 1, the latter with a rational, calculating system 2.

[28] Aversion or anger (or positive emotions like enthusiasm) trigger the disposition (seeking) system while fear or distress trigger the surveillance system, cf. Druckman and McDermott (2008, 302).

[29] Yet emotional vividness makes it easier to remember things.

Core Propositions

I expect emotional charging to be relevant for a truly reflexive learning experience that stands a chance of shifting frames at paradigmatic scale. I expect emotions to contribute to a higher propensity of openness to deliberation and limiting cognitive barriers when considering options outside the policy-scope of a specific domestic setting. Emotional charging thus benefits from conduits such as peer grouping (higher density and intimacy of a network subgroup) or stakeholder involvement (carriers of both factual and emotional input). Overall, learning – both instrumental and paradigmatic – is likely to function differently with an emotional stimulus: better attention, better memory, more lively ways of relating to what is learned, yet potentially overestimating things or jumping to conclusions. There might also be an argument to be made for stronger persistence and credibility once an administrator files a report that hits specific emotional tones to her home organisation. In short, the impact on learning is somewhat ambiguous and multidirectional. This will be explored empirically.

Proposition 5a: *Regarding instrumental learning, with an emotional stimulus or emotional embedding, better attention and a lively memory of policy approaches, including technical details, is expected. Yet, emotionally-charged instrumental learning will also overestimate the "experienced" or relatable information vis-à-vis actual facts. This concurs with an expected use of heuristics as shortcuts to evaluate technical solutions instead of continual information updating.*

Proposition 5b: *Regarding paradigmatic learning, cognitive constraints and technical thinking will be overshadowed or substituted by emotionally charged information that becomes more of an experience than a recollection of information. This removal of a cognitive barrier makes it easier for administrators to engage in deliberation and re-framing of policy beyond pure facts.*

3.2 CRISIS CONTEXT: QUALIFYING THE CONDUITS

Importantly, one transformational factor that is more case specific than the conduits needs to be considered. Context inherently shapes social mechanisms and thorough consideration of how context and actual mechanism interact to define an outcome is one advantage of qualitative research

(Falleti and Lynch 2009). Here, the so-called "migration crisis" requires additional coverage given that the EIN was upgraded amid the turmoil in 2016.

Laffan (2016, 916) describes crises as inherently risky, critical junctures and focal points for future policy trajectories. Observing a change within a crisis – here, re-booting the EIN – therefore points to the crucial character of the case: if new types of soft governance through learning are enacted here, this might have long-term repercussions for the future governance model more generally. Thus, the EIN case is rooted in the crisis: large numbers of EU-external migrants led to a certain comparability of challenges across member states including a need for coordinated responses and practical cooperation (EC 2016). Besides this instrumental logic, re-establishing the EIN may also be understood in terms of its symbolic function – towards member states, the stakeholder community or even citizens. Hunter and Boswell (2015) have described such a logic for the domestic setting-up of independent commissions in crisis response: beyond knowledge production and exchange, these commissions serve a symbolic legitimisation function, showing that the government is taking action, or a substantiating function that supports a government's chosen path.

Generally, regarding governance options, styles and instruments, Howlett (2012) or Lodge and Wegrich (2012) have discussed the profound impact of a crisis for bureaucrats' options. A crisis is a change device that can alter an organisational context, causing reactions within the organisation, which in themselves might hinder effective solutions (Hermann 1963). Thus, either directly or indirectly, this can trigger change, including the emergence of new modes of governance for dealing with a problem (Diedrichs, Reiners, and Wessels 2011, 26–27). Zeitlin (2016) notes how crises may demand specific governance approaches, such as experimentalism, apt to dealing with local differences, for instance different crisis severity, diversity in responses, or governance context.

Similarly, Héritier and Rhodes (2011, 166–67) remark that previous coordination failure may induce cooperation, only through alternative means. The development towards the EIN might be a good illustration of this and viewed within the problematic broader OMC application. Problem

pressure is one core driver of governance as a flexible, continually adjusting system in the first place and crises constitute extra-ordinary pressure. Bartolini (2011, 11) describes how pressure drives "institutional creativity and flexible adaptation" leading into updated and hybridised modes of governance. He emphasises how this skips common or compulsory procedural stages that administrative traditions would impose. In the EIN context, one could consider the skipped procedural stage of aligning with member states before relaunching the network.

In terms of learning, failure or crises can trigger or accelerate policy learning under certain conditions (Kamkhaji and Radaelli 2016; May 1992). Novel situations and uncertainty may trump priors and trigger the motivation for cognitively opening up (Checkel 1999, 549–50; 2003, 213). As outlined above, also specific emotional responses might be amplified in crises. Kamkhaji and Radaelli (2016) trace a causal relationship from crisis to behavioural change, based on associative mechanisms taken from psychological studies of contingent learning. They argue that normal policy learning is rooted in this behavioural shift and emphasise micro-foundations of learning. Importantly, as in their case study, the EIN contributes to change within a crisis. However, in particular deeper forms of learning may not generalise "outside" the crisis context, that is, once the concrete situation is over, learning may remain limited to this situation (Deverell 2009, 184). Furthermore, fast change and according information complexity may also impede organisational learning (Hedberg 1981). Not least, crises may also play a more indirect role in charging up amplifiers or conduits – this might work in various directions: for instance, understood meanings through socialisation or professional trust are particularly relevant when facing adversity and create issues if absent (Egeberg 2007, 80).

At the organisational and higher societal levels, DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 151, 154) hypothesise that environments of uncertainty and change encourage imitation of alleged success-cases or institutional isomorphism. While they primarily focus on organisational change issues emerging for instance due to poorly understood technology, the logic also holds for crises. If a government seems to lack capacities to respond, Shipan and Volden (2012, 791) lay out how this

increases both the interest in and coercive forces for learning. Deverell (2009, 185–86) similarly proposes that outside credibility threats increase the eagerness of organisations to learn or show effort in drawing lessons. Scholars point in particular to a higher group-level propensity of social learning in the face of failure (Checkel 1999, 549) and often a societal, paradigm-discrediting and then paradigm-shifting character when learning from crises (Hall 1993, 284–85).

Laffan (2016, 916) argues that crises possess a social character opening up paradigms as political complexity and interdependencies increase. Migration and integration policy in particular have been dominated by paradigmatic path dependencies that were shaken up in the recent crisis (Geddes 2018). Along these lines, Scholten and van Nispen (2015, 1) describe the unsettling character of the migration crisis as not only being about a wicked policy issue but also about the framing of the policy problem itself – an issue that strongly shapes what and how learning takes place.

Core Propositions

I argue that the context of the crisis made the EIN's re-establishment possible without significant member-state backlash (although arguably most conduits would also work without the crisis context). Moreover, the crisis context helped in transitioning from the previous network and charging up the new practices. I hence expect network members to be generally more open-minded and willing to engage. Not least, the context contributed to the creation of stronger domestic leverage for takeaways from the network, which I expect in turn to strengthen how the full range of learning is taken beyond the individual level. Crucially, I expect all conduits developed above to be more accentuated and charged up than in a non-crisis setting. For instance, emotional charging now gains a clear-cut reference point ("failure"), stakeholders may see new access points, or peer groups may reshuffle based on the comparability of respective crisis experiences.

Proposition 6a: *Regarding instrumental learning, a crisis context increases delivery pressure and leads to an accelerated consideration of all potential options of dealing successfully with the crisis. The crisis introduces a bias towards success cases.*

Proposition 6b: *Regarding paradigmatic learning, a crisis' unsettling character is paradigm-shaking or even paradigm-discrediting and hence leads to epistemic uncertainty that cuts deeper than policy instruments. Issue framing and the systemic embedding of instruments are more openly deliberated on.*

3.3 SITUATIONAL ACTIVATION OF CONDUITS – ON THE FACILITATION OF LEARNING

The conduits discussed above regard a range of social practices emerging in networks, some directly influencing learning, others embedding potential instrumental or paradigmatic learning mechanisms. In either case, it is a crucial conceptual and practical question how these conduits can be purposively activated and linked with each other to create a targeted learning experience beyond organically emerging belief updates. This section accordingly explores the core facilitating actor on the European policy stage: the European Commission. After discussing the general properties associated with the Commission as the facilitator of coordination and learning, two ideal-type facilitated practices are carved out from existing research: platforming and elevating, both of which associate with specific conduits.

3.3.1 THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AS FACILITATOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION AND LEARNING PRACTICES

Governance network theory accentuates managerial activities within networks to explore coordinative processes (O'Toole Jr. 2015). Research emphasises formal or informal managers who steer a network towards joint problem solving and change (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011; Edelenbos, van Buuren, and Klijn 2013; Verweij et al. 2013). Similarly, learning-brokers may link network members to specific societal actors that can contribute to learning (Howlett, Mukherjee, and Koppenjan 2017). This includes upfront work on content-level questions as well as the enablement of interactions among actors or between organisations (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011).

For European administrative networks, diverse actors can fill such roles – the Commission, specific member states, or intermediaries such as external managers and experts in more epistemically-oriented settings. However, in particular the role of the Commission for getting actors to

interact, for learning and knowledge-structuring, or for transnational coordination and Europeanisation of policy and administrations has been emphasised in a multitude of theoretical and empirical studies from a range of policy fields (e.g. Egeberg and Trondal 2009; Hooghe and Marks 2001; Hustedt and Seyfried 2015; Mastenbroek and Martinsen 2018; Tamtik 2016; Wilks 2005). These include migrant integration policy (Carrera 2014; Geddes and Scholten 2015; Mulcahy 2011; Scholten and Verbeek 2015) and adjacent migration policy (Boswell 2006; 2008a; 2008b; Scholten and van Nispen 2015). While research analysed Commission-provided structures, for instance the knowledge exchange infrastructure in integration policy (Geddes and Scholten 2015), this has not yet explicitly considered learning[30].

The Commission exerts leadership within the EU based on individual Commissioners' ambitions and its treaty-based institutional functions and capacities. Its success is linked to attaining and translating expertise and knowledge into decisions and policy outputs (Bürgin 2017; Cini and Šuplata 2017; Kassim et al. 2017; Nugent 1995). The Commission shows both entrepreneurial and managerial-administrative traits, the latter coming under regular strain with limited in-house administrative capacity and reliance on the member states (Cini 1996, 22; Laffan 1997, 423). Meanwhile, entrepreneurial opportunities to shape policy itself are rooted in the Commission's knowledge base (Cini and Šuplata 2017, 144). Overall, both functions coalesce in building coalitions within the political world but also in involving stakeholders, brokering compromise and pushing non-zero sum policy in appropriate moments (Cini 1996, 28–29). This requires an institutional environment favouring the emergence of brokerage, hence a context that privileges expertise or specific frames that transcend formal authority (Risse and Kleine 2010, 714). Moreover, a formal or informal agenda-setting role matters and is traditionally discussed at the higher layers above DGs, although it is also relevant for the bureaucratic world and member-state representa-

[30] Also the case study this research will explore, the EIN, has so far remained unexplored and may be inherently different, as it builds primarily on administrators, not research experts and is more reliant on leadership from within the Commission's DG and more about wielding governance by spreading concrete policy-delivery approaches with the help of specific member-state representatives than about exploring policy or signalling policy exploration at a higher level.

tives (Laffan 1997; Nugent 1995; Princen 2011). Agenda setting is about two things: gaining attention for an issue and credibly claiming that the EU – or a specific DG or network – is the right place to deal with it (Nugent 1995, 614; Princen 2011, 928–30).

The Commission is not considered a monolith (Hooghe 1997, 1–2) but a *multi*national and *multi*lingual (Schmidt and Wonka 2014, 125) *multi*-organisation (Cram 1994), hence a set of different institutions forming a political system in itself (Cini 1996). Different DGs vary in terms of administrative culture and framing of policy objectives, which they pursue and try to expand in "purposeful opportunism" (Cram 1994, 197ff.; Hartlapp, Metz, and Rauh 2013) or rapid response to windows of opportunity (Kassim et al. 2017, 653). Constituting the Commission, DGs are then a more homogenous units of analysis (Cini and Šuplata 2017). Within DGs, directorates and units responsible for the likes of networks mirror the administrative style and ambitions of the parent DG (Cram 1994, 200–201). This may include specific strategic policy approaches and likely broader values as distinctively European element (Boswell and Geddes 2011, 205).

In sum, working towards the creation of knowledge or the preparation of decisions, the Commission tends to broker interactions that target learning in multiple directions. This is one of the core functions of Commission-run networks. Learning is a fluid concept, but networking practices are still expected to target specific ends from the point of view of the teaching or facilitating authority. I expect the Commission to exercise this role, which involves elements of higher-level agenda setting (politically defining a new network structure as a place to tackle the topic) and working on specific issues within the network. For the latter, the Commission should tend to collaborate with member states to broker ideas, both at the ideal-type platforming and elevating stages. The ensuing two sub-sections explore how this purposive orchestration that plays or activates specific transformational conduits may work. To ensure the formulation of empirically tangible implications for these conceptualised practices, below I will at times already refer to the space of integration and migration policy within the Commission, that is, DG HOME and its core network in migrant integration, the EIN.

3.3.2 PLATFORMING PRACTICES

Platforming is about the establishment of a structure of exchange – this entails a range of managerial activities. These include activating actors for the platform, orchestrating them and arranging adequate interactions or providing a knowledge baseline (or ensuring input from third parties). Generally, what I conceptualise as a first ideal type of Commission-facilitated learning is not foreign in EU scholarship around organisational structures and institutions. The EU and the Commission in particular have been described as a "bourse", hence the equivalent of a stock exchange just for trading interests, policies or problems (Nugent 1995, 613), a transfer platform and opportunity structure to exchange – upload, transform, download – information (Padgett 2003) and coordinate policy, also bottom-up (Radaelli 2000; 2003, 39ff.). These ideas are prevalent in policy fields without direct legal authority such as migrant integration (Mulcahy 2011).

As the Commission lacks direct means to exercise a complex governance function due to legal or capacity constraints, approaches like networks create a structure where specific interactions are facilitated or more actively orchestrated. In particular the latter includes working with national administrative counterparts as well as third parties (Abbott et al. 2015). The overall logic of platforming is thus theorised to be about context provision for debating policy design, management, and delivery as performed by the member states instead of direct definition of approaches for them (Boswell and Geddes 2011, 218). Such context may cover information about approaches, background for broader thinking and typical vocabulary and rhetoric.

Platforming as an activity of the higher echelons of the Commission could also be about symbolic value, establishing a visible structure to emphasise learning efforts regarding an issue. Yet, it may as well signal a go-to place or beacon *vis-à-vis* political stakeholders (Boswell 2009; Geddes and Scholten 2015). Much like institutionalising a knowledge infrastructure (Geddes and Scholten 2015), network interactions like meetings in Brussels or learning sessions hosted in member states and the involvement of topical stakeholders help brokerage between research and policy-making – on a content level and via mutual lending of credibility. Overall, a structural component of platforming is likely at the core of soft governance and horizontal Europeanisation in the sense

of fostering exchange and alignment between member states, rather than exploring and making joint decisions (Geddes and Scholten 2015, 52–53; Mulcahy 2011).

Egeberg (1999a; 2007) has described how organisational structures shape processes of dealing with complexity or coordination problems. Crucial components include the organisational locus (e.g. being based in or meeting in a Commission building) which creates physical framing structure within which interactions take place. Face-to-face contact and group conversation are vastly locus-dependent, benefit from proximity and are key when facing complex decisions. This is also about normalising interactions and becoming accustomed to coordinative practices by constant engagement (Boswell 2008b, 479–80; Cini 1996).

Comparable to what happens within an organisation such as the Commission overall (Cini 1995, 2–3), platforming can also be understood as establishing leadership through procedural arrangements, ideas and beyond: for instance, by creating a cultural microcosm within the network, consisting of shared narratives, quite likely values and potentially even abstract myths and ideology. Hence, whether the true value resides in pure instrumental facilitation or the exchange or easing of interactions, learning can be shaped by structural points of reference driven for instance by a parent DG for a network. The managerial activity platforming is thus about what network governance theory has framed as a network manager's purposeful creation of stable patterns of exchange within a stable organisational environment and structural embeddedness in the long run (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011; Huang and Provan 2007).

Egeberg (2007, 78–80) describes this length of service as key variable in organisational demography. Checkel (2003, 210) also underlines the potential function of time in preference change: long-standing interactive communication might help to shift views[31]. Furthermore, intensive interactions that facilitate joint exploration of solutions on an epistemic level or anticipate social forms of learning tend to be easier the better identifiable a structural setup is. At the more operative stages

[31] However, Checkel also notes that longer membership might help individuals to learn how to decouple from what is communicated – hence quality and strength of contacts might be more important than pure time, particularly in smaller groups.

of running the network, the Commission as network manager would also be expected to drive process agreements that fill the structure, i.e. at least propose procedures for the network (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011).

A first platforming task of the network manager consists in activating the network and connecting the right set of actors (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011; Salamon 2002a; Verweij et al. 2013). While the Commission as formal facilitator and partial agenda setter can pull member states into a network, this does not imply that states or their representatives are particularly willing to participate and open to learning or persuasion, in particular if topics are politicised. Network management accordingly requires the provision of participation benefits, either evolving directly from the contacts of platform members or by bringing in further actors to contribute to the network's activities. This is about orchestration and making members interact effectively. It includes the useful mixing up of stakeholders – which in areas such as EU integration policy may be particularly multi-dimensional (Boswell and Geddes 2011, 217) – and arranging adequate formats like workshops, conferences, project teams, or recurrent personal or remote meetings (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011; Salamon 2002a). This involves empowering member-state representatives who show commitment to the platform in terms of organisational resource contributions or content input. This directed involvement is crucial to pull member states on the side of the Commission's broader agenda, in particular in areas under formal authority of member states that are commonly protective of their turf (Carrera 2014, 173; Mulcahy 2011, 128–29).

On a content dimension, platforming implies that the Commission as network manager provides a tableau of approaches that engaged members may explore, a knowledge baseline for orientation (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011). This is also about significant internal organisational and technical capability. Cini (1996, 30) describes such involvement as parallel role of a think tank, research unit and consensus-builder, while Laffan (1997, 423) calls it a think tank and market of ideas. Others talk about re-asserting a role as nucleus and, once more, think tank of the EU that

has a unique horizontal perspective on available policy solutions (Egeberg 2006; Hooghe and Marks 2001, 12–16; Trondal 2011, 59–60).

European institutions can play a strong role in "catalys[ing] isomorphic processes" (Radaelli 2000, 26) by presenting specific member states as examples to follow and by engagement on the platform, gradually increasing peer pressure. However, isomorphic processes may be hard if there is a lack of national cases for imitation. In such cases, the Commission "can overcome this by inseminating solutions into national systems" (Radaelli 2000, 26) or – likely the case in the soft governance world – help specific member states in building both capability for and reputation of a good solution that they can present in the network on the Commission's behalf. Either way, the EU offers an institutionalised transfer platform with the Commission being the entrepreneur that involves adequate stakeholders including specific member-state representatives to suggest best practice models (Radaelli 2000, 26ff.; Stone 2004, 553–55).

Specific member states, stakeholders or experts may also be simply more skilled teachers to provide input directly on the platform or in elevating practices from the platform. This is about "breaking away from two-level, dyadic relationships with national governments" (Hooghe and Marks 2001, 84) while remaining the "consensus crafter (…) hold[ing] the pen" (Hooghe and Marks 2001, 21). It allows the Commission to take a backseat and let actual policies be proposed by others or deducted from specific national settings (Blauberger and Rittberger 2015b; Radaelli 2000, 38)[32]. Of course, the involvement of actors is not under full Commission control (neither is the content-level agenda), nor likely to be fully strategised (Geddes and Scholten 2015).

Core Propositions

Recurrent interactions within a network structure provide a tableau of policy options while allowing administrators to bond over time. Platforming practices are hence expected to emphasise epistemic exchange, including both knowledge sharing and development and, on a social layer, at least

[32] Working indirectly through a platform where these dynamics play out is also a question of "political feasibility" and "technocratic legitimacy", cf. Radaelli (2000, 26ff.); Stone (2004, 553ff.).

basic trust building due to repeated interactions among professionals. Specific actors should already begin to crystallise in their commitment, co-investing at the platforming stage. This includes contributions to the network in terms of organisational resources or agenda support for the Commission or content-level input. The Commission is anticipated to improve its capacities by involving external actors in preparing content and managing the network. These same actors should fuel elevating processes from the platform at the next stage (see below). In its path towards instrumental or paradigmatic learning, the above implies an activation and interaction of at least three conduits, while touching several others.

Proposition 7a: *Regarding instrumental learning, recurrent interactions within a Commission-created network provide a knowledge baseline and tableau of policy options to explore or directly choose from. This includes developing an according professional vocabulary. I expect this to rely on three conduits: first, peer groups are the primary go-to unit of comparison and pre-filter the policy tableau for individual administrators (i.e. what works in a comparable context). Second, professional trust between individual administrators grows through repeated interactions and additional peer groups become accessible via multi-adaptable gateway actors that connect different peer groups. This widens the set of technical solutions and increases comparative pressure beyond only one peer group. Third, social processes are complemented by an active managerial involvement of external stakeholders such as contractors who extend the technical solution space and provide content input on the basis of which other conduits can unfold.*

Proposition 7b: *Regarding paradigmatic learning, the conduit "professional trust" is crucial. Bonding on instrumental elements of policy over time sets a baseline for deeper forms of exchange. Here, gaining access to remote peer groups should challenge paradigmatic assumptions.*

3.3.3 ELEVATING PROCESSES

With elevating, I describe iteratively employed instruments of situating network members in on-the-ground learning launched from a network platform. This is about employing the right ap-

proaches to trigger cooperation and learning by using specific interaction formats. This might include observing activities, participating in delivery activities including interactions with policy recipients, information-focused workshops, desk-sharing with operations officials, policy co-designing activities, or informal gatherings.

Elevating is close to management techniques discussed in the network governance literature (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011; Klijn and Koppenjan 2012; Rhodes and Visser 2011; Salamon 2002b). This includes so-called modulation as facilitating an adequate environment to further cognitive and emotional motivation to engage in cooperation and learning. Elevating also comprises elements of targeted actor activation, for instance, selecting a specific group of governmental core members or reducing group sizes to engage participants more strongly as well as bringing in stakeholders. A network manager such as the Commission can employ these networking tools, commonly with leeway regarding ways of proceeding and agenda setting[33].

Most managerial techniques of making a network experience meaningful involve stakeholders and third parties, often at the delivery layers of policy, which juxtaposes elevating to new modes of governance and OMCs which accentuate these target groups (Schmidt and Wonka 2014). Elevating is also about reducing the distance of the Commission's leadership abilities from policy interventions (Boswell 2008b) and engaging administrative layers of governance. In soft governance areas such as integration policy, administrative interactions may be the only available option of covering a topic at all (Geddes and Scholten 2015, 42). This differs from just going technical and operational on the ground to depoliticise issues at stake, not least because issues remain value-laden and to some degree high politics (Börzel and Risse 2018; Geddes and Scholten 2015, 46)[34].

Taking the example of integration policy, Scholten and Verbeek (2015, 188–89) point out that the field sustains particularly high levels of politicisation and wickedness which, referencing

[33] Ideas of "activation", "modulation" and "orchestration" originate from Salamon (2002a) and were complemented with hierarchical ordering in Rhodes and Visser (2011). Klijn and Koppenjan (2012) use initiating, facilitating and mediating.

[34] Working them at the administrative echelons would point at depoliticised technocratic brokering (Bauer and Ege (2012, 406–7); Radaelli (1995)) and action-orientation rather than symbolic politics. However, in the context of the migration crisis as redistributive issue, depoliticising failed, cf. Börzel (2016); Börzel and Risse (2018, 91ff.).

Boswell (2009), they expect to lead to symbolic forms of knowledge utilisation instead of technically-oriented instrumental exchange – even within administrative circuits. This is mirrored in the framing literature as well which would locate intractable controversy as rooted in different frames, not scientific disagreement (Rein and Schön 1996)[35]. This is arguably a feature of wider OMC-style modes of governance (Lodge 2007).

Hence, in soft governance and integration policy as a specific example, divergent policy frames are at stake and likely imply that simple fact-finding missions are insufficient to shift beliefs. Instead, the core dynamic I expect in elevating processes aligns with frame analysis and frame reflection studies that tackle deeper points of reference which shape and shift the interpretation of factual information and interactions (Schön and Rein 1994) – something I defined above as part of paradigmatic learning. This ties in with constructivist notions and reflexive forms of learning, rooted in language, narratives, and symbols, which Scholten (2017, 346) has explored for the Dutch context of migrant integration or which Mulcahy (2011, 185) has covered as integration policy value diffusion through EU-level networking[36].

More specifically, elevating is close to a dynamic type of intersubjective (re-)framing[37] with particular relevance for networked, administrative-level interactions (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, 93). This refers to sensemaking of actors and interactively providing meaning to a situational context[38]. Actors categorise what they experience and make a "normative leap" to what the ideal situation would look like and what should happen next given their priors. This can be a cognitive and fact-oriented process, though certainly complemented by social and interactive components (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, 97–99). Within elevating [39], the format of study visits in smaller groups,

[35] Hall (1993) uses Kuhn for developing a similar idea about paradigmatic, fundamental beliefs.

[36] Which she finds reflected in domestic discourse, yet much less in domestic legal policy.

[37] van Hulst and Yanow (2016, 93) see frame analysis as static and coin framing as dynamic process, in which actors engage.

[38] Similar logics are studied in organisational institutionalism and management studies, labelled "institutional logics" as frames of reference that shape sensemaking of actors, cf. Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury (2012).

[39] The description of van Hulst and Yanow (2016, 98) is an illustration of dynamics at play on the ground during Commission-facilitated field-trips: "sense-making work of framing can be seen to unfold as actors engage in a conversation with the situation, where "the situation" intermingles persons, acts, events, language, and/or objects. At a certain point in the process, actors attribute some initial meaning to the situation at hand, looking then to see what happens as a result. This is an interactive and iterative process, in which details and generalities inform one another, a clearer idea of what is going on develops, and meanings 'emerge'".

involving stakeholders and relatable, mentally transferable[40] on-the-ground experiences like visiting a refugee camp or co-working at a desk with social workers, are a trigger of such situational sensemaking demands[41]. Lodge (2007, 356) describes a similar dynamic of altered policy discourse at the individual level as administrators engage in peer review processes within an OMC.

Framing relies on narratives and storytelling as a compelling, persuasive collection of definitions and categorisations referring to interpretations of the past and present and predictions about the future (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011; van Hulst and Yanow 2016, 100–101). As Checkel (2003, 213) hypothesises, the scope for argumentative persuasion increases as actors, here, network members participating in elevating practices, face a novel, uncertain environment that prompts them to analyse their options. While Schön and Rein (1994) put forward underlying structures as frames, Boswell, Geddes and Scholten (2011, 4–5) complement this with the cognitive content of narratives, that is, a definition of a concrete policy problem, its causal nuts-and-bolts, and effects of policy interventions. The cognitive dimension is expectedly present at experiential learning sessions where persuasion via personal, potentially emotional contact goes hand in hand with the provision of technical details of a specific policy intervention.

Diverging from content-level views, van Hulst and Yanow (2016, 102) push to explore underlying structures as identity-related questions that Schön and Rein only touch upon. They argue that self-perceptions and other actors' identities are crucial to shape and solve conflicting understandings of situations and support pragmatism. Coordination activities or governance here involve social learning as partial alignment of identities, linking back to abovementioned ideas around socialisation (Checkel 2001; 2005). Van Hulst and Yanow (2016, 102) call this an emotional, psychological, social or cultural attachment to a frame that might shift through interactions.

[40] Observing how a delivery activity is performed is arguably much easier mentally transferred to a home context compared to an abstract policy, this should therefore move the observation closer to hearts and minds of involved administrators. This aligns with availability heuristics, cf. Tversky and Kahneman (1973).

[41] Take the example of observing a refugee-run community initiative. Categorising would invoke notions around what seeking refuge in a specific country entails, the same applies for "community" and initiative taking. This might trigger a range of unconscious notions - "why do they do that, this country hands out huge benefits", "standards here are terrible", "refugees stay among themselves, they don't want to integrate", "they take initiative and are an active part of civil society" etc.

Consider for instance a representative from a member state that treats immigrants as a specific "target group in need of help". Within a soft-governance network, this representative faces a refugee arguing for mainstreaming, empowerment and a self-help narrative. If that refugee dismisses the "needy refugee" orientation as harmful or insulting, this may become an identity-challenging moment for a bureaucrat acting with best intentions. More so, bureaucrats designing policy might have never been in touch with a policy recipient in their whole life. Following a face-to-face interaction, the propensity to switch to a positively perceived in-group of, for instance bureaucrats who are positively perceived by a target group, may increase. Such in-group may carry a specific policy, content-level paradigm as well. Overall, elevating should have an eye opening, reflexive character, that is, verbalising tacit underlying structures (Schön and Rein 1994, 34). As van Hulst and Yanow (2016, 105) put it, "policy-makers, as well as partners in governance networks and public administrators charged with implementing policies (…) are not always cognizant that problem definitions are not given, but 'framed', let alone aware of how such framing takes place".

As Scholten (2017, 348–49) carves out from Schön and Rein (1994), learning as individual action formation depends on "design rationality" of a situational setting. Elevating as a practice would be such a design. Design features that strengthen deep reflexive learning at paradigmatic scale entail, according to Scholten, open communication of actors, including around individual frames. The design also needs to facilitate empathy for and interaction with competing frames for critical reflection. There also needs to be willingness and pragmatism to engage in such activity and allow a challenging of personal frames. Lastly, trust is a crucial enabler of or conduit for the above (Scholten 2017, 348–49).

Such open and dense setups would also be conducive to what Checkel (2003, 213) calls persuasion rooted in serious deliberation, rather than lecturing. Persuasion in elevating could move for instance towards one beacon: a country-level case chosen for the study visit. Alongside broader ideas on the Commission's agenda (in integration policy as a case in point for instance collaborative governance or the CBPs as a broader strategic frame), a national case of course also reflects

concrete policy instruments. The argument, to be explored empirically, is that the broader, paradigmatic meta-ideas become stickier given with an according design of the learning experience. Hence, like Geddes and Scholten (2015, 56) have analysed for the contribution of research in institutionalising the EU as an informal authority in migrant integration, I am not arguing that the EU or Commission, let alone specific administrators, drive a strategic re-framing on their own or in a particularly strategically elaborated manner. Rather it evolves in a social, to some degree even erratic back and forth. Still, elevating through study visits can certainly be understood as purposefully tailored to leave a lasting impression and this builds on the organisational and managerial skills that the Commission uses. However, it would be foolish to overlook the role of member states and their representatives in these activities, particularly given that in soft governance they own the legal portfolio.

Hence, the Commission should tend to seek alliances with specific member states or third parties. Here, the Commission's policy frameworks emphasise multi-level governance and collaborative governance track records. Involving specific member states brings coordinative hierarchy back in by blending and hardening soft instruments through "innovative re-composition" and engagement of state-centric actors (Diedrichs, Reiners, and Wessels 2011, 31ff.; Héritier and Lehmkuhl 2011, 65). Only with this Commission leadership and involving of actors, OMC-style interactions tend to succeed (Jordan and Schout 2006). There also remains the issue of limited organisational capacity within the Commission to carry out meaningful activities when relying only on internal resources. The Commission should therefore tap into member states' capacities (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2013b).

Content-wise, this reflects what Geddes and Scholten (2015, 57) call for the policy field of migrant integration a retreating to national models of integration in searching for approaches rather than picking single policy components across the EU to explore opportunities for convergence (Carrera 2014, 175). Yet, at the same time, also single policy components may be used as standing

for – i.e. substituting (Kahneman and Shane 2002) – a wider and cognitively more complex approach on integration, for instance, having a managerial delivery practice stand for a wider collaborative governance paradigm or referencing a Common Basic Principle.

Elevating pushes specific member states as focal points of policy orientation but also reconfirms their primacy of decision-making, therefore both catering to the political need of member-state authority and to European-level wielding of governance. This should resonate in an according alignment and coordinated learning push between Commission and those member states with adequate organisational resources and investment in the network as well as policy-level fit (or ideological pre-disposition) with the Commission's objectives.

Besides paradigmatic learning attempts, instrumental learning ambitions may be in play. This includes obvious content-level factors or information that underscore paradigmatic learning experiences. Also symbolic and political elements of knowledge usage or learning beyond instrumental learning may play a role (Boswell 2008b): aligning with specific member states can work as substantiating a Commission policy position, it may work as signalling particularly innovative practices, or it may be a political move of rewarding loyal member states.

Member states aside, Geddes and Scholten (2015) or Scholten and Verbeek (2015, 189–90) mention how in research-policy exchange so-called boundary organisations play an increased role whenever a topic becomes more politicised. Such organisations can be third parties (NGOs, think tanks, researchers, committees) that bridge the gap between policy and research but may also push their own interests. In the context of elevating processes like study visits, politicisation should actually decrease due to a more intimate and informal setting. This nonetheless implies openness towards stakeholders, real solution orientation and interest in non-political content and frank exchange. Given that boundary organisations are already involved on an *ad hoc* basis at the platforming stage, their presence likely continues when elevating and the Commission and cooperating member states may strengthen this presence to support "their case" for policy approaches being

showcased. Again, on top of stakeholders' obvious contribution to challenging paradigmatic administrative thinking, this may be framed as an instrumental-to-symbolic function *vis-à-vis* member states (Boswell 2009; Geddes and Scholten 2015, 46).

Core Propositions

I expect that accelerated breakouts in the form of study visits let administrators experience specific policy approaches hands-on. The Commission inquires high-performing member states (multi-level governance track record; collaborative governance focus) to host study visits. Meanwhile, study visit content is expected to be tailored to fit Commission policy preferences around meta-level paradigms, rather than concrete instruments. I expect both faster and deeper reflections in the sense of open exchange without cognitive or external constraints, based on informal interactions in small sub-groups. These groups include stakeholders as part of the delegations and face policy-recipients on the ground. The overall experience is expectedly charged up emotionally, matching paradigmatic, reflexive experiences (re-framing), images, and gut feeling with specifically observed policy instruments including operational technicalities. The delegations fulfil a translation (what would a practice mean for "our" country?), amplification (deliberating what was observed from a different point of view or deeper frame), and sustaining (mutual digesting of experience when travelling and in follow-up interactions) function during and after the visits. Overall, instrumental and paradigmatic outcomes are intertwined during elevating.

Elevating is tied to platforming. It can be considered an iteration from the platform. This is about providing feedback, injecting new ideas into the platform, and re-grouping peers or permeating existing groups. This compounds network density and hence network effects. For instance, new ties are expectedly formed during the ground-level, intimate, and emotional experiences among administrators, but also cover third-party circuits like stakeholders or policy recipients. One side of a newly found or re-shuffled dyad, hence, an administrator, may subsequently act as a gateway into novel peer groups, also beyond the network, for instance into stakeholder groups.

Proposition 8a: *Regarding instrumental learning, two logics operate in parallel. One builds around informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging which all become activated in on-the-ground experiences arranged by Commission and advanced member states. This is about triggering the respective outcomes of the conduits, primarily the exploration of an extended technical solution tableau. The second logic is about peer grouping where new ties to gather instrumental information are built and the elevating experience iterates back to and re-shuffles the network platform to compound network density.*

Proposition 8b: *Regarding paradigmatic learning, hands-on experiences showcase how instruments are always part of wider paradigms. This is underscored by jointly pushing the conduits of informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging which contribute to relatable and identity-challenging frame reflection.*

4 EMPIRICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

4.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON A SINGLE CASE AROUND LEARNING

I study soft governance and seek to uncover black-boxed mechanisms towards learning in actual network practice. I expect the mechanism to be structured around a stipulated path fuelled by a range of conduits and situational settings conducive to or activating these conduits. The research design has to account for this how/why-exploration by engaging with complex interaction and reciprocal causation (Hall 2003, 387). Hence, possibly various forms of learning may strengthen or weaken each other while specific practices aimed at particular learning outcomes may likewise yield different kinds of impact, not least across individuals. Potential learning outcomes may also provide the opportunity to run a platforming activity in the first place. Overall, this complexity is not something to be quantitatively "averaged out" but requires cautious tracing, putting the empirical reality against the proposed framework. The puzzle is thus tackled in a qualitative case study (Gerring 2007, 5, 43-48; Mahoney and Goertz 2006; van Evera 1997, 67–71).

The literature-rooted conceptual framework and a first expectation according to which different types of (structural) conduits as well as situational practices should facilitate different types of learning (instrumental and paradigmatic) are iteratively refined via methods juxtaposing to process and practice tracing. Process tracing aims to rigorously connect and analyse data to reconstruct mechanisms of often singular activities and their causal implications (Bennett and Checkel 2015a). Meanwhile, practice tracing as a pragmatic meta-methodology from international relations emphasises entities and activities that have a recurrent, typical character known to practitioners (Pouliot 2015). Both more singular processes and typical practices are explored regarding their influence on the dependent variable learning[42].

Some agreement on good process tracing has emerged (Hall 2013; Mahoney 2016; Trampusch and Palier 2016) and is presented in Beach and Pedersen (2013) and Bennett and Checkel

[42] Implicitly, this references actor-centred institutionalism, cf. Scharpf (1997), as variety of new institutionalist thinking, cf. Immergut (1998); Hall and Taylor (1996). It sees micro-level strategic interactions as producers of outcomes within a surrounding of policy, politics, and broader variables, e.g. a crisis context, cf. Scharpf (1997, 43–44). "Actors respond differently to external threats, constraints, and opportunities because they may differ in their intrinsic perceptions and preferences but also because [these are] shaped by the specific institutional setting within which they interact", cf. Scharpf (1997, 36-37).

(2015a). Both define process tracing as *the* method for uncovering "how" and "why" questions with a mechanistic view in case studies (Bennett and Checkel 2015b, 4)[43]. This logic applies equally when analysing practices, the overall goal remaining an analytical abstraction from the specific context to a more general social mechanism (Pouliot 2015, 239)[44]. Practices provide a useful lens for this thesis, since they are organised, patterned and repeated[45]. This fits with theories of networking structures and available data of policy professionals engaged in regular interactions and mutually recognisable ways of doing things (Pouliot 2015, 237–238, 251-53).

Overall, I want to understand a mechanism of learning, hence interacting components that produce outcomes, which these components could not produce on their own (Beach 2016, 463ff.; Bennett 2010, 208–9). This includes entities (actors, structures, or organisations) and activities of these entities such as specific interactions, steps, or decisions as well as transferring forces between each part of a mechanism. This thesis's ambition was to extract a relatively simple, minimally sufficient causal path from an empirical case (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 24)[46]. Operationally, below, expected implications and according indicators regarding these forces are formulated based on the conceptual framework (Chapter 3), hence, predictions about evidence to be found if a mechanism was in place (Beach 2016; Bennett and Checkel 2015b, 7–8).

To assess causal leverage of proposed pathways, tracing tests compare competing propositions with set-theoretic logic of necessity and sufficiency (Bennett 2010, 219; Mahoney 2012; 2016, 495; van Evera 1997, 31ff.). For the scope of this thesis, this was toned down significantly. While I acknowledge the relevance of categorising evidence into conditions that allow a process

[43] "The analysis of evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case or the purposes of either developing or testing hypotheses about causal mechanisms that might causally explain the case", cf. Bennett and Checkel (2015b, 7).

[44] Indeed, practice X is also a process of doing X, which – depending on background and context conditions – may trigger subsequent practices, cf. Pouliot (2015, 241–42).

[45] "Practices are distinct from both behaviour and action. The notion of behaviour captures the material aspect of doing. The concept of action adds on a layer of meaningfulness, at both the subjective (intentions, beliefs) and inter-subjective (norms, identities) levels. Practices, [are furthermore] organised and patterned. And because they are regular forms of action within a given social context, practices tend to become mutually recognisable for communities of practitioners. (...) anything [done] in a contextually typical and minimally recognisable way counts as practice.", cf. Pouliot (2015, 241).

[46] This is closer to the theory-building ideal type with primarily inductive epistemological interest and deterministic ontology, cf. Trampusch and Palier (2016, 449); Hall (2003, 374). This is not a sterile archetype but means that the understanding of the world is that "things do not just happen" and causality is rooted in set-theoretic thinking of necessity and sufficiency, see Beach and Pedersen (2013, 27). The understanding of the mechanism to be produced is systematic within the scope of EU administrative networks, cf. Beach and Pedersen (2013, 60ff.); Bennett and Checkel (2015b, 17–18); Bennett (2010, 208).

to move forward, I saw the proposed mechanism as one abstract illustration of a soft-governance practice, rather than a mathematically precise path. Still, the logic helps to understand what specific evidence implies for this illustration, triggering questions such as whether a learning experience would have taken place also in the absence of the crisis or a specific actor like the Commission. This implied in practical terms that deriving one overarching, minimally sufficient set of mechanisms from empirical observations paid attention to capturing sequential, necessary[47] steps for its progression: from setting or practice, to learning type, to governance function. This indirectly addressed equifinality, hence various alternative paths leading to the same results, by considering alternative explanations and focusing on necessary components.

4.2 CASE SELECTION

Targets for case sampling are (1) *representativeness* for a larger population, here, network-based learning and (2) *causal leverage* as variation in the dimension of interest, here, mechanisms towards learning – primarily the influence of conduits and practices as situational settings that activate conduits. I prioritised leverage to generate detailed insight into the mechanism (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 144ff.; Gerring 2007, 12-13, 21-23). Case selection can hence be called "truncated" in purposively aiming for a pathway case as an illustration of potential mechanisms discussed in the theory chapters above (Gerring 2007, 86ff.; Goertz 2006, 177–80; van Evera 1997, 77–88). While an overarching single case is proposed, this also includes two embedded plausibility probes to refine the findings and dig deeper into the case being studied.

The proposed case is the EIN. While other cases could have illustrated a more formal OMC-logic, top-level policy-making interactions or epistemic exchange, the EIN shows some particularly interesting properties. The specific features of the EIN are introduced in detail in Chapter 5, which describes why the Commission and crucially also the member states did not opt for a fully-fledged OMC but still believed to achieve learning momentum with the network. However, broadly speaking, the EIN is still representative of an OMC-style logic and network-based mutual

[47] Beach and Pedersen (2013, 104–5) on why to prioritise certainty (necessary condition) over uniqueness (sufficiency).

learning (Section 2.1). Like formal OMCs, the EIN covers a policy realm without hierarchical, legal EU involvement and with comparatively dominant member states. And as OMCs, its focus is on networked, depoliticised interactions regarding concrete policy improvement. The core departure from a slightly "heavier" OMC is the lack of benchmarks and formalised monitoring agreements, both between peers and by the Commission (although study visits as run through the EIN are close to formal peer review)[48]. Arguably, in contrast to the OMC, the EIN also stands for a modern governance approach and the operating logic of the EU in realms of limited authority.

In terms of leverage, the EIN accentuates administrative interactions in between epistemic exchange (as more prevalent for instance in the European Social Policy Network or the European Migration Network) and top-level policy-making (e.g. within the network of Heads of Public Employment Services). This is an important pathway-fit with the theories introduced above as true administrative steering within soft governance and the learning-logic within this form of governance are being explored. Not least, there are two further factors that make the EIN an intriguing target: it sheds light on the role of crises as a context factor of soft governance and thus, also in more practical terms, the study covers a timely topic with a case that has so far not been studied.

Qualitatively researching the EIN requires specifying the timeframe of analysis. Contextualisation happens from the beginning of a preceding network form, the NCPI network, more than a decade ago. Detailed tracing of network activities and according accounts of interviewees focuses on the period before summer 2016 (establishment of the new EIN) until the end of 2018. Embedded cases exploit diversity in this regard as one case operates on a longer timeline. Overall, the deliberate choice of the EIN certainly carries risks like false positives, concluding relationships or impactful learning where there is actually none, particularly given that learning is known to be an "elusive" concept (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013; Gilardi and Radaelli 2012; May 1992, 331).

[48] It is also important to note that the OMC is not a fixed set of practices and even formal OMCs vastly differ from each other in terms of breadth, depth, but also formal setup or funding – this supports focusing of empirical instances of "soft governance" and "OMC-style" interactions more generally. To provide one example, bottom-up learning is considered a defining characteristic of OMCs, yet in practice these bottom-up dynamics are rarely visible.

However, the explorative approach is a helpful initial illustration with "paradigm-generating" upside (Gerring 2007, 41).

To narrow down the exploration of expected observable implications, the empirical chapters are organised in two stages: first, an overarching, bird-eye view of network practices and learning mechanisms over time (Chapters 5, 6, 7) and second, two nested plausibility probes to both explore implications of specific conduits and practices in greater depth and fine tune the analysis (Chapters 8 and 9). The two embedded case constellations open sub-sets of data to strengthen analytical power. Likewise, they are operationally helpful by allowing the observation of implications within each sub-unit (Trampusch and Palier 2016). Not least, they were intuitive to drill into the inherent multi-level logic of the EIN, something hardly possible when analysing the entire network[49].

The two constellations revolve around Sweden and Portugal respectively, with a focus on how the EIN benefits from or actively creates learning processes and practices around these two countries. Both cases are selected by strong involvement in the EIN and positioning as ideal-types for learning. That is, they are most likely cases of finding conducive factors, specific practices, and specific types of learning outcomes. The constellations cover the Swedish collaborative integration governance system with a focus on municipal and NGO involvement, while the Portuguese governance system additionally emphasises a state-run managerial approach with one-stop-shops.

Besides this alleged learning-propensity, the cases are diverse[50]. This offers scope to analyse conditionality of learning; how conduits emerge or may be activated differently or what factors contribute to other countries learning from either one or the other case. I was looking for probes reflecting a broad usage of formal learning instruments within the selected network (not only conference-style meetings but also interactive experiences). Additionally, Sweden and Portugal have

[49] Schimmelfennig (2015, 100–102, 106) emphasises efficient tracing. In line with Bayesianism, he argues to focus on process links that are either weakest, thus can contest theory, or strongest, i.e. crucial for the argument. Cf. Gerring (2007, 184).

[50] E.g. in resources and administrative traditions, Sweden being corporatist and Portugal evolving from legalistic to pluralist/NPM administration, cf. Lodge and Wegrich (2014); Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011). However, also with regards to issue exposure they diverge: Sweden has a pronounced historical scale of migration (~16% foreign-born population, 2/3 non-EU, >15 asylum seekers per 1000 inhabitants), while Portugal (~9% foreign-born population, 3/4 non-EU, <1 asylum seeker per 1000 inhabitants) is a new destination country only recently receiving more migrants; cf. Eurostat (2017); UN DESA (2018).

followed different primary situational practices of engagement within the network. Portuguese approaches were promoted in the network via traditional, long-running learning and support by the Commission and IOM. This should have targeted first and foremost instrumental learning. Learning on the Swedish case emphasised more experiential, accelerated learning on the ground, which may arguably yield more paradigmatic learning.

Alternative subcases within the new EIN would have been Germany and Norway, and to a lesser degree Estonia. Here, also site visits took place, however for varying reasons the alternatives were deemed less illustrative: the visit to Estonia was a formal network meeting, hence not illustrating all potential learning instruments. The visit to Norway took place only at the end of 2018[51] and not being a formal EU member may have distorted dynamics. This visit was thus not covered for practical reasons. Regarding Germany, I had already covered Sweden as a case with high issue exposure and a country generally as high performer in migration and integration (both elements should yield learning opportunities, as discussed above). I was hence exploiting further analytical range offered by the Portugal case. Not least, while I did collect data on the German study visit[52], the visit primarily built on a high number of conference-style inputs of stakeholders, again not covering the full range of potential learning instruments. Overall, rather than referencing policy outcomes in Sweden and Portugal, the approach aims at isolating the diverse role that conduits and situational settings play in each case. The latter implies that the role of the EIN and the comparative involvement of the Commission should become more easily identifiable.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The validity and reliability of the outlined methodology depends on data quality and retrieval (Berry 2002), in particular qualitative tracing demands high case familiarity and a broad view on sources. In line with Checkel's (1999, 550) assertion to "read things and talk with people", data came from (1) interviews in the EIN nexus and (2) documents for triangulation.

[51] I finished most of the data collection almost a year earlier.

[52] This is used for the bird's-eye network analysis of crucial learning conduits – here, in particular the country's size and political weight push specific conduits. A full analysis of a third probe would have gone beyond the scope of a typical thesis.

Interviewing helps to reconstructs events, group dynamics, or processes towards decisions and actions. Tracing approaches follow a Bayesian logic of inference where different pieces of evidence carry different substantiveness (Mahoney 2016), that is, accounts are not weighted equally as some individuals may possess privileged perspectives that more significantly update prior knowledge than others. This makes elite interviews a strong fit (Tansey 2007, 766–67). Elites tend to – and did – directly consider reasons, drivers and interventions within processes (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 125, 134ff.; Bennett and Checkel 2015b, 8). Specifically, the thesis employed elite-expert interviews focused on specialist informants with procedural or interpretative knowledge (Littig 2009, 101). Insider interpretation is a good proxy for observing how processes or practices unfold (Pouliot 2015, 245–48). Arguably, a sub-set of a dozen interviews played a key role by providing less descriptive views and sharing privileged perspectives. Collier, Brady, and Seawright (2004; 2010) have summarised this as causal process observations.

In line with the qualitative approach and Bayesian logic, non-probability sampling was employed to avoid overlooking actors due to randomisation (Lynch 2013, 40; Martin 2013, 113ff; Tansey 2007). The number of interviews was initially targeted to range between 30 and 40, given comparable research and likely saturation (Flick 2014; Kvale 2007; Mason 2010)[53]. For sampling, a set of actors was identified based on reputation and positional features, starting with those with strong EIN involvement to facilitate further contacts and get an overview of issues at stake (Lynch 2013, 41). I started with the Commission and historically committed national contact points (Germany, Austria, Sweden, Portugal, Netherlands) as well as those supporting the network (Migration Policy Group, Migration Policy Institute, Ramboll Management Consultants). Subsequently, interviewees were recruited by chain-referral. The strategy addressed access constraints and fed into

[53] Kvale (2007, 44) or Bauer and Gaskell (2000, 7) note that semi-structured in-depth interview studies usually include 15+/-10 individuals. Research in a similar realm has commonly drawn upon 15-20 interviews, e.g. 9 in Boswell (2008b), 17 in Boswell (2008a) or 13 in Geddes and Scholten (2015) while up to 150 have been collected for a multi-national research project, cf. Scholten and Verbeek (2015); Scholten, Entzinger, and Penninx (2015) There was also a cap regarding the availability of interview partners, given the EIN population of only 30-60 actors (officials and practitioners) who were at the start of interviewing in 2017 not all officially known by name. However, through the application of a multi-level perspective, interviewing also network actors that were only present at particular instances (e.g. experts on specific topics, regional actors/ cities, NGOs), this number increased, with accessibility of less involved interviewees being more difficult.

an informal analysis of peer groups (Goldstein 2002; Tansey 2007, 769–70). Eventually, I interviewed 53 individuals, some multiple times regarding the nested constellations. A list of interviewees and the interview guideline are provided in the Appendix. All interviewees are network members or had direct and usually ongoing interactions with the EIN. Most interviews took place between November 2017 and January 2018[54]. Interviews were recorded, anonymised and transcribed and then analysed in NVivo 11 (Bazeley and Jackson 2013; Kvale 2007, 92ff.).

Using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions balanced comparability and codability with reflections on feelings or beliefs (Flick 2014, 156ff.; Leech 2002). Also, structuring around themes with somewhat free ordering of topics, allowed flexible deep dives and kept interviewees interested (Aberbach and Rockman 2002, 674; Berry 2002, 679). It was also necessary for understanding nuances in how interviewees structured ideas – crucial for causal process observations (Goldstein 2002, 669; Martin 2013, 117ff.). The natural flow of conversation enhanced the validity of answers (Aberbach and Rockman 2002). Questions emphasised descriptions of behaviour and exemplary views (Kvale 2007, 12, 38) as well as typical proceedings. The thesis also used example questions (Leech 2002, 666–67) to carve out tacit assumptions on practices that interviewees participate in. Retrieved information was tested with further interviewees, as appearing adequate (Pouliot 2015, 245–48).

There are pitfalls with elite interviews that Richards (1996) summarizes as access, reliability – including issue or role exaggeration and crowding-out of valuable information, treatment of changing stories – and power relations or deference. Interdependent accounts and instrumental or ideational agendas add to this (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 134ff.; Bennett 2010, 211; Bennett and Checkel 2015b, 8). Here, process or output-related questions worked well, while impact questions triggered more defensive and/or exaggerating moods. Overall, interviewing ensured validity and leverage but triggered problems for replicability (Kvale 2007, 120ff.), which demanded a clear

[54] Interviews were conducted between Q4 2016 and Q2 2018, in person, by phone, and video calls which for the scope of this thesis should not bias data, cf. Hanna (2012); Holt (2010). Interviews lasted between 25 and 135 minutes, on average about 45 minutes, given linguistic diversity of interviewees and the scope of investigation, selective transcripts were prepared.

guideline and documentation as well as triangulation via document analysis (Coffey 2014; Flick 2014, 245ff.; Rapley 2007).

The amount and availability of written material on the EIN was limited[55]. Besides official documents, interviewees shared grey literature and informal notes, often following a conversation. This included agendas and meeting reports of all EIN study visits and network meetings, separate participant lists of several of these meetings, individually drafted meeting notes for reporting in the respective home countries, and some follow-up communications including surveys and feedback requests. Most of these documents were not technically secret but interviewees still did not want to see their material cited. At several instances, discussion partners directly turned to and quoted from non-public notes, though they could not share the documents. In sum, documents nevertheless helped to calibrate information from interviews.

Data was coded in line with thematic analysis (Boyatzis 1998; Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012; Willig 2014), focusing on recurring ideas across interviews. I opted for direct thematic coding as my research started with theoretical hunches. Accordingly, after each interview, I outlined an overarching story in few sentences before adding the key themes. Codes evolved in loose iterations of open, axial and selective coding (Flick 2014, 290–291, 299ff.), overall clustering ideas instead of disaggregating discourse (Braun and Clarke 2006, 83).

Thematic analysis also eased a qualitative analysis of social structures within the network. For several parts of all sub-questions social network analysis could have contributed leverage, visualising interaction, relationship, or feedback structures (Knoke 2011; Lewis and Chatzopoulou 2015). Originally it was proposed to carry out a formal network analysis, however, this yielded inconsistent results as interviewees were unwilling to disclose information on proximity for the entire network. Therefore, I focused on groups of qualitative cross-mentions. While this does not allow to calculate the likes of density or network centrality, it did show gatekeeping or structural

[55] Main sources were (a) 3 major published reports of the network, though pre-dating the current network, (b) meeting summaries and other documents with communications purpose, (c) legal matters on the establishment of European integration activities incl. communiques and political statements, (d) budget statistics on the network and associated activities.

holes within the network, helping to appreciate the role of network ties as conduits of flows (Borgatti, Everett, and Johnson 2013, 7; Kadushin 2012, 8–9). Studying the conduits was key to grasp how successfully the EIN operates under various conditions. Not only eventual outcomes, but constraints and opportunity structures are shaped by network ties, which in turn are defined through groups or relations between actors (Borgatti, Everett, and Johnson 2013, 1). In short, this meant that for instance the role of a member state such as Portugal could be discussed along its high centrality with a high number of connections, ties beyond a silo of new destination states or building up of further ties while drafting a handbook on one-stop-shop measures.

4.4 SUMMARY OF EXPECTED IMPLICATIONS AND INDICATORS

Various expectations were derived from the theoretical angles introduced in Chapters 2 and 3. These points can be summarised as core observable implications or propositions. Overall, they will be probed as one first step for exploring empirical processes within the broader conceptual framework (Checkel 2003, 213). The empirical chapters challenge these expectations by bringing in detailed and directional perspectives on entities, activities and implications.

Table 2 below summarises the expected implications that were developed in detail at the end of each (sub-) section across Chapter 3. The left-hand side of the table lists relevant mechanism components while the two columns on the right-hand side describe how the mechanism component unfolds regarding the two primary dependent variables. The propositions cover core conduits of learning as introduced above as well as the crisis context and the ideal-type situational mechanism around platforming and elevating in which a network facilitator such as the European Commission activates conduits. As outlined in Chapter 3, I do expect conduits to interact with each other. I do not formulate a specific proposition and rather see the – likely complex – interactive dynamic and mechanism towards learning as one outcome of this study. However, *ex ante*, it can be expected that in particular professional trust and peer grouping are mutually reinforcing. As are informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging.

Table 2: Summary of Propositions

MECHANISM COMPONENT		DEPENDENT VARIABLE	
		INSTRUMENTAL LEARNING	PARADIGMATIC LEARNING
CONDUITS	Professional Trust	Yields higher predisposition to listen to, understand (joint vocabulary), and believe technical arguments.	Provides foundation for paradigmatic exchange, incl. shared belief that learning is possible and peer motivations are genuine.
	Peer Grouping	Yields pressure to learn about instruments as comparability of contexts strengthens perceived transferability.	Makes administrators consider persuasive efforts where national paradigms within the peer group are shifting.
	Secrecy and Informality	Reduces official positioning, strategising, and external scrutiny which lead to consideration of full tableau of approaches and reinforce trust in peers.	Eases argumentative persuasion and discussion of failure becomes feasible as administrators engage with peers who occupy diverging policy paradigms.
	Stakeholder Involvement	Pushes administrators to consider wider range of policy tools as stakeholders amplify information and translate and sustain input into multi-level processes.	Increases exposure of administrators to personalised impact stories which cover paradigmatic foundations of specific policies and their implications.
	Emotional Charging	Improves attention and memory even on technical details (yet also overestimation of findings and use of heuristics).	Overshadows or substitutes cognitive constraints, thus easing (deliberative) re-framing of policy.
CONTEXT	Crisis Context	Accelerates pressure to deliver and consider full tableau of technical options with focus on success cases.	Unsettles and discredits paradigms which leads to consideration of issue framing.
SITUATIONAL SETTING	Platforming	Activates conduits professional trust, peer grouping, and stakeholder involvement.	Activates conduit professional trust.
	Elevating	(1) Elevating activates conduits informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging. (2) Elevating as iteration from platform activates conduit peer grouping.	Activates conduits secrecy and informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging.

Next, for each mechanism component and according expected implication regarding the dependent variable, empirical indicators are defined. The indicators describe what would be expected if the propositions were to hold, thus highlighting crucial evidence for the concepts. Partly, they reflect observing the descriptions of patterns or structures described in the propositions as such (e.g. observing that a network breakout does indeed take place or that a stakeholder joins in), partly they target account evidence or even circumstantial evidence needed to explore a proposition.

Table 3 below summarises qualitative indicators. These are not mutually exclusive nor targeted at testing. Several dimensions are conceptually and empirically overlapping: developing trust may help the establishment of a peer group where then emotions may play a bigger role. Rather, indicators here help qualitatively probing the first set of propositions. The thesis then proceeds with the empirical investigation of the conceptual framework. First, background structures and developments over time contextualise the research target, then conduits and situational settings are explored – first with a bird's-eye view, then in two nested constellations as plausibility probes.

Table 3: Empirical Indicators/ Required Qualitative Evidence

MECHANISM COMPONENT		DEPENDENT VARIABLE: INSTRUMENTAL LEARNING	DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PARADIGMATIC LEARNING
CONDUITS	Professional Trust	Reported interest in technical solutions; References to fellow administrators as certified "professionals", yet contrasting references to lacking professionalism/ experience of some individuals; Reported belief in accuracy of policy instrument descriptions.	Description of mutual trust beyond technical solutions or policy instruments; References to personal ties, rather than just formal ties (i.e. network membership).
	Peer Grouping	Reported preferred ties with single members or groups, both regarding macro-level comparability ("high performers") and individual in-groups ("tenured administrators"); Descriptions of picking up solutions first within described in-groups, incl. descriptions of keeping the pace of respective peer group.	Descriptions of re-thinking embedding of policy instruments in cases where peer group members have shifted; Reported interactions and deliberation on policy system and policy paradigms within constrained peer groups.
	Secrecy and Informality	Descriptions of importance of interactions beyond the formal agenda ("coffee chat"); Descriptions of deliberating beyond respective member state's or home institution's official perspective.	Descriptions of informal hints at policy failure or issues with instruments incl. deliberation about systemic challenges (e.g. "politics", "society and culture"); Descriptions of interactions beyond peer group with aligned policy paradigms.
	Stakeholder Involvement	Descriptions of shaking up perspectives of how policy instruments work from the perspective of practitioners or recipients ("fresh approach", "different view"); Descriptions of vivid deliberation about instruments; Evidence for interacting with stakeholders beyond the network.	Description of new perspectives beyond specific instruments, in particular regarding policies' systemic impact, rather than instrument outputs; Descriptions of triggered deeper reflections on role of an administrator ("how do I contribute"); Descriptions of ongoing mutual engagement beyond specific instruments ("value in cooperating more generally").
	Emotional Charging	Descriptions of technical tools are linked to individualised stories or experiences around these tools; Detailed descriptions of impact stories rooted in technical details of instruments ("aspect x in instrument y made recipients feel valued"); Experiences and individual cases presented as lead items when discussing policy ("how can we help individual/ group x improving instrument y")	Descriptions around emotions ("feeling shaken or challenged") or accounts of emotional reactions (e.g. "shock", "disbelief", "crying"); Descriptions of reflecting about identity ("my role in this") and core beliefs or frames ("why are things the way I perceive them"); Descriptions of deliberation with peers and stakeholders regarding policy frames and identities.
CONTEXT	Crisis Context	Reported feelings of pressure and eagerness to "somehow" figure out what works efficiently ("tackle things right"), including unconventional approaches if successful.	Descriptions of surprise regarding the contribution of instruments to policy paradigms; Focus on figuring out what works "effectively" ("tackle the right things").
SITUATIONAL SETTING	Platforming	Reported stable peer groups, longer tenured administrators should refer to "trusted colleagues" (i.e. personal ties) instead of "trusted countries" (i.e. macro-institutional ties); Emphasis on data-backed success cases rather than individual stories; Formal exchange, lacking visible political cleavages and deliberation; Reported involvement of external actors/ interactions with administrators regarding policy tools.	Description of personal ties and deliberation beyond formal interactions ("coffee chat").
	Elevating	Emphasis on face-to-face interaction and active inquiry about information instead of passive conference-style information reception; Inclusion of cases of policy failure ("instrument failure"); Referral to new personal ties (e.g. "trusted colleagues") upon elevating experience and ties to external stakeholders; Reports of previously unconnected administrators or member-state groups, incl. observation of "weird fits" (non-comparable contexts)	Emphasis on personal, emotional stories transmitted face-to-face from actors outside the formal network (i.e. stakeholders); Emphasis on open deliberation and frankness of exchange; Descriptions of shifting feelings, incl. regrets and self-perception as administrators and of systemic challenges and systemic failure; Descriptions of "surprise" in how instruments work within a system.

5 BACKGROUND OF EU MIGRANT INTEGRATION GOVERNANCE

Before exploring current networking along the propositions developed above, this chapter provides descriptive background on the network's trajectory. This is necessary because of the peculiar legal and political framework the EIN is operating in. It also helps to locate the EIN case further within the theories discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

> [Initially] the network was just [about getting] governments talking about that topic at all and start to learn from each other. (…) The next step was something more structured to do this. Looking at it retrospectively, [we got] caught in a political game [having] flagged the idea of an Open Method of Coordination (…) but there was absolutely no one, [neither] in the Commission, nor the member states that wanted something big like an OMC. (…) Then we came up with this network idea which was really close to an Open Method of Coordination – but it was informal and less heavy. (interview 26_EU) [56]

Hence, this chapter describes how the EIN became the mode of governance it is today, focusing on the interplay of Commission and member states when setting up the network to tackle integration and migration policy as a European challenge since the late 1990s with a significant crisis in 2015/16. This is key to understand the network setting (legal basis, formal governance, political positioning) based on which learning amongst administrators as a form of soft governance evolves.

5.1 LEGAL ORIGINS AND ESTABLISHMENT

Integration policy is linked to migration policy and for both topics formal EU authority was and regarding integration still is limited with intergovernmental decision-making: Geddes and Scholten (2015, 41–42) note that while migration policies nowadays possess a significant EU component, involvement in migrant integration is dominated by a discourse of national integration models and according national challenges. Member states upload these national approaches into transnational exchange platforms and shape eventual decisions (Carrera 2014; Geddes and Achtnich 2015; Mulcahy 2011). Thus, integration is a difficult area for cooperation and tangible outcomes (Monar 2010). More so, effective governance in the sense of steering decision-making in integration and migration policy touches upon classical "core powers" of the nation state, like internal security, border protection, or administration (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2013a; 2016).

[56] Interviews are cited as "#_Category"; 'GOV' stands for national public officials, 'EU' for EU related officials, and 'OTH' for e.g. NGO, third sector, local implementers, or private sector interviewees.

Formally speaking, with the Amsterdam Treaty (European Union 1997), immigration moved into Community competence, while a treaty provision also gave a basis for some Commission involvement in integration (anti-discrimination measures) (Boswell and Geddes 2011, 211; Geddes and Scholten 2015, 48; Neframi 2011)[57]. It was a "critical juncture, providing for the communitarisation of visa, asylum, immigration and other policies concerning the free movement of persons" – however, several of these areas appearing vastly "sovereignty-loaded" and conflicting in terms of objectives[58], hence unfit for binding governance instruments (Diedrichs, Reiners, and Wessels 2011, 40).

Beyond legal steps towards a common migration policy, the Tampere Milestones of the 1999 European Council defined a political agenda calling for fair treatment of residing third country nationals, integration policy, granting of rights and approximation of national legislations (Carrera 2014, 153; EC 2010, 15; Geddes and Scholten 2015; Presidency of the European Council 1999). In 2001 the Commission proposed an OMC on immigration (EC 2001), similarly to the one in the realm of social policy. However, the Council did not even officially discuss the Communication, paralysing further Community approaches. Member states allegedly saw a transgression into national authority and preparation of European legislation (Carrera 2014, 160–161, 173-174).

An interviewee involved in the process agreed that member states did not want to create a "big fuss". However, the interviewee noted that not having the OMC, concerning integration policy components, also related to turf fights inside the Commission[59]. Still, a need for coherence was recognised for the less contagious integration component within migration policy and driven by

[57] For legal delineations refer to Neframi (2011).

[58] Between member states and member states and Commission – cf. "The ultimate objective (…) [is] the integration of third-country nationals residing legally in the Union. However, the Member States link migration issues to issues of security, employment policy and social policy. The result is that the objective of integration cannot be a direct objective of Union action without affecting sensitive spheres within which the Member States wish to retain their competences. (…) The objective of integration can only be pursued indirectly, through support of and respect for national competences.", Neframi (2011, 7).

[59] "We also had an exchange about the target group of the network and we said, ok, it's going to be third country nationals, even residents. And that started a whole turf thing with DG Employment, who had asylum seekers and inclusion (…). They blocked all the inter-DG consultations. [We] had a lot of fighting with them." (interview 26_EU)

few member states, which supports views locating member states in the "driver's seat" of according policy decisions (Boswell and Geddes 2011; Mulcahy 2011).

> With the Danish [2002] presidency, there was a focus on integration of third country nationals (…) and concerted action (…) Then the Greek, the Dutch, the French, in their presidency. A lot of governments shared that idea. (…) there was so much political will and interest, also from the member states. And even though there was the understanding that there was no legal authority, it was the member states pushing. It was not the Commission saying, 'we have to do this'. Only in the very early stages. (…) With the different presidencies [member states] were driving what the exchange of knowledge should be about. (interview 26_EU)

With the JHA Council meeting of October 2002, the Council invited the Commission to "establish a coherent European framework for integration", which was launched in 2005 as Common Agenda for Integration (EC 2005, 3–4). Until 2005, the situation at the Commission was described as new and requiring applied problem solving for getting actors to share information. This aligns to perspective that emphasise the entrepreneurial character within the Commission's DGs and building a knowledge base (Cini and Šuplata 2017). Interestingly, administrative staff was almost exclusively seconded and likely rooted in national approaches.

> This was a very small Department for asylum and migration. Less than a handful of Commission employees. The Dutch and Brits were doing the asylum part, the Germans did the returns… they were all nationally seconded experts because there was no real Commission staff, highly educated on these topics back then. (…) Integration was politically really new, also in the Commission. (…) In DG Home it was focused on what we do once we grant people residence (…). And then we talked about how could we make people work on all these issues (…) fully aware that there was no jurisdiction [but] we can exchange best practices and information. So, the idea was to establish a network of contact points, establish for each member state a person, identify someone that works on this and then to share best practices. (interview 26_EU)

Thus, after failing with a normal OMC on migration, the response of the Commission established a *sui generis* framework even further outside formalised EU procedures to coordinate integration, mainly but not only by ramping up a network of national contact points on integration (NCPIs) as go-to actors within the administrative sphere and formally staying out of political games[60].

This was later framed as part of a "quasi-Open Method of Coordination" – including best practice learning through networks, and expertise and information sharing (Carrera 2014, 159ff.,

[60] "[This worked] pretty smooth[ly] and people were keen to get involved. (…) The NCPIs were informal, run by experts and administrators. Politically, it was, I wouldn't say under the radar, but just something we also did. It had success. Because things were applicable, it didn't get political." (interview 26_EU)

180ff.). At first sight, this fits theoretical accounts of experimentalist governance with broad frameworks, lower level refinement and iterative framework improvement (Monar 2010). However, in integration policy, the Commission was not to monitor implementation or national action plans as it could have with a standard OMC[61] and until today, no hierarchical component has been re-introduced (Diedrichs, Reiners, and Wessels 2011, 39).

The quasi-OMC evolved around four tools, driven in a secretive procedure among Council Presidency and Council Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum, both arguably dominated by member states controlling a top-down agenda setting route, selected NPCIs influencing a bottom-up, low politics route, and the Commission (Carrera 2014, 161ff., 182; DG HOME 2017; EC 2010, 16ff.; 2016, 14–17; Mulcahy 2011, 69):

1. *National Contact Points on Integration* (NCPIs) constituted as expert network on integration. Members came together in 2003 and were officials from respective responsible ministries of the member states with the task of exchanging information, progress reviews and best practices. In 2016 the NCPIs were upgraded into the EIN.
2. *Common Basic Principles on Immigrants' integration* (CBPs), as unofficial baseline for national policies, implementation advice for integration policy and opportunity for the Council to support knowledge sharing (Council of the European Union 2004a, 17ff.; Martiniello 2006). Set up in 2004 and reviewed in 2014, they remain mostly vague to ensure member state agreement – yet arguably the CBPs are still an instance of vertical[62] Europeanisation with some more clear cut priority topics such as "mainstreaming integration" (Geddes and Scholten 2015, 49).

[61] Carrera (2014, 180ff.) criticises departing from EU rule of law (legal certainty and control, transparency and democratic accountability). Secondary EU law relies on regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations and opinions – this does not apply to the framework emphasising reports, handbooks, communications, staff working documents, or council conclusions.

[62] i.e. EU-driven and EU policy goal-oriented; via an intermediary, the Migration Policy Institute as the think tank drafting the proposal, cf. Geddes and Scholten (2015, 49).

3. The *Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund*[63] (AMIF), as framework for co-financing activities that support the CBPs (+3bn EUR 2014-2020). This covers policy targets, but also initiatives strengthening member state capacity for design, implementation, management, or best practice sharing, this includes the EMN or the EIN.
4. The *European Migration Forum*[64] and the *European Website on Integration*, two platforms of a broad range of migration and integration stakeholders sharing information. The website was introduced in 2009 and the Forum met for a first conference in 2009 with +100 civil society organisations, exchanging technical expertise.

With the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, competences in migration and integration were clarified further, limiting integration policy to soft-law mechanisms focusing on supporting and incentivising adequate national legislation (Carrera 2014, 183; EC 2016; European Union 2007)[65]. This can be described as a mix of "member states' desire to tackle common problems of modern welfare states while preserving a high degree of autonomy and capacity for national governments" (Diedrichs, Reiners, and Wessels 2011, 22). Interviewee 5_EU described it as the "little stronghold of the member states".

The European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) was a confirmation of this approach and mainly described the successful support of national activities (EC 2011a; 2011b). Only following a massive influx of refugees into the EU in 2015 and 2016 was the need for a comprehensive Integration Action Plan re-emphasised – in particular with the goal of supporting countries with less experience on measures of relocation and resettlement, but also long term issues like education, employment, or social inclusion (EC 2016, 2). Key measures of this 2016 Action Plan built on earlier ideas around modular good practice components and improved comparability and cooperation (Carrera 2014, 166–69; EC 2010, 19; 2011a). Overall, the plan

[63] Since 2014 (2007-13 "European Integration Fund" with +800m EUR fund size; 2003-06, "INTI", Preparatory Actions for the Integration of Third Country Nationals).

[64] Until 2015 "European Integration Forum", meeting 11 times. The migration forum met 5 times until mid-2019.

[65] Art. 79 (4): "[EP] and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, may establish measures to provide incentives and support for the action of Member States with a view to promoting the integration of third-country nationals residing legally in their territories, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States."

outlined concrete policy activities and re-emphasised all four elements of the Integration Framework. One measure was upgraded in particular: NCPIs became the EIN with strengthened mutual learning and coordination goals (EC 2016, 14).

Table 4: Emergence of Integration as EU-Level Topic

1997	Amsterdam Treaty	Immigration (including integration) becomes Community competence
1999	Tampere Milestones	Political agenda on thirds country nationals is formulated
2001	Commission call for OMC	Coordination of immigration policy via OMC yields pushback and is not followed through
2002	Danish Presidency, JHA Council Conclusions	Council conclusions on integration of TCNs push integration framework and encourage European cooperation in migration and integration including creating NCPIs (meeting for the first time in 2003)[66]
2005	Common Agenda for Integration	NCPIs are upgraded into expert network with technical (handbooks, 2004-2010) and common language/ framework-focus (European Modules on Migrant Integration, 2010-2014). Agenda also includes 2004 CBPs, AMIF, and Migration Forum
2007	Lisbon Treaty	Integration is recognised as component of migration policy (as shared competence) though limited to soft-law instruments
2010	Zaragoza Declaration	(Until today, the last) European Ministerial Conference on Integration re-iterates among others the importance of exchange and cross-cutting coordination through NCPIs[67]
2011	Agenda for Integration of TCNs	Reconfirms Lisbon provisions in broad terms
2016	Commission Action Plan on Integration of TCNs	NCPI network becomes the EIN as one instrument for better policy coordination and delivery within a comprehensive political action plan (response to the refugee crisis)

Source: own timeline, right-hand side based on reviewed literature

5.2 POLITICAL UPGRADE OF NCPI NETWORK AMIDST THE MIGRATION CRISIS

Failure to coordinate cross-cutting policy in a complex socio-political environment has rarely been more visible than during the migration crisis climaxing in 2015/16 and becoming an integration and administration crisis ever since. EU states retreated to national interests and unilateral action, often under strong public, emotional pressure that commonly emerges around questions of national sovereignty and identity (Börzel and Risse 2018; Buonanno 2017). Interestingly, lacking coordination did not focus on problems of taking joint decisions, but rather on following them through (Börzel 2016, 12, 18, 20ff.).

[66] "The European Council at several occasions has drawn the attention to the importance of EU co-operation regarding integration of third country nationals (…). The Council attaches great importance to the promotion of the exchange of information between Member States concerning valuable experiences and national policies on integration (...). In this context the Council encourages the establishment of national contact points in the Member States (…)" (EU Council 2002/14/10).

[67] "To reiterate the importance of the [NCPIs] in promoting the integration of immigrants at both European Union and Member State level and to strengthen their role in the development of structures and tools, in promoting an open exchange of ideas with regard to all integration challenges (…)"; Point 4, Spanish Presidency of the European Union (2010).

While the situation was an emergency stress-test that pushed entire welfare systems into the spotlight, these issues had been simmering below the surface and even been debated among academics and practitioners for years (Buonanno 2017; Collett 2015; EC 2007, 9; Eurofound 2015; Faure, Gavas, and Knoll 2015; McKinsey Global Institute 2016; Menéndez 2016). As the Commission admitted, the situation was not even specifically about refugees but about integrating any TCN within the EU and about mainstreamed, well-coordinated medium to long term policy (EC 2016, 2–4; Scholten, Collett, and Petrovic 2017). This is also why for several years the NCPI network facilitated exchange of information between national experts to strengthen policy delivery. Before the crisis, the network had become what several interviewees called "dormant". At the height of the crisis, although the Commission (2016, 3) still acknowledged that "competence on integration lies primarily with the member states", they translated a perceived need for effective coordination and cooperation into their 2016 Action Plan on the Integration of TCNs. The Action Plan described that…

> (…) the moment has now come to revisit and strengthen the common approach across policy areas and involving all relevant actors – including the EU, Member States, regional and local authorities as well as social partners and civil society organisations. (…) the EU may establish measures to provide incentives and support for Member States in promoting integration of third country nationals residing legally in their territories and has an important role in supporting, stimulating and coordinating Member States' actions and policies (…) Member States are facing similar challenges, and the EU level can add value through the structural support it provides. (EC 2016, 3)

There are at least three things that stand out in this regard: the governance paradigms implicitly pushed, the soft-governance character of the plan and its establishment logic and timing:

- The Action Plan – formally agnostic regarding policy instruments – pushes seemingly trivial yet for several member states politically-charged governance paradigms. This includes the focus on collaborative governance and stakeholder engagement, that is even linked to potential funding availability[68]. It is also partially framed in the language of the CBPs.

[68] As the Commission (2016, 16) puts it, it tries to "[work] with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that all funding instruments are used to their maximum potential and in an integrated and strategically coordinated way".

- The plan reads like a definition of soft governance with notions of incentives, support, stimulation, or coordination. It also focuses on support across layers, even within the national domain. This emphasises cross-cutting cooperation as a response to a crisis that is located at the delivery or management stage of policy. Accordingly – beyond financial means and initiatives – one core structure of soft governance was already existent: the NCPIs with a delivery and technical cooperation focus and a mutual learning mandate. The network was hence charged up into the EIN.
- The plan was published on June 7 2016 – a political window of opportunity (Kingdon 1984/2011): only a couple of months earlier in Q3/Q4 2015, the EU had witnessed a spike in arrivals and the Commission could anticipate a second spike mid-2016 (Eurostat 2017)[69]. With the first spike registered for about a year, integration questions arose on the agenda of member states. At the same time the crisis narrative and actual experience were likely only to get more dramatic. In short, a major problem with an emotional component, growing political pressure across several member states and limited opportunities to act, were presented with a policy alternative by the Commission – and an alternative with coinciding instrumental (strengthening the previous, knowledge-oriented network), symbolic and political logics (positioning the EU as a place that deals with integration).

Merging these three aspects – upgrading a soft governance practice and providing a policy alternative with broad ideas made member state resistance unlikely and gave the Action Plan, and the EIN, momentum. Several interviews (e.g. 3_EU, 5_EU, 11_GOV) emphasised this as an opportunity. The need of a strengthened network was driven by vast and now particularly observable differences between member states in integration and migration approaches and an according awakening across levels of governments and across sectors, even the private sector. Other interviewees (4_EU, 39_GOV) described a feeling that integration as a topic was back on the agenda and doing more seemed worthwhile again. With the network being a device of coordination and

[69] Several millions of refugees were known to be waiting in Turkey, Lebanon, or Northern Africa and the further migration journey commonly starts in spring-time, i.e. registrations tend to spike from Q3 onwards.

with adequate timing of policy initiatives, there seemed to be potential for impact on the ground. This fits remarks on effectiveness of OMCs in other contexts. Diedrichs et al. (2011, 42ff.) highlight how the lack of being on the agenda had contributed to extremely soft modes of governance in JHA. Here, the inverse happened, a soft mode obtaining political backing and salience.

5.3 FROM NCPI NETWORK TO EIN ARCHITECTURE

Like other EU expert groups, the EIN does not have formally specified rules of procedure[70]. Membership, interactions, and governance replicate that of the original network of NCPIs, 28 member states with Norway and Iceland as adjunct members (Council of the European Union 2002, 26). Members are national administrative authorities responsible for migrant integration, hence for instance ministries of the interior, exterior, employment, social affairs, or culture. Member states take part with a permanent and an alternating member[71]. Constantly participating executives are commonly at the level of directors or heads of unit. Alternating members are usually content level experts or desk officers concerned with integration or migration topics, depending on issues discussed. The network does not include non-governmental stakeholders, although they are key actors in integration policy delivery. An interviewee explained the according establishment logic in practical terms – a negative precedent and a personal public-sector orientation[72].

The network is intergovernmental in nature, although with the upgrade to the EIN, the Commission plays a strengthened role as a coordinator and manager of the network, moving the network towards a more Community-based approach and more political debates (Mulcahy 2011, 68), which should mirror the broader stance of DG HOME that is said to feature values reflecting "broadly liberal, human rights and free market" and "rights-based (…) mobility" (Boswell 2008b, 479; Boswell and Geddes 2011, 218). Concretely, a unit within a DG HOME-directorate takes on the network management role (Unit B.1). In the case of the EIN, even when the network was re-

[70] Art 17.2, Commission Decision C (2016) 3301: "Expert groups and sub-groups existing at the time of adoption of this Decision may continue operating without rules of procedure being adopted".

[71] Some countries send multiple representatives, e.g. Belgium (Wallonia, Flanders, Brussels).

[72] "We started with government [actors] because those were the easiest ones. There [were previous activities building] on NGOs and [they weren't] successful. [And] I came from a tradition where integration was a government-run topic, a topic for municipalities. Not something that we just leave to NGOs." (interview 26_EU)

established in 2016, its rules and membership was not completely re-shuffled, allowing existing trusted relationships and embeddedness to persist.

The EIN follows a polycentric, multi-level network-of-networks approach (Carrera 2014, 175; O'Toole Jr. 2015), pursuing its goals by reaching out into a community of integration actors for feedback or practical contributions (e.g. migrant communities, experts, NGOs or civil society or also private sector organisations) (EC 2016, 14). These actors *should* gravitate around the administrative core member of each national network, here, making the members of the EIN known at the national level is crucial to position them as focal points of (sub-)national networks (interview 5_EU). This already points to what section 3.3 introduced as platforming.

Table 5: Structural EIN Properties

CORE NETWORK	ASSOCIATED NETWORKS	FUNDING
▪ National Contact Points on Integration ▪ Commission (coordinator and administrative matters) ▪ As needed, external service provider (support of COM)	▪ National integration actors, i.e. practitioners, policy makers, experts, NGOs, private providers of integration services ▪ European networks, topic related as needed (e.g. EMN)	▪ AMIF, partly also Commission and participants of e.g. workshops
INTERACTIONS	**TASKS/ FOCUS**	**AGENDA SETTING**
▪ ~2-4 seminars/ conferences/ study visits per year, hosted by a member state ▪ Strategic discussion take place during the meetings ▪ Peer learning and mutual assistance mandate beyond formal interactions being implemented since 2016	▪ Coordination and cooperation through mutual assistance and experiential learning, including study visits or peer learning workshops ▪ Operations, implementation, technical expertise and best practices (e.g. handbooks, guidelines, field experiences including discussion of goals, indicators, benchmarks, approaches) ▪ Targets NCPIs as domestic outcome coordinators ▪ Interaction with networks in other policy-areas	▪ No formal rules of procedure, agenda defined by Commission after polling members states ▪ For study visits, strong involvement of hosting member state ▪ Member states influence broader work plan ▪ As needed, external experts prepare agenda items

Source: interviews and EC 2016

Since the NCPI days, official objectives of the network are re-enforcing cooperation and coordination as well as mutual learning (EC 2004, 6–7). This includes advising the Commission on integration and promoting the same goals across and within member states. The functional focus remains operational implementation and technical cooperation, including the discussion of goals, indicators, and benchmarks to enhance coordination – a managerial, evidence-based-policy "discourse on what works in integration" (Carrera 2014, 175).

NCPI outputs until 2016 aligned with this practitioners' perspective and were rather operational than legal. Published handbooks gave practical advice on how to translate good practices into policies or how to develop adequate indicators or benchmarks, instead of promoting specific policies (EC 2007, 90–91; 2010, 162–64; Scholten and Verbeek 2015). Such activities can be considered as a departure from a normal expert, epistemic community and covered non-public-sector related best practices. Interviewees (4_EU, 5_EU, 8_OTH) described this crucial mix of supporting transposition-like implementation and introducing more creative design with the selective involvement of stakeholders and policy users. With re-vamping the network, there has been an official shift from information exchange practices through the likes of handbooks towards more interactive mutual learning, going to the field and meeting implementation actors, which points to what section 3.3 theorises as ideal type "elevating".

Network interactions were for a long time structured around 2-4 closed-door thematic seminars per year (EC 2010, 8; OPMI 2017). For these seminars, NCPIs formed delegations of three individuals with experience or knowledge in integration matters. This was in line with the declared objective of stakeholder involvement across all governance layers (EC 2004, 6; 2007, 6; 2016). If the topic of the seminar was for instance housing, according stakeholders could be nominated. As expertise is available in different settings across member states, delegates were heterogeneous.

The seminar agenda was jointly prepared by the hosting member state, the Commission and a think tank, Migration Policy Group (MPG), acting as workshop facilitator and support service. Hence, network management was shared. Each NCPI could suggest topics, presenters and case studies, while MPG prepared workshop materials such as issue papers, discussion files and conclusion documents, likely pushing a "vertical" element of mobilising expertise besides a "horizontal" function of bringing together various member state opinions (Geddes and Scholten 2015, 54).

As the main workshop output, Commission, NCPIs and MPG edited handbooks summarizing information, experiences and background research (Geddes and Scholten 2015)[73]. Roughly, this reflected the translation of the CBPs into actionable initiatives ("vertical" use of expertise). Three studies were published in 2004, 2007, and 2010 and used as input for the ministerial conferences on the same topics. The 2010 publication was the last within the scope of the 2005 Common Agenda (EC 2010). Moving beyond the handbooks, three modules on integration were developed as reference framework for integration policy and to establish a common language (EC 2014).

> The handbooks, the modules, the website on integration, the Forum on Integration. This was a very active period (…), a very intensive one. After the modules the network was really dormant for a period of time, they weren't even meeting regularly anymore. And then of course you had the 2015 large scale arrivals. And that thrust the network back into action and got the Commission into thinking about structuring the network. (interview 27_OTH)

While the number of interactions has stayed the same, the focus of the network has shifted since 2016 (Table 4 below). Available tools for NCPIs to experience best practices and involve stakeholders were broadened. Beyond thematic seminars, now, study visits form a key part of learning (Council of the European Union 2016, 4). Overall, in line with theoretical perspectives on frame reflection and paradigmatic learning introduced in the theory above, this new density of interactions within a small, trusted group[74] as well as bringing in stakeholders should be helpful for open deliberation. This fits what has been theorised as ideal typical "elevating" which comes on top of more traditional network interactions of "platforming". Of course, ideal types overlap empirically and activate a range of specific conduits as explored below. To provide a few descriptive examples up front:

- The first meeting of the upgraded network was held in October 2016 in Brussels and hinted at a distinct style of joint learning processes (EC/EIN 2016; EIN 2016a; 2016b). A broad range of smaller workshops with 10-15 participants were offered in which eight different integration delivery actors discussed their projects. This included NGOs, local initiatives, or a regional

[73] The process of involving the think tank is described as somewhat obscure and sometimes critical in terms of policy objectives in interactions with the Commission, too, cf. Carrera (2014); Geddes and Scholten (2015).

[74] This group is furthermore voluntarily involved in a mutual learning activity that comes on top of normal commitments, which points at expected willingness to challenge individual views. Not least, this group interacts directly with stakeholders and service recipients which should invoke emotions and facilitate empathy.

government. The session was not targeted at a handbook, in contrast to previous settings, which were criticised for favouring output over deliberation (Carrera 2014, 176–77). Initiatives presenting at the workshop were furthermore focused on enablement and inclusion of service users in the delivery of their projects, including migrant sports groups or de-victimisation by self-organising refugee camp activities (EIN 2016a).

- A study visit to Sweden explored these activities with an even more focused format (EIN 2017b; 2017). Only a subset of the EIN, ten member states chosen on first-come, first-served basis, were taken to the field with three delegates each. The reason was described as pragmatic enhancement of closer interactions, for instance when interacting with the authorities being visited where experiential learning involved for instance sharing a desk with staff during their routine work with migrants. Delegates from each member state were coming from (a) the respective national EIN authority, (b) an NGO from within the respective country's network and (c) from an implementation authority (e.g. a city) – the latter two both involved as delivery actors and domestic co-producers of governance. The concept has been used also at subsequent study visits.
- Also, normal network meetings bring in stakeholders. A March 2017 workshop was run for instance jointly with Eurocities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions to discuss cooperation at the local level. 20 cities, as core integration hubs and local policy deliverers, attended. This again moved towards the delivery level and a network-of-networks style of bringing core managerial actors together. The Commission as facilitator regularly schedules field trips and meetings back-to-back with relevant conferences or policy roundtables on related issues to make trips more effective and "worth a journey" (interview 5_EU). The field visit in Sweden was for instance followed up by a conference on funding of integration activities, or a 2018 EIN meeting in Brussels preceded a 2-day training (Urban Academy on Integration) for local integration professionals.

Table 6: EIN Activities 2016-18

2016	October	Network launch	Brussels, Belgium
2017	February	Study visit	Västra Götaland/ Gothenburg, Sweden
	March	Network meeting	Brussels, Belgium
	October	Study visit	Berlin/ Nuremberg, Germany
	November	Network meeting	Tallinn, Estonia
2018	April	Network meeting	Brussels, Belgium
	June	Study visit	Lisbon, Portugal
	October	Study visit	Oslo, Norway
	November	Network meeting	Vienna, Austria

Source: EIN website/ EWSI

Summarising the above, one can observe a weighing of interests between Commission and member states over almost two decades (Boswell and Geddes 2011; Diedrichs, Reiners, and Wessels 2011; Monar 2010). National actors tend to dominate typical routes of agenda setting within Home Affairs, both in terms of "high politics" from above, that is, the Council, and "low politics" driven for instance by experts (Mulcahy 2011, 69). In the case of the EIN however, there is evidence for an agenda setting role of the Commission, "medium politics", as well as elements of brokering and inseminating ideas, both enabled by collaborating with specific, well-performing member states and stakeholders (Carrera 2014, 173). This is close to what Boswell and Geddes (2011, 223–24) discuss as contextualising or nesting. The EU, the Commission in particular, does not work detachedly from member states but feeds their exchange with distinctive policy features that partly reflect, partly extend national concerns, not least where member states face policy failure (Boswell and Geddes 2011, 205).

The window of opportunity that the migration crisis opened allowed strengthening a network originally established as smallest common denominator. The crisis context allowed the Commission's political push and creating some operational and paradigmatic framing without member-state backlash. This is a catalyst of subsequent actor activation, shifting the network from a

dormant status to higher salience. Formally, the network remains a purely administrative one without formalised procedures for its operation and without any role in decision-making. It is one mode of governance alongside other tools in migrant integration policy. Its core tasks remain rather technical in nature and politically, integration remains under member state authority. Nevertheless, the network has established wiggle-room regarding the involvement of external actors, innovative learning approaches, or even embedding technical discussions in strategic concepts such as "collaborative governance" or "stakeholder involvement". Rather than other governance instruments, the EIN is becoming a go-to place or beacon for actors interested in European-level integration policy and gateway into funding, for instance. The following chapters explore how this framing played out at the actor level.

6 CORE MECHANISM COMPONENTS: CONDUITS OF LEARNING

This chapter is starts empirically unpacking the proposed process of learning. It focuses on context and conduits at various stages during a potential learning experience. These are expected to yield differentiated learning outcomes – instrumental and paradigmatic learning (and potentially in-between or subforms as dicussed in Chapter 2). I defined conduits as (social) structures that shape the propensity of individuals to update beliefs, and, more importantly, shape the content of these beliefs. Conduits are hence the core mechanism components and idependent variables that need to be understood from a bird's-eye perspective before discussing how they might also be situationally activated through ideal-type practices of network management ("platforming" and "elevating", cf. Chapter 7). Thus, alongside an organic mechanism towards learning, the logic of conduits is not least about almost structural support to connect, amplify, or sustain subsequent practices. The chapter proceeds by first discussing the crisis context and moving through the conduits. Then, a brief intermediate summary will be provided and discuss in how far propositions have been met and how interactions of conduits played out in the sense of an overarching process towards learning. This will set the baseline for a detailed examination of purposive situational networking practices (Chapter 7) and probing in two constellations (Chapters 8 and 9).

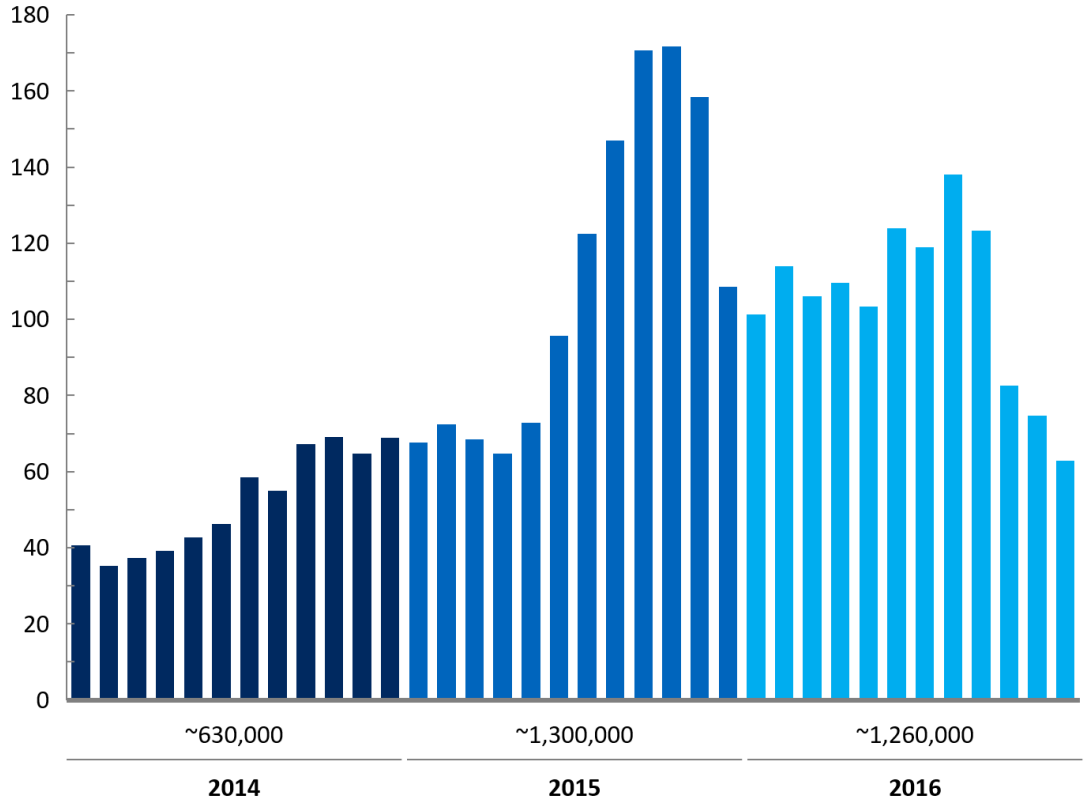
6.1 CRISIS CONTEXT

The policy environment is an important influence whenever discussing networks such as the EIN as context defines problems that eventually feed into networking practices (Scharpf 1997). Meanwhile, a crisis might shift the organisational structures dealing with a specific problem as such, more so than just feeding it into an existing network structure (Börzel 2016; Matthews 2012; Zeitlin 2016). For re-establishing the EIN, the migration crisis in 2015 was the defining trigger and helped in hardening soft policy. The crisis also became a continuous input and/or feedback with which the environment kept fuelling the soft-governance and learning engine EIN. Not least, this crisis also triggered or accelerated specific micro-foundations of actors' behaviour.

The sequence of actions evidences the crisis externality: after the first bulk of arrivals in the second half of 2015 (Figure 3 below), the Commission reacted about a year later with its Action

Plan on Integration, outlining a logical next problem – integration. The numbers speak for themselves when trying to appreciate how differently pressure to act was hitting member states. Similarly, member states gave differing weight to the EIN and articulated different needs for cooperation. This setup can be understood as conducive to a new mode of governance, which was the only way the Commission could actively provide support in this challenging yet diversified situation (Héritier and Rhodes 2011).

Figure 3: Towards a Crisis – First-Time Asylum Seekers in Europe



Source: own illustration based on Eurostat 2018b[75], Note: Monthly data, in 1.000 individuals, EU-28.

In the second half of 2015, out of ~900.000 asylum applicants, 33% went to Germany, 15% to Sweden, 13% to Hungary and between 4 and 7% to Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, and the Netherlands each. At the same time many countries – primarily new member states – remained at significantly less than 1%, receiving only few to several hundreds of applicants. The numbers tilted more drastically towards Germany and mainly away from Hungary. In August 2016, almost 70%

[75] Comparing low and high point, 02/2014 vs. 10/2015 shows difference of 386% or 137.000 individuals per month.

of EU-28 asylum applications happened in Germany, while the number decreased to ten applicants in Estonia (Eurostat 2018b).

> Germany or Greece have all the refugees and there is some tension with those who have some tens of refugees, many of the new member states… there is a gap between the big ones and those, not really taking any. Then you have the smaller member states, but they have some tradition of having immigrants. (…) Somewhere they just don't want it, politically. And it's hard for the administrators and bad for the network. (interview 24_GOV)

Beyond the re-establishment rationale of the network, the question here is how the crisis context shapes the network's ongoing activities. Thematic analysis brought up two topics: (1) equipping the EIN with new *political and symbolic relevance*, perceiving and defining integration as European topic (Geddes and Scholten 2015), and (2) augmenting technical-instrumental *delivery pressure* within specific member states, i.e. perceiving integration as crucial managerial-administrative topic within a domestic context (Kamkhaji and Radaelli 2016).

(1) *Political relevance* of the network grew when the Commission – after years of running a dormant network – named the EIN in its Action Plan (EC 2016). It gave the network a clear-cut purpose and given the sheer size of the problem, a purpose significantly beyond its original mandate of being an epistemically-oriented exchange forum. Now, it was identified by a high-ranking political unit, the Commission, to contribute to solving large scale issues, essentially attaining a governance function. Similarly, the member states had to take a stance on the topic and could in the moment of crisis hardly oppose an intuitive push of solidarity, cooperation and coordination. Integration became a European topic and learning on the topic an asset for individual administrators and the member states they represent.

> Let's say we were not the biggest priority [for my home ministry]. That was the case for years. And that's now drastically different. It's not like the network is making decisions by any means, but there is something going on and you just have to make sure to understand what it is, how it might help us, we might want to help, too. (interview 1_GOV)

> In 2016 the shift [with] the migration agenda, it's not confidential that Junker had a plan to have the Commission being very active in responding to the migration [or rather] refugee protection crisis (…). The shift was starting in 2015. They wanted to show that they are really in charge. The Action Plan and the network both were relevant. If you read the Action Plan and previous products, Communications, you see that refugees and asylum seekers got so much more attention in the Action Plan. They really wanted to show they'd do something about it. Also, because they didn't have the problems like within the member states, with public opinion. (interview 48_GOV)

Thus, at the same time, the network was pushed to shift its focus on refugees as a specific target group. While that does not change how the network operates, it tilts outputs and underlines the political motivation of the shift. Both for the Commission and the member states the urgent topic to agree on were refugees. This new political weight and shifted focus on refugees had three implications: (a) it strengthened funding opportunities and information about crisis-response funds attainable through the network. This leveraged actor activation or reasons for staying involved in the network (motivation and opportunity structure), it was therefore also an instance of straightforward technical learning. (b) It accelerated the exploration of learning tools used within the network as there is greater buy-in for instance for study visits, which could now be more focused. This prepared deeper, paradigmatic learning and associated practices, too. (c) It gave the Commission more involved member states to work with in orchestrating and shaping the network agenda and strategic orientation (i.e. platform building).

(2) Domestic *delivery pressure* was the other main result of the crisis. When states crashed into the migration crisis, it became apparent that this soon would also become an integration and administration crisis – which rang alarm bells both within the Commission and in those member states that were publicly perceived targets for migratory movements. Delivery pressure within the member states brought typical administrative coping (Lodge and Wegrich 2012) to the forefront, which in turn influenced the strategic orientation and ways of proceeding of the network towards less political and more operational insights. Hence …

> (…) the EIN is much more practical now. Which is relevant. Not just things being presented to us. (…) Compared to other networks, the strategy bit is less discussed. The re-launch in 2016, that came from [the Commission]. It was also good political timing. Now it's just a following through of what happened back then. (interview 40_GOV)

With domestic pressure increasing, the interests of EIN members as administrative bodies changed as well. Unequipped for the numbers of migrants arriving, typical managerial styles became apparent, which accentuated opportunities to learn within the network. Distinctions between approaches to migration and integration became clearer, including the approaches' success or limitations. In this sense, Sweden turned to an egalitarian and open governance approach of coping.

Meanwhile Germany tried to respond with high grid, a strong set of rules, and public agency run management (Hood 2000; Lodge and Wegrich 2012)[76].

The crisis created novel situations and uncertainty and partly even paradigm failure as in Germany for about a year, which has been argued to shift priors and assumptions on policy-making and policy delivery within a small group of administrators (Checkel 1999; 2003; Hall 1993; Laffan 2016). Primarily with policy failure and according coping, more paradigmatically-oriented learning instruments like study visit gained leverage in the first place. The crisis became a necessary condition to run the fully-fledged version of a study visit, including emotional and interactive encounters with refugees. Overall, differentiated delivery pressure brought about learning opportunities, needs for learning and learning-openness at the same time. Meanwhile, the Commission defined the topic politically as "European issue", establishing also the response structure of a network as new mode of governance.

6.2 PROFESSIONAL TRUST

In an OMC-like setting, rationalist drivers of networking, exchange, and potentially learning tie in with more constructivist ones that may aggregate and harden into incentives for mutual learning, coordination and cooperation. A long-term development of embeddedness and potentially shared identity are the ideal-type result of interacting on a platform over time, rare positive coordination (Scharpf 1994) and a genuine and voluntary working together "based on normative agreement" (Peters 2015, 6). In short, it was proposed that eventual interactions towards learning should benefit from professionalism and trust, at least by providing a foundation for genuine exchange. These theoretical propositions resonate in the EIN case: many interviewed network members were keen to explain their commitment to a mutual goal and intangibles of working with immigrants as new

[76] "Germany had to get their government machine up and running. Once they did, the results were impressive (…) It all seems super smooth and organised now. But we kind of saw that this is also not really a flexible approach and it is driven by these huge institutions that we could not rely on [here]." (interview 15_GOV)

arrivals to their respective societies. These orientations are crucial to understand behaviour and openness to learning or persuasion[77].

> We are all working for the same thing. Integration more so than migration is really about helping those who will eventually be part of our society. You know, we use different approaches but the goal is the same, we really want them to contribute to society. Either that, or, although it sounds bad, they are a cost. (interview 14_GOV)

Such statements were striking, because for several representatives it implied a normative departure from official government positions. The tacit agreement in the network seemed to be working towards the best possible solutions while avoiding talking politics. This is …

> (…) tough for some countries [mainly the Eastern Europeans.] Their governments have very clear opinions, coming down harshly on migrants. It's hard for these colleagues, because they still care and try to improve measures (…) they were like, apologising. (interview 8_OTH)

Beyond shared values of representatives, this includes mutual interests about working towards these values. While there is limited reliance on a common pool of resources as funding is not particularly exclusive, problem solving practices were described as comparable and therefore shareable. This joint problem solving on "how [approaches] work in new settings, how some things are adjusted, what you can take from that experience" (interview 12_GOV) with like-minded individuals appeared to sustain coordination. Some interviewees were more critical, but still bought into an idea of joint exploration and refinement of ideas[78].

Exploring actors in their role as public officials, various scholars have argued for the perception of staying or getting involved with a peer community as being a professional standard and contributing to mutual reputational gains (Brehm and Gates 1997; Majone 1997). Interviews confirmed notions of mutual recognition, inspiration and reputation derived from a setting of "integration experts" or "integration professionals" (e.g. interviews 15_GOV, 18_GOV, 22_GOV, 38_GOV, 48_GOV). This coding item, a self-description as experts, was a consistent in-group

[77] "We all aim to improve the integration policies across the EU otherwise there would not be any interest in participating in European discussions, whether they are political or technical. We all have an interest in ensuring that the integration policies across the EU become more comparable (…) there are some aspects, that will always ring important in all integration policies, learning the language or getting a job or getting proper housing." (interview 11_GOV) or "[In my home country] you can say that we don't have an integration policy anymore. It is your job to work for your government, so you have to support that even if you don't agree. Which does not mean that I do not bring up issues with colleagues between official meetings. (…) I really care, you wouldn't work in integration if you didn't. It's a conviction topic." (interview 48_GOV)

[78] "You see things in different countries, you learn how and when to adjust. But then there are only so many ways how you can integrate a migrant." (interview 48_GOV).

definition. Given that the EIN explicitly differs from a normal epistemic community, surprisingly more often than broader terminologies like "administrators" or "public officials".

> The network is a good opportunity to build your network as a professional with other integration actors (…) international actors and also the ones back [home, e.g. NGOs], which approach me, see me as a go-to point, which is a crucial component of being good at my job (…) If I can support those who implement things, this is very positive for me as well, we just do better. (interview 19_GOV)

Overall, the framing was positive, incentive focused, rather than about potential problems or sanctions for limited activity. In some cases, participation was described as a norm for a civil servant "representing a European government" (interview 39_GOV). Another interviewee argued, "even if we don't take a lot of things from the network (…) we do see an obligation to take part in European activities. It's just what you do" (interview 25_OTH). In short, emotional or intellectual gains and deeper identity-laden preferences play a role and interact with functional interests (Heclo 1978). In line with the expert notion, one reason appears to be what Peters (2015, 125) described as free flowing and open-minded lower level interactions of administrators "from within functional silos" instead of executives "at the top of the silos". This is also about the creation of a protected space for participating expert administrators, for mutual understanding and shared identity.

> They are all civil servants. Some higher-level civil servants and some have their clear political ideas on topics. This may be due to the structure of the civil service in their country and … frankly, they sometimes just feel to speak out more freely [during] these (…) mid-level, European-level discussion. I remember a vocal and critical colleague [from a big member state] when he came to Brussels on certain topics. When you would see him [in his home country] he was quite neutral [laughs]. (interview 27_OTH)

> If I were to email colleagues you might not get the same replies [because they] have to be careful that [their] supervisors agree (…). But if you are on the ground, you have a chat, talk freely and quickly. It's very, very useful. I needed some data one time and there was no way I could have gotten this when formally inquiring. (interview 48_GOV)

While this – broadly speaking – corroborates claims in the literature about the human dimension in networks (Börzel and Heard-Lauréote 2009), there are issues as well. The primary one concerns the diversity of individual profiles and capabilities in the network. This includes seniority or rank and decision-making power, expertise and experience, and basic skills. On these dimensions, the

EIN presents problems for some of its members, who partly voiced harsh criticism regarding network composition. Besides a mismatch on a personal layer, this was mentioned as an issue for developing joint understandings, vocabularies, or definitions – all contributors to a shared identity.

> People contributed if they had something to say. It was really based on the individual personality (…). Not necessarily a function of the member state. But really, based on the individual and an individual's career and experience. You also had very different levels of expertise within the network. (interview 27_OTH)

> We were sitting in the buildings of European Commission, and there was translation, which was limiting some states which were just talking in their language. Let's say there was the translation in 15 languages or 10 languages. Sometimes some states were sending people who were not so sure in English. It was a little bit harder to communicate informally. (…) In integration policy, migration, you just need to know English, right? Now, the program is just in English and it has created more common space. (interview 22_GOV)

Skewed individual benefits from the EIN became apparent during several interviews:

> There is too much variation [of ranks], some colleagues are topic experts, which obviously is good for technical discussions. Others are quite senior (…). Have the ear of the ministers, run their own sections. That's a big difference. And this makes the benefits of the network not distributed equally. (interview 24_GOV)[79]

Likewise, some interviewees were confident about their roles both within the EIN and in their home countries, while others were constantly referring to superiors, aligning policy and political priorities or apologising for "only administrating" specific government ideas (e.g. interviews 19_GOV, 33_GOV, 46_GOV, 48_GOV). This was reflected in actual learning practices, which shows how the activation of specific actors with specific capabilities and orientations shapes options in subsequently orchestrated interactions[80]. A second issue for effective interactions was described as a lack of continuity in the network. This is a core issue for a mutual understanding of problems and solution approaches – and developing trust as consistency over time[81].

[79] "It is a problem if some country sends someone who is leading a division that is larger than the entire integration administration of, well, multiple countries, actually. You can still discuss things, but implications [differ]." (interview 25_OTH)

[80] "There is going to be work with the 'willing', primarily, and those who can do things. (…) When some decisions are taken, when discussing ideas, some people (…) would make their points and you can push things forward with them." (interview 12_GOV) or "Some colleagues can make firm commitment[s] (…) There are other representatives who I would not seek out and this is not only about the countries but also [about] how easy it will be." (interview 15_GOV)

[81] "There were and still are people who are the centre of integration policy, knowledge and policy development in their country and who could draw on long years of experience and expertise. Even in the new member states, because they would sometimes be the only ones working on these topics. And then in other member states it was a more low-level representative. What also matters is, that some countries have a high turnover. People moving into different careers. Integration is a gateway topic that new people come into and there is a constant need to re-train (…) People's engagement came and went with their replacement or retirement." (interview 27_OTH) or "It's good to run meetings (…) on specific topics [but it] gives a problem. In my department, I work with NGOs but then some colleague here in [home country] works on qualifications, or on values. (…) If you run a mainstreamed integration policy, you have your experts distributed (…). That can be difficult, because who do you send? [It] should be the expert.

> Some countries send great officials (…) who know how to do their job. And these folks tend to stick around. But then you've got other member states who keep changing their representatives… lots of new faces, often every year or every other meeting. [This] is obviously due to shifting policies, national things. If integration moves from employment to culture or some dedicated ministry, other people end up working on these topics. (interview 14_GOV)

Content analysis revealed that continuity or lack thereof relate to member state peer groups. This is intuitive as peer groups are shaped through country background but also through knowing each other and having recurring opportunities to interact. While larger and experienced member states seemed to organise efficient hand-overs to ensure continuity even with changing representatives, for smaller member states, it appear crucial to have individuals being present for longer periods, "doing this job for 7 years, 10 years [they are] able to create some things [and stay] close to where the network is heading" (interview 48_GOV).

Overall, it seems hard to strike the right balance of having topic experts (i.e. desk officers) *vis-à-vis* those who can make firm commitments (i.e. ministerial leadership) *vis-à-vis* those who know the network and are constantly involved. This applies even more to the time and resource-intensive field visits and leads to further diversity in participation. As a member-state representative outlined, "integration is mainstreaming, you have to be careful who you send [to field visits.] We don't have resources and time to send people there just because it's interesting. (…) And I just go if it's [a] policy priority. There is intellectual curiosity and then there is time and work" (interview 40_GOV). Given that several interviewees are the only or one of few policy officers in integration policy in an entire country, often heavily involved with implementation, fear to lose time for their day-to-day work through international missions can be taken at face value[82].

In short, where the network provides opportunities for bureaucrats, their preferences emphasise leverage at home through privileged information from trusted sources, professional contacts,

But then you keep sending different people all the time. And it's not right that one attends and the other doesn't, because communication matters. You need to know and trust people." (interview 44_GOV)

[82] Various interviews confirmed that the network is not about "[having] a nice time in nice conference hotels [but one works] all day and run[s] from project to project, even [with] further travel, like (…) flying to another city" (interview 28_GOV). "This was not [about] spending some fun days in Brussels. (…) Sometimes [it feels] better to do your job back home." (interview 19_GOV) or "It's good to connect with colleagues, it's always interesting and quite stimulating to see something else. But then again, things keep going [back home] and I'm the one supposed to manage these things. And you do waste a lot of time just on the road." (interview 23_GOV)

and mutual recognition – overall, this remains a fairly instrumental learning orientation. However, the EIN opens a line of direct communication of ideas, values and knowledge between officials "by having a face to the phone number" (interview 44_GOV) – no matter how helpful the actual information or how strong the reasons for getting involved may be. According to Stone (2004) this can be understood as the first step of making a network an effective policy transfer device. It may also be understood to be a foundation for deeper, more paradigmatic forms of learning that to a significant degree build on notions of identity as well. Overall, while the reasons for activation and actor orientations may diverge, a joint, interactive setting or constellation is created in which options and combinations of preferences can play out (Scharpf 1997, 44–46). When discussing the merits of an OMC or comparable settings, this is a ground rule for a subsequent joint game, which defines the impact of learning in both instrumental and paradigmatic form.

6.3 PEER GROUPING

Peer groups relate to individual level, social interactions but are also about higher-level ties, primarily between member states. The two dimensions certainly interact as well, the back-and-forth between them was evident. Peer groups play a crucial role in network and diffusion research, but they are also important to understand learning by providing a baseline for deliberation and joint explorations. This section arranges peer groups based on the interview data[83] to understand stratification dynamics in play and assess the proposed emergence of social pressure to follow instrumental success cases and/or paradigmatic shifts within peer groups.

Empirically, the key driver of peer groups is political-administrative proximity, following a brief introduction of the groups, the dimension is explored in detail. Besides this proximity, "leading and lagging" in integration policy approaches is relevant to understand dynamics within or across peer groups: this juxtaposes to formal Social Network Analysis (Kadushin 2012) where leaders can be seen as gatekeepers to access particular practices and peer groups would be subclusters with higher density of nodes (connections) within respective groups and structural holes

[83] For anonymity concerns, I do not show a 30 by 30 cross-tabulation of country-mentions prepared for the analysis.

between them. However, it is important to note upfront, that grouping within the EIN appears permeable in the sense that ties developed on the platform can be shaped by interactions during more interactive networking experiences, hence extending the network effects by building nodes that connect clusters. Here, full peer groups tend to seek orientation towards selected leaders and a social dimension of personal relationships comes back in.

> There is that Baltic group [Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia] which is close to Finland. Sweden also. And Germany. They really try to push things. Estonia has that digitisation topic, some innovative ideas. (interview 15_GOV)
>
> Finland is another case we are oriented towards, like I'm aware [Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary[84]], they have all been there. Different purposes obviously, overall, you want to see the system, the general approach and then everyone is interested in specifics, legislation, policy. (interview 23_GOV)

Sometimes, it is also just one group member engaging in bilateral exchange and then picking up the gateway function described above. Although interviewees rejected ideas of "ganging up" or "us against them", almost all proceeded to name preferred go-to partners and feedback options. This appears to be a characteristic supported by recent network changes where pre-EIN, the Commission was …

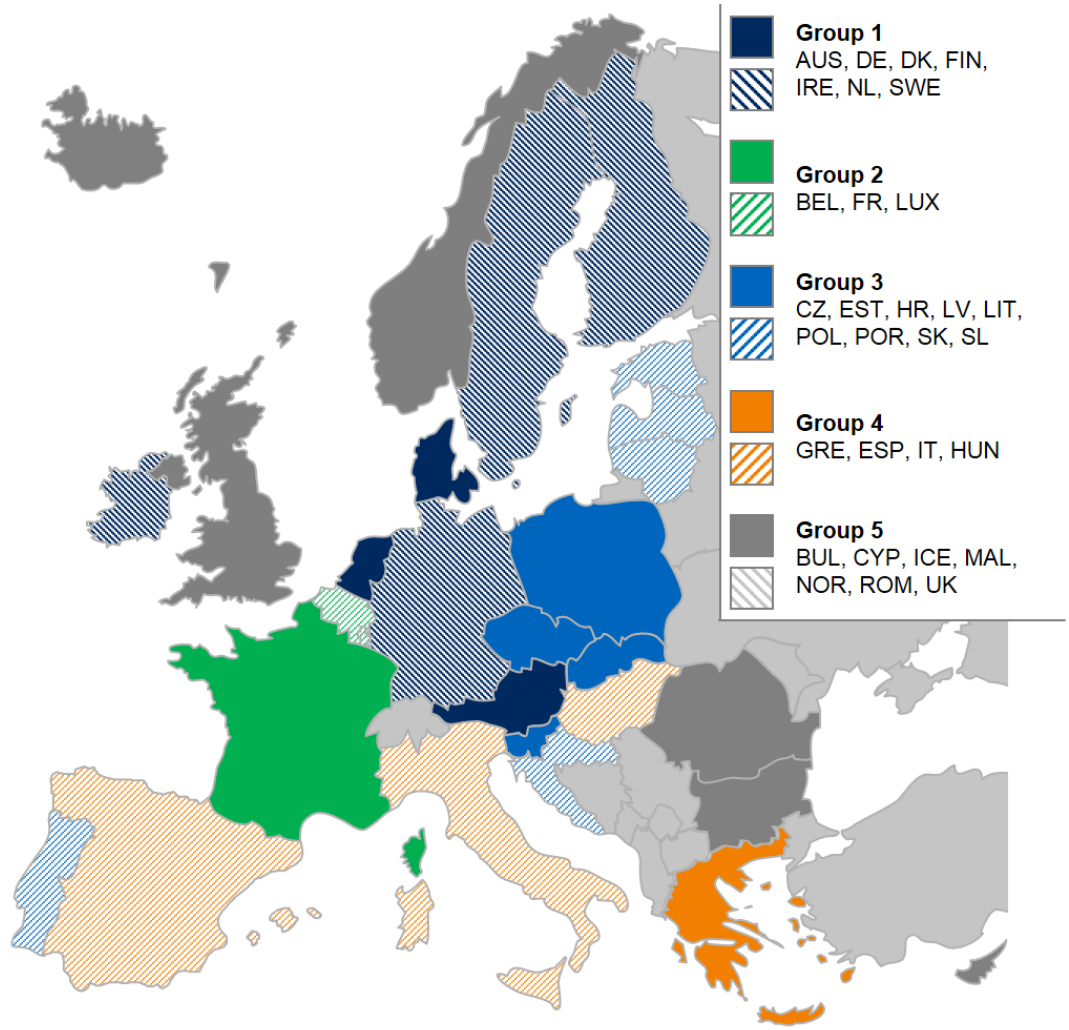
> (…) keen that cooperation between member states included all member states. So, there were not the ad-hoc conference that excluded countries, not that small coalition of the willing moving forward. They were keen to keep that within the community structure, (…) not to have parallel peer groups. Today, countries take matters forward bilaterally or in small groups. (interview 27_OTH)

This in turn was driven by political-administrative proximity including cultural aspects, migration exposure, and coalitions of alleged leaders. It is a rough allocation and does not preclude interactions between members from different groups, hence "an implicit benchmarking exercise with who you see alike. But it's a source of reflection of your policy even if it might not be fully comparable for budgetary or political reasons" (interview 10_GOV)[85].

[84] Re-arranged in alphabetical order; includes interviewee's home country to ensure anonymity.

[85] There was qualitative evidence that both more casual diffusion and purposeful transfers of ideas and group pressure primarily emerged within these groups (emphasis on fully shaded countries, brindled ones appear adaptable).

Figure 4: EIN Peer Grouping



Source: Based on interview data. Brindled colours indicate countries oriented towards neighbouring groups as well

- *Group 1* includes advanced countries from a governance and administration standpoint. The prototype would be Denmark or the Netherlands, both politically (including public discourse) and administratively (management, measures, institutions) advanced in integration and migration policy. Germany, Austria and Sweden are heavyweights in terms of sheer numbers of immigrants[86] and mainly learn and move within this peer group. This does not mean that they do not help others. Rather, primarily the inward learning experience is constrained to their peer group, this particularly applies to Germany and Sweden.

[86] And asylum seekers in the acute crisis period 2015-16, cf. e.g. "Germany, Austria, Sweden, we experienced a game changer in 2015 (…) Obviously, also outside the EIN, we were exchanging practices." (Interview 12_GOV)

- *Group 2* has overlaps and interactions with Group 1 but there was strong thematic evidence at cultural differences, among others for linguistic reasons. Apart from this, Belgium and Luxembourg are administratively rather close to, for instance, the Netherlands.
- *Group 3* consists largely of more recent, CEE EU-members. This includes the Baltic countries that are politically more open and active in picking up practices. One curious member is Portugal, which is considered a comparable partner[87]. As an interviewee phrased (47_GOV) "it's not like it's always and only us Eastern Europeans. A lot of us are partnering with Portugal." Portugal could be described as a node with high centrality.
- *Group 4* mainly consists of countries with border experience regarding migrant arrivals and so-called new destination countries[88]. Despite varying policy approaches, this leads to politically shared concerns *vis-à-vis* other countries and the EU. Still, orientation towards Group 1 was observed as well given recent experiences in dealing with large numbers of migrants.
- *Group 5* includes countries that either did not provide insights on preferred relationships or could be considered free movers picking up ideas across the board. For instance, Malta is an example for the second – coming from a UK-style administrative setup, mixed with Southern European border experience, and the specific situation of being a small member state[89]. Norway would be another case. Not being member of the EU, they selectively pick up operational-level ideas across the network while focusing on Scandinavian practices regarding strategic discussions.

Overall, a high degree of cross-referencing took place - essentially, the same member states kept referring to each other as main trusted partners and good examples. There was one notable exception to highlight because it directly links into one of the nested case studies (Chapter 8): Portugal. Although not being directly comparable to allegedly high-performing Group 1 or issue-driven

[87] Discussed in detail in Chapter 8 – elements of comparability include: small, rather centralised, not extremely well equipped in resources, low numbers of third-county migrants, significant internal minority population, emigration pressure, new arrival destination, which designed integration system from scratch.

[88] Portugal would commonly be considered part of this group but has distinguished itself administratively and politically.

[89] The Maltese integration strategy reflects such diverse inspirations, cf. Ministry for European Affairs and Equality (2017).

Group 4, mainly due to smaller migration numbers, the country is perceived as (a) innovative contributor in how integration delivery is handled and (b) entrepreneurial member of the EIN in terms of policy initiatives but also personal relationship-building. This leads to significant adoption of Portuguese ideas in Group 3, but also in Group 1, 2, and 5. Vice-versa, Portugal appeared active in reaching out to others, often, yet not exclusively, within Group 3, therefore being an illustration of peer group permeability via a social, interactive logic (Checkel 2003), teaching or persuading within an out-group seeking to join the Portuguese in-group.

As mentioned, peer groups were derived primarily referring to the presence of proximate political-administrative environments and, more implicitly, the presence of leaders and laggards in specific policy instruments. This rather instrumental learning logic builds on Stone (2004, 546ff.) who sees these dimensions as contributors to isomorphic pressures when combined with personal interactions. Both topics define an institutional setting that is reflected by its representatives or at least influences their orientations and actions[90].

Regarding political-administrative comparability, the literature focuses on administrative characteristics and traditions (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Thijs, Hammerschmid, and Palaric 2018). The first thing to explore in integration policy is that politics needs to be understood broadly given the culturally contagious topic. The environment includes a public perception and a discourse element of entire societies moving ahead while others "lag behind", this is certainly more paradigmatic in nature:

> We've been trying stricter ways of integration already. Where it's not about the society embracing immigrants, but immigrants should adjust to [our country's] values… and times have changed [but] that values debate has been very constant here, in policy, the public, the media. [It has] spread out and it's [now] an issue in EU policy. But still many member states are reluctant to even talk about that. (interview 39_GOV)

[90] "This network is really driven by its people… we represent member states [and] most of our countries' political leaders agree that they support these exchanges at the European level. (…) So, it's then really up to us to make something of it. (…) There is more fit with some [member states], some are more ahead than others. [But] I can live with helping others." (interview 9_GOV)

Further soft or cultural elements of proximity relate to individual-level interactions and regard the language – this concerned for instance pairs like Germany and Austria, Belgium and France, Belgium and the Netherlands, or groups like the Scandinavian countries, English speaking ones or the Baltic member states. Here, "speaking the same language is an ice-breaker. From the first meeting you share something, you have some context and ideas about your colleague and you can [swiftly] exchange thoughts" (interview 7_GOV). One administrator explained that because of having a second mother tongue, it was easier to engage with the country where this language is spoken – not least regarding the socio-political context. Language moves together with cultural alignment and may ease context-sensitive deliberation when networking.

Other interviewees laid out how coming from alleged progressive countries with regards to cultural paradigms around integration measures and administrative tools matters. Here, exchange in between meetings …

> (…) happens with countries that have similar systems, a similar society [giving] a group like [Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Sweden]. You go to field trips, visit these places and it really helps if you also understand (…) the local context. (interview 32_GOV)

Similarly, being "advanced [and pushing] the boundaries - that makes us comparable to others [equally] open to advance" (interview 40_GOV). There is some inherent tension regarding learning in that comparability and similar backgrounds ease instrumental forms of learning, while paradigmatic exchange might be harder given a lack of diverging cases, including different social identities, to learn from. Yet, at the same time reflection and paradigmatic learning as emerging through social interactions and deliberation may benefit from similar cultural backgrounds or from sharing a language. One interviewee from CEE highlighted that …

> (…) it's much easier to talk with people from Central and Eastern Europe. Or Southern Europe. This is about history and background and understanding governmental structures (…) If you work in the European political arena, it's just easier to come to common terms within this group. It's about heritage. (interview 48_GOV)

This hints at socio-cultural factors but also at a comparable administrative tradition, or governmental structures. It is interesting as it moves beyond the CEE-context and into Southern Europe, which is bureaucratically comparable (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). A case in point is the degree

of centrality in policy implementation where for instance Portugal is close to CEE (Thijs, Hammerschmid, and Palaric 2018, 15). Arguing from a perspective of policy-comparability, another interviewee hinted at like-mindedness, which beyond aligned instrumental thinking can be interpreted as being rooted in comparable policy paradigms[91].

More tangibly, political proximity concerns resource intensity that a state makes available to the public sector and to a certain policy field. This was by far the most prominent coding item when discussing similarities, country comparability, potential peer groups, and concerns for network cohesion with the interviewees. As one interviewee put it, "if we look into it, it really is all about the money. We don't have all that money Sweden has" (interview 22_GOV). Others agreed, referencing alleged "big spenders" being Germany and Sweden[92]. Overall, the logic of talking about resources does hint a technically-oriented, instrumental learning with potentially some political or symbolic elements like how to gain better access to funds[93]. This also includes a pressure to learn indeed, once financial comparability between two peers is established.

Resources integration policy is equipped with relate directly to EU-level outcomes. First, a political stance *vis-à-vis* the EU, including joint interests of some countries, which includes leveraging support schemes. For instance, "Spain, Italy, Greece are close. Basically, there are similar concerns [and] some shared political views. (…) European support schemes certainly play a role" (interview 35_GOV). Second, resources for integration policy tie in with the opportunity structures of participating in the EIN – countries spending less usually have less personnel focused on integration, let alone transnational cooperation. This may influence subsequent implementation of transnational soft agreements that can be followed through less effectively with fewer organisational resources. Besides monetary and resource differences, this opened differences in "time to

[91] "We have a very close network with similar minded countries, facing the same issues [and] handling the issues in the same manner. [Given] the welfare system of each country. In [home country], it's natural that integration is implemented in specific ways. So, it's very clear who we are inspired by and work with." (interview 39_GOV)

[92] "It really is a matter of policy priorities (…) Germany opened their borders, that was [a] political move [and] Germany has put in the necessary resources to bear the consequences." (interview 23_GOV) and "We are clearly impressed [by Germany], but even their tiniest government body, in some local community, for some target group, is bigger than our [country's entire] migration administration." (interview 15_GOV)

[93] "Reality in Sweden is completely different (…) It's like another world to me. It's certainly stimulating but frustrating at the same time because many of the things come down to budgets." (interview 19_GOV)

participate" in meetings. Smaller member states shared similar concerns driven by simply running smaller departments[94] where "it's not like I can send someone. European policy coordination, that's me. Integration policy, that's me too" (interview 19_GOV). This re-emphasises country-level peer group dynamics at the individual-layer.

Having less resources correlates with issue exposure, the combination of a historical stock of migrants and recent migrant influx. Germany, Sweden, and Austria stand out on the second dimension, while on the first, countries like the Netherlands had traditionally strong non-EU migration (Eurostat 2017; Scholten 2017). Several other countries do not fit either group and have accordingly never given the topic policy priority or used elaborate approaches to deal with it, including accumulating adequate resources. Once more, this underscores instrumental thinking. Network members explore opportunities to learn how to strategically navigate policies through a political landscape, ideally learning from who has according experiences.

> To identify likeminded or more similar peers, I obviously use the migration experience. Countries that have had it for a longer period of time, bigger groups of asylum seekers (…) Because it's not a question of being more alike spirited, but about practical visions. We wouldn't want to enter into a smaller peer group that had a recent experience of just receiving the very first asylum seekers, the first 20 or 200. (…) At the same time, I don't say that there wouldn't be an added value in having exchanges between member states with longer experience and member states with shorter experience, the contrary. (interview 11_GOV)

Linking this with countries' administrative traditions gives further hints at dimensions of comparability – those with strong migration exposure have for a longer time mastered a specific mix of systemic approaches and may additionally be coming from a different tradition in the first place[95]. Obviously, also public service mentalities diverge significantly (Hood and Lodge 2006; Lægreid and Verhoest 2010). Overall, administrative systems lead into specific organisational cultures in a

[94] "There is only so much I can do, last year drafting [a domestic] strategy was my focus, now I'll see if we can get more engaged with the network again." (interview 29_GOV) or "We don't have the means to do a lot of international work, there is a lot of [domestic work]. We would like to and had a number of countries visit (…). But we don't have the resources [to go ourselves]." (interview 40_GOV)

[95] Some have inclusive public governance structures with reliance on local-level implementation and involvement of civil society, cf. Thijs, Hammerschmid, and Palaric (2018). This is the Nordic model that aligns to administrative traditions of corporatist governance. Denmark has increasingly departed from this model, moving towards pluralist NPM comparable to the Dutch model and in some regards beyond, towards a public interest driven (UK-style) administrative culture. Germany, coming from a stickier legalistic/ "Rechtsstaat" tradition, cf. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011, 61ff.); Bach and Ruffing (2013). Cf. "We are very interested in (…) Germany, Sweden, and I would say in Greece. And for very obvious reasons – I mean Germany in 2015 got like 1 million asylum seekers and Sweden 35.000 unaccompanied [children.] These are countries that face similar problems (…). We are curious what happens there, more so than in Portugal." (interview 46_GOV)

given country that felt relevant for several interviewees[96]. Also ambition levels vary politically because it is …

> (…) obvious that you turn to certain countries (…) Germany and the Netherlands and Austria and Norway. [We]'re in many regards in a similar situation. And also if you get frustrated with some perspectives of some member states you turn to your peers. But (…) it really depends on the level of ambition of your government. So, with these other [countries], you would include Portugal. [They are] actually trying to achieve something. That's important because a country like Poland, they might be very interested and very keen on doing something, but they don't have the resources, they don't have the politicians to do anything. (interview 14_GOV)

Lastly, as two other interviewees emphasised, the issue pressure of migration may not even be the defining criterion regarding openness to learning across governance layers – rather, they emphasised a general tradition of collaboration and multi-level governance[97].

Summing up, different ways of running governments and administrations and of handling integration policy affect whether and how peer groups form. Within these groups learning dynamics are amplified and sustained in the longer run. Particularly for instrumental learning, peer grouping and comparability is key to build up pressure to follow successfully beaten paths whereas paradigmatic learning may also benefit from experiencing diversity and permeating peer groups by individual, social interactions. A lot of this takes place during more intensive network breakouts or study visits and then iterates back these newly established nodes to the normal network interactions, thus compounding network effects by connecting formerly distant clusters. While the Commission tries to involve the network broadly, making diversity a positive attribute, by "[giving]

[96] A "persistent, patterned way of thinking about the central tasks of and human relationships within [organisations]", cf. Wilson (1989, 91); Cf.: "You need to understand how government works in a country. I feel I do that for countries [that are also from Southern Europe], that helps you to interact and learn from each other. You are not talking about some distant dream." (interview 33_GOV) or "It's not so easy to just take and transfer an approach – most of us admire the Swedish model but it just wouldn't work without long-standing relationships and (…) trust that civil society can and that they should handle certain things. (…) Here, having our local administrations work with NGOs to tackle integration is just not feasible. [The] local administrations are politically very difficult to deal with." (interview 19_GOV)

[97] "National level and cities work well together in some countries, Sweden, Germany, in others it's tricky. I think this is not necessarily due to problem pressure, migration numbers play some role, sure, but (…) it's rather about a good tradition of multi-level governance. Munich, Berlin, Gothenburg, there's loads of cooperation, they have the ear of national governance. Spain or Greece instead, it was already bad. Bureaucratic. Then you have obviously Poland or Czech Republic (…) where national governments have a distinct stance on immigrants." (interview 2_OTH) or "[What we] take [from the network] are best practices (…) I'm not talking about policies but very specific programmes, really street-level things. Because in each country, policy and integration measures, the legal basis is (…) even more diverse than expected. There is so little common ground in understanding integration, the history and policies of the countries. The Common Basic Principles, we can all agree on, but that's about it. We struggle (…) finding commonness [in] legal and cultural terms." (interview 47_GOV)

attention to all member states, to find examples from all of them (…) reflect the diversity of member states, reflect different stages of integration policy" (interview 27_OTH), specific initiatives by subgroups push the network's impact. Here, leaders may either move forward with their peers or exercise a gateway function to pull alleged laggards behind.

6.4 SECRECY AND INFORMALITY

Across all learning tools, informality and secrecy are the breeding ground of bilateral contacts and a fertiliser for more relevant interactions (e.g. study visits, network meetings, supporting instruments). Informality was thus proposed to contribute to instrumental learning by complementing formally presented facts with real-life experiences (incl. challenges). It was also expected to promote paradigmatic learning in the sense of easing exchange with new ties, who might be paradigmatically diverging but potential trusted partners beyond the protocol in the future. This can be framed as provision of a safe environment for building a mutual trust equilibrium, aligning closely with professional trust and peer grouping described above. Without informality and secrecy, learning instruments across all types of network interactions arguably remain frail and belief updating becomes harder to be initiated or followed through. One interviewee explicitly explained that…

> (…) if you 'steal', steal from the best and if you just read about something, exchange things via paper, I can't judge what's best. We are civil servants (…) we do not dare to write about problems or issues. But if we talk informally, I'm always asking what's not working (…), and it is better to avoid those things, because they are very expensive [and] public money. (interview 22_GOV)

When prompted at the end of the interview whether there were particularly relevant issues for efficient networking, she got back to informality and related it once more with greater practice orientation and openness only feasible outside the protocol because "civil servants follow the politics of states, but in [a] more informal environment, the more open we [are], the more practical" (interview 22_GOV). Several interviewees shared this avoidance of the formal networking interactions and written evidence or protocols to speak freely and frankly.

While the network departed from a *secrecy*-angle – unknown membership, limited protocols about deliberation, focus on outputs – it has now shifted towards *informality*. The two share some features, for instance that specific points exchanged do not end up in a protocol. Primarily during

network meetings, informality was felt as a valuable new feature coinciding with the makeup of the EIN since 2016. Making the network a more action-oriented setting, the Commission pushed for allowing direct, swift interactions that moved towards involving some stakeholders during the meetings. This eased deliberation already during normal network interactions or at least gave the opportunity to more directly engage and build relationships beyond formal positions[98].

> If you get a meeting inside a formal building you behave more formal. The new [EIN] has created meetings in places far from Brussels. (interview 22_GOV)
>
> With that 'tour de table' gone, it just feels different. It's little atmospheric aspects, sometimes you had these little flags, name tags on the table (…) If you do things that way, people almost have to feel obliged to voice only formal government positions. (…) It can get quite defensive. (interview 18_GOV)

The second statement focuses on the provision of a safe environment and platform to discuss things openly. This might help gradual peer pressure rooted in personal relationships to unfold in a soft setting that would otherwise lack tools to exercise pressure. As quoted in full length above, this concerns most of the involved actors:

> There's the (…) civil servants and more or less we have to understand each other. [In an] open but also safe environment. (interview 22_GOV)
>
> The Migration Forum, [is more] name and shame. The EIN is more closed in that sense. I would certainly say that there is slight peer pressure, but it's more positively framed. (…) You would 'name' indeed, but in a positive sense, pushing the best practice and informally trying to understand roadblocks. (interview 11_GOV)

However, informality is of even greater relevance for member-state representatives from more Eurosceptic countries, where either a sincere and active exchange takes place informally or only a pseudo-exchange and passive stance is possible. On the one hand, this is sobering and provides a reason why the EIN is not moving faster into the public sphere. On the other hand, it shows how informality helps when it comes to catalysing learning or best practices even into settings that would appear unlikely to learn, for instance some CEE countries with a more critical stance towards the EU and lesser salience of migration and integration. Here, quietly, learning in individual-level administrative circuits might creep up organisational echelons that are otherwise out of reach. Also remaining at the individual level, more paradigmatic learning may be enabled in deeper,

[98] Cf.: "It's a blessing this network finally switched to English (…) it just eases how we get along. [It] makes things less formal. Just by avoiding talking in French or getting things translated." (interview 14_GOV)

trusted exchange. Not least, informality also allows EU and Commission as well as specific gate-way countries to have an entry point to countries with policy priorities departing from "their norm" and understand priorities there.

> [In my home country] everything that happens in this area is aligned at the governmental level… positions presented at the meetings are double checked at different ministries. It's a mandate question, we can't really speak freely if something goes on record, you have a protocol. That's a reason why I look forward to (…) be active in networks where it's less public and official, where we have that element of informality. (interview 48_GOV)

A lot of this happens during "the literal coffee break" (interview 12_GOV) and interactions without reputational risks or audience costs open the door to extending typical solution spaces or comfort zones in discussions. This makes …

> (…) time between the sessions as important as the sessions (…). You can get a feeling for what the others are thinking, whether they are doing something on it or want to explore that further. (interview 19_GOV)

For a governance function, this is relevant for the Commission if the provision of informal spaces of exchange levers the quality and intensity of exchanged information. On the same note, having space beyond the protocol enables the Commission to provide information about policy priorities going forward, a privileged information that keeps member states interested in the EIN.

The above explains lacking effectiveness of network supporting instruments. Practices showcased in mutual learning handbooks or on the European Website on Integration (EWSI) are considered only worthwhile if there is an informal opportunity to screen the information. It implies that the written and published compilation of approaches only matters in the limited number of cases where officials do not hear information first-hand. Content analysis showed that most officials would rely on the first-hand channel wherever possible. EWSI would be a "guide [for] people and act as a depository, marker, you name it. But I don't know if anything is as useful as meeting face to face" (interview 49_OTH). Likewise, lacking informal guidance through handbooks and EWSI limits the use of these instruments[99].

[99] "Curiously, the website isn't used as much as the handbooks were. Probably the handbooks felt more rigorous, printed and published. And they were developed together [by the member states], there probably was some 'listen, this is really good, because… (…) it's important that someone guides you through the practices" (interview 49_OTH).

Regarding breakouts from standard networking practices, particularly during study visits, the programme of these visits is about informal, implementation experiences and interactions with stakeholders who run concrete programmes rather than policy makers designing them. There is no detailed reporting about the visits, just rough information about the agenda[100]. The instrument study visit also brings an emotional layer to the front, which would hardly be feasible in a formal setting. Not least, limiting the number of participants and having civil society and local actors participate is conducive to informal exchange. Although the diversity of actors could be problematic, building trust is eased by having only smaller group that get to know each other. By design, discussions can be open and problem-oriented between public and third-sector actors without running the risk of violating official perspectives. Not least, respective member states chose study-visit participants, adding a filter or layer of trust *ex ante*.

> You spend so much time together [between public and third-sector actors] and you can really discuss things (…) we talk about integration all the time during these trips. (…) We share similar goals, all of us and the visits give you a chance to discuss how these goals can be reached without stating your government's standpoint all the time. (interview 28_GOV)

Informality is also supportive for appreciating the context of policy programmes when hearing for instance stories of refugees on the ground (e.g. 8_OTH, 14_GOV, 38_GOV). This is something where the feel of an experienced policy maker for a situation and soft assessments of comparability matter to complement alleged evidence-based policy. Interviewees underlined this informal exchange and complained about too tight work programmes that limit these types of interactions. The attempt to provide more information and evidence by accentuating formal information input seems to harm both starting to learn in reflexive, paradigmatic terms but even instrumental learning which is surprisingly strongly driven by informal interactions. This is relevant from a theoretical and practical perspective. Lastly, for bilateral exchange informality appears key to initiate relationships. This comes down to open exchange and conscious decisions to advance together[101].

[100] A factual collection of agenda points, no analytical summary. Published with multi-month delay to the public this stays by and large within network circuits.

[101] "The Commission obviously wants us to network and [provides] space for informal networking and I really think this is what makes this field special (…) no need for research or reading." (interview 40_GOV)

> The very important thing for us is the informal exchange of information. It is like that because in matters of the integration of immigrants I would say that the best state is Sweden, with the best marks and evaluations. And even Sweden at least two times has changed, absolutely, it's integration policy. So, we are in a field of constant change. (…) And it was absolutely necessary for us to be part of [the EIN, where we] have created most of our bilateral cooperation with other states [and] understand what is changing. (interview 22_GOV)

This is then used for side-stepping the network, something the Commission almost encouraged, even if not always tracking the initiatives. This aligns with broader ideas of making the EIN a spider-in-the-web of integration policy, a true platform: even if joint initiatives autonomously move beyond or elevate from the network, it meets its purpose. Moreover, wherever things are taken forward bilaterally and informally, this can be understood as leveraging all types of learning due to higher intensity and specificity of exchange.

6.5 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Arranging a network such as the EIN includes bringing in external perspectives – both on the organisational side (e.g. run workshops) and the content level (e.g. research inputs). Policy practitioners and experts may also play an important role for the internal and external acceptance and success of the network. It was proposed that stakeholders would push network members to consider a wider and amplified range of instrumental solution approaches while also providing exposure to more paradigmatic impact stories and frames of for instance viewing service recipients. Overall, while some critical comments were made regarding external knowledge partners, generally, the Commission and the Migration Policy Group were positively perceived as "real experts", just as selective research inputs for the meetings to provide a discussion starter[102].

The following interview extract describes in detail how connecting stakeholders was conducive to the overall network setting. The goal of connecting the network into the wider policy community has a clear influence on the atmosphere of the meetings and types of exchanges that can take place. The interviewee notes, what can be seen as putting the safe space of the network at risk, if *connecting* with externals takes a more important role than *arranging*, hence providing a

[102] "[MPG] have a great perspective on the network and really contributed to what it is (…) they are real experts in the field." (interview 1_GOV) or "I really liked that research input. It's a good discussion starter [and] something to chew on. It's good that the Commission brought them in." (interview 23_GOV)

useful platform for the core actors. In terms of eventual learning this would highlight the importance of open instrumental exchange as well as preparing deeper, reflexive and paradigmatic exchange by trust building over time. Interestingly, the interviewee locates the arranging role with the Commission as orchestrator.

> Stakeholder involvement is good. I don't mind if the expert is from the NGO or the academic field, or somebody who can say something [about] the topic (…) But what is more important is (…) that we will mix those things, that we will not overshoot again. (…) There's the national contact points of integration for civil servants [as an] open and safe environment. But then there was also another idea from the Commission that there has to be given voice to civil society. They have created [the] Migration Forum and it was about the NGOs who were blaming the member states. And it wasn't about the safe environment, it was not about the exchange or the discussion. Just blaming each other. (interview 22_GOV)

The interviewee then elaborated on the "blame game" and how to ensure an open environment for discussion. This was backed by a further interviewee describing a balancing act[103]. Both accounts resonate with the literature on blame avoidance and safe exchange as driving public officials (Hood and Lodge 2006; Howlett 2012).

> Let's say for me it's important, that there will be a true cooperation, that one side will not be blamed. If you take too many stakeholders from the NGOs to the meetings, they will start to blame the states and that will be the end of the discussion. Member states [will shut down and] defend the things that you are doing. You have to ensure [this] quite open environment where more of the ideas are coming, are flowing freely. And people feel it. Feel Chatham House rules (…) So, stakeholders yes, activists no. (…) Everything that will make the group more open is very welcome, everything that constrains us is not. (interview 22_GOV)

Findings about stakeholder involvement in idea and content development were more ambiguous than expected. In fact, it appears that the presence of NGOs or experts as transmitters of outside ideas serves primarily to shake up network members and make them interact. Externals are more of a "connecting" and "arranging" support, hence rather a tool to sustain the platform EIN, than an influence for "content exploration" on the platform. This is similar to the logic of intermediaries being orchestrated to support a Commission agenda (Blauberger and Rittberger 2015b). Beyond their role during meetings, stakeholders allow the Commission to get further policy entry-points into countries and to pursue specific topics. Hence, for …

[103] "This should be more than a conference on integration. It is more official. (…) you need to make sure this is still the network. Not something else." (interview 44_GOV)

> (…) some member states, if you want to understand what works, the funding situation, access to funds, getting support. You better talk to civil society organisations. You can get them at the table, it's not like [member states] can openly oppose that. (interview 17_OTH)

This aligns to what Hooghe and Marks (2001, 84) framed as "breaking away from two-level, dyadic relationships with national governments". The Commission being the "consensus crafter (…) hold[ing] the pen" (Hooghe and Marks 2001, 21) by connecting specific policy actors (NGOs, experts, sub-national authorities, adjacent networks, contractors) with the member states at specific stages. Sometimes this consensus crafting fails, as described for one meeting that involved cities (EC/EIN 2017a; 2017b)[104]: an interviewee explained how tensions were mitigating an exchange of opinions, creating "a complete wall of silence when the cities were raising their points (…) well, [almost] because Greece openly complained that cities were there" (interview 2_OTH). This aligns to the literature on trust as a crucial component for a network's efficiency and positive coordination (Klijn et al. 2015; Klijn and Koppenjan 2015; Scharpf 1994). Here, trust building gets extended beyond the core of the network and includes the likes of cities or NGOs which not all member states seemed to agree with – at least for instances where it becomes the above-cited blame game. From the cities' side, the above instance was perceived as "about trust and vanity. [It felt] like intruding their network" (interview 2_OTH).

The above hence describes failed creation of structural embeddedness of sub-national actors and national actors and a failure of building up stable horizontal and vertical bridges (Agranoff and McGuire 2010; Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011; O'Toole Jr. 2015). However, in line with the network-of-networks design of the EIN and despite (partial) failure, it became apparent that the Commission is at least attempting to build bridges for some of the involved actors because it expands opportunities of mutual support in a policy field where coordination is paramount. In terms of propositions from the literature, one can confirm that where non-government actors with policy-delivery orientation are involved, the solution space of discussions seems to extend and if

[104] "Cities work concretely on integration efforts and obviously with funding often at the national level, they were very interested to join such a meeting. (…) There are two sides to this, we [NGO] and the Commission are obviously eager to work with cities, work with their concerns, connect them with where the funding is. The member states however see this as their business, national authority." (interview 2_OTH)

happening without blaming and public controversy, this is unsurprisingly positively perceived by network participants (Sabel and Zeitlin 2012b). This particularly applies for study visits that are attended together with a domestic NGO and a domestic implementer and a few days are spent together with a narrow content frame.

> Integration is a super-hot topic, so it's good if you can bring people from European NGOs, from your country, because they are really experts on some things that you might not have fully built a perspective on. (…) Then also, if you really want to talk to an NCPI you can always do that. Having the NGOs around is different. (interview 48_GOV)

Stakeholder involvement appears to be a matter of degrees and a tightrope walk for the network manager Commission. The interviewee account "stakeholders yes, activists no", illustrates this well. Other interviewees were likewise rejecting a broader stakeholder forum, referring to the special character of the EIN as a public-sector platform that selectively seeks out external input and which "[cannot be made into] an NGO forum. I mean, you can. But I'm not sure if I wanted to attend yet another stakeholder thing you have already [at the national level]" (interview 28_GOV). This describes the sweet-spot of the EIN bringing together a group that has no direct substitute or does not replicate things the participants often with time or resource constraints get elsewhere. It also speaks to the governance function of the EIN, rather than an epistemic or outreach function. At the same time, spending time together, sharing the scarce resource between a policy maker and an NGO representative was considered relevant from NGO – and partially – EIN-side.

> We are travelling together. We are talking a lot, with the NGOs, when we go on a mission for two days or so. We do take time, (…) we are out of our day-to-day business. It gives you space to listen to the problems (…) and ideas. (interview 24_GOV)
>
> It was very interesting to see different perspectives, but mainly to spend a lot of time with [my own member state's representative], taking the same flight. I think this will for sure have a long-term effect on how we work together, certainly a side effect of the visit, but still very important for us as an NGO. (interview 45_OTH)

This emphasises how governance structures are interactively enabled, fostering multi-level connections – however, it is an interaction that is not taking place frequently. In terms of EIN-impact as a governance tool, this is a limitation[105].

[105] "Some cities obviously made personal contact with some of their national members. But then I haven't heard from any kind of follow ups (…) after the workshop." (interview 2_OTH) or "It would be good to have more constant involvement, go back and see how things work a few months down the road." (interview 45_OTH) or "It was good to have [NGOs]. We had some time to interact,

6.6 EMOTIONAL CHARGING

Emotional charging of learning experiences was expected to contribute to paradigmatic learning in terms of reflection and re-framing, not least by enabling deeper levels of deliberation and removing cognitive barriers. It was also expected that instrumental learning would be enhanced through emotional stimuli and sustained more easily once taken into circuits outside the network, yet this was also proposed to align with using heuristics as shortcuts. Interviewees described all the above to varying degrees. I provide only a short summary given that the actual charging process was clearly and more exemplarily prevalent during the study visit to Sweden, one of the in-depth probes (Chapter 9). Overall, elements of substitution heuristics and (often associated) re-framing were the most relevant across interviewees and became visible through descriptions such as exemplary (arguably paradigmatic) "stories" or "experiences" standing for wider implications and which interviewees described struggling with when trying to summarise them in fact-based (instrumental) terms.

> It's incredibly impressive to sit down with refugees, people who escaped war and they tell you their story, also their story of how they live now. You can't replicate that if you brought someone to a conference (…) They share a lot of details, it's hard to synthesise that, write some report and (…) it's just giving you a feeling that some programmes work and others don't. (interview 24_GOV)

Living this interactive and emotional experience together with other members of the group was key as it both amplified the experience by exchanging views about it and then sustained the experience once leaving the specific context – that is, questioning oneself and being questioned by the sustained discussions and interactions with peers during the visit.

> We were on the same flight [back] and kept talking about it, we would have done that anyway, but [here] it was quite emotional. You know, that feeling that you need to [get your act together] and do something about it, even some pressure because you see that it can work indeed. (Interview 45_OTH)

Other interviewees described how they felt pushed to mutually (with stakeholders participating in the visits) explore options outside the scope of standard policy delivery, challenged by now having faces linked to the facts. Thus, at study visits on the ground, emotions and emotional examples of

I don't have the chance to do that during normal work weeks (…) It's a shame the opportunities to interact are so few." (interview 14_GOV)

failure both shifted deeper assumption about good policy delivery and amplified rational, instrumental learning experiences. Living the experience together with stakeholders was also described as a bonding experience, which can be interpreted as contributing to paradigmatic learning in the sense of reflecting about membership in a specific in-group of policy practitioners.

> The first-hand view is just huge, looking someone in the face, being on the ground (…) Never underestimate that this is also about emotions. Many of the participants had never met a refugee before. This is absurd in a way. I mean, I'm not blaming them, but it's hard to design policies if you don't involve the target group (…). So, hearing [refugees'] stories and experience with the programmes, it is huge. (interview 11_GOV)
>
> After the visit at Restad Gård [refugee centre] people were quite overwhelmed, actually. Some said that this has totally changed their way of looking at integration – from the refugees' point of view. Overwhelming is a good word to use. Someone started crying. Really, it was emotional. I don't think anyone could have been there without being affected, taking in what was said. (interview 8_OTH)

Beyond the concrete and theorised instances of relevance of emotions, overall, emotional charging works as a cross-function across conduits of learning, much like secrecy and informality. Interviewees provided descriptions of emotional perceptions of the crisis context[106], or how mutual emotional experiences during study visits helped with penetrating peer groups and building trust[107], not least with stakeholders, thereby building multi-level ties. In terms of "charging" as a governance or network management activity, interviewees involved with organising experiences such as visits on the ground were explicit in that this was indeed an intentional process and design feature of study visits to shatter instrumental, cognitive constraints of thinking.

6.7 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSITIONS AND THEIR INTERACTIONS

Summing up, an initial assessment of the role of conduits within the EIN by and large supports propositions developed from the literature. However, there are a number of delineations to be investigated further. This regards the process of how conduits unfold impact and interact both in an organic learning process versus (and jointly with) a purposively created situational setting.

[106] "The refugee arrivals, the [ministerial supervisory control] I coordinate with, it made us feel quite powerless, some frustration, you know." (Interview 25_OTH)

[107] "We would usually work side by side without many touchpoints (…) our countries are [quite] different. Going through that visit together gives you a bit of a discussion starter." (Interview 19_GOV)

In terms of *professional trust* (Section 6.2), propositions were by and large met. There is an overall instrumental orientation in interactions of policy professionals and interactions appear indeed to benefit from trust, consistency, and embeddedness in a network. Where this baseline of trust is deepened, it may indeed provide a foundation for paradigmatic forms of exchange, although in particular this influence neccessitates further exploration below.

Peer grouping (6.3) is one of the key network dynamics and a stratification process that plays out on a range of instrumental (performance, resources, isssue pressure) and paradigmatic (culture, heritage, language, political system) dimensions. While social and interactive pressure emerges in terms of instrumental orientation towards success cases, influence on paradigmatic learning appears less prevalent and rather as an extension of instrumental learning (i.e. specific instruments aligning with a specific paradigm or frame of thinking).

Informality (6.4) appears both as contributor to trust building while also benefitting from trusted preexisting ties of administrators. It thus meets the proposed expectation of enabled open instrumental exchange between peers where instrumental facts and formal success cases get complemented by real-life perspectives on challenges (incl. political ones). Beyond helping directly in instrumental learning, informality also serves the said social-interactive function of bringing up new trusted ties for all kind of more systemic discussions, too.

Stakeholder involvement (6.5) is a tightrope walk in terms of instrumental learning where administrators are not aligned on a beneficial degree of involving externals. However, what they do align on is a connecting function exercised by having stakeholders around both within the network and beyond, including domestic contexts. A paradigmatic learning function of bringing in stakeholders appears limited at this stage and might become more visible once digging deeper into new learning formats such as study visits.

Emotional charging (6.6) clearly appeared to play the proposed role and yet again, this role should become more visible once analysing study visit processes in detail below. Substitution heu-

ristics of exchanging factual information for experiences or more vivid stories appear to be prevalent both in terms of instrumental and paradigmatic learning. With emotional stimuli, deeper reflection and exchanges about policy failure and its implications appear to flow more easily between administrators.

In terms of the *crisis context* (6.1), it became clear that pressure to deliver increases. However, this varies across member states and is something to be explored further. As regards the crisis' influence on paradigmatic learning, rather than the proposed discrediting and unsettling function, coping and a return to existing paradigms was witnessed.

A number of important observations were made regarding the interaction of the developed propositions within an overarching process towards learning. Here, indeed the rough-cut expectation that professional trust and peer grouping are closely tied to and reenforcing each other can be confirmed. Peer groups are defined by a logic of trusted ties and the process of extending peer groups necessitates emergent professional trust amongst the involved actors. Likewise, belonging to a specific macro-level peer group (e.g. the Austria-Germany tandem) already establishes a baseline of trust regardless of the depth of personal ties. Alongside the conduit stakeholder involvement, professional trust and peer grouping are also amongst the more interactive conduits in which a micro-level dynamic plays out between actors.

Meanwhile, informality and emotional charging stand out as cross-cutting conduits, alongside the crisis context. They can rather be located at the scope-condition or structural enabling side of things and set the frame within which trust develops, peer groups form and operate, and stakeholders get involved. They provide the breeding ground on which the other conduits amplify and sustain potential learning more easily. Thus, not only do they unfold the above described direct learning influence but they extend for instance the degree of influence a stakeholder can exercise by emotionally charging her messages. Now, the ensuing chapter covers the creation of ideal-type situational practices that activate conduits. This is followed by two probes that connect the role of conduits and situational setting within an overall mechanism of learning.

7 SITUATIONAL FACILITATION OF LEARNING: ACTIVATING CONDUITS

While Chapter 6 explored the general mechanistic forces towards instrumental or paradigmatic learning, the present chapter focuses on the situational setting within which the transformational conduits are activated. While this may happen organically, there are likely significant opportunities to selectively orchestrate the conduits towards desired learning outcomes.

Two ideal-type practices have been proposed based on the literature (Section 3.3). Practices are understood as patterned and repeated interactions that are identifiable by participants (Pouliot 2015). The first type is platforming, defined as long-running engagement within a formalised network structure. This includes a multi-annual view on processes playing out and covers classical network meetings within a conference-style setting. This aligns with a broad range of theories on the EU as an orchestrator of exchange (Abbott et al. 2015; Nugent 1995; Padgett 2003; Radaelli 2000). The core proposition developed in Chapters 3 and 4 is that platforming activates the conduits professional trust and peer grouping to yield instrumental learning. Meanwhile professional trust is also activated to provide a foundation for paradigmatic learning. To what degree and how this activation connects with organically present conduits remains to be investigated.

The second ideal type is elevating. This emphasises breakouts from the platfom into accelerated and novel learning formats which primarily revolve around study visits on the ground. This is about more experiential processes moving beyond the formalised network structure and formal network membership. Hence, platform (i.e. core network) members are elevated and then iterate potential insights and newly established ties with other actors back to the network platform. This builds on theories of experimentalism and approaches of design-rational (re-)framing (Sabel and Zeitlin 2010; Schön and Rein 1994; van Hulst and Yanow 2016). The main propositions for elevating argue that in terms of instrumental learning, elevating first activates the conduits informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging. Secondly, once an elevating practice iterates back to the platform, the conduit peer grouping gets activated. Regarding paradigmatic learning, the conduits informality, stakeholder involvement, and again emotional charging are expectedly activated. Generally, I expect a close interaction of the instrumental and paradigmatic outcome

dimension when studying elevating. Overall, in how far but also how purposive the activation of conduits happens indeed is studied below.

The chapter proceeds first with an empirical investigation of platforming (7.1). Then a section on elevating (7.2) and a section on overarching learning outcomes (beyond the individual) ensue (7.3). Lastly, I bring the transformational conduits back in and discuss how they interact with the situational setting within an overarching process of soft governance and network-based learning (7.4). The sections are structured analytically rather than chronologically and aim at challenging and refining the propositions formulated above to arrive at a detailed path towards learning. Chapters 8 and 9 then serve as plausibility probes for this view.

7.1 PLATFORMING

Platforming is the first of two ideal-type, theorised practices that create a situational setting within which conduits of learning play out or are outright orchestrated. Platforming is concretely understood as the European Commission-run practice of providing an institutionalised, identifiable structure for exchange amongst administrators who are involved in integration policy in EU member states: the EIN and according regular interactions. This section moves through the managerial and content-level stages of creating and sustaining such a platform whilst laying out at what stages and to which level of purposiveness conduits are activated or organically come about. I expect platforming to associate primarily with the conduits professional trust and peer grouping. Subsection 7.1.1 will focus on the structural conditions for activating conduits while subsection 7.1.2 explores the activation within content-level learning instruments.

7.1.1 NETWORK MANAGEMENT AND BASELINE MOTIVATIONS

This subsection focuses on the basic structural and managerial features that define how the network operates or the agenda is set. It covers underlying motivations of member states, officials, and the EU-side for getting involved in networking in the first place – that is, where interests fall on the instrumental to paradigmatic learning continuum and whether in-between types or motivations play a role (e.g. political or symbolic purposes). The analysis starts with discussing actor activation and then moves through typical network management activities with a particular focus on how

they are carried out by whom (Commission and which actors at what stages). The conduits of learning are less relevant for this subsection but rather play out within the set structures and within concrete learning instruments (subsection 7.1.2).

Without the formal framework of an OMC or acting as a working group under the Council, the literature is sceptical how far non-hierarchical networking can take things already at the actor activation stage (Héritier and Rhodes 2011). Empirically though, EIN participation as horizontal management practice and hence a commitment to mutual learning is not perceived as giving away national turf. Interviewees were vocal regarding national dominion of integration, emphasising without prompt that "everyone knows article 79, paragraph 4 [description of competence under Lisbon]" (interview 11_GOV) and that "there is simply no legal basis to do more [for the Commission.] Whatever they do, it depends on the member states to follow or not" (interview 47_GOV). This implied a forward-looking constraint on potential EU involvement in domestic integration efforts and underlined the importance of Commission alignment with member states[108]. Nonetheless, network members described their perception of subtle European regulatory attempts and doubted the Commission's agnostic network management[109]. This tied in with some descriptions of lacking political trust in the EU. Others had a more positive stance[110]:

> When I was first sent to the meetings, I was already told 'be careful, the Commission has the intention to slowly influence our policies.' [But] we have an interest ourselves to listen to experiences (…) facilitated by the Commission and if we are not at least interested in that, then we have no place in the network. (interview 11_GOV)

This tends to happen in alignment of a member state's political stance with the EU and the representative on the ground. Content analysis showed a close link of states commonly depicted as EU-critical with representatives defending the national dominion regading any type of potential lessons to be learned. Interestingly, this did not imply that those interviewees were less vocal or more

[108] Commission actors also shared their reluctance to overstep this: "This network is for the member states and of the member states, [the Commission] is not trying to shape anything, it's about facilitating exchange." (interview 31_EU).

[109] "There is a tendency within the EU to want to regulate more. (…) It's very important to make clear and stand very firmly on that there is no directive (…). It's only information sharing." (interview 39_GOV)

[110] "For sure [the Commission has] ideas and an agenda, I'm not saying it's problematic (…) you can't just 'organise' or 'manage' and remain uninvolved." (interview 38_GOV). Upon relaunching the network, "all 28 member states agreed that integration is a policy of countries. It's a subsidiary approach. But we nevertheless understood that there is common sharing and learning." (interview 6_GOV)

critical in actual network interactions. Instead, they believed in finding solutions primarily at or for the national level.

> Member states have to take care [the Commission] doesn't take away anything, [in particular] if your country is politically (…) critical. There is some vanity and a lack of trust (…). Whether it's good or not, whether you believe it or not, it doesn't really matter if you are the formal representative (interview 48_GOV)

Thus, while not legally empowered in this context, the Commission is still seen as shaping trends and arguably setting the agenda in ways that need to be understood, influenced or mitigated by member states. This links back to broader lack of trust, even coming from rather advanced member states in terms of administrative capacities, funding, and integration experience[111]: "This is about a level playing field. It's crucial to know in advance and verify (…) where the EU is going and what my ministry is doing. If that is aligned to EU guidance" (interview 37_GOV). It is even more present when coming from member states with less resources committed to integration policy[112]. Besides learning about content-level priorities, this hints at attaining politically valuable, instrumental information.

> [The Commission is] reluctant to be very pushy as where to go, what to do, but I think they still have some ideas under the surface (…). And it matters to understand these. You don't want to be the odd one out when something happens or they make [a] political move. (interview 19_GOV)

This implied the presence of a sociological, rather than legal shadow of hierarchy (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013, 612). Interviews classified this non-traditional shadow as an almost institutionalised incentive structure through EU funding, particularly AMIF. While only one representative of an old and large EU member state highlighted that "it can be helpful to see where they [the Commission] wants to go, also talking about funding" (interview 37_GOV), this came up in most interviews with representatives from new and small member states. They raised the same concerns as above (being present matters), but with reference to funding and funding-scheme design[113].

[111] "The Commission [outlined] actions to follow through, so, the EIN is also about understanding what [concretely] the Commission wants and (…) whether our integration policy stands in line with this orientation." (interview 46_GOV)

[112] "Integration is very political and Brussels is very political, too. This is not within the network, (…) but the network is still at the core. Juncker came out with that Action Plan – which included the EIN. Which is us. So, they redefined, I mean not our goals or work, but still, we were part of that manoeuvre where they were like, 'we are in charge!'" (interview 48_GOV)

[113] Cf. "Being part of this network is crucial to make absolutely sure we are in line with what others are doing, how to do good integration policy. (…) This is [about] access to funding via AMIF funds. But also to get help with our programmes [from other member states.] They are more likely to work [with us], if we follow some standards" (interview 23_GOV). Or: "I expect that the

Hence, the Commission partly compensates legal limitations to regulate integration policy by an implicit conditionality of funding. This helps to activate actors, who might otherwise not feel the pressure to interact – either due to an EU-critical stance or low issue salience, i.e. low numbers of migrants. Making funding a shadow topic furthermore opened the door for civil society organisations to become active in member states as these often implement fundable projects (UNHCR/ ECRE 2018). Thus, eventual preference against EU involvement already shifts outside or alongside actual networking[114].

Another argument for engaging in networking concerns the power to define tasks and gain leverage back home[115]. This regards instrumental learning about political (and potentially symbolic) strategies but also happens more directly by using the EU as legitimacy provider at the national level (Carrera 2014; Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002). Interviewees certainly supported this. It was also connected to the shift from NCPI network to EIN, which received a strengthened mandate through the Commission's Action Plan, hence legitimacy as a relevant forum[116]:

> [The EIN move] looks like branding… it's still the same things, visits to NGOs, abroad, (…). But making it more formal and putting a European vision behind it, it became something different. If you look at the legal background, the Commission has the right to form these expert groups and it's more formal than the NCPI. (…) Now, you are becoming an expert for the Commission. It's really good for the respect you get for your work back home. (…) It helps in implementation of policies because you can go to your superiors, refer to this group. (interview 48_GOV)

Commission keeps supporting, stimulating and coordinating member state actions and policies, and I expect proposals for the next generation of financial programmes based on our needs and challenges." (interview 37_GOV) or "Why did we need that Action Plan? (…) There is a lot of money from the EU budget, maybe now they can do something with it, if you stay involved" (interview 48_GOV). Or: "We really want to tailor our programmes in ways that fit with available funding (…) There is a lot [of funding] available for the delivery level." (interview 38_GOV)

[114] "Different member states take different things from the network. When we [received] funding, that changed a lot. We could start organising conferences and that got also those with less funding opportunities involved (…) countries that had less of an issue with migration, the new member states in particular. (…) That funding (…) got them all back in." (interview 26_EU)

[115] There is another rationalist orientation towards network participation, where interdependencies are high, even soft rules tend to hit the ground, cf. Maggetti and Gilardi (2014). This does not appear crucial here: While "I want to know what's going on in [my neighbouring countries], just try to be as good, that's maybe the only competitive thought (…) But it's not like changing integration courses here or also labour market integration would make immigrants come here or make them go elsewhere" (interview 10_GOV). "There are some overlaps, sure. Our integration courses, language courses. We try to avoid huge differences [with neighbouring countries with the same language]. That saves work [in designing courses], sometimes, but it's not like we are waiting for our [neighbours]." (interview 24_GOV)

[116] "[We now have] more status (…) Making it more formal, stronger. I don't know if I have seen other effects. (…) Maybe more resources, more people working on it. But it's three or four people working on it in the Commission, so it's not a big team, still." (interview 44_GOV)

The above describes how leverage is created for institutions (*vis-à-vis* other ministries) and individuals (*vis-à-vis* superiors). Legitimacy provision further matters for domestic political leverage *vis-à-vis* the public. This is close to symbolic (substantiating, legitimising) uses of knowledge and according actor motivations as described by Boswell (2008b; 2009).

> It's not like [Council presidencies[117]] were trying to steer the integration governance, policy debate or policy continuity at the European level, but rather, they were seeking validation at the European level, for their existing national policies. [They] show that everyone is following their national approach. And these interests were very short term (…) without any follow up after the presidencies. (interview 27_OTH)

The accounts above mention administratively powerful member states (interview 27_OTH) and smaller ones with less migration experience (interviews 24_GOV, 48_GOV). The pattern seemingly focused on short-term political leverage for the former and technical arguments about specific integration programmes or achieving funding for the latter. Either way, this hints at a instrumental learning rationale, a motivation to achieve various concretely defined goals (instead of challenging goals themselves).

For active participation on the platform, the network's re-establishment in 2016 was univocally seen as a major step. This fits positive coordination as energising a mutual activity, bringing mutual goals to the forefront and following preferences for more interactive and politically important networking[118]. All interviewees were at least somewhat positive regarding their participation in the new EIN and most had a positive opinion. Joint values – despite functional diversity and differences – resonated throughout interviews:

> Do you know the [tale] about the Colibri, in a burning forest? (…) That little bird flies to the river, gets some drops of water to stop the fire, obviously not super-effective. Then there is a big bird, watching the Colibri and asks what he's doing, telling him that he won't stop the fire. And the Colibri is like, I know but I'm doing the best I can, I do my part. This is the EIN. I

[117] "Where discussions become more political, would be under the Council presidencies. You used to have a presidency expert workshop on integration, formally independent of the NCPI activities (…) when Sarkozy was trying to get national identity accepted as a valid topic for integration discussions (…) the Danes were also quite important back then, trying to get radicalisation and religion on the agenda (…) the Italian presidency with the re-confirmation of the [CBPs]." (interview 27_OTH)

[118] "We had to do something about this network. It's been great, but very technical with the handbooks [on integration]. I think we were lacking political salience in a way. (….) That's obviously changed." (interview 18_GOV). Or: "We have seen quite interesting changes in the network, in its measures and mostly in its strategy. [This] was really to ask the NCPI members [in 2015] 'what should the network become?' (…) I think there was this growing sense that the NCPI network, that somehow our mission was losing energy. [Now,] I think we moved from something that was quite bureaucratic work to something that is quite inspiring. (…) [Earlier,] I used to be in Brussels, (…) we made this 'tour de table' (…) speaking 5 minutes about what had been done the last six months and (…) the feeling was bitter-sweet. I was thinking, why can't we do this by Skype or by email." (interview 6_GOV)

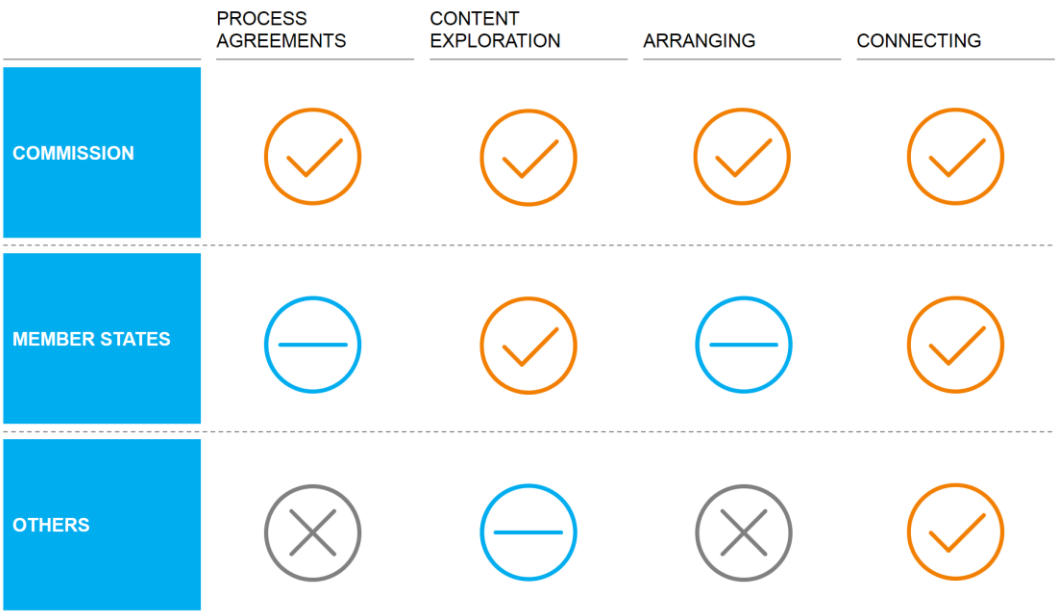
> think most of us are fully [invested] in the network and no matter whether you have 20 refugees or thousands, I believe, we, as administrators do our best here. (interview 24_GOV)

Moving beyond actor activation, structural and managerial activities are key to make network members interact effectively and efficiently. In line with Peters (2015), this emphasises that establishing a network structure alone is insufficient to drive outcomes; rather, leadership, management and ideas matter. Here, the Commission strategically extends a role that might be perceived as tedious and administrative. This includes the selective orchestration of third parties. Moreover, laying the foundations of the network with the chosen formats may activate specific conduits and thus spark specific types of learning and mitigate others. Beyond managerial aspects, this has political elements to it. There is some debate whether the Commission is a benign administrator or a strategic, political actor with a hidden agenda (Blauberger and Rittberger 2015b; Hooghe and Marks 2001). Similarly, the role structural network features play (Egeberg 1999a; 2007) in constraining or enabling opportunity structures, ideas, or leadership is debated.

Using the network management literature, orchestrating the platforming activities requires formal or informal managers or leading actors. Leadership can be defined as driving the network in a specific direction of joint problem solving or change (Edelenbos, Klijn, and Steijn 2011). For the EIN, the analysis revealed a threefold set of actors: the Commission, specific member states, and externals (service providers, experts, or NGOs), which fits theoretical expectations.

Using Edelenbos et al.'s (2011, 423) typology of network management extracted from the literature (Table 7 below), the Commission appears as unified actor and orchestrator. Meanwhile member states are only actively involved at specific touchpoints, namely content exploration and connecting, and remain passive regarding process agreements and arranging actions. Lastly, other actors fulfil a supporting function and only participate in connecting and surprisingly little in content exploration. Below, I move through these managerial dimensions one by one.

Table 7: Network Management Activities



Process Agreements

Process agreements define rules and ways of proceeding. While member states are involved, the Commission managerially shapes their degree of involvement. This includes defining specific interaction methods and types of meetings and workshops as well as outputs to be produced, only selectively requiring member state input. Interviews confirmed a passive stance across member states and their representatives:

> (…) [the Commission is] open to new ideas, but then, we don't have the time. They do. They do that full-time. We rather let them define the work plans, how sessions are run, like this new method… They do the preparations. That can be tedious (…) I prefer the policy side" (interview 14_GOV).

This implies that a range of conduits discussed above can – at least in theory – be set up by the Commission, for instance organising the network sessions in smaller groups that should ease trust building or bringing in stakeholders[119]. While process agreements matter, one needs to appreciate that the EIN does not take policy decisions, let alone binding ones. Therefore, formal rules on voting play a lesser role than in other networks and member states gladly grant the Commission leeway regarding instruments which are considered politically less intrusive.

[119] "[The Commission] has good ideas and did energise the network by the way we do the meetings. Tallinn was great. Small groups, whiteboard work, expert inputs, just [trying] out a few things." (interview 23_GOV)

An important process issue moving towards content exploration and thus concrete learning foci is setting the agenda. Again, it became apparent that the Commission drives the process, first, selecting among topics that are proposed from within the network and second, tailoring the topics in a practical manner towards more operational than legalistic discussions. However, concerning the first dimension, this is where some of the member states become alert and involved. Such uploading of topics and preferences into the network, quite clearly also for using the network to legitimise domestic practices, was present already in the old NCPI[120]. Participating in agenda setting implies pushing for ideas early on and long-running interactions with the Commission, not only when new work plans are discussed. While discussions about network priorities take place with the entire network, specific representatives stand out[121]: "The Commission clearly has an agenda (…). But some member states too. Some are just more visible than others" (interview 40_GOV).

Interviews revealed two patterns of involvement. First, mainly large member states with traditionally strong administrative systems and integration policy are considered influential regarding network priorities. Germany and its lead representative were explicitly mentioned several times – just like Denmark and the Netherlands for previous years. Second, due to personnel fluctuation in the network, not least on the Commission's side, those involved for a long time tend to influence the content and strategic orientation more intensively, which ties in with discussions of network embeddedness developing only over time. Sometimes, both dimensions overlap, making specific representatives highly trusted core figures for EIN orientation[122]. As those individuals co-define the learning agenda, conduits such as professional trust and peer grouping are clearly touched upon even before running an actual learning instrument.

[120] Carrera (2014, 176) saw the Netherlands as focal for politics of mimetics by network members. Mulcahy (2011) describes similar processes, while Boswell (2008b) discusses the logic of symbolic uses of knowledge in migration.

[121] "The agenda is from member states who have time and interest to express their needs on a topic." (interview 10_GOV)

[122] "Some colleagues have been around for a long time and they really use the network to visibly contribute their countries' approaches (…). It's helpful to have [a specific country] invested in what we do, even if they can't really learn something themselves." (interview 38_GOV) or "There are countries that are more into European-level cooperation than others. [Their representatives] are well connected (…) they want us all to stay up-to-date on what they do." (interview 44_GOV)

Nonetheless, the Commission stays in control of the agenda process (and thus of policy preferences being pushed or not) by purposively picking on core figures with aligned preferences to provide learning content, deducted from specific settings within these member states. This fits expectations for OMCs and similar practices (Radaelli 2000, 38) where the Commission's horizontal perspective on solutions allows a degree of control[123]. Content analysis clearly supported that all this happens mostly within the instrumental spectrum of learning motivations. While some paradigmatic alignment between the Commission and those member states involved early on is present (e.g. valuing multi-level or collaborative governance or the enablement of policy recipients), this primarily refers to policy practices rather than large scale systemic questions.

Content Exploration

For content exploration within a set of agreed platforming processes, member states but also third-sector actors matter. The Commission still arranges content frames and learning targets but follows technical-instrumental priorities that emerge from the members' side. Civil society or research has some influence as they can push ideas to country representatives or sometimes be present at network meetings. Concrete interests then get filtered, extended and framed, for instance, "we were covering integration contracts and that was something that I raised about a year ago, also others did that. [This was done] in the broader topic frame of cultural aspects" (interview 18_GOV). Here, some deeper learning aspirations are brought into instrumental learning, which underlines the conducive role of stakeholders in broadening perspectives.

Depending on topic expertise, the Commission uses contractors to prepare eventual workshops or content priorities. This was heavily done when the Migration Policy Group was supplying content and organisational skills required to run the network which contributed to "vertical" influence of the European level in member states' policy direction (Carrera 2014; Geddes and Scholten 2015; Mulcahy 2011). Again, the external actor broadened the horizon of ideas, becoming a conduit towards exploring additional instruments.

[123] Similar to regulatory orchestration, cf. Blauberger and Rittberger (2015a).

> [When] the handbooks on integration were drafted, it was the Migration Policy Group that was providing the methodology to arrange ideas and practices of the member states. It's not that the member states don't know what they are doing, but at times we lack the same comparative perspective. (interview 11_GOV)

This vertical push happened in alignment with the Commission and was in both cases rooted in a comparable horizontal perspective on member states. Both Commission and contractor could form content-level opinions (and assess their overall suitability) before involving the network. In this sense, "[the] Commission has various ideas at hand and can select what topic to put on the work programme" (interview 26_EU). However, some interviewees perceived the Commission as passive on the content side, even within its mandate[124]:

> The Commission should be [clearer] what they push as good integration policy. They are very careful telling countries what to do (…). If they do something about policies, it has to be in general terms, things that are quite obvious for anyone. Which sets the bar very low, making even the worst country's policy acceptable. (interview 44_GOV)

Even without practical outputs in recent years, the Commission appears to have a clear understanding that content exploration implies a focus on technical issues, which underscores the ambition to push knowledge-oriented instrumental learning. The Commission rejected a network-representative push to become more political (or even paradigmatic), which re-emphasised a high politics agenda route via the Council. During the first EIN meeting, this ended up in the official protocol[125]. In some interviews the wish for bringing in a policy-dimension resonated further[126].

> Some of the members have been missing the stronger policy side (…) The technical work can exist before or without the political work but it would probably over time risk to get less important and to gain less support because the added value of pursuing discussions at the EU level is (…) also about influencing European policy developments. (interview 11_GOV)

This is a critical balance to strike – while a range of member-state representatives described benefits from content-focused discussions and workshops, some of them claiming "whatever the topic,

[124] "We need better promotion of good practices (…) they have to be very concrete. You need to hear, see people, but we need contact with concrete projects and NGOs which usually do the projects. Also talk to social workers. Otherwise I cannot export a project, if I don't understand the details. Field visits are a first step." (interview 24_GOV)

[125] "Greece and Germany argued that an overall framework or policy document within which EIN activities operate is missing, and that EIN should shape policy. COM stressed the need to have expertise on what is working in Member States on integration and for MS to find out what works elsewhere. [COM director migration and mobility] explained that the policy framework is the Commission Action Plan on integration, while Council conclusions (…) set out a political vision. She encouraged EIN members to influence the discussion in the Council", cf. EIN (2016b).

[126] "We haven't had a ministerial level interaction since Zaragoza. The world of integration has drastically changed. And now we have this network and focus on technical cooperation again. There needs to be a political backing for all this (…) We'd want to see a minister-level gathering for sure." (interview 1_GOV)

we got to learn something" (interview 10_GOV), others see benefits mainly in political alignment or in informal interactions and exploring policy in one-on-ones with targeted colleagues. While the learning logic and motivations remain on the instrumental end, there is an apparent schism within these instrumental learning targets which is described below and stretches into strategic focus areas of the network and baseline content level definitions to work with[127].

Arranging

The above ties in with arranging, creating organisational setups within the platform EIN that are conducive for the EIN's goals. While the Commission involved member states in defining the network's priorities the actual arrangement of settings happens without member-state involvement, allegedly being "really about helping the member states and [facilitating] exchange" (interview 31_EU). This was confirmed by participants[128] and member states seemed passive, primarily providing feedback about the Commission's chosen approaches. This was described as "the nice thing about European-level cooperation. It's well prepared. [The Commission] really thinks these setups through" (interview 19_GOV). This underscores that the Commission has at least the opportunity to be "design rational" in pushing specific learning conduits via running for instance smaller, interactive groups (Scholten 2017).

The new mix of organisational setups was positively received and included re-arranged meetings in alternating countries, structured field visits, partnering in mutual learning pairs and smaller groups, and intensive breakout group sessions – many of these elements already foreshadowing elevating activities. Some interviewees with a longer perspective on the network perceived the Commission's shifted focus on new arrangements as a retreat of member states going hand in

[127] "I'm part of the meetings, (…) we have rather specific interests, so either we cover them or we don't. Then you go, grab those who are interesting in the coffee break. (…) My added value is mostly professional contacts (…) and more the informal conversations." (interview 39_GOV) or "It's a matter of definitions. For us (…) integration is not necessarily or exclusively about third-country-nationals. (…) We are talking EU citizens here. Or second, third-generation migrants. This is not a theme at the EU level although it is an issue for us. (…) That's a limitation and matter of strategy." (interview 40_GOV)

[128] "Tallinn was the first meeting with these new methods. The team of the Commission came up with this new (…) participatory approach, a lot of interactive discussions and small groups." (interview 15_GOV)

hand with a loss of content-level, scientific, or technical best-practice orientation – i.e. a shift away from a technical learning focus.

> The network is more like a platform. For needs-based, flexible activities. Before it was about building tools and infrastructure (…), it was more systematic and more about really learning and sharing. More conscious, how would you get the best experts (…). I think now it's more basic, focused on that platform where workshops are offered but the content is not strongly shaped. I'm not sure they have fully figured out their strategy. (interview 27_OTH)

While this sounds rather dismissive, it highlights a shift in the form of governance. With Commission and EU providing the infrastructure like funding, meeting logistics and actual platform (methods, participants, inputs), the Commission steps away from content development of meetings while still steering the process. This is both interesting for the EU, being in control without touching the sensitive policy content (and at most broadly framing content), and for member states, attaining access to a valuable platform. In terms of learning dynamics, it is a shift from directly taught instrumental lessons to indirectly facilitating learning via the platform. This includes political, symbolic, potentially also paradigmatic learning elements just by offering a long-term interaction and deliberation space. Interestingly, interviewees linked changed practices of arranging the platform with content exploration shifting beyond technicalities[129]. Lastly, practical aspects of organising study visits and the network were mentioned and positively attributed to the Commission[130].

Connecting

The platform should connect the right stakeholders with the network at the right time. If one takes the name of the original NCPIs seriously, contact points were primarily about providing a go-to point for domestic integration stakeholders and gateway into European-level circuits as well as a contact point for European-level actors interested in a national integration model. As outlined above, this involvement of externals is a crucial conduit towards instrumental learning and may help with attaining new paradigmatic perspectives – systemic experiences rather than facts about

[129] "[Having] the meetings in different member states [is] also an excuse to see the policies there and (…) also meet with NGOs, with programmes and that was also a simple way to [achieve] a more open agenda in terms of practices [being studied] and also showing local policies and perceptions." (interview 6_GOV) or "Overall, it's more practical now. In terms of content of the discussions but also from an organisational point of view. [It's] more focused, the right people are around and it happens at locations that make sense." (interview 40_GOV)

[130] "[It's] more coordinated (…) providing travel, a workplan, quite far ahead actually. It's really helpful to know the timing, dates. And also the topics, so you can really think about when and where you want to go" (interview 39_GOV) or "That allows you to combine a meeting with some individual programme, like a further study visit." (interview 32_GOV)

policy tools. This function was only partially fulfilled because it remained, as Carrera (2014) described it, obscure. In early 2018 this setup was still not strategically settled and while "[information is] not technically confidential, it's not reviewed for the public either" (interview 5_EU). There also seemed to be divergence within the network:

> I don't know [if secrecy is useful], we basically didn't make up our mind on that… be open, visible, connect civil society, that was a goal and then only recently the Website on Integration shows official contact details and still just the names (…) Getting everyone to agree, that's been a struggle before. (interview 32_GOV)

In 2019, email addresses have been added to contact points on the EIN webpage, underlining a slight shift towards more openness[131]. At the same time the self-perception of some network members differs, stating that they are "in the privileged position to be sitting in between [various actors]" (interview 24_GOV) or being "brokers, we connect people and ideas, within [our home country] and beyond at the European level, (…) make [information and contacts] available where they can be useful and where they could not be attained [otherwise]" (interview 28_GOV). This shows that the network is differentiated in how actively involved representatives can be and whether they locate themselves rather on the content-level exploration end (experts) or on the governance-managerial one (platform builders). The former ties in with professional trust as a conduit that is effective towards instrumental learning. The latter references stakeholder involvement which may bring in some paradigmatic spin. However, even platform-building oriented administrators empirically emphasised the instrumental side of motivations and learning dynamics (i.e. widen perspectives on policy tools via multi-level actors and stakeholders).

The Commission fills in for most connecting activities, covering for less active countries. Even where member states invite third-sector or local authorities to field visits or meetings, the Commission provides the setting. There appeared ambiguity among EIN members as to whether and how to involve externals, while the Commission had a coherent stance. Meanwhile, member states on their own would not always explore according connections. As one representative from a country with multiple responsible contact points emphasised, the network brings together actors

[131] Although email contacts still indicate formal representatives, not actual participants.

who would otherwise not know each other – sometimes despite, as in this extreme case, coming from the same country and from within the public sector: "That may sound crazy, but it's in the network where I could spend some time with [other network members and NGOs from my country], get to know them" (interview 7_GOV). This underlines how stakeholder involvement is activated as a conduit.

Network members agreed that a connecting function driven by the Commissio is helpful but that it depends when and how external actors get involved. Content analysis showed general agreement for study visits (i.e. elevating) in contrast to some hesitation and partly strong opposition for network meetings (a platforming activity), claiming that "[the ideal involvement of externals] depends [on] what you are aiming at. For the study trips, shake things up a bit, it's good, for workshops and internal, free discussions it's better without NGOs" (interview 48_GOV). This refers to maintaining a stable, trusted core network, the platform, and opening this only within a constrained zone of control or experimenting.

Summing up along the typical managerial stages in networking – process agreements, content exploration, arranging, and connecting – it became clear that the Commission's role as an operational owner of the network resonates beyond organisational duties. The Commission, despite relying on specific member states, has significant leeway to define the broader strategic outlook of the network and push specific agenda points (and theoretically could slow down others). Not least, the Commission controls how interactions, including those with external actors, take place (and hence how and when the according conduits get activated). This is the case not least because the member states, or their representatives, remain passive on issues that would imply tedious work. Yet, it is this operational work that also provides content-level leverage towards what is learned on an instrumental dimension.

7.1.2 CONTENT-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

Interviews emphasised four broad streams of where learning within the EIN is actively and directly tackled, all instruments being "so much more operative, not only talking, like before" (interview

46_GOV). The instruments include (1) *network meetings*, and (2) *supporting instruments* for gaining perspective around practices within the network and setting a content agenda. Both elements tie in with described structural establishment of a platform of learning and exchange, essentially allowing more instrumental, often technical overviews and setting a baseline for paradigmatic learning via, amongst others, constant engagement, finding common vocabularies or building trust, which facilitates gradual peer pressure towards particular practices. On this basis, (3) *study visits* take on a salient role and move into experiential and targeted learning while all these elements segue into (4) *bilateral cooperation*, which moves beyond continual platforming into "elevating".

For each instrument, processes of learning and in particular the selective activation of learning conduits as studied above are analysed. The first two, network meetings and supporting instruments are discussed here as part of platforming practices, the latter two, study visits and bilateral cooperation are covered as part of elevating processes (Section 7.2). While I do draw lines between these instruments, it is important to note that they interact with each other. One interviewee underlined a sequence of learning which starts with topic orientation and identification of relevant actors, taking place via network meetings and supporting instruments:

> Transfer processes [are] always a series of steps. [First,] what are the things that I'd look at (…) And then on that specific topic – who is doing something, what are they doing, what could be useful. For those two steps you need something like the handbook on integration or now the website on integration for self-study. The information is necessary for orientation. (interview 27_OTH)

The interviewee proceeds to emphasise bilateral cooperation and study visits, underlining the distinction between platforming and elevating and their iterative link.

> The next step is site visits, to know how it's really working. In practice and implementation. And you also have that commitment [by the host] to openness regarding potential transferability – and that's where site visits are really critical. (…) Visits without orienting yourself, (…) without a clear-cut structure, frankly, that's more professional tourism. If you are just going [and] haven't established any parameters [of] what a good practice would look like. (interview 27_OTH)

Network Meetings

Network meetings are the main activity for the complete network, happening 2-4 times a year. Matters range from strategy, to content exchange, or workshops including external inputs and limited site-visit-style interactions. Even though meetings take place in alternating member states and do have a stronger content agenda including exploring policies of the hosting member state, interviewees draw a line between study visits and network meetings. For the latter, "usually the full group is around. And we are mostly among us. That's helpful and problematic at the same time (…) more theoretical, you talk some politics. [Instead, site visits are] on the ground with that smaller group [and] much more interactive [and] concrete" (interview 18_GOV).

Still, even in a bigger group, by having a constant set of professionals coming together, prestige, recognition, or trust matter for how an orientation towards others in the network evolves (Gilad 2012; Klijn and Koppenjan 2015; Rhodes and Visser 2011, 108–9). This contributes to peer pressure or a soft provision of models and information, of naming those who perform best and incentivising others to shift by providing them with network-level recognition. This can also be framed as coordinative upward spiral of trust building towards improved achievement in networks (Klijn and Koppenjan 2012). It is an apparent activation of the conduit professional trust.

> [Meeting] regularly between the member states and the network, there is a certain and gradual peer pressure that influences your policies, the way you think around structuring and organising integration. (…) That is the whole point of the network. When we talk about the exchange of knowledge and experience, we are talking about letting ourselves [be] compared to our colleagues. (…) I call it peer influence, it has bigger impact perhaps than what the Commission's theory is. (interview 11_GOV)

As this account underscores, the mechanism might not fully be on the Commission's radar, although benchmarking and benchlearning is something they certainly think about (interview 5_EU) and the practices carried out hint at an active creation of pressure via implicit peer review (Eckert and Börzel 2012; Monar 2010; Sabel and Zeitlin 2010). While there are no classical commitment devices in play, such as OMC-style monitoring or targets and timetables, the discussion of best practices and guidelines for good policy may produce similar effects by pushing an according

discourse. Also, exploring joint resource acquisition within the EU's funding framework or constant debates about how to measure and use indicators contribute to the network understanding of what single members are up to. This can glue the network together and lead to a widening of mutual concerns and an understanding of others' motivations and capabilities, also political ones (Bartolini 2011, 11; Rhodes and Visser 2011). It became evident that this is indeed the case within the network although some stratification dynamics need to be considered when talking about for instance "peer review" – indeed, different peer groups are already forming at this stage and are the operational forces of what one may call social pressure (see section 6.3).

One interesting component of the meetings, which was recently and only partially abolished, concerned a so-called *tour de table* with every member state giving a brief update on recent integration developments. Coding showed this to be differently perceived, coming down to personal preference. Takeaways ranged from "loss of time" to new evidence for technical or political learning, to symbolic value by being part of a formal international forum. Some interviewees described detrimental peer pressure and comparative dynamics evolving via tendencies to show off for the protocol (e.g. interviews 30_GOV, 38_GOV)[132], others were positive:

> In the old days with the NCPIs we always had a 'tour de table'. Each member would give an overview about what's going on. That was a really good way to be aware of new tendencies in policy-making. (…) It was easy then to just go after that person, during the coffee break, [ask to] have a word, exchange some emails later on. That interaction and knowledge sharing is lacking a bit today. (interview 39_GOV)

Now, the discussions are increasingly more interactive and content-focused, which weakens the broad overview of technical topics but strengthens exchange towards political and symbolic elements of instrumental learning and likely some paradigmatic learning as well by easing deliberation within smaller groups of administrators, a move that underlines how trust benefits from working through orchestrated (in-/ or peer-) groups[133].

[132] "We do run this 'tour de table' and I find it really useful. Just go there, get a quick pitch on something they're running. Or just some information, they express their priorities. Often there is no time for questions, but then I just write a quick note, and (…) approach whoever I think said something." (interview 40_GOV) or "the 'tour the table' is incredibly boring sometimes. Mostly. But it's also how these international exchanges work (…) I see the benefits." (interview 44_GOV)

[133] "We now use informal working methods such as working in groups, making posters and running focus groups. It's more to the point [and] sparks debate." (interview 37_GOV)

> It's more than some re-branding. The methodologies and discussions changed. There are many workshops, participants really do participate in discussions. It's conducted in a more informal way. In the NCPIs it was always that plenary thing. (interview 46_GOV)

Network meetings are a protected space where this exchange happens freely and with clear problem-orientation, however, under the umbrella of a formal protocol and potential political shadow of the respective administration. This also aligns with above-mentioned repetitive discussions about indicators and has arguably both swift instrumental and longer-run social reflexive elements (e.g. gradually establishing a policy discourse or frame) (Lodge 2007). It also helps to develop and set peer pressure at the right levels, hence, instead of shaming via an indicator, open discussions around this indicator evolve, which is an elaborate form of technical learning with some reflexive components. Here, "[indicators,] numbers and outcomes are not [as] important as to talk about what numbers mean"[134] (interview 22_GOV). This aligns with approaches on the value of open debates about frames rather than facts (Scholten 2017; Schön and Rein 1994).

Another interviewee described detailed knowledge exchange taking place and the orientation to – within the group of administrators – discuss things thoroughly. This is actively prompted by the Commission handing groups small case studies to work with as a pedagogic approach (EIN 2017a)[135]. Meanwhile, symbolic aspects of learning certainly play a role strengthened by the political backing of the network. By travelling to regular network meetings, the network is charged with importance for participants and weight back home. Moreover, the network provides privileged information and contacts within a selected group of individuals. Both contribute to direct symbolic leverage, an important motivation for some participants.

Not least, network members receive constantly new clues about ideas that seem to be *en vogue* or to work across Europe or in allegedly well-performing member states. These clues on

[134] Full quote continues: "[To give one example from the] technical seminars, every [country] has to offer language courses. But we were digging deep inside this topic, what was the outcome, what was the problem, what is functioning, what is not functioning, why are students trying to avoid exams. Those are the practical things which are very important (…) In this field and as policy makers we are frightened to do new things, sometimes we find ourselves at the end of the blind road or where we couldn't go further, and we have to return back. And it's better for us to say it to others than to repeat it." (interview 22_GOV)

[135] "In Tallinn the meeting was on the integration of women in work and then differences across member states. You really talk how this works in member states, positive outcomes, negative ones, really thinking this through and how that matters for a European values discussion. We were then given some directions to discuss concrete cases, like high drop outs of integration courses, effects of that, what to do about it." (interview 46_GOV)

what could provide legitimacy are powerful knowledge (Boswell 2009; Gilardi and Radaelli 2012; Powell and DiMaggio 1991). While this is crucial for smaller or lagging member states that can have the bigger or more advanced ones as reference points, it matters also for other network members because they "stay up to date about the European discourse in integration (…) This is about where things are heading, trends, where others are going that your own government likes to see as good use cases" (interview 11_GOV). A similar logic applies to political elements of instrumental learning, where ideas on strategic political interactions can be used in other countries. This seemed to matter for various countries, for instance "forming an impression of the impact of immigration on the public debate in other member states" (interview 37_GOV).

Summing up, network meetings are conducive to instrumental learning processes, touching primarily upon political and partly symbolic dimensions. The platform character of regular interactions prepares deeper forms of deliberation and social exchange. In contrast, in meetings without a *tour de table*, instrumental learning focused on a purely technical dimension is no longer as prevalent. This is noteworthy because it implicitly shifts this *tour d'horizon* of integration policies to adjacent supporting learning instruments like the European Website on Integration (EWSI). Crucially, whatever the shape of instrumental learning, it is furthered primarily by activating trust-enhancing dynamics and structures in the network. While the operating logic between trust and learning is not explicitly recognised by the Commission, the orchestration is still highly purposive – building a trusted group is considered crucial for the network to fulfil its wider governance function (which clearly includes learning). There are also important elements of peer grouping interacting with professional trust. Specific pressures seem indeed to emerge primarily between specific groups of administrators and/or countries they represent.

Supporting Instruments

(Technology-based) supporting instruments can play a crucial role for information and coordination, in particular where targeting an instrumental-learning function. These instruments are often comparatively small communicative means to amplify or sustain core practices of networking.

Tamtik (2016, 9ff.) underlines gradual shifts through minor, communicative steps by the Commission that accumulate as a learning experience. Meanwhile, Torfing (2012, 13) notes, the "production and dissemination of new vocabularies, standards, and benchmarks" supports long-term behavioural change, a "discourse setting" argument shared also by Carrera (2014, 175) and in the present thesis theorised as part of the conduit "professional trust". While these tools would usually be discussed and agreed upon, they also end up in written form. In the past, this happened in Handbooks on Integration (EC 2004; 2007; 2010; Geddes and Scholten 2015)[136].

Today, all the above takes place on the EWSI as "direct continuity of the handbooks, as the same basic idea on a more appropriate platform" (interview 27_OTH). The Migration Policy Group (MPG) has been managing the content as expert screener of relevant practices in alignment with the Commission and the website ought to substitute best practice screening in a *tour de table* by offering a broad overview of topics for orientation[137]. This novel approach of narrowing down information was sharply rejected by interviewees who highlighted that the biggest benefit of the *tour de table* and EIN was to start with narrow experiences, and trusted, targeted pieces of advice[138], which aligned with political and symbolic side-information. This is evidence for the conduit professional trust and more generally a social dimension in instrumental learning.

> The EIN is obviously more helpful [than the EWSI]. You can call anything you like a best practice and advertise it online. How do I know whether this is right or wrong? How it works, what issues it has? (...) I need to see practices on the ground. That's when I pick up practices. There are literally hundreds of practices, I rather trust my own eyes and colleagues I've known for a long time. (…) They know the [usual] constraints and politics. (interview 22_GOV)

[136] "The NCPI network pre-dated the Handbooks on Integration, and those were actually two initiatives brought together by the Commission." (interview 27_OTH)

[137] The website is designed as stakeholder outreach tool and while this was meant to reduce the workload for NCPIs, they do not seem to fill the void. Cf.: "It's open to a wider community (…) regional, local authorities, NGOs, researchers. And it really takes some of the burden from the NCPIs. These are information contact points for the European Commission, originally. So, they actually would be the go-to place to get information. But this also created the workload to provide information as requested by the Commission. Now instead, you have country coordinators, who are experts, with the website [on integration] that take on part of that role. That really lightens [the NCPIs] workload and allows them to be conduits." (interview 27_OTH) or "there is very little contact between NCPIs and the website on integration. (…) I don't know of any transfer cases building on information seen on the website." (interview 49_OTH).

[138] "There is a word limit to make the website succinct and easily searchable. There is then obviously a lot of critique… can you really boil things down, evaluate, measure, put some hierarchy on projects." (interview 49_OTH)

Apart from content-level reasons, there were practical inconveniences with overlapping supporting tools and a lack of alignment between various DGs and even within DG Home[139]. To sum up, technical learning as a key element of the instrumental learning bracket is attempted to be covered increasingly via supporting tools like digital platforms and exchange. Interviewees did not perceive this as such and continue to seek technical clues in personal, trusted interactions. This shifts the focus back to network meetings, study visits and bilateral exchange.

7.1.3 DISCUSSION

There a number of important findings regarding both the baseline infrastructure and motivations for engaging in a network as well as regarding the activation of conduits and how these influence instrumental and paradigmatic learning (the latter primarily via establishing basic trust).

To start with, the provision of the network infrastructure including process agreements is necessary but not quite enough to ensure (instrumental) learning or learning as a governance function more generally. The Commission lays a structural foundation but then managerial aspects and leadership matter when arranging the network towards practices of exchange of contacts, information, and ideas – this is where the organic and partly purposive activation of conduits surfaces. From this perspective, the Commission is controlling all basic managerial activities – from process agreements, to exploring content, arranging and connecting. Edelenbos et al. (2011) emphasise that experienced managers would make use of this full set, enhancing the likelihood of reaching network goals. This supports Peters' (2015) claim that management, leadership, and ideas matter for network outcomes, here, the essential one being mutual learning.

The Commission visibly drives arranging towards a platform, while a few strongly invested member states' representatives join in on the platform. Here, they co-shape the institution they are

[139] "There was the idea of a webpage. But we didn't embrace it. (…) I don't even remember the last time I went [to EWSI.] When they established it, I supported the idea. But we have (…) too many similar webpages. (…) already [the EMN] had their own page. And then I was told, whenever you need to send information to all member states, like, how do refugee passports look like, you go through that [more established network's] platform. It's so overlapping. (…) And now DG Employment has also some stuff (…). It doesn't make any sense. I stick with the personal contacts to identify practices." (interview 47_GOV)

part of by driving content exploration of the network and connecting actors. Regarding the relevance of ideas or content for network orchestration, findings were ambiguous. It appears that the presence of NGOs or experts as transmitters of outside ideas serves primarily to shake up network members and make them interact. That is, they are more of a connecting and arranging support, hence a tool to sustain the platform EIN, than an influence for content exploration on the platform. This resembles a logic of intermediaries who are orchestrated to support the Commission's agenda (Blauberger and Rittberger 2015b). Hence, the conduit stakeholder involvement here plays out rather as a social function than on a content dimension of a direct instrumental extension of policy options being considered.

The impact appears to be threefold. (1) The involvement of external third parties keeps the network meaningful also for those who would not learn a lot anymore if insights were limited to member-state experiences, as they might get help in interpreting specific information differently or can start building further platforms. This aligns with a classical instrumental learning purpose as developed in the propositions above. (2) Regarding the latter, stakeholder involvement eases interactions of public and third sector and local level government within countries, thus, it truly supports a multi-level governance approach with a connecting function. This moves significantly beyond a content-level dimension that was theorerically anticipated. (3) Lastly, it helps the Commission to vertically inject new content-level thinking about integration approaches, hence pushing an agenda and arguably increasing isomorphic pressure (Geddes and Scholten 2015; Radaelli 2000). This is both about a direct content function as well as about "feeding" peer grouping and according dynamics.

On the last point, the Commission seems to use stakeholders and externals (e.g. contractors) as a proxy and stays formally at a distance from content-level discussions, therefore catering to its mandate but still exercising influence about what is being discussed. However, also regarding the first two points, the Commission is certainly not agnostic, and both elements bring ideas into the network, too. Interestingly, all three kinds of impact catered also to symbolic and political

knowledge motivations for member-state representatives. Being on the platform and receiving hints from the Commission and the third sector, be it content level insight, contacts, or privileged information, provides legitimacy and a source of signalling best-practice learning.

This speaks to the role of structure and platforming for shaping eventual ideas. Regarding process agreements and arranging network settings, the Commission takes the lead – or rather, member states have a passive stance leaving arguably administrative burdens to the Commission. By being involved with all managerial activities, the Commission is far more in control of the EIN than the formal network design would suggest. Interestingly, only a part of that control and hence also leeway to activate learning conduits seems to be purposefully used. Most interviewees were reluctant to claim that the Commission is pursuing a clear agenda. However, the Commission's role was a recurrent coding item, certainly not constrained to administrative tasks and filled with notions of hidden power.

The findings do not fit the classical multi-level governance expectation that the Commission, facing a lack of authority, would differentiate away from the member states and engage with the third sector to bring in authority and peer pressure (Hooghe and Marks 2001; Maggetti and Gilardi 2014). Here instead, the Commission stays close to the member states. Yet, despite the lack of legal power in integration policy and a benign appearance, the Commission finds itself in an elevated managerial role when compared to classical sources of state power (Lodge and Wegrich 2014): the Commission possesses privileged information and cross-cutting perspectives about EU political goals and activities, organisational assets to run the network, financial means to sustain the network operations and adjacent projects, and some oversight authority in the sense of having a comparative view on all member states.

The implicit sources of power allow political steering, supported by actors involved by the Commission in the first place and in this sense asserts the Commission's role even outside typical hierarchical or regulatory circuits (Blauberger and Rittberger 2015a; Sabel and Zeitlin 2010).

Overall, this provides an opportunity to support those initiatives on the platform that fit the Commission's idea of a best practice which includes the more general idea of pushing for best-practice, mutual learning as such. On the other hand, it enables member-state representatives to retrieve symbolic leverage and/ or learning from the network by helping to signal the importance of the network and using it as source of legitimacy (Boswell 2008b).

In terms of actual content-level work within this platforming stage, network meetings are a source of broad instrumental learning that also fits symbolic and political motivations of administrators. While instrumental aspects of policy are discussed, members also receive ideas about how these instruments are politically and symbolically embedded and perceived in other countries – a valuable information *vis-à-vis* their superiors. Nonetheless, meetings are the basis of the EIN as an information-exchange platform and therefore remain the go-to place when aiming at an overview of more technical ideas as well. Meeting comparable and favourably-perceived professionals face-to-face triggers slight peer pressure, adding to instrumental learning of best technical practices. This remains primarily about naming, instead of shaming. Technical learning is also covered by supporting tools like the EWSI. Instead of perceiving those as crucial, EIN members continually push their own work via personal interactions as a shortcut to attaining politically and symbolically useful technical information. This underlines that the EIN possesses a significant degree of interaction density (Lodge 2007) and matches expectations formulated for the conduits professional trust and peer grouping.

Overall, as expected, the platforming practice promotes instrumental learning and underscores quite some managerial discretion of the Commission in that regard. Yet, platforming also sets the stage for more reflexive forms of interactions launched and elevated from the platform that may yield paradigmatic learning. Various relationships (peer ties) and interaction-realities anticipate elevating (who manages what, who steers the network, who joins in when). Here, links of the Commission with specific member states and third parties are established. Moreover, on the

content dimension, specific discursive elements like an orientation towards Common Basic Principles or specific vocabularies like collaborative governance are gradually iterated amongst a group of embedded administrators on the platform, likely framing thinking in the long run.

7.2 ELEVATING

This section focuses on instruments used to enhance learning in a more accelerated and reflexive form, hence, processes elevating interactions from the platform. This is the second of two ideal-type situational settings theorised above. Just as for platforming, this is understood as a (at least to some degree) European Commission-driven activity that triggers or works through specific conduits, the main expected ones are informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging. Also peer grouping is expected to play a role where elevating iterates back to the platform.

Above, platforming was described, hence the structural environment for launching the elevating instruments. Beyond basic managerial activities, this included the content-level work taking place in (1) network meetings and (2) supporting instruments, both of which are about continual engagement, steady emergence of trust, broad content-level orientation and preparation for deeper and targeted forms of exchange. This elevating section now drills deeper into (3) study visits and (4) network side-stepping both of which are tied to the platform. In particular, side-stepping the network for instance in bi- or multilateral interactions and iterating back onto the platform is partly theorised but empirically emerged as more relevant. Here, elevating appears to compound networking effects of the platform by opening new ties or ties as gateways into further contexts or content, thus increasing the density of the network as such.

7.2.1 STUDY VISITS

Study visits are integral to the new EIN and positively described across interviewees. The Commission and its contractors take over organisational duties but also set out a content-level agenda and an overarching topic for each visit. The first main goal of the visits are information provision and model function, thus classical instrumental learning goals. This also covers political and symbolic learning motivations of administrators :

> Many of my colleagues were very impressed by this [study visit to] Sweden. This is really important, for politics (…). Because these good examples can mean power for us. Because we can see what's possible, what could be feasible, you can get support (…), you can really take that to your minister, he can take it to cabinet, argue with the finance guys. (interview 24_GOV)

Such learning opportunities trigger "a conscious decision to go, because you want insights on a specific topic, so it's really a good way to use your time effectively" (interview 39_GOV). That is, the instrumentally informed agenda acts as a filter for interested and committed members of the network, which hints at a higher propensity to be truly engaged in learning and open to exchange in this format.

At the same time, content remains closely tied to rather managerial aspects around policy delivery, rather than abstract policy design. This reiterates the Commission's strategic position, emphasising collaboration and coordination across various stakeholder groups. For instance, for the study visit to Sweden the topic was local-level implementation and cooperation across governance layers (public, private, third sector) (EIN 2017). For the study visit to Germany it was cross-departmental and cross-sectoral support for labour-market integration, whilst the visit to Portugal emphasised whole-of-government approaches, including one-stop-shops, and collaborative governance for improving cultural integration (EIN 2017c).

The focus hints at an attempt of treating instrumental learning holistically, embedded or framed within the Common Basic Principles (Council of the European Union 2004b), and at the same time furthering the rational updating of beliefs of representatives by "[showing] a full approach that works. How the different parts move together" (interview 25_OTH). In parallel, this approach boils down the topics (i.e. not running a broader study visit like "integration policy in Germany") to bring in relevant stakeholders who can provide concrete impeti regarding policy instruments and also really identify interested network members. On another dimension, the latter induces selection bias as it is more likely that member states or representatives interested in a certain visit also share a specific learning orientation, come from similar backgrounds, or face comparable challenges.

> Within the NCPI network, there was the need expressed by some member states, to not always do everything in the whole group of 28. Because some member states are more similar and could learn more in a smaller group. That's a real added-value of the EIN and the study visits. (interview 11_GOV)
>
> On our level of decision [making] these visits on the ground [are] really an inspiring model. If we just go to these networks, and we all tell we do this really well, and we are all champions (…) that's not as efficient as looking deep into the practices and to go to the places because everybody can tell a great story of failure. As we say, every fisherman says they got the biggest fish. [For a reliable view, you need to] go, see, look, smell, taste. (interview 6_GOV)

Hence, the underlying mechanism of the study visits is two-sided – first, providing evidence of policy that works (or not) for a pre- and partly self-selected peer group of member states and second, supporting this evidence on a more personal, even emotional level. The virtue of this second dimension, the conduit emotional charging, became apparent for instance during the Swedish study visit: the Commission and Swedish authorities arranged meetings with refugees sharing their experiences with the Swedish integration approach, including instances of failure. This raises interesting questions because the literature is ambivalent on whether failure or negative lesson drawing are helpful for improvements or avoidance of failure in other contexts (Bovens and 't Hart 2016; Howlett 2012). Making a small group interact within a condensed experience likely yielded learning beyond simple knowledge updates.

Running visits with smaller groups and mixing stakeholders with public-sector representatives likewise allowed more intensive discussions of observations and experiences[140]. It is also a clear breaking up of meetings of administrators prone to group-think and strongly overlapping policy frames. Yet, this break-up happens within a setting that remains a protected space, not a naming-and-shaming arena. In more formal interactions, interviewees were afraid of blame games[141]. Here, the study-visit experience, activating the conduit "informality", with the contribution of external participants, shifts structural foundations of learning. It provides a space for emotional relatability via directly visible policy effects and experiences. Ultimately, it might shake up long-standing identities of administrators or increase the perceived pressure to act, which in a next

[140] "They limited the number of participants. Only 10 member states and then civil society and implementation actors from these countries participate. It's much more, 'intimate'." (interview 24_GOV)

[141] Blame avoidance arguably being a prime desire of administrating, cf. Howlett (2012); Hood (2002).

step could push belief updating. This supports a notion of learning, or rather framing of a specific learning type, that might go unnoticed for a long time and only surface when a window of opportunity or an emotional reminder appears to the respective bureaucrat. Besides potential long-run effects, for all study visits, instances of (negative) lesson drawing based on concrete experiences were described[142]:

> I was astonished to hear these stories… if you see things from the perspective of the refugees there, how can you help them, eliminate some useless roadblocks. This is certainly something we took home and [the NGO representative present at the visit] and myself, we are exploring how we can support similar programmes. (interview 28_GOV)

This aligns to Gilardi and Radaelli's (2012, 4–5) view on instrumental learning as Bayesian updating "through evidence-based policy, including (…) success cases as cognitive shortcuts". It also hints at an interaction between *ratio* and *emotio*. There was some hesitation regarding the quality and accuracy of the information provided during the visits, allegedly "[feeling] a bit like an exposition (…) all nicely arranged" (interview 28_GOV). However, a situation of seeing "the truth, but for sure [not the] whole picture [is] ok, [to] focus on specific things to take away" (interview 45_OTH). Thus, it still allowed cognitive shortcuts:

> We need to deliver [back home] and of course we are aware that we can't copy straight up and certainly not a full system. I don't mind if we see a selection of successful programmes and then focus on the efficiency of these programmes. The more concrete something is, the easier is copying (…) and identifying the problems. (interview 23_GOV)

Besides concrete practices and detailed lesson drawing, many interviewees mentioned that they learned about the "approach", "system", "overall integration handling"[143]. While this might seem evident for the visit to Sweden, which explicitly focused on integration governance, this was also mentioned for the German visit.

> It made you think, why don't we listen [to refugees]. Sweden didn't. Then some of them really raised their voices. (…) Now they are running these [refugee-run integration] projects all over the country. It's a new paradigm. (Interview 38_GOV)

[142] "The basic idea is to avoid making the same mistakes over and over. Context is different but some member states are on a similar trajectory, just a bit ahead." (interview 12_GOV)

[143] E.g. 19_GOV, 23_GOV, 34_OTH; cf. "This may sound abstract (…), but I was impressed how [government, regions and NGOs] collaborate in Sweden, everyone is on the same page." (interview 24_GOV) or "It's an integrated approach and you could see that during the study visit. I was astonished by the dimensions. Huge administrative bodies, lots of private sector and NGO involvement. (…) They cooperate quite closely." (interview 45_OTH)

While all this is still about rational, operational learning, there are already hints at deeper and self-reflexive forms of paradigmatic learning and a framing of the rational elements in more systemic or strategic language and narratives (Scholten 2017). This resonated through notions of being impressed, shocked, astonished, feeling weird, or rhetorical questions in the interviews. This is not only about new evidence and a learning push by rationally convincing arguments. Rather, it concerns an understanding of the own identity within a respective integration system which points to the power of mixing informal exchange, emotional charging, and stakeholder involvement in a belief-updating process moving towards paradigms. Hence, it is about making sense of the overarching field of integration policy in a setting with a focus on how things happen. In this specific case, starting bottom-up, rather than focusing on isolated practices that are promoted top-down.

> Policy makers sometimes wonder why they offer a programme, design that programme, say, where they just meet refugees to help them with something, some counselling. Then no one shows up and they get angry, the programme failed… Maybe they should have asked the refugees to start with. They could have told, yes, sure, 'I'm going to be there'… or 'what the heck is that?'. The study visit [to] Sweden really shifted some of these mindsets. They would ask refugees now. (interview 8_OTH)

One may argue that this "would if" construction is a contingent and a vague form of learning, yet it regards deeper frames of positioning oneself in an environment and making sense of the challenges at hand (van Hulst and Yanow 2016). The constellations of the Portuguese and Swedish study visit experience describe this form of social interaction and frame reflection in detail. The interview extracts below are discussed in Chapters 8 and particularly 9, but it is important to note that they underline normative leaps (what *should* be possible[144]) and situational judgement in a reframing process triggered by a novel type of interaction with administrators and stakeholders, crucially including policy recipients.

For some administrators this was indeed the first time they experienced an interaction like that and the organising team[145] actively designed (Scholten 2017, 348–49) the visit to create surprising yet relatable experiences within a small, trusted setup. Interviews accordingly described

[144] But also, what "could be" in terms of narratives about e.g. refugees (what are they capable of).

[145] Local team, hosting member-state representatives, Commission.

relatable situations and personal encounters. The difference to descriptions about formal EIN interactions in Brussels was notable in terms of detail, reflection, and even vocabulary[146], which underscores the expected role of activated conduits.

> The main thing is that we let them meet the refugees directly. Those people sitting in Bruxelles or in their countries, who have no contact and they are deciding about integration policies in Europe, we had them sit with the refugees. (…) For like one hour, it's a power shift. The refugees were asking questions and demanding but it was a very peaceful mix. (Interview 13_OTH)
>
> This whole experience makes you calibrate and challenge yourself, we don't have the money that's out there in Sweden, but Portugal hasn't [either] but can deliver some of the good things as well. (Interview 19_GOV)

Lastly, study visits also play a role for providing participants with some political leverage. This leverage gets further extended by working with concrete, illustrative cases and using them to reframe policy discourse. While "[we] don't make decisions in the EIN, (…) we can influence politics, politicians [and] use the network as leverage back home, communicating with my minister or my administration [or] when confronting NGOs" (interview 24_GOV).

7.2.2 NETWORK SIDE-STEPPING

Network side-stepping in small sub-groups or bilaterally is the last instrument elevated from the platform. It is a partial outcome of the first three modes (meetings, supporting instruments, study visits) and is focused on instrumental learning and deep knowledge-oriented explorations of topics that move beyond EIN mandate and Commission facilitation. Moreover, it is a social component of networking given that any side stepping has potential repercussions once returning to the platform. Per definition, this ties in with peer grouping described in section 6.3.

> Effects of the network, it's hard to say, because a lot of things get initiated [in the network] and are then taken forward by groups of two or three member states. There is no way to know what they are doing, whether these initiatives succeed. (…) Sometimes, you hear about things, but it's really up to the member states to use the network the way they want. (interview 21_EU)

While the network provides a common platform to interact and develop ties over time, member states obviously come from different integration policy paradigms and are at different stages in

[146] More feeling-oriented and more hesitant (I think, I believe, I guess). E.g. "I was [sitting down with refugee students] right across, pushing me, not me personally but just raising all the obstacles they have to face (…) we talked about it that night [me and a colleague], you just don't want to hear that, probably, [and] you don't expect it." (interview 12_GOV) or "Many of the participants told me, that they hadn't thought that the refugees (…) could organise their own activities." (Interview 14_GOV)

terms of their integration policy proficiency[147]. Essentially, this is about leading and lagging, arguably a catalyst of isomorphic pressures (Stone 2004). This may trigger comparative or competitive dynamics within and across leaders and laggards and may bring some member states closer together for moving forward, thus a leader gatekeeping for a group of close followers or laggards. For comparative dynamics, member states perceive a clear hierarchy of performance even without "[formal benchmarking] we are aware of who is doing well. Sweden and Germany and now Portugal (…), the Netherlands" (interview 14_GOV). There were several comments made on "coalitions of the willing" or intensified work with more active member states (e.g. interviews 1_GOV, 12_GOV, 26_EU)[148].

> [Exchange during EIN meetings is] not necessarily the best use of your time (…) That's where these 'coalition of the willing' thoughts come from. Some countries move faster. I'm not even talking about different points of departure (…) at least keeping the same pace. So, there is some side-stepping the network, but whatever is done is also made available to the network. (interview 25_OTH)
>
> [My home country] has for a number of years been a first mover (…). A lot of the things debated in the network, like whether integration contracts are a good idea – well, we have had that for so many years. The whole discussion, where other countries just start to move in that direction. (…) We come from very different backgrounds (…) It can be an interesting intellectual debate. But whether it gives me added value (…), that is still lacking. (interview 39_GOV)

Interviewee 39_GOV then continued to describe the value of professional contacts with similarly advanced member states[149], before laying out that even this group was forming only over the years to reach a level where member states could make real use of observed practices[150]. Professional trust as a learning conduit and according network embeddednes resonates in that account. However, some interviewees reported a less functionalist interaction logic, even randomness, paired

[147] E.g. levels of expertise and administrative resources invested in integration.

[148] Some countries are further along the road of New Public Management, shifting towards post-NPM collaborative governance and refining practices trough bi- or tri-lateral exchanges on technical matters (e.g. managing welcome centres, analysing ID data). Countries mentioned include Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Austria, and Norway. Interestingly, a misfit with the UK was mentioned – although administratively advanced, the stance on migration departs from other countries. The same increasingly applies to Denmark.

[149] The Scandinavian countries have for instance an institutionalised network (Nordic co-operation on integration of refugees and immigrants) to run parallel exchange. This cooperation works on the same goals as the EIN and was launched in 2015 bringing together culturally close and administratively advanced countries.

[150] "Those who listen to us, and share some views, they also are inspired by what we do (…) We had some ground-breaking legislation in the 90s already. We were standing alone on this for quite some time, but then, when I talk about our way of doing integration policy, some countries are more like-minded (…). Also, over years, working internationally on migration and integration you can see how they have changed from being reluctant to being like, well, that's something we should explore. (…) with [these countries], you do have a long-standing relationship and close connection (…) It's [also] a question of personalities, but then it's driven by the similar stance on a policy perspective (…) just [more] natural to take up a conversation." (interview 39_GOV)

with personal openness, which provides another example of the role a relatively simple provision of a European-level platform structure and opportunity to interact can play for socialising actors into European exchange and framing issues as European (Checkel 2003; Schön and Rein 1994). This supports the analytical focus on the micro-level and hints at potentially paradigmatic reach of social interactions.

> In Brussels we are placed in alphabetical order, there is not so much more connecting our countries. So, [us] and [them], we are still always side by side… for many years and we have developed a very close relationship (…). And when we started to share some things [we] told them to come and see by themselves. (interview 6_GOV)
>
> You know many people through the EIN (…) Then you keep the conversations going with whom you get along, your countries get along. (interview 44_GOV)

Coming from what would be considered an advanced member state, the same interviewee explicitly saw value in teaching and gaining perspective but also emphasised difficulties as "[lacking comparability] keeps us busy in the department and me up at night. (…) Should we only be part where we can learn, or should we also be around where we can teach?"[151].

Overall, several member-state representatives argued that the EIN led them to initiate a relationship in the first place and to find paradigmatic alignment on a policy dimension and personal alignment in the sense of a trusted interaction[152]. Study visits were considered crucial for building ties with actors beyond the typical peer group and contacts within the standard conference settings. These new ties were then described to be continuously developed both back "on the platform" and completely outside the network[153]. This describes a crucial logic in terms of network density, a factor commonly acknowledged to contribute to mutual exchange and coordinative dynamics (Eg-

[151] The interviewee details that "when it comes to concrete policies, for us, it has not been that useful (…), but it has been very useful to understand the political situation in other countries (…) It gives perspective on [our own] policies and situation. But to learn… no. [When] Poland talks about having five asylum seekers in a specific programme, it's so different, it's really difficult to learn (…) It is necessary to have that cooperation even with countries that are not that similar, but obviously the extent to which this happens, maybe it should not be that much. This is also why we do quite a few things bilaterally." (interview 44_GOV)

[152] "We got a study visit by our Polish friends, that's actually something the Commission doesn't know – the networking is alive, by itself. And that's something that's just happening because we get in contact with each other (…) Next, I go to Estonia and I just write to my contact and they'll also do a study tour here. A lot of things [happen] outside the scope of the network." (interview 6_GOV)

[153] "[At the EIN meetings] we [are sitting] with the usual colleagues, (…) I'm placed next to [country a] and you build some connection. (…) You also talk to others of course [but] the study visit really makes you interact with others [who] are also there (…) you really have a chance to talk and find out about other views." (interview 19_GOV)

eberg 2007; Kadushin 2012; Lodge 2007): with additional ties, network effects are amplified, potentially even compounded, if specific member state representatives are re-shuffled via the platform breakouts and connect formerly distant dyads, each with their own connections (see subsection 6.3 for gatewaying dynamics and learning in peer groups). Potentially, such re-shifting of an underlying structure can become the grounding for a frame about mutual exchange and consideration by itself (Schön and Rein 1994).

In other instances, bilateral contacts were described to pre-date network interactions. In either way, it is a mode of interaction that creates significant traction for direct and deliberative learning as well as exchange and cooperation besides the network as it frees actors who engage in it of several constraints and scrutiny. Interviewees described this as "Brussels experience", another example of socialisation and an identity marker (Checkel 2003).

> Beyond only participating in meetings in the National Contact Points, we also organised bilateral studies. But I think that was always an offspring of the work in the network, that whenever states identify something that they thought, ah, here's an interesting experience in another member state, that could possibly be applied or that we could allow ourselves to re-apply, then there was also bilateral exchanges. (interview 11_GOV)

Bilaterally, exploration of diversity can really start. Failure, for instance, becomes acceptable because of a trusted, less exposed relationship and even solidarity given the complex topic[154]. This follows a similar logic of informality as a conduit in the broader network setting. In line with experimentalism and depicting the diverse EU as a "machine for learning" (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008, 276), some actors move into controllable and strategic uncertainty, actively producing doubt and testing a solution (Peters 2015, 135). This is what Portugal has been doing with the one-stop-shop and what the EU financially supports. This may even be interpreted as a reflexive paradigm shift moving beyond instrumental learning as within a trusted interaction, administrators may move

[154] Some interviewees were ambiguous on where to learn from and pointed out how differences might enhance innovating in integration. The complexity of the policy area was also described as source of building solidarity beyond alleged differences: "If I have questions, it's more about contents, the programmes, rather than people or where they are from. What I learned is that it doesn't really matter whether a country has a history of immigrant integration or not. A country might have an advantage from some point of view but then, you can still learn about specific things. There is no perfection. (…) A small country, less migrants, they might be able to innovate things, try out something (…) Problems are the same wherever you go, it's a bit like cooking, you sometimes have to be creative. If a country does not have all the ingredients they need to be more creative." (interview 48_GOV)

beyond the *façade* of a policy and consider the underlying general approach. Other interviewees confirmed that…

> (…) when we partner up we can get more detailed insights and really get down to problems, things that don't work. (…) I wouldn't call it risk-taking, but it's certainly about exploring some ideas together, new approaches. Also, because you can get funding for mutual learning activities. (interview 22_GOV)

When it comes to comparative dynamics emerging from the leaders-laggards setup, a misfit between European and domestic arrangements is a potential driver for Europeanisation (Radaelli 2000). This seems to be confirmed here. CEE countries are surprisingly strongly engaged in the network, trying to catch up and prove their commitment to EU interactions[155]. Commonly seen as laggards only strengthens a desire to keep up by being highly engaged. However, they still face difficulty in learning from leaders[156]. As an interesting effect of this, an interviewee elaborated on how being involved in the European arena and having the opportunity to attain funding incentivised them to introduce a target group that was not considered crucial[157]. While this might work at single instances, there are substantial barriers.

Overall, problems of following leaders are commonly tackled in a staged process: one example is Portugal as the gateway of advanced, Commission-supported initiatives into comparative leaders in CEE which then act as gateways towards comparative laggards in CEE. In line with experimentalism, from a practical perspective, heterogeneity also allows testing ideas in a delineated laboratory (Sabel and Zeitlin 2010). Subsequent applications via a staged process and gateways fit this idea of recursive refinement for specific contexts[158]. The Commission is currently

[155] "Eastern European countries, from the beginning were very interested [and] had to catch up to European standards and understand what's going on in Brussels, even if [integration and migration] wasn't a real topic for them." (interview 26_EU)

[156] "We are a small country, our integration is really centralised, we don't have regions, no real local entities. The ministry makes the policy, runs the programmes which are then co-financed by the EU funds and local authorities or NGOs on the ground can (…) implement them. (…) Frankly, there is no similarity with Germany. There might be with some federal state (…). Numbers are different, politics is, the administration." (interview 47_GOV)

[157] "Around 2007 the European Integration Fund was kind of a good EU push. Only with that, we started to think about Third Country Nationals, (…) target groups. Refugees were covered but [TCNs previously] weren't an issue for us" (interview 47_GOV)

[158] As regards interdependencies, commonly described as making soft governance effective, e.g. Maggetti and Gilardi (2014); van Boetzelaer and Princen (2012), this is described with a value-loaded notion of solidarity and joint discovery: "Integration is a difficult issue on many different levels. And as network members there is (…) solidarity between us, because it is not an easy topic. (…) And even though the contexts [member state backgrounds] are different, we have this diversity which sometimes helps innovation (…) it's empowering. It's about doing something and seeing a meaning in it. Sometimes you (…) have an idea yourself and discard it, but then you (…) see how that idea may have a meaning [elsewhere] (…) We had for instance the topic of digitizing integration services [with] many member states with an interest in that topic and then we just ran a pilot." (interview 40_GOV)

setting up further partnering schemes to enhance and – importantly – fund bilateral initiatives. This is relevant for smaller member states as it would provide them with an access point to bigger, more advanced actors. Overall, this "discussing joint proposals with some of the other member states (…) really gives the network another dimension, another dynamic" (interview 38_GOV). For this group, the Commission's support resembles an implicit steering towards cooperation and coordination and an activation of the peer grouping conduit.

However, also within the group of allegedly more advanced member states, interviewees described significant instances of side-stepping the network and moving bilaterally or in smaller mutual-learning, research and exploration groups. Here, they commonly moved deeper into vertical levels of domestic integration spaces, involving researchers as well as regional or local actors. This is something taking place without significant Commission involvement although some interviewees said they would "update the Commission on findings" (interview 1_GOV). Lastly, overall, interviews showed that bilateral contacts, often within peer groups, were the standard operating procedure for every single member state and not limited to specific groups of countries, or the EIN – yet nonetheless something the network further enhanced.

7.2.3 DISCUSSION

Instruments around elevating from the platform showed both links to instrumental and paradigmatic learning via a broad range of activated conduits. This fits a theoretical perspective too: going to the field and seeing how things work on the ground is as close as the network gets to experimentalist governance, which is about sticky and comprehensive experiences (i.e. playing several conduits) and an instrumental exploration while also supporting deeper self-reflection for subsequently improved steering (i.e. a paradigmatic element). Furthermore, exploring specific practices in a confined context and using the diversity of the network to try out different tools, like integration programme delivery approaches in different contexts, fits experimentalism (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008). Field visits are also a soft instrument to wield governance and mainly about "information provision, monitoring and model function" (Héritier and Rhodes 2011, 168–70). These properties

fit the instrumental side of learning processes and may tie in with paradigmatic thoughts as well, once considering models holistically.

The most notable distinction from platforming concerns aspects around deeper frame reflection once engaging with a model on the ground and in a relatable and inter-personal setting (van Hulst and Yanow 2016). This ties in with ideas around persuasion and emotional amplification of learning as shaping functional perceptions (Checkel 2003). The logic was confirmed to be an accelerated process of engaging with oneself and others instead of formally exchanging information and ideas. These mutual experiences were described as having contributed to breaking up peer groups, formal seating orders and the like, thereby creating opportunities to engage with other actors also once returning from an elevating breakout to the platform EIN. This may compound network effects, in particular network density and thus effectiveness and efficiency of any kind of "flow" (Kadushin 2012, 8–9), such as information or a contact, within the network.

It is hence an activated, very comprehensive range of conduits in interplay with each other creating a denser network and amplified experience (all of informality, stakeholder involvement, peer groups, professional trust, and emotional charging arguably matter). This happens in a short time frame that seems to be the necessary breeding ground for this charged-up learning experience. As expected, updated beliefs and newly established social interactions (i.e. peer groups) are then iterated to the platform. The Commission brings design-rationality into these experiences. While the purposiveness of creating paradigmatic impact can be questioned based on the analysed data, activating the mentioned conduits towards instrumental learning and being aware of their potential effects on individual administrators appears to be the case. However, as will be explored in the probes, how deep some conduits cut, how they interact, and how they develop a self-sustaining social dynamic certainly goes beyond the Commission's planning.

Several instances of side stepping or moving on beyond the network were described as rooted in these novel interactions as well as a purposefully designed trust-building experience stretching onto the platform (Scholten 2017, 348–49). The Commission actively supports these dynamics,

which matter for governance in the sense of exerting a steering function without being directly involved in what member states do amongst each other. The logic appeared particularly prevalent amongst smaller member states or those less advanced in integration policy, whilst alleged high performers tend to team up and push specific – often knowledge-oriented – initiatives that move beyond the network's constrained mission. This appears significantly more self-sustaining as new social ties, developed in a "high pressure" environment are explored further.

7.3 EFFECTS OF EIN-LEVEL FACILITATED LEARNING BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

This section discusses how situationally activated conduits yield concrete learning outcomes. This is about additional evidence for specific types of learning beyond the individual layer (which remains the focus of this thesis). As discussed, this study does not focus on policy transfer, diffusion or policy implementation[159]. Yet, this is not to say that network outputs and network influence on how its members describe to behave outside the EIN should be dismissed. This section accordingly moves through interviewees describing how they see their network interactions and individual learning depth and breadth mirrored domestically and transnationally and what behavioural intentions or actual behaviour followed upon individual belief updates.

As anticipated, the main impact of learning in the EIN appears at the individual layer which aligns with previous studies. Arguably, such individual belief updates focus on spreading vocabularies and thinking beyond the EIN, thereby easing subsequent European alignment in styles of running and discussing integration policy. This influence is indirect and faces significant barriers at the individual (Levy 1994) and institutional level (Dunlop and Radaelli 2018b; Vagionaki 2018). Further impact varies across member states but shows some patterns.

Interviewee answers regarding network effects were a broad mix of topics, therefore this subsection uses an indicator-based view (Table 6 below) as basis for coding learning effects beyond the individual[160]. Despite the above constraints, network effects obviously matter from a

[159] While a goal here is to identify diffusion, I emphasise the "how" and "why" of learning, treating evidence on the outcomes as supportive for the overall process analysis.

[160] This thesis assumes that behavioural intentions can best be captured where relating to the work reality of administrators. An according operationalisation disaggregates transfer objects with a focus on organisational-administrative variables that concern

policy-making perspective and are something currently not well understood by the Commission and researchers, claiming that they would "like to start an analysis of best practices and understand how through European cooperation they ended up moving from one country to another" (interview 27_OTH) or having "a scoreboard of transfers, some real benchmark [being] a dream [and] long-term ambition" (interview 5_EU).

Table 8: Learning Indicators beyond the Individual

CAPABILITIES	STYLE	STRUCTURE
Strategic ability (goal formulation and translation, execution approaches, stakeholder involvement)	Procedures (de jure and de facto, including e.g. performance management/ measures)	Organisational structures (macro new/ changed institutions, meso new/ changed organisational units, lines-and-boxes)
Expertise/ knowledge (depth and breadth of formal qualifications, experiential knowledge)	Interaction patterns (informal people management and co-operation/ coordination across units within the administration and beyond)	Resources (staffing/ official HR and financial budgeting)
Analytic power (e.g. computing, ad hoc involvement of experts)	Leadership (e.g. hierarchical vs. team focused, indicator driven vs. soft)	Infrastructure (e.g. buildings and ICT)
	Organisational culture (views on acceptable coping, broad world views, values)	

Source: own categorisation based on literature reviewed in subsection 2.2.3.; Darker shade = higher frequency and intensity of effects

As apparent from Table 8 above, stylistic and capability effects are primary domestic outcomes of network learning, while there was limited evidence for structural change. Most effects are related to improving policy delivery and according managerial approaches and strategies, with only limited hints at political policy-making. Rather, where the EIN influenced legalistic discussions these focus on practical feasibility and implementation. Here, "I never really picked up real policies, like legislations. It's rather smaller projects and how to do them" (interview 47_GOV). Most interviewees would talk about direct outcomes of the process first, such as "having a contact" or "knowing about something", and were then prompted to provide examples of what this segued into, for example, testing a specific policy. Most examples originated from multiple causes with governments exploring options through various channels, including the EIN.

primarily policy management. Here, authors emphasise structural change, e.g. Lægreid, Steinthorsson, and Thorhallsson (2004); Rhodes and Visser (2011), others stylistic change including cultural aspects that constrain rationality, e.g. Hood (2000, 9), others again capabilities, e.g. van de Walle et al. (2016), or a mix, e.g. Pollitt (2016); Knill (2001).

Whilst the above and qualitative information below focus on content-level learning outcomes, Table 9 below describes how government actors transferred content into their institutions or to other actors. The table shows coding frequencies of taking different degrees of action. Data is disaggregated by peer groups and pure counting data, some interviewees did simply not address all items or take a clear stance[161]. This nonetheless provides some illustrative evidence:

1. It supports the above claim that real, observable change is several layers removed from individuals in the network, i.e. their impact is indirect, at best and the impact of learning in the network thus at least two loops removed from triggering change.
2. It supports the intuition that representatives of advanced bureaucracies (Groups 1, 2) are farther removed from implementation, hence primarily providing superiors or stakeholders contacts and information instead of acting themselves. This should hint also at a lower relevance of paradigmatic thought which is much harder to brief superiors on.
3. There tends to be an obvious positive correlation between the strength of responsibility for policy delivery, usually associated with formal rank of an individual and the degree of action-orientation[162] - in smaller member states this is particularly prevalent.

Table 9: Intensities of Acting

		WROTE NOTE/ REPORT (PASSIVE)	*INFO PROVISION OR CONTACT FACILITATION (ACTIVE)*	*ACTED (DIRECTLY AND PERSONALLY)*
CODING FREQUENCY (# of interviewees)	*Group 1*	7	8	1
	Group 2	4	3	2
	Group 3	9	5	3
	Group 4	5	4	1
	Group 5	4	3	1
	Σ	29	22	8

Source: own analysis based on interview data

[161] Group 1: AUS, DE, DK, FIN, IRE, NL, SWE; Group 2: BEL, FR, LUX; Group 3: CZ, EST, HR, LV, LIT, POL, POR, SK, SL; Group 4: GRE, ESP, IT, HUN; Group 5: BUL, CYP, ICE, MAL, NOR, ROM, UK

[162] Data not shown due to anonymity concerns.

Combining indicative insights of the two Tables 8 and 9, one can imagine them as two funnels narrowing down towards more complexity at the right-hand side. For Table 8, capabilities are more easily influenced or changed than styles and structures. Linking into the learning literature, they are technical in nature while styles or structures should also require some degree of deeper, paradigmatic updating. For Table 9, the same stepwise logic applies. Drafting a note is easier than "really" acting. Thus, the EIN's impact focuses on capabilities and style of policy delivery.

7.3.1 CAPABILITIES

Concerning capabilities, the EIN was playing the role originally imagined for – being an exchange platform for information and contacts to leverage instrumental, mostly even technical learning. In contrast to structure and style, capabilities are also direct outcomes of networking. It is therefore no surprise that the biggest effects of the network were visible in building knowledge. Moreover, contributions to strategy formulation or policy formulation played a significant role. Effects on strategic abilities started with straight up policy transfer or selecting and adjusting approaches seen elsewhere to merge them into overarching, policy programmes like integration agendas, strategies, or programmes[163].

Discussing EIN takeaways and how these are worked with in a domestic context, one interviewee highlighted the contribution to different steps of policy-making (e.g. input on legal questions and managerial aspects) and the role these play in overarching approaches[164]. For strategy formulation or drafting of policy, negative lesson drawing, cutting down strategic options is another important effect of information coming from the EIN as "either you learn about something that you really do not want to apply in your own context, or you gradually pick up the pieces of the development around you" (interview 11_GOV)[165]. This ties in with building up knowledge

[163] "[My home country] did not have an integration strategy until now and the range of practices and examples picked up in the network really resonate in this document." (interview 29_GOV) or "They used our [integration] programme as a basis to design their own one." (interview 39_GOV)

[164] "It's helping us to set up policy, so internally we discuss most of the issues. Or write some report. Depending on the topic, it may move to some other ministry, inter-ministerial committee (…) Regarding NGOs, it will get indirectly there, sometimes for a call for proposal. But we don't really discuss it with NGOs. It's policy making and we're policy makers. We do not proactively consult them on these things. The EIN is a policy making body. It's helping us in questioning things, could be more legal things or delivery-oriented issues. Overall, we talk a lot about 'integration approaches'." (interview 40_GOV)

[165] E.g.: "[We monitored] the Austrian [citizen law]. Politicians (…) wanted that Austrian proposal, it wasn't in my division, not even in my ministry. (…) I asked [for] some information (…) In the same way, we had discussions of handling financial donations

and describes a continuous interaction, here within Group 1 of the network. Expertise exchange concerned legal and political information but primarily a lot of experiential knowledge on barriers faced in politics, administration, civil society, or the public. Furthermore, learning without direct follow-up actions was described as valuable long-run capability building[166].

> Repatriation scheme information is something we shared with Austria… we give quite a lot of financial aid [for migrants to repatriate] and provided information on this and a translation of our repatriation act. I don't think they have done anything yet, but we gave them information of how it was done. In a few years they might act on it, policy takes a while. (interview 39_GOV)

Many interviewees were enthusiastic about effects of the network regarding depth and breadth of information provided to them. They were primarily describing the EIN as a platform with privileged data access to the best experts (depth) from the broadest relevant range of countries (breadth). Besides formal information sharing, this concerned informal exchange, yet either way covering primarily instrumental learning.

> We increasingly get research inputs, but then you also have a real expert community in the room to discuss these things… it really helps you [in becoming] a source of information yourself (…) we take this information and these contacts with us and (…) you also get a feeling where integration policy is moving, (…) what the trends are and who you should connect with. (interview 28_GOV)

By obtaining such information and contacts, EIN members become access points to expertise and knowledge, which gives them scope to spread ideas in their domestic networks where they are "interlocuteurs. We translate and connect ideas and people. This is the biggest part of the job. [Domestic integration actors] come to us, we help them" (interview 24_GOV).

Few interviewees pointed at strengthened analytical power through the network, primarily because of the ease of access to experts from other member states and the opportunity to send

from the Middle East (…) Austria again had the [Islam law] and could provide information (…). It's a way of obtaining, by easy access, relevant information. (…) The information was shared in the network and then they could provide me with further background. That helps with drafting policy. You aren't even talking about being inspired. But (…) it helps to say, we can't do this or that because of our legal setting." (interview 39_GOV) or "You take new ideas, information (…) It's really important to stay informed what is going on in other member states to also know the bad solutions, bad outcomes, how you avoid that, when you draft your own national legislation." (interview 32_GOV)

[166] "The integration process is something we need to understand from a European perspective. (…) You see what others do, what the solutions are. And many times you just don't do anything with the information you get. (…) It is important to know, even for the matter of knowing (…) The Commission gives us that framework to exchange things and it takes a longer perspective." (interview 46_GOV)

inquiries through network channels[167]. Capability enhancements through the network were visible across all groups of countries – not least because the network provides a platform that can be used tailored to individual needs. Translating capabilities into outputs like integration strategies, effects were visible in smaller and new member states, likely because of developing these strategies from scratch, starting with the migration crisis and being faced with integration as a topic for the first time. There is also some paradigmatic thinking required for these types of broad strategies. This type of learning may simple not flow as easily through the echelons of bureaucracy in a larger member state.

7.3.2 STYLE

In terms of style, effects on procedural considerations stood out. Alongside building up expertise, procedures were the topic interviewees were most vocal about. They described for instance that "there are so many cases where we took some pieces of how others are doing things. Sometimes the entire programme. Integration contracts, integration courses, (…) language immersion" (interview 24_GOV). Mostly, interviewees focused on technicalities within large scale legal policy or the management of specific programmes. Evidence for changing style included interviewees discussing policy indicators, performance management of specific tools, or measuring impact of implementation actors[168]. This is all classical instrumental learning.

> We rather learn [about] technical details, not so much about the political aspects of integration in other countries. How you do things, details, not the big agenda. [Rather] specific indicators and how to apply those. Or specific topics like living conditions of some specific sub-group, or how to deal with forced marriages, how to do the measurements, the research on that, how to follow up with policy programmes. We implemented quite a lot from what we've seen elsewhere (…) took a few indicators." (interview 44_GOV)

Another interviewee described a legal procedure of stakeholder involvement and how this practice could and should be changed, the EIN providing arguments to do so[169]. *De facto* procedures were

[167] "It's not an elaborate tool, you can basically send an email to all colleagues, get their views or see if anyone has done something on a topic." (interview 12_GOV) or "Your colleagues can guide you through the practices listed on [EWSI] and help you with further questions [or] data on how their projects are working." (interview 32_GOV)

[168] "The Netherlands or Austria (…) have had policy developments, that we are really inspired by. (…) It's very relevant to know that I could approach the Austrian NCPI and understand how their regulations have been amended and (…) how they specified things to make them applicable." (interview 39_GOV)

[169] "We've seen a bit how others involved NGOs. We just have one tool [in home country], a call for tender to get something implemented via NGOs. To do some of the innovative things we've seen in the network, we are actually pushing for a review of our project funding guidelines. Language learning, fighting discrimination and multicultural living are all topics that can really

also affected as subtle influence on issues not requiring major legal change or interpretations on how things are done within broader procedural approaches. This was described as a network discourse hard to detach from. While still discussing instruments, rather than goals, such normative jumps and discoursive arguments clearly move towards a paradigmatic dimension in learning. An interviewee explained this nicely[170]:

> Integration contracts [for my home country were] an absolute no-go, it was as bad as swearing in church (…) I was, astonished when I heard the Austrian colleagues speaking about integration contracts, for me that was never happening. Later we had policy reforms (…) we made it possible to enter an agreement with the state through the public employment service and signing up to a certain number of commitments, and by doing that you gain stronger support than you would if you were just going around learning the language without any clear objective. (…) After a while I started thinking, what is this 'establishment agreement' as we called it, what is the big difference between this and an integration contract? Even if we wanted to distinguish ourselves from what we heard in the European context, we ended up with something very similar. And that is also an example that it's hard to detach yourself from the development around you. (interview 11_GOV)

Regarding interaction patterns, interviewees tackled leadership and organisational culture as one broadly connected topic. There was evidence for domestic change on all dimensions, but first and foremost inspiration and thinking triggered on how better domestic coordination might improve policy outcomes. The overarching discourse across interviews was surprisingly liberal in talking about inspiration from open, soft, and team-focused practices. Again, the logic is instrumental but underscored by deeper beliefs beyond improving instruments.

> Running [administrations] with this integrative focus, with refugees as experts, really team-oriented (…) it's a great example of making the [refugee] camp more efficient from a purely managerial point of view. And it's an improvement for those who live there. (interview 34_OTH)
>
> It was a bit of a wow-moment when I heard how closely the national level coordinates the programmes with the city and the self-help group and how even an international NGO is involved. (…) Personally, it made me think about my own approach, how do I deal with the regional actors. (interview 24_GOV)

benefit from getting traction with small NGOs, small projects first, without that tendering. That's (…) something we've seen in other member states." (interview 35_GOV)

[170] Specifically, the interviewee refers to a pre-EIN period though. Another interviewee described shifting de facto procedures: "I talked to one keynote speaker from a school with an integration focus and I later was invited there. And you see how do you engage, motivate people for this project (…). And this was eye-opening because here, if you talk to the job-centres they only put you in education programmes [for areas] where they need employees, instead of seeing what skills are already there (…) We realised that it's better to find good fit positions than providing training as first step of work integration. So, we re-designed this complete programme. [We also made sure] public servants understood they had to change their perspective." (interview 48_GOV)

Several interviewees described how their normative view on integration was shaken during study visits when meeting refugees face-to-face or hearing about self-help approaches in running refugee centres in Sweden. This has repercussions for views on the respective organisational cultures and concerns aspects like whom to approach when discussing the design of a programme or how to run programmes under pressure[171]. Still, most of this was described as inspiring or thought-provoking, rather than directly altering domestic policy delivery styles[172].

Member states most prominently changing procedures were medium-sized and average-performing, usually equipped with some topic exposure and administrative strength. Their representatives noted how either alleged laggards could soon be overtaking them, or leaders were far ahead. Regarding organisational culture, effects were soft and indirect – but they were voiced across all groups of member states. The same applies to leadership and interaction patterns. Here, many interviewees voiced that they personally changed their views. Effects beyond individuals seemed limited though.

7.3.3 STRUCTURES

Structures – if changing – are a visible and significant step and could hint at a strong impact of learning. Eventually, impact seemed limited. While several interviewees referred to structural change, this was about inspiration that things could or should be done differently, almost a broader paradigmatic thought, rather than straight-up instrumental learning. There were few concrete cases, supported through network interactions and instrumental information. In terms of organisational structures one recurrent example was the administrative model of a one-stop-shop (OSS) for migrants (see Chapter 8). For some member states, using the approach implied creating a new institution or joining up existing ones.

> The OSS was [an] important [inspiration] when we decided to merge our information points for migrants. You had them all across our agencies. We couldn't do much more than that but

[171] "[We re-framed] our discourse, making it open to refugees coming [here] in the last two years. (…) It included re-arranging processes and also people, the question of language was important (…) we got many refugees from Iraq or Syria (…) so we had to get mediators [who] speak Arabic. But also Tigrinya for Eritreans. And we didn't have a community of Eritreans in the country." (interview 6_GOV)

[172] For several representatives this might also be too much to ask for as they are often not ministerial leaders.

> at least it gives [migrants] one place, one office [to] tell them where to go, what to do. It's one stop, but unfortunately not the only one still. (interview 47_GOV)

There were also examples of changed reporting lines and units these reporting lines address[173]:

> [The OSS] is a great example [but] it doesn't work here. What we were able to do was to facilitate the exchange of information about the migrants showing up at one of our offices, like initial registration, with the other [offices]. With education vouchers, do they have children that can get support, labour market integration, these things. The offices share this and share this with, we have (…) an overseer for these families, they would get that information as well. (38_GOV)

Effects on resources played a role for some interviewees[174], mostly relating to above-mentioned leverage *vis-à-vis* other ministries or funding sources. Beyond that, EIN impact remained abstract. There was equally limited evidence for changed infrastructure. Representatives were more focused on processes within or processes enabled by infrastructure[175].

> IT solutions, how they check documents were really interesting to see and that's something where I could see scope to cooperate further. It's at least something that the [responsible ministry] has now on their table. (interview 46_GOV)
>
> The One-Stop-Shop is about the building. They all sit in that big house. Everything is literally next door and that enables interactions and speeds up the processes. (…) This is something we are testing. It's a more limited use-case but certainly builds on the experiences [in Portugal]. (interview 24_GOV)

Overall, those discussing structural change were mostly coming from new or small member states (Groups 3 and 5). This is intuitive since the scale of required change and according inertia to be subjugated is significantly bigger in larger member states with settled administrative systems.

7.3.4 DISCUSSION OF LEARNING EFFECTS BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL

Summing up, outputs and partial outcomes of EIN learning across *structures, style, and capabilities*, focus on nuances – primarily, information exchange about specific programmes and approaches. This aligns with instrumental learning and somewhat confirms the literature that would not expect to see profound change based on networks that have no clear regulatory task to follow through and therefore lack public scrutiny that can make soft governance effective (Maggetti and

[173] "I became the single contact point for NGOs working with immigrants, we had seen this [elsewhere] and given that [we are] a small country it was helpful to (…) bundle the expertise of the people working directly in providing help to immigrants." (interview 29_GOV)

[174] "The study visit is powerful to attain funding [by giving] a real-world example." (interview 24_GOV) or "We try to involve refugees more directly now, like self-help and provision of basic services, things helpful for their wellbeing (...) We got in touch with [the NGO supporting these practices and] got some guidelines (…)" (interview 18_GOV)

[175] "The way they have these refugee camps, out in the woods, it's really not that great and they are aware. It isolates [the refugees.] It's a discussion (…) and that experience in Sweden helps." (interview 9_GOV)

Gilardi 2014). However, the literature does not focus on the long-term, gradual effects of smaller instances of learning (Tamtik 2016), often emotionally sustained and remaining under the surface. Likewise, shifting goals or more abstract discourse may simply be rather subtle and experienced at the individual level and in individuals' social interactions.

For countries departing with a blank canvas, even small changes have a strong directional impact by defining an initial path taken at a critical juncture. These countries are commonly also the ones where specific individuals would play a more relevant role (i.e. individual level learning is closer to where policy is decided). This may then be significantly more about paradigmatic framing and planting a seed, such as starting to see asylum seekers differently and accordingly perceiving their administrative treatment differently, too. When designing policy from scratch, information of procedures (style) and according expertise (capability) influence where policies are heading. For more advanced countries, the network still provides a valuable source of case studies, examples, and privileged information useful in their day-to-day business. This underscores the differentiated impact of the network where potential transfer or diffusion focuses on sub-groups allowing policy convergence and differentiation to co-exist. Common elements across groups concern practical cooperation on delivery and managerial aspects.

In contrast to regulatory networks and OMC practices, the EIN is not about providing a transposable legal framework that can be controlled and reviewed. Understanding effects necessarily emphasises long-run relationships towards positive coordination via instrumental and/or paradigmatic learning. Along the conduits developed above, this implies different processes compared to an OMC – for instance, a stronger focus on network internal peer pressure instead of public visibility, a more positive coordinative setting instead of sanction-driven implementation, and peer grouping as organising principle for efficient learning instead of one-size-fits-all legal framework provision. These elements are rooted in individual representatives' interactions.

Within Hall's (1993) orders of change, most of this happens at first or second, instrumental order, changing settings of instruments and sometimes instruments themselves. However, this may

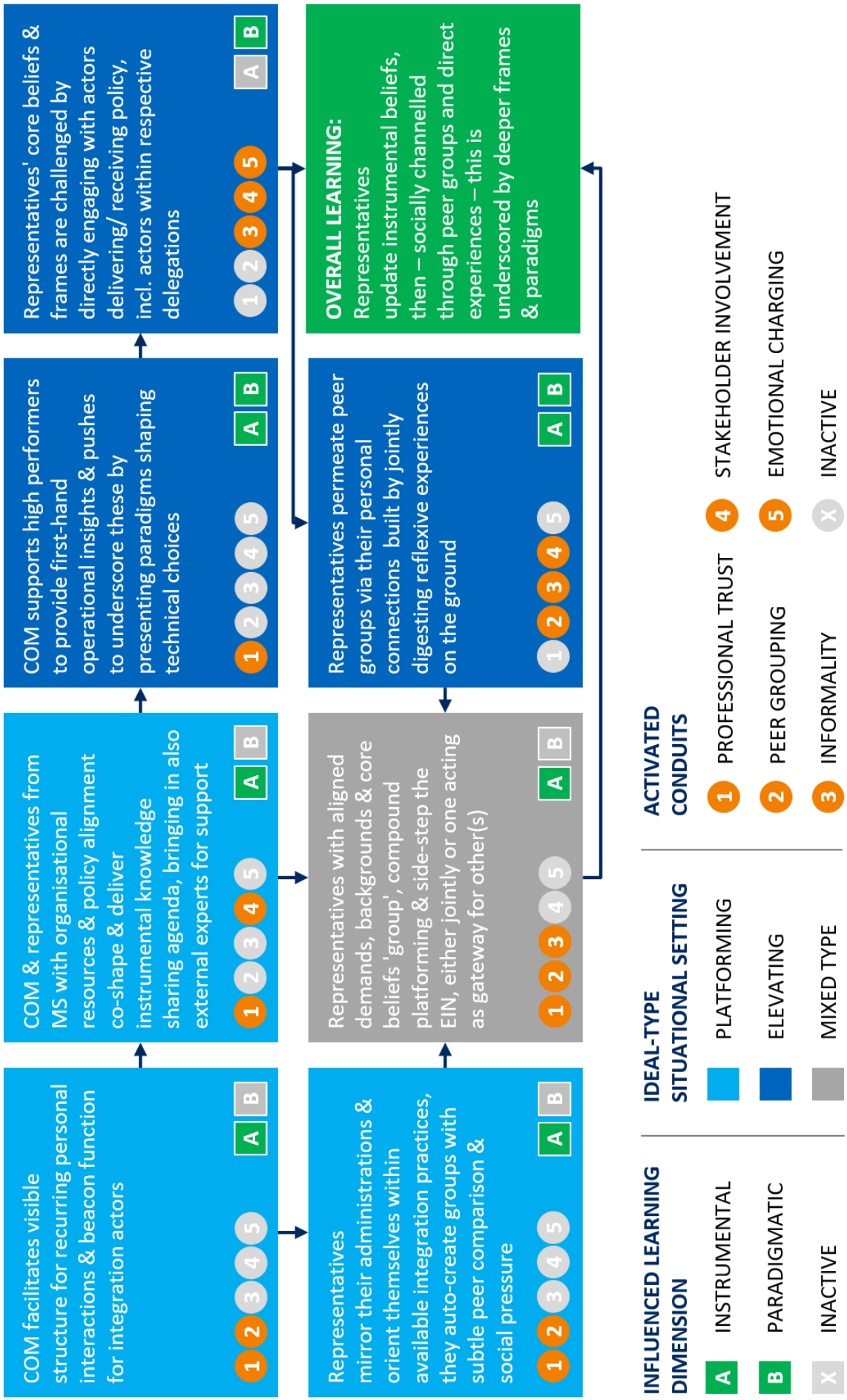
underestimate the role of information for supporting or testing new policy doctrines or third order change in the long run (i.e. paradigmatic learning). Taking the example of OSSs, information provision and implementation has implications for an overarching doctrine of service provision around post-NPM whole-of-government approaches and values. The same would apply for collaborative governance in Sweden where administrators were emotionally touched by experiences on the ground and drawn into reflecting about their roles within the system with potential implications for their future priors of instrumental learning.

7.4 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING PROCESSES – BRINGING TRANSFORMATIONAL CONDUITS AND SITUATIONAL SETTING TOGETHER

Following the discussion of conduits as core mechanism components towards instrumental and paradigmatic learning, the dependent variables of this research (Chapter 6), Chapter 7 has explored the situational setting in which conduits emerge or are activated. This started with the proposition of two ideal-type settings in which a partly design-rational Commission managerially works mutual learning through specific conduits. The first was theorised as platforming, the latter as elevating. The chapter challenged and padded this theoretical framework and the proposed dynamic with a first set of empirical data, primarily qualitative insights and thematic analysis. Based on identified mechanism components, a more sophisticated overarching process (Figure 6 below) was developed to allow a rigorous probing of propositions and expected implications in two nested case constellations (Chapters 8 and 9). This summarises developed descriptions and proposes one minimally sufficient explanation of how an EU-facilitated setup of a networking process works towards updating beliefs regarding integration policy and policy delivery.

An initial set of propositions covered five core conduits and the crisis context. Their role and interactions were analysed in Chapter 6 and preliminary findings are summarised in section 6.7. By and large, propositions were met, however, important findings that regard the interactive character of conduits were drawn out. Not least, the differentiation of organically emerging conduits (and according learning types) from the purposively orchestrated activation of conduits was described as decisive. The latter aspect was refined in Chapter 7 and is presented below.

Figure 6: Proposed Overarching Process of Learning via Platforming and Elevating



As depicted in Figure 6 (above), the process of engaging within the EIN can indeed be structured along the two ideal types of platforming and elevating as Commission-influenced practices[176]. To start with, platforming was proposed (see subsection 3.3.2 or section 4.4) to feature the activation of professional trust, peer grouping, and stakeholder involvement towards instrumental learning and the activation of professional trust as a baseline for paradigmatic learning. The Commission facilitates the exchange and the activation of conduits on an institutionalised structure. Within this space, trust and relationships among actors can emerge and contribute to the availability of a filtered tableau of policy options for instrumental learning.

By and large expectations were met. Member-state representatives were activated, rather closely mirroring their home administrations' positions and were cautious regarding the Commission's involvement in integration, yet they remained passive at the managerial stages of setting EIN learning priorities. Some member states were more equipped in terms of organisational resources to contribute to agenda setting and accordingly voiced their priorities, which the Commission actively picked up, leading to co-shaping of an agenda organised around success stories about specific instruments. These instruments were embedded in broader policy approaches and frames (e.g. collaborative governance).

Yet, contrasting expectations, the presence of all member states and according baseline information on the platform alone created a gradual form of technically-oriented, instrumental learning via subtle peer pressure emerging in network interactions. The originally expected dynamic, taking a side-track via peer grouping, was present in parallel. Peer groups, in both individual-level (professional trust) and macro-level (political-cultural proximity) terms amplified comparative pressure and allowed instrumental learning to cater to political and symbolic motivations. Peer

[176] Also a mixed type emerged empirically, here, elements of both ideal types are visible – long running, repeated interactions, yet also parallel side-stepping.

grouping appeared more permeable than the mechanism anticipated, mainly, because I theoretically underestimated the power of informal, social exchange already at the platforming stage where bonding takes place.

It was expected that platforming remains apolitical, formal and not particularly deliberative, yet significant instances of exchanging views besides the formal agenda were described. Apparently, a significant degree of trust and network embeddedness is present whilst still on the platform and this led to paradigmatic considerations, mostly during the literal coffee break. Primarily though a baseline of personal relationships trust for paradigmatic exchange in other setups was established. Lastly, the partial involvement of stakeholders and external policy experts contributed to a broadening and pre-filtering of policy options to instrumentally pick from. Contributions to considering wider paradigms remained limited.

Elevating was proposed (subsection 3.3.3 and section 4.4) to build on a two-sided activation of conduits regarding instrumental learning. First, informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging matter for the actual elevating experience. Then, understanding elevating as an iterative breakout from the platform, the conduit peer grouping was argued to be relevant once actors return from a study visit. In terms of working towards paradigmatic learning, elevating was expected to activate almost the same group of conduits that includes informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging.

Overall, the proposed logic was confirmed and processes around study visits or network side-stepping were indeed found to be iterations from the platform, some of them yielding direct learning, others feeding back into the platform where novel opportunities for learning are created. As expected, member states hosting elevating experiences were typical high performers and closely aligned with broader managerial and modern governance paradigms of the Commission (framing contributions in terms of collaborative governance, stakeholder involvement, multi-level interactions, policy co-delivery, whole-of-government service provision). Still, during the study visits, instances of failure or challenges became visible from direct, social interactions with policy

stakeholders and recipients on the ground. That high performing member states still faced significant challenges likely contributed to re-thinking more technical approaches in political and reflexive terms, thus moving from instrumental towards paradigmatic learning.

Several administrators described themselves as "overwhelmed" by social experiences on the ground and deeper social frames were actively questioned. The experience was emotionally charged and pushed participants into a novel situation that required large-scale sensemaking, which they approached in social reflections within mini-delegations of domestic stakeholders. Here, strong mutual amplification and sustaining of experiences took place when digesting experiences in informal deliberation. Domestic stakeholders were critical for translating observed practices and increasing administrators' ability to relate to policy delivery practices. This showed an interesting and unexpected close interaction of instrumental and paradigmatic learning. Both appeared congruent and thus powerful for shifting beliefs.

Regarding iterations between platforming practice and elevating processes, again, expectations were met. Individual-level ties built up in elevating experiences helped to open associated peer groups or developing gatewaying functions on the platform EIN. Not least, this compounded network density on the platform. Essentially, elevating experiences are a shortcut to developing trust and rapport, given the charged-up and accelerated mutual experience. A staged process of platform orientation, engaging in bilateral learning around a practice found on the platform, and then extending learnings from outside this learning pair into further peer groups was confirmed. Network side-stepping, primarily in the form of bilateral exchange was commonly focused on technical, instrumental learning and embeddedness in broader policy paradigms. Only gatewaying – once a contextual fit with a new peer group was found – then focused on political fit and symbolic dimensions of learning, contrasting expectations that anticipated the presence of political and symbolic motivations to colour *any* bilateral exchange.

Lastly, referring to section 7.3, the above situational setting and activation of conduits contributes to a governance function of network-based learning. Broadly speaking, it appears that

higher levels of cooperation and to a lesser degree active coordination take place via learning – despite lacking legal authority of the Commission. The co-shaping of the platform structure by the Commission (managerially) and high performing member states (more content-wise) as well as the jointly pursued design of the elevating processes, hint at the creation of implicit, social shadows of governance and importantly an active (if not always purposive) usage of specific conduits that associate with specific types of learning. This both created social pressure on the platform and domestic leverage. It also helped to at least spread specific concrete managerial or delivery approaches and policy tools, and tie those to deeper and paradigmatic views (e.g. collaborative governance, co-design and delivery). Hence, updating of individual administrators' views did take place, tied up instrumental and paradigmatic learning and moved outside the network with some, mostly capability-enhancing and stylistic effects. The network was also found to be emerging as a multi-level beacon for integration actors and a specific locus for shaping policy instead of only covering epistemic exchange or stakeholder involvement.

The following Chapters 8 and 9 now take the findings of Chapters 6 and 7, as summarised here, and probe them in two nested constellations. By being even more specific in studying involved actors and their activities, this first and foremost helps to gain additional insight into interactions of conduits or instances of purposive versus organic activation of conduits. It also helps for challenging the ideal-type character of platforming and elevating experiences.

8 LEARNING ABOUT PORTUGUESE ONE-STOP-SHOP GOVERNANCE

This chapter presents the first of two in-depth plausibility probes of the mechanism of network-based learning that has been proposed above. This chapter and the following one discuss constellations around Portugal and Sweden (Chapter 9). It is no coincidence that the examples are coming from two countries ranked first (Sweden) and second (Portugal) on integration outcome scores (MIPEX 2015a). They are typical best practices and therefore among the first cases the Commission leveraged for learning in the EIN.

This chapter about Portugal explores learning about a managerial approach: one-stop-shop (OSS) policy delivery and co-production for integration governance. It touches upon a range of learning motivations and the interplay of instrumental and paradigmatic learning outcomes. Primarily, this illustrates the power of platforming practices to promote such learning as well as the side-stepping of the network in specific peer groups. This accentuates the impact the EIN, and a design-rational Commission, brought into best practice learning present for more than a decade already[177]. Overall, Portugal embraces networking in the EIN and the OSS is its bestseller, a success story of learning and teaching:

> You don't see many countries that are really investing in helping other countries, showing what they've done and how to replicate in other contexts. That's a big investment. [Portugal is] one of the biggest net receivers of people interested to come and learn from their perspective. Really, not just the nice weather. Because you go there and feel like wow, this is a completely different world. Different policy debate. (…) 'I couldn't imagine that my country, which might not have a lot of money, too, could run such an approach to integration'. (interview 27_OTH)

8.1 MECHANISM CONTEXT

Over the years, Portugal has received praise for its migration and integration policy, with its OSS governance approach of national immigrant support centres, CNAI, receiving particular acclaim[178] (ACM Portugal 2018). However, beyond administration and delivery of policy via CNAI, Portugal

[177] This is an important note to this case study – it is not formally confined to the EIN. Rather, the EIN is an additional forum where the solution got traction. While the EIN is active since 2016, it is obviously not the only governance path, some bilateral side-paths are therefore illustrated. However, even in these instances there is significant feedback into the platform EIN. This structural presence alone plays a significant role for learning.

[178] E.g. Deloitte and Diario Economico (2005), Commission (one of the 12 best practices in integration policy in the EU) (2005), the European Enterprise Award (2010), the IOM best examples of programmes and services for immigrant integration list of the 2010 World Migration Report, the UN Public Service Awards (2011), the European Public Sector Award (2011).

has been named one of the most successful countries in integrating migrants. Integration outcomes are considered second best in the developed world, significantly outperforming other new destination countries like Spain or Italy (MIPEX 2015b)[179].

The following subsection explores the sequence of how the OSS idea emerged, how it spread and got amplified within the EIN's predecessor, supported by international organisations. Importantly, this emphasises the political and institutional framework of Portugal as success condition for the OSS and catalyst of subsequent learning in peer groups. Lastly, it illustrates how an idea that has been around for more than a decade received new traction with the migration crisis as an external trigger.

8.1.1 INTEGRATION POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

In the 1990s Portugal became a "new destination country", mainly for immigrants from Eastern Europe, at a time when it had no coherent national immigration, let alone integration policy (Humphris 2014, 13; IOM 2009a, 154). This triggered the development of frameworks on integration in the mid-1990s with significant involvement of NGOs and migrant organisations. Two dedicated government units for migration, integration, and ethnic minorities were set up – the High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities (ACIME, in 1996) and the Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs (COCAI, in 1998). The main goal of the latter was to engage civil society in the policy-making process. Meanwhile, the High Commissioner was established under direct authority of the prime minister to have leeway in policy design and managerial approaches to policy delivery (IOM 2009a, 155). Portugal keenly involved international organisations to design its migration and integration system:

> The story of the class [is] Portugal, which was quite interested in saying, if we are going to [develop an integration policy], we want to be very correct. They were very open to learning from other countries, they really bought into that learning. They were first and foremost people absorbing things from other countries, which is often not understood. (…) Picking up things from individual countries and from international research. (…) Later, their own experience has shaped their attitude towards international cooperation and sharing of ideas. (interview 27_OTH)

[179] Also, in 2007 and 2011 Portugal ranked second overall. Scores are confirmed by e.g. UN human development reports.

With stronger migration flows around the millennium, ACIME was strengthened in 2002, becoming a consultative government body and receiving a cross-departmental coordinative role. In 2007 it became a public institute, the High Commissariat for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI), later renamed High Commissioner for Migration (ACM) (IOM 2009a, 157–58).

On the policy side, in the same year, the first plan on the integration of migrants was introduced and involved 13 different ministries (2007-09), followed up on by a range of acts in the realm of migration and integration and feeding into a second plan (2010-13) (ACIDI 2007; 2010; 2011). In 2015, a comprehensive Strategic Plan for Migration was adopted to provide a comprehensive policy framework until 2020 and benefit from European funding (ACM Portugal 2015, 7; Calado 2016). Funding for integration has also been growing over the years, increases particularly coming from tapping into stronger EU support (Collett 2011, 14–15)[180].

One feature of the socio-political context contributing to these developments are positive attitudes *vis-à-vis* migrants, even during the economic crisis and a lack of extreme right-wing parties within the electoral spectrum (MIPEX 2015b): immigration is "not politically 'hot' in recession-battered Portugal" (Collett 2011, 14). This has been described as socio-cultural reciprocity of migration experiences as there are both a traditionally large number of Portuguese emigrants, which fosters a sense of responsibility for hosting, as well as a past migration experience where about a million Portuguese resettled from Angola in 1975 (Ames 2016). Accordingly, a political consensus on integration efforts has emerged across parties (Humphris 2014; OSCE 2017; Reis Oliveira 2014)[181].

Portugal had experienced considerable economic growth since the mid-1980s, supported by European structural and cohesion funds. This went along with modernising the country's administration. In the 1990s until early 2000s, Portugal was economically booming and until 2007 its

[180] Significant funds going directly to delivery-oriented non-profit organisation though.

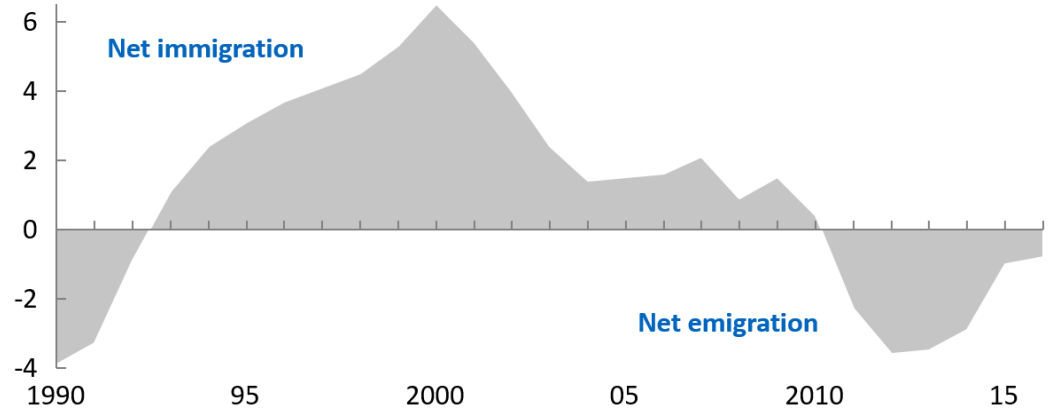
[181] "Why did Portugal, of all countries, adopt specific things and learn so much? (…) That was based on the Portuguese context, that view, to treat immigrants like you'd want to be treated yourself, the strong political will, to the lack of extreme right-wing parties, given their history. Then also the centralisation of integration as an office directly under the presidency. The individuals were also very entrepreneurial, politically sensible." (interview 27_OTH)

economic growth remained usually above EU average (Eurostat 2018a). At the same time, also politically, Portugal was – literally – at the centre of European integration (Lisbon process, Barroso Commission presidency, Lisbon Treaty).

Over those years, Portugal has shown a peculiar migration dynamic (Figure 5 below). Despite a significant influx of migrants from CEE countries in the early 1990s, even then, the country experienced negative net migration. This changed in the boom-period until 2007, with higher net immigration and fewer Portuguese citizens living abroad. The global financial and economic crisis then led to stagnating immigration and increased emigration between 2008 and 2012, while significant financial austerity measures were introduced under the involvement of IMF and EU. Only with economic recovery and the migration crisis of 2015 was this trend changed (Collett 2011; Humphris 2014; UN DESA 2018). Given drastic emigration during the economic crisis, immigration was positively framed and identified as one approach to counter a population loss (ACM Portugal 2015; Costa and Sousa 2017).

In 2016, the Portuguese prime minister unilaterally doubled Portugal's EU quota for refugee relocation, which received widespread acclaim (Euractiv/AFP 2016). The country has been vocal about its administrative capacity to deal with increased numbers of refugees, in sharp contrast to other countries. Today, while immigrants make up about 8% of the Portuguese population, refugee numbers are only in the thousands, many of them leaving within the first two years upon arrival (Jurriaans 2017). The largest number of asylum requests are still coming from Eastern Europe, namely Ukraine (Ames 2016).

Figure 5: Portuguese Historical Migration



Note: Crude rate of net migration, ratio expressed per 1,000 inhabitants[182]*. Own illustration based on POR-DATA 2018; UN DESA 2018*

8.1.2 OSS-APPROACH OF NATIONAL IMMIGRANT SUPPORT CENTRES

Portugal had experience with Citizen Shops, one-stop service centres for Portuguese citizens for everything from utilities to vehicle registration, health, social security and identity cards, or notary services – overall with more than 20 governmental, private and third-sector organisations represented. The first of these shops opened in 1999 in Lisbon. With modernisation efforts of the public sector[183] and after being re-enforced following the global financial crisis[184], they are still an integral part of the Portuguese administration (AMA 2018; Reis Oliveira 2014). Thus, the OSS for migrants was a logical extension of this concept as "the one-stop-shop idea (…) wasn't a foreign concept and [Portuguese officials] were excited to move to the forefront of transnational learning" (interview 27_OTH)[185].

Around the millennium, migrants faced significant problems in dealing with the complexity of the public service system. It was recognised that service dispersion was one of the key reasons behind lacking information for migrants regarding for instance rights and duties as well as the

[182] Crude rate of net migration equals difference between crude rates of increase and natural increase in a country, i.e. population change not attributable to births or deaths.

[183] The OSS is considered a key first step in efforts around e-government or a life-event focused approach to service provision.

[184] European Commission, ECB and IMF pushed to improve service effectiveness and efficiency through the OSS following the crisis. Globally, OSS are trending with cross-fertilisation between policy fields and countries, cf. AMA (2018).

[185] "The idea was to converge in the same place, the same building several services that were spread across the city, from different ministries (…) a whole-of-government, joint solution by making all the services work together in the same place and then move the service user, the citizens, the migrants, to the centre of the service. All services work around [their] needs." (interview 6_GOV)

typical administrative processes (EC 2013). A possible response was seen in the same way it was tackled for Portuguese citizens – merging relevant entities in one location. This was even more crucial as support in different languages was hard to guarantee in dispersed locations. A first step was the 2003 establishment of local points for migrant information (CLAII) run by local NGOs, immigrant associations or municipalities. This was then taken further with the 2004 establishment of the national CNAI immigrant support centres (IOM 2009a, 162), which were moved under the authority of ACIDI in 2005. The first two CNAI opened in Lisbon and Porto, a third one 2009 in Faro. Since being established, they covered several million cases and more than a thousand average daily service users (ACM Portugal 2018; EC 2013).

> We've been working for the last 14 years with this one-stop-shop and have delivered over four million services in these centres… it's really stabilised, a working model in this country. Nobody here, now, would like to go back to the previous situation, where there was this sort of maze for migrants, and people would probably get lost, people [would] pay a lot of money to solve their situation in Portugal, lawyers making money out of things that should be safe, easy and for free. (interview 6_GOV)

The service offering is defined by two factors: the breadth and depth of services offered and the structural co-delivery approach with involvement of migrant organisations in service provision through cultural and linguistic mediation. Both elements contribute to a trusted relationship between state and service users and eliminate legal issues, crucially they are both technical and paradigmatic in nature.

First, with an *integrated service offering* CNAI provide physically concentrated services across all areas relevant for immigrants, including healthcare, labour, social security, official papers and nationality issues including family reunification, education and training[186] and including required private- and third-sector offerings (ACM Portugal 2018). It is paradigmatic for a more general, holistic approach to migration and integration (Calado 2016). Service provision and enhancement of service levels happens through information sharing including shared resources like

[186] The following entities are represented: Ministry of Interior (incl. Foreigners and Border Service and Electoral Registry Office), Ministry of Employment (incl. Working Conditions Authority), Ministry of Social Security, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice (incl. Central Registry)

buildings, infrastructure, and IT systems. Administratively, the joint digital data management systems ease interactions and future digitisation efforts, but also allegedly simple tasks such as coordinated appointments (ACIDI 2009, 9; EC 2013; Penninx 2009, 10; Reis Oliveira 2014). Not least, this setup "facilitates collaboration and allows flexible, short-track responses to what the migrant (…) may need. Literally, we solve things on the same floor." (interview 6_GOV).

Second, for *intercultural mediation* CNAI employ mainly so-called intercultural mediators, mostly with foreign background. Mediators also work on a helpline and travel to regional branches. They provide linguistic support in explaining and delivering services in the respective language of immigrants. More than 15 languages and dialects are available through this approach (ACM Portugal 2018). Mediators furthermore unlock better cultural understanding, often having migratory experiences themselves. This helps to establish closer relationships with immigrants and supports a two-way-process of integration (Council of the European Union 2004b; EC 2013), actively engaging migrants and host society. Managerially speaking, the approach makes innovative use of co-delivery with the third sector – intercultural mediators are recruited via immigrant associations and NGOs (ACM Portugal 2018; Calado 2016; Penninx 2009; Reis Oliveira 2014). The logic is that "[ACM] design[s] programmes and they [with the help of ACM and the municipalities] deliver the projects" (interview 6_GOV). This also ensures a stable link between public administration and immigrant citizens organised through NGOs (EC 2013). Currently "146 out of 170 workers are placed into the shops by immigrant associations, most are immigrants themselves. It really is a joint programme between the public sector and civil society" (interview 6_GOV).

Overall, the orginally instrumental logic of extending Citizen Shops towards immigrants introduced significant paradigm-shifting elements to the solution, primarily revolving about how immigrants are perceived and what immigrant communities may contribute to the solution. This was then taken into an international learning environment.

8.1.3 DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS EU-FUNDED BEST-PRACTICE

The Portuguese OSS for migrants is a well-documented (ACIDI 2009; EC 2004), thoroughly assessed (IOM 2009b; Penninx 2009) and often-cited best practice by international organisations and EU member states (Barcza and Nadasdi 2013; EIPA 2011; OECD LEED and EC 2015; OSCE 2017; Reis Oliveira 2014). Not least, it is a compelling narrative (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011) where an instrumental idea and a wider positive immigrant discourse match.

> We get many, many visits here, [about] every week. Yesterday there was (…) a delegation from Moldova, they were trying to get the working method of the one-stop-shop; we have hosted on the same day the Polish delegation. It (…) has been benchmarked by the Commission (…). And we [are aware] of the reputation of [this] model in countries like Germany, in Hamburg, you have a one-stop-shop for highly qualified migrants, inspired by the Portuguese model. But also, in other countries like Greece, Ireland. Even Russia has been here two times trying to understand this working method. We're always happy to know somebody was inspired by the model. Brussels, I think, also has a one-stop-shop for migrants in the Flemish part. (interview 6_GOV)

This is significantly driven by the fact that the approach was jointly developed and financially supported early on by the IOM and by the European Commission. Until today, the latter provides part of CNAI funding (EC 2013). As one interviewee put it, integration outcomes, commitment to learning, and the involvement of international support are interrelated:

> The NCPIs network and the whole apparatus of European cooperation in integration and migration has been most useful for new destination countries. Because they have to start from scratch, they don't have an ideological orientation to the topic, they were new beneficiaries of European funds and also needed to decide how to spend them in their countries, so they needed to be very specific in what their approach to that would be. [Portugal] really picked up the most. (interview 27_OTH)

When Portugal started to extend its OSS idea to migrants, the same issues that motivated the Portuguese move were also identified in 2005 in the EU Common Agenda on Integration (EC 2005; IOM 2009b) (Table 8 below). In 2004, the Commission launched the first handbook on integration. Developed by the NCPI network under guidance of the Migration Policy Group (MPG), it included the CNAI as a best practice solution for the first time and took the idea into the network (EC 2004).

Table 10: Portuguese CNAI Activities

	ACTIVITY	INVOLVED ENTITIES
1999	First Citizen Shops open in Portugal	National
2003	CLAII established in Portugal	
2004	CNAI established in Lisbon and Porto First NCPI handbook on integration names CNAI best practice CBPs are confirmed by the Council and highlight service and administration access as priority	National, EU, IOM
2005	EU Common Agenda on Integration names OSS as go-to practice	EU
2006	Commission INTI-project on OSS launched, including assessment of OSS practices across Europe led by Portugal First IOM review of CNAI practice	EU, National
2007-08	OSS workshops within INTI-project and NCPI network for updates of the handbook on integration	
2009	Handbook on implementing OSS published, builds on CNAI Third CNAI set up in Faro Second IOM and INTI review of CNAI practice and OSS project	National, EU, IOM

Source: timeline based on own analysis

As the Common Basic Principles (CBPs) were formulated in 2004, the Common Agenda and the handbook were framed in the language of the CBPs[187]. The Commission and involved contractors supported and then used specific best practices (such as CNAI) for the various documents. The involvement of the same think tanks and acting individuals like the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) and Migration Policy Group (MPG) in drafting the documents supports this interpretation (Geddes and Scholten 2015, 49). The three documents – CBPs, handbook on integration, Common Agenda – cross-inspired each other (ACIDI 2009, 9) and clearly, the Commission saw scope to present a best practice they had supported. Hence, they pushed vertical Europeanisation by proposing a somewhat scientifically developed and field-tested solution (Geddes and Scholten 2015). Combining instrumental practices with a range of strategic, paradigmatic publications also composed a persuasive change story, broadly re-framing a technical issue (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011; Geddes and Achtnich 2015; van Hulst and Yanow 2016).

For instance, the Common Agenda recommended strengthening public-private service provision and intercultural interpretation by immigrant communities, supported by one-stop-shop information desks. This was seen as contributing to the Common Basic Principle of institutional access for immigrants (CBP 6). CNAI also tackle principles 7 and 9, working in partnerships and with shared responsibilities. Also, moving towards mainstreaming integration (CBP 10) and the

[187] Lodge (2007, 356) describes a similar framing of economic policy within an OMC along baseline, strategic principles.

use of indicators and improved measurement as defined in principle 11 align with streamlined administrative structures, reporting lines, and IT and which also involve a whole range of ministries (Council of the European Union 2004b, 21). The latter two CBPs are interestingly also the ones that are more specific priorities and therefore more relevant from a vertical, European-defined governance perspective (Geddes and Scholten 2015, 50).

Thus, once Portugal had the approach running, it became a case in point for institutional and managerial design of government access and service delivery in the sense of a paradigmatic whole-of-government project (ACIDI 2009, 16). The NCPI network at the time was already involved with the development of these various documents – significantly supported by MPG – and therefore aware of the Portuguese initiative early on.

In 2006 this was taken further: the Commission funded an INTI[188]-project called "One-Stop-Shop: a new answer for immigrant integration" (JLS/2006/INTI/148). The project coordinator was chosen to be ACIDI, with CNAIs being the prime example. The project goal was the creation of a partnership network to assess the OSS approach and examine the feasibility of implementing the model in other member states, something that was also suggested by an independent IOM evaluation in 2006. For the project, ACIDI brought together seven partners, which was intended to reflect diversity in migration experiences and a diversity of service delivery models[189] (ACIDI 2009, 9–10; Humphris 2014, 21–22; Penninx 2009, 6).

The key project output was a handbook on how to implement an OSS, developed from 2007 until 2009 in a series of three workshops. This was a step towards formally recording the Portuguese approach and making it transferable by highlighting success factors from a comparative perspective and other countries' experiences (ACIDI 2009, 10–12). Both the INTI project and the CNAI experience in Portugal were evaluated in 2009, adding credibility to the thoroughness of the

[188] The predecessor of AMIF, cf. Geddes and Scholten (2015, 52) on the horizontal, network-function of INTI-funding.

[189] The Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (Greece), the General-Directorate of Immigration (Italy), the General-Directorate of Immigrant Integration (Spain), the Immigrant Council of Ireland (Ireland), Network Migration in Europe e.V. (Germany), the IOM mission in Portugal and the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies at the University of Amsterdam (Netherlands).

solutions (IOM 2009b; Penninx 2009). In this sense, Portugal has been at the epicentre of international (instrumental) learning and became also an active sounding board of its own experiences (interviews 6_GOV, 26_EU, 51_GOV)[190]:

> Because they were really using the exchange of best practices they were [in turn] really promoting this [exchange]. Very active. Like wanting to host seminars, wanting to do an international learning project, where they presented how to do the OSS. (interview 27_OTH)

In 2015 the migration crisis gave an opportunity to push a learning opportunity that had been around for some time. The OSS provided a seemingly good-fit solution for many of the challenges arriving with increasing numbers of immigrants: a co-delivery approach with a certain cultural sensitivity, the ability to deal with significant numbers, and a parallel shortage of resources for integration measures. Not least, the OSS had already been crisis-tested with the economic downturn post-2007 which contributed to a rational-instrumental acceptance of the approach amongst EIN members. This concerned the adaptability and scalability of the approach[191]. Portuguese authorities actively used this window of opportunity to re-establish the CNAIs as good practice within the re-vamped EIN[192]. Simultaneously, countries who had picked up the approach in previous years helped to amplify transferability beyond purely instrumental technicalities, a case in point brought up in various interviews was the Czech Republic as a gateway into other CEE member-states. Via empirical, stepwise testing, this also tackled concerns about the need of a specific structural (incl. socio-political) context for successful OSS implementation (Penninx 2009, 7–8).

In this sense, the Portuguese approach to policy development and learning is almost a perfect illustration of experimentalist governance (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008; 2010) because testing and spreading successful approaches is constantly taking place, in particular with the new refugee situation. Within the OSS structure, an interviewee explained, "we have the ability to create and

[190] Similarly, an ad-hoc inquiry via the EMN from 2013 shows how serious Portugal is taking transnational learning as both taking and giving, showing individual commitment of representatives. Two out of ten pages of country-level information (for 28 member states) in the inquiry are filled in by the Portuguese representative, cf. EC (2013). Professional conferences are another setting where representatives interact with the subnational layer on the topic of OSSs, e.g. twinning with Hamburg, Augsburg or Lisbon. Conference summaries praise Portugal as prime example of how to tackle a range of challenges, cf. IQ Netzwerk (2014).

[191] "The OSS is an interesting idea for other countries because of the [inherent] flexibility (…) and the agility in providing specific services. (…) During the financial crisis we created a desk for helping migrants with their mobile phone contracts, which was an issue back then. Once that changed again, we [swiftly] merged the office into the normal legal support office." (interview 51_GOV)

[192] "Last year [2017], and I'm talking only about high-level delegations, we received 25 different institutions to see our one-stop-shops and this year, I expect the number to be more or less the same." (interview 51_GOV).

[pilot new,] specific offices. At this moment, we have a very important one, the entrepreneurship office, which started as a very small project, just to try and see what the results might be, but the results were so interesting that we launched this as a permanent office" (interview 51_GOV). This prototype was shared at conferences (IQ Netzwerk 2014) but importantly also with peers in the EIN who then spread this idea into sub-national governance channels (interviews 1_GOV, 9_GOV, 17_OTH). Portugal in this sense is a laboratory for integration approaches that are well in line with Commission priorities. The practices are modern, adjustable, often rather small-scale and attainable. Nonetheless, they are embedded in a strategic framework and modern governance paradigm and according narratives that from the outset were supported by international organisations like the Commission.

8.1.4 IMPLICATIONS

In Portugal, the migration crisis met comparatively strong administrative capacity and a country with emigration problems, which left significant scope for experimentation, innovation and commitment to transnational learning. This has implications for how current interactions within the EIN play out. It shapes how peer grouping comes about, how and why agenda setting plays out, through which channels the CNAI case is fed into learning instruments and how the solution approach is a surprisingly transferable practice, both at instrumental and even paradigmatic scale. Table 11 below abridges success factors for the CNAI approach and highlights implications for peer grouping and initiative taking in the EIN.

Table 11: Implications of Institutional and Policy Environment

CASE PROPERTIES	IMPLICATION AND CONNECTED CONDUITS	
New destination country, but limited numbers of migrants	Comparability with other new destination countries (Italy, Spain, Greece) and countries with limited migration numbers (CEE)	Peer grouping at platforming stage and outside EIN/ in informal interactions
Long-running experience with one-stop-shops and collaborative governance	Comparability to and recognition by administratively advanced countries like Germany, Austria, Netherlands, or Scandinavian ones	
Strategic planning of integration policy for more than a decade	Exemplary development path for CEE member states	
ACM as centralised authority under the PM	Strong cross-departmental coordination signals priority for migration and Portugal as progressive in this regard	Influence on orchestration within platforming, thus COM using Portugal and CNAI as case in point for study visits
Political climate relatively favourable to immigrants	Scope to proactively and politically signal that immigration is positive and – via CNAIs – can be handled	
IOM supported and EU financed administrative improvement programme	Externally evaluated best practice shaped for transferability (including documentation) – triggering accordingly sustained support by the Commission for spreading the idea	
Focus on adaptable, agile and managerial programmes	Modern overarching multilevel approach with high suitability for quick learning of a solution – fits policy agenda of swift and measurable improvements and prototyping even within a crisis	
Commitment to sharing benefits of learning also with others	Political backing of officials being invested in international exchange and networks, e.g. via conferences cutting across typical interaction layers by engaging in national-to-regional exchange	Influence on activation for platform and public service mentality of officials

Source: own analysis based on interviews and background data

The takeaway from Table 11 can be framed as Portugal being a multi-adaptable member state not really belonging to one peer group only. This makes it a perfect instrumental solution for the Commission to continuously feed to a paradigmatically diverse network. More so, it is a practice that the Commission co-developed over the years. This underlines that the Commission is – from the outset and before actually setting the agenda within the EIN – not agnostic. While for instance the Swedish or German experiences are solutions that would have and have worked without significant EU involvement, the Portuguese case is one that the Commission is invested in and has shaped closely aligned to its policy priorities, ticking a whole range of "buzzwords" like collaborative governance, co-production, holistic one-stop service delivery, or whole-of-government. Nevertheless, the Portuguese approach remains attainable if tailored to a given context and not particularly resource-intensive, hence offering managerial solution components that can work for a broad set

of member states (Penninx 2009). Notwithstanding, at the same time the approach supports an overarching policy framework around interlocking CBPs, something the Commission had been underlining as important component of successful integration approaches (Council of the European Union 2004b; EC 2007; 2010; 2016). This is clearly a more paradigmatic learning dimension that ties in with instrumental learning on technicalities of the OSS approach.

8.2 GRADUAL LEARNING ABOUT OSS GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE EIN – THE ROLE OF PLATFORMING AND ASSOCIATED CONDUITS

The migration crisis was a trigger to re-establish the presentability of the OSS solution in international forums for Portuguese officials. This "supply" and entrepreneurship at the individual level was meeting a "demand" from a multitude of member states who at a purely instrumental layer needed exactly what Portugal was offering or at least parts of the solution. Potential peer grouping was wide open for Portugal with its modular, modern, and adaptable solution, thus the idea found an easy entrance into the network. It also helped, that over the years, the solution had been externally assessed, validated, and regularly been included in best-practice collections pushed by the Commission. The high scores of the Portuguese system, and the OSS solution, supported the activation and interest of other member states, which had initially been doubtful about the concrete reasons for the success of OSSs[193].

[193] "[In] the modules on integration and MIPEX [and] the handbook on integration, they evaluated this project and they just had a super high score. (…) really, incredible. I mean, we didn't question whether this was right or not, but we said, if it's that great let's go and see what problems they might have. It's hard to question things if you are not there. (…) It's not likely that everything is perfect (…). We spent two days there. With a list of questions, what we'd like to see and understand. And the leader of the project worked with us through that [and] showed us all the parts of the project." (interview 48_GOV)

Table 12: Platforming: Entities and Activities, Conduits, and Implications

STEP	ENTITY AND ACTIVITY	CONDUITS	IMPLICATION
	[Externality] migration crisis meets emigration	Crisis context	Administrative and political scope for testing integration measures and extending the use case OSS to be shared abroad, too – supply of good fit solution
	[Externality] MS need swift managerial solutions, cost-effectiveness, and funding access		Portuguese solution provides rational use case and shows how European funds can be attained This eases further engagement of representatives with the Portuguese solution – demand for good fit solution meets supply
1	The Commission *upgrades* the NCPI network to the EIN and *provides chance to share ideas* in structured way	Professional trust, partly peer grouping	Portugal gets access to further contact points, which attain higher leverage at home with increased network importance Bilateral implementations of OSS idea like from CEE are channelled back into meetings of the EIN and informal interactions, amplifying knowledge of the solution New platform fertilises trusted environment of allowing other member states to attain the information needed to consider and work towards a specific learning goal
2	Portuguese public officials *take pride in sharing* solutions and *attaining peer recognition* through re-energised EIN (constructivist notion of normative involvement)	Professional trust, partly informality	Persuasion towards OSS solution visible: With solution co-developed over a long time with international organisations, Portugal is reciprocally involved in sharing lessons learned Officials take personal pride in formally and informally providing help for further implementations across EU Strong public service mind-set and solution orientation of Portuguese officials
3a	Commission *sees overall fit* of Portuguese approach with policy priorities and member state demands and *manages learning* around it	Professional trust, partly peer grouping, partly informality	Commission picks up Portuguese practice by not only leaving space for exchange during network meetings but supporting a study visit on the topic, i.e. arranging and connecting within the network towards exploring specific content Rather passive provision of a platform conducive to exchange, arranging that Portuguese idea, hence the work of an engaged member state, can spread Ideas and feedback spread in parallel to official network activities, which sustains the goal of the Commission of organising study visits and structured exchange (mixed-type interaction beyond platforming/ pure elevating)
3b	Portugal *lays out its practice* in network meetings and publications, paving the way towards a study visit	Professional trust	Awareness and orientation of other member states for implications of solution – know about OSS, existing adaptations, and instrumental or political benefits Further learning around OSS, e.g. subsequent sharing of idea in EIN instruments (study visits, bilateral exchange)

Source: own analysis based on interviews and background data

Step 1

Beyond external triggers, the Commission performed the political upgrade of the NCPI network into the EIN which meant that "we felt energised because now there was this space to share our ideas, discuss them more intensively" (interview 6_GOV). This view was shared by manifold voices and implied the opportunity to have a structured view on best practice approaches, including easier access to study visits going forward. The EIN also meant that all member states got improved access to alleged best performers, overall this emphasised an instrumental logic of interactions. Portugal was clearly one go-to place and for reasons of attainability the clear favourite for many small member states that now had an opportunity to build a trusted relationship.

Importantly, with the re-invigorated EIN, there was now also a space where existing implementations of the Portuguese model could be fed back to Portugal but also into the network. This went beyond the Portuguese case by allowing structured discussions around any kind of OSS experience in European integration policy, something that had been present also before, yet in a less rigorous setting (EC 2013). Overall, the EIN strengthened awareness for the OSS solution and the approachability of involved officials. While this logic remains close to instrumental learning, meeting technical motivations but also political hints on how implementations work, there are also paradigmatic elements that came with it as Portugal received structured and comprehensive feedback across a range of implementations building on their model.

Step 2

The above setup met engaged public officials – from Portugal but also from other member states who felt energised by the EIN platform. As for the Portuguese side, the EIN provided an important opportunity to show best-in-class behaviour and get peer recognition. This relates to the conduit professional trust and according individual motivations. One interviewee described a feeling of pride and that "feedback is important on a content dimension, but it is also a recognition to be inspiring other countries' approaches" (interview 51_GOV). Portugal had for many years worked with the support of the Commission and now had an opportunity to re-pay this learning support. This speaks to public service mind-sets being strengthened through peer recognition and reciprocity (Brehm and Gates 1997; Majone 1997). Being engaged in the EIN was a continuation of previous efforts and formal and informal commitments outside the network.

Step 3

Next, the orchestration of learning, specifically around the OSS, is an intriguing case of how the Commission uses its limited mandate to shape what member states will learn. This starts with member states sparking interest in the solution. Here, the Commission picks up this baseline information fed into the network by Portugal and the existing interest of activated members. With

the idea gaining traction for a couple of member states, the Commission had scope to explore the OSS in a more structured way and organise according learning tools[194].

Before elevating towards a specific instrument, the Commission facilitates continuous interaction among member states within and beyond the EIN. This happens without direct involvement beyond platform provision (e.g. network meetings) and process agreements (e.g. working plans, authority on logistics, agenda, funding) as underlying infrastructure. Here, "arranging" and "connecting" of adequate actors are activities shaped by the structure of the network itself. This setting helps to explore content in bilateral activities taking place on and around the platform EIN without active management of the Commission (i.e. activating the conduit informality). One representative from a small member state explained how the original implementation of OSSs got adjusted by those adopting the solution and how these member states would then move into an experimentation setup where even at the sub-national level, solutions could get tested and fed back to others running OSSs via the joint platform EIN.

> A lot of countries, by now have (…) a one-stop-shop for the integration measures. So, you go and they see what you need and every solution for every problem in integration policy is available there. If we have a measure in place, of course. Housing is a new problem that we cover as well. There are other countries that have pilots in housing as well, and we have the contact details. A lot is obviously going on at the community level and municipal level, but we get access through the other EIN members. The money for the OSS was European funding to set up the integration centres. (interview 50_GOV)

The provision of platform infrastructure as an environment conducive to exchange gives the Commission a role as facilitator of soft governance. This is strengthened through the development of supporting tools for learning such as the handbook on OSSs. Interviewees supported the notion that setting up that tool tilted exchange towards validated best practices. Therefore, they are more likely to be implemented at scale across member states, not least because they more easily get funding[195]. This implicit steering works in close alignment to the Commission's understanding of best practices. Not least, this is supported by the fact that other international organisations such as

[194] "We talked with the colleague from Portugal (…) how the things are done there, where we are in [home country]. And I decided we definitely have to go to a study visit to Portugal. And the network provides this opportunity [in 2018]. The Commission helps to realise that plan (…) they [will] take on the logistics [and] tailor the agenda to the working plan." (interview 23_GOV)

[195] This is a classical incentive structures and has elements of a non-traditional shadow of hierarchy through authority on the design of funding mechanics (i.e. a risk of intervention/ re-design).

the IOM or several NGOs and think tanks were involved as external experts from the beginning of creating the solution – at most instances actively brought in, thus connected and arranged, by the Commission. The Commission can thus stay distanced from what happens, but, being the facilitator, still be sure that implementations align with its integration governance preferences[196].

Crucially, Step 3 is also about the actual learning instruments facilitated via the EIN. Across all instruments, the Portugal case confirmed broader findings from thematic analysis in Chapters 6 and 7: what takes place in the network is amplified through informality and trusted interactions of officials. This is arguably stretching the ideal-type platforming and already close to a breakout from the platform. In the overarching view on mechanism in play (Section 7.4) this was referred to as an empirical mixed-type situational setting.

> The best example of how we learned [via] the EIN are the integration centres (…). First you hear it at the *tour de table*, otherwise we had almost no chance to hear about it. (…) You have a colleague, you have trust and he also know that this could be interesting for you. (…) There is a quick match, (…) when they just give an overview of what is going on within the EIN, but also informally. (interview 22_GOV)
>
> We were coming to the conference, we were able to see it on the ground. We exchange the emails and we established something what I can now call a friendship with our Portuguese colleagues, and this friendship was very welcome because we have also received the information about the pitfalls of the OSS. (interview 22_GOV)

What the above quotes (unsurprisingly) confirm is the sequence of orientation and the interaction of various learning steps. First and second, the supporting instruments such as handbooks and informally told information during network meetings give a rough idea about OSSs. This is instrumental in nature. Third and fourth (often in parallel or reversed order), this is explored bilaterally and taken to a site visit, thus elevating from the platform. Learning opportunities created in elevating processes may then feed back into the platform and this seems particularly prevalent here. However, preceding "elevating" breakouts, Portugal eagerly raised the awareness for the solution, among others in *tours de table* or via publications of and within the network. This is a first step towards further learning instruments. One interviewee highlighted the importance of the EIN in this regard – the structural and recurrent setting of the network eased orientation within the scope

[196] The logic juxtaposes to international organisations as orchestrators where the Commission supports an intermediary (network or external actors) that is aligned to its goals, cf. Abbott et al. (2015), Blauberger and Rittberger (2015b; 2015a).

of best practices and planning priorities for site visits. It is also a clear example of persuasion via information provision and a model function (Rhodes and Visser 2011) – however, likely not focused on direct instrumental learning but rather on convincing others at a more abstract layer that there might be something to be learned once explored further.

> The great thing about the EIN is this recurrent setting, you don't just hear it once. (…) The OSS idea has been talked about a lot of times, (…) you know your colleagues and you can go and honestly ask them what they really think about [the project] they are doing. And then you go and explore options to understand that better, go on a trip there. (interview 22_GOV)

Besides this active and recurrent presentation in network meetings, the supporting instrument handbook appears more relevant than proposed in the overarching network analysis. This underscores the role of language and vocabulary as framing policy making and potentially also perceiving the handbook as a "symbol" for a thought-through policy tool (Scholten 2017; Torfing 2012). With the dedicated handbook, the OSS is more rigorously developed into a best practice compared to other practices found on the EWSI. In practical terms, this has a twofold influence: first, it means that member states and even subnational authorities can move forward with establishing OSSs without direct involvement of Portuguese authorities. Second, having a structured, documented and contextualised implementation model, the handbooks, and hence primarily the Commission, influence what happens outside the network by disseminating an authoritative vocabulary for integration management. This fits the broader Commission motivation of vertical Europeanisation or policy influence that other research has found (Geddes and Scholten 2015).

> With the handbook created by the Commission the goal was to make our presence [to create a one-stop-shop] not necessary. (…) It's open source for anyone who wants to create it. However, most organisations building theses centres [still] ended up being in contact with us, sometimes even after the project was established. (interview 6_GOV)

Being an acknowledged best practice makes it harder for implementers to depart from the ideal-typical model. As the citation above shows, they would commonly check back with Portugal and the Commission once implemented, hence feeding information to the platform. Moreover, the constant reminder of ideally implementing OSSs within a wider strategic approach on integration aligns with Commission priorities. This speaks to the power of epistemic common sense and creating implicit pressure to follow a specific approach.

8.3 ACCELERATED EXPERIENCES SUSTAINING LEARNING – THE ROLE OF ELEVATING AND ASSOCIATED CONDUITS

When considering OSS implementations or, once implemented, seeking validation or improvement, study visits or a side-stepping of the EIN in bilateral setups take place – this was theorised as elevating away from (and returning to) the platform. The Commission significantly co-tailors these breakouts. In the context of Portugal, they are not least an instance of feeding and sustaining platform exchange around its wider integration system.

The formal programme of an EIN study visit is similarly prepared, though significantly broader in scope compared to bilateral visits. In the sense of orchestrating subsequent learning experiences, bilateral visits tend to focus on technical insights and instrumental learning. Instead, the Commission manages the EIN visit to include how the approach is embedded in the strategic integration framework of the country and parallel initiatives of the OSS, which accentuates the motivation to showcase the role of political context and ease reflexivity of administrators.

Table 13: Elevating: Entities and Activities, Conduits, and Implications

STEP	ENTITY AND ACTIVITY	CONDUITS	IMPLICATION
1	Commission and Portugal *provide member states with first-hand view* during study visit	Peer grouping; informality; limited degree of stakeholder involvement	Creation and active management of a platform by the Commission – co-defining content, influencing the agenda and setting ground rules including funding Instance of varied learning motivations, processes, and outcomes (instrumental, social reflexive, political, and symbolic motivations play a role) – differentiated along peer groups and sessions of site visit tailored to fit different member state needs
2	Peer groups of member states *side-step* the EIN in direct interactions with Portugal for specific learning objectives, yet iterate results back to the platform	Professional trust; peer grouping; informality	Learning focuses on political factors within instrumental learning as informality is strengthened Joint breakouts are intertwined with the platform and rigorous technical detail that the solution OSS has been developed with on the platform, hence new knowledge on implementations including technical and political constraints is iterated to the platform

Source: own analysis based on interviews and background data

Step 1

Starting with the study visit in June 2018, what stands out is the rigorous organisation of the visit that sought to paint a full picture of the Portuguese approach instead of only focusing on single elements such as the OSS. This underlines a motivation to present more than a technical-instrumental solution (and as discussed below mirrors the involved individuals' ambition levels and seeking of peer recognition). The goal is "to show a full approach that works (…) How the different

parts move together" (interview 25_OTH). Over two full days with 13 participating countries and 26 representatives, the agenda covered four main topics, encompassing the whole-of-government approach and institutional framework as lived in the OSS, including an OSS visit in Lisbon, but also other government and administration-focused discussions.

Furthermore, the Commission explicitly requested an agenda point on the Portuguese multilevel governance framework and "our work with municipalities including local integration plans and the implementation of local measures" (interview 51_GOV) as attached to the CNAI (i.e. CLAII). On the second day, Portugal presented its children support and integration approach that is about "being engaged all together and a very different approach not only targeting migrant children" (interview 51_GOV) – and then, again on request of the Commission, an exchange on cultural and religious dialogue and integration with representatives from migrant communities. Overall, these elements focused on multi-stakeholder involvement. Hence, the Commission pushed exactly those agenda points that were relevant both for content-level information (a driver of instrumental learning) but also more emotional, street-level components of the visit (likely conducive to paradigmatic learning). This aligns to the broader network analysis, that is, making ideas (here: co-delivery, stakeholder and local empowerment) stick by charging them emotionally. This is amplified further by the inclusion of NGO or local government representatives in each visiting delegation. Both conduits, emotional charging and stakeholder involvement are activated and closely tied to each other. Still, this is not a purely Commission-driven exercise. Portuguese officials were closely aligned with the Commission as both see the OSS only as one tool within a strategically coherent integration policy – this crucially allowed the Commission to push Portugal as an example with modular and attainable practices, while also having a bigger, paradigmatic picture in mind that fits broader approaches on multi-level governance including the involvement of local actors or municipalities in integration.

> We respond to specific requests [but also] offer a general picture. We do many other things [besides the OSS] and pride ourselves in showing that. Our youngsters' support programme ["choices"] or the local network of 92 centres to support migrant integration. Interaction with the municipalities, our multilevel approach (…) (interview 51_GOV)

This alignment between a member state and the Commission was visible at other study visits and is present again. By formally organising and funding visits, the Commission stays in managerial control, which also has content-level implications. However, in slight contrast to broader findings, it appears that leadership in the sense of moving ahead with an idea can be co-located in Portugal. For the Commission though, given matching policy priorities, this might not be an issue and rather contribute to wielding soft power. Unsurprisingly, best-practice study visits go to places that are indeed perceived to be best practices. Building up this perception (as well as actual performance) has for a long time been EU-supported.

Overall, the design of EIN-specific study visit hints at the purposive creation of cognitive shortcuts (Gilardi and Radaelli 2012) by embedding solutions such as the OSS within a broader, working system, which fuels positive perceptions of the approach. This likely strengthens classical evidence-based, instrumental learning with some reflexive elements, hence contextualising the instrumental practice in (often identity-related) paradigms. Finally, the visit alluded to political (illustration of overall political fit of OSS solution) and symbolic learning motivations of involved individuals (implement OSS or signal learning about it because it is a necessary component of a successful system). A criticism of study visits concerns limited informal interactions due to a packed agenda[197]. Bilateral exchanges beyond Commission-facilitated study visits are hence helpful to bring in informality, honesty, and importantly time to engage with each other[198].

Step 2

Commonly, bilateral exchange is a side road to or follows upon Commission-facilitated study visits. In the case of the Portuguese OSS, this is almost reversed. By running international learning projects for a long time already, bilateral visits to Portugal have become a standard practice that several EIN members have followed. On the same note, Portuguese officials have spread the idea

[197] "For the one-stop-shop, what works and what doesn't depends on a lot of factors. But if we have space and time to discuss how things work, we can figure out [what these factors are]. Sometimes the agenda is too tight (…)for exploring informally what matters." (interview 23_GOV)

[198] "[There is a] commitment [by the host] to openness regarding potential transferability – and that's where site visits are really critical." (interview 27_OTH)

outside Portugal and the EIN has strengthened opportunities to do so. The EIN offers the opportunity to combine a network meeting or a study visit with bilateral follow-ups and interactions. This is not trivial: many representatives and policy experts, including Portuguese ones, are busy in their line functions and with hosting delegations. Scheduling meetings back to back, combining EIN and bilateral encounters is highly welcome[199].

In bilateral interactions, technical-instrumental learning, was described as primary learning goal. Thematic analysis supported this interpretation as many interviewers talked about getting to know technical details of a managerial solution, which via the conduit of informal exchange on the ground allowed a more honest exploration of the OSS – as well as more time and a more relaxed agenda than during a study visit.

> From the beginning we knew that it was not about the shiny and bright things that civil servants normally depict in the situation, but there are also problems. And those things you can just have informally. (…) We were going there, we were openly discussing the things on the ground. Then we start to establish the idea in [our country]. There were several exchanges and they were also visiting, we were inviting them to give us a lecture in our conferences about their integration centres. (…) We got their view on likely pitfalls in the way we tailored it. (interview 22_GOV)

Beyond technical exchange, with the Portuguese usually embedding and depicting the idea of the OSS within their strategic approach to integration, some interviewees' remarks can be understood as instances of paradigmatic learning including questioning the role of administrations in service provision or at least deeper thinking about politically contextualising initiatives such as the OSS:

> At conferences in Portugal and site visits, we could clearly see how it's working. And we were able to go back with the idea, and of course we were not able to do the same thing (…). But this idea to create a centralised place where they will not send immigrants to some other place, but they will say yes, we are here just for you and we will solve your problem until the end. This is about the approach, it goes beyond administration, you know (…) At the same time, it's institutionalised, more sustainable than projects which can last for one year or two years. [It] is in one place for ten years and the immigrants, they are more and more aware about this place. (interview 22_GOV)

[199] "We had colleagues from Portugal (…) who visited during the [EIN meeting] and then a colleague stayed longer to meet with (…) the ministry of the interior, social, commerce, the ministry of education, and integration (…) it was also our initiative to invite him and prolong his stay. Our aim was to get the knowledge how they organised integration on a local level and especially we were interested in the one-stop-shop centres for migrants and for refugees. [This exchange] was quite normal both for the Portuguese colleague and for us too. We use these network channels to invite other colleagues regularly. I think, that Portugal would be potential partners in a future project, that we will submit to the Commission." (interview 15_GOV)

> We asked different people the same questions to understand… if this is not working in this great case, it's not going to work in other countries. So, what are the intangibles around the solution. (interview 48_GOV)

Crucially, interviewees depicted both instrumental and paradigmatic experiences as two-sided and cross-fertilising, which is a feedback effect (platforming-elevating-platforming) that the overarching view of mechanisms in play (Section 7.4) accounts for only broadly[200]:

> When you fail with the approach, you at least share some context. (…) I would not even consider it failure if you just set up an info point, but you took that idea of centralising and you discussed it with your teams (…) sometimes, this sparks ideas in the future [too]. (interview 47_GOV)

The back and forth within the EIN makes the network an ideal-typical exchange platform for several separate laboratories that get together regularly and structurally to discuss respective findings. Hence, in the case of Portugal, the platforming element of governance by learning strongly ties in with instances of elevating. While this mechanic is once more close to experimentalist governance (Sabel and Zeitlin 2010), it happens voluntarily and without clear incentivisation structures. However, when discussing for instance the topic of sharing problematic aspects around an approach, it became apparent that the involvement of actors such as the Commission (even if only indirectly) influences how seriously this sharing of experiences and insights is taken – in terms of frequency, intensity, and frankness of sharing[201].

While experimentalist governance is tailored to instrumental learning and social reflection, there are also significant political motivations in play. The mechanism is almost the same, only that beyond the technical solution, wider implications of the approach and strategic political implications are shared on the platform and in informal exchanges and study visits.

> It's a very, very nice example. I need to go and see how they really do that, in one big house – they host everything there! You have a lot, you have all the services, all that could be of interest to refugees in one house. It's a true house. Housing, schools, for jobs, you find that

[200] "We receive a lot of feedback, on the meetings of the EIN or other international meetings. Last year we received a visit from France, three full days on several practical aspects, and the next time we saw them at the meeting they told us that they would replicate a tool that we used, kind of a dictionary for common expressions. (…) we also have a pen drive with specific content, like on Portuguese language. And they also took inspiration from this example." (interview 51_GOV)

[201] "[Regarding problems or challenges] it's really our policy to be very transparent and honest and we have the experience in dealing with [international organisations], which obviously require this transparency. We would clearly say this is how we do it, this idea is good but those are the aspects that are [more difficult] (…) This thing might be a good idea and it succeeds in Portugal but maybe it's not possible to be implemented [straight up] in other countries because of the institutional or legal frameworks. That's clearly the same if we would take something from [elsewhere], it needs to be adjusted to fit the context. (…) we are very active in searching for these opportunities [to share insights, formally or informally]." (interview 51_GOV)

> all there. In one place. It's very interesting, because it is also something that seems feasible to do here. Also, politically. It's a strong signal, kind of a clear-cut solution. It solves quite some issues with how immigrants are perceived, how they (…) react when they face an administration. And I went to Portugal a few years ago, back then it was a goal (…) so, now I want to see how this project worked out. (interview 24_GOV)
>
> From a political perspective, I think, you can argue that setting up these structures [of OSS] is comparatively a low-risk move. It comes down to streamlining your service provision, which is (…) always helpful. And if you get it right, it really benefits immigrants but also society, the administration as a whole. (interview 5_EU)

Besides this, a political dimension of instrumental learning can even be taken further as direct creation of political leverage for involving politicians from home countries. At that stage political and technical feasibility of the approach tie in with each other because it is now about convincing politicians about the fit of a solution. This may even be seen as charged-up symbolic learning (or catering to symbolic motivations). It is no longer about learning as such, but persuasion via bilateral exchange and visits on the ground where …

> (…) if you are into innovation and new ideas, it is very good if you can send politicians to see how things are done. We are policy makers, but we need politicians. So, it was also important for us, that we sent through the projects NGOs and politicians to Portugal. They could clearly see that it is working, that we are not establishing something that is not existing, that we are in a hazard, but that we are creating something almost or very close to the idea over there. (interview 22_GOV)

8.4 PROCESS OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

As outlined, instances of various learning motivations (incl. political and symbolic ones) and both primary learning outcomes (instrumental, paradigmatic) emerged. This subsection brings the conduit "peer grouping" and according dynamics introduced at the beginning of the section back in to show which factors contributed to translating learning into a more concrete governance function towards cooperation, coordination and (limited) domestic change. Extracted from thematic analysis in NVivo, Table 14 below gives a rough overview of the frequency with which government interviewees brought up the Portuguese experience and whether their view was rather passive "reading about it" or direct interactions took place. While this data is not weighted, it still hints at two things: first, across all peer groups the example is known and perceived as best practice. Second, peer group 3, consisting mainly of smaller and CEE member states with more recent migration experiences and limited resources is particularly aware of the case.

Table 14: Best Practice Portugal and According Interactions

	PORTUGAL MENTIONED AS BEST PRACTICE Share of interviewed officials within peer groups; without prompt[202]	ACTIVE INTERACTIONS WITH PORTUGAL Share of interviewed officials who mentioned Portugal best practice (left column); prompted upon mention
GROUP 1 AUS, DE, DK, FIN, IRE, NL, SWE	67% (6/9)	67% (4/6)
GROUP 2 BEL, FR, LUX	25% (1/4)	100% (1/1)
GROUP 3 CZ, EST, HR, LV, LIT, POL, POR, SK, SL	100% (7/7)[203]	57% (4/7)
GROUP 4 GRE, ESP, IT, HUN	40% (2/5)	50% (1/2)
GROUP 5 BUL, CYP, ICE, MAL, NOR, ROM, UK	40% (2/5)	50% (1/2)

Source: own analysis based on interview data

Exploring the mentions qualitatively shows that the best practice was in the case of peer groups 1 and 2 referring to the overall integration system, thus a policy best practice that includes the OSS but has significant political ramifications, which administrators tried to understand via direct interactions with Portuguese authorities. This moves towards paradigmatic motivations and to some degree paradigmatic learning. Instead, in peer group 3 motivations and learning outcomes focused on the administrative-managerial best practice OSS, disregarding the political fit (i.e. disregarding Portugal's emphasis on co-delivery and migrant involvement). Yet, the number of interactions with Portuguese officials concerning the OSS-practice was limited in group 3. The reason interviewees describe was a gatekeeping function of the Czech Republic. The country was mentioned as an early adopter of the approach from which other CEE states could learn as an implementation experience closer to their respective political-administrative systems (i.e. their respective governance paradigm). This is hence about paradigm-sensitive instrumental learning. The according learning sequence iterates as follows:

[202] Pure counting statistics; 1 (mentioned) or 0 (not mentioned), disregarding the intensity of mentions. In case of multiple interviews with single interviewees, both interviews are counted as one. In case of different interviewees from same country, numbers were added up.

[203] Not counting Portuguese officials.

a) accounts of knowledge-oriented, instrumental learning experimentalism (see what works, stepwise approach to a comparable context, build up convincing narrative that an approach works for domestic actors), but also
b) constructivist accounts, reflection, and paradigmatic learning that weight ideational or even emotional aspects more strongly (wait until a context is reached that feels more approachable on a personal level, e.g. linguistically or culturally).

Element 'b' seems to be decisive for successful experimentation – with closer personal ties, openness about what works increases. This also speaks to the micro-foundation of experimenting and the importance of activated conduits such as professional trust, informality, and crucially peer groups. Still, where does the difference in taking notice and acting come from and does it translate to changes on the ground? First and foremost, there are several countries that were part of the original INTI-project and/or that have had OSS in place already about a decade ago. This includes France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany (EC 2013). Interestingly though, interviewees mentioned none of these countries when discussing lessons learned in the space of one-stop-administration.

Moreover, in terms of broader learning in the space of integration they were commonly named as either only potentially interesting (with some hesitation concerning integration contracts in Italy, Netherlands) or unattainable (Germany). At the same time, Portugal was named across interviews and without prompt or direct question. This shows awareness created around the solution including the external assessment of its content-level, technical quality and the perception of attainability with limited resources.

> Based on [a bilateral visit] we suggested some implementation because we had a comparable system to Portugal, this changed, politically and administratively and then it didn't get there because of the system. But the ideas were out there and well received. We wanted to have one intercultural mediator at each, already existing one-stop-shop, highly localised governance… but this didn't go through. (interview 48_GOV)

> We have created something almost similar, we just created immigration centres. And now we got [a number of] regions in [CEE country], and in [over 90%] of those regions we've got integration centres. The solution is praised by a lot of our peers. We really tried to learn from Portugal. (interview 22_GOV)

The latter interviewee proceeded to argue for "[stealing] from the best" if looking for inspiration. Nevertheless, interviewees were aware of constraints of simply copying and highlighted how tandem programmes for learning via the EIN, coming with AMIF funding, could help in understanding how to make most of a best practice approach[204].

The voiced conditioning factors confirm broader findings – funding, the political-administrative system, and size and migration numbers are defining factors when considering solutions. Thus, first, there seems to be an important role attributed to the funding situation in a country whenever a representative considers comparability and adaptability of an approach such as the OSS: "it's about the money. The best marks are in Sweden, but whenever I send a delegation or an NGO to Sweden, they come back in blue mood. It's very expensive and we don't have such huge resources" (interview 22_GOV). This also relates to concrete funding approaches, where representatives saw opportunities to learn how to transition into using the newly available European funds[205]. Furthermore, and expectedly, politico-administrative proximity was described to play a role as a paradigmatic filter for instrumental learning and this was reflected particularly through cross-mentions in peer group 3[206].´

Lastly, as the same interviewees emphasised, issue exposure (migration numbers) and a country's size play a role. Here, Portugal hits a sweet spot of considerable but not huge numbers and a manageable administrative system, being one of the smaller EU member states. This allows Portugal to swiftly innovate in governance and to share what was tested.

[204] "[We] have that [OSS] in our call for tender [for partnering]. That would be a great way to proceed here. We tried to implement it with the help of an NGO the last two years, it didn't work so well. Of course, the government engagement in Portugal is a bit on a different level and also the resources, the organisation is a bit different. So, to make it successful, we need more information on how to get regional and national level aligned and how to engage support groups. And how to involve NGO in these networks on a daily basis. We can explore this in Portugal. One afternoon chat with the Portuguese representative is not enough, obviously." (interview 23_GOV)

[205] "Around 2006 we had a delivery system that was largely based on NGOs (…) With the European Funds [NGOs] turned towards qualitative work and we needed a way to deal with larger numbers, the quantitative side, directed not at tens of foreigners but thousands of immigrants. (…) Portugal was ahead of the curve, they informed us within the NCPI network that they had secured money for some conference on their one-stop-shop." (interview 22_GOV)

[206] "We've identified some best practices from Czech Republic, Slovakia, (…) Latvia… they came here with EU funds to see our policies but we also learned from them. They are similar, regarding numbers and general approach. But actually, it's not only Eastern European countries. We were actually partnering in one project, the Portugal one-stop-shop." (interview 47_GOV) or "Portugal started to show something in the EIN, then the NCPI network, which was quite new and quite centralised and [we are also a centralised country]." (interview 22_GOV)

> Portugal hasn't got a lot of refugees, so they can really try out things, like remain in control how many they have and how to manage [them]. They can do a better job. But it's still interesting to have services merged in one place, a network for the refugees (…) You know also the Nordics are good examples… but sometimes that just seems far away. Not very feasible. And then the newer member states, they have like 20 refugees? (…) I wouldn't really look there to identify practices. Portugal has some size, some numbers you can work with. Also, the country itself, it's not super small, so they still tackle a 'real' challenge and run a 'real' administration. (interview 24_GOV)

The compelling logic of the EIN as a platform is then how this practice moved on to another member state, like the Czech Republic; this member state then serves as the launchpad, here into peer group 3, because political proximity is even higher. The second adopter within peer group 3, here, Estonia would then spread the learning further. The citations below illustrate this in detail. This can be described as refined, iterative testing of instruments and experimentation, where increasingly variables – also more political, symbolic, or even paradigmatic ones – are eliminated for specific peers. Consider for instance doubts about the political fit or learning about signalling to a comparable administration or public that specific initiatives are taken.

> This is how cooperation works, we went out, saw and adopted a solution and now there is a lot of countries – Estonia, Lithuania, Georgia, Poland coming to us and they are closely looking how integration centres work [here]. We are always saying yes, we were inspired by Portugal, but we had to create different integration centres, tailor-made to our situation. This is crucial, now that Estonia is for instance creating something similar, they are asking and we are telling them, don't repeat the same mistakes, it has to be tailored to your own situation. (interview 22_GOV)

> We received project finance from AMIF and we want to develop structures for integration because we have only integration structures for refugees, or individuals under international protection, but now we are facing [huge numbers of labour migrants]. And the first phase of this project [is] different study visits (…) We have selected Portugal, Czech Republic [and another country] because everybody knows that Portugal is really great [with] simple measures which are applicable in many countries. They don't have much money and we, our government is not really keen on spending on integration (…). Then Czech Republic because we are really close, I mean the same history. Culturally (…) we have this Soviet Union background [and] they made a push to implement the Portuguese system, bring a bit of it into reality and we want to check how they manage to do it, because it's even more comparable to what we might be able to do. (interview 19_GOV)

In some countries, refinement and learning around the OSS was boiled down to single elements of it – one interviewee describes for instance how a central information point was created as a minimal solution to ease access to institutions for migrants. The conditioning factors leading to this constrained implementation are described to be based in (legal) policy and different politico-ad-

ministrative systems[207]. By contrast, in other cases, also implications at a broader scale are considered before implementing an OSS solution. This again only works with peers that are sufficiently close[208].

Nonetheless, learning within the realm of the EIN is not limited to strict peer groups. An example coming from peer group 1 would be local implementations of welcome centres in German cities and a municipal focus on integration over the years. While this is OSS-focused, interestingly, Portugal brought in perspectives beyond the purely administrative setting up of OSSs. This concerned supporting entrepreneurship or how to be culturally more sensitive. The process moved besides the NCPI network and the EIN, but feedback from these implementations or information that these implementations were taking place at all gets back to the originators via the EIN. "In Hamburg, we didn't [initially know about] the project, but they followed the handbook and then came to Portugal. (…) There is no formal means to contact us, but we do get feedback bilaterally and in the network" (interview 6_GOV)[209]. Once more, this underlines the relevance of the EIN as platform. It also supports ideas of how the multi-level embeddedness of network actors is crucial to help the network's governance logic unfold.

Asked directly what would have been different without the EIN, an interviewee described the facilitated interactions and informal exchange including feedbacks taking place on the platform EIN with a clear emphasis on instrumental learning, primarily technical one.

> It's the platform, you need to hear about it in the first place. You need to know where to look, then you can pick up then handbook and do bilateral follow-ups. (…) Some countries [could have gotten] there also without the EIN, because Portugal has been so active, also in other networks. But even then, the EIN is a unique platform [in the sense that] all the information around implementation comes back together and you can see who else was doing it, what

[207] "The branches of the different government offices are door by door. You can, in half a day, get everything done. Down to the local things. You just go next door. For all target groups (…) [Here instead] it's split on a legal basis and this makes it very difficult to centralise things. Refugees are positively discriminated, they have more rights compared to TCNs. (…) The reason we focused on the info point is that we don't have the number [of immigrants] and so they don't have to hand out official documents there, but they can guide you through the process throughout the integration period." (interview 47_GOV)

[208] "Czech Republic is trying these one-stop-shops rather than the policy, legal stuff, but they have also changed a little bit the approach, so I'm really curious in which direction they changed recently. And in Portugal I like a lot, not only one-stop shops it's really how they are embedded into their broader political system, their integration system." (interview 19_GOV)

[209] The Hamburg Welcome Center opened in 2007, with the conception reaching back until 2002 and the idea of an OSS taking form in a 2005 project, essentially following the first best practice collection and later findings from the early stages of the INTI-project. Today, there is regular exchange – for instance with regards to the above mentioned ideas around entrepreneurship – during conference and bilateral interactions, cf. City of Hamburg (2014); EC (2013, 5); IQ Netzwerk (2014); Reis Oliveira (2014).

> issues they had. (…) Since the crisis, you also get the full picture [of member states] again. Study visits just add to that and I think [the Commission] is keen to show that there is more to this [than just OSS-administration]. (interview 27_OTH)

Thus, speaking about soft governance via learning in networks and how specific situational practices facilitate varieties of learning, the above analysis of the Portuguese constellation within the EIN by and large confirms the mechanism proposed in section 7.4. The EIN as a full process platform appears as a necessary condition for learning (not quite sufficient without conduits that associate rather with elevating) – and even some transfer of ideas and steps towards implementation, where updated beliefs translate into actions. There is also some distinction to be drawn between the pre-existing NCPI network and the EIN. More than for the methodology of interactions and learning, the analysis has shown that the re-establishment of the EIN in the crisis context mattered for bringing all partners back in. This allowed higher leverage for the constantly engaged, personally committed Portuguese officials to spread their solution.

Taking this towards a formal EIN study visit was a logical next step, where instrumentally-focused exchange around the OSS was attempted to be complemented by political-learning elements and reflexive instances. The planning of this visit highlighted the informal but crucial role the Commission plays in sustaining and tailoring the perception of Portugal as best-practice solution and adding paradigmatic scale by pushing for direct stakeholder and policy-recipient interactions as a conduit. The Commission also supported Portugal to move beyond purely technical descriptions of the OSS and to include ideas around co-delivery of integration measures, true multi-level and collaborative governance within a country, or socio-cultural inclusion.

For all these innovative practices, Portugal has proven over the years to be an ideal laboratory where the interests of international organisations (including the EU), NGOs and the Portuguese government and administration have been symbiotic. This positive coordination has also systematically been documented, which helped the perception of a trustworthy best practice for instrumental learning. As for the solution itself, building a wider strategy on integration on a delivery system that is centred around the CNAI is interesting as well. It's a modular, politically sensitive solution with an attainable minimum viable product ("some degree of centralisation" and

end-user orientation) that can be ramped up as needed. How this feeds into different degrees of developing the solution further was described with reference to peer grouping. Practices are picked up, tried out in refined fashion for a specific context, fed back into the network and picked up by peers who are more comparable. These iterations concern instrumental learning with significant coverage of political and some symbolic learning motivations, but also instances of reflection about paradigms.

With regards to the literature, this implies two dynamics: the first is the swift illustration of experimentalist governance and an ideal-typical view on iterative refinement of a policy delivery approach, the OSS, and hence an illustration of indirectly wielding governance (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008; 2010). At the same time, it departs from ideal-type experimentalism and a multitude of soft governance through regulation accounts (Blauberger and Rittberger 2015a; 2015b; Héritier and Rhodes 2011; Levi-Faur 2010) in being voluntarily iterated and developed without any hierarchical scope for the Commission. Instead, funding framework fit, external/ expert assessment, individual commitment and constant engagement have played a role in building a laboratory and scope for learning and iterative improvement of the technicalities and the political fit of the solution as well as embeddedness in wider paradigms that contextualise the OSS approach.

The second dynamic builds on these latter components and according conduits and is more nuanced. It concerns a mix of ideational, socio-political, or constructivist elements. This includes the role of individual actors building trusted relationships with each other, with the Portuguese officials taking a proactive approach. Several of the citations above have described initial doubts or even suspicion when first hearing about the OSS and Portuguese performance. Interviewees perceived iterations of contact making among policy experts and then going and exploring the solution on the ground as vital for eliminating these trust problems. Informality of interactions during study visits tied in with that – and this departs from the overarching view of mechanism in play, which locates professional, trusted interactions rather with platforming. Yet, in the case of Portugal, elevating and platforming appear connected and iterated at a high frequency, moving

trust building primarily into bilateral exchanges, often on the ground. The role of actively furthering these interactions was significantly influenced by the network manager Commission, but also by joint engagement of the network member Portugal. This links back into contextual factors and peer grouping. Building rapport and trust is easier within a specific in-group. Examples like the Czech Republic adopting the OSS approach that subsequently developed more traction in CEE countries show how socially sensitive learning can be and that gateways between cultural silos are crucial for network efficiency.

9 LEARNING ABOUT SWEDISH COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

The Swedish case study is another plausibility probe for how varieties of learning come about and contribute to administrative governance. The overarching analysis of mechanisms in play has identified two interacting ideal-type situational practices through which the Commission supports administrators' learning and activates specific mechanistic conduits: (recurrent) platforming and (iterative) elevating. The Portugal constellation evidenced technical exchange regarding a specific policy instrument and a historically-sequenced and long-term practice of learning about this instrument. This emphasised instrumental learning and conduits that associate with platforming. Chapter 9 explores how learning about the Swedish integration governance system was enacted in an accelerated form. This is located rather on the elevating side and according conduits. It explores a study visit with strong involvement of a bottom-up refugee initiative, Support Group Network. Overall, this emphasises direct experience on the ground and learning conduits such as emotional charging, informal interactions, and a mixing of stakeholders which associate with paradigmatic learning beyond technicalities of instruments.

Like Portugal, Sweden is a "high performer" whose strategic and practical view on integration aligns with instrumental and paradigmatic Commission perspectives. Both countries are also amongst the more active ones within the EIN and are well-connected gateways to other countries – Portugal to the CEE countries, Sweden to Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, the Nordics, and the Baltic states. This meant getting involved strongly in agenda setting and activity planning by the Commission. It also implied being used as hosts for study visits with expected amplifying functions into their respective peer groups and generally playing a role in activating conduits towards learning, jointly – if not always purposively – with the Commission.

9.1 MECHANISM CONTEXT

The ensuing subsections provide background on Swedish integration policy and recent problems that triggered a paradigm shift towards collaborative governance responses which subsequently spread in the EIN. The subsections also explore the political and institutional framework as catalyst of the conduit peer grouping.

9.1.1 SWEDISH INTEGRATION POLICY – HIGH AMBITION, MAJOR CHALLENGES

Historically, Sweden's migration and integration system is large in numbers – a quarter of Sweden's population is foreign born – yet considered successful and focused on active integration (Andersson and Weinar 2014; MIPEX 2015a). Moreover, to this day, the government, down to its municipalities, is committed to a positive view on migration (EP DG Internal Policies 2018, 26; Ydrén 2017). Since the 1960s, a social democratic consensus assumed migrants' opportunities should equal those of Swedish-born citizens within a universal-type welfare state. Over the 1980s and 90s, the system was tightened up and multicultural ideals and dedicated policies were substituted by a strategic approach of mainstreaming integration, covering the topic within various ministries' portfolios (Jørgensen 2011; Parusel 2015).

Even before the migration crisis, Sweden received more refugees per capita than any other developed country. The country subsequently reduced policy provisions to standards set by EU directives and provided only temporary residence permits. Sweden exhibited signs of "overburdening and fatigue" in major institutions[210] and "serious bottlenecks in the reception system" (EP DG Internal Policies 2018, 26). At the same time labour market integration programmes were strengthened and considered the epitome of integration[211]. However, results have been sobering: in 2018 unemployment of immigrants (~22%) was more than five times as high as for the Swedish-born population (~4%). Employed immigrants also tend to end up in positions they are overqualified for (Collett 2011, 17; EIN 2017b; EP DG Internal Policies 2018, 26; Roden 2017).

Alongside employment, language acquisition and practical questions like housing dominate the Swedish integration discourse (EP DG Internal Policies 2018; Parusel 2016, 12–13)[212]. Since 2010, this resonates in municipal integration courses that are key for getting social benefits and

[210] Migration Agency, Employment Service, police, municipalities.

[211] Starting with the economic slowdown in 2009, investment in labour market integration has been growing, cf. Collett (2011, 17). The relevance of employment is a reason why integration is located under the Ministry of Employment (together with Justice); the Ministry of Justice steers asylum process, settlement, management/expenditures, Migration Agency, AMIF-funds; the Ministry of Employment covers labour market integration, management of new arrivals incl. authority of the Public Employment Service and European Social Fund. Other Ministries are involved via ministerial inter-service consultations.

[212] Rather than abstract topics like "values", see Parusel (2016, 12–13).

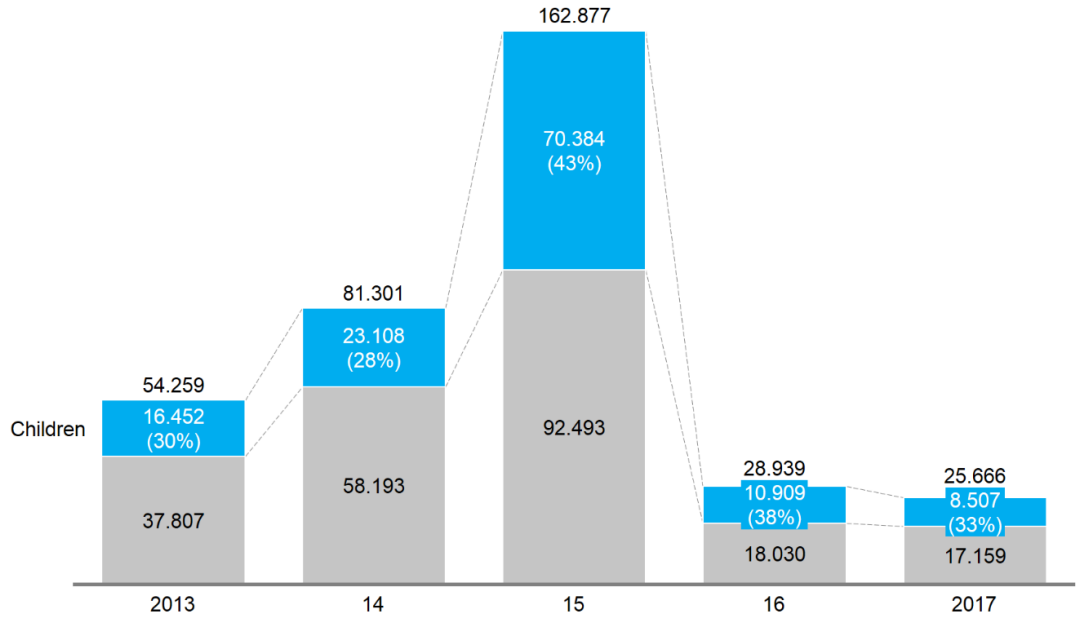
employment[213]. There is more happening at the local level as municipalities are the primary actors in delivering policy (Region Västra Götaland 2017). Interviewees emphasised that domestic networks are "arranged for us within municipalities, they coordinate NGOs and even volunteers and help to connect us with other local networks" (Interview 13_OTH). Subsequently, municipalities feed successful approaches to regions for further sharing (Interviews 8_OTH, 13_OTH, 14_GOV).

In the past, it was attempted to distribute immigrants across municipalities, also remote ones with ageing populations and emigration issues. However, over the 2000s, these same municipalities struggled to provide jobs, which led to a return to overcrowded suburbs (Parusel 2015). The distribution approach has been softened today, but municipalities across Sweden still receive (unevenly distributed) immigrants. This aligns with housing issues, even in remote areas (Andersson and Weinar 2014; Parusel 2015). Therefore, asylum seekers often stay for longer than required in the Swedish Migration Agency's reception centres. Even after being granted asylum, there is a lack of apartments that the Agency can rent (EP DG Internal Policies 2018).

With the migration crisis, all the above has been amplified. About 650.000 asylum seekers arrived between 2000 and 2015, but almost half of them since 2013, and about 160.000 in 2015 alone (Figure 6 below). Unlike other countries, Sweden did not at that time test for age, which likely contributed to a high number of children asylum seekers. 30% of children were unaccompanied in 2014 and this number spiked at 50% in 2015, which required care homes for 35.000 children, primarily teenagers and, to a ratio of 5:1, boys (Migrationsverket 2018b). Already in 2014, Andersson and Weinar (2014) noted that municipalities in charge of refugee reception face a shortage of places for unaccompanied children. Since 2015, this has become hardly tenable, in particular in suburbs (Roden 2017). Mölndal, a Gothenburg suburb, received for instance several thousand unaccompanied children on a population of ~60.000 in 2015.

[213] They cover the language but also socio-political knowledge. Likewise, education, training and active job placement incl. apprenticeship and internship facilitation are supported via programmes where the state partly funds salaries.

Figure 6: Number of Asylum Applications in Sweden



Source: Migrationsverket 2018b; own analysis and illustration

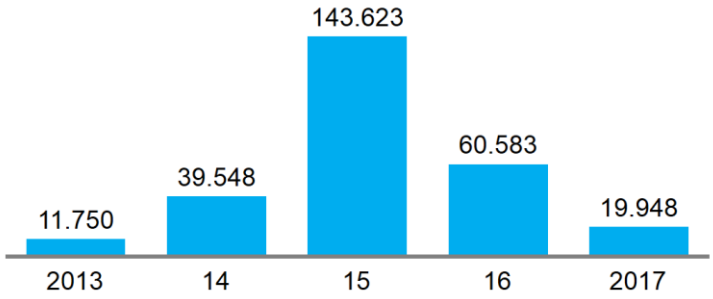
In Swedish public discourse, this has led to a shift (EP DG Internal Policies 2018, 24ff.). Newspapers have started to report about challenges of integration. In reports, murder and gang crime, often committed by young, male adults are increasingly being related to ghettoisation and the ethnicity of offenders, a perceived link previously off-limits. Meanwhile, the Oresund bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen introduced border controls, visibly for thousands of commuters (Lifvendahl 2016; Orange 2016). Besides shifting media sentiment, there is also rising support for a radical right-wing party that received about 18% in the 2018 general election, further tightening up policy responses (EP DG Internal Policies 2018, 28ff.; Roden 2017)[214].

In this climate, struggling Swedish public administration was not able to ramp up its handling of asylum procedures (Figure 7 below). In 2015, there was a significant backlog of decisions on asylum applications. Only about 60.000 decisions were taken that year, almost the same as before the crisis. Asylum was granted in about half the cases, triggering deportation schemes that the Migration Agency could not deliver on. Over the year 2016, the Agency tripled the amount of decisions taken to 15.000 per month, while the average handling time for a case went up to one

[214] Attitudes towards immigrants had been hardening since the financial crisis, cf. Collett (2011, 17); Jørgensen (2011).

year. The handling time further increased throughout 2017, up to almost two years (Migrationsverket 2018b). With a slowly normalising situation, in 2018, there were still open cases[215] and the Agency started shifting capacities to judicial review, returns, and detention. Since 2017, the Agency also restructures, standardises case processes, upgrades IT systems and downscales personnel (EIN 2017b, 11–12; Migrationsverket 2018a).

Figure 7: Cumulative Number of Open Asylum Cases in Sweden



Source: Migrationsverket 2018b; running total current year + previous year; own illustration

The backlog had at least two implications. On the one hand, capacities for case handling were shifted from other departments, which led to a flat number of work permits granted to those receiving asylum[216] (Migrationsverket 2018b). Only in a few hundred cases, this translated to permanent employment – the crucial first step of integration into Swedish society could arguably be considered to be failing (EP DG Internal Policies 2018; Roden 2017)[217]. On the other hand, the high number of pending cases meant that in 2015, 181.000 individuals were living at Migration Agency facilities. The number decreased but still stands at ~1% of the population (Migrationsverket 2018b). In sum, challenges of cultural and labour market integration, and housing – all considered paradigmatic for the Swedish system – have been growing. Most of this happens within overburdened municipalities:

> For 2 years it's the state that pays for everything, then it's the municipality that is responsible for its own citizens. At that point, this sounds rough to say, but, they can be a cost or they can be taxpayers. Either they are supported, or they can start working. That's why it's so important

[215] About 30.000, 2/3 of which from previous years and expected to receive a decision in 2018. 95% of cases from 2015 were settled by mid-2018, 99% expected by the end of 2018.

[216] About 12.000 in 2014, 13.000 in 2015 and 2016, and 15.000 in 2017

[217] Evidence from previous years hints at a need of up to 10 years for achieving even ~60% employment levels among immigrants. There are "fast track" programmes in place for immigrants with good skills or education levels, however, even here, permanent employment upon completion of the programme is not guaranteed.

> that people get into society and for municipalities it's a massive challenge, so even if the arrivals, this acute phase of 2015 is not as difficult anymore, it's what happens after these 2 years [that matters]. (Interview 8_OTH)

This statement provides the context for initiatives of Support Group Network and the elevation of their ideas from municipal and NGO circuits to EIN best practice. It is importantly a case where instrumental fixing of problems appeared insufficient to deal with the challenges at hand. The case illustrates how the EIN actively used the opportunity to showcase an advanced collaborative governance system defined by policy co-delivery of municipality and benefit-recipients which emerged in the crisis. It is an illustration of multi-level governance and, to some degree, of experimentalism within confined laboratories, here, refugee camps.

9.1.2 SUPPORT GROUP NETWORK'S COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE RESPONSE

This subsection describes the paradigmatic collaborative governance approach that Support Group Network (SGN) came up with – it is the content of what the Commission later promoted within the EIN. The approach emerged in the Västra Götaland[218] region, when in 2014 a self-help group of immigrants formed at privately managed Restad Gård[219], Sweden's biggest refugee camp, hosting more than 1.300 refugees. They wanted to tackle passivity of refugees (Region Västra Götaland 2017, 18) and broader issues with the reception system:

> I was shocked by the system here. The reception system almost collapsed. (…) They built refugee camps, far away from the city in the woods. You need three to four hours to [get there. There's] no transportation and then waiting times for [asylum] decisions have become very long, a year and a half, two years. (…) It's like an open prison. You can get out, but your daily allowance in not enough to get a bus ticket. And even if you have money, there's no bus. (Interview 13_OTH)

Being one of the self-help group's co-founders, the interviewee emphasised how being in "total isolation [without] Swedish education and (…) an understanding about the system" makes people lose all "energy and motivation and allows bad ideas, based on rumours, false claims" (Interview 13_OTH). The self-help group was triggered by these negative experiences: refugees started to

[218] West Gotland. The region around Gothenburg. One of 25 regions, home to ~10% of the Swedish population.

[219] The private-run but public-funded operator brings together public, private and third-sector services in a campus-like setting argued to have a critical mass of residents and suppliers for cost-effectiveness and quality, cf. Region Västra Götaland (2017).

"instead of waiting for [help, gather] people with skills and organise activities"[220]. Based on first-hand experiences, the group turned this into a vision of shaping refugee policy and delivery – and started to approach organisations delivering refugee help at that moment. They explained that "this approach of 'oh they need kindness, [they] are traumatised, and now social institutions will come up with nice activities and projects and interventions is making people angry and passive (…) because it attacks their identity (…) and self-esteem" (Interview 13_OHT). Also, "bad migrants, kids in particular, are created from the first day in the country" (Interview 53_OTH). Initially, reactions both on the public side but also from major NGOs were negative and described as "paranoid", but once more and more volunteers and local authorities got involved, traction for self-organised workshops increased (Interviews 8_OTH, 13_OTH, 14_GOV).

For instance, the group organised public shows of culture, food, and fashion from their home countries. Within one week the event was moved from the camp to the city and local politicians and authorities inquired about ways of helping the group. This came down to "resources, networks, and information (…) to spread the concept" (Interview 8_OTH). They hired interviewee 13_OTH for spreading the concept to five camps per year – though within a year already 15 camps were running the scheme. The project received the region's human rights award and was one of two chosen for national rollout as best practice in Sweden, received media attention with a visit of the King and was subsequently uploaded on international exchange platforms. Now, formerly sceptical NGOs got involved in supporting the group, which by 2016 had become a formal network, SGN (Interviews 14_GOV, 31_EU). As the pace shows, SGN contributed a positive story for the public sector to build on and a package of instrumental solutions that addressed perceived paradigmatic challenges.

In terms of impact, the network's activities have led to immigrants finding temporary jobs and building links to Swedish society[221] and – arguably at paradigmatic scale – have helped de-

[220] They identified "forty medical doctors, 58 teachers, hundreds of entrepreneurs, craftsman (…) and a lot of people without education but with a vision that [was getting] killed" (Interview 13_OTH).

[221] e.g. schemes for meeting employers over a coffee, delivered together with the public employment service.

victimising the camps' inhabitants (Ydrén 2017). Most of these improvements are qualitative and hard to measure (EIN 2017b, 9), but various interviewees reported a wealth of small examples that sum up to a strong message of coordination and cooperation between public, private, and third sector[222]. Interviewees also confirmed that this is driven by SGN as prime example of a re-energised "Swedish way" of policy-making and delivery[223].

Today, SGN has a fourfold mission of (1) empowering initiative taking by refugees, (2) cooperating with initiatives that share their ideals, (3) helping local civil society to connect with local support groups, and (4) contributing to society with active citizenship. In practice, this comes down to supporting initiatives on the ground in forming local support groups, in particular at temporary refugee residences, and advocacy *vis-à-vis* the public sector, acting as an umbrella for various associations and individuals supporting refugees. This increasingly shifts from camps into cities and further into enabling transitions into society and the job market instead of just having a meaningful waiting time at the camps (Support Group Network 2018; Ydrén 2017).

Not least, SGN representatives have taken the initiative to spread their approach beyond domestic circuits. The main supporters being the NGO Save the Children, implementing the approach in refugee camps in the Middle East, and the region Västra Götaland, which has become vocal about their formerly "local" success story, producing YouTube reports, articles and sharing the approach across international cooperation fora (Ydrén 2017). This is also how the approach

[222] All refugee-related government services formally and informally cooperate with SGN (incl. municipality, region, police, Migration Agency and Employment service) – as do various companies, employers' associations, state-run businesses and NGOs. Despite challenges, migrant organisations have traditionally been involved in Swedish integration policy – formally, e.g. for municipal language courses, or informally, in festivals or cultural activities. Hence, they have well-structured relationships with municipalities, regions, domestic and international NGOs, cf. Andersson and Weinar (2014, 11–12). The same applies to social researchers, who are key in defining Sweden's political agenda in migration and possess strong ties to the public sector, cf. Jørgensen (2011); Entzinger and Scholten (2015).

[223] The following quote illustrates an impact story: "Their initiatives involve so many people on so many different levels (…) you can't really estimate the impact, but it feels huge for us as policy makers and the migration authorities agree [for instance,] our folk schools lack [Arabic speaking] teachers all over Sweden (…) and the municipality next to their camp as well. Now, they found a lot of former teachers at the camp and wanted to get them to help as assistant teachers. [But] without Swedish ID you can't be checked [on the police registry] and work for a school. And as asylum seekers the story could have ended there. They can't do it. Instead they did. They met with the municipality and the police and came up with the idea to treat teachers like tourists who lost their passport, [which] allowed searches in international data bases. (…) This creative problem solving, refugees together with the authorities, this way of cooperating is what they have taught us. (…) Now, this method is recommended by the Swedish association of municipalities and implemented across Sweden." (Interview 8_OTH)

got taken to the Commission which saw an adaptable instrumental model tackling the crisis context, well aligned to their paradigmatic policy priorities, yet remaining within the EIN's scope of helping member states with operational questions instead of policies and legislation. How exactly the discourse moved onto the platform EIN and was transformed into a learning experience for member states with diverging policy-delivery paradigms is explored below.

9.1.3 IMPLICATIONS

Table 13 below summarises main implications of the context above – the core takeaway being the shaping of peer groups on a range of dimensions (integration performance, integration approach, political-administrative setting). There is also some evidence for platforming and anticipating later elevating (incl. activation of according conduits based on commitment of officials given professional ethos and propensity for third-sector involvement). The following sections move through stages of the EIN networking and particularly the elevating process of a study visit, highlighting how SGN moved within the network to facilitate varieties of learning, not least paradigmatic one.

Table 15: Implications of Institutional and Policy Environment

CASE PROPERTY	IMPLICATION AND CONNECTED CONDUITS	
Former best-in-class example of integration struggling with crisis and socio-political climate	"Even Sweden" mentality across peers, i.e. making Swedish approach more relatable/ attainable Comparability with countries performing relatively well (Germany, Netherlands, Nordics) or struggling with recent arrivals (Austria, Germany)	Peer grouping
Strong municipalities and civil society; society building on social democratic values	Comparability with countries with multi-level governance tradition (e.g. Germany) or similar policy emphases, e.g. labour-market integration	
Support by EU and peers for being a country not shying away from challenges	Despite heavy challenges, externally evaluated and accepted best practice with sustained Commission support for spreading according ideas	Professional ethos and trust
Firm belief of officials on any level (including municipalities, regions) that Sweden can both learn abroad and should share approaches	Buy-in into ideas of mutual learning beyond top-level officials triggers exchanges across levels, countries, and sectors (beyond EIN), which kick-starts elevating by the Commission (idea generation, provision of "practice partners")	
SGN activities fit needs of several other countries and are a modern governance solution in line with Commission strategy	Policy solutions building on enablement and self-help as swift solution for engaging governance layers that are close to the ground, including signalling component that "something is done"; solution also works irrespective of a country's migration policy Accordingly, SGN is featured as an ideal illustration for the Commission's strategic ambition	Stakeholder mix
SGN and Swedish public-sector commitment to sharing learnings bottom-up	Politico-administrative backing and support for bringing SGN into international exchanges and networks, also cutting across typical hierarchies and interaction layers	

Source: own analysis based on interviews and background data

9.2 GRADUAL EMERGENCE OF SGN INTO EIN CIRCUITS – THE ROLE OF PLATFORMING AND ASSOCIATED CONDUITS

This subsection and the subsequent one probe expectations (Chapter 3, section 4.4) and overarching findings (Chapters 6 and 7, section 7.4) with a particular emphasis on situational practices and the associated conduits that drive a process of learning. Table 16 below summarises platforming, associated conduits and then purposive elevation of platform interactions into EIN circuits. In contrast to the case study on Portugal, exploring a multiannual platforming practice, this case study emphasises the quick move of the Swedish model from the platform to a concrete, Commission-run study visit with an emphasis on deeper, paradigmatic learning.

Table 16: Platforming: Entities and Activities, Conduits, and Implications

STEP	ENTITY AND ACTIVITY	CONDUITS	IMPLICATION
	[Externality] migration crisis intensifies interactions of pre-existing, EU-supported regional cooperation, here: within peer pair Germany-Sweden; involved COM consultants hint at beacon EIN	Crisis context; peer grouping	Administrative need for exchanging practical ideas on integration measures on the ground[224] International exchange around approach grants weight to best practice character of SGN activities Regional officials encouraged to elevate practices to the EIN through the echelons of bureaucracy
1	EU-oriented regional officials *take pride* in solution of SGN that they have supported and *push* along multi-level governance chain towards EIN platform	Stakeholder involvement; Professional trust; partly informality	Strong insistence on using Västra Götaland and SGN as case in point for Swedish model and EIN as launchpad in support of European solidarity in integration Push builds on trusted relationship of officials within Sweden, personal links to Brussels, and incentives within Västra Götaland to showcase a success story
2	Given excellent strategic fit, the Commission *pulls* Swedish proposal and SGN into the EIN, shaping the network agenda	Stakeholder involvement; partly peer grouping	Commission pursues agenda more strongly by building also on Sweden's organisational resources Knowledge-orientation of the network shaped towards modern collaborative governance and stakeholder involvement, which are crucial for COM integration views Instrumental learning orientation opened for broad group of member states: best-in-class case within peer group of high-performing or struggling countries (Germany, Austria, Italy) and beacon for less exposed ones (e.g. CEE)
3	The Commission *brings SGN* to Brussels for EIN meeting (pre-study visit) and *directly involves SGN* at further interactions that take place across Europe (study visit and post-study visit)	Stakeholder involvement; professional trust; partly emotional charging; partly informality	Pre-study visit: involving third parties at EIN meeting builds momentum for subsequent instrument study visit and signals level shift in how the EIN is working Study visit: see elevating; SGN strongly featured Post-study visit: SGN enhances solution and strengthens position *vis-à-vis* Swedish policy makers as best practice that COM is promoting across the EU; interactions underline COMs aspiration to position EIN as beacon for stakeholders; COM ensures opportunities to re-engage with SGN after study visit, sustaining paradigmatic learning

Source: own analysis based on interviews and background data

[224] e.g. language courses, welcome centres, NGO involvement.

Step 1

The first couple of steps (*Externality; Step 1*) can be appreciated as a well-working multi-level governance dynamic, crucially working through network-external stakeholders as a conduit. On the ground, the region explored and tested a new policy delivery approach. Next, the region is made aware of this approach's strategic fit with the EU-wide framework on integration and accordingly starts moving the ideas up the echelons of domestic and European bureaucracy. Essentially, the platform EIN soaked up a tested best-practice exchange that was originating from the regional level. Here, Västra Götaland (Sweden), Scotland (UK), Tuscany (Italy) and Baden-Württemberg (Germany) were cooperating through a European learning programme[225] and intensified this cooperation in migrant integration in the wake of the 2015 crisis. This was based on a functional logic of "Sweden [being] very good at language training and Germany seemed better at integration to work and fast tracking" (Interview 8_OTH). In March 2016 the city of Gothenburg and Västra Götaland region went to Stuttgart and "immediately copied the setup of welcome centres" (Interview 8_OTH) for two municipalities in Västra Götaland (EIN 2017b). Stuttgart authorities[226] then returned the visit and came to Sweden where the study visit took them to meet SGN at Restad Gård.

The way SGN worked there was perceived as a level shift in activities within this type of camp and provided the practice with weight as an idea worth sharing (Interview 5_EU, 8_OTH, 13_OTH, 14_GOV). At that stage a participating "consultant for the Commission [asked whether] the Commission was aware of this [initiative]" (Interview 8_OTH). Other visiting delegations were also hinting at the EIN (Interview 13_OTH) and the region's representatives unaware of the EIN tried to find a contact point at the Commission via the Swedish representation. Professional pride and background, some informal space for exchange, and multi-level embeddedness played a significant, conducive role: here, this regards a mix of European-level and (sub-)national work experience in an individual's professional career – one local-level actor described that "formerly

[225] European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL)

[226] A broad group of Ministry, PES, integration units, the head of integration policy, and welcome centre members.

being based in Brussels has really shaped how I look at international cooperation (…) what can we learn from others, what can we teach others, what can we contribute. I did want to push this project" (Interview 8_OTH). Meanwhile, several other involved actors had also worked both for the Commission or in Brussels and for national and third sector organisations. In short, individual European perspectives created a bottom-up yet coordinated national push out of Sweden into the network. And a push that was skipping the normal national coordination layer, hence the Swedish national contact point on integration.

> The region saw [SGN] as a best example for Sweden and brought us to the EIN and other groups. (…) Whenever someone came to the region, they [brought] them to talk to us and hear this voice of empowerment (…) They obviously used us to show that they did well, but they were also really proud. [Visitor groups from Germany, France and Norway] came and had access to see what we do in the refugee camps and suggested to do also something at the EIN. (…) They helped us move abroad. (Interview 13_OTH)

Step 2

Next, SGN was invited to present their approach at the first EIN meeting in October 2016[227]. At this point in time, the EIN had just been re-established and SGN presented itself as a welcome approach to share on (a) a knowledge dimension (technical, instrumental learning), planting a seed that matched strategic aspirations of broad stakeholder involvement, which the Commission had formulated, and (b) an organisational, internally-focused dimension because it illustrated how the Commission wanted the new EIN to work. That is, through less formalised, direct, open and frank interactions, emotional charging, and concrete, practical examples directly tackling the crisis context. Not least, SGN was coming from Sweden, which supported both dimensions. A survey within the network had already identified the country as best-in-class performer that network members wanted to approach for the first study visit, so the content-level interest was widespread and mattered for various peer groups (EIN 2017b)[228]. And on the organisational dimension, not only was SGN a nice illustration of aspired "platforming" but coming from Sweden, a committed member of the network with significant size, also helped in working with dedicated sub-national officials

[227] Formally, the presentation was done by EARALL, which brought SGN as "witness", cf. EIN (2016a).

[228] Crisis context and problems in Sweden had made the country's practices appear more attainable.

investing the necessary time and resources in getting SGN to Brussels (and at later elevating, the EIN to Sweden).

As the last platforming component (*Step 3*), the Commission started directly interacting with SGN, after initiating the contact – once more – without further involvement of national-level Swedish officials. Only regional officials as institutional partner of SGN remained involved, often facilitating contacts jointly with the Commission. This is an insightful dynamic because it underscores how the Commission can exert influence in a nation state without formally transgressing into the state or involving national-level authorities. By positioning actors responsible for policy delivery as intermediaries and skipping the national policy layer, knowledge can be exchanged and a baseline be established on which more strategically oriented, deep learning can take place. This moves beyond the logic described in the overarching analysis and supports notions of steering and agenda control for the Commission. As a first interaction, SGN …

> (…) got a slot at the EIN in Brussels for 10 minutes (…) they were meeting from 8 o'clock that day and after meeting for 10 hours they were tired, everyone was like 'switched off' (…) but then we really changed the [discourse] and experience of that meeting, this power [of] having a refugee there. Now, when I meet them, they tell me, they remember how they woke up. The conversation was then 12 minutes, then they asked me to continue and by the end of the session they were like – 'we need to go there'. (Interview 13_OTH)

In short, information-focused orientation – i.e. SGN exists and runs smoothly – already started being combined with less technical exchanges focusing on deeper belief-structures. This created momentum and interest in the study visit but also supported the basic, yet more paradigmatic idea that "stakeholders matter". At least to some degree, interviewees from the network and Swedish domestic circuits also showed a "halo"-tendency (Kahneman 2011), hence being highly impressed by the personal encounter with SGN activists and using this positive perception as a cognitive shortcut when considering what to make of the content-level messages (likely, this was also linked to conducive emotional messages coming from the activists).

Step 3

Subsequently, it became clear how ideas flow through the conduit of trusted, individual relationships among professional peers into specific third countries. A conference organised by France

Bénévolat in January 2017 for a French audience provides according pattern evidence, thus specific overlapping timelines and participants. An interviewee highlighted that "it's usually the same professionals and you start building a connection" (Interview 31_EU). The meeting coordinator for France Bénévolat was a consultant with EARALL, which had organised interactions between Stuttgart and Västra Götaland previously. SGN had also received a visit by French officials already. Furthermore, the Commission representation in France sent an official who was also in charge of the EIN. The Västra Götaland region presented together with one of the founders of SGN, while the Stuttgart Commissioner for Integration did yet another joint presentation with another SGN member. Meanwhile, Norwegian authorities were present and establishing links to all these actors (France Bénévolat 2017).

About a month later, the breakout from the platform EIN into a study visit brought together several of the above-mentioned actors again. Following the study visit, learning returned to the platform when "the head of the EIN contacted us a few times when they were trying to help others within the member states [with] refugee input or (…) inspiration" (Interview 13_OTH). Like the described event, representatives took the opportunity to feed domestic discussions off the platform. One interviewee described that "we got them here, a couple of times [by] now, and it's just an amazing story that helps us to build momentum, also in our administration, our teams here can see a success story" (Interview 44_GOV). This can be described as a sustaining and amplifying element of learning after the study visit, both in terms of a simple reminder and reflexivity or reframing of information within more personalised stories. Participants would re-engage with SGN while also spreading their views further, touring around conferences in Europe and focusing on an inspirational story beyond pure facts and figures. This has also been described as a longer running interaction, showing how an iterative excurse in the form of a study visit becomes sustained:

> We've been in touch with Norway, back and forth with the migration ministry and those in the EIN and I was there two weeks ago, they are now changing their whole concept of reception centres to adapt our ideas of empowerment and self-[organisation]. (Interview 13_OTH)
>
> The interactions with Stuttgart kept going of course, you would start with the general empowerment ideas and now we are also talking specific approaches to [tackle] isolation of [unaccompanied] children. (Interview 53_OTH)

The EIN fits the platform idea not only from the vista of member states. SGN touring across Europe underlines the logic of being an access point for public or third-sector initiatives from within member states. This implies an opportunity structure to spread ideas and gain information[229], but also signal privileged access to information and people and through that domestic leverage.

> The EIN interactions [are] a big resource for us. In terms of information and knowledge (…) and when you talk to different organisations, or you talk to the government actors, it gives you (…) credibility, people listen more. They even help you to know who is doing what in your region, you are often blind otherwise, or the others are blind and don't see what [your initiative is] doing. (Interview 53_OTH)

This describes a two-way process in which the EIN would demand specific proofs of impact to underscore the inspirational story with data in future interactions, but at the same time help facilitating links to further actors and getting the data[230]. Summing up, gradual interactions and the situational setup of "platforming" focused more on preparing study visits and bilateral interactions with deeper, reflexive, and paradigmatic learning aspirations than spreading technical ideas on how to implement the Swedish welcome centre approach. However, the learning goal "collaborative governance" can well be considered more than a technical solution anyway. Moderate emotional charging and direct interactions to build professional trust and ties early on the platform appear like a necessary component of knowledge-oriented, instrumental learning.

9.3 ACCELERATED LEARNING AND COMPOUNDING OF SOCIAL EXPERIENCES – THE ROLE OF ELEVATING AND ASSOCIATED CONDUITS

This subsection moves through the learning format of a study visit, an instrument used for the first time by the EIN in Sweden. The instrument is organised as an accelerated process launched from the platform EIN and one where facilitated learning targets core values in the direction of collaborative forms of managing integration rather than merely exchanging thin, instrumental information and knowledge about managing refugee camps. An interviewee argued:

> I had two persons saying, 'thank you that you brought us from our office to face the reality'. And everyone, I think, had also some reports, some evidence out of this visit. But [primarily]

[229] EWSI was named as source of information by several third sector interviewees (e.g. 13_OTH, 17_OTH, 34_OTH).

[230] Västra Götaland and an NGO came in: "The EIN has actually asked us to back up our work with research to prove real impact and Save the Children is obviously very interested as well, like how or if our idea could be applicable in refugee camps in Greece, Italy, even in Africa? So, the region gave funds to three universities to start this research and at the same time Save the Children hired an expert." (Interview 13_OTH)

> they say it was a life-changing experience, [it] challenged how we think [about integration]. Everyone agreed on this life-changing aspect. (Interview 13_OTH)

The full range of proposed conduits comes into play at various process stages. They are explored in their respective roles as triggers, amplifiers, or sustainers of the learning process. This includes interactions (and re-shuffling) of peer groups and professionals, the informality of exchange – also with network externals as part of the delegations – or emotional charging of messages. Stakeholder involvement (i.e. SGN, the region, and the delegations) is present almost as a baseline enabler throughout. Table 17 below summarises the analysis.

Table 17: Elevating: Entities and Activities, Conduits, and Implications

STEP	ENTITY AND ACTIVITY	CONDUITS	IMPLICATION
1	Region and Commission *align on featuring* SGN on the agenda, given strategic fit and overlapping interests	Professional trust; Stakeholder involvement	Time spent in Västra Götaland instead of Stockholm, closer to delivery activities instead of legalistic circuits Even policy-related sessions allude to stakeholder involvement and collaborative governance
	Commission *proposes* study group compositions of "twinned" delivery actors and NGOs for each country delegation		Actor diversity ensures vivid exchange and alternative views Delivery-focused actors translate what is observed on the ground, amplify observations in informal interactions, sustain learning after the visit Delivery actors take impetus back home and focus directly implementable, operational insights
2	Delivery actors, namely SGN, *present* their work on the ground, including face-to-face interactions with refugees	Stakeholder involvement; emotional charging; informality	Operational focus of experiences allows understanding of implementation challenges; discussions focus on smoothness of delivery and practical questions rather than legal frameworks Participants receive emotionally charged messages and information including systemic perceptions based on operational experiences, here, they follow a heuristic of substituting systemic questions with easier ones, i.e. what they see working on the ground as a concrete practice
	Member-state representatives and further study visit participants *discuss and engage* informally around their experiences	Stakeholder involvement; informality; professional trust; peer grouping; partly emotional charging	Gradual peer pressure emerges as experiences are amplified by interactions within and across delegations Emotional experiences provide trigger for departing from government positions in informal conversations and broadens solution approaches considered by officials Personal interactions re-shuffle typical peer groups; comparative dynamics (peer pressure) and explorative dynamics (orientation within alternate systems) take place in parallel
3	Representatives *interact* with SGN bilaterally and exchange views among each other	Stakeholder involvement; informality; professional trust; peer grouping; partly emotional charging	Visit participants within and across delegations reach out to each other after the visit to discuss potential activities Mindset shifts sustained by follow-up interactions with SGN; secondary emotional charging as representatives use emotional messages in domestic circuits following the study visit
	Commission *ensures further, gradual engagement* of SGN in contexts besides EIN	See platforming	

Source: own analysis based on interviews and background data

Step 1

To start with, the preparation of the study visit matters. Usually, at this stage the Commission proposes learning goals or highlights areas of interest and then hands over the operational planning of the visit to the host country. Here, this practice differed as the Commission was approached by a region within Sweden in the first place (i.e. essentially an EIN stakeholder). This solved a bit of a contradiction in how the Commission manages the elevating process. While the Commission had encouraged top performers to propose visits[231], focussing on these countries also implies almost too perfect settings being portrayed or a beauty contest between member states[232]. Also, interacting with a member state moves discussions at least somewhat into the legalistic sphere, more remote from where policy hits the ground. In Sweden, the Commission could show both a best-in-class case, nicely built around the CBPs and wider strategic thinking of the Commisison, but also operational challenges emerging for stakeholders within this case. Stakeholder involvement hence became conducive to broader instrumental learning and enabled a paradigmatic learning dimension. This was done by inviting the region and SGN to the EIN meeting, but the initiative for a study visit then had to come from a member state. Here, the Commission leveraged the region, the representative explaining that…

> I personally had to do a lot of lobbying towards the Swedish ministry of employment, because the initiative couldn't come from the Commission – and then they said ok let's have one day in Stockholm, one day in Västra Götaland and I was like, no no, we need two days here. Two days, lights on what we do, that helps us internally in the future, also for a region to show the national level what you do and then there is the European idea of sharing and learning. (Interview 8_OTH)

Other interviewees (11_GOV, 5_EU, 21_EU) confirmed that this perspective was in line with Commission priorities that did not emphasise high-level policy but rather ground-level experiential learning with a reflexive twist beyond instrumental information provision and stakeholder involvement.

[231] Building on demand within the network to see the "best in class" but also on the simple need of organisational resources to prepare a visit, which are only available in some countries ,as well as a required strategic and operational alignment with the Commission's ideal of collaborative governance in integration.

[232] "The visit can feel a bit like an exposition (…) all nicely arranged (…) in Sweden though, I felt that being away from Stockholm helped in getting sincere perspectives." (Interview 28_GOV)

> We did plan to plant a seed by just showing a country where policy design is more creative and a whole range of stakeholders are involved and help to draw out and deliver [the policy.] When the region came up with the concept, that [was] a perfect match. (Interview 5_EU)

The study visit to Västra Götaland was the first mutual learning activity on the ground conducted via the new EIN. The learning emphasis was planned to be around the technical and political aspects of tight coordination and cooperation of stakeholders across governance levels (local, regional, national) and sectors (public, private, third sector) (EIN 2017b; 2017; Region Västra Götaland 2017). This was contextualised with paradigmatic thoughts and facilitating reflexivity of administrators. The two-day programme featured an accordingly strong emphasis on direct interactions with actors delivering integration policy in Sweden as well as policy recipients, i.e. migrants and refugees, in the region organised by SGN.

> The goal was, and what participants took away: all these different levels and organisations or authorities working, thinking, delivering together. And this is not something that happens by chance or by hazard. It's what everyone is dedicated to. (Interview 8_OTH)
>
> This [visit] was about the systemic aspect of coordinated integration policy, it's not about single organisations but consistent delivery, across [organisational] boundaries, and from the recipients' perspective. (Interview 5_EU)

These learning goals were supported by the design of the learning instrument itself. First, before the visit, the Commission proposed a composition of mini-delegations for each participating country. The groups consisted of the EIN representative, a local implementation actor usually from the public sector, and an NGO representative involved with delivery activity on the ground. This had a significant socially-reflexive dimension in embedding instrumental forms of learning in direct experiences and interactions with a specific group of stakeholders, which stands for different policy paradigms as such. Overall, from meeting policy recipients to doing so together with stakeholders, elevating followed a design rationality towards intersubjective re-framing (Scholten 2017, 348–49; van Hulst and Yanow 2016, 93). Hence, a normative transition towards considering goals and for instance identity-related implications of these goals rather than exploring only how to efficiently reach them.

> [Involving sub-national actors] is also about showing some member states that they might want to listen to those working directly with refugees, that's certainly not a given everywhere. (Interview 5_EU)

> The delegations really connect key actors within the [national] systems, we are kind of living stakeholder involvement with these visits and [participants] can see the benefits. (Interview 21_EU)

More instrumentally speaking, involving NGOs and third parties in the network was advocated formally by the Commission to tap into the whole breadth and depth of knowledge available within member states, a fairly classical approach (Cini 1996; Hooghe and Marks 2001). This move of bringing in additional expertise seemed hard to argue with for member states and was welcome by network members[233]. In fact, scholars of experimentalist governance frame ignorance or lacking expertise of operations as a scope condition for subsequent learning within policy-making circuits (Sabel and Zeitlin 2012a).

The informal reasoning was that knowledge within member states could also be actively shaped and aligned to Commission priorities. It could create learning pressure within the member states from below and within the delegation structure with higher interaction density. In short, "slight group pressure (…) and comparing, this is always there. But with these smaller groups, not just NCPIs, you just have a degree of diversity that increases that [pressure]" (Interview 11_GOV). The involvement of third parties had a few direct effects that contributed to this perception of pressure along the entire process.

1. Before the visit, the twinning (or rather triplet-ing) approach within delegations forced representatives to consider the conception of collaborative governance by selecting according actors from their domestic setting to join the formal network representative within the delegation. This also worked as an advance of trust. Beyond delegations, also, "customer centricity" as one element of a modern public service doctrine was embedded in the programme by directly engaging actors on the ground, amongst them current and former refugees[234].

[233] At least for confined study visits; for network meetings, there is more ambivalence (e.g. interviews 11_GOV, 22_GOV).

[234] Here, SGN as an organisation provided an excellent access point to these individuals and organisations. Moreover, SGN distilled "pain points" that recipients would face along their journey, giving the organisers a view on learning emphases (and clear messages for participants). Participants also knew SGN from a meeting in Brussels.

2. During the visit, a translation of factual and emotional information and reports took place within each delegation by the respective actors who are likewise working on the ground. Essentially, the more removed policy makers would hear practical voices re-interpreted for their domestic context, supporting their sense-making and potential re-framing of a novel situation. Besides the translation, also an amplification took place through repetition and strengthening feelings of closeness to the Swedish experience.
3. After the visit, the delegation would serve a sustaining function by implementing certain lessons themselves or by staying in touch with both domestic policy makers from their delegation and Swedish delivery counterparts.

Overall, by design, the Commission extended its reach and strategic weight via third parties. Thus, with all the above effects, moving into Step 2, SGN and the world of policy delivery was simmering in the background the whole time, framing discussions, including more policy-related ones. At the same time the size of the whole visiting group was reduced to ten delegations, implying an intimate setting easing deliberation and professional trust.

Step 2

Next, the dynamic of the visit on the ground comes into play. This covers actual visits and interactions with the actors as arranged by the organising team as well as informal interactions between meetings, during coffee breaks and when travelling. The first day kicked off with presentations from all integration entities involved in delivering integration to explain the Swedish system. While the content delivered was about policy components that each entity contributes, interviewees emphasised a meta-learning of how actors would tie in with each other, "essentially [seeing] coheren[ce]. Of those involved, the public sector and then the NGOs. And I thought, personally, these interactions are amazing, there is a lot of mutual respect" (Interview 52_GOV). This was underlined by somewhat political statements from the presenting organisations[235]. Still, organisers

[235] One of the presenters for instance said that it "is the responsibility of all parts of the public sector to communicate on the fact that migration is not a problem.", cf. EIN (2017b, 7).

and participants reported that this information-focused exchange was comparatively less successful but also deemed less important[236], where administrators "remember what [was] presented but it's more about orientation, should someone ever ask, I'll know the Swedes do these things at the local level" (Interview 12_GOV). These views highlight limited effects that simple information provision in a passive conference setup has – even for instrumental learning goals – although a discourse might be framed with long-run effects of re-iterating a certain storyline (Lodge 2007). Anticipating according experiences of passivity, not least based on what happened in the old EIN (Interview 5_EU), the Commission pushed for direct interactions beyond the network members in the agenda and a focus further down on the operational level of policy.

> The first day was interesting (…), but then the personal level is so important, starting from that day, travelling for two days, getting deep into the weeds together, you get to know people really well and you can now grab the phone and have a few people right there. (Interview 12_GOV)

Direct interactions and personal exchange on how policy hits the ground were given more room later that day when the delegations visited the Gothenburg integration centre and met teachers and students. The programme actively constructed a perspective that underlined the Commission's goal of making clear that stakeholders matter to understand and improve policy. Essentially, "the most interesting part is always to hear both sides, the authorities and then the perspective of refugees on the ground. There is quite a discrepancy, probably in every country [and] usually you don't get to see that" (Interview 12_GOV). Interviewees from the organising team confirmed this.

> The main thing is that we let them meet the refugees directly. Those people sitting in Brussels or in their countries, who have no contact and they are deciding about integration policies in Europe, we had them sit with the refugees. (…) For like one hour, it's a power shift. (Interview 13_OTH)

> The study-visit group was divided into [even smaller] groups and went into different classrooms and talked to different students. [Students would] tell about the teaching, the civic orientation and the welcome in Sweden and the whole integration procedure. In some groups they were really, really critical. In some groups there was quite a positive atmosphere. They really got a chance to talk to the asylum seekers. (Interview 8_OTH)

[236] "Some things that we presented, they didn't really understand. About validation of prior work experience or learning (…) [our] well-developed system." (Interview 8_OTH) or "It was interesting to hear how they handle some things, like certificates, qualifications (…) but for us, it's not the most crucial topic (…), employment is not the highest priority. And also processes, also IT, that's not easy to [adjust] and [fund]." (Interview 19_GOV)

The notion of the interaction not reflecting only on the positives, facing a novel and somewhat unexpected challenging situation to make sense of, was exactly what triggered participants to question their policy perspectives on a broader, paradigmatic scale:

> Our refugee policy and integration approach is state-driven and it felt weird to see probably better results when they shifted away from this state-driven approach (…). It [also] feels weird to know that refugees [in my country] would probably be even more critical. (Interview 52_GOV)
>
> This whole experience [challenges] yourself, we don't have the money that's out there in Sweden, but Portugal hasn't [either] but can deliver some of the good things as well. [Having] these conversations, it's valuable. (Interview 19_GOV)

When discussing this evidence within the network, it became apparent that information-oriented learning would now additionally build on and/or be triggered by the subtext of emotional experiences. Belgium inquired for instance about structural support for networking the various refugee initiatives while Portugal asked about impact measurement to add to the transferability of measures, and the Commission hinted at possibilities for EIN members to call for proposals on strengthening community-building approaches (EIN 2017b, 9). Considering both approaches and obstacles, including obstacles for transferability, was a clear departure from beauty-contest study visits. This was therefore both intellectually and emotionally new to participants, which was reflected in enthusiastic and encouraged accounts about the interactions although still being "far away from [Swedish experiences]" (Interview 19_GOV).

The second day of the study visit extended the learning approach by taking participants to the field, the teaching and accommodation centre Restad Gård, home base of SGN's activities. At the time of the visit, individuals at the camp were staying on average 16 months while the camp itself had become a success story in being a dialogue-driven place – refugees, different public and private services and NGOs, local and beyond[237], collaborated to make the stay tenable (EIN 2017b, 10). How SGN stepped up in the camp and helped refugees self-organise – many refugees being unaware that this was even "permitted" – was the framing story of the visit. Resonating across interviewees it was noted that "the interactions [are] a virtuous circle and how to trigger that, I

[237] Local level: municipality, Folkbilding School, local civil society, SGN and the Migration agency. Regional level: PES, County administrative board and Migration agency.

think, after the visit I would say you need these strong refugee voices" (Interview 24_GOV). This re-framed the entire integration discourse and transcends specific policy approaches (van Hulst and Yanow 2016). Several interviewees related technical practices they had observed swiftly with the wider Swedish integration system, arguably using a substitution heuristic (Kahneman and Shane 2002), where they liked what they saw and drew their conclusions for a much harder question: what to think about the Swedish system. In short, instrumental learning quickly reached paradigmatic scale.

Exchange that day was focused on detailed offerings of SGN and how these shifted policies from victimisation to enablement, spreading the idea of including refugee voices in design and delivery of policy. A concrete example includes a managerial approach piloted at the camp with the help of SGN: needs-based service definition and offerings. This resulted in diverse initiatives[238], which jointly contributed to an almost systemic character of the offering (EIN 2017b, 11). SGN also helped the authorities, establishing a two-sided needs-based approach: examples included counting beds to help the Migration Agency in crisis management in 2015 or sending about 50 asylum seeking teachers as assistant teachers to schools even before having a residence permit. Describing precisely how the dialogue on this played out between SGN and the authorities was the main component of this part of the visit. The connection of instrumental learning about technical improvement and deeper reflexive forms of learning on what refugees are capable of was described as eye opening and paradigm shifting, by interviewees from both advanced member states and those working with less resources. That is, underlying structures and tacit assumptions that had framed policy delivery became visible and were verbalised in a social experience (Schön and Rein 1994, 34; van Hulst and Yanow 2016, 105).

All day long, presentations of actors[239] at Restad Gård re-emphasised this need to cooperate between NGOs and public authorities. As one means for cooperation, SGN was described as a

[238] From community kitchens, to playing soccer, language learning to internship programmes.

[239] e.g. the Migration Agency or the University as well as the Red Cross with an emotional presentation about treating more than 10% of the camp for trauma or torture.

spider in the web, aware of refugee needs and accordingly a contact point for other integration actors. This already positioned SGN also as a go-to point in ensuing international exchange. At the end of the study visit, a Q&A session with refugees and study visit participants was described. Here, SGN members directly confronted EIN members, inquiring what they were planning to do after having seen the approach on the ground. This was a novel setup and a challenging, deliberative and social experience for the participants. Refugees asking questions very personally and emotionally addressed the officials. Several EIN members answered by promising help in sharing best practices and helping SGN with tools needed for spreading the idea.

A discussion about integration more generally ensued, covering for instance racism, and several EIN members encouraged SGN members to keep up their work on a personal dimension, being ambassadors of successful integration (EIN 2017b, 13–14). Crucially, multiple interviewees described this interaction – in positive terms – as public naming (without shaming) taking place and a certain degree of both professional peer pressure *vis-à-vis* other member states and public commitment emerging *vis-à-vis* other members of the respective delegations.

> Working with [refugees] that actively in our country is a new thing and also in few other member states this is quite new, so you also benchmark yourself. What are you doing right? Which challenges is everyone facing and which challenges is no one else facing? And then, what are the others going to do about it now? (Interview 14_GOV)

A conduit that made interactions result in open, frank exchange and even commitments was the emotional amplification. It amplified "how deep" learning and re-framing went as several interviewees reported about reflecting their social attitudes, behaviour but also underlying assumptions that structure their day-to-day work as policy-makers.

> Designing policy from your desk, you [tend to] lose touch with recipients but also with [those] interacting with recipients day in, day out. Our honest conversations with these people were very challenging, also emotional, you question your work, many colleagues did. (Interview 28_GOV)

> After the visit at Restad Gård people were quite overwhelmed actually. Some said that this has totally changed their way of looking at integration – from the refugees' point of view. Overwhelming is a good word to use. Someone started crying. Really, it was emotional. I don't think anyone could have been there without being affected, taking in what was said. (interview 8_OTH)

This amplifying and according challenging of paradigmatic assumptions naturally linked into rational updating of knowledge (e.g. what can I expect refugees to contribute in a camp?).

> It was very important for the member states to have almost a full day to get together with the refugees, we could actually talk to people but also this accommodation practice, as a very active refugee population which have talked to us about their own activities. So that many of the participants told me that they hadn't thought that the refugees themselves could organise their own activities. (Interview 14_GOV)

The amplification resonated in interactions within and across delegations. Informal interactions along the agenda were crucial for bonding and exchanging positions that would not necessarily reflect formal government positions. Interviewees described this as helpful for (a) breaking up their common peer groups and (b) for understanding the wiggle room for future interactions on the policy side within the network (i.e. back on the "platform"). Lastly, being part of a group of mutually respected policy professionals helped to bridge some cultural and formal gaps[240].

> Team building, it's probably not the explicit goal but when you are at the hotel or riding on the bus for an hour, you just chat, away from these formal meetings and have really open exchanges. It's a huge benefit also back in the meeting because you can calibrate your colleagues the next time in a formal setting. (Interview 12_GOV)

Step 3

Lastly, follow-up interactions after the study visit matter. This ties in with broader platforming mechanisms and shifts the balance back from emotionally charged, deep learning towards knowledge and information exchange. Nonetheless, interviewees described how it was "almost (…) comforting to talk to [the NGO representative on our delegation,] to digest what we had seen and really appreciate the perspective and not take it as criticism, but [rather] as encouragement to touch base [with NGOs and refugees] more often and co-draft some programmes" (Interview 28_GOV). This illustrates nicely how the study-group composition had both an amplifying and sustaining effect, constructed intentionally by the Commission as the original facilitator and activator of conduits. The public officials experienced – many of them for the first time – an interaction

[240] "Participants were very active but more asking questions than sharing from their side. I think, that [sharing] happened during the breaks (…) I obviously talked to our friends from Portugal, Austria but then also with other NGO representatives, from some other countries. You know, we just had so much to talk about based on the programme. And at least the ones I talked with shared a lot." (Interview 14_GOV) or "I discussed this with two [CEE] members and they were extremely interested, (…) also because [what they saw] was so different, culturally to how their countries treat immigrants. [They] and also the NGOs were really frustrated that their national government didn't acknowledge the question of integration." (Interview 8_OTH)

with refugees and actors on the ground. This experience is translated into their national policy circuit by accompanying actors, i.e. local implementers and NGOs. And now, the experience is interpreted jointly, creating both a formal and informal bond between three quite different actors per domestic context and without the EIN being necessarily involved (i.e. only via facilitated side stepping, hence elevating from the platform).

> We were on the same flight [back] and kept talking about it, we would have done that anyway, but [here] it was quite emotional. You know, that feeling that you need to [get your act together] and do something about it, even some pressure because you see that it can work indeed. (Interview 45_OTH)
>
> Two people were travelling with me, one was from the local level. She is working directly with refugees on integration plan programmes, and another person was from an NGO from a different city. And she was also involved in many projects since many years in this region, a very experienced person as well. (…) Both told me how this would work and what they would need to make it work for us as well and I (…) had a deeper understanding of what they were talking about because I had just seen this good practice. (Interview 19_GOV)

Futhermore, several interviewees reported about follow-up interactions taking place without involving Swedish authorities but rather directly approaching SGN and individuals they had met during the visit. This pattern across interviews illustrates a forward-looking mindset shift or reframing (van Hulst and Yanow 2016), where previously state-oriented officials would explore and see value in interactions with non-public stakeholders. Some of these interactions took place digitally and quite *ad hoc*, others in person and more gradually as described in the platforming subsection above. Either way, one goal was the secondary emotional charging in domestic circuits accompanying the content-level learning.

> We had some Skype follow ups, just trying to show colleagues why I came back convinced that we need to tweak some things. (Interview 12_GOV)
>
> After the visit in Sweden, I actually personally reached out to [SGN,] just following what they are doing, messaging on Facebook. It feels quite personal to me. (Interview 24_GOV)

In terms of practices, an interviewee summarised various accounts by that "[leveraging] our observations back home is not going to move the needle a lot, so we'll need the help of the Commission to maybe do something more, bring [SGN] to some sessions with the relevant [individuals]" (Interview 38_GOV). SGN and their partner organisations (Västra Götaland, Save the Children) pushed this window of opportunity wide open in offering their views and accounts proactively to

all EIN members and study-visit participants. The statement also underscores how the Commission re-asserted itself in terms of the new discourse established during the elevating process.

9.4 PROCESS OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

Significant elements of the overarching analysis were confirmed. Expectably and in contrast to the Portugal case, this was primarily the case for what can be summarised as ideal-type "elevating" processes or accelerated forms of learning. Overall, departing from a Commission initiative to launch the platform and then breaking out into a learning experience yielded the expected mix of knowledge-oriented instrumental and emotionally charged reflexivity and paradigmatic learning. Interviewees particularly emphasised meta-level learning that built on small operational elements as evidenced by the SGN case but emerged into a paradigm-shifting experience, which interestingly links rationalist and constructivist accounts in the learning literature.

> Truth is, the things you take away are not the ones you are doing in your country and [that] you could just improve. It's really about, even tiny things, things that you would not do in your country or you don't have. (…) That refugees would self-organise, offer classes, have that thirst for knowledge and increase that amongst each other. This was impressive and we knew the head of this refugee group from our meeting in Brussels and the colleagues from West Gotland, they kind of brought us the invitation right on our tables to involve them further. (Interview 12_GOV)

> My main takeaway? There is something to be proud of in every person and our policies need to wake that feeling or [provide] a way this can happen. (Interview 52_GOV)

Several interviewees took this experience either directly to their superiors and colleagues or as an insight and guideline for their personal way of handling things.

> Policy makers sometimes wonder why they offer a programme, design that programme, say, where they just meet refugees to help them with something, some counselling. Then no one shows up and they get angry, the programme failed… Maybe they should have asked the refugees to start with. They could have told, yes, sure, 'I'm going to be there'… or 'what the heck is that?'. The study visit [to] Sweden really shifted some of these mindsets. They would ask refugees now. (interview 8_OTH)

> When I came back, I went straight to my minister, saying, 'it's wonderful, you see a nice, a good example'. In Sweden they are very advanced, have a lot of work for refugees. But mostly, <u>with</u> [strong emphasis] refugees. Not like [here]. And we see, the government. The national, the regional, the local authorities, the NGOs, they are all talking together, they are sharing the same view. The same objectives to welcome refugees. It's so different here. Federal, local level, you have very different policies and goals. And it's so much more difficult to apply policy. This was the key point when I drafted a report back home. To the ministry, administration, my team, the NGOs, and the minister. And it really helps to engage them with each other, I argue that it matters to [align] objectives and listen to refugees. (Interview 24_GOV)

When distinguishing interactions and outcomes across peer groups, pure counting statistics extracted from thematic analysis (as analysed and insightful for the Portugal case) remain inconclusive (Table 16 below): while there seems to be a prevalence of orientation towards Sweden within the group of "more advanced" member states (Groups 1 and 2), with member states with more limited resources being less aware of the practices, this does not necessarily translate into active interactions. Also, qualitatively, peer grouping seemed to take place, but this did not ward participating CEE member-state delegations looking for orientation in the Swedish governance practice and the SGN solution. Enabling NGOs like SGN was presented as more of a strategic and mindset-related rather than a resource-related move, which is an inclusive lesson learned that resonated well with Groups 3, 4 and 5. Interviewees from Groups 1 and 2 instead showed a tendency to focus on operational improvements and concrete measures becoming possible by involving stakeholders.

Table 18: Best Practice Sweden and According Interactions

	SWEDEN MENTIONED AS BEST PRACTICE Share of interviewed officials within peer groups; without prompt[241]	ACTIVE INTERACTIONS WITH SWEDEN[242] Share of interviewed officials who mentioned Sweden best practice (left column); prompted upon mention
GROUP 1 AUS, DE, DK, FIN, IRE, NL, SWE	86% (6/7[243])	67% (4/6)
GROUP 2 BEL, FR, LUX	75% (3/4)	33% (1/3)
GROUP 3 CZ, EST, HR, LV, LIT, POL, POR, SK, SL	56% (5/9)	60% (3/5)
GROUP 4 GRE, ESP, IT, HUN	60% (3/5)	33% (1/3)
GROUP 5 BUL, CYP, ICE, MAL, NOR, ROM, UK	40% (2/5)	100% (2/2)

Source: own analysis based on interview data

In terms of expected platforming mechanisms at work, this is less about information here but rather about anticipating emotionally charged paradigmatic learning and about signalling how the network is supposed to work going forward (signalling a mindset shift). For this, the strategic involvement of aligned partners by the Commission appeared crucial, thus granting EIN members

[241] Pure counting statistics; 1 (mentioned) or 0 (not mentioned), disregarding the intensity of mentions. In case of multiple interviews with single interviewees, both interviews are counted as one. In case of different interviewees from same country, numbers were added up.

[242] Including the regions and Sweden-based NGOs such as SGN.

[243] Not counting Swedish officials.

access to partners with strong multi-level governance track records and collaborative governance solutions. There was also a swift uptake of Sweden for a subsequent study visit given long-running commitment to the EIN and available organisational resources. The creation of a knowledge baseline by means of the platform was reflected in accounts presented above as well as seeking orientation in peer groups[244].

Regarding elevating processes, expectations were met. A vast degree of informal interactions beyond the agenda helped to both amplify and digest certain learnings. Other stakeholders from the respective delegations played a key role in extending the depth and breadth of the experience. Government officials would also depart from formal political positions in these interactions and admit changed deep beliefs and assumptions (i.e. paradigm components). These changes were triggered by interactions with policy recipients, hence refugees, who emotionally touched study-visit participants and made them question how they go about policy design and delivery. On the latter, the operational and technical character of observed practices on the ground contributed to an eased perception of implementability and transferability to domestic circuits. These insights are sustained by relationships of administrators with stakeholders within each delegation. Overall, amplifying or catalysing effects are relevant for elevating. Instead, for platforming, in the case of learning about Swedish governance, normal feedback effects and peer grouping matter a lot more. This implies that the social sensitivity of learning is surprisingly less relevant for emotional, deep, paradigmatic learning than for instrumental knowledge and information exchange. Instrumental learning seems to rely on long-running relationships between couples or groups of member states (like in the Portugal case). It is thus relevant if an elevating experience breaks up a peer group or opens a new peer connection towards these instrumental exchanges.

In terms of the literature, the case illustrates a constructivist side of multi-level governance rather than experimentalism at work. While the camp and SGN's activities can be understood as laboratory for improving integration outcomes, this is not framework-steered from above but

[244] Elements like trust among professionals when platforming, attaining privileged information, and bringing in priorities were all present but not crucial. The same applies for recurring interactions, personal links, side-stepping and gatewaying.

emerging bottom-up along the echelons of government (municipality, region, nation, EU). Strategic targets of the EU, which accentuate collaborative governance practices, are only a randomly strong fit and were developed and refined without reference to concrete laboratory cases. However, it was enlightening that the presence of the Commission's strategy provided a beacon that accelerated multi-level governance moves – stakeholders knew who to approach. Futhermore, the elevating mechanism – facilitated by the Commission once aware of SGN – relates to ideational, paradigmatic learning, which goes beyond typical new modes of governance accounts. How the Commission absorbed and amplified a bottom-up initiative was a swift illustration of governing by ideas and supporting initiatives in developing authoritative policy vocabularies.

10 CONCLUSION: QUIET ADMINISTRATIVE LEARNING AS SOFT GOVERNANCE ENGINE

This thesis addressed unsettled scholarly debates about the learning-centred operating logic of EU soft governance. It explored quiet adminstrative interactions below the political surface and how these interactions yield learning within the European Integration Network. Interactions and alleged "mere talk" among administrators contribute to updating individual instrumental beliefs but also European-level framing of policy delivery and refugee and migrant integration more paradigmatically. According learning dynamics extended even towards administrators from generally more EU-critical contexts and member states with lower salience of migration and integration issues on the policy agenda.

Specifically, this thesis opened the black box of administrative learning by disentangeling a set of conduits as mechanism components that trigger, amplify, and sustain learning. Learning as the dependent variable was differentiated into an instrumental type and paradigmatic belief updates, both driven to varying degrees by different (interacting) conduits. Alongside the scope condition of a policy crisis (here: the migration challenge), five conduits were identified in the literature and probed in the analysis: professional trust, peer grouping, informality, stakeholder involvement, and emotional charging. They were found to be relevant and in several cases cross fertilising, more so than theoretically anticipated.

The thesis also acknowledged the design rationality of transnational networking and developed two ideal-type, distinct practices that the European Commission facilitates. These situational settings are associated with different conduits and therefore have a propensity to emphasise different types of learning. The first setting was theorised as "platforming", a recurrent interaction within a structured networking environment, the second was defined as "elevating", accelerated explorations of policy on the ground. In broad strokes, this conceptualisation reflected empirical realities.

Recapitulating findings of the empirical analysis, the conclusion now narrows them down to few core observations and implications, which relate to the literature and puzzles that originally motivated this project. This segues into discussing some of the challenges and limitations of the

project before proposing avenues for future research. Lastly, I carve out policy recommendations and provide some concluding remarks.

This thesis asked how administrators learn in soft-governance networks. The focus was on exploring mechanisms involved in facilitating different types of learning and the conditions under which these mechanisms operate best. The research question was driven by two puzzles. First, a conceptualisation problem, hence a lack of theory around micro-level processes and underlying micro-foundations of administrative learning. Second, a more empirical puzzle emphasised conditions for, mechanisms, and results of learning. This tackled perennial issues around the practical operation and impact of soft-governance networking.

This was conceptually framed in Chapter 2 that provided the soft governance context within which two individual level types of belief updating were identified as the dependent variables – instrumental and paradigmatic learning. Chapter 3 moved into conceptions around actual processes of learning. This was structured along the above mentioned transformational conduits and according theories. For each conduit a set of two propositions was formulated, one regarding expected implications regarding instrumental, one regarding paradigmatic learning. Then, the situational ideal types platforming and elevating were theoretically discussed. Again, propositions were formulated, this time regarding the conduits expected to be activated.

Chapter 4 laid out the empirical and methodological approach, in particular case selection (incl. selection of subcases) and the approach of qualitative interviewing. Section 4.4 summarised the propositions from Chapter 3 and added a set of empirical indicators for each proposition. This was then taken into the empirical analysis. First, starting with the political and legal trajectory of the network in Chapter 5, then analysing the formulated propositions along the conduits in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 brought the situational ideal-type practices back in and section 7.4 connected the key findings from both Chapters 6 and 7 in an empirically refined, directional pathway of learning, which by and large confirmed expectations. Chapters 8 and 9 probed this intermediate assessment

in two embedded constellations, first on gradual learning about the Portuguese one-stop-shop governance model, second on accelerated learning with a more paradigmatic twist in the case of Swedish collaborative integration governance.

The improved understanding of conduits of learning and their interactions are one core contribution of this project. (1) Professional trust was found to set a necessary baseline of trust building through instrumental exchange. Once embeddedness around these instrumental interactions was established, more paradigmatic learning could ensue amongst involved actors. (2) Peer grouping (see also below for broader implications) was identified as a crucial network dynamic that eases specific flows of information but also the likes of social pressure, identity, or feelings between trusted network ties. It was hence found to influence instrumental learning by pushing success cases within a peer group. Meanwhile, paradigmatic learning comes into play as the group gets penetrated by a stakeholder or peer-group external administrator whose success stories align with diverging paradigms.

(3) Informality has a two-sided relationship with trust building and enables open instrumental exchange – here, formal success cases get disrupted by real-life views on challenges at hand that move beyond pure technicalities of an instrument (e.g. political, social, cultural, symbolic issues). Doing so, direct instrumental learning takes place but also new trusted ties are established which subsequently open up more systemic discussions. (4) Stakeholder involvement was found to push new instrumental perspectives into the network but crucially triggers, amplifies, and sustains the fifth conduit, emotional charging of these instruments. Here, stakeholders are essential for making deeper learning last, also at paradigmatic scale. (5) Emotional charging was found to be a necessary step for pushing administrators into deep instrumental and paradigmatic belief updates, where they started to substitute facts for experiences and deeper self-reflection, crucially also about failure.

Along the empirical analysis, it became clear that the situational setting as facilitated primarily by the European Commission was relevant for activating specific conduits for then pushing

specific types of learning. Indeed, the expectation of a twofold distinction between platforming and elevating holds: both structural and gradual, long-term relationships and exchange and accelerated breakouts play a role. The two situational settings were empirically found to emphasise conduits differently, leading – as theoretically expected – to a higher prevalence of a paradigmatic learning dimension as an outcome of elevating. Nonetheless, instrumental learning still played an important role, simply being more embedded in social interactions and frames. Platforming and its associated conduits, as formulated for the ideal type, influenced mainly instrumental learning but still established the breeding ground (namely activating the conduits like professional trust or peer grouping) for a subsequent paradigmatic dimension of belief updates. Platforming and elevating mutually re-enforce and cross-fertilise each other, as do instrumental and paradigmatic forms of learning. Meanwhile, the purposive activation of learning conduits, thus creating and co-shaping a learning experience around platforming and elevating by the Commission and member states indeed yields governance: (a) in the sense of a *coordinative* extension of European frames (e.g. positive views on collaborative governance or stakeholder involvement) into peer groups and member states by creating moderate, social pressure to follow these paradigmatically absorbed frames. And (b) *cooperation* regarding more practical ideas around policy delivery and management upon learning instrumentally.

The findings were calibrated further in the nested studies. These explored a gradually iterated practice around the Portuguese OSS and an accelerated and experiential process in the case of Swedish collaborative governance. Besides confirming the expected mechanism, the Portuguese constellation accentuated a peer grouping and gatewaying dynamic as the underlying social logic of how learning comes about, and subsequently governance emerges as cooperation and coordination spread even into contexts with low issue salience and an EU-critical stance. In line with this, individual ties and commitment to learning over time were identified as crucial. Even for instrumental learning, this more constructivist logic illustrated how interactions remove trust-barriers and help learning about a concrete policy delivery approach. Likewise adding and further specify-

ing expected dynamics around emotionally charged paradigmatic learning and the role of stakeholders, the Swedish constellation emphasised how network-based governance is initiated bottom-up (a departure from experimentalism's expectation of a top-down impetus) and how instrumental learning steps like technical insights swiftly segue into more systemic, paradigmatic ideas. It also underlined the social sensitivity of instrumental learning which significantly builds on trusted relationships. Abstracting from the concrete case and analysed mechanisms, the main results of the thesis can be boiled down to the following:

(1) *Learning as governance engine*: Despite its elusive theoretical character, learning is a necessary concept for exploring soft governance. This tackles the first puzzle that motivated this research, a conceptualisation issue around the inner workings of soft governance. If governance is understood to be about cooperative and coordinative dynamics, these dynamics – whether originating from different types of pressures, knowledge exchange, or emerging discourse – inherently refer to belief updating and a cognitive transfer process. This study has acknowledged the relevance of learning and it has done so by investigating it where it takes place first, at the invidual level of administrators. Learning was hence the core of investigation and its theoretical ambiguities were tackled by coming back to a reduced differentiation of "instrumental" and "paradigmatic" updating of individual beliefs. While the study found that they are rightfully separate dimensions, there are several overlaps and mutual re-enforcements. Likewise, original motivations of individual administrators may emphasise one dimension but in practice update also the other. Several cases of instrumental motivations (e.g. understand how to run instrument, how to get political support, and even symbolically signal to superiors work on an up-to-date topic) actually moved into paradigmatic belief updates on how instruments are best systemically embedded, and what social frames and (normative) assumptions they build on.

However, even within instrumental learning, the empirical findings of this thesis support the role of more social and constructivist mechanisms, including the likes of frames, narratives, or discourse (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011; Checkel 1999; 2003; Scholten 2017; van Hulst

and Yanow 2016). Examples are network embeddedness and bonding over time in the EIN, which lead to considering peer concerns about context or enablers for specific technical tools. There is also the identity-building "Brussels experience" which via informal and unrestrained interaction beyond the protocol allows grouping and subsequently gradual comparative pressures to emerge. During study visits, this is even more obvious: direct interactions with policy-recipients and follow-up deliberation in mini-delegations, which include context-sensitive stakeholders, translate and amplify deeper, paradigmatic and/or emotional messages into managerial and delivery-oriented policy issues and sustain these reflections within instrumental learning.

(2) *Making conduits for learning explicit*: As outlined above, conducive circumstances need to be paid attention to when exploring learning and the micro-foundations of governance. This focuses on the second core puzzle of this thesis, namely a lacking empirical understanding of the conditions for, mechanisms, and results of learning. Often, studies have focused only on the belief-updating loops of learning itself and isolated contextual triggers like a crisis (Kamkhaji and Radaelli 2016) or they have treated conduits as fully separate mechanisms towards macro-level impact beyond the individual (e.g. peer group pressure) (Moumoutzis and Zartaloudis 2016). Instead, it appears crucial to consider transformational conduits as mechanism components that either grease the overall wheelwork or even make it move in the first place.

For instance, in the EIN case, trusted professional relationships and peer grouping are highly intertwined with learning – clearly in situational settings theorised as platforming but often also penetrated by mutual experiences at the elevating stage. In turn, emotional direct experience in a protected, informal space and associated bonding of the observers, also with stakeholders, plays a role. Overall, learning momentum at the individual level can be created or amplified and then sustained. This might even play a role for learning moving beyond the individual layer into higher, organisational circuits.

One conducive circumstance not discussed above is the almost structural scope condition of the crisis context, which carries a range of theoretical and empirical implications. In this thesis,

notions of a window of opportunity or critical juncture to kickstart the network as well as increasing delivery pressure and openness to new policy options were confirmed. The crisis also opened the door for stakeholder involvement and, again, relatability. Sweden, for a long time appearing out of reach, became a more approachable setting to learn from.

(3) *Iterative elevating from a platform fuels learning*: While the situational setup of a platform was found to be relevant for setting a baseline and being a beacon for ongoing exchange, it became clear that the momentum for learning is largely triggered by accelerated situations, commonly in smaller groups or even pairs of countries. Without this theorised elevating and its associated conduits, platforming remains an empty practice regarding belief updates (though it may still yield coordinative benefits through exchanging facts and vocabularies). Hence, in line with experimentalist governance (Sabel and Zeitlin 2010) and frame reflection or re-framing research (Schön and Rein 1994; van Hulst and Yanow 2016), the study confirms the power of iterative exchange and direct deliberative experience for learning. It was empirically confirmed that iterations work between an ideal-type structural layer (platforming) and more flexible laboratories revolving around that platform, hence, launched from and feeding back to the platform (elevating). Findings depart from experimentalist notions in that this elevating brings a content level steering dynamic into the platform not *vice versa* as in a classical regulatory model. The process appears significantly more bottom-up with the platform primarily serving a beacon function, where trusted relationships can be fed with ideas evolving in accelerated elevating processes. Elevating additionally compounds more structural platforming effects as such by increasing network density (reshuffling the network, helping to establish new ties, also between peer groups) and according opportunities for exchange. Interestingly, even paradigmatic learning may happen efficiently on the platform, once a paradigmatic re-framing exercise took place beyond it.

While the learning logic appears at first sight highly social and not necessarily "design rational", the study confirms that a quasi-regulatory actor, here, the Commission with its intermediary EIN, remains a significant presence in a member-state dominated policy space. Thus, migrant

integration policy is an intriguing case and has so far not been related to experimentalist ideas. The Commission has significant influence on shaping broader managerial and delivery-oriented approaches, given its role in content-level steering and in selecting elevating experiences (which in part are fairly design rational, for instance pushing stakeholder involvement) as well as given its organisational resources for running the exchange platform, a duty most member states gladly dispense. This shows a creative yet arguably not fully purposive way of how the Commission implicitly asserts itself upon member-state level administrative thinking and potentially policy-making – thus, exercising governance through facilitating learning.

(4) *Quiet contributions of administrative interaction*: The influence sphere of the EIN culminates in learning about managerial and delivery-oriented practices. This learning is both instrumental and paradigmatic. Even if paradigmatic, it remains more tangible and relatable than legalistically-oriented policy-making. Essentially, administrators "sandwich" a legalistic logic between operational insights and overarching paradigms. This is a quieter, under-the-surface form of contributing to policy developments and the essence of soft governance. Despite efforts in OMC-related governance and Europeanisation research (e.g. Lodge 2007; Radaelli 2008), this has remained under-researched. Studies commonly emphasise direct decision making, contributions to higher-level change, or legal transposition (Carrera 2014; Mulcahy 2011). Exceptions are scholars exploring epistemic exchange and resulting political and symbolic knowledge usage (Boswell 2008b; 2009; Geddes and Scholten 2015; Scholten and Verbeek 2015).

This ties in with what governance is about more widely. Soft governance is more than "mere talk", actually, a lot of it is still talk. However, this talk was found to be important for developing a coordinative element through network embeddedness and mutual trust-equilibria for considering, communicating, and understanding peer concerns and frames of thinking. It is certainly about vocabulary and broader discourse of what works and how practical aspects are embedded in wider political and paradigmatic views. These kinds of individual-level, quiet and gradual shifts were argued to matter, and research should move beyond a focus on decisions and policy output.

If governance is understood as a cross-cutting coordinative dynamic, it seems important to understand this also from bottom-up and sideways perspectives such as administrative cooperation and alignment of broader frames of discussing migrant integration. The Commission was identified as an active contributor to these broader ideas and frames that shape somewhat common European vocabularies and discourse. This happens by linking experiential and concrete (often instrumental) learning during study visits with broader paradigmatic notions of progressive macro-managerial approaches such as collaborative governance, multi-level governance, stakeholder involvement, co-design and co-delivery. Administrators reflected upon all these even when discussing only small, technical issues.

(5) *The Commission's role and persistent member state presence*: Despite the strong emphasis on learning amongst administrators and their quiet contributions to governance, the study reconfirmed previous assessments that member states remain key also in softer forms of steering. This is not unexpected and hints at the importance of seeking organisational-level alignment when orchestrating learning experiences for individual actors, as done by the Commission. In short, it makes sense to work with and via specific member states and draw on national level organisational resources and capabilities. This does not imply that member states actively use their power but rather aligns to studies of institutional creep or Europeanisation by stealth and situations in which the Commission vertically extends its reach (or at least framing powers) into core state domains (Geddes and Achtnich 2015; Geddes and Scholten 2015; Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2013a). Doing so via administrative actors in integration policy is a swift illustration of this logic.

Acknowledging the role of member states is also important in the context of shadow of hierarchy discussions (Héritier and Lehmkuhl 2008). They certainly remain a structuring power in the background, however, this traditional shadow is challenged by the logic of administrative governance that creates a mix of a funding and sociological shadow (Dunlop and Radaelli 2013) in working through individual-level peer pressure and privileged information (hence, the shadow implicitly works through learning, too). Lastly, member states also remain the natural structuring

element of the next core finding, peer grouping – while learning is initiated on the platform EIN and accelerated in elevating stages, elevating in terms of bilateral initiatives remains inherently about member-state-to-member-state interactions.

(6) *Peer-grouping towards a differentiated Europe*: Almost as a by-product, by studying the conduit peer grouping, the study confirmed notions of a multi-speed, differentiated Europe at a macro level. This has crucial implications for the likes of side-stepping and peer grouping on the levels below nation-state circuits as well. Organisationally and – most relevant in the context of this thesis – individually, actors mirror this macro-structuring which is about political and administrative traditions, current issue pressure but also factors such as culture and language that transcend policy coordination and cooperation. In short, diversity has repercussions and the Commission only indirectly uses this learning engine (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008) by providing an interaction platform and letting grouping naturally emerge. Peer-grouping unfolds a gradual, social pressure to learn on the platform. This speaks to the role of constructivist, micro-factors in shaping what is learned where and from whom. Embracing this at the elevating stage and steering it actively might improve network impact. Not least, the study found that delineated case studies such as presented in Sweden or Portugal work best for learning by making the softer differentiating factors more visible when exploring technical-instrumental aspects of policy, including challenges and failure.

Beyond content-level findings, there is something to be said about the methodological approach of exploring learning and networking in this thesis. Process and practice tracing were operationally helpful for trying to open the black box of network-based governance. In particular, the logic of tracing recurrent interactions as patterns that network members recognise themselves ("practices") was useful beyond its original application in international relations decision-making and idea development (Pouliot 2015). Thus, on top of account and sequence evidence, it became visible that pattern evidence helps to appreciate the structuring conducive and situational forces that facilitate specific types of learning.

In-depth, qualitative interviews worked well to carve out required causal process observations, including those that were more pattern-oriented. Interestingly, yet not surprisingly, conducting more than 50 interviews became more quality assurance than actual updating of information. About a dozen interviews were crucial for the causal insights put forward, many of the other interviews were mainly providing confirming detail but offering no significant information updates. Almost all of the particularly valuable interviews were part of the first 30 conversations, hinting at opportunities to trace efficiently (Schimmelfennig 2015) and accept saturation earlier on. Nonetheless, the rather high number of interviews did help in gaining a valid and most likely more reliable understanding of peer grouping dynamics, which are one important conduit and key for the study of a network. Several interviews, including follow-up conversations, were also necessary in practical terms to gain insight into the nested cases which were inductively defined only after starting the interviewing process.

In terms of limitations, it makes sense to reiterate that the empirical study is a deliberate, truncated choice of an explorative case, the EIN, and a likewise purposive selection of nested constellations, selected on positive outcome. While expected implications and propositions were condensed from the literature, this aimed more at illustrating and exploring likely learning dynamics within soft governance. Hence, it was rather moving towards propositions for future testing instead of rigorously testing theory straight-up (Gerring 2007). This implied a predominance of internal over external validity and hence more limited opportunities for generalising. As outlined, this does not preclude this study from proposing some features (like the conduits and the situational practics of platforming and elevating) as somewhat systematic for future testing, here, practices and a processes, influencing specific types of learning.

One certainly needs to acknowledge that the theorised setup presents just one possible explanation of how various types of micro-level rooted learning are brought into play to create governance in the sense of furthering coordination and cooperation in a difficult policy space. It is also important to understand that this process of learning creation is certainly not a fully purposive

managerial activity but rather a social process that involves chance and change. The migration crisis as a context is crucial in this regard and most of the findings remain context contingent: it is unclear whether member states would otherwise have agreed to an agenda-setting function of the Commission, whether they would have contributed to mutual learning activities, or whether the network would exist at all (– with its full set of current activities, probably not).

By the same token, a less virulent context may have significantly shifted administrative commitment in terms of time, resources, and interest spent on the platform, potentially reducing embeddedness and peer grouping factors. Nevertheless, it appears likely that more generally the types of practices used in the new EIN could still have been set up and would have been able to yield some of the same belief updating within individuals; in particular, with elevating experiences where, for instance, several administrators met refugees for the first time in their lives. Meanwhile, activating the conduits that associate with basic platforming might still have enabled the same logic by moving through other networks or platforms, hence administrators engaging over time in different European-level fora. Lastly, the crisis context and very recent upgrade of the EIN might bias findings in that administrators might be dazzled by a surprising and new way of doing things, in particular given the significant changes towards informality and social elements of interaction.

More generally, as this study has focused on individual representatives and their often quiet contribution to coordination, it is difficult to establish whether the findings are systematic in nature or rather a function of the specific individuals acting in the network. The method of deep, qualitative interviewing and triangulation contributes to seeing a rather systematic mechanism here. Across conduits and situational settings, in particular a broad social logic is operating – learning, not matter what type, is not simply emerging within individuals but is strongly fed by interactions between them. There are certainly a whole range of further, specific methodological twists and challenges worth discussing – this has been done in the methods section of the thesis. However, I would consider equifinality and alternative paths to impact – as shaped by the crisis context and the role of individual characters within the network – to be the most relevant. In that sense, there

are probably other explanations that yield individual belief updating. Though not ruling it out completely, the thesis dealt with equifinality by conceptualising the main learning mechanism around a set of necessary steps within one minimally sufficient path, with empirical cross-checks across a broad set of interviews. The two nested constellations also helped by showing that updated beliefs are indeed rather different in nature, based on varying practices. In sum, this thesis exploratively shed light on soft forms of interaction, specific conditions, and associated varieties of learning – rather than testing theory. This directly ties in with potential future research which could move beyond plausibility probes and use the proposed conceptual framework to formulate falsifiable hypotheses on networking or learning or the facilitation of either.

Future research could furthermore introduce variation and comparison on a range of dimensions to provide a broader theory on learning, soft governance and its micro-foundations. This could be done comparing various networks, possibly from adjacent (European Migration Network, EMN) or further removed policy areas (Network of Heads of Public Employment Services, HoPES) to understand specific mutual learning dynamics, the impact of purposive learning design (formal benchmarking, study visits, and so on) and varieties of learning perceptions and outcomes. This would also help to unpack micro-foundations of learning further, given the different types of membership on these platforms – administrators in the EIN, experts in the EMN, or leaders and executives in the HoPES network.

An alternative comparative dimension could focus on member states or more rigorously on the output-to-outcome-to-impact chain within the EIN. This could help to investigate institutional pathologies and barriers that come in when the micro-level moves into meso and macro circuits. Frankly, it would also be the kind of study needed to truly speak to the effectiveness and efficiency of new modes of governance such as the EIN. What the present study has shown remains mostly at the micro-layer and only gives hints or informs hypotheses that move towards higher levels. This would also tie in with the policy-transfer literature and make contributions to it by understanding learning just as one mechanism of isomorphic pressures or diffusion.

Slightly more farfetched, and all comparisons aside, it might make sense to dig deeper into issues around the social identity of administrators. Recent advances in administrative identity studies as well as research on a potential identification with Europe could be interesting from a sociological perspective. Likewise, the sociopsychological micro-foundations of learning or the magnitude of learning (instrumental vs. paradigmatic) could be fruitful targets of future research, bridging a divide between social sciences and studies from a psychological or even neurosciences angle. The short section and findings on the role of emotions point in that direction but are obviously not tested rigorously. This might also demand completely new methodologies that move towards experimenting. While this sounds somewhat unrealistic, there might be a use case to really help actors such as the Commission understand how to make their limited toolbox as helpful as possible. If approached from a practical, rather than a purely academic angle, there might be scope for investigating various approaches of exchange and learning.

Relating to the above, as this DPhil research focused on learning within a concrete mode of governance, close to an OMC, the findings have practical implications. These merit mentioning, not least because several interviewees, including from the Commission, expressed interest in a detailed, qualitative review of the practices and processes within the EIN – for which they did not have the opportunity and resources until now. While the thesis is obviously not a review report, elements of this research can help to understand where to double down in terms of effort and resources to enhance specific learning mechanisms.

This is already the first, overarching recommendation on a strategy dimension. To really run an effective governance mode EIN, strategic targets of which type of learning is aimed for should be streamlined. Formally, the EIN is always and exclusively about technical-instrumental learning – and almost exclusively success cases. Given the socio-political context and value-laden character of integration policy this misses out on dimensions that matter when policy hits the ground and

even before – as decisions on policies need to be taken. Several interviewees reiterated the importance of appreciating underlying paradigms or at least understanding political embeddedness as well as toning down alleged best practices.

Second, and more concretely in terms of operational-managerial aspects, regarding the platforming practice some smaller issues seem easily fixable and could make the network experience smoother, which in turn should strengthen motivation and active participation. One fix would regard technical tools of approaching colleagues or inquiring about approaches, which currently takes place via email or even deviating to the EMN platform. There are modern solutions in use in the private and third sector that could vastly increase the interactivity of the network, consider for instance professional chat-like exchange and agile content channels or project-management oriented software. Similarly, the storage of solutions and findings on EWSI needs either further alignment or explanation for network members – currently, the tool appears more useful for stakeholders outside the network, which is obviously one of its core features, but network members could contribute to both amplify this use and benefit from it as a partial substitute for their *tour de table*.

Third, and still at the platforming stage, interactions within the full group should be further cut down – small breakouts can both reduce the time commitment and increase active engagement of network members. The Commission should embrace peer grouping as a functional conduit rather than trying to avoid it. Lastly, membership of the EIN should be streamlined: within the group of administrators, should it be those with expertise or decision-making leeway? Long-standing leaders from the field with established mutual relationships or new, fresh voices? The network appears too heterogenous in that regard. A way of keeping that heterogeneity but avoiding skewed network benefits and bored individual representatives could yet again be seen in peer breakouts.

Fourth, in terms of elevating processes, the logic is quite similar in that the provision of more time for deliberation in small groups, meeting face-to-face with policy recipients and stakeholders alike and structural support for network sidestepping appear crucial. This is where learning effects both at instrumental and paradigmatic scale are located, amplified and sustained. The setup of

mini-delegations seems to be a good first step. Beyond this, in terms of network side stepping, bilateral or even multilateral "big brother" schemes may be effective if taking the logic of political-administrative and cultural gatewaying more actively into account. Processes such as Estonia or the Czech Republic learning from Portugal and then becoming approachable for other CEE states highlight that the Commission should actively and consciously support this process. Supporting specific beacon projects such as the OSS in Portugal or picking up local initiatives such as Sweden's SGN appear beneficial.

Fifth and lastly, platforming and elevating could be hybridised. A lot of the above focused on shortcomings of platforming and how opportunities that conduits offer are not fully used. Meanwhile elevating suffers from a less cohesive experience for the network in its entirety. Not unlike breakouts, design-thinking inspired workshops could provide an opportunity to bridge these constraints and shortcomings (Junginger 2017). Each country could for instance join a session with a mini-delegation (as for the current study visits), only that the delegation should also include a policy recipient. Within this setting, two or at most three delegations would form sub-groups that could discuss ideas such as organising a refugee camp, using integration contracts, or offering language courses from a customer centric perspective. A customer in this sense would include the policy recipient but also delivery stakeholders who are part of the delegations but often not involved in policy design. Overall, this should lead to more interactive experiences that touch upon core conduits for learning, including emotional charging which is notably absent at the platforming stage. This would also not be far from ideals of new public governance (Osborne 2006; 2010).

Summing up this DPhil study on a normative note, I believe that migrant integration is one of the most accentuated social policy challenges imaginable and it is a challenge that merits adequate resources and transnational engagement that mirror the equally transnational nature of the issue at hand. Being a policy area that cuts across various departments, I would consider it key to do what the Portuguese government has done years ago: give the topic transversal relevance, attach it right below the political and administrative leaders of the European community, and then go out,

teach and learn. Integration is a challenge that merits stronger political backing and alignment beyond quiet, hidden administrative creeping. While I admire individual effort and drive that interviewees talked about, this is not an efficient way of tackling the issue. Yet, I acknowledge that – as things stand – it might be the only way, particularly in more Eurosceptic setups.

The EU was founded as an economic community and to this day, approaches seem to focus on removing or avoiding barriers to economic development and exchange. This is short-sighted in that the EU, given recent migrant and refugee arrivals, should more than ever debate identity and values. While I think the EIN, just as other European fora, reflects this European spirit, it would be important to make it an explicit topic of deliberation and – where needed – hard decisions. This is hampered further because some national governments get away with simply ignoring demands of modern, open societies and borders, and leaving the regional and local level or even only NGOs on their own – just as they abandon their partners in the European Community, too. The EU could and should do more to support those who face these challenges day in, day out on the ground. Hopefully my findings on mutual learning prove helpful in this regard.

APPENDIX

i CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS

Respective home countries, ranks and employers are not listed. Although some actors gave their permission to be cited with full attribution, this jeopardises anonymity of others in the network. As the EIN is a small community, anonymity had to be a concern. Some hints at interviewee backgrounds are given though and the rough country peer group as developed in Chapter 6 is indicated in the list. Peer groups were arranged as follows:

- Group 1: AUS, DE, DK, FIN, IRE, NL, SWE
- Group 2: BEL, FR, LUX
- Group 3: CZ, EST, HR, LV, LIT, POL, POR, SK, SL
- Group 4: GRE, ESP, IT, HUN
- Group 5: BUL, CYP, ICE, MAL, NOR, ROM, UK

All listed interviewees had direct, usually multiple and ongoing interactions with the network or (mostly the case) are network members. Interviewees were categorised as follows, cited as "interview #_Category":

- GOV = Government official and permanent NCPI member/ representative to the network. This ranges from desk officers/ policy experts up to heads of unit and heads of dedicated government bodies just below the ministerial level. 27 out of 30 member states contributed via their NCPIs, 24 of 30 via interviews, three in writing. The ones missing included one large member state, and two smaller ones. (N = 32)
- EU = European Union officials, ranging from desk officers to senior officials directly involved with the network as well as senior EU personnel with a perspective on the network. (N = 6)
- OTH = Other/ Think tank, contractor or policy expert who interacted with the network or participated in network sessions; or local governance or sub-national implementation actors; or NGO representative. (N = 15)

#	COUNTRY PEER GROUP	NUMBER OF TIMES INTER-VIEWED	#	COUNTRY PEER GROUP	NUMBER OF TIMES INTER-VIEWED
1_GOV	1	1	28_GOV	1	1
2_OTH	-	2	29_GOV	5	1
3_EU	-	1	30_GOV	5	1
4_EU	-	1	31_EU	-	2
5_EU	-	2	32_GOV	1	1
6_GOV	3	2	33_GOV	4	1
7_GOV	2	1	34_OTH	-	2
8_OTH	-	2	35_GOV	4	1
9_GOV	1	1	36_GOV	5	1
10_GOV	2	1	37_GOV	4	1
11_GOV	1	1	38_GOV	3	1
12_GOV	1	2	39_GOV	1	1
13_OTH	-	2	40_GOV	2	1
14_GOV	1	1	41_OTH	-	1
15_GOV	3	1	42_OTH	-	1
16_OTH	-	1	43_OTH	-	1
17_OTH	-	1	44_GOV	5	1
18_GOV	1	1	45_OTH	-	1
19_GOV	3	1	46_GOV	4	1
20_OTH	-	1	47_GOV	3	1
21_EU	-	2	48_GOV	4	1
22_GOV	3	2	49_OTH	-	1
23_GOV	3	1	50_GOV	3	1
24_GOV	2	1	51_GOV	3	1
25_OTH	-	1	52_GOV	5	1
26_EU	-	1	53_OTH	-	1
27_OTH	-	1			

ii INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

Original guideline, refined after background conversations and used for first iteration of interviews. Guideline below focuses on members of the network, not affected units (e.g. a local delivery authority, NGO, service provider).

Interviewee alias:		Actor group alias:	Date:
#	TARGETED THEME	CORE QUESTION	PROBES AND FOLLOW-UPS
*	Introduction and check-in (confirmation of consent)	Thank you for having me. To re-iterate, I am working on a PhD that analyses networks in transnational cooperation and coordination of policy. The EIN is a crucial case study. I would like to record and transcribe our conversation and use your answers from the questionnaire sent before our interview. There are formalities that you should be aware of – did you have a look at the consent form?/ Could you have a read of the consent form and sign a copy? I'd gladly answer open questions.	
1	Warm-up and input for tailoring following interview items; reflection on individual role and position within network	To get started, could you introduce yourself and your background?	[specification] How did you/ your organisation get involved with the EIN? [follow up] How does your organisation or do you individually benefit concretely from participating?
2	Background regarding the network including initial assessment of outcomes/ impact (exploration of independent variable "platform", including partial conditions and outcomes)	How would you describe the development of the European integration network over time?	[specification] Which specific things have worked well in the past, what hasn't? What concretely would you do differently? [follow up] How do you judge the way the EIN works today vs. 5 years ago? Where do you see the network 5 years from now? [follow up] Would things have been different without the recent refugee situation? Can you provide concrete examples?
3	Outcome/ impact and conditions (exploration of domestic context, pressure, coping approaches etc.)	What difference does the network make for issues of integration?	[specification/ probe] Can you describe concrete outputs [in country/ home-country]? [specification/ follow up] Are there specific issues that the network should tackle and currently does not? What would you need to make [solution] happen? [specification/ follow up] How pressing do you perceive integration and migration as an issue in your home country? Are there concrete elements that you think are comparable across countries? [specification/ follow up] Which actors are influenced by the network/ do you try to influence? Which actors should be influenced (but are not)?
4	Process and process outputs (focus on strategies, tactics, approaches within interaction process/ the independent variable and moving towards dependent variable)	Could you describe a typical interaction with your fellow network members?	[specification/ probe] Who exactly is involved? Do you recall similar occasions? Do you think this format is useful for the network? [follow up/ probe] Some people might associate networks with "competition" or "comparison", how does that resonate with you? What is your take on formal, potentially public benchmarking? How do you think this would change interactions within the EIN? [follow up/ specification] You describe in the questionnaire that you [do/ do not interact] with other network actors outside the formal interactions – [why is that the case?/ how do interactions work out specifically?] [follow up/ probe] Can you recall occasions of disagreement in the network? How would you describe what happened concretely, what was the result?

5	Outcome (including discussions of concrete transmission from process to outcome)	Could you describe an instance in which what you did back home was driven by interactions or experiences in the network? [an output, an outcome, or the impact of a network experience]	[specification/ probe] What exactly did you change based on this network experience? [if unclear ask for: policy design, management, delivery, evaluation] [follow up] Could you describe, if there is, an instance in which you tried something unconventional based on your experience in the network? [E.g. a policy tool never used before? Was it a success and why? What do you take from that experience?] [follow up] With which actors to you have interactions in your home country regarding what happens in the EIN (e.g. discussed integration topics)? [if applicable: Could you elaborate on interactions with non-governmental and private sector actors?]
6	Process (focus on interactions and focal actors) and conditionality (involvement of certain actors, cross-check on role perceptions and entrepreneurship)	Is there any actor with a particularly prominent role in the network? How is that visible?	[probe] Do you think others in the network agree? [follow up/ specification] Who sets the agenda/ brings new topics into the network? What role to NGOs/ cities/ experts/ service providers/ [others]? How do interactions with these actors differ from interactions with public sector colleagues? [follow up/ specification] How do you specifically perceive the Commission within the EIN?
*	Closing and check of potential topics beyond study	Thank you for this insightful conversation. Do you have any points you would like to raise?	
*	Identification of key actors/ contacts	As a very last question, who else do you think I should talk to?	

References

Abbott, Kenneth W., Philipp Genschel, Duncan Snidal, and Bernhard Zangl, eds. 2015. *International Organizations as Orchestrators*. *University publishing online*. Cambridge.

Abbott, Kenneth W., and Duncan Snidal. 2010. "International regulation without international government: Improving IO performance through orchestration." *The Review of International Organizations* 5 (3): 315–44.

Aberbach, Joel D., and Bert A. Rockman. 2002. "Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews." *Political Science & Politics* 35 (4): 673–76.

ACIDI. 2007. *Plan for Immigrant Integration: The Council of Ministers Resolution no 63-A/2007, May 3rd*. Lisbon.

———. 2009. *Handbook on how to implement a one-stop-shop for immigrant integration*. Trans. Catarina R. d. Oliveira, Maria Abranches and Claire Healy. Lisbon: Presidéncia do Conselho de Ministros.

———. 2010. *II Plan for Immigrant Integration*.

———. 2011. "Civil society involvement in the welcoming and integration of immigrants: the case of Portugal." Theme 2: Opening up the Public Sector through Collaborative Governance.

ACM Portugal. 2015. *Strategic Plan for Migration*. Alto Comissariado Para As Migracoes I.P.

———. 2018. "O que fazemos." http://www.acm.gov.pt/-/o-que-fazemos-identidade-visual (April 2018).

Agranoff, Robert, and Michael McGuire. 2010. *Collaborative Public Management: New Strategies for Local Governments*. *American Governance and Public Policy series*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

AMA. 2018. "Citizen Shop." Agencia para a modernizacao administrativa (AMA) and Joinup - European Commission (April 2018).

Ames, Paul. 2016. "Portugal to Syrians: Come West: Portugal hopes its welcome for refugees will save Europe, if they can be persuaded to come." *POLITICO,* 2016. https://www.politico.eu/article/portugal-to-syrians-come-west-refugee-crisis-portuguese-prime-ministerantonio-costa/.

Andersson, Ruben, and Agnieszka Weinar. 2014. *Integration Policies: Sweden country report*. European University Institute, Migration Policy Centre and European Union. INTERACT - Researching third country nationals' integration as a three-way process - Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of Integration.

Argyris, Chris. 1976. "Single-Loop and Double-Loop Models in Research on Decision Making." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 21 (3): 363–75.

Argyris, Chris, and Donald A. Schön. 1978. *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, Mass., London: Addison-Wesley.

Axelrod, Robert. 2000. "On Six Advances in Cooperation Theory." *Analyse & Kritik* 22 (Special Issue).

Bach, Tobias, and Eva Ruffing. 2013. "Networking for Autonomy?: National Agencies in European Networks." *Public Administration* 91 (3): 712-726.

Bach, Tobias, Eva Ruffing, and Kutsal Yesilkagit. 2015. "The Differential Empowering Effects of Europeanization on the Autonomy of National Agencies." *Governance* 28 (3): 285–304.

Barcevičius, Egidijus, J. T. Weishaupt, and Jonathan Zeitlin, eds. 2014. *Assessing the open method of coordination: Institutional design and national influence of EU social policy coordination*. *Work and welfare in Europe*.

Barcza, Ildiko, and Anita Nadasdi. 2013. "One-Stop-Shop: Egyablakos ügyintézési rendszer Portugáliában." In *A nyelvtanulástól a politikai részvételig: Bevándorlók integrációját támogató programok az Európai Unióban*, eds. Anna B. Bodolai and Andras Kovats, 85–107.

Bartolini, Stefano. 2011. "New Modes of European Governance: An Introduction." In *New modes of governance in Europe: Governing in the shadow of hierarchy* [eng]. *Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics*, eds. Adrienne Héritier and Martin Rhodes. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1–18.

Bauer, Martin, and George Gaskell. 2000. "Individual and Group Interviewing." In *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*, eds. Martin Bauer and George Gaskell. London, UK: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2–22.

Bauer, Michael W., and Jörn Ege. 2012. "Politicization within the European Commission's bureaucracy." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 78 (3): 403–24.

Bazeley, Patricia, and Kristi Jackson. 2013. *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, California: SAGE.

Beach, Derek. 2016. "It's all about mechanisms – what process-tracing case studies should be tracing." *New Political Economy* 21 (5): 463–72.

Beach, Derek, and Rasmus B. Pedersen. 2013. *Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Bennett, Andrew. 2010. "Process Tracing and Causal Inference." In *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. 2nd ed., eds. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Lanham Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 207–19.

Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds. 2015a. *Process tracing: From metaphor to analytic tool*. *Strategies for social inquiry*. Cambridge University Press.

———. 2015b. "Process tracing: From philosophical roots to best practices." In *Process tracing: From metaphor to analytic tool*. *Strategies for social inquiry*, eds. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel. Cambridge University Press, 3–38.

Bennett, Colin J. 1991. "What Is Policy Convergence and What Causes It?" *British Journal of Political Science* 21: 215–33.

Bennett, Colin J., and Michael Howlett. 1992. "The lessons of learning: Reconciling theories of policy learning and policy change." *Policy Sciences* 25 (3): 275–94.

Benson, David, and Andrew Jordan. 2011. "What Have We Learned from Policy Transfer Research?: Dolowitz and Marsh Revisited." *Political Studies Review* 9 (3): 366–78.

Berry, Jeffrey M. 2002. "Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing." *Political Science & Politics* 35 (4): 679–82.

Blauberger, Michael, and Berthold Rittberger. 2015a. "Conceptualizing and theorizing EU regulatory networks." *Regulation & Governance* 9 (4): 367–76.

———. 2015b. "Orchestrating policy implementation: EU governance through regulatory networks." In *International Organizations as Orchestrators*. *University publishing online*, eds. Kenneth W. Abbott, Philipp Genschel, Duncan Snidal and Bernhard Zangl. Cambridge, 39–64.

Bolleyer, Nicole, and Tanja A. Börzel. 2010. "Non-hierarchical policy coordination in multilevel systems." *European Political Science Review* 2 (02): 157–85.

Borgatti, Stephen P., Martin G. Everett, and Jeffrey C. Johnson. 2013. *Analyzing Social Networks*. SAGE.

Borrás, Susana, and Kerstin Jacobsson. 2004. "The open method of co-ordination and new governance patterns in the EU." *Journal of European Public Policy* 11 (2): 185–208.

Börzel, Tanja A. 2010. "European Governance: Negotiation and Competition in the Shadow of Hierarchy." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 48 (2): 191–219.

———. 2016. "From EU Governance of Crisis to Crisis of EU Governance: Regulatory Failure, Redistributive Conflict and Eurosceptic Publics." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54 (2): 8–31.

Börzel, Tanja A., and Karen Heard-Lauréote. 2009. "Networks in EU Multi-level Governance: Concepts and Contributions." *Journal of Public Policy* 29 (02): 135.

Börzel, Tanja A., and Thomas Risse. 2018. "From the euro to the Schengen crises: European integration theories, politicization, and identity politics." *Journal of European Public Policy* 25 (1): 83–108.

Boswell, Christina. 2006. *The European Migration Network and the Symbolic Functions of Expert Knowledge*. Project-No. 513416.

———. 2008a. "Evasion, Reinterpretation and Decoupling: European Commission Responses to the 'External Dimension' of Immigration and Asylum." *West European Politics* 31 (3): 491–512.

———. 2008b. "The political functions of expert knowledge: knowledge and legitimation in European Union immigration policy." *Journal of European Public Policy* 15 (4): 471–88.

———. 2009. *The Political Uses of Expert Knowledge: Immigration Policy and Social Research*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Boswell, Christina, and Andrew Geddes. 2011. *Migration and Mobility in the European Union*. *European Union Series*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Boswell, Christina, Andrew Geddes, and Peter Scholten. 2011. "The Role of Narratives in Migration Policy-Making: A Research Framework." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 13 (1): 1–11.

Bovens, Mark, and Paul 't Hart. 2016. "Revisiting the study of policy failures." *Journal of European Public Policy* 23 (5): 653–66.

Bower, Gordon H. 1981. "Mood and memory." *American Psychologist* 36 (2): 129–48.

Boyatzis, Richard E. 1998. *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, Calif, London: Sage Publications.

Brader, Ted, and George E. Marcus. 2013. "Emotion and Political Psychology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd ed., eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears and Jack S. Levy.

Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. “Using thematic analysis in psychology.” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101.

Brehm, John, and Scott Gates. 1997. *Working, shirking, and sabotage: Bureaucratic response to a democratic public*. 1st ed. *Michigan studies in political analysis*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Bulmer, Simon, and Stephen Padgett. 2005. “Policy Transfer in the European Union: An Institutionalist Perspective.” *British Journal of Political Science* 35 (1): 103–26.

Buonanno, Laurie. 2017. “The European Migration Crisis: Chapter 6.” In *The European Union in Crisis*, eds. D. Dinan, Neill Nugent and W. E. Patterson. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 100–130.

Bürgin, Alexander. 2017. “Internal coordination and legitimation strategies: assessing the influence of individual commissioners in the policy formulation process.” *Journal of European Integration* 39 (1): 1–15.

Calado, Pedro. 2016. “Migration and integration from a holistic perspective: Experiences from Portugal.” *Migration Policy Practice* VI (2): 7–10.

Carrera, Sergio. 2014. “Integration of Immigrants in EU Law and Policy.” In *EU Migration Law: Legal Complexities and Political Rationales*, eds. Loïc Azoulai and Karin de Vries. Oxford University Press, 149–87.

Chalmers, Damian, and Martin Lodge. 2003. *The Open Method of Co-ordination and the European Welfare State*. ESRC Centre for Analysis of Risk and Regulation. Discussion Paper, 11.

Checkel, Jeffrey T. 1999. “Social construction and integration.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 6 (4): 545–60.

———. 2001. “Why Comply?: Social Learning and European Identity Change.” *International Organization* 55 (3): 553–88.

———. 2003. “"Going Native" In Europe?: Theorizing Social Interaction in European Institutions.” *Comparative Political Studies* 36 (1/2): 209–31.

———. 2005. “International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework.” *International Organization* 59 (4): 801–26.

Cini, Michelle. 1995. *Administrative Culture in the European Commission: the case of competition and environment*. Charleston, SC, USA: ECSA.

———. 1996. *The European Commission: Leadership, Organization and Culture in the EU Administration*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

Cini, Michelle, and Marián Šuplata. 2017. “Policy leadership in the European Commission: the regulation of EU mobile roaming charges.” *Journal of European Integration* 39 (2): 143–56.

City of Hamburg. 2014. “Welcome to Hamburg!: Welcoming Culture.” Example of the City of Hamburg, Berlin.

Coffey, Amanda. 2014. “Analysing Documents.” In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, ed. Uwe Flick. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, Chapter 25.

Coleman, James S. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Collett, Elizabeth. 2011. *Immigrant Integration in Europe in a Time of Austerity*. Washington, D.C.: Transatlantic Council on Migration/ Migration Policy Institute.

———. 2015. *The development of EU policy on immigration and asylum: Rethinking coordination and leadership*. Migration Policy Institute Europe. MPI Policy Brief Series.

Collier, David, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright. 2004. “Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference: Toward an Alternative View of Methodology.” In *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*, eds. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Lanham, Md., Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 229–66.

———. 2010. “Causal Inference: Old Dilemmas, New Tools.” In *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. 2nd ed., eds. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Lanham Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 201–4.

2005. “Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 1 September 2005 – A Common Agenda for Integration – Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union: COM(2005) 389.” In *online version*.

Costa, Paulo M., and Lucio Sousa. 2017. “Portugal’s Openness to Refugees Makes Demographic and Economic Sense.” *News Refugees Deeply,* 2017 (Accessed April 2018).

Council of the European Union. 2002. *2455th Council meeting - Justice, Home Affairs and Civil Protection -: 12894/02 (Presse 308)*.

———. 2004a. *Main Results of the Council - Press Release - 2618th Council Meeting JHA: 14615/04 (Presse 321)*.

———. 2004b. *Press Release. 2618th Council Meeting. Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union - Council Conclusions: 14615/04 (Presse 321)*.

———. 2016. *Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on the integration of third-country nationals legally residing in the EU: 15312/16*.

Craig, Scotty, Arthur Graesser, Jeremiah Sullins, and Barry Gholson. 2004. "Affect and learning: An exploratory look into the role of affect in learning with AutoTutor." *Journal of Educational Media* 29 (3): 241–50.

Cram, Laura. 1994. "The European commission as a multi-organization: Social policy and IT policy in the EU." *Journal of European Public Policy* 1 (2): 195–217.

D'Mello, Sidney, Blair Lehman, Reinhard Pekrun, and Art Graesser. 2014. "Confusion can be beneficial for learning." *Learning and Instruction* 29: 153–70.

Dekker, Rianne, Henrik Emilsson, Bernhard Krieger, and Peter Scholten. 2015. "A Local Dimension of Integration Policies? A Comparative Study of Berlin, Malmö, and Rotterdam." *International Migration Review* 49 (3): 633–58.

DeSteno, David, Richard E. Petty, Derek D. Rucker, Duane T. Wegener, and Julia Braverman. 2004. "Discrete emotions and persuasion: the role of emotion-induced expectancies." [eng]. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 86 (1): 43–56.

Deverell, Edward. 2009. "Crises as Learning Triggers: Exploring a Conceptual Framework of Crisis-Induced Learning." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 17 (3): 179–88.

DG HOME. 2017. "EU actions to make integration work." European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=/the-eu-and-integration/eu-actions-to-make-integration-work (Jan 15th 2017).

Diedrichs, Udo, Wulf Reiners, and Wolfgang Wessels. 2011. "New Modes of Governance: Policy Developments and the Hidden Steps of EU Integration." In *New modes of governance in Europe: Governing in the shadow of hierarchy* [eng]. *Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics*, eds. Adrienne Héritier and Martin Rhodes. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 19–47.

DiMaggio, Paul J., and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48 (2): 147–60.

Dobbin, Frank, Beth Simmons, and Geoffrey Garrett. 2007. "The Global Diffusion of Public Policies: Social Construction, Coercion, Competition, or Learning?" *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (1): 449–72.

Dolowitz, David P., and David Marsh. 1996. "Who Learns What from Whom: A Review of the Policy Transfer Literature." *Political Studies* XLIV: 343–57.

———. 2000. "Learning from Abroad: The Role of Policy Transfer in Contemporary Policy-Making." *Governance* 13 (1): 5–24.

Druckman, James N., and Rose McDermott. 2008. "Emotion and the Framing of Risky Choice." *Political Behavior* 30 (3): 297–321.

Dunlop, Claire A. 2017. "Policy learning and policy failure: definitions, dimensions and intersections." *Policy & Politics* 45 (1): 3–18.

Dunlop, Claire A., and Claudio M. Radaelli. 2013. "Systematising Policy Learning: From Monolith to Dimensions." *Political Studies* 61 (3): 599–619.

———. 2017. "Learning in the bath-tub: the micro and macro dimensions of the causal relationship between learning and policy change." *Policy and Society* 36 (2): 304–19.

———. 2018a. "Does Policy Learning Meet the Standards of an Analytical Framework of the Policy Process?" *Policy Studies Journal* 25 (3): 162.

———. 2018b. "The lessons of policy learning: types, triggers, hindrances and pathologies." *Policy & Politics* 46 (2): 255–72.

Dunlop, Claire A., Claudio M. Radaelli, and Philipp Trein. 2018a. "Introduction: The Family Tree of Policy Learning." In *Learning in public policy: Analysis, modes and outcomes* [eng]. *International series on public policy*, eds. Claire A. Dunlop, Claudio M. Radaelli and Philipp Trein. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 1–25.

———, eds. 2018b. *Learning in public policy: Analysis, modes and outcomes* [eng]. *International series on public policy*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

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

EC. 2001. *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on an Open Method of Coordination for the Community immigration policy: COM(2001)387 final*.

———. 2004. *Handbook on integration for policy-makers and practitioners*. 1st ed. Trans. Migration Policy Group. Luxembourg: EUR-OP.

———. 2007. *Handbook on integration for policy-makers and practitioners*. 2nd ed. Trans. Migration Policy Group. Luxembourg: EUR-OP.

———. 2010. *Handbook on integration for policy-makers and practitioners*. 3rd ed. Trans. Migration Policy Group. Luxembourg: EUR-OP.

———. 2011a. *Commission Staff Working Paper - EU initiatives supporting the integration of third-country nationals - Accompanying the document: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals: SEC(2011) 957 final / {COM(2011) 455 final}*.

———. 2011b. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals: COM(2011) 455 final / {SEC(2011) 957 final}*.

———. 2013. *Ad-hoc query on the provision of services for third country nationals in one place*. Brussels: European Commission and European Migration Network.

———. 2014. *European Modules on Migrant Integration: Final report*. DG HOME, European Commission.

———. 2016. *Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: COM(2016) 377 final*.

EC/EIN. 2016. *Agenda of the 1st meeting of the European Integration Network 11-12 October 2016*. European Commission.

———. 2017a. *Agenda of the 2nd meeting of the European Integration Network 28 March 2017*. European Commission.

———. 2017b. *European Integration Network*. European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=602&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1 (Accessed October 2017).

Eckert, Sandra, and Tanja A. Börzel. 2012. "Experimentalist governance: An introduction." *Regulation & Governance* 6 (3): 371–77.

Edelenbos, Jurian, Erik-Hans Klijn, and Bram Steijn. 2011. "Managers in Governance Networks: How to Reach Good Outcomes?" *International Public Management Journal* 14 (4): 420–44.

Edelenbos, Jurian, Arwin van Buuren, and Erik-Hans Klijn. 2013. "Connective Capacities of Network Managers." *Public Management Review* 15 (1): 131–59.

Egeberg, Morten. 1999a. "The Impact of Bureaucratic Structure on Policy Making." *Public Administration* 77 (1): 155–70.

———. 1999b. "Transcending intergovernmentalism? Identity and role perceptions of national officials in EU decision-making." *Journal of European Public Policy* 6 (3): 456–74.

———, ed. 2006. *Multilevel union administration: The transformation of executive politics in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.

———. 2007. "How Bureaucratic Structure Matters: An Organizational Perspective." In *Handbook of Public Administration*, eds. B. G. Peters and Jon Pierre. SAGE, 77–87.

Egeberg, Morten, and Jarle Trondal. 2009. "National Agencies in the European Administrative Space: Government driven, Commission driven or Networked?" *Public Administration* 87 (4): 779–90.

EIN. 2016a. *1st meeting of the European Integration Network*. European Integration Network.

———. 2016b. *1st meeting of the European Integration Network: Meeting report*. Brussels: European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=602&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1.

———. 2017a. *4th Meeting of the European Integration Network: Meeting Report*. European Integration Network.

———. 2017b. *EIN study visit Sweden final report*. European Integration Network.

———. 2017c. *Study visit of the European Integration Network to Germany: Report*. European Integration Network.

EIPA. 2011. "Civil society involvement in the welcoming and integration of immigrants: the case of Portugal." Strenghts of the Project.

Entzinger, Han, and Peter Scholten. 2015. "The Interplay of Knowledge Production and Policymaking: A Comparative Analysis of Research and Policymaking on Migrant Integration in Germany and the Netherlands." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 17 (1): 60–74.

EP DG Internal Policies. 2018. *Integration of Refugees in Austria, Germany and Sweden: Comparative Analysis*. Brussels: Study for the EMPL Committee. IP/A/EMPL/2016-23. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses.

Euractiv/AFP. 2016. "Portugal wants more refugees to help revive dwindling population." *Euractiv,* 2016. https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/portugal-wants-more-refugees-to-help-revive-dwindling-population/ (Accessed April 2018).

Eurofound. 2015. *Challenges of Policy Coordination for Third-Country Nationals*. Luxembourg: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

European Council. 2000. *Lisbon European Council: Presidency Conclusions*. European Council. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm (Accessed April 2018).

Eurostat. 2017. "Migration and migrant population statistics." Eurostat. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics (March 1, 2017).

———. 2018a. "GDP per capita in PPS." Online: Eurostat. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tec00114&plugin=1 (April 2018).

———. 2018b. "Search item [migr_asyappctzm]." Eurostat. http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do (February 2018).

Falleti, Tulia G., and Julia F. Lynch. 2009. "Context and Causal Mechanisms in Political Analysis." *Comparative Political Studies* 42 (9): 1143–66.

Faure, Raphaelle, Mikaela Gavas, and Anna Knoll. 2015. *Challenges to a comprehensive EU migration and asylum policy*. Overseas Development Institute and European Centre for Development Policy Management.

Featherstone, Kevin, and Claudio M. Radaelli, eds. 2003. *The politics of Europeanization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Flick, Uwe. 2014. *An introduction to qualitative research* [eng ger]. 5th ed. SAGE.

France Bénévolat. 2017. "Conférence - Comment mieux intégrer les réfugiés et les migrants dans nos sociétés?" 18 Janvier 2017, Maison de l'Europe Paris, Paris.

Freedland, M. R., P. Craig, C. Jacqueson, and N. Kountouris. 2007. *Public employment services and European law*. *Oxford studies in European law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freeman, Gary P., and N. Mirilovic, eds. 2016. *Handbook on Immigration and Social Policy*.

Freeman, Richard. 2007. "Epistemological Bricolage: How Practitioners Make Sense of Learning." *Administration & Society* 39 (4): 476–96.

Garrett, Geoffrey, Frank Dobbin, and Beth Simmons. 2008. "Conclusion." In *The Global Diffusion of Markets and Democracy*, eds. Beth Simmons, Frank Dobbin and Geoffrey Garrett. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Geddes, Andrew. 2018. "The Politics of European Union Migration Governance." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 56 (3-4): 120–30.

Geddes, Andrew, and Marthe Achtnich. 2015. "Research-Policy Dialogues in the European Union." In *Integrating Immigrants in Europe*. *IMISCOE Research Series*, eds. Peter Scholten, Han Entzinger, Rinus Penninx and Stijn Verbeek. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 293–311.

Geddes, Andrew, and Peter Scholten. 2015. "Policy Analysis and Europeanization: An Analysis of EU Migrant Integration Policymaking." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 17 (1): 41–59.

Genschel, Philipp, and Markus Jachtenfuchs, eds. 2013a. *Beyond the Regulatory Polity?: The European Integration of Core State Powers*. Oxford University Press.

———. 2013b. "Introduction: Beyond Market Regulation: Analysing the European Integration of Core State Powers." In *Beyond the Regulatory Polity?: The European Integration of Core State Powers*, eds. Philipp Genschel and Markus Jachtenfuchs. Oxford University Press.

———. 2016. "More integration, less federation: The European integration of core state powers." *Journal of European Public Policy* 23 (1): 42–59.

Gerring, John, ed. 2007. *Case study research: Principles and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gilad, Sharon. 2012. "Attention and Reputation: Linking Regulators' Internal and External Worlds." In *Executive Politics in Times of Crisis*. *The Executive Politics and Governance series*, eds. Martin Lodge and Kai Wegrich, 157-178.

Gilardi, Fabrizio. 2010. "Who Learns from What in Policy Diffusion Processes?" *American Journal of Political Science* 54 (3): 650–66.

———. 2016. "Four Ways We Can Improve Policy Diffusion Research." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 16 (1): 8–21.

Gilardi, Fabrizio, and Claudio M. Radaelli. 2012. “Governance and Learning.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford Handbooks Online, ed. David Levi-Faur. Oxford University Press.

Goertz, Gary, ed. 2006. *Social science concepts: A user's guide*. Princeton, N.J., Woodstock: Princeton University Press.

Goetz, Klaus H., and Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling. 2008. “The Europeanisation of national political systems: Parliaments and executives.” *Living Reviews in European Governance* 3 (2): 4–30.

Goldstein, Kenneth. 2002. “Getting in the Door: Sampling and Completing Elite Interviews.” *Political Science & Politics* 35 (4): 669–72.

Guest, Greg, Kathleen M. MacQueen, and Emily E. Namey. 2012. *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, Calif., London: SAGE.

Haas, Peter M. 1992. “Introduction: epistemic communities and international policy coordination.” *International Organization* 46 (01): 1–35.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1981. *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*. 8th ed. 2 Bände. Band 1: Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung; Band 2: Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft. suhrkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft.

Hall, Peter A. 1993. “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policymaking in Britain.” *Comparative Politics* 25 (3): 275–96.

———. 2003. “Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research.” In *Comparative historical analysis in the social sciences*. *Cambridge studies in comparative politics*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 373–405.

———. 2013. “Tracing the Progress of Process Tracing.” *European Political Science* 12 (1): 20–30.

Hall, Peter A., and Rosemary C. R. Taylor. 1996. “Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms.” *Political Studies* 44 (5): 936–57. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1996.tb00343.x/full.

Hanf, Kenneth, and Fritz W. Scharpf, eds. 1978. *Interorganizational policy making: Limits to coordination and central control*. v.1 of *Sage modern politics series*. London: SAGE.

Hanna, Paul. 2012. “Using internet technologies (such as Skype) as a research medium: a research note.” *Qualitative Research* 12 (2): 239–42.

Hartlapp, Miriam, Julia Metz, and Christian Rauh. 2013. “Linking Agenda Setting to Coordination Structures: Bureaucratic Politics inside the European Commission.” *Journal of European Integration* 35 (4): 425–41.

Heclo, Hugh. 1974. *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden: From relief to income maintenance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

———. 1978. “Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment.” In *The American Political System*. *Re-print*, ed. A. King. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 87-107, 115-124.

Hedberg, B. 1981. “How organizations learn and unlearn?” In *Handbook of organizational design*, eds. P. C. Nystrom and W. H. Starbuck. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 3–27.

Hedström, Peter, and Petri Ylikoski. 2010. “Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (1): 49–67.

Heidenreich, Martin, and Jonathan Zeitlin, eds. 2009. *Changing European employment and welfare regimes: The influence of the open method of coordination on national reforms*. Vol. 12 of *Routledge/EUI studies in the political economy of welfare*. London: Routledge.

Heims, Eva M. 2016. “Regulatory co-ordination in the EU: A cross-sector comparison.” *Journal of European Public Policy:* 1–19.

Héritier, Adrienne, Dieter Kerwer, Christoph Knill, Dirk Lehmkuhl, Michael Teutsch, and Douillet Anne-Cécile, eds. 2001. *Differential Europe: The European Union impact on national policymaking*. Lanham, Md., Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Héritier, Adrienne, and Dirk Lehmkuhl. 2008. “The Shadow of Hierarchy and New Modes of Governance.” *Journal of Public Policy* 28 (01): 1–17.

———. 2011. “Governing in the Shadow of Hierarchy: New Modes of Governance in Regulation.” In *New modes of governance in Europe: Governing in the shadow of hierarchy* [eng]. *Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics*, eds. Adrienne Héritier and Martin Rhodes. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 48–74.

Héritier, Adrienne, and Martin Rhodes, eds. 2011. *New modes of governance in Europe: Governing in the shadow of hierarchy* [eng]. *Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hermann, Charles F. 1963. “Some Consequences of Crisis Which Limit the Viability of Organizations.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 8 (1): 61–82.

Hogarth, Robin M., Tomás Lejarraga, and Emre Soyer. 2015. “The Two Settings of Kind and Wicked Learning Environments.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 24 (5): 379–85.

Holt, Amanda. 2010. “Using the telephone for narrative interviewing: a research note.” *Qualitative Research* 10 (1): 113–21.

Holzinger, Katharina, and Christoph Knill. 2005. “Causes and conditions of cross-national policy convergence.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 12 (5): 775–96.

Hood, Christopher. 2000. *The art of the state: Culture, rhetoric, and public management*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

———. 2002. “The Risk Game and the Blame Game.” *Government and Opposition* 37 (01): 15–37.

———, ed. 2004. *Controlling modern government: Variety, commonality, and change*. Cheltenham, UK, Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Pub.

Hood, Christopher, and Martin Lodge. 2006. *The politics of public service bargains: Reward, competency, loyalty - and blame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hooghe, Liesbet. 1997. “Serving 'Europe': Political Orientations of Senior Commission Officials.” *European Integration Online Papers* 1 (8): 1–22. http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/1997-008a.htm.

———. 1999. “Supranational Activists or Intergovernmental Agents?: Explaining the Orientations of Senior Commission Officials Toward European Integration.” *Comparative Political Studies* 32 (4): 435–63.

———. 2010. “Images of Europe: How Commission officials conceive their institution's role in the EU.” *ARENA Working Paper (online)* (8).

Hooghe, Liesbet, and Gary Marks. 2001. *Multi-level governance and European integration*. *Governance in Europe*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Howlett, Michael. 2012. “The lessons of failure: learning and blame avoidance in public policy-making.” *International Political Science Review* 33 (5): 539–55.

Howlett, Michael, and Benjamin Cashore. 2009. “The Dependent Variable Problem in the Study of Policy Change: Understanding Policy Change as a Methodological Problem.” *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 11 (1): 33–46.

Howlett, Michael, Ishani Mukherjee, and Joop Koppenjan. 2017. “Policy learning and policy networks in theory and practice: the role of policy brokers in the Indonesian biodiesel policy network.” *Policy and Society* 36 (2): 233–50.

Huang, Kun, and Keith G. Provan. 2007. “Structural embeddedness and organizational social outcomes in a centrally governed mental health services network.” *Public Management Review* 9 (2): 169–89.

Humphris, Rachel. 2014. *Integration Practice: Initiatives and Innovations by Institutions and Civil Society*. KING Project - Applied Social Studies Unit and ISMU Foundation. Desk Research Paper n. 15/2014.

Hunter, Alistair, and Christina Boswell. 2015. “Comparing the Political Functions of Independent Commissions: the Case of UK Migrant Integration Policy.” *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 17 (1): 10–25.

Hustedt, Thurid, and Markus Seyfried. 2015. “Co-ordination across internal organizational boundaries: How the EU Commission co-ordinates climate policies.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 23 (6): 888–905.

Immergut, Ellen M. 1998. “The Theoretical Core of the New Institutionalism.” *Politics & Society* 26 (1): 5–34.

International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2009a. *Compendium of Migrant Integration Policies and Practices*. IOM.

———. 2009b. *Evaluation of the National Immigrant Support Services in Portugal (ACIDI)*. Trans. Maria Abranches. Lisbon: International Organization for Migration.

IQ Netzwerk. 2014. “Kongress 2014: Dokumentation.” IQ Netzwerk. https://iq-kongress.netzwerk-iq.de/de/rueckblick/iq-kongress-2014/dokumentation.html (April 2018).

James, O., and Martin Lodge. 2003. “The Limitations of 'Policy Transfer' and 'Lesson Drawing' for Public Policy Research.” *Political Studies Review* 1 (2): 179–93.

Jasper, James M. 2011. “Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (1): 285–303.

Johnson, Eric J., and Amos Tversky. 1983. “Affect, generalization, and the perception of risk.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 45 (1): 20–31.

Jordan, Andrew. 2003. “The Europeanization of National Government and Policy: A Departmental Perspective.” *British Journal of Political Science* 33 (02).

Jordan, Andrew, and Adriaan Schout. 2006. *The coordination of the European Union: Exploring the capacities of networked governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jørgensen, Martin B. 2011. “Understanding the Research–Policy Nexus in Denmark and Sweden: The Field of Migration and Integration.” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 13 (1): 93–109.

Junginger, Sabine. 2017. *Transforming public services by design: Re-orienting policies, organizations and services around people*. London, New York: Routledge.

Jurriaans, Kim-Jenna. 2017. “Portugal Offers Refugees a Warm Welcome, but Can’t Get Them to Stay.” *News Refugees Deeply; Middle East Eye,* 2017. https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2017/09/01/portugal-offers-refugees-a-warm-welcome-but-cant-get-them-to-stay (Accessed April 2018).

Kadushin, Charles. 2012. *Understanding social networks: Concepts, theories, and findings*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kahneman, Daniel. 2011. *Thinking fast and slow*. London, UK: Penguin Books.

Kahneman, Daniel, and Frederick Shane. 2002. “Representativeness revisited: Attribute substitution in intuitive judgment.” In *Heuristics of Intuitive Judgement: Extensions and Applications*, eds. Thomas Gilovich, D. Griffin and Daniel Kahneman. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2–30.

Kahneman, Daniel, and Amos Tversky, eds. 2000. *Choices, Values, and Frames*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kamkhaji, Jonathan C., and Claudio M. Radaelli. 2016. “Crisis, learning and policy change in the European Union.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 24 (5): 714–34.

Kassim, Hussein, Sara Connolly, Renaud Dehousse, Olivier Rozenberg, and Selma Bendjaballah. 2017. “Managing the house: the Presidency, agenda control and policy activism in the European Commission.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 24 (5): 653–74.

Kingdon, John W. 1984/2011. *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. 2nd ed. *Longman classics in political science*. Boston, Mass.: Longman.

Klijn, Erik-Hans, and Johannes F. M. Koppenjan. 2012. “Governance Network Theory: Past, Present and Future.” *Policy & Politics* 40 (4): 1–19.

———. 2015. *Governance networks in the public sector*. London: Routledge.

Klijn, Erik-Hans, Vicenta Sierra, Tamyko Ysa, Evan Berman, Jurian Edelenbos, and Don Y. Chen. 2015. “The Influence of Trust on Network Performance in Taiwan, Spain, and the Netherlands: A Cross-Country Comparison.” *International Public Management Journal* 19 (1): 111–39.

Knill, Christoph. 2001. *The Europeanisation of National Administrations: Patterns of Institutional Change and Persistence*. *Themes in European Governance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2005. “Introduction: Cross-national policy convergence: concepts, approaches and explanatory factors.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 12 (5): 764–74.

Knill, Christoph, and Dirk Lehmkuhl. 2002. “The national impact of European Union regulatory policy: Three Europeanization mechanisms.” *European Journal of Political Research* 41: 255–80.

Knoke, David. 2011. “Policy Networks: Chapter 15.” In *The SAGE handbook of social network analysis*, eds. John Scott and Peter J. Carrington. SAGE.

Kohler-Koch, Beate, and Berthold Rittberger. 2006. “Review Article: The ‘Governance Turn’ in EU Studies.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 44 (Annual Review): 27–49.

Kvale, Steinar. 2007. *Doing Interviews*. The Sage qualitative research kit edited by Uwe Flick. London: SAGE.

Lægreid, Per, Runolfur S. Steinthorsson, and Baldur Thorhallsson. 2004. “Europeanization of Central Government Administration in the Nordic States.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 42 (2): 347–69.

Lægreid, Per, and Koen Verhoest, eds. 2010. *Governance of Public Sector Organizations: Proliferation, Autonomy and Performance*. *Governance and Public Management*.

Laffan, Brigid. 1997. “From policy entrepreneur to policy manager: the challenge facing the European Commission.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 4 (3): 422–38.

———. 2016. “Europe’s union in crisis: tested and contested.” *West European Politics* 39 (5): 915–32.

Laffan, Brigid, and Colin Shaw. 2005. *Classifying and Mapping OMC in differenct policy areas*.

Lane, Christel, and Reinhard Bachmann, eds. 1998. *Trust within and between organizations: Conceptual issues and empirical applications*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Leech, Beth L. 2002. “Asking Questions: Techniques for Semistructured Interviews.” *Political Science & Politics* 35 (4): 665–68.

Levi-Faur, David. 2010. “Regulation & Regulatory Governance.” *Jerusalem Papers in Regulation & Governance* (Working Paper 1).

Levy, Jack S. 1994. “Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield.” *International Organization* 48 (2): 279–312.

Lewis, Jenny M., and Sevasti Chatzopoulou. 2015. “Analysing Networks: Chapter 11.” In *Research Methods in European Union Studies*, eds. Kennet Lynggaard, Ian Manners and Karl Löfgren. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 168–83.

Lifvendahl, Tove. 2016. “How Sweden became an example of how not to handle immigration.” Features. The Spectator. https://www.spectator.co.uk/2016/09/how-sweden-became-an-example-of-how-not-to-handle-immigration/ (April 2018).

Littig, Beate. 2009. “Interviewing the Elite — Interviewing Experts: Is There a Difference?” In *Interviewing Experts*. 1st ed., ed. Alexander Bogner. Palgrave Macmillan, 98–113.

Lodge, Martin. 2007. “Comparing Non-Hierarchical Governance in Action: the Open Method of Co-ordination in Pensions and Information Society.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 45 (2): 343–65.

———. 2008. “Regulation, the Regulatory State and European Politics.” *West European Politics* 31 (1-2): 280–301.

Lodge, Martin, and Kai Wegrich, eds. 2012. *Executive Politics in Times of Crisis*. *The Executive Politics and Governance series*.

———, eds. 2014. *The problem-solving capacity of the modern state: Governance challenges and administrative capacities*. Oxford University Press.

Lohmann, Susanne. 2003. “Why Do Institutions Matter?: An Audience-Cost Theory of Institutional Commitment.” *Governance* 16 (1): 95–110.

Lynch, Julia F. 2013. “Aligning Sampling Strategies with Analytic Goals.” In *Interview research in political science*, ed. Layna Mosley, 31–44.

MacKuen, Michael, Jennifer Wolak, Luke Keele, and George E. Marcus. 2010. “Civic Engagements: Resolute Partisanship or Reflective Deliberation.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54 (2): 440–58.

Maggetti, Martino, and Fabrizio Gilardi. 2011. “The policy-making structure of European regulatory networks and the domestic adoption of standards.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 18 (6): 830–47.

———. 2014. “Network governance and the domestic adoption of soft rules.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 21 (9): 1293–1310.

Mahoney, James. 2012. “The Logic of Process Tracing Tests in the Social Sciences.” *Sociological Methods & Research* 41 (4): 570–97.

———. 2016. “Mechanisms, Bayesianism, and process tracing.” *New Political Economy* 21 (5): 493–99.

Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research.” *Political Analysis* 14 (3): 227–49.

Majone, Giandomenico. 1989. *Evidence, Argument, and Persuasion in the Policy Process*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

———. 1997. “The new European agencies: Regulation by information.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 4 (2): 262–75.

Marcus, George E., John L. Sullivan, Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, and Daniel Stevens. 2005. “The Emotional Foundation of Political Cognition: The Impact of Extrinsic Anxiety on the Formation of Political Tolerance Judgments.” *Political Psychology* 26 (6): 949–63.

Marsh, David, and J. C. Sharman. 2009. “Policy diffusion and policy transfer.” *Policy Studies* 30 (3): 269–88.

Martin, Cathie J. 2013. “Crafting Interviews to Capture Cause and Effect.” In *Interview research in political science*, ed. Layna Mosley, 109–24.

Martiniello, Marco. 2006. *Towards a coherent approach to immigrant integration policy(ies) in the European Union*. OECD. http://www.oecd.org/dev/38295165.pdf (Accessed Jan 16th 2017).

Martino, Benedetto de, Dharshan Kumaran, Ben Seymour, and Raymond J. Dolan. 2006. “Frames, biases, and rational decision-making in the human brain.” [eng]. *Science (New York, N.Y.)* 313 (5787): 684–87.

Mason, Mark. 2010. “Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews.” *FQS: Forum Qualitative Social Research* 11 (3). http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1428/3027#g4 (Accessed October 31, 2017).

Mastenbroek, Ellen, and Dorte S. Martinsen. 2018. “Filling the gap in the European administrative space: the role of administrative networks in EU implementation and enforcement.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 25 (3): 422–35.

Mathieu, Emmanuelle. 2016. “When Europeanization Feeds Back Into EU Governance: EU Legislation, National Regulatory Agencies, and EU Regulatory Networks.” *Public Administration* 94 (1): 25–39.

Matthews, Felicity. 2012. “Governance, governing, and the capacity of executives in times of crisis.” In *Executive Politics in Times of Crisis*. *The Executive Politics and Governance series*, eds. Martin Lodge and Kai Wegrich, 217–38.

May, Peter J. 1992. “Policy Learning and Failure.” *Journal of Public Policy* 12 (4): 331–54.

McKinsey Global Institute. 2016. *Europe's new refugees: A road map for better integration outcomes*. Trans. Frank Mattern, Eckart Windhagen, Solveigh Hieronimus, Jonathan Woetzel, Anu Madgavkar and George Tsopelas. McKinsey & Company Inc.

Menéndez, Agustín J. 2016. “The Refugee Crisis: Between Human Tragedy and Symptom of the Structural Crisis of European Integration.” *European Law Journal* 22 (4): 388–416.

Metcalfe, J., and W. Mischel. 1999. “A hot/cool-system analysis of delay of gratification: dynamics of willpower.” [eng]. *Psychological review* 106 (1): 3–19.

Meyer, Renate E., Isabell Egger-Peitler, Markus A. Höllerer, and Gerhard Hammerschmid. 2014. “Of Bureaucrats and Passionate Public Managers: Institutional Logics, Executive Identities, and Public Service Motivation.” *Public Administration* 92 (4): 861–85.

Migrationsverket. 2018a. “Forecast for the number of asylum seekers unchanged.” Migrationsverket - Swedish Migration Agency. https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/For-press/News-archive/News-archive-2018/2018-05-17-Forecast-for-the-number-of-asylum-seekers-unchanged.html (July 2018).

———. 2018b. “Statistics.” Migrationsverket - Swedish Migration Agency. https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Statistics/Overview-and-time-series.html (July 2018).

Ministry for European Affairs and Equality. 2017. *Integration = Belonging: Migrant Integration Strategy & Action Plan. Malta Vision 2020*. Maltese Ministry for European Affairs and Equality.

MIPEX. 2015a. “Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015.” Migration Policy Group and CIDOB. http://www.mipex.eu/ (April 2018).

———. 2015b. “Portugal: Country Report.” Migration Policy Group and MIPEX. http://www.mipex.eu (April 2018).

Monar, Jörg. 2010. “Experimentalist Governance in Justice and Home Affairs.” In *Experimentalist governance in the European Union: Towards a new architecture*, eds. Charles F. Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 237–60.

Morís, Joaquín, Pedro L. Cobos, David Luque, and Francisco J. López. 2014. “Associative repetition priming as a measure of human contingency learning: evidence of forward and backward blocking.” [eng]. *Journal of experimental psychology. General* 143 (1): 77–93.

Moumoutzis, Kyriakos, and Sotirios Zartaloudis. 2016. “Europeanization Mechanisms and Process Tracing: A Template for Empirical Research.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54 (2): 337–52.

Moyson, Stéphane. 2017. “Cognition and policy change: the consistency of policy learning in the advocacy coalition framework.” *Policy and Society* 36 (2): 320–44.

Moyson, Stéphane, Peter Scholten, and Christopher M. Weible. 2017. “Policy learning and policy change: theorizing their relations from different perspectives.” *Policy and Society* 36 (2): 161–77.

MPI. 2019. “Integration Policy.” Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/topics/integration-policy (April 2019).

Mulcahy, Suzanne. 2011. *Europe's migrant policies: Illusions of integration* [eng]. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nabi, Robin L. 2003. “Exploring the Framing Effects of Emotion.” *Communication Research* 30 (2): 224–47.

Neframi, Eleftheria. 2011. *Division of competences between the European Union and its Member States concerning immigration*. Trans. Cristina Castagnoli. Brussels: European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. PE 453.178.

Nugent, Neill. 1995. “The leadership capacity of the European Commission.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 2 (4): 603–23.

OECD, and EC. 2015. *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: Settling In*. Paris: OECD Publishing and European Commission.

———. 2018. *Settling In 2018: Indicators of Immigrant Integration*. Paris/ European Union, Brussels: OECD Publishing.

OECD LEED, and EC. 2015. *Local responses to refugee crisis: From initial reception to longer term integration*. Paris: OECD LEED Round table discussions and European Commission.

Olson, Mancur. 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

OPMI. 2017. "National Contact Points on Integration." Irish Department of Justice and Equality, Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration. http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/managing-diversity-eudevelopmentsintegrationNCP-en (16th Jan 2017).

Orange, Richard. 2016. "Suddenly, the Swedes are talking about their refugee problem." The Telegraph Online. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/sweden/12103667/Suddenly-the-Swedes-are-talking-about-their-refugee-problem.html (April 2018).

Osborne, Stephen P. 2006. "The New Public Governance?" *Public Management Review* 8 (3): 377–87.

———, ed. 2010. *The new public governance?: Emerging perspectives on the theory and practice of public governance*. London: Routledge.

OSCE. 2017. *Good Practices in Integration of Migrants in Line with OSCE Commitments and International Standards*. Warsaw: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

O'Toole Jr., Laurence J. 2015. "Networks and Networking: The Public Administrative Agendas." *Public Administration Review* 75 (3): 361–71.

Oudeyer, P-Y, J. Gottlieb, and M. Lopes. 2016. "Intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and learning: Theory and applications in educational technologies." [eng]. *Progress in brain research* 229: 257–84.

Padgett, Stephen. 2003. "Between synthesis and emulation: EU policy transfer in the power sector." *Journal of European Public Policy* 10 (2): 227–45.

Page, Edward C. 2003. "Europeanization and the Persistence of Administrative Systems." In *Governing Europe*, eds. Jack Hayward and Anand Menon. [Oxford]: Oxford University Press, 162–76.

Panksepp, Jaak. 1998. *Affective neuroscience: The foundations of human and animal emotions*. 2005th ed. *Series in affective science*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2011. "Cross-species affective neuroscience decoding of the primal affective experiences of humans and related animals." [eng]. *PloS one* 6 (9): e21236.

Parusel, Bernd. 2015. "Swedish Integration Policy." Länderprofile Migration: Daten - Geschichte - Politik. BPB, EMN and Migrationsverket. http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/laenderprofile/58635/integration-policy#footnode27-1 (April 2018).

———. 2016. "Policies for labour market integration of refugees in Sweden." *Migration Policy Practice* VI (2): 11–16.

Pekrun, Reinhard. 1992. "The Impact of Emotions on Learning and Achievement: Towards a Theory of Cognitive/Motivational Mediators." *Applied Psychology* 41 (4): 359–76.

Penninx, Rinus. 2009. *Evaluation of the One-Stop-Shop Project*. European Commission and Universiteit van Amsterdam. JLS/2006/INTI/148.

Peters, B. G. 1997. "Policy transfers between governments: The case of administrative reforms." *West European Politics* 20 (4): 71–88.

———. 2015. *Pursuing horizontal management: The politics of public sector coordination*. *Studies in government and public policy*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas.

Pollitt, Christopher. 2016. *Advanced introduction to public management and administration*. *Elgar advanced introductions*.

Pollitt, Christopher, and Geert Bouckaert. 2011. *Public management reform: A comparative analysis*. 3rd ed. new public management, governance, and the neo-Weberian state. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

PORDATA. 2018. "Crude rate of net migration." Base de Datos Portugal Contemporaneo. Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos. https://www.pordata.pt/en/DB/Europe/Search+Environment/Table (April 2018).

Pouliot, Vincent. 2015. "Practice Tracing." In *Process tracing: From metaphor to analytic tool*. *Strategies for social inquiry*, eds. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel. Cambridge University Press, 237–59.

Powell, Walter W., and Paul J. DiMaggio, eds. 1991. *The New institutionalism in organizational analysis*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press.

Presidency of the European Council. 1999. *Presidency Conclusions, Tampere European Council 15 and 16 October 1999*.

Princen, Sebastiaan. 2011. "Agenda-setting strategies in EU policy processes." *Journal of European Public Policy* 18 (7): 927–43.

Radaelli, Claudio M. 1995. "The role of knowledge in the policy process." *Journal of European Public Policy* 2 (2): 159–83.

———. 2000. “Policy Transfer in the European Union: Institutional Isomorphism as a Source of Legitimacy.” *Governance* 13 (1): 25–43.

———. 2003. *The open method of coordination: A new governance architecture for the European Union*. 2003:1. Stockholm: Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (SIEPS).

———. 2008. “Europeanization, Policy Learning, and New Modes of Governance.” *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 10 (3): 239–54.

———. 2009. “Measuring policy learning: Regulatory impact assessment in Europe.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 16 (8): 1145–64.

Radaelli, Claudio M., and Claire A. Dunlop. 2013. “Learning in the European Union: theoretical lenses and meta-theory.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 20 (6): 923–40.

Rapley, Tim. 2007. *Doing conversation, discourse and document analysis*. *The SAGE qualitative research kit*. Los Angeles, Calif., London: SAGE.

Rein, Martin, and Donald Schön. 1996. “Frame-critical policy analysis and frame-reflective policy practice.” *Knowledge and Policy* 9 (1): 85–104.

Reis Oliveira, Catarina. 2014. “One-Stop-Shop: A new answer for immigrant integration.” Overview of the one-stop-shop approach developed in Portugal, Berlin.

Rhodes, Martin, and Jelle Visser. 2011. “Seeking Commitment, Effectiveness and Legitimacy: New Modes of Socio-Economic Governance in Europe.” In *New modes of governance in Europe: Governing in the shadow of hierarchy* [eng]. *Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics*, eds. Adrienne Héritier and Martin Rhodes. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 104–34.

Rhodes, Roderick A. W. 1997. *Understanding governance: Policy networks, governance, reflexivity and accountability*. *Public policy and management*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

———. 2007. “Understanding Governance: Ten Years On.” *Organization Studies* 28 (8): 1243–64.

Richards, David. 1996. “Elite Interviewing: Approaches and Pitfalls.” *Politics* 16 (3): 199–204.

Risse, Thomas, and Mareike Kleine. 2010. “Deliberation in negotiations.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 17 (5): 708–26.

Risse-Kappen, Thomas. 1996. “Exploring the Nature of the Beast: International Relations Theory and Comparative Policy Analysis Meet the European Union.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 34 (1): 53–80.

Roden, Lee. 2017. “How is Sweden tackling its integration challenge?” thelocal.se. https://www.thelocal.se/20170502/how-is-sweden-tackling-its-integration-challenge (April 2018).

Rose, Richard. 1991. “What is Lesson-Drawing?” *Journal of Public Policy* 11 (01): 3.

———. 1993. *Lesson-drawing in public policy: A guide to learning across time and space / Richard Rose*. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House.

Sabatier, Paul A., and H. Jenkins-Smith, eds. 1993. *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach*. Boulder, Colo.: WestviewPress.

Sabel, Charles F., and Jonathan Zeitlin. 2008. “Learning from Difference: The New Architecture of Experimentalist Governance in the EU.” *European Law Journal* 14 (3): 271–327.

———, eds. 2010. *Experimentalist governance in the European Union: Towards a new architecture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2012a. “Experimentalism in the EU: Common ground and persistent differences.” *Regulation & Governance* 6 (3): 410–26.

———. 2012b. “Experimentalist Governance.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford Handbooks Online, ed. David Levi-Faur. Oxford University Press, 1–19.

Sager, Fritz, and Patrick Overeem, eds. 2015. *The European public servant: A shared administrative identity? ECPR-studies in European political science*. Colchester, United Kingdom: ECPR Press.

Salamon, L. M. 2002a. “The Tools Approach and the New Governance: Conclusion and Implications.” In *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance*, ed. L. M. Salamon. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 600–610.

———, ed. 2002b. *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Scharpf, Fritz W. 1994. “Games Real Actors Could Play: Positive and Negative Coordination in Embedded Negotiations.” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 6 (1): 27–53.

———. 1997. *Games real actors play: Actor-centered institutionalism in policy research*. *Theoretical lenses on public policy*. Boulder, Colo., Oxford: WestviewPress.

———. 2001. “Notes Toward a Theory of Multilevel Governing in Europe.” *Scandinavian Political Studies* 24 (1): 1–26.

Schimmelfennig, Frank. 2015. “Efficient process tracing: analyzing the causal mechanisms of European integration.” In *Process tracing: From metaphor to analytic tool*. *Strategies for social inquiry*, eds. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel. Cambridge University Press, 98–125.

Schmidt, Susanne K., and Arndt Wonka. 2014. “European Commission.” In *The Oxford handbook of the European Union* [eng]. 1st ed., eds. Erik Jones, Anand Menon and Stephen Weatherill. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Scholten, P., and S. Verbeek. 2015. “Politicization and expertise: Changing research-policy dialogues on migrant integration in Europe.” *Science and Public Policy* 42 (2): 188–200.

Scholten, Peter. 2017. “The limitations of policy learning: a constructivist perspective on expertise and policy dynamics in Dutch migrant integration policies.” *Policy and Society* 36 (2): 345–63.

Scholten, Peter, Elizabeth Collett, and Milica Petrovic. 2017. “Mainstreaming migrant integration? A critical analysis of a new trend in integration governance.” *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 83 (2): 283–302.

Scholten, Peter, Han Entzinger, and Rinus Penninx. 2015. “Research-Policy Dialogues on Migrant Integration in Europe: Comparison and Conclusions.” In *Integrating Immigrants in Europe*. *IMISCOE Research Series*, eds. Peter Scholten, Han Entzinger, Rinus Penninx and Stijn Verbeek. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 315–36.

Scholten, Peter, Han Entzinger, Rinus Penninx, and Stijn Verbeek, eds. 2015. *Integrating Immigrants in Europe*. *IMISCOE Research Series*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Scholten, Peter, and Frans van Nispen. 2015. “Policy Analysis and the “Migration Crisis”: Introduction.” *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 17 (1): 1–9.

Schön, Donald A., and Martin Rein. 1994. *Frame reflection: Toward the resolution of intractable policy controversies* [eng]. New York: BasicBooks.

Schwarz, Norbert. 2000. “Emotion, cognition, and decision making.” *Cognition & Emotion* 14 (4): 433–40.

Shipan, Charles R., and Craig Volden. 2006. “Bottom-Up Federalism: The Diffusion of Antismoking Policies from U.S. Cities to States.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (4): 825–43.

———. 2012. “Policy Diffusion: Seven Lessons for Scholars and Practitioners.” *Public Administration Review* 72 (6): 788–96.

———. 2014. “When the smoke clears: expertise, learning and policy diffusion.” *Journal of Public Policy* 34 (03): 357–87.

Simmons, Beth, Frank Dobbin, and Geoffrey Garrett, eds. 2008. *The Global Diffusion of Markets and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Slaughter, Anne-Marie. 2004. *A new world order*. Princeton, N.J., Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Slaughter, Anne-Marie, and Thomas N. Hale. 2011. “Transgovernmental Networks.” In *The SAGE handbook of governance*, ed. Mark Bevir. Los Angeles, Calif., London: SAGE, 342–51.

Slovic, Paul, and Ellen Peters. 2006. “Risk Perception and Affect.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 15 (6): 322–25.

Sørensen, Eva, and Jacob Torfing, eds. 2007. *Theories of democratic network governance*. Basingstoke [England], New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Spanish Presidency of the European Union. 2010. *European Ministerial Conference on Integration: Draft Declaration*. Zaragoza.

Stevens, Vidar. 2018. “Individual Learning Behaviour in Collaborative Networks.” In *Learning in public policy: Analysis, modes and outcomes* [eng]. *International series on public policy*, eds. Claire A. Dunlop, Claudio M. Radaelli and Philipp Trein. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 97–121.

Stone, Diane. 2004. “Transfer agents and global networks in the ‘transnationalization’ of policy.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 11 (3): 545–66.

———. 2012. “Agents of Knowledge.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford Handbooks Online, ed. David Levi-Faur. Oxford University Press, 1–17.

Support Group Network. 2018. SGN Sweden. https://www.supportgroup.se/ (April 2018).

Tajfel, Henri, ed. 1982a. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1982b. “Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations.” *Annual Review of Psychology* 33 (1): 1–39.

Tajfel, Henri, and John C. Turner. 1986. “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior.” In *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, eds. S. Worchel and W. G. Austin. Chicago, IL.: Nelson-Hall, 7–24.

Tamtik, Merli. 2016. “Institutional Change Through Policy Learning: The Case of the European Commission and Research Policy.” *Review of Policy Research* 33 (1): 5–21.

Tansey, Oisín. 2007. “Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-probability Sampling.” *Political Science & Politics* 40 (04): 765–72.

Thijs, Nick, Gerhard Hammerschmid, and Enora Palaric. 2018. *A comparative overview of public administration characteristics and performance in EU28*. Trans. European Commission. European Commission, EIPA, Hertie School of Governance, Ramboll and Social Europe.

Thornton, P. H., W. Ocasio, and M. Lounsbury, eds. 2012. *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure and Process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thränhardt, D., and M. Bommes, eds. 2010. *National Paradigms of Migration Research*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Torfing, Jacob. 2012. “Governance Networks.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford Handbooks Online, ed. David Levi-Faur. Oxford University Press, 1–18.

Trampusch, Christine, and Bruno Palier. 2016. “Between X and Y: How process tracing contributes to opening the black box of causality.” *New Political Economy* 21 (5): 437–54.

1997. “Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts: OJ C 340.” In *Official Journal of the European Union*, 1–144.

2007. “Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community: OJ C 306.” In *Official Journal of the European Union*, 1–271.

Trondal, Jarle. 2001. *The 'Parallel Administration' of the European Commission: Towards a Framework for Analysis*. Grenoble: ECPR Joint Session.

———. 2010. *An emergent European executive order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2011. “Domestic Agencies in an Emergent European Executive Order.” *Journal of European Integration* 33 (1): 55–74.

Trubek, David M., and Louise G. Trubek. 2005. “Hard and Soft Law in the Construction of Social Europe: The Role of the Open Method of Co-ordination.” *European Law Journal* 11 (3): 343–64.

Turner, John C. 1981. “Towards a cognitive redefinition of the social group.” *Cahiers de Psychologie Cognitive/ Current Psychology of Cognition* 1 (2): 93–118.

Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. 1973. “Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability.” *Cognitive Psychology* 5 (2): 207–32.

UN DESA. 2018. “Total migrant stock at mid-year by origin and by major area, region, country or area of destination.” United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml (April 2018).

UNHCR/ ECRE. 2018. *"Follow the Money": Assessing the use of EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) funding at the national level*. Brussels: European Council on Refugees and Exiles.

Vagionaki, Thenia. 2018. “Blocked Learning in Greece: The Case of Soft-Governance.” In *Learning in public policy: Analysis, modes and outcomes* [eng]. *International series on public policy*, eds. Claire A. Dunlop, Claudio M. Radaelli and Philipp Trein. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 191–214.

van Boetzelaer, Karin, and Sebastiaan Princen. 2012. “The Quest for Co-ordination in European Regulatory Networks.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 50 (5): 819–36.

van de Walle, Steven, Gerhard Hammerschmid, Rhys Andrews, and Philippe Bezes, eds. 2016. *Public administration reforms in Europe: The view from the top*. Cheltenham UK, Northampton MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to methods for students of political science*. Ithaca, N.Y, London: Cornell University Press.

van Hulst, Merlijn, and Dvora Yanow. 2016. “From Policy “Frames” to “Framing”.” *The American Review of Public Administration* 46 (1): 92–112.

Vandenabeele, Wouter, and Steven van de Walle. 2008. “International Differences in Public Service Motivation: Comparing Regions across the World.” In *Motivation in Public Management: The Call of Public Service*, eds. James L. Perry and Annie Hondeghem. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 223–44.

Verweij, Stefan, Erik-Hans Klijn, Jurian Edelenbos, and Arwin van Buuren. 2013. “What Makes Governance Networks Work?: A Fuzzy Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis of 14 Dutch Spatial Planning Projects.” *Public Administration* 91 (4): 1035–55.

Volden, Craig. 2016. “Failures: Diffusion, Learning, and Policy Abandonment.” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 16 (1): 44–77.

Volden, Craig, Michael M. Ting, and Daniel P. Carpenter. 2008. “A Formal Model of Learning and Policy Diffusion.” *The American Political Science Review* 102 (3): 319–32.

Voorberg, William, Victor Bekkers, Sophie Flemig, Krista Timeus, Piret Tõnurist, and Lars Tummers. 2017. “Does co-creation impact public service delivery? The importance of state and governance traditions.” *Public Money & Management* 37 (5): 365–72.

Wilks, Stephen. 2005. “Agency Escape: Decentralization or Dominance of the European Commission in the Modernization of Competition Policy?” *Governance* 18 (3): 431–52.

Willig, Carla. 2014. “Interpretation and Analysis 1.” In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, ed. Uwe Flick. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, Chapter 10.

Wilson, James Q. 1989. *Bureaucracy: What government agencies do and why they do it*. New York: Basic Books.

Ydrén, Therese. 2017. *Region Västra Götaland's regional development initiatives for asylum seekers and new arrivals*. EPALE Österreich. https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/blog/region-vastra-gotalands-regional-development-initiatives-asylum-seekers-and-new-arrivals.

Zeitlin, Jonathan, ed. 2015. *Extending experimentalist governance?: The European Union and transnational regulation*. Oxford United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

———. 2016. “EU experimentalist governance in times of crisis.” *West European Politics* 39 (5): 1073–94.

Zeitlin, Jonathan, Egidijus Barcevičius, and J. T. Weishaupt. 2014. “Institutional Design and National Influence of EU Social Policy Coordination: Advancing a Contradictory Debate.” In *Assessing the open method of coordination: Institutional design and national influence of EU social policy coordination*. *Work and welfare in Europe*, eds. Egidijus Barcevičius, J. T. Weishaupt and Jonathan Zeitlin, 1–15.

Zito, Anthony R., and Adriaan Schout. 2009. “Learning theory reconsidered: EU integration theories and learning.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 16 (8): 1103–23.