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MAKING PUBLIC POLICY IN EU COMMITTEES: THE ROLE OF POLISH NATIONAL OFFICIALS

ABSTRACT

The goal of the article is to present a theoretical and practical evaluation of experience of apolitical civil servants working in committee-style preparatory bodies of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission.

In the first part the hypotheses resulting from three theories of integration of different range (liberal intergovernmentalism, fusion theory, and deliberative supranationalism) are presented. The second part consists of the verification of those hypotheses, based on an empirical study conducted by the Author in 2013 in the period between January and June. The survey included Polish officials attending the meetings of committees and was followed by interviews.

The thesis of the article is based on the assumption that the majority of decisions of the Council and the Commission are actually made in apolitical preparatory bodies. Both “bargaining” and “problem solving” attitudes, representing both political and apolitical models of EU decision making, are present at this level. Theoretically, the most appropriate attitude is the combination of the liberal intergovernmentalism, the fusion theory, and the deliberative supranationalism. Those approaches can serve as general theories of integration and can be used to explain other elements of EU functioning.

Key words

European Union, committees, public administration, governance, public policy, theories of integration, member states