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## *Patterns of support and opposition in comitology (2008-2012)*

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# 1. Previous work and debates

**Dehousse, Fernández and Plaza (2014, JEPP).**

**Debate** on the nature of the decisional logics at work within Executive Committees:

- *Does it reproduce an intergovernmental model (Pollack, 2003) or rather a consensus-oriented one (Joerges and Neyer, 1997)?*

**Problem:** How can one assess the quality of interactions? How can one measure the weight of arguments? How can one assess the support vs opposition to the Commission's proposals?

## 2. The proposed strategy

### **Step 1. Look at the output of committee proceedings**

- Dismissed as inconclusive: ‘consensual nature’ of comitology (7 rejections out of 2185 decisions in 2008): compatible with different explanations (i.e. the eventual adoption of Commission proposals does not preclude the existence of a degree of conflictuality)
- Definition of conflictuality: the absence of a unanimous position in favour a draft measure proposed by the Commission

### **Step 2. Change the focus: look at the way committees decide (voting records)**

### **Step 3. Focus on Instances of Dissent with Commission proposals**

How frequent are they? What kind of explanatory factors can be offered?

### **3. First Findings (2008 sample):**

- Dissent in 25% of the cases
- Stronger in Regulatory committees
- And in some policy areas (ENERG, CLIMA, SANCO, always in relative frequencies)

### **4. Objectives of the current research**

- Enlarge the sample so as to assess the impact of the post-Lisbon reform (2008-2012; N=6394; valid cases: 5608)
- Focus on opposition to Commission's proposals rather than dissensus among MS representatives within committees
- Provide a finer measure of the intensity of opposition to Commission proposals (Index of opposition, 0)
- Identify the factors that may explain variations

## 5. Featuring Opposition

Table 1. Full Support VS. Opposition (2008-2012)

	<b>Full Support</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	Total
2008	499	152 <b>23,35%</b>	651
2009	659	195 <b>22,83%</b>	854
2010	739	175 <b>19,15%</b>	914
2011	1218	416 <b>25,46%</b>	1634
2012	1182	373 <b>23,99%</b>	1555
Total	4297	1311 <b>23,38%</b>	5608

**Levels of Opposition appear stable ...**

## 6. How can one explain levels of opposition?

### 6.1. Through the analysis of Policy Sectors...

Table 2. Frequencies, breakdown by Policy Field

	Full Support	Opposition	Total
AGRI	243	193 <b>44,27%</b>	436
BUDG	0	2 <b>100%</b>	2
CLIMA	27	27 <b>50,00%</b>	54
COMM	22	0 <b>0,00%</b>	22
CONNECT	60	27 <b>31,03%</b>	87
DEVCO	540	71 <b>11,62%</b>	611
DIGIT	4	0 <b>0,00%</b>	4
EAC	224	46 <b>17,04%</b>	270
ECHO	133	18 <b>11,92%</b>	151
EMPL	23	2 <b>8,00%</b>	25
ENERG	28	24 <b>46,15%</b>	52
ENLARG	87	17 <b>16,35%</b>	104
ENTR	139	51 <b>26,84%</b>	190
ENV	168	122 <b>42,07%</b>	290

	Full Support	Opposition	Total
ESTAT	55	52 <b>48,60%</b>	107
FPIS	6	0 <b>0,00%</b>	6
HOME	124	31 <b>20,00%</b>	155
JUST	16	7 <b>30,43%</b>	23
MARE	36	15 <b>29,41%</b>	51
MARKT	53	14 <b>20,90%</b>	67
MOVE	191	83 <b>30,29%</b>	274
REGIO	1	7 <b>87,50%</b>	8
RTD	299	14 <b>4,47%</b>	313
SANCO	1749	347 <b>16,56%</b>	2096
SEGEN	2	13 <b>86,67%</b>	15
TAXUD	60	128 <b>68,09%</b>	188
TRADE	7	0 <b>0,00%</b>	7
<b>Total</b>	4297	1311 <b>23,38%</b>	5608

**Huge variations from one area to the other....**

## 6.2. Through the analysis of the Type of Procedure...

Table 3. Breakdown by type of Procedure (2008-2012)

	<b>Full Support</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Total</b>
Advisory (a)	45	6 <b>11,76%</b>	51
Management (a)	1235	128 <b>9,39%</b>	1363
Regulatory (a)	442	246 <b>35,76%</b>	688
Regulatory with S. (a)	415	309 <b>42,68%</b>	724
Advisory (b)	7	1 <b>12,50%</b>	8
Examination (b)	2148	621 <b>22,43%</b>	2769
<b>Total</b>	4292	1311 <b>23,40%</b>	5603

(a) Pre-Lisbon

(b) Post-Lisbon

**The Intergovernmentalist thesis:  
The Stricter the Procedure, the Tighter the Control...**

### 6.3. Through the analysis of the Policy Types Thesis

Table 4. Breakdown by type of Policy Area

	Full Support	Opposition	Total
Regulatory (a)	2465	800 <b>24,50%</b>	3265
Spending (b)	1440	349 <b>19,51%</b>	1789
50-50 ( c)	309	97 <b>23,89%</b>	406
Int. Services (d)	83	65 <b>43,92%</b>	148
<b>Total</b>	4297	1311 <b>23,38%</b>	5608

(a) Includes: BUDG, CLIMA, ECOFIN, ENER, ENV, FPIS, HOME, JUST, MARE, MARKT, MOVE, SANCO, TAXUD, TRADE

(b) Includes: AGRI, DEVCO, EAC, ECHO, REGIO, RTD

(c) Includes: CONNECT, EMPL, ENLARG, ENTR

(d) Includes: COMM, DIGIT, ESTAT, SEGEN

**Policy Types don't seem to make a clear difference**



## 7. Index of Opposition

- Focus on Commission proposals, given central role of Commission in comitology
- Abstention lesser form of opposition since QMV generally required to prevent Commission from implementing its proposals
- Tacit agreement regarded as support (cfr 2011 regulation)
- No support regarded as opposition (Abstentions)

$$O = \frac{\textit{Against} + 0,5 \cdot \textit{Abstention}}{\textit{For} + \textit{Tacit Agreement} + \textit{Against} + \textit{Abstention}}$$

## Considering General Features

Table 5. Index of Opposition. Breakdown per year

	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
2008	0,95797	0,07900	0,10831
2009	0,50580	0,11380	0,11785
2010	0,47681	0,08388	0,09278
2011	0,81449	0,12552	0,14051
2012	0,71449	0,10959	0,12029
Total	0,95797	0,10829	0,12327

**Opposition levels low and stable**

# Index of Opposition, categories of intensity

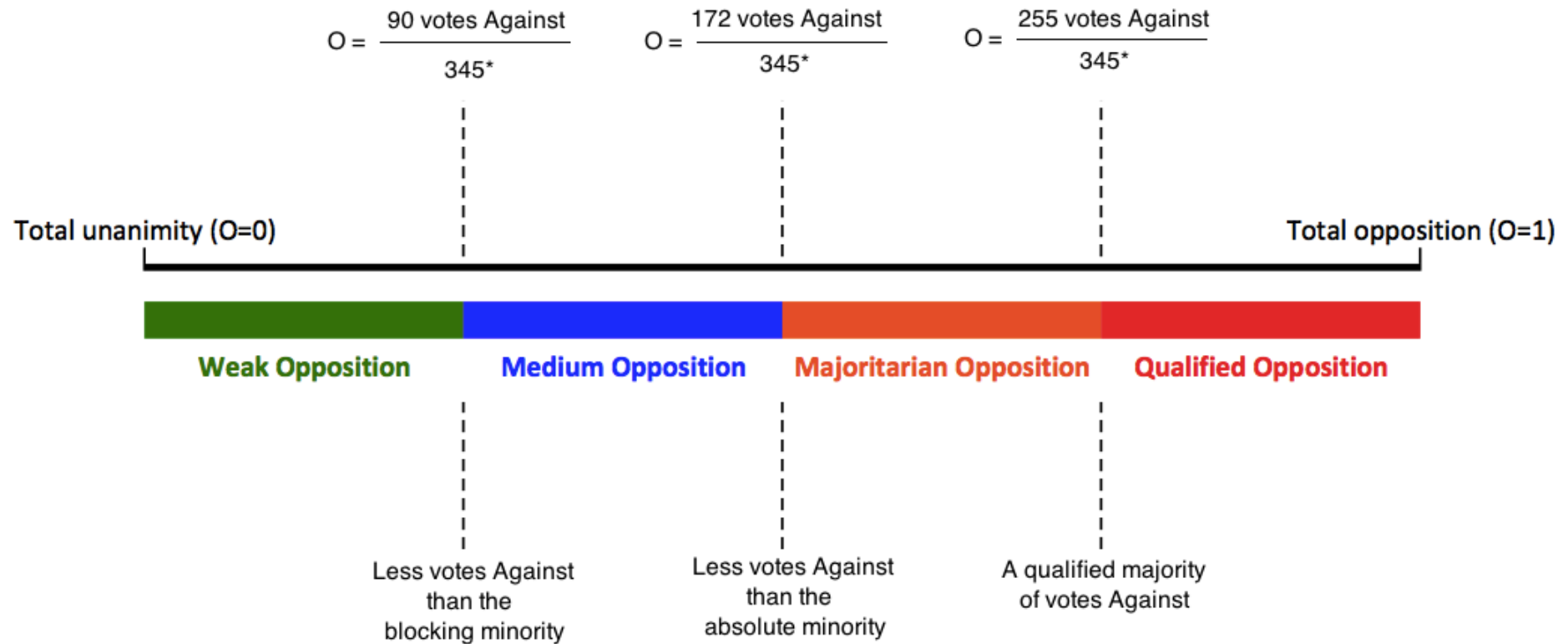


Table 6. Index of Opposition. Breakdown per Type of Procedure

	Weak Opposition (1)		Medium Opposition (2)		Majoritarian Opposition (3)		Qualified Opposition (4)		Total
Advisory (a)	5	<b>83,33%</b>	1	<b>16,67%</b>	0	<b>0,00%</b>	0	<b>0,00%</b>	6
Management (a)	106	<b>82,81%</b>	21	<b>16,41%</b>	1	<b>0,78%</b>	0	<b>0,00%</b>	128
Regulatory (a)	218	<b>88,62%</b>	24	<b>9,76%</b>	3	<b>1,22%</b>	1	<b>0,41%</b>	246
Regulatory with S. (a)	301	<b>97,41%</b>	6	<b>1,94%</b>	2	<b>0,65%</b>	0	<b>0,00%</b>	309
Advisory (b)	1	<b>100%</b>	0	<b>0,00%</b>	0	<b>0,00%</b>	0	<b>0,00%</b>	1
Examination (b)	542	<b>87,28%</b>	61	<b>9,82%</b>	14	<b>2,25%</b>	4	<b>0,64%</b>	621
<b>Total</b>	<b>1173</b>	<b>89,47%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>8,62%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1,53%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0,38%</b>	<b>1311</b>

(a) Pre-Lisbon  
(b) Post-Lisbon

(1) [0-0,26376]  
(2) [0,26377-0,50145]  
(3) [0,50146-0,73193]  
(4) [0,73914-1]

**Weak opposition is the rule for all procedures....**

**...Yet it is more frequent when procedures foresee tighter control**

Table 7. Index of Opposition. Breakdown per Type of Policy

Regulatory (a)	737	<b>92,13%</b>	51	<b>6,38%</b>	9	<b>1,13%</b>	3	<b>0,38%</b>	800
Spending (b)	286	<b>81,95%</b>	53	<b>15,19%</b>	9	<b>2,58%</b>	1	<b>0,29%</b>	349
50-50 (c)	97	<b>100%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>	97
Int. Services (d)	53	<b>81,54%</b>	9	<b>13,85%</b>	2	<b>3,08%</b>	1	<b>1,54%</b>	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>1173</b>	<b>89,47%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>8,62%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1,53%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0,38%</b>	<b>1311</b>

(a) Includes: BUDG, CLIMA, ECOFIN, ENER, ENV, FPIS, HOME, JUST, MARE,

MARKT, MOVE, SANCO, TAXUD, TRADE

(b) Includes: AGRI, DEVCO, EAC, ECHO, REGIO, RTD

(c) Includes: CONNECT, EMPL, ENLARG, ENTR

(1) [0-0,26376]

(2) [0,26377-0,50145]

(3) [0,50146-0,73193]

(4) [0,73914-1]

**The Type of policy does not appear to have a meaningful impact on levels of opposition**

## 8. Assessing Lisbon

Table 8 The Impact of Lisbon coming-into-force

	Frequency	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre-Lisbon	522 <b>39,82%</b>	0,957971	0,09363341	0,108135456
post-Lisbon	789 <b>60,18%</b>	0,814493	0,117989	0,131499963

**A slightly increase in Opposition descriptives**

## Conclusions

- Our analysis confirms that opposition to Commission proposals is limited in comitology procedures: opposition is rare and weak.
- Post-Lisbon changes do not appear to have had a decisive impact at this level.
- Classical intergovernmental approaches can explain the frequency of opposition, not its intensity.
- We still need to possible sociological institutionalist hypotheses (number of meetings, of decisions, etc)