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# **Administrative Traditions and Citizen Participation in Public Policy: A Comparative Study of France, Germany, the UK and Norway**

The participation of citizens in public policy-making has become a key aim for national and supranational institutions across Europe, but the relative importance policy-makers actually accord citizen participation arguably varies due to the alternative administrative traditions within different countries. Using data drawn from a large-scale survey of senior public managers in France, Germany, the United Kingdom (UK) and Norway, we find support for the idea that administrative tradition influences the participation of citizens in public policy. We also identify key institutional factors determining the importance of citizen participation. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

Key words: Citizen participation; administrative traditions; comparative analysis

Word count: (including references and tables)

## Introduction

In recent times, there has been growing interest in citizen participation in developing public policy and setting agendas in the public sector (Smith 2009; Somerville and Haines 2014). Civic-republican theories have long held that the involvement of citizens in decision-making is a key institutional component underpinning the civic culture characteristic of a flourishing democratic society (Almond and Verba 1963). And, during the past decade or so, there has been renewed emphasis on the importance and value of citizen participation in public policy in Europe (Kaufman 2012), and many other countries across the world (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2009). There are numerous ways in which citizens can participate in the policy process. Arnstein's well-known (1969) ladder of participation identifies degrees of citizen power, that go beyond tokenism and non-participation. Tokenistic participation generally occurs through consultation methods, such as public meetings, hearings and workshops and often focuses on a specific policy issue. To increase citizen power, dialogue may be expanded through focus groups, citizens' juries, deliberative polls and networks of public, private and voluntary actors.

Making citizen participation work is challenging, complex and costly and its outcomes are generally uncertain or difficult to evaluate (Barnes *et al.* 2007; Barnett *et al.* 2013; Nabatchi 2012). For many public organizations, there simply isn't the time, money or will to make it happen (Cheyne and Comrie 2002). Furthermore, public managers' perceptions of the importance of providing voice for citizens may also impact upon the propensity to employ citizen participation methods. Research suggests that some public organizations and managers are better at involving citizens in the policy

process than others (Neshkova 2014). Some countries too may be more committed and better equipped to encouraging the participation of citizens in public policy-making, and this may reflect administrative tradition (Yetanoet *al.* 2010). However, to date, little attention has been paid to this issue, in spite of the growing interest in citizen participation in the work of government at all levels (Blomgren Bingham *et al.* 2005).

Administrative traditions are increasingly utilized to explore national differences in public management reforms (see for example, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Meyer and Hammerschmid 2009). The administrative tradition of any given country reflects, amongst other things, state-society relations, the form of political organization, and the dominant policy style, all of which are related to the receptiveness to reform. Based on these characteristics, Loughlin and Peters (1997) and Loughlin *et al.* (2011) identify four main administrative traditions in Western European countries: the Napoleonic tradition, characterised by a strong centralized state and antagonism between the state and society (e.g. France); the organicist tradition, characterised by a federated state and co-operative state-society relations (e.g. Germany); the Anglo-Saxon tradition, characterised by a mixed form of state and pluralist state-society relations (the UK); and the Scandinavian tradition, which mixes elements of the organicist and the Anglo-Saxon traditions (e.g. Norway). These varying administrative traditions could potentially influence citizen participation in the policy process. Understanding the mechanics of citizen participation in France, Germany, the UK and Norway can therefore tell us much about the influence of national traditions on public sector governance and reform.

Does the importance of citizen participation in public policy vary by country? Can variations in a commitment to citizen participation be attributed to alternative

administrative traditions? What institutional factors might best explain cross-country differences? To evaluate whether administrative tradition matters for citizen participation in public policy at the highest levels of government, we draw upon a large-scale survey of senior public managers across all policy sectors in France, Germany, the UK and Norway as they each represent distinct European administrative traditions. The paper begins by discussing the nature of citizen participation in public policy before exploring the administrative traditions of our four countries and developing arguments about the influences of these on participation in the policy process. Following that, the data and methods employed in the study are described and the results of statistical analyses are reported. The paper concludes by exploring theoretical and practical implications.

## **Citizen participation in public policy**

The participation of citizens in democratic societies goes beyond electoral participation, being present in the development of policy and the work of the public sector, often via direct democratic initiatives and procedures, such as consultations, panels and forums and dialogues created through citizen juries (Pratchett *et al.* 2009). For many advocates, citizen participation is thought to reduce the need for bureaucratic organisational structures and to help promote the development of the kind of networked organisations characteristic of post- New Public Management (NPM) collaborative governance (Radcliffe and Dent 2005). These networked relationships will be varied, but a concern for citizen participation has been noted as ‘a key or “new” institutional site and governance mechanism’ at the heart of their development (Brown and Keast 2003). As a result, citizen participation is closely associated with the New Public Governance

(NPG), which promotes collaboration and transparency and is most likely to be found in neo-corporatist or organicist states (Osborne 2006). Nevertheless, a greater focus on citizen participation has also reflected elements of the New Public Management (NPM) such as a customer orientation, especially 'customer feedback' and stakeholder perspectives on service delivery. Although some research suggests that it is difficult to uphold participatory democratic practices alongside consumerist NPM reforms (Coupland *et al.* 2008), it is conceivable that such reforms might help to build responsiveness to citizen demands. In this respect, an emphasis on citizen participation may be a product of the ways in which NPM has played out in different countries, particularly in relation to a customer orientation and performance measurement.

The drive to increase citizen engagement in public policy-making through the introduction of citizen participation methods and initiatives is apparent in projects such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP), founded in 2011, which involves 64 countries around the world, and the Open Method of Coordination in the European Union (EU) (Friedrich 2006). In response to these developments, central governments are focusing on encouraging 'active participation' as opposed to the passive dissemination of information, or consultation as a feedback mechanism (OECD 2004). In France, initiatives at a national level, such as the 'Environmental Roundtable', involve senior civil servants in public meetings and the use of internet fora (OECD 2009). In Germany, similar trends are occurring with the development of greater transparency and collaborative systems, such as 'E-Government 2.0' (OECD 2009). In the UK, this is apparent in the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and the Civil Service Reform Plan (Bennett, 2009). In Norway, administrative policy documents also reveal a trend that

emphasizes greater collaboration and democratic participation beyond elections (Christensen and Lægreid 2011).

Many of the existing studies of citizen participation focus on local government and public services (e.g. Chandler 2001, Farrell and Jones 2000, Foley and Martin 2000, Smith and Wales 1999), and as such do not capture the full impact of national administrative traditions. In fact, scant empirical research considers the importance of citizen participation in public policy within or across central governments, despite a growing focus on the role of administrative traditions guiding national practices. To address this lacuna in the literature, we compare the potential determinants of citizen participation in public management reform in countries with different administrative traditions.

Our arguments about the relationship between administrative tradition and citizen participation are summarised in Table 1, in which we adapt Loughlin *et al.*'s (2011) model to highlight the different dimensions of administrative traditions, namely state-society relations, organization of government, policy style and form of decentralization. Additionally, we consider the role of public management style and EU adaptation pressure in relation to the anticipated importance accorded to citizen participation methods.

[Table 1 about here]

## **Administrative traditions and citizen participation**

The concept of administrative tradition offers a valuable analytical tool for exploring why policies and reforms are or are not introduced within a given state. The wider national, organizational and civic cultures found within a country may also determine receptiveness to different types of policy and public management reform (Hofstede 2001), including the citizen participation in public policy (Almond and Verba, 1963). Nevertheless, the influence of these cultures on policy debates and practices is invariably mediated by administrative and political elites. Typologies of administrative tradition can therefore capture the ways in which the importance of citizen participation reflects how elites shape, and are and shaped, by state-society relations, policy style and de-/centralisation within each country. At the same time, other factors such as public management style and EU stimulus are also likely to be influential (Van de Walle and Hammerschmid 2011). It is therefore important to consider the ways in which a commitment to citizen participation in France, Germany, the UK and Norway might reflect public management styles and the relationship between central governments and the EU, as well as policy style and decentralization.

### *France*

France is often regarded as having a Napoleonic administrative tradition, with central control over territorial administration (Hendriks *et al.* 2011), and little citizen participation expected beyond voter democracy and counter-democracy (Luhtakallio, 2012). In the past, multi-level governance was seen as weak, with subnational authorities mainly



responsible for the administration and implementation of centrally determined policy. More recently, the conventional conception of France as a monolithic state-led, highly centralized system has been called into question as the growth of regional governance structures and territorial checks and balances have diminished the power of the centre (Cole, 2011). Even so, empirical research suggests that there is still little room for citizen participation at a national or regional level, with elite networks of mayors and their executives' playing key roles in policy development (Bezes and Jeannot 2013). Moreover, the effectiveness of citizen participation initiatives, such as internet consultations, at the local level has been critiqued (Talpin and Wojcik 2010). Therefore, despite the salience of recent decentralization reforms, we anticipate that less importance will be accorded to citizen participation methods in France, in part, due to its Napoleonic tradition of administration.

In terms of policy style, France tends to be legalistic, with public administrators accountable to the law rather than to the state or society. The legalistic tradition for regulating policy decisions also impacts upon administrative reform and France has been described as a 'laggard' in adopting NPM reforms (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Rouban 2004; Bezès and Jeannot 2013). In particular, performance measurement practices may be less likely to be taken up as they promote accountability to the public or external organisations undermining the legitimacy of the legalistic regulatory tradition (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Bezès *et al.* 2013). By contrast, practices that promote a customer orientation may be more likely to be introduced, as French citizens are regarded as receivers rather than contributors to national policy (Rouban 2004), reflecting an acceptance of reform under a 'modernisation logic' (Hendriks *et al.* 2011).

With regard to EU influence, administrative and political elites in France “continue to resist” EU calls for further decentralisation (Cole 2011: 325). The EU’s promotion of policy with local and regional involvement as well as deliberation with interested parties, in particular, is in tension with the French administrative tradition (Schmidt 2006). As a result, we would expect to observe a degree of EU ‘adaptation pressure’ in France (Knill 1998) promoting multi-level governance, and more open and participative policy-making (Capano *et al.* 2012).

### *Germany*

The administrative tradition in Germany is characterised as organicist, stemming from a federal and corporatist framework, with a “strong tradition of subnational democracy at regional and local levels in a federal system moderating powers of government” (Benz and Zimmer 2011: 147). Third sector, market and civil society groups, are generally incorporated into state functions, fostering an ‘integrative’ model of politics in which government cooperates with interest associations at the federal, regional and local levels (Jann 2003). Multi-level governance processes encourage regional and local autonomy, and “co-operative federalism” provides a number of mechanisms for citizen participation. Constitutional rights for citizens’ initiatives, referendums, and local governance arrangements allow direct participation in decision-making. At the local level, participation is also enabled through council committees, citizen forums, citizens’ panels and citizens’ communities (*Bürgerkommune*). We therefore expect public managers in Germany to report greater importance of citizen participation in policy-making, as well as greater levels of autonomy for senior public managers, which may

allow for personal attitudes to influence policy-making. We would also anticipate less 'adaptation' pressure from European institutions due to the similarity of the 'organic' policy approaches in Germany and the EU (Schmidt 2006).

Public management reforms, highlighted in the 'New Steering Model', have primarily focus on the decentralisation of German local government units (Kuhlmann 2010), yet NPM reforms in Germany were in general hesitantly adopted (OECD 2009). Concerns that market-led NPM negatively impact on democratic participation are said to have "led to shift in the reform movement which emphasized the role of citizens...with improvements in direct democracy" (Benz and Zimmerman 2011:161). There has, therefore, been a critical adoption of NPM reflecting a strong 'democratic logic' – though this has also been associated with a stronger customer orientation (Randma-Liv 2011). Like in France, the public management style may reduce concern for performance measurement, as accountability to citizens is afforded by legal corporatist policy and legal procedural framework (Ziller 2003). Public management is less concerned with performance measurement and management principles (Bouckaert and Halligan 2008), and a greater collaborative approach has, according to some, led to a more widespread acceptance of citizen participation (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011).

### *United Kingdom*

The UK is characterised as having a pluralist tradition, following majoritarian democratic principles. The division between central and local government in the UK is key to the administrative tradition, yet the pluralist conception which promotes strong local autonomy can be overstated as the strength of the state means that "local government

can be changed or even abolished at a stroke”; and ultimately, “local government can only act within the bounds set by Parliament” (John and Copus 2011: 29-30). Within this system, there is often little policy autonomy for local and regional public managers. Although there is some autonomy in devolved areas in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, central government generally maintains considerable control over sub-national government activity (AUTHOR 2008).

Political engagement between state and society is focused on the role of groups from civil society. Citizen participation is most likely to be important at the local level, and focuses on the provision of services, rather than the development of policy. However, changes in the structure and organisation of the public sector and moves to adopt NPM have in some ways increased the potential for participation at all levels of government (Bovaird, 2014; 2007).

The dominant approach to NPM in the UK includes the adoption of a customer orientation, and performance measurement, following a ‘marketization logic’ rather than one aimed at enhancing democracy (Pollitt 2007). Yet, the development of what is termed ‘citizen governance’ is judged to allow citizens a role in monitoring, regulating and consulting over public policy in the UK, and has come from “within local public agencies as well as being imposed from above by central government” (John and Copus 2011:39).

Whilst citizen engagement is most important at the local level of governance, the reality is that UK local authorities have low discretion, moderate functions and weak access to central policy-making. Hence there may be more limited opportunities for citizens to influence policy-making when compared with Germany, in particular.

Nonetheless, the importance of citizen participation in the UK's central government is expected to be higher than in France, with the consumer orientation and performance management associated with NPM being influential factors. With regard to the influence of the EU, the growing emphasis on citizen involvement throughout UK government means that we expect less adaptation pressure from the EU to promote citizen engagement and participation than in France.

### *Norway*

The Norwegian administrative tradition has been identified as Scandinavian, comprising elements of both the organicist model and the Anglo-Saxon model. Demarcated local authorities, strong unitarism and weak regional structures reflect the Anglo-Saxon model, whilst a consensus orientation and neo-corporatist approach to collective decision-making reflect elements of the organicist model (Hendriks *et al.* 2011). However, elements of the Napoleonic model are also present as control is often centralised and uniformity is also important (Loughlin *et al.* 2011).

With regard to NPM discourses, whilst they were adopted in Norway, the focus on efficiency and a strong market orientation were criticized for causing fragmentation within the civil service and a move to a NPG orientation that emphasises democratic principles is evident in policy documents (Christensen and Lægreid 2011). Indeed, reform in Norway has been slower or less severe than in other countries (Olsen 1996), and as a result public administration reflects elements of NPM and NPG practices but have not been wholeheartedly accepted. Individualist NPM features of customer or user participation have been adopted but in terms of policy style, marketization has largely

been rejected and efficiency is not the main goal, instead collaboration and horizontal coordination are at the fore.

Collectivist and egalitarian traditions in Norway, alongside a strong democratic tradition and high trust in public servants and society, would lead us to expect that citizen participation will be high (Lægreid *et al.* 2013). Further, although Norway is a member of the European Economic Area, it is not an EU member state, and therefore the influence of the EU is expected to be low.

## **Methodology**

Our analysis utilises data from a comparative large-N survey of senior public managers conducted in ten countries of the EU including France, Germany, the UK and Norway in 2012. The survey was designed to explore the nature of public sector reforms and was based on a full census of all central government ministries and agencies in each country to avoid random sampling and related problems of representativeness. It was carried out by separate research teams in each country, with the data cleaning, harmonization and production of the final dataset centrally co-ordinated by the German team to ensure consistency and validity (see Hammerschmid *et al.* 2013a). The survey covered all top and higher level public sector managers working in all policy areas across central government. So, for example, in France, top civil servants working in all the ministries, prefectures, regional ministerial directorates, departmental directorates and executive agencies were surveyed, whilst in Germany, all senior managers working in federal and state (länder) government ministries and agencies were surveyed. In the UK, senior civil servants working in all UK central government departments, devolved governments and

executive agencies were surveyed. In Norway, all top managers working in central ministries and executive agencies were surveyed, along with a small number from regional health and employment authorities.

A piloting process was undertaken in each country to validate the survey questions, with senior public managers' responses to that process informing the final design and wording of the questionnaire and survey items. (For further information see Hammerschmid *et al.* 2013a). The data are subject to strict anonymity regulations, to safeguard individual respondents. Respondents to the survey are all familiar with the trends in public policy within the policy areas in which they work and are able to offer an expert opinion on the importance of participatory initiatives within government. These initiatives may include consultations, forums, panels, and committees set up to include citizens in policy making processes. Top public managers' perceptions of the importance of key reform initiatives have been used in several previous studies (e.g. Hammerschmid *et al.* 2013b).

There were 2,548 valid responses available from the four countries included in this study, with an overall response rate of 21.2 per cent. The response rate varied across each country from a low of 11.4% in the UK, 22.5% in France, 24.7% in Germany through to a high of 33.6% in Norway. These variations in the response rates may have been due to the different access strategies adopted by the research teams in each country, but more likely are a product of trends in survey response in both countries and policy sectors, which may reflect work pressures on senior public managers, general survey fatigue or wider openness to survey completion. Such variations in response have been observed in previous comparative public management

research (Mouritzen and Svara 2002). In terms of the potential impact of varying response rates on our analysis, this is (at least partially) controlled by including variables controlling for organizational type and policy area in the statistical models.

### **Citizen participation in public policy**

To explore the importance of citizen participation in public policy, as understood from the perspective of senior managers in the European public sector, informants were asked whether citizen participation methods and initiatives were a significant reform trend in their policy area, (scored on a seven-point scale ranging from 0, not at all used, to 6, to a large extent). We acknowledge that this measure does not allow exploration of the types of initiatives and methods that may be employed; however, it does allow us to explore the importance of citizen engagement more generally at a national level according to senior public managers.

### **Administrative traditions**

To evaluate the degree to which different administrative traditions may be responsible for variations in the importance of citizen participation in public policy, we first examined differences in the mean scores for the citizen participation variable across the three countries. This analysis indicated that citizen participation was rated, on average, as most important in Germany (3.24), followed by the UK (3.10), Norway (2.94) and least important in France (2.17). The average German and British response to the question on citizen participation was found to be statistically indistinguishable but both were significantly higher than the average French response. The Norwegian response was



statistically lower than Germany, higher than France and indistinguishable from the British response. We constructed categorical variables, coded 1 if a respondent comes from the country in question (e.g. Germany) and 0 if they come from another country in a regression model with which we can identify country effects on citizen participation.

To build on this comparatively simple approach to testing for the influence of administrative tradition, we also include variables that can capture some of the key dynamics of the relationships between the administrative tradition within each country and citizen participation in public policy, including organisation of government, policy style, public management style and EU influence.

#### *Organization of government/form of decentralization*

We include a measure that captures the level of government in which a respondent was employed by asking them to assign themselves to one of the five types of governmental organization: central ministry; central agency; state or regional ministry; state or regional agency; or subnational level organization. Working for a central ministry was then taken as the reference category and dichotomous variables were entered into the statistical models for the remaining organisational types, each of which captures relative decentralization of central government functions.

#### *Policy style*

We include two variables that capture variations in the policy style adopted by senior public managers in each country: one gauges the relative degree of policy autonomy experienced by survey respondents; the other gauges their role perception.

To evaluate the possible salience of respondents' discretion over the use of citizen participation methods within their policy area, we drew upon two questions asking them how much autonomy they believed themselves to have when formulating, and when implementing policies (on a scale of 0 (very low) to 6 (very high)). The scores for the two measures of autonomy were combined to produce an index of policy autonomy (Cronbach's alpha of 0.7). To measure the degree to which a commitment to citizen participation might reflect the role perception of public managers, we draw upon a survey question asking respondents whether they understood their role to be 'providing a voice for societal interests' (scored from 0, strongly disagree, to 6 strongly agree).

### *Public Management Style*

We capture the potential influence of public management style on citizen participation in public policy by measuring the customer orientation within respondents' organization and the use of performance information to communicate with different external stakeholders. These two dimensions reflect the consumerist orientation and performance management practices associated with NPM that seem most likely to influence the development of citizen participation. Informants indicated on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 7 (to a large extent) whether the following were instruments used in their organization: customer/user surveys; service points for customers (e.g. one stop shops) and whether service users are treated as customers. A composite measure of customer orientation based on these three items was created (Cronbach's alpha of 0.7).

Survey respondents were asked whether performance indicators were used, first, to communicate what the organisation does to citizens and service users; and second, to engage with external stakeholders. Informants rated the use of performance information in these two ways on a scale of 0 (never used) to 5 (frequently used).

### *European contact*

We evaluate European influence on citizen participation in public policy by measuring the intensity of contact between senior public managers and the EU. This was done by asking informants to indicate how frequently they were in contact with EU institutions on a scale from 0 (never has contact) to 6 (has daily contact). We anticipate that interactions with EU institutions may play an especially important role in driving citizen participation in the French case, given that the EU promotes adaptation towards an organicist model (Schmidt, 2006).

### *Control variables*

We also included several variables that can control other potentially salient organizational and personal characteristics. Firstly, a measure of *organization size* was used to control for the possibility that smaller organizations are closer to the citizenry or that larger organizations have more resources for encouraging citizen participation. To guide the respondents in determining the size of their organizations, they were asked to assign it to one of six groups (less than 50 employees, 51-99, 100-499, 500-999, 1000-5000, over 5000 employees). This is treated as continuous data, ranging from 0 to 5.

Secondly, we add fourteen categorical variables capturing the policy areas in which respondents worked: general government; foreign affairs; finance; economic affairs; infrastructure and transportation; defence; justice, public order & safety; employment services; health; other social protection and welfare; education; environmental protection; and recreation, culture, and religion. Informants also had the opportunity to report that they covered ‘other’ issues. Each policy area is treated as a dichotomous variable, coded 0 where the respondent did not work in a named area, and 1 where they did. In policy areas dependent upon relational exchanges between service providers and users, such as health and environmental issues, citizen participation may be more important, than in those less reliant on such exchanges, such as defence or foreign affairs.

Thirdly, categorical variables capturing individuals’ age, gender, educational attainment, and tenure were also included in the analysis. Respondents were also asked to indicate what kind of position they currently held in the organization – top, second or third hierarchical level. However, no significant associations were found between the individual characteristics of respondents and the importance of citizen participation methods, so these variables are not reported in the tables below (available on request). The descriptive statistics for all the variables used in the statistical modelling are shown in Table 2.

--Table 2 around here--

## **Statistical results**

Results for statistical estimates of variations in the importance accorded to citizen participation in public policy in France, Germany, the UK and Norway are shown in Table 3. Five Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models are presented. To illustrate the determinants of a commitment to citizen participation across all four countries, the first model incorporates the country dummies and all of the independent variables. To facilitate analysis of the role that each of the independent variables might play in each country separately, the remaining four models then presents the estimates of citizen participation for the French, German, UK and Norwegian samples respectively. We present two sets of these models: the first excluding, and the second including, the control variables. Tests revealed that multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity did not appear to be a problem. Running the models using similar sample sizes for each country and bootstrapping the regression estimates did not alter the results that we observe.

--Table 3 around here--

The patterns associated with national traditions of governance and democracy provided us with expectations about the perceived importance of citizen participation methods. We can see that those expectations are confirmed at the country level, even when controlling for a range of important institutional, organizational and individual level factors. Whilst in our initial analysis of mean-differences in citizen participation between Germany and the UK, and Norway and the UK, were not statistically significant,

regression analysis reveals that German public managers believe citizen participation is more important than their British counterparts, and the British more than the Norwegians when compared to France and other confounding factors are controlled. Our results therefore provide support for the state-society relations identified in Loughlin *et al.*'s (2011) typology of administrative traditions described above.

The organization of government/form of decentralization is also shown to be relevant to citizen participation. We can see from model 1 in Table 3 that central agencies are negatively and statistically significant in determining citizen participation whilst state or regional agencies are positively and statistically significant related. However looking at the country results, we see that varying influences are present. In Germany, the UK, and Norway, government organizations below central ministries seem less likely to utilize citizen participation, whilst in France the pattern is reversed with state or regional agencies positively and significantly associated with citizen participation. This seems likely to reflect national traditions, as citizens in France are often less involved in national policy decision making, whilst in Germany, the UK, and Norway citizen participation is deemed to be more important at the national level. The result for Germany is somewhat surprising, but may reflect the effort by federal institutions to extend areas of central competence in order to circumvent "joint decision traps" (Benz, 2013).

Considering policy style, the findings indicate that policy autonomy is also an important factor in determining citizen participation, as the coefficient is positive and statistically significant. However, turning to the results for the individual countries, we can observe that policy autonomy plays an important role in Germany, a limited role in

Norway but was not significant in the other two countries. This may reflect the patterns identified by administrative traditions, indicating high autonomy in federal corporatist Germany at one pole, compared to a centralised system in Norway and France and the UK's 'muddling through' approach. In terms of individual policy style, 'providing voice' makes a difference in France, Germany and the UK, with a positive and statistically significant association with a commitment to citizen participation in all models. This indicates that the public managers' perception of their role is a key determinant of the importance attributed to citizen participation, and may be more influential in general than policy autonomy. However, this is not the case for Norway, where an egalitarian and homogenous policy approach may limit autonomous decision-making.

The findings presented in Table 3 suggest that there is a strong relationship between a customer orientation and the importance accorded to citizen participation: the coefficient for our index of consumerism is positive and statistically significant in all models. Likewise, the use of performance information to communicate with citizens and service users could have a positive complementary effect on the use of citizen participation methods. Treating citizens as customers and clients with rights to consideration and service as within private sector business may be one way of increasing their interest in participatory decision-making (Aberbach and Christensen 2005). Interestingly, however, this finding only applied in the French and German contexts, whilst in the British context the use of performance information to communicate with external stakeholders other than citizens was an important determinant of citizen participation. This cross-country divergence is suggestive of the possibility that France and Germany are using performance information to encourage

citizens to get involved in government directly, whereas the UK is using it to indirectly engage with citizens via interest groups. In Norway, there is little evidence that performance information is related to the engagement of citizens either directly or indirectly.

Moving beyond administrative traditions and public management style, we also evaluated the importance of supranational influences by examining contact with the EU, as an indicator of adaptation pressure. The results in Model 1 suggest that EU contact is a significant influence; however, when considering the influence on individual countries, the results indicate that this is most relevant in France. This supports suggestions that adaptation pressure is most significant for countries, such as France with its Napoleonic tradition, that diverge from the collaborative and decentralised approach of the EU (Knill, 1998, Schmidt 2006).

## **Conclusion**

This paper has drawn upon the literature on administrative traditions to analyse senior public managers' perceptions of citizen participation in public policy in France, Germany the UK and Norway. Based on ideas about the state-society relations in Napoleonic, Organicist and Pluralist states, we developed arguments about the relative importance of citizen participation in each of the four countries. We found that citizen participation in public policy was perceived to be most important in Germany, and that it was perceived to be least important in France. Some institutional factors were positively related to citizen participation in all four countries, notably a perception on the part of public managers that they provide societal voice and a strong customer orientation within the



organizations in which they work. We also identified specific features of the administrative traditions associated with each country that appear to be shaping attitudes towards citizen participation: higher levels of contact with EU officials in France; greater policy autonomy for German public managers; and, the use of performance information by British public managers to engage with interest groups. The most significant finding for Norway is that customer orientation is a significant determinant of the importance accorded to citizen participation. These results suggest that the different administrative traditions in European countries may well shape the opportunities for citizen participation in public policy, and that Europe-wide efforts to encourage participation should pay close attention to the national context in which initiatives are implemented.

Our study indicates that a commitment to citizen participation in public policy is influenced by institutional factors in central government, as well as in sub-national levels of governance, confirming Blomgren Bingham *et al.*'s (2005) argument that participation is a multi-level issue. It also highlights the role that supranational institutions, public management reforms and key actors may play in driving participation in policy-making, all of which points towards the complexity of the policy environment in which cross-national strategies and programmes for citizen participation are located. These multi-level complexities have already been noted in relation to the EU's Citizen Initiative's (Kaufmann 2012), and it seems that our survey data from France, Germany, the UK and Norway add further weight to the evidence emerging on this developing area of research.

While our study provides valuable findings on the perceptions of citizen participation in public policy within government, its limitations suggest areas requiring further investigation. Although the research draws upon the viewpoints of some of the most influential public managers in our four countries, the results are dependent upon their perceptions of the importance of citizen participation in their policy field. To draw firmer conclusions on the importance accorded to citizen participation in each country it would be necessary to identify explicit measures of citizen participation which could be used to triangulate with the perceptual data on which we rely. Likewise, although the statistical analysis has affirmed the plausibility of many of our theoretical arguments regarding administrative traditions, longitudinal and historical studies are required to reveal the precise institutional dynamics of the relationships we observe on this occasion. Similarly, in-depth case studies could be utilised to examine managers' attitudes towards citizen participation in public policy in much greater detail.

Our study provides an indication of the ways in which administrative traditions might play a part in determining the diffusion of participatory policies and practices at a national level. Nevertheless, the study also highlights that administrative traditions do not wholly determine the importance attached to citizen participation in policy. Whether cross-national initiatives to engage more effectively with citizens can overcome all of the path-dependencies set by administrative traditions across Europe is something that future research can tell.

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**Table 1 National administrative traditions and citizen participation**

	<b>France (Napoleonic)</b>	<b>Germany (Organicist)</b>	<b>UK (Anglo-Saxon)</b>	<b>Norway (Scandinavian)</b>
<b>State-society relations</b>	<i>Antagonistic</i> voter and counter democracy	<i>Organicist</i> – consensus democracy	<i>Pluralistic</i> – Majoritarian voter democracy	<i>Organicist</i> – Representative and consensus democracy
<b>Organization of government</b>	<i>Centralized unitary</i> Power used to impose uniformity	<i>Federal state</i> Integral multi-level governance	<i>Union state</i> Centralised power with devolved authorities	<i>Decentralized unitary</i> Centralised with powerful local authorities
<b>Policy style</b>	<i>Legal technocratic</i> Led and managed by administrative specialists	<i>Legal corporatist</i> Collaborative with interest group representation	<i>Incrementalist</i> Ad hoc approach with plurality of state actors	<i>Consensual</i> Collaborative with interest and social group representation
<b>Form of decentralization</b>	<i>Regionalised unitary state</i> Limited local autonomy	<i>Cooperative federalism</i> High regional autonomy and influence	<i>Regionalised unitary state</i> Devolution and moderate local autonomy	<i>Strong local autonomy</i> Weak /regional structures and moderate local autonomy
<b>Public management style</b>	<i>Public administration- New Public Management</i> Modernisation logic	<i>New Public Management- Governance</i> Democratic logic	<i>New Public Management- Marketization</i> logic	<i>New Public Management- Governance</i> Democratic logic
<b>EU influence</b>	<i>High adaptation pressure</i>	<i>Low adaptation pressure</i>	<i>Moderate adaptation pressure</i>	<i>Low adaptation pressure</i>
				
<b>Citizen participation</b>	<i>Low</i> Centralised power with legal regulation	<i>Medium-High</i> Interest group based with legal and social accountability	<i>Medium</i> Centralised power with social accountability	<i>Medium</i> Centralised power with legal and social accountability

Source: Adapted and expanded from Loughlin *et al.*2011.

**Table 2**      **Descriptive statistics**

N=1503	Mean	St. Dev
Citizen participation methods	2.74	1.83
<i>Organization type</i>		
Central ministry	.31	.46
Central agency	.30	.46
State or regional ministry	.22	.41
State or regional agency	.06	.23
Other subnational body	.11	.18
<i>Policy style</i>		
Policy autonomy	3.56	1.78
Policy implementation	2.68	1.78
Policy choice and design	3.68	1.56
Providing a voice for societal interests	4.08	1.66
<i>Public management style</i>		
Customer orientation	4.10	1.51
Customer/user surveys	2.81	2.00
Service points for customers	2.79	2.04
Treatment of service users as customers	4.52	1.89
Use of PI: Communicate with citizens	3.61	1.82
Use of PI: External stakeholder engagement	3.33	1.78
EU contact	1.33	1.09
<i>Control variables</i>		
Organization size	2.93	1.45
<i>Policy area</i>		
General government	.10	.30
Foreign affairs	.12	.19
Finance	.13	.19
Economic affairs	.14	.20
Infrastructure and transportation	.13	.34
Defence	.02	.14
Justice, public order & safety	.11	.31
Employment services	.16	.36
Health	.13	.34
Other social protection and welfare	.10	.31
Education	.08	.26
Environmental protection	.14	.36
Recreation, culture, religion	.07	.25
Other	.17	.38
<i>Individual characteristics</i>		
Age	2.12	.81
Male	.71	.45
Bachelor's degree	.12	.32
Master's degree	.72	.45
Doctorate	.15	.35
Tenure	2.39	1.26
Top level manager	.31	.46
Second level manager	.35	.48
Third level manager	.33	.47

**Table 3**      **Determinants of citizen participation**

	Full	France	Germany	UK	Full	France	Germany	UK	Norway
Germany	.893**	--	--	--	1.106**	--	--	--	--
UK	.597**	--	--	--	.778**	--	--	--	--
Norway	.476**	--	--	--	.548**	--	--	--	--
<i>Organisation type</i> (ref: Central ministry)									
Central agency	-.212+	.325	-1.055**	-.596*	-.494**	-.043	-1.138**	-.668*	-.554+
State or regional government ministry	.353**	.203	-.052	.235	.052	.009	-.530	-.299	-.537
State or regional agency	1.079**	1.732**	-1.258*	-.424	.868**	1.133**	-1.685**	-.031	--
Other subnational body	-.154	.034	-2.271	-.644	-.342+	-.007	-2.743+	-.852	-1.916*
<i>Policy style</i>									
Policy autonomy	.060**	.057*	.016	.029	.057**	.032	.066*	.053	.089+
Providing a voice for societal interests	.130**	.131**	.129*	.259**	.080**	.082*	.117*	.137+	.030
<i>Public management styles</i>									
Customer orientation	.226**	.197**	.127*	.472**	.310**	.222**	.309**	.522**	.522**
Use of PI: Communicate with citizens	.092**	.139**	.143*	-.051	.092**	.114*	.168**	-.134	.024
Use of PI: External stakeholder engagement	.024	-.011	.051	.130	.021	-.029	.023	.231*	.072
EU contact	.072*	.139**	.156*	-.089	.068+	.213**	-.019	-.082	-.099
<i>Control variables</i>									
Organisational size					.008	.086+	-.074	.059	-.149
<i>Policy area</i>									
General government					.012	.214	.326	.014	-.327
Foreign affairs					-.695**	-1.053**	-.542	-.198	-.531
Finance					-.221	-.071	-.291	-1.198**	.030
Economic affairs					-.515**	-.709**	-.515+	-.083	-.546
Infrastructure/transport					.361**	.096	.266	.917**	-.003
Defence					-1.253**	-.641+	-2.613**	-1.455+	-2.563**
Justice, order & safety					-.156	-.333	-.282	-.025	.143
Employment services					-.496**	-.317	-.730*	-.217	.235
Health					.398**	.767	.225	-.183	.215
Other social welfare					-.007	-.034	-.150	.248	.373
Education					-.100	-.283	.125	.424	-.512

Environmental protection					.664**	.968	.926**	.009	-.208
Recreation, culture, religion					-.017	-.358	.273	.062	.868+
Other					-.157	-.473	.332	.528+	-.479
(Constant)					.085	.449	2.211	-.537	.679
R <sup>2</sup>					.287	.328	.291	.397	.293
F-statistic					16.878**	9.209**	4.818**	2.987**	3.313**
N	1503	636	409	178	1503	636	409	178	280

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Note: + p< 0.1, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.001. Coefficients for individual characteristics not shown.