

European Union Politics

Summary

Asst. Prof. Dr. Alexander Bürgin

Content

1. The purpose of theories/analytical approaches
2. European Integration Theories
3. Governance Theories

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1. The purpose of theories

Definitions

- **Ontology:** basic assumptions of social reality
- **Epistemology:** established ways of gathering knowledge (e.g. causal explanations vs. interpretation)

Using theories leads to better analysis

- Theories
 - Helps to identify what is relevant
 - Helps to structure our analysis
 - Allows as structured discussion

Theorising Policy Making

1. European Integration Theories

Which factors drive the European integration process?

- **Intergovernmentalism:**
 - Governments control integration process
- **Supranationalism:**
 - Role of supranational actors
 - Role of norms
 - Spill over dynamics which cannot be controlled by govt (neofunctionalist argument)

Are preferences fix?

- **Rationalist approaches:**

Yes (exogen)

- Cost-Benefit calculations of the actors
- Strategy: Maximising benefits

- **Constructivist approaches:**

No (endogen)

- Preferences shaped in interaction

Preference formation: Variants of Intergovernmentalism

- **Realist Intergovernmentalism**
 - Geopolitical interests
- **Liberal Intergovernmentalism**
 - Domestic (economic) interests
 - Liberal preference formation (= pluralist preference formation)
 - Aggregation of interests of domestic constituencies

Preference formation: Variants of supranationalism

- **Rationalist Supranationalism**
 - Importance of supranational actors, changed opportunity structure for governments
- **Constructivist Supranationalism**
 - Interaction shapes preferences/identities

Explaining decisions (1): Intergovernmentalism

- **Bargaining:** relative power of a state
 - Information
 - Outside options: Actors with best alternatives are in the strongest negotiation position
- **Package Deals/Side payments:**
 - Historical agreements due to preference convergence of big member states and side payments to smaller member states

Explaining decisions (2): supranationalism

- **Rationalist supranationalism**
 - Path dependancy
 - Spill over dynamics
 - Norms as negotiation resource
- **Constructivist Supranationalism**
 - Arguing/Deliberation: openness for the better argument
 - Socialization processes, social learning

Spill over mechanisms

- **Functional spill over:**
 - interdependence of policy areas
- **Political spill over:**
 - Interest groups, bureaucrats orient their activities towards the European level
- **Cultivated spill over:**
 - European Commission establishes networks/advocacy coalitions which promote European solutions

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3. Governance Theories

Difference: integration theories and comparative/governance approaches

- **Integration theories:** Causes and direction of European integration
- **Comparative/governance approaches:**
 - Focus on policy process in all its complexity and diversity
 - Use of the tools of domestic politics: What are the conditions of actions?

Focus on the daily work instead of the history of integration

- How is governmental power exercised?
- Under what conditions can the Parliament influence legislation?
- Is the Court of Justice beyond political control?
- How to explain public support?
- Why are some social groups more able to influence the political agenda than other groups?

Questions/Legislative Politics

- Council:
 - Influence of decision making procedures on voting power/formation of voting coalitions
 - What explains positions (Misfit, venue shopping)
- EP
 - Voting behavior explained by nationality of left/right divide?
 - Influence of decision making procedures (Consultation, co-operation, assent and co-decision) on agenda setting power

Questions/Executive Politics: Delegation

- Why do the MS (principals) delegate power to supranational actors (agents)?
 - Lower transaction costs:
 - Commit themselves credibly to common agreements/avoid free riding
 - Benefit from policy-relevant expertise
 - Implementation of regulations/monitoring compliance

Questions/Executive Politics: Discretion

- How big is the autonomy of the agent?

Depends on:

- Distribution of information between principals and agents
- Control mechanisms as comitology

Institutionalist approaches used to explain these questions

- Definition Institution:
 - political organisations (EP, Com, ECJ)
 - Formal institutionalist structures (e.g. legislative procedures)
 - Informal patterns of structured interactions (cultural practises, moral templates)
- Three variants of institutionalism: rational choice, historical and sociological institutionalism

Rational Choice Institutionalism

- Institutional structures constrain actors' behaviour
- Actors act according a logic of consequences (maximise benefits)

Example: Principal-Agent Theory

- Difficulties of MS (principals) in keeping control over their agents (Com), Pollack 1997
 - Range of delegated tasks increased
 - Number of principals increased, hence also the heterogeneity in the Council
 - Expanded use of QMV, therefore easier for Commission to construct a winning coalition

Example: Logrolling between EP and Council

- Logrolling: quid pro quo/ package deal:
 - MS control financial aspects and ensure timely adoption of policies
 - In return EP is involved in policy areas in which it has no/limited formal powers

R. Kardasheva (2013) - Abstract No. 10

Example: Lobbying Activities of Interest groups

- Whether interest groups choose to try to influence legislation through national governments or through Com/EP depends
 - On their access to national govt/EP/Com
 - Decision rules applied in the Council
(unanimity – lobby rather national govt)
 - What role the EP has in the final decision

Sociological Institutionalism

- Institutions shape actors' behaviour (e.g. established norms, moral templates)
- Thus institutions do not only influence the strategic calculations, but have a deeper effect on preference formation)
- Actors act according to a logic of appropriateness

Example: Empowerment of the European Parliament

- Puzzle: Rationalist interest in a strong EP???
- Sociological explanation: Empowerment = logic of appropriateness, a more democratic institutional architecture

Example: Institutional constraints for Council Presidencies

- Are Council presidencies pushing their national interests?
 - Answer:
 - Countries holding the presidency have a lot of agenda setting power, however this power is not used due to normative constraints
 - Established norm is that presidency should be a rather neutral mediator
- P. Alexandrova and A. Timmermanns (2013) – Abstract No. 7

Example: Comitology system

- Comitology committees are composed of officials of the MS and the Com
- According to rationalist institutionalism they are a control tool for the MS
- According to sociological institutionalism they are rather a forum of deliberation
- Empirical evidence for both assumptions can be found

Historical Institutionalism

- Institutions are both, constraining and shaping actors' behaviour
- Time is important: decision of the past constrain actors later in time – path dependency
 - Past decisions are tested/workable
 - Legitimacy of past decisions
 - Voting Rules in the Council make change difficult

Examples: CAP reform

- Once established it was very difficult to reform CAP due to Unanimity/QMV in the Council
 - Around 1/3 of vote necessary to block a modification of status quo, but
 - Around 2/3 of votes necessary to modify the status quo

Example EU health policy

- Critical Juncture: New policy, not fully shaped yet
- Once decision is taken, it will be sticky, reason: Path Dependency (QMV needed to reform a policy)

S. L. Scott (2008) – Abstract No. 11

Example: Europeanization processes in candidate countries

- EU institutions and policies influence national institutions and policies
 - Adaption pressure of EU regulations (EU conditionality = accession in return for domestic reforms, rational cost-benefit calculation)
 - Changes in domestic power constellation (EU as constraints for domestic actors)
 - Social learning (sociological institutionalism)

Example: Europeanisation processes in Turkey

- Why did Turkey align (a lot of) its asylum policy with EU standards?
- Membership perspective is uncertain, therefore conditionality strategy of EU rather weak
- Answer:
 - Importance of domestic factors (issue salience: increasing number of asylum seekers, pressure of domestic NGO's, modernisation strategy unrelated of EU accession)
 - Social learning in transnational networks beyond the EU (longterm cooperation with UNHCR)

Example: Europeanization processes in candidate countries

- Does the pre-accession monitoring led to compliance with EU demands regarding labour rights in CEEC?
- Answer
 - positive correlation found between monitoring (= institutional constrain) and compliance

S. Kahn-Nisser (2013) - Abstract No. 3

Another influential approach is Network governance

- Complexity of EU governance:
 - wide participation of public, private sector actors
 - Wide participation of national, subnational and supranational actors
- Network governance: coordination rather than hierarchical governance

Multi-level governance

- Central governments lost control both to supranational and subnational actors
 - Regional level involved in the implementation of EU policies
 - Transnational networks of private actors (issue networks)

Example: Regional Policy of EU

- Has the implementation of the EU's structural funds led to increased powers for sub-national authorities?
- Answer:
 - Evidence from Netherland and Denmark indicates that the central governments are able to keep control over the implementation process

K. Yesilkagit and J. Blom Hansen (2007) – Abstract No. 2

Advocacy coalitions

- **Definition:** a policy community from a variety of institutions who share a common approach to a problem/policy
- **Claim:** Understanding the policy process requires looking at these advocacy coalitions composed of bureaucrats, interest groups, researchers, journalists
- **Strength:** Policy developments in the long run

Example: Biodiversity governance in new MS

- Which factors are crucial for biodiversity governance in the new member states?
 - Answer:
 - Characteristics of NGO involvement has an impact on biodiversity government
 - NGOs are more influential if they are part of an advocacy coalition (=networks with European Commission and public institutions)
- J. Cent, D. Mertens and K. Niedzialkowski
(2013) – Abstract No. 1

Role of Nongovernmental Actors

- **Expertise:** Knowledge in order to establish better policies
- **Policy Making:** Co-Producer of policies, affected actors contribute to joint problem solving
- **Legitimacy:** defend European governance in public discourse, bring EU closer to the people

Framing

- **Frame:** a schema of interpretation individuals rely on to understand and respond to events
- **Framing:** selective perception of an event to encourage certain interpretations and to discourage others.

Agenda Setting

- The art of controlling an agenda in order to maximize the probability of getting a favourable outcome.
- Examples
 - Commission proposal frames the policy options
 - Setting the course and content of a meeting: adding/subtracting issues, speaking time
 - Rule interpretation
 - Setting the voting procedures

Example: Crisis Management of EU

- Which factors contributed to the increase of crisis management missions of the EU?
- Answer: One important factor was the agenda setting power of the former Higher Representative Javier Solana, based on
 - Venue shopping (the art of finding the most appropriate venues for one's policy ideas)
 - Issue framing (the art of defining the art of the problem, consequences of action/non-action)
 - His superior information

Example: Agenda Setting in Council negotiations

- Why are small states sometimes very influential in the Council?
- Answer: It depends on their argumentative power, e.g.:
 - Arguments that resonate well with prior beliefs of the addressees of the argument
 - Scientific arguments
 - Reframing strategies: focus on normative arguments instead of the distributive effect of a policy
- D. Panke (2012) – Abstract No. 5

Example: Implementation of EU policies

- Which factors influence the implementation of EU policies at domestic level?
- Answer
 - One important factor is the issue salience (political/public awareness of the urgency of the problem)
 - Higher issue salience leads to faster implementation

A. Spendzharova (2013) – Abstract No. 6

The Multiple Stream Model

- Three streams which mostly develop isolated:
 - Problem stream
 - Policy stream
 - Politics stream
- A policy solution is possible if these streams can be linked together (window of opportunity)

Example: opening of a visa liberalization process with Turkey

- Despite the reluctance of some governments the Council gave the Com the mandate to start a visa liberalization talk with Turkey – why?
- Answer: Com successfully used a window of opportunity
 - Problem stream: high issue salience – Turkey is the main route for illegal migration into the EU
 - Policy stream: Linkage between readmission agreement and visa liberalization had been established for the Western Balkan countries
 - Politics stream: Danish Council Presidency had an interest in a solution and was accepted as mediator between the pro/contra visa talk camps