



# Theories of Integration

POL 137: IR IN WESTERN EUROPE

“Why has integration proceeded more rapidly in some policy domains than it has in others? To what extent is the Community governed by 'intergovernmental' or 'supranational' modes of decision-making? ... Once supranational institutions are born, a new dynamic emerges.”

# I. Introduction to theory

- Surrendering sovereignty demands explanation
- Scale of cooperation
  - Intergovernmental vs. Supranational institutional structure



- Examples of institutionalization
  - EC rules; EC organizations; transnational society

# Other issues of European integration

- Why is the UK a reluctant member?
- Why expansion – 6 to 28 members?
- Why does integration start, stop, and pause?
- Effects of variable speed of integration
  - i.e. Opt-outs

# Components of a Good Theory

## *Discussion Activity*

- Theories are meant to explain political phenomena
- What makes a good theory?
  - In groups of 2-3, come up with 3-5 components that make a good theory
- Common characteristics of good theories:
  - 1) Logic and internal consistency (mechanisms/processes)
  - 2) Generalization
  - 3) Falsifiability
  - 4) Evidence fits

# II. Intergovernmental approach

- Moravcsik: neo-realist
  
- Major elements:
  - 1) State interests/power are crucial
  - 2) Integration driven by the convergence of state interests
  - 3) Economic cooperation more likely than security cooperation
  - 4) Change driven by structural changes in the global economy
  
- Process:
  - Intergovernmental bargaining

- Selected evidence for intergovernmentalism
  - Germany → benefits from single market
  - France → benefits from CAP; de Gaulle's vision of French-led Europe
  - UK → preference for free market
  
- Intergovernmental method of promoting integration
  - States drive process
    - Carrots and sticks
  
- Critique:
  - Some integration goes against state interests
    - E.g. agreeing to divert trade to less efficient (or strategic) partners

# III. Neoliberal approach

- Pollack: neoliberal institutionalist
- Major elements:
  - 1) Principal-agent relationship
    - States (principal) need agents (EC institutions) to carry out bargains
  - 2) Agents develop autonomy and become strategic actor
    - EC institutions move integration further than states intended
- Process:
  - principals → delegate to agents → agency losses (shirking, slippage) → outcomes
  - Role of state: control agents through oversight and sanctions
    - But agency losses still occur because controls are costly

- Selected evidence for neoliberal institutionalism
  - Police patrols → comitology
    - Oversight committees ensure Commission is in purview of member states
  - Fire alarms
    - ECJ reviews legality of Commission proposals/laws
    - States and others can bring complaints to ECJ
  - Institutional checks
    - EP provides checks to Commission
  
- Critique:
  - States do have power to stop/start
  - Supranational component may be understated

# IV. Supranational approach

- Stone Sweet and Sandholtz: neo-functionalism
- Major elements:
  - Integration driven from functional needs
    - If international level can best meet a function, then institutions and mechanisms will arise to handle that function
- Processes:
  - 1) Int'l transactions creates demand from sub-state actors for EC rules
    - spillover
  - 2) EC rules → supranational institutionalization → further integration
    - Supranational actors; stickiness of institutions

- Selected evidence for supranationalism
  - Demand for single market from businesses
  - Variation of integration by policy area
    - i.e. Deeper in some than others
  - Currency convergence
- Critique:
  - Difficulty in explaining the initial creation of institutions

# V. Multi-level governance approach

- Marks, Hooghe, and Blank: multi-level governance
- Major elements:
  - Focus on how the EU works
    - Qualifies intergovernmental and supranational theories
  - Decision-making varies
    - State-level: decision-making derived from state
    - International-level: decision-making derived from institutions and system of states
- Evidence:
  - States may constrain integration
  - International level may trump a state's interest

# VI. Constructivist approach

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- Checkel: ideas drive integration
- Major elements:
  - Norms of integration
    - Moral entrepreneur spread norms
    - Group processes solidify norm
      - Socialization
- Processes:
  - Environment of uncertainty allows moral entrepreneurs to have ideas adopted
    - “policy window”; socialization
  - Political elites translate ideas into legislation

- Selected evidence for constructivism
  - Strong leaders correlated with periods of integration
    - e.g. Jacques Delors (France), 1985-95
  - European identity supports stronger EU
  
- Critique:
  - Is there a role for the state?
  - Can socialization work the other way?
    - i.e. stop integration

# VII. Political community approach

- Deutsche: societies drive process forward
- Major elements:
  - Individuals form new communities and drive integration
    - Amalgamated: formal merger of two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit with some type of common government
    - Pluralistic: states retain the legal independence of separate governments
- Processes:
  - 1) Sense of community: mutual sympathy and loyalties; we-feeling; trust
  - 2) Core units around which the integrative process develops
  - 3) Rising capabilities to respond to increased burdens

- Selected evidence for political community
  - Mutual compatibility
    - Democracy and markets
  - Distinctive way of life
    - European social model
  - Expectations of stronger ties
  - Broadening of political elite
    - e.g. EP; Euro-bureaucracy
  
- Critique:
  - Too much decision-making power for individuals?