

Abstracts

Joachim Blatter

Integrative Symbols and Regulatory Norms in the Process of Regime Formation

Lessons from Lake Constance

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The protection of Lake Constance is one of the first and most successful examples of international cooperation in environmental protection. While it was still feared in the sixties that Lake Constance would be »lost« to pollution, by 1998 water from the lake was being marketed as a high-quality mineral water. Surprisingly, however, although the conservation of Lake Constance continues to be mentioned as a forerunner in the domain of international environmental-protection regimes, a detailed analysis of this regime has still not been published. This paper is intended to close this gap, and also to make a contribution to the development of constructivist regime theory. It will be shown that international regulations were developed for Lake Constance even in cases where there was neither a compelling necessity (functionalist approach), nor a favorable situational structure (rationalistic approach). The need to create a positive political image on the part of a variety of different political actors who wish to occupy the developing transnational institutional space of an Euregio Lake Constance provides the central motivation for regulations in the symbolically important domain of water conservation. On the basis of a case study, conclusions will be drawn for constructivist theory. Ideas and institutions, besides their normative-regulative aspect, also possess a symbolic-integrative dimension.

Thilo Bodenstein

Decision Processes during Crisis Situations

An Institutional Analysis of the Decision Processes of the Conflicts in Afghanistan and Chechnya

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The paper analyses the Soviet and Russian decision processes in the Afghan and Chechen war 1994-96 and attempts to establish the impact of structural variables on the deployment of military forces. The literature of foreign policy analysis does not explain the variable duration of military interventions. The introduction of a spatial model within an institutional framework enables a comparative analysis to be made of decision processes in different institutional settings. The independent variables are the centrality of the decision group, the homogeneity of the actors and the inclusiveness of the aggregation rules. Depending on the institutional setting, decision processes can be classified as cohesive, fragmented or cyclical. Highly centralised decision groups with strong veto power for individual actors tend to produce a cohesive decision process or deadlock situations, while amorphous decision structures promote voting cycles, making governmental decision behaviour unpredictable and policy change likely.

Antje Wiener

On Constitutionalism Beyond the State

Mediation of Meaning and Union Citizenship

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As a new legal institution in the European Union, Union citizenship has created a mismatch between potential and expectation. How was this situation possible? How can it be explained? Arguing that this is a case of unintended consequences of institution-building, the article proceeds to reconstruct the emergence of European citizenship as a practice, based on thick description. With reference to the concept of path-dependency it then demonstrates that the lacking mediation of the specific social and political contents of this new legal institution – as compared with state-related forms of citizenship – offers room for speculation about the meaning of Union citizenship. To explain the expectations linked with such speculation, the author suggests the extension of neoinstitutionalist approaches to embrace social constructivist observations. It is argued that next to »material« factors (power constellations, financial resources) the role of »associative« factors (constitutional norms, identities) are a key aspect for the calculation of unintended consequences. The main thesis is that in cases of multiple path-dependencies, the systematic observation of associative factors is likely to reduce the risk of unintended consequences of institution-building.

Thomas Jaeger / Niels Lange

Isolated Partners in the Process of European Integration

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Since its very beginning, European integration has been accompanied by conflicts with isolated partners. In some cases, as de Gaulle's »empty chair« policy reveals, they have led to crises of the integration process itself. Conflicts with isolated partners are quite common in the European Union and increase as the EU is deepened and widened. While most of them are resolved without causing public attention, some do bear the potential for escalation and crisis like, for example, the struggle over BSE. Interestingly enough, while there has been a growth in the heterogeneity of interests – which in turn has led to the steadily growing potential for conflict – there has not been an increase in disintegrative spill-overs, such as Britain's »non-co-operation policy«, or lasting blockades. The article argues that this can be explained by the EU's growing ability to resolve conflicts, which is largely based on asymmetric multi-level governance. The analysis of conflicts with isolated partners reveals that the European political system's growing potential for conflict resolution can best be understood by applying a multi-level-governance approach founded on neo-institutionalist insights.

Gudrun Schwarzer

How to Apply for Research Grants

Practical Advice for Social Scientists

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Roughly more than half of the applications for scientific research grants are nowadays rejected by funding organisations. The reasons for this high rate of rejection is not only financial scarcity but also a failure on part of the scientists to present their research projects in a clear and concise way. The following advice is intended to help potential applicants for research grants. The article begins with some fundamental remarks about the function of scientific projects in general and about the way in which funding organisations make funding decisions in particular. This is followed by a review of the reasons why applications for grants often fail. The ideal structure of a research proposal is then discussed and common mistakes are pointed out.