Project 3: Transforming European Governance: Internal and External Dimensions

Project Leaders
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Project Rationale

There is growing recognition that the European Union represents a novel phenomenon in international politics: a non-state polity of 27 diverse members, which is nonetheless capable both of generating a dense and expanding web of internal rules and policies, and of projecting its norms and practices outwards as a regional and global actor. The research envisaged in this project will explore the developing forms of European governance underpinning these capabilities and examine key dimensions of the Union's internal and external decision-making processes and policies, including the relationship between the internal and external dimensions.

These internal relationships include German and other particular national political agendas and the state actors (such as parliaments and parties) that attempt to advance them in the EU arena, as well as the development of transnational civil society organizations that engage both with the EU and with national governments, and attempt to build transnational political constituencies. The external dimension includes the projection of European rules, values and practices in a global context in three important areas: the development of what has been called "experimentalist" governance, the renegotiation of transatlantic security cooperation between the EU, the US, and NATO; and the promotion of Third World social and economic development. Obviously, since the dimensions of both internal and external political relationships are overlapping and mutually significant, these lines of research are also closely intertwined.

a. The Changing Process of European Lawmaking
(Coordinator: Nils Ringe)

This research focuses on the changing process of making European legislation and the questions of who participates in it, and how. It takes up several aspects of institutions of governance. First, since there are actually three EU institutions involved in the legislative process (the Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament), we attempt to consider the dynamics of inter-institutional interaction among them as well as the neglected inter-institutional implications of the intra-institutional processes in each.

Second, we place the institutions of European governance in the context of what happens in the national arenas of Germany and other EU member states. Since these domains are really not completely separable, the involvement of national actors in EU decision-making deserves more attention than it has received to date, especially through cross-national comparisons. For example, what avenues of influence do actors in Germany pursue when they expect EU directives to have significant implications at the national level, and do these avenues look different in other member states?

Third, we consider the role of non-state actors in the creation of European law. Lobbying from both businesses and non-governmental interest groups has increasingly targeted European institutions, but it remains unclear how successful they are in influencing European legislation and what means they use most successfully. Examining the legislative process in such a broad fashion, including the involvement of EU-level, national-level, and non-state actors, will ultimately provide for a coherent picture of European law-making that ties together the disparate parts of knowledge we already have. This, in turn, will allow us to consider important normative questions about governance, especially the question of democratic participation in Europe today.

b. Organized Civil Society and Experiments in European Governance
(Coordinator: Jonathan Zeitlin)

This theme connects the internal dimensions of change within European governance with the intentional export of "experimentalist" modes of policy-making from Europe to other parts of the world. On the internal side, we are interested in the responses to an imputed "democratic deficit" in Europe that have strengthened the roles of NGO networks in EU governance and policy making. Comparatively little is known about the structure and dynamics of these networks, their relationship to their national affiliates, and the participation of both in governance processes at national and European levels. Nor do we yet know much about how cross-national differences in the structure of civil society – such as the varying roles of voluntary associations, religious bodies, and the social partners in the provision of welfare benefits and services – influence the organization and activities of European NGO networks.

We propose to engage researchers to investigate these issues in collaboration with the Platform of European Social NGOs (*http://www.socialplatform.org/*), an umbrella organization of more than 40 European NGO federations and networks active in the social field. We are already helping to develop a survey instrument and indicators of participatory governance that this network could employ, and we plan to participate as well in analyzing the eventual results, discussing them with members of the network at different levels, and presenting them in scholarly venues that will increase awareness of the variable nature and degree of transformation being experienced in contemporary democracies in both Western and Eastern Europe.

Moreover, the specific efforts to engage EU member states in "gender mainstreaming" provides a concrete example of policy influence that our faculty are examining in relation to national and transnational agencies in Europe and internationally. Our Transnational Applied Research in Gender Equity Training (TARGET) research circle at the university engages cooperatively with European researchers in the 6th Framework project Mainstreaming Gender Equity (MAGEEQ) to help understand how gender equity training is provided to policy makers by "gender experts" in Europe and in developing countries.

On the external side, we build on the work of a group of European and American scholars that is brought together in a forthcoming book by Jonathan Zeitlin and Charles Sabel that examines EU experimentalist governance. They argue that the architecture of experimentalist governance is new; it is based on a recursive process of framework rule-making and revision in light of practical experience of implementation in diverse contexts through networked deliberation among European and national actors. We see indications that this experimentalist governance

architecture, and the revisable framework of rules it generates, are being projected outwards beyond the EU through a variety of institutional mechanisms, including the enlargement process, the European Neighborhood Policy, international development aid, bilateral arrangements with major trading and investment partners (including the United States), trans-governmental networks, international standardization bodies, and multilateral agreements. Here we focus not only on the contributions to global governance being made by such European developments but also on the influence of international standard-setting bodies such as the WTO and regulatory cooperation with other countries such as the US on European internal decision-making processes. Policy areas of interest include data privacy, energy, financial market regulation, environmental protection, food safety, GMOs, competition/antitrust, fundamental rights, and internal security.

c. Two Faces of European External Governance: Security and Development
(Coordinator: Jeremi Suri)

We plan to explore the external dimension of European governance at two levels. First, we will explore the renegotiation of transatlantic security cooperation by examining the emerging triangular relationship between the EU, NATO, and the US - especially regarding political and military activities around European borders. We plan to draw on case studies from recent conflicts and interviews with policy-makers in all three bodies and in key EU member states such as Germany to investigate the coordination of military and political policy on issues related to peacekeeping, border security, counter-terrorism, and coalition warfare. We are interested also in the role of non-European and American actors -- particularly in Russia and the Middle East -- in creating new policy coordination challenges.

Second, we are interested in studying the expanding role of the EU in development assistance to the Third World. In this portion of the project, we will examine the role of the EU as a major source of foreign aid, education, common norms, and cooperative treaty building. We expect to draw on published policy papers, interviews, and assessments in "target countries" (especially in Africa) to assess EU development aims, their implementation, and their effects. We also want to foster comparison of EU efforts with those of the United States. Our hypothesis is that the EU offers an alternative and perhaps more promising approach to development than the US.