

European Union Public Policy

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Lecture 6

Policy formulation 2: policy-making uncertainty, expertise and epistemic communities, multiple policy-making ‘venues’

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Other aspects of E.U. public policy-making (to ‘graft on’ to policy networks model?)

- E.U. public policy-making uncertainty;
- expertise and epistemic communities;
- The ‘multiple policy-making venues’ of E.U. public policy

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1. E.U. public policy-making uncertainty

- the uncertain identity of other policy 'actors'
- the problem of the size of the E.U. – 27 member states

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Policy networks will have:

1. A variety of inconsistent and ill defined preferences – a loose collection of ideas;
2. (it will have) to operate in extremely complex and complicated E.U. organisational structures;
3. (it will have) ‘fluid’ participants within it (with varied time and effort)

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2. Expertise and epistemic communities

- a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular policy area, who have an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that policy area.

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“members of an epistemic community share intersubjective understandings, have a shared way of knowing, have shared patterns of reasoning, have a policy project drawing on shared values, share causal beliefs, and the use of discursive practices, and have a shared commitment to the application and production of knowledge”

(Haas, P. (1992) ‘Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Co-ordination’, in *International Organisation*, 46/1, p.3.)

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“members of an epistemic community share intersubjective understandings (*common knowledge about policy area*), have a shared way of knowing (*common sources to gain that knowledge*), have shared patterns of reasoning (*common forms of analysis*), have a policy project drawing on shared values, share causal beliefs (*common values and beliefs*), and the use of discursive practices (*common belief in discussion and debate*), and have a shared commitment to the application and production of knowledge (*common commitment to investigation and application of information on policy area*)”

(Haas, P. (1992) 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Co-ordination', in *International Organisation*, 46/1, p.3.)

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Factors contributing to E.U. public policy makers
using experts and epistemic communities

1. The dynamics of uncertainty in policy formulation;
2. The need for specialist interpretation of information/knowledge;
3. Institutionalisation of information and knowledge (in E.U. bureaucracy)

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- E.U. policy makers seek to reduce policy outcome uncertainty
- political factors
 - i.e. E.U. Commission ‘self-interest’ and policy preferences – seeks to build policy coalitions for own policy preferences

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3. Multiple policy-making 'venues'

- E.U. public policy-making is a collective exercise involving large numbers of participants in often intermittent and unpredictable relationships = many venues and arenas in which public policy is formulated

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Multiple sources and venues for E.U. public policy formulation has led to:

1. The construction of complex transnational public policy coalitions;
2. Public policy actors and stakeholders being more focused on the E.U. rather than national member state governments;
3. Different form of multiple access points for policy actors and stakeholders, compared to public policy systems of member states

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- E.U. public policy-making not just characterised by multi-access venues, but is also a ‘fluid’ policy formulation system and process – as E.U. constantly changing and evolving.
- ***INTERGOVERNMENTALISM***
 - member nation-states (and national governments of those states) trying to act firstly in either the national interest or their own political interest