

NIG-Panel Proposal 2015

Analyzing EU Policy Change across Policy Domains

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Policy change is a crucial issue in the European Union. As the EU has made policies in an ever-increasing number of issue areas, the process through which these policies are modified, adapted and restructured has become central to EU policy-making.

Policy change processes in the EU are highly complex, both because of the multitude of institutions and actors involved at the EU-level proper and because of the EU's multilevel character. This also poses distinct challenges to analysts of EU policy change, who need to cope with this complexity.

So far, processes of policy change in the EU have received only limited attention in the academic literature. While a sizeable literature has developed on EU policy-making in general, this literature tends to focus on new policies or to treat policy decisions as isolated instances. Studies that explicitly look at the way in which existing policies are challenged and reformed, and that look at policy-making against the background of an existing policy legacy, is much less common.

This panel aims to promote the academic debate on this topic by bringing together ongoing research that examines policy change in the EU. Its guiding question reads: under which conditions does EU policy change, and what factors affect, constrain and facilitate this process?

In studying policy change, the panel looks across policy domains, including all types of policy the EU makes, including policies formerly made in the EU's 'first pillar' to policies in the areas of Justice and Home Affairs and the Common Foreign and Security Policy. These areas are typically studied by different academic communities, with little cross-fertilization. Yet, although there is a variety in decision-making rules, common to all policy domains is the continuing struggle among and between Member States and EU-actors with competing ideas on the content of the EU's policy. This panel aims to break through policy domains and assess underlying mechanisms of policy change that travel beyond a particular policy domain.

In addition, the panel seeks to further explore the intersection between public administration and political science in the study of EU policymaking.

Type of papers

This panel invites papers assessing policy change in the EU's multi-level context, across a broad range of policy domains. We are open to papers that take an actor, institutional or any other type of approach. We welcome papers with both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Moreover, as the panel seeks to further explore the intersection between public administration and political science in the study of EU policymaking, we aim at a balanced program with papers from both disciplines.

Linkage between the panel and a subtheme of the NIG research program

This panel contributes to the NIG's central theme "Multi-level Governance and Europe", by focusing on the mechanisms that underlie policy change in the EU's multi-level governance context.
