Robert Schuman Centre

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A New Paradigm for European Governance?

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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE

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Abstract:

There is an increasing consensus among students of European integration that theories of international relations (IR) and European integration (EI) fail to conceptualise and to explain the phenomenon of European governance. The aim of this paper is to introduce policy networks as a better way of "exploring the nature of the beast". Coming from the field of comparative politics and public policy, policy networks have been largely ignored or strongly underestimated in international relations and European studies. This may be partly due to the many different, sometimes confusing ways the network concept is used in the literature. Therefore, this paper strives, in the first place, to review and to structure the existing literature on policy networks. It then explores the application of policy networks to the study of European governance. Finally, the strength and weakness of policy networks in studying European governance are discussed. The paper concludes that policy networks do not (yet) provide a new paradigm for European governance. However, they allow to grasp a unique feature of European governance conventional theories of IR and EI with their state-centred conception of governance cannot come to terms with[1].

[1] For comments on earlier versions of this paper, I am grateful to James Caporaso, Thomas Christiansen, Thomas Diez, Adrienne Héritier, Peter Katzenstein, Patrick Le Galès, Yves Mény, R.A.W. Rhodes, Thomas Risse-Kappen, Wayne Sandholtz, Pascal Sciarini, and Cornelia Ulbert.

I. Introduction

Theorising about European integration has been a constant challenge for scholars working in the field of European integration (EI) and international relations (IR). Already in 1972, Donald Puchala complained that "more than fifteen years of defining, redefining, refining, modelling and theorising have failed to generate satisfactory conceptualisations of (...) 'international integration'[2]" (Puchala 1972: 267). Today, almost fifteen years later, we still have not come to terms with either the underlying dynamics of the integration process or the "nature of the beast" (Risse-Kappen 1996). The EU as an emerging system of governance has been conceptualised as, among other things, a supranational state, an emerging federal union, a federation of states (German Constitutional Court), a concordance system (Puchala 1972), a network that involves the pooling and sharing of sovereignty (Keohane/Hoffmann 1991), a form of vertical joint decision-making (Scharpf 1985), a multi-level polity (Marks 1993), a post-Hobbesian order (Schmitter 1991), a post-modern state (Ruggie 1993). Each of these concepts highlights distinctive features of the beast but none provides us with a description of the "whole elephant"[3]. The observation that the study of European integration has moved into a "post-ontological stage" (Caporaso 1996: 30), where scholars are no longer concerned with how to categorise but rather with how to explain process and outcome of European integration, does not help much. The European Union has developed far beyond an international regime or organisation (Keohane/Hoffmann 1991). It constitutes a political system (Hix 1994), a structure of governance (Schmitter 1992; Caporaso 1996; Marks/Hooghe/Blank 1995), which may be less than a state but which is definitely more than an arena for intergovernmental co-operation. The way this emerging system of governance is conceptualised is not only crucial for the understanding of European governance itself[4]; it also has major repercussions for

[2] Puchala uses Western European integration as the major example for his critical review of existing conceptualizations of international integration and for his proposal for a new understanding of the phenomenon (Puchala 1972: 269).

[3] See Schumann's essay: "*Von der Notwendigkeit, den ganzen Elephanten zu erfassen*" ["Of the Necessity to Capture the Whole Elephant"] (Schumann 1991).

[4] Drawing from James Caporaso's definition of governance as "collective problem-solving in the public realm" (Caporaso 1996: 32), European Governance is hereby referred to as the patterns that emerge from the policy-making (governing) activities of political, administrative and social actors in the European Union. For some scholars, however, the notion "governance" has a more specific (biased) meaning. It refers to a variety of changes in politics which are above all characterized by "a shift in the balance between government and society away from the public sector towards the private sector" (Kooiman 1993: back cover; cf. Rhodes 1995; Marks 1992; 1993; Jessop 1995; Stoker 1995; John 1995). For a critique of this narrow conception of governance see Smith 1996. Michael Zürn, finally, defines governance as one

the way the process and outcomes of European integration are explained. In other words, one cannot theorise about European integration without having a conception of European governance[5].

There is an increasing consensus among scholars that theories of IR and EI fail to capture the nature of European governance[6]. Approaches developed in the field of comparative politics and public policy[7], such as pluralist approaches (Schmitter 1992), policy network approaches (see below), policy analysis (Héritier 1993), transnational and transgovernmental relations approaches (Risse-Kappen 1995), organisational theory (Olsen 1995; Pierson 1995), cultural approaches (Ruggie 1989; Shackleton 1991; Jachtenfuchs 1995), sociological approaches (Hix 1994; Wind 1996), or international political economy theories (van Apeldoorn 1995), appear to be more promising for the study of European governance (Schumann 1993; Hix 1994; Kassim 1994; Risse-Kappen 1996). Unfortunately, however, there is not much communication between the different disciplines of political science, and scholars in IR and EI often tend to underestimate the usefulness of comparative politics and public policy approaches for the study of European governance.

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dimension of the traditional understanding of the State in terms of the functions it fulfills for society (security, resource allocation etc.) (Zürn 1996).

[5] It is often argued that (macro-level) theories of European integration have to be distinguished from (meso-level) theories of European governance (Rhodes 1995; Hix 1994; Kassim 1994). Thus, John Peterson argues that integration theories still explain 'history-making decisions' of the EU, such as the Single European Act or the Maastricht Treaty, whereas policy networks are more suitable for the study of 'every-day decisions' i.e. sectoral policy-making in the EU (Peterson 1994). However, the dynamics of European integration are essentially driven by the institutional structure and logic's as well as by the outcomes of 'every day' policy-making in the European Union (Cram 1994; Wincott 1995). In order to understand European integration, it is not enough to take 'snap shots' (Pierson 1995: 4) of 'history-making' decisions in the integration process. Besides, even if 'history-making' decision-making is still dominated by interstate bargaining, this does not necessarily mean that policy networks do not have any role to play. On the other hand, scholars have increasingly resorted to theories of European integration and international relations to conceptualize European governance (see e.g. Marks 1993; Moravcsik 1994; Marks/Hooghe/Blank 1995; Gehring 1995; Lewis 1995).

[6] A comprehensive critique of the different theories and approaches in IR and EI would go far beyond the scope of this paper; see therefore Schmitter 1991; Ruggie 1993; Matlary 1994; Hix 1994; Christiansen 1994; Börzel 1995; Hooghe 1995; Marks/Hooghe/Blank 1995; Pierson 1995; Wincott 1995; Risse-Kappen 1996; Wind forthcoming.

[7] Comparative politics and international relations are often distinguished as two separate branches of political science (Hix 1994; Risse-Kappen 1996). On the other hand, some authors contrast political science and international relations as two separate disciplines (Christiansen 1994; Kassim 1994).This paper follows the first terminology, being aware of the fact that not all of the below cited authors would accept that their works are classified as belonging to the field of comparative politics, and adds public policy as a third branch.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the usefulness of policy networks in the discourse of IR and EI on European governance[8]. Although there is a considerable number of empirical and conceptual works on European governance using a policy network approach, policy networks have been either largely ignored or strongly underestimated in the field of IR and EI[9]. This is even more striking as IR scholars working with neoliberal institutionalist approaches or regime theory e.g., use the same concepts and theoretical arguments as found in the literature on policy networks in the field of public administration - only the labelling is different.

One reason for the disregard of many IR and EI scholars towards the concept of policy networks may be at least partly due to the very different, sometimes confusing ways the network concept is used in the literature. The first part of this paper therefore strives to structure the literature on policy networks presenting different conceptions and classifying them along three different dimensions. The application of policy networks to the study of European governance is explored in the second part. Finally, the last part of the paper discusses the strength and weakness of policy networks in studying European governance. The paper concludes that policy networks do not provide (yet) a new *paradigm* for European governance. Nevertheless, the concept of policy networks allows to grasp a unique feature of European governance conventional theories of IR and EI, with their state-centred conception of governance, can neither conceptualise nor explain. In order to deploy theoretical power, however, the policy network approach has to face the major challenge to show the relevance (and not only the existence) of policy networks in public policy-making by clarifying what kind of effect they can have on policy process and outcome. In a second step, the conditions have to be specified under which policy networks do matter at all, and if so in which way.

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[8] Hence, the aim of this paper is not to refill old wine into new bottles (Jordan 1990) or to reinvent the wheel. The concept of policy networks is not new but it has, with some exceptions (Héritier/Mingers/Knill/Becka 1994) hardly been systematically applied to the study of European governance.

[9] Some IR scholars indeed invoke the notion of (policy) networks to characterize the EU system of governance (Bressandt/Nicolaidis 1990; Keohane/Hoffmann 1990; Keohane/Hoffmann 1991; Wallace 1990; Metcalfe 1992). However, they use the concept of networks as a metaphor rather than an approach. A proper policy network approach in IR and EI does not exist yet (see also p. 16).

II. Policy Networks - Metaphor, Model, Method, or Theoretical Approach?

"Network" has become a fashionable catch word in recent years - not only in political science but also in a number of other scientific disciplines. Microbiologists describe cells as information networks, ecologists conceptualise the living environment as network systems, computer scientists develop neuronal networks with self-organising and self-learning capacities. In contemporary social sciences, networks are studied as new forms of social organisation in the sociology of science and technology (Callon 1986), in the economics of network industries and network technologies (Katz/Shapiro 1985), in business administration (Thorelli 1986; Powell 1990), and in public policy (Mayntz 1983; Marsh/Rhodes 1992; Lehmbruch 1991; Benz/Scharpf/Zintl 1992; Grande 1994; Héritier 1993). The term network seems to have become "the new paradigm for the architecture of complexity" (Kenis/Schneider 1991: 25)[10].

However, the use of the network concept varies considerably between and within the different disciplines. They all share a common understanding, a minimal or lowest common determinator definition of a policy network as a set of relatively stable relationships which are of non-hierarchical and interdependent nature between a variety of corporate actors, i.e. organisations of public *and* private character who share common interests and/or common norms with regard to a policy who exchange to pursue this shared interests acknowledging that co-operation is the best way to pursue their interests. Beyond this basic definition, which is not completely uncontroversial either, a large and confusing variety of different understandings and applications of the concept can be found in the literature. Often, authors have only a vague and sometimes ambiguous idea of a policy networks and/or do not make it explicit. In the following attempt to structure the literature on policy networks, a distinction is made along two dimensions:

1) *Quantitative* versus *qualitative* network analysis
2) Policy networks as a *typology of interest intermediation* versus policy net works as a *specific form of governance.*

The first distinction between quantitative and qualitative network approach is about methods. Both take networks as an analytical tool. The quantitative ap-

[10] It would go far beyond the scope of this paper to give a comprehensive overview of the emergence of the policy network concept in the literature. For the American literature see Jordan 1990; for the British literature see Rhodes/Marsh 1992: 8-18; for the French literature see Le Galès 1995, Jouve 1995; and for the German literature see Héritier 1993. For an overview of the policy network concept in the different scientific disciplines see Rhodes 1990.

proach, however, considers network analysis as a method of social structure analysis. The relations between public and private actors are analysed in terms of their cohesion, structural equivalence, spatial representation using quantitative methods such as ascendant hierarchical classification, density tables, block models, or representation of path distance[11]. The qualitative approach, on the other hand, is more process-oriented. It focuses less on the mere structure of interaction between public and private actors but rather on the content of these interactions using qualitative methods such as in-depth-interviews and content and discourse analysis. Yet, the two methodological approaches are not mutually exclusive but complementary (Sciarini 1996: 112) [12]. This paper therefore focuses on the more relevant distinction between policy networks as a typology of interest intermediation and policy networks as a specific form of governance.

Two different "schools" of policy networks can be identified in the field of public policy. The more prominent '*interest intermediation school*' interprets policy networks as a generic term for different forms of relationships between interest groups and the state. The '*governance school*', on the other hand, conceives policy networks as a specific form of governance, as a mechanism to mobilise political resources in situations where these resources are widely dispersed between public and private actors. This narrower conception of policy networks mainly draws from the works in the field of public policy.

The distinction between the two schools is fluid and not always clearly made in the literature. In any case, they are not mutually exclusive (see e.g. Katzenstein 1978; Rhodes 1988; Marsh/Rhodes 1992a; Grande 1994; Rhodes 1995). However, there is a major difference between the two schools. The interest intermediation school conceives policy networks as a generic concept which applies to *all kinds* of relations between public and private actors. For the governance school, on the contrary, policy networks only characterise a *specific* form of public-private interaction in public policy (governance), namely the one based on non-hierarchical co-ordination, opposed to hierarchy and market as two inherently distinct modes of governance.

In the following, the two schools of policy networks are briefly described and some major works of each school are introduced. Then, an overview of how dif-

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[11] For an excellent example of a quantitative network analysis see Sciarini 1996; cf. Laumann/Pappi 1976; Laumann/Knoke 1987; Pappi/Knoke 1991).

[12] For an attempt to bring together the two concepts in a *policy-area network approach* see Pappi 1993: 90-93.

ferent conceptions of policy networks have been applied to the study of European governance is given.

1. *Policy Networks as a Typology of Interest Intermediation*

Research into the relations between the state and societal interests (interest intermediation) was dominated for a long time by different versions of 'pluralism'. In the 1970s, pluralism became increasingly challenged by neocorporatist theory (cf. Schmitter/Lehmbruch 1979). Both models, however, have been repeatedly criticised for their "lack [of] empirical relevance and, moreover, logical consistency" (Jordan/Schubert 1992: 8; cf. Rhodes/Marsh 1992: 1-4). This criticism has prompted a stream of qualifications to the two basic models leading to a variety of "neologisms" to describe state/group relations such as 'pressure pluralism', 'state corporatism', 'societal corporatism', 'group subgovernment', 'corporate pluralism', 'iron triangles', 'clientelism', 'meso corporatism' (cf. Jordan/Schubert 1992). These refinements of the two models, however, also appear to be problematic because very often similar labels describe different phenomena, or different labels refer to similar phenomena, which often leads to confusion and misunderstanding in the discussion of state/interest relations. Some authors therefore suggested to abandon the pluralism-neocorporatism dichotomy and developed a new typology in which the network is a generic label embracing the different types of state/interest relations[13]. For them, "the network approach presents an alternative[14] to both the pluralist and the corporatist model. The policy network is a meso-level concept of interest group intermediation which can be adopted by authors operating with different models of power distribution in liberal democra-

[13] Some authors, however, use networks only to denote a specific type of public-private linkages rather than as an overarching term for State/interest relations. Heclo, for instance, presents his "issue network" as an alternative to the concept of "iron triangle", which was used as a model for state-industry relations in the US in the 1950s and 1960s (Heclo 1978).

[14] The term "alternative" may be a little bit misleading here. Policy networks are understood as an umbrella concept which integrates the different forms of pluralism and corporatism as specific versions of networks. Some authors therefore question the added value of policy networks in analyzing different forms of interest intermediation (Hasenteufel 1995). Yet, the governance school conceives networks in fact as an alternative form of state-society relations different from pluralism and corporatism. Others assume that policy networks have been developed above all as an alternative to structural approaches such as neo-marxism (Le Galès 1995: 17).

cies" (Rhodes/Marsh 1992: 4; cf. Jordan/Schubert 1992; van Waarden 1992; Kriesi 1994)[15].

The network typologies found in the literature share a common understanding of policy networks as power dependency relationships between the government and interest groups, in which resources are exchanged. The typologies, however, differ from each other according to the dimensions along which the different types of networks are distinguished.

While Grant Jordan and Klaus Schubert base their typology on only three main criteria - the level of institutionalisation (stable/unstable), the scope of the policy making arrangement (sectoral/trans-sectoral), and the number of participants (restricted/open) - (Jordan/Schubert 1992), Frans van Waarden uses seven - actors, function, structure, institutionalisation, rules of conduct, power relations, actors strategies - finally singling out three as the most important to distinguish between existing types of networks: number and type of societal actors involved, major function of the network, and balance of power (van Waarden 1992).
A less complex but as comprehensive policy network classification was developed by Hanspeter Kriesi. Drawing from the works of Schmitter (1974) and Lehmbruch (1979), Kriesi's classification is based on the combination of the two models of structural organisation of systems of interest groups (corporatism and pluralism) and the two models of relations between state and interest groups in a political process (concertation and pressure), whereby corporatism is linked to concertation and pluralism to pressure. Kriesi adds another dimension, the strength of the state (strong and weak state). This altogether produces four types of policy networks, each characterised by a specific set of properties (cf. Kriesi 1994: 392-396; Sciarini 1996).

Michael Atkinson and William Coleman conceptualise six types of policy networks along two different dimensions: 1) the state structure in terms of autonomy and concentration of power, and 2) the capacity to mobilise the interests of employers (Atkinson/Coleman 1989; see also Katzenstein 1978).

Elaborating on Benson's definition of a policy network as "a cluster or complex of organisations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters or complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies" (Benson 1982: 148), Rod Rhodes distinguishes five types of networks according to the degree to which their members are integrated, the type of

[15] For policy networks as a better way of understanding the "configurative aspects of interest intermediation" see also Lehmbruch 1991.

their members, and the distribution of resources among them[16]. He places his network types on a continuum ranging from highly integrated policy communities at the one end and loosely integrated issue networks at the other end; professional networks, inter-governmental networks, and producer networks lie in-between (Rhodes 1988). In contrast to many works on interest intermediation which focus on state/business relations, Rhodes has predominantly used his policy network model to analyse intergovernmental relations (Rhodes 1986; 1986a; 1986b; 1995)[17].

Stephen Wilks and Maurice Wright apply the 'Rhodes model' to the relations between government and industry (Wilks/Wright 1987). They introduce, however, three major modifications of the model. First, they stress the desaggregated nature of policy networks in the policy sectors, suggesting that government-industry relations have to be analysed at the sub-sectoral, not at the sectoral level. Second, they place considerable emphasis on interpersonal relations as a key aspect of the policy network[18], while Rhodes, drawing from inter-organisational theory, strictly focuses on the structural relationships between institutions. And third, Wilks and Wright redefine the terminology of policy networks. They distinguish between 'policy universe', 'policy community', and 'policy network'. Policy universe is defined as "the large population of actors and potential actors [who] share a common interest in industrial policy, and may contribute to the policy process on a regular basis". Policy community is reserved for a more desaggregated system involving those actors and potential actors who share an interest in a particular industry and who interact with one another, "exchange resources in order to balance and optimise their mutual relationships" (Wilks/Wright 1987: 296). And the policy network becomes "a linking process, the outcome of those exchanges, within a policy community or between a number of policy communities" (Wilks/Wright 1987: 297).

A more fundamental distinction between different types of policy networks is the one between *heterogeneous* and *homogeneous* networks. This distinction is often overlooked; the vast majority of the policy network literature deals with heterogeneous policy networks, in which the actors involved dispose of *different*

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[16] The original 'Rhodes model' included only one dimension: the degree of integration (Rhodes 1986). The other two were introduced after Rhodes had acknowledged that he had conflated two dimensions in his model: the degree of integration and the dominance of a particular group (Rhodes/Marsh 1992: 21).

[17] For the application and evaluation of the Rhodes model in empirical case studies in a range of policy sectors (beyond intergovernmental relations) see Marsh/Rhodes 1992a.

[18] The emphasis on interpersonal linkages is shared by the French literature on policy networks (Jouve 1995).

interests and resources. This heterogeneity of interests and resources creates a state of interdependence among the actors linking them together in a policy network where they mediate their interests and exchange their resources. Only a few scholars have (also) focused on homogeneous networks, in which the actors have similar interests and resources, like in the case of so called professional networks (Burley/Mattli 1993), epistemic communities (Haas 1992) and principled issue-networks (Sikkink 1993)[19].

To conclude, the policy network concept of the interest intermediation school has been widely applied to the study of sectoral policy-making in various countries. Policy networks are generally regarded as an *analytical tool* for examining institutionalised exchange relations between the state and organisations of civil society, allowing a more "fine grain" analysis by taking into account sectoral and subsectoral differences[20], the role played by private and public actors, and formal as well as informal relationships between them. The basic assumption is that the existence of policy networks, which reflect the relative status or power of particular interests in a policy area, influences (though does not determine) policy outcomes.

Some authors, however, strive for a more ambitious use of the policy network concept in studying forms of interest intermediation by attaching some explanatory value to the different network types. The underlying assumption is that the structure of a network has a major influence on the logic of interaction between the members of the networks thus affecting both policy process and policy outcome (Knoke 1990; Lehmbruch 1991; Sciarini 1996 and the empirical case studies in Marin/Mayntz 1991a and Marsh/Rhodes 1992a). However, no hypotheses have been put forward which systematically link the nature of a policy network with the character and outcome of the policy process (Bresser/O'Toole 1994).

The (English/American) policy network literature mainly focuses on works of the interest intermediation school. Much less attention has been paid to the governance school. The following section therefore strives to give a more extensive in-

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[19] I am grateful to Adrienne Héritier for pointing out to me the importance of the distinction between heterogeneous and homogeneous policy networks. She also suggested a possibility for conceptually linking the two different types of networks by arguing that homogeneous policy networks might serve as an important resource for actors involved in a heterogeneous network.

[20] Many authors point out that one of the major advantages of a meso-level policy networks typology towards state-society relations over traditional, macro-level typologies such as strong vs. weak states is that the policy networks typology can account for sectoral variations within the states (Wilks/Wright 1987; Lehmbruch 1991; Peterson 1992; Mazey/Richardson 1993).

troduction to the governance school focusing on the less known German literature.

2. *Policy Network as a Specific Form of Governance*

In the literature on governance, again two different applications of the concept of policy networks can be identified.

Many authors use policy networks as an *analytical concept* or *model* (especially in the field of policy analysis) to connote the "structural relationships, interdependencies and dynamics between actors in politics and policy-making" (Schneider 1988: 2). In this use, networks provide a perspective from which to analyse situations in which a given policy cannot be explained by centrally concerted policy action toward common goals. Rather, the network concept draws attention to the interaction of many separate but interdependent organisations which co-ordinate their actions through interdependencies of resources and interests. Actors, who take an interest in the making of a certain policy and who dispose of resources (material and immaterial) required for the formulation, decision or implementation of the policy, form linkages to exchange these resources. The linkages, which differ in their degree of intensity, normalisation, standardisation and frequency of interaction, constitute the structures of a network. These "governance-structures" of a network determine in turn the exchange of resources between the actors. They form points of references for the actors' calculations of costs and benefits of particular strategies. Thus, the analysis of policy networks allows to draw conclusions about the actors' behaviour (Windhoff-Héritier 1994: 85-88). However, policy networks here are only an analytical model, a framework of interpretation, in which different actors are located and linked in their interaction in a policy sector and in which the results of this interaction are analysed. Why and how single actors act, the policy network analysis can only partly account for by the description of the linkages between the actors. Hence, policy network analysis is no substitute for a theoretical explanation: "[N]etwork analysis is no theory *in stricto sensu*, but rather a tool box for describing and measuring relational configurations and their structural characteristics" (Kenis/Schneider 1991: 44)[21].

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[21] It should be clear by now that this branch of the governance school has strong affiliations with the interest intermediation school. They share a common research agenda addressing questions such as how and why networks change, what the relative importance of interpersonal and interorganizational relationships is, how networks affect policy outcomes, and which interests dominate in a policy network. And the scholars of both sides agree that the policy network concept itself is not able to provide complete answers to these questions.

"[T]he concept of 'policy networks' is a meso-level one which helps to classify the patterns of relationships between interest groups and governments. But it must be used in conjunction

Some authors, however, go beyond the use of networks as an analytical concept. They argue that it is not enough to understand the behaviour of a given individual unit as a product of interorganisational relations (networks). The underlying assumption is that social structures have a greater explanatory power than the personal attributes of individual actors (Wellmann 1988). The pattern of linkages and interaction as a whole should be taken as the unit of analysis. In short, these authors shift the unit of analysis from the individual actor to the set of interrelationships that constitute interorganisational networks. While the 'metaphorical' network concept describes the context of, and factors leading to, joint policy-making, the concept of networks as interorganisational relationships focuses on the structure and processes through which joint policy-making is organised, i.e. on governance. Policy networks are conceived as a particular form of governance in modern political systems (Kenis/Schneider 1991; Kooiman 1993; Mayntz 1994). The point of departure is the assumption that modern societies are characterised by societal differentiation, sectoralisation and policy growth which lead to political overload and "governance under pressure" (Jordan/Richardson 1983)[22]. "Modern governance is characterised by decision systems in which territorial and functional differentiation desaggregate effective problem-solving capacity into a collection of sub-systems of actors with specialised tasks and limited competence and resources" (Hanf/O'Toole 1992: 166). The result is a functional interdependence of public and private actors in policy-making. Governments have become increasingly dependent upon the co-operation and joint resource mobilisation of policy actors outside their hierarchical control. These changes have favoured the emergence of policy networks as a new form of governance - different from the two conventional forms of governance (hierarchy and market) - , which allows governments to mobilise political resources in situations where these resources are widely dispersed between public and private actors (Kenis/Scheider 1991; Marin/Mayntz 1991; Kooiman 1993; Mayntz 1994; Le Galès 1995). Hence, policy networks are 'une réponse aux problèmes d'efficacité des politiques publiques' (Le Galès 1995: 17).

In this view, policy networks are best understood as "webs of relatively stable and ongoing relationships which mobilise and pool dispersed resources so that collective (or parallel) action can be orchestrated toward the solution of a com-

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with one of the several theories of the state in order to provide a full explanation of the policy process and its outcomes" (Marsh/Rhodes 1992: 268; cf. Kenis/Schneider 1991; Windhoff-Héritier 1994).

[22] For a more detailed description of these features of modern societies see Kenis/Schneider 1991: 34-36.

mon policy" (Kenis/Schneider 1991: 36). A policy network includes all actors[23] involved in the formulation and implementation of a policy in a policy sector. They are characterised by predominantly *informal* interactions between *public and private*[24] actors with distinctive, but *interdependent interests*, who strive to solve problems of collective action on a central, *non-hierarchical level.*

All in all, policy networks reflect a changed relationship between state and society. There is no longer a strict separation between the two: "Instead of emanating from a central authority, be this government or the legislature, policy today is in fact *made* in a process involving a plurality of both public and private organisations". This is why "the notion of 'policy networks' does not so much represent a new analytical *perspective* but rather signals a real change in the structure of the polity "(Mayntz 1994: 5).

The view of policy networks as a specific form of governance is most explicit in the works of some German public policy scholars like Renate Mayntz, Fritz Scharpf, Patrick Kenis, Volker Schneider, and Edgar Grande (the 'Max-Planck-School'[25]). They start from the assumption that modern societies are characterised by functional differentiation and partly autonomous societal subsystems (Kenis/Schneider 1991; Mayntz 1994). The emergence of these subsystems is closely connected with the ascendance of formal organisations forming interorganisational relations with other organisations on which they depend for resources. In politics, private organisations dispose of important resources and have therefore become increasingly relevant for the formulation and implementation of public policies. In this structural context, policy networks present themselves as a solution to co-ordination problems typical for modern societies.

Under the conditions of environmental uncertainty and increasing international, sectoral and functional overlap of societal sub-systems, policy networks as a mode of governance dispose of a crucial advantage over the two conventional

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[23] While some authors include all kinds of actors - corporate and individual - in their definition of policy networks (Windhoff-Héritier 1994), others conceive policy networks as purely *interorganizational* relations excluding personal relationships (Marin 1990; Mayntz 1993; 1994; Pappi 1993; Rhodes 1986; 1995).

[24] Most of the authors assume - implicitly or explicitly - that policy networks consist of private and public actors. Only a few apply the concept of policy networks (also) to the study of relations between exclusively public actors (Rhodes 1986, 1986a, 1986b; Peters 1992).

[25] Most of the scholars are or were related to the *Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung* (MPIGF) located in Cologne, Germany.

forms of governance, hierarchy and market[26]. Unlike hierarchies and markets, policy networks do not necessarily have dysfunctional consequences. While markets are unable to control the production of negative externalities (problems of market failure), hierarchies produce 'losers', who have to bear the costs of a political decision, (exploitation of the minority by the majority; cf. Scharpf 1992). Horizontal self-co-ordination of the actors involved in policy-making (voluntary or compulsive bargaining systems) is, on the other hand, also prone to produce suboptimal outcomes: Such bargaining systems tend to be blocked by dissent, preventing the consensus necessary for the realisation of common gains.

> There are two main problems discussed in the literature which can render consensus difficult or even impossible in a bargaining system: 1) The bargaining dilemma (known as prisoner's dilemma in game theory and regime theory), i.e. situations in which defection from co-operation is more rewarding for a rational actor than compliance, due to the risk of being cheated (Scharpf 1992). 2) The structural dilemma, i.e. the interorganisational structure of horizontal co-ordination itself. Horizontal co-ordination between organisations is based on bargaining between the representatives of the organisations. These representatives are not completely autonomous in the bargaining process. They are subject to the control of the members of their organisation. These intrarorganisational 'constraints' have major consequences for the representatives' orientations of action and the reliability of their commitments made in interorganisational bargaining rendering the finding of consensus in interorganisational bargaining processes more difficult for two reasons: first, due to the self-interest of the organisational representatives, and second, because of the insecurity caused by intraorganisational control and the need for intraorganisational implementation of interorganisational compromises (involuntary defection). The linkage of intra- and interoganisational decision-making processes in structures of horizontal co-ordination across several levels of government constitutes a bargaining system in which conflicts are not only caused by competing or antagonistic interests but also by the very structure of the system (Benz 1992)[27].

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[26] There is no consensus in the literature whether policy networks constitute an inherently new form of governance. Some authors argue that networks are a hybrid form located somewhere in the middle of a continuum that has market and hierarchy as the two opposing extremes (e.g. Williamson 1985; Kenis/Schneider 1991). This holds true if the underlying analytical dimension is the degree of coupling. Markets are characterized by the absence of structural coupling between the elements, hierarchies by tight coupling, and networks, by definition loosely coupled, lie in between. Others, however, see policy networks as a qualitatively distinct type of social structure which is characterised by the combination of elements belonging to the two other two basic forms of governance: the existence of a plurality of autonomous agents, typical for markets, and the ability to pursue chosen goals through coordinated action, typical for hierarchies (Mayntz 1994: 11; cf. Marin 1990: 19-20; 56-58; Powell 1990). A third view emphasises the character of policy networks as a supplement of hierarchy rather than a substitute for hierarchy (and market) (Benz 1995; Marin 1990).

[27] Benz identifies different types of conflicts which are caused by a multi-level decision-making structure, such as the problem of decisions at one level provoking conflicts on another level or 'objective' (common) problems often getting a subjective interest dimension due to institutional

> Hence, the probability of producing common outcomes in a bargaining system linking together differently structured arenas, different actors and different interest constellations is relatively low (Benz 1992: 178).

The dysfunction of horizontal self-co-ordination, however, can be overcome when such co-ordination takes place either in the 'shadow of hierarchy' or within network structures. As hierarchical co-ordination becomes increasingly impossible in interactions across sectoral, organisational and national borders, actors have to rely on horizontal self-co-ordination within networks, which then can serve as a functional equivalent to hierarchy (Scharpf 1993). By combining the autonomy of actors typical for markets with the ability of hierarchies to pursue selected goals and to control their anticipated consequences, policy networks can overcome the major problems of horizontal co-ordination:

1) Networks are able to intentionally produce collective outcomes *despite* diverging interests of their members through voluntary bargaining (Kenis/Schneider 1991; Mayntz 1994). Unlike 'exchange' and 'strategic interaction', which are based on the maximisation of self-interests through cost-benefit calculations and which are prone to produce bargaining dilemma, negotiations in policy networks are based on communication and trust and aim at achieving joint outcomes, which have a proper value for the actors[28]. The negotiations to reach a common outcome in policy networks can be guided by either the perspective of reconciliation of interests (bargaining) or the perspective of optimal performance (problem-solving). The question is then under which conditions problem-solving (as the most optimal logic of negotiation to produce common outcomes[29]) dominates over bargaining. Different scholars have dealt with this problem (see Benz/Scharpf/Zintl 1992). Solutions suggested are the institutional consolidation of a network (Scharpf 1993), overlapping membership in several networks (Scharpf 1991), the spatial and temporal separation of the search for a common solution from the distribution of costs and benefits (Zintl 1992; Scharpf 1992; Benz 1992), or the *"Entkopplung von Handlungszielen und individuellem Nutzenstreben"* (discoupling of goals of action from the individual ambition of utility-maximisation; Mayntz 1993: 51; cf. Benz 1992).

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self-interests or the style of decision-making and conflict settlement within an organization (cf. Benz 1992: 159-165).

[28] This could be compared to the principle of the 'upgrading of the common interest' in neo-functionalist approaches.

[29] For a discussion of the general differences between bargaining and problem-solving see Scharpf 1992 and Zintl 1992.

2) Networks can provide additional, informal linkages between the inter- and intraorganisational decision-making arenas. Such informal linkages, based on communication and trust, overlap with institutionalised structures of co-ordination and link different organisations independently from the formal relationships between them. Networks help to overcome the structural dilemma of bargaining systems because they provide redundant possibilities for interaction and communication which can be used to solve decision-making problems (including bargaining dilemma). Networks do not directly serve for decision-making but for the information, communication and exercise of influence in the preparation of decisions. Interaction in networks is not exposed to constraints such as formal rules or assignments of responsibility. Besides, networks reduce transaction cost in situations of complex decision-making as they provide a basis of common knowledge, experience and normative orientation. They also reduce insecurity by promoting the mutual exchange of information. Finally, networks can counterbalance power asymmetries by providing additional channels of influence beyond the formal structures (Benz 1992).

To sum up, in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment, where hierarchical co-ordination is rendered difficult if not impossible and the potential for deregulation is limited due to the problems of market failure (Kooiman 1993), governance becomes more and more only feasible within policy networks, providing a framework for the efficient horizontal co-ordination of the interests and actions of public and private corporate actors, mutually dependent on their resources (Kenis/Schneider 1991; Scharpf 1993; Mayntz 1994).

However, networks are no final solution to decision-making problems in bargaining systems. Because of their self-dynamic, networks become very often 'quasi-institutional' arenas with their own structure of conflict and problems of co-ordination (Benz 1995). Besides, policy networks tend to be very resistant to change (Lehmbruch 1991). Finally, policy networks are often not exposed to democratic control and therefore suffer from a lack of legitimacy (Benz 1995; cf. Scharpf 1993a[30]). Hence, networks themselves create a dilemma: On the one hand, they perform functions necessary to overcome the deficiencies of bargaining systems, on the other hand, however, they cannot fully substitute formal institutions because of their own deficiencies[31].

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[30] For networks as a chance to legitimise a political system see Jachtenfuchs/Kohler-Koch 1996a: 39.

[31] According to Benz, this dilemma or 'paradox of interorganizational structures' cannot be finally overcome. Networks and institutions form a dynamic structural context in which politics has to operate in a flexible way. Actors can cope best with this situation if they act "paradoxically", i.e. act "as if what is achieved was not intended" (Benz 1995: 204).

It should be clear by now that the concept of policy networks as a specific form of governance does not constitute a proper theory. To explain the phenomenon of policy networks as a new mode of governance, the Max-Planck-School draws from the so called *actor-centred institutionalism*, mainly developed by Renate Mayntz and Fritz Scharpf (1995), which is very often combined with other theoretical approaches such as game theory (Scharpf 1992; 1992a; 1993; Zintl 1992), theories of exchange (Marin 1990) or resource dependency theory (Marin 1990; Mayntz 1993; 1994; Kenis/Schneider 1991).

Actor-centred institutionalism combines rational choice and institutionalist assumptions in a way functional regime theory (Krasner 1983; Keohane 1984) and neoliberal institutionalism (Keohane 1989) do. Institutions are conceived of as regulatory structures providing opportunities and constraints for rational actors striving to maximise their preferences (Mayntz/Scharpf 1995). A major function of institutions is to overcome problems of collective action by constraining egoistic and opportunistic behaviour (Marin 1990; Scharpf 1992; Zintl 1992). Networks then are conceptualised as informal institutions - not-formally organised, reciprocal (non-hierarchical), relatively permanent relations and forms of interaction between actors who strive to realise common gains (Scharpf 1993: 72). Networks are based on agreed-upon rules for the production of a common outcome. They reduce costs of information and transaction and create mutual trust among the actors diminishing uncertainty and thus the risk of defection (Scharpf 1992). Due to these functions, networks serve as an ideal institutional framework for horizontal self-co-ordination between public and private actors, on which policy-making is relying in an increasingly complex, dynamic and diversified environment where hierarchical co-ordination is rendered dysfunctional[32]. Public and private actors form networks to exchange their resources on which they are mutually dependent for the realisation of common gains (policies) (Marin 1990; Kenis/Schneider 1991; Mayntz 1993; 1994; cf. Rhodes 1988; 1996). Hence, using the language of IR, one could argue that policy networks constitute a means to manage problems of interdependence (collective action problems) between public and private actors in public policy-making[33].

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[32] For an attempt to formulate a sophisticated theoretical approach to explain the emergence of policy networks as a form of modern governance under conditions of complexity, dynamics, and diversity see Kooiman 1993.

[33] Actor-centred institutionalism is also invoked to explain the impact of policy networks on policy outcomes and policy change (Marin 1990; Windhoff-Héritier 1994).

Figure 1: The evolution of policy networks as a new form of governance[34]

	increasing resource		deregulation/privatisation ⇒	market
complexity	interdependence		inefficiency of	failure
dynamics	⇒between public	⇒	hierarchical	
diversity	and private actors		co-ordination	
	in policy-making		horizontal co-ordination ⇒	*governance through policy networks*

Yet, studies on policy networks are emerging which challenge the rationalist institutionalist approach of the Max-Planck-School by using *cognitive approaches* such as theories of learning or communicative action. The point of departure is a critique of the Max-Planck-School for neglecting the role of consensual knowledge, ideas, beliefs and values in the study of networks (Sabatier 1993; Majone 1993; Singer 1993). It is contended that policy networks are merely based on the common goal to produce certain policy outcomes which allow the actors to realise their self-interests; members of a network share consensual knowledge and collective ideas and values, a specific belief system i.e. "a set of fundamental values, causal beliefs and problem perceptions" (Sabatier 1993: 127, my translation). Such '*advocacy coalitions*' (Sabatier 1993) or '*discourse coalitions*' (Singer 1993) are practically identical with what IR scholars call '*epistemic communities*' (Haas 1992) and '*principled issue-networks*' (Sikkink 1993). Such coalitions or communities are formed to influence policy outcomes according to the collectively shared belief system of their members. Pursuing their goals, advocacy and discourse coalitions do not resort to strategic bargaining but rather rely on processes of communicative action like in the case of policy deliberation (Majone 1993) or policy change through policy learning, i.e. a change in the belief-system of advocacy coalitions (not only in the actors' behaviour as the result of external constrains or the convergence of their exogenously fixed interests) (Sabatier 1993)[35].

All in all, there is a growing number of works on policy networks which acknowledge that ideas, beliefs, values, and consensual knowledge do have ex-

[34] For an overview over the concept of interdependence in International Relations theory see Keohane/Nye 1977; Kohler-Koch 1990.

[35] Sabatier, however, points out at that policy learning is more likely to occur as a consequence of external shock rather than due to processes of communicative action (Sabatier 1993: 122-126).

planatory power in the study of policy networks. However, the critique of rational institutionalist approaches towards policy networks overlooks a fundamental point: Not only do ideas, beliefs, values, identity and trust matter in policy networks; they are constitutive for the logic of interaction between the members of a network. Scholars like Scharpf and Benz are absolutely right in arguing that policy networks offer a solution to problems of collective action by enabling non-strategic action based on communication and mutual trust. Communication and trust distinguish policy networks from other forms of non-hierarchical co-ordination and render them more efficient than those. Yet, by acknowledging the relevance of communicative action (problem-solving, deliberation, arguing) as a way to overcome problems caused by strategic action (maximisation of self-interest, bargaining), rational institutionalists start contradicting the basic assupmtions of their theory, namely that rational actors always strive to maximise their exogenously given interest. The capacity of policy networks to overcome problems of collective action can only be accounted for when actors' preferences and interests are endogenised, i.e. not taken as given and fixed, and the role of shared ideas, values, identities and mutual trust in shaping and changing these interests and preferences is taken on - something that cannot be done within a rational institutionalist framework[36].

This part of the paper introduced different concepts of policy networks found in the literature and organised them along three dimensions which are summarised in figure 2.

[36] For the general problem of rational choice approaches to account for processes of communicative action in formal and informal institutions see Müller 1994.

Figure 2: Concepts of policy networks		
Quantitative network concept		**Qualitative network concept**
	Interest Intermediation School	*Governance School*
policy networks as analytical tool	policy networks as a typology of state/society relations	policy networks as a model to analyse non-hierarchical forms of interactions between public and private actors in policy-making
policy networks as theoretical approach	structure of policy networks as a determinant of policy process and policy outcome	policy networks as specific form of governance

Having looked at different policy network concepts 'in theory' , let us now turn to the ways they are applied 'in practice' to study European governance.

III. Policy Networks and the Study of European Governance

1. Policy Networks in International Relations

As already mentioned, some IR scholars have used policy networks as a metaphor to describe the EU system of governance. They characterise the EU as a "set of networks" or "network form of organisation" (Bressand/Nicolaidis 1990; Keohane/Hoffmann 1991: 13; Wallace 1990: 19; Metcalfe 1992).

Hans Kassim even identifies a "network model" in the field of IR, which challenges the state-centric two-level game conception of European governance put forward by liberal intergovernmentalism[37] (Kassim 1994: 19). This network model asserts that European governance is characterised by a multiplicity of linkages and interactions connecting a large number and a wide variety of actors from all levels of government and society. Policy-making power is widely dispersed

[37] See e.g. Putnam 1988; Moravcsik 1991; 1993; 1994.

between a large number of actors and not monopolised by the national governments. Neither do national governments control access of domestic interests to the European arena as gate-keepers aggregating domestic interests at the national level and then defending them in inter-governmental bargaining in the Council of Minister. Rather, domestic actors can directly access the European arena bypassing the national governments. Thus, the network model has much in common with IR literature on transnational and transgovernmental relations and interdependence (Keohane/Nye 1972; Keohane/Nye 1974; Keohane/Nye 1977; Josselin 1995; Risse-Kappen 1995a), epistemic communities (Haas 1992; Richardson 1995), international regimes (Krasner 1983; Young 1989 Rittberger 1993) as well as with multi-level governance approaches in EI literature (Marks 1993; Marks/Hooghe/Blank 1995). However, Kassim's distinction between "the policy network approach" in comparative politics and "the network model" in IR already indicates that there are considerable differences between the two, "reflecting different origins and different ambitions" (Kassim 1994: 17). Policy networks in IR are basically taken as a metaphor, which "helps to emphasise the horizontal ties among actors and the complexity of their relationships, but (...) does not elaborate clear hypotheses about behaviour" (Keohane/Hoffmann 1991: 14). A more sophisticated, 'theory impregnated' (Rhodes 1995) conception of policy networks in the field of IR and EI is only emerging.

2. *Policy Networks and European Governance*

The debate about 'how to explore the nature of the beast' (Risse-Kappen 1996) used to be dominated by the long-running and probably never ending dispute between neofunctionalist/supranationalist approaches of EI on the one hand and realist/intergovernmentalist approaches of EI on the other hand (for the most recent 'academic duel' see Wincott 1995 and Moravcsik 1995). The increasing dissatisfaction of many scholars with the neofunctionalist-intergovernmentalist dichotomy to study European governance has provoked several attempts to develop alternative approaches, of which multi-level governance is probably the most prominent one (Scharpf 1993; Marks 1992; 1993; Hooghe 1995; Marks/Hooghe/Blank 1995). Expecting a 'transformation of the nation state' as consequence of European integration rather than its 'withering away' or its 'obstinate resilience', multi-level governance seems to be able to overcome some of the fundamental weaknesses of neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism in studying European governance (cf. Börzel 1995), Yet, it is still subject to major criticism (cf. Rhodes 1995; Jeffery 1996; Keating 1996; Smith 1996). The emerging interest in policy networks in the literature on European governance can be also understood as reaction to the critique of multi-level governance for predominantly focusing on the '*multi-level*' aspect (relations between the territorial

levels of *government*) of multi-level governance thereby neglecting the *'governance'* component (relations between the public and private spheres). Policy networks are perceived to offer a way "to put governance back into multi-level governance" (Smith 1996). The European Union then is conceptualised as a multi-level system of governance, where private and public actors of the supranational, national and subnational level interact within highly complex networks to produce policy outcomes.

The concept of policy networks has hardly been systematically applied to the study of European governance. Nevertheless, four distinct ways can be identified in which policy networks have been invoked for the research on European governance. They differ according to whether they treat European governance as dependent or independent variable[38] and to whether they apply policy networks as analytical tool or theoretical approach.

Intergovernmental vs. Supranational/Transitional Policy-Making

The majority of works on European governance use policy networks as an analytical tool to study European governance as dependent variable. A large part of this research is dedicated to the study of the different forms of interest intermediation between public and private actors at the EU level. A major point of interest is the relationship between the Commission and national and transnational interest groups[39] in various policy areas and the influence of these sectoral networks on policy outcomes and policy change in European policy-making (Peterson 1992; Sandholtz 1992; Mazey/Richardson 1993; Bressers/O'Toole/Richardson 1994; Schneider/Dang-Nguyen/Werle 1994).

A smaller set of works uses policy networks to analyse the processes and structures of European policy-making. They start from the observation that European policy-making cannot be reduced to intergovernmental bargaining but increasingly takes place in 'multi-level policy networks' (Peters 1992; Risse-Kappen 1996; Sandholtz 1996). The research here focuses on the question under which conditions multi-level policy networks emerge and, rather than intergovernmental

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[38] The distinction between European governance as dependent and independent variable is important, especially with regard to the discussion about the 'transformation of the state'. Whereas some authors refer by this term to transformations *within* the member states caused by European governance (Héritier/Mingers/Knill/Becka 1994; Kohler-Koch 1996), others point at the emergence of a system of European governance which is no longer based on the principles of territoriality and state sovereignty (Schmitter 1991; 1992; Ruggie 1993; Christiansen 1994; Christiansen/Jørgensen 1995; Jachtenfuchs 1995).

[39] Héritier/Mingers/Knill/Becka (1994) point out, however, that one of the major characteristics of European policy networks dealing with regulative policies is the frequent inclusion of intergovernmental actors.

bargaining, characterise European policy-making (Sandholtz/Stone 1994; Rhodes 1995; Risse-Kappen 1996).

Strengthening vs. Weakening of the State

A considerable amount of the 'second-image reversed' literature on European governance invokes policy networks to analyse the impact of European policy-making on the domestic structures of the member states. Policy networks are considered to be a major challenge to the 'gatekeeper' role of the national governments on which intergovernmentalist scholars base their assumption that European integration 'rescues' (Milward 1992) or 'strengthens' the state (Moravcsik 1994). Policy networks linking the Commission and subnational actors such as regional or local governments can by-pass national governments, giving subnational actors direct and independent access to the European policy-making arena and providing the Commission with potential coalition partners against the national governments (Marks 1992; 1993; Sandholtz 1996). It has been argued, however, that European policy-making might as well alter the resource dependency in domestic policy networks in favour of the national governments rendering subnational actors more dependent on the central government or making the central government less dependent on subnational actors (Anderson 1990; cf. Moravcsik 1994[40]). In an attempt to overcome the oversimplifications of the strengthening-vs.-weakening-the-state debate, some authors use the concept of policy networks to specify the conditions under which subnational actors might gain influence on European policy-making, e.g. by establishing respectively exploiting policy networks (Kohler-Koch 1992; Marks/Nielson/Ray/Salk 1995; Smyrl 1995; Rhodes 1995).

The European Union as a New System of Governance

Some inceptions of the use of policy networks as a theoretical approach towards the study of European governance can be found in the literature on the EU as an emerging political system. Some authors claim that the European system of governance can no longer be conceptualised and explained by using the dichotomy of international organisation/confederation versus federation/supranational state. These 'state-centred categories, still inclined to the principle of territorial state sovereignty, are renounced for being unable to grasp the fundamentally new and unique feature of the EU as a system of "governance without government" (Ruggie 1993; Christiansen 1994; Jachtenfuchs 1995; Jachtenfuchs/Kohler-Koch 1996). It is argued that European governance is not based on hierarchical co-ordination by either national governments joined in the Council of Ministers or a

[40] Moravcsik does not use a policy network approach to test his strengthening-the-state hypothesis. However, his major argument is based on the assumption that European integration leads to a redistribution of resources among domestic actors in the member states in favour of the national executive (Moravcsik 1994).

supranational actor like the Commission. Rather, European governance proceeds through negotiations in policy networks linking public and private actors of different levels and dimensions of government. Whereas this system of governance, based on non-hierarchical co-ordination in policy networks across different levels of government and different spheres of society is perceived by some authors as a 'transformation of the state' in terms of the emergence of a new form or architecture of the modern state in Europe (Grande 1994; Héritier/Mingers/Knill/Becka 1994; Kohler-Koch 1996), others argue that the whole conception of the state is put into question. "If governance by negotiation is possible, the notion of governance is no longer linked exclusively to the state. This opens up for a polycentric system of non-territorial based governance" (Jachtenfuchs 1995: 125; Schmitter 1991; 1992; Ruggie 1993; Christiansen 1994; Christiansen/Jørgensen 1995)[41]. Whether the emergence of a new mode of governance in the EU constitutes only a new form of modern statehood or actually puts the concept of the state itself into question is open to further research. In any case, the concept of policy networks does not only allow to conceptualise such processes of transformation Theory-impregnated policy network approaches, drawing from game theory (Scharpf 1992; 1993) or resource dependency theory (Kooiman 1993; Rhodes 1996) claim to provide some causal explanation for these changes. It is argued that policy-making in the EU takes place in a highly dynamic, complex and diversified environment where public actors at both the European and the national level are increasingly dependent on the resources of public subnational (regional and local governments) as well as private actors of all territorial levels (transnational, national, subnational interest groups etc.). Hierarchical co-ordination either through the Commission or the national governments has become inefficient. The scope for deregulation and privatisation is limited due to the problem of market failure. In this situation, policy networks provide a most efficient form of governance at the European as well as at the national level. As not all policy areas are equally characterised by complexity, dynamic and diversity, this theoretical approach can also account for cross-sectoral variation with regard to pre-eminence of policy networks. The same applies to cross-country variations as the resource dependency between public and private actors and different levels of government is highly determined by the do-

[41] Stephen Krasner, however, argues in a recent paper that state sovereignty has always been a myth. The Westphalian model of the state, based on autonomy (exclusion of external authority) and territoriality (congruence of boundaries and authority structures) has been frequently compromised and contested, de facto and in theory, throughout its history (Krasner 1995). The problem with many works on the erosion of the concept of state (sovereignty) is that it is often assumed that this process has already taken place and led to new modes of governance beyond the state. Thus, these works are often more concerned with finding ways to legitimise these new forms of governance rather than with looking for empirical evidence of their emergence (see e.g. Jachtenfuchs 1995).

mestic structures of the states (political institutions, political culture and state/society relations).

The Transformation of the State

The application of policy networks as a theoretical approach to the study of the Europeanisation of the national state is equally promising, above all as the strengthening-vs.-weakening-the-state debate seems to have led into a dead-end. There is an increasing consensus that neither the relationship between the different levels of government nor between public and private actors is zero-sum in nature (Parri 1989; Hooghe/Keating 1994; Benz 1995; Keating/Hooghe 1995; Olsen 1995). A number of empirical studies indicate that the state is not in decline, despite the growing significance of supranational, transnational and subnational actors in European policy-making (Anderson 1990; Engel 1993; McAleavey 1993; Börzel 1995; Rhodes 1995; Zürn 1996; Kohler-Koch 1996). Hence, some scholars do not expect either a 'withering away' of the state or its 'obstinate resilience'. Rather, they suggest a general transformation of the state as a consequence of European governance, which does not follow the zero-sum game logic of neofunctionalist/supranationalist and intergovernmentalist approaches. Instead of looking for changes in the balance of power between the different levels of government or between public and private actors, these authors focus on processes of the de-bordering of the autonomy action and the reformulation and reinterpretation of principles of action[42]. The Europeanisation of the national state is perceived as a process which fosters the emergence of a new mode of governance, characterised by the shift from hierarchical, state-centred co-ordination to non-hierarchical self-co-ordination of public and private actors across all levels of government (Grande 1994; Jachtenfuchs 1995; Kohler-Koch 1996; Rhodes 1996[43]). The state is increasingly transforming from actor into arena[44] (Kohler-Koch 1996). The emergence of policy networks as the predomi-

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[42] "Prozeß der Entgrenzung von Handlungsspielräumen und der Neuformulierung und Umdeutung von Handlungsprinzipien" (Kohler-Koch 1995: 9).

[43] Important research on the impact of European governance on the domestic structures of the member states - which does not fit, however, in the scheme presented here - is done by Arthur Benz and a research team at the University of Constance who look at how institutional changes in the EU affect the relationship between domestic institutions and informal networks both involving actors at the regional/local, national and European level (Benz 1995a; Benz/Lehmbruch/ Eberlein 1995).

[44] This claim is not equivalent with a the hypothesis put forward by supranationalist/ transnationalist writers that European integration increasingly weakens the state. Neither shares it the pluralist concept of the state as an arena for the competition of societal interests. Moreover, it is argued that the state is no longer in the position to hierarchically formulate and impose policies upon society. State actors have become more and more dependent on the resources of other actors. This does not automatically imply, however, that state actors are not able any

nant form of governance within the member states as a consequence of European governance can be explained by the same line of argument invoked to account for the specific nature of European governance. By adding a third or forth level of government to the political systems of the member states, the complexity, dynamic and diversity of policy-making, already typical for modern societies, is considerably increased, enhancing the need for non-hierarchical co-ordination of public and private actors across all levels of government within policy-networks. The EU constitutes an opportunity structure which offers additional resources to private actors and subnational governments increasing the resource dependency among the different levels of government and the public and the private sphere and fostering the need for non-hierarchical patterns of interactions and co-ordination. Beate Kohler-Koch carries the point even further by arguing that the EU does not only provide subnational actors with additional resources; she also strives to demonstrate that the Commission provides a new philosophy of governance, based on co-operative governing, which changes the *ideas and beliefs* of subnational actors about how efficient governance can be achieved (Kohler-Koch 1995; 1996). This transformation-of-the-state hypothesis still requires comprehensive empirical testing. Policy networks had had a role in public policy-making long before the European Community came into being. Yet, the assumption that European governance *fosters* the *dissemination* of policy networks as a mode of governance is a valid one and might be a more fruitful approach towards studying the Europeanisation of the national state than those offered by conventional theories of EI and IR with their state-centred conceptions of governance.

Figure 3 summarises the four distinct ways in which policy networks have been applied to the study of European governance.

more to pursue their own interests and do not have to play a significant role in public policy-making. Rather, the role of the state has changed from an authoritative allocator into an actor (a set of actors), who still disposes of considerable resources, being able to bring together the actors relevant for policy-making.

Figure 3: The application of policy networks to the study of European governance		
	Policy networks as analytical tool	*Policy networks as theoretical approach*
European governance as dependent variable (bottom-up perspective)	forms of interest intermedia-tion/policy outcomes/ policy change/processes/structures of European policy-making ⇒ *intergovernmental vs. supranational/transnational policy-making*	EU as a system of governance without government ⇒ *policy networks as a mode of European governance; EU as a new form of modern statehood vs. EU as a system of governance beyond the state*
European governance as independent variable (top-down perspective)	impact of European policy-making on the domestic structures of the member states ⇒ *strengthening vs. weakening of the state*	impact of European integration on the domestic structures of the member states ⇒ *transformation of the state from actor into arena*

IV. Conclusion: Policy Networks - A New Paradigm for European Governance?

"It's new, it's different, it's good looking, BUY IT NOW" (Le Galès 1995: 13).

The aim of this paper was to explore the usefulness of policy networks as a concept for studying European governance. In order to clarify the often confusing variety of conceptions and applications of policy networks, the first part of the paper organised the different network concepts found in the literature along three different dimensions: *quantitative network analysis* versus *qualitative network analysis; interest intermediation school* versus *governance school*, *analytical* versus *theoretical* approaches. The second part of the paper analysed the ways in which the policy network concept of the interest intermediation and the governance school have been applied to the study of European governance. What remains to be done in the concluding section is to discuss the added value of policy networks as an approach to European governance.

The concept of policy networks has been intensively criticised in the literature (Rhodes 1986b; Atkinson/Coleman 1992; Marsh/Rhodes 1992; Schumann 1993; Smith 1993; Dowding 1994; Mills/Saward 1994; Bressers/O'Toole 1994; Kassim 1994; Thatcher 1995; Rhodes/Bache/George 1996). The paper does not allow to address the different points of criticism. The concluding part puts forward two main arguments why policy networks might have an added value in studying European governance compared to other approaches. The arguments follow the policy networks concept of the governance school conceiving policy networks as a specific form of governance based on non-hierarchical co-ordination between public and private actors across different levels of government.

There is a growing number of empirical works which convincingly demonstrate the existence of policy networks, in which the different actors involved in European policy-making (formulation and implementation) co-ordinate their interests through non-hierarchical bargaining[45] (see e.g. Peterson 1992; Marks 1992; 1993; McAleavey 1993; Grande 1994; Héritier/Mingers/Knill/Becka 1994; Bressers/O'Toole/Richardson 1994; Schneider/Dang-Nguyen/Werle 1994; Rhodes 1995; Smyrl 1995). Unlike other theories which share a state-centric conception of governance based on a national or supranational authority for hierarchical co-

[45] This does not imply that European governance is exclusively based on non-hierarchical bargainging in multilevel policy networks. Hierarchical co-ordination and deregulation still play a prominent role in both national and European policy-making. Rather, it is argued that policy networks are becoming an increasingly important feature of European governance due to their potential to increase efficiency and legitimacy of public policy-making.

ordination in public policy-making, the concept of policy network is able to conceptualise this emerging form of 'governance without government' (Rosenau 1992). A policy network perspective on European governance thus allows to identify processes of transformation at both the European and the national level which go beyond the strengthening-vs.-weakening-the-state dichotomy. As indicated by several works on the Europeanisation of domestic politics, European integration does not render the nation-state obsolete; it changes the resource dependency between public and private actors across the different levels of government - sometimes in favour of the central state, sometimes in favour of subnational governments or private interests, and in many cases leading to (more) cooperation between the different public and private actors rather than to the strengthening or weakening of one or the other (cf. Grande 1994; Börzel 1995; Font 1996).

But policy networks do not only provide an analytical tool to trace such changes in territorial politics and state/society relations. Embedded in a resource dependency or game theory approach, a theory-impregnated policy network approach can provide some explanation for the proliferation of non-hierarchical co-ordination in multi-level policy networks. As argued by the governance school, hierarchical co-ordination and deregulation increasingly suffer from problems of efficiency and legitimacy in a complex and dynamic context of public policy-making. Policy Networks offer themselves as a solution to these problems as they are able to pool the widely dispersed policy resources and allow to include a broad variety of different actors. But what makes policy networks so special is that they provide, above all, an arena for non-strategic, communicative action to overcome deadlock situations and problems of collective action[46]. What is often overlooked, however, is that policy networks can have quite the opposite effect by inhibiting policy change (Lehmbruch 1991) and excluding certain actors from the policy-making process (Benz 1995).

To conclude, a theoretically ambitious policy network approach faces two major challenges. First, it still remains to be shown that policy networks do not only

[46] As briefly mentioned above, rationalist institutionalist approaches suffer from serious ontological problems in explaining the underlying logic of social interaction within policy networks, which is essentially based on communication and mutual trust. Whereas rational choicers still have to come to terms with these ontological contradictions in their theoretical arguments about networks, the recent debate about communicative action and institutions in the field of International Relations provide some very fruitful points of reference for tackling the role of policy networks as arenas for non-strategic action to overcome problems of collective action (see e.g. the sophisticated debate between rational institutionalists and constructivists in several issues of the German IR journal 'Zeitschrift für internationale Beziehungen', esp. Vol. 1-4 (1994/1995)).

exist in European and national policy-making but are also *relevant* for policy process and policy outcome by e.g. enhancing or diminishing the efficiency and legitimacy of policy-making. Whereas many authors agree that policy networks do have a considerable influence on policy-making (Windhoff-Héritier 1993; Bresser/O'Toole 1994; Sciarini 1996), no hypotheses have been formulated about the impact of policy networks on the formulation, implementation and change of policies.

Second, once having empirically demonstrated that policy networks do make a difference, the question of the ambiquity of policy networks has to be tackled, i.e. the conditions have to be specified under which policy networks enhance the efficiency and legitimacy of policy-making and under which they deploy the opposite effect. A tentative hypothesis, derived from empirical work in the field of EU regional and environmental policy, could be that institutional fragmentation (especially in territorial politics) and a consensus-oriented political culture (fostering trust among the actors) promote both the emergence and a positive impact of policy networks in public policy-making (Smyrl 1995; Font 1996; Börzel 1997; cf. Risse-Kappen 1996).

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