

**Corporatism, Pluralism and European integration:
The impact on national interest intermediation**

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I. Introduction

Does the EU represent transnational pluralism that will trickle down the European multi-level system? Or is it a 'statist pluralist' model which nevertheless impinges most badly on, first, statist national polities and, second, corporatist ones? Or does the EU herald a completely new form of governance, i.e. a problem-solving style of co-operation between public and private actors that will succeed hierarchy between public and private actors as well as competition between interest groups, in both the supra-national and the national spheres?

It seems that there are good arguments for all of these well-known hypotheses that were put forward in recent scholarly writing on European integration and interest intermediation. If so, there must be an analytical key to open the doors between the seemingly contradictory scenarios. I hold that including the meso level in the analysis, i.e. looking at the policy- and sector-specific characteristics in European governance, will do the trick. In addition, we should pay attention to the existence of different types of impact of Euro-level patterns on the national systems. Based on this analytical differentiation, I expect that the public-private interaction styles in the European multi-layer system will – in the long run – rather converge. The result might be a 'moderate diversity' characterised by, on the one hand, the co-existence of various ideal-types of policy networks (statist clusters, issue networks, policy communities and corporatist policy communities) at both the European and the national levels. On the other hand, Europeanisation has decreased diversity between the various Member States and will continue to do so, since basically all national policy networks are nowadays effected by the impact of the specific corresponding EU policies and the relevant networks there. Intra-system diversity of forms of public-private interaction might thus be increasingly moderated by a trend of inter-system convergence due to Europeanisation. Since the effect of Euro-politics is in most cases an indirect and 'soft' one, to be mediated by national institutions (in the wider sense), no uniform systems of interest intermediation will result even in the longer run. In other words, more uniform pluriformism might result.

Section II reviews the state of the relevant literature and its shortcomings, thus outlining the background for the development of a new approach in section III. The latter rests, first, on meso-level policy networks as the characteristic settings of public-private interaction in policy-making and on four simple ideal-types to characterise them at both the EU and the national level (sub-section III.1). Second, this approach builds on the distinction of three

different mechanisms how the EU may impact on national interest intermediation (sub-section III.2). The conclusions then present some preliminary hypotheses on relevant future developments.

II. The state of the debate on European integration and national public–private relations: Definitions and expectations vary

In the European Union, there are quite different models of public–private interaction in the making of public policies. At least at first glance, they may be distinguished neatly in three classic political science paradigms: statism refers to a model where private interests have no significant role in public decision-making. In pluralist polities, there are many interest groups which lobby individually, i.e. they express their views in an effort to influence the politicians who are the crucial decision-takers. In corporatist systems, by contrast, a few privileged interest groups (usually the peak associations of labour and industry) are incorporated in public decision-making as decisive co-actors. A closer look reveals that the definitions used in the literature of notably corporatism but also pluralism differ a lot.

1. Differing definitions

A specific type of interest group system¹ and a particular form of co-operative policy-making² have, in combination, been regarded as the hallmark of corporatism at least by a mainstream (see e.g. Cawson 1985a: 8) (this two-dimensional definition of corporatism will inform the ideal-types presented later in this text). But over time, corporatism was also ‘defined as an ideology, a variant of political culture, a type of state, a form of economy, or even as a kind of

¹ Corporatism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.’ (Schmitter 1974: 13)

² Lehbruch opposed ‘corporatist’ co-operation of organisations and public authorities to ‘pluralist’ pressure politics (see Lehbruch 1982: 8 with further references). Following these lines, a corporatist policy-making process was also described as ‘a mode of policy formation in which formally designated interest associations are incorporated within the process of authoritative decision-making and implementation. As such they are officially

society' (Schmitter 1996: 3).³ What is crucial here: even in most recent writing on European integration, e.g. in accounts of public-private patterns and European integration, authors do not necessarily refer to the same animal when talking about 'corporatism'. Vivien Schmidt defines as corporatism that interests have privileged access to both decision-making and implementation and as pluralism that there is large set of interests involved in decision-making but they have no impact in implementation since a regulatory approach prevails there. Finally, she defines as statism that societal interests are not involved in decision-making at all but that they are accommodated during the policy implementation phase (Schmidt 1996; 1997). Beate Kohler-Koch, by contrast, developed another definition of corporatism for the macro level of political systems. Her typology of 'modes of governance' is based on the two categories 'organising principle of political relations' (majority rule versus consociation) and 'constitutive logic of a polity' (politics as investment in common identity versus reconciliation of competing self-interests). Corporatist governance in her view captures, first, the pursuit of a common interest and, second, the search for consensus instead of majority voting (Kohler-Koch 1999: 26ff). Andersen and Eliassen, in turn, implicitly defined as „a corporatist structure“ that bodies consisting of both interest organisations and Community institutions are decisive (Andersen/Eliassen 1991: 17f.)

Such a nominal 'mess' is not a novel problem in political science since the older concept of pluralism as well presented to its critics a constantly moving target (Grant 1985a: 19).⁴ Contrasting the previously dominant elite model, 'pluralists' originally assumed widespread, effective, political resources; multiple centres of power; and optimum policy development through competing interests. What seems – at least nowadays – unclear is if the groups can

recognised by the state not merely as interest intermediaries but as co-responsible "partners" in governance and social guidance' (Schmitter 1981: 295).

³ Until today, the comparative industrial relations literature thus tends to speak about 'corporatism' (without further specification) if in a state, labour markets and industrial relations are managed by co-operative governance of industry, unions and (partly) the state (e.g. Traxler 1995: 5), even if other policy areas in the same political system may follow completely different patterns. In political science, Scandinavian scholars take the same approach because in their countries, centralised wage bargaining is empirically the major incident of corporatist patterns (Karlhofer/Sickinger 1999: 245 with further references). Economists tend to speak about corporatism as a particular style of economic policy and the conceptual incongruencies become even more obvious if we look at the extreme diversity of specific indicators for, and detailed measurements of corporatism (Keman/Pennings 1995).

⁴ 'Since pluralism is so vague a set of ideas it is difficult to understand how opponents can have rejected it with such confidence.' (Jordan 1990: 286) German authors may use a very different concept since 'pluralism' has

just make themselves heard at some consultative stage of the decision-making process or if they actually all have equal influence on the decision-makers. That pluralism is typically connected with a clear separation of state and society and with the state being an arbiter of the competition between interest groups (Cawson 1978: 182f)⁵ is a strong argument against an equal impact for all groups. Nevertheless, the latter is frequently assumed in contemporary writing that touches pluralist thought, also by Europeanists: e.g. Bomberg speaks of 'similar access and influence' (1998: 183; see also Marsh 1998: 189; and implicitly Schmidt 1997: 134). With a view to detailed empirical studies, however, one may suspect that the assumption of equal influence for all lobbies will discard almost every extant constellation (hence, the definition of the pluralist form of policy network, i.e. the issue network, used in this paper does not include such a characteristic).⁶

Differing definitions are not only problematic per se for scholarly discourse but have furthermore made classifications of political systems partly inconsistent with each other. This is even worse since there is no single authoritative classification of the EU member states with a view to their patterns of interest politics and existing comparative studies do not always draw the same conclusion. In any case, recent Europeanist papers regarded France, Italy and Spain as statist polities while Austria, Germany and the Netherlands are usually considered corporatist – notwithstanding partly differing definitions (Schmidt 1999; Streeck/Schmitter 1994: 215; Lenschow 1999: 16). No agreement exists in the case of the UK: Green Cowles speaks of pluralist government–business relations (1998: 4) while Schmidt takes the UK as a statist example (1999: 1). Interestingly, pluralist systems in Europe are hardly explicitly named but rather exist as a residual category while the US are treated as pluralist textbook-example even if a comparison with the EC is at stake (e.g. Schmidt 1997: 135).

a less specific meaning in German since it was used to distinguish liberal societies from monist ones before the international debate on corporatism started in 1974 (Lehmbruch 1996: fn 4).

⁵ The 'vectors of influence' (Lehmbruch 1979: 51f.) were perceived to run only in one direction, i.e. from private lobbies to state agencies. There was no co-operation in the narrow sense assumed, i.e. no multi-directional relations. However, it is most difficult to draw the borderline between 'negative co-ordination' (i.e. an implicit mutual adaptation of the competing actors which is included in the pluralist pattern) on the one hand, and the active mobilisation of consensus (i.e. direct negotiations which are a typical feature of corporatism), on the other (Czada 1994: 53; van Waarden 1992: 34).

⁶ Equal or unequal influence are here considered as a matter of empirics, not of definition.

II.2. Differing models and expectations

Another interesting feature of the (in quantitative terms meagre) literature on Euro-politics and intermediation is that scholars use to deduce effects on the national systems from one assumed cross-sectoral ideal-type of EU governance style (on empirical meso-level differences see below) but their models as well as expected effects differ. In other words: The few available articles⁷ reaching beyond punctual case studies usually concentrate, in a first step, on describing the EU as one particular type of state–society relations and, in a second step, deduce from this general model of Euro-politics likely effects on the Member States. The most famous of such accounts – with the telling title ‘from national corporatism to transnational pluralism’ – analyses why the EC falls short of centralised labour-industry-state relations that would, such as in some historical national systems, govern economic policy decisions in the wider sense in a policy-transgressing manner. The authors consider most likely for the European Union ‘an American-style pattern of „disjointed pluralism“ or „competitive federalism“, organised over no less than three levels – regions, nation-states, and „Brussels“’ (Streeck/Schmitter 1991: 215).

Not all scholars, however, agree on these specific characteristics attributed to ‘EC governance’.⁸ While Streeck and Schmitter described a pluralist style similar to American patterns, Vivien Schmidt detects important differences to the US model since she perceives the EC to be ‘less „pluralistic“ in interest group access, given that business is the interest mainly represented in a majority of policy areas, and it contains statist elements in its control of the process of interest representation and its greater insulation from undue influence’

⁷ The impact of European integration on interest intermediation in the Member States has so far hardly been discussed in detail and large comparative empirical studies on the practical effects in the Member States are missing. There are at least a few recent exceptions offering interesting insights on the sectoral and case study level. Maria Green Cowles looks at the ‘Transatlantic Business Dialogue’ and its impact on national government–business relations in France, Germany and the UK (1998). Andrea Lenschow discusses the implementation of EC environmental policy acts and their impact on state–society relations in Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK (1999). A study of the implementation of four EC-environmental Directives in Britain and Germany reveals some insights also on private–public relations in Knill/Lenschow (1998).

⁸ I choose the term EC (and not EU) in this section primarily because this diminishes chances that readers include the national level (since EU governance is often used to describe the entire multi-level system, not only the EU as a specific supra-national political system). Since the debate on patterns of governance focuses on EC policy fields and usually neglects the second and third EU pillars with their very special style, using EC here is even correct in legal terms. The typology presented below can nevertheless be applied to the second and third pillars as well.

(Schmidt 1997: 134). She even talks about ‘statist pluralism’ in policy formulation (1997: 138). Like Streeck and Schmitter, also Schmidt deducts impacts on national interest politics from her general ideal-type of EU level governance (1999; 1997). Her conclusion is that ‘statist polities have had a harder time adjusting to EU level policy formulation, a more difficult task in implementing the policy changes engendered by the EU, and a greater challenge in adapting their national governance patterns to the new realities’ while ‘the EU’s quasi-pluralist process is in most ways more charitable to systems characterized by corporatist processes ... because the „fit“ is greater in such areas as societal actors’ interest organisation and access and governing bodies’ decision-making culture and adaptability’ (1999: 2). Schmidt argues that European integration enhances the autonomy of political leaders in pluralist or even corporatist states, but not in statist France where it has ‘diminished the overall autonomy of the executive at the formulation stage, while it has undermined its flexibility at the implementation stage’ (1996: 249).

Beate Kohler-Koch’s ideal-typical EC-style, ‘network governance’, finally refers to a quite different animal that is characterised by co-operation among all interested actors (instead of competition) and by joint learning processes (1996). According to her, hierarchy and subordination give way to an interchange on a more equal footing aiming at joint problem-solving (Kohler-Koch 1999: 32) that will dissipate in the multi-level system. This suggests a much more co-operative process than self-interested lobbying of many individual private groups according to the pluralist ideal-type. There are thus differing accounts of the basic characteristics of EC-public-private relations and, based on them, diverse expectations with a view to effects of European integration on national interest intermediation.

My suspicion is that the existing accounts are not necessarily contradictory. I suggest to read them less as alternative accounts than as useful pieces in a larger jigsaw. Breaking down the level of analysis to include the meso level (for both the EC/EU and its Member States) might allow to integrate these analyses as each referring to different co-existing ideal-types of governance at the EU level and/or to specific forms of impact on the national systems.⁹ Existing confusion resulted mainly from the absence of, first, a systematic connection of

⁹ In terms of discussing our question of an impact of Europeanisation on national interest politics, it is important to note that much of the literature does not systematically distinguish changes in the national policy process due to a trickling down of impacts from the EU level, on the one hand, and the participation of national actors in the European decision process, on the other.

research on interest intermediation pointing at great meso-level differences both in the Member States and in Euro-politics (see below) and, second, an analytical distinction of various kinds of potential effects of EC-level patterns in the Member States. The remainder of this article will try to fill this gap. This should lead not to a general reversal of previous expectations but to an important differentiation.

III. A new approach for studying the impact of European integration on national interest intermediation

1. Varying networks rather than ‘...isms’ throughout the multi-level system

The approach to be presented here acknowledges differentiated governance sub-systems at both the national and the EU level. Instead of ‘pluralism’, ‘corporatism’ or ‘statism’, it is therefore useful to speak about specific policy networks with particular characteristics. The following sub-sections sum up existing insights on the importance of the meso-level in interest politics at the national (a) and European levels (b). Sub-section (c) then presents a scheme of ideal types for both national and European politics. On that basis, the effects of European integration on particular policy networks at the national level can be established much more precisely than hitherto.

a) The national level

It was in fact clear since the beginning of the corporatism debate in the 1970s that in some policy areas, notably in social policy, corporatist patterns were much more frequent than in others.¹⁰ A multitude of case studies on patterns of interest intermediation in EU member states quickly uncovered that even in non-corporatist political systems, corporatist ‘arenas’ indeed emerge at the level of industrial sectors, of sub-national political units and/or of single policy arenas (see e.g. the contributions in Berger 1981; Cawson 1985b; Grant 1985b;

¹⁰ ‘(I)n point of fact, all the interest intermediation systems of Western Europe are “mixed”. They may be predominantly of one type, but different sectors and subsectors, classes and class factions, regions and subregions are likely to be operating simultaneously according to different principles and procedures.’ (Schmitter 1979: 70, see also Lehbruch 1982: 27)

Streeck/Schmitter 1985). Meanwhile, changes at the economic and the political level made it even more improbable that within otherwise increasingly fragmented political systems, corporatism should still cover all crucial issues of policy-making such as Lehmbruch's ideal-type assumed (1985: 94).

Empirically, a strong trend towards sectoralisation of interest-politics was recently acknowledged even for the corporatist 'role model' Austria. In fact, 'social partnership' is much less uniformly characterised by interest group co-decision in public policy-making than often assumed. In areas such as judicial policy, education, research policy, consumer protection, defence policy and telecommunications, the influence of the Austrian social partners is at best marginal (Kittel/Tálos 1999: 118f.; see also Müller 1985: 220; Tálos 1993: 27; Tálos/Leichsenring/Zeiner 1993; Traxler 1996: 19). Corporatist patterns are only prominent in a few core areas (i.e. in social, economic and agricultural policies) and even there not in all relevant issue areas and notably not in all specific decision processes.

The Austrian case is by no means extraordinary since sectoralisation of politics and a shift of industrial relations towards the sectoral level seem to be a rather broad trend (Karlhofer/Sickinger 1999: 242). Compared to the 'classic' 1970s corporatism (which indeed often times was macro-corporatism with demand-side steering of the economy) contemporary corporatist arrangements now seem significantly restricted in functional scope as the policy-making process is broken down in and varying across policy subsystems (e.g. Atkinson/Coleman 1989: 157).¹¹ Nevertheless, meso-level diversity has so far hardly been reflected in comparisons of the political systems of the EU member states. Political scientists still tend to label whole countries as pluralist, corporatist or statist without referring to the important intra-state differences identified in the state-specific literature although in single-country studies, a refined heuristic approach is now frequently chosen on the basis of the policy networks typology developed by British scholars.

The policy networks approach was developed explicitly to capture the sectoral constellations emerging as a response to the growing dispersion among public and private actors of resources and capacities for political action (Kenis/Schneider 1991: 28). With the scope of state intervention targets, also decentralisation and fragmentation of the state increased over

time and was complemented by increased intervention and participation in decision-making by ever more social and political actors. Policy networks were thus characterised as 'integrated hybrid structures of political governance' with the distinctive capacity for mixing different combinations of bureaucracy, market, community, or corporatist association as integrative logics (Kenis/Schneider 1991: 42; Mayntz 1993: 44f).

While continental authors were more concerned with the characteristics of 'network governance' in general (see e.g. Marin/Mayntz 1991b; Scharpf 1993; Kooiman 1993),¹² British political scientists tended to concentrate on the development of policy network ideal-types. On the basis of earlier work by authors such as Jordan and Richardson (1983), David Marsh and R.A.W. Rhodes elaborated the dominant typology (Marsh/Rhodes 1992; Rhodes/Marsh 1992) that distinguishes closed and stable policy communities from loose and open issue networks as the two polar ends of a multi-dimensional continuum (the term 'policy network' is thus a generic one encompassing all types). The characteristics of both groups are on the dimensions membership,¹³ integration,¹⁴ resources¹⁵ and power.¹⁶ Marsh and Rhodes

11 That the sectoral economies, in turn, are increasingly internationalised represents one of several challenges to cross-sectoral corporatist regimes (Hollingsworth/Streeck 1994: 289).

12 A common conceptual approach to 'policy networks' was however not developed: 'By definition of what makes a theoretical "fashion", this term is attributed great analytical promise by its proponents, whereas critical commentators argue that its meaning is still vague and that the perspective it implies has not yet matured into anything like a coherent (middle range) theory. What they agree on is their subject of concern, discourse and dispute, and that is sufficient to establish "policy networks" on the theoretical agenda of contemporary social science, without necessarily guaranteeing the declared value. On the contrary, a speculative oversupply of networking terminology may inflate its explanatory power so that some form of intellectual control over the conceptual currency in circulation, both its precise designations and its amount of diffusion, become inevitably a clearance process within the profession.' (Marin/Mayntz 1991a: 11)

13 A policy community has a very limited number of participants and some groups are consciously excluded while issue networks comprise large numbers of participants; concerning the type of interest, in a policy community 'economic and/or professional interest dominate', while an issue network encompasses a 'range of affected interests'.

14 There are three sub-dimensions: frequency of interaction (in policy communities, there is 'frequent, high-quality, interaction of all groups on all matters related to policy issue', whereas in issue networks contacts fluctuate in frequency and intensity) continuity (changes from 'membership, values and outcomes persistent over time' to 'access fluctuates significantly') and the consensus variable that reaches from 'all participants share basic values and accept the legitimacy of the outcome' to 'a measure of agreement exists but conflict is ever present'.

15 Two sub-dimensions, i.e. distribution within network and distribution within participating organisations: a policy community is characterised by all participants having resources and the basic relationship being an exchange relationship in which leaders can deliver members; in an issue network, by contrast, some participants may have resources, but they are limited and the basic relationship is consultative, plus there is varied and variable distribution and capacity to regulate members.

stress that the characteristics form an ideal-type to be compared with actual relationships between governments and interests because no policy area would conform exactly to either list of characteristics (1992: 187). These ideal-types cannot explain politics within networks¹⁷ but they may be heuristically useful, notably also for comparisons of national and EU-level networks with a view to determining the potential impact of the latter on the former (see below).¹⁸

b) The EU level

That the emergence of a supranational form of macro-corporatism comparable to national patterns in the 1970s is unlikely was underlined in a number of studies on EC interest politics (Streeck/Schmitter 1994: 227, first published in 1991; Kohler-Koch 1992: 103; Traxler/Schmitter 1995: 213).¹⁹

Almost at the same time, scholars increasingly pointed to fragmentation as a typical feature of the EU's political system. Enormous cross-sectoral differences are even laid down in the Treaties since the participation of the EP and the ECOSOC varies and so do voting procedures in the Council and its sub-groups. Such constitutionally fixed differences are however the mere peak of an iceberg since they were further refined in long-standing political practice and different DGs now have very particular styles of interaction with private interests. This was acknowledged by a whole new generation of meso-level studies that addressed the question of EC governance at the area- and sector-specific level (Greenwood/Grote/Ronit 1992;

¹⁶ Rhodes' and Marsh's policy community is characterised by the somewhat contradictory statement 'There is a balance of power between the members. Although one group may dominate, it must be a positive sum game if community is to persist'. By contrast, an issue network comprises 'unequal powers, reflects unequal resources and unequal access. It is a zero-sum game'. Rhodes and Marsh 1992: 187)

¹⁷ Ideal-types never 'explain' anything. One may certainly add on to the original Marsh/Rhodes approach hypotheses from theoretical concepts in political science (e.g. structuralism) and thus change it, see suggestions in (Marsh 1998). When adding different potential explanatory variables, however, the danger is to end up with only an over-complex inventory for empirical research.

¹⁸ Without doubt, there are also impacts from the national on the European level but this is beyond the scope of this article.

¹⁹ The mainstream of scholarly writing on interest politics at the European level describe specific groups and their development without asking explicitly about the pattern of interest politics being corporatist or pluralist. The focus tends to be on the number of groups in a given field and the date of their foundation as well as on specifics of group membership and reasons to join Euro-groups.

Mazey/Richardson 1993; Pedler/Van Schendelen 1994; Eichener/Voelzkow 1994a; Greenwood 1995b; Wallace/Young 1997).

The diverse styles of public–private interaction thus discovered in various EC policy networks included statist, pluralist and corporatist patterns (most recently see Kohler-Koch 1999). To give just a few examples, private interest governments (Streeck/Schmitter 1985) and quasi-corporatist regimes were detected in the regulation of pharmaceuticals (Greenwood/Ronit 1992; 1995c), consumer electronics (Cawson 1992), steel production (Grunert 1987), health and safety at the workplace (Eichener/Voelzkow 1994b; 1994c) technical standardisation (Eichener 1993) and social policy (Falkner 1998). These findings indicate that there is a plurality of sector-specific constellations rather than a pluralist macro-system of Euro-politics (see already Cawson 1992).

This insight bears important consequences with a view to the effects of European integration on national public–private interaction styles: If Europeanisation does not necessarily imply that a policy is decided according to pluralist patterns, the assumptions on feedback into the national systems must be adapted, too. It seems that the impact of Euro-politics could be much more diverse (in the sense of differentiated between policy areas) than hitherto expected.

c) A simple typology connecting two strands of literature

Needed are thus models of public–private interaction in the making of public policies that allow to differentiate between varying situations in distinct policy areas or economic sectors, like the British policy networks typology. At the same time however, the well-established differentiation between statist, pluralist and corporatist patterns which is still frequently used by scholars occupied with Euro-politics (Streeck/Schmitter 1994; 1997; 1999) should not be discarded. Therefore, I suggest a combination of the two strands of literature and incorporate a corporatist ideal type (see already Falkner 1998) as well as a statist one in the well-known issue network/policy community dichotomy. Since the elaborated catalogue of characteristics by Rhodes and Marsh is in fact quite complex and may easily result in blurred empirical types, my typology is a slimmer form of theirs. I suggest to choose only two decisive dimensions and

to treat all other characteristics mentioned by Marsh and Rhodes as empirical matters to be described in empirical case studies.²⁰

The typology proposed here thus includes four basic ideal-types of policy networks grouped along the continua 'stability of public-private interaction' and 'role of interest groups' (see Table 2 below). A statist cluster is thus a form of policy network where interests groups either do not exist at all²¹ or are not paid any attention since there is no public-private interaction (and certainly not a stable one). An issue network has interaction between state and societal actors but the interests group's role is merely consultative as the public actors decide quite independently (this form is close to the pluralist paradigm). The policy community, by contrast, is characterised by rather stable interaction patterns with private groups being incorporated in the process of decision-shaping, although without actual veto power. Only in a corporatist policy community interest groups actually come to share state authority. In this very stable form of network, a few privileged groups (co-)decide public policies with or under the control of public actors. With a view to functionally oriented writing on policy networks and European integration (e.g. Kohler-Koch 1996) it is important to mention that „network governance“ would in the understanding proposed here apply to policy communities as well as to corporatist policy communities. In both constellations, the participating public and private actors co-operate in trying to find a consensual approach whenever possible.²²

20 In practice, this necessarily happens anyway since authors are confronted with partly antagonistic findings on different dimensions of the complex typology but nevertheless have to choose one ideal-typical label for the specific policy network in the end. This is much easier and more objectively possible with a more economic typology.

21 This would then be a network of exclusively public actors (e.g. a para-state agency, a parliamentary committee and one or two ministries).

22 This fits very well the style where 'political goals are not just determined by (legislation, regulations and public administration) alone, but by way of the multi-stratified informal decision-making process between groups' (Kohler-Koch 1996: 370), where 'the state' is more an arena than an actor and where the upgrading of common interests is as common as the pursuit of particular interests. Accordingly, the EU is seen to perform process management instead of steering from above while the borderlines between the private and the public become blurred. It is perceived to bring together interested actors and promote social learning based on discourse and political entrepreneurship (Kohler-Koch 1996: 372 with further references, see also 1999: 32).

Table 1: Four simple ideal-types for the analysis of meso-level interest intermediation

	statist cluster	issue network	policy community	corporatist policy community
stability of public-private interaction	<u>none</u>	<u>low:</u> network is loose and open	<u>high:</u> network is rather closed	<u>very high:</u> always same, few and privileged interests
role of interest groups	<u>insignificant</u> lobbies don't exist or not heard	<u>consultative</u> no interest aggregation but lobbying	<u>participate</u> in process of joint decision-shaping	<u>decisive</u> co-actors in the making of binding decisions

This simple typology allows us to distinguish between four basic types of policy networks at all levels of the European multi-layer system. The following section (III.2.a) will outline in detail that such a differentiated approach matters in the analysis of potential impact from specific European networks on the national ones (see notable Table 2). When networks of the same kind operate at the Member State and EU levels, no great effects are to be expected. By contrast, an encounter of adverse types, e.g. if a statist cluster at EU level co-exists with a corporatist policy community in a Member State, or vice versa, heralds the highest degree of potential²³ destabilisation (see in more detail below).²⁴

²³ If changes actually take place in practice depends on mediating factors such as institutions and agency at the national level and should be studied empirically in much more detail than hitherto.

²⁴ If this will also bring about the greatest changes in the end has to be answered by comparative empirical studies. In recent implementation research with a focus on policies, the hypothesis was forwarded that since engrained national institutions are rather resistant to change, stalemate will result where the 'mis-fit' between European and national patterns is great and adaptative pressures are thus high (Risse/Cowles/Caporaso forthcoming: 13f.). By contrast (but still from an institutionalist perspective), one may also suspect that weak impacts which encounter engrained national institutions may not matter at all and that only a strong impact from the EU level can bring about some change in the Member States. At least with a view to public-private co-operation patterns, this might be rather more probable than the adverse assumption.

III.2. Types of impact on national interest intermediation

This section will (a) further specify the variegated influence of EU decision-patterns as already briefly outlined above. It will furthermore present two other mechanisms how European integration may effect national public–private co-operation (b and c).

a) Impact of EU decision patterns

As argued in section II, papers on the influence of Europeanisation on national interest intermediation so far used to describe one specific form of interest politics as the typical one for the EC and to deduce from that an impact on the national systems which were again assumed to show one ideal-type each. By doing so, sectoral differences on both the EU and the national level were overlooked. The mechanism by which the pattern of public–private co-operation practised at the EU level would impact on the Member States, in turn, was usually not paid much attention. At least implicitly it was assumed that the EC style would trickle down into the national systems since national actors (including groups) participate in Euro-politics in one or the other way and can transfer new ideas on ‘good practice’ or new tactics into their domestic environment.

This kind of effect on national interest politics is thus top-down and indirect. Acknowledging that EU-level public–private interaction is as variegated as at the national level, such effects stemming from EC decision patterns must be highly area-specific: an issue network at the EU level tends to trigger different reactions at the national level than e.g. a corporatist policy community. Participation in an EC network of the former type might encourage some interests to show a lobbyist behaviour also at the national level (usually, it will be those groups who are the more powerful players under market conditions), at the dispense of interest aggregation with other actors. If at the EU level a corporatist policy community exists, national social partnerships in the same field have comparatively less to fear.

Table 2: Impact of EC decision patterns on specific national policy networks

		Impact of EU-level decision patterns			
		statist cluster	issue network	policy community	corporatist policy community
on national policy net- works	statist cluster	(confirmation and potentially reinforcement)	impact towards more openness	impact towards more participation for private interests	impact towards more participation and co-decision for private interests
	issue network	impact towards less openness for private interests	(confirmation and potentially reinforcement)	impact towards more participation for private interests	impact towards more participation and co-decision for private interests
	policy community	impact towards less participation for private interests	impact towards less particip. for private interests (example 2)	(confirmation and potentially reinforcement)	impact towards more co-decision for private interests
	corporatist policy community	impact towards less co-decision for private interests	impact towards less co-decision for private interests	impact towards less participation for private interests	(confirmation and potentially reinforcement) (example 1)

This table suggests that if we consider that various ‘cultures’ of EU-level decision-making can trickle down, we must expect the recent corporatist patterns of EC social policy to bear effects quite different from those of a statist or rather pluralist field of EU activity.²⁵ To start with the left column, a statist cluster (such as e.g. in European monetary policy, see Dyson in Kohler-Koch/Eising 1999; tourism, see Greenwood 1995d: 139) will confirm or even reinforce another statist cluster at the national level (e.g., in Germany and Austria where independent central banks exist for a long time already, the role of private interests in this field will not be hampered by a similar style at the European level). If a statist cluster meets an issue network, a policy community or a corporatist policy community in a Member State, the effect will always be to the detriment of the role of private interests. A pluralist²⁶ EC issue network, in turn (such as e.g. described by Bomberg 1998 for environmental policy; for biotechnology

²⁵ As already mentioned above, the definitions for various public-private constellations in EU policy-making differ. The following examples are hence necessarily taken from case studies with differing conceptual backgrounds and even thematic focuses. I nevertheless thought that the presented evidence allowed to characterise the cases with one of my policy network ideal-types – even though the author of the particular study may not necessarily have referred to a network ideal-type or even a label such as pluralist, statist or corporatist patterns.

see Greenwood 1995a; for water supply see Maloney 1995: 155) will promote more openness for interest groups in a national statist cluster and confirm/reinforce another issue network. If a Member States features a policy community in the field, the impact will be in the direction of rather less participation for private interests. National corporatist communities, too, will rather be pushed towards less public–private co-decision. Further pursuing this logic, an EC policy community (like there seems to be in the automobile sector, McLaughlin 1995: 175) will influence statist constellations as well as issue networks in the direction of more participation of societal actors. Only the groups of a national corporatist policy communities will probably feel an impact to the detriment of their co-decisive role. Finally, a corporatist policy community (such as in EC social policy, Falkner 1998) will rather increase the chances for participation and co-decision in national statist clusters, issue networks and policy communities.

Although much more research is needed and other factors (see below) matter too, it is still encouraging to note that empirical research on Austrian EU-adaptation supports this approach. A study recently revealed that corporatist patterns in the core area of Austrian social partnership, i.e. social policy and particularly labour law (Kittel/Tálos 1999), were not significantly impinged after EU membership (Karlhofer/Tálos 1996; Tálos 1999; Falkner et al. 1999; Falkner 1999b). This fits the above hypothesis neatly since in the aftermath of the Maastricht Treaty, a corporatist policy community was established in the realm of EU social policy, too.²⁷ By contrast, environmental policy is in Austria not regulated in a ‘social partnership’ pattern but managed in a policy community without such a crucial role for labour and industry (Falkner/Müller/Eder/Hiller/Steiner/Trattnigg 1999). At the EU level, an issue network exists in the environmental field, as described in detail by Bomberg (1998). As far as a shift in the Austrian network can be discerned so far,²⁸ it is in the direction of more influence for the involved Ministries but rather less for the interest groups (notably for the

26 In the sense of the definition use here, i.e. not assuming equal influence for all groups.

27 Such as in Austria, labour law issues are predominant also in EC-level tripartite social policy-making under the Maastricht Social Agreement (incorporated in the EC-Treaty at Amsterdam) that includes labour (ETUC), employers (UNICE/CEEP) and ‘the state’ (the Commission and the Council) (for details see Falkner 1998).

28 The basic type of network was neither changed in social nor in environmental policy since EU adhesion.

environmentalists). These social and environmental policy cases in Austria appear as examples numbered 1 and 2 in the Table 2 above.

This suggests that breaking down the European policy-making patterns in meso-level constellations results in what seem more realistic assumptions on their effects in the also variegated national public–private networks. These expectations should be tested in comparative empirical studies that are based on research designs which explicitly include the meso level.²⁹ The mechanism by which Euro-patterns as outlined here could work as an impetus for change at the national level is elite learning (see also Table 3 below). Although this is a ‘soft’ form of influence, recent studies have underlined that supra-national policy networks should be assumed to matter since the EU involves national actors and thus confronts them with a potentially new style that may have advantages which were not obvious to them before and may in general contribute to a change in culture also at the national level (e.g. Kohler-Koch 1999: 19).

While potential effects on the Member States stemming from EU decision patterns were discussed by various authors already, almost no attention has so far been paid to the fact that the EU may also influence national styles more directly than this.

b) Impact from positive integration measures

During the past decades, the EU Member States were confronted with increasingly high numbers of European legislation in meanwhile basically all issue areas. It has found little scholarly attention so far that not only policies may be transmitted in that way but also public-private interaction patterns. Partly only as a side-effect of some policy goal but at times clearly on purpose, the EU quite frequently impinges directly on national interest intermediation in acts of secondary law.

Some examples from social policy will reveal that more particularly, there have been manifold efforts to encourage corporatist patterns at the national level. In some cases, derogations from common EC standards need to be negotiated or at least discussed with the social partners in the Member State concerned. The working time Directive thus allows for derogations ‘by way

²⁹ This is crucial in order not to simply confirm our limited advance knowledge on presumably ‘national’ styles.

of collective agreements or agreements concluded between the two sides of industry at the appropriate collective level' (OJ 93/L 307/18, Art. 17.3). The Directive on the posting of workers in the framework of the free provision of services (OJ 97/L 18/1, Art. 3.3) states that 'Member States may, after consulting employers and labour, in accordance with the traditions and practices of each Member State, decide' not to grant equal minimum pay to posted workers during the first month of their stay abroad.

In other cases, consultation or co-decision of interest groups is not directly prescribed as a condition for certain national actions but encouraged and facilitated. For example, the recent parental leave (OJ 98/L 14/9) and part-time work Directives (OJ 96/L 145/4) allow for one additional year of implementation delay if the EC provisions are implemented by a collective agreement instead of a law. The recent part-time rules (that actually stem from a Euro-agreement between the major interest groups of labour and employers that was incorporated in the relevant Council Directive) also provide that 'Member States, following consultations with the social partners in accordance with national law or practice, should ... review obstacles ... which may limit the opportunities for part-time work and ... eliminate them' (clause 5).³⁰ The EC standards do furthermore 'not prejudice the right of the social partners to conclude, at the appropriate level ... agreements adapting and/or complementing the provisions of this Agreement in a manner which will take account of the specific needs of the social partners concerned' (clause 6.3). Finally, the provisions on implementation provide that 'Member States and/or social partners may maintain or introduce more favourable provisions...' (clause 6.1 of part-time Agreement; very similar passages are in the parental leave Directive and Agreement). Several recent EC social Directives provide that in the national reports to the Commission on the practical implementation of the Directive (to be submitted in this case every five years), the viewpoints 'of the two sides of industry' must be 'indicated' (e.g. Art. 17.4 Directive on the protection of young people at work, OJ 94/L 216/12).³¹

In environmental policy, too, a few recent Directives could impact on national public-private interaction since they encourage more open structures vis-à-vis private groups. 'The plurality

³⁰ In the following sub-paragraph, the national social partners are directly addressed and asked to review such obstacles 'within their sphere of competence and through the procedures set out in collective agreements'.

³¹ This is also common practice in the health and safety at the workplace field, e.g. regulation of chemical agents at work.

of actors associated with the different instruments will result in new complexity in territorial and public–private terms, counter-acting old hierarchical chains of command.’ (Lenschow 1999: 9) However, such patterns are only in single Directives while others might impact in the adverse direction, so that it is ‘doubtful whether EC governance in the field of environmental policy is sufficiently comprehensive, coherent and stable to trigger a decisive and uniform response’ (ibid.: 17). This points to the fact that potential ‘positive integration effects’ as outlined in this sub-section may well be contradictory. Only if the aggregate impetus from the various EC Directives in a specific policy area exceeds ‘zero’ can such influence hence be expected produce adaptational pressure in a national policy network.

c) Impact from competence transfers

The third potential impact of European integration on the Member States stems from the shift of manifold competences to the EU level and potentially also from the specific EC options in that field (including non-decisions while the national level can de facto no longer act). Since a large number of competences which were formerly with national policy networks have been transferred to the European level, the number of issue areas at the disposal for corporatist exchange between the state and national interest groups has decreased. Even where ‘only’ negative integration (Scharpf 1996) prevails, there may be an effect on national interest politics since the neo-liberal options chosen at the EU level may pose restraints since national networks in the relevant area are restricted in their policy choices. De facto, this affects the opportunity structure for national actors (see also Cowles/Risse forthcoming: 5), often times at the dispense of unions or consumer groups with an interest in state interventions that are no longer legal under EC law. As Streeck and Schmitter pointed out, mutual recognition in the Internal Market and the resulting inter-regime competition tend to devalue the power resources and political strength of organised labour (1991: 203).

This suggests that impact of competence transfers would nowadays impede the old-style national macro-corporatism in EU Member States anyway, i.e. even if sectoral differentiation had not already changed the national patterns. At the macro level, Streeck and Schmitter were thus without any doubt right in pointing out that ‘corporatism as a national-level accord between encompassingly organized socio-economic classes and the state, by which an entire economy is comprehensively governed, would seem to be a matter of the past’, not in the least place due to European integration (1994: 203f.). However, this correct diagnosis is only part

of the story about effects of Europeanisation on national interest intermediation since at least at the meso level, the effects stemming from EC decision patterns and positive integration measures may be countervailing impulses.

It is furthermore crucial to note that the impact from EC policy options on national interest politics is mediated by national structures and actors, as the example of the Maastricht convergence criteria for membership in the EMU will demonstrate. They allowed several governments to reform their national budgets by cutting public spending in a speed and form that would otherwise not have been acceptable to both employer and labour associations, e.g. in Austria (Unger 1999; Tálos/Falkner 1996) and in Italy (Sbragia forthcoming). Euro-policies may thus increase chances for governments to 'cut slack' and gain leverage vis-à-vis their major private players. At the same time, given EC policy options can be processed at the national level in various forms. Public-private cooperation was thus recently reinforced via issue-specific and fixed-term tripartite pacts in several Member States (usually labelled 'social pacts', e.g. Fajertag/Pochet 1997). This indicates that mitigation in the national networks of EU impetuses indeed plays a major role in the field of interest intermediation.³²

Last, but not least, it should also be mentioned that from the Member State perspective, influencing EU level decisions is much easier if a 'concerted approach' of all national actors is achieved. In many cases, 'the „politics of uncertainty“ will lead national governments and national interest groups to try to co-ordinate their Euro-strategies. In that sense, Euro-policy-making may bring them closer together' (Richardson 1996: 31). This can be considered as another effect of the pooling of competences in the EU.

In a nutshell, Table 3 summarises all three different forms of EU-level impact on national policy networks:

³² Second, this reveals that corporatist patterns tend to be located at a lower structural level and to fulfil more narrow functions than formerly. Notably, they often serve for labour law and pay adaptations to EMU (Falkner 1999a) rather than being a macro-level pattern for steering the economy like during the 1970s.

Table 3: The three types of EU impact on national interest intermediation

influence via	realm of potential effects	form of impact	transmission mechanism³³
<u>EC decision patterns</u>	area specific	indirect	learning
<u>positive integration measures</u>	issue specific	direct	imposition
<u>competence transfers</u>	dispersed	indirect	exclusion of options

IV. Conclusions: Converging towards moderate diversity?

This paper advocates including the meso level of varying policy networks in the analysis of interest intermediation at the European and the national level as well as of their interaction (see Table 1). Only such a differentiated approach will result in realistic assumptions concerning the impact on national policy networks of EC patterns of public-private interaction (and some preliminary results of empirical research presented above confirm this; see Table 2). Clearly, much more research is needed on both the EU's and the national policy networks, in particular systematically comparative work.

The second main argument of this paper is that there is more than one type of EU impact on national interest intermediation. Most frequently discussed so far were EC decision patterns that might trickle down. Hardly paid attention to as relevant influences were, by contrast, the direct impact of interest intermediation patterns imposed on the Member States in EC

³³ On transmission of modes of governance see also Kohler-Koch (1999: 19) who distinguished between imposition, involvement and supply.

Directives and effects of the transfer of various competences to the EU level (meaning that the national policy networks have lost their grip on them and, at the same time, bargaining chips in national cross-sectoral package deals). The three mechanisms (summarised in Table 3 above) all have to be taken into consideration when it comes to assessing the effect of Europeanisation on national interest intermediation. At times, they may counteract each other.

What are, then, preliminary hypotheses on future trends that can be derived from the analysis presented in this paper? A first one is that inter-sectoral diversity in private–public interaction during the policy process will persist. As outlined above, both the national and the European layers of the multi-level system are in fact characterised by highly divergent styles of interest intermediation at the meso level. Since the EC is a very strongly sectoralised system, even formerly rather unitary states in terms of public–private interaction could be expected to rather increase inter-sectoral differences. Since policy networks were recently described as relevant meso-level constellations in the European states anyway, this will only reinforce an already existing trend towards sectoral differentiation in national states.

At the same time, the inter-systemic diversity of policy networks might in the future be a more moderate one: Since the EC patterns will influence all national systems in the same direction, the effect over time should be some convergence towards the EC model. Clearly, it is crucial to note that the effects on the national systems are usually mediated by national actors and structures, plus the receptiveness of national networks differs according to factors such as embeddedness of pre-existing patterns, institutional ‘fit’ of the Euro-patterns and administrative cultures (Lenschow 1999; Risse/Cowles/Caporaso forthcoming; Knill/Lenschow 1998). Therefore, no uniform interest intermediation patterns for a specific policy area stand to be expected throughout the European multi-level system, even in the medium run. Divergence will persist, but probably in a more moderated form than before the EU gained at least potential impact on national policy networks. In other words, there is a trend towards cross-sectorally divergent styles of public–private interaction that will nevertheless bring about rather more convergence than before between the geographic layers and Member States of the European multi-level system. We could thus be heading ‘towards more uniform pluriformism’.³⁴

³⁴ Or, as Cowles and Risse resume with a view to policy adaptation, towards convergence in ‘national colours’ (Cowles/Risse forthcoming).

Without doubt, the analysis of Europeanisation and national interest politics as outlined here on the basis of four policy network ideal-types and three potential feedback mechanisms represents a research programme to be realised in future comparative empirical studies rather than final results. However, a look at the differing effects of Europeanisation on various national policy networks (Table 2) and on the great variety of potential effects (Table 3) already suggests that a global approach assuming only one EU ideal-type and deriving one similar impetus exerted via just one mechanism for all national policy networks is unrealistic.

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