

**European Integration as Organising  
- Alternative Approaches to the Study of European Politics**

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## **Introduction**

The traditional starting point in studies on European integration is to use specific theories. Depending on your research question you can choose between a state-centred approach, the intergovernmental theory, a supranational approach or an approach that focus on several levels of analysis, i.e. a multi-level governance approach. In this paper we argue, however, that these three analytical and theoretical approaches on European integration have often functioned as academic straitjackets and that they have obscured other fruitful approaches on how to analyse European integration. Indeed, how we conceptualise and define research issues is often determined by which academic 'domicile' we belong to and how issues are presented by media, politicians and researchers. During recent years the debate on the 'home discipline' for EU studies (Haas 1998; Rosamund 2000) has highlighted the fact that different sub disciplines in political science, especially international relations and comparative politics, focus on different aspects of the EU and on European integration. Students of the EU and European integration seem to agree that the complex and multifaceted development of the European Union requires analysis from both a political system and decision-making approaches, as well as from a regime and other IR-oriented approaches.

We believe that this development of a wider research agenda that takes into account the complexity of the political life and processes of the EU and European integration is positive. However, we also believe that we need to broaden our horizon even further and that we should use theoretical and analytical approaches outside the discipline of political science. In this paper we discuss how theories of organising and organisations can help us to focus on new aspects of European integration that the traditional theories of European integration have not covered.

The first part of the paper presents our understanding of the concepts of organisations and organising. The presentation is not comprehensive but focuses on parts of the organisational literature that we find most useful and interesting in the study on the EU and European integration, especially a sociological institutionalist perspective on organisations.

The second part presents empirical cases on how an organisational approach has enriched our empirical studies on the European defence industry and the emerging European co-operation on armaments. The policy area of armaments is complex since it activates political, bureaucratic and industrial actors. It is also an issue that concerns sensitive security policies, both in the domestic context and within the EU and the emerging EU defence policy. Armaments are also about companies,

markets and the community pillar of the EU. Hence, we are dealing with a policy area that is characterised by multiple actors and organising activities, both domestically as well as at the European level. One conclusion that we draw from studies within this policy area is therefore that it is complex! However, we wanted to move beyond that obvious conclusion and to study in what ways this policy area is complex. What are the mechanisms behind the integration process — the organising process — within this policy area? We rather soon realised that the traditional tools of analysing European integration only gave us bits and pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. We wanted to have a more comprehensive picture of the empirical complexities without losing analytical clarity and that is why we turned to organisational analysis.

In the third and last section of the paper we draw theoretical and empirical conclusions of how an organisational perspective can help us to better understand the complexity of the EU and European integration.

### **Organisations and organising**

Paradoxically, the literature on the EU and European integration seldom focuses on the organisations and processes of organising, although organisations and organising lie at the very heart of the European integration process.<sup>1</sup> This is, in our view, unfortunate since the literature on organisations and how organisations are institutionalised offers a wide and rich array of analysis of organisational complexity and multifaceted policy processes. Indeed, we prefer to talk about European integration as a process of organising. The main reason for this is that the concept of organising is broader than the concept of integration. Integration has traditionally been defined in terms of a process that leads to a new form of political community and centre (Haas 1958/68; Lindberg 1963). This means that students of the EU and European integration are focused on the establishment of formal organisations and on a government structure. We would, however, argue that the lack of formal organisations, hierarchical relations and formal transfer of sovereignty within a policy area cannot automatically be interpreted as a weak process of institutionalisation (Brunsson 1999).

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<sup>1</sup> There is some confusion over the concepts of ‘organisations and institutions in the literature on EU and the European integration process. The word “institutions” is used mainly to describe empirically the various EU bodies or organisations. The EU is also analysed from a new institutionalist perspective (Bulmer 1994; 1998). A rationalist institutional approach is discussed by Schneider and Aspinwall (2001).

The concept of organising, and the literature on how organisations are institutionalised, cover both a government structure (formal organisations) and a governance structure (informal organisations). Our understanding of organisations is that they are defined as “groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives” (North 1990:5; Ahrne & Hedström 1999). An organisation thus consists of some form of structured interaction and relationship between actors. This means that organisations are conceptualised in terms of processes — organising — rather than in terms of static entities. It also means that organising is not dependent on the formal structure. As Brunsson puts it, “formal organizations do not always work in as organized a way as they say they do or as others describe them as doing, while markets are often much more organized than common beliefs about markets would suggest” (1999:120). Not all organisations are formal organisations that are backed by a hierarchical and legislative form of authorisation and legitimisation; some are looser structures based on networks and voluntary agreements. Thus, according to the informal way of conceptualising an organisation, there are many ways of organising other than those that entail traditional forms of authority and governance. The key argument in this line of thinking about organisations is that there exist organisational activities that lie outside traditional formal organisations, and that these informal organisations create rules that are followed (Brunsson & Jacobsson 2000).

In practice, the separation between formal and informal organisation is problematic if we expect distinct, empirically observable differences between them. This is always a problem with analytical categorisations. Making such a distinction can, however, be a useful analytical categorisation to show that organisations can take many forms. This is especially important when analysing and studying the European integration process, which is characterised by multiple forms of organisational activity (Héritier 1999; Wallace & Wallace 2000). A broad organisational concept that defines organisations in terms of structured interaction and relationships between actors will therefore capture both formal and informal organisations. Indeed, some organisations in the European integration process are treaty-based and have a supranational and rather clear authority structure. An obvious example of a European organisation is the European Union, which, in turn, consists of multiple organisations: the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, etc. These supranational and intergovernmental organisations are formal organisations, even though they also exhibit informal characteristics. Informal organisations are based on soft law agreements that demonstrate a loose organisational set up. The more informal way of organising can be characterised as governance without a political centre

and hierarchy (Caporaso 1996; Christiansen 1997: 65, see also Rhodes 1997; Kohler-Koch 1997).<sup>2</sup> A broad conceptualisation of organisations is also important to study processes of organising and organisational dynamics. The formal conceptualisation defines organisations as closed entities and as conditions whereas the informal conceptualisation does not draw any clear boundaries between the organisation and its environment. The latter also recognises that organisations are involved in constant processes of organising, internally as well as externally. These processes of organising and change do not take place in an ideational vacuum. Organisations do not float freely but take part in various organisational fields and networks.

A key argument in the institutional analysis of organisations is that they are influenced by “widely held norms and ideas about the kind of organisational forms that are natural, correct or desirable” (Brunsson 1998:260). Organisations also influence the norms, ideas and rules of the external environment (Ahrne & Hedström 1999; Ahrne 1994). How organisations come into existence “and how they evolve are fundamentally influenced by the institutional framework. In turn they influence how the institutional framework evolves” (North 1990:5). There is thus a mutual reinforcement between organisations and institutions. What, then, are institutions?

According to the neo-institutionalist turn in political science during the last decade, institutions are certain social phenomena that can create stable patterns of collective and individual behaviour (Premfors 2001; see also Peters 1999). Rules, procedures and certain structures can constrain and/or facilitate actors’ behaviour, but they can also form actors’ preferences and interests. There is thus a wide array of social phenomena that can be called institutions, and they can have different impacts on collective and individual behaviour. In the sociological institutionalism approach, institutions take on a rule-like status in social thought and action (Meyer and Rowan 1977/91; March & Olsen 1989; DiMaggio & Powell 1991). Other approaches such as rational-choice institutionalism and historical institutionalism, do not require a taken-for-granted status in order to define

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of governance is developed and discussed in both international relations and comparative politics (Rosenau & Czempiel 1992; Rosenau 1992; Rhodes 1997; Pierre 2000). The overall discussion in these subdisciplines concerns how “authoritative allocation takes place without or outside government” (Eising & Kohler-Koch 1999:3-4). The definitions of governance vary. Rhodes argues that governance is synonymous with a new process of governing (1997). Governance can also entail different modes of governing patterns (Eising and Kohler-Koch 1999). The notion of governing without governments is one of the fundamental starting points in the field of international relations and in the study of international regimes (Ruggie 1975; Krasner 1983).

something as an institution (Shepsle 1989; North 1990; Thelen & Steinmo 1992). In the political world there are very few institutions that can be regarded as taken for granted in the sense that they are not contested. However, there are some rules that are less contested than others, and these, therefore, to a large extent, influence individual and collective behaviour. How these rules become more or less taken for granted is a process and it can vary over time. We should therefore search for processes of institutionalisation instead of trying to identify fixed static institutions.

### **Empirical cases**

The first two cases are about Europeanisation and domestic change. The third and fourth cases concern the European Commission and other actors in the European organising process.

#### ***The case of the Europeanisation of defence industrial policy and its consequences for Swedish arms supply***<sup>3</sup>

The Europeanisation of defence industrial policy began in the 1990s. Changes in politics, economy, and technology, have resulted in the development of new regulatory frameworks, both on national levels and on the European level. The creation of a European defence industry market that started in the 1990s is part of the development of a European institutional framework in the defence area. The process is part of the Europeanisation of defence industrial policy in the sense that it was made possible by changes in national defence industrial policy, which resulted in changes in the national regulatory frameworks. These changes might have several consequences for the European states. In practical terms, the defence industry has been restructured. The creation of a defence industry market has taken place parallel to the development of European co-operation on armaments that will be discussed below. The European co-operation on armaments is an important driving force behind the re-regulation of the defence industry and the creation of a defence industry market. Presently, at the beginning of the 21st Century, the emerging European defence industrial market is dominated by a few big companies with a number of cross-ownerships. Only ten years ago the picture was

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<sup>3</sup> This section is based on the work that will result in a Ph.D. thesis with the working title *Europeanisation of defence industrial policy – consequences for Swedish arms supply and the Swedish Defence Material Administration*. Some of the results presented have been published in Britz 2000 and Britz and Eriksson 2000.



different: there were a greater number of companies, mainly state-owned and nationally located (Britz 2000, Britz and Eriksson 2000).

The Europeanisation process has been apparent in Sweden. Sweden has long pursued a policy of neutrality and non-alignment. Its policy of national independence and high self-sufficiency was formulated during World War II and strengthened during the Cold War. One way of solving the dilemma of how to sustain political independence and high self-sufficiency in equipment, while at the same time avoiding financial and technical constraints, would be to increase military spending, but in the 1990s this solution was not politically acceptable. Traditionally, most conventional weapons and ammunitions were produced in Sweden. In the political guidelines of 1991 there was a shift in the military doctrine. The Swedish Government stated that the national military and industrial base must be reduced and become more specialised in order to stay competitive (Hagelin 1992:186). In a report from 1990 the Supreme Commander of the Swedish Armed Forces stressed the importance of maintaining a Swedish capacity to produce ammunition, electronics, torpedoes, and technology that was protected abroad for security reasons. Since then the Swedish defence industry has been restructured, and now, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Sweden's national defence industry — since Saab bought Celsius in 2000 - mainly consists of five companies, partially or completely foreign-owned, in addition to a small number high tech companies co-owned by Ericsson and Saab. The importance of other high tech companies, which by tradition have not been seen as defence industry, has increased (Britz 2000).<sup>4</sup>

The creation of a European institutional framework for defence has taken place at the same time as the national policies have changed, and the development has had consequences for the Swedish arms supply and the government authority in charge of procurement of arms, the Swedish Defence Material Administration (FMV). Arms supply is an important part of defence industrial policy and when studying the Europeanisation of

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<sup>4</sup> British Alvis became the first foreign company to buy a Swedish defence industry company when it purchased Hägglunds Vehicle in 1997. In 1999 Kockums became a subsidiary of the German company HDW (Babcock Borsig AG), and in 2000 Bofors Weapon Systems was purchased by the US United Defence and became Bofors Defence. Saab was partially purchased by British Aerospace (now British Aerospace Systems) in 1997 and in 2000 Saab purchased Celsius, creating a national champion. This means that there are only five major defence companies in Sweden at the beginning of 2001, Saab, Hägglunds Vehicle, Kockums, Bofors Defence, and Volvo Aero Corporation (subsidiary of Volvo). In addition there are some smaller companies, mainly subsidiaries to the LM Ericsson Group or co-owned by the LM Ericsson Group and Saab: e.g. Ericsson Microwave Systems, Ericsson Saab Avionics, and Saab Ericsson Space. This is a quite different picture from that of the Swedish defence industry companies in the beginning of the 1990s.

defence industrial policy in Sweden, FMV becomes interesting in several ways. It is a government authority that co-operates closely both with other state interests (the MoD, the Swedish Armed Forces, The Swedish Defence Research Establishment, foreign authorities, etc.) and with non-state interests (Swedish and foreign defence industry companies and their representatives) within the policy area. Given the development of defence industrial policy and the defence industrial structure, FMV faces demands from several directions to change its activities. The diminishing defence budget affects the authority both directly and indirectly. The demand, in 1998, that FMV should find savings in its budget and the reorganisation of the authority that was a result of that demand, changed FMV's requirements, a direct effect of the diminished defence budget. The restructuring of the defence industry and the concentration of national production in some areas had a more indirect effect on the authority. The procurement process has to change both because of changed rules due to the EU membership, and because of the restructuring of the defence industry. What formerly could be bought in Sweden might now have to be bought abroad or in co-operation with other states. Thus, examining what consequences the Europeanisation of defence industrial policy has for Swedish arms supply can afford insights of value for the study of European politics and processes of Europeanisation. The question is how.

European integration theories might seem as a good choice when the process described above is to be analysed. One might expect that an intergovernmental approach to the analysis of the Europeanisation of defence industrial policy and its consequences for Swedish arms supply would be fruitful because it would put the emphasis on the actions taken by the member states, which have been crucial for this development. The approach still poses some problems, however. Hoffmann (1966; see also Cram 1996) makes a distinction between high politics and low politics. The defence industrial policy area consists of both high politics (security) and low politics (economics), which makes an intergovernmental analysis of this policy area according to his divisions difficult. With respect to the developments of the 1990s, Moravcsik's assumptions seem relevant since the governments of member states have been very important to the development of the policy area (Moravcsik 1995, 1991). On the other hand, there are other difficulties with his assumptions. It could be argued that while the member states push the development forward, they do so in interplay with non-governmental actors such as the defence industry companies. In some cases it could even be argued that the development of the defence industry came first while the initiatives of the member states came after. In effect, the actions of defence industry companies have

resulted in an increased political integration when member states try to catch up with the company development and retake the initiative.<sup>5</sup>

A neo-functional analysis of the Europeanisation of defence industrial policy and of its consequences for Swedish defence equipment supply, would emphasise the different collaborative efforts of defence industry companies and the efforts of the European Commissions to acquire a role in this policy area. Yet even though these actors are important for the development of the policy area (Mörth 1998, Britz and Eriksson 2000, Britz 2000), it can be argued that such an analysis would be insufficient because defence equipment is not part of the common market according to article 296 of the Consolidated Treaty on the European Community, which means that it is not possible to disregard the actions of the member states.

Hence, in order to capture the process in a way that is interesting theoretically as well as empirically, a broader view both on actors and on the activities these are involved in is necessary. According to the scholars of organisational theory, the external environment influences the actions of an organisation through formal and informal rules, norms, and ideas. The emerging European institutional framework on defence issues does not only affect the organisations and the organising of politics on a European level but also on the national level. European armaments' co-operation is an important part of this development, and an example of the need for a broader view. As is also the creation of a European defence industry market, whose shape is decided by the defence industrial policy that the member states pursue. Changes in the formal and informal rules, norms, and ideas of this policy area make the changes in the defence industry described above possible.

Since defence industries are not part of the common market, defence industrial policy is to be considered as an area of intergovernmental co-operation. However, this does not hinder other actors than states such as defence industry companies and the European commission, from actively participating in the development of the policy area. It could be argued that a new policy area is being created, a policy area that is new in content rather than in form. Within this new policy area different kinds of state actors as well as non-state actors (mainly defence industrial companies) are involved. A policy area that formerly has been mainly national now becomes transnational in character. This leads us on to another characteristic organisational scholars point to: that contacts among different actors (organisations) within the institution are of great importance, these

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<sup>5</sup> This especially seems to be the case for France, which consciously has tried to take back the initiative from the defence industry companies (Britz and Eriksson 2000).

contacts are what constitute the institution. Which actors that are involved in this process, their activities, and what kind of activities the actors are involved in need to be studied. From the description above at least one thing is clear, and that is that the number of contacts, between defence industry companies from different states, but also between states, and between states and foreign companies have increased. The rules about what these contacts look like and about co-operation and competition are important for the development of the institution, and the rules about this have changed in Europe, both on a European level and on national levels. Thus, a knowledge of other actors within the same institution and knowledge of who counts to that institution is important.

In the organisational theory literature, one way of capturing the actors and their activities is presented by the actor network theory, presented by among others Czarniawska (1999), Latour (1998), and Law and Callon (1992). Czarniawska and Latour see the actors as part of an actor network. The actor network is developed into a greater unit, which could then be seen as one single actor. Within the actor network it is important to maintain the contacts among the actors in order to keep the actors (the actor network) in the picture. This view of an actor network differs from that of network theory in that it questions the different actors' identity. Studying the creation of an actor network means that the actors themselves and how they build themselves as actors through interaction with others is what is under scrutiny (Czarinska 1999).

Actor network theory might be of help when international co-operation in the defence industrial area is studied. In general, there has been increased importance of international co-operation, both on a government level and on an industrial level. This development is especially interesting as one of the most concrete results of the development of the policy area. The defence industries have to collaborate in order to produce what the states demand, at part of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2100s. (Britz and Eriksson 2000, Britz 2001). Thus, on a transnational level, both the activities of government authorities and the activities of companies influence what the policy area will look like in the future and here the creation of actors and their identities are of importance.

It is not only the business relationships of the companies and the rules created that influence what the policy area will look like in the future, companies also make contact with each other and with different national and supranational interests to influence the policy process itself and the results of that process (Mörth 2002b). The defence industry companies are active in the arms supply process. Partially because as suppliers of products with special demands, the defence companies need close co-operation with

the state to be able to sell what it produces. In addition, Jacobsson (1994) argues that a company in a political environment has to answer to different kinds of demands than it would if it would just act in an economic environment. If a company is to influence the political environment in a successful way it needs to have special knowledge of the ongoing process within the policy area. It is important for these companies to know what changes that take place, who acts, and where and when the company should act. A network that is connected to the public sphere is important, which increases the need for close co-operation between the government authorities and the defence industry.

Closer contacts between actors should facilitate the diffusion of ideas. This can be assumed to be the case not only for companies, but also for state actors. The ideas are an important part of the institutional framework, and according to the scholars on organisational theory, there is an exchange between the institutional framework and the development of organising processes and organisations. The ideas could be seen as circulating in global channels of communication, and they are spread through a process that is called translation or editing. Ideas are spread, but at the same time they are adjusted to the local context in which they will be used. The new context decides how ideas are interpreted and developed (Sahlin-Andersson 1996, Czarniawska and Sköldbberg 1998, Law and Callon 1992). With regard to defence industrial policy and arms supply, these important ideas concern *what arms* should be produced (what kind of arms are necessary in the present security situation?), *where* (is there a need for national production or can the arms be bought elsewhere?), *how* (how big systems are ordered?), and *by whom* (national production or international co-operation?). From the account above it is clear that the ideas about this have been under re-consideration since the end of the cold war. The importance of ideas and ideational changes for the development of this policy area would not have been captured using only the traditional European integration theories.

### ***The case of Europeanisation and domestic change in three European countries<sup>6</sup>***

In a study on how European agreements on armaments affect domestic politics it was argued that Europe does not 'hit' home (Green –Cowles et al 2001). In a comparative analysis of the Swedish, French and British governments it was shown that the governments of these three countries

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<sup>6</sup> Parts of the study will be published in Mörth 2002a.

participated in the rule-making activities at the European level and created room for domestic editing and interpretation so that the agreement fitted into the specific domestic political conditions.

In line with the general Swedish intergovernmental policy towards the EU the government in Stockholm has toned down every supranational aspect of the emerging European agreements on armaments. It has instead welcomed a more intergovernmental and loose co-operative structure. Furthermore, the agreements are not interpreted by the Swedish government as a problem in connection to its close transatlantic relationship on armaments. The British government has also welcomed the emerging European co-operation set up on armaments since it is argued that it fits well into the British market policy on armaments and the fact that it is in line with a strong transatlantic relationship (Mörth 2002a, see also Mörth 2000b). This stands in contrast to the French government which argues that the European agreements leave some room for manoeuvre for the state towards the defence industry market. It has also emphasised that the European agreements are in line with French security policy since these agreements are about a strong European capacity and identity on armaments (*ibid*).

The study illustrates that it is often unclear what kind of changes that are regarded as necessary in order to adjust to the EU. EU policies and legalisations do not travel as ready-made packages. This is even more so in cases of 'horizontal' Europeanisation, i.e. framework directives and soft law that seem to have increased in importance in the EU during recent years. European authority is not exclusively based on hierarchical supranational decision-making and upon coercive rules within the community pillar. It can also consist of less binding rules and other loose intergovernmental agreements.

The close interlinkage between the two processes \_ domestic and European \_ showed that it is difficult to assess the contribution of a single independent EU variable to the process of domestic policy change. The rules agreed in the case of armaments were rather unclear which makes it even more difficult to establish a causal effect. The study discussed how it is misleading to think that we can always establish the EU's impact on the domestic political process. It could even be argued that the processes at the European and domestic levels are mutually constitutive and that they cannot be studied as separate processes. States do not exist outside the EU. The case of armaments illustrates that the states are part of the process at the EU and European level. This does not mean that there were no adaptational pressures for domestic change. The process towards

institutional isomorphism consisted of socialisation and imitation rather than of coercion.

An important methodological question is of course how we can identify in what ways the domestic and European levels are interlinked with each other. We need to analyse the rule making activities at the EU and European level as well as the domestic policy process. We therefore turn to the European level and how the issue of armaments has been handled by the European Commission and other actors in the European organising process.

### *The case of the European Commission*<sup>7</sup>

Conflicts in the EU, especially within the European Commission, are often about how issues should be framed, i.e. conceptualised and defined. Indeed, framing plays an important part in the policy-making process of the European Union since the building of a common conceptual framework is an essential component in the governance of the EU (Jachtenfuchs 2000, see also Schön & Rein, 1994). Conflicts over different frames occur within an institutional and legal context. This is especially true for the European Commission in which different Directorates-General (DGs) sponsor different ways of conceptualising issues. This is often explained by referring to competing interests within the Commission (Peters 1994; Majone 1997; Cram 1997; Haaland-Matlary 1997). Thus, the European Commission is often treated as a coherent and strategic actor. It is assumed that the Commission knows what it wants, namely to expand its powers.

However, frame competition is something more than just competing interests within the Commission. Framing issues, both legally and politically, is a way of organising the work within the Commission. This organisational activity can be referred to as "sense making" (March, 1997). Thus, by analysing frame competition in the Commission from a multi-organisational perspective we can identify an important mechanism behind the cohesion process in the Commission (i.e., generating organised action). Furthermore, an underlying factor behind the internal heterogeneity can be found in the Commission's relationship with the external environment. The notion of the organisation as an open system emphasises the interdependence of the organisation and its environment (Scott, 1998). An organisation cannot be analysed as a self-contained entity. Thus, in order to understand the internal organisational activity we must analyse the organisation's relationship with its environment. The basic idea in this line

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<sup>7</sup> The study is partly published in Mörth 2000a.

of thinking is that the organised structure of identities and rules is not static but changes in response to external and internal pressures (March, 1994).

The external environment is seldom homogeneous. One way of dealing with inconsistent demands is to build on the inconsistencies in the organisation. In this way, organisations structurally reflect socially constructed reality (Meyer & Rowan, 1991, see also Berger & Luckman, 1966). This is the case with the Commission. It has several formal roles and is organised according to various organisational principles, some of which focus on purpose or function, while others focus on national or geographic concerns. In the organisational literature it is argued that a common way of dealing with inconsistent demands is to differentiate between the informal and the formal organisation. This lack of congruence between the formal and vertical structure of an organisation and its work activities is called decoupling (Brunsson, 1989; Weick, 1969). The basic notion in this theory is that an organisation must reflect various myths of its institutional environment (the pillar structure) and retain political support, but it must also attend to practical activity (cross-pillar issues). The dilemma is thus to maintain political support and at the same time attend to issues that cross the pillar structure.

A recent example of a controversial framing activity within the European Commission is the issue of the restructuring of the European defence industry and the creation of a European armaments market. At present, Article 296 in the Treaty of Amsterdam (article 233 in the Treaty of Rome) excludes defence equipment from the internal market. However, because of the process of national deregulation a reinterpretation or even the abolition of Article 296 is not only an economic and a commercial process, it also concerns national security interests and the common foreign and security policy (CFSP). Consequently, the question of how to frame this issue arouses political controversy. To which pillar does the defence industry belong – to the first pillar (the Community pillar) or to the second pillar (CFSP)? Among other things, these pillars are subject to different decision-making procedures and are handled by different DGs. This becomes, then, a "cross-pillar" issue that does not fit into the vertical and functional structure of the Commission and the pillar structure. To try to frame a cross-pillar issue can thus be controversial since it can put into question the organisational set-up (the pillar structure) within the European Union.

The empirical findings showed that the organisational set-up within the Commission generates frame competition. The relatively autonomous DGs guard "their" policy areas. Furthermore, the empirical analysis also showed that framing is not a static activity. The process of frame competition not only promotes various interests in the Commission, but also results in



*reframing*. Frame competition is part of the communication and interactions within the multiorganisation. The study showed that the delicacy of the cross-pillar issue at hand made informal contacts necessary. The dual-character of the issue of armaments also entailed that officials from DGs from the first and second pillars often met in various meetings with other organisations, such as within the WEU and NATO. Thus, the DGs participation in various external meetings put pressure on the internal organising process towards a more constructive working climate.

The conflict between a market and a defence frame was not resolved. This conclusion squares well with the findings in parts of the organisational literature that emphasise how organisations reduce conflicts rather than resolve tensions between various parts of an organisation (March, 1994). The trick is to maintain some ambiguity while at the same time being able to move forward in the policy-making process (Sahlin-Andersson, 1998). The sense-making process, in which various frames are presented, functions as an important component in generating cohesion within the Commission. Various parts of the Commission have achieved some common understanding of how to proceed in the policy-making process, while at the same time maintaining the basic lack of clarity concerning how these two frames could be reconciled with each other. This means that the Commission can continue to take initiatives in this politically sensitive policy-making process. Moreover, there is no such thing as *the* Commission, it only exists as a coherent unit in a legal sense. The actorness of the Commission must constantly be recreated.

As already mentioned, the dual way of framing and handling the defence industry and equipment issue does not fit into the formal and vertical structure of the Commission and the pillar structure of the European Union. The work within the Commission suggests that we are dealing with an informal horizontal and sectoral network within the organisation. We can identify a discrepancy between the pillar structure in terms of which the Commission is organised and the actual day-to-day work activities. There are two parallel processes \_ one formal and another informal \_ in dealing with armaments issue. In order to maintain ceremonial conformity, the Commission buffers its formal structures from the actual work activities, i.e. decoupling. In this way the Commission can retain political support and at the same time attend to issues that cross the pillar structure.

In the long run, however, a market and a defence frame \_ a "pillar one-and-a-half-perspective" \_ challenges the pillar structure. So far, the Commission has tried to find a common position that lies within the existing pillar structure. How the Commission will proceed in this matter is of course dependent on the external environment, especially the political

mood and reactions from the member governments. A general conclusion is that the Commission is flexible and creative in forming a policy that crosses the pillar structure. The intense activity from the Commission in the defence equipment and industry issue also suggests that the Commission not only is given political room for manoeuvre but also creates such political room (Kingdon 1984).

### *The case of European co-operation on armaments*<sup>8</sup>

The discussion on how to organise a European co-operation on armaments has not only been an important issue within the Member-States and within the Commission. In the wake of the end of the Cold War, the Kosovo War, the Amsterdam Treaty, the so-called Cologne process in the EU, and the Laeken summit the question of Europe's defence industrial capacity is high on the European political agenda. Indeed, without a strong European defence industry and co-operation on defence equipment, a European defence capacity and policy will have no substance. Recent years of defence industrial restructuring and consolidation at the European level, combined with various intergovernmental initiatives, have shown that the issue of armaments is the subject of a vigorous European co-operation (Mörth 2002b).

As the case of the European Commission showed, the issue of armaments 'belongs' to different European projects – the political economy project, developed through the EC, and the defence and security project, organised through NATO and the WEU and recently through the EU. Even though the organisations emphasise how the issue of armaments require co-operation between the market-oriented organisation of the European Union (Community pillar) and the defence-oriented organisations of the EU (the second pillar), the Western European Union (the WEU) and its subsidiary organs WEAG / WEAO (and NATO), the organisations also compete with each other.

The recent development of a European co-operation on armaments suggests that the boundaries between the two organisational fields are blurred and that new types of co-operative arrangements on the issue of defence equipment have emerged. Organisations are not given entities. They are involved in a constant process of organising, internally as well as externally. Their identities and functions change. This is especially true of the European security architecture after the end of the Cold War. The general picture of the relationship between the EU, the WEU and NATO is

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<sup>8</sup> The case is based on Mörth 2002b

that of unclear competencies and authority relations. This lack of clarity creates frictions among the organisations and goes back to fundamental issues in European politics, for instance the relationship between Europe and the U.S. The end of the Cold War has created a turbulent situation in which rivalry and dependence among the organisations are more evident than ever. Thus, the organisations take part in a conciliation process (Aggarwal 1998). Bringing market and defence issues closer to each other is not an easy process; it challenges the traditional separation between 'low' and 'high' politics and how policy issues within these spheres are conceptualised, regulated and politically handled. This process is also about identities in the sense that organisations have to develop new roles and self-images in the post-Cold-War era (cf. Cederman 2001).

The emergence of European co-operation on armaments has been analysed as an organising process in which institutionalised organisations interact with each other. European co-operation is thus studied as a process that gradually takes shape in terms of the organisational set-up but also in terms of institutions, i.e., rules that guide collective behaviour. The concept that is used to analyse the organising process is that of organisational fields. Organisational fields consist of organisations, which are held together by institutionalised rules. These rules determine how issues are interpreted and categorised (c.f. frame).

The changes in the two fields \_ defence and market \_ was studied as the formation of a new organisational field in which both fields are included. The overall question in that analysis concerns the co-existence of deadlocks and development in European politics (Héritier 1999). From an organisational perspective this puzzle can be stated in the following way. How do interdependent organisations that compete with each other co-operate? How do they interact and communicate with each other and in what ways are the two fields moving closer together? The starting assumption in the study was that the two fields are moving closer to each other. The empirical question was how 'thin' or 'thick' (is) the emerging organisational field is in terms of institutionalised rules, frames, identities, organisational authority and power relations among different organisations from the two fields.

Figure 1 (see below) condenses parts of the empirical findings. The figure shows how the two fields belong to different political and ideational contexts in European politics. The fields activate different questions and actors; they do so because they are based on different rules, legally as well as ideationally and cognitively. The rules are various articles within the first pillar (the market field) and the second pillar (the defence field) which concern market and CFSP questions. The Commission is a strong actor in

the first pillar, whereas the European Council and the Council are the crucial actors in the second pillar. According to the European Council and the Council, a closer co-operation on defence equipment should be organised as an intergovernmental co-operation with a weak role for the Commission. The proponents of the market field argue, on the other hand, that the supranational regulatory framework in the community pillar is relevant.

The ideational rule in the defence field is the general notion that defence issues should be dealt with in an intergovernmental way since these issues concern national sovereignty. Traditional security, that is security expressed in terms of military threats and power, is based on the logic of anarchy, which necessitates that the states control defence issues. The political ambition to create a European capacity to handle military crises \_ and to create a European actorness on defence \_ is combined with an intergovernmental decision-making process. The driving force behind the need to form such an actor capacity is the changing security situation after the end of the Cold War.

The ideational rule in the market field is that issues within the first pillar should be handled according to a supranational decision-making process since these issues concern Europe's economic and technological competitiveness vis-à-vis the U.S. The underlying logic behind this rule is the increasing economic and technological interdependence between states that necessitates thinking in European terms. The dynamics behind the need to form strong European defence companies, and to create a European defence equipment market, is thus to be found in the ongoing technological and industrial internationalisation of technology. The prime issue within the market field is to strengthen Europe's technological and economic capacity.

Figure 1. Two fields and the issue of armaments

Defence field – Anarchy and intergovernmental co-operation	Market field – Interdependence and supranational co-operation
Dynamics: the end of the Cold War, military interoperability.	Dynamics: internationalisation of high tech industry, internal market
Prime Issues: Petersberg tasks CJTF, PFP - A European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), A European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) <sup>9</sup>	Prime issues: a European armaments market – European companies
Prime Actors: NATO, WEU, EU (second pillar)	Prime Actors: EU (first pillar), Industry

In a concluding empirical analysis it was also shown that the two fields and organisations are moving closer to each other. A new understanding of the issue of defence equipment has emerged in the sense that the Commission, the working group in the Council (POLARM) and other organisations have expressed the view that the issue of defence equipment is complex and consists of both market and defence components. This is especially salient within the Commission, which has argued that the issue of defence equipment belongs to the first and second pillars of the European Union and that the regulative rules from these two pillars should be combined with each other.

The rules of the game of organisational fields are seldom taken for granted but are contested and put into question. The crucial issue is whether the contested rules are fundamental or more legal and technical. The empirical analysis showed that the discussions of the organisations, for instance those in the Commission and the Council, often concerned legal rules, for instance how to interpret Article 296 in TEU. The European Commission and EDIG, the European branch organisation for the defence industry, wanted a stricter interpretation of the article. According to the Commission some member states have interpreted the Article broadly, which has led to the EU industry losing ground to the U.S. industry. However, the empirical findings suggest that the emerging organisational field on armaments is rather ‘thin’ but that a new way of thinking about armaments is emerging.

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<sup>9</sup> ESDI is above all an acronym that is used in a NATO context whereas ESDP is used within the EU.

The emerging organisational field is also organised in a different way than the traditional European armaments co-operation set up. The traditional and established organisations from the two fields – the EU, the WEU, WEAG and WEAO – are challenged by the ‘pretendents’ – OCCAR and LoI.<sup>10</sup> The pressure is made possible due to the general political process after the end of the Cold War that has opened up new possibilities for organising co-operation on armaments. In contrast to the WEU, they are not organisations from the Cold War, and, in contrast to WEAG and WEAO, they are based on exclusive membership and on commercial principles. In contrast to the Commission, the LoI governments are not convinced that the best way to co-operate and organise this issue lies in the European Union. In the LoI initiative the governments made it clear that the issue of armaments was an issue for the six governments and that it belonged primarily to the intergovernmental path of the European integration process. The LoI governments also emphasised the importance of mutual interdependence as the institutional ‘glue’ between the participating countries. Thus, the lack of a hierarchical and supranational co-operative structure requires that the governments and the industry are organised and institutionalised through a looser and more informal way than would be the case if the co-operation had been based within the EU.

It can therefore be argued that OCCAR and LoI are important organisations in the emerging European organisational field on armaments. They represent new forms of domination and authority structures that are both formal and informal and based upon the two frames and fields.

### **Why an organisational approach on European politics?**

Drawing on the case studies the added value of an organisational approach in the study of European politics can be discussed from five aspects. Four of these aspects are of theoretical interests whereas the fifth aspect is empirical. The first aspect concerns the importance of supranational and intergovernmental actors in the EU. The second aspect is about the relationship between actors and institutions. The third aspect refers to the concepts of power and authority. The fourth aspect concerns the study of Europeanisation. The fifth and last aspect is about cross-pillar issues.

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<sup>10</sup> In November 1996 the Joint Armaments Co-operation Organisation, OCCAR (Organisme conjoint de coopération en matière d’armement), was created to act as a joint programme office on behalf of France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy. LoI stands for Letter of Intent and was initiated in 1998 by six European governments with the aim of strengthening co-operation on armaments.

### *Supranational and intergovernmental actors*

The crucial motivation for using an organising approach in studies on European integration is that it enables us to include in the analysis all organising activities that operate in the same policy domain and critically influence each other's performance. It is not necessary to categorise the issue at stake a priori; rather, the analysis can be based on the organisational activity that takes place on an issue irrespective of whether the organisations are the European Commission, governments or an interest organisation. By using an organisational theoretical approach you are neither exclusively state-centred nor exclusively focused on supranational actors. Indeed, your theoretical approach does not determine the empirical findings beforehand, in terms of the importance of intergovernmental and supranational actors. The traditional integration theories are biased in the way that they a priori exclude certain actors in the empirical study. The empirical conclusions can therefore be questioned from a methodological perspective. How reliable is a study that focuses on the European governments and that concludes that the European governments are the most important actors in the integration process (Moravcsik 1998)? How can we be sure that other actors are not crucial in the process if we don't make it an empirical question?

The several case studies on the defence industry and the policy area of armaments clearly show that multiple actors have been important in the organising process. We argue that it would not have been possible to identify and to analyse the complexity of the policy area if we had chosen to analyse it with the help of traditional integration theories.

### *Actors and institutions*

By using a sociological institutionalist approach to organisations you focus on rule-based behaviour and the logic of appropriateness. The main theoretical perspectives on European integration, intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism focus on various strategic actors (national governments or supranational actors), and the analysis is based on the logic of consequence (March & Olsen 1989). The actors are seldom analysed as part of a wider organisational and institutional context. Actors and policies seem to float freely. A sociological institutionalist does not necessarily entail that there are no strategic actors. The two rationalities and logics – the logic of consequentialism and the logic of appropriateness – are relevant in the study of the dynamics in European organising (cf. Green Cowles et al. 2001). Thus, “actors both calculate consequences and follow rules” (Laegreid & Roness 1999:308; March and Olsen 1998; Marcusson et

al. 1999; Fierke & Wiener 1999). Actors follow rules, but actors can also influence the rules of the game. There is a close connection between actors and structures, and the way in which these rules are incorporated into daily practice depends on the local context. Actors are seen as intelligent rule followers (c.f. Hollis 1994).

By using the concept of organisational fields we showed that organisations are institutionalised, i.e. organisations that internalise certain rules and accomplish what is expected of them in order to be politically legitimate (Meyer & Rowan 1977/91). Each organisational field has its own images of the external environment, its own core of ideas about what constitutes a 'threat', how a problem is diagnosed, what counts as a problem in the first place, and how to approach this perceived problem.

In our analysis of armaments and the emerging European co-operation on armaments it is quite clear that organisations are institutionalised and that they follow various rules in the defence and the market fields. The importance of the connection between the organisations and the processes of organising and the ideas and norms of the institutional framework has become especially clear when studying the Europeanisation of defence industrial policy and consequences for Swedish arms supply. It is also clear that the organisations are strategic and that they create new rules. This is especially the case with the European Commission in the study of the defence and market frame on the issue of armaments.

### ***Power and authority***

Our view of the EU and the European integration process is similar to that of multi-level governance that, among other things, questions the notion of a zero-sum game between the intergovernmental and supranational political levels. The notion of the EU as a Multi-Level Governance (MLG) organisation takes into account the complexity between different actors at different levels, but it seems to have left out the important discussion of how some relationships are more important than others. Even though the MLG perspective assumes that authority and policy-making influence are shared across multiple levels of government (i.e. subnational, national and supranational), the analysis of power is not always convincing (Marks et al. 1996). An organisational perspective on European integration, on the other hand, analyses power relations between organisations and how formal/informal domination and authority structures are formed. Drawing on Bourdieu's work on fields, a literature on organisational fields has developed that emphasises how organisations are dependent on each other, but also that they simultaneously compete with each other (Bourdieu 1992,



1996; DiMaggio 1983; DiMaggio & Powell 1991; Scott 1995). According to Latour, the creation of an organisational field (or macro actor, to use his vocabulary) is about the power to stabilize a certain condition. Wills and values within the organisational field become progressively more similar to each other and through this development the field is stabilized (Latour 1998). Power and authority relations are crucial components in these studies. Organisational fields consist of organisations, which are held together by institutionalised rules that to a large extent are taken for granted (Mörth 2002b).

When studying the Europeanisation of defence industrial policy and consequences for Swedish arms supply, the complex power relationships between the governments and the defence industry are shown. Whereas the governments have the formal power and ultimately are in charge of political changes, actions taken by the defence industry intervene with the political development. The case of the emerging European co-operation on armaments showed that new types of organising activities could challenge the existing power and authority structures. The Letter of Intent in 1998 (which resulted in the Farnborough agreement in 2001) and OCCAR represent new forms of domination and authority structures that are both formal and informal and based upon the two frames and fields (market and defence).

### *Europeanisation*

Based on a literature on organisational change and reform the studies on Europeanisation argued that states and other organisations follow and imitate each other but that there is room for domestic interpretation, editing and translation. Institutional isomorphism does not necessarily result in similarity in every aspect of policy, legal, organisational changes etc. The mechanical transfer model has been questioned by students of organisational studies who have analysed the diffusion process of organizational reforms (Strang & Meyer 1995; Czarniawska & Sevón 1996; Brunsson & Olsen 1998). These studies have found that the ideas on organizational reforms are part of a continuous editing process. What is to be imitated is not a given phenomenon. "I will see imitation as a process in which something is created and transformed by chains of translators" (Sevón 1996:51). Projects initiated at the European level create a negotiation space and interpretative flexibility that are negotiated at the domestic level (cf. Law & Callon 1992). The governments need room for manoeuvre in order to get legitimacy in the domestic political process for the decisions made at the EU level.

From the studies about Europeanisation of defence industrial policy, it has become clear that when the defence industrial policy is changed, this development differs both in form and pace depending on what the local context has been. Privatisation of defence industry for example, was quite easily carried out in Sweden, but faced much more difficulty in France. At last, the development was the same, but the justifications of this development differed.

### *Cross pillar issues*

An important empirical advantage of using an organisational approach on European integration is that it enables us to identify and study cross-pillar issues. The lack of cross-pillar considerations in the EU literature leads us to a fundamental problem in the literature on the EU and European integration, namely that complex relations between different paths of European integration are rarely analysed. Indeed, there are few studies that focus on the linkage between the Community pillar, for instance, the creation of EMU and the formation of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (Sperling & Kirchner 1997). This is rather remarkable considering that the very beginning of the European integration process, with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), is considered to have been driven by security motives (Haas 1958/68). “Thus the aims of the ECSC were by no means simply economic; it was intended to address the major security concerns of the early Cold War period” (Bretherton & Vogler 1999: 210).

There are thus two separate literatures and analyses on the EU and the European integration process. Firstly, there is a huge literature on the Community pillar, on market deregulation, EMU, research and development, social policy, etc., that has developed its specific discourse, analysis and concepts. One dominant theoretical approach is the neofunctionalist analysis of the European integration process, with its emphasis on spill-over, the integration as a process and the focus on supranational and transnational actors (Haas 1958/68; Lindberg & Scheingold 1970; Sandholtz & Zysman 1989; Sandholtz & Stone Sweet 1998). Secondly, there is vast literature on the so-called security triangle (the EU, the WEU and NATO) and the formation of a Common Foreign and Security Policy within the European Union. This type of analysis of European politics has also developed its own discourse and theoretical approach. The analysis is often based on theories from the literature on international relations, with its emphasis on states and national interests (Eliassen 1998; Peterson & Sjørnsen 1998; Rhodes 1998; Bretherton & Vogler 1999). It should also be noted that the EU’s civilian integration

process is studied from an intergovernmental approach (Moravcsik 1991; 1993; 1998),<sup>11</sup> but there is, to our knowledge, no example of a neofunctionalist approach to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).<sup>12</sup>

One important consequence of the existence of these separate analytical and empirical traditions is that political issues and policy areas tend to be categorised and analysed within either of these analytical approaches, even though the empirical political process indicates something else. It is likely that most don't even notice that issues seem to move across organisations and different political spheres. Through the use of organisational theory the interplay between processes in different political spheres and the implications of that interplay for the integration process can be studied. The politics of the EU are often complex and multifaceted and the research challenge is to study empirical complexity. By using concepts and analysis from the organisational literature and focusing on organisational activity at the European level, we will, however, reduce the risk of telling only one part of the story of the EU and European integration.

The studies of the creation of a European defence industry market, and that of European armament co-operation show how traditional boundaries in European politics have increasingly been put to question. Furthermore, it is argued that the case in point not only illustrates the complexity of cross-pillar issues, but also that the borders between the market-oriented sphere and security-oriented sphere in general are diffuse and difficult to uphold. The end of the Cold War has opened up possibilities for multiple interpretations of issues that traditionally have been exclusively defined by interpreters within the sphere of anarchy (NATO, the WEU, defence ministers, etc.), or by interpreters within the sphere of interdependence (industrialists, officials within the European Commission, ministers of industrial affairs etc.). Various issues, such as the issue of armaments, or concepts, such as the concept of security, are no longer easy to categorise and, above all, it is increasingly difficult for actors to legitimate an order in which the issue of armaments 'belongs' exclusively to either a market-making organisation or to a defence-oriented organisation.

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<sup>11</sup> For an excellent overview of theories of European integration see Rosamond 2000.

<sup>12</sup> However, in his book *Foreign Policy in the European Union* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), Ben Soetendorp touches upon some aspects of neofunctionalism in his analysis of EU foreign policy.

## **Future research**

The EU can be perceived as a dynamic multi-level system that makes it difficult to make an analytical separation between what goes on inside a state and what goes on outside the state. Furthermore, in recent years more politically sensitive issues are regulated and governed in the EU through soft law. EU's new phase of positive integration embraces issues that concern the core of state sovereignty, which cannot be decided according to the community method but need more national autonomy and flexibility. This is especially salient when it comes to employment policy, defence policy and within the EU's third pillar. Soft law is also important within the EMU. This means that important policy areas are not part of the ongoing governmental and constitutional reform process in the EU (Wallace 2001). These political issues are instead organised through networks and voluntary agreements. Thus, the ongoing constitutionalisation and other governance processes of the EU, the increased importance of welfare state politics in the EU and other issues that are at the heart of state sovereignty, together with the enlargement process, suggest that we are dealing with a would-be polity for which our traditional integration theories and state-concepts are poorly suited.

The traditional Weberian state concept that dominates the analysis of the European integration process is focused on how states use the EU as an arena for intergovernmental bargaining. It is therefore most likely that the approach limits the empirical analysis in the sense that it is difficult to study how new preferences and policies evolve. Drawing on Ruggie's notion of the EU as a 'multiperspectival polity' it can be argued that states cannot be treated as external actors in the EU. In contrast to the Westphalian state, states can be regarded as disjointed and fragmented. "Process and activity become more important than structure and fixed institutions. The state becomes not so much a thing...as a set of spatially detached activities, diffused across the Member States..."(Caporaso 1996: 45, See also Smith 1996). According to this reasoning states are embedded in the EU. The analysis covers new types of state activities, and how new forms of European authority structures can change the domestic political process. Helen and William Wallace have suggested the term intense transgovernmentalism in order to capture a more intense and extensive interaction between the EU and the national levels. (Wallace & Wallace 2000). Intense transgovernmentalism entails that governments are committed "to rather extensive engagement" (Ibid: 33), but that this commitment is not necessarily based on a hierarchical supranational decision-making and upon coercive rules. It can also consist of a more governance-like authority structure, that is of soft law, networks,

competition and knowledge (c.f. Boli et al 1999). It can, for instance, be argued that the EU will resemble a 'Neo medieval Empire rather than a 'Westphalian Super-state' (Zielonka 2001). The latter is about "concentration of power, hierarchy, sovereignty and clear-cut identity" (Ibid: 509) whereas the former is about "overlapping authorities, divided sovereignty, diversified institutional arrangements and multiple identities" (Ibid.).

We argue that an organisational approach, especially a sociological institutionalist way of thinking about organisations, is well suited for an EU that is characterised by networks, soft law and informal authority relations. Indeed, the organisational approach presented in this paper show that the concepts of institutionalised organisations and organising identifies the complexity in the EU without loosing in analytical clarity. We need to move beyond our traditional ways of understanding European integration and the emerging EU polity and instead use analytical concepts and theories that have a long history dealing with organisational complexity. Students of the EU and European integration do not need to reinvent the wheel. There is a huge literature on how complex and multifaceted political processes can be analysed. It is only for us to use these insights and refine them for the study of European politics! "We need to accept that the new European order is neither anarchy nor hierarchy, that its organizational map is multi-layered and not state-centric, that governance is less a matter of engineering than of gardening" (Zielonka 2001: 530).

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