

Sociology of European Integration

Moodle page:

<https://dl1.cuni.cz/course/view.php?id=7256>

Assessment

- End of semester exam (80%)
 - written assignment / essay to be done at home

- Seminar-style presentations (20%)
 - in class, end of sessions 3-6
 - work in groups
 - 3 presentations per session

3. Sociological repertoires for studying
European integration:
social movement theory, field theory,
sociolinguistics, communication theory

Social movement theory

Della Porta & Caiani draw on social movement theory to create testable hypotheses about how social movements and interest organisations will adapt to European integration:

- Resource mobilisation: “we can expect [resource] poorer actors to have more difficulties in developing insider strategies, tending instead to influence decision makers by addressing public opinion via disruptive (and newsworthy) tactics (Lipsky 1965)“
- Opportunity structures: “On the other hand, the low democratic (especially electoral) accountability and the tendency towards consensual decision making that permeates European institutions (Balme and Chabanet 2002; see also Hooghe and Marks 1995) promotes the use of insider strategies.”

Main findings

- Adaptation to ‘rules of the EU game’: “when acting at the EU level, social movements and NGOs tend to use strategies traditionally considered as common to interest groups. Overall ... lobbying ... and media-related strategies ... are most important at the European level”, the latter especially for resource-poorer organisations
- But differences between countries seem to reflect different cultural repertoires: “Transnational contacts do not seem typical of the most institutionalized and resourceful movement traditions, but are all the more relevant for the more contentious Southern movements.”
- Increase over time (1990s - 2000s) in Europeanisation of claims-making (especially with respect to addressees and issue frames)
 - authors predict growth of contentious action, noting mirror Europeanisation of critics like Attac

Social movement theory (contd.)

Mischi & Weisbein study pro- and anti-European mobilisations in two contrasting local milieu in France, both affected materially and symbolically by European integration:

- a rural environment (Brière) where EU environmental protection rules conflict with traditional rural pursuits
- a city (Toulouse) with a strong European heritage and Europeanised economy

“Europe never happens on a blank slate but within pre-existing national and local actor networks” (Smith, 1995, 84-85)

- Idea is to follow mutual imbrication of local/regional identities and European integration, where support/opposition depends on particular constellation

Main findings (Brière)

- Europe as a vehicle for popular politicisation in a region / lifeworld directly affected by European regulations
- Mobilisation for a Europe of differences against a uniform Europe
 - Pour « une Europe des différences et des traditions »
- Projection of class conflict onto a pro/anti-Europe matrix
 - « Toutes ces attaques, c'est contre la chasse populaire »
- Hunters: working-class, rural; repertoire: direct, violent protest + electoral campaigning; traditional modes of protest, force of numbers
- Environmentalists: middle-class, urban; repertoire: legal and media activism; better adapted to European opportunity structure

Sociology of professions / field theory

Baisnée studied the professional world of the Brussels correspondents of French and British newspapers

Ethnography of a professional field imbricated in a specific urban environment

- Mapped (literally) the professional and extra-professional lives of journalists, their social networks inside and outside work
- Traced professional careers from 1960s, focusing on 'founding fathers' of press corps
- Interviewed journalists about their routines and their professional ideals
- Conceptually framed around the symbolic struggles to define the profession

Immersion, embedding, enclosure in a microcosm of 'European people'

- Inhabiting a world apart (sociologically distinct from Brussels population):
 - Overlapping social networks with other sections of EU elite inside and outside work
 - friendship with people whom they are supposed to be able to criticise
- Intense social and geographical proximity with sources in EU institutions:
 - Europhiles: shared schemes of perception and judgement; self-censoring depoliticisation
 - Accused of connivance with Commission staff
- Series of ritualised events (press briefings) shape the working day:
 - institutionalised agenda, little scope for independent investigation
- Tightly organised specialist (technocratic) professional sub-field:
 - development and transmission of own professional standards (expertise)
 - Social capital reconvertible in allied Eurospheres: communications, consultancy, thinktanks
 - Strong experience-based hierarchy of authority among national press corps
- Santer scandal prompts field reorganisation:
 - old institutional journalism challenged by investigative journalists (if supported by editors)
 - importation of different norms and standards by journalists who see themselves *as journalists*
 - corresponding attempts by Commission to 'professionalise' relations with press

Sociolinguistic analysis

Pirat (2007) analysed discourse of ‘no’ and ‘yes’ campaigners in French referendum on 2005 constitutional treaty:

- Uses and effects of slogans depend on socio-political context
- Interpretation has to take into account field position of producers of discourse
- Referenda (closed question ‘tests’) are essentially dialogical and polemical
 - at stake for each party is to define its own image and impose an image on the other
- Apparently simple question gives way to “intense battle for the construction of sense”:
 - we need to analyse the semantic and wider symbolic meanings given to ‘Oui’ and ‘Non’ in the political debate as well as their performative effects

Main findings

‘Yes’ camp - active ethos

- construed as obligatory passage point for European integration
 - L'Europe sociale passe par le oui. (PS, tract national)
- quasi-official position (government, presidential and mainstream media)
- portrayed by opponents as position of acquiescence / acceptance

‘No’ camp - reactive ethos:

- lends itself to a posture of contestation / protest
- a rallying point for the dominated against the dominant classes
- ‘social Europe’ against ‘liberal Europe’ (neutralising the reactive ethos)
 - Pour construire l'Europe sociale, votons NON à la Constitution libérale (Tract du collectif du Rhône pour un Non de gauche, antilibéral et européen)

Discourse sociolinguistics

Doerr studied translation practices at meetings of the European Social Forum

She asked participants to compare national and European meetings in terms of:

- Opportunity for all participants to make their voice heard
- Equality of listening and response

She then observed communicative practices as a participant observer:

- focusing in particular on work of voluntary translators
- using a “sociolinguistic micro-perspective” and critical discourse analysis

Main findings

Common perception of more dialogue and inclusivity in European meetings

- In national meetings listening habits reproduced structural cleavages
 - Dominance by long-term members, organised groups, etc.
- Listening habits more attentive to weaker/minority voices in multilingual meetings
- Instrumental in this more inclusive participation were the voluntary translators:
 - *As members of migrant groups* they were aware of the risks of exclusion and intervened to remind facilitators of the normative principle of including different voices
 - *As members of the network* they saw themselves as ‘language activists’
- Translation “reduces the hegemony of those who have taken part for a long time. For newcomers access gets easier” (British social forum activist)

Communication theory

Some central concepts in communication theory help us understand Europe as a political project from a new angle:

- Mediation and intermediation (actor networks and communication devices/procedures)
- Mediators, intermediaries, brokers (diversity of roles involved in public communication processes)
- Theories of influence, opinion leaders (how messages are filtered and received in chains of actor networks)

Main lessons

Important to historicise the public communication of the EU:

- Communication strategies were influenced by classical ideas and thinkers in communication theory:
 - Lazarsfeld - influence: the two step flow model of public opinion formation
 - Inglehart - cognitive mobilisation anticipated the problem of socially selective informedness
- *From their inception*, European institutions have seen lack of public awareness as a barrier to European integration: exigence to “bridge the gap” (later called “democratic deficit”)