

### **The European Commission as Network Broker**

SUSANA BORRÁS

*Key Words:* European Commission, policy networks, codecision procedure, open method of coordination, European Employment Strategy, genetically modified organisms, interest intermediation

*Abstract:* Recent transformations in the European Union have been putting significant pressure on the management function of the European Commission. Examining its brokerage position in policy networks, this article asks what kind of role does the Commission have in the political interactions in Brussels after the year 2000. Developing a conceptual framework about brokerage roles in EU policy, the article uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data in an empirical analysis of two extreme cases where the Commission has been embattled the past years. The article argues that previous reports of the Commission's demise are much exaggerated, because it continues playing a leading role in managing interaction between multiple actors at different levels of governance. The empirical results show that the Commission is a resilient central network broker.

### **La ecología política de las asociaciones empresariales españolas en el sector de la información y las comunicaciones**

ACHIM LANG

*Key Words:* Interest groups, business associations, social networks, cooperation, competition, political ecology

*Abstract:* This article is about the multi-faceted adaptation processes of business associations caused by changes in their politico-economic environments. It is argued that technological innovations, accompanied by high economic growth rates have led to the establishment of new business associations in the information and communications sector. The incorporation of these newly founded associations into existing structures of interest representation is mediated by the inclusiveness of membership in national peak associations. It is argued that the Spanish peak association CEOE has adopted a generous stance towards the inclusion of new affiliations thereby facilitating the consolidation of the newly developed system of organized business interests.

## **Nuevo paradigma, nuevo contexto institucional: el caso de la política farmacéutica**

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*Key Words:* Actors networks, pharmaceutical policy, regulatory agencies, interest groups

*Abstract:* The goal of this article is to give an explanation about how and why the regulation of the pharmaceutical sector changes for the last decade. The underlying assumption is that institutional frameworks are a key variable to explain the dynamics of policy change as anticipated by the policy network literature and the punctuated equilibrium model developed by Baumgartner and Jones. The adoption of a new policy paradigm -the rational use of medicines- cannot only be understood as a direct response to a crisis situation, changes in the political system or/and the consolidation of ideas introduced by active policy entrepreneurs as the policy windows model suggest. The way power relations are institutionalized (or policy networks) is important in order to explain why changes in the pharmaceutical policy are quite smooth and gradual. By the same token, this article argues that a redefinition of the policy image involves a transformation of the policy network. In 2008 the politics of the rational use of medicines are managed by a more open policy network in which policy experts play a more important role than before.

## **European Cohesion Policy in two spanish regions: Shaping politcs an social capital networks**

JACINT JORDANA

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*Key Words:* Cohesion policies, policy networks, social capital, structural funds, regional depelopment, multi-level european governance

*Abstract:* This paper focus on the European Cohesion Policy in the regional level at its programming stage. It argues that Structural Funds have been very influential in shaping regional development policy-making. Europeanization of the regional policy in Spain has involved an increasing role for regional governments, which have adopted a set of homogeneous practices and procedurals as regard to cohesion policy programming and implementation. However, empirical evidence drawn from Murcia and Galicia's regions related to the programming financial period 2007-2013 (ROPs) highlights the configuration of different regional policy networks to deal with such programming tasks. Also, different features of social capital among the network's actors arise for both regions. These findings suggest that their

policy processes are quite different –in spite of similar formal procedures-, and raise new questions about the sources of such variations.

## **Experiences and cases**

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### **Policy Networks and Information Society promotion. A comparison between Catalonia and Euskadi**

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*Key Words:* Policy networks analysis, Information Society, Catalonia, Euskadi, institutions

*Abstract:* From a quantitative perspective, this article analyses the policy networks that promote Information Society in Catalonia and Euskadi. It aims to map and to clarify what actors are perceived as influential, the relationships that are established between these actors and the interests that prevail. With all this information it will be examined if differences or similarities exist between Catalonia and Euskadi, and it will allow to discuss in what measure the public policies guided to the promotion of the Information Society in both regions are (or not) conditioned by the forms and structures of the policy networks.