



The Programmatic Action Framework (PAF)

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Panel T01W07: Bringing Policy Actors Back In. Relevance and Prospects of Actor-Centered Approaches
in Policy Studies

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Abstract

Leading theories of the policy process mostly stem from peculiarities of American politics. A focus on European politics emphasizes factors that have received insufficient attention so far. Among these is the competition among elites within the state for influence over policy as a central endogenous explanation for policy change. This paper clarifies the original contribution of the leading policy process frameworks in view of their explanatory power and introduces the Programmatic Action Framework (PAF) as a new framework for policy analysis. The PAF proposes that elites in the narrow state apparatus of policy sectors compete with respective elites within and across policy sectors for authoritative and regulatory resources. Homogenous career trajectories, continuous linkages as well as a coherent and strong joint program are essential determinants for the formation and success of a programmatic elite. Thus, the PAF presents a new perspective to explain policy change and stability capable of providing valuable comparative insights into policy processes.

Keywords: Programmatic Actors, Biographies, Policy Change, Theories of the Policy Process

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