

General Seminar

Courts as Actors in Public Policy: Political Actors or Policy *Entrepreneurs*?

Tuesday 26 March 2019

12.30-2.30 pm

Sciences Po, Room Goguel
27 rue Saint-Guillaume, 75007 Paris

Courts are increasingly considered to be political actors, influencing public policy actively and passively, through their rulings. Studies on judicial politics have shown that this influence occurs at different moments in the policy cycle, but seems to be most salient in the implementation phase. At the same time, authors working on judicial politics have compared courts to policy entrepreneurs, who appear particularly active during the agenda-setting phase.

Strikingly, most of the contemporary public policy approaches do not consider courts as prominent actors in policy processes. For example, while policy entrepreneurs are one of the central factors of policy change studied in the Multiple Streams Approach, courts have, up to now, been ignored by the majority of scholars adopting this theoretical frame. The aim of the presentation is to address this research gap, and to determine whether and under which circumstances courts can be perceived as policy entrepreneurs. Starting from an in-depth analysis of the mainstream MSF literature, this article aims at identifying the main conceptual problems linked to this endeavour. The possibilities and limits of using the notion of judicial policy entrepreneurs in studies of judicial politics will be presented through a series of empirical examples on the Court of Justice of the European Union in the agenda setting process of the political system of the EU.



Speaker

Sabine Saurugger, Sciences Po Grenoble

Sabine Saurugger is a Professor of political science and Research Dean at Sciences Po Grenoble. Since 2016, she holds a visiting professorship at the College de Bruges. Her research focuses on interest groups, theories of European integration, European public policies and the politics of law. Most recently she analysed the impact of economic and financial crises on public policies and legal frameworks. Results of her research have been published in journals such as the *European Journal of Political Research*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *West European*

Politics, *Political Studies*, *Journal of European Public Policy* and *Revue française de science politique*. More recently, her co-authored book *The Court of Justice and the Politics of Law* (with Fabien Terpan) has been published in the European Union Series with Palgrave (2017).

Discussion

Nefeli Lefkopoulou, Sciences Po, Law School

Olivier Rozenberg, Sciences Po, CEE

Compulsory registration on the link above

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