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Analysing change in transnational policy networks. Legitimacy-transfers in the Bologna Process

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Analysing change in transnational policy networks. Legitimacy-transfers in the Bologna Process

ABSTRACT

Drawing on theories of legitimacy and democratic deficits in international politics this paper provides an actor-centered relational approach of mapping legitimacy-flows within the transnational policy network of the Bologna Process for a European Higher Education Area. It is shown that legitimacy (either in the form of symbolical or institutional capital conveyed in political speech acts) can be treated as a matter of exchange and bargaining just as other resources, such as money or information. The legitimacy-network of the Bologna Process does not reflect the often lamented lack of democracy in international political setting. While transfers of legitimacy are the most prevalent type of relation in the policy network, there is no unidirectional flow from national societal actors to supranational public actors, but rather a polyvalent exchange. With respect to legitimacy as a political resource the Bologna Process is therefore not hierarchical, it is a “bazaar”.

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INTRODUCTION: TRANSFORMATION OF THE STATE

Under changing economic, political and demographical conditions the state's organisation and the forms of governance are changing as well. The Democratic Constitutional Interventionist State (DCIS) is facing incentives of both internationalisation and privatisation (Leibfried and Zürn 2006). Internationalisation means that international organisations, either from the transnational or the supranational level, take over relevant parts of the political process, *e.g.* agenda setting. Privatisation points to the blending of the private and the public sphere by the growing inclusion of corporative actors without any formal authority for decision-making.

This transformation of the state also leads to a change of the potentials and deficits of political steering and suggests an adjustment of academic approaches: Political internationalisation, measured by a higher degree of transnational entanglement, simultaneously entails shortcomings in the democratic organisation and the legitimacy of the political processes. Political privatisation leads to a stronger influence of interest groups in policy networks and therefore to a precarious figuration of governance. Analysing how legitimacy is gained in transnational policy networks means to open up the problems of missing legitimacy in political processes as well as leaving behind traditional modes of governance (market and state), and focus on networks as a relevant form of governance. In the following, I will describe by means of network analysis, how transnational political networks cope with deficits of legitimacy. To this end, I will examine legitimation-relations within the Bologna Process for a European Higher Education Area. I start out with three hypotheses: (i) As a compensation for the shortcomings in legitimacy, evoked by the complex field of actors (caused by internationalisation), legitimising relations play a major role in the Bologna Process. (ii) Legitimacy as a symbolic resource can be monopolised and used to create asymmetric exchange relations. Legitimacy is therefore a power resource just like other material (goods/money) and immaterial (information) resources. (iii) Societal actors have a larger potential to legitimate others than public actors. Thus, the former are primarily senders of legitimacy, while the latter mainly hold the position of receivers of legitimacy. After sketching the Bologna Process in a historic-systematic manner and briefly theorising the concept of legitimacy in processes of educational policy and policy networks, I will focus on the methodological and empirical part. Tying up to common methods of quantitative content analysis (frequency analysis, contingency analysis), I will concentrate on delineating a method for collecting data for network analysis by using content analysis. At last, I will present

some results of the network analysis of legitimising relations in the Bologna Process using the data of the content analysis.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

The Bologna Process is an intergovernmental initiative of higher-education-policy with the primary goal to establish a European Higher Education Area by harmonising the structures of the respective national systems of higher education. The idea of the process was born in 1998 during the 800th anniversary of the University of Sorbonne, where the ministers of education of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom signed the so called *Sorbonne-Declaration* basically calling for mobility by compatibility. One year ahead 29 European countries sent their representatives to Bologna to specify the political goals and the internal structure of the process. It was held that compatibility should be achieved as to degrees (Bachelor/Master), workload (credit points) and certificates. The *Bologna-Declaration* from 1999 included a mutual obligation of the participating countries to implement the due reforms until 2010 and set up regular follow-up-meetings for stocktaking and to elaborate the political strategy. The first of these meetings took place in *Prague in 2001*. Meanwhile, the European Commission had become increasingly involved in the process and was provided with full membership. Accordingly, the “European dimension in higher education” came in as a further strategem. Moreover, it was stressed that quality-assurance and accreditation were matters of transnational governance of education as well. The second follow-up-conference in *Berlin 2003* brought along further consolidation. Meanwhile, the number of participating countries had grown to 33 and other stakeholders, such as student- and university-associations, had been provided with a consultative membership. Consensus was reached that the EHEA would be realised by seven central issues of transnational higher education policy: acknowledgement, tiered system of studies, modularisation, mobility, quality assurance, promotion of the European dimension and employability. Finally, the most recent follow-up-meeting was held in *Bergen in 2005*, where the doctoral studies were included into the agenda of the process.

Altogether, the Bologna Process proves an interesting field of study due to its hybrid setting between supranational and national policy-making (Nagel 2006). Formally being an intergovernmental agreement, the process is increasingly exposed both to EU-governance (internationalisation) and to the intervention of various societal actors in a diffuse multilevel-system (privatisation). The process itself, representing a meso-structure between national (or regional) autonomy and supranational subsidiarity, is politically functional as it mediates between the national “cannot” and the supranational “must not” regarding the respective policy issues.

INTERNATIONALISATION AND LEGITIMACY

Legitimacy in political processes can be conceptualised in different ways. Legitimacy refers to the justification of authority. Theorists dealing with the problem of legitimacy frequently draw their attention to the *reasons* of this justification. Max Weber's well-known distinction between, traditional, charismatic and legal-rational forms of legitimate order points to the fact, that the justification of authority is not necessarily a democratic one.[1] It is not part of the purpose or within the scope of this paper to establish an extensive theoretical debate on these reasons for justification. Weber's notion of authority is discernibly directed towards the belief in legitimacy or rather the 'motivation to obey' of the subjected and therefore opens up the empirical dimension of legitimacy (Schliesky 2004: 638). Hurrelmann et al. distinguish between *normative* legitimacy as "acceptability in the light of criteria provided by democratic theory or rather strands of political philosophy" and the *empirical* legitimacy as "factual acceptance of nation state institutions in the population" (Hurrelmann, Krell-Laluhová, and Schneider 2005: 2). For a systematic examination of legitimacy in the double-hybrid political setting of the Bologna Process between national and international, public and private actors, another notion is very useful: the distinction between input and output legitimacy as presented by Scharpf (1999). The concept of these two ties of democratic legitimacy goes beyond the differentiation of reasons for justification and the analytical approach to legitimacy (normative vs. empirical). *Input legitimacy* refers to "a deduction of authority from the bearer of common sovereignty and therefore from the subject of legitimacy" (Schliesky 2004: 674, Translation AKN). It represents the participation-dimension of democratic legitimacy and is still monopolised by public national (in federal systems also regional) actors whereas transnational actors suffer from a notorious lack of input legitimacy. *Output legitimacy*, in contrast, stands for the results and thus for the repercussion-dimension of authority. Legitimate authority not only emanates *from the people* (input), but also entails positive governance effects *for the people* (output) (Schliesky 2004: 659). While private actors, such as specialised interest groups, do not represent the interests of "the people" they are poor in terms of input legitimacy. However, their unique potential to enhance,or to impede, the implementation of political programmes makes them crucial for the output legitimacy of international politics.

One can assume that change of the DCIS on the territorial and/or organisational axis entails both chances and risks of input and output legitimacy for the new political order. These implications of the transformation of the state for the potential of legitimacy can be ideal-typically summarised (see table 1).

[1] See the critique on anti-democratic bureaucratism by Schliesky (2004: 155f.).

Table 1: Transformation, Input- and Output-legitimacy

Axes	Form of Transformation	Input Legitimacy	Output Legitimacy
Territorial axis	*internationalisation*	democratic deficit	Compensation of national steering incapacities
	sub-nationalisation	enlargement of political participation vs. clientelism	Opening up regional and local potentials for implementation
Organisational axis	*nationalisation/ centralisation*	democratic deficit	etatistic potential for coercion
	privatisation	enlargement of political participation vs. clientelism	Opening up organisational potentials for implementation

To explain the **internationalisation** of governance processes politicians and academics usually refer to the demand for a functional equivalent to compensate for national incapacities of governance. As to normative institutionalism the political institutions of the nation state cannot cope with the contingencies of an economically, politically and socio-culturally globalised world and therefore have to externalise control (Lepsius 1995; Lepsius 1997). In this sense, internationalisation basically refers to *output legitimacy*. In opposition to that, the often lamented democratic deficit of international politics points to a comprehensive lack of *input legitimacy* (Hurrelmann, Krell-Laluhová, and Schneider). Concerning the deficits of legitimacy in the EU, Grunauer distinguishes between "…the lack of a pre-existing collective identity, the non-existence of pan-European political discourses and the absence of a Europe-wide infrastructure for political parties and mass media" (Grunauer 2002: 179).

A structural analogous process to internationalisation is the **centralisation** of the state on the organisational axis. On the one hand societal participation is diminished by a public monopolisation of political competencies (loss of input legitimacy). On the other hand, the etatistic potential for coercion is growing along with the political consolidation and thus the governmental capacity to act (gain of output legitimacy).

On the other hand processes of **privatisation** denote the relocation of steering capacities to societal actors. The broadening of political participation promises a gain of input legitimacy and the differentiation of the field of actors is supposed to lead to a higher potential for implementation and thus to higher output legitimacy. In opposition to that, there are the two other branches of legitimacy, clientelism and the lack of transparency, as major risks. This especially holds for policy networks, which are, according to Meckling, characterised by intransparency, power asymmetry, lacking control- and sanction-mechanisms and a missing democratic mandate (Meckling 2003: 69ff.). The process of sub-nationalisation is structural analogous to privatisation as to the risks and chances it constitutes for legitimacy.

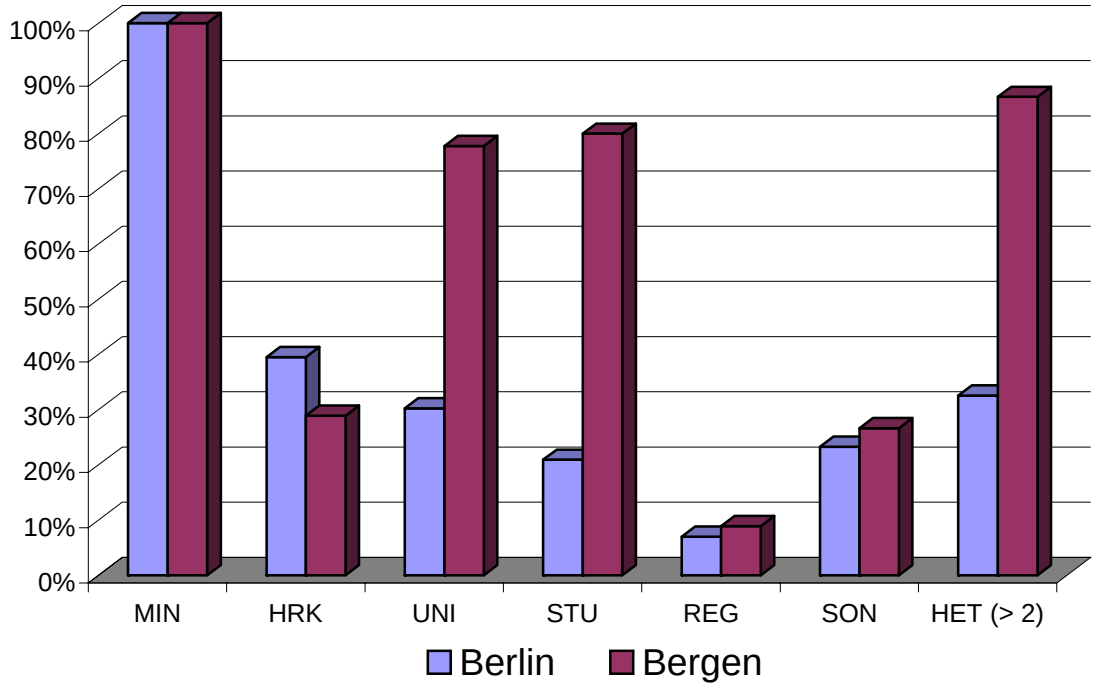
It should be clear by now, that legitimacy and the potential for legitimation of corporate actors in policy networks are resources of their own kind. The legitimacy of governmental actors is expressed by formal decision-making power, which is based on principals of democratic legitimation (representation). But private actors like interest groups also have resources or potentials of legitimacy as they represent organised societal interests. Concerning the Bologna Process, transfers of legitimacy are of primary analytical interest. E.g., when the EU Commissioner for Education opens up a Bologna seminar this may be regarded an act of legitimation (territorial axis, input legitimacy) as well as when the EU invites a couple of interest groups for a consultation in order to compensate its lack of legitimacy (organisational axis, input legitimacy). At the same time, the Bologna Process depends upon the potential for implementation of private (organisational axis, output legitimacy) und regional actors (territorial axis, output legitimacy). In case the employers' associations' interests were systematically neglected, little dedication of the companies to implement the political programme would be expectable. A good example for this is the current debate on the employability of the Bachelor degree. The claim of educational politics that a bachelor degree should be a certificate of employability needs to be complemented by an according personnel policy within the companies. Basically, firms *are* willing to adapt their policy, yet in return they claim more influence on the accreditation and quality assurance procedures in order to minimise their risks. In the societal feedback process, however, output legitimacy is not measured according to the *endeavours* of the political system, but according to the actual *success* of the new degrees on the labour market. In this sense, there is an *ex ante* dependency of public actors on the implementation potential of private organisations.

How far can these general notes on the transformation of the state with special regard to legitimacy be applied to processes in educational policy? Has there been a change of educational policy at all, which in turn might have affected processes of legitimation? Traditionally, education is considered to be a transformation-resistant policy field due to its special link to national identity, which causes a high degree of regulation and high costs (Majone 2003). However, new results in educational sociology show that in the course of the Bologna Process and the indicator programme of the OECD (prominent example: PISA) an international area of educational policy has developed, the political impulses of which are broadly taken into account in the nation states (Martens et al. 2004). The close relationship between the state and the educational sector is likely to lead to intensive change of legitimation processes in educational policy. Therefore, this policy field is an ideal starting point for a network analysis of the transformation of legitimacy on conditions of internationalisation.

Privatisation and Network Governance

It was held that internationalisation of educational policy has taken place due to the involvement of international organisations, such as EU and OECD. Is this transformation on the territorial axis paralleled by a shift towards privatisation on the organisational axis? I shall examine this question, taking the Bologna Process as an example for the development of a transnational regime for higher education. An indicator for a stronger involvement of societal actors might be the changing structure of participation in the follow-up meetings which can be drawn from the composition of the national delegations (see fig. 1).

Figure 1: Composition of the delegations in the Bologna Process[2]



The data refers to at least one representative of the respective group within the delegation. Because of the intergovernmental nature of the process, it is not surprising that there was a ministerial deputy (MIN) in every delegation, both in Bergen and Berlin. The national rectors´ conferences (HRK) are the only actors with a slowly decreasing participation. In 2003 they were represented in two of five delegations, in 2005, however, they were only represented in every third delegation. In contrast to that, there is an enormous increase in the participation of representatives of individual universities (UNI) and students (STU). The former more than doubled their share, the latter almost quadruplicated their proportion. There is a slight increase of regional representatives (REG) and other actors (SON), with the latter being a diffuse group of public (other

[2] Source: own calculations based on the list of participants of the Berlin Conference and the preliminary list of participants of the Bergen Conference.

governmental departments, diplomats) and semi-public actors (accreditation agencies and other). Altogether, the heterogeneity (HET) of the participating actors has significantly increased from Berlin to Bergen: In 2003 only every third delegation consisted of three or more different actors, whereas in 2005 87 % of the delegations were of this kind. This explorative result does not only show the comprehensive integration of societal actors, but also the trend towards a more heterogeneous field of actors, which can be described as privatisation.

Policy networks as social networks

A network analysis of legitimacy relations cannot rest on a merely metaphorical understanding of the notion of networks. Instead, structural features of policy networks need to be specified (Dowding 1995). As social networks, policy networks are composed of actors, relations and resources. Political sociology primarily deals with corporate or organisational actors.[3] They are defined as associations of people or organisations, which are characterised by the *potential to act* facilitated by membership, delegation and representation (i), the factual *power to act* by controlling resources (ii) and a formal structure for decision-making processes.[4]

Network analytical concepts of relations normally refer to personal actors. Relations are classified in respect to form, intensity and particularly content. Different from “classical” relations that entail an exchange of tangible (e.g. money) and non-tangible forms of capital (as a productive resource for political power), legitimation is a relational content *sui generis*. In contrast to material goods it is not limited (although inflation may occur) and in contrast to information it is not as easily transmissible. Theories of “neo-capital” suggest that besides from economic capital there is a variety of non-tangible forms of capital (Bourdieu 1986; Storberg 2002). In an interesting synopsis of this (academically and ideologically) divergent theoretical stream Hartmut Esser distinguishes between economic, human, cultural, institutional, political and social capital (Esser 2000: 230ff.). In policy networks economic, cultural and social capital have already been subject to analysis (Knoke et al. 1996; Laumann and Knoke 1987). Analogously, relations of legitimation may be conceived as transfers of institutional or political capital as the ability to involve other actors into the frame of an institution (*e. g.* a formalised political process) is, like money and information, a resource as well. Both types of

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[3] Knoke/Laumann (1987); Knoke et al (1996). Elite theories and political event history deal with the share of smaller groups or individuals.

[4] Following Coleman, Mayntz and Scharpf consider corporate actors as “handlungsfähige, formal organisierte Personen-Mehrheiten, die über zentralisierte, also nicht mehr den Mitgliedern individuell zustehende Handlungsressourcen verfügen, über deren Einsatz hierarchisch [...] oder majoritär entschieden werden kann“ (Mayntz and Scharpf 1995: 49f.).

capital refer to the “cooperative outcomes of a successful institutionalisation” (Esser 2000: 232ff.). The outcome as to institutional capital is the participation of an organisation in institutionally framed results of bargaining processes and as to political capital the “enforcement of one’s interest in the political space”. The *source* of institutional and political capital is the potential of corporative actors to engage other actors into their institutional patters or to grant them membership in their political in-group, no matter what this potential is based on. Besides from this exchange-theoretical notion of legitimation as a transfer of institutional capital, it may also be conceived as a transfer of symbolical capital (Bourdieu 1986). While goods and information (although being more manifest) are mediate resources of power, legitimation is immediately at the normative heart of power and its justification. Thus, speech acts and other forms of symbolic interaction, such as programmatic affirmation and emphatic appraisal, account for a transfer of legitimacy (with the sender becoming an implicit bail) as well.

As a matter of fact, the issue of relational contents is somewhat underreflected in the theory of policy networks whereas the general features of networks as a heuristic for diffuse configurations of power between state and market has been studied extensively. Political scientists have generated loads of typologies and classifications which vary remarkably in their analytical focus.[5] Here, it may suffice to mention the distinction between policy networks as mere metaphor (heuristic approach) and genuine mode of governance (substantial approach). Focussing on policy network analysis as structural analysis, I choose the concept of the “Organisational State” (OS), which was developed and tested in two prominent comparative studies in political sociology (Knoke et al. 1996; Laumann and Knoke 1987). Central features of the OS are:

Public-Private-Polity: As outlined above, privatisation of the DCIS is charaterised by a blurring of the public and the private sphere. Societal actors possess formal and informal rights and power potentials, which they can draw upon in the political process. Thus, the OS contains both public and private actors.

Organisational Actors: Regardless of there status (public or private), the decisive actors in the OS are organisations or corporations. Powerful individuals or elites can only bring their influence to bear, when they act as agents of organisations (Waarden 1992). The organisations are modelled as rational actors, which try to attain their political goals by minimal effort or to gain with the given resources as much influence as possible. The political aims result from the organisational agenda; they can more or less correspond to the public interest, but they are not completely absorbed in it.

Competition of Governmental Organisations: The rational attainment of organisational goals does not only apply to private, but also to public actors. This competition

[5] See Börzel (2002) for an overview and van Waarden (1992) for a meta-typology.

can be institutionalised as mutual control (“checks and balances”), it also appears when different interests collide:

> *„Just as interest groups lobby the authorities in favor of their preferred positions, so governmental agents lobby the interest groups on behalf of policy stances sponsored by the governmental organizations“* (Laumann and Knoke 1987: 382).

This image of “inverse lobbying” underlines the interests of governmental organisations. Even though their judicial and administrative status may aggravate or ban them from certain form of political participation in the OS, they basically possess an interventional repertoire similar to that of private actors.

The Crossing of Organisational Circles: Interorganisational relations in the OS are generally precarious. The lack of an overarching structure can lead to different patterns of conflict and cooperation:

> *„The continual movement of organizations into and out of debates, with accompanying shifts in position, creates a fragmented, loosely knit structure rather than two strongly polarized camps. […] An iterative gaming strategy develops, in which organizations continually shuffle from coalition to coalition in opportunistic pursuit of advantage.”* (Laumann and Knoke 1987: 386).

This inconsistency in the OS opens up the problem of collective action in political fields and the parallel entanglement of organisational actors in different, topically structured “sub-polities”, so called “policy domains”. A policy domain is a marked-off political (sub-) process, which can be divided into phases of input, throughput, output and feedback. Policy domains are defined by their topic (policy-issues) and consist only of those private and public organisations, which have a special interest in the respective field of policy.[6] The Bologna Process as a policy domain focuses on higher education policy. In this context, the political ends of the process (acknowledgement, tiered system of studies, modularisation, mobility, quality assurance, promotion of the European dimension and employability) can be identified as *policy subfields* (thus setting the substantial boundaries of the network), while the conference in Bologna and the follow-up conferences can be defined as relevant *policy events* (thus setting the formal boundaries of the network).

[6] „The basic unit in the Organizational State is the policy domain, a complex social organization in which collectively binding decisions are made, implemented, and evaluated with regard to specific topics.“ (Knoke et al. 1996: 9).

METHOD

In slight modification of Hurrelmann et al., the methodical question can be summed up as follows: “How can a policy network’s empirical legitimacy be mapped?[7] This points to two central methodical challenges: the extraction of relevant network data (i) and the measurement of transformation (ii). Network data are normally collected by (more or less standardised) surveys or, more uncommonly, by observation. In either case, the collection of data presupposes a general analytical definition of the network and therefore knowledge about the field of actors and their relationships. The change of social networks demands an observation over time and thus a longitudinal design. Adequate data for transnational policy networks do not exist and collecting new data by a trend- or panel design would take a lot of time and other resources, so we decided to take a different approach for pragmatic and methodical reasons. The empirical evidence which will be presented rests on a combination of quantitative content analysis and network analysis. The principal sources of data are therefore policy documents connected to the Bologna Process. The content-analytical collection of network data combines the advantages of both analytical strategies: content analysis is non-reactive and allows an *ex post* extrapolation of change, network analysis is apt to cover the inherent complexity of transnational political processes (e.g. with respect to the variety of actors, national and transnational, public and private) and provides both explicit and implicit measures of political power.[8]

In the first run, a category-system of relevant policy actors and typical relations was created by collecting respective typologies from the network analytical literature (Knoke et al. 1996; Laumann and Knoke 1987) and by the careful examination of a smaller sample of documents. Subsequently, the population of policy documents was explored by a snowball-approach starting at the official website of the Bologna Process, which led to a text-corpus of 136 single documents comprising nine different genres (e.g. position papers, reports) and several hundred pages. For pragmatic reasons, a random sample of 20 documents was drawn from all compiled texts. In this sample all actors and relations were coded according to the category system mentioned above. For each retrieval the publication date of the respective document was noted to extrapolate changes over time. As a first step, the prevalence of the ideal-typical actors and relation in the sample was counted (frequency analysis). Naturally, the frequency of an item in a

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[7] Hurrelmann et al. (2005: 3). The authors examine the question: „How can a nation state’s empirical legitimacy be mapped?“ in a comparative discourse analysis.

[8] Moreover, recent theories of governance suggest that “classic” modes of governance, such as state or market, are increasingly displaced by network-governance, especially in the heterogeneous configurations of transnational policy issues (Mayntz and Scharpf 1995).

piece of written communication cannot be treated as an exact representation of social reality. However, the prevalence of policy actors in political communication *does* have some structural relevance for the policy network either as its symbolical reflection (representational model) or as a formative power (constructivist model). Accordingly, an observation of these frequencies over time can reveal insights about structural changes.

As a second step, relational data is collected by coding actors tied together by relations. To this end, a semiotic Method of Structural Connotation is used which entails syntactic identification, semantic interpretation and pragmatic validation of dyads (smallest network-analytical units). These dyads can then be compiled to a network-matrix that yields idealtypical insights as to the density of the policy network as a whole, important subgroups and positions of structural equivalence as well as central or marginal actors. All important network-analytical coefficients will be introduced when the respective results are elucidated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Boundary setting: Population, unit of analysis and sampling

The Bologna Process as a transnational network can be demarcated both thematically and formally. Within the field of educational policy, the Bologna Process primarily deals with questions of higher education policy. As to the *thematic* boundary setting we can distinguish several policy subfields: acknowledgement, tiered system of studies, modularisation, mobility, quality assurance, promotion of the European dimension and employability. The *formal* definition of the process rests on so called policy events (see above). The most prominent events of the Bologna Process obviously are the meetings of the Ministers for Education from Sorbonne to Bergen, which makes up a time scale from 1998 until 2005. Thus, the population consists of all dyads connected with the policy issues and policy events mentioned above. Data collection therefore includes all policy documents produced is this context. For a study of legitimacy relations in the Bologna Process the units of analysis are whole documents. The pages of a text cannot be regarded as independent and variation within a page can only be explained out of the context of the other pages (Krippendorff 1980). For pragmatic reasons, I will only examine three pages of a text as a maximum. The sampling of the documents and the pages will be made by using the method of lottery sampling.[9]

[9] This method has to be distinguished from the multi-stage sampling procedure (Diekmann 2002: 334f.). Such a sampling would mean regarding each page of a document as a analyser after sampling the documents (two-stage lottery sampling). For the chosen method, the sampling of pages does not mean establishing a additional stage of sampling. Therefore, it is no cluster sampling. In that case, the probability to get analysed of each element of the sampled cluster would have been 1. See Diekmann (2002: 336).

Typical Actors and Relations in the Bologna Process

After the boundaries of the policy network have been set both heuristically and empirically categories of actors and relations have to be specified to guide content analysis. To this end, a separate (smaller) sample was drawn and categories were built according to a synthetic procedure (Nagel 2006: 115ff.). Table 2 presents all categories of actors (column 1) and relations (column 3) and their frequency in the sample.

Table 2: Typical actors and relations

Type of Actor	**Frequency (%)**	**Type of relation**	**Frequency (%)**
EU (1)	12.0	Information (1)	19.8
Legislative Bodies (2)	0.8		
Executive Agencies (3)	8.1	Transaction (2)	9.7
Federal Representation (4)	11.5		
Bologna Actors (5)	10.2	Mediation (3)	4.2
Social Partners (6)	0.8		
Accreditation Organisations (7)	10.2	Legitimation (4)	31.6
Epistemic Communities (8)	4.2		
Other Interest Groups (9)	4.7	Cooperation (5)	17.4
Universities Representation (10)	15.2		
HEI Representation (11)	7.6	Lobby (6)	13.2
Student Representation (12)	4.2		
Professional Bodies (13)	6.8	Power (7)	4.2
Trade Association (14)	3.7		
Total	100		100

The most prevalent **actors** were universities and their interest groups, such as the EUA (15.2 %), the EU and its political bodies (12 %), regional and national corporative actors concerned with federal interest representation (11.5 %) as well as “Bologna Actors”[10] and accreditation-agencies such as ENQA (each 10.2 %). Altogether, these organisations make up for three fifths of all the actors involved. Within this group of “very important organisations” there is apparently no systematic variation by status (public/private) or function. However, it is noteworthy that both universities and supranational as well as national or regional actors exceed the Bologna Actors in their frequency. Among the relations, legitimation was by far the most prominent content, be it as a transfer of institutional capital by granting membership or by a transfer of symbolical capital by programmatic affirmation (e.g. “UNICE warmly supports some activities already undertaken at European level” (UNICE 2002: 9). Altogether, the policy network of the Bologna Process is characterised by relations of symbolic interaction (legitimation, information and general cooperation) rather than material transaction or explicit power relations.

[10] The category comprises both the institutional core, such as secretariat and follow-up group and the member state as far as they were identified by their membership in the process.

While frequency distributions give a first insight as to the quantitative prevalence of actors and relations an examination of the legitimation-network promises further information about the structural prominence of actors in terms of legitimacy.

Network Matrix

The legitimation-network can be aggregated from all legitimation dyads that have been coded. “Dyads are the smallest possible entity of network analysis. It is a network consisting of only two elements, i.e. it consists of two elements and the relationships between them” (Jansen 1999: 54). Table 3 illustrates how these dyads were stored:

Table 3: Storing relational retrievals

ID	Year	Document	Retrieval	Relation	Sender	Receiver
4	2003	*01/9-8* (Ministers 2003)	Ministers decide to accept the requests for membership of Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro…and to welcome these states as new members	4 (institutional capital)	5	4
43	2003	*05/2-1* (EUCLID 2003)	The principles … in the Bologna-declaration … are in harmony with … our own mission statement	4 (symbolical capital)	13	5
46	2000	05/5-1 (SEFI 2000)	SEFI welcomes the important initiative taken by the European ministers of Education in signing the Joint Declaration in Bologna in June last year	4 (symbolical capital)	13	5

Table 3 includes the selected retrievals (col. 4). Each dyad is represented in the columns 5 to 7, where the type of relation and the types of actors involved are specified according to the scheme pointed out above. In the columns 1 to 3 we find additional information as to the documents. Col. 3 contains a code for its *genre* (01 = declaration, 05 = position paper), size (doc. 4 = 9 pages) and the page of the retrieval. Finally, the *year* of publication (Col. 2) is crucial for the extrapolation of change. Finally, a matrix of legitimation-relations is compiled by all dyads as presented in table 4 (see p. 14).

Table 4 shows an actor-by-actor matrix of legitimation-relations in the sample as well as in- and outdegrees of the single actors. The relations marked by inversion may serve as an example: There were five coded transfers of legitimacy from EU Actors (1) to Bologna Actors (5), while there were just two acts of legitimation from the latter to the first. The most prevalent dyad represents legitimising statements from professional bodies (13) towards Bologna Actors (5). This result may well be due to a sampling-bias as position-papers of professional bodies made up a big share of the sample. However, these position papers form an integral part of the overall political communication in the Bologna Process and are provided on the official website. Therefore the result is in line with the third leading-thesis of this paper, claiming that societal actors have a larger

potential to legitimate than governmental actors. Regarding the degrees in the legitimacy-network, this can only partly be confirmed. As to their outdegree (*od*) the most important *senders* are Bologna Actors, EU Actors, executive agencies and professional bodies while Bologna Actors have by far the highest indegree (*id* = 23) thus being the most prominent receivers. Altogether, Bologna and EU Actors prove to be the most prevalent processors of legitimation in the network (sum of in- and outdegree), which underlines the importance of legitimacy-transfers in international policy making (hypothesis 1). If we regard the balance of degrees, professional bodies are the most prevalent net-senders (difference of in- and outdegree), which is in line with hypothesis 3.

Table 4: Matrix of legitimation relations

Receiver (Col.) Sender (Rows)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**12**	**13**	**14**	*od*
1	3	0	2	0	**5**	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	*15*
2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*3*
3	3	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	**5**	1	0	0	*14*
4	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	*4*
5	2	0	3	4	1	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	***17***
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
7	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	*5*
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	*3*
9	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	*2*
10	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	*6*
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
13	0	0	0	0	**11**	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	*14*
14	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*4*
id	*13*	*0*	*7*	*6*	***23***	*2*	*8*	*1*	*8*	*13*	*4*	*2*	*0*	

To study **change** in the legitimation-network, the matrix can be disaggregated according to the date of publication of each dyad. Obviously, however, a double disaggregation (a single type of relation and date of publication) requires a large number of documents and retrievals. The restrictions of data in this pretest only allow a very preliminary comparison regarding two periods of time: the first period reaches from 1998 (Sorbonne-Summit) to 2002 (Follow-up to the Prague-Summit) and can be labelled as “incubation”. The second period reaches from 2003 (Berlin-Summit) to 2005 (Bergen-Summit) and can be labelled “consolidation”.[11]

[11] The preliminary text-corpus used for this pretest only contains documents from 1998 to 2004. Although the first period is longer than the second, there are fewer retrievals (less than a quarter), which makes it more vulnerable to selection-biases. Although network analysis is used here for the exploration of idealtypical roles rather than for statistical inference, a cautious interpretation is necessary.

Table 5: Periodised Legitimation-Matrices

Incubation (1998-2002)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	13	14	*od*
1	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	*5*
2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*3*
3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	*2*
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*1*
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
7	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	*5*
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	*2*
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
13	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*7*
14	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*4*
id	*7*	*0*	*0*	*2*	*7*	*0*	*4*	*0*	*1*	*4*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*25*

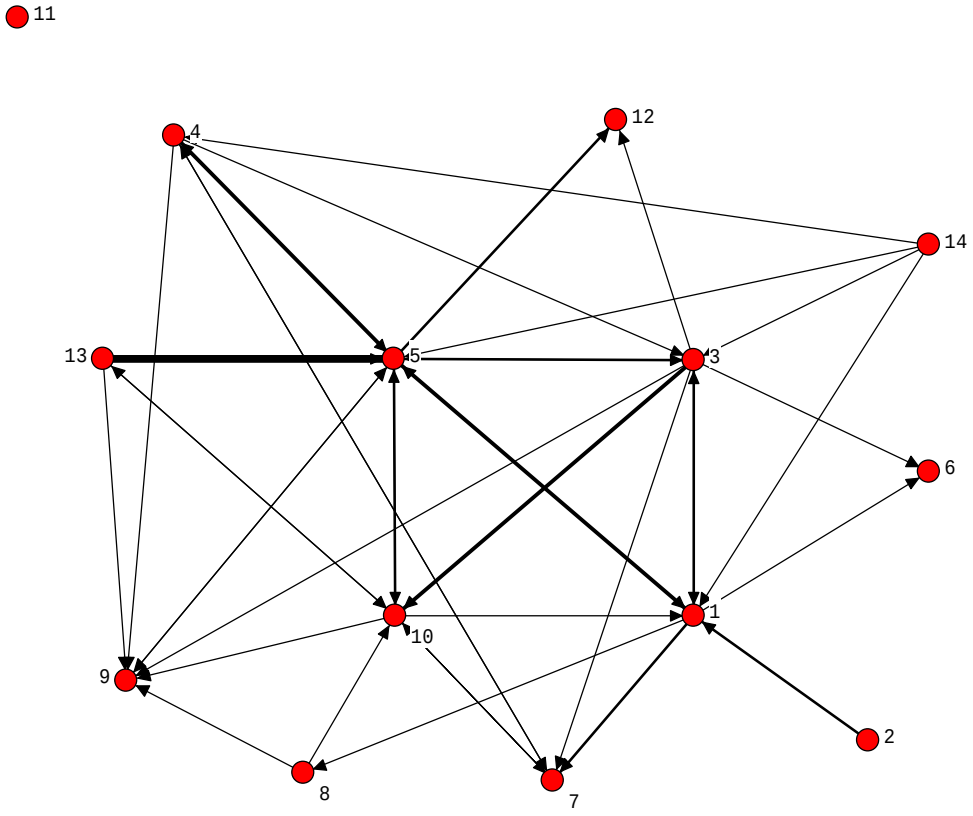
Consolidation (2003-2005)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	13	14	*od*
1	0	0	2	0	5	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	10
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	2	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	4	1	0	0	12
4	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
5	2	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	15
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
9	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	6
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	7
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
id	13	0	7	6	23	2	8	1	8	13	4	2	0	87

Network Analysis

Legitimation relations are by far the most prevalent type of tie in the policy network of the Bologna Process. Figure 2 depicts the directed and valued network of legitimation in the sample.

Figure 2: Legitimation Network of the Bologna Process



The **network as a whole** (symmetrised and dichotomised) is characterised by a relative *low density* (0.22), a moderate degree of centralisation (0.34) and a *very low* degree of *transitivity* (0.02). Thus, there are a few, more or less institutionalised transfers of legitimacy rather than extensive and reciprocal exchanges. In fact, a high proportion of legitimation-triads (transitivity) would have been rather counter-intuitive because, unlike rumours, legitimation is not enhanced by mere flowing. With the degree of centralisation being a measure for the monopolisation of legitimacy as institutional or symbolic capital, hypothesis 2 cannot be confirmed. Instead of one important actor holding a monopoly of legitimation there is a diffuse, polyvalent, yet not reciprocal setting. Therefore, it is important to inquire after fragmentation, polarisation and agglomeration within the network in terms of structural equivalence as well as for important senders and receivers of legitimation.

First insights about positions of structural equivalence are provided by **clique-analysis**. Altogether, there are 12 cliques (n = 3) with a considerable overlap of actors (see table 6).

Table 6: Subgroups within the legitimacy network

Clique	Actors	Equivalence Matrix
1	**3 4 5 9**	
2	**3 4 5 14**	
3	**1 3 5 10**	
4	**1 3 5 14**	
5	**3 5 9 10**	
6	**3 5 12**	
7	**1 3 6**	
8	**1 3 7 10**	
9	**3 4 7**	
10	**8 9 10**	
11	**1 8 10**	
12	**5 9 10 13**	

```
                 1 1   1                 1 1
Level    2 1 2 6 3 4 7 8 9 3 5 1 0 4
-----    - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
6.000    . . . . . . . . . XXX . . .
3.000    . . . . . . . . . XXX XXX .
2.889    . . . . . . . . . XXXXXXX .
2.222    . . . . . . . . XXXXXXXXX .
1.093    . . . . . . . XXXXXXXXXXX .
1.000    . . . . . XXX XXXXXXXXXXX .
0.656    . . . . . XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX .
0.575    . . . . . XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
0.233    . . . . XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
0.081    . . . XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
0.075    . . XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
0.000    XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
```

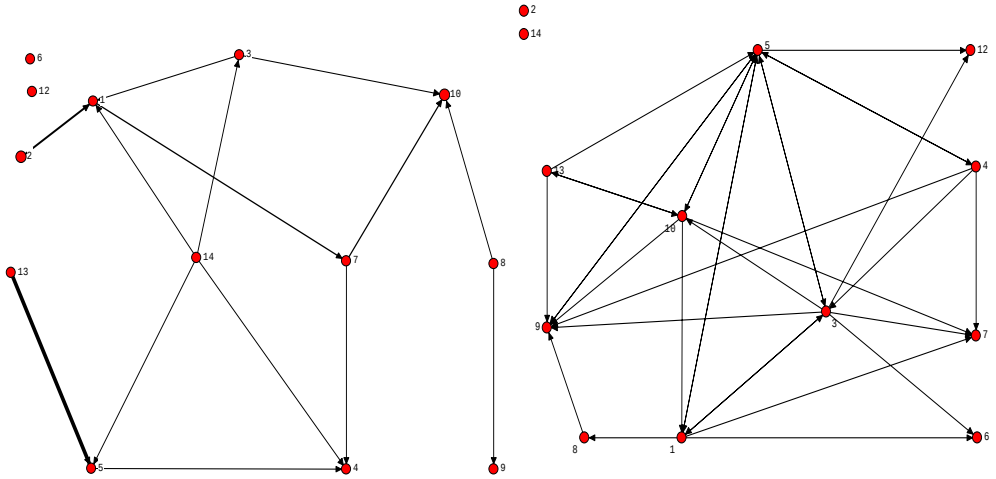
Executive agencies (3) and Bologna Actors (5) share 6 of 12 cliques. How can this common participation be characterised? - An analysis of their valued degrees shows that these are the actors with the highest outdegree (*od*(3)=14; *od*(5)=17) and therefore important *senders* of legitimacy (see table 4). While Bologna Actors transfer institutional capital by granting membership or candidacy, executive agencies as it were redistribute the (input-) legitimacy granted to them by their respective political system by speech-acts of programmatic affirmation and virtual relations (web links), thus transferring symbolical capital. As to the dichotomised degrees it becomes clear that these two types

of actors maintain the *most diverse* legitimation-relations and thus acquire a high degree of degree-centrality[12] in the network.

The result that the three most important senders of legitimacy are public in status and transnational in scope (Bologna Actors, EU Actors and Executive Agencies (European Commission) is *not* in line with hypotheses 3 and 1. Neither are societal actors the most prominent providers of legitimation (3), nor is the air of legitimacy getting thinner when the level of governance rises (1).

Although most network-analytical evidence does not support the initial hypotheses, there may still be a *trend* towards (re-)nationalisation (hypothesis 1), monopolisation (hypothesis 2) and privatisation (hypothesis 3). A decomposition of the network in two periods of time may yield preliminary evidence as to major changes in the legitimation-network of the Bologna Process. Figure 3 displays both the network of the period of “Incubation” (1998-2002) and “Consolidation” (2003-2004):

Figure 3: Legitimation-Networks 1998-2002 and 2003-2004



It is obvious that the network for the first period is somehow “thinner”, which is probably rather due to limitations of data in this pretest than a structural feature (s.a.). Nevertheless, it suggests itself that the density not only of political communication, but of the factual network of legitimation has increased as the set of actors has been broadening significantly since the Prague-Summit in 2001. Calculating the density as the number of factual dyads divided by the number of potential dyads, it has doubled from 0.09 in the first to 0.21 in the second period. Thus, legitimation-relations have deepened as assumed in hypothesis 1 both as to an absolute increase of the respective network-density and in relation with all other types of relations (see table 2), where its proportion has increased from 25.5 to 35.2 %. As far as monopolisation of legitimacy is concerned (hypothesis 2), there is a tendency of centralisation from the period of Incubation (18.2

[12] Other measures of centrality (such as reach-centrality) do not lead to significantly different results.

%) to the period of Consolidation (41 %). Table 7 sums up the results of the temporal comparison:

Table 7: Changes in the legitimation-network

Period/ Feature of Network	**Incubation (1998-2002)**	**Consolidation (2003-2004)**
Density	0.09	0.205
Centralisation	18.18 %	40.9 %
Proportion of all relations	25.5 %	35.2 %

A cross-sectional analysis of the legitimation-network has hardly brought about any support for hypothesis 3, postulating that societal (i.e. private) actors were the most prominent senders of legitimacy. Yet, temporal comparison might point to a *trend* of privatisation. Table 8 presents the top-3 senders for each period with their respective normalized valued outdegree:

Table 8: Prominent senders over time

Incubation (1998-2002)		**Consolidation (2003-2004)**	
Top-3 Senders	***od***	***Top-3 Senders***	***od***
Professional Bodies (13)	8.333	Bologna Actors (5)	25
Trade Unions (14)	4.762	Executive Agencies (3)	20
Legislative Bodies (2) Accreditation Agencies (7)	3.571	EU Actors	16.667

In the period of “Incubation” professional bodies and trade unions appear to be the most prevalent senders of legitimacy, both of which can be regarded private even in a narrow sense. In the period of “Consolidation”, on the other hand, there are only public actors from the intergovernmental level (Bologna Actors) or above (EU Actors and executive agencies which mainly refers to the EU Commission). Thus, if there is any trend, it is not privatisation, but “publification”, which is in sharp contrast to the third hypothesis.

Although legitimation-relations were by far most prevalent in the sample, the policy network of the Bologna Process is multiplex. Therefore, transfers of legitimacy have to be embedded in a more comprehensive view of the network. To this end, the multiplexity of relations can be taken into account for a limited number of idealtypical actors. The Bologna Process as a transnational policy network bridges between supranational and national policy making. To reflect this multilevel nature of higher-education-governance and to explore the differentiation and fragmentation of the network we created a very simple *heuristic synopsis* of the dichotomised multiplex relations of EU Actors (1), Bologna Actors (5) and national or regional actors (4) as presented in table 9:

Table 9: Relational patterns in the policy network

Receiver (C.)/ Sender (R.)	**EU**	**Bologna**	**National/ regional**
EU Actors		Information Transaction Legitimation Cooperation	Information Transaction Cooperation Power
Bologna Actors	Legitimation Cooperation		Legitimation Cooperation Lobby
National/regional Representation	Power Cooperation	Legitimation Cooperation Lobby	

Table 9 displays the multiplex idealtypical relations of supranational, intergovernmental and national/regional actors, which have been verbalised for a better understanding. *EU Actors* supply national and Bologna Actors with information and monetary benefits. These transfers are flanked by mutual relations of cooperation. Moreover, there is a transfer of institutional capital (legitimacy) from the EU to Bologna Actors (the most frequently mentioned dyad in this figuration). Finally, there are formal directives to national actors e.g. to transform European legislation into national law**.** *Bologna Actors* cooperate with the EU. They also legitimise EU Actors, e.g. by providing Commission and Council with a status of membership. Thus, there is a reciprocal exchange of institutional capital. Furthermore, Bologna Actors legitimise national actors by granting membership or candidacy to the Bologna Process or by formally recognising political changes in line with the process. Finally, the national and intergovernmental actors are linked by reciprocal cooperation and there are lobbying-efforts towards the national states to implement the agenda of the process. *National and regional actors* cooperate with supranational actors and exert power on them as far as they induce national interests into EU-politics (e.g. via European Summits). They provide legitimacy to the Bologna Process by chairing the follow-up-group as its very core. Moreover, national actors promise cooperation and at the same time emphasize their importance as collaborative partners, thus preparing the ground for informal influence on the Bologna Actors (lobbying).

CONCLUSION

Legitimacy can be conceptualised in two major ways: Normative political theory focuses on the democratic sources of legitimacy, which is therefore addressed as a procedural idea or value how the representation of political sovereignty shall best be organized. Moreover, legitimacy can be examined in structural terms as a resource within a configuration of actors, which is subject to constant bargaining and exchange.

Following the second, more actor-centred, understanding I examined three hypotheses with reference to some structural features of a transnational political process: the Bologna Process for a European Higher Education Area:

First, it was hypothesised, that legitimation-relations would play a major role in the Bologna Process as a compensation for the shortcomings in legitimacy characterising transnational policy making. As a result of quantitative content analysis relations of legitimation were by far the most prevalent among seven different types of relations in the network and the legitimation network has gained both density and hierarchy over time. However, network-analytical evidence casts doubt on the assumption of a general legitimacy-deficit of supranational actors. Here, supranational (EU) and intergovernmental (Bologna) actors appear to be the most important senders of legitimation in the sample.

Second, it was held that Legitimacy as a symbolic resource can be monopolised and used to create asymmetric exchange relations, thus being a power resource just like other material and immaterial resources. A cross-section perspective of the legitimation-network with the degree of centralisation being a measure for monopolisation of legitimacy as institutional or symbolic capital, hypothesis 2 cannot be confirmed. Instead of one important actor holding a monopoly of legitimation there is a diffuse, polyvalent, yet not reciprocal setting. However, an observation over time points to a trend of (degree-) centralisation in the network, a result that calls for further investigation.

Finally, it was hypothesised that societal actors would have a larger potential to legitimate than public actors. Thus, the former should primarily be senders of legitimacy while the latter should rather be receivers. In a cross-section perspective of the policy network professional bodies are the only private actor among the top-3 senders of legitimacy, exceeded by Bologna Actors and EU Actors. Nevertheless, professional bodies are the most important net-senders of legitimacy. Thus, they might be characterised as “producers” of legitimacy while the other two types are rather “processors”. In this somewhat diffuse setting, however, a comparison of two time-periods did not account for any trend of privatisation, but rather of “publification”.

As preliminary as the empirical research presented in this paper may be, it calls into question some aspects of normative modernisation theory. The lamentation of “the supranational sphere” suffering from democratic deficits is based on an overly idealtypical and monolithic concept of the supranational. In terms of network analysis there is not only a blurring of public and private sphere, but also a hybrid setting of supranational, national and regional actors. Although there is evidence for functional differentiation and role diversification within the policy network, there is obviously no unidirectional flow of legitimacy, be it institutional or symbolical capital, but vivid bargaining. The

legitimation-network of the Bologna Process can thus be characterised as a “bazaar” rather than a “bureaucracy”.

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