

Joseph Jupille. *Procedural Politics: Issues, Interests, and Institutional Choice in the European Union*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 294 pp.

PROCEDURAL POLITICS is about everyday politics with respect to rules. In other words, it studies the conditions under which, the ways in which and the effects with which actors challenge the rules they operate under. The European Union (EU) is an ideal setting for such a study, because it contains a variety of decision-making rules and institutions that exert different influence under such rules.

Jupille starts by developing a general argument about the determinants, the dynamics and the effects of procedural politics. He deals with the following three questions: when are actors more likely to debate about which rules to follow rather than to operate under them? (or in other words, when is procedural politics more likely?), which behavioral regularities are we likely to observe when actors engage in procedural politics? and, finally, what are the policy consequences of procedural politics? The author develops six broad hypotheses. He then proceeds by ranking the preferences of the Council, the Commission and the Parliament with regard to nine EU legislative procedures and by introducing a game of EU procedural politics that provides the basis for some these expectations. The hypotheses are tested using an original data set of instances of procedural politics occurring between 1987 and 1997 and case studies of environmental and agricultural policy legislation.

With regard to the determinants, a necessary condition for procedural politics is the availability of alternative institutional arrangements, otherwise actors would have no choice between rules. Having satisfied this condition, procedural politics is more likely to occur if the jurisdictional ambiguity of proposed legislation increases. Jupille illustrates how the frequency of procedural politics increases around the period when a new Treaty enters into force as the new regime offers new opportunities and creates new ambiguities. Moreover, policy areas that are 'horizontal' in nature, such as environmental policy which cuts across many sectors, generate greater ambiguity and are more susceptible to procedural politics. The second determinant is related to actors' incentives. Actors promote those rules that maximize their influence and, as the influence differential among available alternative increases, procedural politics is more likely to occur. Jupille shows how EU institutions, especially the Parliament, have systematically argued for the use of those rules that are either neutral or increase their influence. A dispute is ten times more likely when the Parliament

faces its most unfavorable procedure as when it faces an average procedure. Confirming evidence is reported both from statistical analysis and, especially environmental policy, case study evidence.

In terms of dynamics of procedural politics, Jupille argues that actors are likely to frame issues in such a way as to "fit" them within the rules that they prefer. Reframing, namely redefining an issue so as to move its substantive core from an unfavorable to a favorable procedure, appears ubiquitous. But joining or separating issues for the same purpose are also common. An interesting result, of which so far we have had only anecdotal evidence, is the Parliament's readiness to forego short-term substantive policy losses to obtain long-term procedural gains.

Procedural preferences also explain the coalition dynamics, more so than the supranational-intergovernmental divide. Jupille provides systematic and case study evidence (especially from environmental policy) that the supranational nature of the Commission and the Parliament do not drive these institutions together if their procedural preferences differ. However, it must be noted that this result is confined to instances where actors dispute the procedural basis of a legislative proposal.

Procedural politics has three main repercussions. First, it decreases decision-making efficiency. The decision time of proposed legislation, of which the procedural basis has been disputed, more than doubles. Second, it affects policy outcomes by making log rolls possible, defining substantive issues on the basis of procedural motivations or, more simply, because rules shape outcomes. The environmental and agricultural policy case studies provide ample evidence of these effects. For instance, the very existence of the Beef Hormones Directive is the result of the Commission and eight member states conspiring to change the legal basis and adopt the measure by majority, rather than unanimous, voting. Finally, the likelihood of procedural changes in Treaty articles increases as the frequency of procedural disputes increases. The provisions that were subjected to a procedural change in the Maastricht Treaty were those that experienced a greater than average share of procedural disputes. This is especially the case where the Parliament has been involved in the dispute and has been the beneficiary of the rule change. Additionally, Jupille maps day-to-day procedural politicking to subsequent Treaty changes, especially in the environmental policy cases. This result sheds new light on the motivations for institutional changes at Treaty level. It provides an alternative, or at least complementary, explanation to Moravcsik's argument about credibility as the basis for adopting majority voting.

This book is a fine example of scholarly work. Jupille investigates an under-researched aspect of EU politics, he develops an original argument, he tests his propositions systematically both quantitatively and qualitatively and he is always careful of producing alternative explanations to his main thesis. Different readers will find different aspects more or less satisfying. For instance, the analysis of patterns of procedural politics is particularly rewarding. I also like how Jupille links everyday procedural politics to Treaty changes. This is probably the finest example of linkages and feedback effects between day-to-day and grand bargaining politics and is a credible challenge liberal intergovernmentalism. The accurate and systematic process tracing in the case studies deserves also mention. Here, however, I would have preferred greater reliance on bargaining theory. In addition to the coalition and framing analysis, bringing to light standard negotiating dynamics such as anticipation of actors' responses, uncertainty of policy positions and strategic reputation building, which clearly operate in these cases, would have helped us to better understand outcomes and patterns of mutual concessions. Nevertheless, these comments should take nothing away from a work that breaks new ground in the study of EU politics.

Fabio Franchino
University College London