Legitimating Public Policy-Making: Referendums and European Integration

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Outline of the lecture

- Public Policy-Making and Direct Democracy
- European Integration at a Glance
- EU-Related Referendums and Their Impacts
- Public Opinion and Regional Cooperation
- Discussions
Public policy-making and direct democracy

- Direct democracy is policy oriented
  - The electoral process centers on specific policy issues
  - Voting results directly influence policy choice

- Public policy-making
  - Process: policy proposal → policy-making → policy implementation → policy evaluation/feedback
  - Contemporary direct democracy is mostly used to draft policy proposal and determine policy-making

- Direct democracy can legitimize public policy-making
European integration at a glance

**Timeline**
- 1951 Treaty of Paris: ECSC
- 1957 Treaty of Rome: EEC and EURATOM
- 1967 Merging ECSC, EEC and EURATOM into EC
- 1979 European Monetary System
- 1986 SEA: Single European Market
- 1997 Amsterdam Treaty
- 2001 Nice Treaty
- 2004 Constitutional Treaty (abandoned)
- 2007 Lisbon Treaty

**Enlargement**
- 1951 France, Italy, West Germany and three Benelux countries
- 1973 Denmark, Ireland and the UK
- 1981&86 Greece, Portugal and Spain
- 1990 German reunification led to a full German membership
- 1995 Austria, Finland and Sweden
- 2004 Ten East and Mediterranean European countries
- 2007 Bulgaria and Romania
- 2013 Croatia
European integration at a glance
European integration at a glance

- Institutional structure
  - European Commission
  - European Council
  - European Parliament
  - European Central Bank
  - European Court of Justice

- Public support for European integration
  - ‘permissive consensus’ in the early decades
  - Growing scepticism after the Maastricht Treaty
  - Politicization in several member states: UK, France, Finland…
EU-related referendums and their impacts

- Three types of EU referendums
  - Membership referendums
  - Policy referendums
  - Treaty referendums

- Key popular votes on European integration
  - 1975-6-5 UK: to remain in the EC
  - 1992-6-2 Denmark: to ratify the Maastricht Treaty
  - 1992-9-20 France: to ratify the Maastricht Treaty
  - 2000-9-28 Denmark: to join the EMU
  - 2001-6-7 Ireland: to ratify the Nice Treaty
  - 2003-9-14 Sweden: to join the EMU
EU-related referendums and their impacts

Key popular votes on European integration (continued)

- 2005-5-29 France: to ratify the Constitutional Treaty
- 2005-6-1 Netherlands: to ratify the Constitutional Treaty
- 2008-6-12 Ireland: to ratify the Lisbon Treaty
- 2016-06-23 UK: to remain or leave the EU

Explaining the dynamics of EU referendums

- Voters: lacking a concrete knowledge about the EU
- Political parties: lacking enthusiasm for EU campaigns
- Interest groups: exploiting discursive campaign linkages
EU-related referendums and their impacts

[Graph showing trends over time]

[Map of France with results highlighted]

[Poster reading "VOTE NO! The Lisbon Treaty is Bad News for Workers"]
EU-related referendums and their impacts

- Impacts of EU-related referendums
  - Politicizing European integration
    -- from ‘permissive consensus’ to ‘constraining dissensus’
  - Forcing the EU to address the democratic deficit
    -- the democratic nature of international organization and regional institutions
  - (De-)Legitimating EU treaties and policies
    -- Constraining or pushing forward European integration
Public Opinion and Regional Cooperation

- Regional cooperation and integration
  - Inter-state reconciliation
  - Functional cooperation
  - Intergovernmental negotiations
  - Supranational institutions

- Public opinion, referendums and regional integration
  - Public attitude towards neighboring countries
  - Public support for regional foreign policies
  - Transfer of state sovereignty
  - Democratize the regional cooperative schemes
Discussions

- Why did regional integration in Europe lead to so many popular votes?

- How did referendums reshape the process of European integration?

- Do you think that ordinary people should have the right to vote on issues related to foreign policy?

- Will direct democracy promote or prevent regional cooperation in East Asia?