Baptiste Aguila
Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter
Helmut-Schmidt-Universität
Professur für Verwaltungswissenschaft
Holstenhofweg 85, 22043 Hamburg
Email: aguila@hsu-hh.de

15. FoJuS Jahrestagung
„Politik und Verwaltung zwischen
langfristiger gesellschaftlicher
Transformation und kurzfristigem
Krisenmanagement"
24. Februar 2022
Technische Universität Darmstadt

V. Explaining governance. A process perspective

Within the previous chapters, the core elements building an analytical framework to governance were presented, and enlightened through the institutional and organizational approaches, which respectively identified orientation and coordination as two pivotal activities effected throughout governance. However, the analytical framework was, so far, still exploring governing processes as frozen in a synchronic way, while the diachronic, process-related aspects of governance were solely sketched. In this chapter, which concludes the first part on a governance theory, this gap will be closed, and change throughout the governing process will be more clearly explained. In addition, the notion of multilevel governance will be introduced and changes affected by levels of governance articulated. Finally, a framework explaining the emergence of specific governing patterns will be outlined, including fragmentation, fragmegration, fragtegration and integration.

1. Sketching the process perspective

In this section, the process perspective on governing is elaborated and conceptually attached to the broad literature on public policy and policy-making (Araral 2015; Hupe and Hill 2012), thus merging them into a coherent modelization of sequential governing activities. In addition, both the institutional and the organizational approaches might provide explanative elements to catch the governing processes and changes in analytical way. Lastly, changes throughout governance will be more specifically defined, and a more encompassing conceptualization of change within the governing process will be advanced, including both institutional and organizational theories.

1.1. Governance as a process

In this study, governance is defined first and foremost as a process of governing that unfolds in a sequential manner, and including a broad range of societal and governmental actors. However, the process perspective might be more precisely defined, and contrasted with other valid views on governing, for instance as a structure or system (Williamson 1999; Jessop 2002). According to a process perspective, processes represent the basic elements to be analyzed, however states, entities, or patterns are not denied, while time ordering, as well as sequentiality of events display an essential groundwork for understanding social phenomena (Maitlis and Hernes 2010). More profoundly, according to process philosophy and metaphysics, the primacy of process as objects of enquiry might be expressed either in a conceptual way, assuming that processes are the most appropriate conceptual tools for research, or in an ontological manner, in thinking that processes are the most essential characteristic of empirical reality (Rescher 1996). According to a version of conceptual reductionism, processes are more fundamental than structures, systems, patterns, entities, or actors, and all substantial objects of research are understood as emerging from each process, defined as sequential pattern of action (ibid: 41). When applied to governing, a process perspective fosters an understanding of governance in a way that is analogous to a public policy, in particular to a process-oriented approach to policy-making (Peters and Pierre 2016: 22). More importantly, within the structural-functionalist approach to governance typical of the 1960s and 1970s, the governmental decision-making process was considered as a black-box linking inputs and outputs together, however without exploring the internal politico-administrative processes, within state and the society. In contrast with the mechanistic assumption of the old functionalist approach, Peters and Pierre suggest a neo-functionalist governance model, which advances five functions that are addressed within the process of governing: decision-making, goal-selection,

resource mobilization, implementation, as well as feedback, evaluation and learning (ibid: 30). In this regards, decision-making is considered as the most crucial function of governing, which transcends all other governing functions, which might be fulfilled by societal or state actors. In addition, the governing functions mirror the policy cycle models of decision-making advanced by the pioneers of public policy research (Howlett and Giest 2015). More particularly, *decision-making* might address a governmental role of authoritatively allocating values, and steering the policy design, agenda-setting, formulation or implementation processes, whereas societal actors makes policy decisions by advocating for specific ideas or beliefs, placing them on the political agenda, and legitimizing the formation of public goals (Peters and Pierre 2016: 35). In addition, *goal-selection* more explicitly addresses agenda-setting as necessary condition for selecting the most crucial policies issues from the unofficial public agenda into the official and governmental public agenda that become then eligible for governmental action (Howlett and Geist 2015: 18). While agenda-setting might emerge from within the public sector, in the cases of governmental actors seeking to expand an issue from a formal to public agenda, policy initiation might as well unfold from the outside, when societal actors use access to government for advocating specific issues and policy preferences. In this sense, *goal-formation* matches with the institutional view presented within the third chapter, which portrays a long-term process of generating, expanding and consolidating patterns of rules and values which are stabilized in more general preferences and goals. More specifically, goals might be generated democratically through a parliamentary process, and they might emerge from within the public administration, when bureaucratic actors follow either specific outcomes or survival. Regarding goal formation and selection, the process of aggregating several interests into political goals requires legitimate procedures and informal rules, which might vary according to the democratic system model (Peters and Pierre 2016: 41). The mobilization of resources unfolds generally more easily through governmental actors, who enjoy a relative monopoly over taxation instruments, however societal and private actors might generate and activate appropriate resources they need to achieve their strategies. Thus, resource mobilization might be considered as laying the organizational groundwork for *implementation*, which refers to the activity of casting policy goals and preferences into tangible form and effect, therefore giving important leeway and discretion to administrative actors at the lower levels of government, as well as to societal actors involved in policy provision (Wu et al. 2018: 10). Such room for maneuvering policy, however, allows for both implementation success and failure, in which governing challenges or chances might appear. In this sense, the nature of implementing interactions and the design of public policies are essential in ensuring that a previously selected goal or strategy is carried out in the real world. Classically, the process of implementation might unfold either in a top-down manner, through administrative planning and strategic management, or in a bottom-up way, providing local actors with discretional leeway to choose the instruments according to the tasks to be executed and more environmental factors. Both the mobilization of resources and implementation might be attached to the organizational perspective illustrated in the fourth chapter, pointing to the mobilizing of actors and tasks for achieving a common goal. Finally, *policy evaluation, feedback and learning* tackles the assessment of public policy related to previously stated objectives, while knowledge from success and failure in previous functions feeds back into the governing process (Peters and Pierre 2016: 10). Through circular feedback, learning, and evaluation, societal and democratic accountability is ensured. All in all, the policy cycle is extended toward a nonlinear process of governing, which settles the conscious activity of decision-making as the very core of requirement permeating governance. In order to explain governing change, however, scholars might rely on institutional and organizational approaches, which provide a set of causal mechanisms linking micro-, meso-, and macro-processes together.

1.2. Change in the process of governing

Departing from previous notions of governance as a structure or system, the governing process is analyzed as timely ordered sequentiality of actions and events that might be aggregated within a non-linear policy cycle model (Peters and Pierre 2016). However, notions of stability, change, and transformation might transcend the circularity of policy cycle models, and suggest different explanations for understanding how the process of governing evolves over time, and why some patterns governance are likely to emerge within a policy field. In addition, each of the previous approaches, institutional and organizational, might offer a contrasted lightening upon the notion of stability and change, however, a general conceptualization is needed first, and differentiated in a second step. According to Pierson (2011), many scholars take snapshots of political without including the temporal sequentiality of events and actions within their analytical models, thus impoverishing their insights into the complexity of political life. In contrast, the notion of path-dependency introduces the dimensions of timing and sequentiality into the analysis by assuming that earlier events, disregarding their scale and width, have a greater impact upon the following actions than later events, mainly due to the mechanism of positive feedback (ibid: 18). Through the notion of path-dependency, structuralist or functionalist explanation biases are avoided, and the contingency, unpredictability, and ambiguity of governing processes are highlighted. Thus, while governing unfolds along an often short-time sequentiality, the broader organizational and institutional context fosters the maintaining of stability and status quo through rules, norms, or preferences and values (ibid: 30-31). Within a context of high ambiguity, the governing process might be guided by both the policy cycle and electoral politics, and in such a context, a linearity between decisions, strategies, and effects is not given, and political institutions might contribute to overall stability, reinforcing positive feedback through allocation power and resisting change (ibid: 43). All in all, the notion of path-dependency suggests broad conceptualization of stability and change through multiple equilibria and governing outcomes, the contingency of governing activities and events, the specific sequencing and timing of events, as well as the inherent inertia of governing processes, emphasizing steadiness over transformation (ibid: 44). However, main critics of path-dependency address the overtly motionless understanding of sequentiality, which is permanently locked-in, and only interrupted by critical junctures (ibid: 52). Henceforth, four types of sequential processes are suggested, widening the timely framework, and distinguishing between causal processes and their outcomes. The first process, *tornado*, represents the case of a sudden causal process unfolding over a short-time period and resulting in short-time outcome, while the second instantiation, *earthquake*, triggers an outcome occurring over a short-time and engendering a slow-moving effect. The third process, *meteorite*, exemplifies a short-time causal process causing a slow-moving outcome, and the fourth process, *global warming*, addresses the case of a slow-moving causal process generating a long-term impact (ibid: 81). Within the realm of governance, the four processual types correspond respectively to partisan *politics* for the first process, *path-dependency* and critical juncture for the second process, *threshold effects* as well as causal chains for the third process, and generational *replacement* of elite actors for the fourth process (ibid: 89). Overall, by introducing varying temporalities within the process of governing the short-time framework of politics and policy cycle is expanded to cover wider collections of causal explanations. Within another seminal publication, Streeck and Thelen (2005) suggest an alternative classification of change processes by distinguishing between incremental and abrupt processes on the one side, and continuous or discontinuous results on the other side. Regarding changes resulting in continuity, *reproduction* by adaptation tackles reactive or adaptive changes aiming to protect the status quo, while *survival* and return addresses continuity in the course of

action despite historical breaking point in analogy to path dependency, or critical juncture (ibid: 8). In contrast, institutional *breakdown* highlights a sudden process and gradual *transformation* a slow-unfolding process, both of which triggers discontinuity (ibid: 9). Further, changes might be analytically split off into endogenous and exogenous ones, while transformative changes are underlining endogenous character of individual actors contesting the status quo from within the institution and organization (ibid: 18). All in all, four endogenous, gradual, transformative types of changes are suggested. First, *displacement* outlines a change unfolding in abrupt or slow way and activating actors that previously challenged the dominant worldview, hence modifying the balance of power among challengers and defenders of the status quo (ibid: 22). Second, *layering* tackles a gradual but substantial change through the addition of new rules and instruments over the previous one, thus weakening support for the status quo (ibid: 24). Third, *drift* touches upon a slow-moving transformation occurring through the absence of effort for maintaining the status quo, thus rules and instruments remain the same but their intended effect drifts away (ibid: 26). Fourth, *conversion* deals with a gradual and profound change in which governing activities are redirected towards new objectives, hence the institutional and organizational framework is used for the interests of challenging actors (ibid: 28). In their theory of a gradual institutional change, Mahoney and Thelen (2010) elaborate further their explanation about endogenous and gradual changes, extending the time frame of analysis and introducing the notion of action constellation and coalitional dynamics to explain transformation, based on changing the preferences, choices, interests and values of actors. More specifically, according to a power-distributional approach, the degree of openness and compliance by the implementation of rules offer an explanatory key to understand governing dynamics, and how rule ambiguity opens a creative leeway and agency for individual actors to alter the governing process from within (ibid: 8). In this sense, each four type of endogenous changes fits with specific political context criteria and kinds of actors (ibid: 22). More precisely, displacement unfolds within an environment where weak veto opportunity and a high level of discretion allows *insurrectionaries* to actively mobilize actors against status quo, while layering occurs when veto is strong and discretion low opening room for *subversives* to transform the established order without breaking rules. Furthermore, drift unfolds within the framework of both strong veto opportunity and discretion, which leaves space for *symbionts* to exploit stability and neglect maintaining the status quo. Lastly, conversion is facilitated through weak veto possibility and high discretion level, creating a leeway for opportunists to reinterpret the rules for their personal advantage (ibid: 18-27). All in all, several actor constellations might be thinkable, and while challengers to the status quo are well equipped to destabilize established order, a more balanced view of stability and change has been suggested (Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Emerging from the theory of fields, a conceptualization of change as a gradual learning and punctuated equilibrium introduces the notion that interaction' dynamics are often strategic, and unfold in reaction to positioning of actors in proximate fields (ibid: 85). In this perspective, the emerging of strategic fields represents a core transformational process unfolding along four steps and beginning first with emergent *mobilization* where actors create new interaction lines, and second, establish a *settlement* through their social skills to created order out of chaos (ibid: 95). Within a third step, state *facilitation* addresses the involvement of state actors or capacities to support the settled order. In the fourth step, the establishment of an internal governance unit, by ensuring rule complying, stabilizes the overall field. However, a field perspective transcends the sole focus on stability, and suggests a more complex dynamic between on the one side, the *incumbents* defending the status quo, fostering field stability through internalized worldviews, establishing strong ties and securing organizational backing and on the other side, *challengers*, who are seeking to exploit previous failures, and build a counter-position by forming alliances

with powerful groups, while at the same time finding a niche to avoid a confrontation (ibid: 98). In this context, the destabilization of strategic fields might either unfold in endogenous manner, through the field invasion by outside actors altering the established settlement and interests, or exogenously, through macro-events having impact upon the different action fields throughout the society and the state (ibid: 100). After the destabilization of the strategic field, however, the reestablishment of field stability is central, and both incumbents and challengers might use their social skills to fashion the new order, however in different ways and guided by distinct interests. Overall, the theory of field helps scholars to understand the dynamic of stability and change, as well as the role of proximate fields, political coalitions or the state by analyzing transformation.

Departing from a mainly institutional approach to change process, March (1981) conceptualized organizational change as non-controllable process that is intrinsically connected to stability and to theories of action in organizations, while organizational reactions to a complex environment implies routinized and adaptive action, as well as the integration of non-rational elements (ibid: 563). Basically, change is characterized as attentive, intelligent, and appropriate response to the environment, showing the quality of standard operative procedures, while relying on the criteria of survival and selection, and directed towards the solution of policy problems. In addition, the process of change relies on learning, trial and error, and implying bargaining or coalition among actors with different interests and preferences, dissemination across organizations, regeneration through renewing of goals, and overall responsiveness to environmental signals (ibid: 564-565). In the same line of thinking, Egeberg et al. (2017) portray organizational change as rational and instrumental process of design and redesigning overall organizational structures of governance, by creating, splitting, merging or terminating units and agencies by an intentional and conscious reflection on criteria of effectiveness or responsiveness (ibid: 38-40). Moreover, organizational design displays an effective manner of redistributing asymmetries of power, therefore, conflicts might appear among actors about structural choices. In a similar vein, Christensen et al. (2020) distinguish the notions of change and structural reforms, defining change as more encompassing concept, and including non-planned and non-deliberate transformation processes, while reforms are characterized as deliberate attempts to modify the core features of organizations (ibid: 131). According to the organizational approach, change and reform are tightly connected and attached to decisions, instruments, and strategies, while talk and action are bounded together throughout an instrumental and rational thinking (ibid: 132). Furthermore, the reform process might be then designed and organized in line with the principles of specialization and coordination, and while specializing involves creating specific units for organizational issues, area, clientele, and levels, coordinating might engage the modification of a positioning of units horizontally and vertically, or establishing a coordinative interministerial working group or commission (ibid: 136). Within the european context, different patterns of reform have been observed that are related to a New Public Management wave in the public sector, generating complex, hybrid, and multi-structured organizational arrangements (ibid: 140). For instance, while France and Germany are classified as slow-moving or reluctant reformer, Sweden was faster and more consensually implementing these waves of reform. As way of synthetizing, both institutional and organizational change are including elements of harmony and conflict (Tang 2011), and being impacted by exogenous or endogenous factors generating a dynamic of stability and transformation. In regards to previous conceptualization of the institutional (3.) and organizational (4.) approaches, however, different ideal-types of change process might be portrayed, which are aligned with the overall framework of governance presented in the second chapter. The idealtypification of the processes of change flows into an extended framework explaining the transformation across time among patterns of governance through the modification of values, preferences, choices, interactions, or strategies.

In line with a conceptualization of institution and institutionalization previously outlined within the second chapter, *institutional change* might be defined as a change in the values, preferences, and choices of governing actors altering the process of generating, consolidating, and expanding the structural patterns of values and rules shaping political life. The mode of institutional change is predominantly *transformational* and *developmental*, including path-dependency effects and gradual and piecemeal cultural changes, which profoundly modify the frames and narratives for interpreting governing, and while sudden historical shocks might appear, they are often quickly reintegrated within the previous developmental path, or slightly modified through the changing of rules, norms, and traditions. The principles of institutional change are aligned with the *ethical* and *axiological* foundation of metagoverning in its institutional understanding, therefore mainly relying on values and preferences as elements of transformation and reflection about the process of governing. The criteria for an institutional change are the *legitimacy* and *appropriateness* of events, actions, and attempts of actors' constellations to re-appropriate and reframe the meaning of governance, while redirecting sense-making and values. Institutional change unfolds mainly at *macro-level* and throughout a *long-term* timeframe, generating a clear pattern of *orientation*.

In regards to the delineation of organization and organizing presented within the third chapter, *organizational change* might be defined as change in the interactions, instruments and strategies of governing actors modifying the process of creating, maintaining, or dissolving the structural patterns of tasks and actor's interactions directed towards a common objective. The main mode of organizational change relates to deliberate effort to *design* and *reform* a given organizational structure by modifying the allocation of tasks, accountability lines, specialization, coordination, which encompass short-term effects of bureaucratic politics, as well as threshold moments and critical junctures affecting the overall constellations of actors, the governing capacity, and lines of accountability. The principle of organizations change is essentially *instrumental* or *rational*, suggesting a tight coupling between talk, action, and effect of reforms. Furthermore, the criteria for achieving organizational change tackle predominantly the *effectiveness* and *responsiveness* of action within a complex and ambiguous environment. Further, organizational change unfolds mainly at *meso-level*, within a relatively *short-time* frame, creating then a *coordination* pattern.
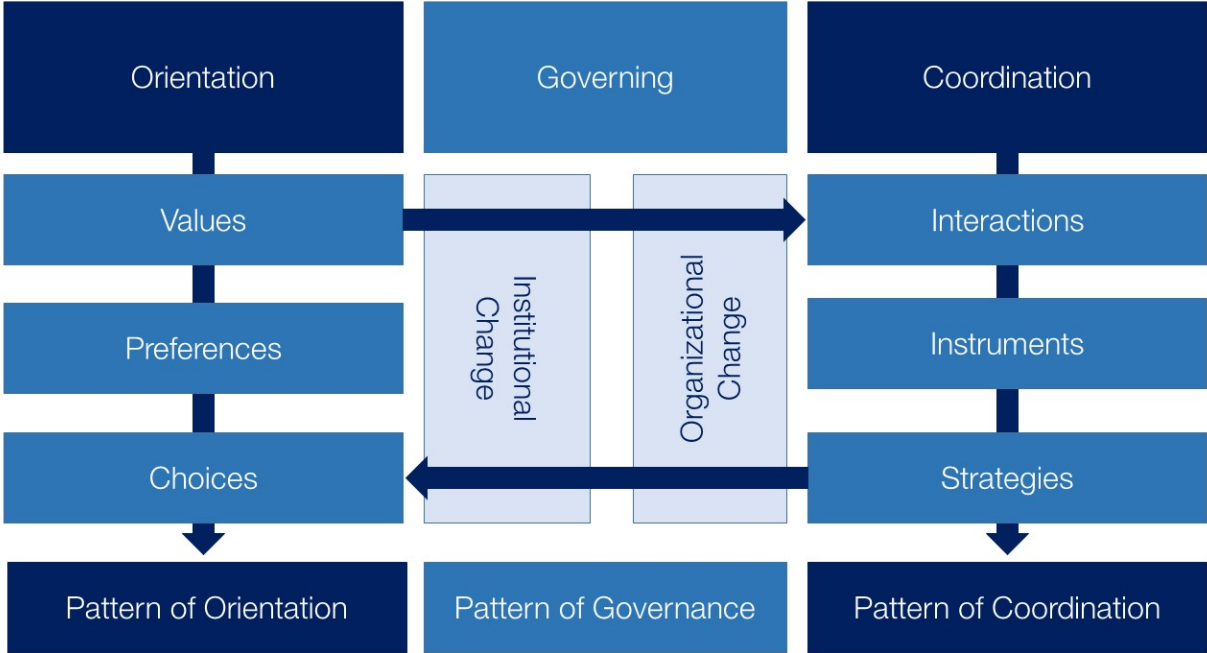
Table 1. Institutional and Organizational Change

	Institutional Change	Organizational Change
Mode	Transformation, Development	Design, Reform
Principle	Axiological, Ethical	Instrumental, Rational
Criteria	Legitimacy, Appropriateness	Effectiveness, Responsiveness
Level	Macro-Level	Meso-Level
Timeframe	Long-term	Short-term
Pattern	Orientation	Coordination

Source: Author

Within the second chapter, the process governing was analyzed through general framework that contained the main elements, including metagovernance, governance, governing, constellations and actors, as well as patterns of governance. In the second and third chapters, respectively, the institutional and organizational approaches were presented separately, highlighting their unique and differentiated character both in terms of stability and change. However, in order to pass the empirical examination, both approaches might be articulated in coherent way, underlining their mutual causal mechanisms, effects, and overall entanglement. To build the extended framework for governance, processes might be distinguished from their causes and effects (Pierson 2001). As regards to *causal* explanations of change, institutional shift in values and preferences might illustrate how endogenous dynamics modify over time the overall frames, narratives, traditions, and perceptions of governing dilemmas, which impact on choices (Bevir and Rhodes 2003). In addition, organizational change in instruments and strategies might be explained by the shifted constellations of actors that modifies the overall structure of interactions and power distribution, affecting the realization of common goals. In terms of a *process* explanation, governing as such might be understood as the entanglement of institutional and organizational processes, and more specifically as the articulation of orientation and coordination. In this sense, while institutional change in axiological direction effects choices about interactions, instruments and strategies, in the same manner, organizational change of strategical rationality impacts an orientation towards some ethical values and preferences. Lastly, causal and process explanations might help to catch the *effects* of governance, including institutional, organizational, and the articulation of both as well. Orientation patterns are explained by shifts in the institutional process and organizational effects, while coordination patterns are formed by both organizational and institutional effects.

Figure 1. Extended Analytical Framework for Governance

Source: Author

2. Introducing multilevel governance

Within the previous section, the extended analytical framework for governance was presented, the institutional and organization type of change were distinguished and the process perspective on governing was clarified under by evoking its conceptual and ontological foundations. Taking stock of the governance framework outlined in the previous chapters, the multilevel character of governing will be highlighted, and the notion of multilevel governance defined. Throughout the following subsections, the process of governing in multilevel arenas will be specified, while some explanations for understanding overall change in multilevel governing will be delineated.

2.1. Defining multilevel governance

The notion of multilevel governance emerged in the early 1990's from the work of Gary Marks on the European structural policy, and supported later on by Liesbet Hooghe on subnational or regional mobilization in the context of European integration (Bache and Flinders, Marks 1992, Marks et al. 1996, Hooghe and Marks 2010). Within the context of a restructuring of a Western, European polity, and a move towards deepened European integration in scope and depth in the late 1980's, the notion of multilevel governance was forged to describe the historical alteration of competencies among governing levels, and more specifically the simultaneous strengthening of supranational and subnational actors (Peters and Pierre 2004). Theoretically, the new concept of multilevel governance was established as third paradigm transcending the dominant schools represented by, one the side, intergovernmentalism, and state-centered realism, and on the other side, international relations, and neofunctionalism, whereby both theoretical strains previously dominated the field by explaining European integration in two opposed manners. As seen from the *intergovernmentalist* lenses, the European integration process was mainly dominated by the national member-states, that are the key European players taking the most important decisions, remaining in control of supranational actors, and retaining their constitutional mandates, major core state powers, or opportunity to exit the European arena whenever they wish (Jessop 2004). As observed from the *neofunctionalist* perspective, the European integration process is largely superseded by supranational actors, who are empowered by the growing interconnectedness of the national economies, and the spill-over trend towards a deepened integration of policy sectors and policy interests, thus supranational actors gain advantage over national states over the long-term by winning societal allies and developing a European constituency (George 2004). Overall the shifts towards intergovernmentalist and neofunctionalist explanations might be represented through a wave of European integration, whereby supranational and national actors have gained or loosed competencies over time. However, the concept of multilevel governance offers a more encompassing framework that acknowledges the multiplicity of levels of government, whereby the member-states are not anymore the sole locus of political powers, whereby the subnational, national, and supranational actors share their sovereignty and engage in the process of collective decision-making (Marks et al. 1996: 343). Whereas multilevel governance has been associated with an unbalanced focus on functional spill-over strengthening the supranational over national actors, multilevel governance is actually recognized as a theory of European policy-making that entails an actor-centered approach analytically distinguishing the strategies of elected and non-elected decision-makers at different levels of governments (George 2004; Marks 1996; Piattoni 2010). Within such a strategical framework, the notion of multi-level governing challenges the very understanding of statehood in terms of monopoly of legitimate coercion, territorial domain of authority, and clear-cut constitutional identity (Jessop 2004). In contrast with a state-centered

approach to multi-level governing, the governance-centric outlook highlights the reorganization of state power, and the rescaling of state sovereignty, while it recognizes the de-nationalization of statehood, the de-statization of political systems, and the internationalization of policy fields, which altogether underlines the necessity to conceptualize European integration as an historical process transforming common notions of power and politics (ibid: 64-66). Alternatively, multi-level governance is characterized as sequential process of policy-making and a loosely-coupled multilevel system, whereby the pattern of loosely-coupling might be observed among national, European, and subnational levels, *vertically*, among subnational or national actors, *horizontally*, or within the different legislative, executive, and judicative branches of government, *internally*, thus multilevel governing might separate powers in a more complex manner (Benz 2010: 216).

In line with governing as described in the previous chapters, multi-level governance within the European Union displays several modes that might at first glance appear different from classical modes of hierarchy, market, and network. A classification in the context of europeanization has been suggested by Scharpf (2010), distinguishing among mutual adjustment, intergovernmental negotiation, joint decision, and hierarchical direction. Whereas the mode of *mutual adjustment* represents the most basic behavior of national governments, *intergovernmental negotiation* sets out coordination by agreements of national executives remaining in control of decision-making, *hierarchical direction* points to the supranational centralization of decision at a European level, without participation of member-states, and finally, *joint decision-making* addresses a merging of intergovernmental negotiation and supranational centralization called the community method (ibid: 69-75). In addition, Benz (2010) has added *network governance* and the Open Method of Coordination as governing modes supplementing the previous classification, while reframing a hierarchical direction as asymmetric interaction among actors, as opposed to a governing mode by command and control (ibid: 218-219). In this regards, network governance facilitates policy-making by linking different actors and levels, while the *Open Method of Coordination* seeks to trigger policy convergence through competition. Moreover, Piattoni (2010) emphasizes a mode of network governance, suggesting *committee governance* as supranational manner for solving technical challenges, while finally, the *new modes of governance* mainly correspond to an Open Method of Coordination through self-steering, blaming and shaming. Finally, Rosenau (2004) advances a classification for transnational governing encompassing governance with or without government, market governance, network governance, as well as *side-by-side governance*, and *mobius-web governance*, which represent more singular manners of governing transnationally. For instance, side-by-side governance tackles cooperative exchanges among transnational non-governmental elites, while mobius-web-governance raises a hybrid dynamic, fully overlapping actors and levels (ibid: 41-45). Returning to the notion of a loosely-coupled multilevel dynamic, Benz argues that the level of coupling hinges on the governing modes and strategies employed by actors within each arena. Either through vertical, horizontal, or internal coordination, levels of coupling might range from *uncoupled*, by mutual adjustment or autonomy, towards a *tightly coupled* joint decision-making by binding mandates, and finally, loosely coupled relationships might involve different forms of shadow negotiations and cooperation (ibid: 223-225). At last, while loose-coupling of multilevel governing might undermine democratic legitimacy, it shows an essential feature of European multilevel governance. Within the same vein, Peters and Pierre (2004) have suggested the existence of a Faustian bargain, in which a consensual and cozy style of decision-making and bargaining might actually hide the powerful relationships among strong players, who dominate the multilevel game in the absence of clear institutional rules. However, constitutional principles might allow for an equality of power among actors, levels, and arenas.

The concept of multilevel governance might be used in normative, theoretical, or analytical way and the most seminal contributions (Piattoni 2010) have strengthened its analytical foundation. Famously, Hooghe and Marks (2004; 2010) have advanced two types of multilevel governance, termed Type I and Type II. The *first type of multilevel governing* is characterized by a general-purpose jurisdiction and power-sharing at a limited number of governmental levels and bundled into few policy packages, membership is non-intersecting and territorially organized, while the overall framework displays a system-wide architecture similar federalism with a power division among legislative, executive, and judicative. The *second type of multilevel governing* displays an ensemble of task-specific jurisdictions that are assigned to a large numbers of levels, power-dividing at numerous territorial scales and distributed functionally according to policy-specific objectives, membership is intersecting, overlapping and potentially competing, whereby overall such a polycentric framework allows for a multiplicity of decision-making loci and arena, where power division is not given (ibid: 18-22). In addition, both types of multilevel governing imply specific visions of decision-making that are biased in their basic political framing. For instance, the first type of multilevel governing favors the establishment of intrinsic communities building citizen identities who might express their opinions through voice and political deliberation, thus conflict articulation is organized through collective self-government and party competition. The second type of multilevel governing, in contrast, priviledges ad hoc and instrumental emerging of extrinsic communities, in which political deliberation is expressed through exiting an arena, shifting jurisdiction, thus engendering conflict avoidance and splitting off decision-making, by allowing more flexibility and tailoring scales towards problem-solving (26-28). In the European Union, the first and second types of multilevel governing are more intermeshed than separated, thus the functional-horizontal governing type is often nested within a vertical-general governing that represents more durable arrangements that might be constitutionalized over time (ibid: 26).

Building on the previous differentiation between types of multilevel governing, Simona Piattoni has elaborated a fine-grained analytical framework for mapping change in multilevel in policy, politics and polity (2010). More specifically, her theory of multilevel governance assumes that national governments have been challenged in their gate-keeping role and their ability to control the center-periphery gate, the state-society gate, and the domestic-foreign gate (ibid: 19-20). In this regards, multilevel governance opens a conceptual space established through an articulation of three axes and planes, the center-periphery axis, the domestic-international axis, and finally, the state-society axis, whereby the point of origin embodies the ideal-typical sovereign national state. Whereas the *first axis* shows a movement away from a unitary state towards decentralized configurations, the *second axis* signals a shifts away from state autonomy towards international cooperation, and the *third axis* reflects a pendulum between the public and private involvement of actors in multilevel governing (ibid: 28). Altogether, the three axes shape a three-dimensional space delimiting three conceptual planes, the *first plane* addressing the internationalization and decentralization nexus and the strengthening regionalization, the *second plane* highlighting the classical theories of European integration, and the *third plane* relying on civil society advocacy and mobilization at subnational level (ibid: 29). All in all, such a three-dimensional conceptual space allows for understanding the variation and change in multilevel governing, as well as the strategies of actors evolving within and between multilevel arenas. Finally, tacking stock of the literature on multilevel governance, and in line with the definition of governance offered within the previous chapters, multilevel governance is defined as *the process of governing among and within levels of government*. This definition matches with the analytical governance framework in terms of coordination, orientation, constellations, governance patterns, and metagovernance.

2.2. Describing multilevel governing in the European Union

In line with the identification of governance as sequential process of governing that is analogous with a public policy cycle, and involving different intensities and temporalities of institutional, and organizational change, multilevel governance might be equally described in non-linear way along a policy cycle model encompassing multilevel dynamics as well. The early classification of the policy-making process within the European Union of Marks al. (1996) might historically be attached to the pre-constitutional framework given by the Maastricht treaties. In their works, the authors distinguish four policy making phases, including policy initiation, decision-making, implementation, and adjudication. Within the first stage, the European Commission dominates the *agenda-setting* by using its formal power to initiate and draft legislation, however, both the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union share some limited agenda-setting power, while a multiplicity of interest groups and subnational actors mobilize their preferences, values and interests into the European policy arena, influencing the European Commission and the European Parliament. Thus, the European Commission represents an essential actor through the policy initiation stage by expanding its nodal position as interlocutor of national executives, subnational actors and interest' groups, however, without being the only critical actor impacting agenda-setting (ibid: 357-361). In the second stage, the Council of the European as an assembly of governmental executives undertakes the main competency for *decision-making*, for instance by adjusting policy proposal to their own national preferences and interests, or defining the role of the European institutions in the policy-making process, however, without retaining an overall control over the legislative process. In this regards, the European Parliament enjoys meaningful decision-making capacities through the rule of qualified majority, the institutionally constrained use of veto, and the co-decision procedure triggering a consensual decision-making style, which locks the Council of the European Union into a complex field, where the European Commission develops coherent positions and political negotiation skills. In sum, the Council of the European Union remains the major decision-making actor, however, the European Parliament, as well as the European Commission retain a decisive role through intermeshed competencies (ibid: 362-366). In the third stage, the European Commission maintains formal executive competencies, while the national governments undertake a responsibility for *policy implementation*, however, their respective competencies are intermeshed, and while national executives might oversee the executive role the European Commission through comitology, the European Commission might enjoy considerable leeway in the day-to-day implementation through directing involvement and selected partnerships with subnational actors and interests groups, or through the monitoring of European funds (ibid: 367-369). Lastly, in the fourth stage, the European Court of Justice plays a crucial role within the *adjudication stage* by redesigning the legal framework of the European Union in a supranational manner, and by reinforcing the supremacy of European Law upon the national law, thus modifying the balance between national legislative and executive powers and providing the overall groundwork towards integrated European polity. Moreover, the European Court of Justice undertook a political function by shaping European integration, providing the legitimization for a constitutionalizing the European Union, and strengthening the supranational actors, and more specifically the European Commission or the European Parliament (ibid: 370-371). All in all, this first classification of the European governing process is useful, however, it does not fully correspond with the governing process model suggested in the first section of the present chapter, and lacks the newest constitutional and policy-related developments unfolding since the beginning of the second millennium in the European Union. Finally, by synchronizing the process governing at a European and national level, analytical coherence will be improved.

Taking stock of the constitutional modification taking place at the beginning of the millennium, Heidbreder and Brandsma (2018) describe the European governing process along a policy cycle model encompassing problem definition, policy-formulation, implementation, or evaluation. In the *problem-definition* stage, the European Council and the European Commission are depicted as being both essential, with the European Council enjoying no official legislative competency, however impacting largely legislative decisions and proposal, while the European Commission undertakes overall responsibility for the legislative agenda, by issuing green and white papers, and speaking as unitary College of Commissioners. In contrast with the previous classification, however, the myth of the European Commission as a unitary actor is contested (Hartlapp et al. 2014), and the European Council gained influence through a restrengthening of the Community method and intergovernmental negotiations, reducing some strategical leeway for supranational actors. In the *policy formulation* stage, while the European Commission still enjoys an exclusive right for legislative proposal, an intermeshing of European institutions including the Committee of Regions and the Economic and Social Committee, as well as the influence of interest groups and expert groups have triggered an intermeshing of agenda-setting, policy-formulation, as well as decision-making and a weakening of the European Commission through co-decision process. In other words, the informal procedures and institutionalization of trialogues as a standard mode of interinstitutional coordinated have consolidated the power of non-legislative actors and their weight in bureaucratic politics, opening a new strategical space for the Council of the European Union to advance its legislative function (Heidbreder and Brandsma 2018: 811-813). In *policy-implementation*, while in most policies the European Commission undertakes responsibility for compliance, it is monitored differently according to the delegation type, and member-states are empowered through delegated acts to monitor the implementation process, whereas throughout implementing acts, the European Parliament is strengthened in its control functions (Brandsma and Blom-Hansen 2017). In addition, policy implementation is highly complex, while member-states are pulled between respecting the primacy of European Law, and ensuring administrative autonomy and parliamentary control (Heidbreder and Brandsma 2018: 814). As regards a *policy evaluation*, both ex-ante appraisement and better regulation initiatives, and ex-post assessments have been enlarged, however its political application remains relatively weak. All in all, policy-making in the European Union became increasingly complex, and the rebalancing of European institutions entailed the restrengthening of the European Parliament through the enlargement of co-decision procedures, the revival of intergovernmental negotiations in the European Council, and the dispersal of interests within the European Commission. In this regards, the classification of multilevel governing in the European Union as regulatory polity is challenged by a growing politicization of the policymaking process through the intensive use of trialogues beside classic procedure, and through the multiplication of non-binding informal governing modes (ibid: 817).

In way of conclusion, the process of governing among and within levels in the European Union is complex and highly intermeshed with the national politics of the member-states, particularly through the multi-level positioning of political parties at different levels, and whereas the power of European party groups in the European Parliament is increasing, the national party system is still dominating the European political arena (Hix 2010). Finally, multilevel governance within the European Union is still marked by the absence of core states power at a supranational level, and by an unclear separation of power, making the choice towards stronger parliamentarization, deliberation, or constitutionalization of the European more essential (Jachtenfuchs 2010; Bache and Flinders 2004). At last, governing in the European Union is challenged by weak democratic accountability, and by the complexity of the decision-making process across, and within levels.

2.3. Explaining multilevel change in the European Union

In the previous subsections, the notion of multilevel governance was defined, while the process of governing in the European Union was shortly sketched. Within the following subsection, the multiple changes along multilevel governance will be embedded into some theoretical attempts to explain change among and between levels in the European Union, before providing a general framework in the last section. Recalling the distinctness between institutional and organization change previously addressed, changes in multilevel governing unfold either in transformational manner, through axiological shifts in values, preferences, and choices, or by a design, through the instrumental and rational modification of interactions, instruments and strategies. Moreover, it might be necessary to combine both the institutional and organization approaches to catch the full picture of multilevel governance, and understand overall transformation of European polity, politics, and policy (Egeberg 2006). More generally, change within the European Union might be theorized in terms of European integration or Europeanization (Börzel and Risse 2003: 57). First, the notion of *European integration* points to an ontological process whereby the European Union pools the sovereignty of its member-states while it establishes institutions at a European level that trigger a widening and deepening of European competencies and a restrengthening of political unification (Mastenbroek 2018; Radaelli 2003). Moreover, European integration ideas have been theorized in terms of intergovernmentalism or supranationalism, whereby multilevel bypassed the duality of national and supranational interactions, by suggesting the more complex multilevel game involving subnational actors gaining strategical leeway in the European polity (Piattoni 2010). In addition, Egeberg has suggested that a deepened transformation of European polity towards integration might be accompanied by the emerging of a multidimensional space at European level that blends different lines of territorial, sectoral, and political conflicts (2006: 19). In other words, the governing architecture of the European Union has become increasingly complex by channeling the political conflicts through interest representation, and redistributing power among levels or actors, thus internalizing external challenges into increased consistency, interconnectedness and interdependency (ibid: 29). Regarding administrative integration at the European level, the notion of *multilevel administration* acknowledges the growing importance of bureaucratic actors at different levels of European polity, and the interconnectedness among jurisdictions, encompassing the supranational, intergovernmental, and intragovernmental levels of public administration (Benz 2015). More generally, the growing autonomy and consolidation of the European Commission and the European Parliament as supranational actors has triggered the establishing of a multilevel administration, which partly incorporate national administration (Egeberg 2015). In other words, the formation of a political center at European level goes along with a differentiation of implementation processes, which might unfold either in direct, indirect or hybrid manner, whereby national agencies are double-hatted and might be employed as part of national administration or European administration (ibid: 72). Alternatively, the concept of *European Administrative Space* highlights the emerging of multilevel administration as process of institutionalizing common administrative capacities, which might be decomposed into three evolving dimensions of independency, integration, and co-optation (Trondal and Peters 2015). Finally, Schimmelfenning et al. have highlighted the interrelatedness between integration and differentiation and observed patterns of a differentiated integration, whereby the differentiating tendencies are tightly linked with European integration, and whereas interdependency promotes integration, politicization fosters differentiation (2015). All in all, European integration defined as process of institutionalizing and organizing European polity is triggered by the combined use of governing strategies and a channeling of political conflicts (Princen 2011; Heidbreder 2017).

In contrast with the European integration concept, the notion of *Europeanization* addresses the post-ontological process whereby the European Union have a long-standing impact on national states, either through a penetration of national traditions, shifts in core domestic institutions, or through the adaptation of member-states to the increasing European integration at supranational level (Mastenbroek 2018; Radaelli 2003). In addition, while the first waves of Europeanization scholarship focused on top-down effects of European integration on national politics, member-states might strategically play the European game, customize and domesticate European policy at their own advantage (Thomann and Sager 2017). To begin with a *top-down explanation logic*, Europeanization is understood as change in response to a pressure to adapt to European politics, encompassing different kinds of direct and indirect pressures (Mastenbroek 2018: 825). First, direct pressures might involve European legislative acts, thus constraining autonomous policy-making, secondly, indirect pressures relate to European Union membership, implying extensive participation to various decision-making fora. However, a direct pressure from European Union actors might not represent a necessary condition for Europeanization, and adaptation as well as the uploading of political preferences might unfold without any common policy (ibid: 826). In this regards, the mainstream argument assumes that for Europeanization to unfold, institutional incompatibility or misfit, and the combination of facilitating and constraining factors should be given (Börzel and Risse 2003). Depending on these factors, the Europeanization pressure might trigger the absorption of European policies, and accommodation, or transformation of member-states to European adaptational pressure (ibid: 69-70). However, the misfit argument has been challenged by more dynamic approaches conceptualizing European policies as inputs that might be strategically used by national actors to reach their goals (Knill 2001: 13). In this perspective, the level of adaptational pressure varies according to the strength of Europeanization, thus while Europeanization through institutional compliance implies strong pressures, Europeanization by changed domestic opportunities is less demanding, and a Europeanization by framing domestic beliefs triggers weak pressure (ibid: 214-225). Following the dynamic view of Europeanization, and the *bottom-up explanation logic*, member-states might move beyond compliance by making choices that are non-recommended by European policy, thus *domesticating* specific policy areas or changing the density, restrictiveness and direction of European regulations, thus *customizing* implementation of European law (Thomann and Sager 2015; Thomann and Zhelyazkova 2017). Alternatively, member-states might perform beyond the European legal requirements, through *gold-plating*, and more generally by modifying European rules during the transposition process (ibid: 1272). From a bottom-up perspective, member-states and subnational actors are regarded as problem-solving entity enjoying informational lead, which might enhance European policies by suggesting context-sensitive solutions or local policy positions (ibid: 1283). More generally, the use of a discretional leeway by member-states during the implementation process highlights their attempts to regain control over European policy and their contribution towards increasing the problem-solving capacity of the European Union (ibid: 1284). Finally, Thomann and Sager suggest that the interplay of Europeanization and domestication might explain implementation dynamics, following a policy-specific logic, and generating different implementation strategies (2017: 1396). For instance, Heidbreder assumes that depending upon the level of ambiguity and conflict observed in a policy field, distinct implementation strategies will be opted (2017: 1370) ranging from centralization, to convergence, agencification and networking. If both ambiguity and conflict and low, top-down functional *centralization* is preferred, while if both conflict and ambiguity rank high, bottom-up and task-specific *networking* is paramount. In case of a shared interests and high ambiguity *agencification* is chosen, lastly high conflicts and little ambiguity favor a *convergence* strategy (ibid: 1374), which might apply within the policy field of ECEC.

Beyond the notion that the processes of European integration and Europeanization are the main explanatory, and mutually influencing concepts to understand change in multilevel governance, the concept of *multilevel metagovernance* might add new elements into the explanatory toolbox, and offer a broader perspective on multilevel change (Jessop 2010). According to the analytical framework presented in the previous chapters, multilevel metagovernance might be assigned to either the institutional, or organizational approach, generating two distinct, and complementary perspectives. As seen from an *institutional view*, a multilevel metagovernance notion addresses the ethical, axiological, and reflexive process of metagoverning the ensemble of values, choices and preferences of actors that have been aggregated into differentiated dilemmas, traditions, or narratives about governing in multilevel polity. In this sense, the emerging of the supranational European actors, including the European Commission, the European Parliament, and European Court of Justice might be interpreted as the origin of a multidimensional structuration of conflict throughout multiple levels, which affects the national or subnational actors that in return upload their values and preferences upwards at European level (Egeberg 2006). The establishing of the European treaties might be understood as process of constitutionalizing the values, preferences and choices made by the entirety of European actors, including supranational, national, as well as subnational actors (Bogdandy and Bast 2009). Moreover, the notion of European values and public administration principles has been challenged by the accession of new member-states in the European Union, triggering a debate about a constructed European administrative tradition, and questioning the actual convergence of European actors around distinct principles and values (Verheijen 2010). In addition, multilevel metagoverning relates to the notions of administrative culture, styles and traditions, whereby administrative culture encompasses values, roles, styles, and attitudes that might converge towards a coherent European administrative value orientation (Knill and Grohs 2015). Finally, the multidimensional conflicts, ambiguity, or politicization of multilevel metagoverning in the European Union might affect choices about axiological values.

In line with an *organizational glance*, multilevel metagovernance tackles a strategical, rational, and reflexive process of metagoverning the ensemble of interactions or instruments adopted by actors, by redesigning and steering the administrative structures and political power, among and throughout levels of governing. In this regards, the forming of the supranational centre of power and multilevel administration might entail the rearticulation of levels of competency, rescaling of sovereign statehood, and strategical re-steering of organizational arrangements (Jessop 2004: 69-73). In other words, the European Union might represent a multilevel metagoverning entity that strategically designs and arranges its organizational structure according to effectiveness or responsiveness criteria, reflecting governing failures and successes, and collibration the several governing modes at its disposal. For instance, while at administrative level, interactions among levels implies coercive, cooperative, and persuasive coordination modes, the European Council the European Commission and the European Parliament metagovern by hierarchy, market, and networks, selectively rebalancing their instruments and strategies across territorial or functional cleavages (ibid: 74). As a consequence of an overall center-formation at European level, hybrid structures appear intertwining functional, political and organizational tensions between the need of autonomy and control, triggering a political and administrative split (Grande and McCowan 2015). While the *political logic* fosters degrees of flexibility and autonomy, the administrative logic fosters tighter control from the member-states and the European Parliament. Alternatively, the selective balancing of multilevel implementation strategies and Europeanization belongs to metagovernance among and across levels (Heidbreder 2017). All in all, when merged together, the institutional and organizational looks on multilevel metagoverning paints the whole picture.

3. Explaining patterns of governance

In the previous sections, governing was characterized as a process unfolding in a similar manner to a dynamic and discontinuous policy cycle, involving institutional and organizational change, and encompassing a multilevel dimension as well. In addition, the multilevel governing notion was outlined and multilevel processes of change in governing were portrayed. In the last section the patterns of governance, which finalizes the analytical framework, will be tackled, beginning with the notions of divergence and convergence. Finally, broader attempt to explain the changes in governing patterns will be made, underlining the reversibility of change in governing pattern.

3.1. Defining divergence and convergence

The notion of *divergence* indicates a trend towards distinctiveness among actors, in regards the ensemble of institutional and organizational elements (Kassim et al. 2000). Theoretically, both persistence and divergence originate in historical institutionalism and the 'new politics' school of welfare state scholarship, which emphasizes the institutional stickiness and robustness of the political traditions in national states (Pierson 2000; Starke et al. 2008). The new politics school generally relies on the notion of path dependency or increased return for explaining persistence throughout time, in terms of prevalence or intensity. Within political environments, institutional density, collective action, as well as the intrinsic ambiguity and complexity of governing makes path dependent process more prevalent, while the absence of efficient competition and learning, the short-time horizon, and institutional stickiness increases the path-dependency intensity level (Pierson 2000: 24). In the same light, administrative traditions are characterized as more or less enduring patterns in style and content of public administration, which are further distinguished in terms of state-society autonomy, political involvement in bureaucracies, management weight versus a legalistic style, and type of accountability (Peters and Pierre 2010). Further, divergence and persistence might be explained by nationally specific policy-making styles, conceptions of coordination, as well as political and administrative opportunity structures (Kassim et al. 2000). In this sense, policy styles are attached to policy segmentation, and governmental autonomy as regards to societal and other actors at lower and higher levels of governance. More profoundly, according to the 'old politics' approach, divergence emerges from variations within the balance of political power, including the political party composition of the government, the presence of institutional veto positions, and the cooperation between government and societal actors (Starke et al. 2008: 979). When applied to policy implementation, divergence might be conceptualized in terms of political conflicts and level of disagreement among political parties about the desired policies, and policy divergence points more precisely to an incompatibility between the actions or political decisions of implementing and legislative actors (Oosterwaal and Torenvlied 2011). More generally, divergence addresses the internal and external differentiation of national states, whereby functional-vertical differentiation is triggered by interdependency level and territorial-horizontal differentiation is affected by the level of politicization (Schimmelfennig 2015). More clearly, divergence is associated with non-synchronization, self-empowerment, loose-coupling, and organizational robustness (Olsen 2003). Finally, a convergence might be explained through a lack of organizing capacities, non-aligned and unreflected use of power, distinct cognitive, or normative frames and logics, and incompatibility among cultural legitimacy identities (Beckert 2010). All in all, whereas a *divergence in orientation* might affect values, preferences and goals, *divergence in coordination* might impact interactions, instruments, or strategies of actors. Both instantiations of divergence tend to unfold across and within the multiple levels of government.

The notion of *convergence* signals a trend towards likeness or similarity among actors, whereby the point of reference is given by divergence, expressing a movement from diverging positions towards a common point (Bennett 1991). In theoretical terms, the convergence notion emanates from structural functionalism and new functionalism, both theories interrogating the outgrowth of industrialization and post-industrial shifts on society (Starke et al. 2008). In addition, the new waves of globalization and European integration triggered alternative thoughts regarding causes of convergence, including for instance policy learning and imitation. A first causal classification is suggested by Bennett, advancing emulation, elite networking, policy communities, as well as harmonization and penetration to explain convergence (1991: 220-229). Emulation points to an increased similarity in policy goals, contents and instruments through an adoption of innovation that is spread internationally, while convergence by elite network addresses idea sharing among transnational and coherent policy communities. Further, harmonization relies on an existing net of interorganizational organizations and recognition of mutual interdependencies in resolving a common problem, penetration denotes a coercive effect of external actors towards convergence. The further development of cross-national policy convergence theory is suggested by Holzinger et al. that set forward international harmonization, transnational communication, and regulatory competition as possible factors of convergence (2008). In their perspective, harmonization and communication are powerful in shaping policy convergence, while regulatory competition does not have the same impact (ibid: 584). More generally, the policy diffusion literature offers vast arrays of rationales for convergence, conceiving diffusion as a process of interdependent policy-making, and emphasizing the process dimension, as well as learning, competition and emulation (Wasserfallen 2018). In this sense, learning tackles the adoption of policies through a cognitive processing of informations, and competition builds upon the anticipation of concurrent position by the monitoring of economic and financial policies (ibid: 624). Emulation is further depicted in terms of ideal norms of appropriateness, and coercion points to a vertical power-dependence as opposed to interdependence (ibid: 626). Finally, the policy diffusion literature addresses the need to analyze the horizontal interconnectedness among national actors might affect variations in public policy diffusion (ibid: 627). At European level, the idea of a European Administrative Space reawakens the theoretical debates about European integration, adding attractiveness and imposition as two dynamics of convergence (Olsen 2003). Different authors tackle the question of whether soft coordinating instruments, including emulation and learning, might hardly affect European policy, and suggest convergence through assimilation as an implementation strategy at european level (Heidbreder 2017; Kahn-Nisser 2015). Within the fields of education policy, and ECEC policy, a convergence has been observed at European and international levels, more particularly through the Open Method of Coordination and Europeanization of education policy (Alexiadou et al. 2010; Bieber 2000; Randall 2000). Whereas most international organizations employ soft instruments towards convergence, the Open Method of Coordination entails a mix of hard and soft instruments, encompassing peer-learning, network, benchmarks, or indicators. In the ECEC field, the emerging of a European childcare policy and feminist movements might have been factors facilitating convergence (ibid: 355). Finally, New Public Management trends have triggered managerial reforms around the globe, impacting the European Union and states alike (Pollitt et al. 2007). However, while discursive or decisional convergence has ranked high, operational and outcome convergence were parsimonious, engendering differential trajectories of reform (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). Overall, *convergence in orientation* refers to increasing likeness in values, preferences, and goals, whereas *convergence in coordination* addresses more clearly a growing similarity and reconciliation in interactions, instruments, or strategies. All in all, both convergence types of are to be found across and within numerous levels of government.

3.2.   Explaining change in patterns of governance

Throughout the last chapters and sections, the analytical governance framework was sketched, the institutional and organizational approaches were outlined, lastly, the process and multilevel perspective on governing were described in terms of stability, dynamic, and change. Within the two remaining sections, the explanation of change through patterns of governance will conclude the analytical effort towards understanding the dynamics of stability and change in governance, and the formation of specific patterns of governance in the ECEC field. The governance patterns are termed fragmentation, fragmegration, fragtegration, and integration. Lastly, two trajectories of change will be suggested and further distinguished as institutional and organizational change.

Quite generally, governance is understood as a dynamic, discontinuous, and multilevel process of governing involving several actors, including their values, preferences, goals, interactions as well as their instruments and strategies. According to the analytical framework, the governance patterns might be distilled by following the analytical chain from metagovernance, governance, actors and constellations, which aggregate their patterns of orientation and coordination in some specific manner. In this sense, it is analytically crucial to begin analyzing the governing process through the distinct orientation and coordination patterns emerging from the actor constellations and individual actors (Scharpf 1997). By analyzing the values, preferences, and goals of actors within a policy field, a clear-cut pattern of orientation appears, while by assessing interactions, instruments and strategies of actors and constellations, a coordination pattern comes into light. Each pattern of orientation or coordination might be characterized in terms of a divergence, and convergence, depending on the dynamic of actors and constellations unfolding within a specific timeframe (Bennett 1991). Empirically, multiple actors may be aggregated within institutional or organizational fields, depending on whether they are interrelated through their goals, values, and preferences, or interconnected through their interactions, instruments, and strategies. When actors are both interrelated and interconnected, they form constellations, that might powerfully shift the overall pattern towards divergence or convergence. For instance, when all actors drive towards similar values, preferences and goals, a *converging pattern of orientation* emerges, and when several actors' constellations are established following each a specific set of preferences, values and goals, a *diverging pattern of orientation* unfolds. In the same line of thinking, when the entirety of actors increasingly strengthens mutual interactions or follow the same instrument and strategies, a *converging pattern of coordination* takes shape, whereas when multiple actors' constellations with strong internal interactions and distinct instruments or strategies are formed, then a diverging pattern of coordination will prevail. By combining the four instantiations along a quadrant matrix, four patterns of governance appear, namely of fragmentation, fragmegration, fragtegration, and integration. The four governance patterns will be now presented individually.

Fragmentation is defined as pattern whereby actors and constellations loose the willingness and capacity to interact with each other, whereby values, preferences, instruments and strategies are drifting away from each other and from a governing center. In other words, fragmentation may result from a diverging pattern of orientation, whereby values, preferences, and goals are losing their constraining, binding or institutionalized quality, and from diverging coordination pattern whereby interactions among actors are weakened, and instruments or strategies are not anymore aligned together. In this vein, fragmentation might either follow from pure anomie, whereby all actors are drifting in separate directions, or from a splitting-off trend, whereby previously linked constellations are being disaggregated across time, fashioning a multiplicity of powerless actors or constellations. Lastly, fragmentation is associated with weak governability (Kooiman 2008).

Fragmegration is defined as a pattern whereby actors or constellations gain the willingness and capacity to interact with each other, in which instruments and strategies are in mutual alignment, however, their values, preferences and goals are drifting away from each other and from overall governing center. The fragmegration pattern ensues from a blending of converging coordination pattern and diverging orientation pattern, establishing a situation where organization tendencies are prevalent, but the institutionalizing force of normativity is weak. The fragmegration concept has been shaped in the context of international governance, denoting the tension between forces of localization and globalization (Rosenau 2004). At his core, fragmentation unfolds throughout a tension between strengthened interactions among actors on the one side, and a disaggregation of legitimacy, values or normativity on the other side, which requires fine-grained governability skills, allowing the main governing actors to navigate throughout muddy and ambiguous waters.

Fragtegration is defined as a pattern whereby actors or constellations loose the willingness and capacity to interact with each other, in which instruments or strategies are not mutually aligned, however, their values, preferences and goals are converging towards similar frames, narratives, or visions that helps maintaining institutional coherency. The fragtegration pattern follows from the admixture of a diverging coordination pattern and converging orientation pattern, triggering an equivocal circumstance where strong institutionalizing tendencies compensate for weakened organizing capacities to mutually align actions. The fragtegration concept appears from debates about the globalization of culture and the demise nation-states as heartland of cultural diffusion (Krzysztofek 2000). In essence, fragtegration indicates a field of uneasiness where values, goals as well as cultural myths and policy beliefs converge towards a discourse legitimized by actors, however, governability is made troublesome by centrifugal interactions pushing actors outward.

Integration is defined as pattern whereby actors and constellations gain the willingness and the capacity to interact with each other, in which values, preferences, goals, instruments, strategies all are converging and aligned towards a governing center. More specifically, integration results from a converging pattern of coordination, where organizing trends reinforce overall alignment of interactions, instruments and strategies in coherent manner, and from converging orientation patterns, whereby values, preferences and goals are legitimized through common narratives, or institutionalized myths that facilitates the agreement of common rules and codices. In addition, both tendencies might be mutually restrengthening and improve overall coherence, cooperation, and provide an impetus for encompassing waves of reforms or transformational change. In sum, integration raises overall governability of objects, subjects, and relationships (Kooiman 2013).

After having defined the patterns of governance that finalizes the analytical framework towards governance, some elements of explanation might be offered to understand how and why change in governance patterns occur. In the second section of the current chapter, the differentiation of institutional and organizational change helped scholars to distinguish ethical, legitimacy-driven and transformational trends from instrumental, rational, or responsiveness-guided alteration by design and reform. In addition, explanations were distinguished in terms of causes, process, and effect (Pierson 2001). Hereof, it might be useful to draw two overarching trajectories of change, which are further disentangled along their institutional or organizational drive, lastly generating four thinkable pathways, termed in ordinal manner, a first, a second, a third, and fourth pathway.

According to the first overarching trajectory, across time, the pattern of fragmentation will tend to evolve into a pattern of integration, through two possible pathways, a first pathway that goes from fragmentation through fragmegration towards integration, and a second pathway starting from fragmentation through fragtegration and finally achieving integration. In line with the *first*

pathway, the initial stage of fragmentation is countered by a conscious, instrumental or rational process of organizational change, whereby shifts in structural design and administrative reforms might be pushed forwards, attempting to enhance overall coherence, coordination among actors, and responsiveness to the different societal or political demands. Further, the successful efforts towards coordination trigger convergence in instruments or strategies, effecting fragmegration. In the following stage, fragmegration is further shifted towards integration by efforts to tighten common values, coherent preferences, and encompassing narratives generating a shared feeling of identity. Finally, integration is achieved through convergence in patterns of coordination and orientation, however, it is not the only path. In line with the *second* pathway, the fragmentation stage is transcended by changing the orientation pattern towards a greater convergence in value, beliefs, perceptive frames, and storytelling, creating the fragtegration pattern. After having done an initial move towards axiological converging, further efforts are made towards integration by increasing the overall level of interactions, communication, and by developing instruments and strategies that are shared among actors, forming a new and powerful constellation of actors. All in all, both pathways achieve integration, however by two different manners and temporalities.

According to the second overarching trajectory, throughout time, an initial pattern of integration will evolve into a fragmentation pattern through two different pathways. In regards to the *third* pathway, integration turns into fragmegration as values, preferences and narratives disaggregate into several societal discourses that are increasingly disconnected from each other. In a further stage, the fragmegration pattern evolves into fragmentation as the disconnection in preferences shatters the interactions among actors and their strategical coherence. Lastly, the *fourth* pathway displays a shift from integration to fragtegration and a collapsing of communication structures, lowering overall strategical convergence, while in a second stage, fragtegration evolves into the fragmentation pattern, through a progressive dissociation of actor's narratives and preferences. All in all, the two trajectories and four pathways allow a thorough mapping of changes within, and throughout the governance patterns, facilitating a comparison among governing processes.

Figure 1. Patterns of governance

		Coordination	
		Divergence	Convergence
Orientation	Divergence	Fragmentation	Fragmegration
	Convergence	Fragtegration	Integration

Source: Author; Krzysztofek 2000; Rosenau 2004.