This chapter presents an overview of the topics discussed in this volume.

Empirical Cases
Adrienne Héritier

This chapter examines the patterns of long-term institutional change which are typical for a number of important institutional rules governing the decision-making process in the European Union. It discusses five institutional rules: the European Parliament's role in legislation; the presidency of the Council; the Parliament and the Investiture of the Commission; the composition of the Commission; and controlling the implementation powers of the Commission. These rules are scrutinized in the light of the theoretical explanations outlined in Chapter 3. This is done to assess which theory offers the most plausible explanation for the institutional change in a particular period of time and to ascertain whether perhaps several factors derived from different theories interact with each other in explaining the outcome.
Conclusion: Explaining Institutional Change in Europe ... and Beyond
Adrienne Héritier
in Explaining Institutional Change in Europe

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: May 2007
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199298129.003.0005
Item type: chapter

This chapter draws conclusions from the theoretical interpretation of the five empirical cases. It briefly outlines the typical features of the long-term change of each case and the book's theoretical explanations. The chapter then compares the developments of the institutional rules across cases and identifies the important aspects of the empirical stories that were not exhibited by any of the theories discussed in Chapter 1. The scope conditions of the theories that have been employed are discussed and the question of whether the theoretical insights gained on the basis of the five case studies may be extended to processes of institutional change beyond the European Union is addressed.

Explaining Institutional Change in Europe
Adrienne Heritier

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: May 2007
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199298129.001.0001
Item type: book

This book poses the question: how and why do institutions change? Institutions, understood as rules of behaviour constraining and facilitating social interaction, are subject to different forms and processes of change. A change may be designed intentionally on a large scale and then be followed by a period of only incremental adjustments to new conditions. But institutions may also emerge as informal rules, persist for a long time and only be formalized later. The causes, processes, and outcomes of institutional change raise a number of conceptual, theoretical, and empirical questions. While we know a lot about the creation of institutions, relatively little research has been conducted about their transformation once they have been put into place. Attention has focused on politically salient events of change, such as the Intergovernmental Conferences of Treaty reform. In focusing on such grand events, it is easy overlook inconspicuous changes in European institutional rules that are occurring on a daily basis. Thus, the European Parliament has gradually acquired a right of investing individual Commissioners. This has never been an issue in the
negotiations of formal treaty revisions. Or, the decision-making rule(s) under which the European Parliament participates in the legislative process have drastically changed over the last decades starting from a modest consultation ending up with codecision. The book discusses various theories accounting for long-term institutional change, and explores them on the basis of five important institutional rules in the European Union. It proposes typical sequences of long-term institutional change and their theorization which hold for other contexts as well, if the number of actors and their goals are clearly defined, and interaction takes place under the ‘shadow of the future’.

**Institutional rules**

Peter Knoepfel, Corinne Larrue, Frédéric Varone, and Michael Hill

in Public policy analysis

Published in print: 2011  Published Online: March 2012  
DOI: 10.1332/policypress/9781861349071.003.0005  
Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses the institutional rules behind the decisions and activities of policy actors. The different influences that the institutions exert on policies are also presented. It also determines the various types of institutions involved and this leads to the operationalization of the institution concept.

**Political agenda setting**

Peter Knoepfel, Corinne Larrue, Frédéric Varone, and Michael Hill

in Public policy analysis

Published in print: 2011  Published Online: March 2012  
DOI: 10.1332/policypress/9781861349071.003.0007  
Item type: chapter

This chapter presents the various phases and questions concerning policy agenda setting. It discusses the process whereby a social problem is identified and then ‘thematicised’ as a public problem as well as the different characteristics of agenda setting. It notes that the political definition of the public problem constitutes, in effect, the first product that the analyst must study when discussing the cycle of public intervention in the context of an empirical study. It examines the general definition and operationalization of the concept of ‘public problem’. It determines the agenda-setting processes on the basis of the strategies of
the actors involved, their resources, and the institutional rules that frame this first stage.

The Supreme Federal Tribunal and Veto Players in Brazilian Politics

in Judging Policy: Courts and Policy Reform in Democratic Brazil

Published in print: 2008 Published Online: June 2013
DOI: 10.11126/standford/9780804758116.003.0004
Publisher: Stanford University Press

This chapter examines the history of policy contestations in the federal courts in Brazil. It discusses the use of the Ação Direta de Inconstitucionalidade (ADIN) in the Supreme Federal Tribunal as a constitutional review mechanism and explains how institutional rules produce “veto points” within the judiciary that enable some policy opponents to effectively delay or defeat policies in areas in which they might otherwise have little or no leverage. The chapter also argues that poor legal performance is not necessarily a disadvantageous political strategy because courts are frequently used as a tactical venue for voicing opposition.

Getting There, Staying There

Patrick Weller

in The Prime Ministers' Craft: Why Some Succeed and Others Fail in Westminster Systems

Published in print: 2018 Published Online: May 2018
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780199646203.003.0002
Publisher: Oxford University Press

Gaining and holding office is the fundamental requirement for all prime ministers. This chapter explores their routes to power, by winning elections or by replacing an incumbent, and then assesses the differences the alternative routes make to the prime ministers’ fortunes. It asks how vulnerable prime ministers are to being replaced by rivals from their own party and shows how different institutional rules shape the strategic choices for those who want the top job. In Australia and New Zealand they must fight; in Canada they often flee; in Britain they fulminate but have difficulty in striking. A change in rules changes both the strategic options of the ambitious and the levers available to incumbent prime ministers.