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European Union Political Theories in Times of Crisis. The Cases of Economic and Monetary Union and of the European Union Migration and Asylum Policy

Abstract

In the last decades, the EU has been analysed by many scholars through different theoretical perspectives. In this context, the 2008 financial crisis has provoked different EU policy crises which have in turn led to a reassessment of the theoretical frameworks needed to analyse them. This paper seeks to contribute to this reassessment, taking the EMU and the European migration and asylum policy as case studies to investigate to what extent these regimes have suffered internal policy crises via the application of two theoretical perspectives: neo-functionalism and neo-institutionalism. On the one hand, under the neo-institutionalism approach, institutions constrain political actors in a norm-based way. According to this perspective, migration and asylum policy change during the crisis may be explained by European institutional constraints on the Member States. On the other hand, neo-functionalism may be used to investigate the EMU Europeanization policy process in which EU Member States' cooperation has reinforced the process of integration in this policy domain. In addition, due to the recent developments in European asylum cooperation, many important questions arise about the nature of the legal measures within the criteria of internal security. This paper tries to shed light on the problématique of asylum and migration policy-making process by looking at an innovative theoretical framework based on the cost/benefit and public goods theories.

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Introduction

This research focuses on the multifaceted nature of the EU and the differential impact of the financial crisis on its policy areas. It examines how the financial crisis has led to different European policy-making crises and, consequently, different European integration/disintegration processes. The financial crisis has not had the same impact on every EU policy domain. Within the framework of this criteria, the main aim of this research is to analyse the weaknesses of two of the main EU political theories, neo-functionalism and neo-institutionalism, in order to explain the different applications of both theories in the EMU (Economic and Monetary Union) and the European asylum and migration policy-making processes.

Since the EU integration project is not going well, some scholars have tried to develop theories of disintegration (Schimmelfenning 2018; Jachtenfuchs, Kasack 2017; Jones 2012; Vollaard 2014). According to them, theories of integration including transactionalist, neo-functionalism, intergovernmentalist, and neo-institutionalist theories do not go far enough to interpret EU integration in a reverse way (Jones 2018). These scholars have been focused on a useful and interesting operationalization of new theoretical models such as the post-functionalist perspective (see Hooghe, Marks 2009), but others criticize them claiming that these approaches are incomplete (Jones 2018).

In this research, in order to explain how the financial crisis has led to different integration processes in different EU policy areas, the EMU and EU's migration and asylum policy have been selected as case studies. On the one hand, the EMU is a clear example of integration in recent years; on the other hand, and due to the refugee crisis, the EU's migration and asylum policy area has not been developed, and instead, it is rather far away from a fully developed integrative policy at EU level. In this regard, neo-functionalism and neo-institutionalism have been chosen for the analysis of both policy areas. The selection of these EU political theories is based on the criteria of Tosun et al.'s (2014) classification of EU political theories. They classify European political theories into: 1) integration theories; 2) theories of policy and institutional change; and 3) theories of public opinion change. In this regard,

neo-functionalism is considered a European integration theory by which “crises can either strengthen or weaken the scope or level of the supranational institutions’ authority vis-a`-vis national institutions” (Tosun et al. 2014: 199) and, “from this perspective, the crisis could both represent an opportunity for and obstacle to further integration” (Tosun et al. 2014: 199). In this case, the EMU integration process may be analysed under a neo-functionalist framework. On the other hand, according to Tosun et al.’s (2014) criteria, neo-institutionalism is classified as a theory of policy and institutional change. In this case, scholars analyse how shocks may lead to institutional and policy changes; in the case of the European migration and asylum policy, to what extent the refugee crisis has led to changes in that policy area with implications for institutional reform.

This article argues that EU political theories are not equally valid to explain crises across all European policy areas and, specifically, in the case of asylum and migration policy crisis, conceptual and theoretical frameworks from other social science disciplines may shed light on its explanation, in the case of this research, it is analysed using public goods and collective action theories. By doing so, this research is based on the following assumptions:

- 1) The EU has different policy domains so the crisis might not be seen as a “whole” but as different policy regimes’ crises (see Trauner 2016; Falkner 2016).
- 2) Depending on the policy domain itself, different EU policy crises must be analysed through different EU integration/disintegration theories.
- 3) Neo-functionalism may explain EMU integration processes during the crisis, nevertheless, it cannot explain the migration and asylum policy crisis (see Niemann, Ioannou 2015; Börzel, Risse 2017).
- 4) Neo-institutionalism shows shortcomings in explaining EMU integration process and European asylum and migration policy crisis (see Schimmelfennig 2018).
- 5) Public goods and collective action theoretical approaches can be useful in understanding the *problématique* of some aspects of EU asylum and migration policy-making (in our case, refugee protection).

The research framework is based on a comparative analysis of the main EU measures in both policy areas in recent years. In terms of structure, the article: 1) analyses the different impact of neo-functionalism and neo-institutionalism on explaining policy-making crises in the EMU and European asylum and migration policy areas; 2) provides insights related to the EU asylum and migration policy crisis from a public goods and collective action perspective.

The following sections bring three key contributions: 1) how economic crises influence the EU integration process in the different policy domains; 2) how this

impact on policies cannot be analysed through the same theoretical perspective; 3) and how the public goods perspective can shed light on the analysis of migration and asylum policy change.

1. The Integration Process: Neo-functionalism and the EMU

The EMU may be considered one of the most ambitious integration policies, representing the needed economic and monetary cooperation for completing the EU Single Market (Thalassinos, Dafnos 2015). The importance of the EMU and the Eurozone has been outlined during the financial crisis. This crisis and the “political attempts to overcome it have far-reaching consequences for the future of the EMU, European integration and Europe in the world” (Thalassinos, Dafnos 2015, 22). In comparison to other EU policy areas, the EMU has represented the perfect example of an EU integration process, before and during the crisis. In this regard, EU scholars have sought to explain the EMU project within the neo-functionalist paradigm.

According to Moravcsik (1993), when it comes to neo-functionalism and the European integration process, this political theory seeks to examine the EU integration dynamics by looking at the spillovers and path-dependencies produced. In this regard, he claims that at the beginning, the integration process is normally scarce and weak as it strongly reflects the national preferences of Member States rather than functional characteristics. In order to properly analyse how neo-functionalism may explain the EMU integration process, it is important to summarize the theory’s main assumptions (Niemann et al. 2016):

- 1) Integration is seen as a process, accordingly, integration processes evolve over time through their own dynamic (Niemann, Ioannou 2015).
- 2) Regional integration is characterized by changing and multiple actors that build coalitions with each other (Haas 1964: 68).
- 3) Decisions are taken by rational actors, who nevertheless have the capacity to learn from their experiences in co-operative decision-making (Haas 1958: 291).
- 4) Incremental decision-making is given primacy over grand designs, where seemingly marginal adjustments are often driven by the unintended consequences of previous decisions, as most political actors tend to be incapable of long-range purposive behaviour, since decisions on integration are normally taken with very imperfect

knowledge of their consequences and frequently under the pressure of deadlines (Haas 2004: 24).

- 5) Neo-functionalists pointed out that interaction in the Community setting is often characterized by positive-sum games and a supranational style of decision-making where participants seek to attain agreement by means of compromises upgrading common interests (Haas 1964: 66)

There have been several studies about neo-functionalism and different EU policy areas during the time of the financial crisis. With regard to European economic integration, several scholars, using a neo-functionalist approach, have sought to reinforce the idea that the Economic and Monetary Union is far from suffering a disintegration process but, despite the crisis, the integration process is reinforced (see Niemann, Ioannou 2015; Verdun 2002).

Having specified the main assumptions of neo-functionalism, in the following table, under a neo-functionalist vision, this article will analyse the main EMU legal measures of the last years that have led to a more integrated policy area (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1: European Stability Mechanism (ESM) evolution

Year	Measure	Neo-Functionalist Analysis
May 2010	The EFSM ^a and the EFSF ^b are established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decisions are taken by rational actors, in this case, the European Commission. - In order to make the EFSM and EFSF possible, the EU cooperates with Member States in the decision-making process. - Agreements by means of compromises upgrading common interests.
March 2012	The EFSF evolves into the ESM ^c adding the Article 136 to the TFUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration is seen as a process, in this regard, by agreements between the different actors, the EFSF evolves towards the ESM, leading to a more reinforced and integrative EMU. - Functional, political and cultivated spillovers (see Niemann, Ioannou 2015)

Note:

^a European Financial Stability Mechanism: funding programme created for the European Commission to provide financial assistance to any EU country experiencing or threatened by severe financial difficulties using bonds issued on behalf of the European Union. The EFSM was used to provide financial assistance conditional on the implementation of reforms to Ireland and Portugal between 2011 and 2014, and to provide short-term bridge loans to Greece in July 2015. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-financial-assistance/loan-programmes/european-financial-stabilisation-mechanism-efsm_en.

^b European Financial Stability Facility: Temporary crisis resolution measure created in 2010 by euro area countries. It has provided financial assistance to Ireland, Portugal and Greece. The assistance was financed via bonds and other debt instruments on capital markets. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-financial-assistance/loan-programmes/european-financial-stability-facility-efsf_es.

^c European Stability Mechanism: was set up as an international financial institution by the euro area Member States

to help euro area countries in severe financial distress. It provides emergency loans but in return, countries must undertake reform programmes. Together with its predecessor, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), it can lend a total of €700 billion. The ESM replaces the EFSF, a temporary vehicle set up in 2010. The EFSF cannot enter new assistance programmes but continues to be active in the bond market to manage its debt. was also linked to the Treaty through an addition to Article 136.

Source: Niemann, Ioannou (2015) and own elaboration.

Table 2: Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) reinforcement

Year	Measure	Neo-Functionalist Analysis
December 2011	The SGP is reinforced by the “Six-Pack” ^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Decisions are taken by rational actors (the EU). – Coalitions and cooperation between different actors. European Commission, European Council, European Parliament. – Common interests.
May 2013	The “Six-Pack” is supplemented by the “Two Pack” ^b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increasing decision-making on decisions regarding a more integrative project. – Consequences in other policy areas (spillovers). – Integration process, own dynamics.

Note:

^a Six Pack: set of European legislative measures to reform the Stability and Growth Pact and introducing greater macroeconomic surveillance. Source: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2013_372_E_0001_01.

^b Two Pack: For Member States in Excessive Deficit Procedure, the Two-Pack introduces a system of monitoring that will co-exist with, and complement, the requirements set out under the SGP. Source: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-457_en.htm.

Source: Niemann, Ioannou (2015) and own elaboration.

Apart from this, all these measures were complemented by the European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB), the creation of the Banking Union and its resolution counterpart, the Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) with the Single Resolution Fund (SRF). Thus, all these steps have led to deeper European economic and monetary integration (Ioannou et al. 2015).

On the one hand, this analysis supports the assumption of previous research about the contribution of neo-functionalism in explaining EU economic integration during the period of the financial crisis. On the other hand, it is crucial to point out that since the financial crisis started, not every EU policy area has suffered from a weakening process of integration and that the integration degree in different policy domains differs. In the case of the EMU architecture, neo-functionalism “identifies crucial driving forces and mechanisms of change (...), and salient policy objectives” (Niemann and Ioannou 2015: 212).

Having specified this, it is important to outline that neo-institutionalism is considered a *policy change* theory (Tosun et al. 2014). According to this affirmation,

the EMU has not experienced any radical policy change, on the contrary, as there has been several policy changes in asylum and migration area, this theoretical framework is not appropriate.

2. Policy Change: Neo-institutionalism and the Migration and Asylum Policy

The Syrian war has provoked a major displacement of people, “the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR)¹ informs that the number of sea arrivals across the Mediterranean to Europe amounted to: 216.1 thousand in 2014, 1 million in 2015, 362.8 thousand in 2016 and 172.3 thousand in 2017” (Pachocka, Vizvizi 2018: 456, 457), causing one of the largest influxes of forced migrants in Europe since World War II. As a consequence, in May 2015, the “European Agenda on Migration” was presented by the European Commission. This Agenda’s main goal was to define the immediate measures to be taken in order to address the refugee crisis. In addition, “the EU decided to assist those Member States that had been facing the highest numbers of refugees at its external borders, namely Greece and Italy” (Niemann, Zaun 2018: 5). Furthermore, in September 2015 the “temporary emergency relocation scheme” was implemented. In this regard, relocation refers to the “transfer of persons in need of international protection from one EU Member State to another” (Niemann, Zaun 2018: 5). This new scheme’s main goal was to share responsibility of relocating refugees but as some experts have claimed (Niemann, Zaun 2018), the scheme negotiations were confrontational and some Eastern Member States such as Hungary, Romania and Poland showed their opposition to such relocation measures because of their compulsory nature.

The opposition of these Member States caused an implementation problem. In this regard, according to the European Commission (2017a), in July 2017, about 27% of persons were relocated. As the “compulsory” nature of the scheme was producing reluctance of Eastern Member States in accepting it, in September 2016, Visegrad countries proposed the idea of “flexible solidarity” at the European Council at Bratislava, consequently, its financial support or expertise meant that “while some

¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Refugees Operational Data Portal: Mediterranean Situation. Source: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>.

Member States could take in refugees, others could instead contribute” (Niemann, Zaun 2018: 7).

During the last decades, scholars have attempted to apply different theoretical approaches in order to explain the fields of policy on migration and refugees. There have been several political theories such as Marxism, political economy, neo-institutionalism, used by the academic community to explain why migration policies fail. These theoretical approaches have their pros and cons, nevertheless, when it comes to explaining migration policies and their relation with institutions, several studies have demonstrated that “supranational organizations and international regimes have had little impact on the immigration policies of individual countries with the partial exception of the EU and the refugee regime” (Meyers 2000: 1274).

Insights from the neo-institutional literature (March, Olsen 1984; Hall, Taylor 1996; Caporaso, Jupille 1999) have underlined the influence of institutions on the policy-making process, both constraining and constitutive. Thus, EU policy change has been analysed by looking at the EU constraints on Member States in order to shape national policies by transferring competences to the EU level.

In particular, EU Member States’ increased cooperation in recent years on issues of internal security, border security, asylum, and irregular immigration, in particular, has raised several questions regarding the nature of such cooperation (Thielemann, Amstrong 2013). The Syrian refugee crisis has led to the securitization of the EU asylum regime and scepticism by Member States towards the EU as a problem-solving institution. Nevertheless, this has occurred in parallel with the emergence and stability of agreements, such as the Dublin Convention, in light of what appears to be a securitization of the EU asylum and migration policy areas (Thielemann, Amstrong 2013).

The European asylum/migration decision-making process has enabled national governments to strengthen their own domestic position at EU level in a strategic way, and to initiate processes of vertical and horizontal policy transfer (Thielemann 2002). So far, under a European integration perspective, one could argue that European integration has helped national governments to overcome established institutional constraints and facilitated asylum and migration policy change at the national level (Thielemann 2002). This calls into question to what extent new securitized European asylum developments and policy change may be explained under a European integration approach, because some Member States are reluctant to empower EU institutions in the asylum policy area because they have come to see migration as a problem of internal security.

In this regard, the main assumptions of neo-institutionalism may be summarized as follows (March, Olsen 1989):

1. Political systems have to be seen not only as a community of individual actors in which individual preferences lead to outcomes within a maximize gains model, but also it must be seen as systems in which institutions, rules and norms of appropriateness play a crucial role.
2. Political institutions provide action alternatives.
3. Political institutions create structure for interpreting history and anticipating the future.
4. Political institutions shape individuals' preferences by means of rules of appropriateness.
5. Political institutions create environments and meaning, providing new interpretations of life.
6. Institutional decision-making processes are based on a garbage can model, in which decisions, actions, solutions and problems interact each other.
7. Institutions are stable and not likely to change.
8. Aggregative forms are characteristic of good times (self-interested action and exchange increasing), spite of integrative forms that are characteristic of concern times (attempts to unity and increasing attention to rules).
9. Institutions provide order and equality of power that may lead to democratic political systems.

Despite the fact that neo-institutionalism may provide insights related to the EU migration and asylum policy crisis, it suffers from some weaknesses. In order to analyse them, the most important EU responses to the refugee crisis since 2015 are studied under a neo-institutionalist framework (Table 3):

Table 3: Main EU's legal responses to the refugee crisis (2015–2017)

Year	Measure	Neo-Institutionalist Analysis
May 2015	European Agenda for Migration is published by the European Commission to outline immediate and longer-term measures to better manage migration. Hotspots concept set out of the first time.	– The EU as political institution provides action alternatives to address the crisis.

Year	Measure	Neo-Institutionalist Analysis
September 2015	Package of proposals to address the refugee crisis is published by the European Commission, including second emergency relocation proposal (12 thousand people from frontline countries), EU emergency Trust Fund for Africa, and proposed permanent relocation mechanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Proposal of action alternatives – With these measures the EU is creating a new political environment in which political actors perceive the political event (refugee crisis) in a different way. – In this regard, words used by the EU referring to the crisis such as emergency, crisis, security etc., led to the different political actors, and in particular Member States to conceive the crisis with a different vision
November 2015	EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan is announced, which aims to support both Syrians under temporary protection and host communities in Turkey, and to strengthen cooperation to prevent irregular migration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The EU plays a crucial role in the political system in which, in this case, with its rules and norms of appropriateness tries to make a bilateral agreement with Turkey within the framework of a maximizing gains model – The EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan is the result of a decision-making process in which actions, solutions and problems have been interacting each other.
May 2016	Common European Asylum System (CEAS) reform proposal are published by the European Commission, including proposed reforms of the Dublin Regulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The EU seeks to provide order and equality of power. – The EU seeks to create a structure based on the previous experience on the refugee crisis in order to face up with the migration and asylum future challenges. – With Dublin Regulation reforms, the EU may shape Member States' preferences by means of rules of appropriateness.
October 2016	European Border and Coast Guard Agency is launched.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Integrative forms that are characteristic of concern times, in this case, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency is an attempt of unity and increasing attention to rules.

Source: Collett, Le Coz (2018) and own elaboration.

As we can see in Table 3, neo-institutionalist theory may explain some dynamics in European asylum and migration domain, nevertheless, there are some weaknesses that would be interesting to address. Broadly speaking, scholars have claimed that the institutional model has little impact on migration policies (Zolberg 1991; Miller 1992), with the exception of the EU. Due to the individual costs and benefits for states, supranational institutions do not act as main actors in shaping states' preferences.

In the case of the EU, neo-institutionalism has been applied for the study of asylum and migration policies, however, since the refugee crisis started, this political theory suffers from shortcomings. Before the crisis, neo-institutionalism might explain the “removal of obstacles to the free movement of people within the EU, and the increased cooperation among its Member States” (Meyers 2000: 1266), on the contrary, one may argue that despite the EU efforts to constrain Member States’ choices in cooperating in asylum and migration issues, the final outcomes tell us that the EU has had little influence over Member States on this policy domain, so neo-institutionalism may explain the different asylum/migration policy-making process during the refugee crisis but not its outcomes.

Finally, one may argue that the European migration and asylum regime is suffering from a disintegration process rather than an integration one. Thus, neo-functionalism is not applicable to this policy domain as it regards “incremental European integration as both prone to crisis and capable of progressing through crisis” (Schimmelfennig 2017: 15). Accordingly, neo-functionalism may explain those policy areas in which during the crisis, the integration process has been strengthened as in the case of the EMU.

3. Theoretical Alternatives to the Refugee Crisis: the Case of Public Goods Framework

While the literature on public goods has been dominated by rational choice underpinnings, some authors have sought to complement such approaches (see Thielemann 2003). This literature has showed that the assessment of actors’ cost/benefit calculations can go beyond quantifiable elements and can include ideological and normative considerations that will vary among Member States (Thielemann, Amstrong 2013).

One of the main problems in research of asylum and migration in the EU is to understand the different positions of Member States in cooperating at EU level. In order to develop solid policies in this area, national and EU policy-makers have to face up to the reluctance and opposition of some Member States to support EU legislation. In the case of refugee protection, some academic scholars have tried to understand the dynamics beyond Member States’ cooperation in this area through a public goods framework (see Surhke 1998; Thielemann 2013, 2018; Betts 2003). Accordingly, in order to explain the refugee protection dynamics in the EU and

understand why some Member States voluntarily increase their burden-sharing initiatives while others are reluctant to do so, literature on public goods may be very useful (Thielemann 2018). Thus, Member States' preferences in embracing cooperation at EU level may be explained by analysing refugee protection as a global public good.

On the other hand, Olson's collective action theory (1965) has been used in combination with a public goods approach. In addition, in the EU context, collective action dynamics have been often used to explain policy-making changes and cooperation among Member States. The most common measure used in cooperation in the EU are ad-hoc measures, as Greenwood and Aspinwall (1998: 12) explain, "EU collective action is often highly informal and ad-hoc: cooperation in one type of structure can lead to collaboration elsewhere". According to Betts (2003: 286) "(...) this is because EU countries have many areas of shared interest and mutual negotiation; concession in one area can generate leeway in another".

Within the framework of this criteria, one may argue that public goods and collective action vision may shed light on the EU migration and asylum policy-making dynamics during the refugee crisis.

Conclusions

This comparative analysis has underlined how the financial crisis has provoked distinct crises within different EU policy areas and, consequently has led to, on the one hand, internal integration processes and, on the other hand, disintegration processes. Accordingly, EMU and migration and asylum regimes have been taken as case studies in order to explain how EU political theories are not always valid in explaining every EU policy area, as each policy domain has been affected by the financial crisis in a different way.

Firstly, when it comes to analysing the EMU case, this research has drawn attention to: 1) how neo-functionalism may be useful in order to explain integration process dynamics within this policy regime during the financial crisis and; 2) how the neo-institutionalism approach, as it can be considered more a policy change theory (Tosun, Wetzel, Zapryanova 2014), cannot explain this integration process as the EMU has not experienced any radical policy change but an integration process that has led to policy cohesion.

Secondly, 1) the EU migration and asylum regime crisis might be analysed through an institutionalist approach because the EU influences to some extent Member States' preferences, so in this regard, the policy-making process can be viewed as a process in which EU norms, rules and Member States' interests constitute a *garbage can model*²; but 2) it has some shortcomings in its results as there is a lack of a common position among Member States about this policy area and, the EU does not influence states' rationale and interests enough. In this case, Neo-functionalism may not explain the asylum and migration regime crisis as it is suffering from a disintegration process rather than an integration one.

Finally, public goods and collective action theoretical approaches can be useful in understanding the *problématique* of some aspects (i.e., refugee protection) of the European asylum and migration policy-making, but further empirical research on this topic is needed.

To sum up, EU policy areas crises are different from each other and they should therefore be analysed by applying different EU theoretical frameworks, depending on if the crisis has led to an integration or disintegration process within the given policy domain. Furthermore, in the case of asylum and migration area, recent concerns about refugees' migration flows as the issue of internal security call into question the extent to which asylum and migration policy change may be understood only from just a European-based theoretical perspective as, for instance in this case, neo-institutionalism is not enough to explain why some Member States do not enhance cooperation at EU level in the asylum and migration policy area.

In the last decades, neo-institutionalism and European integration theories have been the mainstream theoretical models in explaining policy change in the EU. Very often, scholars have tended to analyse EU policy change both at national and supranational levels from these theoretical perspectives. Nevertheless, crises in multiple EU policy areas because of the 2008 economic crisis have led the European integration project to slow down the empowering process of transferring competences from the Member States to the EU institutions.

Having specified these points for future research, one could argue that until the Syrian refugee crisis, neo-institutionalism and European integration models have

² According to Liberman (2013: 307): "The garbage can model (GCM) is a model within the area of organizational behavior that describes the decision-making process in so-called organized anarchies (organizations facing extreme levels of ambiguity in their decisional environments). The GCM attempts to explain how organizations make choices without having consistent, shared goals and how the organizations' members are involved in these decision-making processes".

been reasonably used in analysing European asylum regime changes. Nevertheless, political integration in the EU might be altered with the emergence of existential threats, in Huysmans' words (2000): "some areas of the European cooperation can be transformed when a 'critical juncture' occurs". In this regard, this "critical juncture" has led to some scholars to take into consideration other theoretical perspectives as complementary or alternative explanatory policy change models.

Future research should be focused on a theoretical development of the public goods model from a political perspective in order to assess empirical cases. Rather than considering public goods and cost/benefit models as substitutive theoretical frameworks of the neo-institutionalism and European integration theories, these new theoretical approaches should be seen as a complement to the "mainstream" theoretical ones. In this regard, recent European asylum and migration policy changes should be interpreted using a theoretical synthesis of neo-institutionalism and European integration theoretical trends and the new approaches from other social sciences' disciplines that are being taken into consideration in political science. The comparative perspective of this paper has revealed a clear division line among different impacts of the crisis among EU policy areas and, consequently, the use of different theoretical frameworks. On the one hand, in the case of the neo-institutionalism and European integration models the literature is primary institution-centred and in it political actors' actions are institutionalized. On the other hand, public goods and cost/benefits theories are state-centred/rational choice based, that is to say, Member States act depending on their own cost/benefit criteria and particular interests.

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