The Europeanization of Public Policy

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Introduction

This chapter deals with the Europeanization of public policy, with emphasis on the problems that researchers encounter when they try to get to grips with the concept of Europeanization, the issue of explanation, the measurement of effects, and the control of alternative rival hypotheses. The chapter covers the domestic impact of the public policy of the European Union (EU), hence one could use the term 'EU-ization' in this context. As shown by Featherstone, in his introduction, the scope of Europeanization can go beyond EU-ization—for example, it can include the transfer of policy from one European country to several other countries. But here I am primarily concerned with how the EU impacts on the domestic policy systems of member states. The reference to member states is indicative of another limitation of this chapter. Indeed, the analysis presented here is based on evidence coming from the EU member states. The reader interested in Europeanization in the context of enlargement should refer to Grabbe's chapter in this volume.

Before we start our discussion of the Europeanization of public policy, it is useful to look at the status of the concept of Europeanization and the place of public policy therein. Empirical analysis is essential. However, it has to be accompanied by a delimitation of the concept. Research on Europeanization runs the risk of conceptual stretching. As shown by the introduction to this volume, the scope of Europeanization as a research agenda is broad. The question arises whether this scope is so broad as to stretch the concept of Europeanization beyond the limit of what is acceptable in the social sciences. Indeed, the implications of sloppy conceptual frameworks should not be overlooked.

The section 'The Concept', therefore, exposes these implications and suggests ideas in the direction of conceptual precision. Concepts are relevant in the
context of analytical frameworks, mechanisms of explanation, and theories. Thus, the next step is to make the concept of Europeanization amenable to empirical analysis and to connect it to explanation, although theoretical work on Europeanization is still in its early days. Accordingly, the section ‘What is Europeanized and to What Extent?’ ‘unpacks’ the concept of Europeanization by using a simple taxonomy. The section ‘Vertical and Horizontal Mechanisms’ illustrates the main mechanisms involved in Europeanization of public policy, before the key explanatory variables are discussed in section ‘Towards Explanation?’ The section ‘Conclusions’ presents suggestions for future research. The key argument throughout this chapter is that research on Europeanization presents an opportunity to bring EU scholars closer to ‘normal’ political science. As shown by Hassenteufel and Surel (2000), this is an important item in the agenda of EU studies, in order to avoid intellectual segregation and contribute to cumulative knowledge in the social sciences.

By focusing on the Europeanization of public policy, I will discuss some prerequisites for ‘normal’ analyses, that is, the definition of concepts, the methodology, the identification of research designs, and questions and puzzles amenable to theoretical public policy analysis. There is no need to invent ad hoc theories and models that do not travel beyond Europeanization. Quite the opposite indeed, the goal of this chapter is to show how several important aspects of Europeanization can be handled by using standard analysis of concepts and the methodology of comparative policy analysis. As such, Europeanization has potential for conversation with (as opposed to segregation from) the main research agendas in contemporary political science—a point that will be developed in the conclusions of this volume.

The Concept

Conceptual analysis is a fundamental step in comparative political science, as shown by the recommendations formulated by Sartori in several essays (Sartori 1970, 1984, 1991). Concepts that are not well-defined lead to confusion and elusive language. Concepts that do not specify the level of analysis generate mistakes in terms of the ‘ladder of abstraction’, that is, they obfuscate the relations between genus and species. Concepts without negation are universal: they point to everything ‘conceptions without specified termination or boundaries’ (Sartori 1970: 1042).

What is the state of the current research on Europeanization in the light of conceptual analysis? The problem is not that different authors assign different meanings to Europeanization—this is an indicator of a vibrant debate. Instead, the potential risks refer to (a) concept misformation, (b) conceptual stretching, and (c) ‘degreeism’.

Definitions and their Problems

Lawton (1999), for example, suggests that Europeanization is the de jure transfer of sovereignty to the EU level, and distinguishes this concept from ‘Europeanization’, that is, the de facto sharing of power between national governments and the European Union. Thus, Europeanization and ‘Europeanization’ are identified with the emergence of EU competencies and the pooling of power. Börzel (1999: 574) instead draws attention to what happens once power has been transferred to Brussels. She defines Europeanization as a ‘process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy making’. This notion goes in the right direction. However, it requires further specification, if one wants to distinguish between the simple fact that there is more ‘Europe’ in domestic policies and the more profound impact of the European Union in policy areas which have now become dominated by a European logic of behaviour. Additionally, the reference to an ‘increasing’ role of European policy making may complicate things in terms of degreeism (see below): at the level of member states, most political phenomena seem to show at least a minimum degree of Europeanization. How does one distinguish between Europeanized policies and the ones which are still eminently domestic?

Risse, Cowles, and Caporaso, in their introduction to Cowles et al. (2001: 3), have provided yet another option with the following definition:

We define Europeanization as the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal, and social institutions associated with political problem-solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules.

To begin with, the reader is struck by the emphasis on policy networks. Arguably, the authors use the notion of networks with wide latitude, that is, networks as patterns of social interaction present everywhere except under conditions of extremely autocratic rule. Yet the EU debate displays different positions on the usefulness of the network approach (see Kassim 1994 for a critical position). Additionally, networks are one possible ‘mode’ of governance (as opposed to corporatism, pluralism, and statism; see Kohler-Koch 1999), not an ever-present phenomenon. Thus, one would think that the relevance of policy networks is a matter of empirical (rather than definitional) analysis. More importantly still, the emphasis on the ‘creation of rules’ and ‘the European level’ suggests an extremely broad notion of Europeanization, inclusive of both EU policy and politics and their repercussions on national systems. But if Europeanization has to have a precise meaning, it has to be different and more selective than the notions of EU policy formation and European integration. Common sense indicates that Europeanization has something to do with the penetration of the European dimension in national arenas of politics and policy, a point raised by Börzel (1999).
Ladrech heads towards a promising direction when he puts emphasis on Europeanization as process. He argues that Europeanization is an incremental process re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making. (Ladrech 1994: 69)

By ‘organizational logic’ he means the ‘adaptive processes of organizations to a changing or changing environment’ (Ladrech 1994: 71). In doing so, he underlines the role of adaptation, learning, and policy change. The emphasis on organizations is broad enough as to accommodate both processes wherein networks play a role and instances of Europeanization in which there are no networks at work. The drawback is that too much emphasis on organizations may obfuscate the role of individuals and policy entrepreneurs. Further, the object of Europeanization is limited to ‘national politics and policy making’. One could add identities and the cognitive component of politics. Drawing upon Ladrech’s definition, I would argue that the concept of Europeanization refers to:

Processes of (a) construction, (b) diffusion, and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’, and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of Eu public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures, and public policies.

This definition stresses the importance of change in the logic of political behaviour. Europeanization involves the domestic assimilation of EU policy and politics, hence the definition refers to processes of institutionalization (Stone Sweet et al. 2001). Another point: the definition does not mention organizations. By contrast, it accommodates both organizations and individuals. It is sufficiently broad to cover the major interests of political scientists, such as political structure, public policy, identities, and the cognitive dimension of politics. It can be applied both to EU member states and to other countries (see Grabbe, this volume). The definition does not mention EU laws or decisions of a similar level, but ‘EU public policy’ because it includes modes of governance which are not targeted towards law making, such as the open method of coordination. As Wincott argues in his contribution to this volume, it would be a mistake to assume that the EU level has a high level of coherence from which Europeanization proceeds. Rather, ‘the European Union is always still in formation, built through political contests and struggles’ (Wincott, this volume). Therefore, the definition stresses the making of policy, without assuming that there is a coherent, rational layer of ‘EU decisions’ from which Europeanization descends.

The sceptical reader may observe that this definition of Europeanization is too restrictive as it ignores processes that go beyond the EU dimension. Research themes such as the development of the European identity and culture, and the imitation and transfer of policy between one European country and another (without the involvement of the European Union) are not covered by my definition. Europe is an area of regional integration where processes of identity formation, public policy diffusion, and institutional change can take place independently of the European Union. This is certainly true, but I would still defend this definition by introducing the difference between a preanalytic focus on the broad notion of ‘what is Europe’ and an analytic focus leading to definition, operationalization, and explanation.

More precisely, I would point out to the reader the difference between background concepts and systematized concepts (Adcock and Collier 2001). A background concept represents ‘the constellation of potentially diverse meanings associated with a given concept’ (Adcock and Collier 2001: 530). Background concepts do not typically refer to explicit definitions. At this level, Europeanization covers a collection of diverse research themes and understandings relevant to a wide community of scholars (political scientists, sociologists, and historians). By contrast, the systematized concept is a specific formulation adopted by a particular group of researchers and is ‘commonly formulated in terms of an explicit definition’ (Adcock and Collier 2001: 530). Think of the difference between a ‘dictionary definition’ of a concept and the broader encyclopedic knowledge within which the meaning of the concept is embedded. An encyclopedic (or preanalytic) focus is fully legitimate but it does not help scholars to understand and explain complex phenomena. We need to be explicit about what we want to investigate. Systematized concepts can do a better job, although ‘dictionary definitions’ can vary according to the specific community of scholars involved. This chapter addresses one community of scholars (namely, political scientists interested in the European Union); hence, I opt for a systematized concept centered on the European Union. As mentioned above, I acknowledge that Europeanization can take on broader meanings within other communities of scholars, as shown by Featherstone in this volume. This is not a problem, provided that the conceptual elements of empirical analysis are clarified upfront.

Concept Stretching

Turning to conceptual stretching, according to elementary logic a concept can be described by two fundamental properties, that is, extension and intension.
(Sartori 1970). Intension refers to the collection of properties covered by a concept. Extension represents the class of entities to which the concept applies. There is a trade-off between intension and extension. The more properties are included in the concept of Europeanization, the smaller will be the class of empirical instances. Although there are no priorities in the choice between intension and extension, a concept with high intension has high discriminatory power. Most studies of Europeanization, however, seem to privilege extension. This is probably the result of an early stage of research, when the analytic grid has to be broad enough as to accommodate a wide range of empirical observations that may have something to do with Europeanization. Thus, we have read that Europeanization is supposed to explain processes of cultural change, new identity formation, policy change, administrative innovation, and even modernization. It covers the formation of European public policy and the effects of EU decisions on national systems. It affects member states but also the wider world.

However, the more we know about Europeanization, the more exigent we should be in terms of intension, that is, the properties of the concept. Otherwise the risk of degreession may loom large. Degreession, as defined by Sartori (1970, 1991), occurs when differences in kind are replaced by differences of degrees. As we are not able to see the difference between a cat and a dog, we speak of different degrees of cat-dogs (Sartori 1991). The metaphor of Europeanization as a continuum and the notion of domestic political systems being ‘increasingly’ penetrated by EU policy make the distinction between the cat and the dog difficult. Without boundaries, it is impossible to define Europeanization. But the literature is somewhat reluctant to tell us what falls outside Europeanization. If everything is Europeanized to a certain degree, what is *not* Europeanized? In this case again, political scientists in the early days of research on a new topic have been hesitant to exclude possible indirect, unforeseen, and simply odd instances of Europeanization. They tend to argue that ‘a certain degree of Europeanization’ may be found almost everywhere. In terms of sociology of knowledge, one can understand this cautious approach. Political scientists do not want to preclude innovation by posing a rigid fence around a developing area of research. But this strategy has the cost of conceptual sloppiness and degreession.

Shall one then stick to a very narrow definition of Europeanization, thus limiting the scope of analysis? Connotative precision (i.e. high intension) is vital in this stage of research, but one does not need to narrow the analysis to a few selective aspects of Europeanization. The best strategy—I argue—is to unpack the concept and to distinguish between Europeanization and other terms (thus, showing what Europeanization is not). To unpack a concept—Sartori explained—is to decompose ‘mental compounds into orderly and manageable sets of component units’ (Sartori 1970: 1083).

**Europeization and Contiguous (but Different) Terms**

In the next section, I will present my own ‘unpacking’ proposals. At the onset, however, it is indispensable to draw the line between Europeization and other concepts, namely convergence, harmonization, integration, and policy formation.

To begin with, Europeization is not convergence. The latter can be a consequence of Europeization. Convergence is not Europeization because there is a difference between a process and its consequences. However, Europeization can also produce divergence or convergence limited to a family of countries. Policy studies have detected considerable variability. Some authors have found consistent convergence of media markets regulation induced by Europeization (Harcourt, this volume), but the Europeization of transport policy has resulted in striking domestic differences (Héritier and Knill 2001).

Europeization should not be confused with harmonization. In a study of French environmental policy for the agricultural sector, Montpetit concludes that ‘Europeization encourages domestic policy change, but not all member states will opt for the same types of change. Europeization does not necessarily accord with harmonization. (Montpetit 2000: 599). Harmonization reduces regulatory diversity, typically by providing a level playing field (see Leebron 1996 on types, claims, and goals of harmonization). Europeization leaves the issue of diversity open. The outcome of Europeization can be regulatory diversity, intense competition, even distortions of competition.

Finally, Europeization is not political integration. Typically, theories of integration address the question: ‘why do different countries join forces and build up supranational institutions?’ Europeization would not exist without European integration. But the latter concept belongs to the ontological stage of research, that is, the understanding of a process in which countries pool sovereignty, whereas the former is post-ontological, being concerned with what happens once EU institutions are in place and produce their effects (on EU ‘ontology’ and post-ontological perspectives see Caporaso 1996). This begs the question of the relationship between Europeization and general theories of integration. As shown by Börzel (1999: 576–7), theories of integration focus on the issue whether European integration strengthens the state (intergovernmentalism), weakens it, or triggers ‘multilevel governance’ dynamics. The post-ontological focus of Europeization brings us to other, more specific, questions, such as the role of domestic institutions in the process of adaptation to Europe. In the literature on Europeization, the final results in terms of ‘strengthening’ or ‘hollowing out’ of the state are always conditional—for example, it depends on the configuration and response of domestic institutions.
Europeanization and EU policy formation should be kept distinct at the conceptual level. But in the real world they are interconnected. European policy is not a mysterious deus ex machina situated 'up there'. Instead, it originates from processes of conflict, bargaining, imitation, diffusion, and interaction between national (and often subnational) and EU level actors. ‘The European Union’—Goetz argues—‘is best understood as an arena rather than an actor’ (Goetz 2002: 4).

Further, the outcomes of Europeanization can feed back into the process of EU policy formulation. National actors can draw lessons from Europeanization and seek to change or adapt EU policy. Thus, Börzel (2001) and Bulmer and Burch (2001) argue that Europeanization is a two-way process. Member states upload their preferences to Brussels via complex negotiations and download them from various EU policy menus. Goetz (2002: 4) concludes that ‘Europeanization is circular rather than unidirectional, and cyclical rather than one-off’.

However, analytically one should distinguish between the process leading to the formation of a certain policy, and the reverberation of that policy in national arenas. Otherwise, the concept of Europeanization—in the sense of Börzel and Bulmer and Burch—would be exactly the same as the concept of ‘EU policy process’, which includes both uploading and downloading. Parsimony and elementary logic would suggest that we do not use two concepts—that is, Europeanization and policy process—for the same thing. In empirical research, one can go beyond Europeanization and show how EU policy was first formulated: but this is a matter concerning the scope of one’s empirical research, not a matter of definition. More generally, I do not see why one cannot treat Europeanization as an example of ‘second-image reversed’ process (Gourevitch 1978). If ‘second-image reversed’ research designs are legitimate tools of scientific inquiry, then Europeanization is nothing but an instance of these designs.

What is Europeanized and to What Extent?

As mentioned above, concepts are just a component of a wider explanatory toolbox. In order to proceed towards explanation, one has to make concepts useful in terms of empirical analysis. This is the role performed by taxonomies. A taxonomy is a simple device that organizes research and makes complex concepts amenable to empirical analysis. Therefore, the ideas presented in this section serve the purpose of assisting research design. To repeat: the emphasis at this stage is on the organization of research, not on explanation.

Bearing in mind the definition of Europeanization adopted in the previous section, one can approach the study of this phenomenon by raising the questions ‘what is Europeanized?’ (i.e. the domains where the effects of Europeanization are supposed to materialize) and ‘to what extent?’ (i.e. extension and direction of Europeanization). Figure 2.1a—inspired by but different from Mortino’s proposal (Mortino 1999)—provides a suggested taxonomy for the empirical investigation of these two dimensions.

Let us begin with the domains of Europeanization (Figure 2.1a). The first important distinction is between macrodomestic structures, public policy, and...
cognitive–normative structures. Domestic structures include the political and legal structures of a country, namely institutions (e.g. the relations between cabinet and assembly), inter-governmental relations, and the legal structure. In terms of representation and cleavages, one can distinguish between political parties, pressure groups, and the social dimension of political cleavages (Figure 2.1a). Let us turn to public policy now. Public policy is not the mere output of the political system and it may have dynamic effects on political structures. But analytically, and specifically in a static exercise on taxonomies, one is allowed to differentiate between policy and domestic structures.

Public Policy

The Europeanization of public policy can take different forms. In principle, it can affect all the elements of public policy, such as actors, resources, and policy instruments (see Figure 2.1). Additionally, Europeanization can affect the policy style, for example, by making it more or less conflictual, corporatist, or pluralist, or more or less regulative.

It is impossible to review the considerable amount of research on the Europeanization of public policy. The essential point, however, is simple. When contrasted with the literature on domestic structures, studies at the policy level reveal a greater impact of Europe. This impact takes different forms, such as convergence (Harcourt, this volume, on media markets regulation; Schneider 2000 on telecommunications), direct and indirect transfer of models from Brussels (Radaelli 2000b on monetary policy, tax policy, and regulatory policy), and a profound impact of EU regulation on national competition policy and regulatory approaches (Majone 1996).

Cognitive and Normative Dimensions

The cognitive and normative dimensions of Europeanization should be kept distinct from the others. The main reason for that is twofold. On the one hand, there is the simple observation that not only can Europe affect formal political structures, it can also influence the values, norms, and discourses prevalent in member states. On the other, and most importantly, the ‘cognitive and normative frames’ (Surel 2000) may trigger transformative effects on all the elements of politics and policy. For example, discourse may change the interpretation of a political dilemma facing a political party. It may alter the perception of what is at stake in a policy controversy. It may transform the interests and preferences upon which negotiations are structured. Further, policy discourses can be decisive in terms of securing legitimacy for choices in line with EU policy (Schmidt 2001; Schmidt and Radaelli 2002).

The Institutional Analysis of Policy Change

Ideally, research on Europeanization should be organized in a matrix similar to the one portrayed in Figure 2.1a. On the one hand, one has to specify ‘what’ is Europeanized; on the other, there is the question of ‘how much change’ has been brought about by Europeanization. Frankly, I do not know how the analysis of change should be tackled in general terms, that is, with reference to the whole set of elements portrayed in Figure 2.1a, from political parties to norms. However, theoretical policy analysis has produced a number of propositions and hypotheses on the more specific question of policy change. Given that this chapter is eminently concerned with the Europeanization of public policy, we will now turn to the issue of measuring policy change.

(a) Four Possible Outcomes: Retrenchment, Inertia, Absorption, and Transformation

Drawing upon Börszöl (1999), Cowies et al. (1991), Héritier (1991), and Héritier and Knill (2001), four possible outcomes of Europeanization can be discerned (see Figure 2.1b): inertia, absorption, transformation, and retrenchment. Taken together, they cover both the magnitude of change and its direction (retrenchment being an example of ‘negative’ Europeanization, hence the sign minus in Figure 2.1b).

Inertia is a situation of lack of change. This may simply happen when a country finds that EU political architectures, choices, models, or policy are too dissimilar to domestic practice. Inertia may take the forms of lags, delays in the transposition of directives, implementation as transformation, and sheer resistance to EU-induced change. In the long term, however, inertia can become impossible to sustain (economically and politically). Therefore, one can submit that long periods of inertia should produce crisis and abrupt change (Olsen 1996).

Absorption indicates change as adaptation. Domestic structures and policy legacy provide a mixture of resiliency and flexibility. They can absorb certain non-fundamental changes, but maintain their ‘core’. Absorption— as specified by Héritier (2001)—is accommodation of policy requirements without real modification of the essential structures and changes in the ‘logic’ of political behaviour.

The ‘accommodation’ of Europe should not be confused with transformation. This is similar to what Hall labels ‘third order’ change, that is, paradigmatic 2
change (Hall 1993). Paradigmatic change occurs when the fundamental logic of political behaviour changes—for example, a change in the format and mechanics of party systems or the adoption of a new orthodoxy in monetary policy.

However, Europeanization can also induce retrenchment. This is a very paradoxical effect, as it implies that national policy becomes less ‘European’ than it was. Kerwer (2001) shows that—in the Italian case at least—EU pressure to liberalize road haulage has objectively strengthened coalitions of domestic actors opposing reform. Therefore, the direction of change has been one of increased intervention, rather than liberalization. How this may happen depends on the mechanisms and the factors explaining Europeanization, two issues examined below in sections ‘Vertical and Horizontal Mechanisms’ and ‘Towards explanation’.

(b) The Problem of Measuring the Four Outcomes ... and a Tentative Solution

The four outcomes outlined so far cover the whole spectrum of possibilities. So far, so good. The problem is: how does one go about the empirical measurement of these four outcomes? The vocabulary of adaptation, transformation, and inertia is becoming very popular, but how does one know that there is mere adaptation but not transformation? For example, where is the ‘fence’, the empirical indicators that tell us whether Greece and Italy have been transformed by Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), instead of simple adaptation? Is transformation in the eye of the beholder, a matter of very qualitative assessment, or can political scientists be more precise? When does marginal change fall under the rubric of inertia rather than absorption?

I would suggest a tentative answer to this problem. The idea is to supplement what has been already said with insights from the literature on learning and cognitive psychology (Bateson 1973) applied to policy analysis (Laird 1999). This literature makes a useful distinction between simple coping strategies (i.e. how to get around an obstacle by using a menu of well-known responses in various ingenious ways) and deuto learning or learning to learn. This can be used to determine—to continue with my example of EMU—whether there have been simple coping strategies or deuto learning. Absorption implies learning some clever strategies as a response to stimulation (typical of behavioural psychology). In a sense, this is a ‘thin’ form of learning. To ‘think’ differently, by contrast, postulates a ‘thick’ effect of Europeanization on learning dynamics in that it implies a modification of belief systems, preferences, and values.

Drawing upon cognitive psychology, Laird (1999) differentiates between learning and cognitive development. The former indicates a gradual, incremental process, whereas the latter designates a discontinuous jump towards new ways of organizing knowledge. Laird explains that:

Development [as opposed to learning] denotes qualitatively different stages of cognition. When children go from one stage of development to another, they reorganize their knowledge and the way they think about the world in a drastic way. (Laird 1999: 4)

The distinction between simple learning and cognitive development is useful. First, it claim the distinction between adaptation and transformation. Second, Laird provides a clear focus on institutions, which provides more precision than terms such as transformation. ‘Transformation of what?’—a sceptical reader may indeed ask! The focus on transformation as institutional development brings institutions (in the sense of March and Olsen 1989) back into the analysis. As such, it leads to the empirical analysis of policy change in its institutional context. Indeed, when political scientists say that ‘EU environmental policy has transformed environmental policy in country A’ they mean that the institutions of environmental policy ‘think’ and perform along European tracks. Third, and perhaps more importantly still, it provides clues in terms of empirical research. In fact, there are four processes of transformation that can be traced out empirically. They are political experience, robustness, equilibration, and discourse.

1. Interaction. This is the dimension of political experience (Laird 1999) or, simply, interaction. In terms of empirical analysis of EMU as Europeanization (to continue with the same example), one could think of the interactions between core executive and other actors. One way of detecting transformation is to look at how institutions become (or do not become) stronger in relation to other institutions in the context of their interactions. To illustrate: the interaction between the core executive and Parliament, organized interests, and the electorate can be studied empirically by looking at EMU-induced reforms of the finance bill, pension reforms, the deregulation of the labour market, and so on.

2. Robustness. The second process revolves around the question to what extent has Europeanization brought about ‘institutional robustness’ of domestic institutions? Institutions become more robust by dint of advisory structures, improved policy technologies, and stronger bureaucratic structures. In terms of empirical analysis, if the first process concerns the interaction between an institution and its environment, the second process (i.e. robustness) leads to research ‘within’ the institution itself across time.

3. Equilibration. The third process identified by Laird is called equilibration. Institutions develop through equilibration when they face a crisis that does not fit with any of the standard repertoires of action. This is a bit of a limitation, because it casts the theme of development in terms of stimuli (the crisis) and responses. By contrast, the ideas about EMU (sound finance, central bank
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independence, low inflation, and policy credibility) have provided a cognitive framework within which institutions can rethink their preferences. This is why I would expand equilibration to capture phenomena such as frame reflection (Schön and Rein 1994). Be that as it may, in terms of empirical analysis the bottom line is that development (as opposed to simple learning) requires a discontinuity with the past. The rules and norms through which institutions learn are transformed and become institutionalized through experience. At this point the link between the previous definition of Europeanization as institutionalization and the analysis of change should be evident.

4. Discourse. Discourse is fundamental both in giving shapes to new rules, values, and practices, and in the production of legitimacy. Drawing upon Schmidt (2001), it is useful to distinguish between discourse formation at the level of elites (coordinative discourse) and the forms of political communication directed to the mass public (communicative discourse). Empirically, the analysis of change will detect the presence or absence of transformative discourses as defined by Schmidt (2001).

To sum up the results of this section: research can be organized by using two dimensions, that is, the ‘objects’ of Europeanization and the dimension (and direction) of change. A typical research design should therefore treat Figure 2.1 as a matrix and fill in the cells with empirical observations. Research conducted so far shows a higher level of Europeanization of policy, whereas structures seem to be less permeable. This brings us to the question of whether policy dynamics feed back into political structures, an issue that can be dealt with by looking at the mechanisms of Europeanization and the explanatory variables. It is to these questions that we now turn.

Vertical and Horizontal Mechanisms

Once the concept of Europeanization and the dimensions of change have been clarified, the next step concerns the possible mechanisms of Europeanization. The literature on the mechanisms is still in its early days. Börzel (1999) and the contributors to Cowles et al. (2001) have drawn attention to the so-called ‘goodness of fit’ (i.e. the degree of institutional compatibility) between domestic institutions and European policy. By focusing on the ‘goodness of fit’, these authors draw our attention to explanatory factors related to any mechanism of change. Therefore, their insights on explanation will be dealt with in the next section. Knill and Lehnhäuf (2002) have presented three mechanisms (the first based on the presence of European models, the second on the domestic opportunity structure, and the third on the role of ‘minimalist’ directives in ‘framing’ integration). In an article on policy transfer,

Radaelli (2000b) draws on institutionalism in organizational analysis and presents the mechanisms of coercion, mimetism, and normative pressures in EU policy diffusion. In another article, he looks at the process of EU-induced cognitive convergence in the absence of direct compulsion from Brussels (Radaelli 1997). Finally, Kohler-Koch (1996) highlights subtle—yet crucial—mechanisms that go beyond the issue of the impact of EU policy on the ‘balance of power’. Figure 2.2 combines the insights of the current debate. The purpose is to organize our understanding of Europeanization, bearing in mind that at this stage it is vital to raise the right questions, instead of looking for the ultimate answer.

Basically, there are two types of mechanisms, that is, ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ Europeanization. Vertical mechanisms seem to demarcate clearly the EU level (where policy is defined) and the domestic level, where policy has to be metabolized. By contrast, horizontal mechanisms look at Europeanization as a process where there is no pressure to conform to EU policy models. Instead, horizontal mechanisms involve a different form of adjustment to Europe based on the market or on patterns of socialization. In horizontal Europeanization, the process is not one of conforming to EU policy which ‘descends’ into the domestic policy arena as a hierarchical chain of command. Horizontal Europeanization is a process of change triggered by the market and the choice of the consumer or by the diffusion of ideas and discourses about the notion of good policy and best practice. More precisely, the vertical mechanisms are based on adaptational pressure; the horizontal mechanisms involve different forms of framing (Figure 2.2). Regulatory competition is a mechanism starting with vertical prerequisites but that has horizontal consequences. In fact, the competition of rules is based on the choices of market players, but it exists only in the context of an institutional choice, ‘vertically’ enforced by the European Court of Justice, such as mutual recognition.

**Figure 2.2. Mechanisms of Europeanization**
Consider first the role of European models and vertical Europeanization (Figure 2.2). In certain policy areas the European Union prescribes the adoption of a specific model. As Knill and Lehmkuhl (2002) argue, member states have to bring domestic arrangements into line with an institutional model designed in Brussels. Examples are provided by new regulatory policies in the areas of consumer protection, environmental policy, and health and safety at work. As the European Union positively prescribes the adoption of a model, one could use the term positive integration to distinguish this mechanism from the cases of negative integration, in which the European Union strikes down national barriers to the emergence of European markets without prescribing models.

When there are EU models, member states are under ‘adaptable pressure’. Put differently, they are under pressure to adapt to Europe. Pressure implies coercion—for example, certain directives specify a period of time at the end of which member states are compelled to introduce regulatory arrangements. Adaptable pressure can operate with mechanisms different from coercion. Mimesis illustrates this alternative channel of Europeanization. If the countries adopting EU models provide a critical mass, the remaining countries can feel the force of attraction of the EU ‘centre of gravity’ and join in. Mimesis and coercion are mechanisms of isomorphism, that is, the tendency to become alike, well known to the new institutionalism in organizational analysis (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

Let us now turn to other mechanisms of Europeanization. There are cases in which EU policies do not prescribe a model (see Figure 2.2). Policies of ‘negative integration’ (or ‘market-making’ policies, as opposed to ‘market-shaping’) create integrated markets by removing barriers to trade, investment, freedom of establishment, and free circulation of people. They do not say how a market should be governed in terms of institutional models, but typically emphasize the role of mutual recognition once the barriers have been removed. The key mechanism triggered by ‘negative integration’ is international regulatory competition.

When markets are opened, and certain choices are excluded from the domestic policy menu, existing domestic equilibria are challenged. Negative integration is aimed at achieving results at the national level, of course. However, these objectives are not achieved directly, by prescribing a model, but indirectly, by changing the domestic opportunity structure. The key mechanism is the change in the domestic opportunity structure rather than the compatibility between European Union and domestic and EU policy (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002: 258). Figure 2.2, accordingly, puts emphasis on this type of change. The overall effect of this indirect mechanism cannot be predicted a priori. It all hinges on who is empowered and disempowered, and how, by ‘negative integration’ at the national level.

Directly or indirectly, the mechanisms examined so far assume that EU policy has a precise direction and aims to produce specific compliance at the level of the member states. Typically, they are based on the ‘hard’ instruments of EU public policy, such as directives and decisions of the European Court of Justice. However, there are at least three other soft framing mechanisms of horizontal Europeanization, portrayed on the right-hand side of Figure 2.2. To begin with, in some cases, such as railway policy, the EU proceeds by minimalist directives or non-compulsory regulations. By their nature, these instruments do not create any pressure in terms of adaptation (or ‘goodness of fit’) or international regulatory competition. Yet they can prepare the ground for major policy change. They do so by providing additional legitimacy to domestic reformers in search of justifications, by ‘seminating’ possible solutions in the national debate, and by altering expectations about the future. Additional legitimacy is particularly important when domestic leaders are engaged in radical reforms (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002). The introduction of new solutions coming from Brussels can alter the perception of problems. New solutions can provide a new dimension to national policy problems and trigger learning dynamics or a different political logic. In the case of media ownership policy, the instrument of audience share was first aired at the EU level and then ‘seminated’ in national political systems, with important effects on national legislation in Germany and the United Kingdom (Harcourt 2000). Further, even the vaguest European policy has the potential of altering the expectations of domestic players, for example, by showing that opponents of liberalization are fighting for a ‘lost cause’ because EU policy is heading in a totally different direction (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002).

Can the European Union affect national policy even in the absence of EU directives and regulations, albeit minimalist? The answer hinges on the strength of new governance architectures which create the preconditions for the diffusion of shared ideas and policy paradigms. The most important innovation in terms of governance architectures is the open method of coordination (OMC, see de la Porte and Poen 2002). The OMC is a means of spreading best practice and achieving convergence towards the EU goals. The idea is to use the European Union as a policy transfer platform rather than a law-making system. Thus, the OMC should assist member states in developing their own policies. The ‘method’ is defined by the following characteristics: the EU guidelines combined with specific timetables and action to be undertaken at the national or regional level; benchmarking and sharing of best practice; qualitative and, when appropriate, quantitative indicators; “period monitoring, evaluation, and peer review organized as mutual learning processes” (Presidency Conclusions, Lisbon European Council, 23–24 March 2000). As mentioned above, one aim of the OMC is to encourage convergence. Preliminary evidence suggests that the OMC has facilitated convergence on policy paradigms and
policy beliefs (Trubek and Mosher 2001; Bertozzi and Bonoli 2002; de la Porte and Pochet 2002; Radaelli 2002). Looking at the future, the key issue is whether it will also produce convergence of national policies and convergence of results.

Finally, Europeanization can produce effects that go beyond the balance of power. Kohler-Koch (1996, 1999) argues that the insistence on the implications of EU policy in terms of the balance of power can be misleading. The crucial effect of Europeanization—she suggests—is on the dissemination of the ‘network mode of governance’ (as opposed to other modes of governance, such as corporatism, statism, andpluralism) into the member states (Kohler-Koch 1999). EU policy can change the understanding and the practice of what legitimate governance is all about. ‘Impact studies’, that is, research designs looking at the domestic impact of EU policy, can miss the target because they define the dependent variable in very narrow terms. The ‘governance’ effect cannot be detected at the level of a single episode; neither can it be investigated in a simple ‘balance of power’ research design, for example, by looking at the battle between reformers and advocates of the status quo. Yet the long-term implications of new modes of governance can be the most powerful.

Towards Explanation?

Mechanisms shed light on the process of Europeanization. But how does one explain the likelihood and direction of change? Two research projects have recently been concluded (Cowles et al. 2001; Héritier and Knill 2001), but more research is needed in this area. At the moment of writing, the best option is, arguably, to examine explanatory variables with the aid of the evidence made available by recent projects, but also with insights and suggestions that, at this stage, are still somewhat speculative. On balance, this section contains more ideas on how to proceed than specific hypotheses corroborated by empirical evidence.

Goodness of Fit: General Explanation or Special Case?

The explanation provided by Börzel (1999) and Cowles et al. (2001) is based on the general idea of adaptational pressure. The basic idea is that Europeanization matters only if there is divergence, incompatibility, or ‘mismatch’ between European-level institutional process, politics, and policies, and the domestic level.

The relationship between adaptational pressure and change in domestic structures and policies is curvilinear. When adaptational pressure is low, because the content of EU policy is already present in a member state, there is no need to change domestic institutions. Simply put, there is a good ‘fit’ between national policy and the European Union. Hence it is easy to absorb ‘Europe’. At the other extreme, when the distance between EU policies and national ones is very high, member states will find it very difficult to ‘digest’ and ‘metabolize’ European policy. Hence there will be inertia at the domestic level. The degree of change will be high when adaptational pressure falls between the two extremes. An arc on a Cartesian plan, with adaptational pressure on the x-axis and domestic change on the y-axis can illustrate this relation.

Börzel and Cowles et al. explicitly refer to new institutional analysis in their investigation of adaptational pressure. Domestic institutions reframe Europeanization by providing dominant strategy in cases of ‘mismatch’ between the European Union and member states. Börzel (1999) shows how Spanish regions reacted with a confrontational strategy to Europeanization, whereas German Länder preferred a cooperative strategy. Institutions, in addition, determine the distribution of resources among domestic actors affected by Europeanization. The result is that the impact of Europeanization is contingent on institutional factors. A corollary is that Europeanization will produce diversity rather than convergence, because domestic institutions differ widely.

The ‘goodness of fit’ argument is not without its problems, however. To begin with, what happens when domestic institutions are fragile (Morlino 1999)? In countries such as Belgium and Italy, domestic institutions have been in crisis or transition in the last decade or so. They have not behaved like rigid posts, capable of fencing or shaping the process of Europeanization. Quite the opposite: in certain episodes Europeanization has been a crucial component of domestic institutional change, as shown by the impact of EMU. The interaction between Europeanization and domestic institutions is therefore dialectic.

Second, the notion of ‘goodness of fit’ needs further exploration. The metaphor of the ‘fit’ covers quite a broad range of elements. To illustrate: a country can have a bad or good ‘fit’ because of the presence-absence of Roman law, strength-weakness of bureaucratic structures, corporatist-pluralist style of decision making, centralization-decentralization of power, and so on. Given this broad range, there is no absolute compatibility or mismatch: it is up to political actors at the European Union and domestic level to define what they are. This definition is part of a process of interpretation and political conflict (Goetz 2002). The notion of mismatch neglects this process.

Third, this explanation seems to work better in the presence of vertical Europeanization. Although the advocates of this explanation claim that they offer a general explanation, it remains to be seen how the ‘goodness of fit’ approach performs in the various forms of horizontal Europeanization described above. More research is needed before one can answer this question.
To conclude on this third point, the ideas of adaptational pressure and ‘goodness of fit’ provide a point of departure for general explanations, and future research will hopefully bring more precision to this type of analysis.

Fourth, the ‘goodness of fit’ does not tell the full story of Europeanization. It is a special case (not a general explanation). As shown by Mark Thatcher (2002) in the case of telecommunications, governments have been under little adaptational pressure from EU regulation. Yet they have used European policy to justify and legitimate change. Governments already seeking reform have been able to use European policy as an opportunity, rather than responding to a ‘pressure’. The effects of this type of Europeanization have been large in terms of the clash between the reformers and the advocates of the status quo in telecommunications. But these effects are not captured by the ‘goodness of fit’ argument. Héritier and Knill (2001) have presented empirical evidence on European policies leading to domestic reforms even in the absence of adaptational pressure. Their argument is that European policies can be exploited by national actors engaged in policy reforms even if European and national arrangements are compatible. The implication is that adaptational pressure is not a necessary condition for Europeanization to cause domestic change.

Fifth, adaptational pressure is not the best predictor of how a country responds to Europeanization. A country can be under strong adaptational pressure, yet it can implement EU policy without too many problems, as shown by the implementation of the packaging waste directive in the United Kingdom (Haverland 2000). The intervening variable in this process is the presence or absence of institutional veto points, as argued by Haverland (2000; see also his contribution to this volume). Institutional veto points available to those opposing EU policy can make Europeanization very problematic even in the presence of low adaptational pressure. It is to the intervening variables that we now turn.

Mapping the Intervening Variables

Héritier and her associates are bringing the debate further in the direction of specific sets of intervening variables. Their first group of variables refers to the institutional capacity to produce change. This is still a very general hypothesis. Accordingly, it is useful to segment it into more specific prepositions (see Figure 2.3). To begin with, the presence of veto players constrains the institutional capability to produce change. Conventional analysis of the political systems can be used to show how political processes differ among EU member states. This is a general macrofocus, one centred on the characteristics of the political systems. But Héritier and her associates put emphasis on informal veto players as well. For example, in policies of privatization and liberalization of the utilities, pressure groups can represent serious obstacles.

### Europeization of Public Policy

<table>
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<th>1. Institutional capacity to produce change</th>
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<td>• Veto players in the political system</td>
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<td>• Scope and type of executive leadership</td>
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<th>2. Timing of European policies</th>
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<td>3. Policy structure and advocacy coalitions:</td>
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<td>• Technocratic capture potential</td>
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<td>• Adoption-implementation balance</td>
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<td>• Presence of a legitimating policy discourse</td>
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<td>• Impact of EU policy on domestic advocacy coalitions</td>
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Even small haulage companies can exercise their blackmail potential on certain political systems (Héritier and Knill 2001; Kerwer 2001). By doing so, Héritier and her colleagues switch from the macro-characteristics of the political process to the specific features of public policies.

The interaction between policy dynamics and the macropolitical structure is perhaps one of the most interesting areas of Europeanization. But one cannot see it if the policy level and the macropolitical level are lumped together. Accordingly, one should separate the policy level from the macrocomparative analysis of the political systems and treat the ‘informal’ veto players within the set of actors operating in policy systems (see below).

After this short digression on policy and politics, let us complete the analysis of macrovariables. The scope and type of executive leadership has to be considered. The leadership—Héritier and Knill (2001) explain—can be integrated or, at the other extreme, fragmented, short-lived, and conflict-ridden. When leadership is integrated and the number of veto players is low, Europeanization hardly makes a difference. Executives willing to promote policy change can do so whether European policy exists or not. At the other extreme, fragmented leadership with strong sectoral veto players makes EU-induced change improbable. Europeanization is instead most likely to have a high impact (in terms of policy change) under conditions of intermediate institutional capacity.

At any rate, the institutional capacity to produce change is a necessary condition, but it is not sufficient. The presence or absence of change—and its direction—depends on more specific variables at the level of the policy structure. Before we examine them, however, it is useful to draw attention to timing (Figure 2.3). The impact of EU public policy is contingent on whether a country is already involved in a process of reform or not. For example,
certain policies of liberalization in the European Union have caught some countries unprepared whereas others, most notably the United Kingdom, were already on their way to deregulation and privatization. Put differently, the analysis of the effects of European public policy on national policy systems should be conducted in parallel to the investigation of domestic processes.

At a more general level, the temporal dimension is relevant to the extent that decision-makers can manipulate ‘time’ by delaying decisions, sequencing the process of adaptation, and controlling the speed of Europeanization (e.g. they can follow a gradualist path or proceed by leaps and bounds). This brings Goetz (2001) to borrow from Schmitter and Santos (1998) the categories of time, timing, and tempo.4

The final set of variables—labelled ‘policy structure and advocacy coalitions’—have not received enough attention in projects completed so far. Consequently, the analysis becomes rather speculative from this point onwards. Yet the policy level is crucial because the most surprising effects of Europeanization have taken place via policy change even when formal political structures have remained unchanged (Featherstone 1998; Dyson and Featherstone 1999; Ferrera and Gualmini 2000; Giuliani 2000).

There are four observations on ‘policy variables’ (see Figure 2.3). The first observation concerns the difference between policies that can be governed by technocratic, elite circles and policies that by their very nature require a wider constellation of actors. Let us consider the examples of EMU and transport policy. In the case of the single currency, the process of Europeanization has been seized by small technocratic elites. Core executives, central banks, and technocrats with political power have been empowered by Europeanization. They have been able to produce dramatic change in monetary policy, even in countries with low potential for modernization. By contrast, the liberalization of transport policy has become the hostage of small pressure groups with intense preferences, and divisions within the political establishment. One key difference between the two policy areas is—I submit—the diverse degree of the technocratic capture potential. Comparatively, monetary policy can be captured by a small policy elite rather easily. To govern interest rates and the domestic financial markets, one needs clear rules about the competence of the Treasury and the central bank, and the manipulation of very few policy instruments (either a monetary aggregate or the structure of interest rates). Contrast this with road haulage, where different departments (within and outside the core executive), a panoply of policy instruments, and the collaboration of pressure groups with blackmail potential are simultaneously needed. The technocratic capture potential (or insulation from pressure groups and societal pressure) of transport policy is inherently low, independently from the macroconstellation of domestic veto players in the political process.

The second observation (not totally independent from the first) concerns the balance between policy formulation—adoption and policy implementation. The management of monetary policy is all about policy formulation. Implementation concerns the reaction of the financial markets, but political and administrative structures are not directly involved. So much so that to announce a monetary policy is often equivalent to produce results via the expectations of market players. Tax policy is completely different. To draft a rule on tax avoidance may require the same length of time required by a decision on interest rates, but to implement anti-tax avoidance schemes is a laborious task involving tax inspectors, banks, and other financial institutions, as well as cooperation with tax administrations abroad. Concluding on this point, my hypothesis is that the more the adoption—implementation balance veers towards implementation, the more problematic the process of Europeanization is.

The third observation is about policy discourse, that is, the discourse that provides a rationale and justifies change at the policy level. Institutional capacity and timing provide the potential for change, but policy change has to be considered legitimate. As the role of discourse has already been discussed in this paper, it is sufficient to remark that the empirical analysis of discourse presents its own problems. One the one hand, there is the risk of reification of discourse. On the other, an empirical determination of discourse based on the press and the official speeches of key politicians remains too superficial and elusive. A possible way out of this dilemma is to draw upon the insights of discourse analysis provided by international relations. Another is to address the specific forms taken by policy discourse, such as policy narratives. Policy narratives are amenable to empirical analysis in a variety of forms (Roe 1994).

The emphasis on legitimacy and discourse brings us to the crucial role played by belief systems. Europeanization processes are filtered and refracted by systems of policy beliefs. As shown by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993), the belief system can be articulated in three levels, that is, ‘deep core’ beliefs (normative and axiomatic), ‘policy core’ beliefs (i.e. empirical and normative beliefs concerning the fundamental policy strategies), and ‘secondary’ beliefs. An important issue is to what extent and under which conditions Europeanization can change ‘policy core’ beliefs and facilitate learning and non-incremental change.

Taking these observations together, they put emphasis on the constellation of actors, the characteristics of policy, and the role of belief systems. Turning to the final observation, it is therefore surprising that there has not been systematic analysis of Europeanization in terms of frameworks well grounded in policy theory. To mention only one example, one could think of the advocacy

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4 Time refers to when a decision is made, timing to the sequencing of decisions, and tempo to the speed.
coalition framework. This is not the solution to all the research puzzles raised by Europeanization. But at least provides a framework for the systematic analysis of policy change over a decade or so. It assigns great importance to belief systems and to the balance between endogenous learning dynamics and exogenous shocks. As such, it is suited to an analysis of the interplay between ‘endogenous’ EU policy and domestic ‘endogenous’ factors. Further, it provides an integrated framework for the analysis of constellations of actors, by grouping them into a number of coalitions with different belief systems. In conclusion, the recommendation is to use frameworks which are well grounded in theoretical policy analysis.

Conclusions: Towards Bottom-up Research Designs?

At this preliminary stage of research, it is impossible to draw neat conclusions. However, an important achievement is that fundamental questions on the impact of the European Union on member states have been raised. The risk of conceptual stretching looms large, but improvement is on the way. Taxonomies that ‘unpack’ concepts and make them amenable to empirical research can reduce the risk of concept misformation. Research can be organized by considering a matrix that includes the political entities affected by Europeanization and the extent (and direction) of change.

Research designs are still too rigid. They are limited to the analysis of ‘European effects’ in certain areas of change, but they do not control for rival alternative hypotheses. As Goetz (2001) observes, future research should focus on the relative impact of Europeanization (e.g. in the area of administrative change Europeanization can be an intervening variable in processes of modernization and reform). This requires systematic analysis of alternative or complementary explanations. It may be difficult to undertake multicausal analysis, but this is the best way to be relatively sure that changes observed at the national level are originated by EU dynamics, and not by other forces.

The problem is that to cast the discussion of Europeanization exclusively in terms of its effects means to assume that… there are EU-induced effects! Put differently, there is a serious risk of prejudging the significance of EU variables. The emphasis on effects, indeed, should be accompanied by a contextualization of Europeanization and by an explicit treatment of causality. It is difficult to assess the contribution of a single independent EU variable to the process of domestic policy change. Take the case of EMU and Italy. Here the process of macroeconomic convergence with the criteria designed at

5 For recent developments and an illustration of the framework, see Sabater (1998, 1999).
Theorizing Europeanization

(being dirigiste, corporatist, or polarized). In some cases, the Europeanization of public policy has changed the state even in the shadow of institutions that have not changed their formal-constitutional organization, as Giuliani (2000) argues in his analysis of change in the context of stalemate on institutional reforms in Italy. One suggestion is therefore to intensify research at the policy level. Another is to start thinking of Europeanization less in substantive terms (i.e., as an end-state) and more in processual terms. Goczt (2002) and Olsen (2002) argue that political scientists should be less interested in questions of end-state and final outcomes and more in questions of processes and coevolution of domestic and EU structures.

How can policy research be ‘intensified’ and hopefully improved? Europeanization is a process. It is a process where the cognitive dimension of political life matters. Hence, the current emphasis on mechanisms and variables should not preclude the dimension of evolution, learning, and the social construction of politics. Evolution and learning require frameworks of analysis sensitive to policy change over the medium to long term. One option that researchers may consider is the advocacy coalition framework. This framework is not panacea—as shown by the symposium hosted by the Journal of European Public Policy (March 2000) on the theories of the policy process. But it is suitable for studies of policy change centered on belief systems, legitimacy, and the conflict between reformers and advocates of the status quo.

Research on Europeanization could also benefit from the considerable amount of knowledge generated by studies of the international sources of domestic policy change, that is, the so-called second-image reversed perspective on international relations (Gorevitch 1978). The volume edited by Cowles et al. (2001) goes in this direction, and it does contribute to cumulative research (as opposed to ad hoc research). Although the European dimension presents significant peculiarities, one does not see the point of starting theoretical research on Europeanization from tabula rasa, and perhaps reinventing prepositions already well known on the role of domestic institutions as filters of international forces. Europeanization can therefore contribute to the ‘normalization’ of research—as advocated by Hassenteufel and Sured (2000). Overall, Europeanization has opened a new avenue for a closer debate between comparative politics, comparative public policy, and more traditional EU studies. If it does not confine itself to ad hoc theorization, research on Europeanization has considerable potential for our understanding of the evolution of governance and public policy.

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See Dyson and Featherstone (1999) and Radaelli (1998) for applications of this framework to Europeanization.


Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe

TANJA A. BÖRZEL AND THOMAS RISSE

Introduction

For decades, European studies have been mostly concerned with explaining European integration and Europeanization processes themselves. Debates between neo-functionalism, (liberal) intergovernmentalism, and the ‘multi-level governance’ perspective centred around the question of how to account for the emerging European polity. This research, therefore, adopted a ‘bottom-up’ perspective, in which the dynamics and the outcome of the European institutional-building process are the main dependent variable (see e.g. Puchala 1972; Wallace and Wallace 1996; Moravcsik 1998; Héritier 1999). More recently, however, an emerging literature focuses on the impact of European integration and Europeanization on domestic political and social processes of the member states and beyond. This move toward studying ‘top-down’ processes is desperately needed in order to fully capture how Europe and the European Union (EU) matter. It fits nicely with recent developments in international studies in general, which increasingly study the domestic effects of international institutions and norms. As far as the European Union is concerned, we will get a more comprehensive picture if we study the feedback processes among and between the various levels of European, national, and subnational governance.

While we are aware of these various feedback loops, this paper self-consciously restricts itself to the ‘top-down’ perspective. How do European integration and Europeanization more generally affect domestic policies, politics, and policies of the member states and beyond? To answer this question,

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