Europeanisation –

A Step Forward in Understanding Europe?

Birgit Sittermann, M.A.
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster
Nachwuchsgruppe Europäische Zivilgesellschaft
und Multi-Level Governance
Prinzipalmarkt 38
48143 Münster

E-Mail: Sittermann@uni-muenster.de
Tel: 0251/ 5103831

http:// nez.uni-muenster.de

Westfälische
Wilhelms-Universität
Münster

1 Introduction

Europeanisation recently became a very popular topic in social science research – this is not at last recognisable by the incremental number of papers and books published on this issue. Featherstone for instance points to the popularity of the subject by referring to the Social Science Citation Index: Whereas at the beginning of the 90s there were less than ten publications on Europeanisation a year the number has increased to up to 24 publications in 2000 or 22 in 2001 (Featherstone 2003:5). However, to start this paper like this is not very innovative as Peter Mair rightly criticises referring to his own article on Europeanisation: "To note this is to make a very banal observation, for by now almost every book or paper on the topic - including this one, of course - begins with a reference to how fashionable it has become to discuss Europeanization." (Mair 2004:337). At the same time he rightly adds: "Despite this torrent of publications, however, or perhaps even because of it, the concept of Europeanization remains poorly and confusingly defined. Again, most discussions are agreed on this." (Mair 2004:338).

Thus, this paper aims at casting a little light on the phenomenon of Europeanisation: Is it a completely new research agenda or linked to known concept such as European Integration? Which new insights can be gained from the Europeanisation concept? After all, Europeanisation is still contested. Consequently, Olsen asks: "Europeanization: A fashionable term, but is it useful?"(Olsen 2003:334). After defining the term Europeanisation this paper will provide an overview of recent Europeanisation studies and will then try to outline different mechanisms which are the reason why Europeanisation can be observed. Finally, the paper deals with the outcomes of Europeanisation and the question (and concern) whether national differences between the EU member states will finally disappear due to increasing EU influence. First of all, however, the main question has to be answered: What is meant when researchers speak of Europeanisation?

2 Defining Europeanisation

As indicated by Mair this question is not easy to answer. Olsen e.g. identifies five different meanings of Europeanisation (Olsen 2001; Olsen 2003:334); Featherstone speaks of a fourfold typology which characterises the different trends of definitions in literature(Featherstone 2003:6) whereas Harmsen and Wilson even refer to eight

differing meanings (Harmsen and Wilson 2000). Besides the usual problem of finding a commonly acknowledged definition in social science this diversity derives as well from the fact that different disciplines are dealing with the subject of Europeanisation. And by speaking about different definitions another issue comes up: Which Europe are these definitions referring to? This as well ranges from talking about the continent Europe as a cultural entity to focuses on the European Union (EU). In this case we could speak as well of "EU-isation" (Radaelli 2003:27); Kohler-Koch uses the term "EU-Europäisierung"(Kohler-Koch 2000:12). Vink on the other hand rightly points out that political Europe does not just consist of the EU but as well of institutions as the OSCE, EFTA or the Council of Europe (Vink 2003:65).

In the following three different categories of definitions based on their underlying picture of Europe will be presented: Europeanisation referring to (1) Historical Europe, (2) Cultural Europe and (3) Political Europe. The last connotation does not just present the most definitions but will as well be the focus of this paper as the aim is to account for Europeanisation from a political science perspective.

2.1 Definitions focused on Historical Europe
From the historical perspective, the term Europeanisation refers to the "export" of European political institutions, political practise and "way of life" beyond the European continent mainly through the means of colonisation and thus through coercion (Featherstone 2003:6; Olsen 2003:339ff.). The British Commonwealth with its members and their political systems which even today resemble the British model provide an excellent example for this kind of Europeanisation.

2.2 Definitions focused on Cultural Europe
These definitions are the basis for research focused on the questions of culture and identity and can be found among others in anthropology: "It refers to the reshaping of identities in contemporary Europe in a manner which relativizes (without necessarily supplanting) national identities."(Harmsen and Wilson 2000:17). The transnational diffusion of everyday habits, ideas and traditions is not just relevant for anthropology but as well for social science in general. The understanding of this notion is very broad, dealing with issues such as citizenship, the standardization of cultural practices (e.g. watching the same movies or television programmes) but as well

increasing cross-border personal contacts or the fact that the same shops or restaurants can be found all over Europe (Featherstone 2003:7; Harmsen and Wilson 2000:18; Mair 2004:341). Mair dubs this kind of Europeanisation "Informal Europeanization" and sees increasing "cross-cultural convergence" as the result. According to Mair the logic of this process parallels the concept of nationalisation: The standardisation of lifestyles and experiences in Europe is "just as peasants once became Frenchman and woman in a process of state consolidation in France"(Mair 2004:342). However, the here described phenomena certainly can and have to be as well linked to the concept of globalisation.

2.3 Definitions focused on political Europe

As cited above definitions based on political Europe could refer to political institutions such as the Council of Europe or the OSCE. However, most definitions of Europeanisation concentrating on political Europe focus on the European Union. The most important concepts of the category will be presented below.

2.3.1 Europeanisation as EU enlargement

Europeanisation in this respect refers to the EU enlargement process. Especially in terms of the new member states which joined the EU in 2004 it can be considered as the end of a transformation process. This included the adaptation to the West European State Model (Harmsen and Wilson 2000:16f.; cf as well Olsen 2003:335). The notion of Europeanisation in this context can as well be understood as a modernisation process; economically less developed countries are financially supported to reach the standards of other member states. Beside the new Central and East European member states Ireland can be regarded as an example (Harmsen and Wilson 2000:16).

2.3.2 Europeanisation as the development of Polity and Policies at the European level

This notion of Europeanisation is most famously represented by Cowles et al. (Cowles, et al. 2001). According to their definition Europeanisation is "*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 actors and of policy networks specializing in the

creation of authoritative European rules." (Risse, et al. 2001:3, original italics). A similar notion is represented by Scharpf (Scharpf 2000:10; Scharpf 2002:69).

This definition of Europeanisation as the "institutionalization of a distinctly European political system" is for Mair an essential and necessary notion of Europeanisation (Mair 2004:340). However, he rightly points out that their definition contrasts most other definitions and as such is rather "unusual" (the same opinion can be found in Mair 2004:339; Vink 2003:65). For Mair, this is only one face of Europeanisation (Mair 2004:340).

2.3.3 Europeanisation as national adaptation due to EU influence
The other face of Europeanisation "encompasses the *penetration* of European rules, directives and norms into the otherwise differentiated domestic spheres" (Mair 2004:341, original italics). As a consequence of this interference with the political systems of the member states domestic change and adaptation take place (Featherstone 2003:7). This notion is the most common understanding of Europeanisation as Vink rightly states: "The bulk of the literature speaks of Europeanisation when something in national political systems is affected by something European."(Vink 2003:63). Changes due to EU influence take place on two different levels: Institutional adaptation and the adaptation of policies and policy processes (Featherstone 2003:7 and 9).
Institutional adaptation refers to questions concerning the way both actors and institutions are affected by EU membership. Dealing with this notion of Europeanisation there are studies on e.g. public administrations and their way of dealing with EU requirements, the change of parliamentary politics or the effect of the European dimension on party politics.
In terms of EU influence on policies the largest amount of literature is concerned with the influence of EU public policies on the national level and how and whether EU requirements are integrated in the national policy process (Featherstone 2003:7ff). The perception of the consequences for the member states differ. On the one hand EU requirements might contradict national traditional procedures and policy ideas. Politicians might be forced to implement EU policies without national support. In this respect, Europeanisation can be understood as a loss of national sovereignty. On the other hand the EU might become an opportunity for member state governments to

shift the responsibilities for unpopular policies to the EU level. After all, national governments have their say on EU politics and policies. At the same time the EU could be seen as a new political opportunity structure for e.g. interest groups who have an additional level to turn to. The influence of the EU is as well considered as having led to the strengthening of the subnational level. All in all, the verdict on the effects of EU influence depends of the perspective adopted. Harmsen probably summarises it best by speaking of Europeanisation "as problem and opportunity for domestic political management."(Harmsen and Wilson 2000:15f).

2.4 A working definition of Europeanisation

The main objective of this paper is to assess Europeanisation from the political science perspective. Still, the above enumerated definitions are not covering all possible notions but the most important ones. In the following, however, I will concentrate on the understanding of Europeanisation as national adaptation due to EU influence as it is the underlying concept of most studies. A closer look at the notion of Europeanisation as EU enlargement makes clear that in these definitions national adaptation is involved, too. The definition outlined under 2.3.2 can be neglected as well, not just because the definition of Risse, Cowles et al is unusual but because a closer look at the research focus of their book is not the EU level as their definition might suggest but the national level: They do research "on the impact of Europeanization domestically – that is the national and subnational level" (Risse, et al. 2001:4). Thus, despite the different definition, their research object does not differ from other studies understanding Europeanisation as the impact of EU influence on the national level. That the conception of Europeanisation as outlined under 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 are not necessarily exclusive is underlined by Mair who speaks of the two faces of Europeanization, not at last does this hint at the quite complex procedures linked to the EU (Mair 2004:340f.).

An example for a quite complex definition of the notion of Europeanisation in the latter sense is Radaelli's approach which tries to include the different aspects that are linked to this understanding of Europeanisation (Radaelli 2004:3):

"Europeanisation consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation 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 EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies."

This definition points to the multifaceted conception of Europeanisation that has to be taken into account but which can as well be challenged on various grounds (Featherstone 2003:17). However, for the purpose of this paper this "overarching approach to Europeanization"(Saurugger 2005:294) seems to be the most suitable as it underlines the different aspects involved.[1]

3. Europeanisation as a completely new research agenda?

In political science, the study of the European Union was for a long time dominated by its subfield International Relations and the concept of European Integration. The result of this research are several well-known integration theories, for instance neo-functionalism or intergovernmentalism – all aiming at explaining why and how different nation states worked and work together in order to build up supranational respectively intergovernmental institutions like the EU. The starting point of this kind of research is always the national level; the outcome that is under scrutiny is situated at the EU level. This approach is usually dubbed Bottom-Up (Börzel 2003:2f.; Radaelli 2004:4).

As outlined above, the focal point of research on Europeanisation according to the definition relevant for this paper is the impact of the EU on the national level and consequently, the EU level is mostly treated as the starting point of a Europeanisation study. The national level and changes which occur due to EU influence are the objects of these researches. Hence, a Top-Down approach can be applied[2] (Radaelli 2004:4).

As Vink (Vink 2003:63) and Mair (Mair 2004:338) point out, this perspective used to explain Europeanisation phenomena is not completely alien and new to the field of International Relation. Already in 1978, Peter Gourevitch introduced a view that differed from the traditional perspective in which domestic factors were analysed

---

[1] Beside the scientific usage of the word "Europeanisation" the term has become common in every-day-language too. In these contexts its meaning usually implies not just the change of the national situation due to EU policies but as well the assumption that national differences will be replaced by one EU-wide model (e.g. c.f.**Schmoll, H.** 2005 'Nur eine Episode? Zu den Folgen der Europäisierung der deutschen Hochschulen aus betriebswirtschaftlicher Sicht' *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Frankfurt.)

[2] See below for a Radaelli's suggestion of another research design for studies on Europeanisation.

because of the influence on international policies and institutions. With the so-called "second image reversed" Gourevitch suggested to treat national outcomes at least partly as a product of international impact (Gourevitch 1978).

The popularity of Europeanisation can as well be explained by the fact that in recent years the EU more and more became an issue for the subfield of Comparative Politics. Traditionally -as outlined above- the EU is subject to International Relations and its concept of European integration. However, nowadays the subfield of Comparative Politics deals as well with the EU. On the one hand this is due to the fact that the EU itself is considered to be a political system of its own which can be assessed with the traditional means of Comparative Politics. On the other hand the influence of the EU on the political systems of the EU member states can no longer be overlooked. Accordingly, the EU became an issue for researchers of Comparative Politics and the concept of Europeanisation can be considered as a link between these two subfields of political research (Hix and Goetz 2001f; for the different perspectives on Europeanisation deriving from the International Relation and Comparative Politics perspective, see as well Mair 2004:339). A development that according to Börzel was absolutely necessary as "[…] comparative politics and public policy offer a more fine grained analytical toolbox to trace processes and outcomes of domestic change as a consequence of European integration and EU policy making."(Börzel 2003:4). Hix and Goetz describe the relationship between European Integration and Europeanisation as follows: For them, European Integration can be seen "as source of change" and Europeanisation "as an effect" of this (Hix and Goetz 2001:22). This shift of interest towards the effects on the national level in studies on the European Union can be surveyed since the mid 1990s (Vink 2003:63).

But how is generally accounted for the effect the European influence has on domestic politics and policies? To explain how national politics and policies are affected most researchers turn to the neo-institutionalist theories, claiming that institutions and actors matter (Hix and Goetz 2001:20). Vink even concludes that "the Europeanisation research agenda as such exemplifies the institutionalist turn in the political science of the 1980s and 1990s (Vink 2003:66).

To conclude, it is clear that the concept of Europeanisation is nothing completely new and can be linked both to known concepts and known means of examination. It uses a perspective that differs from the conception of European Integration. However, there is necessarily a linkage between the two concepts although Europeanisation

studies are rarely linked to integration theory, a fact Vink qualifies as a failure of Europeanisation research so far (Vink 2003:68).

4. Europeanisation in the literature

The broad range of definitions mentioned above indicate that a lot of literature deals with the theoretical development of the concept of Europeanisation and the challenges of operationalising it (see e.g. Börzel and Risse 2003; Mair 2004; Radaelli 2004; Saurugger 2005).[3]

As the task to implement EU policy is primarily a duty of state actors, a lot of literature deals with the way governments, ministries and parliaments deal with EU requirements and in how far their work has changed (see e.g. Börzel 2002; Falkner, et al. 2005; Kassim 2003). Another strand of the Europeanisation literature focuses on different policy fields and in how far these – originally domestic task – are now already influenced by EU policies (Bulmer and Radaelli 2004; Eckardt 2004; Harcourt 2003; Haverland 2003).

The "new" EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe which joined the EU in 2004 are as well in the focus of Europeanisation research (Grabbe 2001; Lippert, et al. 2001; Manfeldová, et al. 2005; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005). After all their joining of the EU depended on adapting to and implementing already existing EU law; changes of the national situation have been a requirement.

The fact that as well non-state actors, e.g. interest groups or civil society organisations are increasingly affected by EU policy too is increasingly been taken into account as their working environment changes as well if decisions are no longer taken on national level but on EU level (Berg 2004; Roose 2003; Saurugger 2005; Warleigh 2001).

5. Europeanisation as a research design

As outlined above, the difference between a research design focusing on Europeanisation and one focusing on European Integration can be expressed by the distinct research approaches: Europeanisation is often characterised by a Top-Down perspective, European Integration by a Bottom-Up study. However, as indicated before, the Europeanization process is quite complex and should not be reduced to a simple Top-Down process. Radaelli warns: "The problem is that to cast the

---

[3] Further theoretical literature on Europeanisation will be presented in the following sections.

discussion of Europeanization exclusively in terms of its *effects* means to assume that (....) there *are* EU-induced effects!"(Radaelli 2003:50). Therefore, he underlines the importance of testing rival hypotheses for making sure that other factors are not much more important for changes than the influence of the EU. Another problem is indicated by the wide range of definitions which are on offer and the wide range of studies existing on Europeanisation. Europeanisation as a fashionable concept is in danger of being used as a general explanation for virtually all phenomena of change: "If everything is Europeanized to a certain degree, what is *not* Europeanized?"(Radaelli 2003:32). Börzel agrees: "[...] (I)t is often difficult to isolate the 'net effect' of Europe and to disentangle it from other sources of domestic change not only at the global, but also at the national level and local level."(Börzel 2003:18f.). This underlines the danger of concept stretching which is a general problem for literature on Europeanisation, however, it is a question every researcher has to deal with for setting-up his research design.(Radaelli 2000:4f; Vink 2003:64)

Consequently, Radaelli offers an alternative to the wide-spread Top-Down approach in Europeanisation as for him this is far too static and simple. After all, the EU can have an influence without actually having political powers by just providing a pool of ideas national actors can turn to. Thus, for him, a Europeanisation Bottom-Up approach is the best way to assess Europeanisation processes (Radaelli 2004:4)[4].

Essential for this approach is to see Europeanisation not as the EXPLANATION for change (as explanans) but as the variable that NEEDS TO BE EXPLAINED (explanandum) (Radaelli 2004:2). This contrasts most studies in a top-down manner which define the outcome of the dependent variable as the outcome of the adaptation process and see Europeanisation or better: the factors that determine the change on the national level as independent variable (Falkner 2003:2). Radaelli's approach starts and finishes at the domestic level; the starting point is a system of interaction at the domestic level. Then it has to be checked whether, when and how the EU might provide a change in at least one the components of the system of interaction under consideration. Finally, the consequences on the domestic level of this change has to be measured (Radaelli 2004:4). Thus, Radaelli suggests focusing on the domestic level for a certain period of time rather then starting the research from the EU level. This concept might make it easier to really identify the EU as the cause for change

---

[4] In an earlier version of his concept, Radaelli dubs it Inside-Out-Approach. **Radaelli, C. M.** 2003 'The Europeanization of Public Policy', in K. Featherstone and C. M. Radaelli (eds) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press., here p.51.

and to exclude any other factors. However, dubbing this approach Bottom-Up is quite confusing, as the main focus is permanently and over a period of time on the domestic level.

6. Mechanisms of Europeanisation

For explaining how and why Europeanisation takes place different perspectives can be adopted. On the one hand, the Europeanisation process can be explained by adopting the EU's perspective and by considering the different ways the EU hands down their requirements and ideas to the national level. On the other hand, the adaptation process can be explained by focusing on the reaction and behaviour of the affected actors at the national level. In the relevant literature both perspectives can be found, Knill and Lehmkuhl (Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999; Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002) being prominent representatives of the first perspective, the second perspective can be found with several writers all of them heavily drawing on the work of March and Olsen (March and Olsen 1989; March and Olsen 1998). However, there is wide agreement that a condition for any adaptation process taking place is the recognition of a "misfit" or "mismatch" between EU requirements and the domestic situation.

6.1 Misfit as a precondition for Europeanisation

In general, two different kinds of "misfits" can be identified: *policy misfit* - that is incongruence between European rules and regulations and national policies - and *institutional misfit*" referring to the fact that domestic rules and procedures do not correspond to the EU requirements (Börzel 2003; Risse, et al. 2001:7).[5] To the question whether the national institutional setting, rules, and practises and the requirements on EU level "fit together" is for Risse et al an essential step in their research design for Europeanisation studies that has to be answered. Speaking of the "Goodness of fit" they point out that the "degree of fit" determines the institutional pressure on domestic actors (Risse, et al. 2001:6f.). Or as Börzel and Risse put it: "The lower the compatibility between European and domestic processes, policies, and institutions, the higher is the adaptation pressure on the Member States." However, they consider this as a rather trivial statement as they conclude that without

---

[5] Falkner distinguishes between policy misfit on the one hand and misfit in the politics/polity dimension. See **Falkner, G.** 2003 'Comparing Europeanisation Effects: From Metaphor to Operationalisation', *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)* 7 (2003)(13).p. 4

existing differences between EU policy and the national situation changes on the domestic level would not be necessary in the first place (Börzel 2003:6; Börzel and Risse 2003). This is disputed by Radaelli who makes it clear that he identifies as well examples of Europeanisation without adaptational pressure. He adds that the degree of fit is not measurable with objective standards as it is discursively and socially constructed (Radaelli 2004:7). This is indeed the case if EU requirements are not exactly determining the procedures that have to take place. However, by concentrating on the implementation of EU directives the situation is somewhat different as concrete requirements can be compared with the national situation. On this basis Falkner developed a framework to operationalise the misfit concept for a research project on implementation of six European labour law Directives. She established the category of overall misfit composed of the three sub-categories of the degree of policy misfit, degree of politics/polity misfit and costs, "i.e. the economic consequences (as opposed to e.g., the citizenship dimension) of a required reform for the addressees on all levels."(Falkner 2003:4). The overall degree of misfit is then an aggregation of the three different categories. The aggregation is based on the assumption that the degree of misfit cannot outweigh each other, e.g. a high degree of policy misfit cannot compensate for high costs caused by the adaptation process. Falkner confesses that this way of aggregation can be challenged but she sees this as an effective way to render the comparison of the situation in different countries possible (Falkner 2003:5). Additionally, she underlines the importance of conceptualising the misfit as "this can be expected to be the main individual factor determining Europeanisation success or failure" (Falkner 2003:2).

Falkner's approach is definitely very helpful but limited to the concrete requirements of a directive - whether this corresponds to the national situation or whether adaptation has to take place can be measured objectively. This does not apply to other Europeanisation processes which are based on less concrete requirements. In these cases misfit is more a subjective dimension far more difficult to measure. Accordingly, Knill and Lehmkuhl constitute the limits of the misfit approach to cases of explicit institutional pressure for domestic adaptation (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002:261f.). Börzel, by contrast, points out that softer means of EU influence e.g. through the Open Method of Co-ordination are equally able to challenge domestic habits and structures (Börzel 2003).

Though not easy to conceptualise especially if it comes down to softer means of EU influence the misfit approach is nevertheless a good means to try to understand the situation national actors are confronted with and which after all leads to adaptation processes. Furthermore, misfit is only considered as the necessary but not as sufficient condition for domestic change: "Whether misfit produce a substantial effect at the domestic level depends on the presence of various factors facilitating adaptation and serving as catalysts for domestic change."(Börzel and Risse 2003:63).

6.2 The Europeanisation process explained by EU requirements

It became clear that the way EU requirements are handed down to the national level – very concrete as a directive or as a softer means in form of the Open Method of Co-ordination does make a difference of how do make a difference in terms of whether and how a Europeanisation process takes place. Especially Knill's and Lehmkuhl's approach points to this aspect (Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999; Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002). They identify three different mechanisms of Europeanisation, each based on different ways the EU specifies their requirements arguing "that the distinctive basis of Europeanization rather than the particular policy area is the most important factor to be considered when investigating the domestic impact of varying European policies" (Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999:256)[6]. Additionally, it has to be taken into account that their framework is limited to EU regulatory policy. Thus, the examples they enumerate are based on directives or regulations (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002:258 and 263ff.) The first mechanism they identify is called "Europeanization by institutional compliance" and can be found in policy fields such as e.g. environmental protection, safety regulation at the work place, or consumer protection, thus policy fields which are often dubbed "positive integration" (C.f. e.g.Scharpf 1999). In cases dubbed as Europeanization by institutional compliance the EU precisely prescribes the institutional setting the EU member states have to adapt to and hence, they have only a limited leeway for doing so.

Secondly, Knill and Lehmkuhl speak of "Europeanization by changing domestic opportunity structures" especially in market-making policies, e.g. the case of road haulage. In these cases the EU does not actively prescribe and institutional setting

---

[6] They point out, however, that this distinction is an analytical one rather than an empirical one, p.257.

but has a more indirect impact on the established constellation of the actors involved in the national decision making process by changing the distribution of power and resources between domestic actors. The authors point to the Common Transport Policy as an example. In this field the cabotage directive supported the position of users of transport services and weakened the position of the supplier of public transport. (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002:258/268f.)

An even more indirect way of EU influence is the mechanism Knill and Lehmkuhl call "Europeanization by framing domestic beliefs". This mechanism is applied for issues which should prepare for following more far-reaching policies. Thus, Europeanization by framing domestic beliefs is a first step to change the domestic climate in favour of these ideas. Policies of this kind can be considered as the product of conflicts between the EU member states which make a more than symbolic or vague policy impossible. According to Knill and Lehmkuhl the EU railway policy is a good example of this mechanism as in this case a Council Regulation asked only for minor changes in the national railway system but had indirect effects on the domestic level which were in line with the broader political intention of the EU commission. Taking over the perspective of the domestic actors Knill and Lehmkuhl point out that a cognitive logic is underlying the adaptation process on the domestic level (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002:258f, 262,271f.)

Knill's and Lehmkuhl's approach is very useful for understanding that the EU has different ways to influence the domestic level – more directly or more indirectly. However, their approach is limited to regulatory policy and concrete European regulation and directives. Europeanisation can also take place due to less concrete requirements, e.g. due to the Method of Open Co-ordination. Obviously, these less concrete measures are more difficult to study and thus might call for a change of perspective by concentrating on the level of the domestic actors. However, Bulmer and Radaelli include the Method of Open Co-Ordination in their approach to identify different mechanisms of Europeanisation. Similar to Knill and Lehmkuhl's approach their starting point is the way the EU hands down its requirements. Additionally, they manage as well to include the behaviour of actors in their approach by considering e.g. the effects of learning (Bulmer and Radaelli 2004:4ff; Radaelli 2004:11ff.).

6.3 The Europeanisation process explained by the actor's behaviour[7]

---

[7] This paragraph mainly draws on Börzel 2003; Risse, Cowles et al 2001 and Börzel and Risse 2003.

For explaining the mechanisms of Europeanisation primarily from the actors' point of view most authors argue on the basis of neo-institutionalist approaches, in particular on a) rationalist and b) sociological institutionalism.[8]

The rational institutionalist perspective highlights resource dependency approaches which characterises actors as rational, goal-oriented, and purposeful. They are considered to follow the so-called *logic of consequentialism or logic of expected consequences* (Börzel 2003:8f.; March and Olsen 1998:949)[9]. The underlying assumption is that actors depend on each other to achieve their goals. To reach these goals it is necessary that the actors exchange their resources. Actors intent to get as much influence on the outcome as possible by trying at the same time to stay as independent as possible from other actors involved. Consequentially, actors need to have a clear idea of their preferences and try to use their own resources as effective as possible. In terms of the Europeanisation process this means that the EU can on the one hand be perceived as an external constraint on the actors' behaviour and place. However, on the other hand the EU is as well a new evolving opportunity structure which provides – at least for some actors- additional means to attain their goals. In other words: The EU can contribute to a redistribution of resources between actors involved in a process. Whether the EU is actually influencing the redistribution of resources at the domestic level and thus can be considered as a new opportunity structure from which some actors benefit depends on different aspects. First of all, there has to be a misfit between EU requirements and the domestic level to make an adaptation process necessary and possible. As a second step for analysing whether the Europeanisation process really has an effect on the distribution of resources the literature in general refers to two mediating factors: multiple veto points and facilitating formal institutions. Multiple veto points can be identified in political system which are characterised by the fact that decision making power is spread over various layers and institutions/actors. As a consequence political change in general but as well due to EU requirements is more difficult to pursue. Thus, the coalition in favour of an adaptation to EU requirements is more difficult to build and has to include various actors. Hence, political change has to take place under more difficult conditions. On the other hand, the existence of facilitating formal institutions can

---

[8] Börzel refers as well to organizational ecology as an approach but concludes that this approach can be subsumed under the two institutional approaches (Börzel 2003:5 and 13f.) and therefore it will not be taken into account here.
[9] Vink mentions that this approach is as well called "calculus approach" (Vink 2003:67).

enable actors who would benefit from the adaptation to EU requirements to overcome those multiple veto points and thus take advantage of the new opportunity structure provided by the EU.

It becomes clear that multiple veto points and the existence of facilitating formal institutions have opposite effects on the likelihood that political change takes place. As a consequence, Börzel establishes the following relationship between the two aspects: "A low number of veto points and the existence of facilitating formal institutions determine whether policy and institutional misfit lead to a redistribution of resources and the differential empowerment of domestic actors as a result of which domestic processes, policies, and institutions get changed."

The sociological perspective on actors' behaviour which is as well used for explaining Europeanisation focuses on a constructivist *logic of appropriateness*[10]. This approach contrasts the rationalist view with its logic of consequentialism which implies that actors have a clear idea about their preferences.[11] In contrast, according to the logic of appropriateness actors intend to fulfil social expectations as the actors' behaviour within a "system" is guided by a common understanding of what socially accepted behaviour is. Furthermore, "[a]ppropriateness need not attend to consequences, but it involves cognitive and ethical dimensions, targets, and aspirations"(March and Olsen 1998:951). The sociological institutionalist sees institutions as a means to give actors an idea about their interests and about acceptable ways to attain these goals. Thus, the EU from a sociological institutionalist perspective presents new "institutions", i.e. new ideas, meanings, rules, and norms the member states have to absorb. Consequently, the best chance for EU requirements to be incorporated into the domestic system of institutions is when they do **not** differ strongly from domestic ideas (Börzel 2003:16f; Börzel and Risse 2003:70f). However, in these cases real fundamental change is not necessary to fulfil EU requirements. For analysing under which conditions change is most likely to occur two mediating factors have been identified: norm entrepreneurs and co-operative informal institutions.

Norm entrepreneurs act as "change agents" (Börzel and Risse 2003:67) by actively lobbying for new ideas and norms deriving from the EU and thus help to start a process of social learning at the domestic level. These norm entrepreneurs are not

---

[10] Vink mentions that this approach is as well called "cultural approach" (Vink 2003:67).
[11] For a more detailed description of sociological institutionalist approaches see as well Börzel and Risse 2003:66f.

single actors but a group of people who are linked by shared values and beliefs (i.e. advocacy groups) or actors who are able to legitimate norms and ideas out of their knowledge and their position (epistemic communities).

The existence of co-operative informal institutions such as e.g. a co-operative political culture help to overcome obstacles in the decision-making process as they contribute to consensus-building. This consensus-building idea is as an institution widely accepted and thus shows an appropriate way to deal with EU requirements. To take advantage of multiple veto points as a way to prevent changes would not qualify as appropriate behaviour.

It is clear that these two factors foster the process of adaptation: "The existence of norm entrepreneurs and cooperative informal institutions affects whether European ideas, norms and the collective understandings, which do not resonate with those at the domestic level, are internalized by domestic actors giving rise to domestic change."

The two different logics of action are not exclusive but can as well be connected or as March and Olsen put it: "Any particular action probably involves elements of both." (March and Olsen 1998:952, c.f. as well 952ff. for their account of different interpretations of the relationship between the two logics). However, Vink argues against a synthesis of the two logics. From his point of view a study of Europeanisation should "not conceal the great discrepancy between creating, or making the best of, new opportunity structures (calculus) and adopting a new set of preferences, or even a new identity (cultural)" (Vink 2003:68). By contrast, Börzel and Risse convincingly point out that the connection between the two logics is possible if not a necessity as they might both occur in different phases in a process of change (Börzel and Risse 2003:74f.).

6.4 Accounting for change: A question of structure and agency

Altogether, this choice of perspective for explaining Europeanisation is always linked to the question of structure and agency or in other words: What matters more: the actors will and capability to react to and deal with the external influences or the setting created by the EU? This question necessarily has to be taken into account while studying Europeanisation as it influences the way the processes involved are perceived. Choosing an explanation for change that focuses on the way the EU

formulates its requirements like Knill and Lehmkuhl or an explanation focusing on the behaviour of the affected actors is already a prerequisite in terms of structure and agency. For instance, Risse et al categorise mediating factors according to whether their focus is on structure or agency. For them, co-operative cultures, the existence of multiple veto points within the political system, and the existence of facilitating formal institutions are structural factors which might prevent or support adaptational change. On the other hand they identify two mediating factors that focus on agency: Firstly, the differential empowerment of actors referring to the above outlined concept that structural changes might lead to a redistribution of power and resources among actors and secondly, learning can take place meaning that actors change their given preferences and goals out of their own will and thus, make adaptational processes more likely (for the importance of learning for accounting for Europeanisation c.f. as well Olsen 2003:343; Risse, et al. 2001:9ff).

7 Outcomes of Europeanisation

The question of most interest for research dealing with the national impact of the EU is whether the increasing influence of the EU eventually might lead to a loss of national particularity and a Europe-wide convergence of both policies and polities. The answers to this question have so far been disputed; there is evidence for both convergence and the persistence of national characteristics (Olsen 2003:345). This might differ between different policy fields. However, "[c]onvergence as a result of EU participation is far from being inevitable" (Featherstone 2003:12). Risse, Cowles and Caporaso conclude that "we find neither wholesale convergence nor continuing divergence of national policy structures, institutions, and other patterned relationships"; they speak of "domestic adaptation with national colors" (Risse, et al. 2001:1). Altogether, "there has been no revolutionary change in any of the national systems and certainly no significant convergence towards a common institutional model"(Olsen 2003:345) but at the same time it is undeniable that there is an EU influence. This makes it clear that there is no easy "yes" or "no" answer to the question whether the Europeanisation took place or whether a political system can be qualified as "europeanised". To be able to qualify the degree of change and the reaction of affected actors Börzel identifies five different possible outcomes: She speaks of *inertia* in the case of absence of change. Secondly, she recognises

retrenchment as an outcome. This term points to the "paradoxical effect" that the resistance to change might even lead to an increasing rather than a decreasing misfit situation. Absorption characterises a situation where member states integrate European requirements into the national political system though without considerable change of established structures and procedures taking place. Furthermore, Börzel dubs change as *accommodation* if domestic settings and policies are adapted to fit EU requirements without changing their central and fundamental features and connotations. The highest degree of change can be identified in the case of *transformation*: Here, the affected parts of the political system undergo fundamental changing or are even completely replaced by institutions which fit the EU guidelines (Börzel 2003:15f.; see as well Radaelli 2003:37).[12] As Radaelli rightly points out, the theoretical identification of different possible outcomes leaves researchers with the problem to create an empirical measurement for these five possibilities. Radaelli suggests drawing on the literature on learning and cognitive learning to solve this problem (For further details see Radaelli 2003:38ff.).

However, this issue points another time to the problem of operationalising Europeanisation research. Falkner highlights that even in cases more easy to overview – when it comes to the question whether EU directives have been incorporated into the national situation - there is no easy way to qualify the change and the outcome of Europeanisation. In her research which covered the implementation of six directives in all 15 EU member states completely correct implementation was not reached in almost half of the cases, in approx. 23 per cent of the cases an essential lack of compliance with the EU directive could be recognised. Falkner underlines therefore that the results of EU influence should be examined on different levels: Effects might not just be visible regarding the examined policy but as well on a level that is above, i.e. "institutionalised regime types in a particular policy area" and as well below on the level of corporate or individual actors: "Even effects

---

[12] Börzel relates the outcome expectations to the different approaches to the mechanisms of Europeanisation and identifies dissimilarities: The resource dependency approach contains the assumption that the higher the misfit the more likely the adaptation to EU requirements. This contrasts with the opinion of representatives of the approaches focusing on institutional adaptation and socialization. They argue that the higher the misfit the less likely is adaptation as domestic actors are not willing to replace their established institutions by completely new ones. Actors would be more open to adaptation if the new requirements show some sort of familiarity with the domestic structures they are used to (Börzel 2003:16).

on the lowest level may in the longer run trigger policy reform."(Falkner 2003:9, see as well p.11; Falkner, et al. 2005).

To sum up, it became clear that qualifying and measuring the outcome of Europeanisation is still a field for further research. The complexity of this issue is among things due to the multi-dimensional effects of Europeanisation: It does affect not just polity, policy and politics but as well levels ranging from individual actors, regime types in policy areas to the overall functioning of the political system (e.g. loss of sovereignty for the parliament of subnational levels). Despite the broad influence of Europeanisation it is obvious as well that national diversity will persist.

8 Conclusions

This look at the current literature on Europeanisation proved that there is still a lot of confusion concerning the concept of Europeanisation not at last due to the various definitions on offer. However, it must not be forgotten that Europeanisation is quite a young concept; the lack of a grand theory of Europeanisation (Olsen 2003:346) is therefore not a surprise. After all, a lot of the confusion is due to the quite inconsequential use of the term in the literature, the terms Europeanisation and European Integration are not rarely mixed up. Some writers seem to act according to the idea that they rather use both terms simultaneously for their papers to make sure that it will definitely be recognized. Radaelli even concludes: "Some articles re-brand well-known features of European integration as 'Europeanisation'."(Radaelli 2004:22, Endnote 2). Other authors use the term Europeanisation without referring to the theoretical discussion that is linked to it (See e.g. Roose 2003).

Despite these "confusions" about the concept, it can not be denied that the Europeanisation perspective provides new insights and new perspectives in the processes linked to the European Union which are not traditionally examined from a European Integration perspective. Thus, the concept of Europeanisation can be considered as a major step ahead in our understanding of the European Union and. However, a lot remains to be done. Mair e.g. points out that for him Europeanisation does not yet deal enough with political conflicts expressed in party competition and election campaigning (Mair 2004:345). Vink suggest a broader use of the Europeanisation concept not just exclusively linked to the EU but to link it as well to other forms of regional integration and co-operation.

An important step for securing that Europeanisation becomes not just a short-term fashion would be the further development of its operationalisation which – as outlined above – is not an easy task. Knill and Lehmkuhl, Falkner, Risse et al. (Risse, et al. 2001), and Radaelli provide interesting research designs and concepts. When it comes to operationalisation it seems to be essential not to neglect that influences not deriving from the European level might be the reason for change as well and have to be taken into account. Especially those approaches explaining changes from the perspective of the way the EU hands down her requirements (i.e. approaches focusing on structure) seem to be in danger of overlooking other influences. Approaches focusing on agency – the affected actors and their behaviour – provide a better opportunity to be aware of other influences that might have impact of the actor's decision for adaptation.

Further research on Europeanisation needs as well an expansion of its focus: So far, mostly state actors and institutions and public policy have been in the centre of attention. Other actors on the domestic level such as interest groups are as well affected by the EU so less direct as EU directives and regulation affect them less directly than state actors. However, research of this kind faces additional challenges (c.f. Grote and Lang 2003 and their account for abandoning the concept of Europeanisation for their research project) but will give new insights into the overall impact of the EU on her member states.

Thus, the Europeanisation research agenda is very long and this concept has the potential to accompany us for several years.

Bibliography:

Berg, E. v. d. 2004 'Europeanisiering van het maatschappelijk middenveld in Nederland', in R. v. M. Ontwikkeling (ed) *Advies 28: Europa als sociale ruimte. Open coördinatie van sociaal beleid in de Europese Unie.*, Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers.

Börzel, T. A. 2002 *States and Regions in the European Union. Institutional Adaptation in Germany and Spain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

— 2003 'How the European Union Interacts with its Member States', *Institut für Höhere Studien Political Science Series* 93.

Börzel, T. A. and Risse, T. 2003 'Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe', in K. Featherstone and C. M. Radaelli (eds) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bulmer, S. J. and Radaelli, C. M. 2004 'The Europeanisation of National Policy', *Queen's Papers on Europeanisation*(1/2004).

Cowles, M. G., Caporaso, J. and Risse, T. 2001 *Transforming Europe*, Ithaca London: Cornell University Press.

Eckardt, M. 2004 '"Europäisierung" der Sozialpolitik am Beispiel der Alterssicherung', in S. Frech and J. Schmid (eds) *Der Sozialstaat. Reform, Umbau, Abbau?*, Schwalbach: Wochenschauverlag.

Falkner, G. 2003 'Comparing Europeanisation Effects: From Metaphor to Operationalisation', *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)* 7 (2003)(13).

Falkner, G., Treib, O., Hartlapp, M. and Leiber, S. 2005 *Complying with Europe: EU Harmonisation and Soft Law in the Member States*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Featherstone, K. 2003 'Introduction: In the Name of 'Europe'', in K. Featherstone and C. M. Radaelli (eds) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gourevitch, P. 1978 'The second image reversed: the international sources of domestic politics', *International Organization* 32(4): 881-912.

Grabbe, H. 2001 'How does Europeanization affect CEE governance? Conditionality, diffusion and diversity', *Journal of European Public Policy* 8(6): 1013-1031.

Grote, J. R. and Lang, A. 2003 'Europeanization and Organizational Change in National Trade Associations: An Organizational Ecology Perspective', in K. Featherstone and C. M. Radaelli (eds) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harcourt, A. J. 2003 'Europeanization as Convergence: The Regulation of Media Markets in the European Union.' in K. Featherstone and C. M. Radaelli (eds) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harmsen, R. and Wilson, T. M. 2000 'Introduction: Approaches to Europeanization', *Yearbook of European Studies* 14: 13-26.

Haverland, A. J. 2003 'The Impact of the European Union on Environmental Policies.' in K. Featherstone and C. M. Radaelli (eds) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hix, S. and Goetz, K. H. 2001 'Introduction: European Integration and National Political Systems', in K. H. Goetz and S. Hix (eds) *Europeanised Politics? European Integration and National Political Systems*, London: Frank Cass Publishers.

Kassim, H. 2003 'Meeting the Demands of EU Membership: The Europeanization of National Administrative Systems', in K. Featherstone and C. M. Radaelli (eds) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Knill, C. and Lehmkuhl, D. 1999 'How Europe Matters. Different Mechanisms of Europeanization', *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)* 3(1999)(7).

— 2002 'The National Impact of European Union Regulatory Policy: Three Europeanization Mechanisms', *European Journal of Political Research* 41(2002)(2): 255-280.

Kohler-Koch, B. 2000 'Europäisierung: Plädoyer für eine Horizonterweiterung', in M. Knodt and B. Kohler-Koch (eds) *Deutschland zwischen Europäisierung und Selbstbehauptung*, Frankfurt / New York 2000: Campus Verlag.

Lippert, B., Umbach, G. and Wessels, W. 2001 'Europeanization of CEE executives:EU membership negotiations as a shaping power', *Journal of European Public Policy* 8(6): 980-1012.

Mair, P. 2004 'The Europeanization Dimension', *Journal of European Public Policy* 11(2 April 2004): 337-348.

Manfeldová, Z., Sparschuh, V. and Wenniger, A. (eds) 2005 *Patterns of Europeanisation in Central and Eastern Europe*, Hamburg: Reinhold Krämer Verlag.

March, J. G. and Olsen, J. P. 1989 *Rediscovering Institutions. The Organizational Basis of Politics*, New York: Free Press.

— 1998 'The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders', *International Organization* 52(4): 943-969.

Olsen, J. P. 2001 'The Many Faces of Europeanization', *ARENA Working Papers WP 02/2*: 24.

— 2003 'Europeanization', in M. Cini (ed) *European Union Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Radaelli, C. M. 2000 'Whither Europeanization? Concept Stretching and substantive change', *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)* 4(2000)(8).

— 2003 'The Europeanization of Public Policy', in K. Featherstone and C. M. Radaelli (eds) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

— 2004 'Europeanisation: Solution or problem?' *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)* 8 (2004)(16).

Risse, T., Cowles, M. G. and Caporaso, J. 2001 'Europeanization and Domestic Change: Introduction', in M. Green Cowles, J. Caporaso and T. Risse (eds) *Transforming Europe. Europeanization and Domestic Change*, Ithaka and London: Cornell University Press.

Roose, J. 2003 *Die Europäisierung von Umweltorganisationen. Die Umweltbewegung auf dem langen Weg nach Brüssel*, Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Saurugger, S. 2005 'Europeanization as a Methodological Challenge: The Case of Interest Groups', *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 7(4): 291-312.

Scharpf, F. W. 1999 *Regieren in Europa. Effektiv und demokratisch?*, Frankfurt am Main New York: Campus Verlag.

— 2000 'Notes Towards a Theory of Multilevel Governing in Europe', *MPIfG Discussion Paper 00/5*.

— 2002 'Regieren im europäischen Mehrebenensystem - Ansätze zu einer Theorie', *Leviathan* 30(1 März 2002): 65-95.

Schimmelfennig, F. and Sedelmeier, U. (eds) 2005 *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, Ithaka: Cornell University Press.

Schmoll, H. 2005 'Nur eine Episode? Zu den Folgen der Europäisierung der deutschen Hochschulen aus betriebswirtschaftlicher Sicht' *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Frankfurt.

Vink, M. P. 2003 'What is Europeanisation? and other questions on a new research agenda', *European Political Science* 3(1): 63-74.

Warleigh, A. 2001 ''Europeanizing' Civil Society: NGOs as Agents of Political Socialization', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39,(4): 619-639.