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Teaching, Learning and the Profession

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Research Article

Denmark in Europe 1973-2015: Processes of Europeanization and 'Denmarkization'

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Abstract

Since becoming a member of the European Community in 1973, Denmark has conducted eight referenda on its involvement in the process of European integration. Five of the referenda have produced a 'yes' to accession and further integration while the remaining three have resulted in 'noes'. The Danish approach of using referenda, of claiming opt-outs after 'noes' and of setting up parliamentary controls to check government policy in Brussels has been a way of checking Europeanization - in this article termed 'denmarkization'. For a long period, the two processes of Europeanization and denmarkization have co-existed and helped to create equilibrium and legitimacy behind Danish European policy. However, this seems to have changed lately as denmarkization by centre-right and populist parties no longer appears efficient in safeguarding Danish sovereignty in the vital welfare domain. This has provoked a situation in which Europeanization and denmarkization according to the interpretation of this article are heading for collision, which will necessitate some form of reconfiguration of Danish European policy. This article investigates and discusses this dual-faced aspect of the Danish membership experience and finally raises the question of whether this experience finds parallels in other EU member states.

Keywords

Danish EU policy; Europeanization; integration; euro-scepticism; future of EU

When the Danish government handed in its application for membership of the European Communities in 1961, it sparked off the first serious and organised debates on the pros and cons of membership (Borring Olesen & Villaume 2005: 472-490). Central to these debates was the issue of sovereignty. It became central because the emerging 'no' movements and the EEC-sceptical parties saw the main threat of membership in the loss of sovereignty, and thus national independence, and therefore projected this argument – in many variations and accentuations – to the forefront of their 'no' campaigns. The sovereignty issue has kept this pivotal position through the debates and campaigns of five decades up to the present day (Petersen 2006: 652 ff.).

The loss-of-sovereignty argument has generally been difficult for the 'yes' side to neutralise. This is due to the apparent fact, on the one hand, that membership would and did entail transfers of national decision-making prerogatives to the Community institutions, and, on the other hand, that it was and has been difficult to convince the electorate of the relevance and solidity of the argument that membership also implied a sovereignty gain as Denmark and Danish citizens would receive a share in the new community pool of sovereignty that would accrue from the (emerging) European polity. Instead governments and 'yes' parties for long, and initially with great success, sought to recast the discourse by emphasising the economic rationales of membership, i.e. the advantages to trade, to the balance of payments, to the solidity of the monetary system etc.

However, when they occasionally were forced to engage with the political consequences of membership, the dominant pro-membership story line during the pre-accession period stressed that a Community with British, Irish, Danish and Norwegian membership would be a completely different community from the original one of the Six which would push it in a more intergovernmental,

pragmatic and North European direction (Borring Olesen & Villaume 2005: 489 f. and 715). Although this argument held some substance, former Danish Prime Minister Poul Schlüter (a Conservative) crossed a line when as late as 1986 in the run up to the Danish referendum on the Single European Act (SEA) he made his (in)famous claim: 'The Union is stone dead, when we vote yes on Thursday' (Schlüter 2006).¹ All the same, the point is that Schlüter was probably not being deliberately deceptive. On the one hand, his remark testifies to a manifest shyness among Danish pro-EC/EU politicians in acknowledging and engaging with the supranational ambitions written into the Rome Treaties and further underscored by the EC institutional and legal praxis in the period prior to Schlüter's claim, but it probably also reflected his profound view that member states were still able and determined to check the attempts to constitutionalise the EC.²

Taking its cues from these early Danish EC debates, this article attempts a stock-taking of the Danish relationship with European integration during the full membership period based on the reading of existing research and present-day debate. It does so by employing the two concepts of Europeanization and denmarkization to discuss to what degree and in which sense EC/EU membership has influenced and impacted on Danish politics and society. It is the argument put forward in this article that denmarkization must be seen as a response to the process of Europeanization – as a way of curbing the influence of Europeanization – and further that until recently most Danish decision-makers, like Poul Schlüter above, tended to view denmarkization as a necessary and credible safeguard against excessive Europeanization. However, it is also the argument of this author that this is increasingly not the case any longer, and that the whole issue of (excessive) Europeanization has moved centre stage in Danish politics to a degree – outside of referenda campaigns - never witnessed before.

Due to the comprehensive character of the topic under discussion the article is selective in its approach. It will treat the Europeanization aspect in three parts by first discussing and defining the concept of Europeanization as a prelude to analysing Europeanization trends with a focus on its legal and administrative consequences and on its impact on the salient issues of the Danish labour market and welfare organisation. The denmarkization aspect will be treated by highlighting and discussing the role and importance of three political phenomena, the Danish Parliament's European Affairs Committee, the referendum institution and the Danish EU opt-outs. In the final section, the article will discuss and assess how the two aspects may influence and condition the whole Danish approach to the EU and the process of European integration. The argument concerns the specific Danish case, but in conclusion the article raises the question of whether the Danish case reflects a major trend also seen in a number of other EU countries.

EUROPEANIZATION

The Concept

For historians, the concept of Europeanization is a vast and complex one - both in its temporal and spatial dimensions. We find historians using the concept to analyse and interpret European developments under Hitler, in relation to imperial Europe, in the Napoleonic era and as far back as the middle ages as Sverre Bagge and Robert Bartlett have done (Bagge 1986; Bartlett 1993). Just as historians see Europeanization at work in different time periods, the geographical delimitations of Europe also vary considerably, and the ruling point of view today is simply to argue, along constructivist lines, that theoretically at least it is impossible to demarcate Europe in any precise sense. This double challenge was already neatly condensed in 1992 by Swedish historian Rune Johansson when he observed:

While today it is popular to talk about the end of history one may in summary conclude that also in the future the problems related to integration and disintegration in Europe and the delimitation of European integration will remain topical to discuss in time-bound terms (Johansson 1992: 93 – author's translation).

To these two challenges one must add a further complexity, namely how do we approach the study of Europe in methodological and theoretical terms? Are we addressing the issue through the analysis of the creation of cultural spaces and discourses on Europe, through the mapping of transnational contacts and networks or through the study of material artefacts with the capacity to bind Europe together?

This interesting reflection is presented in an article by Ulrike v. Hirschhausen and Kiran Klaus Patel. There they argue that there are basically three ways of studying Europeanization, which they sum up as Europe Imagined, Europe Constructed and Europe Emergent (Hirschhausen & Patel 2010). If the two first categories may fit into a distinction between, in the Benedict Anderson sense, Europe Imagined and Europe Lived, it is the third category of Europe Emergent that is of particular relevance to this article. This is so, according to the logic of the argument of Hirschhausen and Patel, because the process of post-war European integration may be conceived of as a development in which long-term historical processes and structures came to be perceived of as specifically European by elites and/or people living with and in them. Thus, it was a moment when Europe emerged conscious of itself as European (and not exclusively national), and when a European polity was being constructed on the basis of such a conception. However, as they claim, there is no teleology involved. Historical ambition can fail and history move into another direction primed by other (re-) emergent and competing forces. Despite the fact that 'the ever closer union of the European peoples' has a treaty background of nearly 60 years now, many historians find it wise to acknowledge that we are still living in 'tidal Europe' where political artefacts, among them the EU, may ebb and flow (Hirschhausen & Patel 2010: 4).

If we move into the EU studies area, processes of Europeanization are primarily the domain of social science research. Although the task of defining the subject compared to the history approach is more straightforward both in the temporal and spatial dimensions, a brief glimpse into the literature reveals that the task is still daunting and definitions wide-ranging. Or to paraphrase Johan P. Olsen's nearly 15 year old but still valid observation, as a concept EU-Europeanization is both fashionable and contested (Olsen 2002). Olsen himself listed five different, partly complementary, phenomena referred to by the term Europeanization: (1) changes in external boundaries; (2) developing institutions at the European level; (3) central penetration of national systems of governance; (4) exporting forms of political organisation; and (5) a political unification project.

Several of these phenomena would fit well into a historical analysis of *Europe Emergent*, but for the purpose of this article's focus on the impact of EU-Europeanization on Denmark, we will primarily limit ourselves to phenomenon three from Olsen's list. Central to this way of studying Europeanization is to investigate how the EU influences and impacts upon the member nation states. It is an approach which has expanded greatly over the last ten years, and in the words of Vink and Graziano, its central focus is on the 'changes in national political systems that can be attributed to the development of European regional cooperation' (Vink & Graziano 2008: 3). Or put differently, the approach can be designed to explore the changes that Europeanization generates in the polity, policies and politics of member states.

Legislation and Administration

Although it is often stressed in the literature that the processes of Europeanization have not affected the member states in similar ways and with similar intensity, Robert Ladrech's conclusion, that:

although undetected as regards its cumulative effect, the degree of penetration by the EU into its member states' political systems has resulted in a myriad of adjustments, that, while perhaps not formally redefining national statehood, does imply that twenty-first century EU membership commits a state to a continuous process of Europeanization (Ladrech 2010: 215)

is convincing, including when we are dealing specifically with the Danish experience.

As in other member states, an increasing load of Danish legislation emanates directly or indirectly from Brussels (Töller 2010). As elsewhere, national adaptation does take place and to a certain degree generates a process of 'nationalization' within the process of Europeanization although such adaptation is mainly linked to the indirect part of the legislative process, not the major part that becomes law and has direct applicability through regulations (Kelstrup, Sindbjerg Martinsen and Wind 2012: 386 ff; Kallestrup 2005: 355 ff.).

Among Danish legal specialists there is widespread disagreement as to the actual level of Europeanization of Danish law.³ The minimalist school argues that the European impact is relatively modest, but also diversified from area to area. In an analysis of the ratio of EU directives to total Danish legislation, Jørgen Grønnegaard Christensen has estimated that the European impact is overall approximately fifteen per cent, but between 20 and 30 per cent in the most salient areas such as agriculture, employment, economics and business and transport (Grønnegaard Christensen 2010, table 2: 24). The maximalists for their part argue that Grønnegaard Christensen's analysis only presents part of the picture due to the fact that it only estimates the impact of directives. A full picture, they argue, must also comprise EU regulations and changes effected through EU Court rulings. It is a valid point since regulations constitute the major body of the EU legal framework which counted in, according to the maximalists, would probably move the average up to an overall 30 per cent or even more. Taking this dimension into consideration the maximalist school is ready to recognise that the Danish legal model may be moving from a phase of adaptation into one of transformation. (Kelstrup et al. 2012: 386 ff.).

The impact of Europeanization can also be detected through the many transformations the bureaucratic organisation and representation of Danish EU policy have undergone. These transformations have been the product of the manifest changes that the EC/EU system itself has seen both in terms of institutional upgrading and in the expansion of the policy areas included, but have also been the result of bureaucratic learning processes. Thus, bureaucratic reforms have been executed in order to make national adaptation more efficient, especially in the period after the ratification of the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty (Pedersen 2000).

When Denmark entered the EC, the Foreign Ministry was *the* bureaucratic gate-keeper with the prerogative to filter and represent Danish EC policy. This role has been somewhat diluted since the late 1980s although the Foreign Ministry still chairs the inter-ministry coordination committee (*EU-udvalget*) and the Foreign Minister its twin body within the government, the Foreign Policy Committee (*Regeringens Udenrigspolitiske Udvalg*). Thus, Denmark may still be among the countries with the highest ambitions to control and coordinate EU policy centrally, to be - in the words of Hussein Kassim (2003: 92) - a 'comprehensive centralizer', but it is evident that the specialised ministries over time have acquired more independence and leverage and that the Danish dealings with Brussels are now increasingly, if not always understood to be, at least handled as domestic

policy – a development stressing the high impact of Europeanization (Nedergaard 2001: 55 ff; Petersen 2006: 17 ff.; Kelstrup et al. 2012: 430 f.).

Still, it is not domestic policy and politics as in the good old days when Schlüter pronounced the union to be stone dead. Both in the general EU literature and in the part dealing specifically with Denmark the claim is often substantiated that EU policy-making tends to strengthen the executive at the expense of democratic parliamentary control. A very recent example highlighting this dimension is the introduction of the so-called European Semester.⁴ The Semester was introduced in 2011 as an instrument to improve economic policy coordination within the Union. One of the new features of this process is that the Commission is entrusted with drafting Annual Growth Surveys (AGS) holding a list of policy priorities for each of the participating countries (the Euro countries and a number of countries, including Denmark, attached through an intergovernmental agreement) well before national governments have started preparing the budget for the next fiscal year.

In this way, the very central prerogative of national parliaments to participate actively in the budgeting process appears to have been reduced. First, because the EU Commission to a large degree is framing the national budget debates, and second, because governments as the primary interlocutor between Brussels and the national parliaments – they are the ones blueprinting the AGS and its country specific recommendations - will increase their executive powers. This development creates legitimacy problems, or as one recent report argues: ‘We therefore conclude that, so far, national parliaments have not sufficiently discussed and debated, let alone provided legitimacy for, the EU Council recommendations’ (Hallerberg, Marzinotto & Wolff 2012).^{5&6}

In the research literature, the overall tendency to strengthen the executive vis-à-vis the legislature is generally attributed to several factors such as: (1) the executive (ministers and leading civil servants) having an information lead; (2) the semi-closed nature of some parts of the legislative process in Brussels; (3) the complexity and technicality of much of the proposed legislation and of the decision-making process in terms of the subject matter, the legislative rules, the gallery of people and institutions involved – a complexity which language barriers may increase even further (Kassim 2003: 85 ff.; Laffan 2008: 128 ff.).

Such a set-up not only tends to increase input and control by the government ahead of the parliament, but also by ‘technocrats’ ahead of ministers within the executive itself. An interesting allegation to be found in some of the new sociologically inspired Europeanization studies is that transnational elite formation and alignment nourished by repeated and extensive personal contacts and norm diffusion through shared experience is a real product of Europeanization - and at the same time an important driver in facilitating further Europeanization, as has recently been thoroughly explored by Rebecca Adler-Nissen (2014). In a traditional understanding of the principles of parliamentary democracy, the above development does not only challenge democratic accountability by transferring power from the legislative to the executive through so-called policy drift in Brussels, the leading bureaucratic elite may also represent world views – European views – that are basically out of touch with a great majority of the population ‘at home’.⁷

LABOUR MARKET AND WELFARE

In relation to Denmark we are in need of much more research to qualify to what degree parliamentary democracy is being undermined by a transfer of power to the executive and by unaccountable and unrepresentative elites. In this sense, Europeanization studies still have a long way to go. This is certainly also true when we move into the discussion on how Europeanization impacts upon the Danish labour market or welfare model. Also here there is a need for much more research in the field to qualify the debate. One way of doing this is to supplement impact analysis at

the quantitative aggregate level with a qualitative case-orientated approach in order to highlight how the European legislative input both in terms of law enactment and interpretation through the Court of Justice has in several instances changed not only Danish policy, but in fact also basic features and balances of the Danish polity and politics.

One such well-researched example is the treatment of the equal opportunity issue since Denmark entered the EC. Thus, Dorte Sindbjerg Martinsen's research documents that in several instances EU regulation through directives and court decisions has improved equal opportunity standards for women in the labour market related to issues like equal pay and maternal leave rights. But more than that, this regulation has also to some extent eroded the Danish labour market model according to which labour market regulations are carried out bilaterally through accords reached between employers and employees' associations and trade unions (Sindbjerg Martinsen 2007).

This development has not only happened as the product of diktats from Brussels. Martinsen has further shown that some of the trade unions, especially those with a high female membership, have shifted strategy and orientation and since the mid-1980s increasingly have sought equal opportunity improvements through the Community method. By doing this, these unions have contributed to weakening the Danish labour market model and national control over the process of implementation. In this background, Martinsen argues that Europeanization entered a second phase from the mid-1980s because the process from then on could also count on the backing from an important Danish constituency. This national involvement in Europeanization highlights a third dimension in the process, namely that the handling of the issue at the Community level is influenced by feedback mechanisms from the national arena and thus that European integration is shaped in a kind of dialogue between the supranational and the national.

However, it is also important to stress that EU labour market policy at the same time has met severe criticism and contributed to the forging of what we could term an anti-Europeanization constituency. Historically, sections of the Danish labour and trade union movement have always been sceptical of Danish participation in the EC/EU precisely due to the perceived threat membership would pose to the Danish labour market model (Agerskov & Bach 2006: 52-82). An element in this fear was the potential danger to (national) employment and (national) wages from a free mobility labour market in Europe. Such fear has been voiced during many of the referenda campaigns (on accession in 1972, on the SEA in 1986 and on Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in 2000), but generally on a day-to-day basis it has not played any significant role due to the simple fact that an integrated European labour market failed to materialise during the first three decades of Danish membership.

This situation has changed today. Although a highly mobile and integrated European labour market is still far off, mobility has increased in the years following the enlargements to Eastern and Central Europe, a development also strengthened by the adoption in 2006 of the EU service directive. While only two per cent of the labour force originated in another EU country in 2005, today it is a good three per cent. This 50 per cent rise in labour mobility is mainly attributable to job seekers from Eastern Europe, predominantly from Bulgaria, Romania and Poland, moving west (Geis 2013: 11 ff.). In Denmark, it is estimated that foreign workers (in 2012) occupied 120,000 full time jobs or what amounts to approximately five per cent of the Danish work force. In recent years, there has been a drop in the percentage of workers from Western Europe whereas the number of employed from Eastern Europe has grown. Thus, workers from Poland, the Baltic countries and Romania alone account for approximately one third of foreign workers in Denmark. Apart from construction, it is mainly unskilled sectors such as transportation, agriculture/forestry and service businesses (such as hotels and restaurants) that have a high representation of the Eastern European work force.⁸

It is against this background that the issue of the Europeanization of the Danish labour market has moved centre stage for the attention of the trade unions, the labour movement, but also among euro-sceptic forces such as the Danish People's Party (DPP). Its centrality can be illustrated by the anti-social dumping and anti-cheap (Eastern European) labour campaign run by the large 3F trade union (see photo below) which organises a high proportion of unskilled workers or by the recent report by the independent left-wing think tank, CEVEA, on the perception of foreign workers in Denmark.⁹ Thus, in the conclusion of the latter, the following demand is made: 'Therefore we need increased attention towards the use of a foreign work force in order to ensure that the unfair competition Danes are meeting when employers use cheap foreign labour and lower the standard of working conditions in Denmark, is brought to a halt' (CEVEA 2013: 6 (author's translation)).



'Cheap East labour is costly. You pay the price!'/ 'Social dumping is costly. You pay the price!'.

Posters by the Danish trade union 3F at Copenhagen Central Station, November 2013. Photo by: Christian Axboe-Nielsen.

Furthermore, in recent years, the social dumping issue has merged with the broader and increasingly heated debate on social or welfare tourism. During 2013, such a debate raged in many EU countries, including in Great Britain and Germany with both Prime Minister David Cameron and Chancellor Angela Merkel having expressed concerns over the fact that EU migrants put considerable strain on schools, healthcare and the welfare state (Dominiczak 2013; Maressa et al. 2014). In Denmark, similar fears have been voiced and the whole prospect of increased mobility with the accompanying social rights dimension have in fact resulted in a fierce political debate about changing the way welfare provisions (unemployment benefits, child allowances, student grants etc.) are organised.

It is not only migration as such that lies behind this reaction, but also the fact that the Commission and the Court of Justice through recommendations and rulings are putting pressure on the national government to accommodate legislation to conform to the equal treatment principle related to The Single Market. Thus, the Danish Thorning-Schmidt government, in power until the June elections of 2015, modified regulations regarding foreign workers' right to receive child allowances on the recommendation of the EU Commission and was preparing new legislation concerning the entitlement system of the generous Danish student grants as a consequence of two recent court rulings paving the way to student grants for foreigners. Thus, the number of foreign students receiving Danish grants through the qualification of working 10-12 hours nearly doubled from 2013 to 2014 (Gudmundsson 2013; Kragh 2014; Ritzau/tv2.dk 2015).

This debate has been very divisive, with the liberal-conservative parties emphatically denying that it was ever the intention to create a Social Union as part of the Single Market. The debate has shattered the traditional, mutual EU understanding between the Social Democrats and leading bourgeois pro-EU Party *Venstre* with the latter levelling severe attacks against the Thorning-Schmidt government for not countering Brussels on this issue - to the great satisfaction of euro-sceptic DPP which achieved unprecedented electoral success in the recent June 2015 elections (21.7 per cent of the vote), making it the second largest party after the Social Democrats.¹⁰

From a Europeanization perspective there are a number of important aspects to stress related to these developments. First, that the process of Europeanization has certainly reached a critical point if the belief is sustained that national welfare is being undermined by social dumping, welfare tourism and specifically in the Danish case by the appreciation that the universalist character of the Danish (national) welfare state is being undermined by single market requirements and labour migration. Second, this observation will potentially impact very heavily on Danish EU policy. In contrast to the British government, the Danish Thorning-Schmidt government was never inclined to recast its relationship with the EU with reference to the negative effects of welfare tourism specifically or Europeanization more generally. However, this has changed with the incoming Liberal Løkke Rasmussen government, which is critically dependent on the votes of DPP. Thus, even during the electoral campaign, the bourgeois parties agreed on a mutual understanding that Danish EU policy would seek to restrict EU citizens' access to Danish welfare provisions and further included publicly expressed support for the Cameron government's wish to renegotiate British EU membership terms (Hjølund 2015). Third, these above-mentioned developments point in the direction that Europeanization for the first time in Denmark is becoming a major political issue in daily national politics (outside the brief referenda and EP election periods) and furthermore sustains the expectation that Danish EU policy is moving in a more EU-sceptical direction. Løkke Rasmussen is maybe not overly inclined to move too far in that direction, but he will, like Cameron, face the dilemma that his parliamentary majority will break if he does not do so.¹¹

'DENMARKIZATION'

For good reasons the concept denmarkization is neither so fashionable, nor contested as Europeanization. Its lack of contestation should mainly be explained by its lack of 'fashionability', and this article by no means claims that the Danish imprint on the EU is comparable to the EU imprint on Denmark. However, in this article denmarkization has a wider meaning which explains why it is initially put in inverted commas. Thus, the use of the concept finds its logic in the argument that it may be employed to designate general responses by member states, in casu Denmark, aimed at controlling, contesting or even curbing EU-Europeanization.

In three important respects Denmark may be seen to have been a pioneer in devising mechanisms or negotiating policy outcomes with the ultimate aim of retaining democratic-parliamentary control

over EU policy and safeguarding national sovereignty over key policy areas. The pioneer metaphor comes in because some of these mechanisms and policy solutions have since been emulated by other member states. These three mechanisms and policy solutions are: (1) The Danish Parliament's, *Folketinget's*, European Affairs Committee; (2) the referendum institution; and (3) the opt-out policy solution.

The Folketing's European Affairs Committee dates back to 1961 when the so-called Market Negotiation Committee was established. The task of the new committee composed of party representatives according to party size was to serve as a scrutiny and watchdog committee in relation to the Danish government's handling of the accession negotiations with the EC. However, its mandate was only to be consultative and was in fact a bit blurred since the grand political issues were still brought before and discussed in the general Foreign Affairs Committee (*Udenrigspolitisk Nævn*). Originally, the Market Negotiations Committee only served as an ad hoc committee, a position changed when it became a permanent one under the revised name, The Market Committee, when Denmark entered the Communities in 1973. Furthermore, it had only limited practical experience during the first year of membership before the rule was established that for all EC decisions of major political relevance, ministers needed binding mandates from the Committee before negotiations were initiated in Brussels, and a renewed mandate each time negotiation positions changed (Borring Olesen & Villaume 2005: 460; Folketinget 2012: 5 ff.).

After Maastricht, the Market Committee acquired its present name, Folketinget's European Affairs Committee, and its position was strengthened in a number of ways, not least by securing earlier access to Commission legislative proposals and by committing the government to forward at a very early stage a so-called basic memo (*grundnotat*) on each proposal (*Folketingets Europaudvalgs beretninger 1973-2010*: 59 ff). These reforms not only mirrored the changes in the institutional set-up of the EU, but also the fact that the Committee often found it difficult to cope with and oversee the legislative process in Brussels, and the way Danish governments handled it. All the same, in the international research literature the European Affairs Committee is regularly singled out as being among Europe's strongest parliamentary committees when it comes to exercising control vis-à-vis the executive, especially concerning its powers to issue mandates for the government before negotiations in Brussels. Denmark may be a comprehensive centraliser at the interdepartmental level within the executive, but it also seeks to exercise comprehensive parliamentary control over the executive, an endeavour strengthened by the Danish tradition of having minority governments (Kassim 2003: 92 ff; Holzhaacker 2008: 147 f.; Corona 2013).

The features of the Danish parliamentary scrutiny and control system are by no means emulated in detail by the other member states, but thanks to the avant garde nature and comprehensive character of the Danish system, it has been widely studied and in some instances also partly copied. In response to this interest, Folketinget in 2012 published a full booklet in English describing in detail the mandate, role and character of the work of the committee. From this booklet one may also see that the committee is now preparing how to develop not only its control mechanisms, but also its (limited) role as co-legislator according to the stipulations of the Lisbon Treaty (Folketinget 2012).

Institutional transfer has also been at play regarding the second item in the 'denmarkization' process: the introduction of referenda in relation to EU issues. Of the current member states, Ireland has held more referenda than Denmark (nine versus eight), and the two countries were the first to stage EC referenda, which they both did for the first time in 1972 as part of their pre-accession process. But Danish voters voted 'no' twice (on Maastricht in 1992 and the Euro in 2000) before Ireland cast its first 'no' vote in 2001 (on the Nice Treaty). And it is of course the 'noes' that have been the claim to fame (Leconte 2010: 20 ff.; Borring Olesen 2011: 45 ff.). The reason why Denmark originally introduced the referendum in relation to EC/EU issues was constitutional. In §20 of the Danish constitution of 1953, it is stipulated that national sovereignty may be transferred to

international institutions established by treaty, but also that such transfer will require a 5/6 majority in Parliament and, if the majority is less, alternatively through a specified majority obtained in a binding referendum (Boring Olesen & Villaume 2005: 271 ff.). A consultative referendum may also be carried out as happened with the referendum on the SEA in 1986, when there was a majority against the treaty in Parliament, but a majority that agreed to accept the result of a consultative referendum (which produced a 'yes') (Petersen 2006: 528 f.). In this way the referendum institution has developed from being a legal instrument to also acquiring the dimension of a political instrument.

Furthermore, the country's legal expertise has some flexibility in interpreting when §20 must be applied. To most political observers it is not self-evident why the Ministry of Justice could reach the conclusion that a §20 requirement could be applied to the Amsterdam Treaty while the Supreme Court in 2013 established that the Danish government did not violate the constitution by not holding a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. Nevertheless, it appears that the Danish referendum institution overall – albeit with some qualification¹² - has acted to modify a widespread feeling (as often propagated by the EU-sceptic parties and movements) that EU policy is only elite business and at the same time has demonstrated to electors that they can pull the denmarkization handle if they feel that Europeanization is travelling too fast. However, one must also stress that the referendum institution has not exclusively functioned as an outlet for euro-scepticism as five out of the eight Danish referenda have returned a 'yes'. In these cases, referenda have helped create legitimacy behind the European policies of Danish governments.

The referendum is intimately linked to the third element of the denmarkization repertoire, namely the opt-out mechanism and policy solution. After all, opting-out of treaty obligations is a way of addressing a stalemate political situation when national electorates have voted 'no' to further integration. It may be argued that Britain was the first country to be granted an opt-out as happened during the Maastricht negotiations on the issue of EMU-membership. The reason why Denmark did not pursue a formal opt-out during Maastricht on the same issue was the fact that the Danish government had made it clear that Danish entry into the third phase of EMU would require a referendum according to the transfer-of-sovereignty clause in the constitution. However, when the Danes said 'no' in the Maastricht referendum of 2nd June 1992, the opt-out solution became the key to solving a critical problem, not only for Denmark, but also for the EC which, according to its own treaty stipulations, could not transform itself into the EU before all member states had ratified the new treaty. In practical terms it was a 'big key' since Denmark in the Edinburgh agreement of December 1992 was granted four opt-outs to pave the way for holding a new referendum. The four opt-outs were (1) non-participation in the third phase of the EMU; (2) non-participation in defence policy issues in the Maastricht Treaty pillar two; and (3) non-participation in the supranational aspects of pillar three cooperation on justice and home affairs. Finally, the fourth opt-out exempted Danish citizens from embracing the new union citizenship (DIIS 2008).

The focus on precisely these four opt-outs was the product of an interesting domestic handling of the Maastricht dilemma. In fact, it was the opposition parties, the Social Democrats, the Social Liberals and the EU-sceptic party, the Socialist People's Party (SPP), which negotiated a 'National Compromise' based on the four opt-out solution. The ruling Liberal-Conservative government was basically a bystander in this process and more or less had to accept the national compromise as a diktat because it was the general expectation of the time that a 'yes' in a new referendum could only be obtained if the SPP endorsed a 'yes'. This expectation seemed justified when the Danish voters in May 1993, with a majority of 56.7 per cent, approved Maastricht in the Edinburgh opt-out version - dubbed 'Maastricht without thorns' at the time (Petersen 2006: 506-520).

The Maastricht-Edinburgh intermezzo (and the subsequent consequences of the opt-outs) highlights several important features in the Danish relationship with the EC/EU. First, that the Danish

electorate was unwilling to accept Danish participation in the more politically sensitive areas of EU cooperation, while at the same time refusing to endorse a full exit from the Community, even from the Union. Second, that EU referenda are able to mobilise the electorate (the turn-out in the two referenda in 1992-93 were 83.1 per cent and 86.5 per cent), sustaining the view that the issue is highly charged and seems to be important to voters. Third, that voters and parliament do have real powers to define and mitigate the consequences of Europeanization and to counterbalance the influence of the executive which in fact has helped create legitimacy behind Danish EU policy. But also fourth, as analysed by Rebecca Adler-Nissen, that the third feature comes with a modification, namely that the handling of opt-outs by diplomats in daily Brussels politics, due to elite socialization and policy drift, rather facilitates integration. The overall point arising from Adler-Nissen's analysis is that Europeanization may advance despite opt-out differentiation and that the attempts to 'take back' sovereignty through opt-outs will fail as long as the tacit norms of EU diplomacy continue to operate in a manner that pushes integration ahead (Adler-Nissen 2014: 174-189).

The double-bound conclusions above are valid in a historical interpretation of the complex Danish relationship with the EC/EU. However, the question is whether this is still the case today in the Lisbon Treaty era? As already hinted at in the previous section, there are strong indications that the kind of check-and-balance equilibrium between Europeanization and denmarkization which was believed to exist during the first thirty odd years of Danish membership is increasingly understood to have been upset.¹³ The sensation, voiced by several politicians lately, is that the denmarkization strategy is no longer efficient in checking excessive Europeanization and the question therefore today is whether the urge for increased differentiation and national retrenchment will in fact be a real challenge to Europeanization in the future?

EUROPEANIZATION AND DENMARKIZATION: THEIR STATUS TODAY

When Danish Prime Minister Schlüter in 1986 declared the vision of European union to be 'stone dead', he was of course very wrong, not only because a European Union was in fact formally established shortly after, but also because Denmark since the adoption of the SEA and the Maastricht Treaty has been Europeanized to a degree hardly imaginable to him. On the other hand, Schlüter was right in his intuitive realisation that European union would be hard to realise due to nation state resilience. As this article has argued, the process of European integration since the SEA and Maastricht has seen both expansion and deepening, but also attempts at national retrenchment or neutralisation - or in other words, the co-existence of the processes of Europeanization and denmarkization.

Although most of the research literature acknowledges that Europeanization has accelerated over recent decades and has seriously affected the policy-making, politics and polity of the nation states, it still appears difficult to ascertain if this impact has crossed the line and taken politics in Europe into a new order. Most scholars seem to agree with Robert Ladrech's somewhat vague conclusion that 'Europeanization has not produced any seismic shifts in the operation of national policy-making and institutions' (Ladrech 2010: 206). If we zoom into the Danish example, most scholars would probably agree with Ladrech that no seismic shift has occurred in relation to a European impact on Danish policy-making and political institutions.¹⁴ However, there are clear disagreements in the evaluation of the degree of European penetration of Danish politics. At the one end, we find scholars arguing that Europeanization has only resulted in some adaptation and modification of a kind which has generally left the Danish system intact, and at the other end, we meet scholars who argue that Europeanization has had a profound impact and maybe even a transformative impact (Kelstrup et al. 2012: 386-393).

The examples given in this article point in the direction that Europeanization is at least in the process of transforming the Danish system. Although we may see difference in interpretation between the minimalists and maximalists in their evaluation of how much of Danish legislation today emanates from Brussels, they agree that the proportion in some areas is profound and has been rising. Further the article has documented that the administrative set-up to cope with the impact of EU legislation is comprehensive – and has become increasingly so – and acts as a go-between between the European and national processes of legislation in a way that tends to strengthen the government's overall control of the legislative process. The introduction of the European Semester is one such point in case. Through the research by Adler-Nissen, we have also seen that the handling of the opt-outs in Danish diplomacy tends to follow Europeanization impulses rather than a denmarkization logic. In relation to the labour market/equal opportunities example, it was revealed that the so-called Danish labour market model is already seriously undermined by the general supremacy of EU law to national labour market regulation, but also and more importantly by a shift in political orientation among (some of) the model bearers themselves from the national level to the community level and from the negotiated labour market method to a law-making method.

We may also conclude that the heavy seismic Europeanization activity going on is no longer kept underground; it has actually surfaced and become a contested issue in day-to day-politics as never before. The social dumping and welfare tourism debates demonstrate this and also question if Ladrech's earlier quoted observation about Europeanization being 'undetected as regards its cumulative effect' continues to be valid. Thus, it appears that the heated and radical character of the Danish debate on these issues to a large extent is nourished not merely by their potential economic and social consequences, but by a new realisation, a realisation that is not only theoretical and hypothetical, but very practical, that the Danish national (democratic) polity, *det danske folkestyre*, has lost the power to regulate and decide on one of its most salient features, the welfare state. This new realisation helps to explain the strong reaction by the largest opposition party, the liberal party *Venstre*, which publicly urged the government not to respect EU law on the transferability and exportability of social benefits (Kragh 2014).¹⁵ As such the affair is another example of the present limitations of denmarkization in countering the process of Europeanization.

On the other hand, the example also highlights that the intrusive character of Europeanization at the national level is also becoming a problem for the process of Europeanization itself. When law-and-order parties like Danish *Venstre* advocate disobeying EU regulation, and when David Cameron in the UK clings to a similar approach and is pressured into staging a referendum on British membership of the EU, it appears as if the two processes, Europeanization and 'denmarkization', no longer just co-exist, but actually are headed for collision. The recent Danish 'no' in the December 2015 referendum on exchanging the country's opt-out on Justice and Home Affairs with an opt-in model confirms this very clearly.

In fact, such a scenario has been further accentuated in Denmark with the recent parliamentary elections of 2015. Already in the EP elections of May 2014, the DPP achieved the highest electoral score and, as already mentioned, in the national elections of June 2015 it became the largest bourgeois party - although declining to take government responsibility. This onus was once again passed to Lars Løkke Rasmussen and the Liberal Party, but depending on the DPP as its major parliamentary coalition partner the Liberals are obviously feeling the need to accommodate the DPP on core issues like EU policy and refugee/immigration policy. Thus, already during the electoral campaign the bourgeois parties agreed on a mutual understanding, entitled 'Danish Welfare in Europe', according to which Danish EU policy would seek to restrict EU citizens' access to Danish welfare provisions and further included publicly expressed support for the Cameron government's wish to renegotiate the British EU membership terms (see Hjøllund 2015 & Dansk velfærd i Europa 2015). Furthermore, the new government is working on plans to set up an EU implementation committee with the declared objective of reducing 'over-implementation' of EU directives. In the

foreign ministry, there is an expressed fear that this new initiative will break with the single tier implementation of directives (and reduce its gate-keeper role) and introduce a competing tier based more on a political than legal approach (Thobo-Carlsen 2015) Both of these initiatives can be seen as stepped-up attempts to strengthen 'denmarkization', but also as initiatives that potentially bring the two processes of Europeanization and denmarkization closer en route to collision.

This conclusion finally raises the pertinent question of whether the increasing contestation of Europeanization in the Danish political context owes primarily to the qualitative and quantitative advances of Europeanization or if it is more the product of a reconfiguration of Danish politics with EU sceptic parties commanding a much more important role today compared with the situation five to ten years ago. Reluctance against endorsing further Europeanization is by no means a new phenomenon, but previously EC/EU-scepticism was primarily driven by EC/EU sceptic movements not represented in the Danish parliament or it manifested itself as opposition against further Europeanization as envisaged by new treaty revisions. For instance, there was a majority in Parliament rejecting the SEA in 1986, but a majority which none the less accepted the 'yes' result in a non-binding referendum (Borring Olesen 2006).

The situation today is different in the sense that important parties in the Løkke Rasmussen government coalition want to roll Europeanization back and challenge the legality of EU law. This set-up, including the fact that the DPP became the largest bourgeois party in the recent elections, challenges Løkke Rasmussen and the Liberal Party and pushes the government into a EU-sceptic posture that represents a break with the Party's traditional pro-EU approach. On the other hand, there is still good reason to maintain that the new scepticism is also nourished by a sensation within the party that Europeanization has come to cross a critical borderline which is believed to undermine Danish sovereignty in ways that was never envisaged or endorsed. As the Prime Minister often repeats these days:

The Single Market is – especially for a small country living from trading with others - a great achievement, but this great achievement must not be used as a cover for establishing a social union where everybody is entitled to everything, everywhere and at all times (Løkke Rasmussen 2014; *Dansk velfærd i Europa* 2015).

In sum, it is hard to disentangle the precise nature of the dynamics between Europeanization and euro-scepticism. Euro-scepticism seems to feed from advancing Europeanization, while the latter is increasingly being challenged by the mere growth of euro-scepticism. What is evident, however, is that traditional denmarkization devices are no longer considered adequate for checking the influence of Europeanization and therefore a kind of reconfiguration of the traditional Danish relationship between the two processes in which denmarkization reasserts itself appears to be a likely outcome. On the other hand, this will only happen if similar dynamics, what we may term 'ukization', 'irelandization', 'netherlandsization', 'polandization', 'hungarization' also gain prominence - which seems to be the case for the moment. Europeanization is currently challenged in many parts of Europe by what seems to be a general move towards national retrenchment (Eppler & Scheller 2014).

This development highlights that Europeanization in fact has two dimensions: one which we understand as EU-Europeanization and which concerns the progressive integration of member states into 'an ever closer union' (of some form) and another which we may term a new European standardisation of national responses to integration. This new standardisation may well prove to be the major challenge to European integration in the years to come, but in fact also to the nation state itself because it is not self-evident that national retrenchment is the key to solving the challenges of the European nation states of the twenty-first century.

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¹ See You Tube-clip on this part of Poul Schlüter's televised speech at http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=oU-LymBuAik [accessed 26 September 2014]. On Schlüter and the Danish Conservative-Liberal government's approach to the SEA, see Nikolaj Petersen 2006: 387 ff.

² For a recent reappraisal of the research into the constitutionalisation of Europe, see Davis & Rasmussen (2012).

³ In her important article, 'Measuring and Comparing the Europeanization of National Legislation', Annette Töller demonstrates that Europeanization scholars so far have not developed any convincing and systematic method to measure the European impact on national legislation and that therefore it is very difficult to compare the results of the various national analyses that have been carried out (Töller 2010).

⁴ The European Semester is only one initiative among several taken to increase EU control over the member states' and especially the euro countries' financial performance in the fight against the euro crisis – initiatives that point in the direction of future supranational reform of the EMU cooperative framework and thus further Europeanization of the EMU (Buti & Carnot 2012; European Commission 2012).

⁵ See also Danish Ministry of the Economy PM of 4 Dec. 2013, 'Notat til Folketingets Europaudvalg og Finansudvalg om det europæiske semester og den årlige vækstundersøgelse 2014', at: <http://www.euo.dk/upload/application/pdf/d33de188/201308001.pdf?download=1> [accessed 26 September 2014].

⁶ According to Folketinget's on-line EU information platform, the Financial Committee and the European Committee have jointly approved a recommendation to hold three yearly sessions (in December, March and May) with the government to debate the AGS and the policy recommendations for Denmark, see 'Europæiske Semester' at: <http://www.euo.dk/emner/styring/Esemester/> [accessed 26 September 2014].

⁷ Several of these democratic deficit elements are listed in Follesdal's and Hix's debate with Majone and Moravcsik, see Follesdal & Hix 2006.

⁸ The most reliable figures on the employment structure and profile of the Danish labour market is found in Arbejdsmarkedstyrelsen's on-line employment database: jobindsats.dk. On the number of foreign workers, see the statistics related to the topic 'Udenlandsk arbejdskraft' at <http://www.jobindsats.dk/sw9795.asp> [accessed 26 September 2014]. See also Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd, *Stigning i Østeuropæisk arbejdskraft i Danmark*, at http://www.ae.dk/files/dokumenter/analyse/ae_stigning-i-osteuropaisk-arbejdskraft-i-danmark.pdf [accessed 21 April 2014]; and the report by the independent centre-left think tank CEVEA, *Danskerne frygter udenlandsk arbejdskraft*, at http://www.cevea.dk/files/materialer/analyser/social_dumping_-_danske_frygter_udenlandsk_arbejdskraft_0.pdf [accessed 21 April 2014].

⁹ The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, in short LO, has also dedicated a full theme to the issue of social dumping on its homepage, see 'Social dumping: Danske arbejdspladser truet', at: <http://www.lo.dk/Tema/TemaArkiv/2012/SocialDumping.aspx> [accessed 21 April 2014].

¹⁰ See various opinion polls reproduced at Berlingske Barometer at <http://www.b.dk/berlingskebarometer> [accessed 23 August 2014]. For the 2015 elections result, see <http://www.dst.dk/valg/Valg1487635/valgpg/valgpgHL.htm> [accessed 20 July 2015]. In a recent article by Saskia Bonjour and Maarten Vink, they demonstrate that the Europeanization of migration policy has also caught Dutch politicians unprepared as to the degree of undermining of intergovernmental control over migration flows, generating the same kind of political dissatisfaction and outcry as in Denmark (Bonjour and Vink 2013).

¹¹ EP results reproduced on the Danish Parliament's homepage, <http://epvalg14.euo.dk/om-ep14/dokument12/> [accessed 23 August 2014]. A point sustaining the argument that Løkke Rasmussen may be more pragmatic on the issue of Europeanization is the fact that, despite his demand to Prime Minister Thorning-Schmidt to administer the child allowance check contrary to EU law, he has refrained from altering the praxis after taking office himself.

¹² Despite the referendum institution, legitimacy has been severely contested at times as happened when the Danish 'no' to Maastricht in 1992 turned into a 'yes' the year after in the Edinburgh referendum. On election night, violent demonstrations broke out in Copenhagen protesting the result (Adler-Nissen 2014: 7).

¹³ A further indication of this occurred immediately prior to publication of this article. On 3 December 2015, in a referendum the Danish voters rejected a proposal to turn the Danish opt-out on Home and Justice Affairs into a rather flexible and favourable opt-in model by a 'no' vote of 53.1 per cent. The dominant slogan of the 'no' side headed by the

Danish People's Party was: 'No to more EU'. In the referendum campaign, voters obviously listened more to the arguments of the populist right and left than to the government and the traditional centre right, centre left parties. In this sense, the result may also be interpreted as a vote of mistrust not only of the EU, but also of the Danish parliamentary system itself.

¹⁴ This was also the general conclusion reached by the comprehensive power study commission set up in 1997 which through a number of detailed reports studied power and democracy in Denmark. The main result of the study is condensed in Togeby et al. 2003.

¹⁵ As also revealed by the article by Claus Kragh, *Venstre* has for some time been preoccupied by the social rights dimension of the single market and, when presiding over the former government of Liberals and Conservatives (the Løkke Rasmussen government 2009-2011), took a number of initiatives to limit the payment of social benefits to EU citizens and established a working group to come up with suggestions on how to limit foreigners' access to Danish welfare benefits.

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Research Article

Differential growth and how liberalization was achieved in the postal services sector

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Abstract

EU liberalization has a tendency to occur even in the most disputed policy areas. Drawing on two approaches, gradual institutional theories and differentiated integration, this contribution seeks to clarify how the EU achieved liberalization policy in the postal market. A qualitative study of the decision-making process of the Postal Directive suggests that differential growth, in particular related to time rules in existing legislation that ensure future re-negotiations and concessions that constrain resistance, have contributed to policy change in EU postal services. This occurred under the conditions of instability in the market due to an unclear line between who is allowed to compete where, social norms that made it politically costly to create barriers to further integration and longevity that created desires to put an end to a process.

Keywords

Differentiation; European integration; Liberalization; Policy change; Postal services

The EU is first and foremost known as being a liberalization project. The Single European Act in 1992 established the European Single Market and aimed for free movement of goods, services, capital and people. Although today the internal market is a consolidated area in the EU, liberalization processes are on-going and disputed. This is particularly clear in the area of the freedom to provide services in the internal market, which has been considered to be unexpectedly slow (Stone Sweet 2010: 28) and a 'leftover area' (Bulmer 2009: 310). In several service areas EU liberalization has met barriers and ended up largely modified (e.g. the Services Directive) or even rejected (e.g. the Port Directive). However, the European Commission repeatedly puts even the most disputed policies on the agenda and opponents argue that the Commission never gives up. This fact suggests that as long as the EU mill grinds slowly enough, EU liberalisation eventually occurs even in the most disputed areas. It is therefore of interest to explore how time and what Goetz and Meyer-Sahling (2009: 190) call 'time rules' contribute to imposing liberalization in the European Union.

For the purpose of answering this question, I draw on theoretical perspectives of one mode of gradual institutional theories, "layering" (i.e. adding of new rules on top of existing policy), as well as differentiated integration, as time and time rules play a crucial role in both. I argue that layering – although being an institutional approach – provides important insights to understand policy change. This is because any liberalization policy involves an institutional change: when liberalizing a market, how the market is organised changes, i.e. liberalization changes the institutional setting within which actors behave. I also argue that there are elements in the differentiation literature that contributes to better understanding how layering occurs. Layering is differential growth. There is no layering without differentiation. I draw on both perspectives, exploring the factors and conditions that contribute to explain policy change within the EU postal market.

Liberalization of postal services in the EU is a well-suited field for analysing the question of time and elements that become effective through time. The decision-making process of "fully" opening the postal services to competition has been slow: lasting almost two decades since 1989, when the Postal and Telecommunication Council invited the Commission to prepare measures to develop postal services in the EU, until the decision makers agreed on the final amendment in 2008. The process included three sequences consisting of a first directive and two amendments. Moreover, in

the postal sector public services remain the most predominant (Finger and Finon 2011: 57), highlighting the major tension between a “universalist” perspective, which is based on social solidarity and a “competitive” approach focusing on efficiency and consumer choice. The social aspect inherent in postal services, the difficulty of avoiding the ‘whiff of monopoly’ in such network services (Spiller 2011: 13) and the high share of employee costs (i.e. 80 per cent of the production costs are labour costs) make postal services particularly difficult to liberalize. Thus, the Postal Directive represents a crucial case for understanding how the EU is able to introduce liberalization reform – it seemed very unlikely from the outset.

Drawing on interviews with 13 officers and document analysis, I find that that time played an important role in fundamentally changing the approach of service production from a focus on public service to an emphasis on competition both in terms of strategic time rules and temporal concessions and as a background condition as longevity. Time occurs as important in the incremental process of layering, where the reformers started liberalizing at the sector’s margins. This created instability as the line between the liberalized and the reserved area remained unclear. The inclusion of timetables and “expiry” dates in the early versions of the Directive ensured that the dossier would be placed on the agenda again in the near future and created pressure for further liberalization. The opponents could accept such time rules as long as they were guaranteed to have a say in the new round (i.e. any amendment to the earlier Directives would follow the ‘ordinary legislative procedure’ that is a co-decision procedure including both the Council and the Parliament).

The remainder of this contribution aims at explaining the decision-making process of the Postal Directive. Section two presents relevant approaches of differential growth that guide the analysis. The third section describes the data and research techniques adopted. The fourth section gives an account of what happened in the postal case, while the fifth section discusses the empirical findings in light of the theoretical aspects.

DIFFERENTIAL GROWTH

The focus is on explaining integration, which used to be a common research goal in the first phase of EU scholarship from the 1960s onwards (see Rosamond 2007). Yet whilst this early scholarship is characterised by ‘grand theories’, the aim of this analysis is to contribute to middle-range theories; that is, starting with an empirical phenomenon. Whilst several EU scholars today focus on governance, integration studies are still relevant, as for example shown by the increasing interest in differentiated integration (e.g. *Journal of European Public Policy*’s special issue ‘Differentiated integration in the European Union’, published in 2015). This section presents perspectives from the literature of differentiated integration and gradual institutional theories. While there are plentiful approaches that may contribute to explain policy change (see Capano and Howlett 2009), I choose these two approaches as time plays a role in both. They provide a comprehensive but manageable number of dimensions in the analysis.

For more than two decades, differentiation has been an integral part of European integration (Leruth and Lord 2015). Viewed as a cause, differentiation is considered a facilitator for further integration – as a key instrument to overcoming deadlock between heterogeneous member states (for reviews, see Holzinger and Schimmelfennig 2012; Stubb 1996). An issue with accounts that treat differentiated integration as a cause, is that differentiation easily ends up explaining differentiation: the many different ways of doing things (the different ideologies and traditions) in the member states explain differentiated integration – this is not really an explanation. However, it is still of interest to understand the effect of differentiation on agreement or unification.

One assumption in the literature on differentiated integration is that flexible policy provides for further integration that would otherwise be halted (see, for example, Kölliker 2001). Such differentiation includes modification of disputed policies through watering-down and vague policy formulation, so that existing policies can be maintained to a larger extent than the reformers

originally intended. It comprises opt-out possibilities such as territorial, sectorial or temporal derogations, giving for example exceptions to certain territories or sub-sectors or allowing certain actors more time to adjust to a new policy. That way, for example in the area of liberalization, actors have the possibility to invest in new institutional arrangements and benefit from learning effects before having to meet competition from other actors. Thus, resistance against a policy decreases.

In order to come to agreement member states that benefit the most from a new policy offer greater compromises in order to achieve the policy, whilst poorer member states exploit this situation by requesting concessions. As a result, political content that would encroach on important member state interests are removed. As such, the final outcome may be without 'real political meaning' (Novak 2010: 94). Differential growth is key also in a distinct strand of literature on gradual change. In contrast to contributions on differentiated integration, gradual institutional theories propose that such incremental steps eventually may contribute to quite fundamental changes. Scholars such as Thelen (2004) and associated colleagues (Mahoney and Thelen 2010b; Streeck and Thelen 2005) developed a gradual reform perspective as a reaction to an exaggerated distinction between long periods of institutional stability and exogenous shocks that sometimes disturb the stability and induce radical change. In their opinion, there was a lack of tools to explain modes of continuous processes of reforms the way institutions normally evolve. They argue that there is an inherent dynamic within the institutions themselves that opens up for incremental changes: even "stable" policies (i.e. formal compromises or relatively durable policies) are still challenged and are therefore exposed to shifts.

According to this view, it is sufficient that there is an opening for actors to enact change – there does not have to be a need for change. The authors argue that institutions themselves encourage certain change strategies or invite agents to foster change. Yet there are also possibilities of actors being disadvantaged by one institution to use their privileged status in relation to other institutions to push for change. For example, trade unions that have sometimes been disadvantaged by the Commission, have exploited its contacts with its socialist partners in the European Parliament to resist liberalization policy or include social policy (Parks 2008). Researchers of gradual reform view such mobilization and testing of the boundaries of existing institutions not as radical interruptions of stability as equilibrium scholars tend to do (e.g. True 2000), but as contributing to the institutions' persistence. Institutions survive, when they serve the relevant actors' interests well (Hall and Thelen 2009: 11).

Gradual reform implies different types of policy changes. Streeck and Thelen (2005) mention five modes: "conversion", that is re-direction to new goals; "displacement", which refers to a situation where an increasing number of actors adopt new, emerging policies; "drift", implying that there is a difference between the rules and the real world; "exhaustion", meaning institutional breakdown; and 'layering' that carefully introduces new policy on top of the existing policy, without replacing the existing policy. Researchers have pointed out that the boundaries of these modes are unclear (see Van der Heijden 2010; Rocco and Thurston 2014). However, the fact that the Postal Directive was amended twice, thereby introducing new elements on an existing policy, suggests that layering may explain the introduction of the competitive approach in the postal sector. Thus, this case study's focus is on layering. In contrast, the Postal Directive is not about conversion as despite an increasing focus on cost efficiency, the "old" solidarity aim of universal services remains in the new Directive. Exhaustion is also not relevant as it is about policy change, not breakdown. However, due to increased competitive pressures from technological innovations such as electronic substitution, it

could be expected that drift also contributes to explaining the liberalization reform. Also displacement could play a role as potential market entrants and other promoters of liberalization find their interests advanced by the Commission, member states that have already introduced such reform and right-wing parliamentarians. Yet there are strong veto positions in the EU. Hence, total displacement seems impossible. Therefore promoters of displacement may settle for layering instead (Mahoney and Thelen 2010a).

To understand the meaning of layering (for a review of the concept, see van der Heijden 2011), the notion of path dependency is useful. It implies that earlier courses of action are difficult to reverse, once they have been introduced. Decisions in the past therefore limit future options or enable certain paths more than others. This rigidity of institutions explains why for example, national institutions exposed to similar globalization or Europeanization pressures remain diverse (see Hall and Soskice 2001; Lorrain 2005). Pierson (2000) clarifies how path dependency works, conceptualising it as grounded in a dynamic of 'increasing returns'. It means that a social process is path dependent, when it is self-reinforcing or generates positive feedback. Thus, path dependency confines future available directions because the benefits of existing practices (i.e. investments have already been made and learning effects make the activities effective) compared to other alternatives increases over time. This is relevant for theories of gradual reform as they aim at explaining why policy change occurs despite such stability of institutional arrangements. Layering occurs as reformers learn to circumvent such unchangeable elements (Streeck and Thelen 2005: 23). When there is resistance against displacement, promoters of policy change may avoid such barriers when introducing a voluntary policy on top of an existing policy (Rothstein 1998) or by introducing changes only at the margin (Palier 2005: 131). Thus, 'the actual mechanism for change is differential growth' (Streeck and Thelen 2005: 24).

Although being motivated by different empirical observations (i.e. flexible European integration and incremental institutional reform), the literature on differentiated integration and gradual institutional theories complement each other. The well-described content of differentiation, including for example modification and opt-out possibilities, adds insights to the gradual institutional perspective. In particular, this is clearly related to layering, where there is no layering without differentiation. Therefore the differentiation literature contributes to better understanding about how layering occurs. Moreover, gradual institutional theories contribute to understand why and how differentiated integration may result in future change.

METHODS

The analysis draws on evidence such as policy papers, minutes from hearings in the European Parliament and meetings in the Council, consultancy reports, reports by interest groups, online newspaper articles and thirteen semi-structured in-depth interviews. The aim of the interview sampling was to cover views from the industry and EU institutions, which was based on Internet searches and contacting the relevant persons/organizations. These include: two Members of the European Parliament representing the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats and the Group of the European United Left; a desk officer in the Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market and Services; a desk officer in the General Secretariat of the Council; three representatives of trade unions including Uni europa and the Norwegian Postkomm; an international correspondent of PostEurop; two representatives of Deutsche Post; a representative of the German Presidency 2007; two representatives of the Portuguese Presidency 2007; and one representative from a national regulator in a large member state. Attempts to speak with each of the two rapporteurs of the Postal Directive in the European Parliament were not successful.

The interviewees spoke based on personal experiences rather than taking an official role. Anonymity, which ensured that they could speak freely, was considered more important than the benefits of readers to know the source of each statement. The interviews took place in 2011 and 2012. This oral data has been important for establishing the mechanisms at work and has been cross-checked with the mentioned written documentation. The interview data has been essential for covering gaps and documenting facts. However, a caveat is the interviewees' lack of memory, as the processes of the early versions of the Postal Directive go more than a decade back in time. In addition, the interviewees were more concerned with the more recent amendment. Therefore the evidence is richer on this last process than the two former. For that reason, earlier studies have been important sources of background information.

Van der Heijden (2013) emphasises the value of using complementary theories when studying policy transformation. He argues that researchers tend to overlook evidence that may go against the chosen theory, while easily finding proof to support this theory. In order to avoid such issues, the analysis includes a rich description of the case, relating the explored factors to the theoretical framework after the description. Moreover, the interview guide included questions about conflicts, cooperation and power relations. The purpose of these topics was to check whether other theories would be better at explaining the policy change in the postal sector.

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF THE POSTAL DIRECTIVE

This section presents the results about what happened during the decision-making processes of the Postal Directive and its two amendments – in the following, labelled the first, second and third “Directive”. The third Directive is treated in more detail than the two early Directives, as thorough analyses of the early Directives exist (Schmidt 1998; Smith 2005) and because the final step of market-opening as introduced through the third Directive was the most disputed, making it particularly interesting to understand how the EU was able to agree on this last amendment.

In 1989 the Council invited the Commission to prepare measures to develop postal services in the EU. Three years later the Commission (1992) launched the Green Paper that highlighted the aim of liberalizing postal services and improving quality standards by introducing minimum requirements with regards to delivery. Using competition law, the Commission had planned to enact liberalization itself, but due to massive opposition by the member states, it gave in to pressures to include the other legislators in the decision-making process (Schmidt 1998: 281). The policy was controversial as traditionally a protected public postal operator could use its revenues generated in profitable activities to subsidize losses in other activities (Geradin and Humpe 2002). Social solidarity justifies such subsidization: the price of an item was the same for every citizen across a national territory. However, the competitive approach undermines this way of funding postal services. In a competitive situation, a competitor can choose to enter only those markets that are profitable. A consequence of such “cream-skimming” is that it deprives the established public postal operators of the revenue to fund universal services. Given the loss of sources of revenue, “universalists” were concerned that this would endanger the performance of universal services. In contrast, the Commission argued that practices of cross-subsidization serve to give dominant operators an unfairly protected position and cover inefficiencies. The Commission viewed liberalization as a means to make state operators become more efficient – to cut the “pumping” of state money into an inefficient sector and improve the quality of postal services as operators would have to pay more attention to customer needs (Interview 1).

Member states that had already opened up their domestic markets for competition, or were in the process of doing so, largely supported the Commission’s competitive approach partly because they believed competition from foreign companies could improve services at home (Interview 7) and the

established postal operators in such countries were looking for markets abroad (Interview 5). The established companies in such countries supported liberalisation of their domestic markets as long as they could enter the markets of foreign operators, i.e. they emphasised the importance of a level playing field. Likewise potential entrants were concerned with potential manipulation by the incumbent. Large postal users dependent on postal services (e.g. Postal Users Group, Free and Fair Post Initiative) embraced liberalization expecting it to reduce their costs.

In contrast, member states that opposed the Directive were concerned with how to fund and maintain the universal service provision. Such financial worries were particularly wide-ranging in countries with several islands, mountains and a dispersed population and/or poor quality standards. Several member states also struggled with restructuring processes, in particular member states that joined the decision-making process with the enlargement of the EU in 2004. They feared that their established postal operators would be inapt to compete in an open market and therefore sought to postpone liberalisation (Interview 8). Among the interest groups, public postal operators and trade unions opposed liberalisation. Trade unions were concerned with “social dumping” and unemployment, but also higher prices for small consumers such as households (i.e. the prices of individual mail increases whilst bulk mail prices decreases) (Interview 6).

The dispute went on for almost twenty years and included three “Directives”: The first Postal Directive was initiated in 1995 and decided on in 1997. It distinguished between services that may be “reserved” for the universal service provider and services that were open to competition. Whilst the liberalization achievements in this legislation were rather small, the quality measures were substantial, obligating the member states to guarantee a minimum of characteristics of the universal service (e.g. at least one delivery and collection five days a week for every EU citizen at affordable prices). It also set a timetable for further liberalization at a later point in time. Following-up this timeline, the legislators amended the Directive in 2002. This second Directive included further steps of market opening. In 2008 it was amended again with the third Postal Directive, which “fully” opened the market by introducing competition to the remaining letter policies.

THE FIRST DIRECTIVE

During the process of the first proposal, only few segments were proposed to be opened up for competition, the most controversial being addressed was advertising mail and cross-country mail. Viewed as important sources of revenue for covering the universal service, most member states were against exposing such services to competition (Geradin and Humpe 2002: 100). In the Parliament a left-wing rapporteur, Brian Simpson, played an important role in modifying the proposal. As a result, the Commission had to make several concessions and include elements that would limit the effect of competition. For example, the Commission granted general authorizations and individual licenses for non-reserved services, thus leaving it in the hands of the member states to decide on requirements that postal operators had to fulfil in order to enter the market, thereby creating substantial entry barriers (Council 1997). As the effect of liberalization as set out in this Directive would be minor and it was guaranteed that any future amendment would include all the EU legislators in co-decision, opponents eventually accepted the Directive that had gone all the way to conciliation, before it was accepted at third reading in the Parliament. However, the proponents of liberalization achieved one important step in the first Directive: although liberalisation would only be enforced at the edges of the postal market, the EU legislators established the competitive approach as a principle and introduced a timetable for future liberalisation. This timetable started a dynamic shift towards further liberalisation of postal services.

THE SECOND DIRECTIVE

In May 2000, the Commission introduced a second proposal, recommending to liberalize postal services in two further phases: First, by 2003 the weight and price limit for services that may continue to be reserved should be reduced to 50 grammes. Second, by 2007 a subsequent reduction of the remaining exclusive rights should be undertaken. There was still no majority for such market opening in neither the Parliament nor the Council, yet the setting had changed. Firstly, the rightwing politicians in the Parliament were of the opinion that it was time for further market opening. One of them was the new rapporteur, Markus Ferber, a German Christian Democrat. 'He was assuming the responsibility with a total other intention than Brian Simpson, who was still a Member of Parliament, but he had lost his influence on the issue, so from the left we tried to moderate it' (Interview 10). It made a difference as 'Simpson was certainly more open to labour unions and to include their demands than Ferber' (Interview 8; Interview 6). Secondly, at the Lisbon Summit (23-24 March 2000) a majority of leftwing governments had agreed that the Council, together with the Commission, would set a strategy to accelerate liberalization of postal services, as this was considered beneficial for economic growth. The Summit took place a couple of months before the Commission launched the second Directive. The strategy weakened the position of those opposing liberalization as advocates proposing further liberalization, argued that the member states had already agreed to introduce competition:

So the Commission could say, 'we follow only that what was concluded by the ministers of the national states involved in the European Union'. That made it very difficult to fight against it. It was not occasional that at that moment both the Directive on the postal services, public transport and the energy was made, because they already had the support of the prime ministers of the member states. The Commission, which only has the formal right to initiate legal texts, could say, 'we are only doing those things that the Council of Ministers has asked us'. That made it very difficult [...]. Some at the rightwing side said, 'we have already decided to do, so we are only creating a law text to make it continuously irreversible. But it is not a political discussion, we have had it already, the member states agree, we also agree, the Commission agrees, so don't make objections' (Interview 10).

However, there was a perception that 'status quo has served Europe well' (Economic and Social Committee 2001). Therefore both the Council and the Parliament wanted a more restrained approach than the Commission aimed for. At first reading, the Parliament rejected several of the provisions that would contribute to further liberalization and called for employment and social goals to be included. The Commissioner, Fritz Bolkestein, argued that the amendments went 'against the grain' of the Commission's proposal and would hinder advantageous modernization (Parliament 2000). Therefore, the Commission left out the amendments delaying and limiting further liberalization and excluded amendments concerning social and employment issues, including instead a formulation emphasising the social tasks of the Community. However, the Council moved toward the Parliament's position postponing the final step towards full market-opening and including higher weight and price limits for the reserved area in 2003 (100 grammes), delaying the 50 grammes step from 2003 to 2006 and the subsequent step from 2006 to 2009 (Council 2001b). The Council insisted that any liberalization concerning the 50 grammes-category would have to be based on a new legislative decision-making process. The common position was adopted by qualified majority with the Dutch delegation voting against and the Finnish abstaining (Council 2001a). The Parliament approved the proposal at second reading (Parliament 2002).

As with the first legislation, the second Directive had introduced conditions for level competition (e.g. an independent regulatory authority and the requirement of keeping separate accounts for the universal service and services within the non-reserved area). However, there were claims of national postal operators abusing their dominant position and new entrants encroaching on the reserved

area (for examples, see van der Lijn et al. 2005). Court rulings have been initiated, yet based on legal clauses of services of general economic interest, such decisions did not enforce further competition in the postal sector. Instead it has been argued that they strengthened proponents of state intervention (Sauter 2008: 171). Court rulings and potential litigation that has driven EU legislators to accept liberalization in other sectors (e.g. telecommunications and energy), were not effective for opening the postal services market.

THE THIRD DIRECTIVE

In October 2006, the Commission tabled another proposal amending the two former directives. A few months later, Germany entered the Presidency, followed by the Portuguese Presidency in the second half of 2007. Although Germany was in favour of the proposal, progress was slow, yet it accelerated under Portugal, although reluctant towards including a final date of market opening in the Directive. There were several conditions as to why the process was slow moving. In the beginning, the Commission was not supportive in moving the process along: 'They came with a kind of dogma that this is our proposal, it is well studied, the impact assessments are complete, [...] you have to read them and you have to agree!' (Interview 2; Interview 11). The consultations and assessments had indeed been extensive over recent years¹, yet several member states were not convinced and were unwilling to discuss the key issue: the final date by when the reserved area should be abolished (Interview 7).

Another condition was the unencumbered situation of the German Presidency, as for Germany the situation was clear. Germany had already opened its national markets and foreign competitors had entered. This situation would remain even if there had been no new directive or the Directive would have looked very different (Interview 8). Eventually competition from other sectors constituted a larger threat for public postal operators than competition from other postal operators. However, at the time, this process of stagnation of letter markets due to electronic substitution had taken place much slower than had been anticipated and primarily occurred in Scandinavia and the Netherlands (Wik Consult 2006, pp. 14). Electronic substitution thus did not become an important topic in the negotiations (Interview 5; Interview 7), although internet trade contributed to strengthen the private express delivery sector (e.g. FedEx, UpS) and weaken the established postal operators and postal workers.

However, the second Directive included a deadline that had some effect on the member states' ability to make a decision. Without a further proposal adopted by the 31 December 2008, the sector would primarily be subject to EC Treaty rules (Article 86 TEC), which allow the Commission to address decisions and directives to member states as considered appropriate (Commission 2006: 5). Member states opposing liberalization wanted to avoid such a 'case by case' approach:

It was always a potential threat: 'If you do not agree, then the second directive will expire and it expires completely'. The consequence would be as if there had been no directive in the postal sector. From that it follows that there would be no monopoly for nobody. For the opponents that would be a horror scenario; something had to happen. Insofar we could work calmly with the details' (Interview 7).

The expiry date therefore created a pressure for reform, yet not necessarily further liberalisation, as the legislators could also have agreed to abolish the deadline and otherwise keep the Directive as it was. Gradually there were some moves towards a "mid-position" in the negotiations between the member states and the Presidency. The timetable included in the earlier Directive played an important role. Having assented to a timetable at an earlier stage, the member states had quasi agreed to market opening:

If you're from a country and you say that you agree that liberalisation will take place in 2009 [as stated in the second Directive's timetable], what is your argument to say that I don't want it. It can happen, but from a political point of view, it's a risk, you cannot consent [i.e. you may hinder integration]. Maybe you can change it from 2009 to 2010, but still you cannot change the full position saying that no, I don't want market or liberalisation. So for us it was an argument to convince them, 'come on, you cannot change position now. We've been working towards market liberalization so you cannot say now, that you are not prepared. You knew about this six-seven years ago, so it's not an argument to say that I'm not prepared, I have too many public servants. You knew that this was going to happen' (Interview 9).

In general it is considered negative to be outvoted in the Council or standing in the way of integration. This adds to the understanding as to why the argument about the timetable was effective. None of the big member states wanted to be seen as standing in the way for integration:

They had noticed that eventually the process was no longer to put back. [...] they did not want to get the image that they were slowing down the process. No, no, they didn't want that image; they couldn't permit themselves to do that. (Interview 7; Interview 9).

Moreover, throughout the process the Commission became more willing to give concessions:

They want to get the Directive through and they will give away everything except market opening. [...] that's why it's so open, because the Commission didn't dare to oppose anything to the member states' (Interview 9).

The concessions contributed to solve several issues with the draft: One issue was that it did not solve the concern of how to finance universal services (for an elaboration, see Oxera 2007). France acted as a bearer for efforts of clarifying how to calculate universal services and rejected the proposal until the Commission gave admission to use state aid to support universal services (Interviews 2, 7 and 9). The Directive's appendix, which describes how to finance universal services and the methods of calculation, is a result of such negotiations. This had an effect on several reluctant member states.

Another issue was restructuring processes in countries with inefficient public postal operators (Interview 7; Interview 2). Due to restructuring problems key academic experts argued that certain countries should be given additional time to adapt (EurActiv 2007a). Poland was leading the opposition against the proposal due to such concerns. For this opposition's acceptance of the Directive, an option of a long transition period after the adoption of the Directive was crucial. Such member states were willing to accept end of 2012 as the end of transition, receiving two more years to implement the Directive than the majority of countries. In the final Directive this temporal derogation included eleven countries for reasons of joining the postal reform process at a late stage, having a small population and a limited geographical size with a particularly difficult topography or a large number of islands (Parliament and the Council 2008). After the option of a longer transition period was agreed on, such member states became more flexible with regards to other affairs (Interview 2). Other member states expressed that the temporal derogation was acceptable as it concerned small markets: 'We were not indifferent, but it was absolutely tolerable, as they are relatively small markets' (Interview 7) – it was acceptable as the exempted countries were not potentially interested in entering other countries and the other way around (Interview 5). However, for reasons of reciprocity the pro-liberalization camp would not accept derogations for other large member states, as their operators were potential competitors (Interview 7).

A third issue was a group of countries' demand to protect remote areas and vast zones from competition. Italy, which headed the opposition against the Directive for this reason, repeatedly argued, 'if we open up for liberalization processes and we have to give licenses to three or four

operators, then nobody is actually going to operate on the entire territory [...] then we need to keep some reserved areas' (Interview 2). The Commission excluded this possibility, arguing that member states through licence requirements could monitor the operators and decide what restrictions to impose on them, thereby maintaining the quality of the distribution and setting a benchmark, but having to treat every company in the same manner. As a consequence, there were discussions about whether to adopt a proposal by qualified majority, going against for example Italy or trying to give such member states something, so that they could accept the proposal (Interview 2). Eventually Italy abstained from vetoing the proposal, but was never completely convinced: 'You can never convince them [member states] completely by all means [...] we had already a strong qualified majority, but if we had the Italian delegation on our side of course it would be better' (Interview 2). In the end only Luxembourg vetoed the Directive and Belgium abstained.

In the Parliament the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats tried to find a compromise. The struggle was dominated by the Christian Democrats, who also had the rapporteur, yet the compromise between these big groups did not succeed immediately and so the social democrats sought the liberals, which gave some concessions to the social democrats (Interview 10). As a result the Christian Democrats did not have a majority and had to make concessions. At first reading on July 2007, the Parliament extended the proposed deadline for full liberalization and included formulations to safeguard the rights of workers. It was 'an attempt to soothe detractors of the Commission's initial proposal, following heavy lobbying by a dozen incumbent operators and protest strikes by trade unions, which see liberalization as a threat to the sector's two million jobs' (EurActiv 2007b). The inclusion of social provisions was important for the Parliament's acceptance of the proposal, as they wanted to avoid a 'race to the bottom' that would result in dreadful working conditions (EurActiv 2008). To some extent the lobbying of trade unions had been effective. The final Directive states that basic labour conditions applicable in a member state will not be affected by the Directive. However, there are no strict rules on what or how to implement them. 'In that sense they [trade unions] were not successful' (Interview 8).

The trade unions argued that 'the losers will be citizens, governments and taxpayers, small and medium size enterprises, most national post offices – and postal workers. The only winners will be some big mailers and some big and mostly multinational private operators' (John Pedersen quoted in EurActiv 2007b; also Interview 6). Green and leftist parliamentarians supported the unions to a large extent, yet they were in a minority in the Parliament (EurActiv 2008; Parliament 2007b). In addition to concessions and the inclusion of some social provision, the longevity of the process mattered for the achievement of the final compromise:

I remember exactly how the question of how to finance the universal service, the quality of the universal service and all the social questions in the end played the decisive role. Again and again it was the question of working conditions and rights in the postal sector [...]. I believe that most delegates realized that it couldn't be hold back any longer. It was really becoming a never-ending story. At the point in time the story was really ten years old. We've had the Directive since 1997, where it has been seriously spoken about the final date. Then most of the delegates realized that time could not be holding it back any longer. Then there were cosmetics in the social area, so that everybody could say that they had embedded this and that (Interview 7).

In the end, the reform was more or less broadly backed. Divisions remained mainly regarding the 'when' and the 'how' so that none of the delegates would 'lose face' (Interview 3).

THE RELATION BETWEEN DIFFERENTIAL GROWTH AND MARKET-OPENING OF POSTAL SERVICE

The evidence suggests that proponents of liberalization – through differential growth – were able to get around the status quo that seemed to be unchangeable. Important for their success was the introduction of time rules and deadlines as well as concessions. The initial reform introduced minor steps at the margin. In practice there was a limiting liberalisation effect at all. Yet an element of instability between the new layer and the core policy created further pressures for reform. This was because the line between conventional and special services remained controversial, encouraging legal complaints as the established operators and the new market entrants disagreed about who were allowed to operate where. Given this new context of instability, it was considered a smart move by promoters of liberalisation to include time rules such as timetables and deadlines in the early directives. That way, they guaranteed that the issue would remain on the agenda. Opponents accepted such time rules as long as they were guaranteed extensive impact assessments and co-decision in future legislative rounds and because they represented an element of delay of liberalisation pressures.

As the timetables included dates for future liberalization, the member states had in practice given assent to future market opening. As there is a consequence pertaining to creating barriers to further integration in the Council (e.g. embarrassment, reduced chance of ‘pay back’ in the form of future concessions or side-payments) (see Novak, 2010: 93), large member states were not willing to prevent a reform that was close to being accepted, once the most critical issues had been resolved. Such solutions included differentiation in terms of modification (e.g. national authorisation criteria) and opt-outs (e.g. temporal derogations). It also included some social properties and new quality standards. These properties eased resistance against the proposal. The long duration of the decision-making process itself played a role for the willingness to agree on a compromise. Over the years the legislators had invested a huge amount of resources in impact assessments and work, trying to reach an agreement. In the end it was no longer possible to hold it back. Eventually this process of layering resulted in displacement of the rules in terms of how to organise public service provision in the postal market. In contrast, the drift that was expected to contribute to policy change due to increasing electronic substitution, did not play an important role in affecting policy change as it, according to informants, never became an important topic in the negotiations.

CONCLUSION

Although market opening in the postal sector was part of a larger trend and the Commission, market entrants and large consumer groups pushed for liberalization, radical displacement was not possible due to strong opposition from defenders of the status quo. Instead market-opening was achieved through layers of reforms, starting at the margins and moving towards the core. Together this incremental layering fundamentally changed the approach of service production from a focus on public service to an emphasis on competition.

The first small moves towards opening the postal market created instability due to claims of abuse by incumbents and encroachment by new market entrants when the rules for a reserved area remains different to the rest of the market. Under such conditions, time properties such as deadlines and timetables, which ensured future re-negotiations, played a crucial role in helping proponents of liberalization to pushing for further reform. Concessions that prevented mobilization against the new policy were also important in circumventing opposition. This occurred under the conditions of longevity of the process and social norms that make it politically costly to create barriers to further integration. Draining of the process went on so that the legislators wanted to put an end to the process of reform. However, the defenders of the status quo were to some extent able to preserve

original practices through differentiation, including modification of the policy content and ensuring certain member states temporal opt-outs. Therefore and due to decreasing volumes in the letter segment, in practice the traditional monopolies remain to a large extent in the letter segment.

Given conditions of instability in the market, social norms of consensus and longevity of the process, the introduction of time rules and concessions proved effective in opening the postal market to competition. It could suggest that as long as the EU mill grinds slowly enough, EU liberalization eventually occurs even in the most disputed areas. With increasing Euroscepticism since the outbreak of the financial crisis, the Commission has increased its emphasis on preventing harm from competition policy (Aydin and Thomas 2012). However, it remains unclear whether criticism of EU liberalization policy will result in a new approach.

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¹ Studies carried out for the Commission are listed on its web page:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/post/studies_en.htm

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Commentary

Exploring the 'faces' of Europeanization from an Albanian perspective

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Abstract

Europeanization is a process that exists in all prospective members of the European Union (EU). One such country is Albania, which has long been stagnating in its attempts to join the EU. This commentary explores Olsen's faces of Europeanization by observing how this process has materialised in Albanian politics and governance. It also sheds light on Europeanization approaches by studying the EU candidate countries in the Balkans aiming to look for similar or distinguishable patterns in countries where Europeanization has taken place. The commentary contends that Europeanization in Albania is occurring according to some unique features, which are labelled as 'Europeanization by convenience'.

Keywords

Europeanization; integration; EU accession; conditionality; institutions

UNDERSTANDING EUROPEANIZATION

The meaning of 'Europeanization' is surrounded by considerable conceptual contestation. Most of the definitions look at the term as a process which induces changes to political structures. One of the earliest definitions is offered by Robert Ladrech (1994) who describes Europeanization as 'an incremental process of reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the extent that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy making' (1994: 69). Similarly, Robert Harmsen and Thomas Wilson (2000) define Europeanization as 'the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal and social institutions ... specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules' (2000: 14). Maarten Vink and Paolo Graziano (2007) introduced EU integration at the definition of Europeanization, referring to it as a process of domestic adaptation to European regional integration (2007: 7). A more complete definition of Europeanization, which encapsulates processes, structures and actors is offered by Frank Schimmelfenning and Ulrich Sedelmeier (2005). According to them, Europeanization is 'a process in which states adopt EU rules that cover a broad range of formal and informal issues and structures. This means the transposition of the EU law into domestic law, the restructuring of domestic institutions according to the EU rules; or the change of domestic political practices according to the EU standards' (2005: 7). For a better understanding of the processes induced by Europeanization I refer to the work of Johan Olsen (2002) who unpacks the term as being applied in a number of ways to describe processes of change (Olsen 2002: 921) He labels them the 'faces of Europeanization' and describes them through five changes: the first change relates to the expansion of territorial boundaries through which Europe becomes a single political space; the second identifies the development of institutions of governance at the European level; the third depicts the penetration of national and sub-national systems of governance, involving a division of responsibilities and powers between the different levels of governance; the fourth describes the export forms of European political organization and governance beyond the European territory; and the fifth conveys the political project aimed at achieving a unified and politically stronger Europe.

THEORIZING EUROPEANIZATION THROUGH 'RATIONALIST INSTITUTIONALISM'

Rational choice approaches have produced progressive research on Europeanization (Pollack 2006: 31), because they explain the effect of the EU membership on the new member states. Börzel and Risse suggested that Europeanization is theorised in terms of two distinct mechanisms, rational choice emphasising a logic of consequences, and sociological institutionalism emphasising a logic of appropriateness (2000: 41). Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier tested rationalist institutionalism on the effects of EU membership on the new member states in Central and Eastern Europe (2005: 50). They previously found that 'in the rationalist account, international organizations are instrumental associations designed to help states pursue their interests more efficiently' (2002: 509). Rationalist theories (see March and Olsen 1989) conceive international organizations as [...] voluntary groups whose 'members would not join unless a net gain resulted from membership' (Sandler and Tschirhart 1980: 1491). According to this logic, expected individual costs and benefits determine the applicants' and the member states' enlargement preferences. A potential state will seek to join the EU if it will benefit from enlargement.

EUROPEANIZATION IN THE BALKANS AND ALBANIA

Europeanization is often used interchangeably with European integration because it affects both member states and candidate countries. There are currently five countries with candidate country status in the EU: Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey (European Commission 2015). For many Western Balkan countries, Europeanization and integration have taken place concurrently, accompanied by a strong urge for democratization. They have gone through all three processes at the same time after the collapse of communism in their efforts to build their democratic states. However, the case of Albania is seen as unique (Bogdani and Loughlin 2007: 23), because its path to democratization has been scarred by one of the worst communist regimes in the world (US Government 1996: 19). Albania stands out from the Western Balkans (European Stability Initiative 2014) because of the total isolation of the country under the totalitarian regime and the absolute disavowal of any human rights discourse, including the removal of any forms of religion and private property. Evan Tomaš argued that 'Albania was the most isolated of all the communist countries in Europe with arguably the most brutal regime' (2014: 116). This painful communist past has defined the Albanian approach to democratization. According to Elda Ah-Pine, '[t]he democratization process in Albania is one of the most difficult ones given its tumultuous historical legacy, its difficult economic situation and above all, given its extreme domestic political polarization' (2011: 2). Ah-Pine explained the Albanian peculiarity with the total isolation of the country for decades and the real paranoia of political freedom, which left a legacy of 'political passivity' among Albanians. During communism, Albania had in place a hypocritical electoral system, where there was a right to vote with only one political party to 'choose' from (2011: 6).

In addition, Europeanization is often linked with transformation and regime change. Explaining the Europeanization of the Balkan countries, Othon Anastasakis refers to the 'Eastern Style Europeanization' as a process of deep transformation and modernization of economies, politics and societies (2005: 79). The transformation and regime change from communism to democracy happened simultaneously with Europeanization for them. They developed in a uniquely distinguished way, which Anastasakis identifies as 'Eastern Style'. Schimmelfennig further debates on the legal transformation when stating that '[i]n the case of quasi-members and candidate countries, it is clear that the transfer of the *acquis communautaire* is at the core of Europeanization' (2012: 5). Attempting to find a transformation model in the Balkan countries, Tamara Radovanovic (2012) noticed that the transformation of these countries has occurred while trying to bypass the Balkanization process. 'Since the fall of communism in the 1990s, the Western Balkans have been undergoing fundamental and multiple transformations that are complex in their nature and uneasy

to be explained by a single paradigm or model' (Radovanovik 2012: 208). Indeed, the Balkans have transformed territorially, politically and socially.

Furthermore, Europeanization is in many cases equated to the process of EU accession. Heather Grabbe emphasized '...the impact of the EU accession process on national patterns of governance' (2001: 1014), and recognized the EU conditionality as a Europeanizing force in the accession of applicants. All the Balkan countries have entered in negotiations with the EU for future membership, but have made distinguishable progress regarding their status. (see Table 1 for the status of these countries with the EU).

Table 1. EU Status of the Balkan countries

	SAA ¹ initialled	SAA signed	SAA Enters into force	Application for membership	Commission's opinion	Candidate status granted	Start of accession negotiations
Albania	2003	2006	2009	2009	2010	2014	-
Croatia	2000	2001	2005	2003	2004	2004	2004 (joined on 1 July, 2013)
BH	2007	2008	-	-	-	-	-
Macedonia	2000	2001	2004	2004	2005	2005	-
Montenegro	2006	2007	2010	2008	2010	2010	29 June 2012
Serbia	2007	2008	2013	2009	2011	2011	-

Source: Balfour & Stratulat 2011: 8.²

Albania and other Western Balkan countries were recognised as potential countries for EU membership in 2003 at the Thessaloniki Summit (European Commission 2003). The EU refused candidate status to Albania three times from 2009 to 2013, until granting it in June 2014 (European Commission 2014a) despite Britain, Germany and France expressing reluctance (Thomas 2014). Albania still needed to meet key priorities, with particular focus on administration and judiciary reform, the fight against corruption and organised crime and fundamental rights (European Commission 2014b).

As in all EU enlargement processes, all the Balkan countries are subject to EU conditions for membership, among them democratic conditionality. According to Isa Camyar (2010), conditionality has a coercive nature. Adopting a 'Rationalist Institutionalism' approach, it can be noted that the EU's influence on candidate countries follows a logic of consequences where domestic institutions are the main factors impeding or facilitating changes in response to EU adjustment pressures. They act rationally by complying to these pressures for fear of consequences if they were to act otherwise. It is by using this logic that conditionality can be seen as Europeanization's coercive feature. However, for conditionality to work, it is important that it is also persuasive and considered legitimate. 'If a candidate country [...] positively identifies with the EU, or holds it in high regard, the

government is more likely to be open to persuasion and to consider the rules that the EU promotes as legitimate and appropriate' (Sedelmeier 2011: 16). Sociological institutionalism helps to explain this behavior according to a logic of appropriateness. Hence, a logic of consequences is not always the only logic that illuminates the processes of Europeanization.

There are concerns about conditionality related to post-accession. After a country joins the EU it may risk stagnation in the Europeanization process, if not regression. Sedelmeier strongly argues that '[t]he finding that conditionality – the external incentive of membership – was the key mechanism that led to the adoption of EU rules by the candidates make the question of post-accession compliance more salient' (2011: 25). Addressing the same concern, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier engage in an analysis of the EU's influence in candidate countries, which 'has resulted primarily from the external incentives of accession conditionality rather than social learning or lesson-drawing' (2005: 9).

Regarding the public's perception in the Balkans, one can notice that '[p]eople of the region [...] strongly support the EU integration of their countries' (Keil and Arkan 2015: 238). In 2009, data from the Gallup Balkan Monitor revealed that people in the Balkans were in favour of their country joining the EU, varying from 63 per cent in Serbia to 93 per cent in Albania (2010: 7). Albanians were 'among the most optimistic among potential new members in the Balkans – on average, they believed that their country would join in 2014' (2010: 10). It is now a fact that Albania is far from reaching that objective.

Looking for the reasons behind this 'EU obsession', Alina Mungiu-Pippidi observes:

The Eastern Balkan publics wanted to join Europe, [...] due to increasing poverty [...] Europe was, therefore, needed as much for its money as for regime legitimacy and security ... After securing domestic domination (in business as well as the judicial system and politics), communist successor parties in Romania, Bulgaria and Albania made European accession their next important objective (2010: 68).

GDP data helps to demonstrate the level of poverty, in which Albania continues to be trapped in. According to Global Finance³, in 2015, Albania was the second poorest country in the region with a GDP of \$11,689, coming after Bosnia and Hercegovina (\$10,360). Countries of similar size, such as Montenegro and Macedonia, were having a much higher GDP.

Another problem in the Balkans is the political environment, which has serious problems with market institutions, administrative capacities and the rule of law. Mungiu-Pippidi writes about the 'unfinished transformations' (2011: 61-67). The region is still experiencing deep transformation of political institutions, administrative culture, and some territorial changes. In their analysis of the Albanian integration, Bogdani and Loughlin concluded that 'Albania is far from a fully democratic system' (2007: 85). The authors found that:

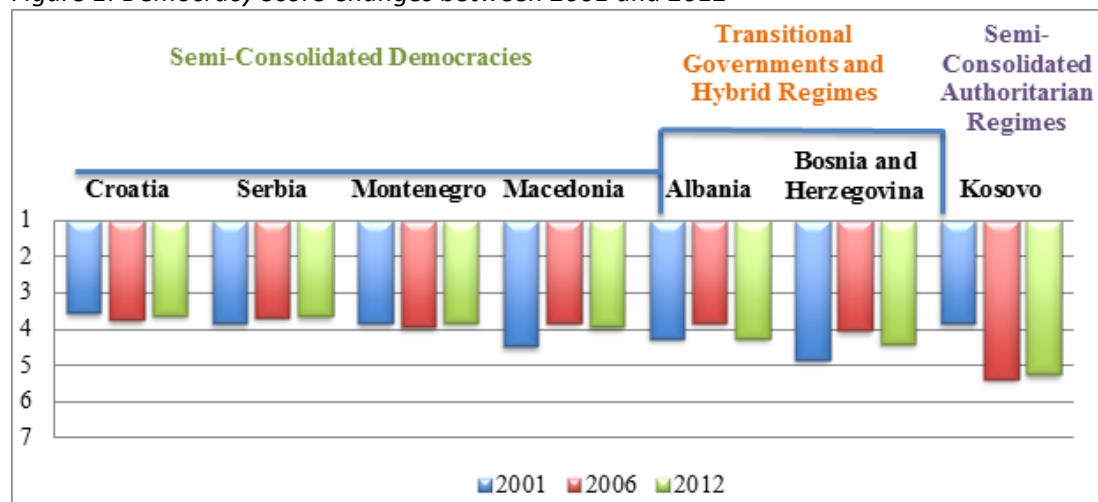
[t]he political and economic system of Albania established after the onset of democracy has ... been faulty and problematic... it is poor, incompetent and irresponsible political leadership which has been the principal factor that has prevented Albania achieving good results in its attempted reforms (2007: 30).

After many years of experiencing democracy, the situation in Albania has not changed much. To understand this situation, this commentary provides some data on the scores of different indicators of democracy. The data is very useful for shedding some light on the scholarly findings.

THE “FACES” OF ALBANIAN EUROPEANIZATION

Europeanization is also related to other processes, such as state-building and democratization, or judiciary reform, fight against corruption, organised crime and fundamental rights. The following data demonstrates how Albania and other Balkan countries are doing in terms of all these processes. Albania improved in 2006, but deteriorated in 2012.

Figure 1: Democracy Score Changes between 2001 and 2012



Source: Nations in Transit (NIT) 2002, NIT 2007, and NIT 2013.4

Table 2: Albanian Democracy Averaged Scores 2005-2014

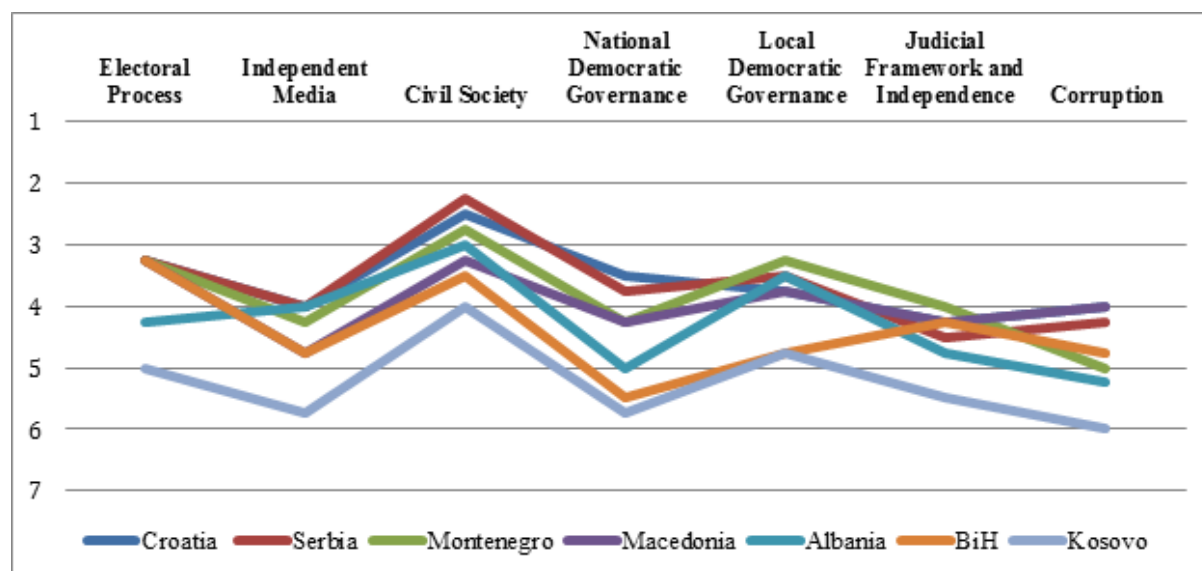
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Electoral Process	3.75	3.50	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.75	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.00
Civil Society	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Independent Media	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
National Democratic Governance	4.25	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.75	5.00	4.75
Local Democratic Governance	3.25	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	3.00	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.50
Judicial Framework and Independence	4.50	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.75	4.75	4.75
Corruption	5.25	5.25	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.25	5.25
Democracy Score	4.04	3.79	3.82	3.82	3.82	3.93	4.04	4.14	4.25	4.18

Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2014*⁵

Table 2 gives data on the democracy score for Albania from 2005 to 2014, which has slightly decreased.

Figure 2 represents the democracy score comprised by performance on seven different categories of democracy. Albania scores better in civil society, but not in the electoral process, national democratic governance or corruption.

Figure 2: Democratic Performance by Category



Source: NIT 2013.

Table 3 shows rate changes of all the data. Albania has no sign of improvement for any of the performance categories in four years.

Table 3: Rating Changes between 2008 and 2012

	Croatia	Sebia	Montenegro	Macedonia	Albania	BH	Kosovo
Electoral Process	=	=	=	↑	↓↓↓	↓	↓↓↓
Independent Media	↓	↓	↓↓↓	↓↓↓	↓	↓	↓
Civil Society	↑	↑↑↑	=	=	=	=	=
National Democratic Governance	↓	↑	=	↓	↓↓↓	↓↓	↓↓
Local Democratic Governance	=	↑	=	=	↓↓↓	=	↑↑
Judicial Framework and Independence	=	=	↑	↓	↓↓	↓	↑
Corruption	↑↑	↑	=	↑	↓	↓	↓

Source: NIT 2009 and NIT 2013

↑: 0.25 improvement; =: status quo; ↓: 0.25 decline.

Table 4 uses another index, Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). Albania is ranked the lowest in the region (113).

Table 4: Corruption Perception Index

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Rank							
(score)							
Macedonia	69 (4.3)	69 (3.9)	62 (4.1)	71 (3.8)	72 (3.6)	84 (3.3)	105 (2.7)
B&H	72 (4.2)	91 (3.2)	91(3.2)	99(3)	92 (3.2)	84 (3.3)	93 (2.9)
Serbia	80 (3.9)	86 (3.3)	78 (3.5)	83 (3.5)	85 (3.4)	79 (3.4)	90 (3.0)
Albania	113(3.3)	95 (3.1)	87(3.3)	95 (3.2)	85 (3.4)	105(2.9)	111(2.6)
Montenegro	75 (4.1)	66 (4)	69 (3.7)	69 (3.9)	85 (3.4)	84 (3.3)	N/A
Croatia	62 (4.6)	66(4)	62(4.1)	66(4.1)	62(4.4)	64(4.1)	N/A

Source: Transparency International CPI⁶

The empirical data and the debates on Europeanization help to explore the faces of Europeanization more closely. The first of five changes in the process of Europeanization, according to Olsen, relates to the expansion of the EU territorial boundaries. The EU's commitment to enlargement has been positive, at least until relatively recently. This commitment has its rationale by reason of economic dominance and political power, but also, on the enormous stake in the stability of the region (Noutcheva 2009: 1069). Despite the Ukraine conflict, which has highlighted the dangers of eastwards enlargement, another enlargement benefit (at least for the Western Balkans) is still that it 'makes Europe a safer place... Current enlargement policy is reinforcing peace and stability in the Western Balkans and promoting recovery and reconciliation after the wars of the 1990s' (European Commission 2014: 3). The OSCE presence in Albania has confirmed the safety concern by noting that 'the objectives of the EU concerning the Albanian integration are more about security and stability targets in the region rather than checking that the state builds the political system in accordance with European rule' (Ah-Pine 2011: 15). Developments such as reviving the 'Great Albania', which aspires to bring Kosovo and Albania together, may pose stability threats. If this were to happen, conflict might occur because of territorial claims involving Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Greece. These developments can be kept under control if the Balkans are integrated into the EU.

However, there is some stagnation in the enlargement process due to public pressure (Toshkov, Kortenska, Dimitrova, and Fagan 2014). Opinion polls exhibit rising scepticism among EU citizens towards further enlargement. In spring 2013, 53 per cent of EU citizens opposed enlargement (European Commission 2013a). After the 2008 economic crisis and recently the Greek collapse, enlargement has become highly contested. The result is mutual distrust or pretense: 'We pretend we want you, and you pretend you're getting ready' (Rupnik 2011: 28). Soeren Keil warns about the danger of 'enlargement-fatigue', which may 'contribute to further alienation between the EU and

the Western Balkan countries' (2013: 352). Faced with persistent hurdles in the region, EU member states have stopped promoting the Balkan enlargement and begun to show cold feet on the enlargement policy (CSES 2014: 7). This situation creates what Jacques Rupnik labels as 'accession fatigue' for the aspiring members who may get tired of waiting. An 'enlargement fatigue' within the EU risks meeting an 'accession fatigue' in the Balkans. These two conditions question the whole process of membership in Albania.

Olsen's second change, the development of institutions at the EU level, does not apply to Albania as a non-member. The third change is the adaption of national and subnational systems to the EU and of EU norms to the domestic systems. Albania and other Balkan countries do not have the power or the position to dictate any rules to the EU. However, 'the weaker partners are also in a position to affect the course of their Europeanization via the introduction of new EU principles and practices emanating from their particularities' (Anastasakis 2005: 83). For instance, when Albania requested candidate status in 2010, the European Commission outlined twelve key priorities (2010: 2). Albania did not comply with all twelve priorities and was denied candidate status. In the 2013 request, priorities were focused on five instead of twelve indicators, namely: reform of the judiciary, fight against corruption, protection of human rights and administration reform, the rule of law, and fundamental rights (European Commission 2013b). The reduction of the number of priorities is a sign of some relief from the EU and demonstrates that negotiations did consider the country's particularities. As the poorest country in the Balkans with one of the toughest communist regimes in the world, Albania could only adapt the EU rules incrementally and with some variation.

One further change relates to exporting forms of EU political governance beyond the EU territory through conditionality. It is obvious that conditionality is the dominant mechanism of EU influence. However, 'the EU no longer solely focuses on the Copenhagen criteria...but also on the consolidation of statehood in the region, both external (state borders) and internal (autonomous governance)' (Noutcheva 2012: 2). Satisfying this type of conditionality makes export EU governance beyond the EU territory more difficult. The adoption of the legal norms of the *acquis communautaire* should not be a literal approximation of legal text, but an approximation of standards (Daci 2008: 15). The tables above demonstrate that Albania is not making progress in meeting the EU standards. But why are other Balkan countries performing better than Albania, although they entered the Europeanization process at the same time, if not later? As explained by the 'Eastern Style Europeanization', in order to enter successfully the Europeanization process a country should be 'transition ready', and Albania is still experiencing an ongoing transformation within its political institutions and is not transition ready.

There is a striking dichotomy in the Albanian Europeanization versus those of other Balkan candidates. On the one hand, Albanian political elites suffer from incompetency and poor leadership - data shows that they have performed worse than any other Balkan country. At the same time, Albanian citizens have aspired to join the EU for long, and as data shows, more than any other Balkan country. Albanian politicians have taken advantage of people's aspirations by playing with the EU membership card. The Europeanization process in Albania has been following a pattern that it is here labelled as 'Europeanization by convenience' - using the process to gain the popular vote. Political institutions in Albania follow the logic of consequences - they follow the rules of conditionality to the point of not risking their negotiations with the EU and not disappointing their electorate. As such, Europeanization turns into a means of convenience - it keeps EU negotiations on, by not failing the basic requirements, but also serves as a 'strategy' to win elections. As data shows, Albanian politicians are not utterly committed to responding adequately to all EU adjustment pressures, thus, making only cosmetic adjustments without any substantive change on the Albanian political governance.

The final change relates to the political project for a stronger Europe. For this project to be successful, a re-evaluation of all policies for the EU enlargement in the Balkans is required. Keil and

Arkan observe that 'the EU has never been involved in candidate countries as much as it currently is in the Western Balkans states' (2015: 235) causing longer pre-accession time and tighter standards. This may have consequences for the EU's political project as '[t]he more the goal of EU accession resembles a moving and elusive target, the more likely it is to hinder the commitment of Balkan political leaders to Brussels-demanded reforms, as well as the support of the Balkan people for European integration' (CSES 2014: 9). This leads to 'accession fatigue'. Dieter Fuch and Edeltraud Roller argue that the experience with the countries of the Eastern Europe made the EU more vigilant with new membership because '[g]iven the difficulties of transformation processes and the lack of democratic tradition, [...] once countries [...] become members of the EU, a resulting destabilizing effect cannot be excluded' (2006: 71). This has led to an 'enlargement fatigue'. Rupnik suggests that the Balkans needs the EU to reconsider its approach to enlargement, which cannot simply replicate the pattern so successfully applied in Central Europe. [...], but requires the EU to overcome the hesitation between containment and integration and to renew its commitment to the Balkan's European future in order to restore its credibility regionally and internationally (2011: 30). Keil and Arkan reinforce the idea that 'it is time for the EU to think about a plan B [...]' (2015: 238). Considering that Europe is still experiencing economic difficulties, and given the Albanian performance on conditionality, it is difficult to predict how Europeanization will proceed in Albania. If the Albanian political class will not overcome using Europeanization as an instrument for political reasons, perspectives on EU accession loom large in the short term.

CONCLUSION

Europeanization in the Balkans demonstrates similar and distinctive patterns. In Albania, there is an interesting configuration. On the one hand, the EU has used Europeanization more rationally (as a strategy for stability in the region) than normatively (to induce domestic change). On the other hand, Europeanization has been used instrumentally in an 'Albanian fashioned-way' without substantive domestic changes of Albanian politics and governance. 'Europeanization by convenience' has brought about merely cosmetic adjustments to respond to EU conditionality. For Albania, EU accession is more an 'obsession' than about social learning or lesson drawing.

Following the recent economic challenges in Europe, the EU needs to rethink its approach to enlargement. The Europeanization of the Balkans requires the EU to overcome the hesitation between containment and enlargement, which deeply affects its commitment to the Balkans' European future, in order to avoid a Europeanization fatigue. The dichotomy 'enlargement fatigue' and 'accession fatigue' may have major implications for the future of EU integration. Certainly '[t]he integration of the Western Balkans into the EU has the potential to become the single most successful foreign policy achievement of the Union' (Keil 2013: 344). The future of Europeanization profoundly depends on the engagement of all parties involved in this ongoing process.

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¹ Stabilization and Association Agreement

² Rosa Balfour and Corina Stratulat, The democratic transformation of the Balkans, European Policy Centre, Issue Paper No.66, November 2011, at 8. Available at:

http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_1363_the_democratic_transformation_of_the_balkans.pdf Updated by the author from http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm

³ Global Finance, Country Data. Available at <https://www.gfmag.com/global-data/country-data/>

⁴ 1 represents the highest level of democratic progress. Available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/blog/democratic-scorecard-western-balkans#.VCQrqfldXZ8>

⁵ 1 represents the highest level of democratic progress. Available at http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/nationstransit/2014/albania#.VCQ17_IdXZ8

⁶ The score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption, 0 means that a country is perceived as highly corrupt. The rank indicates a country's position relative to the other countries.

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Research Article

The Grin of the Cheshire Cat: European Studies in Irish Universities 1974-2014

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Abstract

The fortunes of European Studies in Irish universities have tended to reflect the experience of Ireland as a member-state of the EU. At the outset, the need to prepare graduates for careers in EU institutions and, more broadly, for occupations directly affected by the EU such as law, banking, business, farming and tourism, was met by a wide range of courses (BA and MA) at most Irish universities. These had a strong vocational mission and were supported by EU-funded schemes such as TEMPUS, Erasmus and, later, Jean Monnet, all of which stimulated transnational mobility and the subsequent standardisation of curricula through the adoption of credit transfers (ECTS) under the 'Bologna process'. In all these developments, Ireland 'punched above its weight' in a context where it was basking in economic success due largely to favourable trade and inwards investment conditions. More recently, however, and especially since the demise of the 'Celtic Tiger' public opinion has been much more circumspect as expressed in negative referendum results and, most recently as a reaction to, the management of the economy by a 'troika' of external agencies. Today, European Studies programmes have been the victim of public disillusionment with the EU, and tighter budgets have resulted in a 'cannibalisation' of these programmes by their constituent disciplines so that the label "European Studies" is reduced to a fig-leaf barely concealing an underlying fragmentation into more traditional mono-disciplinary degrees.

Keywords

European Studies; Ireland; teaching and learning; Bologna

INTRODUCTION

The story of European Studies in Irish universities between 1974 and 2014 mirrors, to some extent, the experience of Irish membership of the European Union. We can detect an early phase of enthusiasm linked to a strongly perceived need to prepare graduates for living and working with, and within, the countries of the EU. This entailed a focus on policy-making, on understanding how the EU institutions operated, and on the best ways to derive benefits from new trading opportunities offered by the increasing consolidation of the Single Market. Since about 2008, however, a number of factors have combined to dilute and diversify the hitherto strict attention to the 'mechanics' of membership and transform European Studies (especially at the graduate level) into something more reflective, but also more specialised in the sense that formerly pluridisciplinary degrees have been replaced by programmes focussing on discrete disciplinary themes e.g. law or regional development. Among factors contributing to this dilution have been, firstly, the success of Irish membership, and the concomitant 'Celtic Tiger' phenomenon that has created a certain complacency that found expression in negative referendum results and a somewhat arrogant belief that "they" (i.e. other EU countries and especially the new East European member-states) had much more to learn from Ireland's success than Ireland did from them. Secondly, and more recently, the bracing experience of supervision by the 'Troika' (ECB, IMF, European Commission) caused public opinion to doubt if the EU was any longer an undisputed "good thing"; with students, anecdotally at least, beginning to question why they needed to study something that had apparently failed to cement the prosperity generated by the boom of the Tiger years. Ironically, at a time when it was (is)

arguably more important than ever to understand the implications of Ireland's EU membership, and especially the permanent and, overwhelmingly beneficial sharing of sovereignty involved therein, the focus of university curricula on matters European has tended to be somewhat dissipated. To be fair, Ireland's tendency to take its eye off the European ball, has not been helped by severe budgetary constraints in the higher education sector, nor by the development of new curricular themes that seemingly offered a welcome relief from the tedious troubles of a turbulent Eurozone: themes such as the environment and climate change, human rights, and the developing world, and new perspectives on global peace and security. Areas such as Chinese Studies are well-funded by the Chinese Government thus increasing the pressure on less lucrative European programmes (Murphy 2014:481). As we shall see below, the evolution of university postgraduate curricula, from 2008 onwards, has reflected these wider developments. Resource constraints have also discouraged risking the relatively greater costs that interdisciplinary programmes inevitably incur; they have also contributed to a disciplinary 'siege mentality' whereby academics tend to hold on to what do they best (i.e. teach their own subjects) instead of following the more perilous path of trans-disciplinary cooperation that lies at the heart of any credible European Studies programme. Budgetary retrenchment in the age of austerity has also led to a general decline in the international standing of Irish universities in widely-publicised league tables. While one may quibble with one or other of these 'objective' indicators, collectively they tell a rather depressing story. To mention them is not to argue for their infallibility: but any serious assessment of European Studies education in Ireland today needs to take into account this rather gloomy context. Thirdly, we do live in an international market-place and if students cannot find what they are looking for in Ireland, there are plenty of postgraduate European Studies degrees that are thriving in third-level institutions such as the ZEI in Bonn, Germany, the university in Lund, Sweden, College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium, and the Europa Institute in Edinburgh Scotland.

UNDERGRADUATE EUROPEAN STUDIES

Undergraduate curricula in European Studies in Irish universities have been remarkably stable over the forty years of EU membership. The earliest was the BA in European Studies in 1974 at the National Institute for Higher Education in Limerick which (with a similar programme at Loughborough in the UK) pioneered an interdisciplinary curriculum that has been emulated and refined in many parts of Europe, and beyond. The Limerick European Studies programme has remained remarkably constant with the only major restructuring taking place at the time of semesterisation. Although the postgraduate programme in 'European Integration and International Trade' launched at UCD in 1966 is sometimes cited as the first 'European Studies' degree in Ireland (Murphy 2014:475) it was essentially economics. At Limerick, the interdisciplinary ideas have remained much the same. From the start, students have followed a core European Studies module stream, a language stream (French, German, Spanish) and then may take either three disciplinary subjects (from History, Sociology, Law and Economics or two such streams plus a second language (from French, German Spanish and Irish). At the end of Year 2 and the start of Year 3 students go off campus for internships and/or further language training in a relevant country. The Erasmus student mobility programme (of which more later) has become an indispensable adjunct to European Studies programmes in Ireland. In the final year, students finalise their language and disciplinary studies, choose some electives, and complete a 'capstone' project which should in theory tie together many of the facets of their degree experience.

This structure underlies other undergraduate programmes in Ireland, At University College Cork (UCC), Maynooth University (MU) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD), just to take three examples, languages are an integral part of the programme as is the time spent abroad. All three have a strong interdisciplinary basis. The three universities differ only in the range of modules offered to students.

At Maynooth French German and Spanish are offered but a wider choice is available at TCD where Italian, and Russian are also on the menu. At UCC Italian is offered in addition to French, German and Spanish. While all universities offering undergraduate European Studies combine similar languages, the complementing disciplinary streams vary in emphasis. At UCC for example, geography and economics provide a distinctive flavour to the degree with modules making students aware of demographic change, the impact of urbanisation, centre-periphery tensions, regional development, and agricultural policy. Like all other European Studies degrees, students are introduced to the EU institutions, and the policy-making process in Brussels. UCC uniquely provides, in addition, a module devoted to a simulation game involving decision-making in the European Council. At Maynooth the same hybrid pattern prevails: in first year students take a core European Studies module, a language (French German or Spanish) and one other subject. These 'other subjects' extend to Greek and Roman Civilisation, Law, Economics, Finance, and Anthropology. In subsequent years, two subjects are taken each year plus the chosen language. The BA at TCD also follows the same pattern as the other universities but there are some features that distinguish this degree from other European Studies degrees in Ireland; firstly, an emphasis on history; secondly, a greater choice of languages (extending beyond the usual three to Russian and Italian); thirdly, the first year is a compulsory common foundation year made up of History, the History of Ideas and an Introduction to Social Science; fourthly, TCD students must study two languages (although selecting one as their major language for study abroad in third year); fifth, there is no compulsory module involving study of the EU institutions, but only an option in fourth year entitled European Union Politics. In second year, and in addition to two languages, TCD students take two compulsory modules focussing on the 18th century and an additional optional module from topics drawn from modern European history, sociology of Europe; comparative politics; micro- and macroeconomics; and international relations. The third year is spent abroad in a country related to the student's language major; and the final year is spent studying languages (although only one hour a week on the 'minor' language), a compulsory text-based module on modern European cultural history; and two optional modules from a wide range including, for example, France 1912-1923; Turkish-German literature; contemporary Italian literature; Spanish culture; and EU politics.

This brief survey of some of the major BA European Studies programmes inevitably raises the question as to what students are seeking when they embark on such a degree programme. What all these degrees have in common is the acquisition of fluency in one (or two) European languages linked to a study of the political, cultural, and economic contexts in which these languages might be used: international finance, tourism, banking, commerce, and any public authority that has dealings with its European counterparts such as county councils, universities, and semi-state bodies, spring to mind. For anyone wishing to work in, or around, or in a direct relationship with, the EU institutions in Brussels a European studies degree is often seen as an ideal preparation. Interestingly, however, the Central Applications Office (CAO) entry points seem to suggest that curricular content relevant to an understanding of 'how Brussels works' is not a key factor in guiding student choice. The TCD curriculum which has no required study of the European Union commanded a 535 CAO entry level in 2013, while UCC with the most EU content (including an EU-based compulsory simulation game) of the four universities, required a CAO score of 335 with UL (355) and NUIM (395) falling in between (i.e. in the amount of EU content included in the syllabus). What this suggests is that "employability" may not (despite what is often assumed especially in a recession) be the key factor in guiding student choice. If not, it may be the oft-quoted 'student experience' or the perceived 'reputation' of the university.

A key component of undergraduate education in European Studies has been the Erasmus programme. Over three million students have benefited from the Erasmus mobility exchanges since they were established in 1987. Since then, the numbers of students and countries involved has risen steadily from just over 3000 students and eleven countries in 1987 to over 250,000 annually today with 33 countries involved (28 EU member-states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland

and Turkey). The programme has also included visits by university staff (academic and administration) of whom about 40,000 benefited in the year 2009-10. Another feature, since 2007, has been the support for work placements - now accounting for about one in six of all Erasmus exchanges. The programme can be seen therefore as partly an attempt to enhance EU labour mobility by familiarising young graduates with foreign labour markets, but partly (although intangibly) to create a 'transnational society' that is less conscious of the limitations of national borders. Commissioner Vassiliou touched on these themes in alluding to the various benefits of Erasmus: 'By enabling students to spend a period studying or working abroad, Erasmus provides them with more than what is for many the experience of a lifetime. It teaches them a foreign language, it hones their communication skills, it improves their interpersonal and intercultural abilities' (Vassiliou 2012). Not only are young people given the confidence and ability to work in other countries where the right jobs may be available and not be trapped by a geographic mismatch, but they are also likely to form permanent personal partnerships across national borders. Thirty-three percent of Erasmus students have life partners of a different nationality (compared to 13 per cent of non-Erasmus students) with the result that one million babies are reckoned to have been born to transnational Erasmus parents since 1987 (European Commission 2014). The most popular countries as destinations for Erasmus students are: Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy while the countries sending out most students are Spain, France, Germany, Italy and Poland. Although countries generally try to maintain a rough balance between outgoing and incoming students, there are imbalances: the most acute being Malta which receives four times as many students as it sends out (European Commission 2013).

For its size, Ireland has been an active participant in the Erasmus programme. In the year 2011-2012, 2754 Irish students went abroad for study or work placement, while almost twice as many (5751) Erasmus students came to Ireland from abroad. Irish students on work placements abroad rose from 303 in 2007-8 to 791 in 2011-12. Incoming students to Ireland for work placements have run at double the outgoing figures: up from 645 in 2007-8 to 1476 in 2011-12. This almost certainly reflects a high demand for competence in English among continental European countries. Financial support for Irish Erasmus students has never been generous, and has declined gradually from 299EUR in 2007-8 to 242EUR in 2011-12. Participation rates (i.e. the proportion of Irish graduating students, having been involved in Erasmus) have however increased over the same period from 3.08 per cent to 4.68 per cent. In 2009-12, the most active universities in sending out Erasmus students were (in order) University of Limerick, University College Dublin, University College Cork, Dublin Institute of Technology, and Trinity College Dublin. In the same period, the most popular destinations for Irish students were (in order) France, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom and the Netherlands, while incoming students came principally from five countries: France, Spain, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. Outgoing Erasmus staff visits from Ireland went principally (in order) from University of Limerick, University College Cork, Royal Irish Academy of Music, Cork Institute of Technology, and NUI Galway (European Commission 2013). It is worth mentioning, if only in passing, that the exponential growth of Irish low-cost airline Ryanair has played a conspicuous role in enabling thousands of students to travel on a scale that would have been unimaginable twenty years ago. This has made possible the initiation, continuation and enhancement of contacts under the aegis of the Erasmus programme.

What impact has the Erasmus programme had on Irish universities, and on national higher education policy? Despite higher education being seen quite early on by government as an engine of economic development, the international context of this process was relatively slow in making itself felt in government thinking. In the 1992 green paper, for example, *Education for a changing Ireland* (Government of Ireland 1992) the primary goal was 'to increase awareness of both technology and enterprise' as a key strategic purpose. Internationalisation did not play a significant role in higher education policy-making until the mid-1990s. The OECD Report (OECD 1991) did not mention internationalisation issues at all, nor did the 1995 Report of the Steering Committee on the future of

higher education in Ireland (Higher Education Authority 1995). That said, it is not wise to assume that Irish universities were unaffected by international issues. On the contrary, they were affected early by funding opportunities (from the Social Fund) and by the Erasmus programme itself which forced universities to adopt credit-transfer schemes that guaranteed the equivalence of courses undertaken by mobility students. In some respects, we can argue that the higher education sector was the “tail that wagged the dog” in the evolution of a more internationally-focussed higher education system, notwithstanding the demands of the Bologna Process (which provided a short burst of energy to fuel the more long-term ‘slow-burn’ benefits of the Erasmus programme). In the late 1990s, government policy also purported to encourage the development of Ireland as a centre of educational excellence. In tandem with this initiative, bodies were set up to monitor and maintain the credibility of educational qualifications, partly with a view to matching equivalent standards in countries to which, and from which, students might be expected to travel. Partly for financial reasons, universities began more energetically to recruit students from non-EU countries but these ventures, even where they were educationally desirable, have run into opposition on the grounds that ‘home’ (i.e. EU) students already place a strain on increasingly scarce resources. Moreover, Ireland is in competition with many other ‘educational destinations’ a challenge that is all the more daunting, in the context of a relative decline of all Irish universities in global league tables. The impact of Erasmus on universities is difficult to calibrate precisely, but, clearly visible, are the establishment of international offices, orientation programmes for EU students, credit transfer schemes firmly established, the standardised Europass CV, ‘semesterisation’ to align with other EU countries, curricular adaptations to cater for a more cosmopolitan clientele, and an increase in teaching exchanges and research collaboration. Universities have become increasingly aware of the European environment in which they operate. Erasmus has helped to raise this consciousness but it cannot be said to be totally responsible for it. Despite funding constraints, Irish universities are still relatively autonomous in the sphere of teaching and research: a desire for self-preservation, in the teeth of a more managerial culture being imposed from above, if nothing else, drives the academy towards cooperation in Europe, and beyond.

POSTGRADUATE EUROPEAN STUDIES

Postgraduate courses in European Studies in Ireland have displayed much less continuity than what we have observed in the case of undergraduate programmes where, as we have seen, there has been a remarkable stability. One reason for the more fluid evolution of postgraduate programmes is the perceived need to adapt to labour market trends. This supposition is based on the assumption that students proceed to a postgraduate degree to prepare themselves for a particular career choice for which the undergraduate degree has been too broad and insufficiently focussed on ‘real world’ contexts. As noted at the outset, we can see a process whereby postgraduate programmes in European Studies have generally moved away from being specifically attuned to the needs of the EU institutions in the context of EU membership, and towards either more ‘academic’ approaches, or more sharply focussed on a particular discipline. Thus, at UCD, TCD and UL, until recently, postgraduate programmes were geared to bridging the gap between academe and the demands of the EU institutions. For example, an early MScEcon degree run jointly by TCD and UCD routinely included civil servants among its student body. This joint degree was superseded by one at UCD entitled MEconSc in European Economic and Public Affairs.. It included a tight focus on the policy-making processes of the EU; it provided two study trips (one to the EUI in Florence, and one to Brussels) thus giving students an opportunity to make early and fruitful contacts with policy-makers, among whom many would eventually be working. This link with ‘real world’ exigencies was cemented by a series of scholarships, provided to UCD by the Irish Government, to enable young high-fliers from the “accession countries” to benefit from relevant training in Dublin at UCD. This process ran in parallel, of course, with visits by east European civil servants to government

departments in Dublin, and missions by Irish policy-makers to help accession countries prepare for membership. This was a time when the Irish economy was displaying precocious growth and allowing Ireland to be seen as a template for emerging economies in Europe and to 'sit at the feet' of the Celtic Tiger. However a number of factors changed the status of postgraduate programmes in European Studies. The demise of the Celtic Tiger took the shine off Ireland as a 'role-model'; cutbacks in financing for higher education generally made it more difficult to support programmes at the same level; public opinion was turning against the EU partly as a result of Ireland being no longer a net beneficiary in the EU structural funds, and partly from a misplaced popular arrogance that said Ireland no longer 'needed' the EU. One reaction to the dilution of European Studies programmes was to recoup student numbers by offering alternative programmes: Peace and Development Studies at UL; Development Studies at UCC, European Regional and Minority Cultures at UCD, a bifurcation of the UCD programme into a MA/MSc offering two alternative 'tracks', and European Employment Studies at TCD. One apparent exception to the apparent splintering and dissipation of postgraduate programmes in European Studies was a new MPhil degree at TCD labelled simply European Studies and launched in 2009. Although this degree accentuates the trend away from a strongly 'vocational' remit, it is a truly interdisciplinary programme, and it has a remarkably cohesive structure. Like the BA in European Studies at TCD, however, it is possible to go through the entire programme without any meaningful contact with the European Union.

The Trans European Mobility Programme for University Studies (TEMPUS) was initiated in 1990 as an early response to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The emphasis ever since has been on higher education reform in an ever-expanding group of partner countries. In the early days the focus was on east and central Europe, but, later, the 'neighbourhood' countries, Central Asia, the Western Balkans, the Mediterranean and most, recently, Libya, Israel and Egypt have participated. Irish universities, as partners in joint European projects (JEPs) coordinated by other universities, participated from the outset. Examples of early projects were: public administration reforms in Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania; European Studies curricular reform in Bulgaria, the setting up of a European Training Centre (for journalists, civil servants, and business persons) in Skopje, Macedonia. More recently (under TEMPUS IV) projects have tended to be more tightly focussed than earlier. For example, TCD has had a project with Belgrade, Serbia to implement a postgraduate qualification in pharmacy. UCD helped to establish an environmental specialist training programme at the University of Zagreb, Croatia. UCC is involved in quality assurance criteria for higher education institutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and UL participated as a partner in delivering an online European Studies programme in northwestern Romania (University of Cluj-Napoca). These are, of course, only a sample of many projects that Ireland has participated in over the past twenty-three years. The projects carry an important mobility aspect whereby students and staff travel between partner countries. Graduates of Masters programmes in Ireland go back to their own countries and set up new courses and centres which in turn attract funding from the EU. As an English speaking country with sound European credentials Ireland was a popular choice for an EU-China Cooperation mobility project, as well as other global schemes under Erasmus Mundus with Australasia, the USA, and Canada.

Another important initiative undertaken by the EU to stimulate European integration studies, and which has benefited Ireland, is the Jean Monnet Action. This was launched in 1989, and has grown exponentially since that date to cover 72 countries on all five continents. So far, the Action has set up 162 Jean Monnet Centres of Excellence, 875 Jean Monnet Chairs, and just over 1000 Jean Monnet modules. In addition, the Action directly assists six academic non-university institutes, including the College of Europe in Bruges, the European University Institute in Florence, and the European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht.

Ireland has participated in the Jean Monnet programme although at a diminishing rate. This decline may be due to the co-funding requirements that universities are increasingly unwilling to undertake, or to demands on the scheme from countries outside the EU, as Jean Monnet chairs are now a truly

global phenomenon. It has also been argued that the Jean Monnet schemes have not been sufficiently well publicised in Ireland (Murphy 2014:484). Ireland had two Centres of Excellence in the late 1990s (UCD and Limerick) and a third one arrived in 2013 at Maynooth. Jean Monnet chairs have been fairly liberally sprinkled around the island (at least six at UCD, and three at UL, although these have tended not to be replaced (possibly again due to the co-financing requirement). Despite some pessimism (Murphy 2014:484) about the low participation rate in the Jean Monnet programme, there has more recently been an upturn in Irish fortunes with Monnet chairs being granted to Maynooth and Cork in 2015. Jean Monnet Centres and Jean Monnet chairs are underpinned by modules, and research networks which have collectively constituted an epistemic community in which Ireland has been well-placed. Jean Monnet conferences held in Brussels are a regular reminder of the scale and diversity of the Jean Monnet 'community'.

In Ireland, perhaps more than in other EU countries, the apex of the European Studies academic community merges with the higher echelons of policy-making structures. The establishment of the Institute of European Affairs (IEA) in 1991 provided a forum for academics and policy-makers to interact in the context of Irish membership of the European Union. Since that time the IEA has provided policy advice to government, but has also been instrumental in helping to ensure that public opinion has been better informed on EU issues. This latter function has been especially important at times when EU referendums were being held and there was a concern after the Nice and Lisbon referendums that lack of information, added to complacency on the part of some government ministers, had resulted in these referendums being lost. The Institute hosts about 100 events annually, including numerous distinguished speakers: almost any foreign visitor of note to Dublin makes the Institute a mandatory port of call. Among eminent speakers from abroad in the past have been Mikhail Gorbachev, Gordon Brown, Chris Patten, Noam Chomsky, and Jean-Claude Trichet. The Institute also carries out research based on a number of working groups including areas like enlargement, justice and home affairs, monetary policy, and the environment. Academic input (especially from TCD and UCD) has been crucial but is only part of a wider mix of expertise that embraces diplomats, businesspersons, politicians, and EU policy-makers. At the time of the Nice referendum, the IEA produced a publication summarising the main issues, and at the time of the Lisbon referendums, IEA publications elucidated issues for a wider audience. More recently the IEA has greatly enhanced its information role to the public by embracing social media such as Twitter and Facebook, hosting interactive blogs, and beaming podcasts of key speeches. Recently, the IEA became the IIEA (Institute for International and European Affairs). This transformation reflected not only the increasing role of Ireland in global issues (such as climate change and human rights) but also the difficulty in delineating clearly between EU and non-EU themes in areas such as enlargement, security and migration. Discussions at the Institute are almost always conducted under the Chatham House (known here as the Europe House) rules which enable speakers to air opinions freely on the understanding that what they say can be alluded to, but not attributed to them. This is of benefit to journalists who also participate in IIEA activities. The Institute is largely funded by corporate subscriptions but in all its activities it strives to be independent and non-partisan: among the members of its so-called *Comite d'honneur* are *inter alios*: Bertie Ahern, Albert Reynolds, Mary Robinson, Charlie McCreevy and Pat Cox.

EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

The relative dissipation of a European focus in the undergraduate and postgraduate university curricula is accompanied by a linguistic deficit that links back to the secondary school curriculum and forward to the job market. Recent analysis of job market vacancies in Ireland highlights the need of employers for graduates with language skills. Not only are major multinationals like Google and Paypal being compelled to import graduates from outside Ireland to fill vacancies where linguistic

skills are essential, but even at the level of SMEs whose export activities are crucial to their viability, need to do business in the language of their foreign customers. Due to an anachronistic attachment to French, 49 per cent of Leaving Cert students in 2011 took this subject, although France is not a major trade partner for Ireland and French is not one of the ten most widely spoken languages in the world. On the other hand, only 13percent of Leaving Cert students took German despite the growing influence of Germany in Europe and the still-untapped opportunities for Irish experts in the German market. Overall only 8percent of Irish secondary school students learn two or more foreign languages compared with a European average of 60 percent. It is significant that Ireland is the *only* country in Europe where a foreign language is not compulsory at any stage in the school curriculum. Google's European boss John Herlihy says that there is a shortage of job applicants for vacancies in his Portuguese, Hungarian and Swedish customer service teams: "There is a huge opportunity for Ireland if we can adapt our education system to allow for the studying of more languages. Indeed, we need to do so if we are to be a truly open economy operating in the global economy" (Irish Times 2011). At Facebook, staffing manager Orna Holland says 75per cent of users are outside the United States making multilingual and multicultural skills essential in the workplace. "We believe that Irish students should be encouraged to consider language skills as a complement, if not core, to whatever course of study they embark on" (Irish Times 2011). The recent emphasis on incentivising mathematics, whatever its merits may be, has tended to elbow languages out of the classroom. Behind the complacency regarding foreign language learning lies the easy assumption that, in a globalised world, English is the universal *lingua franca*. However, 75 per cent of the world's population cannot speak English, and only 9 per cent have it as their first language; and to research one's market thoroughly, and to appreciate cultural nuances in the target market, knowledge of a foreign language gives the exporter a valuable edge over the competition. According to Tony Donohue of IBEC (the Irish Business and employer association), customers prefer to buy goods and services in their own language. On a per capita basis, Ireland is one of the biggest international traders in the world, so this is a salient issue. In an IBEC survey in 2010 10% of respondents identified languages as a "skills gap" likely to be experienced over the next two years (Irish Times 2011).

Finally, the health or otherwise of European Studies in Ireland will depend in part on the existence of an active and vibrant professional association dedicated to promoting and protecting European Studies. The record so far has been rather patchy. Again we can perceive a period of "missionary zeal" in the 1970s and early 1980s when the Irish Association for Contemporary European Studies (IACES), and more latterly the European Studies Specialist Group (ESSG) of the Political Studies Association of Ireland (PSAI) have provided an Irish 'home' for scholars of European integration. To be fair, such associations have been hampered by at least three factors: lack of funding; poor public transport links within Ireland that made Dublin the inevitable hub for such activities; and most importantly the process of "satellisation" whereby Irish organisations were overshadowed by broader associations e.g. the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) in the UK, the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) in Europe and the European Union Studies Association (EUSA) in the United States. Most Irish academics in European Studies often meet each other more frequently at these international gatherings than in their home country! What any new professional organisation will need to do besides stimulating research and conferences, is to (a) defend the discipline in its own institutions (b) provide a talent-bank for policy-makers (c) help to shape opinion in civil society. It can be argued, moreover, that European Studies provides an excellent vehicle for innovation in pedagogical methods where simulation exercises, field trips, IT skills, linguistic ability could more generally be made an integral part of the third level curriculum (Murphy 2014: 485).

CONCLUSION

'Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin' thought Alice, 'but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in my life'! Alice's observation could well be applied to the fate of European Studies in Ireland. Modules that were once designed for, and integrated into, interdisciplinary European Studies programmes have now either disappeared completely or, more often, been subsumed into other programmes surviving awkwardly in their new surroundings, serving new purposes and like the 'grin' of the Cheshire cat reminding us of the larger structures whence they came. Ireland's relationship with the EU has changed recently for at least three reasons: the bail-out supervised by the 'Troika' was a starkly uncomfortable reminder of Ireland's vulnerability in a globalised world, and its subsequent dependence on fellow EU members for its economic recovery; second, however, Ireland has ceased to be a *demandeur* in the EU but is called upon to provide assistance to others whether it be in terms of the Greek bail-out or rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean, thirdly, the prospect of a 'Brexit' has given rise to a number of questions about Ireland's relationship with Britain and its relationship with the EU: both relationships have never been so close. These developments make an awareness of Ireland's European role as urgent as ever. Whatever the future holds, it seems incumbent on those who educate the next generation of Irish citizens to ensure that they can make well-informed and responsible choices.

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Research Article

Teaching and learning with EU simulations: Evaluating Model European Union Mainz

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Abstract

‘The shift from teaching to learning’ describes a new paradigm in pedagogy and didactics. Simulations are said to be an adequate method for this shift, said to achieve several learning outcomes ascribed to the new paradigm. In this paper, we will, first, describe the new paradigm. Second, we will discuss advantages ascribed to simulations. Third, we will describe a simulation practiced in Mainz in the last years, Model European Union Mainz (MEUM). Fourth, we will present some findings of an extensive qualitative and quantitative evaluation which accompanied MEUM. And finally, we will discuss some conclusions for simulating the EU.

Keywords

Simulations; Model European Union; Mainz; pedagogy; active learning

INTRODUCTION

‘What I hear, I forget, but what I do, I learn’. These words, ascribed to Confucius 2.500 years ago, describe a (not so) new paradigm in pedagogy, the so-called ‘shift from teaching to learning’. Although the quote by Confucius shows that the basic idea is not quite new (if the quote really is from Confucius), the phrase, coined by UNESCO according to Johannes Wildt, had a tremendous success and conquered universities around the world (Wildt 2003). Wildt reports that this shift started in public management departments of universities in the 1990ties, looking for potential for saving money (Wildt 2005). Afterwards, it was turned into a ‘new’ pedagogical and didactical concept. The core of this new paradigm is active learning. Students shall acquire disciplinary knowledge as well as soft skills through active learning, which corresponds to demands of the Bologna Process. A teaching method which shall fit perfectly to these demands is using simulations, understood as more or less complex roleplays, in classroom.

In this paper, we will, first, describe the new teaching and learning paradigm, discussing bases, relevance and its relation to the demands of the Bologna Process. Second, we will discuss advantages ascribed to simulations. Third, we will describe a simulation practiced in Mainz in the last years, Model European Union Mainz (MEUM). Fourth, we will present some findings of an extensive qualitative and quantitative evaluation which accompanied MEUM. And finally, we will discuss some conclusions for simulating the EU.

THE SHIFT FROM TEACHING TO LEARNING

The ‘shift from teaching to learning’ is characterized by the following components: a) centered on student learning, b) a changing role of the teacher, c) definition of learning objectives, d) from learning input to output, e) emphasis on organization of learning. The traditional, teacher-centered teaching, practiced ideally in a classical lecture with frontal teaching, is limited. New ways of teaching and engaging students are now en vogue (see on *active learning* Silberman 1996, on teaching politics and international relations Gormley-Heenan & Lightfoot 2012). A study by Stice

showed that students retained 10 per cent of what they read, 20 per cent of what they hear, 50 per cent of what they hear *and* see, 70 per cent of what they say, and 90 per cent of what they do and say (Stice 1987, quoted in Oros 2007). The study was based on ideas from David Kolb about learning types and learning styles, claiming that learning is facilitated in situations where reflection and abstraction follow personal experiences, hence active participation of students increases learning outcomes while traditional forms of learning in which more passive forms like listening are pronounced are less successful (Kolb 1984). Stice got his data from his engineering class, his results are now widely cited and repeated. Critics claim that neither Kolb's theory nor Stice's data are accurately validated (see, e.g., Raymond & Usherwood 2013, Oros 2007). However, the shift from teaching to learning is widely acclaimed.

As a central element, as mentioned above, the "shift" changes the focus from input to output, from the content of teaching to "learning outcomes". This corresponded to demands following the Bologna Process of unifying the European higher education, as it was expressed explicitly at the Bergen-Communiqué (Bergen-Communiqué 2005). At the follow-up process of the Bologna Declaration 1999, European universities have declared at their Convention in Salamanca in March 2001 that:

European higher education institutions recognise that their students need and demand qualifications which they can use effectively for the purpose of their studies and careers all over Europe. The institutions and their networks and organisations acknowledge their role and responsibility in this regard, and confirm their willingness to organise themselves accordingly within the framework of autonomy (University of Graz 2003).

More than 100 European universities have started a pilot project called 'Tuning educational structures in Europe'. Common points of reference for desired learning outcomes were defined, 'generic competences and skills' as well as 'subject specific competences and skills'. All the competences are listed in table 1.

Table 1: Tuning Project: Competences and skills

Generic competences and skills - highly important	• Capacity for analysis and synthesis • Capacity to learn • Problem solving • Capacity to apply knowledge in practice • Capacity to adapt to new situations • Focus on concern for quality • Information management • Ability to work autonomous • Teamwork • Basic knowledge • Will to succeed
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Table 1 (continued): Tuning Project: Competences and skills

Generic competences and skills - less important	• Understanding of cultures and customs of other countries • Appreciation of diversity and multicultural environment • Ability to work in an international • Context • Leadership • Research skills • Project design and management • Knowledge of a second language • Communicate with experts in other fields • Ability to work interdisciplinary
Subject specific competences and skills - First cycle	• Show familiarity with the foundation and history of his/her major (discipline) • Communicate obtained basic knowledge in a coherent way • Place new information and interpretation in its context • Show understanding of the overall structure of the discipline and the connection between its sub-disciplines • Show understanding and implement the methods of critical analysis and development of theories
Subject specific competences and skills - Second cycle	• Have a good command of a specialised field within the discipline at an advanced level • Be able to follow critically and interpret the newest development in theory and practice • Have sufficient competence in the techniques of independent research and be able to interpret the results at an advanced level • Be able to make an original, albeit limited, contribution within the canons of the discipline, e.g. final thesis • Show originality and creativity with regard to the handling of the discipline • Have developed competence at a professional level

Source: University of Graz 2003, Wildt 2003

All this new learning objectives transcended traditional learning objectives, which were mainly concentrated on teaching knowledge. In the course of the Bologna reforms, inventing new modularized study structures (and in Germany especially Bachelor and Master degrees), these new objectives were integrated in curricular norms. Interestingly, the results of the Tuning project and the Bologna reforms coincide with the recent debate in German didactics of politics (*Didaktik der Politischen Bildung*). According to didactics, the aim of modern university teaching should be to impart knowledge; methodological, social and civic competences in four dimensions (see Detjen et al. 2012; Manzel 2012; Massing 2012): a) Disciplinary expertise, b) Ability to judge, c) Capacity to act, d) Political attitude, general interest and motivation.

The capacity to act includes *expressis verbis* communicative capacities like articulation, argumentation, negotiation and decision competence. Such 'political eloquence' (Detjen 2012) is not only relevant in educational contexts of political science, but for citizens in general. Disciplinary expertise corresponds to the subject specific competences, the list of methodological, social and civic competences correspond to the generic competences and skills.

Obviously, the new didactical paradigm is quite demanding, not only for students, who shall be more active than ever and shall acquire a lot of competences, but especially for teachers, who often have to change their role and their self-understanding. Traditionally, teachers were experts telling students about their knowledge. 'Professor' comes from the Latin word *profateri*, which means publicly proclaiming information and knowledge. The shift from teaching to learning implies a shift of the role of a teacher towards an activator, moderator and promoter of learning processes. The quote 'From the sage on the stage to the guide on the side' illustrates this change nicely (see King 1993).

SIMULATIONS, TEACHING AND LEARNING

Simulations and role plays (here used synonymously) have become more and more popular in Social and Political Sciences, especially International Relations. *International Studies Perspectives*, a quarterly journal devoted to pedagogical and didactical aspects of IR, hardly publishes any issue without an article about simulations (see e.g. Taylor 2012, Crossley-Frolick 2010, Van Dyke et al. 2000, Zeff 2003 or Switky 2004, Guasti, Muno & Niemann forthcoming, as an early contribution to the debate on simulations see Stoil & Lester 1979). The Journal of Political Science Education devoted a special issue in 2013 on simulations (JPSE 2013). Practiced in the U.S. for decades already, they are quite new in German contexts. Germany seems to be a developing country concerning simulations. Several universities, like Frankfurt/Main, Tübingen or Erfurt, participate at Model United Nations (MUN). But MUNs are rarely embedded in curricula, usually they are offered as special and additional events for voluntarily participating students. Apart from MUN, some universities practice small-scale simulations in IR-seminars. At Bochum, WTO-negotiations were offered several times as a seminar (see Schirm et al. 2010: 2011). However, as said, while simulations are widely practiced in the U.S., they are rather exemption than rule in German Political Science faculties. This is surprising, because didactics claim that simulations correspond fully to demands in new didactics and pedagogy, especially the shift from teaching to learning.

Simulations are more or less complex role plays functioning as models for an even more complex reality (see for the German debate Detjen 2007: 373f., Giesecke 2000: 184f., Herz & Blätte 2000, Massing 2003, Scholz 2003). Reducing the complexity of reality to an understandable and controllable model, students have to act as realistic as possible, they have to negotiate, argue, debate or decide, depending on the simulation. Through a formalized process with certain defined roles which have to be performed by students, patterns of the real processes of politics or the functioning of real political organizations are reproduced. Through this, learning takes place at

several levels. First, there is a content level which corresponds to the subject specific competences or the disciplinary expertise. Students learn about structures, actors, policies and processes of politics. At a second level, learning outcomes are creativity, methodological skills, social and communicative competences, which corresponds to the generic competences and social and communicative skills mentioned above. Crossley-Frolick mentioned seven learning objectives which simulations can achieve (Crossley-Frolick 2010):

- High level of student engagement
- Through a practical grasp theories are “demystified”
- Practical, familiar topics can be explored
- Assumptions of “easy negotiations” are questioned when students have to make decisions on their own
- Working with primary documents makes students learn about “official language”
- Communication skills are practiced and developed
- Simulations provide an enjoyable teaching method to students for pedagogical ends.

Schirm, Smejkalova and Rötzmeier (2011: 651) from the University of Bochum emphasize the practice aspect and the generic competences: “Simulations differ to most other seminars insofar as knowledge and analytical competences are not only acquired but subsequent are practiced and through this intensified. Additionally, in simulated negotiations a range of further skills and competences have to be practiced...”. Which knowledge specifically is acquired and which generic competences are practiced specifically depends on the institutional design of specific simulations, but in general, the claim is held that simulations fit very well into the demands of new didactical approaches. However, as many observers note, many of the arguments in favor of simulations are based rather on anecdotal evidence than systematic evaluations (see, e.g. Raymond & Usherwood 2013). In the following, we will present a simulation we developed at the University of Mainz, Model European Union Mainz (MEUM).

MODEL EUROPEAN UNION MAINZ

Simulating the EU is not yet as common as simulating for example the United Nations within the MUN concept, despite the ever growing importance of the EU in today's politics (see e.g. Bergmann 2015; Weidenfeld 2011; Schmidt & Schünemann 2009, Guasti, Muno & Niemann forthcoming). Around 80 percent of German legislation is made in Brussels and Strasbourg nowadays, the parliament in Berlin just accepts and acknowledges (Sturm & Pehle 2012: 26). Therefore, this kind of simulation triggers student's attention in a special way. This is why we decided to run a teaching project to discover the possibilities and boundaries of simulations as a teaching method. MEUM was born as a student initiative in 2010, but its integration in the political science department's curriculum as a seminar began in 2011 within the framework of a teaching project supported by the University of Mainz. Since then, its status as a regular seminar has opened up the possibility of evaluating this new teaching method against its more traditional counterparts.



Figure 1: MEUM 2014 (Source: MEUM)

MEUM simulates the Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP) of the European Union. Participants therefore take on the role of Members of the European Parliament (MEP) or Ministers in the Council of the European Union. They are assigned specific real political positions (country and faction for MEPs) which they have to represent during the whole simulation. Observing and commenting on the ongoing procedure are participants working as journalists, representing also the “public opinion”. The simulation requires participants to find compromise through negotiation and in the end possibly pass new legislation. The whole procedure is therefore based on real legislative proposals issued by the commission.

MEUM is hosted not only by the political science department, but in cooperation with two student organizations, AEGEE Mainz/Wiesbaden and BETA.¹ This cooperation allows for an extensive social program accompanying the three days of simulation and also the inclusion of external participants. Therefore, MEUM consists of about 70 to 90 participants each year, divided fifty-fifty between regular students in the seminar and international students which are eligible to apply through an open selection process.

Out of this basic concept derive three general advantages. First the improvement of language skills: The international setting requires regular students to speak English, to represent their assigned position as well as negotiate in a foreign language and act on it. This serves as a vital preparation for

¹ AEGEE (Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe or European Students Forum) is the biggest non-subject bound Students organisation in Europe, BETA (Bringing Europeans Together Association) is a europewide non-profit association, established in 2008 in Mainz and with about 250 members today. BETA runs EU-simulations in the EP in Strasbourg (about 200 participants) and supports smaller simulations (MEUs) all over Europe. The first one was MEUM in 2010, since similar MEUs developed for example in Granada, Belgrade and Crete.

an internationalized job market. Second, the atmosphere makes the experience more realistic, as the EU is per definition an intercultural, multinational working environment. These two aspects together with the social program achieve a third advantage: the enhancement of intercultural skills. But how are the two educational objectives (enhancing subject specific and generic competences) mentioned before achieved under this framework?

The first one, expertise in the content of the simulation, mainly develops through intensive preparation. Together with their assigned role participants receive a Preparation Guide, containing a short introduction into the European decision-making process, especially the OLP and the topics of the two legislative proposals debated. These topical introductions outline the problem, thereby serving as a starting point for the participant's own research on their role's perspective. Furthermore, the package includes descriptions of all roles inside the simulation as well as the Rules of Procedure and the rough course of the simulation.

To make sure participants prepare adequately for MEUM, preparation is divided for external and internal students. The main preparation for external students takes place in an Online-Forum on MEUM's webpage, where participants can exchange first personal details and later on write position papers for the EP factions. It is vital to ensure the preparation on this platform works by assigning tutors to accompany participants via the forum and pointing out the importance of adherence to set deadlines to hand in the personal position papers or the faction position papers. In those, each participant sums up his role's position to facilitate information exchange, coalition building and deliberation in advance of the actual start of the simulation.

Internal participants, additionally, have a special preparation in an accompanying seminar which provides time and space for discussion of the topics and more theoretical background in relation to current EU research. Furthermore, a 'real world' insight into the EU is given, for example actual MEPs or staff members of the delegation of Rhineland-Palatinate to the EU, or even the minister of Rhineland-Palatinate for European Affairs presented their views of EU. This opened the possibility for students to exchange directly with practitioners and, through this, grasp the EU in the most direct sense possible.

Both, internal as well as external participants, have to prepare extensively their positions on their own, writing preparatory position papers. The second objectives, generic competences, are met together in the course of the simulation. MEUM simulates the OLP after the changes with the treaty of Lisbon. In this procedure, the European Commission proposes new legislation to the two legislative chambers, the Council of the European Union (short: Council) and the EP. Both discuss and amend the proposal which is signed into law after successful adoption in both bodies.

The two proposals are real proposals issued by the Commission and selected by the organizing team to further participant's understanding of real legal texts issued by the EU. But for the sake of debate there are two criteria which need to be met. The proposal should have a readable length and shouldn't be too technical or difficult. Participants need to find a direct relationship with the topics discussed. For this reasons the selection of the chemical directive REACH was dismissed once, as it is based extensively on chemical specifications and basically impossible to understand for an average educated person. The most important point though is the topic to provide enough controversy to allow for debate and not to be entirely outdated. One example discussed at several MEUMs was the return of illegal staying immigrants under the Returns Directive, which opens up several differing positions both between EP factions and Member States through the degree to which they are concerned by the cause of immigrants influx.

Apart of these selection criteria, the learning effects for participants mainly derive from the experience itself. The simulation takes place during three days in which two proposals are debated

separately in the bodies and are exchanged after amendment. The following table shows the steps of MEUM.

Table 2: MEUM schedule

Step	Proposal I	Proposal II
1	Commission introduces proposal to EP	Commission introduces proposal to Council
2	EP debates proposal, prepares and adopts amendments	Council debates proposal, prepares and adopts amendments
3	EP Representatives present amended version to the Council	Council Representatives present amended version to the EP
4	Council debates amended proposal, prepares and adopts amendments	EP debates amended proposal, prepares and adopts amendments
5	Council Representatives present amended version to the EP	EP Representatives present amended version to the Council
6	Debate and final voting in the EP: EP either accepts or rejects version of proposal as amended by the Council	Debate and final voting in the Council: Council either accepts or rejects version of proposal as amended by the EP

At the core of the simulation is the idea that both legislative proposals are being discussed at the same time. The procedure begins by the simultaneous introduction of proposal one to the EP and proposal two to the Council by the Commission. The Commissioners are well prepared and chosen students who have to explain the proposal. In the course of the simulation the proposals are being exchanged several times between the EP and the Council with both institutions having the chance to pass amendments to the texts of the Commission

The setting is as professional as possible, with representative premises and an obligatory Business Dresscode as well as the strict adherence to the Rules of Procedure. For all participants, preparing workshops on the first day of MEUM introduce the Rules of Procedure in a short 'Mock Simulation' to provide an opportunity for participants to try out these quite complex rules in a relaxed atmosphere. These rules of procedure foster a professional and fruitful atmosphere through structuring debates and the rights to speak, specifying language and emphasizing rule of order by imitating parliamentary rules of procedure.

The atmosphere is further influenced by the facilitation of debate by the presidency, or chairs, which stays neutral during debate and maintains order in the bodies. The legislative proposals are introduced by a commissioner who serves also as point of contact for arising legal questions. Therefore the responsible persons for both roles need to be selected carefully and well prepared.

Inside the framework, participants are free to vote upon a temporary adjournment of formal debate for informal discussions and the timetable sets additional breaks for coffee or lunch. These breaks, as well as the evening social program, are of great importance to a successful simulation. They serve as space for participants to mingle with colleagues from the two bodies to deliberate and negotiate on amendments to the current texts or voting positions. This opportunity of informal exchange is vital for the course of decision-making and teaches the most about daily life of politicians.

Participants learn about the procedures on the European level and experience the difficulties of negotiations first hand. In the process, they re-evaluate their political attitude towards the EU. Political motivation however mainly develops through the social enactment with and in the diversity of participants and their cultures. This European experience stimulates their motivation to get actively involved in European initiatives and boosts their support for European integration.

EVALUATION OF MEUM

The simulation was accompanied by an extensive evaluation and feedback process. First, we carried out online inquiries, before and after the simulations in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. Second, we gathered written reports in which the students had to reflect on their roles and their activities as well as on the simulation in general. Third, we conducted interviews with some of the participants. And fourth, we held a focus-group discussion after the simulation as a feedback with some students.² Using these methods, we set out to assess the results of MEUM. Additionally, the data enabled empirical probing of the requirements of didactical reflection according to new developments in didactics (see Manzel 2012).

We start by presenting the findings from the online inquiries and the respective supplementary results from qualitative methods. Subsequently, we highlight some aspects not covered in the surveys, as they only came up during the open qualitative feedbacks.

Table 3 gives an overview on the general disciplinary learning outcome. Almost 90 percent of respondents claim to know more about the EU through the simulation. As table 4 shows, the students did not only learn about the ordinary legislative procedure, but also about the institutions and policies of the EU. Less consideration was given to the history and theories of European integration, aspects which hence need to be covered during preparation in the run-up to the simulation itself.

Table 3: General disciplinary knowledge

MEUM has improved my knowledge of the EU in general		
	Count	Percentage
Completely disagree	3	2.11%
Disagree	4	2.82%
Neither agree nor disagree	12	8.45%
Agree	64	45.07%
Completely agree	59	41.55%

Aggregated responses from MEUM 2011, 2013, 2014, 142 respondents

² Data collection with methods three and four was conducted in 2013.

Table 4: Specific disciplinary knowledge

MEUM has improved my knowledge of the EU especially in the following area...		
	Count	Percentage
structures and institutions (1)	88	26.11%
decision-making (2)	129	38.28%
policies (3)	87	25.82%
history and development (4)	10	2.97%
theories of integration (5)	23	6.82%

Aggregated responses from MEUM 2011, 2013, 2014, multiple mentions possible

Regarding subject-specific knowledge, the qualitative feedbacks highlighted one additional aspect. Participants were surprised about the role informal debates and deals take on during the proceedings. Many would have never judged it to be that important but the students stick to their roles even at the social parts, prolonging the simulation long after the end of the “official” schedule, as one of the written feedbacks points out:

“The most interesting experience for me was lobbying and back-door diplomacy. It was really a challenging experience, which I enjoyed a lot. Sitting together with people till late nights and keep on negotiating with them was simply a classical experience for me.”

Together with the internalization of roles described later on in this part, this “hands on” impression could explain the frequency difference in survey findings between learning effects in decision making and policies/structures and institutions. Acting as decision-makers themselves, participants gained a deeper understanding of actual *processes* in EU institutions than of content and *de jure* structures.

Next to subject specific competences, we asked about the generic competences or soft skills. More than 80 percent of the participants thought they had improved their soft skills through the simulation, as depicted in table 5.

Table 5: Generic competences in general

MEUM helped to improve my soft skills in general		
	Count	Percentage
Completely disagree	3	2.11%
Disagree	5	3.52%
Neither agree nor disagree	16	11.27%
Agree	69	48.59%
Completely agree	49	34.51%

Aggregated responses from MEUM 2011, 2013, 2014, 142 respondents

Table 6 shows relatively equal shares of (perceived) improvement in different relevant soft skills throughout the years. It is notable here that the composition and size of the participants' pool is of high relevance for the overall, average shares between categories. During MEUM 2011, participants came from relatively homogenous backgrounds, namely mainly from EU countries. In 2014, a large group of non-european students took part, which resulted in comparably high values on the 'intercultural skills' category. Similarly, in 2014 the number of participants was more than double than in 2011. Hence, for example factions in the European Parliament grew in size and considerably more 'teamwork' was needed for effective negotiations. These differences between the years account for overall equal shares in the aggregated data. However, one should not miss these important aspects, which bear particular relevance when designing simulations for certain didactical purposes.

Table 6: Specific generic competences

MEUM has improved my soft skills especially in the following area...		
	Count	Percentage
English language skills (1)	84	25.00%
Intercultural skills (2)	74	22.02%
Rhetorical skills/debating (3)	94	27.98%
Teamwork (4)	84	25.00%
Total	336	100.00%

Aggregated responses from MEUM 2011, 2013, 2014, multiple mentions possible

An interesting aspect we discovered during the qualitative evaluation of MEUM 2013 was a gap between experienced participants and less experienced ones. This was mentioned several times and also confirmed in the most recent survey following MEUM 2014, which quantitatively covered this aspect for the first time. Out of 31 experienced participants, all but one found their previous experience to be an advantage (table 7). Besides the data, the gap is also recognizable during the course of the simulation. More experienced participants directly use the opportunity to work on negotiations and proposals from the start, whereas less experienced participants need to familiarize with the formal situation first. As one of the interviewees stated:

"Previous experience was the main difference between those who participated successfully [inside the simulation, e.g. presenting their points and arguments], with more engagement and those who rather stayed in the background. If I'd have had some experience this would have been completely different for me. But I gained experience throughout the simulation so towards the end this was different."

The factor of previous experience plays a particular role regarding the procedure of the simulation, but previous knowledge about the EU takes some weight too, as it facilitates the personal preparation of participants for their role, for example how to find information about specific country or party positions.

These aspects emphasize the importance of preparation, not only on the subject, i.e. the EU, but also on topics like delivering speeches or how to work within the Rules of Procedure as well as the need for assistance during the preparation phase for ‘newcomers’. Despite differing levels of experience, all respondents in the qualitative evaluation concluded they had learned a lot and improved their communicative skills and political judgment about political processes. The degree of soft-skill-improvement depends on the personal involvement though, which is highly dependent on the personal experience with simulations. In general, the participants supported the positive image we gained from the survey, as the following quote shows, which is representative for many similar statements:

“The simulation made me know how to communicate in a highly professional setting, especially when people are representing different cultures and regions.”

Table 7: Impact of previous experience with simulations

In case you participated in previous simulations before MEUM 2014, do you feel your previous experience was an advantage for your participation in MEUM?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes, very much (1)	18	26.47%
Yes, to some extent. (2)	12	17.65%
Don't know. (3)	0	0.00%
No, not much. (4)	1	0.01%
No, not at all. (5)	0	0.00%
MEUM was my first simulation. (6)	37	54.41%

MEUM 2014, 68 respondents

Additionally, the general interest in European politics was stimulated, one important aspect of the German political didactics demand. Again, almost 90 percent of the respondents agreed (table 8). Furthermore, many participants voiced a strong motivation to get actively involved themselves, for example in European student activities or alike. Their ‘ties with Europe’ strengthened through the experience, mainly due to the participants from diverse countries. One interview summarizes these in short:

“I just enjoyed the diversity of different countries and cultures and positions that we had here. Despite all those differences sitting together and actually achieving such a sophisticated political reform is something I find it absolutely fascinating. It confirmed my conviction that in general more Europe is the way forward.”

This also ties in with the results on soft-skill improvement. Students overcame cultural differences and language barriers in order to work together.

Table 8: Interest in EU

MEUM has increased my interest in European politics		
	Count	Percentage
completely disagree	2	1.43%
disagree	4	2.86%
Neither agree nor disagree	11	7.86%
Agree	64	45.71%
completely agree	59	42.14%

Aggregated responses from MEUM 2011, 2013, 2014, 140 respondents

In general terms the feedback was very positive. More than 90 percent of participants answered that MEUM was a success, a number which is constantly found in all waves of the survey.³ In 2011 and 2012, as seen in table 9, almost all of the respondents answered positively when asked about their perception. In 2012, all respondents enjoyed simulating politics. Only the tight time schedule was criticized by some students.

Table 9: General Feedback

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
MEUM 2011/2012 was a success	69	27	1	0	3
I enjoyed simulating politics	70	30	0	0	0
Good balance between social programme and simulation	45	48	8	0	0
Wish I had more free time on my own	3	10	35	50	3
Simulation was well organized	65	35	0	0	0

All values in percentages. First row: Aggregated response MEUM 2011, 2012, 89 respondents. All others: MEUM 2012, 42 respondents.

³ In order to ensure methodical coherence we only depict aggregated data from MEUM 2011 and 2012, as they used the same statement to assess the success of the simulation. MEUM 2013 and 2014 surveys rather asked for “satisfaction” on a one to ten scale, showing also high values. Therefore, the results are equally interpretable but it is not possible to aggregate them in a simple way. The other categories were only assessed in 2012.

As shown above, there was a clear benefit from the use of qualitative methods. It resulted in a more comprehensive evaluation of the learning outcomes. All in all, the qualitative responses supported the survey findings, but added some additional points and perspectives to the picture. In the following we describe some factors not connected to the theory deduced aspects covered by the online inquiries. One of the main factors for the success of the simulation is the realistic atmosphere which contributes in large part to the internalization of participant's roles. Participants start to 'think as ministers, MEPs or journalists':

"The whole simulation process was very professional. I felt that I was really in an official meeting of European parliament. It will be a memorable simulation in my life because I saw the total activities of European parliament very practically which I couldn't achieved from bookish knowledge."

Some participants were also strongly engaged emotionally, as one participant mentioned in the focus-group: 'I was really, honestly sad when first my amendment and in the end the whole directive failed, as I thought we found a satisfying compromise, which turned out not to be entirely true'. Others added points as feeling 'nostalgic' when returning to their daily study routine after MEUM and would have preferred to sit in the EP or Council again. This great emotional involvement was not clearly discovered in the surveys and seems to distinguish the simulation method from other forms of teaching. While instruction in the sense of teaching and learning subject specific competences might also be achieved through a traditional lecture or seminar, this emotional aspect deserves more attention in future evaluations.

Some participants even reassessed their personal career path, either considering a career in politics again or dismissing the profession of a journalist as a viable career option. Reflection in general was a main aspect during all three qualitative methods. Participants rethought their own enactment and the political processes they experienced firsthand. The majority evaluated the process in positive terms, from simple comprehension for the difficulties in a complicated environment of decision-making to the general statement:

"The simulation showed that democracy might be expensive, but genuinely valuable, because every opinion can make itself heard."

All in all, all participants judged the simulation to be more instructive than their everyday studies and stressed the learning outcomes on different levels, as this final quote shows:

"It was a great opportunity to learn a lot in only a few days about the European Union, its institutions and their decision-making process. Based on the fact that it was not a normal lecture about these topics, but rather a simulation where we participated actively, the learning affect was bigger and I will remember it longer. It was a great experience."

CONCLUSION

As seen in the evaluations, the online-survey as well as in qualitative interviews, written feedbacks and the focus-group-discussion, Model European Union Mainz is quite successful. Subject specific knowledge about the EU is acquired, especially about the decision-making process of European legislation, but also knowledge about institutions and policies. However, due to the institutional design and the focus of the simulation, learning about the history of European integration and integration theories is limited. This drawback should be compensated in the preparation surrounding the simulation.

But disciplinary knowledge in general can also be learned in traditional forms of teaching like lectures. There is no real evidence that simulations are better in that sense. In order to analyze that, control-groups have to be included in assessments. We tried this in the 2013 survey, but in the lecture and seminars on international relations, the EU was not in the focus, so the results are not comparable. Although perhaps not yet proven with convincing evidence, as Raymond and Usherwood show, the students esteem simulations clearly and claim themselves that they have learned more than in usual lectures and seminars, which in itself is an argument in favor of simulations. Here, the relationship between emotions and learning in simulations should be subject to further scrutiny, as also our evidence shows (see Jones & Bursens forthcoming on affective learning).

Additionally, the activating advantage of a simulation has to be stressed. Students do not only acquire disciplinary knowledge but also practice several soft skills or generic competences. Although this is also possible in traditional forms of teaching, the use of soft skills in a lecture is quite limited. In a simulation, the students are highly active, they really immerse in their roles, as the emotional involvement indicates. As ministers and parliamentarians, the participants have to develop own positions towards relevant political problems, they have to argue and defend their positions, they have to negotiate in order to find allies and majorities, and finally, they have to compromise in order to come to a decision (or they have to decide not to compromise, which is open to their choice). Learning theory assumes that this active learning leads to better learning outcomes. Although this is not really clear, the students enjoy the simulations and esteem the possibility of active participation, as all evaluations clearly showed, which also is an argument in itself.

Additionally, simulations correspond better to the demands in new Bologna-curricular and new approaches of didactics as they fit very well into the 'shift from teaching to learning'. These advantages of a simulation depend, of course, on the design of the simulation. As shown, an intensive preparation of the participants is essential, especially for students who are not familiar with simulations.

But this leads to a big problem inherent in simulations, not yet addressed: the problem of resources. Simulations, especially when combined with intensive preparation and evaluation, are very demanding for teachers. Although their role during the simulation is quite limited (at best, the teacher can relax and let the simulation go), beforehand and after the simulation a lot of work has to be done. In the case of MEUM, the financial support of University of Mainz and the cooperation with voluntary student groups (AEGEE and BETA) have helped to organize a large-scale simulation with international participants and an accompanying social program. In general, there are two possibilities: either universities support efforts like simulations with special support, e.g. additional financial resources for tutors or a reduced teaching load, or we follow Rebecca Glazier's recent advice 'Running simulations without ruining your life' and incorporate easy, small-scale simulations into seminars (Glazier 2011). In any case, we should use simulations. They offer a valuable tool for good learning outcomes, but especially, simulations undeniably provide an enjoyable teaching method to students for pedagogical ends in Crossley-Frolick's sense.

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The European Rescue of the Nation-State

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Alan Milward's work has been available in print since the mid to late 1970s, but still remains a classic among European integration theories because it remains one of the most convincing economic explanations of European integration. Despite its shortcomings (the review will talk about the danger of his economic analysis being too one-sided later on) Milward's work is still one of the most important contributions to European Studies, because it gives a comprehensive explanation of European integration, which is a rare find. Its continued longevity, coupled with the many challenges facing the European integration project, mean it is time both to refresh our memory of it and reiterate some of the most pertinent criticisms of this book.

In his book *"The European Rescue of the Nation-State"*, Milward suggests that there is a good reason why European integration has been achieved predominantly in the economic field. He puts economics – low politics – in opposition to 'more important' sovereignty issues, which Stanley Hoffmann called 'high politics'. This higher importance also partly comes from Milward's historical angle, in which economics is not part of the central functions of the state. Some doubt must be cast on this fundamental assumption that economics is low politics and therefore rather unimportant, because in analysing European integration, economics is undoubtedly important and that is exactly the analysis Milward pursues in what follows.

In addition, down-to-earth economics may well be more important to citizens than high politics, e.g. in terms of employment, welfare and economic well-being. Milward actually agrees that economics is a much more tangible factor in decision-making, not only for citizens, but also for states. The basic contention of his book is that on the basis of economic necessities, post-war nation states decided to give up limited areas of their traditional sovereign rights. The supranational European institutions then delivered what the nation state was no longer able to achieve on its own. Peace and prosperity would be the core terms. In this sense the supranational level saved the nation state from the wrath of its own citizens (1992: 3), whose final judgment would fall in favour of the institutions which could deliver the best results. I disagree with this interpretation on two points only. First, it is hard to believe that the national governments intentionally planned their integration into the European framework with the full insight that Europe would deliver what it did and what they needed. Second, the objective view which Milward attributes to citizens seems somewhat artificial. The European Union alternative must have been a very remote option when compared with the nation state with which, say, the Belgian miner, was familiar. What Milward nevertheless rightly points out is that the nation state is not the antithesis of European integration, rather integration is the culmination of the fact that European nation states have developed alongside each other and are nowadays closely intertwined.

As a result of his mainly economic and *Realpolitik* motivations for integration, he is also very critical of the idea of a longstanding European cultural unity which some claim to underpin the modern integration process. He also criticises his own economist colleagues viewing the state as an imperfection in pure free market doctrine. Milward rightly points out that the state is the result of an evolutionary historical process which also entails the development of the theory of market economy. He additionally underlines that the state is the element which makes trade and market economy possible through its administrative and organisational functions, although the economy or trade might not be genuinely free. In relation to the post-war interdependence debate, Milward stresses that the fact of interdependence does not necessitate integration in a supranational sense. He points out that interdependence advanced further and faster in the 1890s than in the immediate post-war years. There is merit in this critique. However, one can point to the same fact as the reason for post-war integration. In other words, one could argue that the greater economic interdependence experienced in the 1890s was a necessary pre-requisite for post-war European integration to be successful. As a result of the economic integration of the 1890s, integration efforts were also made in the inter-war period. Such economic convergence in previous periods was seen as beneficial by post-war political leaders such as West Germany's Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and

they made arrangements for a lasting development in the same direction. Hence, the success of the post-war integration effort can be seen as the result of the previously disappointed integration effort in the inter-war years and the strong desire not to let this chance slip away a second time. On the economic side of this argument, it is important to realise that the interdependence referred to is a (western) European phenomenon and should not be confused with doctrinal ideas of free trade. Milward calls this European 'interdependence integration' a revived form of seventeenth century French mercantilism (1992: 130). The European communities in this sense are economically 'fortress Europe' with a strong tariff barrier faced by those outside.

One historical experience from the inter-war period was that Germany had to be included in any such European club if it was to make economic sense. Milward concedes that the *political* motivation to bind Germany in the integration project can also be seen in this economic effort. The economic strand of the argument is, however, predominant, for which, Milward thinks, he has good historical reasons:

It mattered little that the European Defence Community failed, for it would never have been capable of guaranteeing that the Federal Republic would stay in place. It met neither the needs of the Germans nor the other Europeans. It was commercially, as the pivot of West European trade, that West Germany had to be bound in place, and it was this necessity (...) that gave increasing force to the idea of the customs union (1992: 167).

This historically slightly distorted argument brings out a valid point in favour of economic integration. However, to deny the political foundations of European integration means misunderstanding its whole purpose. Later on, Milward does pick up on the main political aim, namely security. Milward exemplifies this by reference to the Netherlands that security in the post-war period became a much wider meaning beyond the physical integrity of national boundaries. Social peace and cohesion, which was to be achieved through prosperity, became an integral part of it. That is indeed a strong political motivation for European integration. Political motivations behind the Schuman plan – breaking the longstanding Franco-German antagonism – are a good example for the political nature of European integration, too.

There are many authors in European Studies who have either privileged political or economic reasons for European integration and it is arguably very difficult to find a tenable combination of both. Credit must be given to Milward for trying to find that compromise between economic and political motivations.

The argument of this book should not be misunderstood. In bringing together so much evidence relating to the economic and social foundations of the Treaties of Rome there is no intention to deny the political motivations which are conventionally and correctly ascribed to the Treaties. These are that it was a further guarantee of the peace settlement, a still closer Franco-German association; that in doing so it reasserted French political leadership in Western Europe and that it represented a yearning that Europe should have a greater voice in world affairs. (...) The argument accepts all these political motivations, but asserts that, except in Germany, the economic foundation of the treaties was more fundamental, because without it they could not have achieved their additional political objective. These were, in any case, not truly separable from the economic ones (1992: 208).

Milward went on:

It was essential for political and economic reasons that West Germany be bound to the west, but it needed an arrangement that satisfied the economic interests of Western European countries if a durable way of doing this was to be found. The common market was the one durable way that had been found. It was the fact that it rested so firmly on the economic and

social foundations of post-war political change and in doing so reinforced the post-war nation-state that gave the European Economic Community its strength and marked out the Treaties of Rome as a turning-point in Europe's history (1992: 223).

As Milward suggests in this passage, the motivation in Germany was predominantly political as for Adenauer the restoration of full sovereignty and parity of status was an absolute *sine qua non*. Supranational institutions were seen by German politicians such as Adenauer and Walter Hallstein (later the first President of the European Commission), albeit not the Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard, as the right way to achieve this. Milward seems to deduce from this general acknowledgement one reason why Germany became such a strong advocate for European integration.

In Milward's account of the leading 'Europeanisers' – Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Paul-Henri Spaak, Alcide de Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer – he stresses the political motivation for European integration much more. On this personal level and for people of their age and often bitter experience, the political motivation for integration dominated. Milward levels a valid critique against the impression that this is the whole picture, however. The disadvantage of an historical approach is that it constitutes an elitist view of European integration. Primary sources are inherently restricted to a small circle of leading figures. Having realised this problem, Milward tried to give his historical analysis a broader basis: hence the abundant statistics marshalled to support his arguments. However, it is from this that my main critique of this book stems. It is really a question of emphasis. Milward stresses the economic motivation too strongly and therefore overlooks or misrepresents the political endeavour which is most obvious in the European integration effort (see for example Monnet, 1978). For the economic argument, however, it is an extremely insightful account, because it presents a convincing argument of the economic motivations for European integration and even arranges the economic arguments in such a way that they present a comprehensive explanation of European integration. Attempting such a universal explanation of European integration is rare and because of that Milward is still an important source in European Studies today.

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