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Dimensions of Europeanisation

Text for: François Bafail / Timm Beichelt (ed.): *Européanisation. D'Ouest en Est*
L'Harmattan. Coll. Logiques Politiques (dir. Yves Surel), 2008

1 Introduction

Linguistically, the combination of the core term "Europe" with the suffix "-europeanisation" (or "europ-éanisation" in French, or "Europ-äisierung" in German) stands for a process of something "becoming European". This "something", the subject of Europeanisation, is by definition not included in that meaning, which leaves a wide range of objects that may become Europeanised – for example individuals, processes, practices, peoples. Beyond the academic sphere, the term is used for quite different objects. In a non-academic dictionary, Europeanisation refers to the formation of a European identity and polity beyond the nation state.¹ The European Commission (EC) uses it in connection with the processes of integration, for example, with regard to the common market.²

Even these scattered examples show that the ongoing debate about the meaning and scope of "Europeanisation" has deeper roots than simple competition between academic schools of thought. Many authors have built on the prominent definition of Robert Ladrech, who linked the notion to "EC political and economic dynamics [becoming] part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making" (Ladrech 1994: 69). This usage established some common understanding that the term "Europeanisation" should be reserved for domestic processes and institutions being influenced by European Union (EU) processes and institutions.

However, from the background of the linguistic core meaning, Ladrech's perspective represents no more than a certain custom that is fed by the need for distinction from the concept of integration. Whereas European integration stands for the process of ceding

¹ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europeanization>, 19.5.2006). There are no entries on the German or French page.

² Decision 97/761/CE, see Journal Officiel L 310 from 13.11.1997.

sovereignty from the national to the European level, Europeanisation, in this sense, is limited to processes in the opposite direction: whatever comes from the EU level and induces domestic change is called "Europeanisation". Although the distinction makes perfect sense and helps in distinguishing two fundamentally different processes, seeing Europeanisation this way makes reference only to one special aspect of European states and societies "becoming European".

Indeed, there is a pertinent debate on how to exactly understand and use the term "Europeanisation". Overviews on the research field mention a diversity of approaches (Featherstone 2003; Axt/Milososki/Schwarz 2007). Their scope of application differs by certain historic phases of the integration process, by the geographic area of relevance, and in general by different policy issues. Sometimes, Europeanisation concepts refer to a norm-laden depiction of a macro-political process. In other instances it denotes an analytical attempt to understand or explain domestic political processes that result from EU impulses. With every new anthology on the widely discussed concept, the variety of meanings seems to grow (Cowles/Caporaso/Risse 2001; Featherstone/Radaelli 2003; Falkner et al. 2005; Graziano/Vink 2006).

This chapter constitutes an attempt to reduce the variety of potential meanings of the term "Europeanisation" to different models that bear its core meaning to differing degrees. The last concept discussed – "Europeanisation as a macro-process" – bears the broadest meaning and, by including the formation of EC/EU preferences through national developments, comes close to what other authors might see as European integration. Still, none of the models gives up the core of Ladrech's definition, namely that Europeanisation refers to national "somethings" undergoing domestic change *because of* developments in the European arena.

The three models to be discussed are therefore located between two ends of the potential linguistic meaning of Europeanisation. At one end is the top-down approach ("Misfit Model", also called the "Goodness of Fit Model"), in which political processes and institutions change with reference to one source of impulses – the EU level. At the other end is the Macro-process Model, in which the EU is seen as an arena that is integrated into (domestic and transnational) political processes and institutions itself. Domestic elements become European, but at the same time these impulse-giving European elements are influenced by domestic factors. Processes and institutions thus "become European", but more as an overall development than as the effect of one arena influencing the other.

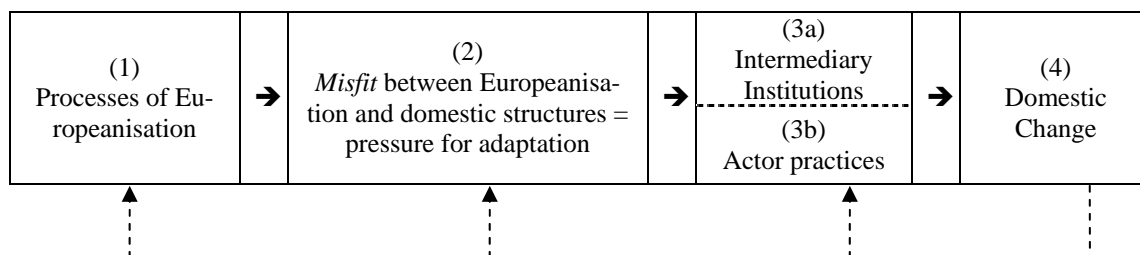
The third type is located between these two extremes. As is often the case with typologies of three that refer to one logical axis, this type in a way lacks its own systematic core. "Europeanisation as transformation", as it is called, can on the one hand be seen as an extension of the top-down model because the idea of European impulses playing a major role for domestic changes is still there. The difference consists in stating the central importance of *domestic* factors for *domestic* change, as is the case in some policy fields. Discussion regarding this third type is driven primarily by issues relating to new EU member state Europeanisation, which was the topic of a workshop to which an earlier version of this paper was delivered. In Central Europe, we are confronted with transformation societies that are, on the one hand, linked to certain legacies (Crawford/Lijphart 1997, see contribution by Kutter/Trappmann in this volume). On the other hand, the transition frame opens many options for political actors to take, even vis-à-vis

supranational organisations like the EU. Some authors have convincingly made the point that EU conditionality has by far not had the direct effects the European Commission would have liked (Hughes/Sasse/Gordon 2004). Therefore, Europeanisation in that specific area should be linked from the beginning to a conceptual model that makes a restricted influence of EU impulses more than a context variable, which they are considered to be in much of the top-down approach literature.

2 The Misfit Model: Europeanisation as an EU-induced Adaptation Process

The majority of Europeanisation scholars use a basic model for the Europeanisation process – aside from various predecessors, beginning with Risse/Cowles/Caporaso (2001) – which views a *misfit* between the state-centric and EU levels of analysis as the central parameter for domestic transformation based on EU influence (see Figure 1). The concept of *misfit* connotes the compatibility of domestic structures vis-à-vis the pressure of Europeanisation: the less compatible, the greater the pressure on domestic structures to adapt.

Figure 1: Basic Model of Europeanisation

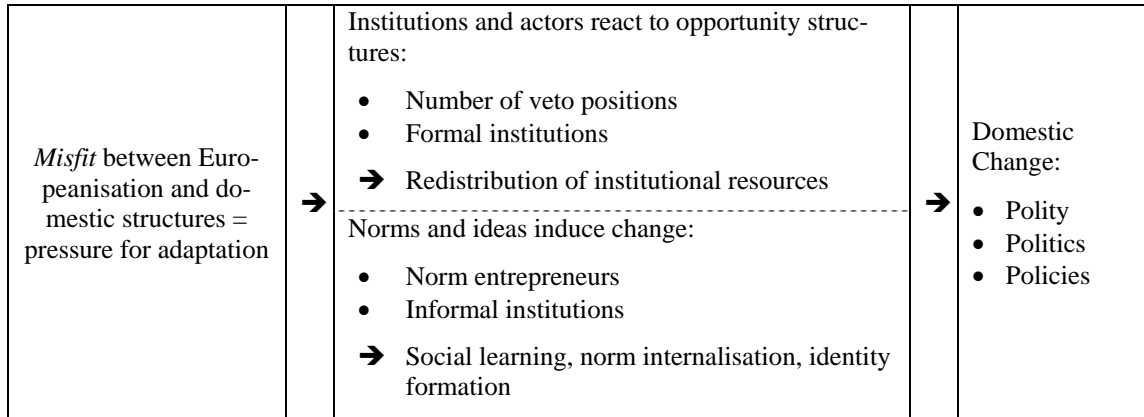


Based on Risse/Cowles/Caporaso (2001: 6).

Under examination, the model in this basic version reveals noteworthy weaknesses. First, the concept of Europeanisation is vexingly used to signify the beginning of the process. Thus Europeanisation seems to connote simultaneously both the initial condition and the process as a whole. Second, domestic-political transformation is confined (if the concepts in fields 2 and 4 are taken literally) to domestic structures, not however, to the equally important political processes. And third, in field 3, opposition from intermediary institutions (i.e., social organisations) and the practices of actors appear as eclectic artefacts without sufficiently systematised explanatory power.

Nevertheless the model can still be fruitful. The concept has also been caught on under the title of “Top-Down Model” (as far as I can see, this term was first used by Knill/Lehmkuhl 1999). Its core lies in a specific grasp of the concept of compatibility, which is systematically understood in the model as a structural deficit at the domestic level. The larger the misfit (or the smaller the goodness of fit), the higher the pressure for domestic transformation, as the domestic political actors would also not reform without this pressure. Lack of compatibility becomes therefore a necessary condition for internal transformation. Accordingly, changes in domestic politics can first come into being when additional “sufficient” internal requirements reveal the potential for change (Börzel/Risse 2003).

Figure 2: Amendments to the Misfit Model – Europeanisation as EU-induced Adaptation Process



Based on Börzel/Risse (2003: 69).

Compared to the original model, one must find categories that make the influence of the additional variables comprehensible. According to a preliminary design in 2000, an adequate concept was presented by Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse (see Figure 2). It concerns the correction and differentiation of the model in Figure 1: The term Europeanisation is again reserved for the same process that encompasses domestic transformation in the dimensions of polity, politics and policies; the necessary conditions for domestic transformation are added to the *misfit*, spelled out as “enabling factors” and differentiated along an important theoretical division between sociological and rational institutionalism (see accordingly March/Olsen 1989; North 1992). In this way, the authors take on the basic assumptions of institutionalism, in which rules can also be traced back to informal institutions so that they might constrain the actions of political actors in similar ways as formal institutions. Domestic transformation can thereby also take place in the ideological dimension. However, according to the model, the diffusion of norms and ideas is unidirectional – that is, from the EU level to the nation state.

By differentiating between the various dimensions, as well as through its theoretical foundations, the more evolved Misfit Model presents a powerful analytical tool to conceptualise the process of domestic transformation as a reaction to processes at the EU level. Nevertheless, the decision to model Europeanisation as a linear process, flowing from the EU level to the nation state, assumes a tenuous position; empirically the distinction between the EU and national levels cannot be as clearly delineated as the model suggests. Decisions at the EU level occur with the participation of the Council of Ministers, in which the national governments responsible for later implementation are represented as well. Even if signs of the utilisation of majority voting become more frequent (Hix 2005: 87-89), and naturally this only with the Council’s consent, the principle of consensual decision making still applies (Hayes-Renshaw/Wallace 2006). Therefore, the model only applies to a small selection of EU cases in which the actors, who are obligated to their respective parliaments and societies, are willing to accept a significant, normative *misfit* at all. However, it has often been argued that national governments utilise the non-transparent decision-making process at the transnational level in order to pass unpopular legislation through EU bodies to be later implemented nationally (Put-

nam 1988). In support of the Misfit Model, however, it would have to be systematically shown that, in the political day-to-day workings of the EU, the pursuit of hidden agendas at the expense of the domestic polity is the norm.

To present compatibility as the lynchpin of a model of Europeanisation entails a danger of oversimplification, which can only to a certain extent be compensated for by outlining the differentiated scenarios of logical effects within the “sufficient conditions”. This observed weakness of the Top-Down Model is also supported indirectly by an array of studies, which accord the *Misfit*-thesis a narrower explanatory power and instead see competition between domestic political parties as the central parameter for transformation (Treib 2003; Falkner et al. 2005).

3 Transformation Model: Europeanisation as an Additional Condition of the Domestic Political Process

The Top-Down Model conceptualises the domestic realm as a dependent variable whose characteristics depend on processes at the European level. The *misfit* is conceptualised as a catalyst for domestic transformation; however, provision is made for a systematic consideration of the domestic level only at the end of the Europeanisation process. Thus the model gives little attention to the question of in what way the specific influence of the EU level determines domestic transformation. Structures and outputs in nation states cannot solely be traced back to Europeanisation, but rather result from other specifically (so to say, genuine) domestic or global processes.

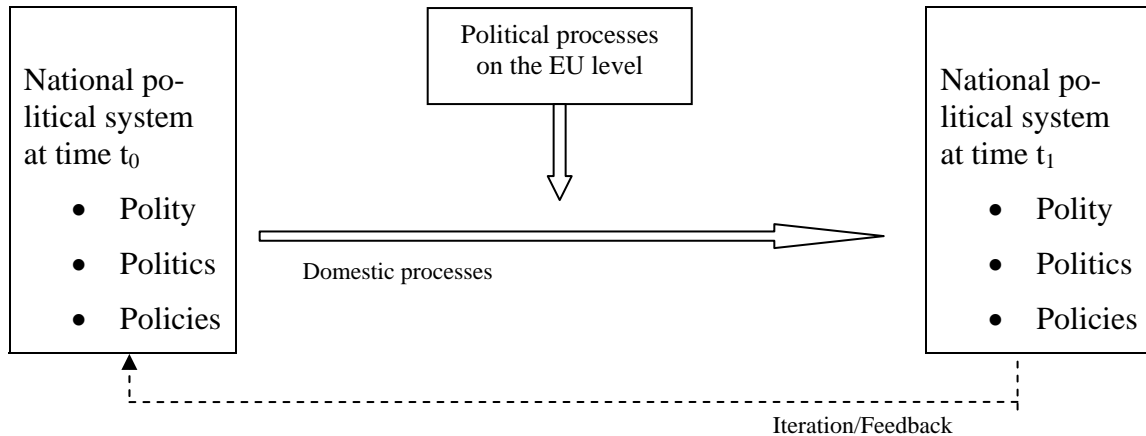
The most convincing perspective that accounts for the different dimensions of the influence on domestic politics is addressed by the “Bottom-Up” Model:

The bottom-up approach (...) starts and finishes at the level of domestic actors. The idea is to start from actors, problems, resources, policy styles, and discourses at the domestic level (...). A bottom-up approach checks if, when, and how the EU provides a change in any of the main components of the system of interaction (Radaelli/Pasquier 2006: 41).

For this reason, the development of a political system is determined first and foremost by the domestic political process. Nonetheless, external influences operate on various components of the domestic political process within the different dimensions of the system and, moreover, in a different form from that of European policies.

Less enticing however, is the characterisation of this perspective as “Bottom-Up.” When the political processes “begin and end” at the level of domestic actors, the dichotomy between top and bottom is hardly convincing. Also, the concept moves the domestic process to the centre under certain perspectives of external European and global influences. It leads in its simplest form to a Transformation Model, in which the domestic system is in a continual process of transformation via domestic and international processes (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Transformation Model of Europeanisation (Basic Model)



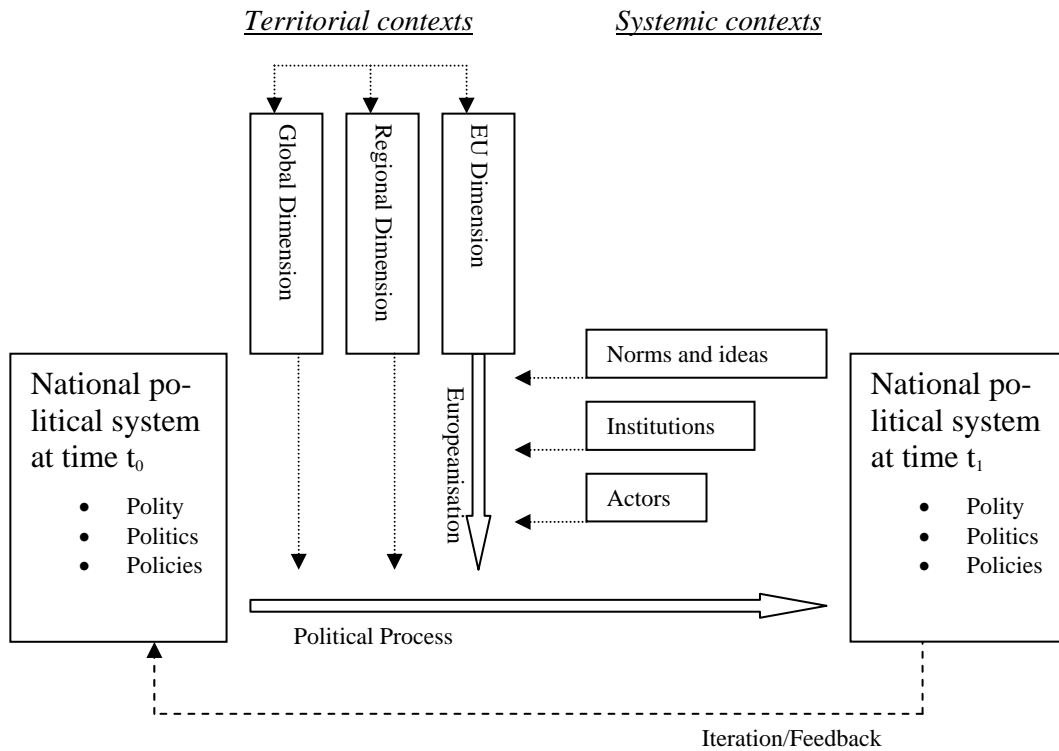
In this model Europeanisation is considered to be the cause of domestic transformation under the status of one variable among many. However, an entire series of additional elements of the model, which should be added to the basic model, are named in the literature. First, additional geographic dimensions that seem to affect domestic politics are cited. Integration science first described the close connection between globalisation and Europeanisation (Verdier/Breen 2001). Under this understanding, the processes of globalisation and Europeanisation are seen as equal and their effects analysed in a parallel manner (Schmidt 2002). Not uncommonly, however, authors disregard the paradigm of globalisation for the common market and its fields of regulation in the analysis of political-scientific processes in Europe (for example, see Busch 2003). From this perspective, Europeanisation is in the end seen as a special case of globalisation, also in terms of its economic as well as cultural, or communicative, function.

Second, the regional component has become increasingly relevant in European politics. Going beyond the hierarchical exercise of sovereignty, processes and structures in the realm of Europeanisation have also increasingly been altered by the development of subnational actor networks (Conzelmann/Knodt 2002). In addition to the European and global dimensions, a regional dimension also exerts influence on the domestic political process.

All three dimensions exert an influence that can be isolated. But they can also be connected, depending on the policy field or issue. In this way a three-dimensional context arises in another transformation model. National actors pursue domestic politics within the framework of national institutions; these are the most important elements of national processes. However, in 21st century Europe, the national space is no longer delimited, but rather embedded in a variety of regional and transnational processes (Zürn 1998). Although it is possible in principle to isolate Europeanisation as one of the influences on national processes, it must be thought of as part of developments on a small and large scale. Such considerations were also noted by Radaelli and Pasquier:

One way to avoid pre-judging the role of Europeanization is to specify alternative hypotheses (such as globalization, or domestic politics). So far, however, there has been more debate on how to specify mechanisms of Europeanization than on the mechanisms at work in rival alternative hypotheses (Radaelli/Pasquier 2006: 40).

Figure 4: Enlarged Transformation Model



In its basic form the Transformation Model when extended to other contexts can distinguish EU-level influence from its alternatives. But can it account for the mechanisms of Europeanisation represented in the Misfit Model? It is important here to specify the suggestion given by Radaelli and Pasquier. To some extent this has already been done in Figure 3 by replacing “actors, problems, resources, policy style, discourses at the domestic level” with the political system in its three specifications of polity, politics, and policies. With this replacement, the political process, in terms of systematic thinking, is bound to functional necessities. Political outputs are seen as the result of different inputs into the domestic system. With this, the political process is seen as a complex interaction from several actors and institutions aiming to achieve a particular political result. The same complexity of the analytical pattern is therefore becoming the aim, also in terms of the process of Europeanisation. This can be achieved without much difficulty by including the different mechanisms of Europeanisation found in the Börzel/Risse model into the Transformation Model (see Figure 4).

The expanded Transformation Model therefore views Europeanisation as a phenomenon that has to be grasped on two main levels – the nation state and the EU. The political processes start in the state, and the European political process forms a contextual condition that has to be specified in two ways:

- First, the EU dimension not only shapes the context of national politics, but is complemented by regional and global politics. The extent to which the EU is a self-contained variable of influence on national political processes is consequently an empirical question. In the case of primarily domestic pressure and a general capacity for an independent solution (e.g., in telecommunications or transportation policies),

the European political process can be examined as a self-contained dependent variable separate from the national process. If, however, global issues are at hand and relevant institutions exist outside the EU (e.g., in EU trade policy), the EU would better be considered an interceding variable. The actual driving force of domestic policy changes are then global political processes.

- If such an empirical look determines that Europeanisation can be viewed as a relevant factor of influence that can be isolated, then the question of character must be posed. Here it again has the effect that specifically EU-level actors can be identified only in few cases. This means that truly independent positions can rarely be formulated at the EU level. The elements of EU political processes mentioned above – actors, institutions, ideas, norms – cannot therefore simply be considered part of the political process but rather as systematic context factors of the process. The actual European political process is partly marked by its precarious substance. Only through actors, institutions, and ideas, which are all bound to the member states, do political developments at the EU level gain relevance and can be viewed as Europeanisation in the domestic process.

While the advantages of the model have become clear, some defects are also worth mentioning. First of all, the model's complexity makes its application difficult. What is more, the model does not account for a common ideal space to connect the national and the EU levels. Ideas and (formal as well as informal) norms are understood as border-setting or contextual conditions of Europeanisation, which then disseminate in the nation state. But is not the existence of a common European value and norm frame actually a prerequisite for Europeanisation? If we accept this condition, then ideas, values, languages and cultures – that is, all context factors of political analysis (Goodin/Tilly 2006) – are inadequately treated. This problem is addressed in the third model of Europeanisation.

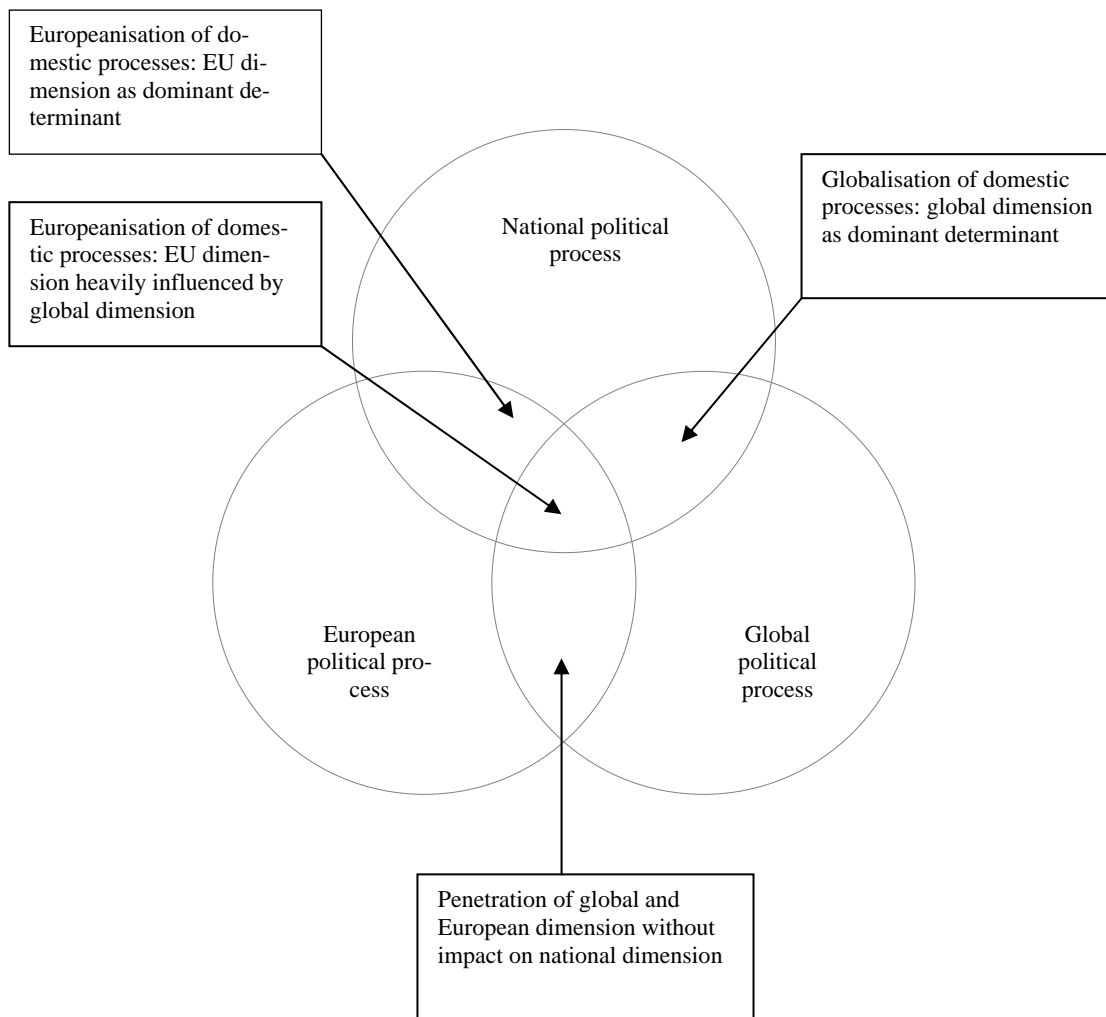
4 Europeanisation as a Macro-process

Both models cited thus far neglect the nation states' effects on the EU level, partly so as not to endanger the strict causality of the models (although effects in the form of feedback are allowed). In the third model, the assumption of a clear vector of influence is abandoned. In this model, Europeanisation is not viewed as a linear adaptation process, but as an interweaving with reciprocal effects. Social constructivism provides the main theoretical foundation for this form of a model. According to social constructivism, mutual interactive contacts of values and norms lead to a reconstruction of the social reality (Searle 1997).

A definition of Europeanisation following social constructivist premises must therefore include elements of a) construction, b) diffusion, and c) institutionalisation of (formal and informal) institutions, styles, and norms. Interestingly, such a definition was given by a researcher who would hardly consider himself a follower of the constructivist school (Radaelli 2003: 30). Radaelli's definition targets the cognitive components of policy making. If together all formal and informal procedures as well as the shared beliefs and norms constitute the phenomenon of Europeanisation, it is no longer only the organisational logic that is influenced, as with Ladrech, but also its discursive and social basis. Although the Europeanisation impulse still formally comes from the EU, there is no longer a clear hierarchy between the two levels. Graphically, this relationship can be

depicted by three circles representing the national, European, and global political processes (see Figure 5).³ Where the circles overlap, the processes influence each other and can thereby initiate a number of dynamic developments. The model therefore shows that a new basis for domestic politics emerges in the EU member states from preceding processes at the EU level. In terms of social constructivism (Katzenstein 1996; Checkel 2001), permanent external influences on (national) political processes do not lead simply to reactions in the sense of stimulus and response.

Figure 5: Europeanisation as macro process



Rather these influences lead to an at least partial internalisation of the normative foundations on which politics and policy are based. Political actors and the societies that

³ The basic idea for this is from Nadège Ragaru, whom I want to thank for insisting on the incomplete character of the first two models.

legitimise them find themselves, according to this concept, in a phase of social learning because of European integration. Simultaneously, the entirety of the political process is shaped by the EU level. Viewed in such a comprehensive fashion, Europeanisation is a macro-phenomenon that affects all functional instances of the policy cycle. Not only do the actors and institutions conform to the EU level through social learning, but also society and its individuals and their norms and values.

If these implications of the concept are taken seriously, other propositions of constructivist thinking naturally come into play. In this school of thought norms and values are not seen as dependent variables, whose developments only adapt to external dynamics. As inter-subjective phenomena, knowledge and value diffusion should not be viewed as a one-way street, but rather as a process of reciprocal influence between levels. The basis for the complex process of political decision making in EU-Europe is increasingly blurred; the origin remains indistinct. On the one hand this means that the inclusion of values and norms in the concept of Europeanisation has opened up a particularly good research field for social constructivism (Christiansen/Jorgensen/Wiener 2001: 7). On the other hand, the opening of the concept for the inter-subjective, that is, also the inter-dependent elements, implies a non-linear construction of the European self. The construction affects the EU citizens of different nationalities, their particular social and political elites as well as the genuine EU elites of the community's institutions.

Thus the macro-process view of Europeanisation approaches a comprehensive concept of the exchanges between EU and national politics. Still, it is a limited concept that only shows one particular aspect of the entire EU system. The direction of action of political dynamics remains constant. Although the model recognises the reciprocal dynamic between the national and EU levels on the input side, the attention is only on changes at the nation-state level, in contrast to a great part of the existing integration research. Therefore, this concept cannot be used to examine, for example, the construction of a European identity or the assimilation of policy in individual EU member states [Radaelli (2003: 31) has underlined this point as well]. However, what comes into focus are "recontextualisations" with which "'Policy-Inputs' of the EU (...) aided by existing legal norms, policy patterns, discourses and routines adapt and reformulate a national political communication society" (Kutter/Trappmann 2006: 15).

As a macro-process Europeanisation affects change in national politics along many dimensions. How these adjustments turn out is determined by actors who are, on the one hand, no longer only a part of the national but also of a transnational (EU) frame. On the other hand, analyses focus less on the conditions of EU policy making and more on the orientation of actors toward national preferences and conditions in order to explain the final outputs and outcomes in the nation states.

5 Outlook

As already mentioned, the three models examined here are interconnected despite their differing fundamental statements. In the Misfit Model two simplifying assumptions are made with its a) clear location of the source of domestic change as well as b) the strict vector of influence running from top to bottom. The Transformation Model retains element b), but it examines more systematically – in terms of a) – different dimensions of influence on political change in EU states. When Europeanisation is modelled as a macro-process and no longer strictly as a process of one level's adaptation to another,

element a) is also put into question. In contrast, the multilinearity of political processes is made central.

A central principle of scholarship is that generally the simplest (most "parsimonious") theories and models for social reality are preferred. Acknowledging the diversity of the political processes in Europe leads to the conclusion that none of the models discussed here can be generally preferred over the others. Rather two criteria can be used to determine which model is best suited:

- First, a strong interweaving of the national and EU level on a given subject (for example, a certain policy field) indicates that a non-linear model is better suited to depict the process of Europeanisation. Therefore the use of the Macro-process Model is best when epistemic communities exist between the national and EU level that have a common normative base. The British central bank has been seen as an example of the relevance of the evolution of shared ideas to domestic reform (King 2005). If we extend this to the phenomenon of Europeanisation, we accept the hypothesis that the source for domestic change lies less in the political process – in the EU institutions – and more in the formation of a common European context. Europeanisation is then not a dependent, independent or interceding variable, but rather a macro-process.
- Second, the character of decision making at the EU level is important. The Misfit hypothesis is useful when it is reasonable to assume that national governments would accept or have to accept decisions that are contrary to their interests and put them in a difficult political or legal position. When decisions are taken consensually, the foundation of the Top-Down Model (which depends on the initial hypothesis of a misfit) is not very plausible, as long as the theory of the two-level game (according to Putnam) is not given absolute comprehensive relevance. When this is not the case, it can be assumed that national governments include the EU level in domestic processes as one context variable among several. Then the EU is less an oppositional entity to the nation state and more a set of geographical, institutional and intellectual context factors.

Stating that no model enjoys general preference, however, implies that the predominance of the Misfit Model in Europeanisation research is not justified. It is inadequate as a fundamental or standard model when there are clearly reciprocal relations between the national and EU levels. This is more often the case than sometimes assumed by the authors of the Top-Down Model because the majority of pertinent studies assign EU governments a determining role in the Council of Ministers and with this in the general decision-making process of the EU (again, see Hayes-Renshaw/van Aken/Wallace 2006). As long as an EU *demos* is lacking, governments rely for legitimacy primarily on their national populations. Therefore, they would only accept Council decisions that greatly differ from their individual preferences under specific conditions. This has almost never been the case, at least with the “essential national interests”, which since the Luxembourg Compromise of 1966 must be decided on consensually when any member state so wishes.

However, governments in the Council can certainly find themselves in a minority position regarding less essential interests, so that misfits under certain conditions are difficult to avoid. This is particularly the case for issues decided by qualified majority. In addition there is the problem of coordination of national EU policies (Kas-

sim/Peters/Wright 2000). This coordination is not always efficient and can therefore lead the member states to be sub-optimally positioned. Moreover, the offices of the permanent representatives of the smaller EU member states are often staffed by only a few dozen professionals, making it difficult for them to actively participate in all Council work groups. A last reason that has been noted is the possibility of unclear or conflictual majority relations in the governments of the member states, which can lead governments to take a position based more on coalition politics than on the expected final output. If one or more of these conditions exists, as well as a linear relationship between the EU and national level, then the Top-Down Model is suitable.

Table: Suitability of Models of Europeanisation

		Interaction between national and EU level	
		Linear from EU level to nation state	Non-linear; strong interdependence of levels
Decision mode on EU level	consensual	Transformation Model	Macro-process Model
	non-consensual	Top-Down Model	Macro-process Model

In the end, both linear models have the advantage that they identify causal relationships by separating dependent and independent variables. The segmentation of the European political process in an iterative succession of operations makes it possible to filter out specific EU-level influences on domestic change. If the EU level can be adequately demarcated, the Top-Down Model can be employed. But if the contexts of the domestic processes themselves need first to be analysed, the Top-Down Model is not complex enough and loses ground to the Transformation Model. The variable “Europeanisation” may be oversimplified, in view of the reality. However, the wide application possibility of the Macro-process Model, particularly the inclusion of non-linear exchanges, makes causal analysis difficult. In the macro perspective, by definition, there *is* no identifiable starting point – demands and expectations are created at the level of values and norms actually in the interchange between the EU and national levels (although the direction of the effect analysis remains fixed). Only concentrated case studies and explanations are deemed acceptable, but how representative these are for the entirety of Europeanisation tendencies in principle cannot be established.

Thus all three models found in the Europeanisation literature have specific strengths and weaknesses that cannot be counteracted in an across-the-board manner. Whether a model’s application is adequate is not determined by (predetermined) theoretical approaches of EU research, but rather by the empirical classification of the object of analysis. If this axiom is observed, Europeanisation research will continue to establish itself as the central element for theorising European integration.

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