Introduction

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Europeanisation

Social Actors
and the Transfer of Models in EU-27

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Introduction

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Since the 1980's, the growing role of social actors has been observed in the framework of the European polity. A European Confederation of Trade Unions was created in 1973, civic platforms, European demonstrations and movements have emerged and the principle of civic consultation has been elaborated by the European Commission in order to improve the functioning of the European decision-making process. If this new conception of European mechanisms is well understood and recognised by almost all stakeholders, nevertheless the manner in which social actors inside the EU-27 are using these new resources has still been little studied. First and foremost, publications are focused on the mechanisms of interest representations (Greenwood 2007) and rarely propose a sociological analysis of the impact of Europeanisation on the social actors themselves (Wagner 2005, Balme, Chabanet, Wright 2002). This gap is even more significant when we take into account the EU-27 and especially what happens in the new member states that were part of the former soviet bloc.

Thus the challenge of this collective volume is to capture the effects of both EU widening and deepening processes on social actors from old, new and prospective member states. The empirical findings presented here are the results of research[1] that took place within the EU-Consent programme, which was supported by the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission**.** These data

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[1]   A large part of the empirical findings presented in this collective book have been collected by the members of the Team 14 of the EU-Consent program. This working group was dedicated to the analysis of the social actors in the context of widening and deepening EU.

have been compared with the findings of other researchers working on social actors. As we wanted to achieve one of the aims established by this European programme, namely, to enhance our understanding of how organised civil society interacts with the European integration process, we have followed the definitions of widening and deepening processes elaborated by the leaders of the programme. While the notion of "broadening" was proposed in the latter stages of the programme in order to take into account the idea of the extension of scope of policies, initially widening and deepening were defined in following terms: deepening was understood as " a process of 'gradual and formal *vertical* institutionalisation (Faber, Wessels, 2006) or, in neo-functionalist terms, as a rise in the scope and the level of European integration in terms of institution-building, democratic legitimacy and European policies affecting both the EU's polity and policies". Widening, meanwhile, was defined as a "process of gradual and formal *horizontal* institutionalisation" or again in neo-functionalist terms, as a process of "geographical spill-over" (Faber, Wessels, 2006).

Our working group has focused on the social actors from Central and Eastern European countries (later CEECs) in order to understand how, since the end of the 1990s, (ie. since the start of the negotiation period) widening and deepening have impacted on both the functioning of the EU and domestic contexts. It is surely of interest to understand how well social actors are able to represent a growing number of interests at European level and whether they use European resources to defend their causes at national levels. The ultimate question is "has the European polity changed due to the widening process?" In other words, are stakeholders from candidate and new member states able to frame or reframe the rules of the European game? To answer these questions, this book proposes a comparative approach of strategies adopted by social actors from different European countries.

In her introduction to the book *Participation and Policy Making in the European Union*, Helen Wallace (1997) identified a lack of systematic analysis of non-governmental actors and of a historical perspective. If several studies have since dealt with some aspects of this question, there is no complete overview of Europeanisation of social actors in the Eu-27. Christiansen and Piattoni (2004) consider the role of social actors/interest representation in the development of EU policy, but they did not extend the scope to considering the impact of the EU on the actors themselves or on the domestic level in particular. Balme and Chabanet and Wright (2002) focus their book on collective action but do not draw on the Europeanisation literature, nor do they focus on enlargement towards central and eastern Europe. Although Eising's chapter in *Europeanization: New Research Agendas* (Graziano, Vink, 2006) looks at interest groups and social movements both in terms of bottom up and top down dynamics, as we propose, it presents only a state of the art in terms of methodologies, rather than case studies, and he identifies the need for more empirical research in this area. It is just this gap that our collective volume intends to address. In fact it is doubly relevant to analyse the role played by such actors in the context of EU widening and deepening, given that economic interests were represented at the beginning of the European construction while so-called public interests were only represented later, in the 1980s, a period when, as Justin Greenwood notes, criticisms of the EU's democratic deficit first surfaced (Greenwood, 1997). We intend to address this gap by comparing the Europeanisation of social actors from old, new and prospective member states, which has not yet been systematically carried out in the European literature, as others have observed (Perez-Solorzano Borrogan, 2006). By using this methodology, our aim is twofold: to question the notion of Europeanisation and to better highlight what is at stake for social actors when they decide to engage in the European game.

Given that we seek to understand the role that social actors play in the context of EU widening and deepening, we use the notion of "Europeanisation" to depict the manner in which stakeholders (i) are influenced by European agendas and rules when they are acting at European level and (ii) are able to use European resources to try to defend their interests and to (re)frame European issues through their collective actions. Regarding this research design, it is evident that our conception of Europeanisation is largely influenced by Radaelli's work. Indeed we consider both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the process but furthermore we seek to take into account the side effects (Goetz and Hix, 2000), and to demonstrate with empirical data the complex phenomenon of "usages of Europe" (Jacquot and Woll, 2003). This notion of "usages of the EU" seems to us relevant in the sense that it allows the researcher to affirm and to demonstrate that European Union is not an independent variable, nor does it exist independently of its constituents parts. According to Jacquot and Woll, "usage of the EU, as strategic as it might be in the first place, will through repetition lead to cognitive and normative adaptations, which in turn change the behaviour of the actor or his or her social positioning" (ibid: 5) Through this approach we would like also to illustrate that Europeanisation is not a linear process but rather a cyclical one.

It is nevertheless interesting to note that despite the advantages offered by the bottom up approach, it has not as yet been widely used in studies of Europeanisation in Central and Eastern Europe. The focus tends to be on the extent to which pressures from Europe, mediated by different national contexts, have transformed domestic institutional and regulatory frameworks; in other words, how far the EU has succeeded in "exporting Europeanisation" (Papadimitriou, 2002). Rational choice explanations of change predominate. Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeir (2002, 2005), for example, argue that

candidate countries will adopt EU rules if the benefits of EU rewards exceed the domestic adoption costs. Similarly, Vachudova (2001: 34) finds that the EU exerts the strongest pressures for change because it 'offers the greatest benefits of membership [and] insists on the most extensive requirements'. With very few exceptions, these studies define Europeanisation as an entirely discrete variable which is not affected by the process of enlargement itself (Grabbe, 1999).

Conversely, we think that taking into account not only the vertical, but also the horizontal dimensions of Europe, and its side effects, is more appropriate in the context of these countries, in that they became progressively familiar with European Union during the 1990's, by which time it was more complex than it had been in the 1980s when, for example, Spain and Portugal joined. As explained above, the participatory dimension of the EU has been in existence for some twenty years; social actors have more opportunities to express their view in the framework of European platforms and European movements, and social actors have been involved in the European game with its multidimensional effects since the very beginning of accession negotiations. One particular point of interest in Radaelli's definition (2003) is the emphasis placed on the differentiation between the vertical and horizontal dimensions of Europeanisation: while the former refers to the well-known process of pressure to fit with EU policy models, the latter deals with mechanisms which "involve different forms of adjustment to Europe based on the market or on patterns of socialisation", like regulatory competition and different forms of framing. We find that observing the socialisation process is very useful because it allows us to understand how stakeholders react to European integration and at which moment they consider it as a resource or as a constraint.

Looking specifically at social actors[2], we share Radaelli's proposal that these processes can best by understood via a bottom up approach, which starts by analysing the system of interaction at the national level and then considers how they deploy European resources in their activities and to what effect. This sheds light on the active role these actors play in defending collective interests at both European level and national levels. The literature on Europeanisation has given rise to a range of questions such as: what is the effect of European integration on national political systems? To what extent has multi-level governance impacted on public policies or social actors? Do social actors view European rules as constraints alone, or also as a set of opportunities? What kinds of learning processes have they undergone in adapting to these rules? However, to date, much of the Europeanisation literature has tended to conceptualise social actors as static filters responding to European pressures from above. While there are legitimate reasons to justify such an approach in the accession period, when the opportunities to effect change from the bottom up are more limited, a failure to recognise that the EU offers social actors a wide variety of resources even in the absence of pressure from above may obscure important parts of the story.

Given that we are interested in non state actors, we do not analyse how stakeholders from candidate states adapt their institutions and rules to European guidelines and norms but rather how the democratisation process which was still taking place during the negotiation process has been reinforced or by contrast slowed down by Europeanisation

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[2] By social actors, we mean non state actors, even if each social actor runs the risk of becoming institutionalised as soon as they become involved in representation platforms and in bargaining mechanisms. In the European context, we believe it is important to recognise that social actors may have a role not only as 'takers' but also as 'shapers' of Europeanisation (Börzel, 1999).

(Tulmets). Our assumption is that Europeanisation does not occur in a similar way in all candidates states. As Europeanisation is considered not only as a top down and but also as a bottom up process, the national context still matters. This gives rise to a crucial question, the answer to which could allow us to elaborate a new pattern of Europeanisation. Which types of actors are strengthened, and which are weakened as a result of the Europeanisation process?

While agreeing with the general hypothesis that involvement in the European game can give rise to a phenomenon of institutionalisation (Wagner, 2005, Goetz, 2006), we contest the assumption that in the post-communist context "individuals often come first, institutions second" (Goetz, undated: 12). If it is true that certain political, societal and economical fields are characterised by strong personalities[3], it would be wrong to reject the importance of the institutions, even those which were already in existence during the previous regime. Nevertheless the post-communist countries are not the only "new" member states that will be studied in this book. To enrich our analyis, we chose to compare the dynamics observed in this context with processes which have already occurred during a previous enlargement (Portugal) and which are taking place in the case of a current candidate country, Turkey. Both cases offer the advantage of allowing us to highlight the links between Europeanisation and democratisation. Furthermore, the analyis of social actors in these countries offers us the possibility of addressing the following questions: what links exist between the strength of national social actors and their capacity to be present and active at the European level? Does the involvement in European

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[3]   See for example the role played by leaders of ecological think tanks in the importation of European norms and values in the Czech Republic (Devaux, 2009).

socialisation structures reinforce the legitimacy of social actors at national level?

Therefore the specificity of this book lies in its consideration of the Europeanisation of social actors from new member states in a comparative perspective. To achieve this goal the book aims at linking several analytical grids in order gain a comprehensive perspective on what is at stake for social actors in candidate states.

The authors refer to the theories of social movements (Mc Carthy, Zald 1977, Tarrow 1998, 2001) and especially the concept of political opportunity structures (Kitschelt, 1986, Börzel, Risse, 2000) in order to explain how social actors try to represent their interests at the European level. However, they also use theories of mobilisation (Tilly, 1978), which are founded on micro-level sociology, and therefore pay more attention to the socialisation processes and to the effects that the collective action has on both structures and on individual trajectories. As such, they are able to draw on concepts such as path dependency, repertory of collective actions, multi level governance and frames theory in order to demonstrate how social actors that are embedded in national contexts but also involved in European issues try to implement what they consider a more democratic vision of society.

Different case studies from old, new and prospective member states are analysed in this book. In several chapters, authors present a monograph, while in others comparative approaches are developed. Throughout the book, many types of social actors are considered, including trade unions, business associations, agricultural organisations, green, feminist and civic movements. Since these are among the more developed movements both at national and European levels, the evolution of each national organisation can be considered either in comparison with its counterpart in another member state, or in terms of its interactions with European movements

(such as the European Trade Unions Confederation or Friends of the Earth Europe). The case studies represent the different situations in old member states (France, Germany, as founder members, Portugal and Spain as more recent members, which allow us to consider an earlier example of the influence of European integration on the democratisation process); in new member states (including small countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary; a large country, Poland; Estonia, a country extricated from the communist regime and soviet influence where, for instance, environmental movements were strongly involved in both the defence of the environment and in gaining national independence; one of the most recent member states, Bulgaria; and a prospective country, Turkey).

Firstly, we intend to evaluate the position of social actors on the domestic opportunity structure just before the beginning of negotiation processes in order to understand to what extent engagement with European institutions has influenced the development of collective action. This requires a mapping of the types of organisations which existed before 1998: professional organisations, interest groups, defence associations for owners, consumer groups, think tanks. The comparative approach also enables us to address the question of temporality. As transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe did not occur in a closed system, many of the changes which social and political actors underwent were strongly influenced by the European space. From an early stage, politics, polity and policies in the Central and Eastern European countries were framed or reframed through contacts and interactions with the European institutions. This question of temporality is discussed by several contributors to the volume, such as Claire Visier, analysing the Turkish case, and Magone-Martins, analysing the Portuguese case, who consider the impact of timing on adaptation processes and provide interesting comparisons between different countries in different historical contexts. The way in

which EU membership perspectives have influenced transitions from authoritarian rules and perspectives in post-soviet regimes can thus be compared with the experiences of countries who joined the EU in the earlier Southern enlargement and with those who are yet to join. The longitudinal nature of the case studies presented allows us to observe the consequences of Europeanisation and to respond to the following questions: has Europeanisation strengthened democratisation processes in the post-communist countries? How have each of these countries been affected by the participation of social actors in European policy processes?

Beyond this aim, this book intends also to consider which of the four scenarios (Faber and Wessels, 2006) elaborated in the framework of the EU-Consent programme (namely: spillover, spillback, status quo and reinvented union), most accurately describes the impact of interactions between widening and deepening processes in our particular area of study. The analytical grid used to guide research in the EU-CONSENT network has been adapted to the topic of social actors.

As regards the spill-over scenario, we will consider whether the integration of the nation states within the suprational EU polity offers new opportunities for social actors. If these actors try to resist certain national and European decisions, we might expect that they can get more resources for collective action by using the European framework. For example, trade unions from the Visegrad group can collaborate to promote interests in different sectors. In addition, interest groups may appear to defend new categories of social actors, such as consumers, house owners, landowners. Through this process, this collective action could contribute to the development of a European public space.

On the contrary, according to the spill-back scenario, we can imagine that the process of Europeanisation

encourages social actors to defend national and narrow interests without participating in a European public space. In this case, social actors try to strengthen links between policy and population by acting at the national level. They reinforce their cultural and national roots and legitimise their collective actions through the valorisation of local groups. This is enables them to feel more connected to policy-making, which takes place ever further away from local populations, who feel powerless vis à vis the European institutions. Returning to the local level may be a means of resisting the process of homogenisation resulting from Europeanisation.

According to the status quo scenario, it could be argued that if the enlargement does not disturb the functioning of EU (as has been recently demonstrated by Dehousse, Deloche-Gaudez, Duhamel, 2006), this does not mean that social actors from new member states are able to bring forward new issues onto the European agenda. Conversely, according to the re-invented Union scenario, we can expect that the period of negotiations allows social actors to become more powerful in terms of seizing new opportunities and resources. In the process of widening, European institutions try to ensure that the diversity of countries and cultures are represented in order to enrich the European public space. Therefore we can hypothesise that the process of deepening means a greater participation of social actors in policy-making processes according to national traditions or cultures of protest. Both social actors and a more structured EU can create new forms of governance.

In order to consider these four scenarios, we proceed as follows. Firstly, we propose to analyse the Europeanisation of social actors along both directions of the *vertical* dimension; assessing on the one hand the extent to which resources, objectives, repertories of action are defined in relation with the European space (polity, politics and policies), and on the other how these social actors in turn

re-frame the European game. The aim is to analyse the relationship between social actors – both in the old and the new member states – and the European integration process. As in any relationship, we have a situation of reciprocity. The central question posed is to what extent the EU - especially since the recent enlargement – impacts on the activities and resources of the actors being studied. As discussed above, the aim is not to limit the analysis to a vertical top down process, but to explore the extent to which the European polity shapes the resources and opportunities available to the social actors. Secondly, in order to understand the effects of various processes of European socialisation and the role played by social actors in the legitimisation of the EU vis à vis its citizens, we will draw attention to the *horizontal* dimension of Europeanisation. In this second section, the focus switches to explaining the variables that determine the fact that the EU has a differential impact depending on the policy area, the type of social actors and the country in hand. How do we explain the fact that a Polish or German civic association is more mobilised in view of one Directive than another? Why are some actors able to maximise the opportunities offered by the EU while the position of others on the domestic opportunity structure is weakened? Why might environmental groups in one country tend to be pro-European and others eurosceptic? This section will also seek to answer questions such as: When and how were these actors socialised into European policy making? What is the rationale of their action at the domestic level? What is at stake for them as regards the domestic opportunity structure? Who is able to benefit from political or social leverage at the EU level? Thus, the volume will focus not only on the manner in which national actors use Europe but also on how and to what extent national actors become socialised to European rules and values. We emphasize the side effects of Europeanisation because the adaptation to the EU multi-level game is neither a linear nor a harmonious process. On the contrary, it may entail tensions and side effects

and lead to an increased differentiation between and within social actors.

In sum, while all chapters discuss the relevance of different notions such as Europeanisation, the transfer of models and governance, their specificity lies in the fact that they are based on empirical data analysed through theories of collective action emphasising both top down and bottom up dynamics, and paying attention to the links between Europeanisation and democratisation.

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