Öffentlichkeit und Gleichstellungspolitik im Regierungsprozess. Zur institutionellen Dynamik im Mehrebenensystem der Europäischen Union

/Public Discourses and Gender Equality in European Governance: Institutional Dynamics in the Multilevel Polity of the EU/

Projektleiterin:
Prof. Dr. Ulrike Liebert, Universität Bremen

Projektmitarbeiterinnen:
Birgit Locher-Dodge; Holger Schneider; Verena Schmidt, Jörn Ketelhut (Bremen); Stefanie Sifft (UK), Petra Kodré/Henrike Müller (Germany); Marina Calloni (Italy); Amy Mazur, Silke Reuter (France); Milena Sunnus (Sweden); Celia Valiente (Spain)

Laufzeit: Juni 1999 – September 2001

Abstract
With the development of more than ten equal treatment, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination directives and nearly two hundred decisions by the European Court of Justice since 1970, the dynamics of European integration has challenged deeply entrenched societal norms of equality regulating gender relations in the Member States. In view of the diversity of gender regimes in Europe, the research project explores the patterns and dynamics of how Member States have coped – and arguably converged towards - common EC/EU gender equality norms (1975-2000). The aim is to explain for the domain of European gender equality law the variable strategies that member governments have adopted in dealing with implementation. The conceptual framework of Europeanisation identifies three kinds of interrelated explanatory mechanisms to account for variation in the domestic impacts of European gender law: (1) institutional conditions that influence a state’s capacity to comply with or defect from EC norms; (2) cognitive factors, such as ‘policy-framing’, public opinion and political discourses and (3) forms of political interaction, such as advocacy coalitions, that push for or hinder the transformation of domestic gender regimes. The analytical approach to Europeanisation weds neo-institutionalist and discourse analysis with a comparative study of the implementation of EC/EU-directives, exploring equal treatment/opportunity policies (1970-2002) in six “most different” cases: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and UK. The research has involved a transnational network of country experts; its empirical data base includes systematic information on parliamentary legislative processes, political party positions, women’s organisations’ strategies and media debates, opinion polls and structures of the labour market, as well as decisions by the ECJ.

Results
Unexpectedly because of the primarily economic nature of the integration project, the European Union over the past three decades has gradually expanded women's rights, gender equality and non-discrimination norms. These findings contradict the assumptions held by feminist and non-feminist EU critics alike, namely that European negative integration and the consequences of market, economic and monetary union – together with the joint-decision-making trap - would jeopardise any prospects for positive integration.

Even more surprisingly, as a consequence of these EC provisions, the Europeanization of domestic gender policy has significantly advanced, as well. This is the case, despite the conspicuous diversity of gender cultures and regimes in a pluralistic Europe – with the differentiated male breadwinner/female caregiver model being prominent in Continental and
Southern Europe; an egalitarian dual breadwinner/dual caregiver model characteristic of Scandinavian societies and a liberal breadwinner model established for instance in the UK. Hence, the varying strategies of Member States’ responses to the challenge of implementing EC gender equality directives – ranging from resistance to learning, including adaptation and, occasionally, transformative change and policy innovation – warrant explanation. To account for these variations in the implementation of EC/EU gender equality law in Member States, a number of hypotheses are examined: a) the impact of ECJ infringement procedures and preliminary rulings; b) the legislative conflict and public controversy that the transposition of EC gender equality provisions has sparked in Member States, c) the role of gender politics, namely in state institutions, policy advocacy coalitions and the framing of political discourses.

Theoretically, the framework maps out the “complexities of Europeanisation” by developing a mechanisms-based approach. Aimed at bridging the gap between institutionalism and discourse analysis, between structure and agency, between the material and the ideational, the research project seeks to make a contribution to the theory and comparative methodology of Europeanisation research. Drawing on gender research allows the analytical framework of Europeanisation that has been developed for other policy-domains to expand and to encompass a broad range of “hard” legal as well as “soft” mechanisms.

Empirically, some of the key conditions under which the transformation of traditional gender regimes by equal treatment and non-discrimination norms will be likely have been specified by the six comparative country studies that explore the cases of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. These are original research findings by an international group of social and political scientists coordinated at the University of Bremen, Germany. An extensive appendix offers comparative statistical data on gender gaps in the development of European labour markets; lists the gender equality directives that have been adopted by the European Community/European Union and the decisions that the European Court of Justice has issued in the domain of gender equality (1970-2002).

Comparing its patterns and dynamics across the six (old) Member States, the book gives an account of the gender politics of Europeanization. Theorising the empirical findings, it argues that the outcome of the interplay between EU gender equality norms and domestic gender regimes depends on the “gendering” of Europeanization, shaped, among others, by the patterns of women's political representation, the gendered discursive frames for shaping public debates, and transnational networks that support domestic gender equality advocacy coalitions.

In the light of these findings in the area of gender equality policy, European governance can be described as a device for modernisation, based on new norms of procedural justice and innovative instruments (including gender mainstreaming) for promoting the restructuring of European societies, starting with labour markets, moving on to the reconciliation of work and family life as well as private law, and tackling sexual harassment and trafficking in women, too. Finally, in the area of equal treatment and anti-discrimination policy, Europeanisation does not necessarily result in a convergence towards common norms. Rather, these processes help articulate conflicting norms and diverging meanings, depending on structural context as much as cultural diversity.

“Gendering Europeanisation” studies in depth EC equality norms as an important dimension of social transformation in „constructing a European society by jurisdiction” (Richard Münch), albeit one that is being increasingly politicised. Equal opportunity, equal treatment and non-discrimination have been championed as key principles of „procedural justice“ aimed
at redefining „social solidarity“, social citizenship, individual and collective welfare in Europe, where the national welfare state has reached the limits of economic growth as a provider of substantive redistributive equality. More recently, political science textbooks finally also include topical chapters on „European gender politics“.¹ The research conducted in the project „Public discourses and gender equality in European governance: institutional dynamics in the multilevel polity of the EU“ has contributed to filling these research gaps, advancing the state of the art on European, market correcting „positive integration“ by gender equality norms - arguably a prototype for the “social Europe” to come. Here, the scope of equal treatment and non-discrimination transcends gender and will, arguably, include ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, and disability, as well.

Veröffentlichungen
Deutschsprachige Veröffentlichungen

Beiträge in Sammelbänden


Arbeitspapiere


Fremdsprachige Veröffentlichungen

Monographien


Locher, Birgit: Trafficking in Women in the European Union. VS Verlag 2006

Beiträge in Sammelbänden


Id.: “Europeanizing the Military: The ECJ as a Catalyst in Transforming the German Bundeswehr”; in Heidi Gottfried, Laura Reese Hg.: “Gender and Work in Comparative Perspective”; Lexington Press, 2003

Id.: “Constructing the EMU: Euro-Scepticism and the Emergence of a European Public Space”; in Bo Strath and Lars Magnusson, Hg., From the Werner Plan to EMU. In Search of a Political Economy for Europe. Brüssel, Peter Lang 2001


Ketelhut, Jörn: EU Gender Equality Law, Gender Disparities in Domestic Labour Markets, and Public EU Support, in: Liebert, with Sifft et al., Gendering Europeanisation (Multiple Europes, Vol. 19), Brussels: Peter Lang, 285-300

*Sonderhefte von Zeitschriften*

---

*Contributions to Journals*


Id. 1999: “Gender Politics in the European Union: The Return of the Public“; in: European Societies, 1999; (1) 2

Locher, Birgit 2001: „Feminism and Constructivism. Worlds Apart or Sharing the Middle Ground?“, mit Lisa Prügl; in International Studies Quarterly 45, S. 111-129

*Working-papers*


*Conferences and Workshops*

**Europeanization in Transatlantic Perspective. Joint Workshop: Institute for European Studies (IES), Cornell University & Jean Monnet Centre for European Studies (CEuS), University of Bremen Bremen, Dec. 8-9, 2000. (Participants: David Bathrick; Peter Katzenstein; Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, Jonas Pontusson, Dietmar Schirmer; Christine Eifler; Karin Gottschall; Zdzislaw Krasnodebski; Stephan Leibfried; Ulrike Liebert; Michael Zürn).**

**Qualifikationsarbeiten**


Sifft, Stefanie: “Discursive Europeanisation”; Inaugural-Dissertation, Universität Bremen (in progress)

**Anschlussprojekte**

„Citizenship and Constitutionalisation: Transforming the Public Sphere in East-West European Integration“. Funded by VolkswagenFoundation (4/2005 – 3/2008), with PhD fellows based in Bremen and international partners from Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic and Norway (Arena/Oslo).

“European Solidarity”. international and interdisciplinary research and book project, directed by Lars Magnusson and Bo Stråth, European University Institute, Florence, 2005-6.


**Links**

http://www.monnet-centre.uni-bremen.de/projects/research.htm
http://www.monnet-centre.uni-bremen.de/projects/consteps/index.html