

CEuS Working Paper No. 2002/1

Causal Complexities: Explaining Europeanisation

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Introduction

How can an emergent non-state polity construct from its common market a framework for equality, including social and economic rights for women and men, and extend it across its member states? European nation states, although faced with similar international challenges and societal complexities, continue to display distinct governance styles (Pierre & Peters, 2000:207). Within the different worlds of welfare in Europe, gender policy regimes have shaped and reshaped a diversity of worlds of gender orders (Sainsbury, 1999). Recently, under the constraints of economic and monetary integration in the 1990s, states have arguably lost much control over their welfare policies, more than they consented the European Union to gain in transferred authority (Leibfried & Pierson, 2000:267). Pitted at a crossroad between market and national sovereignty, the EU faces the question “whether it is still possible to escape a future in which the European project risks dissolution in a market zone with states competing in social dumping” (Magnusson & Strath, 2001:45). Since activist approaches to European social policy generally had fairly limited success, the evolution of gender-related EC policies over the past three decades represents a puzzle, even taking its limitations into consideration (Stratigaki 2000; Mazey 2000; Walby, 1999; Rossilli, 2000; Hoskyns, 1996; Ostner & Lewis, 1995). To what extent and how was this equality framework “empowered” (Checkel, 2001) in and across EU member states?

This paper explores impacts of Europeanisation on domestic equality policy by comparing member states with contrasting welfare and gender regimes.¹ Although the literature on comparative Europeanisation studies is vast (see below), it has not yet met with the equally prospering gender studies on EU politics and policy (cf. Caporaso & Jupille, 2001, Tesoka 1999; Hantrais, 2000).² By promoting an exchange between both

¹ With the term gender order, or gender regime, we draw on Ostner and Lewis' (1995:161) notion that refers to the “norms, principles, and policies informing the allocation of tasks, rights, and life chances” to individuals of different sex or sexual orientation.

² Studies of gender policy and politics in the EU include, among others, Warner, 1984; Ostner & Lewis 1995; Duncan 1995, 1996; Elman 1996; Hoskyns, 1996; 2001; Gardiner 1997; Saraceno 1997; Liebert 1997; 1999; Plett 1997; Mazey 2000; Rees, 1998; Walby, 1999; Hantrais 2000; Rossilli 2000.

strands, this paper seeks to yield new insights into the varieties of Europeanisation “between diversity and equality”.

Equality is neither a clear-cut norm – in different cultural contexts it defines and sanctions differing patterns of behaviour, living and thought. Nor is it an unambiguously shared value, since it has generated a variety of ideals and symbols as the basis for collective identifications. Thus, European history displays a continuous dynamics of attempts to put competing ideals of equality – from Christianity over bourgeois and socialist ideologies to feminisms – into practice (cf. Fetscher, 1995:230). While market institutions conceive equality and efficiency as a “big tradeoff” (Okun, 1975), the women’s movement is divided on whether to consider equality an ideal or obsolete. For instance, French difference feminism would see woman as representing any radical force that subverts the structures of patriarchal discourse (Kristeva, 1986), and equality as conducive to cooptation and disempowerment. By contrast, for post-structuralist feminism, the primary undertaking would be to deconstruct the dichotomy man/woman and the associated oppositions in Western culture, instead of stabilising them by equality norms. For the purpose of this paper, our concept of equality is embedded in discussions rights and resources that are necessary to overcome inequality (Dworkin 1981). More in particular, we adopt the European Commission’s definition as “a situation in which all individuals can develop their capabilities and can make choices without being constrained by gender stereotypes or restrictive roles; and where different behaviours, goals and needs of women and men are equally recognised, valued and promoted” (Europäische Kommission, 1998:33). Equality policy, accordingly, is understood as the set of public policies that seek to promote gender equality as a societal value and norm, by adopting equitable programmes and measures.³

Despite this normatively controversial ground, our paper hopes to offer three straightforward contributions to the emerging sub-discipline of Comparative Europeanisation:

- (1) While it is without doubt that Europeanisation matters for domestic change (Cowles, Caporaso & Risse, 2001), we systematically explore its impacts on social and economic gender rights over a range of six EU member states. We argue that in the context of a

³ “Gender equity” is defined as an equitable treatment of individuals of different genders, includes equal treatment as much as differential treatment, as long as this is considered as of equal value, regarding rights, entitlements, obligations and chances (European Commission, 1998:32).

diversity of domestic gender orders, EC equality norms have enhanced cross-national convergence, but that they have not produced harmonisation. The implementation process of EC gender directives between 1975-2000 was uneven, and domestic frames of mind varied, from accommodation over resilience to outright refusal. But, by 1998, all 15 member states had implemented the equality *acquis communautaire*, though without jeopardising national distinctions.

- (2) For explaining the dynamics of Europeanisation, we move beyond the theoretical debates between rational institutionalism and social constructivism (id.; Börzel & Risse, 2000), on one hand, and between “mainstream” and feminist debates (GEP, 2000), on the other, in three ways. First, we shift the traditional variable approach to a focus on “manipulable” institutional conditions which may influence a state’s decision to comply or defect from EC norms (Haas, 1998:18). Second, we consult rationalist, constructivist and feminist accounts to explore how “policy-framing”⁴ links institutional inducements to political interaction, thus transforming domestic policy. Does change primarily result from strategic interaction, informed by individual rationalities, shaped by institutional opportunities and constraints; hence, independently from the ways policy problems are framed? Or are “discursive shifts” and the re-framing of policy crucial links that are missing in the rationalist account? We claim that whether “discursive shifts” will be a necessary condition for explaining domestic change depends on the pattern of domestic divergence from EC frames. In particular, this paper seeks to uncover the contingent conditions under which the domestic interplay of structure and agency involves a re-framing of equality and gender as a crucial link in Europeanisation.
- (3) In the field of methodology, we see the comparative analyses and systematic case studies included in this paper as contributions to “diversity-oriented research”, with a focus on contrasting configurations, causal complexities, and their underlying generalities (Ragin, 2000). Diversity-oriented research is particularly attractive for reformulating explanatory standards and advancing theory in comparative politics (Zuckerman 1997:277ff.), by putting alternative theoretical ideas in dialogue with evidence.

⁴ As we use the term here broadly, “framing” is the process by which people construct interpretations of problematic situations; the idea of framing refers to the “selecting, organising, interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality so as to provide guideposts for knowing, analysing, persuading, and acting” (Rein & Schon, 1991:263; cf. also Kohler-Koch 2000).

This introductory chapter first defines Europeanisation, second lays out the explanatory approach, third develops the research hypotheses, and fourth outlines the research design.

I. Defining Europeanisation

“Europeanisation” is an interdisciplinary term that is diffused across several disciplines, including sociology, economics, social anthropology, history, and political sciences.⁵ In the latter case, it has profiled as a key concept of a new comparative approach to European integration studies. With its focus on the impacts of integration, comparative Europeanisation analyses have developed into a quickly expanding research programme at the intersection of comparative politics and international relations. Reflecting the dynamics of the integration process after Maastricht, the term has been successful in directing attention to an always larger range of Europeanisation impacts and for analysing change in practically all sectors and dimensions of state politics, domestic politics and public policies.⁶ However, the term “Europeanisation” is used in different meanings.

We define Europeanisation here as transnational processes conducive to shared frameworks, such that, as Helen Wallace puts it, “a European dimension becomes an embedded feature which frames politics and policy within the European states” (Wallace, 2000:370). A framework is commonly understood as “a particular set of rules, ideas or beliefs that you use in order to deal with problems or to decide what to do”.⁷ The term “framing” in this context can have three different meanings. First, in Europeanisation, European states create shared frames of references by framing common sets of beliefs and

⁵ See, for instance, Tarrow, 1995; Borneman & Fowler, 1997, Fligstein, 2000.

⁶ Studies of the impacts of Europeanisation focus adjustments and transformations of the nation state in general (Ladrech 1994; Olsen, 1995; Foellesdal *et al.*, 1997), or have studied changes in specific ones, such as Germany (Katzenstein, 1997), or Austria (Falkner, 1999); they have examined subnational structures, such as regions, national and subnational courts, national bureaucracies and administration, and national Parliaments. Europeanisation studies of domestic public policies are most numerous (Héritier, Knill & Mingers 1996; Mény *et al.*, 1996; Hanf & Soetendorp, 1998; Börzel 2002; Caporaso & Jupille, 2001; Kerwer, 2001; Kerwer & Teutsch, 2001; Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999; Schneider, 2001), including also “unconventional policies” such as on the regulation of drugs, alcohol and sexuality (Kurzer, 2001). Recently, the politics of Europeanisation has received growing interest, including domestic political actors, processes, and contentious movements (Imig & Tarrow, 2001), political elites (Checkel, 2001). Finally, studies on the Europeanisation of national political cultures have developed in several separate subfields which still await conceptual integration, such as comparative European public opinion studies (Niedermeyer & Sinnott, 1995; Gabel 1998; Liebert, 1998, 1999) on the one hand, and analyses of changing nation state identities (Risse *et al.*, 2001) and of the Europeanisation of national public spheres, on the other (Eder & Kantner, 2000).

⁷ See Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, Harper Collins Publisher, 1999:672-3

ideas, and creating common frameworks. Second, Europeanisation induces people in member states to frame domestic structures and activities in ways to incorporate “a European dimension”. And third, Europeanisation puts a frame around domestic settings in the sense that it makes their particularities look more striking, with all their strengths and weaknesses. In all these meanings, Europeanisation can be conceived as frame convergence, by, in and of European states.

This definition encompasses a social constructivist component as well as an institutionalist perspective. The former emphasises norms and “norm diffusion”, understood as “domestic empowerment of European norms” (Checkel, 2001:180). The latter focuses on European level institutional arrangements and an “incremental process of re-orienting the direction and shape of [...] national politics and policy making (Ladrech, cit. after Börzel & Risse, 2000:1; Cowles, Caporaso & Risse, 2001:3).

Europeanisation defined by its outcome in terms of frame convergence differs, on the one hand, from globalisation since normative frameworks are deeply embedded in regionally condensed forms of institutionalisation. On the other hand, it should also be noted that Europeanisation is not restricted to the EU, and neither does it end at the outer borders of EU member states, but extends beyond them. We also try to abstain from projecting a finality onto Europeanisation. Convergence towards shared frameworks does not require uniformity, or would imply an “inexorable erosion of the domestic” and a “displacing” or “overriding” of member state’s internal processes (cf. Wallace, 2000:371; Maurer, Wessels & Mittag, 2000:1). Rather, “frame convergence” is conceived here as compatible with domestic diversity, and, depending on it, must be expected to come in multiple forms of outcomes. For instance, as social anthropologists have argued, Europeanisation may be “a politically explosive” and “accelerated process and a set of effects that are redefining forms of identification with territory and people”, conducive to “fundamentally reorganizing territoriality and peoplehood”, and therefore to ultimately transform “the two principles that have shaped modern European order” (Borneman & Fowler, 1997:489). Others have found Europeanisation to proceed incrementally, enhancing government and administrative adaptation to European regulations (cf. Hanf & Soetendorp, 1998).

Let us therefore now turn to the question of how to account for different patterns and dynamics of Europeanisation. It appears paradoxical to expect multiple forms of Europeanisation operating in different domestic contexts to enhance cross-national convergence towards a common regulatory framework.

II. Explaining Europeanisation: a Mechanisms Approach

Europeanisation, as we defined it, is a process of convergence towards shared policy frameworks. To understand its underlying dynamics, we need to decompose it into its elementary pieces and to identify the relations between them. A useful image is that of a chain of interactive causal mechanisms that drive Europeanisation.

In search of these driving forces, comparative Europeanisation research has advanced an agenda of three basic questions (Börzel & Risse, 2000): First, how do impacts of European norms, policies and institutions vary across states, subsystems and sectors? Second, which are the necessary and the sufficient conditions that account for domestic changes? And, third, are the effects of Europeanisation conducive to convergence or divergence? For answering these questions, it offers a range of competing theoretical approaches. A number of authors have contrasted two, and sometimes three alternative “logics”, “approaches” or “images”, each with causal claims regarding the forces that are supposed to drive – or block – the dynamics of “domestic change”, “compliance”, “implementation”, or “norm empowerment”.⁸

Since sometimes different images, models and logics share similar causal assumptions while apparently similar logics can produce different expectations, cumulative research on Europeanisation becomes an increasingly difficult enterprise. A comprehensive explanatory framework for Europeanisation that would integrate and contrast competing explanatory approaches is still lacking. In the meantime, a “social mechanisms” approach to social

⁸ For instance, authors make distinctions between a rationalist vs. sociological logic of domestic change (Börzel & Risse, 2000); functional institutionalism vs. social constructivism for explaining state compliance with international norms (Haas, 1998); institutional steering vs. empowerment vs. cognitive framing mechanisms for explaining domestic adaptation patterns (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999); institutionalist vs. constructivist interpretations of domestic change (Kurzer, 2001); rationalist (societal pressure) vs. social constructivist (elite learning) explanation of “domestic norm empowerment” (Checkel, 2001); institutionalist vs. political cultural vs. rational choice account for variation in domestic implementation (Duina, 1997); functionalist” vs. “institutionalist image” of Europeanisation (Kerwer, 2001).

theory can provide some orientation.⁹ This is facilitated by the fact that most approaches to Europeanisation, although differing in their emphasis, draw on institutional, behavioural and cognitive elements in the processes they aim to account for. In a mechanisms-based theoretical framework, theories can be compared by the kinds of macro- and micro-mechanisms that they postulate to be at work in the dynamics of Europeanisation.

A. Mechanisms-based Social Theorising

The mechanisms based approach to social and political theory conceives of social change as an association between two macro-states or events. In the search for explanation, it aims at reconstructing the transitions between them by specifying the social mechanisms that generate observed associations between these events (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998:1). In particular, it assumes that change is the result of a chain of transitions from the macro-level to micro-level and back to the macro-level that is operated by three categories of mechanisms:

“Environmental” or “situational mechanisms” that depict externally generated influences on the conditions that affect individual or collective action. They link macro-level social, political and institutional structures, events or states to the reality of individual (collective) actors, by shaping their opportunities and constraints, perceptions, beliefs, desires, identities, interests (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998:23).

“Cognitive” or “action-formation mechanisms” operate “through alterations of individual and collective perceptions” (Tarrow, 1999:10). They operate at the micro-level, explaining, “how a specific combination of individual desires, beliefs, and action opportunities generate a specific action” (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998:23).

“Relational” or “transformation mechanisms”, finally, depict action modes or logics of interaction between individuals and “how individual actions are transformed into some kind of collective outcome, be it intended or unintended” (Hedström & Swedberg,

⁹ Jon Elster defines mechanisms as “frequently occurring and easily recognisable causal patterns that are triggered under generally unknown conditions or with indeterminate consequences” (Elster, cit. after Tarrow, 1999:10). “Social mechanisms” are “repeatedly operating causal chains which in social systems trigger expectations and through these expectations further causal chains, so that small causes can have large effects, while the failure of a social mechanism can have further implications beyond its own effect” (Luhmann, 1994:425; translation U.L.).

1998:23). Different kinds of transformation mechanisms are modelled by game theory, by neoclassical market models, exchange-network models, or coalition theories.

Regarding each of these, rationalist and constructivist approaches would entertain different ideas about what the crucial mechanisms are. The current feminist debate and gender analyses of the “new challenges to gender, democracy, welfare states” in the European and international context (GEP, 2000)¹⁰ move across the whole field that rationalism, constructivism, and reflectivism have spanned (Christiansen, Jørgensen & Wiener, 1999:531f.):

On one hand, liberal-pragmatic approaches pursue an interest in explaining the “role of women’s agency in politics” and the conditions for a “politics of empowerment and inclusion”;

Postmodern strands of feminism, on the other hand, reject rationalist approaches in reflecting on the “formation of political identities based upon particularities cross class, cross gender, and cross ethnicity”, and, in particular, in reflecting on gender equality in an EU mirror” (Hobson 2000);

Covering a middle-ground, feminist-constructivist approaches would pursue normative constructions of gender in “the global politics of home-based work” and by changing western welfare states (Prügl, 1999); “between formal politics and everyday life politics” as in cross-border transitions of citizenship, between the local, the national and the transnational (GEP, 2000).

Hence, current gender and feminist theorising brings rational as well as social-constructivist ideas into the study of gender politics in Europeanisation. Feminist constructivism (see Locher & Prügl, 2001a; 2001b), in particular, starts from an “ontology of becoming” that conceptualises the transnational political world as a social world, and political processes as processes of constructing gender as well as enabled by gender constructions. Such constructions are malleable but, as feminist constructivist writings

¹⁰ Under these topics, the international conference, organised by the Danish “Research Programme Gender, Empowerment and Politics”, at Vilvorde August 18-20, 2000, brought together feminist and gender researchers from a large range of European countries and the US, including Birte Stim, Drude Dahlerup, Anette Borchorst, Christina Bergqvist, Iris Marion Young, Marjorie Mayo, Joni Lovenduski, Anne Phillips, Ute Gerhard, Jacqueline Heinen, Anne Maria Holli, Anna Jónasdóttir, Trudie Knijn, Jane Lewis, Ruth Lister, Irina Novikova, Carita Peltonen, Hege Skjeie, Celia Valiente, Qi Wang, among others.

argue, state institutions expend considerable effort to construct, maintain or change gender roles, identities and practices that are located in particular socio-historical contexts, and still remarkably consistent throughout history and across cultures. A feminist constructivist view is interested in exploring changing meanings of gender and policy in postnational domestic politics that are embedded in the EU and exposed to an international environment. It sensitises to normative and cognitive dimensions involved in the empowerment of transnational norms that a rationalist account would leave unnoticed. Gender analyses of Europeanisation highlight intense controversies about the meanings of “mother” and “father” and collisions between “maternalist” vs. “egalitarian” gender norms. They question measures of “inequality” and assessments of “problem pressure”, since these are seen as depending on researchers’ “different standpoints” (Hartsock). This includes the measure itself – the norm of equality – that is object of contrasting interpretations. Hence, for capturing inter- and cross-cultural dimensions of norm-empowerment, social constructivism offers an important conceptual tool kit.

Empirical and comparative studies of the Europeanisation of gender equality policy can seek to provide the empirical evidence necessary to assess rationalist versus constructivist propositions, respectively. To illustrate this claim, the following overview will draw on examples from the literature on European integration and Europeanisation.

B. Environmental Mechanisms of Europeanisation

Europeanisation is shaped by a range of environmental opportunities and constraints that include external as well as domestic institutions. In a sociological view, institutions symbolise and represent an order, and they create a framework for materialising it. Hence, they perform normative, cognitive and regulatory functions, each of which is performed by a distinct set of regulatory, normative and cognitive mechanisms (cf. Scott, 1995). First, the regulatory function of institutions is based on enforcement mechanisms, such as law, sanctions, instrumental logic, rules and procedures; legality serves here as the basis of legitimacy. Second, the normative functions of institutions derive from mechanisms, such as social obligations, the logic of “appropriateness”, accreditation, and certification; here, legitimacy is grounded on morality. Last, but not least, institutions also perform cognitive functions, based on mechanisms such as “taken for grantedness”, imitation or emulation, orthodoxy, prevalence, isomorphism or cultural support; here, the basic criterion is conceptual correctness. European governance rests on institutional mechanisms of

different kinds that perform primarily regulatory, normative or cognitive functions with regard to domestic actors. The tool kit of governance mechanisms available to EU decision makers includes juridical “hard law” as well as “soft mechanisms”, such as monitoring and “best practices”. While rational-institutionalist approaches to Europeanisation highlight legal enforcement, rational-institutional incentives and constraints to explain domestic alignments with supranational norms, constructivists entertain ideas of cognitive mechanisms that enhance norm-transmission –internalisation, socialisation and learning - conducive to attitudinal transformation and conversion. Feminist approaches, in particular, emphasise gender-sensitising “harder” provisions, such as “gender-quota” built into institutions, as well as “softer” devices, such as anti-sexist codes of conduct and “methodologies” of gender-mainstreaming (Mazey, 2000). I will here distinguish five different environmental mechanisms: legal, institutional opportunities, knowledge-based, spillover, and public pressure.

1. Legal Compliance Mechanisms

Legalistic and rational-institutionalist approaches conceive Europeanisation as a question of producing compliance “beyond the nation state” – where “addressees of a rule ‘adhere to the provision of the accord and to the implementing measures that they have instituted’ (cf. Neyer & Zürn, 2001: 4). One needs to distinguish between compliance as rule-based actions of addressees that are enforced by sanctions, induced by monitoring, or by juridification and legal internalisation, on the one hand, and adherence to norms that is an expression of norm acceptance and internalisation, on the other hand. While compliance is produced by a social influence that leads to changes in actor’s overt behaviour in the direction intended by the source, and results from controlling desired outcomes and monitoring recipients’ behaviour, it may or may not lead to attitude change. Forced compliance, in particular, is the outcome of inducing an actor to advocate publicly a position that is contrary to his or her attitudes. In EU-research, several legal and institutional types of compliance mechanisms can be distinguished: First, under the ECJ’s doctrines of supremacy of EC law, of direct effect and indirect effect, Stone Sweet and Brunell advanced their theory of the “constitutionalisation of the treaties” (Stone Sweet & Brunell, 1998), emphasising citizens’ recourse to the European Court or Justice as a mechanism to promote legislative compliance by states. Second, being responsible for ensuring that treaty provisions and decisions are properly applied, whether directly or requiring transposition into national law, the Commission can set the infringement

procedure in motion. Third, as sociological analyses of formal and informal institutions show, systems of monitoring are forceful mechanisms that shape the will of both state and non-state actors to comply with international and European norms. EC decision makers can choose among various policy modes – market-correcting, positive integration policies; market-making, negative integration policies; or “framing policies” – each based on different mechanisms to drive Europeanisation (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999:8).

2. Institutional control mechanisms

Theories of international relations focus on the systemic level to understand the causes of “why states might choose to comply or not” (Haas, 1998:20). Functional institutionalism highlights a range of inducements for compliance that shift between vertical images of compliance and horizontal models by transnational exchange, including, among others, the following mechanisms:

Verification of state compliance, by providing prompt information about state actions, early warning of violations, certification of non-compliance with EU laws by member states (Haas, 1998:28 ff.);¹¹

Horizontal linkages and “dense networks” among institutions involved in an issue area may enhance compliance by “encouraging states to build up their reputation to anticipate reciprocity”, depending on frequency of interactions, rewards for compliance (Haas, 1998:27);

New EU regulatory policy that affects the domestic distribution of power and resources and thus alter the domestic rules of the game; here they see an actors-centred account, based on strategic interaction as the most appropriate approach to explaining cross-national variation (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999);

Monitoring provisions, to publicise state actions to potentially critical audiences and to provide more and better information with which to act (Haas, 1998:28 ff.);

Capacity building, by anticipating resources, including technology, training and financing, to encourage compliance (Haas, 1998:28 ff.).

¹¹ Monitoring and verification provisions can differ as to their object, who is responsible, whether they are voluntary or mandatory, and their frequency.

Hence, assuming that rational calculations of interests are the driving forces that explain compliance, a focus on environmental mechanisms emphasises governance mechanisms capable of stimulating actors' interests in ways to promote compliance.

3. *Framing Policy*

Knowledge-induced change is possible as the result of a specific type of EC “framing policy” that aims at mobilising cognitive support in member states. This type of EU policy neither prescribes concrete institutions, nor does it modify institutional opportunities and constraints, but it affects domestic arrangements by “altering the beliefs and expectations of domestic actors, thus indirectly affecting their preferences and strategies” (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999:2).¹² Another example for institutional mechanisms that further knowledge-based changes in attitudes and behaviour are information and communication campaigns for developing “national concern”: state decisions to comply are expected to be enhanced by EU institutions that, in the short run, “provide information to the public to catalyse concern on issues for which mass concern already exists”; and institutional strategies that, in the long run, provide “public education, the creation and strengthening of NGOs, and the promotion of the findings and individual status of epistemic community members enhance national concern” (Haas, 1998:28).

4. *Spillover*

The classical neo-functionalist idea of “spillover” can be interpreted as a mechanism for triggering knowledge-based changes in behaviour. In Lindberg’s definition spillover is “a situation in which a given action, related to a specific goal, creates a situation in which the original goal can be assured only by taking further actions, which in turn create a further condition and a need for more action and so forth” (cit. after Rosamond, 2000:60).¹³ “Spillovers” thus presume environmental problem pressure as the crucial mechanism that triggers learning and the development of new ideas about policy problems. Of functionalist origin, the concept refers to a specific governance mode – the Monnet method – linked to a particular pattern of agency – a coalition between supranational

¹² It appears problematic to reduce “framing policy” to a residual mechanism that comprises only “not-yet positive or negative integration policies”. It should be assumed that “framing” is the “bottleneck of constructing legitimate institutions” (Kohler-Koch, 2000), including all EU policy and domestic implementation. In this sense all EU policy would involve framing mechanisms that link EU institutions to domestic agency.

¹³ The idea of “spillover” originates in the neo-functionalist theory of integration formulated by Ernst Haas: “The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-1957 (1st edition 1958; 2nd edition 1968). Here,

institutions and functional interest associations. “Spillover” is the term for the link between institutional, cognitive and agency-formation mechanisms.

5. Public Pressure

Public pressure are part of environmental constraints under which governments act. Following a rationalist perspective, governments will be interested in re-election and therefore responsive to their constituencies: “Political attitudes influence the types and extent of policies carried out” (Lampinen and Uusikylä, 1998:239; cit. after Mbaye, 2001:265). The conventional expectation is that the lower the overall mass support for the country’s membership in the EU, the higher the probability that a member state will face difficulties in implementing European policies (Lampinen and Uusikylä, 1998:239). On the other hand, it is theoretically conceivable that publics might put pressure on governments to comply with international norms if these norms are strongly supported by mass public opinion. However, political culture is more frequently understood as more resistant to change than any other institution, since it “dictates not what we think but how we think” (Kurzer, 2001:22). While culturalist analyses – including comparative studies of national political cultures – focus on aggregate structures of mass public attitudes – a mechanisms approach explores micro-level processes to explain individual and collective preference building, identity and agency formation, power mobilisation and reproduction.

C. Cognitive Mechanisms of Europeanisation

While environmental compliance mechanisms produce domestic conformity with supranational norms by deploying control and pressure, including sanctions and coercion, cognitive mechanisms involve information and persuasion devices that typically aim at enhancing acceptance or even conversion towards new beliefs, opinions, attitudes, values on the part of domestic actors. Social constructivist views of domestic conformity with EU norms suggest “ideas” and “understandings” to be central in shaping choices by “goal-seeking states”, as well as the role of “cognitive frames” for interpreting how national interests are likely to be affected by any particular decision, and for determining attitudinal and behavioural changes. “Commonly held norms may play some role in this manner, but the most important source of influence for social constructivists are the shared causal understandings, or consensual knowledge, which help guide decision makers in making

spillover referred to the modes in which integration in one economic sector would create pressures for further

choices in complex and unfamiliar domains” (Haas, 1998:32). Cognitive mechanisms need to combine with agency – mainly epistemic communities – to explain knowledge-based attitudinal and behavioural change. Knowledge based mechanisms are assumed to shape communications, to account for strategic choices by which policy advocates seek to mobilise diffuse or specific support among citizens. Cognitive framing of European policy is expected to explain why European mass publics do or do not develop an interest in European issues, and how they communicatively interact with political elites. In the literature, different sets of ideas emphasize a different nexus for explaining cognitive shifts that give meaning to Europeanisation, among them elite learning, discursive framing, and frame-reflection.

1. Elite Learning

Political learning can be conceived as a psychological process that helps political elites to cope with new or difficult situations that may be triggered, among others, by external incentives, unpleasant experiences, cognitive dissonance or social comparison. Learning mechanisms can involve norm transmission, where social norms are conceived as the “cement of society” (Elster 1989: 251) – as consensual standards that provide direction, organise social interaction, make situations meaningful, and prescribe what behaviour is socially appropriate in a given context. But learning can also refer to cognitive frames, ideas and understandings that shape policy choices by goal-seeking states. While Checkel suggests “elite learning” based on norm diffusion to explain “domestic empowerments of European understandings” (Checkel, 2001:180; 194), Haas, in contrast, describes cognitive innovation mechanisms to trigger new ideas and thus reshape “collective causal understandings” of national interests (Haas, 1998:30). In this perspective, Europeanisation is a result of learning processes by societal elites, that are conducive to policy diffusion and innovation (Berry & Berry 1999). The following cognitive mechanisms may be involved in these processes:

Negative public perceptions: “policy-oriented learning” by the dominant actors in the policy subsystem is explained by negative public perceptions regarding policy decisions and their effects (Kiser & Ostrom, 1982);

Cognitive dissonance: a cognitive dissonance between knowledge in relation to basic values and causal assumptions that constitute “core beliefs” may urge an advocacy coalition to learn, and (Sabatier, 1998:122);

“Nesting” may be conceptual or legal, and regards “the causal connections which state decision makers believe tie together various issues”, such that choices to comply in one issue may favour or require changes also in another area (Haas, 1998:27-8).

Besides “norm diffusion” and “cognitive innovation”, “modelling” is a further cognitive mechanism of social learning (Bandura 1986): here people learn from the rules and actions of others and use this information to generate courses of action to suit their particular purposes.

2. Strategic Framing and Frame Reflection

The frame concept has become relevant for understanding discursively constructed problem definitions, the structuring of alternative solutions, and the shaping of individual and collective preferences. As Beate Kohler-Koch points out, the framing approach is distinct from rational choice as well as from normative frameworks (cf. 2000:515). On the one hand, it can demonstrate that the way in which alternative options are framed has an independent impact on an actor’s preferences, thus questioning the basic assumptions of rational choice theory that decision-making is determined exclusively by the expected utility, and not by the formulation of a choice problem. On the other hand, in order to make sense of “an amorphous, ill-defined problematic situation”, a frame is different from norm-based valuations because it basically operates with definitions and distinctions. While the idea of “framing” refers to the mental structures and appreciations by which people construct their worlds, the concept of “re-framing” or “frame-shifts” captures how policy problem-setting frames change over time (Rein & Schon, 1991:267). Assuming that policy controversies are “inherently subject to multiperspectival accounts”, “frame-reflective discourse” helps participants to reflect on the frame conflicts inherent in their controversies and to explore potentials for their resolution. In this context, “frame critical policy analysis is a strategy to enhance frame-reflective policy discourse by identifying the taken-for-granted assumptions that underlie understandings and actions in a problematic policy situation” (Rein & Schon, 1991:265-7). For instance, Barbara Hobson analyses the EU’s impact on the gendering of citizenship through the contrasting lenses of Sweden and Ireland by adopting a frame-reflective methodology (Hobson, 2000).

3. *Cognitive Heuristics*

Frame reflective analysis helps to illuminate the “cognitive heuristics” that actors use and that account for biases and distortions. Namely “mental shortcuts” free individuals from the necessity to process information completely and systematically. As simplifying cognitive routines cognitive heuristics serve as ways of problem solving and lead to approximate solutions, but they do not reflect a deeper understanding of the problem structure (Kahneman/Slovic/Tversky 1982; cit. after Manstead/Hedwstone 1996: 296).

D. Interactive mechanisms in Europeanisation

After having explored some of the environmental mechanisms that promote domestic change, and cognitive mechanisms in the construction of meanings involved in Europeanisation, the third kind of transformational mechanisms aims at capturing the dynamics of political interaction conducive to transformation. Cognitive mechanisms – interest calculation, learning, modelling, framing – fashion preferences and identities and thus form agency. In the transition from the micro- to the macro-level of domestic change, agents equipped with variously gendered social identities, policy beliefs and preference orders, resources and constraints will engage in political interaction in struggles to define authoritative decisions on domestic policy stability, change or innovation. The policy subsystem comprises a variety of arenas where such interactions take place: government coalitions, legislatures, courts, corporatist arrangements, party congresses, and mass media. It includes all public and private actors and organisations that are actively involved in a policy problem or question. The interaction or relational mechanisms that typically explain, if not the outcomes, then the influence on decision-making, include “norm negotiations”, “policy advocacy coalitions”, “multilevel action coordination” and “collective action”.

1. *Policy Discourse*

Here we refer with “discourse” to “learned discussion” or “dialogue”, as a socially conditioned political practice involving “language in use in speech and writing”.¹⁴ Following Rein and Schon, policy discourse consists of the communicative interactions of individuals, interest groups, social movements, and institutions “through which problematic situations are converted to policy problems, agendas are set, decisions are

¹⁴ Theoretically, discourse implies “a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), it constitutes ‘the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people’, and is thus ‘constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it’” (Wodak, cit. after Titscher *et al.*, 2000:25/26).

made, and actions are taken” (Rein & Schon, 1991:263). As a political conversion and transformation process, political discourse, therefore, cannot be reduced to “the sum of political actors’ public accounts of the polity’s purposes, goals, and ideals”, as Vivien Schmidt writes, since its effects are more pervasive than “to explain political events, to justify political actions, to develop political identities, to reshape and/or reinterpret political history, and, all in all, to frame the national political discussion” (Schmidt, 2000). As social practices, public discourses should neither be reduced to language systems of ideological or theoretical assumptions. Compared to other mechanisms of political interaction in decision-making – such as interest based bargaining and negotiation – political discourse – in the sense attributed to it by Jürgen Habermas – relies on, discusses and questions validity criteria with the aim of producing consensus among discourse participants (Titscher *et al.*, 2000).

Feminist discourse analysis aims at uncovering power-related effects of political discourse. Apart from promoting norms, defining problems, forming preferences and resolving policy controversy, political discourses, through feminist lenses, are perceived as impacting not only social identity and political agency but, in particular, emancipatory change. In her contribution to the feminist discussion of discourse theory, Nancy Fraser assesses the “uses and abuses” of discourse theory for feminist politics from the assumption that discourse analysis should, above all, serve to understand the conditions for and to shed light on the prospects for emancipatory social change and political practice. This involves the following questions (Fraser, 1992:51/2; cf. Hobson & Lindholm, 1997):

- How social identities are fashioned and altered over time, and, in particular, women’s collective identities;¹⁵
- How, under conditions of inequality, power resources are deployed and social groups formed and unformed into social agents for change;
- How the cultural hegemony of dominant groups in society is secured.

2. “Norm Entrepreneurs” and “Epistemic Communities”

To explain norm diffusion and change, cognitive mechanisms, such as elite learning, modelling or innovation are not sufficient unless agency is included. Norm entrepreneurs play an important role: They “actively initiate change processes”, “deliberately try to ‘sell’

¹⁵ Fraser’s concept of identity comprises “complex, shifting, discursively constructed social identities”, that provide “an alternative to reified, essentialist conceptions of gender identity on one hand, and simple negations and dispersals of identity, on the other” (Fraser, 1992: 68).

policy ideas to other actors”, and aim to “persuade others to internalise new norms”. However, in cases where they meet “principled norm resistance” and “active opposition against the introduction of novel ideals that compete for resources and attention”, norms are translated rather than imitated, “This translation process involves compromise and shared as well as competing objectives: it is a negotiation process” (Elgstrom, 2000:457-8). Norm entrepreneurs are frequently members of “epistemic communities” who will seek to introduce national measures consistent with their beliefs, and utilise the enforcement mechanisms of the bureaucratic units in which they operate (Haas, 1990, 1992). Haas points to more specific cognitive strategies to more broadly diffuse the beliefs of the epistemic communities, among others persuasion, recruitment patterns, policy emulation, or third-party inducements (*ibid.* 34).

3. *Policy Advocacy Coalitions*

The advocacy coalition framework explains policy innovation or change towards European norms primarily as the success of coalitions with a shared policy belief system who finally prevail because of (a) a favourable distribution of resources and constraints under which they act;¹⁶ (b) the impact of external events, such as changing public opinion, or international influences; (c) the intervention of “policy brokers” (Sabatier, 1998:102); (d) policy learning by decision-makers. Advocacy coalitions do not need to build on “iron triangles”, including the inner circles of administrative agencies, legislative committees, and interest groups, but may be constituted by those journalists, researchers and policy analysts with an impact on the generation, diffusion and evaluation of policy ideas (Sabatier, 1998:120).

4. *Multilevel Action Coordination*

Policy networks for multilevel action coordination can be retained to suit particularly well the multilevel mode of European governance and policy making. Their combination with “advocacy” reflects particular resource problems that under-represented groups face. Two types of mechanisms make part of the logic that drives such networks. First, the decentralisation and fragmentation of the institutional structure of policy making in the EU; these offer opportunity structures that are favourable to forming communication

¹⁶ Stable parameters that define the resources and constraints under which policy advocacy coalitions act and compete, include basic attributes of the problem area, the distribution of natural resources, socio-cultural values and the social structure, as well as basic constitutional and institutional structures. External events comprise changes in socio-economic conditions, in public opinion, governing coalitions, as well as policy decisions and impacts from other subsystems that influence policy actors and their patterns of framing public policy (cf. Sabatier, 1998).

networks. Secondly, “multilevel action coordination” (Helfferrich & Kolb, 2001) describes an interaction logic and form of cooperation that requires neither a collective identity nor group solidarity as cognitive mechanisms on which agency formation is based. Self-named advocates of weak or under-represented groups usually neither enjoy political positions of power or authority, nor do they suffer or benefit directly from impacts of the policies in question. But activists identify and acknowledge one another as advocates of a non-represented or under-represented group who are moved to act in a common or public interest. Hence, the shared perception of their structural minority position would enhance individual resolve as well as mutual trust that both can be deemed necessary for successfully coordinated action.

The boomerang mechanism is arguably one of the most innovative ideas brought into transnational politics by advocacy networks to coordinate action at multiple levels. According to this pattern State A blocks redress to organisations within it; they activate a transnational network whose members pressure their own states and (if relevant) a third-party organisation, which in turn pressures State A (Keck & Sikkink, 1996:13). This pattern of coordinated action depicts a particularly efficient technique to coordinate scarce action resources at two levels and to target them towards a common goal.

5. Collective Action Mobilisation Mechanisms

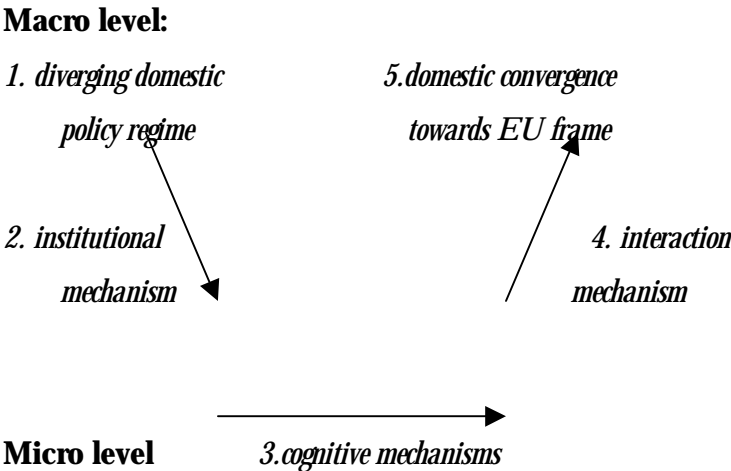
Decision makers interact under the constraints of collective action: constraints may derive either from their electoral constituencies or from contentious mobilisation. European protest movements have become a salient feature of the emerging Euro-polity, including such groups as farmers, environmentalists, migrants, and women to a much lesser extent (Imig & Tarrow, 2001a). In particular, four mechanisms form, shape and mediate social pressure on decision makers (Imig & Tarrow, 2001b:23): brokerage of interests between national groups from different countries; media constructions of European meanings around issues not inherently European; multilevel lobbying around issues in which the state and the EU share competencies; identity shifts towards the Europeanisation of values. However, neither gender policy issues nor gender politics were found to play any relevant role in European contentious action. This may be surprising, since the Europeanisation of domestic gender equality policy involves controversial understandings of gender and equality norms, and could therefore be expected to offer ground for collective contentious action. With Imig and Tarrow, we should further include

social and contentious movements with an impact on public policy (cf. Imig & Tarrow, 2001a).

E. One Model – Two Logics of Europeanisation

The causal complexities of Europeanisation will play out differently in different policy domains. The three kinds of causal mechanisms will be sufficient to explain any process of Europeanisation conducive to domestic change. Yet, depending on domestic regimes and their divergence from EU frameworks, these mechanisms will combine in different configurations. Figure 1 represents the theoretical assumptions on which our theoretical mechanisms-based model of Europeanisation rests (see Figure 1: Europeanisation, a mechanisms-based model).

Figure 1 – Europeanisation: a mechanisms-based model



The previous section has discussed a variety of Europeanisation mechanisms, including rational-institutionalist, constructivist and feminist ideas about the driving forces of these processes. Summarising this discussion, Table 1 provides an overview of Europeanisation mechanisms, including examples for environmental, framing and political interaction causal assumptions found in the literature on Europeanisation and internationalisation. In particular, this table makes three propositions:

- (1) It claims that governance, cognitive and interaction mechanisms capture both the hardware and the software of Europeanisation. Hence, these are the necessary and sufficient conditions which we expect will explain why policy agency succeeds or fails

to promote EU policy frames at the domestic level, on whatever issue, ranging from community and new regulatory policies, over multilevel governance, to open coordination and intense intergovernmentalism.

- (2) We expect that Europeanisation will be conducive to the diffusion of shared policy frames by a variety of domestic paths. Depending on domestic contexts, policy convergence will be a result of primarily rationalist, constructivist, or gendered mechanisms. Each of these three logics would suggest a different configuration or chain of social mechanisms, to explain transitions from an initially diverging domestic situation to convergence with European frameworks. In this chain, political interaction mechanisms are the third sufficient condition to account for the outcomes of domestic change. In this transition, policy innovation will depend on institutionally embedded new “advocacy coalitions” and how they interact with established political elites. The question is then, depending on policy and problem framing, whether competition, cooperation/association, or hierarchy/subordination will emerge, and how institutions will affect the balance of power resources and the processes of interest aggregation and intermediation.

Table 1 – Europeanisation mechanisms

| Mechanisms | rational-institutionalist | social-constructivist |
|----------------------|--|---|
| environmental | <i>Compliance mechanisms:</i> - <i>legal enforcement</i> - <i>Institutional monitoring</i> <i>Public/social pPressure</i> | <i>Framing policy</i> - <i>directives;</i> - <i>benchmarking</i> |
| cognitive | <i>Spillover</i> <i>Rational choice</i> | <i>Learning (simple, complex):</i> - <i>cognitive heuristics, bias</i> - <i>modelling</i> - <i>cognitive dissonance</i> - <i>conversion</i> - <i>creativity (innovation)</i> |
| interaction | <i>Veto players</i> <i>Policy advocacy coalitions</i> <i>Multilevel action coordination</i> - <i>"boomerang"</i> - <i>"velvet triangles"</i> <i>Contentious collective action</i> | <i>Political discourses</i> - <i>norm entrepreneurs</i> - <i>epistemic communities</i> - <i>strategic framing</i> - <i>persuasion</i> - <i>frame-reflection</i> |

- (3) As we have seen, competing (ideal type) logics offer very different stories based on different kinds of mechanisms supposed to be at work in Europeanisation. Rationalists emphasise institutional opportunities and constraints with an effect on individual preferences and power resources; premised on the assumption of rationally calculated, self-interested, rational action, and political dynamics that result from competitive interaction and electoral logics. On the other hand, constructivists and feminists emphasise the independent effect of framing.

The inventory of causal mechanisms promoting Europeanisation that is presented here does not claim to be exhaustive. The selection is oriented towards illustrating the different categories of mechanisms and approaches towards them. Table 1 offers a summary of the pieces that have been obtained so far. To illuminate the complex puzzle of Europeanisation, the next section will return to the area of gender policy. The question is how the general framework of hypotheses constructed so far can be translated into an empirical model and empirical propositions that can give meaning to empirical findings.

F. Framing Europeanisation: Five Modes

Cross-national variation in the patterns of Europeanisation as well as variation over time warrant a conceptual refinement beyond the “two logics” images. We suggest here a mechanisms based approach to distinguishing modes of Europeanisation, to capture how and why domestic political actors respond to the challenges that derive from European frameworks in different modes. By analysing the kinds of mechanisms that are involved in these processes – legal-institutional, cognitive, and interaction mechanisms, we find five paths towards Europeanisation to emerge: stubbornness, compliance, domestication, transformation, and innovation (see Table 2: Five Paths Towards Europeanisation). Following this taxonomy, Europeanisation processes can be expected to be conducive to policy innovation in reaction to EU norms, to domestic policy transformation, domestication, compliance or stubbornness, depending on the capability of political elites and nongovernmental domestic groups or transnational alliances to induce learning, ranging from simple adoption of the new norms for pragmatic reasons, over their internalisation to fundamental domestic conversion and, eventually, the developing of innovative creative ideas that will subsequently advance also European policy frameworks. The literature on the Europeanisation of domestic gender policy will help to further specify these expectations and develop hypotheses for empirical research.

Table 2: Five Paths Towards Europeanisation

| Mode | Result and mechanisms |
|-----------------------|--|
| Innovation | <i>Domestic development and introduction of creative policy ideas or methods in response to EU-norms, triggered by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>cognitive-informational creativity;</i> * <i>minority groups' ideas (velvet triangles etc.) influencing dominant discourse</i> |
| Transformation | <i>Basic conversion of domestic policy frameworks, in response to EU-norms, enhanced by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>complex elite learning regarding core beliefs and conceptualisations of problem interdependency, of common interaction goals and of identities;</i> * <i>epistemic communities' shaping political discourse</i> |
| Domestication | <i>Domestic internalisation of EU- frameworks, due to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>norm transmission by cross-national modelling ("simple learning");</i> * <i>norm entrepreneurs or advocacy coalitions making external frames suitable and fit the domestic situation;</i> * <i>strategic discursive framing to turn EC-policies into accepted and legitimate parts of domestic policy frameworks, attitudes, and ways of thinking</i> |
| Compliance | <i>Making EC-norms part of the domestic legal order, without necessarily changing attitudes and legitimacy beliefs; as a consequence of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>legal enforcement, hierarchical or by "boomerang"</i> * <i>institutional control (incentives, monitoring)</i> * <i>weak or no public discourse</i> |
| Stubbornness | <i>Domestic refusal to accept EU- frameworks, ideas or norms, due to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>protectionist cognitive heuristics and bias, shaping dominant discourse</i> * <i>veto players, mobilising contentious collective action or negative public perceptions</i> |

III. Europeanising Equality Policy: Hypotheses

This section puts the mechanisms based framework for analysing Europeanisation into practice to map out a number of research hypotheses on domestic gender policy change. They are premised on three assumptions. First, we assume that EU member states have converged towards a shared equality policy frame consisting of eight EC equality directives; hence, Europeanisation has – although with variations – evolved in all cases. Second, cross-national divergence in gender orders is the necessary condition for Europeanisation to evolve: without domestic divergence from EU frames, Europeanisation would be pointless. Finally, domestic regimes do not determine fully the mechanisms and the paths towards

Europeanisation. The following draws on the literature on EC equality policy and the feminist debate to bring more colour into these abstract claims. These debates offer a wealth of ideas and claims regarding the effects of domestic gender regimes, of institutional, cognitive and agency related causal mechanisms, and how these would combine to trigger political change. There are five sets of hypotheses to answer the questions whether and to what extent domestic change in response to EC equality policy will be (1) constrained by path dependent rigidities of institutionalised gender policy regimes; (2) enhanced by legal enforcements, institutional inducements, or rather by domestic public pressure; (3) prompted by rational calculation, or enhanced by elite learning; (4) promoted by public discourses on controversial issues, or consensual politics by dominant coalitions. The ultimate question to be answered is which paths of Europeanisation will prevail, depending on the kinds of logic – rationalist or constructivist – and mechanisms involved in European gender policy.

A. Domestic Gender Regimes: Impediments or Enhancement?

Domestic gender regime diversity and divergence from EU norms is seen by some authors as an obstacle to the implementation of EU gender policy (cf. Duncan 1995; id. 1996). Others expect that “domestic misfit” will create a more intense “problem pressure” and thus, at least in principle, enhance domestic change.

The “needle’s eyes” thesis to explain domestic stubbornness

Ilona Ostner and Jane Lewis argued that since member states are culturally and politically diverse, gender policies must pass through a supranational and a domestic filter:

Thus, gender-related policies must pass through two separate ‘needle’s eyes’ to be discussed, adopted, and implemented. [...] The welfare regime of each member state and the gender order underlying it constitute the other needle’s eye that influences how EU directives are implemented. [...] Member states [...] are likely to resist new policies that challenge existing national patterns (Ostner & Lewis, 1995:161).

The “adaptational pressure” proposition,

This proposition, in contrast, maintains that large misfits with EC norms are not a principle obstacle to change, but rather a variable that would reinforce pressure towards change. Catherine Hoskyns observed that the integration of markets and states had the

“paradoxical effect” of “destabilising existing patterns of social integration, including those relating to gender,” opening up “space for challenge and re-formulation, with unpredictable outcomes at EU as well as member state level” (Hoskyns, 1996:4). Paulette Kurzer concluded her analyses of cultural change in the EU with the strong claim that it would be “safe to predict that regional integration is diminishing Europe’s diversity and that the people of Europe are becoming more alike” (Kurzer, 2001:24).¹⁷ Can these findings be extrapolated across the EU and its policy areas? Cowles, Caporaso and Risse.(2001: 7) formulated the misfit-hypothesis according to which adaptational pressure explains domestic change: “In principle, the degree of adaptational pressure determines the extent to which domestic institutions would have to change in order to comply with European rules and policies”.

B. Legal Enforcements or Epistemic “Inducements”?

Since gender equality policy continues to be a task of member states, it is a field for exploring how the EU can promote common regulatory frameworks to manage domestic diversity. Which are the mechanisms by which EU policy makers can induce member states to comply (Haas, 1998:20); and how can actors achieve “convergence towards moderate diversity” (Falkner, 2000:95)? Two contrasting scenarios depict Europeanisation and implementation as depending on different types of institutional mechanisms that warrant systematic and in-depth empirical analyses. Stone Sweet and Brunell claim domestic policy change to be a consequence of legal enforcement mechanisms, such as the “preliminary ruling” procedure, that citizens may use to address their query to the European Court of Justice (Stone Sweet & Brunell, 1998:76). On the other hand, Peter Haas and others suggest that implementation of EC directives by member states would result from a European “epistemic” institutional environment favourable to enhancing elite learning (Haas, 1998:34).

Applied to the subject matter of gender equality policy, the hypothesis to be tested would claim that member states with a larger number of citizens bringing gender equality cases to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), and thus receiving a higher share of preliminary rulings, would also tend to better comply with EC gender equality directives, by

¹⁷ In “Markets and Moral Regulation”, Paulette Kurzer shows how the EU indirectly triggered cultural change in Holland, Finland, Sweden, and Ireland regarding the regulation of drugs, drinking and sexuality, namely as an effect of the free movement of citizens under the European Single Market, and under intergovernmental arrangements on policing and internal security (Kurzer, 2001: 25).

implementing them more punctually. On the other hand, in-depth case analyses will have to examine whether the alternative claim is supported by empirical evidence. The theoretical expectation is that, in the context of gender orders that strongly diverge from EC norms, and where citizens used neither the ECJ, the Commission, nor the infringement procedure, norm convergence was facilitated by an “epistemic” institutional environment supportive to norm change.

C. “Public Pressure” or “Elite Learning”?

Domestic policy regimes may adjust to new international norms, without pressure by legal enforcement or compliance mechanisms but merely by virtue of their own domestic publics who put pressure on policy makers, or by political elites who chose to learn.

Following a rational approach, governments are assumed to be interested in being re-elected and will therefore be responsive to pressure from their constituencies: “Political attitudes influence the types and extent of policies carried out” (Lampinen and Uusikylä, 1998:239; cit. after Mbaye, 2001:265). Social policy development by the EU rests, as Cram points out, on the advantages of a regulatory approach over distributive or redistributive measures: the regulatory approach chosen proves “virtually costless” for the EU itself, and “the costs tend to fall on employers and individuals rather than on national governments” (Cram 1997:106). Hence, national governments back home will need to impose the costs of the compromise struck in the Council of Ministers on their constituent groups. This “lose-win game” could help to explain failures in domestic norm implementation. There are three more specific expectations that can be tested in empirical comparison:

- The conventional view is “[...] that the lower the overall mass support for the country’s membership in the EU, the higher the probability that a member state will face difficulties in implementing European policies” (*ibid.*, 239);
- The “gender gap” hypothesis explains the extent to which policy makers adopt EC gender norms by gendered attitudes held by constituencies towards the EU: If there is no or a conservative gender gap in public opinion, with women being as eurosceptical as men or more so for lack of political interest in the EU (Liebert, 1997), compliance with EC norms will be hampered by stubbornness. On the other side, a “progressive gender gap”, with women being more critical of the EU on grounds of legitimacy, makes it more likely that governments will be under pressure to transpose EC equality policies.

The elite learning hypothesis rests on a cognitive approach that assumes transnational norm and frame diffusion in member states to be an effect of epistemic mechanisms. Elite learning and strategic framing are seen as key constructivist forces that shape domestic understandings and change (Haas, 1998:33; Checkel 2001). Learning, on the one hand, is the mechanism by which political elites adopt new policy beliefs and conceptions; domestic policy change, understood as the “empowerment of EC norms” is promoted by elites who learn the new norms (Checkel, 2001). On the other hand, the re-framing of the issues of gender equality and policy is a strategy for mobilising public support for new member state policy in response to EC-norms. Elite learning requires therefore a re-framing of domestic policy that brings it in line with supranational norms. In both cases, government parties are not under public pressure or compelled by gendered electorates, but they will actively learn and seek to raise public support for innovative domestic gender policies.

D. The Politics of Presence, Networking or Public Discourse?

Research on the Europeanisation of contentious movements has noted that women’s movements and issues are conspicuously absent from domestic contentious collective action directed against the EU (Imig & Tarrow, 2001). To explain this finding, national differences in the distribution of resources for women gaining access to gender rights have been analysed as “impediments to the construction of a common interest by European women” (Saraceno, 1997). However, besides contentious action and litigation strategies, alternative forms of gender politics have been developed in practice, with relevance for the scope of our research: the politics of presence, and networks.

The “politics of presence” thesis (Phillips, 1998) and its institutionalist corollary, the “state feminism” thesis (McBride Stetson & Mazur, 1995), focus channels of formal representation and participation of feminist stakeholders in domestic political institutions that formally control decision-making on EC norms. In this perspective, we would expect those member states with a relatively higher percentage of women representatives and officials in decision-making positions, namely in public administration (femocrats), courts and legislatures, to enhance European gender policy frames more than states with a lower level of women’s presence. On the other hand, feminist research has explored different forms of “networks” as political interaction venues for enhancing domestic compliance or learning processes regarding European equality norms: multilevel-action-coordination and lobbying, the boomerang strategy; and velvet triangles:

Process tracing of the strategies developed by the European Women's Lobby (EWL) to influence the Amsterdam Treaty negotiations in 1996-7, illuminated that the construction of a common interest for European women was the result of promoting "multilevel-action-coordination" (Helfferrich & Kolb, 2001).

The "boomerang" hypothesis (Keck & Sikkink, 1996) suggests that, in the multilevel EU polity, domestic compliance with EU norms is the result of transnational alliances between national women's organisations, state femocrats and supranational actors, conducive to the deployment of legal or institutional compliance mechanisms.

The concept of the "velvet triangle" (Woodward 2000) depicts networks between three types of agents who may enhance gender policy at international as well as at domestic levels: femocrats and feminist politicians; academics and experts, and third, the women's movement, or non-governmental organisations (Locher 2002).

Both devices, the politics of presence, as well as networking strategies, may or may not, but do not necessarily involve public discourse. The "political discourse" hypothesis explains the diffusion of EC norms by focusing on political communication dynamics. The degree and forms in which these communications are public, depend on the arenas in which they evolve. Political discourse can be dominant, consensual or conflictual. Provoked by "controversial gender issues", a gendering of political discourses may occur, or discourses can be gender neutral or gender blind. The more publicly salient domestic discourses on EU gender policy issues there are, the more publics and policy makers can be expected to become sensitive to gender issues, perspectives and impacts. Domestic (mass and elite) publics can be expected to promote domestic change towards Europeanisation, (a) by mobilising public interest in the EU; (b) by reflecting traditional domestic gender roles and deep-seated cultural interpretations of gender morality in public life, and (c) by mobilising collective action in favour of collective redefinitions of gender norms.

E. Which Paths towards Europeanisation?

In this chapter, for explaining Europeanisation, I have suggested to move beyond the theoretical debates between rational institutionalism and social constructivism (Cowles, Caporaso, Risse 2001; Börzel & Risse, 2000) and the transnational feminist debate (GEP, 2000). For this purpose, I have shifted the traditional "variable approach" to a focus on

“manipulable” conditions which may influence a state’s decision to comply or defect from EC norms (Haas, 1998:18); institutional and constructivist devices, “to better understand how institutional design can enhance learning, and on state beliefs which influence decisions about institutional design, and of the degree of autonomy of agencies in different governments; and on the various mechanisms that diffuse beliefs of the epistemic communities more broadly” (Haas, 1998:34). Then I have discussed some of the diverging ideas that rationalists, constructivists and feminists bring into Europeanisation analyses. While rationalists underline “institutionally embedded” action and interaction logics, and social constructivists entertain ideas about cognitive mechanisms such as “elite learning”, gender analyses seek to bridge the gap between institutions, discourse and agency (Fraser, 1992). I consider “framing” a crucial missing link in a sufficient account for Europeanisation that aims at explaining how institutions shape cognitive frames as much as political interaction in the domestic policy arena. In particular, I have argued that “discursive shifts” are one of the conditions of domestic change. In processes of Europeanisation, the interplay of structure and agency is arguably shaped by the shifting modes by which equality norms and gender issues are framed and re-framed.

Figure 2 – Europeanisation: A Mechanisms-based Model

| 1. Necessary condition | Sufficient conditions: causal mechanisms | | | 5. Dependent variable |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| | 2. Environmental | 3. Cognitive | 4. Interaction | |
| Domestic divergence from European gender frameworks: a) core values b) conceptual c) instrumental | a) legal enforcements b) institutional opportunities & constraints c) domestic public pressure | Elite attitudes towards learning : a) stubbornness b) compliance c) domestication d) conversion e) innovation | a) domestic advocacy coalitions b) multilevel networks c) political discourse (norm entrepreneurs; epistemic communities) | Domestic convergence towards EU gender policy framework a) timing and b) quality and c) efficiency of implementation and application |

Figure 2 (“Europeanisation: A Mechanisms-based Model”) displays the major ideas and hypotheses on causal mechanisms driving Europeanisation that were described and analysed in the preceding sections. The model suggests that Europeanisation processes are contingent and follow different logics, depending on the social construction of historical “paths”, that link old domestic patterns by various mechanisms to new transnational

frames. Depending on which specific concatenations and causal chains operate on these processes in specific historical and geographical cases, different domestic paths towards Europeanisation will emerge.

Conclusion

To explain cross-national convergence towards European frameworks, a complex causal pattern of Europeanisation processes has been outlined. This suggests that (a) domestic gender regime diversity is necessary, and (b) EU environmental governance mechanisms, linked to (c) cognitive mechanisms and (d) domestic interaction and agency will be sufficient to account for domestic translations of European policy frameworks that are conducive to convergence. The argument to be tested empirically for the domain of EU gender policy in systematic comparative analysis is that, given the diversity of gender regimes, there will be different logics – configurations of institutional, cognitive and relational mechanisms – involved in producing domestic change towards EC frames. For instance, one might expect in cases where gender regimes diverge most from EC norms, that rational-institutionalist mechanisms will be needed, linked to multilevel action coordination of policy advocacy coalitions. By contrast, where gender regimes are least divergent from EC norms, elite learning would be sufficient. Public opinion will play a role where elites are unwilling to learn and where knowledge-based inducements have created public concern. Hence, the aim of the empirical analyses is to specify the conditions under which particular “chains of mechanisms” or logics can be expected to crystallise.

This research project follows the methodology of a country-based, theoretically structured, cross-cultural comparative analysis.¹⁸ While the empirical case studies provide for in-depth knowledge, carefully selected comparisons serve the search for mechanisms that produce similar outcomes in different kinds of systems. Different governance styles in Europe range from outright “state opposition to equality”, over mixed frames for protecting difference but also advancing equality between women and men, to cases where gender equality has become part of national and state identity. Our research design, by making a two stage selection of cases, seeks to maximise diversity: we selected France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Spain and Sweden, in the first stage, and a number of EC gender

¹⁸ For a detailed description of the methodology, see concluding chapter in this paper.

equality issues in the second. Since social and political process analysis is concerned with uncovering the discursive mechanisms conducive to or hampering free agency, it remains difficult to empirically probe any theoretical claims about how these agents are socially constructed through institutional, cultural and relational practices, customs, and meanings. We have followed therefore Nancy Hirschmann's call for a "cross-cultural" approach to one's own culture, a moving "back and forth" for gaining the critical benefit of "outside" perspectives. Operating from a different cultural context, she argues, one would be able to provide insights into how social constructions operate in one's own domestic context (Hirschmann, 1998:354).

While the empirical case studies draw on qualitative data on the implementation of nine EC equality directives in six member states from 1975-2000, and proceed in a number of selected "diagnostic cases" to in-depth analyses of political discourses and process tracing, the comparative analysis seeks to integrate structural, institutional and cultural parameters with information on the process. It analyses the configurations that result from the interplay of institutional factors, "discursive framing", and political agency in a number of processes involved in Europeanisation. Hence, in the field of methodology, our paper is oriented towards a "diversity-oriented research" design that is interested in exploring contrasting configurations to uncover the generalities underlying these "causal complexities" (Ragin, 2000). The general theoretical expectation is that, under conditions of domestic divergence from EC frames (necessary condition), neither institutional nor interaction mechanisms will be sufficient to explain domestic paths towards convergence, unless we have not understood the cognitive mechanisms at work. For explaining variation in the paths that member states take to shift their policy frames towards shared equality norms, hence, we examine alternative theoretical ideas regarding the three kinds of mechanisms that are supposed to drive Europeanisation: environmental-institutional conditions, cognitive mechanisms and transformative interactions. To establish whether there is a general pattern of a rational, or constructivist or gendered "causal complexity" underlying Europeanisation, and under which conditions this is the case, different theoretical perspectives have provided us with different stories. Diversity-oriented research seeks to put their ideas in dialogue with evidence.

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