

## The Many Faces of Europeanization\*

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### Abstract

Is 'Europeanization' as disappointing a term as it is fashionable? Should it be abandoned, or is it useful for understanding European transformations? Five uses are discussed and it is argued that research need not be hampered by competing definitions as long as their meaning, the phenomena in focus, the simplifying assumption used, the models of change and the theoretical challenges involved, are clarified and kept separate. The research challenge is one of model building, not one of inventing definitions. While it is premature to abandon the term, its usefulness may be more limited than its widespread use could indicate. Europeanization may be less useful as an explanatory concept than as an attention-directing device and a starting point for further exploration.

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### Introduction: A Fashionable Term, but is it Useful?

'Europeanization' is a fashionable but contested concept. Measured by the number of titles using the term, research on Europeanization is an academic growth industry. Yet, the term is applied in a number of ways to describe a variety of phenomena and processes of change. No shared definition has emerged and definitions are often delimited to a specific article or book chapter (Börzel, 1999, p. 574; Bulmer and Burch, 2001, p. 75; Checkel, 2001, p. 180). Because 'Europeanization' has no single precise or stable meaning, it has been argued that the term is so unwieldy that it is futile to use it as an organizing concept (Kassim, 2000, p. 238).

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Still, it may be premature to abandon the term. This is so because most studies are of recent origin and because there have been few systematic attempts to map and compare different uses.<sup>1</sup> Efforts to model the dynamics of 'Europeanization' are scarce and the empirical evidence uneven and often contested. Therefore, rather than rejecting the term outright, I make an attempt to create a little more order in a disorderly field of research. The issue raised is not what Europeanization 'really is', but whether and how the term can be useful for understanding the dynamics of the evolving European polity. That is, how it eventually may help us give better accounts of the emergence, development and impacts of a European, institutionally-ordered system of governance.

The current debate over 'the future of Europe' is to a large extent about how Europe should be governed, how the basic institutions of governance should be organized and how authority and power should be distributed, exercised and controlled. A working assumption of this article is that the transformation of the European political order may be fruitfully studied as changes in and among key institutions.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it is assumed that Europeanization is not a unique process and a *sui generis* phenomenon. Rather, Europeanization is conceptualized in a way that makes it (in principle) possible to compare European dynamics with the dynamics of other systems of governance. Radical and durable changes in the constitutive characteristics and basic principles of the political organization of Europe are seen as important examples of how systems of governance originate and how they are maintained and change.

Then, with a focus on institutional dynamics and a kind of political order emerging in Europe, and with the primary aim of suggesting a way of thinking about such dynamics, I proceed by, first, separating different phenomena called 'Europeanization'; that is, *what* is changing.<sup>3</sup> Then I suggest some processes of institutional change that may be helpful for understanding *how* Europeanization takes place. Furthermore, an institutional perspective is used in

<sup>1</sup> Search in various databases revealed few occurrences of the term prior to the 1980s. Since then 'Europeanization' has become increasingly popular, and from the end of the 1990s the term has been widely used.

<sup>2</sup> A focus on institutions does not imply a lack of interest in how studies of policy-making and implementation, and political identities may help us understand Europeanization. Limited space, time, energy and competence are the reasons for not giving these aspects the attention they deserve in this article. For the same reasons and with the same regrets, the sub-national level and variations across European sub-regions (Morlino, 2000; Goetz, 2002), are not dealt with. In general, the aspiration is *not* to take stock of the literature on Europeanization (for a state-of-the-art article, see Bulmer and Lequesne, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> At the current stage of Europeanization studies it may be useful to keep definitions parsimonious. That is, we should not read too much into definitions. For instance, we should not define Europeanization as an 'incremental process' (Ladrech, 1994, yet in Ladrech 2001 this element of the definition is left out). In this article it is assumed that the exact nature of the processes of change and their end results should be determined by empirical studies rather than by definition.

an attempt to approach the *why*-question and to suggest some research challenges. Connecting the different phenomena called Europeanization to the different mechanisms by which Europeanization is brought about is a major challenge for those aspiring to theorize European institutional dynamics. I suggest some small steps in that direction.

The argument is that different conceptions of Europeanization complement, rather than exclude, each other. They refer to different, but related, phenomena. It is also argued that the dynamics of Europeanization can be understood in terms of a limited set of ordinary processes of change, well known from other institutionalized systems of governance (March, 1981). The European case also illustrates how mundane processes can produce an extraordinary outcome.

One conclusion is that while it may be premature to abandon the term Europeanization, its usefulness may be somewhat more limited than its widespread use could indicate. Another conclusion is that the empirical complexity and conceptual confusion should lead not to despair, but to renewed efforts to model the dynamics of European change. An immediate challenge is to develop partial, middle-range theoretical approaches that emphasize domains of application or scope conditions, and that are empirically testable. A long-term challenge is to provide a better understanding of how different processes of change interact and make institutions co-evolve through mutual adaptation.

## **I. Europeanization: What, How, Why?**

A first step towards understanding Europeanization is to separate the different phenomena referred to by the term, that is, *what* is changing. I distinguish between five possible uses:

*Changes in external boundaries:* This involves the territorial reach of a system of governance and the degree to which Europe as a continent becomes a single political space. For example, Europeanization is taking place as the European Union expands through enlargement.

*Developing institutions at the European level:* This signifies centre-building with a collective action capacity, providing some degree of co-ordination and coherence. Formal-legal institutions of governance and a normative order based on overarching constitutive principles, structures and practices both facilitate and constrain the ability to make and enforce binding decisions and to sanction non-compliance.

*Central penetration of national systems of governance:* Europeanization here involves the division of responsibilities and powers between different

levels of governance. All multilevel systems of governance need to work out a balance between unity and diversity, central co-ordination and local autonomy. Europeanization, then, implies adapting national and sub-national systems of governance to a European political centre and European-wide norms.

*Exporting forms of political organization:* Europeanization as exporting forms of political organization and governance that are typical and distinct for Europe beyond the European territory, focuses on relations with non-European actors and institutions and how Europe finds a place in a larger world order. Europeanization signifies a more positive export/import balance as non-European countries import more from Europe than *vice versa* and European solutions exert more influence in international fora.

*A political unification project:* The degree to which Europe is becoming a more unified and stronger political entity is related both to territorial space, centre-building, domestic adaptation, and how European developments impact and are impacted by systems of governance and events outside the European continent. A complication is that there is not necessarily a positive correlation between the four types of Europeanization mentioned above, and between each of them and a politically stronger Europe.

The next step, then, is to suggest a possible way of understanding institutional change and continuity in the current European context. Here, institutional change is seen as depending on a limited number of processes that are ordinary and complementary and producing a variety of outcomes under shifting circumstances (March, 1981). Political institutions and the agents embedded within them respond in routine ways to changing opportunities and challenges. For example, change may be a result of rule-following and the application of standard operating procedures to appropriate situations. It may be an outcome of problem-solving and calculating expected consequences, or of conflict resolution and confrontations. Change may also be produced through experiential learning or competitive selection, contact and diffusion, or turnover and regeneration.<sup>4</sup>

An account of *how* Europeanization takes place then requires an understanding of the structure and dynamics of each change process. For analytical purposes models can be kept separate. In the real world, however, there will be complex mixes of processes. While one mechanism may fit a particular

<sup>4</sup> The discussion of models of change is highly influenced by March (1981); Lave and March (1975); and March (1994), as well as more than 30 years of conversations with James G. March. As correctly suggested by one anonymous reviewer, the list is not exhaustive. I have limited the discussion to some models that consistently have turned out to be useful in studies of the dynamics of formal organizations and political institutions. An example of a model that could have been added is change through turnover and regeneration, illustrated by, e.g., Cram's concept of 'banal Europeanization' (Cram, 2001).

phenomenon or situation better than others, there is no reason to expect a one-to-one relationship between a phenomenon and a mechanism of change.

Still, for each of the five phenomena called Europeanization above, I suggest – in hypothetical form – one or two processes that may be fruitful as an analytical starting point, before attending to some complications attached to using them. For example, changes in territorial reach and Europeanization as enlargement is interpreted as rule application. The development of institutions of governance at the European level is understood as purposeful decision-making. Changes in domestic systems of governance are examined within the framework of two basic processes of adaptation: experiential learning and competitive selection. Furthermore, Europeanization as export of European models is interpreted as a process of diffusion. Finally, it is suggested that Europeanization as political unification involves institutional mutual adaptation. A multitude of institutions and actors co-evolve as they adapt to each other. They change the organizational setting for each other's adaptation as they find a place in the changing political world order.

Identifying processes and mechanisms useful for understanding Europeanization is a step towards identifying conditions that make each frame of interpretation more or less relevant. This article has modest aspirations when it comes to exploring *why* various processes of change may be useful. However, the institutional perspective used here highlights the significance of existing structures, histories and dynamics for understanding political transformations.<sup>5</sup> Institutions are relatively stable elements of political life. Within the Westphalian political order, for example, territoriality and peoplehood have for quite some time been two basic principles of political organization, group formation and identification in Europe (Borneman and Fowler, 1997). Concepts like 'historical inefficiency' and 'path dependence' also suggest that established institutions do not always adapt quickly to changes in human purpose and external conditions (March and Olsen, 1989; North, 1990). Yet, an institutional perspective does not imply stasis. Enduring institutions can be remarkably adaptive, responding to volatile environments routinely, though not always optimally (March, 1981).

Major change in the relations between key institutions is likely both to reflect and affect power relations, in Europe as well as globally. Post-war European co-operation was initiated by a devastating war and major European powers lost their world hegemony. Now, Europe is in a period of explo-

<sup>5</sup> An institution is viewed as a relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behaviour for specific groups of actors in specific situations. Such rules are embedded in structures of meaning and schemes of interpretation, as well as resources and the principles of their allocation (March and Olsen, 1998, p. 948). Here it is not possible to discuss alternative institutional approaches to European dynamics (Schneider and Aspinwall, 2001; Stone Sweet *et al.*, 2001).

ration and innovation. Talk of Europeanization, like talk of Americanization (Jacoby, 2001), is likely to occur when there are possible shifts in relations of dominance. That is, when there is a willingness and possibly an ability to challenge an established hegemony and win back a more central role at the global scene. This suggests that the consensus- and efficiency-seeking frame often found in EU documents has to be supplemented by an interest in the power aspect of European transformations. However, attention to power also includes attention to the limitation of purposive, arbitrary intervention in the existing order. In complex and dynamic contexts like the European one, purposeful actors influence the processes and structures within which change takes place. Yet, no single group of decision-makers has the insight, authority and power to design and reform institutions at will and achieve pre-specified objectives.

I am interested in how existing institutional arrangements impact on two key dimensions of institutional change (March and Olsen, 1995; Olsen, 1997a, 2001). First are changes in political organization: the development of an organizational and financial capacity for common action and governance through processes of reorganization and redirecting of resources. Second are changes in structures of meaning and people's minds. That is, focus is on the development and redefinition of political ideas – common visions and purposes, codes of meaning, causal beliefs and worldviews – that give direction and meaning to capabilities and capacities.

## II. The Changing Boundary of 'Europe'

A discussion of the ways in which European space may be politically organized and governed presupposes that Europe as a *geographical* concept, the external boundary of Europe as a space or territory, can be delimited and defined (Jönsson *et al.*, 2000, p. 7). In the literature, however, 'Europe' is used in a variety of ways. Recently it has become common to use 'Europe' with reference to the European Union and its Member States.<sup>6</sup>

Certainly, European transformations are not limited to the EU and its Member States or to western Europe. Cross-border relations have been, and still are, managed through a variety of transnational regimes and institutions besides the EU (Wallace, 2000). There are many examples of institution-building at the European level. Furthermore, there has also been an increase in non-territorial forms of political organization, and the meaning and impor-

<sup>6</sup> Older debates focused on the exact dividing line between Europe and Asia and raised questions like whether Britain 'is European?' (Garton Ash, 2001). The two issues are different. The first is a question of territory and space. The latter concerns (as Helen Wallace has pointed out) the empirical question of whether the British are tied into mainstream continental European ways of thinking and behaving as distinct from an insular, trans-Atlantic or international orientation.

tance of geographical space has changed with the growth of functional networks with no centre of final authority and power (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz, 1998; Kohler-Koch and Eising, 1999). Therefore, an adequate understanding of the ongoing transformations requires attention to other European transnational institutions, regimes and organizations as well as non-Member States. Still, the European Union has been most successful in terms of institutionalizing a system of governance that includes a large, and increasing, part of the continent. The EU is currently the core political project in Europe and the example most often analysed in the literature. The Union will also be the main frame of reference for this article.

For the European Union and its forerunners, enlargement has been a recurrent process. The Union has turned out to be attractive for most European states and the list of applicant countries is long. How, then, can we account for the dynamics of expansion? More specifically, why have the Member States accepted new members (Schimmelfennig, 2001; Sedelmeier, 2001; Sjursen, 2001b)?

Consider *rule-following*. Here, change is normatively driven. Action is obligatory, derived through a process of the interpretation of an identity, codes of conduct and the obligations and rights flowing from them in different situations (March and Olsen, 1989). Change may be seen as quasi-mechanical, that is, as following from the routine application of stable criteria for entry and the execution of standard operating procedures to pre-specified situations. If an applicant country meets the criteria of membership, it is admitted. If not, then the door is closed. In less automatic situations the underlying process may be one of arguing and persuading. Actors appeal to a shared collective identity and its implications. They evoke common standards of truth and morals, and change follows as normative or factual beliefs change.

Part of the research challenge is to account for why some identities and obligations are activated and others are not. For example, criteria of access to the EU may be liberal-democratic, implying that the Union will admit countries that reliably adhere to some universal and impartial criteria in their domestic and international conduct (Schimmelfennig, 2001). Criteria may be institution-specific and related to the principles on which an institution is founded, such as the Copenhagen declaration of 1993. Or they may take the form of a moral imperative based on a general sense of 'kinship-based' duty, that is, belonging to a specific political community (Sjursen, 2001b). This way of reasoning is illustrated when actors argue that there is an historic opportunity to 'reunify Europe' after decades of artificial separation (Notre Europe, 2001). Furthermore, interpretations of obligations may also be history-specific. For example, Sedelmeier argues that, during the cold war, EU policymakers constructed a specific role which implied a responsibility for the EU

towards the central and eastern European countries (the CEECs). Such commitments were unevenly distributed across policy-makers, yet they had important impacts on the enlargement process (Sedelmeier, 2001).

It is commonplace to observe that the EU agreed to enlargement with no precise calculation of the consequences, including the costs and changes required for Member States. There was no guarantee that the benefits for each Member State would outweigh their costs. In brief, enlargement cannot be seen purely as the result of a strategic choice where Member States are maximizing their expected utility. However, it is also commonplace to observe that participants in the enlargement process are concerned with costs and benefits, and that they bargain in the defence of self-interest and economic and security gains.

What, then, are the mechanisms through which identities and norms have an impact? Do actors use identities and norms genuinely or instrumentally? Schimmelfennig (2001) argues primarily within a logic of self-interested calculation rather than a logic of appropriateness. The enlargement process is characterized by strategic use of norm-based arguments and appeals to democratic identities and values. Member States have been rhetorically entrapped and have to support enlargement in order to save their reputation as Community members. Strategic behaviour is constrained by the constitutive ideas of the Community and the actors' prior identification with the Union. In comparison, Sedelmeier (2001, p. 184) is more open to whether identities and norms are used genuinely or instrumentally. He observes that there are simultaneous processes of enactment and definition of the EU's identity. Finally, Sjørusen emphasizes the genuine role of internalized norms. Norms constitute the identity of actors and do not only regulate their behaviour. Decisions are made as actors reason together and assess the moral validity of arguments (Sjørusen, 2001b).

Many EU documents portray enlargement as consistent with liberal-democratic principles and Community values as well as the interests of existing members and applicant countries (Commission, 2001b). Scholars aspiring to theorize about Europeanization cannot assume such harmony. It is important to understand the relations and possible tensions between a logic of appropriateness and norm-driven behaviour and a logic of calculation and expected utility under varying circumstances. Actors often follow rules. Yet they are also often aware of the consequences of rule-driven behaviour. And sometimes they may not be willing to accept the consequences of following rules. In some situations one identity and norm-set may be dominant and provide clear normative imperatives. In other situations there may be many competing identities, giving vague guides for action. Likewise, interests and means-end understandings may be either clear or obscure. One possibility is that a

clear logic of action will dominate a less clear logic. Another alternative is that learning over time will produce rules and norm-driven action, while highly unfavourable consequences will make existing rules suspect and activate a logic of calculation (March and Olsen, 1998). A third possibility is that different logics are relevant for different issues. For example, enlargement may be decided through application of basic norms, while the distribution of the costs of enlargement may be decided through self-interested calculation and bargaining.

### III. Developing European-Level Institutions

Some scholars portray Europeanization as the institutionalization at the European level of a distinct system of governance with common institutions and the authority to make, implement and enforce European-wide binding policies. This view is illustrated by Risse *et al.*, who define Europeanization as:

the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal, and social institutions associated with the problem solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules. (Risse *et al.*, 2001, p. 3)

Europeanization here includes both the strengthening of an organizational capacity for collective action and the development of common ideas, such as new norms and collective understandings regarding citizenship and membership (Checkel, 2001, p. 180).<sup>7</sup>

A possible frame for understanding the dynamics and outcomes of European-level institutional development is *purposeful choice*. Within this frame, which is used by intergovernmentalists in particular, a group of actors have a choice between alternative forms of organization and governance. They have normative criteria that make it possible to discriminate between available alternatives and their outcomes. They choose the one that, according to its inherent properties or expected effects, is assessed as being most valuable. Institutional developments, then, are seen as reflecting the will, power and understanding of identifiable actors. The research challenge is to identify the actors, and the motivations and forces that determine their choices.

In a problem-solving mode, objectives are shared and institutional change is the outcome of voluntary agreements among the relevant actors. The challenge for institutional architects is to discover or design forms of organization and governance that make all participants come out better than they could do

<sup>7</sup> James Caporaso has reminded me that Europeanization was defined as institution-building at the European level, yet the dependent variable in their study was the impact of European institutions on domestic institutions (see Cowles *et al.*, 2001).

on their own. For instance, the European Union is assumed to be involved in a continuous search for 'the right formula for building lasting and stable institutions' in order to improve the functionality, legitimacy and credibility of the institutions of governance (Patten, 2001). In this perspective, the participants first have to agree upon common objectives and substantive political programmes. Then they have to develop institutional arrangements as organizational tools for their policies.

In a conflict resolution mode, change reflects the interests and beliefs of the most powerful actors, as they bargain and build coalitions, based on their political, military or economic power. There is an explicit focus on the competing conceptions of European unity and forms of political organization. Likewise, there is a focus on power, that is, how Europeanization reflects and modifies the ways in which political power is constituted, legitimated, exercised, controlled and redistributed. Like other political orders, the emerging European order has to cope with tensions between unity and integration and disunity and disintegration (March and Olsen, 1998). Thus, even when EU officials emphasize norms of consensus and voluntary co-operation and argue that 'power politics have lost their influence' (Prodi, 2001, p. 3), this perspective assumes a need to understand the power relations and cleavages shaping the new order as much as the Westphalian state order in Europe (Rokkan, 1999).

While there is agreement to a large extent that the Union is 'an extraordinary achievement in modern world politics' (Moravcsik, 1999, p. 1), there is less consensus when it comes to the nature of the Union and the causes of its development. For instance, the importance of explicit intervention and choice in the development of European-level institutions has been contested. Inter-governmentalists emphasize institutional choices made by the governments of (the major) Member States (Moravcsik, 1999). A competing view is that systems of supranational governance have their roots in the European-wide transactions, group-formation and networks of transnational society, while governments primarily play a reactive role (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz, 1998). An institutional approach, with an emphasis on 'historical inefficiency', focuses on how the element of willed change is influenced and constrained by existing institutional arrangements (March and Olsen, 1989; Olsen, 1997a, b). From this perspective it is expected that the significance and nature of deliberate choice depends on existing institutional configurations and that the importance of purposeful choice will change as the degree of institutionalization at the European level changes.

One possible source of improved understanding of the scope of purposeful institutional choice in contemporary Europe is to compare different European institution-building efforts, such as the EU, EFTA, Nato, the Nordic

Council and the Council of Europe. Another option is to compare attempts at institution-building within the EU. The EU has been characterized as a 'non-state' and a 'non-nation' (Schmitter, 2000) and as 'a relatively incoherent polity in institutional terms' (Caporaso and Stone Sweet, 2001, p. 228). The Union's capacity and legitimacy for institution-building has varied across institutional spheres such as competition policy, monetary affairs, external and internal security, culture etc., and the ongoing development from (primarily) market building to polity-building creates the need to attend to the different dynamics of various institutional spheres and policy sectors.

Studies of state- and nation-building in Europe (Rokkan, 1999) suggest four dimensions that are relevant for comparing both institutional spheres within the EU, and the Union with other European institution-building efforts: (1) regulatory institutions: building a unified administrative and military apparatus to control a population, a territory and its external borders, including the ability to extract resources for common tasks; (2) socializing institutions: developing, through education and socialization, a territorial identity and a cultural community with a sense of belonging, emotional attachment and shared codes of meaning; (3) democratic institutions: creating democratic citizenship, representative institutions, equal rights of political participation, legitimized opposition, organized parties and fora for public debate and popular enlightenment; and (4) welfare institutions: developing social and economic citizenship and rights and a community that accepts the collective responsibility for securing more equal life chances for citizens through the means of public service, reallocation of resources and regulation of the use of private resources.

Comparison of the different dynamics of institutional spheres and policy sectors is, in particular, required when institution-building is seen as involving changes in action capabilities and in identities, codes of meaning and normative criteria giving direction to capabilities. Like other political systems, the EU makes efforts to justify its institutions, to develop a sense of belonging and to create emotional identification with the system among citizens. Aspirations of governance, then, include not only changes in behavioural regulation, opportunity and incentive structures, but also the molding of individuals and changes in mentality, causal and moral beliefs and ways of thinking.

For example, EU institutions, including the Council, have taken an interest in the democratic and European dimensions of education, hoping to make young people more conscious of European ideas and of being Europeans (Beukel, 2001, p. 131). Member States, however, have been reluctant to give the Union authority to shape the institutional framework for education and socialization. Control over educational institutions – including changes in

universities (Dineen, 1992; H. Olsen, 1998) and in national history writing (Geyer, 1989) – is a sensitive issue exactly because it is closely linked to national and sub-national identities. One implication is that students of European institutional dynamics, for theoretical as well as practical reasons, need to supplement their interest in decision-making and decision-implementing institutions, with an increased interest in the dynamics of educational and socializing institutions at the European level.

#### IV. Domestic Impacts of European-Level Institutions

The third conception of Europeanization focuses on change in core domestic institutions of governance and politics, understood as a consequence of the development of European-level institutions, identities and policies. Today this is the most common use of the term ‘Europeanization’ and a branch of the literature that has moved into a ‘second generation’ phase of analysis with an increasingly coherent intellectual agenda (Goetz, 2002). In ‘first generation’ studies, in particular, European-level development is treated as the explanatory factor and changes in the domestic systems of governance as the dependent variable. The research tasks are, then, to account for variations in European impacts and to explain the varying responses and robustness of domestic institutions against pressures at the European level.

The bulk of the empirical literature concerns the effect of the European Union on the Member States. Most often these studies focus on impacts on domestic policies and behaviour. Yet, there are also studies of the scope and mode of change in domestic structures and practices, in resources and in principles of legitimating collective understandings and codes of meaning.<sup>8</sup> Through what processes and mechanisms do European-level developments penetrate the domestic level and produce change then?

Two basic frameworks for analysing Europeanization as an adaptive process are *experiential learning* and *competitive selection*. In experiential learning institutions change on the basis of experiences with, and interpretations of, how relevant actors in the environment respond to alternative forms of domestic organization and governance. Environmental actors may be indifferent to the focal domestic institution or actively promote specific forms. They may dictate prescriptions or allow considerable discretion and local autonomy. In all cases forms and actions assessed as successful are more likely to be repeated and developed. Likewise, unsuccessful forms are more

<sup>8</sup> Mény *et al.* (1996); Hanf and Soetendorp (1998); Börzel and Risse (2000); Maurer *et al.* (2000); Sverdrup (2000); Börzel (2001); Andersen and Eliassen (2001, p. 233); Bulmer and Burch (2001); Bulmer and Lequesne (2001); Cowles *et al.* (2001); Goetz and Hix (2001); Knill (2001); Ladrech (2001); Radaelli (2000).

likely to be avoided. We need to understand which experiences actors are exposed to, how they interpret and assess what has happened and why, and to what degree they are able to store, retrieve and act upon such information.

In models of competitive selection, environmental imperatives are seen as driving the change process, and there is a need to understand mechanisms of variation, selection and retention. Institutions and actors are fixed and their survival and growth rates depend on their performance, comparative advantages and how well they 'match' their changing functional and normative environments. Only the most efficient institutions survive. The others disappear.

What, then, are the factors that influence patterns of adaptation? Which European-level institutions and actors matter? Why do some states and institutions undergo more profound change than others? What determines the responses, adaptability and robustness of domestic institutions, including their ability to ignore, buffer, redefine or exploit external European-level pressures?

From an institutional perspective we should not expect processes of experiential learning and competitive selection always to be perfect, making adaptation automatic, continuous and precise. Often adaptation is taking place in a world not easily understood or controlled. The rate of adaptation may be inconsistent with the rate of change in the environment to which the institution is adapting, and there may be no single optimal institutional response to changes in the environment (March, 1981). The most standard institutional response to novelty is to find a routine in the existing repertoire of routines that can be used (March and Olsen, 1989, p. 34). External changes are interpreted and responded to through existing institutional frameworks, including existing causal and normative beliefs about legitimate institutions and the appropriate distribution, exercise and control of power.

Differentiated responses and patterns of adaptation and institutional robustness can, in particular, be expected in political settings like the European one. First, because European institution-building and policy-making are unevenly developed across institutional spheres and policy areas, the adaptive pressures on states and institutions vary. For instance, Jacobson suggests some hypotheses relevant for the impacts of the EU and other supra-, inter- and transnational institutions, regimes and organizations. Whether they have an impact and are complied with depends on many factors: the more precise their legal foundation; when they are based on hard law rather than soft law; when the affected parties have been involved in developing the arrangement; the greater the independence of their secretariat; if the secretariat is single-headed rather than multiple-headed; and the greater the financial autonomy of the institution or regime (Jacobson, 2001, p. 20).

Second, differentiated responses are likely because the (west) European political order is characterized by long, strong and varied institutional histories, with different trajectories of state- and nation-building, resources and capabilities (Rokkan, 1999). However, while some domestic actors are proud of their historic achievements and do their best to protect them, others are eager to get beyond 'the burdens of the past' (Zielonka, 2001). As a result, extensive penetration of domestic institutions by European developments is taking place in some spheres, while there are also protected spaces, stubborn resistance and non-penetration in other spheres (Wallace, 1999, p. 3, 2000, p. 371). One implication is that we have to pay attention to how institutional spheres are affected differently as well as how they attend to, interpret and respond to European developments differently and in non-synchronized ways. Therefore, we also have to attend to how differently Europeanization might impact on the relationships and balance between the major institutional spheres of the nation-state (Olsen, 1996).

In spite of a considerable number of empirical studies, there is limited agreement about the degree to which Europeanization as the development of institutions at the European level creates Europeanization in the meaning of changing domestic institutions. For instance, a veteran student of European integration asks: 'Why is it that we are so ill-equipped to make compelling generalizations about how the European arena, as constituted by the European Union (EU), impacts on the Member States in terms of the politics of the countries? ... Why are our efforts to compare countries' experiences of EU membership so feeble?' (Wallace, 1999, p. 1).

European-level arrangements have been seen as strengthening the territorial state and the state-based order and as creating more national government rather than less (Milward, 1992; Metcalfe, 1994; Moravcsik, 1994). They have also been seen as affecting negatively the substantive problem-solving capacity of the state and reducing the role of democratic politics in society (Scharpf, 1999). Furthermore, they have been seen as transforming, rather than strengthening or weakening the territorial state or the state system (Wessels, 1996; Kohler-Koch, 1999; Kohler-Koch and Eising, 1999; Hooghe and Marks, 2001).

Students of government and administrative institutions observe a significant and persistent shift of domestic attention, resources and personnel to European-level institutions and their decision-making cycles. There is also some convergence in patterns of attention, behaviour and policy. Yet a main finding (although with many nuances) is that there has been no radical change in any of the national systems and no significant convergence towards a common institutional model homogenizing the domestic structures of the Euro-

pean states.<sup>9</sup> No new harmonized and unified model of dealing with Union matters has emerged. EU arrangements are compatible with the maintenance of distinct national institutional arrangements and there is even reconfirmation and restoration of established national structures and practices. In sum, structural diversity persists among the core domestic structures of governance in spite of increasing contact and competition between national models. Established national patterns are resistant to, but also flexible enough to cope with, changes at the European level.<sup>10</sup>

While European developments have been presented as an important reason for administrative reforms (Raadschelders and Toonen, 1992, p. 16), and as creating a need for improved domestic co-ordination (Kassim, 2000, p. 236), governments and administrative systems have differentially adapted to European pressures on their own terms. That is, adaptation has reflected institutional resources and traditions, the pre-existing balance of domestic institutional structures, and also 'the broader matrices of values which define the nature of appropriate political forms in the case of each national polity' (Harmsen, 1999, p. 81).<sup>11</sup> Likewise, a study of ten smaller west European states – both Member and non-Member States – concluded that adaptations to the EU were influenced by existing institutional arrangements and traditions (Hanf and Soetendorp, 1998).

Europeanization as domestic impacts is not limited to structural and policy changes. European values and policy paradigms are also to some (varying) degree internalized at the domestic level, shaping discourses and identities (Dyson, 2000 a ,b; Checkel, 2001). Europeanization of foreign policy has produced shared norms and rules that are gradually accumulated, rather than being a process where interests have been fixed (Sjursen, 2001a, pp. 199–200). Likewise, common concepts of appropriate fiscal behaviour, taxation and 'sound' money and finance have developed at the elite level (Radaelli, 1997; Dyson, 2000a; Sbragia, 2001, p. 80).

<sup>9</sup> Kaelble (1989), studying primarily social institutions, concluded that there had been considerable convergence in Europe in the period 1880–1980. Gary Marks (personal communication) holds that, at the level of subnational regionalization, there has been both convergence and divergence. Where there has been change over the past several decades, it has been towards strengthening regions. Yet the extent of variation in the strength of regions is still at least as great as in 1950 or 1960. Countries have similar slopes, but the slopes tend to diverge over time. As a result, the direction of change is convergent, but the outcome is greater divergence.

<sup>10</sup> Page and Wouters (1995); Wessels and Rometsch (1996); Christensen (1996); Egeberg and Trondal (1999); Harmsen (1999); Bomberg and Peterson (2000); Kassim *et al.* (2000); Maurer *et al.* (2000); Radaelli (2000); Sverdrup (2000); Bulmer and Burch (2001); Cowles and Risse (2001); Goetz (2001); Jacobsson *et al.* (2001); Ladrech (2001); Trondal (2001); Wessels *et al.* (2001); Ugland (2002).

<sup>11</sup> Harmsen observed that the Netherlands was more occupied with the perceived threat to the autonomy of civil society, and the balance between state and society, than the sovereignty of the state. In contrast, France was more interested in buffering the state against EU norms (Harmsen, 1999, p. 105; see also Kassim *et al.*, 2000; Wallace, 2000, pp. 369–70).

Simultaneously, among ordinary citizens, national identities are reaffirmed and there has been a revival of nationalism and ethnic-based identities that possibly represents a major source of potential resistance to Europeanization (Schlesinger, 1993; Hooghe *et al.*, 1999). While there are relatively few studies of how Europeanization contributes to molding public opinion and changing the role and significance of civil society in such processes (Venturelli, 1993; Schlesinger, 1992, 1993), new boundaries of solidarity have been drawn within and among organized interests (Dølvik, 1997; Macey, 1998). Even churches and spiritual associations have come under pressure to adapt their structures and state–church relations to the changing European context. They have been asked to ‘help to interpret and give meaning to the process of European unification’ and their responses have been affected by different privileges and national arrangements (Jansen, 2000, pp. 103,105). Likewise, there have been a limited number of studies of the adaptation of the polity at large, including changes in domestic politics, political cleavages, voting behaviour, elections, political parties and party systems. The conclusions of such studies seem to support rather than contradict studies of governmental and administrative systems (Mair, 2000; Goetz and Hix, 2001; Ladrech, 2001; Anderson, 2002).

In sum, European-level developments do not dictate specific forms of institutional adaptation but leave considerable discretion to domestic actors and institutions. There are significant impacts, yet the actual ability of the European level to penetrate domestic institutions is not perfect, universal or constant. Adaptation reflects variations in European pressure as well as domestic motivations and abilities to adapt. European signals are interpreted and modified through domestic traditions, institutions, identities and resources in ways that limit the degree of convergence and homogenization.

As students of European dynamics are beginning to understand better the conditions for interactions between European and domestic factors, more nuance in the conclusions can be expected. So far, however, institutional learning across national borders is limited (Kassim, 2000, p. 242; Maurer *et al.*, 2000). Competitive selection on the basis of comparative efficiency is a significant process in some sectors, like telecommunications (Schneider, 2001, p. 78; Levi-Faur, 2002). Yet, competitive selection does not in general secure convergence towards a ‘best practice’ and optimal institutional forms across Europe (Harmsen, 1999, p. 84). Goetz concludes that the literature ‘casts some doubt over the explanatory power of “European integration” as [a] major force driving domestic executive change’ (Goetz, 2001, p. 220). He finds no straightforward connection between adaptive pressure and adaptive reactions and he advises caution in treating European integration as a major inde-

pendent source of change. European-level changes are just one among several drivers of domestic change.

Furthermore, a development towards, for instance, autonomous central banks (Cowles and Risse, 2001, pp. 232–3) and a shared concept of ‘appropriate fiscal behavior’ (Sbragia, 2001, p. 80) are not solely European phenomena. Typically, transnational professions such as economists spread predominant ideas globally. Likewise, the high intensity of competitive selection in the telecommunications sector is to a considerable extent a result of strong global pressure (Schneider, 2001, p. 78; Levi-Faur, 2002). Changes in educational policy have been understood in terms of changes in (economic) factors outside the range of the EU (Beukel, 2001, p. 139). There are interesting attempts to separate effects of Europeanization and globalization (Verdier and Breen, 2001). Still, a major challenge is to trace changes at the domestic level back to European-level institutions, policies or events. In practice it has turned out to be difficult to isolate European effects (Radaelli, 1997, p. 572, 2000; Bulmer and Burch, 2001, p. 76; Levi-Faur, 2002) and to disentangle ‘net-effects’ of European arrangements from global, national and sub-national sources of change.

## V. Exporting European Institutions

Inward-looking definitions, that is, Europeanization of the continent itself, are a twentieth-century phenomenon (Mjøset, 1997). Historically, Europeanization has been understood as the spread of forms of life and production, habits of drinking and eating, religion, language, and political principles, institutions and identities typical of Europe and unknown in the rest of the world beyond European territory (Kohn, 1937; Weber, 1947, pp. 208, 215; Mjøset, 1997; Zimmer, 1990). The global extension of the territorial state system is just one outstanding example of European models of polity and society spreading throughout the globe, making European development a key to understanding the rest of the world (Geyer, 1989, p. 339).

A basic framework for understanding such diffusion processes is borrowed from epidemiology. When studying the spread of a form of political organization and governance through a territory and a population, the focus is on questions such as: what is the pattern of diffusion? How fast, how far, and to whom does it (first) spread? Does it stick, or fade away and disappear? What are the political processes through which forms of organization and governance spread? Why does a form spread? Which factors determine the rate and pattern of diffusion? In particular, what are the properties of forms that make them more or less likely to spread? Does it make a difference whether transmission happens through networks of individual contacts or through ‘broad-

casting' and exposure to organized efforts of arguing, persuasion or indoctrination?

An institutional perspective suggests that diffusion will be affected by the interaction between outside impulses and internal institutional traditions and historical experiences. Diffusion processes are unlikely to produce perfect cloning of the prescriptions offered. What is diffused is likely to be transformed during the process of diffusion (March, 1981; Czarniawska and Sevón, 1996; Olsen and Peters, 1996; Christensen and Lægreid, 2001).

In practice, the spread of European models has sometimes taken the form of colonialization, coercion and imposition. European institutions have penetrated and destroyed the traditions and institutions of other continents. They have disrupted and undermined the coherence of established polities and societies and created political counter-mobilization and confrontations. However, diffusion has also taken the form of imitation and voluntaristic borrowing from a successful civilization. The receivers have copied European arrangements because of their perceived functionality, utility or legitimacy.

Because the major European states have lost their world hegemony, hierarchical command and coercion are currently less likely to be the most important processes for spreading European institutions outside Europe. Diffusion patterns may depend more on the exposure to and the attractiveness of European forms. Then, the issue is: among the many, competing ideas about exemplary or appropriate political organization and governance available at the global scene, how distinct and attractive are European forms?

There is scant empirical documentation of external diffusion processes during the last few decades. Yet the new institutionalism in sociology denies that there are distinct European models of organization and governance. The lack of distinction between Europe and the rest of the world, rather than the uniqueness of European solutions, is emphasized (Meyer, 2001, p. 238).<sup>12</sup> The focus is on the diffusion of global prescriptions – templates and standards of universalistic rationality and validity – spread through a global system of cultural communication (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Meyer, 1996; Andersen, 2001).

The attractiveness of European prescriptions and normative standards has also been questioned. For instance, Garton Ash argues that the UK looks to the United States for inspiration. There is a fascination with American solutions and 'idealized America trumps idealized Europe' (Garton Ash, 2001, p. 12). Furthermore, the attraction of American enterprise, innovation and flexibility (Dyson, 2000a) is hardly limited to the UK.

<sup>12</sup> See, however, Strang (1991). Of course, a successful diffusion of European forms of organization and governance, such as the territorial state, has, over time, made Europe less unique.

Currently, Europe finds itself in a new period of experimentation and innovation. The continent is in search of an identity and new political and social models (Beck *et al.*, 2001). While Europe has limited power, it is still the world's major producer of ideology and a normative area that can contribute good ideas (Therborn, 2001). For instance, the Lisbon process emphasized the need to formulate, defend and spread globally a European model of society, partly through competition between different existing Member State models. Increasing attention is paid to European identity and to civilizational differences between Europe and the United States, illustrated by debates over federalism, the desire to combine improved economic efficiency with social justice and responsibility, the use of the death penalty, resistance towards treating language and culture as commodities, new conceptions of security, environmental issues like the Kyoto agreement, etc. Possibly, new forms of organization and governance are in the making, producing forms and processes of change that may inspire regional integration in other parts of the world (Telò, 2001).

Furthermore, European states are increasingly making attempts to assert themselves on the international stage through the EU. For instance, one dimension of the development of a common foreign and security policy relates to the status and role of the EU in the international system (Sjursen, 2001a, p. 199). Aspirations include making the Union an influential actor in the development of a new international order through the WTO, Nato and the United Nations, as well as in bilateral negotiations. A goal is to make the Union's *political* power better reflect its *economic* power.

The power aspect is also observed when the Union is seen as 'Europe' and the focus is on diffusion of institutions, standards and identities within the continent. Borrowing between European states has a long history (Barker, 1944). Yet in recent enlargement negotiations with the CEECs, phrases like 'catching up' with the west, the conditionality of aid and the need to accept EU standards and forms as part of becoming Member States, indicate status and power differentials. Yet, it has also been observed that leaders in the former communist states in eastern and central Europe are improving their ability to differentiate between those aspects that are useful for their own political purposes and those that are not. Imitation has followed a political logic distinct from faddish mimicry (Jacoby, 2001).

While coercion is not the main process of change, diffusion of forms of political organization is unlikely to reflect solely the attractiveness of European templates. Diffusion processes involve the distribution of power and status. They also take place within a framework of resources and capabilities, incentives and sanctions. Resources can be used to give voice to ideas and practices, to make them more visible and more attractive. Forms supported

by the resourceful are *ceteris paribus* more likely to spread. Therefore, we have to attend to the resources mobilized to promote European forms in other parts of the world, as well as the resources available for non-Europeans to resist unattractive forms. In sum, students of Europeanization as the diffusion of European forms of organization and governance beyond the region have to understand the distinctiveness, attractiveness and legitimacy of European models, as well as the resources backing or opposing their diffusion. The shifting long-term European export–import balance of forms is one possible indicator of whether Europe is becoming a more or less important entity in its interaction with non-Europe.

## VI. Political Unification of Europe

The fifth conception defines Europeanization as a political development making Europe a more distinct, coherent and strong political entity.<sup>13</sup> Sovereign states, then, are unified into a single political space and system of governance, a functional whole and a purposeful and resourceful actor. Coherent structural arrangements provide a strong organizational basis for concerted action inwards and outwards. The development of a European sphere for public will- and opinion formation contributes to common conceptions of legitimate political organization and a shared feeling of belonging, giving direction to action capabilities. Internal borders and barriers are fading or removed. External borders and barriers are strengthened. There is a clear discrimination between members (citizens) and non-members. In sum, a fragmented European state system is unified as the boundaries of political space are extended.

Europeanization in the sense of (strong) political unification is not a practice already brought into existence. As an aspiration, it is partly present in some reform programmes (Habermas, 1998; Fischer, 2000; Commission, 2001a; Notre Europe, 2001). Europe has, however, a long history of unsuccessful attempts at unification (Heater, 1992) and there are currently competing ideas about what political organization and system of governance is desirable, possible and likely to make Europe a stronger entity.

<sup>13</sup> It has been argued that there is no need for 'Europeanization' in this meaning because it is synonymous with 'integration' and does not add anything to explaining unification (Radaelli, 2000; Bomberg and Peterson, 2000; Kohler-Koch, 2000). I disagree. Europeanization here involves enlarging the territory, developing new institutions of political governance and adapting existing domestic institutions into a larger coherent order, as well as exporting European models beyond the region. Furthermore, the concept of integration has problems of its own. Integration among a set of elementary parts may refer to structures of interdependence, interaction and sociometric connectedness, and meaning and consistency, in terms of shared normative and causal beliefs, emotional identification and shared political projects (March, 1999, pp. 134–5). These dimensions are not necessarily strongly correlated, even if they are often assumed to be so in the literature.

As of now, there are also few agreed indicators of Europeanization as political unification. A strong Europe does not simply imply maximizing territory, centre-building, adaptation of national and sub-national systems of governance and export of European models. Rather, the institutionalization of political borders, authority, power and responsibility is a delicate balancing act. For example, EU enlargement will increase the Union's territory, population and resources. Yet it will also create more heterogeneity and put stronger demands on the Union's institutions of governance. A stronger centre and a single hierarchical control and command system may under some circumstances make it possible to act in a more coherent way and play a more significant role in global developments. Yet strong adaptational pressure will also generate protest and resistance from Member States as well as others disagreeing with common policies. Likewise, vigorous adaptation of domestic systems without adequate respect for local autonomy, diversity and protection of minorities will provoke conflict and obstruction. The export of European solutions may indicate success. Yet a successful European development will also depend on imports from other parts of the world.

Such a balancing act is unlikely to take the form of a single, typical and dominant process of change. Rather, a crucial aspect of Europeanization has been the dissemination of a network mode of governance characterized by complex interactions between levels and sectors in a multi-level and multi-centre polity (Kohler-Koch, 1999; Hooghe and Marks, 2001). In order to understand European dynamics it is therefore likely that we will need a basic framework allowing several different types of simultaneous processes of change and a pattern of *mutual adaptation among co-evolving institutions*.<sup>14</sup>

The processes of institutional change discussed so far, rule application and arguing, choice, adaptation through experiential learning or competitive selection and diffusion, are seen as complementary rather than exclusive. In varying combinations they are likely to be helpful in understanding contemporary ecologies of co-evolving institutions. This complexity may also explain why students of European transformation have often observed that the dynamics of change take the form of mutual adaptation among co-evolving institutions at different levels and sectors of governance; still, they have tended to ignore the observation in their model-building efforts.

<sup>14</sup> Please note that I talk about co-evolving institutions and not institutional co-evolution. The latter concept, as used in biology and evolutionary economics, opens a theoretical can of worms, i.e. the relationship between institutional change, development and evolution. Institutional development implies that change has a direction, that there are consistent and durable changes in political institutions and the institutional balance (Orren and Skowronek, 2001). Institutional evolution in addition suggests that change tends to improve the adaptive value of institutions, in terms of performance and survival. Processes of development and evolution should, however, be documented empirically rather than assumed in models of European institutional dynamics.

On the one hand, it has been observed that change is not unilateral. Global, European, national and sub-national processes interact in intricate ways. Typically, there is no single dominant and deterministic causal relation. Causal chains are often indirect, long and complex. Effects are difficult to identify and disentangle. Interactive processes of feedback, mutual influence and adaptation are producing interpenetration between levels of governance and institutions (Héritier *et al.*, 1996, p. 1; Rometsch and Wessels, 1996; Kassim, 2000, p. 257; Laffan *et al.*, 2000, pp. 84, 85; Wallace, 2000, p. 370; Bulmer and Burch, 2001, p. 178; Bulmer and Lequesne, 2001; Ladrech 2001, p. 4). On the other hand, the observed complexity is often bracketed. For example, Risse *et al.* (2001, p. 12) write: 'although the causality between Europeanization and domestic structure runs in both directions, we have chosen to emphasize the downward causation from Europeanization to domestic structure'. The dilemma is obvious. A focus on uni-causal relations and the language and logic of fixed dependent and independent variables, can become a straitjacket preventing an adequate theoretical and empirical analysis of European dynamics of change. However, no coherent empirical research programme is possible if everything is seen as endogenous and in flux.

Current European developments may illustrate an elementary property of human beings, that they are capable of producing more complex behaviour and institutions than they are capable of understanding (Lave and March, 1975, p. 6). A world where many actors are adapting to each other simultaneously and therefore changing the context in which other actors are adapting, is a world that is difficult to predict, understand and control by any single actor or group of actors. It is difficult both to infer the proper lessons of experiences and to know what action to take (Axelrod and Cohen, 1999, p. 8).

Political leaders facing a situation where institutions evolve and unfold through an unguided process with weak elements of shared understanding and control may trust processes of natural selection, for instance through competitive markets. Then the task of prospective leaders is to establish simple rules of fair competition and to harness complexity by protecting variation, exploration and innovation. A complementary position is to try to make institutional change a more guided process by improving the elements of shared understanding and co-ordination and reducing complexity. Examples would be institutional actors monitoring each other, exchanging information, introducing arrangements of consultation before decisions are made, developing shared statistics and accounts, making explicit efforts to reduce incompatibilities and redundancies, and deliberately to develop networks of contact and interaction, joint projects and common rules and institutions. An increasing institution and regime density at both European and global levels sug-

gests that both competitive markets and reforms aiming at more deliberate co-ordination are parts of a changing world order.

For students of institutional dynamics, Europeanization as unification makes it necessary to rethink what are fruitful research strategies. In simple models of institutional change, action is often assumed to be a response to a fixed environment, i.e. the environment is not affected by institutional action. The assumption is convenient, but often inconsistent with institutional realities (March, 1981). Assuming that institutions create their environments in part – that they are part of an ecology of interaction, control, co-operation and competition, with organized units responding to each other – complicates the model-building task considerably.

One strategy is to design research projects aiming to specify the scope conditions for specific processes of change, i.e. under what conditions each process is likely to be most significant for understanding European transformation. Another research strategy – and an even more challenging one – is to focus on how institutional transformation may be understood as an ecology of mutual adaptation and co-evolving institutions, including a (varying) number of interacting processes of change. Empirically, the latter research strategy implies studying how non-European, European-level, national and sub-national institutions and actors may change at the same time and in association with one another, as they try to find a place within a complex multi-layer and multi-centred system.

## **VII. A Model-Building, not Definitional Challenge**

Where does all this leave us? Is ‘Europeanization’ generally a disappointing term to be abandoned, or is it useful for understanding the ongoing transformation of the European political order? Is it useful to subsume a variety of phenomena and change mechanisms under one term? Are we in danger of misunderstanding the process and nature of Europeanization because we misuse the term (Wallace, 1999, p. 2)?

Research on European transformations need not be hampered by competing definitions as long as their meaning, the phenomena in focus, the simplifying assumption behind the definitions, the models of change and the theoretical challenges involved, are clarified and kept separate. Europeanization may, however, turn out to be less useful as an explanatory concept than as an attention-directing device and a starting point for further exploration. Possibly, Europeanization as political unification will turn out to be of most interest, because this conception combines internal and external aspects of European dynamics and includes the other four meanings. It will certainly be the

most challenging for those wanting to theorize European institutional dynamics.

Students of European transformation disagree when it comes to the importance of change, what the future is likely to bring and how we may best understand institutional transformations. One reason may be that the European political order has not settled down in a new stable equilibrium. There has been significant change since the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957. Yet, Europe is still in a period of transition. The continent is moving towards a new form of political organization and it is experimenting with the procedures by which the political order itself is to be changed, as illustrated by the ongoing Convention on the Future of Europe.

How, then, are changes in the European political order to be analysed? In contrast to those who identify an institutional approach with strong European-level institutions (Puchala, 1999), the approach used in this article predicts considerable robustness and resilience in the constituent institutions at the domestic level. Domestic institutional structures, and the values, norms, interests and power distributions in which they are embedded, are monuments of historical battles, joint problem-solving and peaceful conflict resolution. Institutions should not be expected to change easily and quickly except under extraordinary conditions. Historically, the territorial state has also shown itself highly adaptive when facing radical change in its environment. Compared to other forms of political organization it has been successful, for instance, when measured by its survival rate (Weiss, 1998). Now the territorial state's adaptive capabilities are again being tested, and the observation of domestic structural continuity and behavioural change is of interest here.

While conceptual clarity is of great importance also in the European context (Radaelli, 2001), the research challenge is not primarily one of inventing definitions. Questions of the properties, mechanisms and explanation of European transformations should not be turned into definitional issues. The challenge is to model the dynamics of change in ways that make the simplifying assumptions behind various definitions accessible to empirical tests. The way ahead lies in integrating perspectives on institutional dynamics, rather than choosing among them. There is no single grand theory of 'Europeanization' that can help us understand how institutions co-evolve through processes of mutual adaptation. Nor is there a single set of simplifying assumptions about change, institutions and actors that will capture the complexity of European transformations. Yet a limited repertoire of (middle-range) models of institutional change that may be helpful in capturing European dynamics exist. Exploring the scope conditions of each model is a beginning. Understanding their interaction is the long-term and difficult challenge.

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