

Between the National and Supranational? Transnational Political Activism, Conflict, and Cooperation in the Integrated Europe¹

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Abstract: *The aim of the article is to propose an approach that would be able to analyze connections between supranational political structures and domestic political interactions. The paper starts by criticizing the reductive dichotomy between the 'global' and 'national'. Instead of this dichotomy, the article draws on current contributions to the study of contentious politics and proposes to see international politics as a triangular structure of relations among states, international organizations, and nonstate actors. Further, the article applies this perspective to the analysis of Europeanization, and current conflicts taking place within the European Union. Four patterns of cooperation and conflict are defined. The article concludes by analyzing the political debate on European integration.*

Keywords: *globalization, states, European Union, Europeanization, non-state actors, cooperation, conflict.*

Introduction

The increasing economic, political, and cultural integration of the world – the process generally referred to as globalization – is said to profoundly restructure the way things are managed and governed in the present era (Habermas 1998, Held et al. 1999, Keohane, Nye 2000, Held 2004, Habermas 2006). It is widely believed that due to the globalization processes national economy, polity, and culture have

changed their status and meaning. While the modern organization of space was based on the institution of the state, globalization has supposedly challenged its privileged position among other social institutions (Ruggie 1993, Strange 1996). Thus, social scientists are urged to broaden their research perspective so that they do not limit themselves to national polities, but encompass global and transnational, i.e., cross-border developments instead (Beck 2000). These developments are seen as major determinants of what is happening within increasingly transnationalized 'national' polities. The national, or the local, is supposed to be understood as part of the wider global context of political action.

Although it is undoubtedly true that globalization has transformed contemporary politics, there has thus far been relatively little done to disentangle the concrete processes that have brought about this change. The claim that we are in need of a global research perspective often remains poorly specified. As things stand now, the 'global', i.e., the result of globalization, is juxtaposed with the 'national', and it is claimed that there are robust interactions between them. However, there has not been much research focused on the exact forms of these interactions. The goal of this article is to outline them in a more systematic way by focusing on the impact of globalization and internationalization/Europeanization on political mobilization in the European Union. Nevertheless, let me pre-empt a possible misunderstanding: the article does not present a full theory in any way. Rather, it explores a possible way to approach the study of internationalization and Europeanization in a more interactive manner than it is presently the case.

In the first section the article criticizes the dichotomy of the 'global' and 'national', and claims that it fails to provide us with a meaningful means to analyze the present situation. Drawing on S. Tarrow's work the article proposes to see global politics as the result of dynamic interactions between states, international institutions, and nonstate actors. The article claims that institutions matter. This institutionalist perspective makes it possible to identify different types of interactions between national polities and their broader transnational environment. The structural process of globalization does not influence political actors directly; its impact is always mediated through institutions. Thus, anti-globalization protesters of the late 1990s did not rise against a 'global structure', but against the international financial institutions. In a similar vein, the most profound impact of globalization in Europe was the reinvigoration of the integration process in the 1980s, which ultimately resulted in major changes in both the European and member states' institutional structures (Sandholtz, Zysman 1989). The second section focuses on the latter set of changes that has recently started to be studied under the rubric of 'Europeanization'. The recent studies on Europeanization, however, share the reductive top-down approach characteristic of the globalization studies criticized in the first section. Therefore, stressing the interactive character of Europeanization

the third section proposes an alternative view. The section identifies four different patterns of Europeanization. In other words, this section points out four types of coalition and conflict that are being formed within the multilevel structure of the present European composite polity. The last section compares this analytical perspective to political, i.e., ideology-laden views on European integration.

Globalization and Internationalization

Globalization is a multifaceted concept. According to different approaches, one can distinguish among its different dimensions – economic, military, environmental, social, cultural, and several others (see Scholte 2000, Keohane, Nye 2001). This text focuses primarily on its political dimension. Some authors see it as an inherent part of globalization; others strive to distinguish it from globalization. According to the latter group of authors, globalization is regarded as too broad a concept to capture the recently changing political interactions. Instead of globalization, these researchers prefer to speak of *internationalization* to underscore the institutional dynamics of contemporary transformations (Tarrow 2001a, 2002, della Porta, Tarrow 2005, Tilly, Tarrow 2007). In a similar vein, even those, who see globalization as encompassing also political processes, share this institutional understanding of its political aspects (Keohane 2002, Held 2004, Císař 2004b). Thus, both camps stress the institutional underpinnings of globalization processes. Contrary to the views that see globalization as a result of unfolding markets and capital mobility (Gill 1995, Cox 1996, Strange 1996), these views concentrate on the institutional conditions necessary for globalization to exist. Whether called political globalization or internationalization, *international institutionalization* is understood as the manifestation of globalizing tendencies in contemporary politics.

These tendencies have been expressed in the growing importance of international institutions, e.g., the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization; in the dense structure of intergovernmental relations; in regional integration projects like the European Union and NAFTA; and in networks that relate these organizations to private sector actors, non-governmental organizations, transnational advocacy networks, and social movements (Gourevitch 2003, Risse 2003, Rosenau 2003, Tarrow 1998, 2001a, 2005, Císař 2004b, Habermas 2006). From this point of view, globalization and institutionalization are mutually inter-related concepts. According to R. Keohane (2002: 81):

‘The relationship between globalization and institutional change does not only work in one direction. Globalization is fundamentally a social process, not one that is technologically predetermined. Like all other social processes, it requires the underpinning of

appropriate social institutions. [...] Globalization and international institutionalization are mutually contingent.'

Liberal theory of international relations captured this international institutional structure in terms of 'international interdependence' (Keohane, Nye 2001) and 'global governance' (Rosenau 1992, Keohane, Nye 2000); other authors speak of 'complex internationalism' (O'Brien et al. 2000). However, they all describe the same phenomenon: the formation of a multilevel structure of decision making that is no longer fully controlled by states, although states still play an important role, but is populated by a number of nonstate actors (Wapner 1996, Keck, Sikkink 1998, della Porta et al. 1999, Florini 2000, Evans 2000, Josselin, Wallace 2001, Clark 2001, Mendelson, Glenn 2002, Price 2003, Risse 2003, Tarrow 2005). As a result, politics in the era of globalization is not torn between the 'global' and 'national', as it is sometimes supposed, but takes place in the multilevel setting, where different types of coalitions are formed among different types of actors across different levels of decision making.

The focus on the institutional character of contemporary transformations makes it possible to see a more complex picture of transnational politics than the duality of the 'global' and 'local' would allow. The latter leads to an impoverished, top-down view of globalization. According to this perspective, globalization forces driven by market logic impinge on local contexts that resist the pressure (Drainville 1994, Cox 1996). Instead of this perspective, I draw on recent contributions to the study of contentious politics, and see global politics as '*a dense, triangular structure of relations among states, nonstate actors, and international institutions, and the opportunities this produces for actors to engage in collective action at different levels of this system.*' (Tarrow 2005: 25) In other words, global politics is structured by relations among three basic types of actors: states, nonstate actors, and international organizations. According to this approach, the latter, i.e. the result of internationalization, has transformed the standing of states and brought opportunities for nonstate actors to engage in collective action beyond national borders (Imig, Tarrow 2001, Tarrow 2001a, 2002, 2004, 2005).

Although international institutions are predominantly seen as targets of political mobilization, they also create institutional focal points for transnational coordination of nonstate actors. In the words of S. Tarrow, they work as 'coral reefs' that attract contained as well as contentious actors to cooperate, network, and establish coalitions around campaigns coordinated across national borders (Tarrow 2002). International institutions 'both intrude on domestic politics through their policies and personnel and offer venues where nonstate actors and states can take their claims and build coalitions.' (Tarrow 2005: 27) Similar to national political institutions, international institutions provide nonstate actors with opportunities to organize and make political claims (Tarrow 1998, Tilly, Tarrow 2007).

To sum up: contemporary global politics is not structured by dichotomous relations between the 'global' and 'local', but by a triangular structure of relations among states, nonstate actors, and international institutions. The three types of actors interact and create various cooperative and competitive patterns of interactions that form the relational structure of contemporary global politics. Therefore, if we are to understand the political dynamics of globalization, we need to look beyond the simple global/local dichotomy, and focus instead on the institutional conditions for political action 'beyond borders'. Nowhere are these conditions more developed than in the context of integrating Europe – in the European Union (EU). Accordingly, the remainder of this article will focus on forms of interactions among different political actors within the institutional structure of the EU.

Europeanization

Until the 1990s scholars studying European integration primarily focused on the explanation of reasons for the integration process. The theory of integration was divided into two theoretical camps – neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism (Rosamond 2000: 98–99). Although the two differed in almost all respects, both shared the focus on the integration process itself. At the same time, both were unable to reflect on the specificity of this process's result – the emerging European polity. Only in the 1990s in response to the reinvigoration of integration in the second half of the 1980s (Single European Act) new approaches emerged, which began to study the changing governance structure in Europe. By focusing their attention on the institutional effects of the integration process at the European level these 'governance approaches' paved the way for Europeanization theories that emerged later on and did not primarily focus on the study of integration, but its effects on the level of EU's member states.

Europeanization studies strive to explain changes induced by the integration process in national polities, politics, and policies. According to Radaelli (2003: 30), Europeanization refers to

'[p]rocesses of (a) construction, (b) diffusion, and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things", and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures, and public policies.'

In other words, Europeanization is understood in a top-down manner as the result of the EU pressure on its member and accession states (Schimmelfennig 2002, Börzel, Risse 2003, Grabbe 2003).

Others define Europeanization as a particular instance of international institutionalization – internationalization (see above) – in the European context. Hence, Europeanization is seen as

‘...the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal, and social institutions associated with political problem solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules. Europeanization involves the evolution of new layers of politics that interact with older ones.’ (Risse et al. 2001: 3)

Although this definition refers to interactions, Risse and his collaborators in fact focus on the effects in national polities of the top-down adaptation pressure from the EU.

These studies of Europeanization, to an extent, repeat the logic of the globalization studies based on the dichotomy between the ‘global’ and ‘national’. In these studies too, the supranational (European) level of governance is kept separate from the national one, and the process of their interaction (Europeanization) is reduced to (EU) top-down pressure. The remainder of this paper will show that there is no theoretically grounded reason to conflate Europeanization with the top-down adaptation pressure. I claim that the influence of the EU not only changes the situation for political actors in national polities (the focus of the above quoted studies), but provides various opportunities for these actors to enter the European policy process on the side of either European or national political actors. In other words, there are several ways the Europeanization process manifests itself, and there is no reason to reduce it to only one mechanism.

As the paradigm of multi-level governance (Marks 1993, Marks et al. 1996, Hooghe, Marks 2001, Tarrow 2001b) already pointed out in the 1990s, the policy process within the EU is characterized by the interconnectedness of subnational, national, and European institutions that enable political actors at different levels to interact and establish various types of coalitions (Rucht 2001, Helfferich a Kolb 2001, Martin, Ross 2001, Greenwood 2003, Císař 2005, Císař, Vráblíková 2007). This dynamic defies the above-defined Radaelli’s and Risse’s models. Their perspectives make them blind to certain types of interactions that are enabled by Europeanization. In line with the perspective defined in the previous section, in order to get a more complete picture of Europeanization, one needs to focus on interactions among the three principal actors – states, supranational (European) institutions, and nonstate actors. If this is done, it will soon be clear that there is no simple logic behind Europeanization that could be modelled on the basis of the top-down adaptation pressure from the EU. This pressure presents only one mechanism of Europeanization among several.

Conflict and Cooperation in the European Union

The currently developing governance structure of the EU provides various opportunities for political action. According to S. Tarrow (2004: 53),

‘...the map of Europe today offers the potential for coalition building, political exchange, and the construction of mechanisms of alignment and conflict among social actors across states, sectors, and levels of decision-making. These can take horizontal as well as vertical form. Regional governments, political parties, and even social movements are reaching across and above their territories to exercise leverage against other actors, national states, and supranational authorities.’

In previous research (Císař 2004a, 2005) I focused on the European institutions and nonstate actors, in order to identify variegated ways of their interactions and to provide a more complex picture of the process of Europeanization. I proposed to distinguish among four modes of interaction between the European institutions and nonstate actors (see Table 1). The *upper-left quadrant* of Table 1 captures the situation of cooperation or conflict between the two types of actors. Both sides develop active strategies of action that either align together or clash in conflict. The *lower-right quadrant* describes the complete opposite of the previous situation. In this case, neither side embarks on an active strategy. The situation defines policy areas that lie outside of the priorities of both the European institutions and nonstate actors. Under the conditions captured by the *upper-right quadrant* the European institutions exert pressure on national political institutions. In this case, nonstate actors do not directly interact with the European institutions and are the passive receivers of changes induced by the EU pressure. Due to this pressure domestic political institutions change their configurations. The result is the empowerment of some actors and dis-empowerment of others. In other words, the EU opens access points to the national political system for some actors and closes them for others. This is the situation described as the mechanism of Europeanization in the standard Europeanization studies criticized above. The *lower-left quadrant* describes the opposite situation characterized by the passivity of the European institutions and active nonstate actors who strive to influence the EU. In this case, bottom-up mobilization can be observed.

Table 1: Interactions of European Institutions and nonstate actors

European institutions	nonstate actors	
	active	passive
active	cooperation/conflict	empowerment/dis-empowerment of non-state actors
passive	transnational lobbying aimed at the EU	indifference

Source: Císař 2004a.

While the above-presented typology points out to the fact that there are several possible mechanisms of Europeanization and presents a research perspective that is able to conceptualize non-state actors' transnational mobilization induced by the development of the EU governance structure (Císař, Vráblíková 2007), it nevertheless omits an important aspect. It is focused only on the interactions between the European institutions and nonstate actors and does not incorporate EU member states into the picture. This innovation was brought into the field of transnational politics by the political process model presented especially in the work of S. Tarrow (see Table 2).

Table 2: Coalitions among European Institutions, states, and nonstate actors

	nonstate actors	European institutions
states	national local alignment	elite consolidation
nonstate actors	transnational alliance	supranational consolidation

Source: Based on Tarrow 2004.

Drawing on the triangular model outlined in the first section of this paper Tarrow (2004: 54) distinguishes among four basic types of coalition and conflict in contemporary Europe:

1. National local alignment – a coalition of national government and nonstate actors against European elites;
2. Elite consolidation – a coalition of national government with European elite against nonstate actors;
3. Supranational consolidation – a coalition of European elites with nonstate actors against national government;
4. Transnational alliance – a coalition of nonstate actors in at least two different states against European elite.

Empirical examples of *national local alignment* abound in the EU. Tarrow mentions the conflict over fishing rights in Bay of Biscay in 1995. In this year Spanish

tuna fishermen seized ‘...a French tuna boat for allegedly using nets that exceed the statutory EU limit of 2 kilometres.’ (Tarrow 2004: 56) They blocked the vessel in the port of Hendaye. As Tarrow shows, pressed by domestic public opinion the Spanish government was made to lobby in Brussels for better regulation of tuna fishing. Spanish fishermen and their government aligned against the European supranational elite. An example taken from Eastern Europe would be the protests of Czech farmers prior to the accession for agricultural subsidies equal to these in old member states. In this case too, nonstate actors aligned with their government against the European elite.

There are also numerous examples of elite consolidation. In this case, a national representation aligns with the European elite against domestic actors. One of the most profound examples was the use of Maastricht stabilization criteria for the justification of domestic economic reforms, as happened, for example, in Italy in the 1990s. In this case, supranational institutions formed an alliance with the national government against many segments of the Italian population that exploded in protests (Tarrow 2004: 55). The same top-down pattern could be observed in the former East European accession countries, where a number of policy measures were introduced as part of the adoption of *acqui communautaire*. In these cases too, national governments ‘bound their hands’ by referring to the demands coming from Brussels. The alliance was struck between governments and the European elite against potential domestic opposition (see also Cowles et al. 2001, Grabbe 2001, Linden 2002, Featherstone and Radaelli 2003).

In the case of *supranational consolidation* a coalition is formed between the European elite and domestic nonstate actors against the state. Examples proliferate in the EU especially in the area of regional policy, as the 1988 reform of structural funds enabled European institutions (especially the Commission) to directly cooperate with subnational – regional – actors (Marks 1993). However, with the increasing EU competencies this coalitional type can be observed also in other policy areas. For example, the issue of gender equality was only taken seriously by the national political elite in the Czech Republic in the second half of the 1990s as part of the EU accession process. In this case, the EU pressure aligned with the demands of local women’s groups that were suddenly able to find open access to the previously closed political system (Císař, Vráblíková 2007). The same pattern characterized the area of anti-corruption policies (Císař 2004b).

The last coalition type is the result of the *transnational alliance* building. In this case, nonstate actors in at least two European states align, in order to challenge the European elite. Such alliances are formed in a number of policy sectors (Imig, Tarrow 2001). In addition, in order to be able to obtain access to the European institutions, they have become more and more institutionalized and have established their offices directly in Brussels (Marks, McAdam 1999, Greenwood 2003). One can think of or-

ganizations such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, ETUC and many others. Additional occasional coalitions are formed around particular issues such as the Czech campaign against the second nuclear power plant Temelin. In this campaign it was the alliance of the Czech and Austrian opponents of the construction that strived for anti-nuclear support from the European Commission; an attempt that ultimately failed (Císař 2004b).

Political Debate on the European Union

According to this paper's main argument, there are four basic patterns of coalition and conflict in contemporary Europe – national local alignment, elite consolidation, supranational consolidation, and the transnational alliance building. All four can be observed in different situations in the multilevel structure of the European polity. Taken together, they present a useful analytical approach to the study of Europeanization. Taken separately, they present distinctive political views on the EU. In other words, I claim that although they all form contemporary European politics, political actors, according to their different ideological persuasion, typically select just one of them to promote their political views. Two of them present negative views – a Europe that is dangerous to the normal business of politics. Two of them, to the contrary, depict hopeful views of Europe.

Conservative critics of the EU picked up the model of supranational consolidation, in order to show the danger the EU, together with NGO activists, presents to democracy at the national level. The conservative Right uses this model to illustrate the dangerous character of supposed European post-democracy. According to this view, there is a powerful coalition in the making within the EU between the European elite and some nongovernmental actors who align against the democratically elected representatives of states. As a result, in the EU we supposedly are observing the rise of European post-democracy covered in the ideology of Europeanism.

One of the most outspoken voices representing this view is the current Czech President. According to V. Klaus, Europeanism is the dominant current European ideology that encroaches upon the legitimately elected representatives of the European states and strives to de-politicize national politics in the name of a single set of policy prescriptions. In this view, European bureaucrats see themselves as the 'committee of the wise men' who through European directives and hand in hand with the elitist representatives of European NGOs dictate their opinion to elected politicians. Neither the members of the European elite nor the representatives of NGOs possess electoral legitimacy; yet both pretend to work for the good of the European people (Klaus 2005, 2006).

According to Klaus, this coalition's goals are manifold. First, it promotes the old-fashioned model of the welfare state at the cost of free market competition. Second, it strives to homogenize European societies and strip the states of their sovereignty. This is the reason why the members of the European elite collude with nonstate actors: Eurocrats need allies in their struggle against national political elites. Thus, Europeanism and post-democracy go hand in hand; the former provides the latter with the necessary ideological underpinning. Third, this supranational-local coalition makes every effort to evade democratic control by the (national) peoples of Europe. In order to achieve this goal, the coalition supports internationalism and international institutions that circumvent the domestic policy process. Internationalism is also seen as the ready-made justification for this coalition's anti-Americanism. Fourth, the ultimate goal of this coalition is to take over European polities and their legitimate representatives and institute a new type of governance structure that would not be based on electoral accountability. It would be firmly in the hands of European political and intellectual elites that would in a somewhat Platonic manner mould European peoples according to their preferred ideal. All in all, this coalition aims at a revolutionary transformation of normal political affairs (Klaus 2004a, b, 2006).

On the same side of the ideological spectrum, the liberal Right selects the model of *elite consolidation* to show that by developing excessive market regulation the EU together with the states impinges on the freedoms of nonstate actors, who are in this perspective conceptualized as socio-economic actors (firms). According to this view, represented, for example, by business interest groups such as the European Chemical Industry Council and the European Round Table of Industrialists, excessive regulation or, as they often put it, 'regulation overkill' stifles innovation and obstructs European efforts to increase its competitiveness on the global market (CEFIC 2003, ERT 2002: 4).

The remaining two models are, on the contrary, adopted by the forces of the Left. On the one hand, in some Western European countries, the old Left draws on the model of *national local consolidation*, when it takes on the EU as a promoter of much hated neoliberalism. A Europe to be hoped for is supposed to be based on the reinvigorated regulatory functions of states and a vibrant civil society. Thus, an alliance is hopefully to be struck between governments and nonstate actors against supranational elites who supposedly promote market deregulation.

On the other hand, the contemporary new Left (components of the so-called alterglobalization movement) does not share the old Left's belief in the state capacity to bring about social justice. It is a coalition of nonstate actors, who are supposed to bring politics closer to the citizenry and thereby put a stop to neoliberal restructuring in Europe. Hence, *transnational alliance* is picked up by these actors as the way for Europe to be reformed 'from below.' In the eyes of some activists, this alliance is

currently being forged within the framework of the European Social Forum process (see della Porta et al. 2006: 196–231).

Conclusion

The goal of the article was to present a first outline of an interactive approach to the study of the effect of globalization and internationalization/Europeanization. The argument of the text started from the criticism of the globalization studies that base their perspective on the global/local dichotomy. Instead of this perspective, an alternative view based on the Tarrow's model of triangular relations among states, international organizations, and non-state actors was proposed for the study of contemporary institutional structures of transnational governance. Subsequently, as the EU presents the most developed supranational institutional arrangement in the world, the article turned to it. The study of the effects of European international institutionalization – Europeanization – has currently developed a research perspective that to an extent replicates the problems of the globalization literature criticized in the first section of the article. Thus, drawing on the Tarrow's triangular model the article proposed to open the study of Europeanization to a more interactive perspective than the one currently used. Four patterns of interactions among states, the European institutions, and non-state actors were differentiated and illustrated by empirical examples. Subsequently, the four patterns were used in order to analytically frame the political debate on the current development of the EU.

It is safe to conclude that in opposition to the views of the mainstream scholarship and political ideologues all four patterns of Europeanization can be observed in the contemporary EU. The ultimate section of the article showed that it is only theoretical reductionism and/or ideological myopia that allows one to stick to only one of them and see it as the only model of European politics. Different patterns of interactions are being formed around different issues in Europe and these patterns cannot be captured by a single representation. Only reductive reading of the world makes it possible to unduly simplify the otherwise complex reality of politics in Europe.

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Notes

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