

The role of Non Governmental Organisations in a New European Order.

New forms of governance. The case study of Greece, Poland and United Kingdom.

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Abstract. Hundreds of Social movements and nongovernmental organisations, either formal or informal, play a dynamic role in the European Union. This paper challenges to analyze their role in a New European Order, where great personalities are missing. Will they push Europeanization forward? Attention is drawn in the examples of Greece – a pro-European State, Poland – a new member State, and United Kingdom- a sceptical member State. The political future of the European Union, after the Irish “No” at the Lisbon Treaty, seems to be uncertain. New ways of engaging citizens at the European Union seems to be more important than ever. First, I will attempt to approach the issue of Europeanization in a theoretical terrain and then I will try to analyze the results of my research. Is European Society building, simply a government and political parties task, or new ways of participation could do the job as well? Can citizens play an important and promising role towards this direction? These are two of the debates that this project will aim to place and try to shed light on. Non Governmental Organisations and Social Movements, as the main channels of influence and participation across Europe, will be put into the microscope of this research project.

Introduction

Today more than ever before the European Union is in search of new goals, new ideas, new expectations and new ways to motivate people. The original cause for the creation of the European Union -stability and peace- is widely achieved, even though it should not be taken for granted. It is difficult to inspire people at the end of 20th century's first decade, by promising peace and prosperity. More than 50% of the EU's citizens do not remember or have not lived a big crisis, a war or a hunger. The European Integration project needs to “transform the way the average European thinks and acts” (Pentland, 1973, p.242). Youth Associations and Non Governmental Organisations widely active seem to play an interesting and promising role in a constant effort to stimulate people's reaction towards all changes society comes through.

Moreover, it has been stated that old ideas, such as the creation of an “imagined community” have produced “new impulses from young people's participation,” as Lauritzen pointed out, while “by understanding the individual as a cultural being and as a social constructor, we can concentrate on the social and political contents of a European community as a community of Europeans, on civic society, on community building and on local action and global responsibility” (1999, p.228). Participation in a transnational nongovernmental organisation is one of the core means of youth participation in local,

national, European and global level. This article concentrates its analysis in the European level: Greece, Poland and United Kingdom.

According to Lavdas, “a multitude of commitments may develop emotional engagement as well as enhance opportunities for meaningful choices, leading to the condition of political polyculturalism, in which multiple allegiances co-exist, without denying the basic adherence to certain minimal shared political values” (2008, p.1). Participating in youth NGO’s might not constitute that all people believe in same political values, though it does prove that young participants are active as EU citizens. Trying to paraphrase Massimo’s D’Azeglio (Bellamy, 2006, p.1), words “having made Italy, we need to make the Italians”, now in a European level “having made the European Union we need to make the Europeans as well”. How can this be achieved? In what level can NGOs contribute towards this direction? This is an issue that this analysis tries to shed light on. Attention is drawn in the examples of Greece -a pro-European State-, Poland -a new member State-, and United Kingdom- a cautious member State-. Greece entered the EU in 1981, so it can be addressed as an old member-state; Poland represents EU’s most important step after the establishment of the European Community –the big opening- and UK’s behavior was and still is, an interesting issue. All these countries have thousands of young citizens active in NGOs. I will analyze, both separately and in contrast, the role of NGOs towards the Europeanization of Greek, Polish and British youth and its role in Europe’s future.

Alexis de Tocqueville characteristically wrote that, “feelings and ideas are renewed, the heart enlarged, and understanding developed” through active participation in organisations (cited by Marc Morje Howard & Leah Gilbert, 2008, p.12). In the same path, Howard and Gilbert wrote that “interaction in voluntary organisations results in virtuous circles of cooperation and political involvement, effectively creating –schools of democracy-”. According to Warleigh a regime can be defined as democratic if the people, as a collectivity, have the formal power and a number of sufficiently effective means; the question needed to be answered is: where are the people?

Europeanization as a project

Pentland in 1973, wrote that “European integration will require a transformation of the way the average European thinks and acts” (Robyn, p.242). Today, more than ever before, it is vital to conceive *Europeanization as the creation of we-ness in a European public space where citizens will identify themselves as Europeans, apart from their primary nationality*. Vink and Graziano wrote that “the story of Europeanization has only just started (p.4).

Many definitions have been attempted to describe Europeanization; some of the most profound are listed above. Europeanization as the domestic adaptation to European regional integration (Vink & Graziano, p.7); Radaelli characteristically wrote that Europeanization “refers to the process of (a) construction, (b) diffusion, and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourses, identities, political structures and public policies” (2003, p.30); Cini, identified five different definitions of Europeanization as: “(a) the territorial expansion, (b) the process of European-level institutionalization, (c) the export of European Institutions to the wider world, (d) “the strengthening of the European integration *project* or the *European*

Construction as a political ambition” and finally, (e) “the domestic impact of European-level institutions” (2005, p.333); Europeanization, as the “development of new norms regarding citizenship and membership at the European level” (Checkel, p.80). Ioakimidis, pointed that Europeanization is seen as “the process that is transforming the political systems of the EU member states and beyond” (2002, p.1). Europeanization, according to Olsen (2002, p.922) “is not a unique process and a *suis generis* phenomenon”. In this work it is related to the “process of structural change” and the “variously affected actors, institutions, ideas and interests” (Featherstone & Radaelli, 2003, p.3). Radaelli and Pasquier tend to support that “debates on definitions are particularly important in the genetic stage of a new field of inquiry” (Vink and Graziano, p. 6). The European Union can be this field.

Bulmer underlines that “Europeanization as such is not a theory, but rather a phenomenon that needs to be explained” (cited by Vink & Graziano, p.12). Börzel and Risse have created an interesting two-angle framework in their effort to approach the field of Europeanization as domestic impact (2003, p.63-69). The first part approached the domestic impact of Europeanization as a “process of redistribution of resources”, while the second, as a process of socialization and learning”. Olsen added that “different responses and patterns of adaptation and institutional robustness” should be expected in a political environment such as the European one (2002, p.934). The Liberal Intergovernmentalists tend to claim that “European opportunities and constraints strengthen the action capacities of national executives” [Moravcsik (1995) cited by Börzel & Risse, 2003 p.63], while on the other hand, the Neofunctionalists support the idea that “Europeanization provides societal and subnational actors with new resources” (Marks (1993), Sandholz (1996) cited Börzel & Risse, 2003 p.63).

New forms of governance?

Alexis de Tocqueville highlighted the importance of a “face to face interaction in civic associations as the bedrock of American democracy” (Howard & Gilbert, p.12). Here, in this research it seems to find similarities with the results in a European Union level. As they underline, “voluntary organisations provide opportunities for ordinary people to join important civic skills” and “to develop feeling of efficacy, which in turn produce more proficient and engaged citizens” (p.14). Moreover, as Robyn wrote, the “on-going construction of the European Union raises fundamental questions about the ability of people to voluntarily acquire new forms of identity with new political institutions” (p.2). Here lies the importance of NGOs and youth associations to cultivate into young Europeans the new feelings of belonging and help them successfully adapt to the new reality. This is something will be tested in the next chapter. The European reality brought people in a totally new experience; it is the first time people need to adjust to such a reality in a voluntary base (Robyn, p.4). On the contrary, “the last type of long-standing continental political organisation, the Christian empire of the Middle Ages, was based on feudal order of subservience and pre-modern conceptions of religious unity more than political engagement” (Robyn, p.4).

The European Construction used to be, and still is, an adventure with fellow travelers that aims among others: in the strengthening of democratic institutions, in the creation of a common cultural identity and the evolution of European Union in an important international scene. (Theologou,2005, p.15). NGOs seem to play an important

role in motivating young people's awareness and participation, at the same time as they can be the necessary vehicle that will push European integration forward. The formation of a *United States of Europe* was never the "endpoint of the integration process", but it is true that "a quasi-federal trajectory would indeed signify the beginning of the end of the nation-state as the dominant unit for political organisation" (Vink, 2002, p. 15). This could be achieved if NGOs and transnational networks play a significant role "in agenda setting at all levels of domestic, trans-governmental and European politics and policy-making" (Kaiser&Starie, 2005, p.11).

Concepts like Europeanization of people must be in a primary agenda. European Union has covered great step of political and social development, since the Treaty of Rome (1957) was signed, but it still is in a "period of transition" while the "continent is moving towards a new form of political organisation" (Olsen, 2002, p. 944). The European Union, as a "live amalgam" is in continuous transformation; this piece of work seeks to be evidence of the importance of youth towards this development.

Conclusion

The query that Rawls (cited by Lavdas, 2004, p. 39) expressed in 1993 is still applicable and farsighted: *How is it possible for there to exist over time a just and stable society of free and equal citizens who still remain profoundly divided by reasonable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?* Additionally, Kant (cited by Lavdas and Chrysochoou, 2005, p.285) phrased that cosmopolitan law is the natural expansion of the national state, while "the fact that people of the world coexist and cope regularly, is relative with the main principle of the creation of the state through the nature".

The aim of this paper was to test whether NGO youth participation in Greece, Poland and United Kingdom promotes the Europeanization of youth, transnational bonding, the formation of a European identity and a European demos. This can be defined as learning to live, co-exist, co-operate and work with people from different countries. This is because cultural learning, socialization and transnational youth networks move forward what Kant (cited by Lavdas & Chrysochoou, 2005, p.285) wrote about "cosmopolitan law" (Weltbürgerrecht). Non Governmental Organisations succeed such learning through the constant interaction of their members with young people all over Europe: exchanges, seminars, voluntary work and meetings are only few of the circumstances that bring the participants of youth organisations in interaction. NGO participation supports this principle: it brings people together and creates bonds. As long as young people are in constant contact to each other, they are "obliged" to establish a legitimate order: Europe. What is the role that comes for NGOs to place in this new European order?

NGO participation seems to promote the formation of a European identity and a European Demos. This can be defined as the creation of common European characteristics and the creation of feelings of belonging in a bigger community: Europe. This creates new settings in the European public space. People active in the EU field are eager to work, travel and live in this new "morfwma": The New Europe. Non Governmental Organisations promote this notions since the constant interaction of young Europeans promotes the creation of common feelings of belonging that contribute to the construction of a European demos and the formation of a European identity with common

basic values. This cannot occur automatically but, instead, requires time and effort. O'Neill (2000, p.122) mentioned that the process of integration became a subject of criticism and the result is uncertain. Shore (cited by Grillo, 2007, p.78) "acknowledges the increasing importance of bottom-up Europeanization, as a growing list of European icons and symbols from the Eurostar high-speed rail service to the Eurovision Song Contest". It seems that NGO participation strengthens young people's willingness to put all these in their everyday life. This is the reason that most of the actions are related with this kind of issues: human rights, democracy, justice, freedom, racism etc. Ignatief (2000) cited by Lavdas and Chrysochoou (2004, p.143) mentioned that "we should conceptualize the complex nature of Europe as a community with common perception of the meaning, size and scope of freedom". Chrysochoou (2004, p.144) pointed out that the European "res publica" will be the cornerstone of the protection of "democracy of reflection" in the context of a new, multilevel and international "civitas", that signifies the progress of the common culture of Europe. Furthermore, he added that in the creation of a European demos, people should be aware of their common rights and obligations that come as a result of the European Citizenship. NGO participation initiates constant interaction between different people from different countries all around the European Union. Through this, young participants create relations and become more aware of the common and different characteristics of their countries.

The analysis came up with certain outcomes that support the claim that NGO participation in the three selected countries drives young participants, in a large majority, in discovering common elements of culture, politics, actions, and creation. Elements like common European awareness, mutual respect, human rights and common culture are constructed through NGO participation and contribute to the creation of young people's way of thinking. All these make young people more interested for the European Union, more eager to participate in common actions and fulfill common targets that can progressively lead to new forms of governance; governance of the people, by the people, where EU citizens having the leading role. This will be a New European Order.

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Europeanization of Corporate Governance: the case of Greece

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Work in progress. Please do not quote. Comments welcome.Abstract

The major economic scandals at the beginning of the 2000s boosted EU's efforts to harmonize the regulatory framework for corporate governance. In this process EU shifted from a traditional harmonization approach towards a "new harmonization" approach and lately towards a "hybrid" approach as expressed by the comply-or-explain rule. As it regards the content of European Corporate Governance, a number of provisions in the European framework embrace characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon model which places the interests of shareholders above those of any other stakeholder. A number of scholars consider this shift as an inevitable development and expression of an apolitical process of globalization. Greece's corporate governance framework also changed in the recent years towards the same direction. This change could be described as a pure Europeanization process, since EU Directives shape, in an important extent, the legal framework. However, I argue that in both arenas, the European and the Greek, changes in corporate governance are not results of the "automatic" processes of globalization and Europeanization but the outcomes of a continuous struggle between conflicting interests both in national and transnational level. In this context, we can explain both deviations from the Anglo-Saxon model and also resistance to change. The final outcome of this political conflict is not predetermined and it will depend upon the relative balance of power and the institutional framework. Path dependencies and well-rooted cultural differences are important factors to be considered, while, the current global crisis changes the land in the financial sector worldwide and rejuvenates the "battle of models".