

Experts and Academics as Idea Generator and Promulgator: Identifying the Social Policy Community of the European Union

Ryosuke AMIYA-NAKADA
Meiji Gakuin University
r.amiya-nakada@nifty.com

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Abstract

The Social policy discourse of the EU is characterized by its continuous evolution. True, there are shifts in emphasis and change in the buzzwords; Social Model, Flexicurity, and Employability are examples. Still, beneath stylistic fluctuations, a common thread through policy development can be discerned since the Delors era. This paper is an attempt to figure out such continuity and seek its foundation in the existence of a rather stable policy community.

Specifically, the paper highlights the role of academics and policy experts. The paper proceeds in three steps. First, it traces the development of the social policy discourse since the Delors era, based on comprehensive examination of the presidency conclusions of the European Council and the important social policy documents. This will show that recent topics and policy frames can be traced back to the earlier days, which is conditioned by the institutional configuration and objective policy tasks which the EU has been faced with.

Second, this paper insists that such continuity cannot be taken for granted, because the issues are electorally important and the political power balance has shifted many times. As an explanation of such not-so-natural continuity, the paper stresses the role of the social policy community surrounding the EU institutions, especially that of academics and policy experts. Through the analysis of the participants and contents of the presidency conferences, academic reports and policy papers, it is shown that relatively stable members of the policy community have been continuously mobilized.

Lastly, as a first step to gauge the net effect of that policy community, this paper picks up several examples to illuminate when and how this policy community takes effects and where the limits lie. In the end, the paper proposes a punctuated Europeanization metaphor as a description of the policy dynamics in the social policy domain.

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1. Introduction

One of the most intensively investigated topics in the European integration research is the influences of the EU level developments on the national level polity, politics and policies. So-called "Europeanization" study is a prominent example. Although it has been modified and refined in response to criticisms, the original image of the Europeanization process, exemplified by the "goodness-of-fit" hypothesis, reflects a rather formal-institutional and staged model of policy processes. Namely, the policy was first determined at the EU level, then the task of implementation falls on the member states and the analytical focus is on how they react to that specific EU legislations.

At least in some policy areas, however, this model does not fit neatly. It may be useful in the policy areas where the EU has the extensive formal legislative responsibility and power, as in the case of competition policy. In contrast, in those policy areas where the EU has the weak rule-making power, policy instruments of the EU institutions, especially the Commission, include necessarily soft ones. Thus the "New Modes of Governance" draw the attention of the practitioners and researchers. In this "soft" channel of influence, it is quite difficult to measure the channel and extent of European influences on national changes. This paper is an attempt to identify one possible channel of transnational policy diffusion and suggest possible conditions of its effectiveness.

For this type of investigation, the Advocacy Coalition Framework is of help. Its initial intention was to move beyond the formal institutional power analysis, like the President versus the Congress, the Iron Triangle, et cetera. This nicely fits with our concern, to pay more attention to the transnational and informal aspects of policy dynamics in the European Union. The ACF explicitly aimed at including an intergovernmental dimension and expanding the analytical focus on journalists, analysts, researchers and others (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 24).

There are, however, a few differences in terms of academic concern and the institutional settings. First, the concern of this paper is more of continuity and evolution than change. Second, the ACF usually presupposes two or three competing advocacy coalitions. In our case, this does not apply, which will be discussed in the third section of the paper. Third, the institutional architecture of the European Union is more complex and fragmented. In addition to that, due to the multi-level nature of the EU, it cannot be assumed *a priori* if an advocacy coalition includes actors from different levels. Brussels is more distant to the EU citizens than Washington D. C. is to the US citizens. Our strategy is focussing on the EU level at first, then examining its "reach" beyond Brussels.

Because of these differences, we use the ACF just as a reference, and avoid directly "applying" the framework to our case. And we use the term "policy community" as descriptive concept for a set of people with shared values and orientations, operating in the policy subsystem. When we explicitly refer to the ACF, we use "advocacy coalition" as an inter-changeable expression to the policy community.

In the next section, we first trace the development of the EU social policy discourse for these fifteen years, to highlight the relative stability and rather evolutionary nature of its adaptation. But this is not self-evident if we consider the changes in the economic and political environment and fluctuation of "political center of gravity" (Manow, Schäfer and Zorn 2008) of the EU. So, in the third section, we identify a stable policy community in the EU social policy, which is a source of policy stability and evolution. In this policy community, some academics have been playing a central role for years. In the fourth section, some examples concerning the "reach" of the EU policy community is presented and several possibilities are suggested. In the final section, we summarise our findings and arguments and discuss some implications.

Our central contribution in this paper is identification of the EU social policy community at the very concrete, personal level. Another contribution is methodological. We identify the policy community using the data on such neglected activities like the Presidency academic conferences or the advisory personnel and groups to the Commission and the Member States. The work is still in progress, and the data is not exhaustive, just illustrative. We hope this may enhance our knowledge on how the "soft" policy transfer and diffusion occurs.

2. Development of the "European Social Model" discourse

It is commonplace to use the phrase "European Social Model" in the discussion of the economic and social policies of the European Union. It came to the fore especially after the launch of the Lisbon Strategy in the 2000 Lisbon European Summit. It is now well known that its declared aim was "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" and one of the three aims was "modernising the European social model, investing in people and combating social exclusion". From these short quotes, it is clear that this strategy is an attempt to find a solution of the economic and social problems in a positive-sum combination of dynamic economic growth and social security.

Much has been written and discussed about the Lisbon Strategy concerning its emergence, its novelty, and its effects. It is rather rare, however, to put this Strategy into longer time frame. Below, based on an extensive reading of all the Presidency conclusions and important policy proposals in the social policy domain since 1993, it will be shown that the Lisbon Strategy is not so unique in terms of its contents. Rather, it should be seen in the continuous development at least since the Maastricht Treaty and its "evolutionary" character is to be emphasized.

(1) Beginning of the "Social Model" discourse (early 1990s)

In the discussion over the "European Social Model", a Green Paper in 1993 titled "European Social Policy - Options for the Union" (COM (93) 551 final, 17 November 1993) is sometimes referred to as its beginning. In fact, this Green Paper is the first important policy document explicitly to use the word "Social Model". The issues dealt in this Green Paper overlaps with the current discussions, but emphasis is put differently in some cases.

First, it is remarkable in the policy documents in this period that complementary nature of the macro and micro aspects of economy or economic reforms is stressed. For example, in the presidency conclusion of the 1993 Copenhagen European Council, which is usually noted for its adoption of the "Copenhagen Criteria" for the Eastern Enlargement, the priority is given to the employment problem against the background of the ratification failure in Denmark due to the referendum in June 1992. As a way out of legitimacy crisis, the "European Council pledged the determination of the Community and its Member States to restore confidence through the implementation of a clear strategy ... to restore sustainable growth, reinforce the competitiveness of European industry and reduce unemployment (Presidency Conclusion, European Council in Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993)". It is remarkable that the first instrument for the recovery is sought in the short-term fiscal measures; increase in the national-level investment and the additional contribution to the European Investment Bank. In the medium to long term, too, macroeconomic measures are listed as necessary to complement structural reforms.

Second, it is also characteristic of policy discourse in this period that the role of the structural fund is stressed. It is quite natural in view of restricted policy instruments of the EU concerning economic and social policy at that time. But emphasis on the direct intervention by the EU is more an expression of political will, which is hardly seen the discourse in the 2000s.

Third, in terms of policy instruments, more hope is placed on the "Social Dialogue" procedures introduced in the Maastricht Social Protocol. In almost every policy documents referring to the Social Model, the Social Dialogue is located in the central places. Jacques Delors, then the President of the Commission, is known for his commitment to the establishment of this procedure and he had high hope on Social Dialogue to circumvent political deadlock at the Council and put pressure from the domestic social actors on each national government.

In terms of policy contents, we should note that the issues discussed under the Lisbon framework was already taken up in this period. In the communication "Towards a Europe of Solidarity" (COM (92) 542 final, 23 December 1992), the commission says that the maximum support from citizens are only acquired only when the development of the Social Dimension of the integration is achieved, also pointing to the importance of the participation by the trade unions, employer organizations and the NGOs. It is also notable that this communication already picked up social exclusion as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, based on the 1989 Council resolution. Further topics as Danish model, Minimum Income Guarantee, are already referred to in this communication. Even the numerical employment target, which has become almost synonymous to

the Lisbon Strategy, is already seen in this period, in reference to the exclusion of the women ("Community-wide Framework for Employment" (COM (93) 238 final, 26 May 1993)).

There are some differences, too, in terms of policy content. In the famous white paper in the Delors era, "Growth, Competitiveness and Employment (COM (93) 700 final/A and B, 5 December 1993)", the reduction of working time and work sharing is given much places, which fade out in the later policy papers.

To summarize, social policy issues under the Lisbon Strategy was already there in the policy discourse of the 1990s. Still, there are differences in terms of policy instruments and policy contents. Further, the word "Social Model" itself disappears in other Commission Communications and presidency conclusions in this period, except the 1993 Green Paper, which suggests that the discourse of "Social Model" was not firmly rooted yet. In the next years, however, expression and terminology of the "Social Model" becomes established framework in the EU social policy discourse.

(2) Institutionalization of the "Social Model" (late 1990s)

In the Essen European Council in December 1994, it was agreed to aim at labour-intensive growth, for which the Member States should submit an annual report from 1995. This is the starting point of the policy development leading to the Lisbon Strategy.

There are several points to be noted for this period. First, it is most remarkable that the phrase "Social Model" had secured foothold in the EU social policy discourse. This is typically shown in the Communication "The Future of Social Protection: A Framework for a European Debate" (COM (95) 466 final, 31 October 1995). The paper begins with a clear sentence, "Social protection represents a fundamental component and a distinguishing feature of the European model of society", but the reform was under consideration "to replace the old rigidities with more flexibility, while at the same time maintaining this objective of solidarity". In the Communication "The European Employment Strategy: Recent Progress and the Prospects for the Future" (COM (95) 465 final, 11 October 1995) published three weeks before, the aim was to achieve both more incentive to work and the social protection system and it was stated that the need to adapt the European model of society to the current situation.

This policy initiatives resulted in the agreement on the approaches to the creation of employment at the Madrid European Council in December 1995, which included the necessity of both macro-economic policies and structural policies, co-operation of the Social Partners, more efficient social protection system, removal of labour disincentive and so on. In 1996, the French President Jacques Chirac made a contribution, "Pour un modele social europeen", to the newspaper *Liberation* before the Turin European Council, which was taken up and discussed in the Inter-governmental Conference and the European Council. In his contribution, Chirac urged to make employment as a criteria for all the policy measures and wanted more measures at the EU level than mere resolutions and reports. In this period, the "European Social Policy Forum" was

held in 1996 and 1998, which invited the Social Partners and the NGOs, and the development of various indicators was under way. In this way, the stake in the European social policy became higher.

Second, a policy orientation emerged from those discussions. It was a direct linkage between social policy and employment policy, represented by such expression as "active social policy". This was an approach to maintain a certain level of social protection but encourage more participation in the labour market. This was well epitomized in the title of the Dutch Presidency Conference in 1997, "Social Protection as a Productive Factor".

Third, it is also of interest that we can already find the "flexicurity" issue, which was the main issue in 2006 and 2007, in this period. In the June 1996 document "Action for Employment in Europe: A Confidence Pact" (CSE (96) 1 final, 5 June 1996), those issues like flexibility and security, diversified working hours and work-life balance were discussed and the expression "flexisecurity" was already found. In the following documents, the pair "flexibility and security" recurred again and again (cf. COM (97) 102; Presidency Conclusions, Luxemburg Extraordinary European Council, 20 and 21 November 1997, Point 70).

(3) The Launch of Lisbon Strategy (2000-2004)

The Lisbon Strategy, agreed upon in the March 2000 European Council, was not a sudden innovation. Rather, it was the culmination of the employment and social policy development throughout the 1990s. There, the modernization of the European Social Model was explicitly agreed.

There are several background factors to the adoption of the Strategy. First, Europe was under favorable economic conditions reaching peak in 2000 and the unemployment rate was going down. In other words, there blew the following wind for the policy initiatives since 1990s. Second, most Member States had left or center-left government, which will be discussed later. Third, a variety of policy initiatives were already accumulated throughout the 1990s. For example, the employment rate target of 70% was already on the table in the 1999 Communication "Community Policies in Support of Employment "(COM (99) 167 final, 21 April 1999), which also proposed the synergy of employment and economic policy, activation of labour force, life-long learning. This Communication was preceded by the European Council agreement in November 1997 and the Commission report in 1998 (COM (98) 572 final, 14 October 1998).

As a result, the "modernization of the European Social Model" became a political consensus at the EU level, the materialization and the implementation of which was the next agenda. Substantially, the idea of the linkage between employment or social policy and economic policy was institutionalized in the EU social policy discourse, which has made the subsequent policy debates focussed on the "balance" of both concerns, not an "either-or" type of debate.

(4) Policy change under the Barroso Commission ? (2004-)

The center-left ended already in 2002, and the liberal Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Manuel Barroso took the office of the Commission President in 2004, succeeding center-left Romano Prodi. This moved the overall policy direction rightward to the more liberal economic policies.

In terms of social policy, this change did not lead to the retrenchment, as in the case of the Member States in 1980s and 1990s. Based on the institutionalized framing of the linkage between employment, social and economic policy, the shift in emphasis was observed and social policy became mainly directed at the creation of employment. In the European Council in March 2005, the Lisbon Strategy was relaunched, with a renewed focus on growth and employment. Active labor market policies and making work pay became the topic of the day, and "flexicurity", which was already found in late 1990s, came to the fore in the following years.

Although the duo "flexibility and security" was already found before, "flexicurity" first appeared in the Presidency Conclusion in the March 2006 European Council. This European Council was preceded by the informal Hampton Court European Council held in October 2005. At this informal meeting, it was expected that there would be a big debate on the "Social Model". Barroso came with a Communication on "European Values in a Globalised World" (COM 2005 525 final, October 20, 2005). He was expected to make an alliance with Blair toward further liberalization. The European Trade Union Congress issued a warning at the Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment three days before the Summit, the social NGOs presented their concerns with their own declarations (<http://www.euractiv.com/en/socialeurope/eu-debates-european-social-model/article-146338>; Torreblanca 2005). From the EU social policy community, André Sapir submitted a paper "Globalisation and the reform of the European social models" to be presented at the ECOFIN Informal Meeting on 9 September. Here, Sapir pointed out that there were four, not one, "models" in Europe and the Anglo-Saxon Model was not the only alternative. The Scandinavian Model was almost as efficient, and with higher level of social protection.

In the end, showdown was avoided. There was no discussion on the "Model(s)". The Social Platform, a loose coalition of the European Social NGOs, declared "After a long battle the citizens are back at the core of the Lisbon Strategy. [...] For the last year Social NGOs have been fighting hard to save the social vision of Europe and we were all relieved to see that thanks to the Austrian Presidency the citizens' main concerns were back at the core of the Lisbon Strategy and the central role of social cohesion to achieve the EU objectives was recognised in the Conclusions of the Spring Summit. (*Social Voices*, 16, April-June 2006)" Even the Presidency - the Commission President duo could not break the policy consensus.

(5) Fluctuations in the Political Balance of Power and Continuity as a Puzzle

As we see in the above, the development of the Social Model discourse in these fifteen years is more of "evolution" than "change". Then, what's the matter with "evolution"? It is argued below that those continuous development is not so self-evident, considering the changing political

balance and coalition at the Council and the rotating presidency system.

It is often pointed out that the Amsterdam Treaty and the ensuing social policy initiatives were possible under the condition of general social democratic dominance in the European Capitals. In 1997, the Labour Party under the Tony Blair won the majority in the British General Elections in May, Lionel Jospin of the French Socialist Party assumed the premiership as a result of the parliamentary election in May and June. Before that, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen ruled Denmark since 1993, Wim Kok led Dutch government since 1994, and the center-left "Olive" coalition won the 1996 Italian Election ousting Berlusconi. Center-left victories in the UK and France gives further momentum to that trend, which reached the pinnacle in the electoral success of the German Social Democrats under Gerhard Schröder in September 1998.

This kind of political explanation apparently gives an plausible explanation to the launch of the Lisbon Strategy. It is impossible, however, to explain why there was no visible change after the end of center-left dominance.

Already in May 2001, Italian electorate brought Silvio Berlusconi back into the Premiership. Danish Social Democrats lost power in November, Jospin suffered disaster in the French presidential election in April 2002, failing to proceed to the second round. The downturn of the European center-left was most dramatically shown in the Dutch general election in May 2002. The Dutch Labor Party under Wim Kok, with internationally renowned "Dutch Miracle" and the good economic performance (unemployment rate 2.6%, GDP growth around 3%), had to suffer a historical defeat with its parliamentary seats almost halved.

If we view the EU policy making mainly from intergovernmental perspective, and assume that each governmental attitude is at least partly shaped by its partisan preferences, this change of partisan composition should be reflected in the policy change of the EU. This is a plausible hypothesis considering the limited competence of the EU in this policy domain. But it was not the case, as we have already reviewed. Even if we find a policy change, it is after taking office of the Barroso commission in 2004. And still, the change is not that of policy paradigm but that of accent.

Beyond these anecdotal suggestions, we proceed further to show the non-obviousness of policy continuity by examining the political orientations of the Council and Presidency.

First, political color of the Commission President and the social policy Commissioner has been changing. After Mid-1980s, both center-left and center right politicians took the office of the Commission President; Delors (1985-1994) from the French Socialists, Santer from the Luxemburg Christian Democrats (1995-1999), Prodi from the Italian "Olive" coalition (1999-2004) and Barosso from the center-right Portuguese Social Democrats (2004-).

The partisan composition of the Council has been fluctuating as well, reflecting the governmental takeover in the member states. Manow, Schäfer and Zorn (2008) shows that political center of gravity of the council lay generally in the right in the 1980s, then moved leftward in the 1990s and swung back again to the right after 2000. This partly explains the progress in the EU

social policy after the mid 1990s. As they pointed out, however, partisan composition of the Council may indicate the general policy direction but cannot fully explain respective policy initiatives. Typical example is the adoption of the Social Protocol attached to the Maastricht Treaty, which is supported by those member states like Germany, many of which were governed the center-right parties.

The roles of the Presidency is not yet fully examined but it is sure that it has an important agenda-setting function. The presidency rotates in six months, political color as well. If we assume that every presidency exerts policy influence based on partisan orientation, policy change in a zig-zag manner would be possible.

2000	Portugal (left)	France (left)
2001	Sweden (left)	Belgium (liberal + social democrat)
2002	Spain (right)	Denmark (right)
2003	Greece (left)	Italy (left)
2004	Ireland(right)	Netherlands (right)
2005	Luxemburg (right)	UK (left)
2006	Austria (left)	Finland (right)
2007	Germany (right)	Portugal (left)

Table 1 Political Orientation of the Council Presidency

To summarize, if we draw attention to the partisan presentations of the formal political organs, fluctuation rather than continuity is expected. True, political coalition building is quite important in explaining specific *decision-making* in the council. In that process, not just partisan orientation, but also national policy legacies (Johnson 2005) and transnational coalition (Johansson 1999) are important factors.

It is not the case, however, in the policy initiatives at the EU level. Beside the coalition building at the decision phase, this paper contends that *policy-making or the formulation of policy initiatives* is also important. This is because those initiatives are monopolized by the commission, and the coalition most effectively works in revision and decision of already tabled policy initiatives.

3. Identifying the EU Social Policy Community

In spite of possible political fluctuations, it is the "Social Model" advocacy coalition, including DG Employment, civil society organizations, and, the last but not least, academics, which nurtures the evolution of the "Social Model" discourse.

(1) Bureaucratic source of continuity

Whence comes this continuity? A part of the answer lies in the bureaucratic continuity.

The commissioner dealing with social policy are; Manuel Marin from the Spanish Socialists, Vasso Papandreou from the Greek New Socialists, Pdraig Flynn from Irish *Fiana Fall*, Anna Diamantopoulou again from the Greek New Socialists, and Vladimir Spidra from the Czech Social Democrats. In comparison with the partisan composition in general, the social policy commissioner comes from those parties friendly to the social policy in general.

Further, examination of the high officials in the DG employment shows another source of continuity (following analysis is based on various annuals of the Commission, namely *Annuaire de la commission de la communaute economique europeene*, *Organigramme de la Commission des Communautés europeenes* , *Who's who in the European Union?*). First we examine the Director-General, the chef on the DG bureaucrats side. Jean Degimbe had served for sixteen years since 1976 (<http://wwwarc.eui.eu/ech/binFR/CreaInt.asp?rc=INT-ECH691>). He was a long-serving European official, recruited to the ECSC High Authority by Christian-social Roger Raynaud, who was from the French Christian Union CFTC. He then served under the vice president Raymond Barre, President Ortoli. During his reign, the line-up of the high officials were stable. After three years of vacancy, the post was filled by Allan Larsson from 1995 to 2000. He was a Swedish Social Democrat, who had served as a President of the Swedish Labour Market Office and the Minister of Finance

(<http://www.varnamo.se/naringsliv/gottomplats/ambassadorer/allanlarsson.4.18ff2710e077ef560800010591.html>)[8] . From 2000, Odile Quintin served for six years. She entered the commission in 1971 directly after her graduation from University. After experiences in the DG Agriculture and the DG External Affairs, she had worked for the DG Employment since 1982 (http://www.oecd.org/speaker/0,3438,fr_21571361_35042830_35287523_1_1_1_1,00.html) . Since 2005, Nikolaus van der Pas has been Director-General. After working in the German and Dutch private companies, he came to the Commission in 1963 and spent many years in the Public Relations and External Affairs. His previous job was the Director-General of the DG Education (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/employment_social/organigram/cv_vanderpas_en.pdf) .

The Deputy Director-General was created in 1993. Hywel Ceri Jones had occupied this position first, for five years. He had also been working in the Commission for many years, mostly in Education and Employment. He became the Director of the Education, Vocational Training and Youth Policy in 1981(Organigramme, Decembre 1981), then served as a member of a task force on educational problems before assuming this position in 1993. After him, Quintin was Deputy Director General for two years, and Karl-Johan Lonnroth succeeded her since 2000. He was a genuine social policy official, who had worked in the Finnish Ministry of Labor for twenty years and then moved to the ILO before coming to the Commission in 1996 (http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/directors_general/lonnroth_en.pdf). Since 2005, Lenia Samuel has been serving, whose previous position was the General Secretary of the Cypriot Ministry of Labor and Social Security, where he had worked since his university graduation (http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/directors_general/samuel_en.pdf) .

As these examples show, most top officials in the DG Employment usually had already many years of experience, whether in case of internal promotion within the Commission or external transfer from the Member States. This must guarantee policy continuity to some extent.

A few remarks are in order. First, as exemplified by the current Director General, some top officials did not have previous experiences in the social policy field. Among nine Directors of the DG Employment (as of the end of 2007), only two have worked for the DG for more than ten years. New appointment at the Director level often includes promotion from other DGs, which means that there is no closed track for the social policy bureaucrats.

Second, "Brussels" is often described as a bureaucratic monster in the popular press, but the Commission is not so gigantic in reality. As of September 2009, about 25,000 regular employees worked for the Commission, 600 for the DG Employment. Among them, however, those bureaucrats influential in the policy-making (AD) were just around 340 (http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/bs_dg_category_en.pdf). As the DG is composed of nine Directorates, which have about four Divisions, one division has around ten bureaucratic policy makers. Considering the huge co-ordination tasks with other DGs, other EU Institutions and the Member States, one can hardly say that the DG is equipped with enough human resources to monopolize policy formulation.

Thus, the Commission cannot guarantee policy continuity by itself. In fact, it is often pointed out that the Commission is rather open to external policy advice (Smith 2004; Borrás 2007; Mazey and Richardson 2006; Degger and Kambeck 2007; Interview with Roshan Di Puppò, Philippe Pochet). We have to investigate further to find external actors in the advocacy coalition.

(2) Academics constituting the policy community

In identifying the EU social policy community, this paper is focused on external, mainly academic actors. They contribute to the development in the EU social policy through several channels.

a. Standing advisory organs

First we examine various institutionalized advisory organs surrounding the Commission. This kind of an official think-tank was first established on Delors' initiative as the "Forward Studies Unit" in 1989. The unit was composed of fifteen members, which is supposed to submit a report on important issues directly to the Commission President (http://ec.europa.eu/comm/cdp/mission/index_en.htm). Activities of this unit include publication of "Europe 2010" and the preparation of the White Paper on European Governance.

In May 2001, the Prodi Commission established the Group of Policy Advisers (GOPA) to succeed the Forward Studies Unit. The GOPA had six divisions, Economy, Science and Technology and Society, Foreign Affairs, External Relations, Dialogue with Religions, Churches and Humanisms and Public Opinion and Communication Strategies. The Group of Economic

Analysis was chaired by the director of the Group of Policy advisers and included "six executive members" and the executive director, Andre Sapir. Except Sapir, they were officials from the Commission. The Group had twenty-five "external members", which was composed of university professors and researchers in the think-tanks and economic analysis institutions. Among them, some experts are notable in their continuous presence afterwards; Jean Pisani Ferry, then Executive President of the *Conseil d'Analyse Economique*, Maria Joao Rodrigues, Special adviser to the Portuguese Prime Minister and Professor of Economics in Lisbon University, and Klaus Zimmermann, President of the German Institute for Economic Research. Especially, Rodrigues' role is important, which led Zeitlin (2007) to call her "Mother of the OMC". She had already participated in the so-called Gillenhammer Working Party on industrial change, which was set up by the 1997 Luxemburg European Council.

In 2005, the Group of Economic Analysis was further re-organized into the Group of Economic Policy Analysis (GEPA) as a part of the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA). The Bureau had three expert groups, the declared aim of which is "These expert groups bring together officials from other Commission services and selected external experts from academia, policy centres and the business community". In the GEPA, external members were reduced to twelve, which included Pisany-Ferry and Sapir.

In the BEPA, a new expert group dealing with social policy is established as the "Group of Societal Policy Analysis". This group was expected to give an advice to the reform of the European Social Model. The Group is chaired by Loukas Tsoukalis, then Professor of Oxford University, and includes eleven academics. It is remarkable that most of this eleven members are broadly social democratic advocates of the modernization of the European Social Model, who have already taken part in the EU policy formulation.

Gosta Esping-Andersen and Maurizio Ferrera have already been engaged in those activities as the academic report submitted to the Presidency. Fritz Scharpf, former Director of the Max-Planck-Institute of the Study of Society, was well known adviser to the German Social Democrats. Francois Bourguignon was former vice-president of the World Bank, who belonged to the group "*gauche-en-europe*" which was established by Michel Rocard and Dominique Strauss-Kahn of the French Socialist Party (<http://www.gauche-en-europe.org/IMG/pdf/cos-2.pdf>.) Beside Bourginon, Esping-Andersen and Pisany-Ferry was member of the academic council of "*gauche-en-europe*". Manuel Castel participated in the expert conferences preceding the Lisbon European Council in 2000, and Julian Le Grand was adviser to Tony Blair on Health Policy. Jitka Rychtarikova is special adviser to the Employment Commissioner Spidla. Zimmermann headed the Berlin Economic Institute, known for its closeness to the trade unions, and changed its policy orientation toward more liberal one (*Forschungsprovinzialismus und okonomischer Mainstream*, <http://www.bdwi.de/forum/archiv/archiv/97825.html>; Frankfurter Rundschau, 31. Mai 2003, "Mit Frührente muss Schluss sein") .

Two other members, Frans Van Vught and João Borges de Assuncao, can be called

"liberal" .The former was member of the Dutch liberal D66 (<http://www.observant.unimaas.nl/default.asp?page=/jrg24/obs6/art45.htm>) and member of the advisory group to the Prime Minister Balkenende, and the latter was economic adviser to Barroso, when he was prime minister of Portugal.

In recent years, Roger Liddle, a Principal Advisor in the BEPA, have played a most visible role such as the co-author of the policy paper "Europe's Social Reality: A Consultation Paper from the Bureau of European Policy Advisers", submitted to the 2007 Spring European Council. A Public consultation was launched based on this policy document, which resulted in the communication "Opportunities, Access and Solidarity: Towards a New Social Vision for 21st Century Europe" (COM(2007)726) and a Commission Staff Working Paper (SEC(2008)1896). He was a special advisor of Tony Blair on European Policy from 1997 to 2004 and also known for a co-authored book with Peter Mandelson , *The Blair Revolution*, which was famous for its character as "the nearest approximation to a manifesto of the New Labour's modernisation programme (Forey 2000, 99)" (<http://www.cumberland-news.co.uk/news/viewarticle.aspx?id=567433>). His presence in the Barroso Commission may surely show the shift in emphasis toward more liberal orientation. Still, it is within the policy community.

b. Special advisory organs

Beside these standing groups, it is quite commonplace to call up a advisory groups for a specific policy objective. The "High Level Group on Industrial Relations" was set up following the Commission's Communication on the Social Agenda of June 2000 and submitted its report in 2002. It was chaired by Rodrigues and ten members, among which each three members came from the labor and the employers. Four academic members included Rodrigues and Jelle Visser, the co-author of the book "Dutch Miracle." The "Employment Task Force", set up in 2003 under Wim Kok's chairmanship, had seven members including five academics. Rodrigues and Günther Schmid, who had advocated the introduction of flexibility element in the German labor market in reference to the Dutch and Danish experiences, belonged to this Task Force. The "High Level Group on the future of social policy in an enlarged European Union" had worked from 2002 to 2004. It is composed of five members, among which were Rodrigues and Anthony Atkinson, who have worked for the EU related activity since 1990s and co-authored a presidency report on social inclusion. Further eight experts who provided a substantial input were named, including Sapir and Zimmermann.

The existence of a rather stable policy community can be seen in the drafting process of the Constitutional Treaty. The Working Group nine of the Convention, to deal with social policy, made hearings inviting Diamantopoulou (then Employment Commissioner), Vandembrouck (former Flemish Minister of Social Affairs), Atkinson and Olivier Duthillet de Lamothe, chair of the "High Level Group on the future of social policy in an enlarged European Union".

As is shown above, special advisory organs includes several, so to say "core" members like

Rodrigues, Sapir and Atkinson. The reports submitted by these advisory organs usually function as baseline for the subsequent policy initiatives and their influence cannot be underestimated.

In contrast, although similar in its objective, the "High-level Group on the Lisbon Strategy", set up in 2004 preparing its mid-term review in 2005, was different in its composition. As in the case of the "Employment Task Force", it was chaired by Wim Kok, but it was mostly composed of parliamentarians, employers and trade union leaders. In fact, some academics were there, but they are specialists on Environment and Economics. The resulting "Kok Report" advocated streamlining of the Lisbon Strategy, which is sometimes criticized as the set back for the social aspects of the Strategy. As is seen in the composition of the Group, this report came from outside of the policy community and it is the reason why the orientation of the report is somewhat different from previous policy documents.

c. Presidency conferences

In addition to those formal advisory organs around the Commission, more diffuse activities by the Presidency have contributed to the accumulation of the "Social Model" discourse. Here, we focus on the Presidency academic conferences and reports submitted to it. As in case of the White Papers and the Green Papers, which have been paid due attention in the EU research, those academic Reports submitted to the Presidency have played non-negligible roles influencing policy directions. Below is the list of academic conferences with intensive reports.

	Presidency	Authors
Mar. 2000	Portugal	<u>Ferrera</u> , <u>Hemerijck</u> , <u>Esping-Andersen</u>
Sep. 2001	Belgium	<u>Esping-Andersen</u> , Gallie, <u>Hemerijck</u> , Myles
Jun. 2003	Greece	Amitsis, <u>Berghman</u> , <u>Hemerijck</u> , Sakellaropoulos, Stergiou, Stecvens
Jul. 2005	Luxembourg	<u>Atkinson</u> , Cantillon, Marlier, Nolan
Nov. 2006	Finland	Kvist, Saari, <u>Le Grand</u> , <u>Hemerijck</u> , and others
Jun. 2007	Portugal	<u>Rodrigues</u> , <u>Hemerijck</u> , <u>Schmid</u> , <u>Berghman</u> and others

Table 2 Reports submitted to the Presidency Conferences and their Main Authors

It is clear that the member of the policy community surrounding the Commission also formed core of those Presidency conferences. Judging from the authors, the Presidency may have some say in the selection, as is most clearly seen in the report to the Greek presidency. It is also notable that the Dutch (2004 second) and Spanish (2002 first) Presidency did not convene those academic conferences related to social policy. It may be the case that the Presidency simply ignore those policy areas not conforming to their own policy preferences.

d. Academics as policy promulgator

Those core members of the EU social policy community, academics participating in the discourse accumulation process, then amplify and promulgate the "Social Model" discourse in their status as University based researchers. One of the examples of those functions is the publication of the reports submitted to the Presidency conferences by academic publishers. The 2000 report by Ferrera, Hemerijck and Esping-Andersen was scheduled for publication from the Oxford University Press, the 2001 report by the Esping-Andersen and others from the OUP, too. The 2003 report of the Greek Presidency conference is published from the Hart Publishing, and the 2006 Finnish conference report and the 2005 Luxembourg report are from the Policy Press. Usually, the EU policy documents are published from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities in Luxembourg. By inviting the renowned academics as the authors, these reports can be distributed through the academic publishers.

Further, apart from those conferences convened by the EU and the national governmental institution, those academics have played an active and important part in conferences and publications, which further accelerates the diffusion of the Social Model discourse. For example, the British third-way think-tank "Policy Network" has organized a series of conferences and published the contributions as a book "Global Europe, Social Europe" in 2006 from the Polity Press. This book is a kind of an all-star cast of the EU social policy community, with Hemerijck, Tsoukalis, Ferrera, Liddle and Lönnroth as contributors.

A part of the policy community has also participated in the EU research policy process. The DG Research has set up the Advisory Group on "Social Sciences and Humanities in the European Research Area", to provide advice regarding the sixth Framework Programme for RTD (from 2002 to 2006) and the European Research Area in Social Sciences (ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/citizens/docs/advisory_group_members.pdf). One of the tasks of this Advisory Group was "identifying the research priorities in the thematic priority 7 "Citizens and Governance in a knowledge based society" in the seventh Framework Programme. Fifteen members of this Groups includes Rodrigues, Gallie, and Thomas Meyer, who is one of the most active academics in the programmatic discussion of the German Social Democratic Party. Four members of this Advisory Group also belongs to the expert group called "Lisbon Agenda", which has been organized by Rodrigues (<http://www.mariajoarodrigues.eu/lisbon-agenda/group/>). In the "Lisbon Agenda", Castel, Berghman and Robert Boyer have been taking part.

In case of lacking enthusiasm in the EU institutions, the policy community academics sometimes stimulate the debate from outside. The "Sapir Report" in July 2003 is an example. Prodi asked Sapir in July 2002 to submit a report on the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals and the eastern enlargement. It resulted in the report authored by Sapiar and Pisany-Ferry (<http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/controversial-expert-report-upsets-commissioners/article-114693>). But the report was so critical of the cohesion policy and the CAP that the Commissioners on regional and agricultural policy sent highly negative response to the report, which made its adoption as a formal "report" impossible. Prodi avoided to comment on that, saying that he was in

no position to make comments. Further, at the time the publication, the Convention on the Future of Europe was at its final stage, which monopolized political attention. Thus, the report did not stimulate any political dynamism.

Against this silence, the oldest think-tank in Brussels, the Center for European Policy Studies, published a policy paper titled "Beyond the Sapir Report", to stimulate the debate (<http://www.euractiv.com/en/innovation/europe-deliver-growth-sapir-report/article-132113>). Sapir and Pisany-Ferry responded and reiterated their recommendations as a policy paper "Last Exit to Lisbon" in 2006 (Pisany-Ferry and Sapir 2006).

In general terms, too, the wall separating inside and outside of the EU official institutions is not so high, in terms of not only policy but also personnel. Aforementioned Jones, who had served as Deputy Director-General from 1993 to 1995, became the president of the executive committee of a Brussels based think tank, the European Policy Centre, in 2001 and worked there for six years (<http://www.epc.eu/PDF/Feb2007.pdf>). On the other hand, Sapir and Pisany-Ferry, now working outside, had been adviser to the Director General of the DG Economic and Financial Affairs from 1990 to 1993.

(3) Discussion: the EU social policy community and the Advocacy Coalition Framework

As is shown above, policy formulation process of the EU social policy is accompanied by the input and dissemination activities of the academics and the external policy experts. The commission itself often invites them as policy advisers and academic contributors. They also work outside the formal institutional framework, which helps accumulation and institutionalization of the "Social Model" discourse. It is remarkable here that there are some "core" members, like Rodrigues, Liddle and Hemerijck. Their political orientation is relatively similar, that of social democratic modernization. This policy community functions as the advocacy coalition at the EU level, which has enabled continuous policy development in these fifteen years.

In the Advocacy Coalition Framework, it is assumed that there are a few contending advocacy coalitions in a policy subsystem, whose interactions and resulting policy change are the focus of analysis. In the case of the EU social policy, we can find only one advocacy coalition around the DG employment.

Why this anomaly? There are a few possible reasons. First, the stable policy community is necessary as the EU institutional structure is notoriously fragmented. To reach consensus among many veto players with different partisan orientations and national interests, the policy needs to be as "neutral" as possible. This necessitates moderate policy orientations, which is supported by the relatively homogeneous advocacy coalition of bureaucrats and policy experts.

Second, the policy formulation is less politicized due to diminished party political struggle at the EU level. In the cases of the nation-states with fragmented institutional structures as Germany and the United States, the political executive (US) or the political parties (Germany) can give a political orientation from outside the bureaucratic machinery by way of political appointments or

promotion based on partisanship. This brings the party politics inside the policy subsystem. Minority in the policy subsystem can depend on the power of political actors to attain policy change, and the political actors can take political ownership of alternative policy ideas of the minority. At the EU level, party political struggle is less noted, although one can see growing politicization in the European Parliament. Further, the executive organ, the Commission, is based on the Grand Coalition of the left and the right, and it is expected that the Commissioner works for the "European" interest, neither national nor partisan.

Third, there is less incentive for political actors to raise a *voice* at the *European* level. As the EU institutions are endowed with weak political power and resources, they must rely on the "soft" methods to achieve many of goals raised in the Lisbon Strategy. Thus, those political actors who have opposing policy orientations to the EU social policy community can simply "*exit*" from the EU-level policy subsystem and move to the Member State level, stopping the policy initiatives at the Council or ignoring them in the implementation stage.

As a result, the political dynamics over policy change is unfolded more *between* the policy subsystems, rather than *inside* the policy subsystem.

4. The reach of the policy community

As is suggested in the discussion of the previous section, it is not self-evident if the EU social political community, or the advocacy coalition, extends over the institutional layers. It is theoretically justifiable to presuppose that an advocacy coalition *can* be formed over the different political levels. It is an empirical question, however, if it *does* really include the personnel from different levels and take effect at all levels. Below, two examples are shown where the EU social policy community can have a policy effect and reach beyond Brussels. At the same time, it is also suggested that it is not always the case

(1) Presidency as a "window of opportunity"

The first example is about the role of the Presidency. As the EU has only weak social policy competence, political backing is necessary for the initiatives based on the Social Model discourse to materialize. The Council Presidency sometimes serves for that purpose.

Zeitlin (2007, 132) explain the set up of the Lisbon Strategy by the activities of the high officials of the DG Employment. According to him, then the Director-General Larsson and his Deputy Quitin had recognized and theorized the EES was quickly as an innovative approach to EU governance, prior to the March 2000 Lisbon extraordinary European Council. In other words, the Portuguese Presidency took the policy initiatives already under way inside the EU bureaucracy and successfully introduced a policy innovation.

In this Lisbon Council, the "active welfare state" concept was introduced (Presidency Conclusions, Lisbon European Council, 23 and 24 March 2000, para 24 - 34). This was followed by its implementation in the form of the Pension OMC introduced under the Belgian Presidency in

2001. Here, the political initiative by the Belgian Minister of Social Affairs, Frank Vandebrouck, was important. Vanhercke (2006) tells a quite interesting story about it.

During the Spring of 2001, the Belgian Minister for Social Affairs and Pensions, Frank Vandebroucke, preparing at that time "his" EU Presidency later that year (July-December 2001), received a special visitor in his cabinet. Odile Quintin, then Director General of DG Social Affairs of the European Commission, was invited to share her views on the priorities of the future Belgian Presidency ... and she altered them. Indeed, up to that point Frank Vandebroucke, advised by his Presidency Task Force, wanted to limit the agenda to, first, further developing EU co-operation with regard to social inclusion and, second, finding agreement on the modernisation of Regulation 1408/71. Obviously, Odile Quintin had made a correct judgement when she firmly insisted on speaking directly to the minister, and not to the Chief of Cabinet or the Task Force: 60 minutes of discussion later, the "Social Affairs" side of the future Belgian Presidency had a third priority, suggested by Odile Quintin : preparing the open method of co-ordination on pension. (Vanhercke 2006, based on an interview with Frank Vandebroucke, 27 February 2006)

This is another example of political initiatives by the Presidency making internal policy development materialize. There is a further aspect this story. Vandebrouck had temporarily retired from public offices due to a political scandal, during which he was enrolled in the Oxford University and earned a D.Phil from the Faculty of Social Studies. At Oxford, his advisor was Atkinson, which means that Vandebrouck had been already close to the "core" of the EU social policy community. It is only natural that he took up the policy initiative proposed by Quintin. He insists that he had devised the Dutch expression *de actieve welvaartstaat* (active welfare state), which departs from the Bismarckian welfare states but is different from the Blairite "Third Way" (Vandebroucke 2003).

In this way, the Social Model discourse can be translated into the concrete policy with the help of the Presidency. Seen from the opposite direction, these examples show that the pre-existing advocacy coalition and the institutionalized discourse enabled those "small" countries to take bold steps in policy making, without voting or economic power.

(2) Spill-over of the discourse to the national level

In some cases, a part of the EU social policy community is directly linked to the national policy community. This will serve as an institutional channel for "soft" Europeanization.

For example, the Center of Strategic Analysis of the French Government (Centre d'Analyse strategique) was established based on the decree of June 2006, and one of its primary tasks was the Lisbon Strategy (http://www.strategie.gouv.fr/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=2). It had five division, among which the Division of Labour, Employment and Vocational Training was headed by Yves Chassard, who participated in the discussion of the High Level Group on Social Policy as an external expert. Soon after its launch, the Center convened a workshop titled "Social Europe" in October (Workshop <<Social Europe>>). The Social Dimension of the European Union: What are

the Prospects?, 23 October 2006. <http://www.strategie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/ACTESEuropeSociale.pdf>). Many of the EU social policy community members were invited, including Liddle, Ferrera and Tsoukalis.

It is already noted that Rodrigues was special adviser to the Prime Minister of Portugal during its Council Presidency. Hemerick, who have authored many of the policy documents, has been a member and the director of the Academic Advisory Council for the Dutch Government (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid). He convened a symposium titled "Toward New Social Investment Agenda: The Future of the Dutch Welfare State" (Naar een nieuwe sociale investeringsagenda: De toekomst van de Nederlandse verzorgingsstaat), to which Vandenbrouck was invited as a speaker.

(3) Limits of the EU social policy community

In other cases, however, the accumulated policy discourse do not take effect or even just ignored.

For example, the German Government submitted its National Strategy Plan in 2005 to the both houses of its Diet for the purpose of discussion. The Lower House bundled this draft report with other social policy legislative proposals on agenda, and the debate was concentrated on those legislative proposals without any comment on the National Strategy Report (Deutscher Bundestag, Stenographischer Bericht, 16. Wahlperiode, 32. Sitzung, 6. April 2006). The Upper House with it oppositional majority made an resolution, which was just for criticizing government and not about its content (Bundesrat Drucksache, 413/1/05).

The impact on the social policy OMC is rather limited, according to the existing empirical research (Zohlnhöfer and Ostheim 2005; Kröger 2006; Natali 2007, Ervik 2006). In the "Last Exit to Lisbon" authored by Pisany-Ferry and Sapir (Pisany-Ferry and Sapir 2006), the commitment of four types of actors, namely the parliament, the social partners, civil society and the follow-up was examined. With an exception of Estonia, most countries could score only half, which showed still lacking interest and commitment by the national actors.

Thus, we cannot say that the EU social policy community always matters. Only in some cases and under certain conditions, the policy community extends beyond Brussels and take real effect on policy. My image here rather resemble the "policy stream" image of Kingdon (1984). The EU policy process and the Member State policy process are usually autonomous and rather isolated. In some cases, due to external pressure, political entrepreneurship and other reasons, two processes became inter-connected. Till then, the general direction of the policy subsystem is already determined at the EU level. Still, in the case of "soft" policy diffusion, the Member States can resist to the influence by opposing or ignoring the input from the EU level. In this image, the Europeanization does not proceed continuously. It is more intermittent. We may call this image "punctuated Europeanization".

5. Summary and implications

Let us summarise our findings in three points. First, the development of the EU social policy is continuous and evolutionary, in spite of changing political climate. Second, we can identify the stable EU social policy community behind evolution. In the community, several academics have played an important role as generator of policy ideas and their promulgators. Third, the "reach" of the EU policy community is usually limited. It need some political ally or favorable conditions for those policy ideas to take effect.

These findings have several implications for further research. First, the Europeanization research should pay more attention to those "soft" channels of influence, especially when the formal competence of the EU institutions is weak. For that purpose, we should also expand our view and include seemingly non-political actors like academics in sight. Second, the Europeanization research has tended to focus on "decision", but we should take longer-term perspective, as recommended by the ACF, including policy formulation and implementation. With short sight, one might mistake a policy idea with a long incubation period for a recent innovation, as in the case of flexicurity. Third, the ACF may serve as a useful frame of reference, but it needs some calibration for the application to the EU policy process. Especially, the fragmented and the multi-level nature of the EU and the multiple veto-points should be carefully examined. Finally, there are still unexplored sources for the examination of the EU policy process. Particularly, when we want to know more about informal and soft aspects of governance, we should explore non- or under-utilized materials and devise methods for their analysis.

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