Causality in Europeanization Research: A Discursive Institutional Analytical Strategy

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Abstract: Discourse analysis as a methodology is perhaps not readily associated with substantive causality claims. At the same time the study of discourses is very much the study of conceptions of causal relations among a set, or sets, of agents. Within Europeanization research we have seen endeavours to develop discursive institutional analytical frameworks and something that comes close to the formulation of hypothesis on the effects of European Union (EU) policies and institutions on domestic change. Even if these efforts so far do not necessarily amount to substantive theories or claims of causality, it suggests that discourse analysis and the study of causality are by no means opposites. The study of Europeanization discourses may even be seen as an essential step in the move towards claims of causality in Europeanization research. This paper deals with the question of how we may move from the study of discursive causalities towards more substantive claims of causality between EU policy and institutional initiatives and domestic change.

I. Introduction

This paper addresses the question of how we may move towards more substantive claims of causality between European integration and domestic change with a point of departure in discursive institutional approaches to Europeanization. Discourse analysis as a methodological tool is not commonly associated with substantive causality knowledge ambitions. At the same time discourse analysis is very much directed at the study of causal conceptions among agents. The puzzle is how we may proceed from the study of discursive causalities towards substantive theoretical causal claims.

The knowledge ambition of discourse analysis traditionally steer clear of making theoretical causal claims that reflects and are testable against an objective and stable reality. The ambition is instead to develop research strategies that enable the study of concrete historical discursive developments. Discursive institutional analytical strategies typically obtain their value when inspiring empirical studies that generate not already available insights into the organisation of

societies. Yet, whether or not we consider theoretical model building and the establishment of causality the ultimate ambition of political science, dealing with relationship between discourse analysis and substantive causal claims has become increasingly urgent. Europeanization research is good example.

Theoretically, discourse has grown to become at least one potential explanatory variable among a number of variables in theoretical and analytical frameworks in Europeanization research. Discourse is by now well established as a variable that we need to have some concern with. This is the case whether discourse is seen as an independent variable, a dependent variable or, alternative, more broadly if discourses are seen as making up the context within which decision makers operate. Europeanization theories and analytical framework are perhaps more often than not – and rightly so – demanding attention to both institutional and discursive (or ideational) variables. Regardless if these types of variables are put forward as competing or as potentially complementing, we are faced with the challenge of how discursive variables and possibly related causal claims are interrelated with other types of variables and causal claims.

Empirically, if we want more comprehensive knowledge of the implications of European integration for European societies, it has become increasingly unsustainable to employ one-dimensional research strategies. The study of domestic change in the face of European integration is rarely, if ever, a matter of studying a single cause and effect relation, just like EU institutional and policy initiatives may be considered both in terms of implications for domestic institutional arrangements and discourses. Thus, the puzzle of moving towards claims of causality in Europeanization also gives reason to the question of how discourse analytical strategies may 'speak' to other theoretical and analytical frameworks.

Think, for instance, of the establishment and implications of the European Monetary Union (EMU): On the one hand, the EMU is at the very least conditional for member state fiscal policies and the introduction of the Euro among other things involves national adoptions of payment systems and affect cross border trade and financial market integration. On the other hand, the EMU as a reflection of a neo-liberal policy paradigm has also been used strategically to legitimise national policy and institutional choices, and the Euro may well be considered and studied in terms of its implications for 'nation building' and identity construction in Europe (Risse et al. 1999; Dyson 2000). In other words, we must expect at least potentially multiple national impacts of any EU level policy or institutional initiative, just like domestic change is likely to be caused by a mixture of independent and/or domestic mediating variables.

Finally, it will be argued that discourse analysis supply a number of particularly helpful methodological tools for developing more analytical inductive research strategies and may form the basis for multi-theoretical analysis. Analytical inductive research strategies are acutely needed in Europeanization research. Not only were we well into the 2000s before some convergence appeared around a common conception of the object of Europeanization research – that is, the study of the domestic implications of European integration. The research area is also very much characterised by theory building, rather than inhabited by well-established and testable theoretical positions. For those reasons, it seems appropriate to commence the work on establishing substantive causal claims in Europeanization research with an open mind allowing for

multi-theoretical interpretations.

Along these lines, the discussion below moves beyond the traditional dichotomy between those scholars engaged in causal analysis (empiricists) and those engaged in studying the constitutive nature of norms, values and indeed discourse (reflectivists /constructivists) (Kurki 2006). Even if discourses have the reputation of being 'slippery' and in flux, discourses are real world phenomenon that may be captured and analysed by fairly well-known research techniques.

The paper is organized as follows: Section two briefly introduces the concept of discourse and research techniques aimed at analysing discourse. Section three identifies types of causal claims as suggested – explicit or implicit – by discursive approaches to the study of Europeanization. This is followed by three sections which discusses how we may move towards establishing causality in Europeanization research through research strategies aimed at uncovering mechanisms (section four), temporal and cross-country comparative analysis (section five) and multi-theoretical analysis (section six). Concluding remarks are made in the seventh and final section.

II. What is Discourse Analysis and How can Discourse Analysis be done?
This brief introduction by no means does justice to the range of approaches to discourse analysis in political science. It should also be noted that the focus below is discourses analysis – or the analysis of discourse – rather than on discourse theory (for a discussion of discourse theory in European politics – see David Howarth and Jacob Torfing (2005)). Even if discourse theory probably still has much more to offer also for Europeanization research, the focus on discourse analysis is justified by being associated with policy and institutional analysis, and thus, Europeanization research. Furthermore, discourse analysis is particularly helpful when dealing with issue of 'how to study' Europeanization.

What is discourse analysis?
Sometimes a distinction is made between two general strands of research designs among scholars with an interest in the role of discourses in politics; namely the positivist (or structural) and postpositivist (or poststructural). The former takes its point of departure in hypothetical-deductive methodological set-ups and favours quantitative data. The latter is inductive and favours qualitative and often single case studies (Jones and McBeth 2010, p. 333). This distinction may be legitimised for heuristic purposes. However, it is probably also a distinction which is increasingly counter-productive for the development of comprehensive and empirically sensitive research strategies for specific investigations.

Almost certainly, we are better off considering the value of compound research designs guided by the research question at hand and the nature of the existing research on the area of interest. In that spirit, it has been proposed that the application of bottom-up, or more inductive methodological set ups, are timely and potentially helpful in Europeanization research (Radaelli and Pasquier 2006). At the same time, it will also be argued below that we should move towards comparative research designs and strategies that enable the investigation of Europeanization mechanisms of relevance across comparable cases. The following emphasise the features of discourse analysis which promote these aims.

First, *the* research object of any discourse analysis is discourse. Hayer (1995, p. 44) defines discourse as 'a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities'. Different scholars may make use of slightly different definitions of discourse, but they all deal with the production of collective perceptions and meanings. Discourse analysis is the study of the development and effect of collective meaning systems.

While the focus here is more narrow on discourse analysis and particularly the role discourse in Europeanization research, we both make use of and reach out to the broader literature concerned with the study of meaning systems and their effect on political decision making. Approaching discourse analysis as a research methodology not only permits reaching out to a broad range of research tools, but also to speak to a variety of theoretical and analytical frameworks. In the broadest sense, we may even include the majority of current meso-level analytical frameworks concerned with governance, network analysis, institutional theory and policy analysis. Albeit more or less prominently meso-level analytical frameworks concerned with politics most often have some interest in discourse. This include, for instance, the study of ideas, knowledge, political communication, public opinion, or broader meaning systems variously conceptualised as policy frames, paradigms (Hall 1993), belief systems (Sabatier 1998) or narratives (Patterson and Monroe 1998).

Second, discourse analysis point up the implications of discourse for political outcomes. For instance, in Europeanization research discursive perspectives emphasize European integration as a set of concepts and conceptions which makes up a discursive context for domestic actors, policies, and institutions. Discourses on European integration set out a 'space of possibility' for decision makers – including politicians, high level civil servants, public administrative units, non-governmental organisations and business associations. This 'space of possibility' is both constraining and enabling for policy and institutional choices. On the one hand, domestic actors must articulate themselves through existing discourses in order to be considered relevant and legitimate. On the other hand, particularly the decision making elites may make strategic use of discourses on European integration to carry through or, indeed, hinder domestic reform. Furthermore, the discursive perspective assumes that discourses have real consequences for decision making. In that sense, causal conceptions among actors have a causal effect on political outcome. It is, however, also clear that the types of causalities emphasised vary in kind – much more about this below.

Third, discourse analysis has a significant inductive concern and an essential task in any discourse analysis is the mapping of the discourse or discourses in focus. The first step is thus an empirical investigation uncovering ideas, concepts, categories, and causal relations as articulated within the field of inquiry. The study of political identity, or 'senses of belonging' to a political system, and how such identities may affect political outcomes can be used as an illustration of the more inductive concern of discourse analysis: It has convincingly been shown how EU institutions indeed have had some success in reconstructing national representatives interests within EU institutions. It has been shown how national representatives may gradually assume supranational identifications with treaty commitments and institutional affiliation (Laffan 2004). To varying degrees, individuals or groups of individuals also conceive of themselves as Europeans, as

belonging to a nation state and/or perhaps a sub-region. Euro-barometer surveys and elite interviews are central to this type of research (Gillespie and Laffan 2006). However, we have also seen how discourse analysis has contributed to uncover and investigate other identity categories. These includes 'Europe as a moral community' and the existence of European 'communication communities' suggesting an emerging Europeanization of media treatment of European integration themes (Risse and Maier 2003, p.50ff.). Almost certainly, additional identity categories with relevance for EU politics are waiting to be uncovered and investigated.

How can discourse analysis be done?
This leads to the question of how we may capture discourses empirically. There are several research methods and techniques on offer to this endeavour including contend analysis (see Herrera and Braumoeller 2004) and interpretative methods (e.g. Yanow 2006). Both content analysis and interpretative methods do however have some drawbacks. Content analysis is traditionally using statistical analysis of the appearances of word categories across texts. One of the drawbacks is that discourse here tends to be detached from its context. Content analysis excludes analysis of, for instance, what is the authoritative position of the actors producing discourse? How is discourse related to the institutional and social context in which it is constructed? How is the discourse received by a broader audience? Interpretavists studies are, on the other hand, often criticised for being less than transparent and for failing to be 'clear enough to be wrong' (Jones and McBeth 2010). This critique may be slightly misplaced for studies that by no means claim to be replicable or aiming at making truth claims about an external political reality. In any case, while not excluding the usefulness of interpretative methods and particularly content analysis, they are probably both better seen as a supplement to other broader research methods for the purpose of Europeanization research.

Such a broader and often used method to capture discourse goes through the study of problem perceptions (Lynggaard 2006; Bacchi 2009). Problem perceptions are here seen as ideational symptoms reflecting the discourse that a set of actors operate within. Take for example EU's employment policy, where we have seen how national decision makers come to think and talk about new employment policy problems – e.g. gender mainstreaming, raising employments rates and the inclusiveness of societal actors in labour market governance – through their involvements in the processes and activities related to the Open Method of Coordination. This is turn is seen as having real consequences for both national employments policies and governance on the area (Zeitlin 2009).

In order to identify a discourse we must then be able to identify and describe the rules guiding the formulation of policy problems, their sources and solutions. Studying and recording articulations of perceptions of political problems over a certain time period may be a very manageable technique to uncover a discourse empirically. Other categories may also be used including, for instance, conceptions of 'us/them', 'right/wrong' or more specific categories – possibly inspired by available case specific research or analytical and theoretical frameworks.

Document analysis is probably the most used research technique to uncover continuity and change in discourse. As data basis for discourse analysis documents has the advantage of typically being fairly readily available through libraries, archives, databases and often also electronically and

online. The supply of the types documents that is often useful for our analysis – e.g. government reports, policy papers, newsletters, and newspaper articles – also tend to be continuously available over longer time periods. This is helpful since both discourse analysis and Europeanization research requires longitudinal studies. Finally, documents in essence produced by the actors involved in the discourse in focus are typically available. These are sometimes termed primary documents and are significant when we wish to map concepts, categories and causal relations as conceived by the involved actors. This is opposed, for instance, to research interviews and surveys where the researcher to some extent – regardless of the openness of categories and questions – is always involved in the production of the discourse(s) investigated.

Still, whereas surveys repeated over certain time period is also an option (e.g. opinion polls and Eurobarometer surveys), research interviews repeated in a comparable manner is much rarer. In any case, it may very well be worthwhile thinking about how to possibly combine and make the most of each of three research techniques. Document analysis is probably the most suitable for studying the construction of discursive categories and causalities over time. Surveys may offer ways to quantify and measure the scope of such categories. Research interviews may come in handy when we wish to further qualify broader discursive constructs and supply inspiration for possible causal relations between discourse and political outcomes.

But what is the role of political discourses in Europeanization? How are discourses related to political outcomes? And, in particular, how can we proceed with the study of causality in Europeanization research? These are the issues we now turn to.

III. Discursive Causalities in Europeanization Research

Within the discursive perspective on Europeanization there are at least three types of causal claims. These causal claims are by no means mutually exclusive and most often authors – explicit and implicit – draws on different types of causal claims. Yet, types of causal claims are given attention here as they do have some significance as to how we proceed with the study of causality in Europeanization research. The otherwise subtle distinction between types of discursive causal claims in Europeanization research has to do with whether domestic discourses are seen as one among a number of explanatory variables, if discourse is seen a strategic context, or if discourse is a strategic choice: even if particularly the two last mentioned tend to avoid making actually causal claims.

Discourse as a variable
First, rather than arguing 'ideas all the way down', discourses can be seen as one variable along with political-economic institutions and actors interests (Schmidt and Radaelli 2004). For instance, in addition to variations in discourses among domestic elites, the scope, direction and timing of Europeanization may also vary according to different national policy legacies, preferences, and vulnerability to increased global competition and domestic institutional paths (Schmidt 2002).

Sometimes forceful discourses are considered to 'shape' actors preferences in favour certain policy or institutional choices. A notably example is Amandine Crespy's (2010) study of the impact of the French radical left discourse on the adoption of a critical French attitude to the EU Services (or 'Bolkestein) Directive. The critical French state preference in turn tipped the balance among EU

member states and the European Parliament in favour of significant amendments to the directive, which was finally adopted in a watered down version. Here we move towards discursive push/pulling causes in the sense that, discourses may be attributed with an independent and persuasive force that may affect domestic institutions and policy preferences. Hence, this perspective enables inquiries into *when* and *how* European integration discourse matters for domestic policy and institutional choices (Schmidt 2003). It also powerfully promotes – and rightly so – a non-sectarian approach to the study of ideas and discourses by clear reference to political science and comparative politics.

Intuitively, it may seem most straight forward to take a starting point in causal claims which already ascribes certain push/pull powers to discourse in the Europeanization of domestic policies and institutions. However, we do face a number of challenges when pursuing analytical strategies encompassing both discursive and non-discursive variables. For instance, when is an empirical observation an observation of the existence of a discourse rather than, for instance, a policy legacy? How do we differentiate between actors' discourses about national political-economic institutions and the material reality of countries economic vulnerability? And perhaps most fundamental, how do we differentiate between actors' interests and discourses about actors interest? However thoroughly and unambiguously, these challenges are probably neither solved by means of conceptual definitions nor on the level of operationalisation of variables (see Jupille (2006) for a very good and accessible epistemological discussion).

Discourse as strategic context
Second, discourses may also be seen as making up a strategic context or a conceptual framework through which social, political and economic developments are ordered and understood at the domestic level (Hay and Smith 2005; Smith and Hay 2008).

The study of discourse as strategic context tends to be based on causal assumptions, rather than empirical tests of causalities. It is thus assumed that there is a causal relation between discourses and political outcomes, even if it is probably not a one-dimensional and straightforward causal relation. Studies based on such causal assumptions are often empirically rich, yet the empirical eye is on uncovering discourses, rather than on the causal relation between discourse and policy outcomes. Discourses may be seen as constitutive for other types of causalities explaining domestic change, but is not attached with push/pull powers in themselves. The mapping of domestic discourses on European integration consequently becomes a research objective in itself since the assumption is that *discourse always matters*. From this by no means follow that discourse on European integration is necessarily significant in bringing about domestic change. It is entirely possibly that European integration issues is absent from domestic discourse at the expense of, for instance, discourse on globalization (although this may also be attached with significance and seen as a strategic choice).

Discourse as strategic choices
Third, most studies with some concern with the Europeanization of domestic discourse – often in addition to the above – tend to see discourse as a strategic choice in itself. Focus is put on how decision makers respond to the conceived implications of European integration as well as on how decision makers may use discourse on European integration strategically in bringing about or

hindering domestic change (Hay and Rosamond 2002; Schmidt 2007). Decision making tends – most often implicit – to be defined in way so that discursive change constitutes a strategic choice. In that sense, discursive change is in itself an instance of decision making. The causality at play here seems to be one between discourse as process and discursive change as an instance. That is, developments and shifts in conceptions about the implications of European integration among a set of agents over a period of time may amount to a change in discourse at a given point in time. This line of thinking may, for instance, lead to the study of the development of a policy discourse and its possible institutionalisation through a gradual informal and formal sanctioning of a policy discourse (Lynggaard 2007). The causal chain is here:

(discourse as a process) articulation of policy ideas --> (discourse as an instant) change in discourse --> (discourse as a process) institutionalisation of discourse --> (discourse as an instant) institutional change

Even if this line of thinking links up ideas, discourses and institutions, the causal claims are concerned with the degree of systematic and authority attached to discourses. In other words, causal claims are made on the ideational level(s). The challenge to this type of causal claims is whether and how we move beyond the study of discourses and tangibly engage with the study of causations between European integration and domestic policies and institutions.

Below it is argue that it may be useful to turn to the study of mechanisms focusing both on discourses as context and as strategic choice or, put slightly different, discourse as code and as conduct.

IV. The Study of Mechanisms from a Discursive Institutional Perspective
The point of departure of the subsequent discussion is neither *if discourse matters* in Europeanization research nor is it *when discourse matters*. Rather the question is, *how does discourse matter* in Europeanization. Essentially, how can we commence the work of specifying and giving substance to causalities in Europeanization research? For the purpose of the discussion below, we preliminary adopt a very broad definition of causality. Causality is thus used to describe a relationship between events or situations, whether these are systematic and universal or idiosyncratic and whether causality is a theoretical claim or an empirical claim.

The identification of mechanisms aims to explain systematic relationships between observed events. In that sense, the knowledge ambition of explanatory mechanisms differs from the ambitions of establishing law-like theoretical claims, which tend to be close to universal allowing only a very few digressions. At the same time the focus on mechanisms aims at explanations of relevance across a range of comparable phenomena and thus moves beyond descriptive analysis linking a series of events in single case studies (Hedström and Swedberg 1998).

At the heart of discursive analytical frameworks are two mechanisms namely (1) discursive constructs and (2) actors' strategic use of discourse. These two basic mechanisms respectively represent more structural and more agency-based types of explanations, or discursive code and discursive conduct.

Discursive code

To be sure, the point of departure for any discursive analytical strategy is the existence of some sort of duality between discursive structures and agents. As summed up by B. Rosamond: 'Agents are bound by structures, but they are also capable through action of altering the structural environment in which they operate, albeit in way that may be structurally contained (Rosamond 2000, p. 172)'. This duality is commonly acknowledged. At the same time any given discursive analytical strategy may give favourable attention to the study of discursive constructs or actors' strategic use of discourse. There may very well be empirical arguments for favouring one or the other in certain fields of study. Perhaps it is fitting to uncover discursive constructs in highly institutionalised policy fields, where we must expect actors' room to manoeuvre to be particularly constrained? Perhaps it is appropriate to focus on actors' strategic use of discourse during crises, policy failures or in situations characterised by institutional contradictions? In such situations the literature generally suggests that actors' have more options to change their structural context.

Regardless, discursive constructs are most often seen as constitutive for actors' strategic actions and there seem to be some reluctance to point to discursive constructs as causal mechanisms of in their own right (Wendt 1998). Even when discursive constructs is a central research object – including the study of policy frames, paradigms and belief systems – there is a bias towards explaining Europeanization by reference to the actions of agents. There may be sensible reasons for the bias towards agency-based explanatory mechanisms, but here we will point up the potential of exploring more structural mechanisms. Before doing so, we will briefly consider the nature of discursive constructs.

Discursive constructs have at least three characteristics namely their content, their 'structural firmness' and the interactive process of discourses (see box 1).

Box 1: The Study of Discursive constructs

Characteristics of Discursive constructs	Research examples	Usefulness for causality research
Content	Enforcement of neo-liberal policy ideas (Radaelli 1997). National conceptions of state- European integration relations (Larsen 1999).	Identifying conditions for Europeanization
Structural firmness	Conceptions at work either as background assumptions or explicated in the foreground of decision making processes (Campbell 2004) Beliefs which are more or less fundamental to policy makers (Dudley and Richardson 1999; Nedergaard 2008; Quaglia 2010).	Identifying conditions for Europeanization
Interactive processes	The Transformative powers of discourse (Schmidt 2008). The Translations of discourses between different social contexts (Kjær and Pedersen 2001)	Studying causal mechanisms

Both descriptive content analysis and the structural firmness of discourse are essential to studying the Europeanization of discourses. However, analysing discursive content and the structural firmness of discourses is probably more helpful in uncovering conditions for Europeanization, rather than identifying Europeanization mechanisms'. The study of discursive content may, for instance, reveal a 'fit' or 'misfit' between EU-level and national discourses which, in turn, may be more or less conducive to Europeanization. On the other hand, the structural firmness of

discourse may tell us something about whether Europeanization is at all an option, or if discourses among domestic actors are highly institutionalised and, thus, likely to remain in place.

It seems that it is when we engage in the study of interactive discursive processes that we move towards the study of Europeanization mechanisms. Whether interactive discursive processes give momentum to change in political outcomes appears to depend on the mixture of, on the one hand, discursive coherence and persuasion and, on the other hand, incoherence and conflict. Most authors would probably agree on this, but they vary in their emphasis on either coherence or conflict in this mixture.

Vivien Schmidt's *transformative power* Europeanization mechanism emphasise discursive coherence and persuasion. V. Schmidt suggests that interactive discursive processes are the processes through which meaning is coordinated among political elites and policy choices are communication to the public. Here the mechanism explaining variations in Europeanization is the persuasiveness of discourses which is enhanced by discursive coherence, consistency and credibility. It is among other things argued that 'the credibility of a discourse is likely to benefit from consistency and coherence across policy sectors, although a modicum of vagueness or ambiguity is also to be expected (Schmidt 2008, p. 311)'.

Another promising mechanism for Europeanization research is *translation* (Kjær and Pedersen 2001; Lynggaard 2007), which put more emphasis on discursive incoherence conflicts. The study of processes of translation has gained some prominence in the study of how ideas travel globally (Czarniamska and Sevon 2005), but is still largely underdeveloped for the purpose of Europeanization research. Rather than focusing on the diffusion of coherent and persuasive discourse, translation point to the more complex and selective processes through which discourses interact. Following this line of thinking, the expectation would be that EU-level discourses are probably rarely adopted in national contexts in their entirety, but rather 'bits and pieces' are selectively incorporated into existing national discourses. It is also entirely possibly that ambiguous EU-level discourses may appeal to an even broader palette of decision makers and member states and, thus, contribute to Europeanization. This is still an insufficiently researched area. So for a start we should expand our analytical strategies to allow, not only the study of discursive coherence and persuasiveness, but also discursive incoherence and conflicts as mechanism(s) of Europeanization.

Discursive conduct
From more rationalistic perspectives, the contributions of actors to Europeanization tend to be seen as happening at particular points in time. The notion of domestic veto players is an example of this line of thinking. The claim is that the number of veto players may explain whether Europeanization of domestic policies is likely or not: a low number of veto players increases the likeliness of domestic policies being affected by EU adaptional pressures and reverse a high number of veto players favours status quo (Börzel and Risse 2007). We have, for instance, seen how national parliaments have decided not to ratify EU treaty amendments – e.g. The Maastricht Treaty in Denmark (1992), The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in the Netherlands and France (2005) and The Treaty of Lisbon in Ireland (2008). The actual establishment of national veto players may very well be explained by historical path dependent developments such as

traditions of having referenda on matters that are considered to include a transfer of state sovereignty to EU-level institutions. However, the choice of actors to veto (or not) EU-level adaptional pressure tend to be seen as an instance, rather than a process.

The social ontology of discourse analysis does not allow for overly one-sided explanations referring back to individual conceptions, behaviour and actions. Yet by no means follow actor-less historical accounts of discursive constructs (Wittrock and Wagner 1996). Discursive analytical strategies in Europeanization research will typically entail studying both discursive constructs and actors' strategic use of discourse. It is also clear that causal claims will be on the more structural side compared to methodological individualist starting points, regardless whether more explanatory value is attached to discursive constructs or actors' intentional use of discourses (Jacquot and Woll 2003).

It is, thus, not likely, that any individual actor give momentum to discursive change. Discursive actorness should rather be conceptualised as a role from where collective, but also individual agents, may exercise discursive powers and possible contribute to the Europeanization. Discursive actorness is then a role that various agents may take up simultaneously or successively. It may be useful to further explore *discursive entrepreneurship* as an Europeanization mechanism. Discursive entrepreneurship may contribute to linking up otherwise unlike discourses, involve the creation of fora for communication (e.g public debates, hearings, conferences etc.) as well as involve endorsements and authorisations of formerly marginalised discourse (Lynggaard 2006). Other, but in Europeanization research underexplored mechanisms of discursive agency, are the concepts and working of *discourse coalitions* (Hajer 2005) and *epistemic communities* (Hass 1992; see also Bulmer 2007). Altogether, discursive entrepreneurship becomes an actor-in-context type of explanatory mechanism giving reason to the study of strategic actors.

V. Making the Most of Temporal and Cross-country Comparative Analysis
The study of discursive constructs as a mechanism of Europeanization necessitates a temporal analysis of the evolvement of concepts and conceptions on the area in focus. This is also the case in the study of more agency-based mechanisms.

The techniques of discourse analysis may be seen as one way to conduct a comparative temporal analysis at domestic level. We have already seen a few large cross-country and cross-sectoral comparisons of the construction of domestic discourses and how these may affect policy and institutional choices (e.g. Schmidt and Radaelli 2004). However, Europeanization research making use of discourse analysis is often also single case studies among others since cross-country and cross-sectoral studies often requires larger research teams and multi-linguistic resources. A comparative temporal analysis offers an opportunity to otherwise single case studies to increase the number of examples and, thus, possible comparisons. At the same time, comparative temporal analysis is certainly also an option for cross-country and cross-sectoral research designs to conduct systematic comparisons of periods and events.

The objective of a temporal analysis of domestic discourse is to uncover concepts and causal conceptions among a set of actors over a period of time (probably at least ten years). The discourse(s) in focus depend first and foremost on the research question at hand. It may, for

instance, involve the study of how decision makers conceive of the challenges of European integration or a more narrow focus on actors' conceptions within a policy field.

Regardless, problem perceptions are often taken as symptoms or estimations of the ideas informing a policy field or policy. The temporal analysis may thus be conducted so to register continuity and change problem perceptions in the field of interest. The extent to which it is possible to register and describe a systematic set of rules for how central problems, their sources and solutions are articulated among a set of agents a discourse can said to exist. In this same manner it is also possible to identify and register developments in discursive coherence and incoherence and possible domestic sub-discourses. Furthermore, the study of discursive agency may, for instance, be conducted by registering 'first movers' on the use of specific EU-level conceptions as well as convenors of fora for the communication of such conceptions.

Having registered continuity and change through a diachronic descriptive analysis, we may move on to temporal comparative analysis. The increase in cases is essentially done in two ways: 1) by characterising periods of time and 2) by characterising points in time. A period of time may, for instance, be characterised by the institutionalisation of certain conceptions of the implication of European integration among a set of domestic actors. Here Europeanization is essentially seen as a process. Yet, analytically, the point in time which marks the end of an institutionalisation of domestic discourses on European integration may also be seen as an instant of change and characterised in terms of differences before and after this point in time. Depending on the number of periods and points in time identified, this procedure will enable us to compare a case with itself at different periods of time and points in time. We thus increase the number of cases available for comparison and do so in a way that has the advantage of (*the*?) most likely comparative research designs (see further Lynggaard 2011).

VI. How to Conduct Multi-theoretical Analysis
We have already pointed to some of the challenges related to approaching discourse as one variable among other non-discursive variables. At the same time, the move towards a more comprehensive understanding of the effect of European integration on domestic political outcomes almost certainly depend on our ability to bridge different research designs and to promote cross-fertilisation in Europeanization research. The claim is that, having conducted an analysis of domestic discursive constructs and actors' strategic use of discourses, we may also interpret the findings in other alternative theoretical and analytical perspectives.

Some of the manifold alternative theoretical and analytical perspective available for multi-theoretical analysis have already be carried into Europeanization research including, for instance, the broad institutional literature, the literature on state-society relations, network analysis, the varieties of capitalism, party systems and so on – all depending on the research question at hand. This 'second order' multi-theoretical analysis raises the question of whether and how it is possible to move from an analysis of discourses to subsequently conducting a multi-theoretical analysis including institutional and more structural approaches.

In order to enable a multi-theoretical analysis it is clearly necessary to develop a research design of relevance beyond discourse analytical frameworks. Depending on the more specific research

question at hand, this may give reason to cross-country studies where countries are selected so to compare, for instance, small/large states, corporatist and pluralist political systems, liberal market economies and coordinated market economies or unlike electoral systems. For instance, do domestic discourses on European integration vary between small and large states? Are there variations between corporatist and pluralist political systems? Between liberal market economies and coordinated market economies? Clearly, the analytical frameworks and theoretical perspectives applied in a multi-theoretical analysis may well differ from the initial, or first order, discourse analysis on both ontological and epistemological issues. However, for the purpose of conducting a multi-theoretical analysis as suggested here, analytical frameworks and substantive theory of relevance for the subject matter may be approached as discourses in their own right. Some might find this solution controversial. Yet, this approach allows for a comparison of discourses as articulated by actors involved in the empirical field and academic discourses – all with the purpose of theoretical cross fertilisation and commencing a more comprehensive understanding of the respective implications of European integration within EU member states.

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