

THE EUROPEANIZATION OF DOMESTIC REPRESENTATION STRUCTURES: OPERATIONALIZING THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

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Abstract: *In this article it is explored the Europeanization of national political parties, as domestic representation structures. The author argues that Europeanization studies focused more on policies cases, at the expense of researches oriented towards polity or politics items, and that this domain of the academic literature should be filled out with more comparative approaches. The interest of the author goes towards designing and/or explaining a specific set of indicators that could be used for operationalizing the party dependent variable in order to analyse if the European factors determined specific changes within the domestic political parties, changes that can be seen as an “Europeanization” effect. In the article, there are analyzed: (a) the concept of Europeanization (working definition, domains, magnitude and direction); (b) the indicators used by scholars for assessing the Europeanization of political parties; (c) the outcomes outlined in the existing literature (a critical perspective); and (d) the research methods applied in this field, with specific mentions for the differences existing between Western and Eastern case studies. The findings indicate a series of domains that should be further exploited via counterfactual reasoning or process tracing techniques in order to better grasp EU’s influence on party politics, with the final goal of improving the functions parties perform in national and European democracies, and reducing the democratic deficit associated to European issues presented and debated in member states and at the European level.*

Keywords: *democratic deficit, Europeanization, methodology, political parties, representation structures*

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