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Politicization as an (un)intended Consequence of the European Union in Crisis?

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Abstract:

Crises have endemic to the process of European integration and to the deepening of its policy and institutional integration. The recent history of European integration does demonstrate that crises have had contradictory results. While institutional reforms which were adoptes in response to the Euro crisis seem to reinforce technocratic and authoritarian form of economic governance and sustain an intended dynamics of depoliticization at the European level, policy reforms have fulled a rather unintended dynamics of (re)politicization at the national level. This gives rise to a paradoxical situation characterised by the post-functionalist and politicized phase of the Eutropean integration process and the functionalist and depoliticized character of the European Union. These dynamics in turn challenge the mainstream view of crises as an opportunity to restructure the EU polity.

Keywords:

Introduction:

The current crisis demonstrated the limitations of the 'progressive' myth of crisis in the EU (European Union) and the mainstream view of crises as an opportunity for deeper European Integration (EI). Indeed, both the EU and its member states have suffered from, and continue to so, not a single crisis but multiple crises: the crisis of the Euro; the crisis of the EU and the crisis of democracy (and capitalism). The events of the crises manifest in various areas; policy, processes and the polity dimension of the European politics, but nowhere so strongly as in the Economic Monetary Union (EMU). According to Pittors (2014) the weak polity supporitng the EMU lays at the very core of the crises that the EU faces today.

The economic crisis has put an end to the general belief that EI could be a could be a one-way street in the direction of common economic growth and welfare for all who are part of the European family. The Euro crisis can be understood as a (temporary) output crisis where the former positive outcomes cannot be provided for a big part of the European population any longer (Schafer and Weber, 2014: 1). This "output failure" yields potentially negative effects on political support. And since the EU has traditionally legitimated itself through policy outputs (Scharpf 1999), the Euro crisis poses a danger for the diffuse support and thus for the legitimacy of the EU. From this perspective, the crisis has increased the importance of the attitudinal dimension of EI, especially citizens' political attitudes towards the EU. The crisis resulted in a massive drop in support for the political system both on the national and the European level (Braun and Tausendpfund 2014, Armingeon and Ceka 2014). As such, the crisis has demonstrated the depth of interdependence between the EU level and the national level: the crisis did connect [citizens'] discontent with the national economy to [their] distrust with EU institutions (Schafer and Weber, 2014: 18). It may be well be argued that the national political arena still plays an intermediary role between Europeans and the EU polity.

Vulnerability and fragility common to both political levels enable us to identify the crisis not a crisis of the EU only but a manifestation (consolidation) of the contradictory tendencies of the recently growing transformation of the economy in Europe, including the expansion of economic integration and the processes of democratisation. It has become obvious that representative democracy within a nation's geographic borders is not directly coupled with Europeanisation (and globalisation) of its economic space (and the fiscal and monetary space within the eurozone) (Mair, 2006; Scharpf 2011).

This paper suggests a middle ground between the two mainstream views about the crisis; the ever-present character of crisis in the EI process and the novelty/distinctiveness of the current crisis, by tracing the mode of European crisis-management and governance reforms to the Lisbon Treaty and its institutional architecture, characterized by the rise of European Council-driven form of intergovernmentalism (Puetter, 2012). It aims to approach the politicization of EI and democatic legitimacy of the EU from a multi-level governance perspective. The paper proceeds as follows: After a brief overview of Eurozone governance reforms, the Eurozone crisis is explored as a challenge to the democratic legitimacy of the multilevel EU polity. Next, politicization of EI is

discussed both as an enabling and constraining factor for enhancing the democatic legitimacy of the EU. The assertion that EU-level technocracy is at odds with the politicization of the EU and its policies at the domestic level, the paper raises the option of muddling through for the future of Europe.

Overview of Eurozone Governance Reforms

The Lisbon Treaty does not bring about new elements exclusively designed for governing the EMU but it altered the rules of EU decision-making in a way which has become relevant for the euro area (Schwarzer, 2014: 30-31). The Lisbon Treaty in general strengthened the grounds for intergovernmental responses to the crisis (and the rise of the European Council and President as the new power center) and intensified a potential for conflict with the EU's supranational institutions. Furthermore, the emerging crisis management mode since early 2010 has led to new power relationships between member states (the new German dominance and marginalization of small and medium sized member states) and institutions, in particular with the European Central Bank (ECB) (Schwarzer, 2014: 29). Its prominent rule in day-to-day crisis management also leveraged the ECB's political influence in the euro area as for example its direct involvement with disciplining member states to implement reforms on the domestic level (Schwarzer, 2014: 34). Notwithstanding the depoliticized and technocatic mode of EMU governance and the technocratization of politics (Schwarzer, 2014: 40), the politicization of an institution that lacks political embeddedness and clear lines of accountability is a serious challenge to the notion of democratic governance (Scicluna, 2014: 549). A key question in the future governance reform debate will be how to provide for the conditions to bring the 'ECB back to basics', that is, limiting its role to the core of monetary policy (Schwarzer, 2014: 35).

The establishment of temporary and permanent sovereign debt crisis mechanisms and new measures for closer surveillance and coordination of budgetary and economic policy (the Six Pack, the European Semester, the Fiscal Compact) deepen policy coordination yet without an extension of the community method to the fields of budgetary and economic policy-making and surveillance. Indeed, many scholars criticised the poor democratic quality of the governance processes, with the increase in supranational and intergovernmental rule to the detriment of the 'Community Method' and any significant involvement of the European Parliament (EP). These processes have become increasingly intergovernmental and supranational (or technocratic) in the course of the Eurozone crisis, leading Habermas (2012) to the "post-democratic executive federalism" that currently dominates the EU decision-making.

Parallel to ongoing depoliticization of the EU governance has been increased domestic politicization of the EU and its policies. This politicization can be seen as the continuation of an earlier trend, namely the post-functionalist phase of EI, bringing national identities, political parties and publics back to European politics (Hooghe and Marks, 2009). Thus, Eurozone crisis-management and governance reforms can be better understood against the transforming context of both EI and the EU.

Based on this overveiw, the paper aims at an assesment of the dynamics of depoliticization inherent to governance processes and its likely consequences for the democratization of the EU polity. It argues that the debate on the politicization of the EU should take into consideration its multilevel nature, that the EU is not a single-level state, but part of the two-level constellation of the European polity (Scharpf, 2014: 114). In the 1990s, a tacit consensus has emerged among scholars to conceptualize the EU as a multilevel regulatory polity (Majone 1996). This is reflected in a corresponding distribution of political responsibilities. The EU is in charge of efficiency-oriented, largely technocratic regulatory issues of low political salience while national governments retain authority over highly politicized issues of redistribution, ideology and enforcement (Genschel and Jachtenfuss, 2014: 2). As long as EU authority is limited to issues of market creation and regulation, its democratic deficit is not a problem. In fact, it insulates EU policy making from the national party politics and democratic demands put forward by its citizens (Scharpf 1999). However, the limit to fragmentation of power is the problem-solving effectiveness of the EU: if and when the EU is unable to deliver results, it will lose legitimacy while also contributing to the weakening of the democratic institutions at national level.

To understand fully what this means, we need to consider the fragmented nature of EU multi-level democracy in which input politics remains primarily at the national level while output policy has increasingly gone to the EU level (Schmidt, 2006). In other words, the national level has increasingly become characterized by 'politics without policy' as more and more policies are removed from the national arena. This has thereby emptied national politics of substance, impoverishing the national political arena, and leaving the way open to populist contestation. At this same time, the EU level consists of 'policy without politics.' This makes for depoliticized EU policymaking processes and institutions focusing on the output-oriented dimension of political legitimacy. It

seems plausible to interpret the permissive consensus of public responses to EI process as indicative of output-oriented legitimacy, and of citizens' benign neglect of input-oriented deficiencies at the European level (Scharpf, 2015: 20).

To the extent that the EU remains a regulatory polity and as long as its policies have not achieved political salience, a stable European "constitutional settlement" had effectively been established (Hix, 2007, 143-4). in order to account for the absence of manifest legitimacy crises, Scharpf however (2014) relies on a complex normative model; legitimacy intermediation, which is a product of the Union's two-level polity.

In his excellent analysis of the legitimacy of the governing structures of in multilevel European polity by referring to the republican and liberal traditions of legitimacy discourses in Western political theory, Scharpf (2014: 110) helds the view that the Union appears as the extreme case of a polity conforming to liberal principles but which, at the same time, lacks practically all republican credentials. When judged in terms of republican criteria of political legitimacy, his assessment of the EU goes as follows:

> 'As a political community, the EU has at best very weak claims on the loyalty of disaffected citizens; as a political regime, it does not conform to democratic standards of political interaction; and while the legality of EU authorities is not in question, they lack the legitimating essential of electoral accountability. Nevertheless, academic concerns over the alleged European democratic deficit have only recently begun to provoke political discussions outside of the EP' (Scharpf, 2014: 113).

Despite its constraining impact of European policies which on the economies, institutions and policy legacies of EU member states, EU policies did not become politically salient in national constituencies and EI did not provoke much. This is because it is the legitimacy of the member states-the moderating influence of national governments on EU legislation, and their continuing accountability for its implementation which, until very recently, has protected the Union against direct challenges to its policies (Scharpf, 2009). The structural characteristics of the two-level polity generates an indirect and two-step legitimating relationship between governments and citizens. European citizens do not confront the higher-level of the EU governance and polity directly instead national governments assume political accountability and responsibility for the exercise of governing powers. And from the Union's perspective, what matters is the willingness and ability of its member governments to implement EU law (Scharpf, 2014: 115). EU governments could succeed in doing so if and when the EU produces good policy outputs.

The legitimacy of Eurozone governance can only be derived from output-oriented arguments but cannot be legitimated, even indirectly, by input-oriented arguments or the legitimating belief that creating the Monetary Union would serve the common good of its member countries and this is better served by independent, non-majoritarian and technocratic institutions in particular the ECB with its mandate to ensure price stability in the eurozone.

The Eurozone crisis as a challenge to the EU democratic legitimacy

Indeed, prior to the Eurozone crisis, the EU seemed to have effective output, the minimal political input by citizens did not appear unduly problematic (Schmidt, 2015a: 3). The inner and outer challenges faced by the eurozone has not only brought about the Eurozone's sovereign debt crisis but eroded its claim to output performance and output legitimacy as policies pushing austerity and structural reform led to recession and social inequality rather than growth and employment; the rules-based austerity policies have appeared at best to be ineffective, at worst to have exacerbated the crisis (Schmidt, 2015a: 6). More importantly, the EU's rescue mechanisms and the subsequent stricter budgetary and economic coordination and surveillance mechanisms still followed, to use Scharpf's (2015: 123) words, the persistent intellectual and political influence of the monetarist fallacy. In other words, the lessons which EU political and institutional actors drawn from the eurocrisis did not include a re-examination of the economics of monetary centralisation or a reflection on the monetarist fallacy (Feldstein 2011).

While EU supranational intervention and oversight over national economies and societies have strengthened and while European policies have a direct and highly salient impact on the lives and concerns of citizens (with obvious redistributive consequences between and within countries (Cramme and Hobolt 2015), national governments were also caught up with problems of democratic legitimacy and accountability. Their further loss of policy autonomy as a result of euro response and reform measures has not only disabled their own legitimacy but also has eroded the shield of legitimacy intermediation for the EU; as Scharpf argues (2014: 126) "for the first time, therefore, the exercise of European governing functions must depend on its own legitimacy.

What we have seen then is an intensified debate on the Eurozone input responsiveness to citizen politics. Input legitimacy represents the exercise of collective self-governing '*by* the people' so as to ensure political authorities' responsiveness to peoples' preferences, as shaped through political debate in a common public space and political competition in political institutions that ensure officials' accountability via general elections (Scharpf, 2015: 20). First and foremost, input legitimacy is a criterion focused on citizens' political attitudes and engagement (Schmidt, 2015a: 7).

Signs of discontent and disillusionment with the EU and national governments have grown among citizens, whether they live in the Northern creditor countries or the Southern debtor states. Parallel to the decline of citizens' trust to both the EU and national institutions has been the deterioration of the positive image of the EU among a large majoirity of Europeans (Cramme and Hobolt, 2015: 3). Hobolt (2015) examines the public responses to the euro crisis and shows that European citizens have become increasingly likely to blame the EU, both for ineffective management of the crisis and poor economic conditions in their countries (Hobolt, 2015: 62) which serves as an indicator of the weakening output-based sourse of EU legitimacy. Moreover, while citizens and even the supporters of the European project increasingly hold the EU responsible for economic outcomes, they cannot hold European politicians to account for the crisis and this has led to declining levels of trust in EU institutions. The crisis has thus served to amplify the accountability deficit within the EU (Hobolt, 2015: 62).

Nonetheless, while citizens increasingly see the EU as part of the problem when it comes to the economic crisis, they also consider it to be part of the solution: the Union is still considered to have greater capacity than national governments to provide an effective solution to the economic challenges facing Europe.Hence, it seems that the crisis has led to a decline in diffuse support for the EU (Schafer and Weber, 2015) but somehow paradoxically, Hobolt and Wratil (2015) demonstrate that utility-based public support for economic integration has remained stable within the euro area, while it has declined in EU member states outside the euro area. Hence, they assert that the continued legitimacy of EU economic governance could depend on whether the EU is seen to deliver effective solutions to economic problems (2015: 239). It is worth noting, however, that this public willingness to accept EU authority might not sustain in the long term unless the EU and its institutions become more responsive and accountable to citizens at the EU level (Hobolt, 2015: 64).

The principal question therefore is not just the effectiveness of the EU's structural reforms but whether EMU's new regime will have more political sustainability in the years to come (Cramme and Hobolt, 2015: 6). As a form of 'emergency politics', EMU is intended to override the mechanisms of politicization, that is, by shielding highly unpopular austerity measures from political controversy and public debate (White, 2015a). The question is how long will the emergency politics in today's EU and the emergency mode of Eurozone governance last? Arguing that the emergency regime, rather than a temporary deviation from a rule-based order, has long been a core feature of European integration, White (2015: 315a) suggests the political contestation of these measures and of the ideas and practices underpinning them. An effective response is likely to strengthen and synchronise the rhythms of parliamentary politics, as well as being receptive to new forms of political opposition emerging from civil society (White 2015b: 95)

Given its politically fragmented character, Scharpf (2014: 116) suggests that the EU must be legitimated not as a government of citizens, but as a government of governments. Mair further elaborates this conceptualization and defines the EU as a non-democratic political system largely beause voters are not afforded the right to organize opposition within the European polity (Mair, 2013: 138). The lack of government- opposition nexus at the EU level has similar implications for the national level, as can be seen in the mobilization of a new and populist opposition of principle against the polity (whether that polity be be European or national, or both at the same time. This new polity-skepticism (including Euroskepticism), Mair argues (2013: 140) is partly fostered by the increasingly limited scope for opposition within the system. The loss or decline of political opposition is one of the reasons accounting for the rise of populist movements and parties in Europe. This new opposition signals a growing gap between responsiveness and responsibility in European party systems: while mainstream parties claim to possess governing capacity (responsibility), they are no longer seen to represent (responsiveness), the new parties claim to represent but lack governing capacity (Mair, 2013: 140-141, note 24).

The salience national political parties attribute to the EU has been increasing so does the party political contestation. Expressions of Euroscepticism form a central driving force of the process of politicization (de Wilde, 2015: 3). The rise of populist and Eurosceptic parties on both the right and left challenges the pro-European bias of the mainstream parties and exert pressure on the latter to adopt some of these positions for immediate electoral purposes (Lefkoridi and Schmitter, 2015: 11). The pre-existing political elite consensus has

thus been replaced with an increasingly plural constellation of supporters and opponents of sustained integration (de Wilde, 2015: 3).

More generally, Laffan (2014) explores the impact of the newly evolving rule-bound system of economic governance within the euro area on domestic politics and (governing) political parties. Laffan refers to the emerging "politics of constrained choice" whereby parties are struggling to justify and navigate the constrained choices that result from the emerging regulatory framework while at the same time grappling with functional pressures for further integration" (2014: 282). The politics of constrained choice will condition electoral competition and party government in the euro states. Governing parties find themselves caught between domestic electoral politics and stronger external commitments that place limits on their freedom to respond to their electorates (2014: 285).

A related key argument is that the growing euro area constraints have greatly strengthened responsibility to the collective (responsibility to partners and co-responsibility for the common currency area) as a central norm in the system of economic governance. Further, Laffan claims that the growing euro area constraints are a source of tension between responsiveness and responsibility, between representation and governing. Given the increasing difficulty of separating out European from national (Mair, 2013: 139-140) a key question emerges as to the feasibility of making the euro area as a collective more responsive to Europe's electorates – to think beyond the responsive capacity of member states to the responsiveness of the multilevel system as a whole.

As the elected representatives of the citizens, the European Council has claimed for itself the greatest input legitimacy during the crisis (Schmidt, 2015a: 8). One challenge to the Council's self-claim is that its "intergovernmental input legitimacy may sustain general rules applying to all member states, but it cannot legitimate discretionary interventions in individual member states (Scharpf, 2014: 130). A second objection is related with the functionality of the Council: the Council is not a representative arena but rather more like a closed negotiation forum (Schmidt, 2015a: 8). However its political discretion as a common EU institution has now been overshadowed by deepened asymmetries and cleavages among the member states and the predominance of the few.

Of all the EU supranational actors, the increased roles of the Commission in the management of the Euro area regime in member states is welcomed by some as the emergence of a central authority that could make the EMU into more of a federal system (Pittoors, 2014), in reality the Commission has lost its role as a 'policy entrepreneur' to the European Council and could rather be considered more as as a 'compliance entrepreneur' or 'policy manager' Pittoors, 2014: 14). Since the Commission itself lacks any kind of input-oriented legitimacy, its increased managerial role comes at the cost of input legitimacy of the national governments and national parliaments. As national governments are increasingly drawn into budgetary and fiscal cycles within the EU, national parliaments struggle to exercise their traditional prerogatives over domestic public finances (Laffan, 2014: 283).

Politicization and its impact on European Integration

For those who view of the EU's democratic deficit an institutional one, the remedy lies in the strengthening of representative democracy and democratic government at the EU level, by increasing the responsiveness and accountability of the EP in particular. However, this parliamentarization thesis is constrained by the fundamental structural deficits of the EU political system: briefly said, the translation of votes into seats in the EP and to authoritative power and actual influence remains underdeveloped. As a result, the EU's direct and supranational channel of political representation does not provide the Union democratic legitimacy it remains doubtful whether the EU democratic deficit could be redresses by further politicization and political integration of the of the EU. Regarding the way democracy can be transferred at the supranational level, Meny argues that:

> "There is no easy, ready-made solution to the democratic stalemate in Europe. It is not sufficient to elect MEPs by universal suffrage to offset the democratic deficit. Giving more powers to the EP will not do the job either. Allowing the voters to choose the president of the Commission they prefer will not cause damage, but neither will it suffice. It might be, rather, a new source of disillusionment, as there is no connection between the choice of the president and the actual composition of the Commission, not to mention even its policy choices" (Meny, 2014: 1342-43).

Certainly, the euro crisis, its management and structural reforms have sharpened the democratic shortcomings of the EU. Briefly stated, the EU has opted in favour of a depoliticized, technocratic and more intergovernmental form of governance rather than recurring to parliaments and public debates at a moment where the institutional

and budgetary issues were at stake (Kröger, 2015: 485). Both the Community method and the EP have been sidelined both during the management of the crisis and the subsequent governing reforms (Schmidt, 2015a: 2). Besides their exclusion from the policy processes, most MEPs followed the EP's discourse of "no size at all or of 'no alternative' while voting on stringent measures (Schmidt, 2015a: 17). Further, de-parliamentarization thesis has found new support through the increasing politicization of the ECB (Scicluna, 2014: 565). In this regard, one notable outcome of the Eurozone crisis has been the growing tendency of the apolitical ECB to take highly political decisions for example, in relation to the purchase of Eurozone sovereign debt. The politicization of an institution that lacks political embeddedness and accountability is a serious challenge to EU democratic governance (: 549). The transfer of some budgetary competences from national parliaments to the European Commission is another manifestation of de-parliamentarization at the national level. Given the fact that national governments may no longer be enforcing partisan electoral promises, but implementing budgetary, economic and other policies decided at the EU level, Kröger rightly argues that:

> "What has been said to characterize the EU – policies without politics – may be becoming the dominant governance form in Member States too. The Euro-crisis has certainly increased the opportunity structure for such a development – the further hollowing out of state democracy without establishing democratic government at the EU level" (Kröger, 2015: 485-86).

Arguably, a consequence of technocratic and more intergovernmental form of governance is that European politics is becoming less and less structured around political contestation and political alternatives at the EU level. It is often argued that 'leading candidates' competed for the European Commission Presidency in the campaign for the EP in May 2014 introduced a new element of political contestation at the European level (Körfer, 2014). The fact that the Council did finally choose the Commission President from among the winning candidates potentially helps to generate left/right political debates that have greater chances of spurring citizen interest and thereby to gradually to politicize the EU (Schmidt 2015b: 18). However, such politicization signals an increased voice of discontent with and opposition to the EU by extremists of the right and left and could eventually lead to delegitimize the EP (Schmidt 2015b: 18). Moreover, this new element of political contestation at the European level could pose a challenge to the Union's institutional design characterised by consensus-oriented decisionmaking (Körfer, 2014).

This leads us to the role of a transnational European public sphere for debate as a way of increasing democratic legitimacy of the EU other than electoral representation. Without public deliberation on matters of European politics, including EI, it is difficult to develop the EU's capacity for transnational democracy and democratic politics. Indeed, the need for a European public sphere and Europeanizing debate about European politics has been emphasized by scholars for tackling the EU democratic deficit (Habermas, 2012). From this perspective, the latter is perceived as a structural deficit related to the lack of a demos (or shared identity) and the underdeveloped nature of the intermediary structures (political parties and mass media) that could mediate between European politicians and citizens (Kröger, 2015: 481). The fact that citizens cannot be represented at the EU results less from the institutional shortcomings of the EU political system than from these structural deficits dominating in the wider political arena. Scholars of European politics have identified a heightened political salience of the European issues and the increasing evidence of a parallelization of national public spheres (Kriesi and Grande, 2015). However, this politicization via awareness and mobilization does not seem to be changing the structuration of political conflict in the direction of a Left-Right contestation about Europe in domestic politics. Instead, trends include above all the increasing importance of identity factors framed in a new integration-demarcation cleavage than economic considerations (Kriesi et al. 2008, 2012). Hence, EI process is increasingly shaped by and is also contributing to this new structural conflict in Europe. With regard to politicization of the euro crisis, Kriesi and Grande (2015) suggest that national political debates were dominated by structural reform issues involving broader constitutional questions for the EU as a whole.Further, thedebate has reinforced the tensions between member states, including a new core-periphery cleavage between them (Kriesi and Grande, 2015: 81). Most imporantly, the debate was dominated by supranational actors and national executives which in turn indicate the weakness of the partisan channel and the insignificance of transnational parties (Kriesi and Grande, 2015: 79).

The predominance of the intergovernmental channel during the debate has revealed a key limitation of the politicization of Europe; no transfer of European politics into mass politics (Kriesi and Grande, 2015: 84) or that the parallel Europeanization of the national public debates has not eventually contributed to the politicization of the EU governance/polity at the European level. As de Wilde (2015: 12-13) rightly states, to fully assess the extent of politicization, we need to take into account the multiple arenas in which it may be manifested, Europe's divided member state public spheres and the relationship between long term trends and short term episodes of contention. On the one hand, the growing politicization of European integration reveals variance across time and

space persists, thus amounting to differentiated politicization (de Wilde et al, 2016). On the other hand, politicization is heavily influenced by opportunity structures that differ across member states. The overall trend is one of "nationalistic politicization" characterized by the dominance of national actors and the national channel of delegation and accountability over European ones as well as national (and intergovernmental conflict) discursive framing (de Wilde, 2015: 15-16).

These findings suggest three further conclusions: first, the dynamics and the outcomes of politicization heavily depend on the national political/cultural context, second, EU-level politicization of redistributive crises and conflicts can take place in the intergovernmental channel than the partisan one and thirdly, national public debates on politicization are embedded in the multilevel context of the EU. A fourth conclusion might be that changes to the structure of European governance which can be summed up as reinterpretation 'by stealth' have actually created path dependencies for further institutional change and are shaping debates on the future of the Union. Indeed, for some, this executive-dominated governance provides an opportunity for strengthening the intergovernmental channel of accountability by giving more weight to national parliaments over their governments for decisions in Brusells (de Vries, 2015). Hence, the EU may develop more towards a "union of the nation states" as such politicization empowers national politicians (de Wilde, 2015: 9).

Central to the argument above is a key dilemma, is this model of intergovernmental governance and democracy in Europe an option of "muddling through"; that is, a confirmation of the political status quo and the existing institutional and structural democratic deficits of the EU and approaching the prospect for representative politics in Europe doubtfully or is it a reflection of a particular view of EU democracy; that EU's democratic legitimacy is "borrowed", borrowed from its member states and that democracy must be defended back at the domestic level (Kröger, 2015: 481).

Conclusion

Leaving aside the normative foundations and conceptualizations of the dual traditions of legitimacy in Western political theory and confining ourselves to fragmented and densely structured multilevel polity of the EU, a timely debate on EU politicization and democratization must begin by referring to Schmidt's dual and fragmented model of European politics: in which the EU level is characterized by "policy without politics" and the national level by "politics without policy" as more and more policy areas are removed from the national to the EU level, leaving an increasingly emptied policy space and a weakened national political arena ('depoliticizing' national representative politics). The key questions that could be raised for remedying this situation are: how does one maintain the effectiveness of the EU's 'output' democracy for the people if one increases 'input' democracy by and of the people at the EU level, because this would politicize technocratic governance processes and decisions (Schmidt, 2009: 398). By the same token, however, if one does not increase the 'input' side, how does one respond to the increasing dissatisfaction of the citizens with the EU and its redistributive decisions that they see as political rather than purely technocratic. And yet, if one therefore does increase 'input' democracy at the EU level, can one do this without undermining it at the national level, and thereby worsening national 'politics without policy.' From a democratic legitimacy perspective, the crisis of the Euro suggests that the EU needs 'output' policies that are more effective, 'input' politics that are more responsive to citizens, and 'governance' processes that are more balanced and carried out with greater efficacy and accountability (Schmidt, 2015a: 17).

Crisis management and reforms undertaken have had a major impact on the EU economic governance: changes and developments have strengthened the role of the executive actors and are paving the way towards executive federalism; a combination of intergovernmental decision-making in the European Council and formally apolitical, technocratic institutions such as the ECB. One apparent consequence of the executive dominance in the EU is intensified pattern of de-parliamentarization as the parliamentary control and influence of the EU decision-making processes and decisions has been further constrained. Put differently, there is an ongoing depoliticization (and de-legalization via the emergency measures) of the EMU with tools of non-majoritarian and technocratic governance, without democratizing EU policymaking. Contrary to Moravcsik's claims regarding the EU's continuing stable constitutional settlement and the remarkable flexibility of its crisis responses, (Moravcsik, 2012: 68), the Eurozone crisis threatens the stability of the EU's institutional/ constitutional architecture. The risk of instability manifests itself in three interelated changes/developments: delegalization, institutional reconfiguration in the combined form of new intergovernmentalism and non-majoritarian technocratic governance, and endangering the democratic deficit at both levels.

The executive drift in the EU's system governance need to be placed in broader context of transformation. As Scicluna (2014) succinctly puts it, over the past decade the EU has moved from an unsuccessful attempt at

democratization via politicization (the Constitutional Treaty) to an unintended politicization without democratization (the Eurozone crisis). Further, as Dawson and de Witte (2013) skillfully explain the crisis has undermined the EU's constitutional balance with substantive, institutional and spatial dimensions, upon which its stability and legitimacy is based. In their view, an attachment to constitutional balance is an attachment to the responsiveness of the EU to citizens (Dawson and de Witte, 2013: 842). At a time when the EU is moving far beyond regulatory policies it ought to strengthen its responsiveness or input legitimacy. The challenge is that this norm cannot be accommodated through depoliticized and technocratic governance (or a functionalist EU). EU-level technocracy is at odds with the politicization of the EU and its policies at the domestic level.

Given the dim prospect of democratization via constitutionalization, we should be asking whether or not domestic politicization will serve to reconcile EU executive governance with the empowerment of representative institutions and thus paving the way for a new wave of democratization. Debating the transformative effects of politicization for the EI/EU, Lefkoridi and Schmitter (2015) argue that, besides continuing higher levels of output-generated popular support, there would have to be a dual transformation of European politics: the "drift to the Left" and the "shift to the Region" (the EU's assuming more authority for regulation and redistribution and evolving into a Europe-wide social market economy). Apparently, the rise of populism especially on the right and the rise of anti-Europe trend reflected in social protests and electoral results are not so permissive for transforming the EU into political union. The latter remains the least overtly debated issue and the one that both elites and citizens find the hardest to imagine (Lefkoridi and Schmitter, 2015: 4).

Arguably, the seeming absence or weakness of pro-integration forces enabling political integration and supranational democratization bring us back to the option of muddling through or resilience without democratization and to rely on member states as the repository of democracy and legitimacy for the EU, at least in the medium term. As European analysts, this tentative conclusion should not obscure us to the fact that it is the majority of those national political and which have opted for living under the neoliberal rhetoric and reality.

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