

Local Government in the Republic of Cyprus: Path Dependent Europeanization

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Abstract

Local government in the Republic of Cyprus has experienced historical continuities that create burdens, limiting its ability to function well. Although the accession of Cyprus to the EU has provided local actors with access to a new political sphere, their overall condition has remained restrictive. This work uses EU's regional policy as a case study to assess European integration's impact on Cypriot local government during 2000-2012. The effects of European integration and the responses of local government to its challenges are analyzed via specific indicators, e.g. administrative structures, financial and human resources and the local politicians' profile. This work offers a theoretically and empirically informed analysis based on specific analytical frameworks (Europeanization and historical institutionalism) and empirical data derived from structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. It suggests that the burdens of the past acted as decelerating factors, limiting the effects of Europeanization and local governments' responses to it.

Keywords: Republic of Cyprus, local government, Europeanization, historical institutionalism, path dependence

Introduction

This work is based on a political science perspective to offer a sub-national study of a small and centralized EU member state (MS), namely Cyprus. It analyses a feature of the European integration of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) that has been unexplored, despite its importance for the quality of democracy. The basic novelty of this work is the assessment of the effect of European integration, through the process of Europeanization, on Cypriot local government as the level of governance that is closest to citizens. This work studies the immediate pre-accession and the immediate post-accession period (2000-2012) to conduct a novel analysis of the changes that occurred in the Cypriot local government due to Europeanization. The EU's regional policy is used as the specific case-study for the financial effects of European integration.

The research hypothesis views the impact of Europeanization and the effects of European integration as dependent on historical continuities and on burdens of the

past affecting Cypriot local government. Specific research questions operationalize the research hypothesis: 1) Have the burdens of the past, bequeathed to the Cypriot local government, been decelerating Europeanization, limiting thus the effects of European integration at the local level? 2) How do the differences among the Cypriot local actors in institutional and financial resources, structures and local politicians' profiles affect the possible differentiations in the results of Europeanization?

The methodology for the present study included a literature review and field research (February and September 2013) which produced the empirical data. On the one hand, the structured questionnaires, due to their wide coverage, enabled us to reach the entire area under the effective control of the ROC, including urban, suburban and rural local government organizations. Displaced¹ and mixed communities, where Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots live together (Potamia and Pyla), were also included. On the other hand, 20 semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to clarify specific points and to gather supplementary data. Finally, secondary quantitative data, e.g. the reports of the Auditor General of the Republic proved important in overcoming difficulties in the acquisition of data about the financial situation of local government.

Our sample included 25 out of the 39 municipalities and 99 out of the 484 communities of the ROC. The collected data were analyzed via qualitative and quantitative analysis. For the purpose of this research, European integration was seen as the independent variable, while the produced change at the local level was seen as the dependent variable. In order to assess the effects of European integration on Cypriot local government, we used urban Europeanization as an analytical framework. Based on Marshal's typology (2005), we assessed Europeanization's top-down impact on Cypriot local government by measuring: (a) the changes in local structures, institutions and personnel; (b) the implementation of new EU legislation and the consequent increase in local competencies; and (c) the secured funding deriving from regional policy programmes and other EU programmes.

To a smaller extent, we evaluated the attempts to lobby European institutions and the participation in pan-European networks to analyse bottom-up and horizontal Europeanization. Since the effects of Europeanization are both varied and mediated by domestic factors (Börzel and Risse, 2003), we adopted a typology of research indicators incorporating differences in local resources (Bähr, 2008, pp. 3-18; Stegarescu, 2005, pp. 301-333). Hence, it was examined how differences in institutional and administrative capacities, e.g. staffing, competencies, financial resources, infrastructure and differences in the profile of local politicians, acted as domestic mediating factors

1 Due to both the continuous occupation of a third of the island by Turkish troops and the failure to find a settlement before Cyprus's accession to the EU, the *acquis communautaire* is currently suspended in the area which is not under the effective control of the ROC. Currently, nine municipalities and 135 communities are displaced from the northern areas of the island.

affecting the absorption capacity of the regional policy programmes and the results of Europeanization. The historical institutional approach (Lecours, 2011, p. 1107) was used as an additional theoretical and analytical tool in the interpretation of the findings.

The importance of this work lies in the partial coverage of a vital gap in the literature with regard to a governance level that is of particular significance for the functioning of democracy, the one of local government. No previous research has been conducted examining the domestic impact of European integration on the local government of the ROC, creating thus a significant gap. Previous work covered the effects of European integration on crucial parts of the executive, the legislative and the judicial power (Sepos, 2008). This work attempts to cover part of this gap by establishing Cypriot local government as an analytical category and by offering the first study of its relationship with the EU. The theoretical contribution of this work aims at conveying a more comprehensive understanding of the limited effects of Europeanization at the Cypriot local government level, by emphasizing the mediating role of domestic factors. The research results indicate that the burdens of the past have acted as decelerating factors, preventing local government from utilizing the opportunities of European integration.

Urban Europeanization and Historical Institutionalism

Europeanization was initially conceptualized as a top-down process focussing on the transfer of rules and practices from the EU to its Member State (MS) and their institutions (Ladrech, 1994). The expanding academic focus on Europeanization caused the growth of additional processes, i.e. the bottom-up approach, where the MS try to affect the formulation of policy at the EU level by uploading their own preferences to reduce adaptation cost, and the horizontal approach, which sees MS as being capable of transferring knowledge and best practices between them (Howell, 2004, p. 5).

These research dimensions of Europeanization were also applied to regional and local government actors. Heinelt and Niederhafner (2008, pp. 173-174) highlighted that Europeanization has been offering local government actors access to a new political sphere that may increase their autonomy. Marshall (2005, p. 682) called for a more comprehensive academic study of Europeanization at the local level and developed the model of urban Europeanization. Hence, local government actors can download Europeanization (top-down) via implementing EU legislation and fulfilling the criteria to secure EU funding, causing changes in local policies, practices, and preferences (Marshall, 2005, p. 672). They can upload Europeanization (bottom-up) by becoming active policy shapers, lobbying European institutions and transferring local demands

at the European level (*ibid.*). Finally, they can participate in the horizontal process of Europeanization by utilizing the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and joining transnational networks, such as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), to transfer practices and norms between them (Marshall, 2005, p. 673). Based on Marshall's analysis, this work uses the three processes/research dimensions of Europeanization to examine the impact of European integration on the Cypriot local government actors and their responses to the challenges of the former. The mechanisms² of Europeanization (mainly the positive mechanism) that were in effect were analysed to examine the ROC's and local governments' implementation of regional policy and their responses to EU pressure for domestic change (Knill, Tosun and Bauer, 2009, p. 524). Moreover, we investigated the typologies of the possible effects of Europeanization as they were developed by Börzel and Risse (2000, pp. 5-6) and Radaelli (2000, p. 11), i.e. absorption, accommodation, transformation, inertia, and retrenchment.³ The response of the Cypriot local government towards the challenges of European integration was categorized based on the typology of Goldsmith and Klausen (1997, pp. 237-253), i.e. counteractive, passive, reactive and proactive.⁴ Finally, the different domestic mediating factors were analysed, since they may act as institutional veto points or support facilitating formal institutions, affecting either negatively or positively the impact of Europeanization (Börzel, 2005, p. 53).

Additional analytical and theoretical insights were derived from the historical institutional approach to clarify the role of history and institutions in influencing the formulation of policies (Lecours, 2011, p. 1107). According to Pierson (2000), path

- 2 Mechanisms of Europeanization include: (a) The positive mechanism that is based on European policies of positive integration and causes change by demanding MSs' compliance with a specific European policy model, based on specific rules; (b) The negative mechanism that is based on European policies of negative integration and causes change by making MSs exclude certain policies that negatively affect the completion of the common market; (c) The existence of inconsistency between European policies/rules and the domestic institutional structures that causes adaptational pressure. The goodness of fit between the two defines the intensity of the adaptational pressure. See Knill, Tosun, and Bauer (2009, p. 524) and Börzel and Risse (2000, pp. 5-6).
- 3 Absorption is defined as limited change, where the MSs do not significantly change their existing structures. Accommodation is defined as moderate change, where the existing structures are adapted, while transformation is defined as significant change via the full alteration of the existing structures and policies. Inertia is defined as no change at all, while retrenchment takes place when the effect of Europeanization is reduced in the sense that national policies can become less European than they used to be by taking an opposing direction. See Börzel and Risse (2000, pp. 5-6) and Radaelli (2000, p. 11).
- 4 Local government actors may be counteractive and sceptical, seeing EU issues as pointless. They can be passive and demonstrate a limited involvement with European issues. They may be reactive and participate in partnerships and networks with their European counterparts. Finally, they may show interest and have a proactive point of view to promote European integration at the local level. See Goldsmith and Klausen (1997, pp. 237-253).

dependency specifies that past decisions affect future decisions by limiting available options, while the perceived increased returns ensuing from remaining on the same path do not facilitate change. Nonetheless, change is possible during critical junctures that offer enlarged chances for key institutional reforms to happen, followed by extended stretches of institutional stability (Prado and Trebilcock, 2009, p. 358). The present work utilized the historical institutional approach to understand how local government was influenced by past historical developments.

The Burdens of the Past on Local Government

The ROC is located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, having a population of 858,000 (Eurostat, 2015). It is a unitary state, divided into six districts, 39 municipalities and 484 communities (2017). The ROC joined the EU in 2004 and the Eurozone in 2008. The last two historical periods prior to its independence delivered historical continuities that create burdens to its progress, affecting the impact of Europeanization (Sepos, 2008, pp. 15-21). As we will see, these restrictions continue to affect local government.

Ottoman Era

The basic structure of the local governance system of the ROC dates back to the Ottoman era (1571-1878). This historical period vested local actors with specific features that have since had a key role in the overall functioning of local government. These include the explicit assignment of restricted competencies and limited sources of revenues, along with the strict administrative control of the central state structures via the appointed District Commissioners (Tornaritis, 1972, pp. 6-13). Only men who had the economic capacity to possess land and pay the respective taxes had the right to elect and/or be elected as the head of the village. Thus, wealthy and influential people were mainly elected. These functioned both as protectors of the local population and as structures of oppression in the case of disobedience, exacerbating the local clientelistic networks (Sepos, 2008, p. 142).

British Colonial Era

No progress was observed during British rule (1878-1960) in terms of reinforcing the role and competencies of local government, since the 1930 Municipal Corporations Act 26, which replaced the restrictive Ottoman laws regarding local government, retained many of the provisions of the old law (Tornaritis 1972, p. 17). Both the powers and financial resources of local authorities continued to be highly specific and extremely limited. Appointed district commissioners oversaw local government,

perpetuating strict administrative control (Markides, 2009, p. 186). Measures were taken by the British to combat the clientelistic networks by introducing legislation to alleviate rural debt (Richter, 2010, p. 25). Yet, it should be noted that, despite the changes introduced by the British, the clientelistic networks have not been completely eradicated (Sepos, 2008, p. 142).

The Republic of Cyprus

During the first years of the post-colonial period, the overall function of the Cypriot political and administrative system was affected by the outbreak of violence in 1963, the coup d'état that the Greek military junta executed against President Makarios and the consequent Turkish invasion in 1974 (Tzermias, 2004). Local government was central to the outbreak of intercommunal violence on 1963 and thus to the collapse of the bi-communal structure of the constitution (Markides, 2009). Article 173 of the Constitution, which provided for separate municipalities for the two Cypriot communities, was never enforced and this issue quickly led to violence and ethnic tension. As a result local democracy was restricted, since the central government appointed persons responsible for local government management (Markides, 2009). Starting from the 1980s, a series of events, including the adoption of the Municipalities Law of 1985, the European Charter of Local Self-Government (1988) and the Communities Law of 1999⁵ halted this practice and improved to some extent the status of Cypriot local government by providing a more modern legal framework.

While Cyprus's accession to the EU (2004) caused reforms and institutional adjustment to the wider political, economic and administrative system of the ROC, it did not considerably affect local government. Consequently, the burdens of the past remain, minimizing the administrative, financial and political autonomy of the Cypriot municipalities and communities with the latter facing greater restrictions. Local government actors' responsibilities and sources of income are still limited since they are greatly dependent on central state grants while they continue to operate under the administrative control of the central state, embodied by the appointed district officers (Markides, 2008, pp. 186-188). Corruption is evident in most of the functions of local government, especially in local financial management. During the period under examination, the Auditor General (2000-2012) repeatedly indicated cases of embezzlement and fraud both in municipalities and communities. Finally, the existence of so many small local government units on a small island seems to have had its own impact on the nexus of political power distribution. According to Attalides (cited in Markides, 2008), this has allowed important local political interests to take root and thereby be well placed to resist change and reform.

5 These laws were partially based on the Colonial laws, retaining many of their restrictions.

The national framework of regional policy reflects these historical burdens since the Cypriot state has been implementing the partnership principle, which allows local government access to the regional policy programmes, in a restricted way. This behaviour is common to other centralized EU MS, e.g. Estonia (Kull and Tartar, 2015, p. 23) and Ireland (Callanan, 2012, p. 409). While local government is typically entitled to integrate its proposed projects in the operational programmes, problems arise from its increased dependence on the central state structures. As we will see, the firm gatekeeping (Pollack, 1995) of the Cypriot state, prevents local efforts to adopt a more active future role vis-à-vis European integration.

The Different Mediating Factors of Europeanization: Presenting the Sample

Municipalities and Communities: Population Size and Financial Characteristics

The average population of a municipality in the ROC is 19,950 and the average population of a community is 645 (National School of Government International, 2014, p. 25). The majority of the population is concentrated in large urban centres (67.4 per cent), while the communities of our sample demonstrated large populations only if they had increased economic opportunities, e.g. coastal touristic communities (Voroklini 6,134 people).

Table 1 (overleaf) summarizes the financial characteristics of the members of the sample in terms of own resources and state grants, highlighting their sharp differences. The expenditure of local government in the ROC, as a percentage of GDP and as a percentage of public sector expenditure, is low, reaching the second lowest level in Europe (EKDDA, 2010, p. 267). CEMR (2011, p. 24) attributes these limited resources to the limited role of local government due to the small size of the country. The four oldest urban municipalities (Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, and Paphos) demonstrated the biggest financial capacities. With one exception (Strovolos), these municipalities were the most populous, verifying the increased economic activities of the big urban centres of the island, where the majority of the population is concentrated.

Table 1: Financial Characteristics of the Municipalities and Communities

Actors (2008-2012)	Own resources min €	Own resources max €	State grants min €	State grants max €
Urban Municipalities	10,094,114	29,206,703	3,978,261	17,850,948
Suburban Municipalities	1,401,433	14,805,288	1,548,522	10,846,000
Rural Municipalities	52,500	6,752,000	853,788	2,732,000
Displaced Municipalities	24,586	67,937	80,909	1,766,274
Communities	10,000	1,688,850	9,000	477,500
Displaced Communities	0	500	1,000	1,000

Source: The returned structured questionnaires

Municipalities and Communities: Structures and Personnel

Inefficiencies were clear regarding the total numbers of personnel and the professional training and suitability of that personnel. Table 2 illustrates these sharp differences between the municipalities and communities of our sample. The communities of the sample that did not employ any personnel at all (28 per cent) relied on hiring services.

Table 2: Personnel of the Municipalities and Communities

Number of Personnel	Municipalities (per cent)	Number of Personnel	Communities (per cent)
0	-	0	28
≤ 100	48	≤ 5	58
100-200	4	≤ 10	8
200-300	12	≥ 10	6
≥ 300	12	-	-

Source: The returned structured questionnaires

Important inadequacies were clear regarding the qualitative characteristics of the personnel. The four oldest urban municipalities are town planning authorities and have a wider existing institutional structure (Schmidt, 2002, p. 896-908). They had a better position in the political and administrative system and demonstrated larger financial capacities and greater numbers of specialized personnel, ranging from a minimum of 16 to a maximum of 82 people. The suburban municipalities employed less specialized personnel ranging between a minimum of four and a maximum of 47 people. The rural municipalities demonstrated even smaller numbers of specialized

personnel, ranging from a minimum of two to a maximum of 27 people, while the displaced municipalities demonstrated the smallest numbers of specialized personnel, ranging from a minimum of one to a maximum of four people.

Just 24 per cent of the municipalities had specialized personnel solely dedicated to EU issues while 52 per cent had specialized personnel partly engaged in EU issues. Only 19 per cent of the communities of the sample appeared to have specialized personnel. As we will see, the observed deficiencies in personnel, along with the ones observed in the financial capacity of local government, create severe difficulties in the latter's attempt to adapt to the challenges of European integration.

Local Politicians' Profile

Our findings demonstrate important differences in the profile of the mayors and community council presidents of our sample. The overwhelming majority of the mayors (88 per cent) had attained a higher education in contrast to the majority of the community council presidents (75 per cent), which only had secondary education. Mayors had better computer knowledge (84 per cent) and were more fluent in speaking foreign languages (88 per cent) vis-à-vis the community council presidents (57 per cent and 65 per cent respectively). The mayors enjoyed greater party influence and higher party positions (e.g. members of senior party bodies, 53 per cent) compared to the community council presidents (four per cent).

Presenting and Analyzing the Findings: Top-Down Europeanization

Empirical evidence emphasized that the Europeanization of Cypriot local government was restricted in its scope, indicating a profound top-down orientation. It was also indicated that the stronger presence of the mediating factors had a positive impact on the effects of Europeanization, acting as supporting the facilitation of formal institutions (Börzel, 2005, p. 53).

Limited Changes in Local Structures, Institutions, and Personnel

We begin with Europeanization's top-down effects on local structures, institutions, and personnel. We noticed limited evidence of broad Europeanization effects vis-à-vis the institutional framework, structures, and personnel of the local government actors of our sample. This had to do mainly with the fact that the ROC joined the EU maintaining its excessively centralized model without sufficiently preparing local government in terms of developing the necessary infrastructure for attracting EU funds. The slow reaction of the Cypriot state is highlighted by the ongoing and hence belated reform activities (2010–present) focusing on the local government system. In this context,

it was obvious that the burdens of the past, established on the basis of a historical legacy (Dabrowski, 2014) of centralized territorial administration, clearly decelerated Europeanization. Concerning the local governments' post-accessional attempts to fill some of their infrastructure, institutional and personnel gaps, we noticed that these were differentiated due to variations in local resources. Overall, these efforts were based on a process of learning by doing, which was common in other cases, such as the local government actors of Piedmont, Italy (Zerbinati, 2004, pp. 1007-1009). Only 52 per cent of the municipalities attempted to establish their own structures (special EU sections) or modify their existing ones. These structures, however, were clearly understaffed, since the vast majority were made up of just one specialized officer dealing with EU issues. Evidence showed that size and financial ability were clear indicators of change since only the biggest and most populous municipalities had the resources to hire more than one specialized officer. The remaining municipalities focused their efforts on cooperating with the newly established district development agencies (14 per cent) and with specialized consultancy firms (nine per cent).

The communities exhibited an even poorer performance, since they had not yet established their own infrastructure to attract European funds (96 per cent). Due to greater resource constraints, most of them continued to exhibit great dependence on central state structures, relying on the district officer's services (74 per cent) and to a lesser extent on those offered by the Union of Cyprus Communities (22 per cent). The findings underline that the major capacity divergence between the sample members, in terms of institutional capacity and institutional capability (personnel and efficiently performing the assigned tasks) (Bailey and De Propriis, 2002, pp. 408–428) significantly affected both their overall function and their responses towards the challenges of Europeanization. In practice, our findings confirmed Schmidt's (2002, pp. 896-908) observation that economic vulnerability and limited institutional and policy capacity further reduces the efficiency of infrastructure.

Path Dependency in EU Legislation Implementation

We continue with Europeanization's top-down effects via the implementation of EU legislation. We noticed limited evidence suggesting that broad Europeanization effects had taken place via the implementation of EU legislation, confirming that the burdens of the past decelerated this specific process of Europeanization. These effects were mostly concentrated in municipalities who, due to their better constitutional position and the relatively more decentralised degree of competences (De Rooij, 2002, p. 449), had the opportunity to be more actively involved in the implementation of EU legislation. As a result, a greater change in the municipalities' policies, practice, and preferences (Marshall, 2005, p. 672) was observed due to these specific effects of downloading Europeanization.

On the other hand, the great disparity noted between the municipalities and communities in terms of the mediating factors accounts for the observed variations in the effects of European integration. The differences in the attributed tasks (Fleurke and Willemse, 2007), along with the greater resources in personnel and specialized staff and the greater economic capacities, clearly established greater opportunity structures (Keating, 2008, pp. 1-2) for the municipalities. As a result, the involvement of municipalities in the implementation of harmonized legislation was greater in scope, e.g. tender procedures, food hygiene and environment, allowing them to increase their competences and to be active in new issues. Even greater was the increase in the competences of the urban municipalities of our sample. These were town planning authorities and they had to implement additional harmonized legislation, leading to a further increase in the scope of their activities, e.g. energy efficiency of buildings and building permits. These differences enabled the mayors to implement the harmonized legislation, recognizing (45 per cent) that European integration both strengthens local government' competences and increases its influence in the wider political system.

Conversely, the weaker presence of the mediating factors meant that the involvement of communities in the implementation of harmonized legislation was smaller, producing very little increase in their competences. The communities benefited little from these specific effects of Europeanization due to their weaker constitutional position, fewer assigned tasks and increased dependence on the central state structures, mostly the district administration, to perform their activities. This finding was reflected in the extremely small percentage (a mere four per cent) of the community council presidents who recognized that the harmonization of national legislation leads to a strengthening of the powers of local government.

The findings deriving from the mixed communities of Pyla and Potamia indicated that the effects of European integration that concern the Turkish-Cypriot residents of these communities, occurred mainly in the context of top-down Europeanization, e.g. mostly via the implementation of the European quality standards of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Financial Impact of Top-Down Europeanization

We move to Europeanization's top-down effects in terms of its financial impact on local government actors, which, based on the evidence, was relatively greater. Just like in other EU MS, such as Belgium (Van Bever and Verhelst, 2013, pp. 7-8), the desire to secure European funding was the major factor that impelled the municipalities (55 per cent) and communities (43 per cent) of the ROC to be involved in European issues. Yet, it was clear that the burdens of the past decelerated this specific process of Europeanization, preventing the sufficient utilization of the new political sphere and

the new funding opportunities offered by the EU.

We begin with the secured funding that is derived from European programmes, besides those of regional policy. Relatively wider participation was observed vis-à-vis these programmes. Due to large variations in institutional capacity and institutional capability (Bailey and De Propriis, 2002, pp. 408-428), the financial effects of these programmes were quite differentiated. Evidence showed that greater resources in personnel and structures were a clear indicator of greater success in securing funds. Hence, the urban and suburban municipalities managed to secure funding from an average of three and two and a half programmes respectively. Finally, the rural municipalities secured funding from an average of one and a half programmes, while just two displaced municipalities managed to secure funding.

This specific financial top-down aspect of the process of Europeanization affected the communities to a lesser extent and in a more restricted way than the municipalities. Less than half of the communities of our sample (42 per cent) managed to secure funding from at least one European programme. Yet, in contrast to the municipalities, the communities were not final beneficiaries and were more dependent on the central state structures to secure and implement the programmes. Thus, due to their weaker constitutional position and their less decentralised degree of competences (De Rooij, 2002, p. 449), they had to rely more on direct lobbying with the central state structures to secure funding from these programmes. Based on our empirical evidence, we observed that the community council presidents had poorer access to the central state structures than did the mayors. The greater ability of the mayors' to access and influence the system, especially if they belonged to the ruling party, was pointed out by the vast majority (75 per cent) of the community council presidents. This explanatory factor in securing programmes was highlighted in other cases (Zerbinati, 2012, p. 589), but empirical evidence showed that it had to coincide with, and thus was enhanced by infrastructure, personnel, and financial capacities. Still, almost one-third of the interviewed mayors accepted that support was asked from the central state structures to overcome technical problems.

Our findings also indicated that European integration moderately affected the Turkish-Cypriot residents of Pyla and Potamia via the funding of bi-communal projects, such as restoring the Venetian castle in Pyla.

We move now to the funding secured from the regional policy programmes. This highlighted the significance of local politicians and their profile as a mediating factor of Europeanization's effects. The ROC started participating in the final stages of the 2000–2006 period of the programme. Central state structures were the final beneficiaries, and they conducted projects in eight municipalities and communities of our sample. What came as a surprise was the differentiation demonstrated by a small rural community (Kalopanayiotis) whose community council president clearly focused

on the EU as a way to solve local problems. Mr. Papadouris, a civil engineer with significant business activities beyond Cyprus, started focusing on the EU's allocations even before Cyprus's accession. Instead of relying on the slow state processes, he paid foreign experts to prepare technical and architectural plans to revive Kalopanayiotis. These plans were adopted by the government, who were at the time (2003) running the risk of losing significant parts of the allocations, permitting Kalopanayiotis to take innovative initiatives, securing three significant projects worth a total of €5,400,000.

Table 3 indicates that the burdens of the past decelerated this specific process of Europeanization during the following programmatic period (2007-2013). Only the four oldest urban municipalities managed to change their policies, practices, and preferences (Marshall, 2005, p. 672) becoming final beneficiaries. The strong presence of mediating factors, such as the greater attributed tasks and resources, allowed these municipalities to develop the necessary tracking and implementing mechanisms to utilize the improved opportunity structures (Keating, 2008, pp. 1-2).

Table 3: Regional Policy Projects Implemented During the 2007-2013 Programming Period

Special priority targets	Nicosia municipality	Limassol municipality	Larnaca municipality	Paphos municipality
Special target 1	€37,520,173	€42,195,049	€18,496,120	€8,078,515
Special target 2	-	€6,995,254	-	-
Special target 3	€13,903,613	-	-	-
Number of programmes	5	4	2	1

Source: Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund in Cyprus (2013)

Yet, important variations were noticed among these municipalities concerning the secured funding that were explained by the activities of their mayors. Just like in the case of Kalopanayiotis, the mayors of Nicosia and Limassol had significant experience prior to being involved in local government (regional director of a multinational and a former minister). The interviews pointed to the fact that these two mayors were more strategically-minded in setting the obtainment of allocations as a key organizational goal. They adopted a more entrepreneurial profile (Zerbinati, 2012) and focused a significant part of their municipalities' resources on preparing projects in accordance to the specific conditions of the regional policy. The other municipalities and communities were unable to secure regional policy funding. The majority (77 per cent and 74 per cent respectively) justified their weakness by indicating that they lacked the necessary resources, mainly money, and personnel. Empirical data indicated that these local governments had a more passive behaviour and participated as partners,

not as beneficiaries, mostly in education and infrastructure enhancing programmes. Similar findings were noted in Greece, where the limited administrative and financial autonomy of the local government actors forced them to exhibit analogous behavior, participating in equivalent programmes (Andreou, 2010, pp. 19-24).

Finally, empirical evidence revealed the firm gatekeeping of the Cypriot state that was similar to that exhibited by other centralized MS, e.g. Estonia and Greece (Kettunen and Kungla, 2005, p. 367; Andreou, 2006, pp. 253-255). The Cypriot state implemented the partnership principle in a way that reproduced the pre-existing balance of power between central and local levels, demonstrating the resilience of domestic traditions (Callanan, 2012, p. 401). This gave the central state structures a dominant role in all the processes of the EU's regional policy, allowing just a few local actors to enter a programme as final beneficiaries, thus limiting the effects of Europeanization. Yet, as the cases of Nicosia, Limassol, and especially Kalopanayiotis indicated, a local politician's profile could act as a decisive mediating factor in overcoming the burdens of the past. Thus, it is possible that local political leadership may be successfully adapted to Europeanization's challenges and even positively affect the outcome of Europeanization (Borraz and John, 2004, pp. 110-113).

Bottom-Up

We noticed scant evidence to suggest that there had been much uploading of Europeanization due to a strong presence of the burdens of the past. The mobilization of the Cypriot local government actors at the European level was impeded by a number of factors. Exogenous limitations derived from the unresolved Cyprus problem created further constraints on resources that in turn reduced the possibility of individuals having contact with the European institutions. Endogenous limitations included the extremely crucial role of the central state structures: the gatekeepers (Pollack, 1995). Just like in other small and centralized MS (Estonia), the state continued to firmly control the uploading efforts of the municipalities and communities, and would shift them in accordance with its own preferences and priorities (Kull and Tartar, 2015, p. 23). Once again the great disparity in resources, powers and financial capacities between the municipalities and communities caused differentiations in the impact of Europeanization. Our findings confirmed the observations of Kull and Tartar (2015, pp. 240-241) and Borraz and John (2004, pp. 110-113) that connected the size of local government and the mentality of local politicians with the mobility at the European level.

A total of 53 per cent of the municipalities of our sample tried to develop relations with European institutions. This included more populous urban and suburban municipalities. The most active municipalities were Nicosia and Limassol, which

had mayors with significant international experience, prior to becoming involved in local government. Both mayors also demonstrated greater personal resources (e.g. information and knowledge) and more outgoing profiles which clearly indicated greater bottom-up Europeanization effects. Consequently, these mayors were more able to comprehend the opportunities offered by European integration (Borraz and John, 2004, pp. 110-113).

Evidence of an indirect bottom-up Europeanization process was observed in the participation in other institutions. Such evidence varied, reflecting the different degree of activation between the actors. The Union of Cyprus Municipalities was the most common way (35 per cent) in which the municipalities of our sample sought to promote their interests at the European level. It was followed by the CoR, the European Commission, with 23.5 per cent for each institution, and the European Parliament (18 per cent). Almost half (47 per cent) of the municipalities never tried to be heard in Brussels, displaying great path dependence. Based on our findings, it was obvious that the municipalities in Cyprus still had a long way to go to become more active at the European level through this uploading process of Europeanization.

More than half of the communities of our sample (57 per cent) had never attempted to develop relations with European institutions. The communities tried to promote their interests at the European level in an even more limited way due to more constraints on their resources and capacities, as well as their local politicians' profiles (education) that did not allow them to fully comprehend the opportunities offered by European integration. As a result, the various district development agencies (29 per cent) and the Union of Cyprus Communities (15.5 per cent) were most often used to promote communities' interests at the European level. Thus, based on our findings, we observed that the communities in Cyprus were not active at the European level thereby delimiting any uploading process of Europeanization and demonstrating strong path dependence.

Horizontal

Empirical evidence suggested that the horizontal process of Europeanization had relatively greater effects, yet, the effects of this process were decelerated by the burdens of the past. Differentiations in the results of the horizontal process of Europeanization were noted among the municipalities and communities depending on mediating factors like resources, power and financial capacities.

Almost all the municipalities, and especially the four oldest ones, demonstrated increased efforts to participate in pan-European networks, such as CEMR. This process of Europeanization was valued highly by the municipalities (89 per cent). All the interviewed mayors (ten) highlighted the significant advantages that would be

gained by participating in this process, including the interactive flow of information on local issues and the opportunity to establish relations and future partnerships. These were also important motives that influenced local governments from other MS (e.g. Ireland) to increase their participation in the horizontal processes of Europeanization (Rees, Quinn, and Connaughton, 2004).

On the other hand, the communities of the sample did not value this particular process of Europeanization so highly (24 per cent). This had to do with the fact that the communities lacked the financial, administrative and human resources to participate in these networks independently. Another key indicator for the participation in pan-European networks was educational constraints, e.g. lower formal education levels and lower computer literacy. The community council presidents saw participation in European networks as highly complicated (78 per cent) and failed to recognize the opportunities deriving from this horizontal process of Europeanization, focusing their attention mostly on the dissemination of best practices via local networks.

The Typologies of Europeanization

Based on the typologies of Radaelli (2003, p. 37) and Börzel and Risse (2003, p. 70), the impact of European integration on the local government of the ROC was restricted. The suburban, rural and displaced municipalities remained path dependent, demonstrating limited changes (absorption). The relatively largest domestic change (accommodation) was observed in the most populous urban municipalities of the sample, which had greater political, economic and administrative autonomy. Path dependency was higher in the communities where the observed changes were limited. Changes observed ranged from absorption (most populous communities and Kalopanayiotis) to an almost complete lack of change (inertia) (smallest and displaced communities).

We shift our attention to the evaluation of local government's responses to the influence of European integration, based on the typologies of Goldsmith and Klausen (1997, pp. 237-253) and Marshall (2005, pp. 671-674). The observed differences were explained by the sharp variations in the presence of mediating factors that determined the attitudes towards the challenges of European integration. The most populous urban municipalities responded relatively favourably and exhibited greater interest in European issues (reactive). Still, due to structural deficiencies, the urban municipalities did not show an integrated mode of action and did not manage to act preventively to a considerable extent (Goldsmith and Klausen, 1997, pp. 237-253; Marshall 2005, pp. 671-674). The above findings were noticed as well among the suburban and rural municipalities that had even greater structural difficulties and more serious resource constraints. They were passive to the challenges of Europeanization, especially to the

the bottom-up processes. Finally, the displaced municipalities were primarily passive due to even higher structural difficulties and resource shortages.

With the exception of Kalopanayiotis, the communities of our sample that had fewer resources had even poorer reactions to Europeanization. Kalopanayiotis was reactive to the top-down financial process of Europeanization, while the most populous communities were primarily passive in all Europeanization processes. Both smaller and displaced communities showed mainly a counteractive attitude in all Europeanization's processes.

Conclusions

This work was the first attempt to study the effects of European integration on the Cypriot local government level, highlighting interesting aspects of this process and contributing to the enrichment of the international literature. It attempted to provide new empirical insight from a small EU MS on a fresh and unexplored research topic, by investigating the importance of the past.

Based on Marshal's (2005) typology and on the analysis of the empirical findings, it was observed that the Europeanization of the Cypriot local government was limited both in its scope and effect. It had an obvious top-down orientation with modest effects on local structures, institutions, and personnel, and it was also observed that local authorities displayed path dependency regarding the implementation of EU legislation. Europeanization demonstrated relatively greater impacts on its top-down and horizontal processes, while extremely limited effects were demonstrated regarding its bottom-up process. Cypriot local government still has a long way to go to become more active in the processes of Europeanization.

In an attempt to answer our first research question, we noticed a clear historical continuity regarding local government, starting from the Ottoman period and reaching the current period of the ROC. This historical continuity attached specific burdens to local government that resulted in the consolidation of a specific culture of increased dependence on central government, along with deficiencies in institutional and financial resources, structures and local politicians' profiles. The findings of this work emphasized that the ROC accepted the effects of European integration on this issue in a restrictive way that was further decelerated by the burdens of the past.

In an attempt to answer our second research question, the empirical findings highlighted how the differences of the Cypriot local actors in institutional and financial resources, structures and local politicians' profile has a significant role in the different results of Europeanization. When these specific mediating factors were enhanced, they acted as supporting facilitating formal institutions (Börzel, 2005, p. 53) increasing

Europeanization's effects. In other words, the different institutional and financial capacities of local government and the corresponding differences in terms of the profile of local politicians determined the effects of all three processes of Europeanization.

The findings of this work validate our research hypothesis, confirming that the impact of Europeanization and the effects of European integration depend on historical continuities affecting Cypriot local government. By way of conclusion, it can be noted that the burdens of the past inhibited local government from utilizing the opportunities of European integration. The differences in resource capacities resulted in the adoption of differentiated behaviours by local governments to the challenges of European integration. Thus, Europeanization's effects were most intense (accommodation) where fewer institutional and administrative capacity constraints were noted and vice-versa. In this context, it was indicated by the cases of Nicosia, Limassol and particularly Kalopanayiotis that a local politician's profile could act as a decisive mediating factor in overcoming the burdens of the past. Thus, it is possible that local political leadership may be effectively adapted to Europeanization's challenges and positively affect the Europeanization processes despite shortages in resource capacities.

This work's theoretical contribution delivered a comprehensive picture of the limited effects of European integration, via the process of Europeanization at the Cypriot local government. It verified the importance of domestic mediating factors on the process of Europeanization. The research results indicated that the burdens of the past prevented local governments from utilizing the opportunities of European integration.

Finally, research findings provide evidence of path dependence, pointing out the perseverance of domestic traditions. Hence, new research may be useful to investigate why and how mediating factors react to the challenges of Europeanization, linking them to the overall Cypriot culture.

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