

Strategic Learning, Limited Europeanization: How the Turkish National Police Used Twinning to Prepare Itself for the Planned New Border Agency

Session 10 illustration sociological
institutionalism

Twinning: a socialization tool in EU-Turkey relations?

- The fading credibility of Turkey's EU membership perspective undermined the conditionality strategy of the EU.
- Outside the formal setting of accession talks, twinning projects are a tool to keep Europeanization processes in Turkey on track.
- Twinning aims to induce domestic change via social learning – corresponds sociological institutionalism

Why Twinning has socialization potential?

- Relationship based on partnership
- Long duration
- Less politicised setting
- Candidate countries select twinning partner

Why socialisation often still does not take place

- Mistrust
- Twinning partner perceived as service provider
- High staff turnover
- Lack of follow-up projects

Method: Selection of a project with favorable conditions for socialization

- Twinning between Turkish National Police and the German Federal Police
 - Both Turkey and EU MS as targets of illegal migration – incentive to cooperate
 - project focus on uncontroversial training tools
 - unpoliticized and insulated environment: participants were from the training departments of the national police

Indicators for social and strategic learning: 1) Policy Dimension

Social learning

- EU acquis strong reference point
- *Motivation*: Improvement of policy standards and qualification for EU membership
- *Rule adaption*:
 - Formal and informal rules
 - Focus on principles
 - Changes in organizational culture

Strategic learning

- EU acquis weak reference point
- *Motivation*: Improvement of policy standards and individual/organizational interests
- Rule adoption:
 - Formal rules
 - Focus on instruments
 - No change in organizational culture

Indicators for social and strategic learning: 2) Interaction Dimension

Social learning

- *Attitude towards counterpart: **Trust***
- *Perceived role of the counterpart: **Partner***
- *Communication level: Project related and beyond*
- *Result of interaction: Teambuilding*

Strategic learning

- *Attitude towards counterpart: **Mistrust***
- *Perceived role of the counterpart: **Service Provider***
- *Communication level: Only project related*
- *Result of interaction: Client-contractor relationship*

Indicators for social and strategic learning: 3) Identity Dimension

Social learning

- *Identification with EU*
 - Stronger identification with EU
 - Stronger support of EU accession of own country

Strategic learning

- *Identification with EU:*
 - No changes in attitude towards EU
 - No changes in attitude regarding EU accession of own country

Method: Interviews and Observation

- 16 semi-structured face-to-face interviews with
 - representatives of the German and Turkish project management,
 - European Commission representative for the project.
- In addition, my presence at a training workshop in Side in April 2012 allowed me to observe the verbal and nonverbal interaction
 - in a steering-committee meeting,
 - in the training sessions
 - in periods of informal interaction.

Findings: strategic learning dominates

- For the Turkish project management
 - the aim of twinning to qualify for EU membership, or the broader context of the EU's integrated border management approach (IBM), played almost no role at all.
 - Instead the Turkish project management was mainly interested in improving the standing of the TNP in the domestic debate about the composition and competences of the planned new border guard.

Policy Dimension

- Successful training modules, however EU's IBM approach of secondary importance, e.g.
 - Turkish side requested two additional workshops about human resources management which were initially not foreseen in the project description – more than 1.000 participants
 - In contrast, the scheduled workshop on the history of the EU, EU law and the Schengen area attracted less than the required 10 to 15 participants

Interaction Dimension

- Relationship remained of a rather contractual nature
 - German actors and the official of the European Commission met in restaurants, bars and the gym after a full day of work - Turkish side did not participate
 - Speaking about sensitive issues: German interviewees delegation was interested in the statement of their Turkish colleagues regarding incidents of torture in police stations, but did not dare to ask.

Identity Dimension

- No stronger support for EU accession
 - For many, the ongoing negative discourse about Turkey's membership prospects inside the EU is the main reason for their waning identification with the EU
 - Incoherent application of the EU's own border management principles constrained social learning, e.g. practise of refoulement by Greek coast guards, in which refugee boats are immediately forced back to the Turkish coast, regardless of the refugee status, situation in refugee camps in Greece, Italy

Conclusion

- A single Twinning project as a socialization tool overambitious
- Twinning projects rather an enabling opportunity structure for the involved actors of the beneficiary country
- However: Follow-up projects may create a lasting network among the involved actors, and thus lead to a more personal type of relationships, which is more conducive for social learning – Strategic learning a precondition for social learning?