

Europeanisation and UK Central Government —A Case Study of the Blair Government

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of Europeanisation on UK central government during the Blair government. The election of the Blair government in May 1997 marked a new start for the UK's European policy. Compared to its predecessors, the Blair government adopted a more positive approach to the EU. During the Blair government, what are the changes to UK central government under Europeanisation? Also, "Europeanisation" has developed in recent years as an important approach in European studies, drawing special attention to the two-way interaction between EU and domestic levels in the process of European integration. A case study of the Blair government, which significantly shifted the UK's policy towards Europe, facilitates an examination of Europeanisation as a two-way process of interaction between European and national levels. This case study offers an opportunity to examine the top-down effect of how UK central government "receives" changes from the EU, as well as the bottom-up effect of how UK central government "projects" its interests into the EU. This paper is, therefore, designed with the dual purpose of examining the empirical changes to UK central government under Europeanisation during the Blair government, and examining the theoretical validity of Europeanisation against the empirical studies.

Key Words: Europeanisation, UK central government, the Blair government