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How Does the Variance of Product Ratings Matter?

This paper is a detailed analysis about the literature on the Social OMC from 2006-2010, focusing on how OMC research has been carried out. It specifically points to which theoretical framework/concepts are used, and how change is conceptualised and measured. It is organised in five sections. The first concerns visibility and awareness about the OMC; the second analyses research on the EU level coordination process; the third scrutinizes how features of the OMC have been analysed. The fourth and fifth sections, addressing how national integration of the OMC has been researched, respectively address substantive policy change as well as national policy-making. Strikingly, virtually all OMC research adopts theoretical frameworks derived from literature on Europeanisation and/or institutionalisation. Also, as the OMC is voluntary and sanction-free, it depends heavily on how and the extent to which actors use it (agenda-setting, conflict resolution, maintaining focus on a policy issue, developing a policy dialogue, etc). OMC research has become nuanced and does highlight how, for which purpose and with which outcome actors engage with the OMC. Another finding is that there is data on policy issues addressed through the OMC, learning does take place and there is knowledge about domestic policy problems. However, the linkage between knowledge of an issue and direct use of the OMC for policy change in social policy is weak, but that may change with EU2020, where social policy has received a higher profile. Most research covers the EU-15, much more research needs to be undertaken in newer EU member states.