

**The challenges of Europeanization.
(on the example of Poland - the New Member State of the EU).**

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“I hope the Polish people, for centuries a true European people, by cultivating its values,
will find its rightful place in the structures of the European Community.

Not only will Poland lose nothing of its identity, but - through its own tradition - will
enrich this continent and the whole world”

Pope Jean Paul II

The process of Europeanization enjoys increasing popularity within the study of European integration. In spite of a large conceptual hesitation regarding the question what it actually is, the literature speaks of Europeanization when something in the domestic political system is affected by something “European”. This concept has been considered as one of the major challenges introduced by the external environment on domestic politics. It is described as a process of transformation not only on the national but also on the EU level which makes it even more complicated and requires a further precision.

“Ever closer union for the citizens of Europe” - this is a goal and the purpose of main ideas of the European Union. In order to fulfill this task it is necessary to bring about many changes and to introduce all the new Member States to Community regulations .

Up to now, we have noticed many trials of defining this phenomenon, but the consensus still remains unachieved as it is pointed out below:

- Europeanization as de jure transfer of sovereignty to the EU level;
- Europeanization as sharing of power between national governments and the EU-called “europeification” (Andersen & Eliassen, 2001);
- Europeanization as a process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy-making (Börzel 1999:574);
- Europeanization as the extending the boundaries of the relevant political space beyond the member states (Kochler-Koch,1999, 15) etc.

The argument is that the different conceptions of Europeanization complement, rather than exclude each other. They refer to different, but related areas.

In order to understand the varying impact of European Integration on domestic arrangements and structures, the broad meaning of this concept needs to be analyzed. The first

step towards that is to point out different theories which facilitate familiarizing with this process. According to the literature we can distinguish five of them:

1. *Europeanization as changes in external territorial boundaries* - meaning Europeanization taking place as the EU expands its boundaries through enlargement which is increasing the Union's territory, population and resources. Yet, it also creates a bigger political power willing to achieve the same goals, but this time in a stronger formation.
2. *Europeanization as the development of institutions of governance at the European level*. This signifies center building with a collective action capacity, providing some degree of political coordination and coherence. Formal - legal institutions and a normative order based on some overarching constitutive principles, structures and practices both facilitate and constrain the ability to make and enforce binding decisions and to sanction non-compliance.
3. *Europeanization as central penetration of national and sub-national systems of governance* - here it involves the division of responsibilities and levels between different powers of governance. All multilevel systems of governance need to work out a balance between unity and diversity, central coordination and local autonomy. Europeanization, then implies adapting national and sub-national systems of governance to a European political center and European-wide norms.
4. *Europeanization as exporting forms of political organization and governance that are typical and distinct for Europe beyond the European territory* - this concept focuses on Europeanization as the spread of life and production, habits of drinking and eating, religion, language and political principles, institutions and identities typical for Europe and unknown for other than European territories. The accession countries are "down loaders of EU institutions and policies but their capacity of upload preferences is very weak".
5. *Europeanization as a political project aiming at the unified and politically stronger Europe*. The degree to which Europe is becoming a more important political entity is related both to territorial space, center building, domestic adaptation, and how European developments impact and are influenced by systems of governance and events outside of European continent. It defines Europeanization as a political development making Europe a stronger and more distinct entity with states unified into a single political space and system of governance.

The theories mentioned above prove the substantial point of Europeanization - the transformation on many different levels of country's existence. But we have to remember that transposition of laws is one thing; their implementation is another. In some cases it is necessary to create new institutions to implement European Union law; sometimes existing institutions have to be changed. Great care must be taken of the implementation, for if this is not done properly, the whole mechanism of "the ever closer Europe" will not proceed in the right direction.

According to these theories, Poland, along with rest of the new Member States, is acting as a "downloader" of European institutions, policies and models of governance. From creation of the new institutions and offices (The Committee for European Integration - responsible for integration process in Poland) through implementation of EU rules of law, legal patterns and behaviors, we are looking at the impact of Europeanization being a spread of European normative and institutional standards.

The arguments mentioned above prove that EU has powerful mechanisms to shape institutional development and policy-making in its Member States. But how and to what extent have the routes of influence analyzed above actually driven change? It is difficult to say at this point in time, given the dynamic nature of the process, the wide range of potential effects, and the fact that the eastern enlargement has just happened. The EU has no specific test of institutional change or compliance with its requirements, and it is difficult to see how an identifiably "European" influence on institutional and policy change could be detected in all but a few cases.

While assessing the process of alignment of Polish law with the law of the European Union, we are obliged to remember that it is a result of many years of building and adapting Polish legislation and not only of the short 5 years' period of the negotiations. However, now that the negotiations are over, and Poland is already a Member State, we are still working on adjusting our regulations to the European patterns. Finally we can easily argue that this adaptation, although in process for many years already, is moving forward with a big degree of efficiency and reliability.

This transformation is one of the major challenges posed on Poland and the rest of the new Member States. It is beyond any doubt that we are facing a dynamic and far-reaching process of uniting our continent - the old world, settlement of traditional yet progressive values - we are experiencing our minor-scale globalization.

Many scholars and among them Risse, Cowles and Caporaso, define Europeanization as:

“the emergence and development at the European level of the distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal and social institutions associated with the problem solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules”.

So what is the definition of Europeanization after all? Following Radaelli’s interpretation: “it is a process of construction, diffusion and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies”.

A basic conclusion of the present paper is that the impact of enlargement followed by the process of Europeanization, depended to a very large extent on the preparation of Poland for the accession. Looking at its developments, this nation is on a good way to achieve its long lasted dream: to become The Europeans - equal in every way with the other Westerners.

I will conclude my paper with the words of Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the President of Republic of Poland:

“The 21st century presents a new calling. A friendly world is awaiting us, but, simultaneously, one that is founded on competition. Before us lies a time when, more than ever, efficiency, justice and solidarity will count. Europe cannot go into the millennium merely as the “old continent.” To suit these new times, a new dynamic vision of Europe must be formed: Europe as the cradle of a new, modern model of civilization. Our continent could stand a new Renaissance. Europe must become synonymous with the description “continent modern.”

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