

# **POLITICS IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD**

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## **RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEANIZATION AND A DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY ON THE EXAMPLE OF COHESION POLICY**

### **ABSTRACT**

The article presents basic relations which happen among Europeanization and the public politics on the example of the politics of the cohesion. The author makes the broad exploration objective concepts and also postulates determined conclusions and recommendations.

*Keywords:* Europeanization, public policy, cohesion policy, European integration

### **INTRODUCTION**

From some time now, in a politological discourse (especially in European studies) a phenomenon of the Europeanization is a subject of a thorough exploration. Number of authors try to explain the phenomenon and show to readers an image of Europeanization processes that happen in different areas of social life. In this article I try to focus on relations

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that occur between the Europeanization and public policy by exploring cohesion policy. In my profound opinion, public policy is a subject of many different processes of the Europeanization and their outcome shows correlations that occur between them, as well as features which I try to present.

Therefore, a fundamental research aim is revealing relations between the Europeanization and cohesion policy. In particular, I would like to show what kind of processes happen and what they are based on in a context of the Europeanization – cohesion policy.

A research issue is establishing interactions that happen between policy of a strategic (redistributive) nature and the Europeanization. Detailed issues concentrate around an exploration of the Europeanization notion, its rules and types, as well as around pointing out a role of public policy, showing their notional distinctions and doctrinal disputes arising in connection to that, reaching an issue of including cohesion policy and its regulations in public policy.

Leading hypothesis in this article is an assumption that cohesion policy is a typical example of public policy and it is also subject to a wide process of the Europeanization with a bottom-up approach, top-down approach and (what is rarely mentioned) ad-extra.

### **CONCEPTUAL RANGE OF THE EUROPEANIZATION, PUBLIC POLICY AND COHESION POLICY**

Before going straight to a main topic, I will try to define notions of the Europeanization, public policy and cohesion policy. In scientific literature it is said that the Europeanization is not a theory, but a phenomenon that is worth explaining. Some concept of the Europeanization was popular among scientists from the field of European studies. According to P. Murray, the Europeanization is largely formulated by transnationality and an interdependence of the European Union, as well as national administrative and management systems which concentrate around modifying the European Union and member states (Murray, 2009). T. Risse, J. Caporaso and M. Green Cowles understand the Europeanization as an export of

cultural norms from Europe to other sides of the world (Risse, Caporaso, Green, Cowles, 2001; Radaelli, 2004, p. 359).

The term “Europeanization” has been used for the first time in 1973 by H. Wallace. The author noticed an influence of the Europeanization on intrastate interinstitutional relations. She suggested that an effect of the European integration does not lead to a convergence between many approaches of national states, which possess not too deep differences in an administrative tradition and political culture (Ruszkowski, 2010, p. 358). C.M. Radaelli understands the Europeanization as a set of processes, diffusions and institutionalizations of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, convictions and norms that are firstly defined on a level of the European Union and then become a part of logics of a national discourse (Radaelli, 2003, p. 30).

In R. Landrech’s opinion, the Europeanization is a process of building, dispersion and institutionalization of norms, convictions and informal regulations, policy procedures, paradigms, styles and methods of doing things that are defined and consolidated in a political process of the European Union and then incorporated to logics of an internal discourse of political structures and sector policies in member states.

The Europeanization is also an incremental process of a reorganization of policy’s directions and shapes to a level where political and economical dynamics of the European Union somehow becomes a part of an organizational logic of national policy and its decision-makers. The Europeanization can be divided into:

- bottom-up approach – from member states towards European institutions,
- top-down approach – from European institutions towards member states,
- ad-extra approach – from European institutions towards subjects outside of the European Union, including non-European subjects (Ruszkowski, 2010, p. 367).

C. Radaelli particularly focuses on processes relating to an influence of the EU on national structures and policy. However, most of the researchers drawing from social constructivist literature perceives the Europeanization as a “mutually constitutive” process of change. That in turn leads to study-

ing the Europeanization as a bidirectional relation between an agency and a structure, when the agency is transformed by a participation in the EU structure, but also when the agency transforms processes and structures of the EU (Börzel, 2003).

In a context of European foreign policy, the Europeanization occurs on a national level, as the national political structural, administrative and political processes and policy are “set to the European direction” (Nugent, 2006, p. 523). According to Michael E. Smith, “national adaptation”, understood as a change of position or a problem of politics occurring as an effect of a participation in chosen public policies (including cohesion policy), can be measured by four indicators: elite socialization, bureaucratic restructuring, constitutional changes and in a public perception of purposefulness and rightness of cohesion policy (Smith, 2000).

The Europeanization of politics relates also to changes on the European level, as countries actively introduce their interests, ideas and preferences towards the EU. “National contribution” that influences EU policy and processes of decision making EU institutions, as well as the main point of access to the EU system for member states, has been classified in many ways. For example: Helen Wallace suggests four channels for a national state, helpful in using own influence in the EU. H. Wallace focuses on policy processes, such as a policy project, negotiation arena, legitimacy and policy implementation (Wallace, 2005, p. 27).

In Albert Sbragia’s opinion, an effect of incremental “working together” of the EU and states can be perceived on a few levels and in three main dimensions: through elite (elite socialization, business lobbying), strategies (enlargement of EU policy’s range and engagement of regional actors) and policy (process of the EU becoming a part of democratic policy, political discourse and political debate) (Sbragia, 1994, p. 70).

An infiltration of political preferences or rules of member states to the EU (bottom-up Europeanization) can be observed during various phases of negotiations about politics. Simon J. Bulmer and Claudio M. Radaelli suggest three main factors influencing an extension of the bottom-up Europeanization during constructing policy. These are: preferences’ convergence of member states (the smaller the number of differences, the bigger potential for the Europeanization), rules of voting in the Council

(avoiding anonymous voting) and learning from repeating negotiation sessions (Bulmer, Radaelli, 2004, p. 343). Similarly, A. Miskimmon and W.E. Paterson propose a model of methods used by a state in order to influence the EU. In their opinion, there can be distinguished four phases: building of institutions – exaggerated multilateralism, setting a program, giving an example and an ideological export (Miskimmon, Paterson, 2003).

The Europeanization process relates not only to a vertical dimension (EU – national state), but it is also characterized by horizontal dynamics (member state – member state). Horizontal dynamics is an effect of ideas, force and strategy exchanges between member states, initiated by a context ensured by the EU (Radaelli, 2004, p. 7).

The horizontal process creates a culture of cooperation that contains a harmonization of ideas and strategies between member states or between a member state and a state that is not a member of the EU. Horizontal connections put pressure on actors without including transnational institutions. The horizontal cooperation can also create connections with other transnational organizations (More in: Klat, 2012, p. 5–10).

According to S. Bulmer and C. Radaelli, it is worth noticing that the horizontal pattern of the Europeanization is particularly experienced in chosen public policies, where transnational institutions are less influential and cooperation and mutual learning predominate among member states (Bulmer, Radaelli, 2004, p. 35).

In areas of politics, where national governments are the key actors, where decisions are subjected to unanimity between governments or where the EU is just an arena for exchanging ideas, transnational institutions have very little power and they cannot work as strong agents promoting the Europeanization. Nevertheless, in the opinion of S. Bulmer and C. Radaelli, the Europeanization still happens, however it is much more volunteer and non-hierarchical (Klat, 2012, p. 11–20).

Similarly to the Europeanization, the notion of public policy have a variety of definitions. According to one of them, public policy means decisions and actions that are linked to each other, undertaken by public authorities in order to achieve certain goals, most often in situations when market mechanisms do not have any use. Therefore, the term “public

policy” is used to describe practices of authorities, who undertake their actions in order to solve problems of a collective (public) nature.

Therefore, public policy is a system of actions and a system of control, legal and financial tools that are used by public authorities, as well as by agencies working in their name, aiming to fulfill intended effects. Public policies are also both actions and lack of them, as long as they influence lives of citizens (Zawicki, 2014, p. 17). Moreover, three level of public policies can be distinguished:

- program elections made by those who use public authority in order to influence lives of citizens,
- realization of public programs that are made by administrative apparatus and its surroundings,
- effects of public actions and their influence on citizens’ lives (Peters, 2004, p. 4–7).

There are problems with a definition of public policy in Poland, because there are no distinct words for politics and policy or policies. They both relate to public sphere, however one of them describes constituting of authorities in a community, the other one – authorities in action. Therefore, it can be assumed that public policy is quite a general term that relates to redistributive and control policies, as well as to policies of shaping institutional structure and sector policies (Surdej, 2013, p. 9). A purpose of redistributive policy is gathering incomes from wide social groups and transferring them to narrow social groups<sup>1</sup>.

Control policy focuses on direct influence on behaviors of entities and communities by appropriate use of a incentives and sanctions’ system<sup>2</sup>. Policy of shaping institutional structure is based on making the law and appointing executive agencies that implement public policies.

Sector policy is a policy preferring a development of chosen fields of economic activities<sup>3</sup>. The purpose of sector policy is to increase international rivalry, to obtain higher supply safety and protection of working places in sectors embraced by sector policy (Zawicki, 2014, p. 30–31).

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<sup>1</sup> This category includes social care, health protection and tax policies.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of these policies are: social care, health and tax policies.

<sup>3</sup> The most often this kind of field is industry and agriculture, more precisely – specified assortments of production under both of the fields.

To sum up, it should be assumed that public policy means actions of the state and all its agendas. Increasingly, public policy is a policy of organizations and transnational groups. What is more, it also means actions that national public policies direct and limit at the same time. Therefore, a thesis can be drawn all kinds of public policies are characterized with striving to seek methods of increasing public and economical welfare (Surdej, 2013, p. 10)<sup>4</sup>.

By analyzing the last notion of social and economic cohesion policy, one can conclude that this policy is a public policy which has a horizontal policy nature, however in some publications there are assumptions that cohesion policy is a public policy of a strategic nature. However, it seems that cohesion policy (taking into account a whole life cycle and functioning of public policy) is partly anchored in a horizontal approach and partly in a strategic one, what is a result of its nature.

In my opinion, this policy should be included in an economical dimension, because it concentrates on a group of actions aiming to decrease economical and social disproportions between member states, regions and social groups.

Cohesion policy aims to increase economic rivalry of regions and to solve number of social and economical problems. According to the above, considering it through a prism of economical dimension becomes reasonable. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union adds a territorial component to cohesion policy, therefore at present this policy is described as policy of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The territorial component gives a particular role to regions which because of their location and specified economical indicators are regions with a low level of national product, but at the same time meet the conditions of a 1<sup>st</sup> aim of cohesion policy. These are also regions that require deep transformations in a range of revitalization, modernization and strengthening the rivalry.

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<sup>4</sup> More on public policy in: Zybała, 2012; Anderson, 2011; Evans, 2008; Hausner, 2007).

## THE EUROPEANIZATION OF COHESION POLICY

Terminology used in literature dealing with cohesion policy issues is not homogeneous. It is similar with analyzing legal acts. The community legislator uses three notions: structural policy, regional policy, cohesion policy. Cohesion policy as a public policy is cohesive with an idea of Europe of Regions, which proclaims that states should be replaced with strong regions. Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that in contacts with the European Union states should be replaced with regions. The concept of Europe of Regions is promoted to the present day by a variety of its followers, however it is difficult to predict, whether it is going to materialize or not.

Cohesion policy, after the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, found itself in shared competences which concentrate around the fact that member states divide competences on those that are fulfilled by the European Union as an international organization and those fulfilled by certain states as separate, sovereign beings. It can also be concluded that the European Union and member states can accept legal acts that are obligatory in the fields defined by the Treaty of Lisbon. Nevertheless, member states can fulfill their competences only in a range, in which the European Union has not fulfilled them or has decided not to continue fulfilling them. In terms of decision-making field it is a very important change, introduced by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

In a scientific discourse, interchangeable using of terms cohesion, structural and regional policy results from different conditionings of technical, legal or even geographical nature, even though it seems that the term “cohesion policy” has the most important meaning and a thesis might be risked that it somehow absorbs notions of structural and regional policy (Ryszkiewicz, 2013, p. 5–35).

Cohesion policy works on a basis of a variety of subjects. On the European level, the European Commission that manages Union’s funds has a particular meaning, as well as the Committee of the Regions – an advisory body that consists of representatives of regions and local authorities. They have a significant influence on decision-making relating to cohe-



sion policy. Quite remarkable role in cohesion policy is assigned to the European Parliament that is a co-legislator of community law concerning cohesion policy<sup>5</sup>.

On a national level, a managing authority has an essential role – therefore in Poland it is the Ministry of Regional Development<sup>6</sup>, partly the Ministry of Finance<sup>7</sup> and a variety of coordinative bodies, such as Regional Policy Coordination Committee, placed in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland and the audit committee.

A regional level is a leading role of regional authorities, including a provincial government that deals with programming and implementing cohesion policy on a regional arena. All those subjects, that have an influence on creating cohesion policy, strive to a realization of its main aim that focuses on minimizing development differences of certain territories, for which the most important indicators of the level of development are: Gross domestic product per one citizen and an unemployment rate.

Therefore, as it can be seen, the issue of cohesion, regional and structural policy happens to be quite a controversial discourse, in terms of usage and distinction of notions and their meanings. That discrepancy is especially visible between particular scientific disciplines that differently define policies mentioned above (Ratajczak, 2012, p. 159; Kawecka-Wyrzykowska, 2009; Roznoch, 2012, p. 169–170).

Transformations in cohesion policy can be linked to changes of a contemporary state. Accurately, these changes reflect notions of network and multilevel management. A network state is a kind of a civil state that is opposed to a statist state. A phenomenon of the multilevel management is linked with a process of the development of the network state. It is undertaken as a reconfiguration of relations and an exchange of resources between differential actors of a political system, placed on its different

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<sup>5</sup> For example the Regulation 1083/2006, establishing general rules in a range of implementing the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund.

<sup>6</sup> At present: the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction of the Republic of Poland.

<sup>7</sup> Responsible for financial transfers from the EU to Poland.

levels, sectors or areas. Logic of the network state, based on multilevel management's mechanisms and specified development challenges, entails a lot of conceptual and practical consequences for functions that it uses, so consequently – for methods of constructing public policies.

The European Union, while distributing a financial aid, requires to simultaneously implement new procedures, introduce better law – cohesive with the Union's law and make a provided help adequate to European standards. In this context, the happening Europeanization processes are the most visible.

On one hand, it is a transfer of aid means, on the other – tough requirements of implementing appropriate Union's regulations. It seems that in this case the Europeanization of cohesion policy is implemented by means of tough instruments, such as regulations, directives or, in some areas, decisions. It causes a creation of a forced isoformism, states have to implement specified regulations, arisen on a transnational level.

What is more, between cohesion policy (as a public policy) and the Europeanization, processes of voluntary isoformism can also happen. The example is using of the Open Method of Coordination as a new model of public policy management, including cohesion policy.

A main tool of implementing the Open Method of Coordination was the National Reform Programme, which is a document introducing actions that are taken by a member state in order to accomplish the renewed Lisbon Strategy. Moreover, another instrument of implementing the OMC was the National Development Strategy (NDS). It was a fundamental strategic document, specifying aims and priorities of development for the next years.

Also, this document formed a basis for effective absorption of developmental funds – both national and Union's ones. What is more, it was a framework for rational usage of Union's means granted for Poland. The strategy was not a document required by the European Commission and it has been transferred there only for information purposes. National Development Strategy was cohesive with other sector strategies, such as *inter alia*: the National Report on Social Security, the National Strategic Plan for Rural Development and the Fisheries Development Strategy, as well as other certain operational programs implemented in years 2007–2013.

To sum up, it needs to be accepted that the Europeanization is a measure in an evolutionary process of creating new paradigms and factors of influencing certain subjects, including states. The extent of a state's participation in Europeanization processes will depend on a structural change that will be made in society.

In my opinion, the Europeanization of cohesion policy is one of the key areas needed for understanding factors that can justify how, why and when political and institutional changes appear. In researches it is also essential for political elites to understand their value, experiences and perception, as well as a historical, cultural and political context, under which they work and which also is an example of explaining relations happening between cohesion policy and the Europeanization.

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