

Mechanisms of Europeanization in Georgia

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Raising Awareness about Georgia's Europeanization in Academia
[RAGEA]

Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Activities



Launching the ENP

- ◆ 2004 – European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was launched
- ◆ 2006 – ENP was launched in the South Caucasus. It covers three main directions: support of democracy, integration of market and support of security.

Main principles of the ENP

- ◆ **Positive conditionality** – EU encourages reforms in partner countries offering incentives according to individual progress.
- ◆ **Shared Ownership** - reforms are planned together with the ENP countries.
- ◆ **Differentiation** – EU takes into account each country's specific circumstances.

Evaluation of ENP's efficiency

Partially effective in Georgia (Rinnert, 2011, 8):

- ◆ Positive conditionality didn't work well because as Georgian parliament and researchers say: 120.4 euros, assigned from EU (2007-2010) is just a formal amount considering the number and scale of requested reforms.
- ◆ EU didn't say what specific rewards would be given to ENP countries.
- ◆ The principle of differentiation wasn't used in the South Caucasus and EU perceived it as a homogenous region

Launching the EaP

- ◆ May 2008 – Poland and Sweden introduced the idea of Eastern Partnership (EaP).
- ◆ May 2009 – Initiation of EaP with 6 partner countries to “accelerate political association and economic integration between partner countries” (Council of European Union, Joint Declaration of the Prague EaP Summit, Brussels, 2009, 6).
- ◆ EaP is based on the abovementioned 3 principles and offers partner countries additional 600 million euros in addition to the 2010-13 ENP financial aid.

EU-Georgia Association Agreement

- ◆ November 2013 – Initiation of the Association Agreement between EU and Georgia, within EaP.
- ◆ June 2014 – Signing of the Association Agreement;
- ◆ May 2016 – Georgia officially joins EU's research and innovation program – Horizon 2020

Operationalization of Europeanization

- ◆ Europeanisation is a process of implementing the EU's formal and informal rules, norms and ways of “doing things” at the local level, which influences not only public policies but also domestic discourses and identities (Radaelli, 2003).
- ◆ Term “Europeanization” is defined as a transformation of national variables in the process of adaptation with the European model.
- ◆ **The Misfit Model** – The model tries to interpret the adaptation at the national level through studying the fit or misfit between the local and European levels (Börzel and Risse, 2000; Caporaso et al., 2001).

4 possible outcomes of Europeanization

- ◆ *Inertia* when no transformation takes place.
- ◆ *Retrenchment* is the “paradoxical effect” that occurs when instead of decreasing the number of misfits increases.
- ◆ *Absorption* means that certain adaptations occur though EU standards are integrated in the national political system in such a way that no fundamental changes take place.
- ◆ *Transformation* means that the domestic system undergoes significant changes in response to EU requirements (Börzel and Risse, 2003).

2 Stages of Europeanization

- ◆ They are related to two stages of enacting the EU acquis: first, the transposition of standards and second, their implementation and enforcement.
- ◆ The transposition and implementation are, on the one hand, led by the EU or the aspirant country itself, or on the other hand, based on the “logic of consequences” or the “logic of appropriateness” (Schimmelfenning, 2012, 6).

Main mechanisms of Europeanization: Conditionality

- ◆ According to the “**logic of consequences**”, the Europeanization process is driven by the EU’s *conditionality* based on the application of sanctions and rewards.
- ◆ Conditionality might be **negative**, for instance, a warning that the EU might cancel a bilateral agreement or use political sanctions (for instance, hinder a visa liberalization process).
- ◆ Alternatively, conditionality might be **positive**, which means that the EU might reward a particular country’s progress by integrating that country more quickly into the EU market, accelerating the visa liberalization process, etc. It is noteworthy that the EU tries to avoid using negative conditionality, hence its main mechanism to encourage political transformations is positive conditionality (Borzal, 2015, 21).

Main mechanisms of Europeanization: Socialization

- ◆ According to the “logic of appropriateness,” the main mechanism of Europeanization is *social learning* or *socialization*. Target countries consider EU norms beneficial if they perceive these norms as legitimate and identify themselves with the EU (Schimmelfenning, 2012, 7).
- ◆ There are two main components in socialization process: a) A country must get ready before joining the EU to be able to fulfill its obligations; b) A country must prove to the international community that it is a valuable potential member.
- ◆ Political elites might be so preoccupied with a desirable performance, however, that instead of fostering Europeanization, they might produce a phantom effect in order to better position their country and ensure fast acquisition of an expected reward (Schimmelfennig, 2012).
- ◆ Therefore, it is crucial that the socialization process be accompanied by certain “cognitive change” so that Europeanization does not stay on paper (Sotiropoulos, 2004, 267).

Europeanization without the EU

- ◆ The adoption of EU norms might be driven not by conditionality or socialization, but by the fact that a country is dissatisfied with the local governance capacity, while considering efficient EU regulations and believing that their implementation might assist in overcoming local problems. This process is known as “Europeanization without the EU” (Irondele, 2003).
- ◆ However, as studies reveal, this phenomenon is an exception rather than the rule, and aspirant countries (in the case of both Eastern Enlargement and the ENP), are driven predominantly by conditionality (Schimmelfennig, 2010; Sedelmeier, 2011).
- ◆ It turns out that another common mechanism of Europeanization in the countries of ENP is *self-conditionality*, which means that the countries aiming to integrate with the EU behave as if they were considered under more conditionality, send obvious signals they are ready to join the member states, and try to persuade the EU to treat them as candidates (Schimmelfennig, 2010, 15).

Asymmetrical dependence on the EU & “Bargaining Power”

- ◆ The readiness to implement EU norms is high only in those ENP countries that expect to ultimately join the EU (Sedelmeier, 2011; Schimmelfennig, 2012; Borzel, 2015).
- ◆ Otherwise, two main factors might push them to implement EU regulations: their **asymmetrical dependence** on the EU and their **bargaining power**, which seems to be influenced by the country’s size, economic prosperity, governance capacity, and the prevalence of pro- and anti-European attitudes. As research illustrates, smaller, richer, better governed, and more Eurosceptic countries are characterized by a stronger bargaining power, and hence obtain more exemptions from the EU (Zhelyazkova, Borzel, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeire, 2015).

3 Principles of Europeanization: Political conditionality

- ◆ **Political conditionality** is used as the main instrument for disseminating EU norms.
- ◆ In this context, the key principle is “**differentiation**,” which means that EU regulations do not equally spread to all aspirant countries.
- ◆ **Differentiation** is expressed through the EU’s exemptions and discrimination.
- ◆ No wonder that aspirant states try to obtain exemptions and avoid discrimination, which is dependent on their heterogeneity (that is their difference from states that are already members) and the abovementioned bargaining power. Higher heterogeneity and weaker bargaining power result in a more differentiated integration (Zhelyankova et al., 2015, 21).

3 principles of Europeanization: Disseminating liberal values

- ◆ The EU attempts to disseminate liberal values in these countries, and the success of this effort depends not only on local veto players (for instance, supporters of the EACU), but also on political elites' "normative emulation" of the EU (when, for instance, Georgia attempts to implement rather costly EU policy prescriptions as if it was clearly a prospective member (Borzel, 2015, 24)).
- ◆ As research shows, the weaker political institutions in a country and the more the country is motivated to adopt EU acquis as a basis for its local legislation, the more open the country is to the EU's influence (Maniokas, 2009).

3 Principles of Europeanization: Privileged partnership with neighbors

- ◆ Using planning, accountancy and support procedures that were used in Central and Eastern European countries.
- ◆ “The resonance of EU norms and values with the domestic institutions of the EaP countries is far lower than in case of the CEE countries, whose political and economic transition had been well under way when they started negotiating their entry into the EU. By declaring the EaP countries “friends” and “neighbors”, the EU made quite clear that it did not consider them “members of the club” (Borzal, 2015, p. 23)

Mechanism of Europeanization in Georgia : Conditionality

- ◆ Our research findings confirm that the leading mechanism of Europeanization in Georgia is conditionality and not socialization or Europeanization without the EU. Although the Association Agreement is considered a “modernization plan” for the country, and its implementation is believed to bring many desired changes in terms of both domestic and international politics.
- ◆ It is also believed that EU regulations are implemented because the Association Agreement enforces them and very seldom because policy-makers see the necessity of their implementation. The respondents argue that although the importance of many regulations and standards is acknowledged, their implementation started only because they were set forth by the Association Agreement.
- ◆ *“Implementation of these standards is necessary for the development of certain fields and it is necessary because the EU requires it. We could have started this process two to three years later, but as we have made these commitments under the Association Agreement, we are launching this process now” (N.D., State Agency).*

Self-conditionality or Socialization?

- ◆ There is an opposite view that what Georgia needs to progress and what is set forth by the Association Agreement do coincide. The Georgian side undertakes changes not because it is obliged to do so but because they are beneficial.
- ◆ *“It is almost the same. EU integration is valuable because it coincides with our development priorities. Therefore, reforms are carried out not because they are required by the EU, but because they are necessary for our country’s modernization” (B.S., State Agency).*
- ◆ *“There are some issues in food safety that are not included in the EU Approximation Plan, but which our government acknowledges should be carried out as well. Those implemented reforms – developed normative acts – should certainly be in compliance with the EU. I am not saying that they should coincide perfectly, but they should be similar to European norms. It is not that we surpass our obligations but it happens due to the objective reality and our needs” (Z.L., Expert, NGO).*

Motivation of Georgia: Discourse 1

- ◆ The changes to be carried out are beneficial for the country as they bring it closer to Europe, and ultimately the country can expect to be rewarded:
- ◆ *“It is not about pleasing someone. We do not try to please [the EU], but we benefit from it. Any standard, in anything that we do we aim at receiving something in return. What we get is, firstly, an improved capacity for free trade with the EU, which means increased exports. Secondly, we get simplified movement of our people within the EU; and thirdly, more assistance from the EU – financial, technical, and political support, which is necessary for us, and enhances our prospects for integration with the EU. This is what we should get from it” (L.D., Expert, State Agency).*

Motivation of Georgia: Discourse 2

- ◆ Position of the parliamentary minority: the regulations set forth by the Association Agreement are implemented based on political considerations. Recent amendments to the Law on Broadcasting serve as the most vivid example.
- ◆ *“The current government once announced that they did not want to introduce the technical inspection of vehicles. They received such reaction from people that they easily put this issue aside. On the other hand, they adopted the Law on Broadcasting in a hurry in order to harm ‘Rustavi 2.’ It is clear that political expediency lies behind these regulations” (I.C., Expert, Representative of Former Government).*

Assessments by former and current Governments

- ◆ As a rule, the representatives of former and current governments have different views on the implementation of EU standards.
- ◆ While the GD representatives assess it as their contribution to the country's progress, a UNM official thinks that the current government *“tailors EU standards to its own political agenda instead of the actual needs.”*
- ◆ *“As for adjusting to the legislation, the government lacks such improvisational skills. Our government used to adjust these regulations so that any harm to our economic growth was avoided, but this government cannot do it” (D.L., Politician, Parliamentary Minority).*

Experts' Assessments

- ◆ Current and former governments have used different approaches towards implementing EU standards.
- ◆ Conversion of the Competition Agency into an independent unit underwent only superficial changes under the former government. In contrast, the current government has overstretched working on the respective legislation.
- ◆ *“It seems to me that the process is extremely prolonged. In the period of the former government these changes were staged for Europe; now it seems they are way too much prolonged by the current government... I think there is a desire to improve and do something, though I do not see any orderly and subsequent steps towards it” (P.M. Expert, NGO).*

Politicians distance themselves from the discourse of “assignments”

- ◆ The interviewed politicians try to distance themselves from the discourse of the EU’s assignments and stress that all that is done is meant for the citizens’ wellbeing. It can be assumed that the respondents try to neutralize the existing utilitarian approach to the goods provided by the Association Agreement by highlighting the role of socialization.
- ◆ Thus, on the one hand, they distance themselves from the idea that conditionality is a decisive factor in Europeanization, while on the other, their narratives illustrate the role of conditionality by acknowledging that the EU’s assignments are the “driving force” in the process of Georgia’s Europeanization.
- ◆ *“I do not like talking about ‘homework.’ It is not done for someone somewhere else, but first of all, for our citizens and their own wellbeing. If this ‘homework’ is a driving force for integration, no doubt, it is positive” (Z.E., Politician, Parliamentary Minority).*

Experts: Europeanization as obligation

- ◆ Association Agreement requirements are a decisive motivation for implementing new standards. Experts doubt that without strict regulations the Georgian side would undertake these changes on its own.
- ◆ *“Even without this obligation, we should have a desire to move towards this model. However, I am not aware of any steps taken by officials that are not directly motivated by these commitments. Therefore, the Association Agreement commitments are essential for the country to not slow down its pace towards development” (M.I., Expert, NGO).*

Population: Europeanization as synthesis of conditionality and socialization

- ◆ *“I think that the introduction of European standards would be useful for our country, too, and we are expecting a certain award, we want Europe to make us a EU member. We introduce EU standards to deserve their favor but it is also useful to our society” (Female, 18-25, Tbilisi).*
- ◆ *“The end justifies the means. If you have a goal, the EU tells you: Do you want to join us? Will you do this? Alright. If you do not implement it, you will get nothing. The EU does not aspire to accept us as much as we aspire to join it; we want it more. If we perform EU requirements, the likelihood of accepting us is higher” (Male, 18-25, Zugdidi).*

Population about EU's "normative power"

- ◆ In addition, it is important to focus on the discourse that considers beneficial and necessary the implementation of EU standards although stresses that Georgia is not ready for their enactment yet; therefore, at this stage their implementation can be viewed as enforcement.
- ◆ *"There are some things that are recognized in the EU, for example, technical inspection. This is good but for us it is an enforcement. A person may be supporting his family with it, but if you inspect his car, it may be subject to write-off"* (Male, 26-40, Tbilisi).
- ◆ *"For example, nobody should say that the anti-discrimination law has not been enforced. At the time of my youth, instructions were received from the Central Committee and the same happens now. A decree would be received; they would talk a little and then adopt that law. Nobody should say that the people in the Parliament did not know what they signed. They had no other option. But it is also important to know that it is not a compulsion but simply a rule. It tells you that if you do not do this and that, it will prevent you from achieving something. When you were signing this Association Agreement, did not you as the government know what it meant?"* (Male, 41-65, Zugdidi).
- ◆ Dominant discourse: Despite the fact that the adoption of the anti-discrimination law is perceived as being imposed by the EU, it does not use enforcement or menace.

Georgian paradox of Europeanization

- ◆ Association Agreement is considered as an “enforced” mechanism which Georgia uses voluntarily to progress.
- ◆ In this context, “enforced” and “voluntary” mechanisms are not mutually exclusive but logically interconnected.

Let Georgia's Europeanization shift from
Normative to Behavioral Level!

