

Is the Division between Centre and Periphery of European Integration Inevitable?

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The aim of this article is to define the phenomenon of political subjectivity of EU member states in the system of European integration. The article examines basic factors influencing the scale of the above-mentioned attribute. Moreover it discusses the characteristic of the system of European integration and the process of "Europeanization." The crucial part of this article is the description of the centre, semi-periphery and periphery of the system of European integration and the presentation of the process of appropriation of interdependences by EU member states within the united Europe. This paper argues that political subjectivity entitles EU member state to model the structures of European integration. It allows the participants in the system of European Union to perform the fusion of norms from national to supranational level. The scale of political subjectivity determines the place of EU member state within one of the concentric circles of European integration. One can observe the transfer of regulations from the centre (Western Europe) to the periphery (European Neighbourhood Policy) of the European project.

INTRODUCTION

The common belief is that Europe is at the crossroads nowadays. According to influential thinkers the idea that could reunify European project into one coherent polity is in fact non-existent. It is unquestionable that the unity of European integration is jeopardized by a number of exclusive political and economic projects realized beyond institutional framework of the Community. Gradually multi-tier Europe becomes a reality and undermines

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the most fundamental values of the European Union. One of the essential problems is the predominance of national loyalty over pan-European interest. In fact it gives legitimization to the process of re-nationalization of European politics. For this reason the inevitable phenomenon seems to be the differentiation of European project into its socio-political and economic centre and periphery. This vital challenge for the future of the European Union is widely recognized but not resolved by any political remedy. The major hope for all EU citizens is to overcome above-mentioned political divisions which inhibit the process of European integration.

THE POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY OF EU MEMBER-STATE

The role of EU member state in the institutional architecture of integrated Europe still remains substantial (Konopacki, 2008: 17). To a great extent the process of European integration is legitimized by the executives of EU member states. For its efficiency the system of European integration demands political subjectivity from its participants. It should be indicated that the states from the Western Europe are the major suppliers of this factor. In general the political subjectivity in European project can be defined as the degree of influence on the EU decision-making process (Szczerski, 2008). This attribute is crucial for EU member states to moderate the supranational sphere of the Community mechanisms. In fact political subjectivity allows EU member states to maintain steering in European politics and fulfill their autonomous policy goals at the supranational level (Raczyńska, 2001: 29). This attribute is necessary for them to implement various policy scenarios depending on the specific European context. It is crucial to possess the wide range of possible courses of action for the rise of the political subjectivity of EU member state. The degree of this factor is being manifested by the scale of realization of its European agenda. The political subjectivity is realized through the prism of its ongoing fluctuations over a period of time. Its increase or decrease is always relative and should be perceived in the whole context of the system of European integration. This attribute has very much in common with the relevance and independence of EU member state in the EU decision-making process. The political subjectivity makes it possible to give the resistance to the pressure from the structure of the system of European integration. In fact by possessing this attribute, EU member state can influence one the shape of European project. EU member state with low level of political subjectivity is often

under the pressure from the system of European integration. As a result it only adapts to the particular European context by downloading political, economic and legal order established by the highly subjective EU member states (Bieleń, 2003).

The above-mentioned phenomenon creates the logic of competition among EU member states. A sort of tension between the subjectivity of EU member states and the structure of the system is evident. It should be stressed that the system of European integration becomes highly selective in the process of defining the pool of possible political roles (McAnulla, 2006). Apparently this system favors certain forms of conduct and reduces other activities of EU member state. As a result it stimulates the activity of highly subjective EU member states and creates less favorable conditions for the others. In fact substantial degree of the political subjectivity is allowed to maintain control by particular EU member states over the process of “Europeanization” (Graziano and Vink, 2007). In consequence these states maintain their impact on the interdependences within the system of European integration. The political subjectivity allows them to control internal effects of these interdependences (Tallberg, 2003). It is evident that maximization of strength and independence in the system of European integration leads to the competition for the position among EU member states. Highly subjective EU member states impose a sort of “structural pressure” on the less subjective participants of the system (Ohmae, 1996). It should be mentioned that European integration does not exclude fundamental principles of the international relations. As a result the political subjectivity of EU member state seems to be relying on the realistic assumptions (Czachór, 2007: 53). With reference to the idea of liberal intergovernmental approach one can estimate that European project is the result of rational choices made between EU member states. All interactions are carried out to maximize their benefits and their political position in the system of European integration. In fact EU member states act as the hosts of united Europe. With substantial differences in the impact on the EU decision-making process, they are the subsystems in the system of European integration. Being highly competitive entities, EU member-states act to appropriate interdependences in the European Union. For this reason European integration becomes a sort of an instrument of creating a political hierarchy in Europe (Czaputowicz, 2003: 40). By taking over supranational sphere, EU member states act to build a favorable international

environment for them. The enforcement of particular national regulations to the level of EU becomes a method of appropriation of interdependences. The influence on the directions of “Europeanization” is carried out by the fusion of regulations between national and supranational sphere. The political subjectivity of EU member state can be measured through its impact on the Community law (Kranz, 2006). Indeed highly subjective entities perform transfers of their national regulations to the European level (Boerzel and Risse, 2000). The entities functioning on the margins of European integration just adopt mechanisms from supranational sphere to their own legal systems. That is why European Union can be defined as a multi-regulatory mechanism composed of overlapping subsystems of national and supranational law (Vercauteren, 2001: 57).

To the great extent the prerequisites of political subjectivity in the European Union are objective (e.g. territory, population, economic growth and position in the EU institutions). These above-mentioned factors create structural and relational power for EU member state (Grosse, 2008). The structural power can be defined as autonomous management of internal structures. This factor allows EU member state to maintain steering over its own organizational resources. The degree of rivalry to obtain the resources to increase the structural power is evident in the system of European integration. This internal capacity actually helps EU member state to maintain the level of political subjectivity. The relational power is the attribute allowing to enforce national regulations in the system of European integration. By using this kind of power, EU member state is able to define its external supranational environment. The scale of structural and relational power determines the degree of realization of political agenda by EU member state.

As the substantial points of the reference for the system of European integration, the executives of EU member states have two fundamental aspects (Hoffmann, 1998). The first one is the strategic dimension which is associated with the responsibility for the development of the overall objectives of EU member state within European project. The second one is selective and focused on the formulation of its sub-objectives in the European Union. The result of these dimensions leads to the implementation of national interest in variety of EU decision-making bodies. The matter of European issues is both of political (high politics) and technical (low politics) nature. The policy of EU member state within

the system of European integration is thus a kind of conglomerate of strategic and operational activities. As a result European policy is a specific variant of foreign policy of every EU member state. It is extended on the purely internal agenda due to the phenomenon of shared sovereignty. For this reason it embraces a wide spectrum of activities connected with negotiations within the EU institutions and bilateral relations with other EU member states. The process of management in the system of European integration is carried out through a number of supranational procedures which impose a sort of structural influence on the distribution of power among the participants of united Europe. The values of this system have an impact on the national institutions dealing with European affairs. Despite of the occurrence of the so-called “procedural autonomy”, European integration promotes the adoption of common mechanisms by coordination institutions of EU member states. This is a variant of a process of “Europeanization” which leads to the adoption of common procedures by public administration of EU member states.

It should be mentioned that between EU member state and European integration the so-called “four relational areas” are in existence (Nowak-Far, 2005: 31). The first one is implementation which is focused on the proper adoption of *acquis communautaire* to the national legislation. The second one is negotiations which are the tool of efficient formulation of national policy in the EU decision-making process. The third one is legitimization by national legislatures in order to provide democratic support for the process of formulating national preferences in the European Union. The last one is litigation which is responsible for the representation of EU member state in the proceedings before the European Court of Justice. The harmonious management of above-mentioned “relational areas” is the element of strategy to maximize the political subjectivity by EU member state in the system of European integration. In fact the subjectivity of EU member state is realized in each “relational area” separately. The structures of each EU member state are in contact with European supranational sphere within above-mentioned areas. Their policy towards European integration seems to be a conglomeration of all these areas. This phenomenon remains a clear evidence of interdependences existing between national sovereignty and European integration. Due to the so-called “indirect legitimization” of the European Union, the efficiency of national structures of EU member states is certainly at stake. For its proper functioning, the structure of united

Europe requires a significant activity of the EU member states (Knill and Lenschow, 2005: 42). It should be stressed that the project of European Union has its own administration at a very limited level. This crucial factor influences the activity of administrative apparatus of EU member states. In fact the indolence and passivity of administrations of EU member states reduces their political subjectivity in the system of European integration (Papadoulis, 2005: 77).

The management of European integration is carried out through supranational institutions and national administrative apparatus. In this sense European project is a sort of “close external environment” for EU member states. It creates the necessity to participate in the activities of regulatory nature by the participants of united Europe. The national administrations are responsible for the competitiveness of national economies in the European Union. This factor is an essential component of the political subjectivity in the system of European project. By using regulatory mechanisms, national administrations of EU member states compete to achieve favorable conditions for the development of their economies (Grosse, 2005: 38). A sort of “procedural game” is performed by participants of the system to increase their internal economic potential. Sectoral functioning of the EU Council and the European Commission determines the perception of European policy as a conglomerate of separate supranational areas. The accumulation of potential by EU member states in each of these areas creates the overall political subjectivity in the system of European integration (Callaghan and Höpner, 2005: 58).

To the great extent EU member states promote their national models of capitalism at supranational level (Hall, 2001). One can observe significant disparities in socio – economic development between EU member states. In fact the European Union after enlargement 2004/2007 can be described as an entity with low level of socio – economic cohesion. In general EU member states want to maintain steering at supranational level in order to retain control over their national economies (Scharpf, 2002: 101). The process of globalisation reduces maneuverability of EU member states within international economic relations. For this reason European integration offers a wide range of instruments for the preservation of control over economic processes by the participants of a united Europe. EU member states compete to obtain the desired shape of economic policy at supranational level (Nowak-Far, 2006: 44). They take action to transfer

their national regulations to the system of European integration in order to improve the competitiveness of their economies. At the same time they lead activities designed to block disadvantageous regulations in terms of their socio – economic impact on national economies (Artis and Nixon, 2001). In fact EU member states are shaping the Community sphere of economic regulation to achieve its compatibility with their national systems of capitalism. The policy of EU member states is determined by differences in their models of capitalism, the structures of their economies and the perception of the state's role in this area. In general the strongest EU member states in economical terms have the greatest impact on the creation of supranational regulatory mechanisms in the system of EU (Krakowski, 2005: 19).

THE SYSTEM OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The process of globalisation creates a wide spectrum of interdependences between EU member states (Zielonka, 2007). The above-mentioned phenomenon reduces the ability to steer by EU member states within the international relations. For this reason the project of European integration is becoming a tool of maintain control by EU member states over these interdependencies (Keohane and Nye, 1975). The system of European integration seems to be a response to the reduction of national power in the era of globalization (Staniszkis, 2003). By shaping this supranational sphere, EU member states have the possibility to raise their position in the international politics. In fact this is a sphere of meta-regulation which is based on the power, interdependence, political subjectivity and appropriation. To the great extent European integration becomes a sort of catalyst for the position of EU member state in the international relations. It should be noticed that the process of European integration is an outcome of legal, economic and political contexts of Western European states. In this sense the system of united Europe has its own values, norms and patterns of modernity which are incorporated from these states. Being a sort of Western order, the system of European integration has been stretched on the Eastern and Southern European states. It should be mentioned that all new EU member states for many years have been developing its internal structures according to different (non-Western) rationality. For this reason nowadays European integration is composed of its centre (Western Europe), semi-periphery (Central and Eastern Europe)

and periphery (European Neighbourhood Policy). The main factor allowing to include particular state into one of this circles becomes the degree of its influence on the supranational regulatory mechanisms. The European project can be defined as a multi-regulatory mechanism composed of overlapping subsystems of national and supranational law. This mechanism allows to control economic interdependences between EU member states. In fact the system of European integration crosses the boundaries between the area of national and supranational regulations by establishing network of national and EU institutions (Goetz, 2000: 29). Within the system of European integration, EU member states are transferring regulations from national to supranational level. That is why European Union is a kind of conglomerate of territorial (EU member states) and functional (EU institutions) subsystems.

In general EU member states perform the management of procedures within the European Union by influencing the area of law at national and supranational level (Grabbe, 2001a: 79). The European project can be characterized in quasi-state terms as a sort of “inverted federal pyramid” (Page, 2003). For this reason European policy is realized through the number of relational networks established between various entities. The lack of ability to play the so-called “procedural games” causes the loss of steering by EU member state within the united Europe. To the great extent the system of European integration relies on intergovernmental negotiations. The major source for the European policy is “indirect legitimization” which is fulfilled essentially through the systems of EU member states. Indeed EU member states are the most important elements legitimizing the Community. It should be stated that this entity is not politically autonomous in relation to its participants because their executives are superior sources of legitimization for the united Europe. In fact participation in the system of European integration is strengthening the executives of EU member states (Laffan, 2003). The above-mentioned phenomenon of “indirect legitimacy” underlines the question of efficiency of their national institutions. One can notice that low level of relevance of EU citizens (democratic legitimacy) and EU institutions (technocratic legitimacy) in the project of European integration is evident. Being a sort of political system, European Union is not fully developed because of its substantial dependence from EU member states (Nolte, 2002). That is why key decisions relating to the functioning of this system are being

taken within its broad environment. The system of European integration generates its own pattern of subjectivity which functions as a filter for EU member states. Moreover there are specific criteria for “the entry” to the European Union (i.e. the Copenhagen criteria) (Falkner, 2005).

According to influential experts the factor that defines the position of EU member state within the system is the intensity of its preferences (Moravcsik, 1993: 117). These preferences are shaped on the basis of its internal conditions. One can notice that executives of the participants to the system act as agents of their national groups of interest. In fact these preferences constitute a conglomerate of interests at supranational level. They are transferred by EU member states into the area of European project. To the great extent the hierarchy in the system of European integration depends on the intensity of preferences. The more EU member state expects to get through the conclusion of agreement within the European Union, the more it is willing to sacrifice to achieve it. It should be emphasized that highly subjective EU member states are able to realize their project by themselves without the need to reach the compromise at European level (Stemplowski, 2004: 9). As for the role of supranational institutions one has to observe that they reduce the costs of interactions within the system of European integration (Hix, 2005). The supranational institutions ensure equal access to information on European affairs among the EU member states. In fact EU member states create supranational institutions to build the infrastructure for the intergovernmental negotiations (Keohane, 1998: 80). The institutional environment of the system of European integration is designed to support the achievement of agreements among EU member states. To the significant degree EU member states use these supranational institutions to appropriate interdependences. In general European project ought to be perceived as series of rational choices made by EU member states in the framework of intergovernmental negotiations. It should be mentioned that category of power seems to be relative in the system of European integration (Murray, 2000: 131). There is a kind of determinism of structures which have major influence on EU member states and as a result define their position in the above-mentioned system (Barber, 2006: 22). The EU member states with low level of political subjectivity are often under the pressure from these structures. In fact an evident relationship between political position in the system and the scale of independence of EU member state can be noticed. The participants to the system

of European integration pursue their national interests to maximize their position at supranational level (Kabat and Rudnicki, 2005). This phenomenon is necessary to uphold democracy in the united Europe. The European project could become unrepresentative for EU member states which political position in the system is relatively low. The citizens of these states would receive smaller benefits from the participation in the process of European integration. It ought to be mentioned that EU member states has the power of changing the foundations of the system (i.e. treaty reforms). However the impact of EU member states on the reforms remains uneven. The most important in this process are EU member states with the greatest length of their membership in the united Europe. In fact privileged position within the system of European integration is possessed by these participants who are involved from the earliest phases in the above-mentioned process. In this sense independent role of the others in changing of the system seems to be problematic. The significance of the political subjectivity of EU member states is even greater because of the great amount of areas which function on intergovernmental basis (e.g. Justice and Home Affairs, Foreign policy, etc.). In fact EU member states delegate sovereign powers at Community level to improve their position by achieving control on supranational mechanisms.

The core of the system of European integration seems to be the Eurozone. By using the common currency, EU member states formulate the “Eurogroup” which occupies substantial position in the institutional architecture of united Europe. Functioning in this institution is definitely the condition sine qua non of the political subjectivity for EU member state within the economic policy of European project. The membership in this group raises the significance of EU member state in the EU decision-making process. The meetings of the “Eurogroup” take place before the meetings of ECOFIN Council. For this reason EU member states – participating in this institution – possess predominant influence in the determination of the economic guidelines for the whole system of European integration. In fact they have significant advantage in shaping of the preferences of ECOFIN Council. The decisions reached by the participants of the “Eurogroup” are very often adopted by ECOFIN Council. In this sense the adoption of common currency becomes the factor that increases the political subjectivity of EU member state. Moreover the members of “Eurogroup” have key voice in defining economic policy

coordination instruments for the whole European Union. This institution is also crucial in terms of creating common position of the system of European integration at the international level and toward the European Central Bank. EU member states – functioning outside the “Eurogroup” – are perceived as peripheral in the international economic relations. In this sense the above-mentioned institution becomes a substantial reference point for the other participants of the system of united Europe. In general EU member states outside the “Eurogroup” function on the margins of the EU decision-making process. That is why the process of enlargement of this entity creates the new distribution of power within the system of European integration. Apparently giving up the part of national sovereignty by joining the Eurozone enables EU member state to increase its political subjectivity in the European project.

Furthermore the reform of treaties is often perceived as the manifestation of political subjectivity of EU member states. It should be noticed that the scale of involvement in this process is in fact unequal among EU member states. The methodology of this reform promotes EU member states with the greatest experience in the process of integration. The major characteristic of the amendment of the treaties is that it is being realized by the permanent political process with the crucial role of intergovernmental conferences. Indeed permanent nature of the above-mentioned process favors EU member states participating in the system of European integration from the earliest phase. One can observe that the Treaty of Nice was concluded among EU member states during the process of accession negotiations of the Central and Eastern European states. The reform aiming at preparing the system of European integration for the greatest enlargement in its history was realized in fact without candidates. The exclusion of the Central and Eastern European states from the reform of the treaties at that stage meant the possible reduction of their political subjectivity as the future participants of the system of united Europe. The position of candidates within the debate on the Constitutional Treaty was limited as well. To the great extent highly subjective EU member states defined the conditions of European Convention and the Intergovernmental Conference of 2003/2004 without the possibility of more substantial involvement from the new participants of the system. For this reason basic regulations of the Constitutional Treaty concerning EU decision-making process diminished the position of the Central and Eastern European

states. In general these regulations were upheld by the Lisbon Treaty which became the substantial factor reducing the political subjectivity of new EU member states in the system.

It should be emphasized that the process of accession to the system of European integration is highly symptomatic. It is often characterized as being long-term, adaptive and without real alternative (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004: 79). In fact the process of accession is asymmetric due to the large discrepancies between EU member states and candidates. In general candidates possess low bargaining position in the pre-accession period. They are obliged to make national adjustment to European integration and accelerate internal modernization processes. Because of substantial structural problems, candidates have to perform civilizational advancement to comply with the standard of the Community. The parallelism of political transformation and European integration has the substantial impact on the political position of candidates. While functioning at the periphery of the system, candidates perform activities to become members of its centre. To the great extent they are the subjects of the so-called “patronizing Europeanization” from the united Europe. This process can be described as an export of order from the European Union to the candidates. This “structural violence” causes the need for sufficient adaptation of candidates to the standards of European integration. In this sense European Union becomes an important reference point for the transformation of candidates. This highly asymmetric relationship is based on the coercion (Moravcsik and Vachudova, 2002: 163). It should be mentioned that economy is the substantial factor deciding on the discrepancies between European Union and candidates. For this reason high bargaining power and privileged position during negotiations on accession is possessed by European Union rather than candidates. In fact Copenhagen criteria – being a sort of filter for “the entry” to the system of European integration – reflect the challenges for candidates. They determine the position of candidates in the pre-accession period (Grabbe, 2001b: 11). Fulfilling these criteria helps to achieve functional membership by candidates after joining the system of European integration. The enlargement of European Union depends on the policy of highly subjective EU member states, especially net payers. The accession negotiations reveal general condition of the candidate in comparison to European integration (Stemplowski, 2002: 14). To the great extent the Community can be considered as a “pole of attraction” for

candidates. The road to European Union can be characterized as being without viable alternatives for candidates, thereby reducing their bargaining power in relation to the centre of the system. Indeed candidates have less prominent position in comparison to the partners from European Union. Because of discrepancies in the economic potential, candidates have little room for maneuver in determining the conditions of “the entry” to the system of European integration. In fact the centre of united Europe has the greatest impact on defining the accession negotiations (Michoński, 2009: 49).

It should be stressed that candidates are obliged to adopt *acquis communautaire* in full. That is why the accession negotiations are the tool of defining the time of adoption of EU legal order. If necessary they determine the periods of derogations in this matter beyond the date of joining the European Union. The multiplicity of derogations makes new EU member state considerably dysfunctional in the system of European integration. For this reason from the very beginning of membership its political subjectivity is reduced. In general new EU member state is pre-occupied with costly adjustments to the system of European integration. According to experts the scale of problems after joining the European Union is proportional to the number of derogations granted to the new EU member state. It is associated with its low efficiency and functionality in the system of European integration. In fact candidates are often more willing to apply for transitional periods than to solve their internal problems. For this reason the number of derogations portray a sort of mismatch of the new EU member state to the united Europe (Hübner, 2003). In this sense fully functional membership is achieved after several years from the date of its accession. Moreover new EU member states are net beneficiaries to the EU budget. Their economic potential is relatively small which diminishes their political position in the system of European integration. It is evident that the distribution of benefits within the united Europe is uneven and opportunities for new EU member states are limited (Friis, 1999: 62).

FROM CENTRE TO PERIPHERY OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The essential feature of the system of European integration is the division between its centre and periphery. The centre can be described by high level of economic development, high quality of institutions, significant

position in the EU bodies and long experience in European integration. In fact states located in the centre have significant degree of subjectivity which enables them to occupy a privileged position in the EU decision-making process. As the so-called “policy-makers” they have the greatest impact on EU law-making process. It is believed that highly subjective EU member states play an active role in the fusion of norms from national to supranational level (Wasilkowski, 1996: 100). In comparison to semi-peripheral or peripheral states, they are much more influential in terms of development of regulatory mechanisms in the system of European integration. By exporting its national norms to European level, the centre makes an international environment much more coherent with its internal structures. This phenomenon allows it to reduce the costs of interaction with the other participants of the system. By having global perspective, the centre shapes the trends in European project. It should be notice that the transfer of regulations from the centre to periphery is based on the economic power of highly subjective EU member states. The centre of above-mentioned system is composed of the founders of the Community. That is why European project becomes a sort of emanation of legal, economic and political values of the Western European states. In fact the system of European integration establishes its own pattern of activity and involvement which – to the great extent – comes from the centre. For this reason highly subjective EU member states possess the ability to model the structure of this system. In this sense European project corresponds with the preferences of EU member states belonging to the center of the Community.

Semi-peripheral – in the system of European integration – are these EU member states which joined the Community during its “Eastern Enlargement” of 2004/2007. In the political terms joining the European project seemed to be one-sided process since the conditions of accession of Central and Eastern European states were defined mostly by the centre. For them accession to the European Union was voluntary but it required the adaptation to the order of the Community. The role of Central and Eastern European states within this coercive process was reduced by the necessity of adjusting their internal structures to make the compliance with conditions of European integration. Nowadays because of a number of derogations – as a new EU member states – they are absent in many important areas of the European project. For this reason

the semi-peripheral states are forced to function on the margins of the system with relatively low level of impact on EU decision-making process. According to experts the institutions of peripheral states are much more weaker in comparison to the institutions of the centre. As a result during the debate on the future of European integration semi-peripheral states carry their own luggage of unsolved structural problems (Czaputowicz, 2004). Moreover with their low economic potential and lack of real convergence (low level of GDP per capita), semi-peripheral states are net beneficiaries to the EU budget. For this reason the EU member states from the semi-periphery of the European project hardly ever participate in the substantial political debates. To the great extent the lack of membership in the “Eurogroup” becomes the crucial factor preventing them from taking part in the core of EU decision-making process. In fact semi-peripheral EU member states do not participate in the exclusive European projects (e.g. Prüm Convention). To the significant degree they are influenced by the process of “patronizing Europeanization”. Their vulnerability to the phenomenon of “structural coercion” makes them more adaptive to the conditions defined by the centre. As a result semi-peripheral EU member states do not use opportunities to exploit European integration as a tool of their advanced modernization. For this reason they present a reduced importance in the creation of the EU agenda. Semi-peripheral EU member states are required to adopt legal system which has been developed at the earlier stage of European integration. As a consequence the process of EU enlargement can be perceived as a legal transfer from centre to periphery. In this sense the time of accession to the European project determines the scale of changes which the new EU member state is expected to implement while obtaining membership in the Community. The European integration operates on the legal bases originating from the Western Europe, so the semi-peripheral EU member states occupy a less favorable political position in the system of European integration (Piontek, 2009).

The last circle of the system is periphery which consists of non-EU member states participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy. These states are outside the European Union and are left with no real perspective of joining the project in the predictable future. According to experts these states are sovereign but their political subjectivity and autonomy in relation to the system of European integration is at extremely low level. The peripheral states seem to be only recipients of legal and financial transfers

from the system of European integration without any influence on the order of European project. Their low institutional and economic viability left them with no real opportunity to become EU member states. It should be mentioned that perhaps the denied membership might be the tool of becoming the semi-periphery by these states. As a result it could enable them to gain a slight influence on the European regulatory area. However peripheral states are highly dysfunctional in comparison to the system of European integration. Their internal structures – with rather poor quality of executives – are able only to implement regulations prepared within the system of European project. By presenting the regional perspective, they abdicate from the impact on the united Europe and choose the role of the so-called “policy-takers”. The peripheral states reveal the degree of clientelism attitudes and minimalist policy in their relations with the centre and semi-periphery of the system. For this reason they are often the destination of political and economic expansion led by states belonging to the centre. The European Union seems to be a “fortress” which makes peripheral states a kind of political dominion for the Western order.

SUMMARY

The political subjectivity is an attribute of the state that allows it to influence its external environment. Highly subjective state retains maneuverability in the international relations. This factor is responsible for maintaining the steering by the state in the decision-making process. The scale of political subjectivity decides on the degree of realization of political agenda by the state. Within the framework of European integration, this attribute is reflected by the impact of regulatory mechanisms. The European Union can be defined as a multi-regulatory mechanism composed of overlapping subsystems of national and supranational law. EU member states seek to maximize political subjectivity by the appropriation of interdependences within the system of European integration. EU member states with the highest level of this attribute form the centre of the system. They have substantial influence on the process of “Europeanization”. EU member states with lower level of political subjectivity formulate semi-periphery which possess less meaningful impact on the regulatory mechanism of European project. The peripheral states are outside the European Union and adopt regulations created by highly subjective EU member states without the possibility to influence their shape.

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