

Course

The Future of Europe in the Light of the Modernisation Process

School of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno
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Lecturers

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I. Content:

This intensive course (of one week maximum) deals with options, possibilities, directions, interventions and challenges of the new Europe as it is developing over the last decades. The emphasis will be on social, political and cultural Europe and on the ways of governing the issues that are seen as public responsibility.

1. The Future

The course starts with the question: how to deal with the future? Here a number of approaches from the field of futures studies will be discussed: forecasting, models for the future, the comparative prognosis, the seeds of change and the so called "weak signals".

Most attention will be given to scenario's: what are its functions and what are the requirements of a good scenario (vision of the future, analysis of the present and the road from here to there)?

2 Europe

Secondly, the main theme of this course will be addressed: the Europeanisation Process. In that context the following topics will be discussed:

a. Cultural Europe.

Is there something like a European identity? Is its development desirable? Should there be more emphasis on diversity or on unity? How can a European identity be promoted? Here the comparison will be made with the development of the nation-state. What centrifugal developments with regards to the (present) nation-state are detectable: The Europe of Brussels, but also the Europe of the city networks and of the EU-regions. Alternative models for a centralized Europe and of a Europe of the regions will be discussed.

b. Citizenship, civil society and civic culture.

The relevance of these three concepts will be discussed in the context of the Europeanisation process. Especially important is the need of a civic culture in the light of a stable and robust democracy. What are the features of a civic culture (Almond and Verba) and what is the relevance of these features in the light of the recent and forthcoming expansion of the European Union. Especially the importance of 'trust' will be discussed here at length.

c. Social Europe.

Most of the old EU-countries had developed some form of a welfare state. (Esping Andersen: The three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism). What about the new EU-members as welfare states? Will the welfare state survive in the light of the Europeanisation process and in the light of globalisation? Is the welfare state too costly or should it be seen as a productive force? What trends and tendencies are visible within the EU in the direction of a social Europe?

3. Modernisation, intervention and governance

Thirdly we will focus on the possibilities and limitations of intervention. The so called 'project of Europeanisation' is connected with what we call 'the project of modernisation': it is highly interventionist by nature. We assume that by gathering and using knowledge we can shape the society, the Europe, we want or, at least, develop ourselves a bit further in that direction. The characteristics of 'modern' perspectives on intervention and public policymaking will be discussed and will be explored in the form of exercises and assignments. Furthermore we will look at the specific characteristics and requirements of accountable governance in Europe and the consequences it has for public policy making on the European, the national and the local level.

4. Europe in the World.

Finally we shall deal with the different aspects of the globalisation process, its main problems and its impact on the Europeanisation process. We can distinguish here the following aspects and problems:

- Economic: the danger of increasing inequality,
- Social: the decline of the welfare state model,
- Political: absence of a world government, (global governance as replacement?)
- Cultural: the fear for homogenisation/Mac Donaldisation,
- Ecological: the tension between growth and sustainability.

Special attention will be given to the "Clash of Civilizations" hypothesis (Huntington). To what extent (if at all) is that hypothesis true and how can (cultural) conflicts in the world be avoided?

II. Working methods and requirements.

The working methods of this course require an active participation of the student. There will be lectures, but there also will be ample time for debates and discussions (partly orchestrated in the form of oppositional statements which require to take positions).

Moreover there will be a so called "Policy Development Assignment" in which the students will develop different policies for the Czech Republic (or the EU or on the local level) taking the European context into account, and present them in plenum.

Fluency in English is a prerequisite.

After the course the students can write a paper for which they will get credit points. The requirements for such a paper and technical things like the deadline for sending it (electronically) to the teacher will be discussed during the course.