

EUROPEANISATION OF BUSINESS: ARE WE WITNESSING THE CREATION OF THE NEW COMMON EUROPEAN CULTURE?

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European integration brought upon a number of side effects such as the concept of pan-European citizenship or the concept of Europeanisation. This concept has been extended to “up-loading to the EU, shared beliefs, informal and formal rules, discourse, identities and vertical and horizontal policy transfer”. Further questions concerning conceptualizations of Europeanisation usually relate to direct and indirect impacts, diversity and uniformity effects. However, does it mean that Europeanisation extrapolates to business communications and leads to the creation of a new common European business culture? Are we witnessing the creation of the new common European culture? This paper aims at answering the mentioned-above questions by studying concepts of European business, European customer and Europeanisation itself.

Key words: European business; Europeanisation; European customer; business communications.

European integration brought upon a number of side effects such as the concept of pan-European citizenship or the concept of Europeanisation. In its most explicit form Europeanisation is conceptualized as “the process of downloading European Union directives, regulations and institutional structures to the domestic level”. However, this conceptualization can be extended in the literature within the framework of “up-loading to the EU, shared beliefs, informal and formal rules, discourse, identities and vertical and horizontal policy transfer”. Further questions concerning conceptualizations of Europeanisation usually relate to direct and indirect impacts, diversity and uniformity effects. Hence, Europeanisation refers to a large number of related phenomena and patterns of change:

- The process in which a notionally non-European subject (be it a culture, a language, a city or a nation) adopts a number of European features (Westernization).
- Outside the social sciences, it commonly refers to the growth of a European continental identity or polity over and above national identities and policies on the continent.

Europeanisation may also refer to the process through which European Union political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy-making.

Therefore, we can conclude that Europeanisation largely influences all the aspects of the life of European community.

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ness culture? Are we witnessing the creation of the new common European culture?

While Europeanisation of business communication still remains an issue for further studies, Europeanisation of business in Europe is an established fact. First of all, due to European integration processes, scientists began to use a new term - "European business". There are four approaches to defining it. First of all, Harris and Mercado propose a basic definition and describe European business as "any firm doing business in Europe, ranging from a local bakery in France to Microsoft having operations in Europe" [2, p. 73] [4, p.1]. However, this definition does not allow to distinguish between firms who operate purely on national markets, those who operate globally (such as Google) and firms whose focus is paneuropean only. Secondly, European business can be defined as a "homogenous business environment, consisting of a level playing field based on common rules and standards, as well as homogeneous markets made of consumers with similar demand".[5] Thirdly, European business should also refer to "firms with a regional scale of operations, leading to a high level of paneuropean standardization" [5]. Finally, European business can also be regarded in terms of an end result - "firms having internationalized to the point of conducting business with a regional focus (activities occur at the paneuropean level rather than at the national or global levels), as well as in terms of an ongoing process of homogenization of markets and business operations" [5].

Another phenomenon that appeared along with the creation of common European market and common European currency is a European customer. The meta-analysis conducted by Leeflang and van Raaij showed that there has been some convergence in consumer behavior across Europe with distinct features such as environmental and health concerns. Ganesh also described European customers with similar consumer behaviors across European countries, giving firms an opportunity to target these segments with the help of a standardized marketing approach. This led to the creation of another phenomenon – Euromarketing. However, at the same time, according to De Mooij and Hofstede, national value systems do not converge over time and greatly influence consumer behaviors, hence, divergence is still prevalent over convergence [7, p. 68].

Finally, European integration led to the further integration of national industries in Europe. If we regard price convergence as an indicator of the convergence of national industries, then the European Commission reports prove it as long as they describe overall price convergence since 1996: price convergence in the EU has stalled [8].

However, when it comes to European business culture, it depends on the point of view we take. First of all, researchers stick to the terms "Western / Eastern / Southern / Northern European business culture", thus, refusing the existence of a common European business culture [10]. Secondly, it is com-

mon to speak about “European business culture” when it is compared to American or Asian business culture. Finally, it is possible to speak about European business culture in terms of business interests representation in Brussels: while researchers do admit that the patterns of business interests representatives behaviour vary across industries and differ between NGOs and business organisations, there is no difference between lobbying of German business interests and Polish business interests.

Consequently, we can conclude that a homogeneous European business culture still doesn’t exist. Which factors can lead to the misperception? First of all, all European business cultures rely on common rules of European etiquette: punctuality, politeness, certain rules of greetings and communication, business gifts [9]. Secondly, when global companies came to Europe they also brought their vision of a standardized corporate culture and corporate standards that influenced the vision of doing business in Europe in general. Finally, given above-mentioned concepts of European business and European customer it seems natural to further extrapolate them on business communications in Europe.

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