Europeanization and Globalization of Scandinavia

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Europeanization for some countries becomes an opening door for various forms of advancement. Europeanization is even able to secure domestic agenda, especially related to social, economic, and defense security development. However, for a number of other countries, Europeanization is a process which can reduce the identity and even provide an extra burden on domestic politics. "Europeanization itself has many interpretations, ranging from institutional to the formation of a new culture that becomes common European identity," Wawan Mas’udi, SIP, MPA, faculty of Department of Politics and Governance, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UGM, said on Tuesday (7/6).

In a discussion entitled Neoliberalism and Globalization: Scandinavian Experiences held by Scandinavia Community/ Scanty, Wawan said that social, economic, and political consolidation in the form of European Union (EU) also implicated Scandinavian region (Sweden, Denmark, Norway).

The most powerful impact of Europeanization in the region is in the social and economic fields. Free movement of goods and labor that becomes the basis of cooperation has made this region experience rapid pluralization process, especially when EU has expanded into Eastern Europe. "In the economic field, the need to protect the domestic and economic strength becomes very important. The failure of Eurozone referendum in Denmark and Sweden and the reluctance of Scandinavia to join the EU are very clear indications that this region needs to conduct self-protection or at least self-restriction on integration," he explained.

Europeanization, however, also brings beneficials impact for Scandinavia. In the social field, the involvement of Scandinavia in the Schengen system, European insurance and education has made human relations deeper. In addition, Scandinavia is also able to sell its comparative advantages more widely and freely. "Europeanization is an external force and Scandinavia has its own way to connect with this very strong supranational regime. In this situation, Scandinavia is in the path built by Moravscik where other forms of integration will be largely determined by how powerful domestic interests get benefits from the process. For Scandinavia, Europeanization is an instrument to strengthen the social democratic regime that becomes the identity of this region," he explained.

Meanwhile, Nanang Indra Kurniawan, SIP, MPA, who is also a teaching staff of Department of Politics and Governance UGM, mentioned that Scandinavian welfare state is relatively strong in
facing globalization pressures. Organized institutions of social democracy have mediated and re-translated the pressures of globalization, which in turn can be adjusted to domestic needs. “The state still has a strong capacity to implement and finance the welfare programs to maintain equality and economic security among citizens. As a result, to this day the Scandinavian countries are still among countries that have the highest welfare rate in the world,” he added.

Nanang added that although the neoliberal transformation is taking place in Scandinavia and affects the prosperity of the region, it does not occur radically. In many ways, in fact adaptations of neoliberalism in Scandinavia successfully re-structure some aspects of the welfare state and strengthen the base of the Nordic/Scandinavian/Social Democracy Model.

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