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### **Nationalism and centre formation in an enlarged Europe**

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## **Abstract**

In line with recent studies, this paper argues that a party's attitude towards the European Union (EU) derives from its main ideological goal, which is primarily of a domestic character. The EU is evaluated on whether it contributes to achieve the party's main objective in domestic terms. For example, social democrats evaluate integration on its impact on the redistributive economic regime, nationalists on the impact on the sovereignty of the national political community. The paper then investigates how enlargement changed the composition of the centre of European party systems and argues that the decline of Christian democracy and the rise of nationalism after enlargement makes opposition to political supranationalism a characteristic of the centre-right, while in the centre-left social democrats, from East and West, have adopted a pro-European attitude.

National political parties play an increasingly visible role at the European level. In the process leading to the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty not only the Convention took in representatives of each country's centre-right and centre-left parties, but also the generalised practice of referenda called to public attention national parties' attitudes to European integration and, in particular, to the European Constitution.

Beyond the give and take that characterises the negotiation of a European Treaty, long standing ideologies are crucial criteria to judge European deals. Not only national politicians acting at the European level are constrained to behave as party leaders concerned with their basis of political support and party cohesion, but also political parties are called to intervene directly as actors of European policy-making. The progress of the EU is increasingly scrutinised by the ideologies that inform European politics since parliamentary life began. The progress of the European polity is to proceed in the context of an enlarged Europe, where the ideological composition of the centre changes by integrating party systems which are not fully consolidated and, in most cases, strongly shaped by the nationalist/cosmopolitan cleavage.

This paper is based on the assumption, developed in the literature, that each party family responds to the European Union (EU) in agreement with its core ideological concepts.<sup>i</sup> Strategic concerns, like moves to gain office through coalition or maximizing votes only motivate an eurosceptic or europhile position in the short term of electoral politics. It is thus expected that the ideological types of parties that occupy the core of national party systems across Europe shape national agendas towards integration. We illustrate these propositions and characterise the effects of occupation of the centre by different party families with examples from Western and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The last enlargement of the Union changed the composition of the centre-right across the EU, resulting in increased resistance to

supranationalism. Enlargement had a less imposing effect on the composition of the centre-left, since social democracy is the dominant party family both in Western and the Central and Eastern Europe. The inclusion of economic systems in recent transition to market economy however, raises more challenges to policy coordination among social democrats at the EU level.

### **The Centre Right**

Christian democrats, nationalists and economic liberals respond in different ways to European integration. When Christian democracy's religious cosmopolitanism occupies the centre-right, support for political supranationalism tends to be high. By contrast, in countries in which national or national conservatives dominate the centre-right, an eurosceptic government is a likely outcome. Liberal or liberal conservative parties identified by economic neo-liberalism conditionally support European integration if they see the EU as a liberalising instrument and oppose it if the EU appears as an extra layer of red tape hindering economic freedom.

The eastern enlargement of the EU increased the proportion of nationalists, national conservatives and liberal conservatives, putting an end to Christian democrats' predominance in the EU member states' centre-right party systems. Nationalism, both as a predominant identity in nationalist and national conservative parties, and as a secondary identity in liberal conservative parties, embodies a vision of a culturally congruent political community, which opposes supranational polities. The eastern enlargement strengthened resistance to political supranationalism and brought to the table the question of eurosceptic parties in government.

### **The Christian Democrats**

Christian democrats of Catholic confession are identified by political cosmopolitanism, derived from Catholicism's universal claims.<sup>ii</sup> The Christian democratic parties of the six founding states were instrumental in devising the supranational elements present in the European Communities since its inception. Catholic cosmopolitanism was in most cases so strongly linked with the project of European integration in the post-war period that the two can hardly be analysed separately. Christian democrats in Italy, Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg remained staunch supporters of European integration throughout the following decades.<sup>iii</sup>

The French Christian democrats, the Mouvement Republicain Populaire (MRP), and the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU) provided the ideological and organisational grounds of European integration. While European supranationalism drove a wedge between the French Christian democrats and General de Gaulle in the early sixties, diminishing the influence of the former, and eventually leading to the dissolution of the party, the CDU has been consistent and enduring in its commitment to European integration. Konrad Adenauer, the first chancellor and founder of the CDU, believed that the post-war German state, before and after its eventual unification, should be anchored in an integrated Christian Europe. This made the CDU a stalwart defender of political supranationalism. In 1989, Helmut Kohl's double choice for the unification of Germany and the subsequent deepening of

supranationalism in the Maastricht treaty in 1992, expressed the CDU's identity and materialised Adenauer's policy choices first formulated in the 1950s.<sup>iv</sup> Dissidence from europhilism within the CDU occurred episodically. Ludwig Erhard, who was German chancellor from 1963 to 1966, was sceptic of political supranationalism and the primacy of the Franco-German entente. His preference for economic integration was representative of a protestant constituency less keen on political integration. The CSU, the Bavarian sister party, and its leader, Edmund Stoiber, marked the 1994 European parliament election campaign with an eurosceptic stance, with the party opposing the extension of qualified majority voting in the Maastricht treaty. This proved, however, to be a short-term election strategy and was soon after reversed.

Although the CDU is the most significant example of Christian democratic parties' commitment to political integration, Catholic cosmopolitanism seems to be at the basis of other Christian democratic parties' intense European affiliation. Equally dedicated to the European cause are the Christian democratic parties in Belgium and Luxembourg. In comparison, the Italian's Christian democrats European position had a more declaratory character and the Austrian Christian democrats was, until the fall of communism, limited by the Austrian neutrality status.

In CEE, Christian democracy has been conspicuously weak as a party identity, despite the Catholic Church being the fundament of the most influential and decisive resistance movement of the region, the Solidarity trade union. The failure of the Solidarity trade union to anchor the Polish right, after its experiment in government between 1997 and 2001, on principles of Christian democracy, epitomises the failure of this ideology in organising the centre-right space in CEE. In the only two countries where Christian democracy survives, Slovakia and Slovenia, the division of the movement contributes to its poor electoral performance. In Slovakia the two Christian democratic parties, the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU) and the Christian Democratic Union of Slovakia (KDH), although having been in government for the last two terms of office, remain unconsolidated and unable to control the centre-right, having recently lost office. In Slovenia the New Slovenia - Christian People's Party (NSi) and the SDK are witnesses to how Christian democracy remains and fragmented and weak.

### **The nationalist and national conservative parties**

Nationalists refer to individuals' allegiance to the nation as a primordial element of human identity. Nationalism embodies a vision of a culturally congruent political community where the nation justifies political authority. The transfer of authoritative powers away from the nation-state is thus against the core values of parties holding the nation as the primary political identity. Until 1992 the relative weakness of the supranational element in the European communities allowed coexistence between some nationalist parties and European integration. The Maastricht Treaty's provisions on the extension of majority rule to an increasing number of policies marked the end of this coexistence.

Nationalist parties all over Europe have opposed European integration, but these parties have generally not entered the party systems' core. However, from the turn of the 1990s parties mainly determined by political nationalism gained office in Austria, Italy and the United Kingdom. Ideological opposition to the development of a

supranational political entity, with economic arguments playing second fiddle, thus became part of the European polity.

In Austria, the colliding forces of nationalism and European integration materialized in an unusually concrete way in the events triggered by the governmental coalition of the Austrian Freedom Party's (FPÖ) with the Austrian Christian Party (ÖVP) in 2000. The origins of the FPÖ can be traced back to the party representing the Austro-Hungarian Empire's ruling German minority. Although the FPÖ attempted several times to recast its image as a liberal party, nationalist backlashes followed. The rise of Jörg Haider to the party leadership in 1986 after a period of ascendancy of the liberal faction confirmed the pattern of reaffirmation of the party's nationalist identity. When in 1994 the accession of Austria to the EU raised to prominence in the political agenda, the FPÖ declared its opposition to Austrian EU membership. In January 2000, the FPÖ gained office in coalition with the ÖVP; ideological opposition to the participation of a nationalist party with a Nazi past led the governments of European member states to impose sanctions against the Austrian government.

This resulted in the resignation of Jörg Haider from the party chair on 1 May 2000. However, Haider remained effectively the FPÖ's leader behind the scenes, and this situation once again brought to the fore the historic confrontation between, on one side, the liberal and centrists and, on the other, the nationalist wing of the party. Haider's nationalist wing was not inclined to let the party redefine its identity away from nationalism and euroscepticism. In the midst of crisis, Haider's followers launched a petition against the moderate wing of the party in order "to ensure that the FPÖ remains Haider's party" and reinforced the party's nationalist identity. In the midst of this crisis, three of the FPÖ's ministers resigned and the government fell.

Nationalism is also the key ideological precept of national conservatives, but unlike nationalist parties, conservatives' nationalism is tempered by a belief in the individual as an economic agent. The nation emerges as a relative notion, and conservatives limit the importance of the state, giving a prominent role to traditional institutions, such as the monarchy and the church. The evolution of the British Conservative party's European position is an example of how nationalists' predominance over economic liberals in determining the party's identity, resulted in a changed attitude on integration. The conservative party's progressive identification with nationalism developed into an eurosceptic stance.

During the seventies, the party's reluctance to accept any form of supranational governance was overcome by Edward Heath's leadership and the party led Britain to membership of the European Economic Communities (EEC). The leadership considered that European market de-regulation served well the central goal of the party, economic liberalization. The election of Margaret Thatcher to party leader further established market liberalization as the party's fundamental goal. Thatcher was one of the strong supporters of the 1985 Single European Act and the completion of the Single Market but soon Jacques Delors's Commission agenda was considered far too interventionist and supranationalist and the British Conservatives' entered into a colliding route with integration. Margaret Thatcher's Bruges speech in 1989 made this explicit and marked the beginning of the party's opposition to European integration.

Although Thatcher's euroscepticism resulted from what she saw as "socialism through the back door", opposition to ratification of the Maastricht Treaty also derived from the then secondary party nationalist definition of the political community, and it provided a platform for the nationalist faction of the Conservative Party to rally around.

The dilemmas created by the conflict between the party's euroscepticism and its governmental position became highly salient and Margaret Thatcher's resignation as Prime Minister was related to her opposition to European integration. To deal with the party's internal opposition to Maastricht Thatcher's successor, John Major argued that national opposition to the ratification of the Maastricht treaty should be quelled for it threatened the party's hold on power, and demanded a parliamentary vote of confidence on the issue.<sup>vi</sup> In time, this strategy backfired. Major defended Maastricht with an instrumental justification and did not properly link the party's Europhile stance with its economic neo-liberal identity. This weakened the party's neo-liberal wing and provided the nationalists with a platform against which to stand. In the end this strategy opened the way for the supremacy of the nationalist faction in determining the party identity under the leadership of William Hague. The party has consolidated a eurosceptic stance in the 2001 and 2005 parliamentary elections.

The rising importance of nationalism as a political identity in the CEE is now particularly visible in the coalition governments of Poland and Slovakia. The trend has origins in the movements for democratic transition, and democratisation in the region has seen sovereignty-related conflicts structure the emerging party systems. The increasing importance of nationalism in Poland materialized in the electoral success of a national conservative party, the Law and Justice's (PiS), and the nationalist League of Polish Families (LPR) in the 2005 autumn parliamentary elections, and their governing coalition in May 2006. The PiS's law and order stance is fundamentally linked to nationalism, although somewhat weakened by the importance given by the party to individuals' welfare. In the early years after its formation the party avoided taking a stance on integration, but eventually the party has become increasingly explicit about its opposition to the European supranational political system. After the party took power the uncompromising opposition to the Constitutional process, in particular regarding the revision of the voting formula obtained at Nice, developed into a muted opposition to participating in the attempts to resolve the crisis.

The LPR is the last re-incarnation of Polish Catholic nationalism, an ideology that has consistently opposed Polish integration in the EU. The party leader, Roman Giertych, sets the main goal of the party: to defend the nation and its devotion to Catholicism from its enemies. The national principle urges the party "not to accept the subordination of Polish politics to foreign purposes. (...) The LPR pursues Polish interests instead of the doctrine of adjustment to international circumstances that currently rules supreme". Such objectives occupy almost entirely its electoral program.<sup>vii</sup> The LPR's fundamental national Catholicism makes the party politically hostile to European integration.

The centre-right in Slovakia is very fragmented, and nationalist parties receive a consistent share of the vote. The Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) of Vladimir Meciar and the hard eurosceptic Slovak National Party (SNS), two nationalist parties considered unacceptable coalition partners since 1998 for their

bad international standing, again returned to office with the social democrats Smer after the parliamentary elections of June 2006.

### **Liberals and liberal conservative parties**

The political concerns of nationalists and Christian democrats are secondary issues for liberal conservatives. Liberal conservative parties predominate on the centre right and are mainly preoccupied with promoting market economy and only secondarily with the sovereignty of the nation. Liberal conservatives share the goal of fusing national economies, through a free trade agenda, and the promotion of competition and growth, with the European institutions. European integration has been, from its inception, largely coherent with the neo-liberal economic aims of a majority of European centre-right parties. While this is generally still true nowadays, scepticism of projects such as the Social Charter and the Commission's policies to regulate the European market and redistribution at the European level, particularly at the time of the Delors Commission, has occasionally flared up among liberal and liberal conservative parties.

In addition to economic neo-liberalism, liberal conservative parties hold political nationalism as a secondary element of their identity.<sup>viii</sup> This makes their relation to integration markedly multifaceted. Although liberal conservatives support integration when the EU is seen to promote a free European-wide market, they are suspicious of the increase of supranational powers in the EU, and support this trend only conditionally. When liberals consider that the EU's supranational powers are used to further market regulation, adding an additional layer of red tape to national economies, neo-liberal and nationalist values converge in harsh euroscepticism.

The French liberal conservative parties illustrates that when neo-liberalism prevails over nationalism the centre-right tends to be europhile, even if in a conditional way. The reinterpretation of the Gaullist legacy, in particular of his combination of nationalist rhetoric and europhilism, by the French right-wing has been a cause of contention since the late seventies.<sup>ix</sup> Giscard d'Estaing's Union for French Democracy (UDF) and Jacques Chirac's Movement for the Republic (RPR) disputed de Gaulle's inheritance, with Chirac in the late seventies attempting to reoccupy the Gaullist high ground on the issue of French sovereignty and adopting a nationalist and eurosceptic rhetoric. In the 1981 parliamentary election campaign Chirac changed tact on European integration and proceeded to renew the ideological underpinnings of the French right, based on the premise that the balance between supranational and intergovernmental elements in the European Communities and the degree of European market liberalization matched the interests of France. The 1981 election, in which the Socialist Party won with a Keynesian platform, was conducive to re-identify the RPR with neo-liberalism by giving the party an economic platform against which to stand.<sup>x</sup> The RPR's program emphasized economic issues and portrayed the market as the perfect distributor, defending the merits of deregulation and privatization.<sup>xi</sup>

Although convenient from the point of view of a centrist strategy, Chirac's benevolent view of the EU as the agent of market liberalism made him an odd figure among the Gaullists. Indeed, identifying the RPR with an europhile liberal conservatism was not consensual and divided the ranks of the party on several occasions, most vividly during the 1992 Maastricht Treaty referendum campaign.

Different interpretations of de Gaulle's nationalist legacy were the primary cause of the split. In 1992, a traditionally centralized and unified party saw the strongest opposition to the leadership of Jacques Chirac and the Maastricht Treaty emerge through the voices of Charles Pasqua and Philippe Séguin. Philippe Séguin's defence of democracy as inseparable from national sovereignty made him oppose "Maastricht Europe", and becoming a serious rival to Chirac for the leadership of the party. The unification of the UDF and the RPR elites in a new party, the Republican Popular Movement (MRP) reinforced Chirac's ideological reinterpretation of Gaullism and its consequences on the stance on European integration.

The Spanish Partido Popular (PP) was equally successful in organizing the post Franco elites and occupying the centre-right by subordinating Spanish nationalism to conceptions of market liberalism and economic growth. Despite Spanish nationalism being an important determinant of the PP identity and attitude to minority nationalities, the EU's underpinning of free trade and economic growth in Europe constitute the basis of PP's europhilism. The Portuguese Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Greek New Democracy (ND) also made economic liberalism their identifying element.

Liberal conservative parties are a predominant party identity in CEE. This has mostly resulted in the centre-right's conditional europhilism, with liberal conservatives counting with the EU's support in the marketisation and liberalisation of their economies. However, in other cases, economic liberal views have been the basis of opposition to the economic effects of integration. While in Hungary the unification of the right around a liberal conservative identity has resulted in a conditional support of the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) to European integration, the Czech Civic Democratic Party's (ODS) has opposed integration based on an extreme understanding of economic liberalism, combined with a political nationalist identity.

The establishment of FIDESZ as a liberal conservative party, founded on principles of economic liberalism, was achieved after the party's victory in the 1998 parliamentary elections, when the prime minister and party leader Viktor Orban consolidated the political identity of the party by appealing to those who "belong to the nation".<sup>xii</sup> The successful unification of the Hungarian centre-right by FIDESZ, where nationalism plays a secondary role, kept at bay nationalist eurosceptic parties.<sup>xiii</sup> Deriving from the affirmation of national identity was the Status Law, which would grant citizenship rights to all ethnic Hungarian living in the neighbouring states.<sup>xiv</sup> The secondary nationalist political identity of the party also reflected in conditional support to the EU.<sup>xv</sup>

The ideological evolution of the Czech centre-right has strong parallels with the identity formation of the Hungarian FIDESZ. However, the two parties illustrate how related economic ideologies can result in different evaluations of integration when economic identities determine their attitudes. The ODS's euroscepticism, and in particular, that of its leader Vaclav Klaus, derived from its rather extreme understanding of economic liberalism. Accession would lead to the over-regulation of the Czech economy. Following the unexpected emergence of the Czech state in 1993, the party started to portray itself as the protector of the fragile Czech nation. This resulted in a reinforcement of its scepticism attitude on integration. Increasingly, the ODS's European discourse also included an element of opposition to the supranational character of the EU.<sup>xvi</sup> The ODS accused the EU of serving as a vehicle

for the interests of West European states, in particular those of Germany, which were in contradiction with the Czech national interest. In the 2001 Manifest of Czech Eurorealism, the party evoked the marginal influence of the Czech Republic in European decision-making as a reason for delaying and possibly withdrawing the Czech application.<sup>xvii</sup> While Klaus's economic liberalism made it accuse the European Union of curtailing economic freedom, the party's vocal political nationalism resulted in a vigorous defence of the Czech state as a guarantee of national identity and political self-determination against the supranational institutions of the EU.<sup>xviii</sup>

### **The centre- left: The social democrats**

The European centre-left is ideologically more homogeneous than the centre-right, with social democratic parties occupying the space in most countries. Social democrats' main goal is to achieve and maintain an economic regime that compensates for class inequalities in the access to the labour market. Contrary to political systems, economic regimes are quantifiable and divisible, which means that social democrats have a degree of freedom to reassess issues. Therefore, despite being historically divided on integration, during the eighties and nineties social democrats of Western and Europe reconciled with globalisation's constraints on the regulation of the national economy and, consequently with European integration. Until the eighties, and in some cases the nineties, several social democratic parties opposed integration because of the EEC's promotion of free trade, which was seen as undermining their efforts to establish, and then protect, national welfare regimes.

However, the controversy in the French Parti Socialiste between warring factions on the eve of referendum of the Constitutional Treaty is a warning sign that the break of the consensus on globalisation may result in a return of left wing forces to Euroscepticism. The support of left-wing forces to integration remains especially fragile because no agreement on Social Europe has yet been attained. Indeed social democrats reappraisal of European integration relies ultimately on the possibility of some form of supranational welfarism. The gradual change in social democrats appraisal of European integration (see Bailey) came in the early 80s for the French Socialist Party (PS), in the late 1980s in the British Labour Party. It was in the mid-1990s that the Scandinavian socialists and the CEE's ex-communist parties recognised the goodness European integration. The two cases below, the Danish and the Polish social democrats, illustrate the parallel processes that led the centre-left to acknowledge the EU as a possible response to globalisation's impact on employment, social security and pensions.

The Danish social democratic party (SD) traditionally considered the Single Market as a mechanism for promoting competition and accelerating globalisation's erosion of comprehensive welfare states. Until the late eighties, the SD maintained a commitment to the policy canons of continental social democracy. The Danish socialists' response to the 1979 oil shock with Keynesian demand-side policies put a heavy strain on the state budget and led to the deepening of the economic crisis. In the late eighties, the party continued to refuse the need for reform and opposed the conservative government's attempts to implement a union-backed package of tax reform aimed at restoring economic growth. At this time, the Danish social democrats were among the parties with the lowest support for European integration

an attitude that reflected the party's negative evaluation of European economic integration.<sup>xix</sup>

In the early nineties, the party acknowledged the need for adapting its economic policies to the changing context. The party's 1993 parliamentary electoral programme, under the new leadership of Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, reflected the recognition that globalisation is irreversible and that adjustment to the new economic conditions implied a new formula for combining social justice and effective economic governance.<sup>xx</sup> After winning office in 1993, the party changed the labour law to a more liberal system of hiring and firing and advocated a retrenchment of unemployment benefits, while focusing on the development of active labour market policies and reforming the tax system.<sup>xxi</sup> The resulting system, a mixture of flexible labour laws, a generous but means-tested unemployment benefit and active labour market policies have since gained recognition as an effective formula for a maintaining a social market economy in the context of a global market.

A re-assessment of the EU accompanied the reformism of the Danish social democrats. From 1992, the SD's conditional euroscepticism gave place to the understanding that the European economic markets were irreversibly connected and that the EU was possibly a tool for resisting liberalising pressures. Social democrats considered that their goals could be attained through supranational co-ordination in the EU. Although eurosceptic factions remain within the SD, the party's repositioning on the European issue reflects the acknowledgement that the EU can be a framework for pursuing many of its left-wing objectives.

A parallel process was taking place in the CEE centre-left. In those parties with origins in communist parties, the conversion to europhilism was associated with their embracement of social democracy and the acceptance of the restraining impact of globalisation. The transformation of communist parties to social democracy and the adoption of an Europhile stance appear as a virtuous cycle. Although in CEE the transformation from communism to social democracy and europhilism, occurred in a different economic, political, and international setting, similarly to their Western counterparts, social democratic elites based their transformation upon recognising the irreversible character of globalisation and the necessity for welfare state reform. The Polish ex-communist party, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), is an example of such dynamics.

In its early days, despite supporting the introduction of market economy, the newly re-founded SLD kept a strong commitment to the redistributive role of the state, and during its first Congress in 1990, the party rejected Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz's radical marketisation measures known as shock therapy.<sup>xxii</sup> During the election campaign for the 1993 elections, the SLD reconsidered its opposition to European integration, with the party declaring Atlantic and European integration compatible with the national interest. Between 1993 and 1997, while in office, the party complied with the restraining effects of international commitments to low public expenditure and a balanced budget. The 1997 SLD's election manifesto reflected the transformation brought about during the party's tenure in office. Although classical social democratic policies like employment and social welfare were still central to its economic programme, the party declared its engagement in balancing redistribution and economic growth.

The doctrinal transformation changed the party's reading of EU policies, with europhilism deriving from the perceived consistency between European integration and the aim of making Poland a social market economy. By 1997, the party's europhilism was one of its central planks. In a 2000 speech, General Secretary Leszek Miller placed the recently re-founded party as Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) among the Western social democratic parties and joined their call for initiatives to bolster EU-level social policies. In the 2001 elections the SLD appeared as the only political force ready to lead Poland to Europe, when critical negotiations between Poland and the EU were to take place. The party won a landslide victory with more than 40% support, and, during its tenure in office, it maintained a committed support to European integration.

From these two case studies it appears that the europhilism of social democrats will remain fragile if the EU fails to create a regime of welfare protection. The split in the Parti Socialiste on the eve of the referendum on the Conventional Treaty is a reminder of that. The opposing faction blamed the Treaty to bring the EU closer to the liberal model of market economy and showed its fundamental opposition to globalisation. From this it appears that the development of a form of supranational social regulation is important to consolidate the centre-left allegiance with the EU. However, some analysts have pointed out that enlargement made the agreement on an European agreement on welfare protection even harder to attain.

The argument goes as follows: agreement on the reform of welfare states is notably difficult because welfare systems are embedded in diverse economic regimes,<sup>xxiii</sup> and these influence social democrats' conception of welfare states' adaptation to globalisation. This is what makes a European canon for social provisions, such as pensions, sick leave and unemployment benefits, labour market policies and the health system so difficult to agree upon.<sup>xxiv</sup> Social democrats of liberal regimes, such as the British Labour Party, are seen as opposed to any plans for social regulation at the European level, and as the CEE are often portrayed as liberal systems, enlargement is seen as reinforcing the divide over plans for Social Europe. According to this view, the new member states are not interested in European social regulations that undermine their competitive advantage, based on low salaries and low social expenditures.

However, the extent of welfare reform in CEE is frequently overstated. While some countries, like Estonia, liberalised thoroughly the communist-inherited welfare systems, others, like Poland, Hungary or Slovenia, although having partially marketized pensions and introduced means-tests in some areas of income maintenance policies, maintain a sizeable system of social services. Most of the new members would welcome a consensus on the substantial issues of welfare state reform that reconciles maintaining systems of social protection and competitiveness. The development of an European Social model that helps the reform of resilient features of the communist welfare states, while respecting different economic regimes, is probably welcome.

## **Conclusion**

Except for short-term electoral strategies, European attitudes are not the pawns of electoral politics. Party responses to European integration are structured by the congruence of the EU's nature and policies with their lasting core ideological goals.

While for some types of parties, like nationalists or Christian democrats, the political nature of the EU is their central concern, for others, as the social democrats or liberal conservatives, responses to integration follow the direction of the EU's economic policies.

The inclusion of CEE party systems carries a decline in the proportion of Christian democrats and a rise in the number of nationalists among centre-right parties. Increasing resistance of a political rather than economic nature to the EU's supranational arrangements is therefore expected. Although the translation of this resistance into governmental policy is yet another subject, the unitary nature of political opposition to integration means that in countries where nationalist concepts predominate in the centre-right, like in Poland and the United Kingdom, or where nationalist parties are often necessary elements of a governmental coalition, like in Slovakia, opposition to further political supranationalism will probably become a consideration of governmental parties.

Enlargement did not bring changes in the composition of the centre-left, with social democrats dominating the scene in CEE and Western Europe. By the mid 1990s, the Western and CEE social democrats adopted the view that by integrating with the EU the new and old democracies would be in a relatively better position to face the liberalising pressures of globalisation and maintain a redistributive regime. However, enlargement increased the diversity of national economic regimes, making agreement on European social regulation more complex.

Enlargement also increased the number of governmental parties, such as the League of Polish Families, the Law and Justice or the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia excluded from the European core parties (the EPP-ED, the PES and the ELDR). These parties are thus effectively kept out from policy-making at the supranational level. Therefore, although the number of nationalist parties has increased with enlargement, their impact on European policy-making is limited,<sup>xxv</sup> and national governments remain for the moment the only channel to express their preferences.

## Notes

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