

# THE EUROPEAN UNION: A REGIONAL POLITICAL LABORATORY FOR CO-EXISTENCE OF MULTIPLE CIVILISATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL POLICIES/SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

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## Özet

### **Avrupa Birliđi Çođul Medeniyet Formlarının Birarada Yaşaması ve Sosyal Politika/Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Uygulamaları İçin Bölgesel Siyasi Bir Laboratuvarı Teşkil Edebilir Mi?**

*Avrupa Bütünleşmesi hareketini incelerken bu makale temelde iki ana soruya cevap aramaktadır. Daha ne kadar süreyle kolektif kimlikleri (milli, kültürel, dini veya medeniyet bazlı) Uluslararası İlişkilerin ana analiz birimi olarak kabul etmek zorundayız? Ayrıca, ulus/medeniyet/kültür/din bazlı olmanın ötesindeki meşruiyet formları tamamen bir hayal olarak mı kalacaktır? Bugün en gelişmiş bölgesel siyasi ve ekonomik bütünleşme hareketi durumundaki Avrupa Birliđi'nin bu çerçevedeki başarı ve başarısızlıklarının analizi, bu tür yönetim modellerinin (çođul medeniyet formlarını içselleştiren ve dağıtımçı adaleti sağlayabilen) ortaya çıkma olasılıkları hakkında önemli ipuçları verecektir. Bu çerçevede, bu makale, Avrupa Birliđi'nin, söz konusu çođul medeniyet formlarının oluşabilmesi ve sosyal politikalarla desteklenmiş sürdürülebilir kalkınma modelleri gelişmesi için bir bölgesel siyasi deney alanı olarak ele alınabileceğini öne sürecek ve bu bağlamda söz konusu yapıyı inceleyecektir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bölgesel Entegrasyon, Avrupa Birliđi, Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma, Sosyal Politikalar, Çođul Medeniyet Formları

## Abstract

### **The European Union: A Regional Political Laboratory for Co-existence of Multiple Civilisations And Implementation of Social Policies/Sustainable Development?**

*By analysing the European integration experience, this paper tries to find answers for the following two major questions. For how long do we have to take*

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*the collectivist identities (national, cultural, religious or civilisational) as the main unit of analysis in International Relations? Are post-national/civilisational/cultural/religious legitimacy formations nothing but mere utopias? As the European Union is the most developed regional political and economic integration movement at hand, the analysis of its successes and failures can give important hints on the probable formation of such governance models (inclusive of multiple civilisations and capable of providing distributive justice). In this context, this paper will argue that in the short-run the EU can be considered as a regional political laboratory for co-existence of multiple civilisations and implementation of sustainable development backed by social policies.*

**Keywords:** *Regional Integration, European Union, Sustainable Development, Social Policy, Multiple Civilisations*

## **1. Introduction**

With the current waves of globalisation hybrid identities are getting more common than ever. For centuries, national, cultural and religious homogeneity are considered as main preconditions for constructing political structures. However, in today's interconnected world, the individuals are not solely limited to national, religious, cultural and civilisational identities. Today, the political institutions have the task of creating all-embracing models for the fractured and multi-coloured identities of the individuals. Simultaneously, they need to foster a feeling of belongingness to the political structures. Only a truly multicultural, multi-civilisational and communicative model can provide such an alternative.

Yet, besides being successful in their participation dimension by means of creating an inclusive model for all, the political models of today have to also provide social services to the individuals. As Richard Rorty suggests, the Marxists have always been right about at least one thing; the central political questions of mankind have always about the relations between the rich and poor. Therefore, when going beyond the national, cultural and civilisational borders, such a radical democratic outlook defined by multiculturalism and a fully civilian participatory political model will not be enough. For reaching the Kantian model of perpetual peace, the political structures should also be capable of solving the material problems of the individuals. To this end, a sustainable development model supported by welfare and social policies is of utmost importance.

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, three main perspectives have been used to characterise the foundations of the legitimacy of the political communities. The first, derived from the European Enlightenment and the 1789 French Revolution, links the legitimacy of political communities to the very existence of political institutions that are implicitly accepted by society through a social contract. The second, developed by German political thinkers such as Fichte and Herder, links the legitimacy of political communities to a corresponding “nation”, defined by a common culture. Finally, the third conception, formalised by Renan in 1870, modernised the original universalistic theory of the French Revolution and associated the legitimacy of state institutions with the existence of a “mass desire to live together”. Today, this last conception; existence of a “mass desire to live together”, is considered as more crucial for the successful functioning of political regimes. And it is accepted that a legitimate ruler or the system is the one:

- i- which serves the interests of the people,
- ii- which receives the consent of the people,
- iii- which is positively chosen or rated by the people.

Here, one can easily see that besides its participatory structure, the service providing character of the model is also equally important. Therefore, following Fritz Scharpf, one can say that the combination of the input and output dimensions of legitimacy is still crucial for the healthy functioning of political structures. For Scharpf, legitimacy by inputs is the society’s approval of the political structures due to participation in the decision making mechanisms. Legitimacy by outputs on the other hand is the society’s approval of the political structures due to the services they provide. In the aftermath of the ‘Great Depression’ the nation-states managed to provide and combine input and output dimensions of legitimacy, which has been tactfully analysed by Karl Polanyi in his ‘Great Transformation’. In Bauman’s words; ‘The project of freedom from fear pursued through the social state was perhaps the boldest endeavour ever consciously undertaken by humanity, along with the resolve it gathered to see it through.’

Similarly today, another bold ‘Great Transformation’ is necessary. Yet, due to the destructive consequences of uncontrolled global capitalism, today, national or even regional welfare models can be fragile. This new

‘Transformation’ necessitates a multi-civilisational and welfare based approach where ‘global politics’ catches up with ‘global markets’. ‘There are valid reasons to suppose that on a globalised planet, where the plight of everyone everywhere determines and is determined by the plights of the others, one can no longer have freedom and democracy in one country, or only in a few select countries. The fate of freedom and democracy in each land is decided and settled on the global scale – and only at that stage it can be defended with a realistic chance of lasting success.’

As Habermas puts it ‘the creation of larger political unities in itself changes nothing about the mode of the locational competition as such.’ Viewed from a planetary perspective, the joint strategy of a continental combination of states is hardly distinguishable from the codes of conduct of single nation-states which it came to replace.

Nevertheless, the regional political models can still be important laboratories throughout the long-run quest of creating ‘global politics’. Today, European integration clearly proves that internal ethnic, cultural or religious differences do not necessarily hamper a coherent and consistent European behaviour. The attempts to unite people by means of a European political identity based on ‘rights’ and ‘communication’, and the ongoing efforts to strengthen the European social model may inspire the development of ‘global level politics’. In this context, the current state of the European Union will be analysed in the following pages as it can provide important hints for repeating the same processes at the global level.

## **2. The European Union:**

### **A Regional Political Laboratory for ‘Global Politics’ to Catch Up With ‘Global Markets’**

In less than a decade the EU will be a regional integration movement of approximately 30 member states and 500 million people. Surely, it can continue to exist if it manages to imagine and construct multi-coloured, elastic and inclusive political models. In fact, Europe has historically been successful in developing such alternatives. A high level of local variation has characterised Western Europe for most of its history. Many villages differed from their neighbours, counties and provinces differed sharply from one another. Cities

and towns differed dramatically from the surrounding countryside. Artisans in the towns may have had more in common with the members of the same crafts in relatively distant towns. Similarly, urban merchants may have had stronger links to their trading partners hundreds of miles away. Yet, this changed by the birth of absolutist monarchies and the formation of more powerful centralist states. The following nation-states aimed at creating more collectivist national identities.

At some point, the attempts to achieve a hybrid supranational European identity can be considered as a return to the prior medieval Europe. Surely, this model may only work when it comes together with participatory democracy and civil society involvement in decision-making mechanisms. A pluralistic attitude towards differences will be the main element of unity in this model, where the unity is defined by the rule of law and political and social rights. It is doubtful whether a model based on coherence may play to Europe's strengths. Historically, the civilisations have sometimes formed the empires, but otherwise have not been basis for political units. Cultural and ethnic legitimacy explanations radically underestimate the constructed character of these elements, present them much more historically continuous than they really are, and overstate their likely unity. For example, that at the time of those very European ventures the Crusades; Greece was decidedly a part of the non-Europe. On the other hand, people of ancient Greece were chosen as their ancestors by the West Europeans. Hence, the claimed historical unities tend to be constructed on the basis of highly selective readings of history.

The Europeans derive their similarities not from a lowest common denominator nor from rigidly enforced boundaries but from characteristics that many Europeans hold in common without any definition of the whole. Europe is the setting for a number of lively cultural fields, not simply a reflection of a single culture, already fixed in its essence. That's why the supranational European identity has to also follow such an inclusive and elastic framework. In this context, the EU enlargements are in fact the most important chances to further develop such a model.

However, for many, the creation of an ever closer Union signals the creation of a modern Leviathan which will annihilate national sovereignty, generate bureaucratic apparatuses, minimise accountability, undermine democracy and erode the current sense of nationhood of the member states.

These fears were manifested in varying degrees in the post-Maastricht ratification crises, the ‘Maastricht ruling’ of the German Federal Constitutional Court and the British Conservative opposition to the deepening of the European integration.

These are in fact the results of a dogmatic adherence to the principle of national sovereignty as a political value. For example, the British conservative party opposes the unified Europe concept by stressing the importance of national identity. Several other European countries have also similar fears and this was clearly visible during the European Constitution debate which resulted in its rejection by France and Germany in 2005. These fears prove that collectivist identities based on ethnic, national, cultural, civilisational and religious affinities are still alive in Europe.

## **2.1 Going beyond the “Othering” Effects of Collectivist Identities**

It’s no secret that states’ functions have been redefined and decision-making is constrained by virtue of their participation in an interlocking network of bargained situations. However, the governments are still national today, though significant aspects of governance operate above and below the nation-state level. Generally, the state-centric theorists tend to stress on the notions of the past to explain the developments in the future. Moreover, they exaggerate the threats against the collectivist identities of the masses. A more problematic aspect of their arguments is that; they fail to notice the artificiality and historicity of these identities and resist any suggestion about the different levels of government activities without any preconceived idea as to where the sovereign state is.

Then again, although the rational arguments can prove that the individuals can create identities beyond the national-identity it is still doubtful whether they will really be willing to do so. Myths, great history narratives and fatherland stories can also be the own preferences of the individuals as they can not be solely explained as the forced constructions. Moreover, today, the citizens can actively participate in the national deliberative processes and effectively influence the conduct of their governments. So, one can say that the quality of democratic governance is still higher at the national level compared with other alternatives. Furthermore, for many scholars, the homogenisation of the identities also brought various economic benefits. Gellner for instance

explains nationalism as a theory legitimacy stemming from industrialisation. Therefore, the political, economic and even the psychological conditions can be the reasons of the continuing strength of the national and similar collectivist identities.

Contrary to the arguments that consider the nation-state as a modern phenomenon, one can also find discussions about the “Antiquity of Nations” within the political science literature. The ever existent need of communal living is given as the main reason behind the antiquity of the nations. Hence, the nation and other forms of collectivist identities are explained as tools that were created much before the nation-state or the political institutions of modernity. Following the same line of thought, Anthony D. Smith argues that the only way by which a truly united Europe could emerge is through the formation of common European memories, traditions, values, myths and symbols. For him, a pan-European nationalist/collectivist movement could create common myths, symbols, and memories by establishing a new type of collective identity which pacifies but does not abolish individual nations. He analyzes the myths, memories, symbols and traditions of the pre-modern ethnic communities and tries to establish a balance between the undeniable novel components of the nation with its ancient, rooted and persistent attributes.

Yet, this approach to the European identity formation can be criticised for several reasons. First, Smith looks at the European project through the lenses of the traditional nation-states and existing national identities without a state vision for Europe. Here, it should be stated that, as a *sui-generis* body, the EU is a community of diversity and its institutions managed to apply norms guiding the state action despite the absence of clear-cut coercive apparatuses. Therefore, the EU can not be analysed solely by the tools that are created for the nation-states and more collectivist identities. Secondly, Smith considers the European identity just as a cultural identity. He criticises the political conception of European identity for its artificial character. However, a political European identity can in fact be an alternative on the condition that it is established on democracy and welfare dimensions, broadly embedded in the European enlightenment tradition.

At most, one can say that a supranational identity would be weak to transfer individual loyalties from the national to the European level because of the existent traditions and myths of the national levels. However, in an enlarged

EU, if a culture based identity is pursued this may lead to the exclusion of various groups. Anthony D. Smith is also aware of this problem, but contrarily he argues that forming a deep continental cultural identity to support political unification requires an ideology of European cultural exclusiveness. Yet, such an understanding closes the doors of the EU to countries which shares the values of the European enlightenment tradition but comes from a different civilisational background; such as Turkey. Moreover, it inescapably leads to negative value judgements for different cultures and civilisations, which is detrimental for such a multicultural grand project. Such exclusive attitudes strengthen the clash of civilisations theses of Huntington and decrease the hopes for a peaceful world.

Moreover, the European integration has not been geographically static, it has also widened in time. The number of total member states has increased from six to twenty-seven and the general expectation is that with the further enlargements the Union will be an entity of thirty or more states. This is a difficult process as it both necessitates the implementation of the EU rules and regulations in the new member states and the transformation of the supranational institutions in line with the necessities of the enlargements. Besides the technical problems that are arising due to getting bigger, enlargements also bring in further ‘differences’ to be managed. In this context, the supranational institutions further necessitate a theory of legitimacy that goes beyond the existent lines of collectivist and ‘othering’ identities.

The latest enlargement of the EU towards the Central and East European Countries (CEECs) and the possible future enlargements to Southeast Europe and the Balkans necessitate further theoretical discussions about the future of the Union. However today, the discussions about the enlargement are generally limited to the effects of the widening on various policy areas such as the Single Market or the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The feasibility of the current model to include different cultures, religions, political models and lifestyles is rarely discussed. Furthermore, the deepening strategies for such a heterogeneous structure are hardly commented upon. Surely, this does not constitute a major problem for the ones who want to see the EU as an intergovernmental form. Moreover, they may also consider widening as a positive development as they regard it detrimental for the deepening towards a supranational model. Most of the discussions about the EU are limited to the



possibility of creating a well working market mechanism, which will supposedly increase the individuals' loyalties to the supranational institutions. The output dimension of the legitimacy is broadly underlined in this argumentation; however, by means of a purely neo-liberal understanding. A combination of neo-functionalism and neo-liberalism seems to be the dominant framework here, where the participation dimension and social policies are again rarely touched upon.

In an enlarging and deepening EU the real challenge is the transformation of the model from an elite project towards a participatory social process. As long as the supranational form is defined as the exact replica of the nation-state and the procedural democracy is regarded as the only possible alternative, it is extremely difficult to reach such an inclusive multicultural framework. The enlarging Union necessitates going beyond the existing models and requires a multicultural and hybrid identity definition. Here, a theory of legitimacy that includes the 'other' through communication and political rights dimensions, and also supports the social and welfare policies seems to be a possible option. In the short run, a supranational political model that is established on a hybrid identity and also capable of providing social and welfare policies, is more feasible at the regional level. Europe seems to be the place to build such a model as the European enlightenment tradition at least created some of the important common values around which such an organisation may flourish.

Previously, it was argued that the legitimacy of a political regime can be strengthened by the effective functioning of the political institutions. This type of a legitimacy formed by the outputs of the system (following again Fritz Scharph's input and output legitimacy conceptualisations here) can be as effective as the legitimacy by the inputs. One of the most important examples of this type of legitimacy has been existent in the United States of America for centuries, where the different ethnicities, cultures and religions managed to live together within a well working model. However, this legitimacy is mostly a result of the general conviction in the effective functioning of the American market model. One can say that the distributive market is the main element of the legitimacy in the USA. Nevertheless, the American example is crucial as it shows the importance of the output dimensions during the legitimisation of a regime.

In political science literature, one can also find supporters of American federalist model for the EU. For example, Kalypso Nicolaidis argues that the federal nature of the American model can be inspiring for European integration. As both historically and ideologically the defining feature of the USA has been a collective aversion for strong centralised power, Nicolaidis gives non-centralisation as the very essence of American federalism. Several European politicians have also openly stated in the past that they are considering the political system of the USA as a model for the EU. Recently, Belgian Prime Minister, Guy Verhofstadt, also argued that the Constitution of the United States can provide lessons for the European project. Furthermore, he stipulated that the United States can be a great model for the European Union.

However, one should not forget that the decentralised and presumed democratic nature of the American model is again a result of the *sui-generis* market system. The USA was established by the migrating populations from all over the world, but mostly from Europe. Multicultural and multiethnic nature of the American society necessitated the development of local governance structures from start. Moreover, as it was established as a market model from the outset, a Gellnerian political homogenisation attempt was considered as superfluous by the elites. Instead, a politically federal ‘laissez faire et laissez passé model’ became the theory of the legitimacy for the USA. Participation was mostly limited to the market and the civil society was defined *visa vis* the economic society.

What’s more, the American market model, the most important legitimising element of the system, started to have problems during the last decades. Jeremy Rifkin argues that the American Dream is becoming more elusive nowadays. Americans are increasingly overworked, underpaid, squeezed for time, and unsure about their prospects for a better life. Rifkin argues that while the American Dream is languishing, a new European Dream is capturing the attention and imagination of the world. For Rifkin, Europe has become a giant laboratory for rethinking humanity’s future. In many respects, the European Dream is the mirror opposite of the American Dream. While the American Dream emphasizes unrestrained economic growth, personal wealth, and the pursuit of individual self-interest, the European Dream focuses more on sustainable development, quality of life, and the nurturing of community. Rifkin argues that the Americans live (and die) by the work ethic and the dictates of

efficiency. On the other hand, Europeans place more of a premium on leisure and happiness. For Rifkin, America has always seen itself as a great melting pot, but the Europeans prefer to preserve their rich multicultural diversity.

A fully neo-liberal model is intrinsically limited with regards to democratisation as it greatly jeopardizes the input dimension of legitimacy by creating economically (thus politically) unequal classes in society. Yet, the USA has still been successful in transferring the welfare state expenses to the market. Insurance companies and pension funds have taken the place of the welfare state in the USA and as a result a real Lockean model, where the state had a minimal intervention to the market could be established. Furthermore, in the surveys that are done in the USA, being poor is generally considered as the personal fault of the individuals. The general idea is that the market provides all the opportunities, so, if a person is poor that's his/her mistake. A research done in late 1980s about the American public's view on being rich and poor showed that most of the Americans consider personal welfare as mostly the responsibility of the individual.

**Table-1 / American Views on Being Rich and Poor**

People are wealthy because of personal drive.	%64
People are wealthy because of their willingness to take risks.	%62
People are wealthy because of inheritance.	%64
People are wealthy because of lack of hard-work and initiative.	%47
People are wealthy because of political influence or pull.	%46
People are wealthy because of great ability or talent.	%46
People are poor because of lack of thrift.	%64
People are poor because of lack of effort.	%53
People are poor because of lack of ability, talent.	%53
People are poor because of poor schooling by society.	%46
People are poor because of loose morals.	%44
People are poor because of low wages.	%47
People are poor because of prejudice and discrimination against blacks.	%39
People are poor because of being taken advantage of by rich people.	%19
People are poor because of bad luck.	%12

Source: Kluegel, James R. and Smith, Eliot R., *Beliefs About Inequality: Americans' Views About What Is And Ought To Be*, New York: Aldine-deGrueter, 1986.

Here one can see that the political institutions are considered having minimum responsibility with regards to the personal welfare of the individuals. People are suggested to work harder to get the benefits from the supposedly well working market system. In this model, being rich is crucial because this makes you able to participate in the insurance schemes and pension funds that guarantee your future. Also as individuals generally perceive their own economic position as a result of the internal factors, the model is occasionally questioned in this model. To this end, a more recent research gives us interesting results.

**Table 2:** Views on Welfare State

WELFARE STATE ATTITUDES IN CROSS-NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE (1996)

<u>Attitudes</u>	<u>Canada</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>Italy</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>Sweden</u>	<u>UK</u>	<u>USA</u>
Government should be responsible for:								
providing a decent standard of living for the old	90%	92%	97%	98%	91%	98%	98%	87%
providing health care for the sick	94	89	97	99	90	96	99	85
providing financial help to low-income college students	85	94	89	94	64	79	90	85
providing decent housing for those who can't afford it	72	87	82	88	60	82	89	67
providing a decent standard of living for the unemployed	66	81	84	65	73	90	79	48
reducing income differences between rich and poor	51	74	69	75	65	71	68	48
providing jobs for all	37	69	80	77	63	65	69	39
controlling wages by law	37	50	40	65	19	28	38	28
Favor more government spending on:								
education	66	64	54	71	51	59	85	77
health	56	49	49	77	69	77	92	68
old age pensions	29	33	49	68	60	57	80	51
unemployment benefits	17	21	38	49	36	43	36	28

Source: Howard, Christopher, *Just How Exceptional Is the American Welfare State?*, Research Paper presented at Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar and the Miller Center for Public Affairs, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA, October 24, 2002.

Here, one can again see that for most of the Americans the system has minimal responsibility in providing the welfare and social services to the individuals. Market again seems to be the main structure in which the distribution is expected to be carried out and a fair distribution is not a real

concern. Yet, one should still accept that this model still works well for the USA. That's why various people consider the USA as an economic and political miracle providing prosperity and growth, in addition to being inclusive towards multi-coloured identities.

However, to a great extent, the main legitimisation element of this model is the market mechanism, and it works effectively by pooling the wealth of the world towards itself. Wallerstein explains this as the development of a world system of exploitation and control. However, Wallerstein also argues that this system is doomed as it is a closed system that does not take into account the comparative advantages of nations and the increasing criticisms against it. He points out that there is no escape from the class struggle, internally between those for and those against a more democratic and egalitarian society, externally between those defending nations' sovereignty and those upholding the imperial 'right to intervene'. He argues that the workers are still the immense majority in the world. Although migration from rural areas into labour markets has enabled capitalists to relocate, particularly to China, the world is running out of new sources of cheap labour and even the new workers are learning how to organise for better wages. So wage levels are rising as a percentage of production costs, averaged across the world. Also, taxes to pay for health, education and welfare are rising. Higher wages and taxes squeeze global profits, threatening capitalists' ability to accumulate capital, especially from industrial production and hence threatening the "core". As a result, the US economy is faltering. Furthermore, it cannot regularly use its military muscle to shape the world the way it wants. Wallerstein concludes, "In the history of the world, military power has never been sufficient to maintain supremacy. Legitimacy is essential, at least legitimacy recognised by a significant part of the world."

The example of the USA (and its more recent economic crisis) shows us the problems of the solely output oriented models. In a globalising world (here, not referring solely to economic globalisation but to the globalisation of the ideas and the intellectual accumulation resulting from the developing communication networks), it becomes more and more difficult to sustain this model as the exploitation is becoming more visible for the "periphery". In this context, the destructive effects of such a neo-liberal legitimacy understanding may be cured by a global welfare regime and the EU seems to be the most important example where one can start such a transformation.

### **2.3 King is Dead, Long Live the King ? The New European Dream vs. the American Dream**

Esping-Andersen argues that the purpose of the welfare state and the social rights is to “permit people to make their living standards independent of pure market forces.” With this idea of the purpose of social rights in mind, Esping-Andersen draws empirical distinctions between three main types of welfare states. First, the liberal welfare state mixes means-tested programs for the poor with programs for all who contribute to these with a social insurance foundation (e.g. UK, USA). Second, the corporatist-statist welfare emphasises social insurance programs that benefit those who pay in – a much bigger number than in the liberal model (e.g. continental Europe: Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, France, Italy). Third, the social democratic welfare state emphasises programs that are universalistic (independent of whether people do or do not pay in) and also grant benefits that are tied to a middle-class style of living (e.g. Nordic Europe: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland). In addition to triple classification of Esping-Andersen, a fourth model mentioned in the literature is the Southern and Southeastern European model, which can be considered as a combination of the ‘social insurance’ and the ‘corporatist-statist’ models backed by contributions of the family and the informal society networks. Overall, one can see a mixture of these models in Europe and argue that there is a general European understanding supportive of the social policies. Although there are differences in institutional structures and understandings, one can still see a general belief in the necessity of the welfare state throughout Western Europe. Most of the people still consider the services such as health, education, shelter and employment under the responsibility of the welfare state.

The social rights have also been an important part of the European historical experience. As early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the ‘poor law’ reform in England started the development of a moral belief in the necessity of protecting the individual against the pure market forces. In time, the laws that protected the individuals have increased both in number and scope. The social rights started to be included in the countries’ constitutions throughout Europe with the 1920 Weimar Constitution. Between 1888 and 1914 the insurance schemes for the work place accidents have been developed in most of the West European countries. These insurance schemes gradually included the illness periods of the workers. After the First World War, unemployment insurances started to protect

the workers in most of the west European countries. The workplace accident, illness, unemployment and old age insurance schemes have been developed following the Second World War. Gradually, the concept of ‘social security’ started to become the main concern of the governments.

**Table 3:** The Percentage of the GDP that is Spent on the Social Security (EU)

Country	1980	1990	1997	2006*
<b>Belgium</b>	28	26.7	28.5	29.7
<b>Denmark</b>	28.7	29.7	31.4	30.9
<b>Germany</b>	28.8 (W. G.)	25.4	29.9	30.2
<b>Greece</b>	9.7	23.2	23.6	26.3
<b>Spain</b>	18.1	19.9	21.4	19.7
<b>France</b>	25.4	27.7	30.8	30.9
<b>Ireland</b>	20.6	19.1	17.5	16.5
<b>Italy</b>	19.4	24.1	25.9	26.4
<b>Luxembourg</b>	26.5	22.6	24.8	23.8
<b>Holland</b>	30.1	32.5	30.3	28.1
<b>Austria</b>	-	26.7	28.8	29.5
<b>Portugal</b>	12.8	15.6	22.5	24.3
<b>Finland</b>	-	25.5	29.9	26.9
<b>Sweden</b>	-	33.1	33.7	33.5
<b>England</b>	21.5	23.2	26.8	26.7
<b>EU-15</b>	24.3 (EU12)	25.4	28.2	28 (EU25)

Source: Kleinman, Mark, *A European Welfare State?*, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002. p. 24 (\*2006 data: Eurostat)

Here, one can see that the social security expenses have traditionally taken an important share from the budget in most of the EU member states. However, the existence of strong social policies is mostly observable at the national levels today. And for most of the Europeans, the EU is still as an elite formulation that solely acts on the issues of high politics. To some extent, this also leads to a legitimacy crisis where the deepening EU can not find the relevant support for its policies at the supranational level. Moreover, the differences with regards to the social security understandings in the continent also delay the development of all binding supranational decisions in those areas. Nevertheless, some important steps have been taken in time, and therefore one can at least talk about the beginnings of a supranational social policy in Europe.

The 1961 European Social Charter of Council of Europe was an important development to this end. With the Social Charter, the Contracting Parties have agreed on the following:

- Everyone shall have the opportunity to earn his living in an occupation freely entered upon.
- All workers have the right to just conditions of work.
- All workers have the right to safe and healthy working conditions.
- All workers have the right to a fair remuneration sufficient for a decent standard of living for themselves and their families.
- All workers and employers have the right to freedom of association in national or international organisations for the protection of their economic and social interests.
- All workers and employers have the right to bargain collectively.
- Children and young persons have the right to a special protection against the physical and moral hazards to which they are exposed.
- Employed women, in case of maternity, and other employed women as appropriate, have the right to a special protection in their work.
- Everyone has the right to appropriate facilities for vocational guidance with a view to helping them to choose an occupation suited to their personal aptitude and interests.
- Everyone has the right to appropriate facilities for vocational training.
- Everyone has the right to benefit from any measures enabling them to enjoy the highest possible standard of health attainable.
- All workers and their dependents have the right to social security.
- Anyone without adequate resources has the right to social and medical assistance.
- Everyone has the right to benefit from social welfare services.
- Disabled persons have the right to vocational training, rehabilitation and resettlement, whatever the origin and nature of their disability.
- The family as a fundamental unit of society has the right to appropriate social, legal and economic protection to ensure its full development.



- Mothers and children, irrespective of marital status and family relations, have the right to appropriate social and economic protection.
- The nationals of any one of the Contracting Parties have the right to engage in any gainful occupation in the territory of any one of the others on a footing of equality with the nationals of the latter, subject to restrictions based on cogent economic or social reasons.
- Migrant workers who are nationals of a Contracting Party and their families have the right to protection and assistance in the territory of any other Contracting Party.

The Charter was not a strongly binding document. However, it at least defined the basic minimums for a healthy market mechanism in Europe. Its underlining of the social dialogue and the participation has positively effected the employer and employee relations throughout the continent during the last decades. The Charter was reviewed and further detailed in 1996, and the social rights and fight against the social exclusion are defined as the main tenets of the European governance model. Lately, the Charter is included within the EU Constitution and the more recent Lisbon Agreement; and became also fully binding for all the EU member states. The below table summarises the historical development of the social policy competences of the EU.

The EU has also developed a ‘European Social Fund’ with the 1957 Treaty. This Fund’s goal was to simplify the employment of workers, increase their geographical and occupational mobility and facilitate their adaptation to change, particularly through vocational training. After a number of further reforms, the Fund now co-finances projects for young people seeking employment, for the long-term unemployed, for disadvantaged groups, and for promoting gender inequality in the labour market. As of today, the European Social Fund’s expenditures have grown to almost 10 percent of the EU budget.

**Table 4:** The Social Policy Competences of the EU

<i>Treaty</i>	<i>(Additional) explicit social policy competence</i>
<b>Rome 1957</b>	Free movement of workers Social Security Coordination
<b>Single European Act</b>	Working environment (health and safety)
<b>Maastricht Social Agreement 1992</b>	Social security and protection of workers Protection of workers where employment contract is terminated Collective interest representation Co-determination Employment of third country nationals Working conditions (general) Worker information and consultation Gender equality for labour force Integration in labour market
<b>Amsterdam Treaty 1997</b>	Employment policy coordination and funding of pilot projects and incentives for trans-national cooperation in the field Action against discrimination (sex, race, ethnic origin, belief, disability, age, sexual orientation) Measures fighting social exclusion Measures assuring equal opportunities and treatment of women and men
<b>Nice Treaty 2001</b>	Further measures to protect the workers

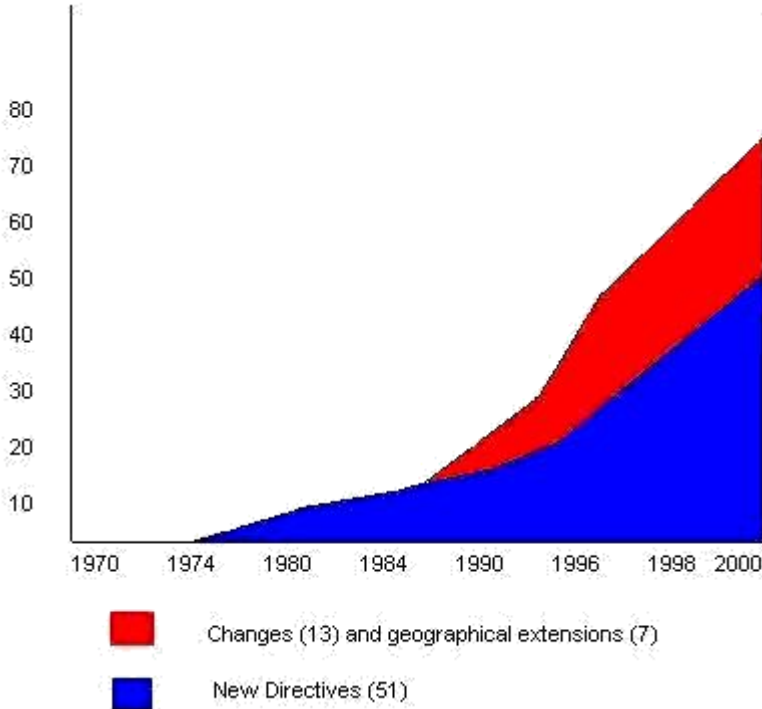
Source: Cini, Michelle (Ed.), *European Union Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. p. 268

In addition to this Fund, the EU also seeks to combat regional and social disparities by other means. Structural Funds, European Regional Development Fund and The European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund can be given as examples of these. Particularly, the structural funds have been an important instrument of the European Union in supporting social and economic restructuring across the Union. Currently, they account for over a third of the European Union budget. These funds are especially crucial for the new member states and the underdeveloped regions of the Union as it helps them to keep up with the EU development average. During and after accession countries such as Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Greece have benefited greatly by these funds, and further strengthened their economic and social structures.

Surely, the increasing number of the EU social directives does not automatically mean that we are seeing the strengthening of the social and welfare policies at the supranational level today. Most of the issues in this

domain are still on paper and under the strong control of the member states. Yet, the increasing number of the EU directives can be taken as the first signs of the long run deepening of the social dimension of the European integration project.

**Table 5:** The Increase in the EU Social Directives



Source: Falkner; Gerda, 'The EU's social dimension' in Cini, Michelle (Ed.), *European Union Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. p. 270

As strong social policies have been historically existent at the national levels within Europe, one can consider the more recent increases in number of EU social directives as a continuation of this practice. The European experience is generally considered as the ideal model of coordinated capitalism. This distinctiveness is mostly visible when a comparison is made with the USA. The American alternative is generally given as the main competitor of the European welfare models where the market is pictured as capable of providing happiness for all. As most of the Americans are proud of their tradition of charitable giving, it is generally argued that the welfare state institutions are compensated by this social solidarity of the USA. Yet, although the charity makes the donor

feel good, it is never big enough to really challenge the social deprivation. In proportional terms, the entire US charitable expenditure is equivalent to the annual fluctuation of the state welfare budget in most of the developed European welfare states.

In future, by combining the democracy and the welfare state, the EU can be a post-national/multi-cultural alternative and attain higher levels of legitimacy. Following the experience of the nation-states, the European institutions and intelligentsia will play a key role in that transformation. Surely, the EU still has a very small bureaucracy compared with the member states; however, with the rising competences of the EU, the number of people working for the EU institutions is increasing. The EU is funding various education institutions with a view to educate future policy leaders for the Union. College d'Europe and European University Institute are the two important examples that are directly funded by the EU for research on supranational policies. Following the nation-states' experience, EU bureaucracy is also funding the scientific studies. Hundreds of Centres, Research Institutes, and Undergraduate and Postgraduate programs in the member and candidate countries are directly funded by the EU today. The EU related academic programs have become increasingly important over the last decades, not only in political science but also in other disciplines. In addition, the EU has also become a key topic in conventional and traditional courses on comparative government and international affairs. Learning about the EU is ever more salient in university curricula; as preparation for the European job-market; and for understanding the evolution of the EU system.

Again, in parallel to the nation-state experience, the EU institutions are funding the modern knowledge centres with a view to make use of the produced data. Moreover, the EU institutions are also investing in their human capital and trying to further strengthen their bureaucratic apparatuses. Additionally, with various opportunities to the young graduates, such as internships, the European institutions are also guaranteeing their future employees. Naturally, during their service in the EU institutions these European officials are supporting the supranational policies to further strengthen the Union as any created bureaucracy would protect itself.

Besides the officials of the supranational legislative and executive organs, the members of the judiciary bodies also play an important role in the deepening

of the Union. Particularly, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has been extremely important in this regard. Therefore, one may argue that the European elites (both in the executive, legislative and judiciary bodies) started to have loyalty also to the supranational institutions. The increasing competences of the EU led to the development of a bureaucratic mass that fight for the deepening of the supranational institutions for self survival. Furthermore, this deepening bureaucracy also started to shoot for the creation of stronger ties between the member states' societies. Various funding opportunities have been created for increasing the cultural and social dialogue between the member-states.

As Alex Warleigh argues the problems of EU the democracy are substantive rather than formal and relate principally to the absence of a meaningful 'Euro-demos'. Vivien Schmidt calls this as lack of politics in the EU. Today, although Brussels holds the keys to decision-making in an increasing numbers of policy areas, interest groups still mostly organise, pressure and protest primarily at the national level, with relatively little transnational cooperation (except for business). The national governments, elected on a political platform at the national level, must speak and act at the EU level as representatives of national territorial interests or even national organised interests and when policies are passed, they then must speak for and act on at the national level in their capacity as EU's political representatives. The result is that they are, therefore, held accountable not only for the developments which they may be or may not be entirely responsible but also for the things which they may not be politically committed.

Moreover, as the national elections tend to focused on substantive policy issues that can increasingly be fully addressed at the EU level, such as immigration, food safety, or economic growth; and the European Parliamentary elections tend to focus on more general polity issues that can only be resolved by nationally-based actors, such as how to reform EU institutions, voters have voice over questions that do not count at the level at which they voice them, running the risk of de-politisation and decreasing engagement in traditional politics.

From all these, one can see that without the development of European level politics and an active European Civil Society, the institutional steps and even the existence of a strong European elite supporting further deepening (surely mostly in the areas which they consider as important) will not lead to the

solution of the legitimacy problem of the supranational institutions. Besides the creation of such a European 'demos' with the above mentioned strategies, the EU institutions should also be capable of providing economic efficiency for further legitimacy. But here the efficiency is not offered solely as an efficient market model, but on the contrary as an efficient political model that is providing welfare and social services to the individuals, and shooting for controlled sustainable development.

The present EU is generally explained as an economic project that aims to create an internal free market (that also includes corrections to the classical market model by means of environmental policy, consumer protection, food safety, public health, etc.) and aspires to become a strong economic bloc. However, it is difficult to argue that the same model has also strong economic governance. There is hardly any common approach to the budget policy (apart from the 3 % budget deficit target), economic growth, the issues of poverty and social cohesion. These issues are still under the control of the national level institutions within the EU. Surely, one can see various pieces of soft law in these domains within the EU but they are not binding. However, for deepening, the EU necessitates a clear-cut economic governance model. The EU can not deepen further by mostly focusing on high politics and without taking the public opinion into consideration; which is mostly concerned with the welfare and social policies. Citizens' solidarity, hitherto limited to the nation-state must be expanded to the citizens of the Union in such a way that, for example, Swedes and Portuguese, Germans and Greeks are willing to stand up for one another. Only then would it be possible expect them to accept the similar minimum wages, let alone the same opportunities for their different collective forms of life and for their individual life projects.

Through the globalisation process, the nature of which is much broader than purely economic, we get more and more accustomed to a different perspective which sharpens our awareness of the growing interdependence of our social arenas, of shared risks, and of the inescapable impact of collective fates. While the acceleration and condensation of communication and traffic makes for shrinking distances in space and time, expanding markets come up against the limits of the planet, and exploiting resources against those of nature. In such a setting, the question arises for how long we can still shift social costs

of insecurity, poverty and misery unto those segments of the workforce that have become relatively 'useless'?

Surely, political elites are not capable of taking and carrying out such an initiative, unless the institutional innovations are met by the response and support of previously reformed value orientations in their populations. Therefore, the first target groups of such a 'project' are not governments, but social movements (trade unions, interest groups, youth and women organisations, etc.) and non-governmental organisations, i.e. the active members of a civil society which extends across the borders of a nation.

In an enlarged EU, further market oriented policies will increase the inequalities between the regions (as this also necessitates the decreasing of the regional funds) and the relatively less gaining member states and the segments of the societies will start questioning the overall project. Hence, for further deepening the Union, which is also crucial in the current era of globalisation, the EU has no other alternative than following social and welfare policies. It may seem paradoxical but in fact for global competitiveness, the EU has to follow more society oriented policies instead of the market oriented ones. This is crucial for keeping the Union together and being able to survive in the era globalisation. Gradually, few such supranational blocs can work for the development of a world economic order leading to a more egalitarian global model. In fact, not this idea, but as Polanyi argues, the belief in a global "self-regulating market" is a "stark utopia".

"Today, the international economy is oligopolistic, with strategic alliances characterizing relations among multinational companies; it is not a 'single open competitive market' propounded by globalists. ... Moreover, trade and investment in the contemporary economy are highly concentrated in the 'Triad': North America, The European Economic Area, and Japan." Furthermore today, "The political rhetoric of globalisation is based on an anti-political liberalism. Set free from politics, the globalised economy allows companies and markets to allocate the factors of production to greatest advantage, and without the distortions of the state intervention." For fighting against the pushing trend of further globalisation moving on these grounds, Hirst and Grahame suggest strong political alliances. In particular, they consider the EU as the most ambitious project of multinational economic governance in the modern world. For them, the EU should be willing to take up economic

governance for the European continent as a whole because there is a “need for policies that link the rich and poor regions in the EU, and that link the rich states of the EU with the poor ones of Eastern Europe in a common search for prosperity. By pursuing a “continental Keynesianism”, the EU can keep the wealth gap from growing, both in the EU and in Europe, and thus can prevent the intensification of conflicts and the growth of migration.

Hence, one can say that the neo-liberal arguments that are based on minimal state do not answer the requirements of today’s global problems. The quest should be for the creation of social regimes, preferably beyond the nation-states/civilisations/cultures, and with a view to restructure the economic world order. In this context, the EU is an important example as it is the only successful and influential integration model at hand. The strengthening of the social model in the EU is vital for not only the future deepening and success of the Union but also for the development of similar regimes in other parts of the world.

### **3. Concluding Remarks:**

#### **The EU as an Inspiration for Multi-Civilisational Futures and Sustainable Development Backed By Social Policies**

For multi-civilisational futures, a civil society monitored political model where the participation is open to all the differences (even the marginal ones) seems utmost crucial. Here, the deliberative or the communicative democracy takes the place of the procedural democracies. The debate of all the possible conflicting ideas is the main goal of this model. However, this radical democratic dimension and inclusivity will have to be supported by the material conditions. Here, the output dimension is crucial and the social policies are still the key for such a distributive justice model.

The assumption of a European identity that unavoidably competes with the pre-existing and deeply rooted myths and memories is a quick decision. What is overlooked by these perspectives, which see an inescapable clash between the national (or parallel collectivist) and any probable supranational identity, is that the nation (or similar collectivist identities) is only one of the communities, imagined or not, to which individuals happen to belong. There are several forms of identification beyond and below these levels, and the political models are still capable of generating a sense of belonging to a broader community with these multiple identities. In this context, the EU can be a



political model which includes those multiple identities under the umbrella of 'political and social rights' as the supranational/transcendental unifier. It is possible to form a civic and inclusive European identity, which is embedded in political institutions and protected by the EU law.

At this point, EU enlargements can be taken as important litmus tests showing the readiness of Europe for such a transformation. Particularly, the Turkey's accession to the EU is crucial as it is generally assumed as the most different candidate state. Turkey's accession to the EU is particularly important as it will show the limits of the current European project in including the other. Zygmunt Bauman calls this process as 'Modernisation without Westernisation'. And if Europe manages to successfully go through such a transformation, the hopes for taking this type of modernisation to the global level may also increase.

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