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Double Allegiance in European Integration

Publics, Nation-States, and Social Policy

KEES VAN KERSBERGEN

RSC No. 97/15

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van Kersbergen: Double Allegiance in European Integration:
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Double Allegiance in European Integration Publics, Nation-States, and Social Policy

KEES VAN KERSBERGEN

A Working Paper written in the framework of the Allegiance Project, directed by Prof. A. Milward under the auspices of the Robert Schuman Centre

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#### **Abstract:**

"Allegiance" is the willingness of a national public to approve of and to support actively the decisions made by a government, in return for economic and social security. European allegiance does not depend on how people look at European integration, but originates in national allegiance. It depends on a double allegiance. Social policy is a critical instrument of statecraft in the welfare state which has the capacity to foster allegiance to the nation-state. Governments of nation-states attempt to nourish allegiance by providing social and economic security. The major reason for this is that national allegiance is and remains the primary source of political power. This explains why most social policies have remained the exclusive competence of national authority, why social policy is such a contested political domain in the European Union, why national welfare states have been so resistant to change, and why the current threat to national social security tends to jeopardize European allegiance.

#### Introduction1

The concept of allegiance is particularly useful for understanding the complex and problematic relation between a national citizenry, a nation-state, and a transnational or supranational polity. This paper deals with the role of national publics and social policy in the process of national and European integration. Anticipating the conceptual discussion below, allegiance is defined — somewhat idiosyncratically perhaps — as the willingness of a national public to approve of and to support actively the decisions made by a government, in return for a more or less immediate and straightforward reward or benefit to which the public is entitled on the basis of it having rendered approval and support.

A relation properly described by allegiance is not simply characterized by the loyalty, trust and obedience of the ruled, but most critically by an *exchange* between a ruler and the ruled, consisting of a pay-off between security and support. The notion of allegiance would enable one to grasp better the historical and contemporary role of European publics in the integration process and may introduce a new view on the problems of political order, legitimacy and identity. Although I take issue with some writings on legitimacy and identity (e.g., Bellamy *et al.* 1995; Franklin *et al.* 1994; Garcia 1993; Hix 1995; Hbrek 1995; Weiler 1993), I should stress here that I am not arguing that the concept of legitimacy should be replaced by the notion of allegiance, but only that "allegiance" is discloses what legitimacy tends to miss, namely the crucial condition of security in the exchange relation between a ruler and the ruled.

The general hypothesis is that European allegiance does not depend on how people look at European integration. How a public understands the European Community or Union (EC, EU) in a general way is most likely largely inconsequential. Moreover, it is unlikely that people evaluate the legitimacy of the EC or EU's political institutions and decision-making processes in any meaningful sense. Finally, the extent to which people are attached to locality, region or country is arguably not directly related to their "European" attachment (see Marks 1996). Instead, European allegiance must be viewed as originating in national allegiance. National allegiance, in turn, is contingent on national social and economic performance. To the extent that a national citizenry

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Sven Bislev, Alan Milward and the participants of the Allegiance-seminar at the Robert Schuman centre for their critical comments and helpful suggestions.

perceives European integration as dysfunctional to national social and economic security, national allegiance is not guaranteed.

European integration, therefore, depends on a *double allegiance*, consisting of a primary allegiance to the nation-state and its political elite and a secondary allegiance to the EC or EU. Secondary allegiance, however, exists to the extent that European integration facilitates nation-states to provide the resources upon which primary allegiance hinges. Primary allegiance emerges via a reciprocal, advantageous transaction relation between governments and publics within the nation-state.

The more *specific hypothesis* is that social policy is a critical instrument of statecraft in the welfare state (Banting 1995) and that social policy has the capacity to foster allegiance to the nation-state. Governments of nation-states, in addition to guaranteeing territorial integrity, attempt to nourish allegiance by providing social and economic security. The major reason for this is that national allegiance is and remains the primary source of the political power of the elite that drives the integration process. This explains why most social policies have remained the exclusive competence of national authority, why social policy is such a contested political domain in the European Union (see e.g., Hantrais 1995; Leibfried and Pierson 1995a), why national welfare states have been so resistant to change, and why any threat to national social security tends to jeopardize European allegiance.

# Allegiance and "The European Rescue of the Nation-State"

The idea of double allegiance is adopted from what I take as the key theoretical idea of Alan Milward's (1992: 3) *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, namely that

"(...) without the process of integration the West European nation-state might not have retained the allegiance and support of its citizens in the way that it has. The European Community has been its buttress, an indispensable part of the nation-state's post-war construction. Without it, the nation-state could not have offered to its citizens the same measure of security and prosperity which it has provided and which has justified its survival".

The notion of allegiance is in many ways crucial to the argument. The modern nation-state is conceived as a complex political organization of mutual political obligations of rulers and ruled. The extension of public functions could not be

achieved but by the extension of obligations of the rulers to the ruled in order to effect the allegiance of the public. But the scope of the necessary extension of functions went far beyond the capacities of nation-states. The rescue of the nation-state in the context of increased interdependence required in the post-Second World War period the surrender of sovereignty. This explains the construction of the European Community.

The nation-states followed a strategy of integration because this was "(...) one way of formalizing, regulating and perhaps limiting the consequences of interdependence, without forfeiting the national allegiance on which its continued existence depends" (Milward 1992: 19). National allegiance was secured and a secondary allegiance developed among national citizens, because the national publics understood that integration was necessary and in their own interest. The phenomenon of double allegiance was born. Secondary allegiance did not significantly weaken primary allegiance, but the former depended on the latter.

National government that was restored after the war turned out to be qualitatively different from the pre-war form of government, because it was based on a new distribution of political power. Ultimately, the power of the state remained grounded in the use of force. "The cruel penalties imposed by its judges, the weapons of its police and armed forces were what, finally, commanded allegiance" (Milward 1992: 24). The two qualitatively distinctive features of the post-1945 power structure, however, concerned the diminished need for force and the foundation of state power on a broader political consensus. Both were crucial for allegiance.<sup>2</sup>

The reconstruction of the post-1945 state originated in the pre-war experience of the collapse of the nation-state. Despite variations there emerged a common European model of the nation-state, built on a foundation of broad political consensus. The common model consisted of two features:

 The inclusion of formerly excluded social classes and a realliance of political coalitions: "labour, agricultural producers, and a diffuse alliance of lower and middle income beneficiaries of the welfare state" (Milward

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Already before the war the construction of allegiance, still ultimately depending on force, was sought in expanding the significance of national symbols and myth, in responding more effectively to the demands of citizens, in extending political rights, in securing a higher standard of living, and in providing social security. This pre-war attempt to save the nation-states from collapsing by securing allegiance, of course, failed dramatically, both nationally (e.g., Germany) and internationally (the Second World War).

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- 1992: 27). The extension of the franchise mattered, but "the more powerful impulses were the desire for security, the general sentiment that only the nation-state could offer it, and the need for national parliamentary government to restore its legitimacy by purchasing allegiance" (Milward 1992: 27);
- The development of political parties as machines of allegiance that intermediated between public and public policy in response to the above mentioned powerful impulses.

The solution to unemployment, first, was seen as crucial to the issue of allegiance, because it was not only a waste of resources, but had also proven to be a threat to political order and obedience. The inclusion and (incomes) protection of the agricultural sector, next, was equally viewed as necessary for allegiance as this sector had proved especially susceptible to non-democratic and extremist political pull. Finally, the welfare state was built with a view to generate and support a nation-wide consensus.

These developments and measures were associated and added up, although largely coincidentally, to a distinctive welfare effect.

"Support for agricultural incomes was an essential support to the welfare state; poor farmers would otherwise have made bigger demands on social insurance systems. High levels of state expenditure on housing construction and other aspects of the economy, such as defence and social security, sustained employment levels by sustaining demand. Full employment gave social insurance a much sounder actuarial basis. Social insurance systems, in their turn, provided governments with a larger financial reserve with which to pursue counter-cyclical economic policies aimed at maintaining high employment" (Milward 1992: 33).

What was in fact being produced were various national "consensuses". But these national consensuses depended in part on the internationalized economies. Hence the stimulus for international cooperation and integration.

"The common policies of the European Community came into being in the attempt to uphold and stabilize the post-war consensus on which the European nation-state was rebuilt" (Milward 1992: 44).

The general argument is underpinned by the historical evidence derived from a number of detailed case studies. The study of the decline of the Belgian coal industry and the Borinage shows how crucial subsidies were in the process and

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how the nation-state reasserted itself through the help of the Community.<sup>3</sup> The Belgian government had always seen the supranational policy and authority as a means to support national policies and goals.

"It was a source of authority outside the nation which could be appealed to for help, blamed for unpopular policies which were also those of the government itself, and, when it suited the mood, caricatured as a technocratic dictatorship trampling the rights of Belgian underfoot" (Milward 1992: 116).

The crucial interpretation is that "the Belgian government had judged correctly in 1950 that integration would provide needed, and unembarrassing, support for combining the management of industrial decline with high welfare and high employment. It had very little to lose and much to gain" (Milward 1992: 118). What it had to gain, of course, was national allegiance.

The explanation of the origins of the European Community concurs with the general argument.

"Given the tendency of the post-war west European state to justify itself ideologically as the guarantor of the social and economic advance of its citizens; given the ensuing tendency to take a somewhat exalted view of the power of foreign trade and particularly of exports; given the velocity with which foreign trade in western Europe did grow; given the way in which this growth did contribute to the growth of efficiency, incomes and choice; a European solution was *necessary*. Domestic policy was not in the end sustainable unless this neo-mercantilism could be guaranteed by its Europeanization" (Milward 1992: 134, italics added).

The creation of the common market is explained by reference to it being virtually the only possible solution to the problem of securing the nation-state and national allegiance in a context of economic interdependence.<sup>4</sup> Equally, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "In the 1960s employment policy, including regional policy, can be seen as a conscious attempt, firmly supported by the Community, to hold together the Belgian nation" (Milward 1992: 115). And furthermore, "On almost every count Belgium's entry into the European Coal and Steel Community reinforced national policy. Without supranational support that policy would have been harder to carry out. Where there were differences of opinion national policy was never in danger of having to change, except slowly and marginally. The real reason for this was the strength of mutual assumptions about stability, welfare and the need for a managed interventionist response to economic change. In circumstances like that it was easy to internationalize policy" (Milward 1992: 116, italics added).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 'The will of the European nation-state to survive as an organizational entity depended on the prosperity which sustained the domestic post-war political compromises everywhere. The importance of foreign trade to that prosperity was great and was magnified in the political

Europeanization of agricultural policy is explained by reference to the impossibility of problem solution within a national framework and the risk of the breakdown of allegiance. To secure the incomes in agriculture without jeopardizing the allegiance of other national social interests created the dilemma for which a common agricultural policy provided the solution. A corollary of the argument, highlighted by a study of the attitude of Britain towards Europe, is that not joining the European Community was against the interest of the nation-state. In fact, the failure to sign the Treaties of Rome is seen as a serious mistake. By stressing sovereignty and independence, arguably also conditions of national allegiance, the British decision not to join may nevertheless have jeopardized allegiance.

The idea of allegiance is central in the rescue-argument. Generally speaking, the rescue and reassessment of the nation-state critically depended on national allegiance. Economic interdependence and the diminished capacity of the nation-state to provide security and prosperity created the necessity of international, transnational or supranational cooperation. Integration helped safeguarding national or primary allegiance and establishing secondary or European allegiance.

Conceptually and substantially there remains some ambivalence in the rescueargument, because the exact meaning of allegiance is not clearly defined. For

and economic thought of the time. West Germany was the pivot on which the increases in foreign trade, investment and prosperity turned. It was essential for political and economic reasons that West Germany be bound to the west, but it needed an arrangement that satisfied the economic interests of Western European countries if a durable way of doing this was to be found. The common market was the one durable way that had been found' (Milward 1992: 223).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 'Would national taxpayers and voters have continued so long to pay the costs of income support for agriculture as the size of the agricultural sector and its weight in the national economy rapidly declined, had the decision been set in a purely national context? Surely not. (...) Because it was shrinking so rapidly, Western European agriculture was the most vulnerable of all the elements in the post-war political consensus. It has proved to be, however, because of the Europeanization of agricultural policy, one of its most durable components' (Milward 1992: 317).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> 'In refusing to join, British governments were weakening the nation more than defending its sovereignty. They were left to carry their own burdens of welfare and agricultural policy and the consequences for manufacturing industry were immediate. Economically and politically Britain's role became increasingly peripheral and the benefits from not having joined the Communities were reduced to no more than the preservation of that same illusion of independence which led to the mistake in the first place' (Milward 1992: 433).

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instance, allegiance can both be commanded (by force) and purchased in order to restore legitimacy. But can allegiance really arise through force and what is the difference between allegiance and legitimacy? Also, allegiance and support are used interchangeably and sometimes both allegiance and support are given to a nation-state at the same time. Is there no difference between support and allegiance? The next section tries to provide some conceptual clarification.

#### Towards a Relational Concept of Allegiance

It is appropriate to pose the following questions: 1) what precisely do we mean by allegiance; and 2) in what context may it be analytically useful to employ the notion? My general answer to the first question is that allegiance is the willingness of a national public to approve of and to support actively the decisions made by a government, in return for a more or less immediate reward or benefit to which the public is entitled on the basis of it having rendered approval and support. My answer to the second question consists of the proposition to view the concept of allegiance as analytically useful for understanding the complex and problematic relationship between a national citizenry, a nation-state and its government, and a transnational or supranational polity.

A relation properly described by allegiance is not simply characterized by the loyalty, trust and obedience of the ruled, but most critically by an exchange between a ruler and the ruled, consisting of a pay-off between security (and prosperity) and support. The "goods" of security (prosperity) and support are varied and manifold. Security offered by a government can be territorial, physical, economic, and social and may range from the protection against war and occupation to compensation for the hardships of social and economic life in a market economy. Support offered by a public can be political, economic, social and civil and may range from various forms of social and political participation and the willingness to pay taxes to the general inclination to observe the law. The notion of allegiance enables one to grasp better the problem of political order, legitimacy and identity from the public's point of view.

Historically, the concept described the relationship between a liege and a liege lord and referred to the duty of the liege to obey and support the liege lord and to the right of the latter to decide for the former. Allegiance is necessarily a relational concept and it is important to stress that in a relation properly

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described by allegiance the implied rights and duties are correlative. It is a dyadic relation where a subject has the right to be protected as well as the duty to obey and support and where the ruler has both the right to decide and the duty to provide security. Allegiance involves a dyadic exchange relation and the currency of this bond as well as the guarantee of its stability consists of trust and security rather than, for instance, the presence of third party as a dispute resolver.

Allegiance describes the relation between the ruled and the ruler, between a subject and a sovereign, between a public or citizenry and a government. The subject confides in the ruler and the ruler in the subject. This remarkable "confidence" is rooted in a double expectation, because both parties in the relation anticipate a reward or benefit: protection, security and prosperity in return for submission and support, and submission and support in return for protection, security and prosperity. Implied in this relation between a public and a government is that when protection and security are not guaranteed, then ultimately obedience and active support decline, and when support and obedience are not delivered, then ultimately the capacity to rule — and therefore the capacity to deliver the goods — decreases.

Allegiance is conceptually close and directly related to the notion of legitimacy. However, there are some important differences that are usually confused. One example already cited exemplifies how the concepts are linked, but sometimes confused. The most powerful impulses for establishing a new political consensus in the post-war era in Western Europe were "the desire for security, the general sentiment that only the nation-state could offer it, and the need for national parliamentary government to restore its legitimacy by purchasing allegiance" (Milward 1992: 27). In this case allegiance is the constitution of legitimacy. However, I think this is not entirely correct and a short discussion of the concept of legitimacy will clarify this.

Legitimacy is multi-dimensional and comprises three levels (Beetham 1991: 15-19): legality, normative justifiability, and legitimation. Political power is legitimate to the extent that

- "- it is acquired and exercised according to established rules (legality); and
- the rules are justifiable according to socially accepted beliefs about a) the rightful source of authority and b) the proper ends and standards of government (normative justifiability); and
- positions of authority are confirmed by the express consent or affirmation on the part of appropriate subordinates, and by recognition from other legitimate authorities (legitimation)." (Beetham and Lord 1996: 1; see Beetham 1991).

Normative justifiability is the key to legitimacy, because disagreements at this level cause problems at the other levels. For the present purposes it is sufficient yet important to note that legitimation, the third dimension of legitimacy, is similar to the meaning of allegiance in this paper. Express popular consent involves actions that publicly demonstrate voluntary agreement and confer legitimacy on the powerful (Beetham 1991: 91, 150). The third dimension of legitimacy comes indeed very close to what I understand to be allegiance. However, a difference is that allegiance does not focus on the demonstration of consent, but on the pay-off relation between a government and the governed, where the latter publicly demonstrate their consent in return for security, i.e. the deliverance of a good. Allegiance is much more than appointing and affirming political authority legitimately, for instance, in elections. Allegiance also points to and touches upon civil obedience, for instance with regard to paying taxes and contributions, or in a more general sense with regard to obeying and implementing the laws in return for the benefit of being governed well.

The point is that all criteria of legitimacy may be met, yet allegiance may not occur. A government may have acquired political power legally according to established rules (criterion 1), the rules may be socially accepted and so may the political programme of the government (criterion 2), and the ruled may have expressed their consent by having elected the government (criterion 3). Nevertheless, allegiance may still be problematic, because the government does not or cannot — possibly for reasons outside its power — deliver economic and social security.

Allegiance as I understand it differs from legitimacy in four important respects. First, legitimacy refers to both the rightfulness of the institution of government and the actual government, whereas allegiance describes the relation between the actual rulers and the ruled. Secondly, allegiance has a more "active" connotation as it presupposes the subject's broad and active support for the ruler and not merely passive acquiescence or express consent. Moreover, the concept of allegiance has this connotation only by virtue, thirdly, of it describing a beneficial exchange between the ruled and the actual ruler, where the ruler delivers security. Allegiance presupposes a pay-off. Finally, legitimacy is — on the basis of the criteria specified — a property of the decision-making processes and the political institutions, while allegiance looks at the relation between rulers and ruled from the public's point of view.

Legitimacy, then, has a more "passive" connotation in that it only asks for a general acquiescent acceptance and express but diffuse consent and not for an evaluation of decisions made by someone else in power or of political

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performance. Legitimacy, in short, does not presuppose an exchange relation, which can be clarified when one appreciates that according to legitimacy one ought to accept decisions as legitimate even if these adversely affect one's interests (see Obradovic 1996). Allegiance does not allow for this possibility.<sup>7</sup>

In the present context allegiance is a concept which is also to be preferred over identity. There is a decisive reason for this. The debate on identity (and its impact on legitimacy) in the EU almost entirely depends on the pivotal assumption that the making of a new polity (e.g., Hooghe and Marks 1997) necessarily depends on the existence or development of a single European identity. Since every national polity to a large extent was built on a national identity, the European polity must equally depend on a European identity. And since there is no such thing as a single European identity, the legitimacy of the polity is to be seen as problematic and questionable. In addition, the EU itself challenges national identity. Thus, Laffan (1996: 82) argues that "European nation-states developed on the basis of a relative congruity between bounded territory, functional tasks and a shared identity. This congruity is no longer assured as the link between territory, governance and identity is eroded at national level and is not replaced by an equivalent set of institutions and shared symbols elsewhere". The Eurobarometer surveys show a continued attachment of national publics to the local, regional, and national levels (Marks 1996) and the erosion of the link between territory, governance and identity is therefore questionable, at least from the publics' point of view. It is the assumption on the necessary congruity of the polity of a nation-state and national identity which creates the problem of identity in the European polity. Relaxing this assumption would reveal that such a problem of identity may not be as crucial as many tend to argue. Many issues with respect to identity and legitimacy in Europe are only problems to the extent that the comparison between nation-state building and the European integration is maintained.

Let me give three examples. "Representative politics is still largely national which constitutes a barrier to the emergence of a *genuinely European political realm* "(Laffan 1996: 93, italics added). But the question is: what precisely is genuine if one drops the analogy with the nation-state? "Political communities are based not just on rational calculation but on sentiment, solidarity and a degree of political cohesion" (Laffan 1996: 95). Again, dropping the analogy generates the question why a European sentiment, solidarity and sense of

Omparable reflections would be valid in the case of the conceptual resemblance between allegiance on the one hand, and loyalty, fidelity, and devotion on the other hand, because neither of the latter notions would involve a material exchange.

political cohesion should need to bolster the European polity? "A European identity is not likely to transcend national identities but may develop as a weaker form of identity in a hierarchy or circle of identities" (Laffan 1996: 98). If this is the case, then what is the point of problematizing identity at European level? I am not arguing that the concept of identity is to be avoided for all analytical purposes and I think it is right to point to problems of immigration and citizenship. But I do argue that focusing on identity has the drawback of presupposing a parallel development between a national political community and the EU. This assumption is flawed.

### Social policy in the Welfare State as an Instrument of Statecraft

The social and territorial integration of the nation-state has nowhere emerged spontaneously and mechanically. The formation of national states has been generally characterized by fierce social and political struggles, by failed attempts to appease class and ethnic wars, and by violent clashes over the construction of a single, national political community and identity (e.g., Tilly 1990; Mann 1993). It was only after the Second World War that in some parts of Western Europe effective mechanisms of social and political conflict resolution were institutionalized and that the legitimacy and territorial integrity of nation-states became fairly well entrenched.

One does not need to employ a functionalist argument to understand that the welfare state as a structural component of post-war advanced industrial democracies has had two pivotal integration effects. The first is social integration and concerns the variable extent to which social policies and welfare arrangements effectively mediate, regulate and reconcile social conflicts, particularly class conflicts (see Van Kersbergen 1995; 1997). The second is national or territorial integration and involves the extent to which the welfare state successfully and positively constructs and reinforces a national political community. Both effects have been critical for post-war state-building and for the political legitimacy of the nation-state.

Following Banting (1995: 271), social policy can be seen "as an instrument of statecraft, to be employed in defining political communities and legitimating the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> I deliberately use the term "effect" rather than function, because the latter term would mistakenly suggest that the origin and development of the welfare state can be explained in terms of its integration effects.

structures of the state". This makes clear why I think it also makes sense to look at national allegiance rather than legitimacy or identity as a crucial constituent of successful social and political integration. It is allegiance that best describes an exchange relation between a political community (the ruled) and its legitimate government within a given nation-state (the ruler). No matter how legitimate authoritative decisions by a government may be as evaluated against legality, normative justifiability and legitimation, ultimately these are binding only to the extent that they are grounded on the tacit consent as well as active support of the citizenry in return for the actual deliverance of security and prosperity. This clarifies why in this context allegiance is preferred over legitimacy or identity, because allegiance presupposes a relation of exchange between the rulers and the ruled and because the currency of the exchange consists of the (physical, economic and social) security and prosperity which a national government offers to its constituency in return for tacit consent and active support.

It is important to stress, however, that a social and political order can never be assumed to be inherently stable as rapidly changing social, economic and political conditions create a permanent need to adapt. Both the reconciliation of social conflicts and the construction of a national political community are never fixed properties of a polity because they are built on social and political alliances and their institutionalization that are permanently challenged. Instead, social and political integration must be seen as a continuous, dynamic, contingent, and — as the resurgence of ethnic, religious, regional and cultural conflicts in Europe demonstrates — sometimes highly precarious process. National welfare states, however stable they may seem, are therefore permanently confronted with a dual problem of integration and the task of reaffirming and reinforcing integration is never accomplished. On the contrary, it is a permanent assignment that properly belongs to the continuous political responsibility of national governments.

If allegiance has as its core the idea of an exchange and if it is the case that the currency of the relation consists of security and prosperity in return for active support, then surely social security is crucial for national allegiance. But if social security is crucial for national allegiance, why did social policy at least until 1985 not get a more prominent place on the agenda of European integration in order to ensure the nation-state's capacity to deliver social security?

I think that the idea of double allegiance is helpful. As argued, social policy is a pivotal instrument of statecraft in the welfare state. It has the capacity to foster allegiance to the nation-state, reinforcing the national basis of political power. This establishes the crucial link with European integration. *Prima facie* this

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seems inconsistent with the thesis on social policy and national allegiance. However, we are dealing, not with an inconsistency, but with a paradox.

European integration, shortly defined as a higher level of integration which involves the voluntary delegation of national authority to a supranational polity, has depended on double allegiance, consisting of a primary allegiance to the national welfare state and its political elite and a secondary allegiance to the EC. Secondary allegiance existed only to the extent that the EC facilitated primary allegiance. And primary allegiance continued to depend on a mutually propitious exchange relation between rulers and ruled within the national welfare state.

It is this paradoxical aspect of European integration that is highlighted by concentrating on allegiance in the case of social policy in Europe. It substantiates the theoretical and substantial relevance and analytical advantage of the notion of allegiance and allows for the formulation of hypotheses on the relation between social policy, nation-states and European integration that are open to falsification in historical and comparative political research.

#### Social Policy and European Integration: Some Issues and Propositions

In this section I select — from the perspective of allegiance, but still somewhat arbitrarily — some issues that can be found in the (growing) literature on social policy and integration and propose some propositions on social policy, national welfare states and European integration. I start at the level of Treaties, appreciating that the dynamic of social policy development is of course not entirely Treaty-driven (Leibfried and Pierson 1995b).

# The Treaty of Rome and National Social Policy

The Treaty of Rome gives a low priority to social policy, preoccupied as it was with the goal of economic integration. Twelve articles dealt explicitly with social policy issues: social provisions (117–122), the European Social Fund (123–127), and vocational training (128). Another ten articles were concerned with health and safety (30–39) and 2 articles dealt with wages and movement of workers (68, 69), although a positive reading might include articles on labour mobility (48, 52, 59) (Collins 1975; Brewster and Teague 1989; Room 1991; Byre 1992; Balze 1994; Hantrais 1995; Ross 1995).

Social policy, however, served one purpose: the removal of potential distortions of competition or mobility. In fact, policy development (especially harmonization) was understood as more or less automatically following successful economic integration (e.g., articles 100—102). Many formulations, moreover, mirrored the national concerns of the member states and their disagreements rather than any social commitment. Thus, article 117 (first paragraph) argued that the members states have agreed upon the need to promote improved working conditions and an improved standard of living for workers so as to facilitate harmonization. The second paragraph of the same article, however, stated that the functioning of the common market itself already favours harmonization of social systems.

The article on equal pay for men and women (119), which had little or no significance until the mid-1970s, originated in a conflict between France and Germany on the possible competitive (dis)advantages of their respective social policy regimes. France insisted on inclusion of the article for the promotion of equal competition (Balze 1994: 39–42; Ostner and Lewis 1995: 162; Hantrais 1995).

As Ross (1995) has noted, the EC was barred from most welfare state areas and the Commission was — in principle — strictly limited in its social policy capacity. The Treaties determined a narrow constitutional room to manoeuvre, the national governments prevailed the decision-making process in this already strictly confined domain, and any social policy initiatives to be taken therefore presupposed a politically prudent Commission.

This absence of social policy in the Treaty of Rome is explained by the crucial role of social policy as an instrument of statecraft in the national welfare states. National elites were only prepared to surrender social policy to the European superstate, if and only if a European social policy could be argued to be functional to economic goals that could not be achieved at national level or if the risks of inadvertent spillovers were likely to be minimal. European social policy was constrained by the Treaty of Rome and by the diplomatic setting that defined social policy as belonging to national sovereignty. The deeper logic of this concerns primary allegiance, because "virtually all organized social forces — political elites and parties, employers, unions, and other — saw the nation as their essential location. Social policy became a fundamental mechanism for distributing available rewards" (Ross 1995: 360).

Whenever possible, social policy remained the exclusive domain of national authority because it was a crucial instrument of primary allegiance. Wherever

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necessary, EU social policy existed to deal with distortions of economic competition.

Eurosclerosis and Faltered Social Policy in the 1970s

Whenever new social policy measures were adopted at European level in the 1970s, the initiatives rested on:

- a) a sense of incapacity among national elites to deal with unexpected worsening social and economic conditions (stagflation, unemployment) that, although common to all member states, were defined nationally;
- b) a sense of incapacity among national elites to deal with unexpected new, domestic social and political demands.

Hence the Social Action Programme with such goals as full and better employment, the improvement of living and working conditions, and greater participation in social and economic decision-making in the Community. However, the formulation of the texts typically reinforced the competence of the nation-state. The Council Resolution concerning the social action programme (21/1/1974, OJ C 13/1 12.2.74) in fact already introduces subsidiarity without using the word (see Van Kersbergen and Verbeek 1994). European social policy was characterized by a lack of direction, strategies, and instruments and by the unwillingness of national governments to surrender their control over a crucial instrument of national allegiance.

# Single European Act and Qualified Majority

The White Paper on the completion of the internal market did not mention social policy, but the Single European Act (SEA) did. Qualified majority voting was allowed in the area of health and safety (article 118A, 2). Moreover, regional policy (economic and social cohesion, article 130, A—E) gained a more prominent place. An activist Commission now began itself to understand social policy as a crucial instrument of European statecraft and willfully started to permeate policy proposals with carefully camouflaged seeds for future social

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The Council 'considers that the Community social policy has an individual role to play and should make an essential contribution to achieving the aforementioned objectives by means of Community measures or the definition of by the Community of objectives for national social policies, without however seeking a standard solution to all social problems or attempting to transfer to Community level any responsibilities which are assumed more effectively at other levels'.

policy growth. According to Ross (1995a: 39; 1995b: 363) the staff of the Delors Commission used the Russian Doll strategy of which the deeper logic "involved building on the EC market-building mandates to move into state-building areas". On a cynical reading this strategy was adopted with a view to lure national governments into supranational social policy-making. A less cynical view would hold that the strategy was chosen in order to persuade hesitant member states to get over the threshold of social policy as national statecraft towards transnational statecraft.

The third dimension of the *Paquet Delors*, the financial complement of the SEA proposed in 1987, built on the commitment to economic and social cohesion and proposed an intensification of regional redistribution. The aim was to counteract the risk of downward harmonization caused by socioeconomic disparities between member states. Here arose a context in which the richer nation-states were willing to confront regional inequality by supranational policy. National competitiveness was jeopardized by "social dumping" and the "race to the bottom" with considerable political risks for the project of European integration. A national concern for allegiance, therefore, explains the reform of the structural funds, which were doubled in 1988 (Marks 1991; J. J. Anderson 1995).

## Social Charter, Maastricht and Subsidiarity: Constraints and Pressures

The preamble of the "Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers" of late 1989 includes an explicit reference to the principle of subsidiarity, echoing not only the member states' concerns (see Rhodes 1995: 96), but also an awareness that it had become necessary to defend crucial national means of statecraft explicitly. In his preface, Delors defined the Social Charter as the keystone of the social dimension in the construction of Europe: "[i]t incorporates a foundation of social rights which are guaranteed and implemented, in some cases at the level of the Member States or at Community level depending on the field of competence". Subsidiarity appears in one of the considerations in the preamble: "[w]hereas, by virtue of the principle of subsidiarity, responsibility for the initiatives to be taken with regard to the implementation of these social rights lies with the Member States or their constituent parts and, within the limits of its powers, with the European Community", immediately followed by the "reassuring" statement, that "the solemn proclamation of fundamental social rights at European Community level may not, when implemented, provide grounds for any retrogression compared with the situation currently existing in each Member State".

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The inclusion of subsidiarity in the Social Charter reveals that member states are anxiously protecting the national character of the welfare state in order to retain social policy as an exclusive domain of statecraft and as an instrument of primary allegiance. 10 The fate of Europe's social dimension as promoted by the Commission depends to a large extent on the conditions under which constraints that impede and forces that propel the development of a European social policy are likely to crystallize and steady and are capable of overriding national resistance. Form the European perspective, the are four barriers to social reform: 1) the fragmentation of European political institutions, exemplified by the conflicts over the extension of majority voting to social policy at the Maastricht summit and the exceptional position Britain was granted; 2) the absence or weakness of political forces, notably social democracy and organized labour, and other coalitions that can shoulder the expansion of social policy; 3) the economic, social and cultural heterogeneity of Europe, that complicates the construction of an integrated and harmonized social policy; 4) the fundamental diversity of national welfare states that excludes the development of a European social policy. According to this analysis

"the welfare state remains the realm of policy competence that still rests firmly in the hands of national governments, neither gravitating upward to the EC nor devolving to local or regional governments. Given the popularity of most social programs, national administrators will not be eager to accept a major transfer of social policy authority" (Leibfried and Pierson, 1992: 348; but compare Leibfried and Pierson 1995b).

Are there any pressures that encourage social policy development at EC level? First, there is the already mentioned possibility of "social dumping", that is 'the prospect that firms operating where "social wages" are low may be able to undercut prices of competitors, forcing higher-cost firms to either go out of business, reallocate to low-social-wage areas, or pressure their governments to reduce social wage costs (Leibfried and Pierson, 1992: 349). Although "social dumping" is likely to increase the political demands on national welfare arrangements and — if such demands are difficult to meet at the national level — on social policy activity of the EU, it is questionable that the risk of dumping is high (Mosley 1995). Second, economic integration may constrain the capacity of nation-states to pursue or continue national social policies, because these emerge as non-tariff barriers to trade, inviting a response from the Commission (Leibfried and Pierson 1992: 348—53). But inviting a response is not equal to responding, let alone leading to acceptance by the member states. Finally, ongoing economic integration may spur the need to extend the meaning of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Streeck (1995: 428) sees the Charter as an exercise in comparative labour law, highlighting what the member states have at a basic level already in common.

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European citizenship and accompanying rights. However, needs do not create their own fulfillment.

The balance of pressures seems to be such, that it is perhaps difficult for the EU not to raise efforts in the domain of social policy, but, as said, pressures or "needs" to pursue social policy do not guarantee their own fulfillment. The institutions of the EU are likely to take initiatives; the success of such initiatives depends on political support at the national level; and national governments accept European social policy only if national solutions prove to be deficient. The fact that national welfare states have proven to be very resistant to change corroborates the general argument.

# The Resistance of National Welfare States to Change

Increasing interdependence, internationalization and globalization of national economies are argued to compel national welfare states to dismantle their social systems radically for reasons of international competitiveness. Accordingly, different national systems are assumed to converge rapidly around a lowest common social denominator that is a far cry from the welfare state of the golden age.

A similar account is given of the effects of European integration on national welfare states. Severe risks of social tourism and social dumping arise as the European nation-states gradually abandon their economic borders. National welfare states, again for the sake of competitiveness, necessarily adjust their social systems quite radically in a struggle for survival in a common market that, paradoxically, was itself invented to facilitate and regulate economic competition and to preserve welfare (Adnett 1995; Begg and Nectoux 1995; Ferrera 1994; Kosonen 1994; Rhodes 1996).

Empirically oriented social and historical studies, however, provide very little confirmation of radical changes that the theories so forcefully prophesy. No doubt, the empirical evidence documents extensively the immense pressures on as well as the massive challenges to the welfare state. Moreover, there is evidence for incremental adjustment in the major programmes, decreasing growth of social expenditures, and retrenchment. But, paradoxically, there is also a substantial gap between the (conservative and neoliberal) political rhetoric of retrenchment and the actual resistance against change of most of the welfare state's core programs.

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Why have the European welfare states been so impervious to radical change in spite of the economic, social and political transformation they have experienced and in spite of the mounting pressures they are facing? The reason is that the politics of retrenchment is fundamentally different from the politics of welfare state expansion. National welfare states — contrary to expectations — have not been fundamentally transformed in the last two decades or so because radical change undermines the national allegiance upon which the very political power of the governments that are willing to introduce and implement radical changes primarily depends (see Hantrais 1996; Gould 1996; Stephens 1996; Pierson 1994, 1996; Esping-Andersen 1996).

# Allegiance and the Contemporary Problem of Declining Support for **European Integration**

Mario Monti, the Commission's internal market commissioner recently said:

"It is something of a paradox that people should identify Europe only with budgetary sacrifices, which needed to be carried out anyway, and not with the advantages it has actually brought" (in *The European*, 21–27 November 1996).

Thinking in terms of double allegiance and social policy as statecraft explains

that this is indeed a paradox, that is to say, a seeming contradiction.

There was a time that national and European technocratic and political elites had little to worry about public attitudes towards their project of integration. Either national publics had no opinion or — to the extent that they did — they supported integration in a diffusely positive manner. National publics appeared to consider integration as an elite project which presumably and somehow facilitated their own government's attempt to pursue policies in the national interest. And as long as their governments succeeded in securing these interests, integration could be evaluated as a good thing or at least as nothing to worry about much. There was a "permissive consensus" (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970) which tolerated and warily supported European integration.

Relying on current initiatives in Brussels to launch campaigns that would "bring Europe closer to the people", listening carefully to the fashionable yet essentially defensive words of Eurospeak like "transparency", "openness", and even "subsidiarity", and looking at the Euro-public relations campaign to explain to the European publics what monetary union is all about, some anxiety about the Union's public image is now taking root (see Lodge 1994; Van Kersbergen and Verbeek 1994; Schmitter 1996).<sup>11</sup>

There seems to be some substantive ground for the elites' concern. Public support for European integration is in decline since 1991 (Anderson and Kaltenthaler 1996). This can be observed in European and national opinion polls, in the results of the Danish "first no then yes" referenda, the French "noui" to the Treaty of Maastricht, and in the results of European elections, most recently and significantly in the Austrian elections which put the anti-integration FPÖ almost on a par with the ÖVP and the SPÖ.

It is a recurrent and increasingly frequent phenomenon that policy-makers react to their own inability to convince others of the correctness of their course by redefining the lack of popularity as a harmful effect of a failure of communication and of bad public relations management. Does the public not accept the policy or the cherished project? Then surely there must be something wrong with the information flow to the public and with the way the policies and projects have been communicated. The answer to skeptical public moods and decreasing popularity is then better advertisement and propaganda.

However, there is reason to believe that the public Euro-skepticism has little to do with bad public relations or a failure of communication. Where political science theories and analytic journalism readily seek the root cause of deteriorating support in the notorious democratic deficit and the lack of legitimacy in general (e.g., Neunreither 1994) and in the secrecy of politics and public policy-making in the Council of Ministers in particular, public opinion research indicates that the decline of support for European integration may, in fact, be associated with worsening expectations of national publics about the national economy and social security. Simply put, poor economic and social conditions tend to reduce support for European integration (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993).

But what is the mechanism explaining the link between national social and economic conditions and public support for the European Union? In line with the general argument of this paper, the answer would run something like this. Governments in the context of a country's political system are held responsible

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> An ambitious Citizens First campaign, costing 24 million Ecu, was recently launched (26 November 1996) and informs European citizens about their rights in the single market. Another campaign on institutional reform will start after the Intergovernmental Conference on the revision of the Maastricht Treaty.

for growing economic and social insecurity (see C. Anderson 1995). European integration as supported by the national political elites will be evaluated as a bad thing or at least as something to worry about when further integration, currently monetary union, does not so much seem to generate an "ever closer union" but rather an ever more austere national policies of retrenchment that reinforces social insecurity. The decline of primary or national allegiance explains the decline of secondary or European allegiance.

That monetary union will generate considerable advantages for the member states in the long run and would therefore reinforce national allegiance is an argument that — as most politicians in a representative democracy should know — cannot convince voters who see their social security threatened in the short run. If a government wants further European integration and if further integration means harmful national economic and social policies, then European integration is evaluated negatively. This is a threat to national allegiance. integration is evaluated negatively. This is a threat to national allegiance. shows that support for European integration is much more fragile than the prolonged "permissive consensus" and double allegiance suggested. This is highlighted by the recent strikes with a distinct anti-European tone in several of the member states in the Autumn/Winter of 1995 and of 1996. As I am writing this (late November 1996), French truck drivers, joint by train drivers and airport personnel, are blocking France's borders in order to emphasize thei demands to the employers. The Juppé-government is anxious to prevent further escalation and offering financial assistance to truck companies to pay for early retirement right. Danish truck drivers are blocking the Danish-German border in order to defend and expand tax privileges. In doing so, the strikes show how crucial social and economic security is for primary allegiance. Moreover, the European traffic-jam caused by the strikes tangibly and dramatically underscores the extent to which the European economies are interdependent.

I think that the rescue-argument and its emphasis on allegiance assumes a contemporary significance. If it is the case that primary, national allegiance was secured by integration and a secondary allegiance developed among national citizens, because the European publics understood that integration was necessary and in their own interest, then the performance of national economies and of the social system is the crucial variable for understanding patterns of double allegiance. If there is a relation between national performance and integration (and between these and allegiance), then this must be a "linear" one. Thus, integration is (or is thought to be) beneficial for the national interest, defined in social and economic goals by the elite, and this leads the public to believe that because the national interest is their interest, integration is good. Allegiance, both national and "European", is based on this causal chain. In other words, the

European Union is popular if the national economy performs well from the public's point of view and if economic and social security is not endangered.

In this sense, popular support for integration is critical, but indirectly so. It is the fairly prosaic support for national governments to help solve national social and economic problems inter- or supranationally which matters, not some remarkable pro-European identity or a similar lofty zeal. Moreover, improving the democratic legitimacy of the EU will have little effect on double allegiance. The fundamental reasons is that European integration, the reassertion of the nation-state and double allegiance of national publics are part of the same logic. Public support for Europe will vary according to national economic and social performance, both over time and cross-nationally and this has little to do with concerns about legitimacy or with the problem of identity, unless these concerns are coupled to a sense of insecurity among national citizenries.

Support for the Union is therefore predominantly utilitarian or evaluative. Recent public opinion research (Anderson and Kaltenthaler 1996) suggests that the higher the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the lower the level of unemployment, the lower the level of inflation, the earlier the entry into the Community, and the longer the length of membership, the higher the public support for European integration tends to be. The empirical tests against different measures of public support for European integration to be less relevant than unemployment and inflation. This makes sense in terms of allegiance and its emphasis of security in exchange for support, for it is the prospect of unemployment and inflation rather than a general idea about economic growth that effects a popular sense of insecurity.

However, timing and length of membership were found to have consistent positive effects on all measures of public support for Europe. This means that security is probably not the entire story. Anderson and Kaltenthaler (1996), therefore argue that — in addition to domestic economic performance — the timing of entry into the Union (presumed to reflect "original enthusiasm") and the length of membership (conjectured to induce a domestic socialization process) influence patterns of support since 1973.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Three questions were used as an operationalization of the dependent variable that tap both the utilitarian and affective dimensions of support: 1) In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe?; 2) Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the Common Market is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?; 3) If you were to be told tomorrow that the European Community (Common Market) had been scrapped, would you be very sorry, indifferent, relieved?

However, I am a bit skeptical about the entry- and socialization-arguments as I am not convinced that they tap anything particular. The early entry argument as reflecting "original enthusiasm" says more about the elite than about public opinion and in any case would probably need to fall back on to the utilitarian argument in order to explain why original enthusiasm is reflected in the contemporary enthusiasm of the public. The socialization argument holds that "joining the EU starts a domestic socialization process, which leads to greater awareness and appreciation of the benefits derived from integration, and the set of institutions making up the EU more generally (...)" (Anderson and Kaltenthaler 1996: 177). This arguments, in facts, repeats the utilitarian point ("benefits from integration") but at the same time assumes that European publics are well informed about EU institutions, which is not the case.

The most interesting findings of the research, which corroborates the critique, is that "(...) publics are less supportive, the more questions require them to calculate the trade-offs of membership (...). On the face of it (...) it is plausible that European publics approach the integration process with somewhat of a cost-benefit calculus in mind" (Anderson and Kaltenthaler 1996: 193). This implies that the assumed socialization process — i.e. in time a national public is familiarized with the institutions of the Union and the effects of integration — has no independent positive effect on support for European integration. It is therefore primarily domestic economic performance which affects public opinion on Europe, and "national and supra-national politics matter to European mass publics" (Anderson and Kaltenthaler 1996: 195) only to the extent that national politics provides benefits, possibly through integration.

If we assume that politicians are relatively intelligent, perhaps even rationally calculating human beings themselves, then the cost-benefit calculus is a characteristic of political processes in a more general sense. Politicians, a national political elite, foreign ministers, high level bureaucrats, the European technocrats, diplomats, all have a sense of the importance of allegiance not only as an asset upon which the success of integration policies ultimately depends, but also simply and directly as a factor determining their careers in office. To continue the European project national allegiance must be assured.

# Conclusion: A Threat to Double Allegiance?

The anxiety of nation-states to protect their authority in social policy does not necessarily entail a successful defense. In fact, the European welfare state

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regimes are now largely embedded in the internal market and the two-tier system of European social policymaking. In this context, the room for national social policymaking is more restricted than before. In particular, three kinds of constraints are relevant for national social policymaking: 1) obligations in international law to enable cross-border mobility of labour; 2) growing interdependence with actors in other national systems; 3) competition between national systems for mobile production factors (Streeck 1996: 83–88). A supranational, European level of social policy does exist, but has not replaced the national welfare state and is restricted in terms of authoritative capacities. However, national social policy is affected by integration:

"A supranational social policy regime limited to market-making, forces national social policy to devote significant political resources to the opening of national borders (...). With market integration laying national welfare states open to unprecedented competitive pressures, nationally confined economic and social policies become dependent on the voluntary cooperation of mobile production factors, forcing governments to rely more and more on the provision of incentives and inducements for the latter. In the process national social policy regimes and the national social compacts that sustain them are bound to be fundamentally transformed' (Streeck 1996: 88).

Subsidiarity is a symptom of a more general phenomenon that Streeck (1995; 1996) has recently identified as "neovoluntarism". Neovoluntarism is emerging as the central characteristic of the post-welfare state social policy regime of Europe. This social policy regime

"fits the political bargain underlying the internal market; conforms with the dictates of intergovernmental market making without supranational state-building; and is compatible with the fragmented polity in which it is made, with minimized supranational regulation and reregulation and high horizontal interdependence" (Streeck 1995: 423; see Streeck 1996: 77ff).

The Union's social policies allow "diversity of rules and regimes and choice between them, as well as the use of national machinery for dealing with international externalities (...)" (Streeck 1995: 424). Neovoluntarism "stands for a type of social policy that tries to do with a minimum of compulsory modification of both market outcomes and national policy choices, presenting itself as an alternative to hard regulation as well as to no regulation at all" and

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it "allows countries to exit from common standards if their polity or economy will not sustain them" (Streeck 1995: 424). 13

Neovoluntarism in social policy discontinues the European welfare state tradition as it resists to guarantee social rights politically and legally. The role of the state is diminished, while the roles of the market and of civil society are maximized. Therefore, "neovoluntarism returns allocational decisions to private actors in private markets, with no possibility previously to readjust their political and organizational resources" (Streeck 1996: 83).

The implication of this is that to employ social policy as an instrument of national statecraft is increasingly difficult and that, as a result, national and therefore European allegiance may be eroded. Moreover, the previous section showed that further integration, especially monetary union, may paradoxically undermine national allegiance and therefore European allegiance, precisely because it subverts the national welfare consensus. The exchange between the rulers and the ruled in the European nation-states, once facilitated by economic integration, has become less propitious and more arduous. Allegiance is in double trouble.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> In this way, "cohesion" is obtained by mode of exemption. Neovoluntarism also 'gives precedence to established national customs and practices and encourages contractual agreements between market participants' (Streeck 1995: 424–5). In this way, "unity" is secured by mode of subsidiarity. Neovoluntarism also represents the attempt 'to enlist for purposes of governance the subtle, cajoling effects of public recommendations, expert consensus on "best practice", explication of the common elements of national regimes, and mutual information and consultation' (Streeck 1995: 425). In this manner, "governance" is substantiated by means of recommendation, expertise, explication, and consultation. Neovoluntarism also 'offers public and private actors menus of alternatives from which to choose' (Streeck 1995: 425). In this way, "governance" is guaranteed by means of choice.

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