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THE DEFENCE OF THE EUROPEAN VALUES AND SOCIAL MODEL FACE THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Introduction

The work whose introduction we are about to start is to offer a general view of the current situation of the Welfare States in the countries of the European Union, outlining the characteristics of the so-called European Social Model. The enlargement of the European Union up to 27 countries has marked a historical milestone which has significantly changed the processes of convergence between Member States, originally expressed as a goal with no deadline. Its economics aspects were later specified in the Treaty of Maastricht, which led to the Economic and Monetary Union and the origin of the Euro as single currency. Nothing similar has happened at the social field. Social policy is a key on the real configuration of the Welfare States and is still a competence of the Member States. Its approach should be found through the coordination of the different national policies.

The study we are introducing will enable the gauging of the great divergence that Member States show on welfare expenditure and its functions. This requires a classification of the Welfare States into different sub models, so that we could better understand the peculiarities of the different realities.

Moreover, some critics to the welfare state model as an institutional arrangement dates back to more than 30 years ago, as it was considered inefficient in the exigent globalization context.

It is a fact that the dismantling of the Welfare State was not carried out in any European country. But some new ways of financing, management and social protection are being sought to guarantee the political and economic feasibility of the system and to improve its results in terms of efficiency.

A General View to Social Policies and Welfare States of the European Union

Usually we are speaking about the Welfare State in general and comparing it to a model of homogeneous features that could be recognized in any Member State of the European Union. This styling is just a rough approach to a very diverse and complex reality, moreover now after the enlargement of Europe. To enrich the vision of the social Europe we could start offering a classification of the different Welfare States corresponding to the EU-15 countries in four social models: Nordic, continental, Anglo-Saxon and Mediterranean, Boeri (2002).

Efficiency and equity in the European social models

Sapir (2005) has classified the four models from two variables, efficiency and equity, inherent in all of them. In table 1 we can see that the Nordic model presents the best record, as it joins high efficiency and equity. In the cases of Anglo-Saxon and continental models a trade-off is produced between equity and efficiency. Incapacity to reach simultaneous high records in both variables determines: a commitment for efficiency in the Anglo-Saxon case and higher attention to equity in the continental model. The Mediterranean model, with low records on efficiency and equity should be widely reformed as it presents a clearly negative situation.

Table 1.

		Efficiency	
		High	Low
Equity	High	Nordic	Continental
	Low	Anglo-Saxon	Mediterranean

Source: Sapir 2005.

European social model concept

The expression *European social model* was firstly used in the 1980s by Jacques Delors, who was president of the European Commission at that time, to identify the main features of European policies in contrast to the United State's model. These policies tried with reasonable success to combine economic development and social progress. We are going to use some data to outline this characteristic profile of the European social model and the noticeable differences we are going to see between Member States.

A quantitative approximation to the European social model

We are going to deal with this quantitative approximation focusing on three vectors: social expenditure as a percentage of GDP, the same social expenditure but per capita in purchasing power standard, and the functions in which this social expenditure is distributed as percentage of the total.

Social expenditure as percentage of GDP (1975–2006)

Table 2 shows a general view of the evolution of social spending in some countries of the UE-27. The period included goes from 1975 to 2007, except for the countries having joined the EU later. In this way, Portugal shows data from 1995 and from the countries of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements we only have data from the year 2000.

If we stand by the table we can see a growing trend of social spending until the middle of the 90's, except from Ireland. From this moment the trend changes with a generalized fall until the year 2000 in which a new turning point upwards takes place until 2004. Between 2004 and 2007 a light fall takes place, although diversity in performance is significant. In this way, Ireland (which is more than 9 points under the EU-27 average); Spain (more than 5 points); Hungary (almost 5 points); Italy (0.5 over the average); Holland (clearly over the average) and Portugal (a little under the average) alter the general rule. All these countries show a slight increase of social expenditure between 2004 and 2007. This fact allows us to point out other feature which is the strong dispersion of data between countries. The great difference between the 30.5% of France and the 12.8% of Romania should reflect the current social model in those countries, which dismisses an easy conception of the European social model, especially in the new Europe.

Table 2. Social expenditure as percentage of GDP

Country	1975	1985	1995	2000	2004	2007
Czech Rep.	-	-	-	19.5	19.6	18,6
Germany	27.8	25.8	32.5	29.2	29.5	27,7 ^(p)
Ireland	22.0	25.6	24.1	14.1	17.0	18.9
Greece	10.0	19.5	23.6	25.7	26.0	24.4
Spain	16.2	24.8	26.3	19.7	20.0	21,0 ^(p)
France	26.3	34.2	35.9	29.5	31.2	30,5 ^(p)
Italy	20.6	26.7	28.2	24.7	26.1	26,7 ^(p)
Lithuania	-	-	-	15.8	13.3	14,3 ^(p)
Hungary	-	-	-	19.3	20.7	22,3
Holland	29.3	30.7	32.4	26.4	28.5	28,4 ^(p)
Poland	-	-	-	19.5	20.0	18,1
Portugal	-	-	23.7	21.7	24.9	24,8
Romania	-	-	-	13.2	14.9	12,8
Slovenia	-	-	-	24.9	24.3	21,4 ^(p)
Sweden	27.4	32.0	39.6	30.7	32.9	29,7 ^(p)
United Kingdom		20.9	27.1	27.1	26.3	25,3 ^(p)
UE-15	-	-	-	26.9	27.6	27,5 ^(p)
UE-25	-	-	-	26.6	27.3	26,4 ^(p)
UE-27	-	-	-	-	-	26,2 ^(p)

Source: Eurostat-Esspros.

We should add other typologies to the four models pointed out by Boeri and Sapir, as other newer emerge showing, although vaguely, common features that will enable the formation of other explicative models of the different socioeconomic realities currently in Europe. It is also important to say that according to data from 2004 social protection expenditure had probably grown under the GDP (Eurostat 2007). In general, social protection expenditure as percentage of the GDP has been stable since 2003 (Eurostat 2008) both for UE-15 and UE-25.

Social protection expenditure per capita in Purchasing Power Standard (2007)

The third table shows a new vector to bring us close to those features that can be of help understanding, from a quantitative point of view the European Social Model concept. The data on the table offer a precise comparison as social protection spending is presented per capita Purchasing Power Standard.

Table 3. Social protection expenditure in PPS *per capita* (2007)

HOLLAND	9293,2 (p)	142
SWEDEN	9028	138
FRANCE	8264,3	127
GERMANY	7943,1(p)	122
UK	7455,1 (p)	114
UE-15	7464,3 (p)	114
IRELAND	7054,4	108
UE-25	6805,5 (p)	104
ITALY	6773,3 (p)	104
UE-27	6521,8 (p)	100
GREECE	5719,9	88
SPAIN	5526,4 (p)	85
SLOVENIA	4760,5 (p)	73
PORTUGAL	4700,6	72
CZECH REP.	3717,8	57
HUNGARY	3477,8	53
POLAND	2428,7	37
LITHUANIA	2135,9 (p)	33
ROMANIA	1352,2	21

Source: Eurostat-Esspros.

We can see again a large dispersion of data: Holland has the highest spending, almost seven times higher than Romania's, the lowest. It would be really difficult to get round this reality and speak openly of a European Social Model, formed by equivalent social protection systems. We will see that it is more about sharing values than sharing properly financed institutional designs to meet population's needs. Although a Romanian and a Dutch can share some values, their citizen's rights are completely different.

Social expenditure by functions (2007)

The fourth table shows the per cent allocation, by functions of the total social spending, corresponding to 2007. We can see how the weight of the expenditure in old age and survival pensions is the most important in all countries, except Ireland. We find again dispersion on the values although a bit more nuanced, having excluded Ireland's for being oddly low and those of Poland and Italy for being oddly high, the distance between the highest, Greece (52%) and the lowest, Holland (40.2%) is a bit more than eleven points.

Table 4. Social spending by function (% total social spending) (2007)

Country	Old age/survival	Illness/Health	Disability	Family/Childhood	Unemployment
Czech Rep	43,9	33,9	8,1	9,2	3,5
Germany	43,1 ^(p)	29,8 ^(p)	7,7 ^(p)	10,6 ^(p)	5,8 ^(p)
Ireland	27,4	41,1	5,5	14,7	7,7
Greece	52	28,1	4,9	6,2	4,5
Spain	41,3 ^(p)	31,2 ^(p)	7,6 ^(p)	6,0 ^(p)	11,7 ^(p)
France	45,3 ^(p)	29,9 ^(p)	6,1 ^(p)	8,5 ^(p)	6,1 ^(p)
Italy	61,1 ^(p)	26,1 ^(p)	6,0 ^(p)	4,7 ^(p)	1,8 ^(p)
Lithuania	47,0 ^(p)	30,7 ^(p)	10,4 ^(p)	8,7 ^(p)	1,9 ^(p)
Hungary	43,9	25,5	9,6	12,8	3,4
Holland	40,2 ^(p)	32,5 ^(p)	9,1 ^(p)	6,0 ^(p)	4,3 ^(p)
Poland	60,2	22,1	9,6	4,5	2,2
Portugal	50,0 ^(p)	28,3	10	5,3	5,1
Slovenia	46,7 ^(p)	32,1 ^(p)	7,8 ^(p)	8,7 ^(p)	2,3 ^(p)
Sweden	41,0 ^(p)	26,1 ^(p)	15,3 ^(p)	10,2 ^(p)	3,8 ^(p)
UK	44,9 ^(p)	30,6 ^(p)	9,8 ^(p)	6,0 ^(p)	2,1 ^(p)
Romania	47,3	23,8	10	13,2	2,2
UE-15	46,6 ^(p)	29,3 ^(p)	8,0 ^(p)	7,9 ^(p)	5,2 ^(p)
UE-27	52,8 ^(p)	29,1 ^(p)	8,1 ^(p)	8,0 ^(p)	5,1 ^(p)

Source: Eurostat-Esspros.

After the expenditure in pensions, next biggest chapter is health. In this case Ireland clearly exceeds the European average (29.1%) with 41.1% and Poland has the lowest percentage 22.1%. We have to highlight that the sum of the two most important chapters, pensions and health, amounts around the 80% of total social expenditure, which makes clear their importance as key elements on the European Welfare States.

Expenditure in social protection of disabled people and family tends to be around 16% of the total, 8% each one, but data shows again large distance ones from the others. In the case of disabled allowances Sweden is a clear outlier 15.3%. In the case of family allowances policies some countries stand out as Ireland (14.7%), Germany (10.6%) and some new EU members as Hungary (12.8%) and Romania (13.2%). It is also important to mention the meagre weight of familiar policy in Spain (6%), Italy (4.7%) or Poland (4.5%) all of them with a strong catholic tradition.

Unemployment allowances reach an average of 5.1% in the UE-27, standing out Spain's data (11.7%) and Italy (1.8%), the lowest of those on the table. We do not find convergence here either, although maybe employment policies have achieved a better coordination in the European Union.

The European social model as an ideal one

From what has already been said we can conclude that *the concept of European Social Model* presents some difficulties to capture the reality of social protection systems in the Member States of the European Union, even more in the face of the enlargement to 27 countries at the beginning of 2007. Why then is it so much interest in keeping the debate about the concept and outlining its main features?

We are in front of the paradigm of a model to follow in order to combine economic efficiency and social justice (Ferrera et al. 2000, Esping-Andersen 1999) in the most suitable way. If we come back to the scheme proposed by Sapir (2005) in the first table, we should wonder if we had to identify the Nordic model as the ideal one, as it couples high efficiency with equity and offers an universal system of social security, a fair distribution of income and salaries, an efficient collective bargaining mechanism and a high investment in education and research and development (R&D).

It is paradoxical that the documents which outline the long term European Union's strategy, as those with the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy, have the United States as a reference instead of the countries of the EU which have already achieved the objectives all member states are after to, even when a comparison with the United States is completely inappropriate, because of cultural and economic policy reasons.

The European social model as a political protect

The European Commission (2005) stated that it considers the basic features of current social models in the EU. They can be grouped into five fields: Policies are based on solidarity values, cohesion, equal opportunities and fight against discrimination. Security and health at labour policies, universal access to education and health care, quality of life and employment, sustainable development and ways for civil society participation are incorporated.

- An important public sector.
- Enhancement of national systems, at a supranational level, through EU intervention.
- Important tradition of social dialogue and establishment of agreements between governments, trade unions and industry.

The European Social Agenda was emanated from the European Council of March 2005. It was about achieving a better level and quality of life through strong economic growth, employment creation, social cohesion and environment protection.

In the same line the informal European Council celebrated on 27th October 2005 in Hampton Court (Great Britain) highlighted the European dimension of

social policies and the common objective of moving towards social justice through a higher economic growth, more employment creation and more flexible social systems.

In July 2008 the European Commission presented a Paper which represents a renovation of the Social Agenda: “Renewed Social Agenda: Opportunities, Access and Solidarity in 21st century Europe”. This is a key document to understand the main action lines in the social field in Europe. In this sense the document makes it clear on its 3rd page; actions on the social field are, first of all, Member States’ responsibility, specifying limits to EU’s power on this field.

It is said that this renewed Agenda shouldn’t be limited to traditional domains. It should be transverse and multidimensional, meeting a wide range of fields from labour market policies to education, health, immigration and intercultural dialogue. The Renewed Social Agenda established on the Paper is shaped by three concepts: opportunities, access and solidarity. It is said then that the creation of opportunities requires a constant effort to create more and better jobs and to increase welfare.

That means taking barriers down, making mobility easier, fighting against discrimination, strengthen gender equality, helping families and avoiding new ways of social exclusion. Individuals need access to exploit opportunities; access to education, health care and general interest social services. They should be able to participate and actively integrate themselves in the societies they live. But there are also individuals and regions in Europe that kept out of changes and need some help. This is why solidarity is so important to fight against poverty and social exclusion.

One of the three priorities in the Europe 2020 Strategy is the Inclusive growth. That means a high employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion. That means too empowering people through high levels of employment, investing in skills, fighting poverty and modernising labour markets, training and social protection system. For the European Commission is also essential that the benefits of economic growth spread to all parts of the Union, thus strengthening territorial cohesion. Europe need according with this communication to make full use of its labour potential to face the challenges of an ageing population and rising global competition. In this sense policies to promote gender equality will be needed to increase labour force participation thus adding to growth and social cohesion.

To catalyse progress under this priority the Commission is putting forward two flagships initiatives”. The first one is “An agenda for new skills and jobs” to modernise labours markets and empower people by developing their skills throughout the lifecycle with a view to increase labour participation and better match labour supply and demand, including labour mobility. The second one is “European platform against poverty” to ensure social and territorial cohesion such in order to share the benefits of growth and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society. (European Commission, 2010).

The report to the European Council by the Reflection Group on the future of the EU 2030, published in May 2010, offers to us very interesting elements in order to think about the challenges of Europe. And propose many political guidelines. We focus our attention in two areas. The first one is about “renewing Europe’s Economic and Social Model”. The report says that at the heart of the European community is a distinctive economic and social model, referred to as a “Highly competitive Social Market Economy” in the Lisbon Treaty. The consensus that exists around the model depends on a continued balance between its social and market dimensions, but this balance has been disrupted over time as social inequalities have increased. The sustainability of Europe’s economic and social model will depend on the possibility to restore a dynamic equilibrium between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development.

To create more and better jobs is an essential objective and reforming the labour markets is central to reach it. In opinion of the Reflection Group Member States should aim at improving three key aspects: the flexibility and security of their workforce (flexicurity), labour mobility; and the culture and management practices of enterprises¹. But this reform must be accompanied by new targeted measures aimed at enhancing security and solidarity for the individual. Social support systems deserve robust protection against abuse or *moral hazard*. In particular, social security systems should be adapted in favour of rapid reintegration into the labour market rather than long-term support of people of working age. Another field of interest for the Reflection Group is the fight against social exclusion, poverty and gender discrimination. One political measure could be implementing existing EU legislation to ensure agreed minimum standards. The EU can also contribute to the objective of a healthy European population, a crucial economic and social asset, in particular through the development of healthcare, well-being and age-related industries and services.

The second big element of reflection we are interested on is the challenge of demography. As the reflection Group says the combination of ageing populations and a contracting domestic labour force is set to have drastic consequences for Europe linked with the unsustainable pressure on pensions, health and welfare systems. In the next 40 years Europe’s support ratio will deteriorate sharply, leaving four contributing workers to support every three retired people. As political measure is urgent to begin with family-friendly policies aimed at stabilising or increasing fertility levels. But in the Reflection Group opinion the European Union’s demographic challenge will only be addressed through two sets of complementary actions: boosting labour market participation rates; and implementing a balanced, fair and proactive immigration policy. And expanding labour market participation is a *sine qua non*. The first step is devising and implementing effective work-life balance strategies (leave arrangements, teleworking, etc.). The second step will

¹ Commission of the European Communities 2007.

involve removing the legal, administrative and cultural barriers to promote greater intra-EU labour mobility. Key instruments in this regard include the full portability of welfare and pensions rights; improve language training, full recognition of academic degrees as well as professional skills. Finally a major shift is required in the European approach to retirement. Current early retirement practices should be discouraged and retirement should become an option for individuals rather than obligation.

With respect the proactive approach for the immigration policies, the reflection group thinks that migrant labour will be part of the solution to Europe's future labour and skills shortages. In this regard Europe has much to learn from Australia, Canada and the United States, with which it is direct competition for talented and skilled immigrants, thus the EU needs to develop a common policy with the aim of attracting the most qualified, talented and motivated immigrants.

Social Europe and the challenge of globalization

In a joint survey of the European Commission and the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), March 2008, Begg, Draxles and Mortensen (2008) state that globalization is rather an opportunity for growth than a social threat, although the process may produce winners and losers with severe social results. They point out the empirical evidence, which we have analyzed, that no demolition of the European social model – institutionally established in the welfare states – has ever happened. It is said the idea that only a free market, putting aside the social agenda, is consistent with sustained prosperity is openly wrong. The EU has small open economies in which high levels of prosperity have been possible also due to large and lavish welfare states. The survey we are talking about states that globalization is not a zero-sum game. However, it is necessary to point out three issues with the purpose of assessing its benefits and impact:

- The benefits are not evenly distributed between individuals, regions and countries.
- The costs will probably concentrate in the short term while the benefits will materialize in the long term. As result, the pace of the process is part of the political challenge.

The benefits won't happen automatically but will result from successful adaptation policies; i.e. from reforms in the fields of competitiveness, social regulation, education, research and infra-structures.

Other idea to be checked put into the Commission report is that globalization carries out unavoidable adverse consequences. Europeans have pointed out a number of potential threats: redistributive impacts, with negative results for some groups and regions; cultural hegemony; environmental damages; political conflicts; instability of public finances; social unrest related to immigration. In any case those adverse consequences must be nuanced as, at the same time, external positive ef-

fects may arise from an increased real income as a result of cheaper imports. Also, the strain on the social budget as a result of the ageing of population would be more intense than those coming from globalization. The challenges brought about by globalization can be classified into three main groups (Begg et al. 2008: 3):

- Equipping the economy to compete. It means to invest in activities with a future and to adapt the EU economy to the requirements regarding climate change, the ageing of population and new competition fronts.
- Carrying out adjustments. Economic and social shifts will be necessary bringing about costs and demanding a different resource allocation.
- Improving socioeconomic governance. This will require a joint action of the EU and its member states.

The Lisbon Strategy or the new Strategy Europe 2020 is responses to globalization. Its main goal is to re-accommodate the EU in the world arena. However, it is necessary to clarify that these Strategies have also other key goals as job creation and the assurance of social cohesion.

It has been reiterated, and thus confirmed by the Renewed Agenda on Social Policy, that this is basically a competence of the Member States. However, the easiness to carry out the needed adjustments and reforms will be given by the measure in which the member states are able to co-operate both within the EU and in wider scenarios, with the purpose to avoid a race to the bottom in the environment and social arenas.

Begg et al. (2008: 4) warn that a fragmentary regulation and the prevalence of national regulations may become a zero-sum game, and even a negative one. On the contrary, an effective coordination process at EU scale may help to overcome the lack of global trust and reduce that risk. To summarise, the challenge of governance within the EU is to assure that the current processes (Strategy Europe 2020, Sustainable Development Strategy, Open Method for the Coordination of the Protection and Social Inclusion) are suitable and acceptable for the Member States and do not generate any conflict in their goals and guidelines.

May wish to conclude this point with an idea I think is crucial: globalization is not the only reason for the reorientation or reinvention of the welfare state. To face globalization is just one of the reasons for the needed reorientation on the welfare state and it should go beyond the compensation to those who are supporting the most the cost of the increasing global competition. According to Begg et al. (2008: 5) the core of the responses in social policy issues would be in: education and training, immigration and integration policies, labour market reforms and the redesign of social protection to enhance its activating role.

Conclusions

Modern society is the result of a long and successful process that brought it to the institutional configuration we dubbed in this work welfare state.

This process reached its highest point in the Europe articulated into the EEC, in the beginning of the 1970s.

In this space and time, the welfare state showed some features that inspired trust: full employment, lavish social services and universal and public, and control of poverty and marginalization.

From the crisis of the 1970s some very diverse transformations took place that finally eroded the foundations of the welfare state representing a fire test for its main elements. In the background of this process of critique lays a severe intellectual turnaround in which

the main socializing structures lose their authority, the main ideologies are not longer their vehicle, the historical process don't mobilize any more, the social ground is already no more than the extension of private life (Charles 2007: 23–24).

This *age of vacuum or hyper-modernity* (Lipovetsky 2007) or *liquid modernity* (Bauman 2006), is in the economical a background of turn back to liberalism, in a historic track both in thought and in the praxis, risky and unable to improve the achievements of modern times, those of the *golden age of growth*, in the middle on the 20th century.

In the panoramic view of the European Social Model offered in this work, we have been able to see how the historic process has been unable to foster the convergence of the social systems of the EU-27 meanwhile it continues enlarging its borders.

The current European political process seems to have put the social dimension in a secondary place, after a peak point in 2005, and after overcoming a paralyzing institutional crisis in 2007. It must be pointed out the impulse in the social field of the EC Communication, July 2008, for the establishment of a Renewed Social Agenda one – as we have stated – being built on the basis of three concepts: opportunity, access and solidarity.

In the end of the work we have outlined the challenges facing the model in its current version, with the aim of preserving its most significant and identity features. Charles (2007: 30) expressed the uneasiness of hyper-modern man, a Narcissus living tormented by that worrying:

In the international level terrorism and catastrophes, neoliberal logic and its effects on employment; in the local one, urban pollution, violence in marginalized neighbourhoods; in a personal level anything that weakens body and psychic balance.

Before this reality it is needed a theoretical and smoothing speech. This is, as we know, the demanding endeavour of social scientist, to it we must devote ourselves. The possibility of enjoy civilization and life is at stake.

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