

## ***Euro-Socialists or Euro-Marketeers? EU Top Officials on Capitalism\****

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This paper examines how a strategic subset of the European Union's political elite, senior career officials in the European Commission, conceive of relations between state and market in Europe. Traditional studies have assumed that contention in the European Union is primarily territorial, but recent research has identified a non-territorial, ideological cleavage. This paper uses questionnaire data with 105 officials to test hypotheses on territorial and non-territorial sources of variation in officials' views about European capitalism. It is found that a non-territorial factor, partisanship, profoundly structures top officials' beliefs. Partisan officials are receptive to the world of parties and national capitals *outside* the Commission, while non-partisans get cues from their position and history *in* the Commission.

**T**his paper examines how a strategic subset of the European Union's political elite, senior Commission officials, conceive of relations between market and state in Europe. In conjunction with the political College of Commissioners, these 200-odd senior officials of A1 and A2 grade have a constitutional obligation to play a political role in the European Union, most prominently because they have exclusive competence to initiate and draft legislation.<sup>1</sup> Political conflict and choice are part and parcel of their job. Yet, we know little about the economic values they have. To what extent should market activity be regulated at the European

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<sup>1</sup>I define "senior officials" in positional terms. A1 and A2 officials are the directors general, directors, and senior advisors who provide leadership to 4,000 Commission administrators.

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level, and to what extent—if at all—should the European Union redistribute wealth from rich to poor? In short, what form of capitalism do they support?

Traditionally, studies of European integration have assumed that contention in the European Union/Community (EU) is primarily territorial. Yet, a growing number of scholars posit that EU decision-making reflects not only territorial, but also non-territorial conflicts imported from domestic politics. The key question of this article is how territorial and non-territorial dimensions shape senior officials' views on regulating European capitalism. Analysis of this substantive issue provides an opportunity to assess the relative merits of two theoretical understandings of contemporary EU politics: theories of international relations and regional integration emphasizing territorial factors, and domestic politics approaches stressing non-territorial alongside territorial sources of contention.

In the next section I review these alternative strands of theorizing and formulate hypotheses derived from these. The second section describes the data I collected between July 1995 and May 1997 from extensive interviews with 137 senior Commission officials and mail questionnaires from 105 of these 137 people. In the final section I discuss the results of a multivariate analysis. I find that, in keeping with domestic politics approaches, a non-territorial factor, partisanship, profoundly structures top officials' orientations to European capitalism. But first, we need to explicate the positions on capitalism that Commission officials may and do take.

Political actors in the European Union disagree on how to regulate capitalism in Europe (Crouch and Streeck 1997; Hooghe and Marks 1999; Rhodes and Van Apeldoorn 1997; Wilks 1996). Neoliberalism seeks to insulate the European-wide market from political interference by combining European market integration with minimal European regulation. This set of ideas attracts those who want minimal political interference in economic decision-making, market-liberals seeking selective European and national regulation of market forces, and, in part, nationalists intent on sustaining state sovereignty. Opposing them is a loose coalition supporting regulated capitalism at the EU level, intent on increasing EU capacity for regulation to achieve something akin to a European-wide social market economy. These ideas attract social christian democrats and market-oriented social democrats. Many of these proponents concede that markets rather than governments should allocate investment, but many also insist that markets work more efficiently if the state helps to provide collective goods including transport infrastructure, workforce skills, and cooperative industrial relations. The coalitions behind these opposing projects are neither fixed nor monolithic. Yet each group has a crystal-clear bottom line: Neoliberals seek to constrain European authoritative decision-making; proponents of European regulated capitalism want to deepen it.

How do Commission officials stand in relation to these projects? Table 1 shows responses on three questions. The first one summarizes key components of a model of European regulated capitalism, which entails extensive welfare services, social dialogue between both sides of industry, redistributive regional pol-

TABLE 1  
European Regulated Capitalism (% of respondents, n = 105)

Item	Yes	Yes, but	Neutral	No, but	No	Mean
1. Europe has developed a unique model of society, and the Commission should help to preserve it: extensive social services, civilized industrial relations, negotiated transfers among groups to sustain solidarity, and steer economic activity for the general welfare.	42.5	38.7	4.7	9.4	4.7	3.21
2. No united Europe without a mature European cohesion policy	46.7	31.4	1.9	18.1	1.9	3.24
3. Europe is too much influenced by big business	5.7	22.6	0.9	56.6	14.2	2.20

*Notes:* Values range between 1 (no) and 4 (yes), with 2.5 as neutral value. In the questionnaire, I deliberately omitted a neutral choice, and as a result only a very small number of respondents insisted on neutrality or abstained. They are allocated a value of 2.5.

icy, and industrial policy. Item two indicates support for cohesion policy, which finances the provision of collective goods and some redistribution; cohesion policy now absorbs 35% of the EU budget. The third question distinguishes proponents of European regulated capitalism—the new left—from the traditional left. A defining feature of regulated capitalism is its friendliness to markets and opposition to state ownership or control. Contrary to the traditional left, proponents of European regulated capitalism are less inclined to oppose capital owners. The third question, which probes top officials' views towards corporate interests ("big business"), indicates that only a small minority is worried about the influence of big business.

Table 1 demonstrates that the Commission is a bastion of European regulated capitalism, borne out by a high mean value on the dependent variable, though there is a substantial dissenting minority. But then support for some form of European regulated capitalism is relatively high throughout Europe with elites and public.<sup>2</sup> So the real issue is not the level of support, but how one explains

<sup>2</sup> In an elite survey conducted by Eurobarometer in the Spring of 1996, elected politicians, high-level civil servants, business and labor leaders, media and cultural leaders were asked to evaluate whether policy areas should be decided at the national/regional or European level. A value of 1 refers to exclusively national/regional competence, and a value of 10 to exclusively European competence. This is an indirect way to assess the potential for European regulated capitalism, which prescribes partnership between European, national, and regional governments in flanking policies

variation in support. In this chapter, I examine why some officials are keener on advocating European regulated capitalism than are others.

### Conceptualizing Contention on European Capitalism

Current EU literature furnishes two basic traditions that formulate sharply different expectations about key actors and the character of contestation in the contemporary EU polity. The first assumes that contention in the European Union is primarily territorial. This tradition is rooted in international relations, and the point of departure is that European integration is best conceived as a form of international cooperation. There are two variants of this thesis. Neofunctionalist models have conceived of EU politics as structured by contention between pro-integration and anti-integration forces. Key actors are supranational actors, particularly the Commission, that want to shift authority to the European level because there are good functional reasons to do so. Their strategy is to win over national actors, for example by socializing them in transnational networks or persuading them of the functional necessity of deeper integration (Haas 1958; Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997; Schmitter 1969). In the intergovernmentalist model, divergent national interests structure territorial competition. Key actors are national state executives, who conceive of European policy-making as an instrument to maximize national economic benefits in an interdependent world (Hoffmann 1982; Milward 1992; Moravcsik 1993). Essentially, the argument in these two variants is that the position one takes on the European-national territorial cleavage predisposes one's position on the regulation of European capitalism.

In contrast, a growing number of EU scholars posit that EU decision-making reflects ideological, class, sectoral, and functional conflicts—alongside territorial cleavages (Caporaso 1996; Hix and Lord 1997; Hix 1999; Hooghe and Marks 1999; Hooghe 1999; Marks and Wilson forthcoming; Richardson 1996; Risse 1996). There are many variants of this approach, but they all emphasize that

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to economic and monetary union. Mean scores for such flanking policies range between 7.6 and 4.3. Top leaders want primary EU competence for environmental policies (7.6), scientific and technological research (6.7), employment policy (6.0), social policy (5.4). They support secondary EU competence for regional development (4.6), health insurance (4.5), and education policy (4.3). (European Commission. 1996. *Top Decision Makers Survey: Summary Report*. Brussels: Directorate-General X.) To my knowledge, comparable data for the general public do not exist. Eurobarometer regularly presents respondents with a list of policy areas, but merely asks them whether they want these policies to be decided at national or European level. Such either/or reasoning is not conducive to assessing support for European regulated capitalism, which promotes multilevel policy-making. Nevertheless, a 1996 survey shows that for an absolute majority of respondents the following policy areas central to European regulated capitalism should be decided at European level: science and technology research (70%), protection of environment (65%), regional support (63%), and fight against unemployment (53%). There is minority support for European-level policy-making for health and social welfare (34%), education (37%), and workers' rights vis-à-vis employers (42%). (European Commission. 1997. *Eurobarometer. N.46*. Brussels: Directorate-General X. The fieldwork was conducted in October–November 1996. The results on these questions have been fairly stable.)

EU politics looks increasingly like domestic politics. Two are particularly relevant for our analysis. The partisan approach argues that a two-dimensional overarching cleavage structure is taking shape in the European Union, defined by a territorial, national/European dimension alongside a non-territorial, left/right dimension (Hix 1999; Marks and Wilson forthcoming). It focuses on political parties as key framers of contention. A second approach is the new governance model, according to which authority is increasingly compartmentalized in specialist public-private policy networks that often stretch across territorial levels (March and Olsen 1989; Mazey and Richardson 1993; Richardson 1998; Peters 1996; Peterson 1995, 1997; for an overview see Hix 1998). This approach rejects the notion of an overarching cleavage structure. It focuses on policy specialists as key actors.

I extract arguments from both strands of theorizing to hypothesize about how territorial or non-territorial factors may shape top officials' orientations to European regulated capitalism.

### *Territorial Factors*

How might fundamental conflict over the territorial organization of authority shape officials' views concerning the European political economy?

**SUPRANATIONALISM VERSUS INTERGOVERNMENTALISM.** Literature on the European Union often assumes that Commission officials are committed to supranationalism. Given that European regulated capitalism requires member states to shift competencies to the European level in a wide range of policy areas, one may hypothesize that the more officials favor supranationalism, the more they will favor European regulated capitalism.<sup>3</sup>

**EUROPEAN VERSUS NATIONAL SOCIALIZATION.** A common assumption in neo-functional and intergovernmentalist studies is that the European Commission has an interest in enlarging the scope of competencies handed to the European level. Logically, this would lead the Commission to support European regulated capitalism. Two hypotheses, relying on a socialization logic, follow from this. The first relates *length of service in the Commission* to support for European regulated capitalism: the longer one has worked in the Commission, the more likely one has internalized the Commission's institutional interest.

The second associates *length of career in national administration* with Commission officials' orientations. The longer one has been a national civil servant,

<sup>3</sup> The assumption is that institutional design takes precedence over substantive concerns. What motivates supranationalists in a maturing EU polity should be similar to what inspired supranationalists in the 1950s. As a supranationalist top official put it: "I am not in the business of right-wing or left-wing policies. I have done both in my life. What counts is whether we promote *European integration*. [Ideology] is the wrong axis." (Respondent's emphasis, interviewee 058.)

the greater the resistance to European regulated capitalism. There are several reasons why former national civil servants are likely to be skeptical of European regulatory ambitions. Many who join the Commission were successful regulators in their home administration, and so they are likely to believe that national institutions are intrinsically valuable settings for economic regulation. Also, they may consider national economic regulation more legitimate because decisions are taken according to established national practices—practices former national officials know well.

**NATIONAL INTEREST.** Whether the European Union promotes European regulated capitalism or trade liberalization influences costs and benefits for individual member states. Liberal intergovernmentalism links national economic utility to the political-economic preferences of Commission officials. It argues that national governments seek to maximize national (economic) gains from European integration. Furthermore, national governments' informal influence on top Commission recruitment and their formal powers in policy-making give them leverage effectively to make Commission officials act as their government's agents. So one may hypothesize that officials from countries with transparent gains from European market regulation and redistribution should promote European regulated capitalism, while those from donor countries should oppose European regulated capitalism.

### *Non-Territorial Factors*

Recent studies of the European Union claim that contention in Europe centers on the organization of economy and society and that this debate is waged in domestic and European arenas simultaneously.

**LEFT/RIGHT IDEOLOGY.** Regulating capitalism in Europe involves regulation of market forces, the provision of collective goods and social services, and income redistribution. These have long defined left and right in domestic politics. One may therefore expect that left-wing Commission officials are more in favor of European regulated capitalism than their right-wing colleagues. This is consistent with a simple version of the partisan model.

**PARTY IDENTIFICATION VERSUS SOCIALIZATION ON THE JOB.** Ideological positions may also be the sediment of socialization. Two institutional contexts appear fertile grounds for socialization: political parties and the officials' work environment.

The first hypothesis links *party identification* to support for European regulated capitalism. Partisanship is part and parcel of top Commission officials' daily life. Top Commission officials' role in the legislative process often requires that they make partisan choices. Like other elite members, they have higher politi-

cal awareness, participate more frequently in political events and organizations, and have more crystallized political preferences (Putnam 1973). Furthermore, party allegiance is often an important selection criterion for top administrators in the Commission (Ross 1995). Political parties, then, constitute a plausible institutional setting for ideological socialization of Commission officials.

Recent party research demonstrates that party positions on European integration are to a large extent a function of parties' position on the left/right cleavage (Marks and Wilson forthcoming; Ray 1997).<sup>4</sup> It is argued that left-wing parties have become more pro-European as the Union has grown to be a more propitious arena for social democracy. With the goal of an internal market achieved, parties on the economic right have become reluctant for fear that further integration would strengthen the EU's capacity to re-regulate market forces. Christian-democratic parties used to be strong supporters, but they have become less enthusiastic as economic and social conservatism has grown in their ranks. These substantive findings can be combined with political-psychology research, which has shown that partisan attitudes tend to crystallize during the formative years of young adulthood and then remain fairly stable or strengthen with age (Converse 1976; Sears and Valentino 1997; Weisberg 1998). The implication is that when parties reposition themselves over time, older partisans tend to hold on to the parties' prior positions, while younger partisans reflect newer positions. This generational effect leads to the hypothesis that Commission officials who identify with a particular party family will reflect their party's preferences as to European regulated capitalism at the time of their socialization. So according to this sophisticated partisan model, older social democrats should show qualified support for European regulated capitalism and their younger colleagues stronger support; older christian democrats strong and younger party fellows weak support; liberals reluctant support; conservatives deepening skepticism.

A second influence on belief systems may be *job socialization*. Policy areas have policy legacies in which particular principles and norms are embedded. These provide officials with moral templates for evaluating initiatives (Hall 1993; Skogstad 1998). Socialization in a particular moral template is most likely if Commission officials stay in one Directorate General (DG) for a long time or move between DGs with comparable moral templates. This functional argument is derived from studies of DG cultures or styles, which argue that the compartmentalized character of the Commission makes it easier for DGs to develop their own political agenda (Abélès, Bellier and McDonald 1993; Cram 1994). It is consistent with the new governance model, which draws attention to institutional variation in the immediate, circumscribed policy world within which officials perform. One may hypothesize that the longer senior Commission officials have worked in units dealing with social and redistributive issues, the more likely they support European regulated capitalism.

<sup>4</sup>The assumption underlying this argument is the logical opposite to the previous footnote. Substantive objectives shape predispositions about institutional design.

**POLITICAL CONTROL OVER RECRUITMENT.** It is difficult to alter the values of bureaucrats. It is much easier to get the right people on the job, but this requires the power to hire and fire. In American politics, the spoils system combined with mandatory approval by the Senate of top federal administrators provides the key principal—the Senate—with significant leverage over appointments. In the Commission, the college of Commissioners appoints top officials by simple majority. So the political Commission is well placed to select officials on the basis of their views *if it so wishes*. Former Commission president Jacques Delors had a strong interest in influencing the ideological make-up of his top bureaucracy. During his 10 years of office (1985–94), Mr. Delors was the driving force behind an action plan for European regulated capitalism. According to George Ross' study, "Delors, with Pascal's [Lamy, Delors' chef de cabinet] advice, had very carefully replaced a considerable number of high Commission officials, directors general and division heads, in critical areas" (Ross 1995:67). One may therefore hypothesize that top officials appointed under Delors are more supportive of European regulated capitalism.

**POSITIONAL INTEREST.** Recruitment practices are one channel for constraining agents' behavior and beliefs; ex-ante rule design is another (McCubbins and Page 1987; for an EU-application: Franchino 1999; Pollack 1997). Officials with extensive regulatory responsibilities or large funds need routine access to regulatory autonomy and financial clout to maximize positional power, and these resources are at the core of European regulated capitalism. In contrast, officials with limited regulatory responsibilities may find access to information, mediation skills, or credibility more valuable resources, and these do not depend on European regulated capitalism. This reflects thinking among proponents of a new governance model of EU public policy, who conceive of Commission officials as one among several actors locked in policy networks where all contribute specific resources (Majone 1989; Peterson 1995). So one may hypothesize that officials with regulatory or financial autonomy have greater incentives to support European regulated capitalism.

## Data

This section introduces blow-by-blow dependent and independent variables. I refer the reader to the appendix for details on operationalization and intercorrelations.

**ORIENTATIONS TO EUROPEAN CAPITALISM.** I combine two items in an additive index of support for European Regulated Capitalism. The first item in Table 1 explores more generally whether European institutions should help bring about a social market economy. Item two taps into Commission officials' support for the flagship policy of European regulated capitalism, EU cohesion policy (full



wording in Table 1). Values range between 1 (unconditional opposition) and 4 (unconditional support), with an average score of 3.22 and standard deviation of 0.677.

**SUPRANATIONAL BELIEFS.** To measure officials' orientations to EU governance, I use an index of Supranationalism composed of three items.

**EUROPEAN SOCIALIZATION.** I use Commission Career, that is, the number of years served in the Commission.

**NATIONAL SOCIALIZATION.** My measure is State Career, which is the number of years served in state service as a national civil servant prior to joining the Commission.

**NATIONAL INTEREST.** I employ subjective and objective indicators to estimate who benefits from European policies. To measure perceptions, I use data from an elite survey by Eurobarometer in 1996, in which elites were asked whether their country had benefited from EU membership. National Benefit is the proportion of respondents who replied "benefited." I allocate scores to Commission officials by nationality. Support for European regulation and redistribution is often linked more narrowly to financial benefits. Cohesion Transfer is a measure for EU structural intervention, the EU's largest redistributive instrument, by member state. I allocate country scores to Commission officials by nationality.

**LEFT-RIGHT IDEOLOGY.** Commission officials were asked which party or ideological current they most identify with.<sup>5</sup> I allocate each official a value according to a 10-point Left-Right scale, based on the left-right positioning of party families developed by Hix and Lord (1997). About 42% refused to disclose their preference, or, more commonly, they insisted that their personal ideological beliefs are irrelevant for their job. I deal with this data issue in two ways. In the first instance, I allocate to these non-partisans an ideological position that is the mean of all partisans. But this assumes that non-partisans and partisans are not inherently different groups. In a second step, I hypothesize that the causal logic underlying the structuring of political beliefs of partisans may differ from the one driving non-partisan officials. I test this by analyzing partisans (N = 61) and non-partisans (N = 44) separately.

**PARTY IDENTIFICATION.** To test the hypothesis that Commission officials reflect changing party orientations to European integration, I employ dummies

<sup>5</sup> I use self-reporting of ideological identification and/or party allegiance by officials. This is a powerful indicator of the subjective importance of ideological belief systems, as it registers whether interviewees themselves choose to give weight to partisanship.

for the main party families (Soc: socialists, Christ: christian democrats, Lib: liberals, and Con: conservatives). To acknowledge the generational effect, I add interaction terms consisting of a generation dummy with each party family dummy (Young-Soc, Young-Christ, Young-Lib, Young-Con).

**JOB SOCIALIZATION.** For the variable SocialDG, I calculate years spent in DGs dealing with European regulated capitalism. Nearly 48% of Commission officials have worked in a regulated, capitalism-friendly DG.

**POSITIONAL INTEREST.** My measure for Regulatory Discretion is a ranking from 1 to 5 based on figures compiled by Page (1997) on secondary legislative activity by the Commission. I allocate scores to Commission officials by DG.

**POLITICAL CONTROL OVER RECRUITMENT.** The variable Delors is a dummy. Of the 105 Commission officials, 54 were appointed under Delors.

### Examining The Evidence

The sources of senior Commission officials' divergent views on European capitalism are to be found in a mixture of territorial and non-territorial factors. This is consistent with characterizations of the European Union as semi-federal (Sbragia 1993; Marks, Hooghe and Blank 1996; Wallace and Wallace 1996). Sbragia has argued that the European Union, like any federal system, performs a delicate balancing exercise between territorial and non-territorial claims. This study demonstrates that Sbragia's balancing act is not only reflected in institutional design; top Commission officials are pulled in different directions by territorial and non-territorial factors. Four factors in the multivariate regression account for 44% of the variance (Model 2, Table 2). The strongest bivariate association is with a non-territorial factor, Party Identification ( $R^2 = 0.23$ ), and this factor also overshadows all others in the multivariate analysis. Another non-territorial factor, Regulatory Discretion ( $R^2 = 0.07$ ), is also significantly linked to support for European regulated capitalism. The two remaining factors tap into territorial difference: State Career ( $R^2 = 0.12$ ) and Cohesion Transfer ( $R^2 = 0.04$ ), which indicate the impact of national socialization and national interest respectively.

The outcome of this territorial/non-territorial contest—a competition between two bodies of EU literature—is, at the aggregate level, a balancing act. However, this aggregate result may obscure systematic differences between partisans and non-partisans.<sup>6</sup> To adherents of the partisan model, political parties

<sup>6</sup>Partisans and non-partisans do not differ significantly in their support for European regulated capitalism (bottom row of Table 3). The null hypothesis that the means of both groups are equal cannot be rejected (T-test = -0.931; p-value = .354).

TABLE 2  
Explaining Orientations to European Regulated Capitalism

	All Officials			Partisans		Non-Partisans	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Supranationalism	-.004 (.089)		.082 (.093)	-.021 (.129)		.059 (.133)	
Commission Career	.100 (.008)		.124 (.008)	-.062 (.013)		.276 (.010)	.241 (.009)
State Career	-.259** (.010)	-.301*** (.007)	-.237** (.010)	-.263* (.016)	-.213** (.011)	-.180 (.014)	-.244 (.012)
National Benefit	-.018 (.009)		.043 (.009)	-.042 (.012)		.112 (.014)	
Cohesion Transfer	.286*** (.061)	.281*** (.054)	.216** (.061)	.262* (.097)	.286** (.079)		
Left-Right	-.163 (.194)		-.213** (.055)	-.221 (.229)			
Party Identification							
Socialists	-.150 (.354)			-.096 (.624)			
Christian-democrats	.255* (.305)	.234* (.225)		.391** (.347)	.313** (.251)		
Liberals	-.002 (.238)			—			

<i>Conservatives</i>	-.298 (.527)	-.376*** (.227)	-.350* (.458)	-.415*** (.254)
<i>Young-Soc</i>	.061 (.247)		-.040 (.291)	
<i>Young-Christ</i>	-.337*** (.336)	-.355*** (.304)	-.467** (.419)	-.441** (.340)
<i>SocialDG</i>	-.041 (.008)	-.049 (.008)	-.021 (.013)	-.106 (.011)
<i>Regulatory Discretion</i>	.314*** (.046)	.302*** (.037)	.261** (.065)	.397** (.067)
<i>Delors</i>	.023 (.119)	.049 (.123)	.178 (.189)	.164 (.158)
<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>	.444	.443	.514	.351
<i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i>	.350	.399	.366	.246
	N = 105	N = 105	N = 61	N = 61
				N = 44
				N = 44

*Notes:* Multivariate linear regression (constant included in equation, pairwise deletion of missing values). Standardized coefficients (betas); standard errors between brackets. Due to the small dataset for models 6-7, I exclude variables with a bivariate correlation weaker than 0.15 level (one-tailed). \*Significant at 0.10 level; \*\* Significant at 0.05 level (two-tailed); \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 level (two-tailed).

are crucial framers of contention over the European political economy (Hix 1999; Marks and Wilson forthcoming). So one may expect that for officials with close party allegiance, partisanship is the prism through which they evaluate EU issues. Partisanship should link them with like-minded political interests inside and outside the Commission. In contrast, officials without party allegiances should be free from such constraints; they should be influenced more by territorial factors or by their position in the Commission. This dataset provides an opportunity to assess more precisely the accuracy of the partisan model. For this purpose, I now examine partisans and non-partisans separately.

Two general conclusions emerge from Models 4 to 7 in Table 2, which present multivariate models for partisans and non-partisans. First of all, the sources underlying orientations of partisans and non-partisans are distinctly different. For partisans, support is powerfully associated with Party Identification, and mainly political factors help to explain additional variation: a political-bureaucratic factor (State Career), a political-national factor (Cohesion Transfer), and to a lesser extent a political-ideological factor (Delors recruitment). The impact of non-political factors is weak, with the exception of Regulatory Discretion. Support among non-partisans, on the other hand, seems mainly influenced by life and position in the Commission, more particularly Commission socialization and whether they work in a service with regulatory autonomy. Other internal-Commission factors are also relatively strongly associated with views on European capitalism, though they are pushed into insignificance in multivariate models. The one external background with a significant impact is State Career. Sbragia's balancing act breaks into two very different acts once we relax the assumption that top Commission officials constitute a homogeneous population.

Second, the models are less successful in explaining orientations of non-partisans ( $R^2 = 0.35$ ) than partisans ( $R^2 = 0.52$ ). For non-partisan officials there is no equivalent for partisanship as a powerful source for belief structuring. Commission socialization and interest do not shape views in quite such a decisive way.

The remainder of the paper examines key results for the three populations in order of significance.

**PARTISANSHIP: PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND LEFT-RIGHT IDEOLOGY.** Party Identification is the single most powerful predictor of where officials stand on European regulated capitalism. In the simple regression for all interviewees, the coefficient of determination equals 0.23, and this rises to 0.31 among partisans. To be sure, Left-Right views are also strongly associated with views on European regulated capitalism: The more one stands toward the left on the ideological spectrum, the more likely one is to support European regulated capitalism. However, this effect washes out when it is pitched against Party Identification in a multivariate analysis (Model 1 and 2). Collinearity between these two vari-

ables produces unstable coefficients, and that may tempt us to write off Left-Right too readily.<sup>7</sup> Model 3 therefore repeats the multivariate exercise without Party Identification. It demonstrates the power of Left-Right beliefs, but total variance explained ( $R^2 = 0.31$ ) is much lower than for models including Party Identification (Model 1 and 2:  $R^2 = 0.44$ ). While Left-Right captures a significant component of how partisanship shapes Commission officials' orientations, Party Identification encompasses this effect *and* adds considerably to it.

Top officials reflect to a large extent their party's orientations to European regulated capitalism, but with a generational twist: Changes in party positions over the past decades are most strongly absorbed by younger people. I take as baseline for the party dummies the non-partisans, that is, officials who have not disclosed their ideological predisposition. So the party dummies reflect, in standardized form, the difference between the means for these party families and the means for non-partisans; the interaction terms reflect the difference between the means of young and old socialists, and young and old christian democrats, respectively. For the partisan subsample, the coefficients reflect differences between the means of socialist, christian-democratic, and conservative party families on the one hand and liberals on the other hand.

I expect a significant generational effect for christian democrats and for socialists, as these party families have shifted their positions most significantly over past decades. The results for christian democrats strongly confirm my hypothesis: The christian-democrat dummy is positive and significant, and the young christian-democrat dummy is negative and highly significant. The prewar generation, socialized in party thinking in the 1950s and 1960s, consists of hardcore supporters of European regulated capitalism. This political-economic project has been a logical choice for those who internalized the supranationalist and social ambitions of social personalism, the political theory developed by Mounier and Maritain that permeated European christian democracy in the first postwar decades (Hanley 1994). However, with religion rapidly losing salience, christian-democratic parties are increasingly emphasizing social and economic conservatism, and this sits uncomfortably with European regulated capitalism. Younger christian-democratic Commission officials reflect this repositioning of recent years. The data give less support to the hypothesis that socialists have shifted to strong support. Table 3, which gives average support of old and young for each party family, demonstrates that the trend is there, and that young socialists are very strong supporters of European regulated capitalism. But these effects wither away when I control for other powerful influences. One reason is that young socialists are concentrated in Commission services with high regulatory autonomy: 77% of young socialists, as against 36% of all officials. Because Regula-

<sup>7</sup> Associations between Left-Right and any of the party dummies range between 0.214 and  $-0.798$ , which intimates a severe multicollinearity problem. Regressing Left-Right on the six party dummies confirms this: The coefficient of determination is a very high 0.926.

TABLE 3  
European Regulated Capitalism by Partisanship and Generation

	Partisans by major party family					Non-Partisans	ALL
	Socialists	Christian-Democrats	Liberals	Conservatives	Partisans		
Older generation	3.204 (11)	3.750 (6)	3.125 (6)	2.250 (4)	3.167 (27)	3.380 (23)	3.265 (50)
Younger Generation	3.557 (13)	2.964 (7)	3.104 (12)	2.000 (2)	3.184 (34)	3.214 (21)	3.195 (55)
ALL	3.396 (24)	3.327 (13)	3.111 (18)	2.167 (6)	3.176 (61)	3.301 (44)	3.229 (n = 105)

Notes: Values range between 1 (no support) to 4 (full support). Figures in parentheses refer to number of officials.

tory Discretion is a more comprehensive predictor of officials' support for European regulated capitalism, it pushes the socialist dummies aside. It is tempting to attribute this finding to self-selection—left-wing officials seeking out autonomous regulatory DGs—but my evidence does not make it possible to dismiss competing explanations such as recruitment policy or chance. Finally, the findings for conservatives and liberals are in line with expectations. Conservative officials reflect their party's positions, where a combination of nationalism and economic conservatism has predisposed these parties to be reluctant supporters of European regulation and redistribution. Liberal officials do not have consistent party cues to rely on, and this is reflected in the insignificance of the liberal dummy.

The strong showing of Party Identification challenges theories of European integration that have downplayed the impact of encompassing ideological frameworks and party-programmatic appeals. For officials with party allegiance, partisanship is the primary prism through which they evaluate EU issues.

**CAREER SOCIALIZATION: STATE VERSUS COMMISSION.** Partisanship does not exhaust variation among top officials. Career socialization is the second-strongest predictor of their stance on European regulated capitalism. Former national officials are far less outspoken in their support for European regulated capitalism than former professors, business people, or professionals. The negative association with State Career is strong across models. State institutions seem effective in socializing individuals into EU-skeptical views.<sup>8</sup> Commission socialization, on the other hand, is significantly weaker than state socialization.

It is possible, however, that I reject the hypothesis of Commission socialization too rashly because collinearity between Commission and State Career may produce unstable regression coefficients.<sup>9</sup> With the help of the subpopulations, I am able to examine the relative influence of both socialization factors more precisely. As can be gauged from Models 5 and 7, the two forms of career socialization play out very differently for partisans and non-partisans. For partisans, it matters a great deal whether an official has had a prior career in the state sector, but length of tenure in the Commission is irrelevant. Non-partisan

<sup>8</sup> Socialization tends to be most effective in a highly insulated environment where signals and incentives are unambiguous and non-conflicting. The effect of state socialization should therefore be strongest in the most insulated and central parts of the state machinery, that is, the traditional line ministries of the central state. It should be weaker in more complex, porous parts of the state: positions with some autonomy from central authorities (courts, central bank, parliament, public companies, local government), or positions at the European-national interface. This is why, for the indicator State Career, I count years outside the traditional line ministries for half only (see appendix). This anticipated relationship is supported empirically. The association between State Career and the dependent variable is much stronger when I weigh years spent in traditional and non-traditional state positions differentially ( $-0.352$ ) than when I give equal weight to all years in state service ( $-0.277$ ).

<sup>9</sup> The association between Commission and State Career is  $-0.587$ .



officials are almost equally strongly influenced by Commission and state socialization. So Commission socialization works only for those without strong extra-work loyalties, and even for these individuals state institutions remain powerful socialization agents. For the majority of Commission officials, then, current association with the European Commission has left a far weaker imprint than a prior stint in the state sector.

**NATIONAL INTEREST.** The hypothesis that officials' positions on European regulated capitalism reflect the interests of their country finds partial support with the data—at least for Cohesion Transfer. Officials from national states reaping real financial benefits are more inclined to support further regulation and redistribution. Though the association with Cohesion Transfer is modest in the bivariate analysis, it is strong in the multivariate analysis. The reason is that Cohesion Transfer picks up consistently higher support among officials from the greatest beneficiaries of EU structural policy (Greece, Ireland, Spain, and Portugal). While average support outside these countries is 3.17 out of 4, it is 3.57 for officials from those four countries. However, variation around these averages still largely reflects the impact of party identification, with socialists more in favor than christian democrats, in turn considerably more supportive than liberals and conservatives. Intergovernmentalism has residual explanatory power for a small subset of officials.

**POSITIONAL INTEREST.** There is considerable support for the hypothesis that the more regulatory autonomy officials have, the more they want to expand European-wide regulatory competencies. The association is particularly strong among non-partisans. Officials are driven by positional power, and this irrespective of the policy substance of their tasks. To put it sharply, other factors being equal, officials with extensive regulatory powers in competition policy are more in favor of European regulated capitalism than weak European regulators in education and training. Senior officials in Commission strongholds need and demand extensive Commission capacity to regulate market forces. There is no evidence that socialization is at work rather than situational response to a given incentive structure. In autonomous regulatory DGs, veterans are not more positive than newly appointed officials. The defining feature is where one works in the Commission, not since when. These results sit uncomfortably with scholarly work emphasizing socialization in the Commission.

**JOB SOCIALIZATION.** Functional socialization is also weak. There is no support for the hypothesis that officials may acquire positive attitudes to European regulated capitalism on the job—through their work on social regulation and redistribution. Only for non-partisans is there some support in the bivariate analysis, but the variable drops out when controlling for other influences. These results qualify a popular argument, among scholars and Commission officials alike, that DGs nurture certain ideological missions.

An alternative mechanism linking functional location and beliefs is self-selection: Officials favoring European regulated capitalism may seek and receive appointments in DGs supporting those policies. If self-selection were at work, one would expect officials in social DGs, irrespective of length of service, to be significantly more in favor of European regulated capitalism. However, this effect is not strong in the bivariate analysis, and it drops out when controlling for factors like partisanship, national interest, and positional interest. The reason for this weak effect has to be sought in supply and demand dynamics for scarce top positions. As demand far outweighs supply and as the primary selection criterion is nationality rather than merit or ideological affinity, candidates rarely have the luxury to choose the top position that corresponds best with their functional expertise or ideological beliefs.

**TARGETED IDEOLOGICAL RECRUITMENT: THE DELORS FACTOR.** The Delors effect, that officials appointed by Delors are supporters of European regulated capitalism, is very weak (Model 1-3). The main reason is that the overall result masks major differences between partisans and non-partisans. For partisans the association is powerful, but it is non-significant among non-partisans. And yet, even for partisans Delors recruitment barely survives controls in a multivariate analysis ( $p = 0.10$ ). The Delors effect is concentrated on the small group of right-wing partisans. Conservatives, liberals, and younger christian democrats recruited in the Delors years are much more favorable to European regulated capitalism than ideologically like-minded officials recruited before 1986 or after 1994. The effect is weak for socialists and reverse for non-partisans.

**SUPRANATIONAL BELIEFS.** Neofunctionalism predicts that supranationalist officials should be keener on European regulated capitalism than intergovernmentalists, because European-wide regulation and redistribution would enhance supranational institutions. This hypothesis finds support in the bivariate analysis, but drops out in the multivariate analysis. The reason is that supranationalist beliefs vary decisively by career experiences.

## Conclusion

This paper argues that partisanship profoundly structures contention among top officials in the European Commission. This is consistent with a growing EU literature, rooted mainly in comparative politics, which emphasizes the role of non-territorial factors, particularly ideology and partisanship, in shaping contention in EU politics. It goes against theoretical models that conceive of EU politics as a function of international bargaining among national governments in pursuit of maximum national benefit. While the latter argue that the main cleavage structuring contention in the European Union is territorial, national/European conflict, the former analyze non-territorial factors—alongside territory.

To weigh the relative merit of these two theoretical strands, I examine top Commission officials' views on state-market relations in the European Union. I find that top officials take sides in struggles between "Euro-marketeers" and "Euro-socialists." When we seek to understand the sources of variation in Commission officials' orientations, the partisan model has greater heuristic value than its competitors on three accounts. First of all, party identification turns out to be by far the most powerful predictor of variation in Commission officials' orientations: Officials reflect their party's positions as to European regulated capitalism, with left-wing parties generally more in favor than right-wing parties. Secondly, the results indicate that non-territorial as well as territorial factors matter, and neither is reducible to the other. The strongest territorial factor is prior national socialization: Former national civil servants are more likely to be reluctant to support European regulated capitalism. In keeping with the partisan model, political orientations can be set out in a two-dimensional space as the outcome of positions on a territorial, national/European and a non-territorial, partisan dimension.

Finally, and most importantly, partisanship structures political beliefs of top Commission officials in distinctly different ways. Partisanship makes officials receptive to influences from outside the Commission; its absence makes officials responsive to incentives from inside the Commission. Partisans and non-partisans live on planets with contrasting geology. In technical language, different causal models explain variation among partisan and non-partisan officials.

Through partisanship, officials maintain connections with the outside world and they remain receptive to political influences. They bring beliefs to their job that are the residue of experiences outside the Commission, most strongly the policy position of their preferred party, but also state socialization (as former state officials) and national interest (at least those from cohesion countries). Strong ideological and territorial interests are not antithetical. Partisanship generally shields them from their work environment, so that Commission socialization and turf battles do not have much impact. But they are more vulnerable to ideological scrutiny by their recruiters: Under Jacques Delors, the door remained closed for partisan skeptics of European regulated capitalism.

Non-partisans' beliefs, on the other hand, are to a large extent formed in-house. These officials take cues from their personal history (Commission socialization) and position (extent of regulatory autonomy) in the organization. However, even non-partisans do not escape the impact of external experiences: Former state officials are far less likely to become proponents of European regulated capitalism. Even in the most auspicious circumstances, then, the socializing force of the Commission does not match that of state administrations. Fifty years after its creation, the Commission is a porously bounded institution.

Some might be surprised about the focus of this article on desires (beliefs) rather than deeds (behavior). After all, research in political beliefs was largely abandoned in the 1970s and 1980s because beliefs rarely seemed to predict be-

havior (Searing 1991). Critics argued that “values and ideas are froth on the mouth of madmen or froth on the waves of history” (quoted in Putnam 1973). Ideology or ideas were perceived as cloaks for interests or dwarfed by (economic) interests, power, and strategy. However, the perceived gap between behavior and beliefs has less to do with perfidious or schizophrenic behavior on the part of the objects of study—elite actors—than with poor conceptualization and methodology by political scientists. One reason is that many studies have focused on case-bound or time-specific beliefs rather than on basic beliefs, that is, generalized principles about social and political life (George 1979). That is why I am not interested in top officials’ opinions about the most recent proposal for health and safety in the workplace or vocational training. Instead, I seek to understand their principled stance towards the regulation of market forces. Another source of frustration has been unrealistic expectations about the causal power of beliefs. Belief systems are a set of general guidelines—heuristic aids to behavior—not a set of mathematical algorithms that are applied by actors in a mechanical way. They introduce propensities to the actual behavior of officials. Basic beliefs should therefore be placed in a causal chain that also includes situational and institutional factors (George 1979; Putnam 1973; Searing 1994).

Top Commission officials do not live in an institutional straitjacket that prescribes their beliefs about capitalism. Like many other actors, they are divided over the pursuit of “good common life” in the European Union. Where situational and institutional context permits, these opposing views guide their actions in the European Union.

## Appendix

DATA. I interviewed 137 out of 200 top Commission officials of A1 and A2 status between July 1995 and February 1997, and received from 106 of them mail-back questionnaires with behavioral questions and 32 statements measuring orientations on political and social life ( $n = 106$ ). I use 105 for data analysis here; one questionnaire was excluded because a comparison with corresponding interview excerpts raised doubts about the validity of some responses. A comparison between these *samples* on key characteristics (position, age, nationality, gender, education, prior career, seniority, Commission cabinet experience, parachute, nationality) reveals no bias. Testing sample bias with respect to the *population* is more difficult as the Commission does not publish socio-demographic data for its top officials. However, I test sample bias for nationality by using as yardstick common Commission practice to seek a “geographical balance” in top appointments, that is, reflecting the distribution of seats in the Council of Ministers. French, British, and to some extent, Italian and Dutch officials appear over-represented in my questionnaire sample, while nationals from the second (Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish) and third enlargement (Austrian, Finnish, and Swedish) are underrepresented. However, the chi-square statistic

falls short of rejecting the null-hypothesis that the distribution in the sample and the population are the same ( $\alpha = 0.436$ ).

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE ERC.** Additive index of the first two items in Table 1, divided by two (Cronbach's alpha of 0.53). Principal component factor analysis identifies a single dimension, with eigenvalue of 1.35 and 67.8% of variance explained. The third item in Table 1 is only weakly associated with the above two items ( $r = 0.172$  and  $0.215$ ). An additive index that includes this item as well as the above two has a rather poor Cronbach's alpha of 0.49. This reinforces my contention that this item refers to the traditional socio-economic cleavage rather than to regulated capitalism views.

**SUPRANATIONALISM.** Additive index of three items from the questionnaire (values ranging from 1 to 4) and divided by three (Cronbach's alpha of 0.49). Principal component factor analysis identifies a single dimension, with eigenvalue of 1.48 and 49.4% of variance explained.

1. "It is imperative that the European Commission become the true government of the European Union."
2. "The Commission should support the European Parliament's bid for full legislative powers, even if the price would be to lose its monopoly of initiative."
3. "The member states, not the Commission nor the European Parliament, ought to remain the central pillars of the European Union."

**COMMISSION CAREER.** Years in Commission service. *Source:* Biographical data from: *The European Companion*. London: DPR Publishing, 1992, 1994; *Euro's Who's Who*. Brussels: Editions Delta, 1991; interviews by author.

**STATE CAREER.** Years in national service. These concern positions in the executive branch of the state and hierarchically subordinate to central government: civil servants in line ministries, diplomats (excluding EU postings), and government ministers (but not national parliamentarians). For public officials with some autonomy from central authorities (courts, central bank, parliament, public companies, local government) or in positions with a strong European component (European desks in Foreign Affairs or near the head of government), I allocate half of the time to state career. *Source:* biographical data.

**REGULATORY DISCRETION.** Page (1997) measures two types of secondary legislative activity by the Commission: regulations, directives, and decisions that require Council approval, and those that do not. As there are no official statistics on legislative output per DG, Page and his collaborator White used keywords (author; form; year; subject) to scan the Justis CD-Rom for legislation over the period 1980–94 (over 30,000 pieces), and allocated output to the DG

considered to be the most plausible author. I did a manual recount for 1980–94 for some policy areas, and arrived at a comparable breakdown. (*Source*: European Commission. N.d. *Directory of EU legislation in Force until Dec. 1994*.) Amendments to Page's data pertain to DGs created since 1994. The proportion of autonomous Commission output to total output ranges between 10% (budget) and more than 90% (competition). Values: 1 = up to 20%; 2 = 21–40%; 3 = 41–60%; 4 = 61–80%; 5 = above 80%.

**NATIONAL BENEFIT.** Q: "Taking everything into consideration, would you say that [COUNTRY] has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union?" Options: benefited, not benefited, don't know. *Source*: Eurobarometer. 1996. *Top Decision Makers Survey: Summary Report*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities (DG X).

**COHESION TRANSFER.** EU structural intervention for 1994–99 as percentage of GDP in 1994 prices for each member state. *Source*: European Commission. 1996. *First Report on Economic and Social Cohesion 1996*. Brussels: 144 (table 24). EU structural intervention (structural funds and cohesion fund) represents 0.51% of EU GDP for this period. Four cohesion countries receive a higher proportion: Portugal (3.98%), Greece (3.67%), Ireland (2.82%) and Spain (1.74%).

**LEFT-RIGHT.** *Source*: self-reporting, transformed in numerical values using Hix and Lord (1997).

**PARTY IDENTIFICATION.** *Source*: self-reporting. Four dummies for party family: socialists, christian democrats, liberals, and conservatives. Four interaction dummies between party family and generation. The generation dummy has value 0 for officials born before 1940 and 1 for officials born since 1940. Reference group for the whole population is the group of non-partisans; liberals constitute the reference group for the partisan subpopulation.

**SOCIALDG.** Years in a social DG. I use a narrow definition of services for European regulated capitalism: social regulation (social policy, culture, environment, vocational training and education, consumer services) and redistribution (agriculture, third-world development, fisheries, regional policy). A broader definition might include services dealing with the supply of collective goods (transport, research and development, telecommunications, energy, and tourism and small and medium enterprises). *Source*: biographical data.

**DELORS.** Value 1 for officials appointed during 1986–1994; value 0 for those appointed before or after. Delors was in office January 1985 through December

1994, but his star was waning by 1993. Allowing for time lags between recruitment and start of the job, it seems prudent to take 1986 as the starting date and the end of 1994 as the cut-off point. *Source:* biographical data.

### Descriptive Statistics of Indicators Used

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. dev.
ERC	1.00	4.00	3.22	.677
Supranationalism	1.00	4.00	2.48	.662
Commission Career	1.00	38.00	18.01	10.71
State Career	0.00	28.00	6.01	7.21
National Benefit	63.00	98.00	89.70	7.383
Cohesion Transfer	0.11	3.98	0.64	1.031
Left-Right	2.30	9.30	5.63	1.089
Socialists (dummy)	0.00	1.00	0.22	.421
Christ-democrats (dummy)	0.00	1.00	0.12	.330
Conservatives (dummy)	0.00	1.00	0.05	.233
Liberals (dummy)	0.00	1.00	0.17	.388
Young_Soc (dummy)	0.00	1.00	0.12	.330
Young_Christ (dummy)	0.00	1.00	0.06	.250
SocialDG	0.00	33.00	4.84	7.86
Regulatory Discretion	1.00	5.00	3.04	1.39
Delors	0.00	1.00	0.51	.50

### Intercorrelations

	ERC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Supranationalism	.244**								
Commission Career	.201**	.200**							
State Career	-.352***	-.293***	-.587***						
National Benefit	.197**	.110	.373***	-.353***					
Cohesion Transfer	.187*	.056	-.262***	.053	.143				
Left-Right	-.296***	-.174*	-.078	.137	-.028	-.002			
SocialDG	.235**	.103	.241**	-.248**	.095	-.004	-.173*		
Regulatory Discretion	.261***	.060	-.113	.018	-.088	-.022	-.059	.363**	
Delors	.160	.030	-.165*	-.025	.130	.201**	-.120	.090*	.178*

*Notes:* Significant at 0.10 level; \*\* Significant at 0.05 level (two-tailed); \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 level (two-tailed).

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