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**The Role of Europe in the Nationalist Discourses of Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party**

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In recent decades the European Union has served as an important component of the platforms of regionalist and nationalist political parties in Europe. This is both an ideological phenomenon as well as a component of electoral competition. There is a genuine desire for continental integration alongside a pragmatic leveraging of the EU to reduce the perceived costs of secession. The transitional costs of secession are potentially high; thus, nationalists must persuade their compatriots that secession will be a well-managed process in which the benefits will exceed the costs (Dion, 1996). Membership of the EU serves several purposes: nationalists can credibly claim that secession will involve minimal economic disruption because trade links and a common currency will already exist. Moreover, continental integration blunts the power of the viability arguments that so often emerge in debates about the prospects of an independent Scotland or Wales.

The paper employs a within country comparison of two political parties seeking to highlight differences between the parties on the issue of statehood versus autonomy. The Scottish National Party is unambiguously for Scottish statehood, while Plaid Cymru has typically aspired to a more nuanced version of sovereignty in keeping with trends toward multilevel governance and continental integration. The parties share many similarities but operate in quite different social and economic contexts. Culture and language figure more prominently in Plaid Cymru discourse while the SNP stress more prosaic matters like the economy and effective governance.

European politics have obviously altered the terrain of political competition in member states. Just as member states help shape EU policy and evolution, European institutions and policies have penetrated party manifestoes and election campaigns at the regional level the presence of Europe is felt in the form of regional development funding, new forms of

paradiplomacy and representation of regions in Brussels, and in elections for the European parliament. One could say that the process of Europeanization has exerted an influence over party competition in the regions.

### **Europeanization**

Scholars of EU politics have adopted the concept of Europeanization to describe the penetration of EU institutions and governance into the politics, economies, and psyches of European societies. Olsen (2003, 334) is cautious about the theoretical utility of the term, noting 5 distinct uses. Other scholars do not linger on the concept's utility but press ahead with definitions that see the EU and its institutions as the independent variable and the domestic political structure as the dependent one, albeit with important national differences in the degree and form of Europeanization (Pennings 2006). Pennings (2006, 258) uses Ladrech's (2002, 393) parsimonious definition of Europeanization which simply sees this as "the responses by national actors to the impact of European integration."

When looking at political parties, one might measure Europeanization by manifesto content, using content analysis methods to measure the degree to which a party is 'Europeanized'. Kriesi (2007) conducts such an analysis of political parties in six European countries. The importance of the concept of Europeanization is that it may highlight the emergence of a new cleavage in European politics. Kriesi notes that the literature thus far has not provided much support for an emerging EU cleavage, but for some political parties it seems more important than others. Moreover, we might expect the EU to be more prominent in electoral politics in some countries than others. Nationalist political parties have recognized the utility of integration for the

achievement of their particular constitutional goals. Jolly (2007, 112) finds support for the hypothesis that regionalist political parties will support European integration in as far as this enhances the viability of small states and autonomous regions. Jolly finds strong support for this hypothesis in the manifestos of the Scottish National Party. Jolly's analysis is sound but needs to be reconsidered especially after the response of the SNP and Plaid Cymru to the draft Constitution of the EU.

In December 2001 at the European Council in Laeken, Belgium the Convention on the Future of Europe was struck to draft a constitution for the European Union. More than an administrative 'cleaning up' exercise, the treaty was a step toward a European confederal union, and as such the treaty promised to raise controversy as well as test the limits of Europeans' taste for supranational institutions. As with the 2000 Convention which produced the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Laeken commission was composed of three representatives of each member state (including the 2004 accession candidate states). Members were chosen among representatives of both European institutions and national parliaments. In all, there would be 105 members, and 102 alternates who would step in to fill unexpected vacancies. One overlooked drama in the drafting process was the fact that sub-state jurisdictions and their nationalist parties played a peripheral role in the deliberations and their implications. One might concede that all parties not in government were voiceless on the matter of the Constitution, but in the case of state-level political parties there is at least the prospect of winning office and scuttling the Constitution. For nationalist parties at the substate level, no such option existed.

This is a potential problem for nationalist parties committed to European

integration. Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party have placed Europe at the center of their political platforms. Both are committed to the integration project and the Euro. The rationale is multifold. There are electoral considerations, practical concerns about the uncertainty of independence and the transition from constituent member of the UK to independent state, and finally, genuine ideological preferences for integration and European social and political mores.

The problem is this: Until the constitution, the parties could critique the UK government for not being sufficiently European. They could present the picture of a Europe of possibility—a Europe they would shape once full independent members, perhaps with Commissioners, and a coveted seat on the Council of Ministers. The parties could present themselves as the progressive visionaries of the new European future, in contrast to the dominant British parties with their attachment to an outdated empire state.. Now, two problems emerge. The first is that the constitution would have locked future states in arrangements not of their making. That is, PC and the SNP had very little input into the details of the document signed on October 29, 2004. The parties were faced with unreservedly supporting a document they did not help construct, eschewing a central platform of their programs, or perhaps remaining silent except for criticism of specific areas of the draft Constitution. Another problem, which I will not deal with in this paper, is the prospect of a ratified constitution's impact upon constitutional politics within the UK.

For almost a year, these parties had to reflect on a future EU which could see the benefits of integration undermined by the transference of sovereignty over marine resources (of particular interest to Scotland) to the EU, and the low profile of 'regions' in the final draft

signed in October 2004. The draft constitution represents a fundamental challenge to two decades of policy on European integration, and as such challenges these parties' pro-European Union ethos.

This analysis argues that PC and the SNP are between a rock and a hard place and chose the best option available to them. Outright rejection is risky, as it could resuscitate the charge of separatist isolationism, so often used in elections past. In the case of Plaid Cymru, a tepid protest would undermine the party's general argument for European integration. It is tempting for an observer to conclude that these parties may view the failure of ratification with some relief.

### **Nationalism and Integration**

There is a sense of paradox when one considers the enthusiasm many nationalist parties in Europe have regarding integration. It should be *prima facie* contrary to the stated aims of independence and sovereignty, long considered the core of nationalist doctrine. However, the modern state, an institution to which nationalists have aspired, has, in some respects, become maladaptive to the challenges of both globalization and demands for local autonomy. In this light, support for European integration amongst European substate nationalists becomes less contradictory. This turn to Europe is both utilitarian and idealistic. There is a cost-benefit calculus at work where nationalists see the benefits of integration: development funding, a stable currency, stability in the event of secession, and a reduction of the power of the host state. Nationalist parties point to the transformation of Ireland which has leapt from an agricultural economy to a 21st century service economy aided in part by infrastructural funds from European Regional Development Fund.

Countries like Scotland and Wales share many of Ireland's characteristics: English speaking workforces, high levels of education and proximity to European markets.

Moreover, the SNP and PC seek the benefits of membership of Scotland and Wales in the Eurozone. One of the primary risks associated with secession, after war, is economic dislocation as skittish markets retreat and weigh options in the wake of political instability. A smooth, democratically-sanctioned alteration of the constitutional status quo with the transition to a major global currency (the Euro) would ease the market's fears and permit a minimal dislocation of existing economic arrangements.

Electoral considerations are also clear regarding domestic politics. Outright secession scares voters and only the most committed nationalist would countenance such a radical change. By supporting the European Union, PC and the SNP can endorse an 'independence in Europe' policy that promises change and continuity. In fact, the utilitarian economic benefits suggested above make the nationalist project quite positive and becomes more a lament over frustrated development in the status quo. By reassuring voters, calming markets, and ambitiously painting a picture of post-independence economic vibrancy nationalists have made integration a core plank in their electoral platforms.

The zeal for integration underscores the observations of scholars (Lynch 1996, Keating 1996, Shulman 2000) who see some forms of nationalism as consistent with globalization. Nationalism is a protean program and frequently economic nationalism means opening up to the global economy rather than building walls to keep it out. Of course, opposition from the left remains influential in many places, determined to prevent the liberalization of trade. These voices are nationalist too, but represent an older conception of the state as

the ultimate referee over economic outcomes. With globalization and integration, nationalists in many places see their economic futures as bound up with increasing integration and liberal trade.

### **PC, the SNP and the European Constitution**

On June 6, 1975 the UK held a referendum on renegotiating the terms of Britain's membership of the EC. The campaign revealed a divided SNP, with prominent members supporting and opposing the treaty publicly. The official party position was summed up by the slogan "No, on anyone else's terms", a position that seemed more concerned with democratic process than the content of the Treaty (Harvie 190, 1994). On the other hand, a serious critique of the institutions of the EU was also offered with SNP office holders comparing EC bureaucratic centralization unfavorably to the Kremlin. Opposition to the EC revealed both a nationalist-sovereignist character, as well as a 'new politics' critique of bureaucracy and the alleged capitalist Trojan horse in the form of the Treaty of Rome. The referendum passed, and divisions over Europe were soon obscured by division within the party on the question of administrative devolution.

The failure of the devolution referendum in 1978 seemed to mark the end of the SNP's surge of the 1970s. The party faced the 1980s divided over devolution, electorally defeated and empty of political energy. It was at this time that a rethink on Europe would take place. Influential figures like Jim Sillars began to look to a European future, one in which Scotland could achieve its aspirations while shedding the separatist rhetoric of its supporters and enemies. By 1983 the party had taken a pro-European position that would crystallize in the slogan: "Independence in Europe". The slogan took the wind out of opponents' arguments that

the SNP was a reactionary, separatist-even 'ethnic' party, and gave it a cosmopolitan internationalist character.

Plaid Cymru's orientation toward Europe has always reflected the party's wider view of Wales as a European nation. As such, integration has been viewed as a positive development for a continent mired in war and instability. As Lynch (1996,58) observes the party engaged early with post-war European transnational organizations such as the International Congress of European Communities and Regions, founded in 1949. Like the SNP, PC adopted an anti-EC position in the 1970s. This position was primarily motivated by a sense that the UK had not adequately taken Welsh interests into account in the negotiations over accession. The procedural critique was, as with the SNP, accompanied by a critique of contemporary capitalism as manifested in the European project of trade liberalization (Lynch 1996, 65). In the referendum PC campaigned against continued membership with the slogan "Europe Yes, EEC No" reflecting their principled support for integration but suspicion of the project on offer as the EC. This ambiguity remains today, as well shall see below. By 1983 the party had adopted an agnostic position on integration which would, in any case, have to be voted upon in a referendum held after independence. By 1989 the party had settled upon a clear endorsement of Europe, albeit a regional rather than nation-state version.

### **Exogenous Influences on parties**

Political parties have long been exemplary examples of domestic political actors largely insulated from extra-state influences. Unlike governments, which are betwixt and between foreign and domestic policy, parties are shaped primarily by ideology, memberships, and leaders. This description, however, is out of step with developments in Europe, where political parties' behaviors are not only shaped by external factors, but

also, by competing in the supranational arena in continent-wide elections. This is a powerful resource for small political parties. The EU provides an additional platform and arena for parties to press their case, engage in strategic alliances and acquire resources that might not be available in the arena of domestic politics. This also serves to reinforce the importance of the EU in party policy. For parties enthusiastic about the future of Europe, EP elections have generally been a positive opportunity to critique the government of the day, and to highlight their own international profile 'at the heart of Europe'.

What happens when a political party must confront an abrupt change in one of its fundamental campaign issues? Neither PC nor the SNP had any substantial input into the draft, and yet they must now deliver a judgment and take a position on an actual European constitution rather than an ever evolving, amorphous one. PC could blithely endorse a united Europe of regions, and the SNP could argue that Scotland's interests would be best served outwith the UK and inside the EU as an independent state. But what if this was no longer the case?

For PC and the SNP Europe has become a synonym for sanitized nationalism, compromised globalization harnessing capitalism, and of a restoration of self-respect. Europe helped to address the 'viability argument' (less powerful now anyway with the rise of the knowledge economy) and deflect the atavistic separatist charge. Unfortunately, draft constitution repaid the zeal of PC and the SNP by favoring member states over regions and would-be states, and sacrificed the basic interests of Scotland in favor of EU-wide cohesion. This can only be problematic for the nationalists who spent so much time rationalizing and reconciling themselves to the EU.

### **Internal Party Politics**

Political parties have a competitive interest in maintaining the loyalty of voters and party members. This scenario makes fundamental change in the policy environment threatening to established political parties. Voters and members evaluate policy in light of their ideological interpretation of party policy. In the case of PC and the SNP--parties that pose themselves as defenders of the nation-voters and members will judge them positively where they prioritize the basic interests of Scotland and Wales. The problem arises when a valued and vital element of a party' s platform is seen by party members as a threat to the nation. This is precisely what happened with the SNP and the draft constitution.

Political parties deliver goods in return for electoral support (minimally) as well as monetary and voluntary support. Technology has reduced somewhat the need for armies of volunteers but there remains an important role for party members as representatives and standard bearers of the party message. Furthermore, partisan voters and members are more likely to maintain consistent attitudes toward basic party positions and will tend to have greater knowledge of political events as they affect party positions. If a party becomes dysfunctional by failing to respond appropriately to changes in the political issue environment, they will tend to see the rise of factionalism, internal dissent and possibly defections to other parties (or abstentions). Therefore, political parties are likely to focus on core issues and develop responses that are coherent and palatable to their core electorate, as well as the public at large.

### **Reacting to the Draft**

In the summer of 2004 the draft Constitution of the EU was completed and ready for the signatures of the 25 member-state executives. At this time, the constitution was

available for scrutiny by political parties, an exercise made more salient by the June 2004 elections to the European Parliament. The draft had become an increasingly sensitive issue for both parties before and after the EP 2004 elections. Hysterical headlines in the UK's tabloid press suggested that-among other things-Britain would have to surrender its UN Security Council seat. All the while, more important matters deemed threatening to Scotland and Wales were being decided by the constitutional committee.

The SNP expressed its concern with portions of the EU draft constitution. In June 2003 Nicola Sturgeon MSP, the party's Shadow Minister for Justice and Europe in the Scottish Parliament, linked Scotland's involvement in the constitutional process to Scotland's relationship with Europe. In Parliament on June 12, Sturgeon argued that

Right now, Scotland is little more than a bystander in the big discussions that will shape and define the terms of our relationship with Europe for generations to come (SNP, 12 June 2003)." Sturgeon also laid out the quandary for the pro-European SNP: The SNP is passionately pro-European. We believe in an enlarged, confederal Europe, a voluntary coming together of states in a Union that collectively exercises sovereign rights pooled by its members... But, we oppose a European super state. The nations and people that make up the European Union now, and even more so post enlargement, are diverse-historically, culturally, politically, constitutionally, and linguistically. That's why each member state must retain its own distinctive identity and its own sovereignty in respect of constitutional, fiscal and other matters of vital national importance. That is our vision of Europe (SNP, 12 June 2003).

On the matter of vital national interest, Sturgeon identified the constitution's awarding of exclusive competence over marine resources (i.e. fishing) as unacceptable.

The SNP could not be portrayed as zealously protecting national powers from Brussels' control; in fact, the constitution proposes four areas of exclusive EU competence. These are monetary policy, a common commercial policy and a customs union, and the Common Fisheries policy. The SNP only rejected the last policy. In a speech to the Scottish Council of the European Movement on November 1st 2003, SNP MSP

John Swinnney emphasized the SNP's commitment to European integration but underlined the SNP's commitment to a decentralized fishing policy in the EU. On the proposal to give the EU exclusive competence over fishing Swinney stated:

To enshrine in a constitution the process that allows that [the CFP]-and other examples of injustice-to continue, cannot be supported by the SNP. Indeed, we believe it is gravely adverse to Scottish interests. So, an SNP government, in an independent Scotland, would use its power to remove this measure from the constitution. None of that represents a dilution of the SNP's pro-Europe position .... In fact, removing fishing as an exclusive competence would enhance the status of the EU in Scotland. It is a pro-European position to take (SNP 1 November 2003).

In November 2003 SNP Westminster leader (now party leader), Alex Salmond, expressed alarm at the potential negative impact on Scotland of the proposed Energy chapter. In an intense lobbying effort, the UK, the offshore oil and gas industries, and representatives of the Scottish parliament and European Parliament (including SNP representatives) managed to have the energy chapter reworded so as to prevent the EU Commission from imposing controls on reserve extraction rates (Scots Independent June 2004). In fact, the energy chapter of the constitution was dropped in May 2004, mainly because of the UK's intense lobbying. The SNP was not shy about voicing its concerns regarding fishing. In its National Council meeting on June 12 the SNP voted to welcome the draft constitution's progress and reform to existing institutions, but condemned the UK for failing to prevent the entrenchment of the EU's exclusive domain (Article I-12) over fisheries conservation and amend the Chapter on Agriculture and Fisheries. The conference further stated that the National Council of the party "Resolves to withhold support from any legislation ratifying any constitution agreed by the IGC if these provisions concerning fisheries remain unchanged (SNP, National Council June 12, 2003)."

The SNP's sole voice on the European Convention as established at Laeken in

December 2001 was veteran SNP politician, MEP and Professor of Law, Neil MacCormick. Representing the European Free Alliance/Democratic Party of the Peoples of Europe group as an alternate, MacCormick submitted a statement supporting the draft constitutional exercise but raised concerns that the Praesidium of the Convention decided not to proceed with a proposed Working Group within the Convention about the future position of 'regions' within the EU. Furthermore, the statement does not equate a written constitution with statehood and called for a clear enumeration of powers. The statement is very concerned with the principal of subsidiarity and demands a stronger definition to permit appropriate "recognition" of the roles of territorial "entities" like Scotland and Wales in EU governance. More specifically the 2002 statement called for the following:

1. Substitute term 'region' with 'nation' where appropriate.
2. Reform EP constituencies in sensitivity to cultural spaces within member states.
3. Abolish or reform the Committee of the Regions.
4. Require Commission to consult with all levels of jurisdiction when implementing EU law.
5. Delineate the circumstances when internal territories can participate/vote in Council of Ministers.
6. Right of access by all territorial entities to Court of Justice.
7. Define and institutionalize subsidiarity.
8. More involvement in EU institutional system of self-governing sub-state territories.
9. Protection of linguistic diversity and equal rights for all languages (MacCormick 2002).

By May 30, 2003 MacCormick expressed disappointment with the draft Constitution, as it existed then. It was "robustly statist" and provided no recognition for self-determination of stateless nations. Indeed, the document left sub-state governance and issues related to it with the member states. Despite improvements in language regarding cultural protection and clarity in structure of EU institutions, the EFA was forced to give the draft 'unqualified support' (SNP press release May 30, 2003).

MacCormick also lodged final amendments for the final draft of the constitution on May 30 calling for the removal of fisheries conservation laws from exclusive domain of the EU. By December 2003 the then leader of the SNP, John Swinney, denounced the draft constitution's enumeration of fisheries policy to the EU, singling out the absurdity of landlocked Luxembourg approving such a constitutional retrenchment. Swinney vowed to oppose the constitution even though the party had no way to influence the process without an independent Scottish government. However, Swinney was careful to add that this position in no way diminished the party's pro-Europe position, but in fact pointed to the detrimental consequences of the UK constitutional status quo for Scots (SNP Press release December 8, 2003).

On January 26, 2005 SNP MP Angus Robertson (SNP Press Release January 26, 2005) called for a renegotiation of the constitution, 3 months after its signing in Rome. Robertson cited the Common Fisheries Policy as a central sore spot for Scotland and the decision of the constitutional committee to make fisheries an exclusive competency of the EU as the basis for his call. The CFP has been so roundly condemned in Scotland that the SNP could not possibly have supported the constitution as signed in October 2004. On April 18, 2005 the SNP's MEP Ian Hudghton, spoke out on the constitution in the EP,

and warned that the EU was falling out of favor in Scotland:

An opinion poll published in Scotland this week asked how many people would vote on the proposed EU constitution -the result was 35 % in favor and 49% against. Five years ago, we may well have expected a more positive response. Historically, Scotland has been more enthusiastic about engagement with the EU than elsewhere in the UK. But people in Scotland increasingly see the policies coming out of the EU as insensitive and inappropriate to our communities. I'm referring principally to the disastrous handling of fisheries policy and the ridiculous proposals to hand over control of Scotland's fisheries exclusively to Brussels (SNP Press Release April 18, 2005).

In the wake of the 'no' votes in France and the Netherlands, SNP criticism of the constitution continued. In a letter to *The Scotsman* on 2 June 2005. MSP Richard Lohead welcomed the French rejection, pointing out the document's failure to take Scottish interests into account, especially those policy areas devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

### **Plaid Cymru and the draft Constitution**

Plaid Cymru had fewer criticisms of the constitution. With no great fishing or energy interests it may be that PC was less disturbed by the features of the draft constitution. In fact, it has publicly approved the reference to linguistic diversity found in the draft. There are areas that would be expected to be of concern to the party. The tendency to preserve power with the Council would seem contrary to the party's avowed preference for a Europe of Regions. Further, no Plaid representative served on the Convention. The only Welsh representative, Peter Hain, an MP and then Labour Welsh Secretary, had an interest in maintaining the status quo. The quietude of the party on the draft is curious.

Acting almost like a lobby group, Plaid Cymru pressed then Secretary of State for Wales, Peter Hain, to boost Wales' role within the EU. This would be accomplished by allowing members of the Welsh Assembly (AMs) representation at high level European talks

when Welsh issues are involved. Article 203 of the Treaty of European Union permits regional politicians to represent their state at Council meetings. Of course, this does not permit a Welsh 'vote' but rather some input to the sovereign government of the UK's position on the matter in question. Recently, PC has pressed for the UK to negotiate a greater role for the Welsh Assembly as well as more protection for the Welsh language (Plaid Cymru Press Release "Plaid discusses Wales' role in EU with Minister" Oct. 12, 2004). In keeping with PC's vision of a federal Europe of regions, Plaid Cymru was the first political party in the UK to call for a written constitution for the EU and a binding Charter of Fundamental Rights, believing both would strengthen Wales' voice in Europe and protect its language. On the draft Constitution, the party has not been as pointedly critical as the SNP. On May 7, 2002, the party underlined its support for the Convention and its dissatisfaction with the EU-status quo (Plaid Cymru Press release May 7, 2002). Plaid Cymru had no representative on the committee, but as part of the European Parliament's European Free Alliance, it had the ear of Sir Neil MacCormick SNP MEP and Convention member. In 2002 Plaid Cymru criticized the low proportion of women on the committee (10%), the apparent bias toward member states evident in the composition of the Praesidium (the executive of which was appointed by governments), and the stated belief of Valery Giscard d'Estaing that power should rest with member states and not European institutions or regional governments (Plaid Cymru Press release May 7, 2002).

In a debate in the National Assembly of Wales in June 2003 PC Leader Ieuan Wyn Jones argued that the draft constitution would "tighten the grip" of the larger member states of the EU, and further marginalize Scotland and Wales (Plaid Cymru Press Release 4 June 2003). Jones continued:

We reject utterly the risible mentality of those little Englanders that the United Kingdom can cut itself off from the rest of Europe. Our criticism of the draft constitution is based on the fact that it favours the large nation states at the expense of Europe's smaller and stateless nations. We in Plaid Cymru want to see a Europe of the people, not a Europe where the larger nation states are calling all the shots (Plaid Cymru Press Release 4 June 2003).

Plaid Cymru welcomed the Blair government's April 2004 decision to subject the draft to referendum but joined with the SNP in an April 2004 news conference to complain about the dearth of either Scottish or Welsh government representatives at meetings of the Council of Ministers. Scottish ministers had attended an average of 10.2 % of meetings since devolution and the Welsh government only 3.6% (Plaid Cymru Press release April 21 2004). In both cases, these were lower than the percentage of meetings attended by Scottish and Welsh representatives before the 1999 devolution. The news conference compared these figures unfavourably with the influence of new EU states that have full participation and equality in the Council. Even more galling for the nationalists was the fact that in the other devolved administrations, such as Wallonia and Flanders, attended Council meetings more frequently.

The failed French referendum of May 2005 was regarded by Plaid Cymru as a "wake up call" for European leaders. Plaid reiterated its view that the draft "leaves power in the hands of the member states and unelected Brussels bureaucrats (Plaid Cymru May 30 2005)." The party's position was that any "new discussion surrounding the reform of the EU constitution must give more prominence to national and regional Assemblies and Parliaments within the EU member states (Plaid Cymru May 30 2005)."

### **Conclusion**

The Constitution forced the parties to rethink what have been hitherto

statements of broad principle concerning Europe. The Scottish National Party has less difficulty because its objection is primarily about a single policy area (fishing). There was also the state-centric language of the Constitution, but since the SNP is committed to a sovereign state within the EU, this is the preferred option for the party. In the case of Plaid Cymru, little dissent was expressed about the draft. This is curious since Plaid had wanted a federal-type Europe of Regions, an institutional structure not endorsed by this constitution. Jones (2009 129) observes that Plaid Cymru's experiences dealing with the European Union may have led it to change its "utopian commitment to a post-sovereign Europe" to the goal of independence.

Since the Treaty of Lisbon, a number of issues have emerged to challenge the positive view of the European Union for substate nationalists. If the Euro was a symbol of the stability offered by continental integration, that symbol lost its allure with the various economic crises of 2008 and especially the crisis in the Eurozone brought on by issues with the Greek economy. The SNP conference of 2009 adopted the position that Scotland should continue to use the British pound until the Scottish public voted to adopt the Euro (Hepburn and McLoughlin, 2010, 390).

Brexit seems to play into the hands of nationalists as it heightens the contrast between the English majority's view of Europe and that of the nationalist parties. Certainly, there is some reason to believe this is the case in Scotland. On the other hand, the Welsh electorate voted to leave the EU by a small margin (52%). This could mean that Plaid Cymru's pro-EU stance is at odds with a large portion of the electorate. Even in Scotland, where 62% voted to remain, sizeable discontent exists regarding the management of Scottish fisheries. In any case, should Brexit happen, additional procedural hurdles to EU membership may arise making the promise of a smooth transition to sovereign, EU member state status doubtful.

De Winter and Cachafeiro (2002) have argued that the phenomenon of Europeanization is altering the dynamics of domestic and supranational party systems. These authors argue that the EU presents opportunities for nationalists to prosecute their goals and a platform to enhance their domestic stature. This is true but hides another painful reality. That supranational and national politics cannot be assumed to be in harmony. That is, that parties claiming that the EU will further the cause of autonomy for their region/nation will have to acknowledge that their parties' states interests are not always congruent with those of the EU. Just as states may make decisions harming the periphery, or retarding its development, the EU may equally have asymmetrically distributed benefits that harm vital national interests. Plaid Cymru and the SNP benefited greatly from the Conservative party general hostility to the deepening aspect of the EU. Both parties could paint themselves as internationalist and economic moderates seeking the benefits of integration. What remains clear, however, is that the EU's future trajectory is driven by state interests, and as independent members of the EU, smaller nations would have to make the calculated decisions that might compromise national interests.

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