

Globalisation, Change and European Integration

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ABSTRACT

It is far from controversial to suggest that the dynamics of European integration need to be understood with reference to the context provided by the wider global political economy. Indeed explanations of 'change' (in terms of policy competence, institutional reach or a less tangible notion of renewed dynamism) in European integration frequently allude to the influence of external global structure upon actors within the EU system. In particular, literature on the single market initiative and the subsequent project to secure economic and monetary union usually identifies the importance of imperatives set by global structural conditions. In the wider realm of international political economy, bodies such as the EU are increasingly seen as regimes either designed for, or with the potential to secure the governance of international economic turbulence/ 'globalisation'.

The primary purpose of this paper is to explore the usefulness of using ideas about globalisation to assist the theorisation of change in contemporary European integration. It reviews the ways in which external context has been used to explain developments in regional integration in Europe and thinks more generally about the globalisation-regionalisation interface. The paper goes on to explore the assumptions about globalisation, global context and the structuring of interest which reside (but which are often unacknowledged) in such accounts. These assumptions tend to revolve around highly rationalistic conceptions of interest which are then separated from the external economic environment so that changes in this environment induce utility-maximising actors into various forms of strategic re-evaluation. Debate then tends to concentrate on identifying the key actors (state, supranational or non-state) involved in and capable of devising appropriate programmes of action. As a challenge to these assumptions, the paper then draws on constructivist arguments to explore - in relation particularly to the origins of the single market programme - the relationship between ideas, interests and identity on the one hand and the *social construction* of a context of global threat to 'Europe' on the other.

The single market case study is used as the empirical anchor to make a series of more general points about theorising change in the context of European integration. In particular the paper seeks to contribute to debates about the dynamics of co-operation between actors which are concerned less with rationalistic pursuits of interest and more with the relational and ideational construction of identities.

We need to place developments in European integration within their wider global context. This is not a controversial thing to say among students of the European Union (EU). Indeed it is difficult to imagine circumstances when it might be contradicted. Most student texts alert their readers to the dangers of obsessive chronicling of the institutions and decision-making dynamics of European integration without locating the EU as an entity within the world economy or geopolitics. Historical studies of the origins of post-war regional integration in Europe frequently identify the international dynamics of the time as decisive shapers of the character of the institutionalised form of co-operation adopted by the founding 'six'. Moreover, explanations of 'change' in terms of (for instance) EU policy competence, institutional reach or less tangible notions of renewed dynamism and discernible alterations in the EU *zeitgeist* frequently allude to the influence of external stimuli or the structure of the global political economy upon actors within the EU system. For example, contributions to the specialist literature on the single market initiative and the subsequent project to secure economic and monetary union usually identify the importance of the imperatives set by global structural conditions and external competitive pressures.

The maturation of literature on integration and EU policy-making has coincided with the widespread infiltration of the concept of globalisation into the social sciences. This has had many disciplinary and multidisciplinary manifestations, but of particular importance to this discussion is the way in which the use of the concept has led scholars of international political economy (IPE) to regard bodies such as the EU as regimes either designed for, or with the potential to secure the governance of the turbulence occasioned by globalisation. This has been the thrust of the growth of work on 'regionalism' with the attendant suggestion that we need to pay greater attention to the relationship between regionalism (or regionalisation) and globalisation.¹

This paper is partly an attempt to contribute to serious thinking about the ways in which we can understand change or dynamism in the EU via the use of theories of globalisation. But it is not uncritical of the ways in which the globalisation-regionalisation/integration interface is normally understood. So we need to be carefully systematic about how to theorise the interplay between 'Europe' and 'the world'. The observation that global change provides a set of exogenous factors which influence the behaviour of actors located in the EU can only be made within the

¹ For a survey of the literature on regionalism see A. Hurrell 'Explaining the resurgence of regionalism in world politics' *Review of International Studies* 21/4 (1995)

context of serious thinking about both the nature of globalisation and the relationship between globalisation and regional entities such as the EU. More fundamentally perhaps, this discussion draws attention to a number of significant theoretical questions of structure and agency, notably the relationship between globalisation and actors' interests and identities.

The paper builds on earlier arguments about the value of the contemplation of theories of globalisation for the theorisation of dynamism in the EU², not simply because it wishes to assert the importance of 'global change' for 'European change', but also because it detects theoretical ambivalence and conceptual underdevelopment in the commonplace linkage between the two phenomena. Against current trends perhaps, the paper also asks that we look again at international theory for useful insights.³ In particular, the paper identifies constructivist international relations thinking as a potentially productive site for thinking about change in the EU because of the ways in which it identifies the significance of intersubjectivities in the social construction of interests and identities. With the further embellishment provided by sociological theories of institutional reflexivity, the paper offers a provisional framework for thinking about one aspect of the globalisation-integration interface. The final section of the paper fleshes the argument out by offering a reading of some elements of the work of the European Commission and its interaction with other actors. In its broadest possible terms, the argument is that change in European integration requires the prior discursive elaboration of the European space which in turn relies upon the social construction of 'non-Europe' (to coin a phrase) and that recently this has drawn heavily on the discourse of globalisation.

'Europe' and 'the World'

To demonstrate the nature of the problem it is worthwhile to interrogate in some depth the most usual way in which the globalisation-integration relationship is articulated. This would be to treat European integration and the emergence of the EU as responses to the onset of global transformation. So the growth of the EU reflects a considered reflex to particular sorts of policy dilemma and incentive structures occasioned by changing global conditions. The development

² B. Rosamond 'Mapping the European Condition: the Theory of Integration and the Integration of Theory', *European Journal of International Relations* 1/3 (1995)

³ The contrary position is developed with some eloquence by S. Hix 'The Study of the European Community: the Challenge of Comparative Politics', *West European Politics* 17/1 (1994)

of the EC-EU is intimately connected to the types of challenge posed by the intensification of economic and social life associated with the latest phase of globalisation. Examples of this kind of reasoning include Sandholtz and Zysman's important work on the single market initiative which is portrayed as the response of a complex network of actors to the relative competitive decline of the EU.⁴ Elsewhere, William Wallace makes a notable distinction between formal and informal integration. Formal integration is seen as purposive institution-building decisions. These may often be proactive, but they may also be reactive - often in response to the emergence of the informal integration: 'those intense patterns of interaction which develop without the impetus of deliberate political decisions, following the dynamics of markets, technology, communications networks, and social change'.⁵ The possibility of formal integration redirecting informal integration is canvassed by Wallace. This idea of informal integration is often what writers have in mind when they speak of globalisation and the deepening and widening of informal integration is more often than not seen as a direct challenge to nation-bound politics and the nation-state mode of governance. Helen Wallace has this idea in mind in her recent attempt to develop a framework for the contextual study of EU policy-making.⁶ Globalisation is cited as a force, along with the inadequacy of the state and the historical specificities of Western Europe, that helps to accumulate pressures for transnational policy co-operation. Globalisation here is about intensive change in technology, the world economy and security complexes which primarily threaten traditional state-bound forms of governance. So for Wallace 'European integration can be seen as a distinct west European effort to contain the consequences of globalisation. Rather than be forced to choose between the national polity for development policies and the relative anarchy of the globe, west Europeans invented a form of regional governance with polity-like features to extend the state and harden the boundary between themselves and the rest of the world'.⁷

It is necessary to investigate some of the causal chains attributed to this commonplace stimulus-response model. The basic claim is that globalisation confronts the interests of key

⁴ W. Sandholtz and J. Zysman '1992: Recasting the European Bargain', *World Politics* 42 (1989)

⁵ W. Wallace 'Introduction: the Dynamics of European Integration', in W. Wallace (ed.) *The Dynamics of European Integration* (London: Pinter/RIIA, 1990), p.9

⁶ H. Wallace 'Politics and Policy in the EU: the Challenge of Governance', in H. Wallace and W. Wallace (eds) *Policy-Making in the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

⁷ Wallace 'Politics and Policy in the EU', p.16

actors. This in turn induces those actors into responses which shape and change the course of European integration broadly defined. There are two big questions close to the surface here: (a) what is globalisation? and (b) how should European integration - as a response to globalisation - be understood. The first is complex, and may be broken down into a series of sub-issues:

- (a) is globalisation a structural *condition* or is it better understood as a set of on-going *processes* which affect the external environment within which policy actors operate?;
- (b) is there a direction to the logic of globalisation or should we be thinking about it more in terms of the complex interaction of a variety of dynamics whose product is uncertain and contingent?;
- (c) to what extent is globalisation a phenomenon rooted in the domain of economics as, say, the spread of neo-liberal ideas and practices across the world?;
- (d) alternatively, is 'economic globalisation' only one aspect of a multifaceted phenomenon?;
- (e) to what extent is globalisation driven by external agency (i.e. external to the EU) and, therefore, what is the relationship between global structure and global, supranational, national and subnational agency?

The second big question - the nature of European integration as a response - raises the issue of whether European integration should be seen as *resistance to* or as *a facilitator of* globalisation. Much of this discussion is bound upon with the identification of the key actors in the integration process generally and the decision-making dynamics of the EU in particular. Globalisation is often seen first and foremost as posing serious challenges to the nation state as an appropriate capsule for the political regulation of economic activity. Proponents of globalisation are often thought of as sponsors of the world-wide spread of market-driven neo-liberalism with its attendant project to roll back the frontiers of the state. This has led to spirited attempts to discount the objective status of globalisation on behalf of the normative rescue of certain sorts of interventionist national political economy.⁸ One view then would be to regard the EU as the project of dominant actors with the interest (and presumably the material capabilities) to implant neo-liberal practices in

⁸ The most notable example can be found in P. Hirst and G. Thompson *Globalization in Question: the International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996).

(western) Europe.⁹ Regionalising elites are also globalising elites, and the effective application of globalisation requires the emasculation of the modern European welfare state. Of course, precisely the opposite argument is implicit in the view of integration as resistance. Here writers like Helen Wallace (see above) share the view of historians such as Alan Milward¹⁰ that the emergence and development of the EU constitutes an attempt to rescue the policy-making competence of European states. The dilemma here is partly resolved by trying to escape the confines of what Scholte calls 'methodological nationalism' and 'methodological territorialism' in the analysis of globalisation.¹¹ It is a common argument to suggest that globalisation liberates (indeed sometimes creates) some actors and constrains others. So here the sub-questions concern the consequences of globalisation for the actor balance within the EU, the ability of external global actors (say transnational corporations) to influence the policy direction of the EU and the ability of EU institutions to mediate between competing actor claims.

The thoroughgoing pursuit of such questions is highly unlikely to beget parsimony, but they need to be borne in mind when seeking to make connections between change 'inside' the EU and events 'outside'. The remainder of the paper tries to unpack some of these issues and is structured in the following way. The next section contains further thinking about globalisation, but in particular develops a critique of the way in which the interplay between globalisation and regionalisation is normally understood in the 'orthodox' IPE literature. The following section draws together some potentially useful theoretical tools before the paper applies them to the specific case of the EU.

Globalisation and Regionalism in the Global Political Economy

For many writers, the EU provides an instance of regionalism in world politics and/or the international economy. The conventional academic theology of regionalism consists of a sustained debate among international economists and specialists in IPE about the impact of

⁹ Some thinkers from this vantage point do note that the EU offers important sites of resistance to the 'neoliberalisation' of Europe. For a fascinating discussion of the social democratic possibilities immanent in EMU see J. M. Ryner 'Welfare Capitalism in Post-Maastricht Europe: Towards a Project for the "Social Democratic Heartland"', mimeo, University of Amsterdam (1997)

¹⁰ A.S. Milward *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1993)

¹¹ J.A. Scholte 'Beyond the Buzzword: towards a Critical Theory of Globalization', in E. Kofman and G. Youngs (eds) *Globalization: Theory and Practice* (London: Pinter, 1996)

regional trading arrangements upon (a) the goal of global free trade as embodied by both the tenets of liberal theories of trade and the GATT/WTO system, and (b) the use of trade policy instruments by state and supranational policy elites. The debate is complex and nuanced, but its essence is about the extent to which regional blocs such as the EU, NAFTA, APEC and others divert trade that would otherwise take place between member countries and others that are not part of the regional grouping. Against this deployment of counterfactuals comes the argument that regional arrangements are 'good' for world trade provided that they can be shown to possess dynamic 'trade-creating' qualities.¹² While the regionalism and trade issue continues to generate a substantial debate, there is a clear sense of movement which is beginning to take the literature onto a broader terrain.

In particular, this rather focused 'trade debate' carries within in it a more than implicit suggestion of the need to resolve the problematic nature of the relationship between regionalism and globalisation. One immediate way of understanding the relationship is the idea that globalisation somehow *causes* regionalism and regionalising pressures. Here regionalism amounts to the product of various reflexes by policy actors to pressures generated by globalising dynamics. From this vantage point regionalism may be seen as an outcome generated by actors who seek to defend their interests in the face of global onslaught. There is also the possibility that certain policy actors have preferences for permitting globalisation to affect the pattern of development of a particular regional space. This variant would understand regionalism as essentially about the playing out of the dynamics of globalisation in particular locations, albeit influenced by the cultural habits of those particular locations. So the moves in the EU towards a single integrated market and full economic and monetary union would be seen as the European mediations of the global spread of neo-liberal versions of political economy (both in theory and practice). A further idea would seek to draw out the analytical resemblance of globalising and regionalising dynamics. That is to say the focused study of regionalism should attempt to map the interplay between regionalising pressures/elites and national and subnational mediations.

¹² For a good summary of the debate see 'Regionalism and Trade: the Right Direction?', *The Economist* 16 September 1995. Examples from the literature include K. Anderson and R. Blackhurst (eds) *Regional Integration and the Global Trading System* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993); V. Cable and D. Henderson (eds) *Trade Blocs? The Future of Regional Integration* (London: RIAA, 1994); R.C. Hine 'Regionalism and Integration of the World Economy', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 30/2 (1992); R. Ruggiero 'Multilateralism and Regionalism in Trade (Regional multilateral accords need to converge)' *Economic Perspectives* (USIA Electronic Journals) 1/16 (1996). On Europe specifically, see J. Pelkmans 'Regionalism in World Trade: Vice or Virtue?', L. Bekemans and L. Tsoukalis (eds) *Europe and Global Economic Interdependence* (Bruges: European Interuniversity Press, 1992)

The complexity of the issue is heightened by the contestability of the concept of 'globalisation'. To simplify (slightly), globalisation can be treated as a condition or as discourse.¹³ In the former category there is a sub-debate about whether globalisation is best treated as an exogenous condition (i.e. a structural reality which shapes and constrains actors) or as a set of as yet unresolved processes which are transforming existing structures (such as the states system or the world economy) through a complex process of encounter between global processes and local mediations. Globalisation in this sense is most often used to describe the increasingly worldwide and increasingly intensive economic interaction in the domains of production, finance and trade. This may have cultural side-effects such as the homogenisation of consumption patterns, but is usually manifested in the implantation of (neo-liberal) norms and practices across the world by new forms of authority.¹⁴ For some, this type of reasoning overemphasises the singularity of the economic logic of globalisation and overstates the homogenising and universalising capabilities of global capitalism. Rather more sociologically-inclined work has tried to capture what it sees as the chaotic, uneven, contingent and potentially reversible character of globalisation. Writers such as Appadurai write about the 'global cultural economy', a complex intersection of signs and flows whose impact is chronically unpredictable and heavily reliant on local mediations.¹⁵ The residual paradox here is that while globalisation may denote, as Scholte puts it, the rise of 'supraterritoriality'¹⁶, the unevenness of its impact reintroduces the probable significance of territoriality for a proper understanding of local interceptions and translations of global scripts.¹⁷ The nature of this mediation needs to be understood and here a focus on globalisation as discourse may prove useful. Here globalisation may be seen as a 'discourse of power' reflecting the

¹³ This distinction draws on R. Higgott 'Globalisation and Governance: Accommodating to Regionalisation and Localisation', mimeo, University of Warwick (1997)

¹⁴ For example T.J. Sinclair 'Passing judgement: credit rating processes as regulatory mechanisms of governance in the emerging world order', *Review of International Political Economy* 1/1 (1994)

¹⁵ A. Appadurai 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', in M. Featherstone (ed) *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1990). See also B. Axford *The Global System: Economics, Politics and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995) and S. Lash and J. Urry *Economies of Signs and Space* (London: Sage, 1994)

¹⁶ Scholte 'Beyond the Buzzword', pp.45-48

¹⁷ A. Amin and N. Thrift 'Living in the Global', in A. Amin and N. Thrift (eds) *Globalization, Institutions and Regional Development in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

interests of powerful actors in the global political economy - a process involving the world-wide export of the ideologies of free market capitalism and liberal democratic governance. In such scenarios, especially where globalisation is understood as the spread of neo-liberal norms combined with a sense of fatalism regarding the possibilities for national control of economic processes, connections can be made with the interests of globalising elites who have material interests in the widespread hegemony of such discourse. A similar, but potentially distinct, version of globalisation as discourse would understand the discursive elaboration of the structural condition of globalisation as a social construction which is developed and used by actors to define their environment and to structure the range of available policy choice. Clearly, our understandings of both globalisation and regionalism will influence the way in which the intersection of the two phenomena is theorised¹⁸.

It would be taking things a little too far perhaps to treat regionalism as a form of 'extended nationalism'. Such an idea would fuel the image of regions as types of super-mercantilist entities creating either the basis for long run civilizational conflict (especially for those willing and prepared to supranationalise a realist analytical framework) or, more prosaically (in liberal mode), protectionist trade policies levied at the regional level. For the purposes of this discussion, it is worth pointing out, as Björn Hettne rightly notes, that regionalism does 'express a move towards a political/territorial logic compared with the functionalist liberal economic logic implied in the market principle and the interdependent world economy'.¹⁹ This is not to suggest that regionalism implies the creation of super-states with centralised nation-state-like qualities (a scenario that is deeply flawed even in the European context, let alone anywhere else), but it does denote the partial transfer of governance functions and the development of new sorts of political network within the geographical confines of the region along with the necessity of an element of institutionalisation at the regional 'centre'. The patterns are highly variable, but it does hint that alternative notions of post-national governance such as the flexible functionalism of David Mitrany

¹⁸ We should also attend, as Gillian Youngs rightly notes, to the interplay between theoretical and 'real world' discourses of globalisation. See G. Youngs 'Dangers of Discourse: the Case of Globalization', in E. Kofman and G. Youngs (eds) *Globalization: Theory and Practice* (London: Pinter, 1996). On globalisation as discourse, see also C. Turenne Sjolander 'The rhetoric of globalization: what's in a wor(l)d?', *International Journal* 51/4 (1996)

¹⁹ B. Hettne 'The regional factor in the formation of a new world order', in Y. Sakamoto (ed) *Global Transformation: Challenges to the States System* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1994)

have been decisively trumped in practice.²⁰ The point here is that the territorial-political logic of regionalism opens up the second important quality: the role of ideas in region-building, and in particular the importance of the construction of regional identities as an important regionalising dynamic. Thinking in this way creates the space for the analysis of struggles to construct a regional identity in the light of existing national and subnational identities²¹, or *vis-à-vis* rival notions of the region²². This then leads to the discussion of the significance of regions as *imagined* constructs and the social construction of regions as elements of the study of regionalism and IPE more generally. Ideas structure choices, so the structuring of ideas becomes crucial.

At this point it is salutary to return to the discussion of globalisation-regionalism interface since the core point of this paper concerns the construction of regional identities via the deployment of external (global) referents. Two manifestations of regionalism would seem to be particularly amenable to this sort of analysis. The first, regionalism as security community, requires the discursive location of the region within a particular security context and may in turn require the elaboration of extra-regional threats. Analysts of the origins of the EU often regard the architecture of contemporary European integration as a response to the uncertain geo-political environment of the late 1940s/early 1950s and the emerging Cold War. The second, regionalism as economic community, develops the idea of securing competitiveness for the region in the global market by providing - at the regional level - the conditions for economic dynamism. Again, notions of external, threatening, extra-regional 'others' become important to the construction of regional selves.²³ This paper focuses on the second of these variants with reference to the EU. This should not be interpreted as asserting that attempts to elaborate a European identity only occur in the economic domain. On the contrary, it is important to leave open the idea of co-existing, potentially contradictory, projects to construct European identities in both the security

²⁰ D. Mitrany *A Working Peace System* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966). (Originally published in 1944)

²¹ Or indeed the development of alliances between 'regionalising elites' and subnational movements to hollow out national identities and referents through the consolidation of regionalism.

²² R. Higgott and R. Stubbs 'Competing conceptions of economic regionalism: APEC versus EAEC in the Asia Pacific', *Review of International Political Economy* 2/3 (1995).

²³ A third version might be 'regionalism as proto-polity', where the region becomes a site for the development of ideas of post-national citizenship, interest articulation, representation and social justice. In this instance the use of global reference points is less concerned with the discursive elaboration of particular events and/or process that challenge/threaten the region, and more about the deployment of universal (globalised - perhaps, globalising) notions of democracy and justice. It is not a conception of regionalism that exists much beyond the EU.

and economic domains. Nonetheless both variants require the development of three prior perceptions:

1. The recognition of a particular problem, challenge or threat;
2. The perception of the need and/or right for there to be a regional regime (as opposed to separate national regimes) and/or for an existing regional entity to undergo change to address the problem, and
3. The emergence of a consensus about a particular conception of a regional space in the minds of key actors.

These perceptions do not arise independently of one another. So the recognition that a region's economic competitiveness is in peril must be founded upon the assumption that there is a regional space that is more or less competitive.

This raises in turn several vital questions about structure (the external context, formal and informal institutions) and structural change, and agency (the identification of key actors - states or transnational 'policy communities' of elite/corporate/academic actors). There are also fundamental questions about the nature and role of interests (i.e. are regions constructed to suit certain interests, to perform acts of closure upon alternative solutions?). This takes the argument back to the earlier point about the ambiguities of globalisation. If we are concerned with the social construction of regional identities, then it is difficult to argue in the same breath about the objectively neutral status of the global condition. External threats and narratives about external context, while rooted in economic activity, also have a subjective socially-constructed component. The key again is the relationship between regionalism and globalisation, or more precisely the evidently important role of contextualising region-building identity in terms of global context. For example, it is commonly argued that much of the impetus towards integrative solutions found in the EU derives from the threats posed by economic dynamism elsewhere, notably in the United States and Asia. In APEC, by contrast, it has been suggested that the development of a regional identity is consolidated by the self perception of the Asia-Pacific region as the most energetic economic space on the planet.²⁴

²⁴ D.C. Hellmann 'Regionalism, Globalism and Leadership: Europe, Asia and the Realities of the Post Cold-War Political Economy (APEC Study Centre Conference Paper, 1996)
<<http://apec.gspa.washington.edu/apec.uw/pub/1996/hellmannreg.html>>

Regionalisms as Social Constructions

The conventional approach to international phenomena such as regionalism involves the deployment of 'rationalist' modes of reasoning and the imputing of rationalist motivations to the actors under scrutiny. So 'orthodox' IPE would address the structural change brought about by globalisation in the domains of production, finance and trade. This then affects the repertoire of constraints and opportunities for actors, which in turn depends upon the intersection of this structural change with a mixture of available institutions, material interests, material capabilities and prevailing frameworks of ideas. This then can then be used (in varying combinations) to explore the emergence of regionalising outcomes of varying types and intensities. In agent-centred accounts, actors' interests are assumed to be external to and prior to the processes of interaction. Where primacy is ascribed to the determining effects of structure, interests are often thought of as a rational response to an actors' location *vis-à-vis* the structure. Even liberal institutionalist approaches, which openly canvass the consequences of institutions for actor behaviour, continue to treat actors as rational agents with exogenously-given interests.²⁵ The following is somewhat typical of this type of reasoning: 'regional institutions become relevant only when there is an objective need for them, and possibly for different purposes than were originally conceived'.²⁶ Now this is obviously true at one level and the second part of the statement will ring particularly true for students of the EU. However, it is difficult to make assertions about the objectivity of needs. Few issues are more 'political' in the global political economy than the building of regional economic and security institutions (again observers of the EU and the domestic politics of its member states will have no quarrel with this). Certain actors ('regionalising elites' perhaps, along with various NGOs) will be in the business of asserting the objectivity of need through the strategic deployment of discourses that make claims for regime formation and/or supranational institutionalisation at the regional level. In a quite fundamental sense, therefore, claims for regionalism are *subjective* rather than objective. Such ideas are frequently found in the sociological literature about globalisation, which is treated as being as much about a world 'for

²⁵ The point is made by R. Duvall, A. Wendt and H. Muppidi 'Institutions and Collective Representations in International Theory: The Global Capital Regime and the Construction of Capitalist State Identities', paper presented to the Minnesota-Stanford-Wisconsin MacArthur Consortium Workshop on Globalization and Global Governance, 1996.

²⁶ Hettne 'The regional factor in the formation of a new world order', p.163

itself as a world 'in itself'.²⁷ This is why studying the ideational aspects of regionalism (regions 'for themselves') is so significant. So if it is felt important to look for ways of asking questions about the understandings, interests and knowledge which actors bring to and develop within institutions and through interaction, then it is necessary to go beyond conventional rationalist approaches. Conventional explanations - whether agent-centred (individualist) or structurally-determinist tend to fall into the classic dilemmas of the agent-structure problem.

The agent structure problem is a well established conundrum in social theory and in recent years has begun to make substantial inroads into the study of international relations.²⁸ This is not the place for a long rehearsal of the dilemma, but its essence resides in the claim that human agents (both as individuals and collectively) are the only *actors* in the social world; structures are not capable of action. But agents are constrained by structures and structures must - to some extent - emerge from human action. The agent-structure problem is about how best to theorise this situation. One solution to this dilemma - which is broadly defined as 'structuration' - develops a theory of the 'duality' (as opposed to the dualism) of structure and agency²⁹. This involves the contemplation of reciprocity between actions and structure so that structures and institutions become, in the words of Anthony Giddens, 'the medium for and the outcome of the contingently accomplished activities of situated actors'.³⁰ Agents may make structures, but are also subject to the behavioural modifications which those structures impose. Nonetheless, structuration theory permits agents to be sufficiently reflexive to operate within these constraints to the extent that structures can be modified and redefined. This is especially important because of the emphasis

²⁷ R. Robertson *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992)

²⁸ See, among others, A. Wendt 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization* 41/3 (1987); A. Wendt 'Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics', *International Organization* 46/2 (1992); A. Wendt 'Levels of Analysis vs. Agents and Structures: Part III', *Review of International Studies* 18 (1992); A. Wendt 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *American Political Science Review* 88/2 (1994); A. Wendt 'Constructing International Politics', *International Security* 20/1; D. Dessler 'What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?', *International Organization* 43/3 (1989); M. Hollis and S. Smith 'Beware of the Gurus: Structure and Action in International Relations', *Review of International Studies* 17/4 (1991); M. Hollis and S. Smith 'Two Stories About Structure and Agency', *Review of International Studies* 20 (1994); W. Carlsnes 'The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis', *International Studies Quarterly* 36 (1992).

²⁹ There is no single structurationist position. Variants can be found in R. Bhaskar *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Brighton: Harvester, 1979); P. Cerny *The Changing Architecture of Politics: Structure, Agency and the Future of the State* (London: Sage, 1990); A. Giddens *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984)

³⁰ A. Giddens *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984), p.23

placed upon the *intersubjectivity* of structures (as opposed to the objective materiality of structures).

Moreover, the constitution of both interests and identities is problematised. This has become the key project of constructivist approaches to international relations. As Alexander Wendt puts it: 'each identity in an inherently social definition of the actor grounded in theories which actors hold collectively about themselves and one another and which constitute the structure of the social world'.³¹ Identities formed in this manner constitute the basis of interests. Identities are relational and (can only be) the product of social practices. Wendt again: 'Identities are the basis of interests. Actors do not have a "portfolio" of interests that they carry around independently of social context; instead they define their interests in the process of defining situations'.³² When applied to regionalism, as Andrew Hurrell notes, constructivism is primarily concerned with the incidence of *strategic interaction* and *cognitive interdependence* among actors within the region.³³ Constructivist perspectives open the door to the analysis of the social construction of regions.

We have already identified the significance of the regionalism-globalisation dialectic and constructivists point us in the direction of trying to understand how actors define themselves in relation to others and how, in so-doing, they define their operational context. A further useful theoretical embellishment here is the idea of reflexivity which is found in much contemporary sociological theory. The concept is most prevalent in debates about reflexive modernisation, which in turn seem to derive largely from the work of Ulrich Beck on ecological risk and its implications for modernity.³⁴ Beck is concerned with the breakdown of the erstwhile certainties of progress and scientific rationality in the context of productive processes which engender

³¹ Wendt 'Anarchy is what states make of it', p.398

³² Wendt 'Anarchy is what states make of it', p.398.

³³ A. Hurrell 'Explaining the resurgence of regionalism in world politics', *Review of International Studies* 21/4 (1995)

³⁴ U. Beck *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage, 1992). See also U. Beck 'World Risk Society as Cosmopolitan Society? Ecological Questions in a Framework of Manufactured Uncertainties', *Theory, Culture and Society* 13/4 (1996). The very different notions of reflexive modernisation of three contemporary social theorists are debated in U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994). A particularly sharp critique - especially of Beck and Giddens - is offered by J.C. Alexander 'Critical Reflections on "Reflexive Modernization"', *Theory, Culture and Society* 13/4 (1996).

manifest ecological risks. The production of environmental security replaces the generation of economic wealth as the primary task of modernity. But the complexity of information-based industrial processes renders confident calculations of external threat impossible. This 'return of uncertainty' creates the space for reflexivity in which situated actors engage in theorising about themselves as a way of creating plausible narratives in the face of scientific uncertainty. The overwhelming concern is the creation of 'ontological security'. Reflexivity then is defined in terms of situations where '[d]ecisions have to be taken on the basis of a more or less continuous reflection on the conditions of one's action. "Reflexivity" here refers to the use of information about the conditions of activity as a means of regularly reordering and redefining what that activity is'.³⁵ Giddens, who attributes the emergence of new forms of what he calls 'life politics' to reflexive modernisation, and Beck seem to offer an optimistic prognosis regarding the potentially emancipatory consequences of reflexivity. This is in part because of their emphasis on the monitoring of the self, rather than upon the production of narratives about 'the social'. Moreover, the idea of authority and the exercise of power in the context of reflexivity is oddly lacking in these accounts. Given that reflexivity is about the revision of narratives of self in the light of new information or in the context of uncertainty, there should also be scope for actors with endowments of authority (whether material or discursive) to play reflexive games. These in turn might constrain the range of available narratives for other, less authoritative (but nevertheless reflexive) actors. Giddens more or less hints at this point elsewhere in his work when he fashions the idea of institutional reflexivity: '[w]hat distinguishes modern organisations is not so much their size, or their bureaucratic character, as the concentrated reflexive monitoring they both permit and entail'.³⁶

If we strip away both the rather individuated emphasis of a good deal of theorising about reflexivity and dispense with the rather simplistic notions of modernisation that are implicit in some work, the concept can be of great use - especially in the light of the constructivist arguments developed above. To summarise, reflexivity arises in the context of uncertainty and contingency. It is the way in which actors monitor themselves and establish their relationship to their environment. It is a largely strategic exercise, where the role of knowledge is crucial for the

³⁵ A. Giddens *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), p.86

³⁶ A. Giddens *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), p.16

discursive interpretations for behaviour.

European Integration, Globalisation and Reflexivity: the Social Construction of European Identities

While the literature on European integration is immense, there are still very few pieces of work which seek to apply aspects of contemporary social theory to the study of the EU.³⁷ For the most part explanations of European integration tend to operate quite firmly within the broad rationalist parameters identified above. The classic - and now rather sterile - debate in EU studies between intergovernmentalism and neo-functional integration theory is really a debate about the primacy of alternative, rationally-motivated actors. To take one example, Andrew Moravcsik's influential liberal intergovernmentalist account of European integration argues that developments in integration derive largely from the outcomes of intergovernmental bargains at the European level. Two provisos are that states obtain their preferences for the European bargain in processes of domestic politics, and that bargaining outcomes are facilitated by the structure of EU-level institutions.³⁸ This type of position is clearly susceptible to a constructivist critique which would draw attention to the static conception of exogenous interests in his account. Others have focused on the failure of Moravcsik and others to be sufficiently reflexive about the ontological status of a nation-state-centric EU.³⁹ But perhaps the most significant line of critique draws on much recent research on the EU which has sought to map the institutional complexity of the 'Euro-polity'. In so-doing, such critiques identify extreme difficulties with the intergovernmentalist depiction of inter-state bargains as the main driving force behind the dynamism (or lack of dynamism) in the EU. Writers from this angle argue for the importance of the 'everyday' politics

³⁷ Although it should be noted that there is a steady trickle of work drawing on the structure-agency problem and reflexivity applied to the EU. These include T. Ashford 'Regulating Agricultural Biotechnology: Reflexive Modernisation and the European Union', *Policy and Politics* 24/2 (1996); M. Wind 'Europe Towards a Post-Hobbesian Order? A Constructivist Theory of European Integration (or How to Explain European Integration as an Unintended Consequence of Rational State Action)', European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre Paper No 96/31 (1996). It is worth noting in passing that much constructivist work has sought to refine theoretically state-centric conceptions of international politics. What follows tries to expand the constructivist method to non-state actor interactions.

³⁸ A. Moravcsik 'Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31/2 (1993).

³⁹ B. Rosamond 'Mapping the European Condition'; B. Rosamond 'Understanding European Unity: the Limits of Nation-State-Centric Integration Theory', *European Legacy* 1/1 (1996).

of the EU, insisting that history-making changes in the direction of EU such as Treaty revisions, are often consolidations of patterns of behaviour and policy-making activity that have emerged from the complex interaction of actors - more often than not supranational and non-state actors.⁴⁰ The emerging public policy literature on the EU carries with it the promise of investigating the role of knowledge in the formation of policy communities and advocacy coalitions around matters of European integration.⁴¹ This emphasis on knowledge and institutionalised interaction is welcome, but it still carries the danger of an underlying rationalism with the attendant possibility of either agent-centrism or structural-determinism.

There is also the danger of marginalising the importance of global context, especially in cases where writers seek to champion the treatment of the EU as a polity, amenable to the tools of comparative political science.⁴² Indeed there is a surprising lack of work which explicitly addresses the relationship between global conditions and European integration. The most common argument in this regard is that European actors are confronted with a range of economic policy dilemmas which derive from external structural change.⁴³ There is the occasional reflection on the place of European actors (usually states) in the context of structural change, as in Wallace's discussion of the relationship between formal and informal integration.⁴⁴ The difficulty, as noted above, has been to develop arguments that locate the EU in the context of globalisation, but also acknowledge the complex multi-actor nature of the EU at the same time. Is it possible to develop an account of reflexive regionalism in the empirical context of European integration? The study of the European Commission offers an apparently useful site for this discussion, and the remainder of this paper focuses on the interaction of the Commission with other actors as a

⁴⁰ A compelling a theoretically-rich critique of Moravcsik, from this vantage point is D. Wincott 'Institutional Interaction and European Integration: Towards an "Everyday" Critique of Liberal Intergovernmentalism', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 33/4 (1995)

⁴¹ Two recent volumes representing this trend are W. Wallace and H. Wallace (eds) *Policy-Making in the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) and J. Richardson (ed) *European Union: Power and Policy-Making* (London: Routledge, 1996). See also the work contained in the *Journal of European Public Policy* (founded in 1994)

⁴² The danger is implicit in the research agenda suggested in S. Hix 'The Study of the European Community: the Challenge to Comparative Politics', *West European Politics* 17/1 (1994)

⁴³ An excellent overview of this argument is given by P. Hall 'The Political economy of Europe in an Era of Interdependence', mimeo Center for European Studies, Harvard University (1996)

⁴⁴ W. Wallace 'Introduction: the Dynamics of European Integration'

potential case study of 'reflexive regionalism' in action. The particular empirical focus is on the period of accelerated integrative activity commencing in the mid-1980s in which moves to deepen integration were codified in major revisions to the founding treaties of the European Communities: the Single European Act and the Treaty on European Union. The *zeitgeist* of the period is summed up by Schmitter who describes 'the vague, but widespread, *subjective* notion that Europe as a whole was destined to decline in its competitiveness...vis-à-vis other developed world regions, specifically Japan, the Pacific Basin and North America'.⁴⁵

The rhetorical outpourings of the European Commission in this period offer much evidence of deliberate, strategic attempts to develop and confirm the existence of a European economic space whose territorial reach corresponds with the actual and potential boundaries of the EU. One well-known example is the Commission's own official diagnosis of the need for deeper market and institutional integration. The so-called Cecchini report of 1988 included the following characteristic statement:

Without an institutional framework to deal effectively with...[the]...problems inherent in the success of the 1992 programme, the European home market will soon be put in jeopardy. The tensions that will be created will not be susceptible of management in an institutional vacuum. In short, for Europe to meet its market challenge, it must also, sooner rather than later, review the overall structure of its economic order.⁴⁶

This rhetoric of 'Europe' (for which read 'the European Community') as a unitary entity facing particular sorts of economic pressures and confronting stark policy challenges was juxtaposed throughout the report with the serious counter-factual of 'non-Europe'. This was a clear attempt to justify the pursuit of market liberalisation and deeper institutional integration within the Community. But it also represented a distinct discursive strategy on the part of the Commission leadership which sought to place the idea of Europe as an economic entity with discernible interests onto the policy agenda. This version of Europe and its global location is manifest in a great many elements of the Commission's work. The 1993 *White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, and Employment* lays out clearly what it calls changes in the EU's 'décor', or 'the universality of the trends which have been shaping the global economy and their acceleration since

⁴⁵ P.C. Schmitter 'Examining the Present Euro-Polity with the Help of Past Theories', in G. Marks et al *Governance in the European Union* (London, Sage, 1996), p.10, emphasis in the original.

⁴⁶ P. Cecchini (with M. Catinat and A. Jacquemin) *The European Challenge 1992. The Benefits of a Single Market* (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1988), p.xxi.

the 1970s'.⁴⁷ These include new, technologically street-wise competitors to European industry, the end of communism, the new skills revolution, the shift to a knowledge-based economy and market interdependence following from international capital mobility. The presentation of these as inescapable structural changes that affect the *European* environment, means that *European*-level solutions are required. This mode of discourse infects virtually all public statements from all of the Commission's Directorates General (DGs). A few more examples should suffice. DGIII (Internal Market and Industrial Affairs) states that its key objective is to 'promote the competitiveness of European industry'⁴⁸ and the existence of such an entity is constantly reasserted throughout the department's public output. DGV (Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs) takes time to demonstrate that there is such a thing as a European labour market.⁴⁹ Finally, the joint venture of DGIII and DG XIII (Telecommunications, Information Technologies and Industries) to sponsor the idea of a European information society to act as a source of assistance and orientation and as a market place for ideas⁵⁰ bears not only the hallmark of an attempt to create Europe as a region, but also begins to look like a vehicle for the elucidation of reflexive narratives.⁵¹

Beyond the development and dissemination of public narratives about 'Europe' and 'Europeanness', there is also the interaction between the Commission and other groups. One often-cited instance of strategic interaction leading to the development of the single market programme was that between the Commission and certain groups of European industrialists. The significance of the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT) is often noted. In a notable salvo against state-centred intergovernmentalist accounts of European integration, Maria Green Cowles argues

⁴⁷ Commission of the European Communities *White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment: the Challenges and Ways Forward into the 21st Century* (COM[93] 700) <http://europa.eu.int/en/...white/c93700/ch0_1.htm> p.3

⁴⁸ *DGIII's Mission* <<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dgiii/mission3.htm>>

⁴⁹ <<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg10/infcom/xc5/ewfqa/ewfg1102.htm#11.02.01>>

⁵⁰ *The Information Society Project Office: a New Market Place for Ideas* (1994) <<http://www.ispo.cec.be/ispo/ispois.html>>. On some of the contradictions inherent in the EU's strategy towards the 'European' media, see B. Axford and R. Huggins 'Media Without Boundaries: Fear and Loathing on the Road to Eurotrash or Transformation in the European Cultural Economy?', *Innovation* 9/2 (1996).

⁵¹ See also C. Farrands 'The Globalization of Knowledge and the Politics of Global Intellectual Property: Power, Governance and Technology', in E. Kofman and G. Youngs (eds) *Globalization: Theory and Practice* (London: Pinter, 1996), pp.176-177.

that the ERT was deeply significant in the formulation of the agenda of the 1992 programme.⁵² Her point is that the ERT drew on events external to the institutional interactions of the EC when formulating its agenda. Of particular importance was the idea of the challenges of a globalising world and the attendant growth of international competition. Now to some extent, Cowles's intervention is designed to accentuate the importance of non-state actors in the integration process, and not surprisingly she operates with the assumption of business interests as exogenous. Other accounts, such as that of Sandholtz and Zysman pay attention to the *interaction* of networked actors in the promotion of the single market programme.⁵³ They identify (*inter alia*) the significance of non-state actor interaction in the 1980s between the Commission and firms in particular industrial sectors, notably the increasingly- integrated high technology economic sectors ('telematics'). This interaction is seen as important in both the general liberalisation of the EC market space associated with the single market programme and the development of a genuinely European technology policy in the form of the ESPRIT programme. The latter was something that national administrations had conspicuously failed to deliver. Indeed, in other policy areas such as aerospace, the development of European policy competence is often explained by the inability of state policy-makers to develop the necessary expertise and understanding to be of help to firms as the latter pursued strategies of internationalisation:

While governments played a central role in an era when aerospace policies were wedded to *national* needs and priorities....they are largely peripheral when there is a requirement for knowledge of global capital markets, international marketing techniques or local taxation laws⁵⁴

This suggests that national expert systems were no longer able to cope with or for that matter conceptualise structural change. Thus key corporate actors favoured the development of policy capacities above the nation state in order to obtain the knowledge that they needed. Such arguments still operate in a world of utility-maximising actors to account for shifts in support and identification. There is also a sense of functional automaticity embedded in such accounts, that downplays the interactive context involved in the redefinition of firms as 'European'. It is the

⁵² Maria Green Cowles 'Setting the Agenda for a New Europe: the ERT and EC 1992', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 33/4 (1995)

⁵³ W. Sandholtz and J. Zysman '1992: Recasting the European Bargain'.

⁵⁴ C. Jones 'Aerospace', in H. Kassim and A. Menon (eds) *The European Union and National Industrial Policy* (London, Routledge, 1996), p.102 (my emphasis)

contention here that it is impossible to understand these instances of Commission-group exchange without understanding the reflexive negotiation of interests and the development of plausible narratives of both context and the repertoire of possible solutions.

This is particularly apparent in the interaction between the Commission and British trade unions in the late 1980s. The conversion of British unions to 'pro-European' attitudes in the late 1980s is often attributed to fairly shameless opportunism as unions saw both opportunities for influence in the policy-process and the potential for favourable legislation enacted at the European level. There is an element of this account that is correct, but it quite underestimates the (a) reflexive activity on the part of the union movement (and particularly the General Council of the Trades Union Congress) which both monitored and defined the shifting environment in which unions were operating and built appropriate strategic policy choices; (b) the informal exchange of ideas between elements in the Commission and British union elites; (c) the consequent discursive developments which defined the European dimension as the central aspect of unions' environment; which (d) became articulated with the collapse of the twin domestic certainties of collective *laissez-faire* industrial relations and the post-war Keynesian Welfare State and (e) the realisation by the Commission leadership and DGV of the utility of alliance-building and discursive value of the 'social dimension' of European integration for the creation of support for the development of European policy competences.⁵⁵

It should be remembered that the Commission is a far from unitary actor; it is a 'multi-organisation', to use Laura Cram's phrase.⁵⁶ There is clear evidence of rival reflexivities at work within the organisation. Perhaps the most obvious involves DGXI (Environment, Nuclear Safety and Civil Protection), which has been characterised as a 'green' department, fostering a philosophy of 'ecological modernisation'.⁵⁷ This contrasts markedly with the priorities of other DGs, where the governing policy logic is overwhelmingly neo-liberal, with regulation seen as necessary for the goal market harmonisation. Indeed DGXI has been in direct conflict with DGIII. In the so-called

⁵⁵ For much greater detail see B. Rosamond 'National Labour Organizations and European Integration: British Trade Unions and "1992"', *Political Studies* 41/3 (1993); B. Rosamond 'The Integration of Labour? British Trade Union Attitudes to European Integration', in D. Baker and D. Seawright (eds) *Britain For and Against Europe. British Politics and the Question of European Integration* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997 - forthcoming)

⁵⁶ L. Cram 'The European Commission as a Multi-Organisation: Social Policy and IT Policy in the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy* 1/2 (1994)

⁵⁷ Thanks to Duncan Matthews for bringing this example to my attention

'Danish bottles case' of 1991 DGIII argued that the Danish government's policy that all bottles should be returnable to the point of sale on environmental grounds was contrary to Article 30 of the Treaty of Rome as amended by the Single European Act. DGXI felt compelled to defend the Danish action, but lost the internal battle within the Commission. DGIII, on behalf of the Commission took the Danish government to the European Court of Justice (the Commission lost the case). The key here is that both DGs operate with narratives based on the reflexive monitoring of external context. DGIII's 'Europe' is an entity that is more or less competitive on world markets, structurally located in a globalising capitalism. DGXI's 'Europe', by contrast, while also located globally, is threatened by ecological risk and a sustainably developed Europe is the appropriate strategic direction.

The presence of rival reflexivities is apparent at all levels of the EU policy process. This can mean rival 'Europes' as in the instance cited above, but it can also mean conflicts over whether regional solutions are appropriate. A senior executive in Daimler-Benz Aerospace recently argued that 'all-European solutions are no longer sufficient to safeguard the [industry's] future'.⁵⁸ On the other hand John Peterson demonstrates that struggles between national and European levels of policy-making are alive and well in the domain of R&D.⁵⁹ It is important to emphasise that attempts to construct the region are subject to attack from both above and below.

Conclusions

Hopefully the analysis here demonstrates that we need to think in more detailed terms about the idea of European integration as a reflex to global shifts. In the wider domain of IPE and international relations scholarship, the tendency is to examine the factors which *initiate* regionalisms, and this is not unreasonable given the relatively provisional nature of most of the regional blocs in the global political economy. However, the longevity of the EU also poses questions about the dynamics that sustain and change regional entities once they are established. This means that the construction of identities in the way described here is an ongoing project, possibly involving shifting coalitions of actors and certainly involving different narratives of both

⁵⁸ Cited in Jones 'Aerospace', p.101

⁵⁹ J. Peterson 'Research and Development Policy', in H. Kassim and A. Menon (eds) *The European Union and National Industrial Policy* (London: Routledge, 1996)

the European region and its global context.

There are also some more general implications for EU scholarship. The literature on European identity has rightly paid attention the linkages between the successful deepening of the integration project and the acquisition of supportive 'European' identities - the emergence of 'we' feelings and (therefore) 'they' perceptions. Quite a lot of attention has been paid to the emergence (or more often than not, the obdurate absence) of European identities among European Union member states' mass publics⁶⁰, and there is a developing literature on the dissonances between European norms and continuing cultural diversity.⁶¹ The temptation is to regard the discussion of European identities as either irrelevant, or at best, premature. The argument developed here seeks to open up alternative venues for the discussion of identity in the context of the EU. In so doing it has attempted to look at fruitful ways of thinking about identity in the context of a critical approach to interests. For some practitioners of classical integration theory, identity in this context was a commodity to be dispensed with once it had passed its 'use by' date. Aware of the benefits of European-level policy-making, rational, utility-maximising actors would reorient their action, and thus their loyalties. While certain elements have disappeared from this account, the idea of identities and interests standing prior to any actors' engagement with the European policy process is still apparent in mainstream analyses of European integration. Constructivist work in international relations has begun to offer a critical account of the development of national interests and national identities within a framework which is neither necessarily agent-centred nor structure-bound. The application of these sorts of insights to the debate about intergovernmentalism in the EU would be very healthy, but it is also true to say that, given the complex and multi-actor nature of the contemporary Euro-polity, there is a substantial case for the development of constructivist scholarship on a variety of formal and semi-formal institutional processes and actor interactions

⁶⁰ For good summaries of the evidence see O. Niedermayer and R. Sinnott *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

⁶¹ See S. Zetterholm (ed) *National Cultures and European Integration. Exploratory essays on Cultural Diversity and Common Policies* (Oxford: Berg, 1994)