

**The European Union
as a
“Multiperspectival Polity”**

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Special thanks to Leon Lindberg for comments, criticisms, and valuable conversations without which this paper could not have been written. I am also grateful to Emanuel Adler, Wolfgang Streeck, TJ Pempel, Michael Barnett, Bruce Cronin, Charles Dannehl, Mark Gobeyn and Haknoh Kim for their helpful suggestions. All errors and omissions are my own. Criticisms and comments are welcome.

Paper prepared for the Fourth Biennial International Conference of the European Community Studies Association, Charleston, SC, May 11-14, 1995.

I. Introduction: The EU as a “Multiperspectival” Polity

The European Union (EU) is often characterized as the most successful and fully institutionalized international organization in modern history, as well as a complex arena for national governments to coordinate policy and manage economic interdependence. Upon closer inspection however, the EU represents much more. According to Sbragia (1993a), the EU is a “political entity that does not fit into any accepted category of governance” (24). And a growing number of scholars point out that the EU appears increasingly anomalous to traditional conceptions of sovereignty and international cooperation (Ruggie 1993; Adler 1994; Agnew 1994; Cronin 1995; Buzan 1992). Recent efforts to explain this anomaly confirm that while the nation-state shows few signs of fading away, the “Europeification” of national policy-making has resulted in a complex, multidimensional, multilayered collective decision-making system (Andersen & Eliassen 1993; Sbragia 1993a,b; Ladrech 1994; Goetz 1995; Sandholtz 1993; Marks 1992, 1993; Wallace 1994). The differences between the European “nation-state” and “member-state” are no longer semantic.

This paper will argue that the EU has gradually evolved into a novel system of rule and regional governance where nation-states, while still holding the allegiance and loyalties of their populations and still acting in “self-interested” ways, nevertheless construct their identities and define their interests in different ways *as member-states* of the EU. The reason is that the EU, as a collective decision-making system, has had a significant and cumulative impact on the constituent national political systems which participate in this “partially formed polity” (and in many ways are “locked into” this process). Although the EU is frequently referred to as a collective decision-making system, my usage of the term is more specific: the EU is a system in the sense that it constitutes a new level of governance at the regional level (“above” but not “beyond” the nation-state); the EU is a collectivity in the sense that both the supranational institutions and intergovernmental machinery linking the fifteen constituent national systems constitutes a “collectivity acting as a singularity” (Ruggie’s term, 1993). It is this dimension of the “collectivity as a singularity” in particular which remains conceptually underdeveloped and weakly incorporated within existing regional integration theories.

While the earliest research on the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) predicted the gradual transcendence of the nation-state, reformulations beginning in the 1960s relaxed this assumption and began to diagnose the independent importance of the “collectivity dimension” of the EC/EU (Lindberg 1965, 1971; Haas 1964). While on the right track, theoretical reformulations “outstripped” the development of the EC/EU (Nye 1987 (1971), viii), and this literature became increasingly ad hoc and self-critical, even suggesting its own “obsolescence” (Haas 1975). However, this obsolescence thesis

appears to have been a premature conclusion, not because the EU appears any more likely to replace the nation-state, but rather because of the ways in which identities, preferences and interests of member-states are increasingly constructed, shaped and reshaped, and partially formed on the basis of participation in the EU.

John Ruggie (1993) recently argued that the EU has evolved into a novel postmodern international political form, a “multiperspectival polity,” where:

...it is increasingly difficult to visualize the conduct of international politics among community members, and to a considerable measure even domestic politics, as though it took place from a starting point of twelve separate, single, fixed viewpoints...since the collectivity of members as a singularity, in addition to the central institutional apparatus of the EC, has become party to the strategic interaction game...the constitutive processes whereby each of the twelve defines its own identity - and identities are logically prior to preferences - increasingly endogenize the existence of the other eleven” (172).

Multiperspectivity does not merely represent a complex, multidimensional “game” (Smith and Ray 1993; Hughes 1993; Putnam 1988; Evans, Jacobson and Putnam 1993) but also a *regional system of rule* which structures the *context* in which member-states’ preferences are formed and a *quality of interaction* which shapes the *character* and *content* of “national” interests. Although Ruggie does not develop the “multiperspectivity” metaphor, his lucid if brief conceptualization raises an important challenge to the current state of European integration research.

While it is certainly true (if not obvious) that integration only proceeds where it is member-states’ interests to do so, this in-and-of itself is a relatively uninteresting theoretical position.¹ Much more significant, if generally under-appreciated, is the qualitative dimension of the EU as a *collectivity*, in which the cohabitation of national, supranational, transnational, and subnational identities *prestructure* the context in which “national” preferences are formed. This *interaction context* of the “collectivity as a singularity,” is a unique development in the history of the modern state system. I will argue that this interaction context in which member-states negotiate, bargain, settle disputes, and so on is *sui generis* because participation in the EU has become inseparable from the processes whereby European nation-states formulate their interests.

While intergovernmentalist approaches have become quite sophisticated, particularly Moravcsik’s (1993a) “liberal intergovernmental” version, their account of national preference formation is incomplete. According to Moravcsik, “the analysis of national preference formation must *precede* the analysis of interstate bargaining” (1993b, 5) because, “governments *first* define a set of interests, then bargain among themselves in an

¹ For a similar argument regarding rationalist approaches in general, see Kratochwil (1993).

effort to realize those interests,” (emphasis added) (1993a, 481). This strikes me as a particularly restrictive assumption, and will serve as the key null hypothesis of my argument.

The key limitation of Moravcsik’s theory of national preference formation is twofold: first, it closes off the possibility that either supranational institutions such as the Commission can influence and shape national interests and preferences; but second, and even more limiting is the assumption that national interests are exogenous to the strategic interaction context of the EU.² In terms of the former, neofunctionalists (and others) have shown how the Commission can act as an *animatuer*, initiating ideas and setting the agenda, cementing bargains by acting as an honest broker, as well as shaping and influencing how national interests come to be defined – for example, by innovating policy solutions which member-states might otherwise have been unable to foresee or agree to bilaterally (Lindberg 1963; Lindberg & Scheingold 1970; Coombes 1970; Dehousse & Majone 1993).³

But the latter point has not been systematically addressed, although, as this paper will argue, it may be a far more incisive criticism. In order to develop this critique, the working hypothesis of this paper is that the constitutive processes of national preference formation are endogenous to the strategic interaction context of the EU. This follows the recent argument advanced by Sandholtz (1993): “the national interests of EC states do not have independent existence; they are not formed in a vacuum and then brought to Brussels” (3).

To sum up, while an important corrective to earlier integration theories which failed to account for the role of underlying social interests and a relatively parsimonious theory of how domestic politics influence national preference formation, intergovernmentalism overlooks the way in which the interaction context of the EU *prestructures* the manner in which “national” preferences are formed, thereby understating the qualitative dimension of the EU’s interaction context as a collectivity. Ultimately this debate can only be settled by empirical means, but without informed theorizing to generate specific hypotheses and an empirically tractable research project, the ability to have a debate and systematically test

²This critique is not limited to Moravcsik’s argument. With few exceptions (discussed below) existing theories hold similar assumptions (often implicitly). Moravcsik’s version of national preference formation is dealt with in greater detail since it is arguably the most developed and sophisticated model currently available.

³And of course, this applies to Ernst Haas’s (1958) study of the Commission’s predecessor, the High Authority (see especially ch’s. 12 and 13).

competing theories will be limited. This paper is preliminary attempt to conceptually and analytically delimit the boundaries of what such an approach would like.

After a brief expansion of my conceptual argument, a review of the major traditions of integration research - neofunctionalism, realism, and intergovernmentalism - will follow in order to establish the strengths and weaknesses of existing approaches. Building on this review, section four will suggest that integration theorists can benefit by engaging in the debate “brewing” (Adler’s term) in International Relations between rationalists and constructivists. Section five elaborates Ruggie’s “multiperspectivity” metaphor and points out important insights which can be gained by combining neofunctionalist insights with a constructivist approach. Section six examines the role of COREPER - while often considered synonymous with intergovernmentalism, this section will argue COREPER is an example of “multiperspectivity” in action. Finally, a concluding section will suggest future research questions which can be developed into an empirically tractable research project.

II. The Interaction Context of the EU

Regardless of whether the EU is viewed as “just another” international institution or a “part formed” political system, existing approaches almost without exception undervalue the nature of EU’s *interaction context*. I will argue that this interaction context is a novel feature of the modern state system which warrants greater attention by students of European integration. Existing theories of integration treat the EU as a complex and highly institutionalized form of regional cooperation and collective decision-making which can be explained by *general* theories of international relations *without* substantive modification since the differences are of *degree* and not of *kind* (eg. functional regime theory, game theory, etc). While efforts to develop general theories of integration are to be commended, they entail the risk of missing or undervaluing the collectivity dimension of the EU. I am not arguing that the infamous “*sui generis* problem” defies the capacity for integration research to inform (and be informed by) general theories of International Relations. In fact, my goal is to prove this statement wrong. Although the EU interaction context is *sui generis*, closer scrutiny and conceptualization of its unique features can not only contribute to the study of European integration, but perhaps the way in which we study the linkages between international and domestic governance as well. And, if the goal of regional integration research is to develop increasingly sophisticated and comprehensive theories to account for a multidimensional reality, then the distinctive features of the EU’s interaction context are necessary components in a fuller theory of European integration.

Intergovernmentalists can tell us only part of the story. In a nutshell, the interaction

context of the EU has an independent causal impact on the processes whereby member-states' discover and formulate their interests and preferences (ie. causal arrows originating from the interaction context of the EU):

Interaction context of the EU -----> Ntnl. Preferences/Interests <----- Domestic forces

In this respect, my line of attack is not entirely dissimilar from Gourevitch's now-classic article (1978) regarding the importance of the "second-image reversed." In the context of integration theory, intergovernmentalists posit "a unidirectional causal chain: domestic interests ---> state preferences ---> interstate bargaining ---> outcomes" (Dehousse & Majone 1993, 3). According to his own criteria, Moravcsik is guilty of "demand-side reductionism," or the focus on variation in domestic preferences while ignoring the strategic context in which states interact (1993a, 482). While Moravcsik's analysis is sensitive to "second-image reversed" theories, it remains unsatisfactory when applied to the context of the EU. He writes, "*to the extent that international factors, such as economic interdependence or external threats to national security influence preference formation, they must pass through the domestic polity*" (emphasis added) (1993, 483, fn. 9). But his model comes perilously close to what Janos (1986) calls "structural parochialism," or the tendency to seek explanations for political phenomena solely within the structure of the "underlying" society (66).

Another example of this limitation is the recent volume, *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining & Domestic Politics* (1993), which is "state of the art" research on the complex ways in which the domestic and international levels are reciprocally interrelated (with an introduction by Moravcsik and a synthetic concluding essay by Peter Evans). However, there is no mention of the possibility that the EU may constitute a qualitatively different type of interaction context, or that supranationality adds its own "synergistic" forms of issue linkage, etc. While few would disagree with Moravcsik (1993c) that a core question is "not *whether* to combine domestic and international explanations into a theory...but *how* best to do so," (9) few have seriously entertained the possibility that the interface between international and domestic politics interact within the EU in novel and nontrivial ways.

How can we begin to conceptualize the unique features of this interaction context, or what Sbragia (1993b) has called the "Community-state entanglement" (2)? For starters, a growing number of International Relations theorists have pointed to the overlooked importance of systemic "interaction capacity." Recently, Buzan (1993) has conceptualized "interaction capacity" as a crucial, but overlooked component of the international system

(66-80). According to Buzan, the “interaction capacity” of the international system (represented by both technological capabilities and shared norms and institutions) “not only affect the ability and willingness of units to interact, but also determine what types and levels of interaction are both possible and desired” (69).⁴ Furthermore, these attributes are “systemic not only because they represent capabilities that are deployed throughout the system, but also, and mainly, because they profoundly condition the significance of structure and the meaning of the term system itself” (72). For example, Buzan points out that interaction within a system without norms and institutions will be systematically different for one which is richly endowed with them (70).⁵

Applied to the subsystemic level, this notion of “interaction capacity” can become a powerful explanatory variable of regional dynamics. For example, the recent proliferation of research on the so-called “new regionalism” suggests ‘bringing the region back in’ as a dimension of conceptual and analytical importance (eg. Neumann 1994; Adler 1994; Lake 1994; Katzenstein 1994; Hettne 1993; Singer & Wildavsky 1993).⁶ A regional approach attentive to varying interaction contexts can theoretically account for the growing impossibility to “characterize world politics as either a jungle of unrelenting conflict or as a reflection of patterns of complex interdependence and institutionalized cooperation” (Keohane and Nye 1993, 6).

Buzan’s formulation builds on Keohane and Nye’s (1987, 1977) argument that a system-level theory must incorporate both structure and process. According to their distinction, “systems have two dimensions: structure and process. We used the term “structure” in the neorealist sense to refer principally the distribution of capabilities among units. *Process refers to patterns of interaction: the ways in which the units relate to each other*” (emphasis added) (745). Using this general distinction, my argument is that the interaction context of the EU is *sui generis* because of the way in which the units (member-states) are organized and related to each other and embedded within a broader collective decision-making system which taken together constitutes a “collectivity acting as a singularity”. In short, the interpenetration and mutual dependence of constituent national

⁴In Buzan’s formulation, “interaction capacity” is a form of non-zero sum, or “attributive” power which “is open-ended in that all units can increase (or decrease) their levels of it through such capability-expanding activities as technological development, industrialization, administrative efficiency, and collective identity” (as opposed to relative power which is positional, zero-sum and reflective of the underlying distribution of capabilities) (67-68).

⁵As Buzan notes, Ruggie’s (1986) usage of “dynamic density” captures the effect of interaction capacity without identifying the cause and aggregates the role of technology, norms and institutions (72).

⁶The classic work on the study of regions is Cantori & Speigel (1970).

systems and European level institutions has evolved to the point where “national” preference formation has become endogenous to participation in the EU.

It must be emphasized that this is an evolutionary process which has not happened overnight, and may be regarded as still in a transition period (section five elaborates this point). Further, the notion of a “multiperspectival” identity does not represent the antithesis of “national” identity, nor does it signal the latter’s demise. Rather, a “multiperspectival” identity denotes the *cohabitation* of national, supranational, transnational and subnational identities which structure the constitutive processes of “national” preference and interest formation.⁷ As Ruggie clarifies, identities are logically prior to preferences and interests and Wendt (1994) has argued that identities and interests are not competing causal mechanisms, but “distinct phenomena, in the one case motivational, in the other cognitive and structural, and as such play different roles in explaining action” (5). And as Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein (1994) have concisely summarized this ontological position: “The basic identities of states, that is the ways in which they operate as “actors” on the international stage, are partly constructed within and by their social environments and are thus analytically endogenous to them” (1).⁸

Finally, and a point returned to in the concluding section, is that for the concept of multiperspectivity to be useful more disaggregated measurements need to be developed. For instance, it would be naive to assume that subsequent to EU expansion eastward, Ireland would suddenly endogenize the existence of Poland or Bulgaria in their interest/preference calculations. In other words, more disaggregated measurements are needed to generate specific research questions. For example, how does preparation for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) alter the processes whereby national preferences are formulated? An important indicator of change is the recent proposal by France, in preparing for EMU, to deepen parliamentary ties with Germany by institutionalizing linkages between finance committees in the Bundestag and the National Assembly (*Financial Times*, February 20, 1995). And German has proposed that “coordinators for Franco-German relations” be allowed to regularly attend cabinet meetings in Paris and Bonn when Franco-German issues are discussed (*ibid*). The Franco-German relationship not only represents

⁷There is a growing literature which rejects the assumption that identities are mutually exclusive, by elucidating the capacity of states to hold multiple social identities, develop collective identities at the international level, and maintain concentric circles of identity, etc. For a sample, see Smith (1993); Adler (1994); Buzan (1993b); Adler and Barnett (1994); Wendt (1994); Neumann (1994); Neumann and Welsh (1991); Bloom (1990).

⁸They go on to add: “Thus agents do not have identities apart from social structures. In the language of game theory, players are as much effects of the game as they are its creators. Their identities are created by the game, and sustained by participation in it” (30, fn. 29).

an underpinning of European integration that dates back to the origins of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (Milward 1992), but is the most developed and mature case of multiperspectivity within the EU today (see Cameron 1993, 56-58 for an account of the deeply rooted “normative consensus” which underlies the Franco-German relationship).⁹ This argument is returned to in section five. The next two sections will review existing theories of integration and suggest an approach which may provide a vehicle to overcome some of their limitations.

III. Three Traditions of Integration Research

A. Neofunctionalism

Neofunctionalism was pioneered by Ernst Haas (1958) in his case study of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and from his theoretical conceptualization of the “expansive logic of sector integration” and the qualitative nature of supranationality. Before detailing the neofunctionalist argument, it should be noted that neofunctionalism has come to mean different things to different people. This stems from neofunctionalists increasingly *ad hoc* reformulations, internal disagreements, and very selective and narrow interpretations by their successors. Indeed, neofunctionalism is often portrayed as a sort-of ‘straw-man’ and dismissed on the presumed tenacity of the European nation-state to survive.¹⁰ A different type of selective reading and misrepresentation are recent attempts to reapply neofunctionalism, following the *relanch* period and passage of the Single European Act (SEA). Moravcsik (1993a) correctly observes that “current efforts to resurrect neofunctionalism rarely address the conclusions that neo-functionalists themselves drew about the weaknesses of their approach, nor do they consider the implications for current theory-building of theoretical developments in international relations theory over the intervening two decades” (478).

Few theorists have been able to navigate between these two extremes, but this does not necessarily imply that such a course cannot be charted. Such a task would not be easy

⁹ Are there other phases of “multiperspectivity” which are discernible? For example, could Spain and Portugal be considered an intermediate phase? A recent *Financial Times* survey points out, “it is precisely because of the shared EU membership that bilateral trade has increased tenfold in the past decade” (October 28, 1994). Specifically, between 1983 and 1993 Portuguese exports to Spain rose from \$187.5m to \$1.9bn, and Spanish exports to Portugal rose from \$429.6m to \$4.3bn. These issues are elaborated below (section five).

¹⁰ Perhaps the most egregious example of narrow and selective reading of the neofunctionalist approach is recent work by Milward and his associates. In particular, see Milward (1992, 10-13) and Milward & Sørensen (1993, 2-4, 20). Still critical, but more balanced assessments of neofunctionalism can be found in Nau (1979); Webb (1983); George (1991); Streeck & Schmitter (1991); Keohane & Hoffmann (1991); Burley & Matth (1993); and, Moravcsik (1993a).

however, since as Moravcsik also points out, “neofunctionalism provided no clear direction for revision” (476). The bedrock of neofunctionalist insights however remains unassimilated within contending approaches however, and it this point which is overlooked by most contemporary integration theorists (important exceptions include Nau 1979, Genco 1980, and Puchala 1981, 1984). It should also not be forgotten that the line of questioning innovated by regional integration theorists during this time period (roughly 1955-1975) were critical “precursors” to the study of interdependence and transnational relations, international political economy, international regimes and international institutions (Puchala 1981, 150; Kratochwil & Ruggie 1986).

Neofunctionalism is a distinct theory of political integration, clearly differentiated from earlier functionalist theories.¹¹ In order to briefly summarize the functionalist approach, it is useful to begin with their rejection of federalist strategies. As Taylor (1975) puts it, “it is one of the fundamental propositions of the functional approach that constitutional prescription is impracticable” (xxiv-xxv). Functionalism was designed as a way to incrementally alter the “substance” of politics, “to move it from considerations of the flag, of territory and national prestige to questions of welfare and cooperation” (ibid, xxiii). For functionalists, “integration is the gradual triumph of the rational and the technocratic over the political” (Pentland, quoted in Laffan 1992, 9). Essentially, functionalists argued that:

international cooperation in relatively restricted fields, initially limited to the more technical aspects of social and economic life, could easily be conceived as a method to circumvent the difficult and delicate question of state sovereignty: it would gradually eat into that sovereignty and, ultimately, it would empty sovereignty and the state of their substance (De Vree 1972, 39).

Hence, functionalists called for a minimalist or “invisible” attack on national sovereignty, where federalist solutions called for a maximalist, “frontal” attack. But rather than view federalism and functionalism as diametrically opposed, neofunctionalism stresses their complementary and combines features of both. As pointed out by Tranholm-Mikkelsen (1991), “neofunctionalism can essentially be seen as a harnessing of functionalist methods to federalist goals” (3).¹² Neofunctionalism inherited the functionalist emphasis on

¹¹ Haas used David Mitrany’s (1943) functional approach as a point of departure, but in a later work he relates the intellectual roots of functionalism to traditions as diverse as Guild Socialism, Marxism, Pragmatism, and Liberalism among others (1964, 8-10; 19-20). This work (especially ch’s 1-4) still remains one of the most systematic and thorough examination of functionalism. For a good discussion of the different variants of functionalist thought in the social sciences, and a comparison between Mitrany’s formulation and those found in anthropology and sociology, see Pentland (1973, 67-9).

incremental change and the role of technocratic decision-making. But neofunctionalism rejects the separability of politics from economics, and focuses on integration at the regional level rather than global integration or universal peace.¹³ According to Haas (1964):

Power and welfare are far from separable. Indeed, commitment to welfare activities arises only within the confines of purely political decisions, which are made largely on the basis of power considerations...Overall economic decisions must be made before any one functional sector can be expected to show the kind of integrative evolution that the Functionalist describes...The distinction between the political and the technical, between the politician and the expert, simply does not hold because issues were made technical by a prior political decision (23).

Having briefly established the main differences between neofunctionalism and earlier functionalist approaches, a more detailed examination of the neofunctionalist research program can now be conducted.

1. Definitions and Reformulations

Neofunctionalism offers no single, authoritative definition of integration.¹⁴ Instead, neofunctionalists revised their definition of integration over time. This can either be considered a natural part of ongoing reformulations in an evolving research program, or theoretical imprecision and an initially over-optimistic assessment of Europe's integrative potential. Both could probably be argued convincingly, depending on one's interpretation and use of hindsight.

Haas (1958) originally defined the ideal-type of political integration as:

...the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states. The end result of a process of political integration is a new political community, superimposed over the pre-existing ones (emphasis in original) (16).

The next major definition of integration was developed by Lindberg (1963). Lindberg's definition deemphasizes the transfer of loyalties and places a greater emphasis on the role of collective decision-making. For Lindberg, integration is:

¹²This same point was made by Nye back in 1971: "Basically, the neofunctionalists were federalists in functionalist clothing, pursuing federal ends through what appeared to be functionalist means" (51).

¹³Mitrany (1966) disagrees with the neofunctionalist research agenda. In his view, regional integration in Europe would merely recreate the traditional problems associated with the nation-state on a continental scale.

¹⁴Nye (1971) usefully disaggregates types of integration: economic (trade, services); social (mass, elites); and political (institutional, jurisdictional via policy, attitudinal, and dependable expectations of peaceful change) (24-54; summarized in table 2.6, 49). The clarity with which different theorists conceptualize these distinctions varies considerably.

(1) The process whereby nations forgo the desire and ability to conduct foreign and key domestic policies independently of each other, seeking instead to make *joint decisions* or to *delegate* the decision-making process to new central organs; and (2) the process whereby political actors in several distinct settings are persuaded to shift their expectations and political activities to a new center (emphasis in original) (6).¹⁵

This definition enables Lindberg to focus on the integration process without being committed to a particular end-point, as well as to avoid tenuous hypotheses about value changes and shifts in loyalties (which are assumed to postdate new patterns of expectations and activities). Also, Lindberg emphasizes the role of collective decision-making and the specific competencies of Community action, and deemphasizes the focus on supranational institutions per-se. In other words, his focus is on “the extent to which the Community institutions are enabled to deal directly with fields of activity, rather than merely influencing the actions of individual governments in respect of these fields” (8).¹⁶ In his earlier publications, Lindberg (1963, 1965, 1966) more or less elaborates and works within Haas’s theoretical framework. In later work, Lindberg (1967, 1970, 1971) modifies this position by applying David Easton’s system-analytic approach (1965a, 1965b) to the EC. Using Easton’s formulation (and his system-analytic terminology) as his point of departure, Lindberg attempted to operationalize the EC as a collective decision-making system and develop systematic measurements to explore the complex, multidimensional relationship with constituent national systems (see especially, Lindberg 1971).¹⁷

¹⁵The first part of this definition paraphrases Haas (1960), who, in effect, downplays the previously hypothesized amalgamated end-point. In this more cautious formulation, Haas writes: “‘Integration’ comprises the total political process by which nations forego the desire and ability to conduct foreign and key domestic policies independently of each other; instead they seek to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision-making capacity to a new central organ with jurisdiction over all of them. Institutionally, the process of integration takes place either in a growing federation, or in a confederal context in which continuous intergovernmental consultation defines the policy of all participants” (2).

¹⁶While this is getting ahead of the story, it is worth mentioning here that although Lindberg consciously avoided using the concept of “supranationality,” (8) his analysis is very consistent with what I will later describe as the qualitative dimension of supranationality and suggestive of the notion of the “collectivity acting as a singularity.”

¹⁷It is important to point out Coombes’s (1970) observation that Lindberg’s reliance on behavioralist approaches from American political science limit his institutional focus (obviously this critique does not apply to his subsequent research interests!); in other words, it is “inadequate to present data indicating changes in the aims and attitudes of groups, unless it can be shown simultaneously that these relate to changes in the roles of institutions” (91, fn. 2). Further, Coombes perceptively notes that while Lindberg traces how the process of *engrenage* results in a ‘restructuring of political action’ between Community and national policy-makers, “he pays far less attention to the consequences of the Commission’s tactics on its nature as an *institution*, or for that matter, to the general *institutional* conditions which favour or impede further integration” (emphasis in original) (94).

Neofunctionalism places special emphasis on the importance of institutions in the creation of a “new center.” For neofunctionalists, institutions are the “crucial causative links in the chain of integration” (Haas 1958b, 86). And contrary to Deutsch’s assessment, Haas argues, “a definite change, or ‘take-off’ did not take place until after the actual institutions of the ECSC had been established. New modes of conduct and new channels of communication among elites did not develop until *after* the institutional constitutive act” (emphasis in original) (ibid).¹⁸ In many ways this institutionalist argument was based on the methods and viewpoint of Jean Monnet. Monnet placed tremendous stock on the role of institutions and his pragmatic, incrementalist approach, commonly referred to as “the Monnet method,” is a kind of blueprint for a neofunctionalist theory of integration. Neofunctionalist theory certainly internalizes the prescriptive elements of “the Monnet method” and as many have noted can also be seen to contain a *strategy* for integration (eg. Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991, 2; George 1991, 19, 24).¹⁹

For example, Monnet (1978) recalls, “like Adenauer and Schuman, I thought that the accord of the High Authority must be conducted very quickly. Once the institution is in place and the breakthrough consolidated, the moment of the technicians arrives, and their difficulties, I do not doubt that - but the political step will have been taken” (quoted in Featherstone 1994, 159). And Mayne (1991) points out that one of Monnet’s favorite quotations was from the Swiss philosopher Henri-Frédéric Amiel: “Each person’s experience starts again from the beginning. Only institutions grow wiser. They accumulate collective experience; and, because of this experience and wisdom, people who accept common rules find that while their own nature remains unaltered, their behavior is gradually transformed” (122).

It is important to point out here that the perceived strength of this “gradualist” method was that “the building of a political union was left to the future, a future which was essentially uncharted” (Coombes 1970, 24). But this strength is also a key source of its limitations; as Puchala (1988) has pointed out, this method “unknowingly set in motion an

¹⁸The differences between neofunctionalism and transactionalism are further explored in Puchala (1970, 1971, 1981, 1984), and Lindberg (1967, esp. 344–46). The clearest statement by Deutsch on his approach can be found in his chapters (ie. ch’s 2,3,6,7) in Jacob and Toscano (1964).

¹⁹It is also important to keep in mind here George’s (1991) observation: “In the early years of the EEC there were close personal and intellectual links between US academics and European technocrats...Encouraged by its successes, the Commission apparently came to believe the predictions of neofunctionalist theory” (24). There is an interesting parallel today between legal scholars and the European Court of Justice (ECJ). Specifically, the “interactive” or “context” school of legal theorists pioneered by Weiler and others (eg. Stein, Bieber, Cappelletti) has cultivated ties with the Court through their recent work such as the major study sponsored by the European University Institute, *Integration Through Law* (1985). As Burley (1993) points out, “they have been subtly encouraged by many of the judges themselves. The result...is a blend of both analysis and prescription” (393).

internally contradictory political-economic process” (450). One of the persistent and unresolved criticisms of neofunctionalism is its failure to specify the causal relationship between economic and political integration (elaborated below).

The role of institutions in the neofunctionalist formulation becomes clear when linked to their conceptualization of spillover. The constitutive act of setting up supranational institutions creates the necessary (but insufficient) conditions which are conducive to the identification of common interests among participants. Once in place, supranational institutions assigned functionally specific tasks generate economic and political pressure for further integration and increasingly redirect the support and demands from constituent national political systems. Set in motion, neofunctionalists argued, this process results in common policies which “both replace and extend national policies to the point where separate governments would be tied within a broader political framework endowed increasingly with its own political legitimacy and authority” (Wallace 1983, 45). The “logic” is that institutions are assigned functionally specific tasks that are inherently expansive because original goals can only be met by further expanding tasks and extending competencies, thereby generating pressures toward further integration.

As Haas originally hypothesized, spillover may set into motion integrative processes if initial integrative efforts are “inherently expansive.” That is, initial integration “must be both specific and economically important in the sense of containing the potential for spilling over from one vital area of welfare policy to another” (1961, 102). “The ideal task for maximizing the spill-over tendency,” writes Haas, “must be closely related to welfare, highly specific in terms of initial requirements, and yet broad enough so that the initial requirements cannot be achieved without the grant of new powers” (1968b, 526). Functional specificity must not be narrowly proscribed or trivial however, since “the measure of political success inherent in economic integration lies in the demands, expectations and loyalties of the political actors affected by the process” (1958, 13). However, early neofunctionalist models assumed that the processes of integration would tend to favor increasingly centralized outcomes in the creation of a “new center.” As Streeck and Schmitter (1991) have pointed out, “the implicit assumption in much of neofunctionalist writing is that in a set of interdependent economies a centralized pursuit of group interests is always and unproblematically the superior alternative to traditional, national, or subnational strategies” (142).

Revised neofunctionalist models emphasized that political integration is incremental and contingent, often the result of unintended consequences from previous decisions. For instance, Haas & Schmitter (1964) point out that “linkages between economic objectives and policies, on the one hand, and political consequences of a disintegrative or integrative

nature, on the other, are of a “functional” character: they rest very often on indirection, on unplanned and accidental convergences in outlook and aspiration among actors, on dialectical relations between antagonistic purposes” (261-62). But the extent to which task expansion generates inexorable pressures for further political integration was never precisely specified (Katzenstein 1971). Haas (1968b) admits, “the extent to which common markets and economic union must force over-all political union is less clear” (527).²⁰

To make the story more complex, there are four types of spillover each generated by different causal mechanisms.²¹ Functional spill-over is derived from the inherently technical nature of attempts to construct a customs union and the latent interdependencies associated with integrating limited sectors of modern industrial economies.²² Political spill-over involves a learning process where elites perceive that supranational solutions serve their interests better than national ones, leading to shifts in expectations and activities which furthers the integration process. Cultivated spill-over emphasizes the privileged position of Community institutions (especially the Commission) to foster collective decision-making by “upgrading the common interest” from the “minimum common denominator”.²³ A fourth type is geographical spillover (Haas 1958, 313-17) or what we now refer to as “widening” or expansion.

In Haas’s original study of the ECSC, the spillover process and the inherently expansive nature of sector integration was considered a more or less “automatic” process. This theoretical position was modified in his (1961) article which attempts to *generalize* the process of integration, and emphasizes that the scope of the spillover process is limited by the “autonomy of functional contexts.” According to Haas, functional contexts are autonomous because “integrative forces which flow from one kind of activity do not

²⁰See also Haas (1967, 315). In an earlier article, Haas & Schmitter (1964) suggest the relationship between political and economic integration be treated as a continuum, where “political union can be said to exist when the politicized decision-making process has acquired legitimacy and authority. Integration on the other hand, is merely the analytical term we bestow on the period of time intervening between the establishment of common economic rules and the possible emergence of a political entity” (265-66). They go on to add that this process is by no means uniform or unilinear.

²¹Tranholm-Mikkelsen (1991) wrongly attributes this distinction to George (1985). As far as I can tell, Lindberg (1965) originally drew this distinction in his case study on agricultural policy. Specifically: “there is still another kind of spill-over, different than the functional type implied above, which might be termed a politically procedural spill-over. In agriculture, spill-over will be primarily a matter of strategy and tactics and will take place as package deals are constructed in which ingredients from other functional sectors are introduced to balance agricultural concessions. Efforts on the part of the Commission to *link* other matters to agriculture will constitute another variety of spill-over” (emphasis in original) (228). Nye (1971) introduces the term “cultivated” spillover (200-201); see also Haas (1967, 324).

²²For an excellent summary of the “logic” of spillover see George (1991, 21-24).

²³These concepts are elaborated in Haas (1961).

necessarily infect other activities” (102). Haas (1967) further qualifies the potential for successful spillover to take place by acknowledging that his conception of the “incremental decision-making style” and “pragmatic interest politics is its own worst enemy,” because “pragmatic interests, simply because they are pragmatic and not reinforced with deep ideological or philosophical commitment, are ephemeral. Just because they are weakly held they can be readily scrapped” (327-8). He adds, “the very success of the incremental method becomes self-defeating as important elites recognize that welfare can be safeguarded without a strong Commission and overt political unity” (331).²⁴

However, the deterministic and teleological critiques of neofunctionalism’s conception of spillover as automatic, continuous, and inevitably leading to a European superstate are misplaced. Neofunctionalists were not ambivalent on this point. Lindberg (1963) for example, clearly states: ““Spill-over” assumes the continued commitment of the Member States to the undertaking...Political and economic integration cannot be expected to succeed in the absence of a will to proceed on the part of the Member States” (11). Revised neofunctionalist models incorporated processes of “spill-around,” “spill-back,” and the possibility of integration becoming “encapsulated.” Neofunctionalists did hold that European integration was unlikely to be “scrapped” and may have passed “a point of no return”(Lindberg 1965, 225; 1966; Haas 1968).²⁵ Haas (1968) argues that “even if a spill-over tendency is brought to a halt...this by no means implies a return to a purely national framework of action, a spill-back. It may signify merely a more or less prolonged period of stagnation, an integrative plateau” (xxix). And Lindberg and Scheingold (1970) concur; based on their findings they predicted integration to reach an extended period of “overall equilibrium or plateau” (279).

Among the many criticisms of neofunctionalism (some of which have already been addressed), two stand out as particularly problematic. First, while neofunctionalism paid insufficient attention to the role of exogenous shocks and the effects of the wider international context on the processes of integration (Hoffmann 1966; Schmitter 1969; Nau 1979), an equal if not more important shortcoming is the degree to which they undervalued the role of domestic politics. Many have pointed out that neofunctionalism suffers from a “benign” view of domestic politics, underestimates the role of national leadership, and in earlier models assumed national decision-makers were what Haas called “economic-

²⁴See Puchala (1988) and Schmitter (1993, 17-19) for similar assessments. For a recent study on the Delors Commission which supports this general argument, see Ross (1994).

²⁵For example, Lindberg (1966) suggests that de Gaulle’s strategy may have hinged on “betting on the permanency and irreversibility of integration, not challenging it” (240).

incrementalists” (Hansen 1973, 232). Following de Gaulle, neofunctionalists added the variable of “dramatic-political” actors, and Nye (1969) stressed that “important decisions affecting the integration process must be channeled through the political legitimizing leadership” (198). But as George (1991) contends, “the claim that nationalism was more persistent than they had originally assumed was not incorrect, but by itself was as unsatisfactory as their renewed emphasis on leadership. They did not go on to provide any theory of nationalism, explaining why it should persist” (30).²⁶ Also Moravcsik’s recent work testifies that neofunctionalism “describes domestic processes, but “says little about basic causes” of variation in national demands for integration (1993a, 477; citing Lindberg and Scheingold 1970, 284).

Second, neofunctionalists can be criticized for not specifying a timeframe within which integration takes place (Katzenstein 1971; Schmitter 1993, 14).²⁷ This is tantamount to saying that neofunctionalists are not much help in forecasting Europe’s “destination” (Shonfield’s phrase) and disagreed on the endpoint (amalgamated state? political community? customs union? free trade zone?) (nor did they have much to say about its origins). Although ambivalent at times, they did offer various hypotheses regarding the potential stability of “half-baked” forms of integration. While Haas (1975) argued that the EC was a “half-way house” of integration which was inherently unstable, this may speak more to a growing frustration with a body of theory which “outstripped” Community developments (Nau 1979; Adler 1994). Back in 1964, Haas argued, “few people believe that the existing system of regional government, the supranational method now under French attack, has a claim to longevity. I believe it does...it may well be a real system of government rather than a mere temporary style” (67). And Lindberg (1965) recognized that despite the unforeseeable possibility of future system transformation the EC exhibits a certain “long term survival potential”; namely, “It is not to be excluded...that the current

²⁶Haas’s subsequent research has come a long way from his “end of ideology” hypothesis. In his more recent work, Haas (1986, 1990, 1993) has developed a sophisticated approach to the study of nationalism. See in particular, Haas (1990) who explores the links between liberal nationalism, postwar integration, and the continued capacity of the European nation state to satisfy the welfare needs of its citizens.

²⁷This issue was also a key source of disagreement between neofunctionalists and transactionalists. Deutsch et. al. (1967) argued that “European integration has slowed since the mid-1950s, and it has stopped or reached a plateau since 1957-8. since 1957-8 there have been no further structural or fundamental gains” (218). Lindberg (1967) points out that this is at odds with neofunctionalist accounts, “Haas and I have argued that it is since 1957 that integration has made its greatest strides” (344). Katzenstein (1971) points out the two approaches have different timeframes, where “at the root of the different time perspectives...lies a basic disagreement on the efficacy of politics as a learning mechanism for society. From the perspective of the neofunctionalist model politics acts as a powerful agent of social learning even where the exclusive self-interest of elite groups is its most dynamic part; processes of integration can therefore be studied over shorter periods of time” (ie. years and decades vs. decades and centuries) (292).

pattern may persist for a long time and not evolve into either a federal system à la Monnet or a “Europe des Patries” à la de Gaulle” (203). Schmitter (1971) offered a “hypothesis of natural entropy” where “all integration processes will tend toward a state of rest or stagnation - unless disturbed by exceptional (ie. unpredictable) or exogenous conditions not present in the original convergence or in the institutions themselves” (243). Perhaps the clearest model is Puchala’s (1972) “Concordance System,” which includes national, subnational, transnational and supranational actors linked together in an collective system in which “actors find it possible to consistently reap mutual rewards from their interactions” (277). Unfortunately, this model was not subsequently developed much further.²⁸

In sum, numerous reformulations notwithstanding, neofunctionalism became increasingly *ad hoc* and reactive, and the indeterminacy of many of their conclusions seem to support Moravcsik’s point that this approach offers no clear direction for revision. But before giving up on neofunctionalism, another issue to consider is that contending approaches have not assimilated neofunctionalist insights (in a Lakatosian sense). Whether the neofunctionalist research agenda can be reinvigorated remains an open question.

2. A Missed Opportunity?

Neofunctionalism can be considered a direct challenge to the tenets of realism.²⁹

Summarizing their differences, Cornett and Caporaso (1992) conclude:

What neorealism takes as given, neofunctionalism makes problematic. What neorealism accepts as constant, neofunctionalism attempts to make variable...*The attempt to endogenize goals and beliefs lays the basis for a very different theory of change. Explanatory leverage derives not from changes in the distribution of power but from variations in consensual knowledge and perceptions of interest* (emphasis added) (239).

These differences have all the markings of a grand paradigmatic debate. According to Puchala, “integration studies in the 1950s and 1960s embodied the conceptual elements of an alternative disciplinary paradigm that contrasted sharply with the *Weltanschauung* of political realism” (1984, 195). Did the realists win? Or was this a victory only by default? It is important to note that the challenge to realism was muted in large part because “at the

²⁸See Schmitter (1993) for a fascinating analysis of possible future “termination states” of the emerging EU polity.

²⁹ While “realism” is treated as a single tradition in this paper, there are substantive differences between “classical” realists like Morgenthau (1958) who argue from a “first-image” perspective (ie. the causes of war are rooted in human nature) that states are power-maximizers (see also Carr, Niebuhr, Wight, Aron, Kissinger); and neorealists like Waltz (1979) who argue from a “third image” perspective (ie. the causes of war stem from anarchy, the ordering principle of the international system) that states are primarily interested in survival and maximizing their security (see also Walt, Mearsheimer, Gilpin). For more detailed comparisons, see Keohane (1986); Ashley (1984); Rosenberg (1990); Doyle (1990)

time that the findings of integration studies were raising serious questions about the assumptions of political realism, the integrationists were so engaged in intellectual conflict with each other that they largely ignored what their work was doing in the discipline” (ibid). The internal debate between integrationists (eg. between neofunctionalists and transactionalists regarding timeframes, the causes and consequences of a “take off” period, the significance of the range and rate of transactions among members, etc.) and within the neofunctionalist camp itself (eg. the dependent variable problem, whether loyalties shift towards a new center, and the role of supranational leadership) distracted attention from a broader paradigmatic debate. As I will argue below, this *is* a key objective of the emerging constructivist research agenda, and the shared intellectual framework with earlier integrationist writings suggest a valuable connection and link back to neofunctionalism. First, the main contenders to neofunctionalism - realism and intergovernmentalism - will be examined in more detail.

B. Realism

Realists do not accord integration a very privileged role in their theories. Indeed, what Haas (1971) pinpoints as the “main reason” for studying regional integration would seem silly to most realists; namely, “the units and actions studied provide a living laboratory for observing the peaceful creation of possible new types of human communities” (4). Furthermore, since realism’s sustained theoretical focus has been on the resilience and persistence of the nation-state, they would find equally unpromising integrationists’ focus on “explaining how and why states cease to be wholly sovereign, how and why they voluntarily mingle, merge, and mix with their neighbors so as to lose the factual attributes of sovereignty while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflict between themselves” (ibid, 6). In fact, one of the most quintessential realist statements is that wars occur because there is nothing to prevent them (Waltz 1959). As a result, many of realism’s critics point out their theories are too static and narrowly committed to explaining continuity (eg. Keohane 1986; Ashley 1984; Kratochwil 1994). As Ruggie (1986) has pointed out, a central limitation of realist theory is that it contains only a “reproductive logic,” but no “transformational logic” (152).

For realists, what really matters are the behavioral constraints and fundamental uncertainty which is inherent in a system of anarchy. According to realism’s logic of anarchy, the EU will not amount to much, and poses no challenge to the existing “Westphalian” state system, at least until such a time as the long-awaited “United States of Europe” comes into being. As a result, even Kenneth Waltz, who is credited as a pioneer of structural or neo- realism, makes few references to the EC in the now-classic, *Theory of International Politics* (1979, 180, 201-2). According to realists, European integration is

largely explicable by the strategic bipolarity of the cold war and the nuclear stalemate between the US and USSR (Waltz 1979, 70-71; Hoffmann 1966; Mearsheimer 1990). And where realists do accord a role for the possibilities of integration, they differentiate between “low politics” (eg. economic and welfare issues) and “high politics” (eg. foreign policy and defense) (Hoffmann 1966). However, Pentland (1973) suggests that the realist conceptualization of the state is poorly suited to capture the transformative effects of integration on national political systems. Specifically, “the concept of the impermeable, autonomous state, and the concrete distinction between foreign and domestic policy, are simply not tenable in the context of integration” (240).

Realism emphasizes the effects of self-interested states in an anarchical system where the ultimate recourse is “self-help.” The resultant “security dilemma” creates behavioral incentives (“shaping and shoving effects” in Waltz’s terminology) to consider power and gains as relative and zero-sum, and to treat mutual trust as an elusive international commodity. States which deviate from this logic do so at their own peril - hence, the possibilities for “cooperation under anarchy” remain limited (Oye 1986; Grieco 1990). Because the logic of anarchy is “the principle force shaping the motives and actions of states,” states are necessarily “preoccupied with power and security, are predisposed towards conflict and competition, and often fail to cooperate even in the face of common interests” (Grieco 1988, 488). As a result, “neorealists in Waltzian tradition are forced to argue that, despite the seemingly fundamental transformation taking place in Western Europe, all of the insecurities associated with the interwar period threaten to resurface with the dissolution of the liberal consensus, significant changes in the regional distribution of power, or the disintegration of bipolarity” (Cornett & Caporaso 1992, 245). Several recent statements by leading realists have confirmed this position (Mearsheimer 1990, 1995; Waltz 1993). For example, Mearsheimer (1990) predicts that without the common external Soviet threat and the US serving a “nightwatchman,” the glue holding together cooperation in the EU will dissolve, and Western Europe “will begin viewing each other with greater fear and suspicion, as they did for centuries before the onset of the Cold War” (47).³⁰ In short, realists see the prospect for conflict within the EU much the same as they were 2500 years ago between Athens and Sparta: conflict was inevitable because of the growth of Athenian power and the fear this caused in Sparta.

³⁰For critiques of this view, see Ruggie (1992); Adler & Barnett (1994); Snyder (1990); and Van Evera (1991) For additional critiques see the exchanges between Mearsheimer and: Stanley Hoffmann, Robert Keohane, Bruce Russett, and Thomas Risse-Kappen, in “Correspondence: Back to the Future Part II & III,” *International Security*, 15(2,3), Fall 1990 & Winter 1991: 191-199, 216-222.

On the other hand, there are some signs that realists are beginning to concede some of their previous “hard core” arguments. A good example is recent work by Hoffmann (1991(with Keohane), 1992, 1993). Compared to his earlier work (1966, 1982), Hoffmann is closer to a neoliberal institutionalist than a realist. For example, he argues, “within the EC, the density of institutionalized links and the structure of governance have blurred the distinction between domestic and foreign policy and between national sovereignty and federal (or community) powers” (1992, 198). Furthermore, in Hoffmann’s revised view, he “does not see the relation between nation-state and EC as a zero-sum game,” and he predicts that “the federalizing process is likely to proceed...both because of the logic of sector integration and because of interstate bargains” (205)! Another example is a recent article by Grieco (1995). Specifically he claims, “the Maastricht’s Treaty’s elements regarding EMU do indeed pose a serious challenge to neo-realist arguments about international institutions” (23). He goes on to add, “The Maastricht package on EMU in fact raises questions about the neo-realist hard core, namely, the assumption that the rationality of states is informed and shaped by international anarchy” (32)! The challenge for realists like Grieco is that as their revisions increasingly converge with other approaches (eg. neoliberal institutionalists, neofunctionalists?) their ability to retain a set of “hard core” realist assumptions and a distinctive research program becomes blurred. In fact, with the exception of hard-liners like Mearsheimer, Waltz and their associates, the differences between realism and other International Relations traditions, including liberalism and institutionalist approaches are becoming less and less substantive.

C. Intergovernmentalism

Integration research took on a predominately intergovernmentalist orientation beginning in the latter half of the 1970s, and this approach has become a growth industry (eg. Wallace, Wallace & Webb 1977, 1983; Taylor 1983; Bulmer 1983, 1985). The bulk of research on the Community was (is?) approached from an intergovernmentalist perspective (if only implicitly) and many self-consciously avoided generalizations (and theory!) relying instead on description and painstaking empiricism. Centrifugal forces such as “dramatic-political” actors like General de Gaulle, the ‘empty chair’ crisis and resultant Luxembourg Compromise in 1966, and an increasingly turbulent international economic system halted further efforts at integration and ushered in a period of malaise and ‘Euro-sclerosis’ which lasted until the mid-1980s.³¹ Further, neofunctionalists’ self-critiques

³¹According to Milward & Sørensen (1993), “the single most important change in the 1970s was the dramatic alteration in the Community’s external environment which had a deep and lasting impact on domestic consensus patterns within the member states: the collapse of international monetary stability, sluggish growth, high inflation and, from the end of the decade, the gradual loss of market shares within the

which culminated in Haas's (1975, 1976) "funeral oration" (Genco's term, 1980, 59) to neofunctionalist theory suggested the time was ripe to develop new approaches (eg. Keohane & Nye 1975).

Intergovernmentalist approaches have become quite advanced at accounting for the role of domestic politics, explaining interstate bargains, the conditions under which cooperation take place, and the role of international institutions in cementing this cooperation. They differ from realism by rejecting the view that state power and interests are *determined* by their position in the international system as well as the ability to "black box" the state (Moravcsik 1991, 46). In general however, intergovernmentalist approaches remain more or less steeped in realist assumptions. At a minimum, the boundaries between realist and intergovernmentalist assumptions are blurred at the margins.³² For example, their emphasis on relative power and relative gains (ie. zero-sum competition) leads them to emphasize that interstate bargaining will reflect the lowest common denominator of the most powerful state interests (and the relative intensity of preferences, the existence of alternative coalitions, etc.) (Moravcsik 1991, 1993a).

Also, while intergovernmentalists differ from realism in their treatment of international institutions, and the possibilities for the transfer or "pooling" of sovereignty to the supranational level (albeit in minimal and controlled doses) their logic essentially converges with realist accounts. Said otherwise, intergovernmentalist theories of national interest/preference formation, like their realist counterparts, often border on the tautological. Both realists and intergovernmentalists hold that states choose integrative solutions, surrender or pool sovereignty, cooperate and so on - where it is their "self-interests" to do so. But this kind of circular reasoning only begs the question of how these "self-interests" are formed. For example, Milward (1992) claims to develop a "fundamentally different theory of integration. This theory is open-ended; it does not forecast any particular outcome" (437). It is also empirically indefensible: *any* outcome can be explained by Milward's theory, since ultimately that outcome would be explicable by the national-interest! In general, while realists argue that interests are determined by a state's position in the system, intergovernmentalists argue that interests reflect domestic politics

common market to the United States and Japan in high-technology products" (22). For a theoretical treatment linking these developments with the 1992 initiative, see Sandholtz & Zysman (1989).

³²For example, Wallace, Wallace & Webb (1983) is a collection of essays widely cited as representative of an intergovernmentalist approach. In her introductory chapter, Webb's notion of intergovernmentalism, "a gladiatorial image of policy-making," (26) is synonymous with realist arguments such as Hoffmann (1966). That the main criticisms of intergovernmental approaches in this volume (eg. lack of theoretical coherence, lack of attention to domestic politics, etc.) have since been substantively addressed in recent work by theorists like Moravcsik speaks to the increasing sophistication and development of this approach as a distinct research program.

and underlying societal demands.³³ For both approaches, integration is essentially viewed as an *instrument* of national politics where a state's rational self-interests emerge from the desire to maintain power relative to others.

While this point will be further elaborated below, intergovernmental approaches fail to account for the ways in which participation in the EU prestructures the formation of national interests as well as the way in which the "ongoingness" of interaction belies the capacity to separate iterations in a black-and-white (or "tit-for-tat") manner of interaction (Kratochwil, 1993; Schmitter 1993, 81, fn. 4). Hence, a limitation of their approach lies in imputing a greater degree of coherence to the pursuit of seemingly monolithic national interests than actually exists. In 1983, Bulmer pointed out that "a particular problem of intergovernmentalism is the tendency to view national governments as omnipotent, monolithic structures" (356).

A related problem for intergovernmentalism, and a much more serious limitation, are the assumptions (explicit and implicit) that member-states retain firm control and oversight in the transfer of sovereignty and competencies to the Community level. For example, Moravcsik (1993) argues that "national governments strike a balance between increased decision-making efficiency and the political risk of uncontrolled issue linkage" (514). The difficulty of striking this sort of a balance however, is exacerbated by high levels of uncertainty associated with incomplete contracting, divergent expectations between key national actors, unintended consequences of previous decisions, the role of contingency, the entrepreneurial capacities of supranational actors, and so on. To take another example, Milward & Sørensen (1993) assume that the processes of national interest formation are extraordinarily coherent and the transfer of sovereignty remains tightly controlled by member-states. They write:

Assuming, as we have done, that nation-states, in order to advance important domestic policy objectives, choose to transfer sovereignty over certain policy areas to common institutions, then *their principal national interest will be not only to define and limit that transfer of sovereignty very carefully but also meticulously to structure the central institutions so as to preserve a balance of power within the integrationist framework in favour of the nation-states themselves* (emphasis added) (19).

This assumption makes *prima facie* sense: states generally do not voluntarily perform acts of self-abnegation. But assuming that sovereignty can be "very carefully" and "meticulously" transferred discounts an important argument forwarded by Lindberg and

³³Milward's approach is intergovernmental in orientation. For example, Milward & Sørensen (1993) argue that national policy objectives "are almost entirely shaped by domestic political pressures and economic resources" (21).

Scheingold that integration “represents a kind of “leap in the dark,” for none can fully control its movement or predict its future” (1970, 105).³⁴ Perhaps the best example which contradicts this intergovernmentalist logic has been the role of the ECJ and the “quiet revolution” in the legal order of the member-states (Weiler 1981).³⁵ Based on the implied powers language of Article 235 for example, intergovernmentalists might predict that the Court would scrutinize every claim of authority by Community institutions not expressly mentioned in the Treaty.³⁶ “This would have been consistent not only with the Article’s wording, but more generally with the notion that the EC Treaty had effected a carefully limited transfer of sovereignty from the Member States to the Community” (Bermann 1994, 361). But, Bermann goes on to explain:

a judicial policy of this sort would have disserved an objective that was ultimately dearer to the Court, namely maximizing the effectiveness of Community law within the Community’s emerging political and economic system. The instrumentalist reasoning that drove the Court’s more patently federalist doctrines of direct applicability, direct effect, and supremacy also militated in favor of a liberal understanding of implied powers (361).

Why would member-states allow such encroachment on their sovereignty? Bermann argues that member-states accepted a “massive dose of supranationalism because the Community’s political processes still allowed them to safeguard their vital interests,” but with the result of “further legal empowerment of the Community through a relaxed attitude toward enumeration, a receptiveness to Community preemption, and a generosity toward implied powers” (362). Marks’s (1993) research on structural policy offers another critique of these intergovernmentalist assumptions. He writes:

The treaties, including the Maastricht Treaty, have been ambiguous and open-ended, and the European Council, the organ of the member states, has neither the coherence nor the organizational capability to press member state concerns directly into institutional practice. Structural policy provides an extreme case of the disjuncture between the Treaty and the institutional outcome, and of the vital role of the Commission in mediating these (407).

³⁴Shonfield’s (1972) metaphor, “Journey to an Unknown Destination” is instructive here as well.

³⁵In Stein’s (1981) inimitable phrase: “Tucked away in the fairyland Duchy of Luxembourg and blessed, until recently, with benign neglect by the powers that be and the mass media, the Court of Justice of the European Communities has fashioned a constitutional framework for a federal-type Europe” (1). Weiler (1993) argues that this period of “benign neglect” may be over, for reasons not the least of which stem from “the (re)introduction of majority voting in the post-SEA era which drove home the radicalness of the constitutionalization” (430); see also Bermann (1994, 362-64).

³⁶Article 235 states: “If action by the Community should prove necessary to attain, in the course of the operation of the common market, one of the objectives of the Community and this Treaty has not provided the necessary powers, the Council shall, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, take the appropriate measures.”

Many other examples could be offered here, such as why such carefully calculating heads of state would appoint Jacques Delors as the chair of the “Committee for the Study of Economic and Monetary Union” and why the version of EMU which heads of state signed at Maastricht was essentially the version constructed by the Delors Committee (for a discussion of the alternative options, see Sandholtz 1993).³⁷ But the basic point is that intergovernmentalist approaches, while admirable for attempting to develop parsimonious theories of integration, assume far too much coherence and take too much as given in their models of national interest and preference formation.

A slightly different variant of intergovernmentalism is Keohane and Hoffmann’s (1991) “network” approach. They formulate three core propositions regarding the nature of EU institutions as follows:

1. The EC is best characterized as neither an international regime nor an emerging state but a network involving the pooling of sovereignty. (2) The political process of the EC is well described by the terms “supranationality” as used by Ernst Haas in the 1960s...(3) However, the EC has always rested on a set of intergovernmental bargains [they cite the example of the Single European Act] (10).

Their conceptual centerpiece is the notion of “pooling sovereignty” which describes the incremental effects of “sharing the capability to make decisions among governments, through a process of qualified majority rule” (7). They claim that “pooling” is distinct from amalgamation even though “for issues on which sovereignty is pooled, authority to make decisions is removed from individual states” (ibid). Keohane and Hoffmann assert that authority is not transferred to a higher authority “because the crucial decisionmaking role is taken by an interstate body...and because these decisions are implemented by national governments or - if these governments fail to carry out this task - through national courts, enforcing Community law” (8).

Keohane and Hoffmann also acknowledge the importance of supranationality in making the EU distinctive from other international organizations. For example, they write: “Unlike international organizations, the European Community as a whole has gained some share of states’ sovereignty: The member states no longer have supremacy over all other authorities within their traditional territory, nor are they independent of outside authorities” (13). But this creates some confusion: what exactly makes the EC/EU a distinct entity? Is it the nature and degree of supranationality or the pooling and sharing of authority? While the

³⁷The key differences in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) are specific dates for Stages Two and Three (the Delors Report only specified the July 1, 1990 date for Stage One), the detailed “convergence criteria” (where the Delors report “simply gave general expression to the desirability of greater convergence”), and the specifics of Stage Two (which the Delors Report only dealt with tentatively) (Artis 1992, 299).

two are not mutually exclusive, neither are they identical. The authors are unclear on how the two concepts are interlinked and how they are analytically distinct. Also, they qualify their argument by claiming that “ultimately, despite the revival of supranationality and the emergence of a Community-wide political system in which state sovereignty is both pooled and shrunk, *what matters most are the bargains among the major players*” (emphasis added) (30). But what is so new about this argument?

While the authors imply that the pooling of sovereignty results in institutional changes (often unexpected) their approach is unable to hypothesize the content or shape of these institutional developments. Thus, the Keohane and Hoffmann “network” approach contains a weak functional theory of the supply-side of regional institutional developments. An even clearer example of this limitation is provided by Moravcsik (1993d). Specifically, he writes, “powerful, autonomous supranational institutions are often seen as the opposite of Intergovernmentalist theory. Wrongly so. *Where such institutions are required to attain the goals set by national governments, we should expect them to emerge*” (emphasis added) (32).³⁸ But this type of functionalist assumption, that supranational institutions are created in a lock-step fashion from states’ wishes, only reinforces the intergovernmentalist/realist view of integration as an instrument of national politics. In a general critique of this type of functionalist assumption, Rueschemeyer and Evans (1985) argue:

Wherever state intervention require new institutions, we cannot simply assume that insight, political will, and resources of the state elites will lead to corresponding institutional creations, but must reckon with considerable difficulties, delays, and failures and look for particular social processes capable of forging new social identities and institutional forms (72).

Intergovernmentalists also underemphasize the “intermingling and intermeshing of the national and Community levels of the policy process and the extent to which European issues have now been absorbed as part and parcel of public policy-making” (Laffan 1992, 12). Finally, and a theme returned to below, by emphasizing the predominance of the national system and the “interstate” strategic interaction context, intergovernmentalist theories vastly underestimate the way in which the EU constitutes a unique interaction context which prestructures the processes of national preference formation. The next section will introduce an important debate “brewing” within International Relations and suggest its relevancy to the context of European integration research.

IV. Taking the “Constructivist Turn” Seriously

³⁸In fairness, it should be noted that the italicized sentence did not appear in the *Journal of Common Market Studies* version.

An important debate has emerged in International Relations between rationalists³⁹ and constructivists⁴⁰. Keohane (1988) welcomes a “dialogue” to form between rationalists and constructivists (he refers to them as “reflectivists”), but he also challenges the latter to come up with an empirically tractable research agenda.⁴¹ While constructivists challenge the intellectual predominance of rationalistic theories, they have “so far failed to develop a coherent research program of their own” (379). This is a fair criticism, with the exception of the *International Organization* special issue on epistemic communities (1992) there are very few solid empirical examples of constructivist research at all.⁴² Thus far, the debate has not been extended into regional integration circles, even though both sides agree that the EU provides a main battleground to test their competing approaches.

A. What *is* Constructivism?

As Adler (1994) explains, “constructivism is the view that social reality is constructed when individuals come in contact and interact” (11). The distinguishing characteristic of a constructivist perspective is the attempt to explain and trace the processes of the social construction of identities, interests, practices, and institutions (ibid). Because a central aim among constructivists is to explain the “social construction” of identities and interests, they reject the microeconomic assumptions which are foundational to the rationalist approach and rely instead on sociological imagery. Rather than view world politics as a series of exchanges among atomistic, pre-social actors, they conceptualize an interaction context where actors are highly influenced by normative environments (Adler &

³⁹The former include both realists (eg. Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981; Grieco 1988, 1993; Mearsheimer 1990, 1995; Krasner 1991) and institutionalists (eg. Keohane 1984; Axelrod & Keohane 1986; Powell 1991; Snidal 1991; Keohane, Nye, and Hoffmann 1993; Moravcsik 1991, 1993a-d). Several of these works can also be found in Baldwin (1993), a useful volume highlighting the differences (and increasingly, signs of convergence) between these two schools. For recent reviews of this ‘neorealist-neorationalist debate’ see Milner (1992); Powell (1994); and, Niou & Ordeshook (1993).

⁴⁰See for example: Onuf (1989); Kratochwil (1989); Wendt (1992, 1994); Adler (1991, 1992, 1994); Adler & Haas (1992); Adler & Barnett (1994); Ruggie (1982, 1989, 1993). A useful discussion of what a constructivist approach might look like can be found in Caporaso (1992, 620-32); see also, Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein (1994).

⁴¹See also Goldstein & Keohane (1993, 5-6).

⁴²A good example of empirical research on international regimes from a constructivist perspective is Ruggie’s (1982) seminal article on the “embedded liberalism compromise” (see also, Ruggie 1991). He argues that the “authority relations that were instituted in the international regimes for money and trade reflected a new balance of state-society relations that expressed a *collective* reality” (202). Another example is Emanuel Adler’s research on the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE; now OSCE) for a book in progress, provisionally entitled, *Seeds of Peaceful Change: The CSCE and the Construction of Security Communities*. A sample of his findings can be found in Adler (1994). See also, Koslowski & Kratochwil (1995) who provide a constructivist account of the Soviet empire’s demise by tracing changes in constitutive norms and practices (esp. 228-47).

Barnett 1994; Katzenstein 1993, 267, 294-95). A strong causal argument here would be that actors (eg. states) identities and their attendant interests and preferences are *constituted* by their social environments.

Whereas rationalists share an individualist ontology which takes its cues from microeconomic theory⁴³ constructivism is based on a collectivist ontology imported from sociology (Giddens 1979, 1984; Bhaskar 1979; see also Wendt 1987, 1992).

Constructivism diverges sharply from rationalists' "Newtonian-like" epistemological assumptions of exogenously given preferences, fixed identities, and axiomatic utility maximizing functions. Wendt (1994) cogently summarizes the rationalist position:

Either they bracket the formation of interests, treating them *as is* they were exogenous, or they explain them by reference to domestic politics (eg. Moravcsik 1992), treating them as if they *really are* exogenous (although not necessarily constant). In both cases the effect on systemic theory is captured by what Jeffrey Legro (1993) calls the rationalist "two-step": first interests are formed outside the interaction context, and then the latter is treated as though it only affected behavior. This can merely be a methodological presumption, but given its pervasiveness in the current debate it may also be seen as an implicit hypothesis about world politics: *systemic interaction does not transform state interests* (emphasis added) (1-2).

Recognizing the limitation of this approach, Jervis (1988) has pointed out: "By taking preferences as given, we beg what may be the most important question on how they are formed," which carries the cost of "drawing attention away from areas that may contain much of the explanatory 'action' in which we are interested" (324-25).

"Constructivism is interested in how social "things" "become," rather than in the way in which they "are" (Adler 1994, 11; Ruggie 1989, 28; Haas 1983). For constructivists, "shared understandings and communicative rationality are as important as instrumental rationality" (Caporaso 1992, 631). And institutions are considered as important "socializing agents," where "socialization can be understood as the process during learning by which norms and values are transferred from one actor to another and new identities and beliefs are formed" (Barnett 1993, 9).

B. What Are the Stakes of this Debate for Integration Research?

The stakes of the rationalist-constructivist debate equal and in some ways transcend earlier debates between International Relations theorists (eg. realists vs. idealists; traditionalist vs. scientific approaches⁴⁴) as well as contemporary ones (eg. neorealists vs.

⁴³For a fuller exposition of this point, see Keohane (1984, 27, 80-83); Goldstein & Keohane (1993, 4); Goldstein (1993, 8-9); Caporaso (1992); Nicholson (1992; esp. ch.'s 2, 3, 12); Elster (1983, 1984); and Hollis & Smith (1991).

⁴⁴A useful collection of essays on this debate can be found in Knorr & Rosenau (1969).

neoliberalists; and the so-called “third debate” between positivists and post-positivists⁴⁵). According to Adler (1994):

Because of its paradigmatic nature, this debate cannot be settled by empirical means alone. Because the two approaches are based on different meta-theoretical assumptions, they require different kinds of data; what is more, they would even give different interpretations to the same raw data (10).

Essentially, the rationalist-constructivist debate is over the ontological and epistemological foundations of International Relations theory.⁴⁶ In short, this debate turns on “the units and relations we consider real, and how we go about acquiring knowledge about them” (Adler 1993, 32).

As suggested above, this debate has long been forthcoming between integration theorists. A skeptical reader at this point will ask, ‘why do we need a “constructivist” approach to study integration’ (other than for reasons of career construction!)? Perhaps the most important reason is that because rationalist approaches emphasize the self-interested and exogenously given nature of interest formation,⁴⁷ they are unable to account for the ways in which preferences and interests are constructed, shaped and reshaped, and partially formed on the basis of participation in the EU.⁴⁸ As Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein (1994) point out, for rationalists:

⁴⁵See in particular, Lapid (1989) and rejoinders by Holsti (1989) and Biersteker (1989). Many confuse constructivist arguments with those advanced by post-structuralists and post-modernists (eg. Ashley 1984; Der Derian & Shapiro 1989). While they share common ground in arguing for a more interpretivist epistemology and stress the importance of intersubjectivity, their research agendas are very different. For constructivists like Adler, Wendt, and Ruggie, the post-modernist project is limited since it denies “the existence of a reality outside human discourse” and post-modernists “shun the scientific enterprise and attempts to arrive at social-science explanations” (Adler 1994, 38, fn. 55). Some mistakenly lump these approaches together (eg. Keohane’s (1988) category of “reflectivists”; and Mearsheimer’s (1995) notion of “critical theorists” (see esp. pg. 37, fn. 128) which grossly confuses constructivist arguments (37-47).

⁴⁶For a more extended discussion, see Dessler (1989). He distinguishes between a “positional” and a “transformational” ontology. Essentially, “the difference between these ontologies lies in their conception of the *relation* between rules and action. In the positional ontology, rules (conventions and norms) are fixed parameters of action, unintentionally reproduced which constrain and dispose behavior so as to preserve the rule structure. In the transformational ontology, they are the material conditions of action which agents appropriate and through action reproduce or transform, possibly intentionally” (460-61). Although the transformational approach roughly corresponds to a constructivist perspective, the positional model specifically refers to neorealist approaches (and in particular, Waltz 1979) and hence may not extend to more sophisticated rationalist approaches (eg. neoliberal institutionalists like Keohane, 1989; Nye 1988; and recent “governance without government” literature such as the Rosenau & Cziempel (1992) volume where “governance” is defined as “order plus intentionality”).

⁴⁷With notable exceptions such as Rapoport’s (1960) notion of a “debate” (10-12). Lindberg (1971) applies this notion of “debates” as a bargaining style in which “viewpoints, intentions, and interests are changed and a perception of common interest begins to emerge” (100). See also, Jervis (1988) and Nye (1987).

Structure merely affects behavior, rather than constituting actor properties. *Compared to earlier advances in international relations theory this marks a substantial narrowing in analytical perspective.* In the 1960s, for example, students of regional integration theory were researching the effect of integration processes on actor properties. Both neo-functional theory and transaction flow analysis offered sophisticated theories and methods to investigate such effects (emphasis added) (7).

Building on this observation, my analysis will suggest that there is a case to be made for linking earlier neofunctionalist insights to the ontological and epistemological framework advanced by recent constructivist researchers. As mentioned earlier, the rationalist-constructivist debate has not found its way into integration circles.⁴⁹ But there is a good case to be made for the relevancy of such a debate between contending approaches of European integration.

Adler & Barnett (1994) have suggested that earlier integration theorists were “constructivist in spirit.” In their own words:

If unable either to match ontology to epistemology and methods, or to grasp the full implications for social theory of a world that is socially constructed, integration theorists did raise a set of questions that resemble those forwarded by modern-day constructivists. The integration and constructivist scholars shared an additional trait: both attempted to evaluate and integrate the causal role of both material and ideational factors in understanding processes of structural change. Deutsch, Ernst Haas, and their respective students were already identifying novel ways of understanding power and empowerment, their role in international relations, and their relation to human purpose (21).

By taking Wendt’s suggestion that “identities and interests be treated as dependent variables endogenous to interaction” (11), a constructivist approach could avoid many of the limiting assumptions of intergovernmentalist approaches. For example, while in many ways Moravcsik (1993a) is correct to point out that “neo-functionalism appears to mispredict

⁴⁸Earlier neofunctionalist formulations make similar arguments in emphasizing such things as upgrading the common interest, swapping concessions, package deals, and honest brokerage on the part of the Commission. Haas (1964) for example, discusses the development of a “cumulative pattern of accommodation” or a “Community viewpoint”; Lindberg (1963) documents the gradual emergence of a “Community method” of norms and shared expectations; and Lindberg and Scheingold (1970) describe the mechanisms and activators of “growth-inducing coalitions” to include the capacity of actors to “develop new perspectives, loyalties, and identifications as a result of their mutual interactions,” where actors may “gradually internalize the Community decision-making and bargaining norms” (119).

⁴⁹Although Meehan (1993) offers an interesting empirical analysis of changing conceptions of identity and citizenship in the EC/EU which is very constructivist “in spirit.” She argues that “a new kind of citizenship is emerging that is neither national nor cosmopolitan but that is multiple in the sense that identities, rights and obligations, associated by Heater (1990) with citizenship, are expressed through an increasingly complex configuration of common Community institutions, states, national and transnational voluntary associations, regions and alliances of regions” (1). For a constructivist analysis of EU industrial relations, see Kim (1994)

both the trajectory and the process of EC evolution,” his approach is rooted in a realist logic that borders on being a tautology. While oversimplifying his position, Moravcsik is arguing that the nation-state acts in its rational self-interest and integration proceeds only on this basis. But who *would* disagree with the intergovernmentalist view that “the EC is grounded fundamentally in the preferences and power of Member States” (514)? In essence, how different is this position from Hoffmann’s (1966) obstinacy thesis? Of course integration only proceeds where it is in member-states’ interests to do so, but this in-and-of-itself tells us little. In effect, rationalists fail to account for the ways in which institutions construct actors as certain types of empowered and interested subjects (Wendt et al. 1992, 16). And, as institutionalist research documents, institutions do not just constrain and enable *but they can establish the very criteria by which actors discover their preferences* (DiMaggio & Powell 1991, 10-11; Thelen & Steinmo 1992; Hall 1986). In a review of Moravcsik’s approach (1993a), Lindberg (1994) points out that:

All of these approaches of a rationalist kind tend to reason backwards: the outcome is obvious once you understand the underlying distribution of preferences, or of preference orderings. I really do not think that is the case. I think that governments perhaps do not really know what their preferences are. Even if they do, it is not clear that they can find an area of agreement. We know that preferences are not stable. We know that in certain cases a proposal, a well-chosen proposal from the Commission, can change the whole nature of bargains and bring in new issues (83-84).

A broader criticism would be that because rationalistic approaches assume preferences and interests are exogenous to interaction they close off the possibility that they can be shaped, or shaped and reshaped, and partially constructed through participation in the EU. At this point, I do not wish to push this argument too far, especially without detailed empirical evidence of cases which contradict the rationalist version of preference formation. Moreover, intergovernmentalist approaches are still very valuable, especially when linked to liberal theories of international interdependence to explain state-societal relations and diagnose the role of domestic politics and underlying societal interests in the processes of national preference formation (Moravcsik 1993a,b).

In short, my argument is not that rationalist accounts of preference formation are wrong, but that there is no reason to assume *a priori* that interests and preferences are exogenous to the interaction context of the EU. Likewise, in order to avoid being misunderstood, let me clearly state that I am not assuming *a priori* that preferences and interests must always be endogenous to interaction. A strong constructivist case would show how national interests and preferences are *prestructured* by the EU’s interaction context. Another type of case, combining constructivist and intergovernmentalist insights,

would show how interests and preferences are “co-constructed” through the EU’s interaction context *and* by underlying domestic forces. In this formulation, it would be necessary to sequentially trace how domestic interests shaped national preferences, which were then reshaped through interaction or vice versa. Moravcsik holds that “an understanding of domestic politics is a precondition for, not a supplement to, the analysis of the strategic interaction among states” (1993a, 481). But conversely, the strategic interaction context of the EU should not be a “supplement” to an understanding of domestic politics.

To summarize, there are few better places for a constructivist approach to be tested than in the interaction context of the EU. Are rationalistic approaches like Moravcsik’s essentially correct to assume that member-states formulate their interests and preferences first and then meet in Brussels to bargain? Or are the constitutive processes of national interest and preference formation endogenous to the interaction context of the EU? Are “self interests” informed, or better yet, “discovered” through the processes of interaction? For example, do institutions such as the Commission help states “discover” or “realize” their interests? Does strategic interaction within the intergovernmental machinery of the Council and COREPER affect the constitutive processes of national preference formation? The next section will address these questions in greater detail by examining the distinctive features of the EU as collective decision-making system.

V. The “Collectivity as a Singularity”

A. Rejecting the Intergovernmental-Supranational Dichotomy

There is growing recognition that the debate over the nature of EU decision-making as supranational *or* intergovernmental is unrewarding (Pollack 1995, 3; Sandholtz 1993, 3 Marks 1993, 407). Few argue either extreme, but the debate is misplaced because it assumes a single-dimensional intergovernmental-supranational dichotomy. This dichotomy is misleading in large part because so much effort is placed on explaining the “relative” importance of the two components.⁵⁰ While there are many excellent studies on the EU

⁵⁰There are interesting parallels here to the debate within Comparative Politics over the relative autonomy of the state and the literature on state-societal relations (eg. Skocpol 1979, 25-33; Evans, Rueschemeyer & Stevens 1985; Krasner 1978, 1984; Almond 1988; Wade 1990; Amsden 1989). The “relative autonomy” of EU institutions, such as the Commission, can perhaps be usefully viewed in this manner; for a suggestion on the relevancy of this comparison, see Lindberg (1994, 83). The key however, would be to avoid overstating the autonomous powers of the such institutions from their surrounding national (“societal”) contexts. Thus, an instructive lesson from the state-societal literature for integration researchers is that those who make an argument for the “relative autonomy” of the state from society often draw too sharp a distinction. As a result, the boundary between state and society is blurred, making “society” indistinct and largely a set of external constraints (Hall & Ikenberry 1989; Mitchell 1991). Rather, what is needed is a focus on the *linkages* between the state and society and an account of how they are reciprocally interrelated

decision-making process which focus on the intergovernmental character of the Council of Ministers, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER), and European Council summitry as well as the supranational features of the Commission and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) - this dichotomous assumption (while useful for heuristic purposes) can often result in theorists 'talking past each other' which only reinforces the uncumulative character of regional integration research.⁵¹

Even many of the more cautious and balanced assessments implicitly assume a supranational-intergovernmental dichotomy. Sbragia (1992) nicely summarizes this common viewpoint: "The Community is thought to be strong *to the extent that its policies transcend the collectivity of national interests*, and the strength of the Commission has been seen as a rough approximation of the likelihood of such transcendence occurring" (emphasis added) (270). I challenge this common view by offering an alternative way of conceptualizing the EU which starts by rejecting the intergovernmental-supranational dichotomy. Building on Ruggie's conceptualization of the EU as a "multiperspectival polity," this section will examine the ways in which the membership in the EU means much more than an arena to pursuit national self-interests. According to this formulation, membership in the EU prestructures the context in which national interests and preferences are formed. Rather than measure the "strength" of the EU against the yardstick of national sovereignty, which implies that the EU will remain an "incipient" polity as long as the nation-state survives, the argument presented here is that the "strength" of the EU lies in the "collective weight of the nation-state" (Sbragia's term).

In challenging the supranational-intergovernmental dichotomy, my argument rejoins a dialogue which neofunctionalists tried to articulate in the 1960s and early 1970s. That is, the EEC/EC as a collective decision-making system is more than an arena for national governments to meet and bargain, but a new level of governance with a unique interaction context. However, as this interaction context "deepens," the nation-state is *not* killed off in the process. On the contrary, integration has strengthened the European nation-state (Milward 1992; Puchala 1988; Goetz 1995; Moravcsik 1993a, 507).⁵² At the same time, in

and mutually constitutive (eg. Barkey & Parikh 1991; Katzenstein 1978). In a provocative article, Peter Evans (1992) argues that state autonomy depends on a "combination of internal coherence and external connectedness," which he refers to as "embedded autonomy," requiring "an apparently contradictory combination of Weberian bureaucratic insulation with intense immersion in the surrounding social structure" (154). This suggests many interesting lines of questioning which could be applied to the context of the EU, some of which are explored below

⁵¹The classic statement of this problem is Puchala (1972). For an attempt to combine neofunctionalist, neorealist, and intergovernmentalist accounts in a more eclectic fashion, see Cameron (1992, 30, 65). For an attempt to link International Relations and Comparative Politics approaches into a theory of integration, see Hix (1994).

the process of the European “nation-state” becoming the European “member-state” it undergoes substantive alteration. The evolution of a collective decision-making system “above” (but not “beyond”) the nation-state transforms them into constituent units of the “collectivity as a singularity.” Within this novel system of regional governance, member-states do not formulate their interests and preferences before “coming to Brussels.” The constitutive processes of interest and preference formation are endogenous to the interaction context of the EU. Sandholtz (1993) frames this issue clearly:

Community decisions are bargains that reflect state interests, but those interests are shaped in part by membership in the EC. Each member state tries to ensure that EC outcomes are as close as possible to its national interests, but the crucial point is that those national interests are defined in the context of the EC. Membership in the EC has become part of the interest calculation for governments and societal groups (3).

Neofunctionalists also hinted that this interaction context can alter the constitutive processes in which member-states form their “national” preferences and interests. Haas originally identified this as the qualitative nature of supranationality. But many have misconstrued his initial optimism with his core argument.⁵³ Supranationality is not commensurate with the powers of a particular institution such as the Commission or the ECJ. Rather, supranationality denotes a distinctive set of ordering principles and a unique context of interaction. According to Haas (1964), supranationality:

...is neither federalism nor intimate intergovernmentalism cooperation, even though the institutions it employs resemble those of a federation more than the United Nations or NATO. Supranationality is a unique style of making international decisions, unique because of the nature of the participants, the context in which decisions are made, and the quality of the decisions produced (1964, 64).

Supranationality is not synonymous with supranational institutions. Those who equate them as one and the same, overlook what can be termed the “*nonsupranational elements of supranationality*.”⁵⁴ This argument follows the lead of Rueschemeyer and Evans (1985) who have pointed out:

⁵²See also Puchala (1972, 271) for an earlier identification of this possibility.

⁵³ As Keohane and Hoffmann (1991) note, “the conception of supranationality, rarely referred to in the recent literature on Europe except with disdain, has suffered grievous misinterpretation and stereotyping over the years” (15).

⁵⁴This paraphrases Durkheim’s (1964) notion of the “noncontractual elements of contract.” I am indebted to the work of Rueschemeyer & Evans (1985) and Evans (1992) for this linkage. Rueschemeyer & Evans (1985) have argued, “Durkheim’s formula of the “noncontractual elements of contract” must be understood broadly, applying to any institution building and to collectivity formation as well. Goals, priorities, and commitments - the elements of action that function as reference points in the rational calculus and thus tend to be taken for granted in utilitarian analysis - are reshaped in effective processes of institution building and collectivity formation, at least for the pivotal set of actors” (72).

*Any institution building requires transcending individual rational-instrumental behavior. The “noncontractual elements of contract,” which Durkheim insisted underlie the system of market exchange, have their analogue in bureaucratic organization. An effective process of institution building must reshape the goals, priorities, and commitments of core participants and inculcate *shared assumptions and expectations on which a common rationality can be based* (emphasis added) (51).*

This is an elegant summary remarkably compatible with what neofunctionalists tried to argue regarding the qualitative nature of supranationality! Many have associated the “strength” of supranationality with the “strength” of particular supranational institutions or the degree to which spillover is or is not inherently expansive. Whether this is due to imprecise formulations on the part of neofunctionalists or misrepresentation and stereotyping (or both), I wish to delink and disaggregate the concepts of spillover and supranational institutions from supranationality as a qualitative dimension of systemic interaction.

Taken together, the qualitative dimension of supranationality denotes a regional interaction context where supranational institutions *and* intergovernmental machinery *and* national political systems are organized and arranged according to functionally differentiated and overlapping competencies and authorities.⁵⁵ This multidimensional image is summarized by the aggregate concept of the “collectivity as a singularity.”

Let me provide a clear illustration. Many regard the Council of Ministers as the intergovernmentalist institution *par excellence*. It is currently fashionable to portray EU decision-making as the “pooling” of sovereignty in an interstate body (Keohane & Hoffmann 1990, 1991). But as Wessels (1991) argues, the Council “is not an “interstate body” but a body at the supranational level” (137). Implicitly, Wessels is describing a core component of the “collectivity as a singularity.” For example he points out that in the evolving EU decision-making structure, “member governments move from a position of “decisionmaker” to that of a “co-decisionmaker” (136) and “beyond the legal criteria, the horizontal and vertical differentiation as well as the dynamics of the decisionmaking and the interaction style of the Council would make it more appropriate to characterize this evolution as an “amalgamation” of the national system, into a new common system with its own competencies, institutions, and procedures” (149).

⁵⁵This point which I am trying to make here is similar in kind to Ruggie’s (1992) treatment of “multilateralism.” Specifically, he argues, “what is distinctive about multilateralism is not merely that it coordinates national policies in groups of three or more states, which is something that other organizational forms also do, but that it does so on the basis of certain principles of ordering relations among those states” (567)

To summarize so far, seen through the lenses of a theorist who assumes an intergovernmental-supranational dichotomy, the Council is viewed as an intergovernmentalist institution *par excellence*. But according to the lenses provided here, the Council is a “nonsupranational element of supranationality,” and an integral component of the “collectivity as a singularity.” The next section will explain why this distinction is important and not semantic. First, it is important to emphasize that this interaction context did not emerge overnight, or by the stroke of a pen - but only slowly and grudgingly, by fits and starts.⁵⁶ As this process has evolved and the outlines of a “part formed” polity have become more visible, theorists are still grappling for ways to describe the beast. I will suggest that because of the EU’s unique interaction context and the qualitative dimension of supranationality the constitutive processes of national interest and preference formation can no longer be assumed as exogenous to the “game.”

B. National Preference Formation in a “Multiperspectival Polity”

The European nation-state does not appear to be fading away, and the traditional assumptions of rational, self-interested states maximizing their utility are by no means becoming invalidated by either irrationality or altruism - but these same assumptions of member-states pursuing their “self-interests” may be right for the wrong reasons. Of course member-states pursue their national self-interests, but these interests are partially formed through interaction and continuous participation within the EU system. The reason is that in a “multiperspectival” polity, the constitutive processes of national preference formation become endogenous to participation. I cannot improve on Weiler’s (1991) description of this polity:

The importance of the EEC inter-statal notion of community rests on the very fact that it does not involve a negation of the state. It is neither state nor community. The idea of community seeks to dictate a different type of intercourse among the actors belonging to it, *a type of self-limitation in their self-perception, a redefined self-interest, and, hence, redefined policy goals*. To the interest of the state must be added the interest of the community. But crucially, *it does not extinguish the separate actors who are fated to live in an uneasy tension with two competing senses of the polity’s self, the autonomous self and the self as part of a larger community...*” (emphasis added) (2480).

In this interaction context, the nation-state truly becomes the “member-state” and European-level institutions -both supranational and intergovernmental - become “Community” institutions. The difference is no longer semantic.

⁵⁶For example, a comparatively newer layer of dimensionality to the EU interaction context is the “mobilization and empowerment of subnational governments” (Marks 1993, 407); see also Goetz (1995).

However, the prevailing approaches to study European integration fail to capture this distinction. I will provide two examples to illustrate this point. First, Philippe Schmitter (1993), in arguably one of the best recent theoretical treatments of European integration misses this distinction. He points out that contending approaches share two main points of agreement: first, that integration involves a consensual process; and second, “the actors in the process of European integration will remain for the foreseeable future independent in the formation of their preferences and disregarding of the welfare of the other” (6). With the possible exception of someone developing a Gramscian hegemony theory of integration, the first point represents the minimum common denominator for any theory of integration. But the second point is more problematic. Schmitter seems to confuse the constitutive processes of national preference formation with the assumption of states acting in self-interested (rather than altruistic) ways. But the two are analytically distinct. Assuming that national preference formation is endogenous to the interaction context of the EU does not imply that states no longer act in self-interested ways. It would be naive to assume that participation in the EU creates altruistic states. “Multiperspectivity” implies that the meaning and content of “self-interests” can change through interaction, not that states become altruistic. Viewing the EU as a “collectivity acting as a singularity” only assumes that through participation, states develop notions of identity and “self-interest” differently than they otherwise would. Later in his paper, Schmitter points out a key neofunctionalist argument which is compatible with this position; specifically: “Interests, rather than shared ideals or common identity are the driving force behind the integration process, but this does *not* mean that their definition will remain constant once the integration process has begun...Actors can learn from their experiences in cooperative decision-making, modify their preferences, and even develop new ideals and identities” (1993, 10).

Second, Moravcsik (1993) suggests that critics of his approach “may dispute the basic framework, arguing that state behavior is not purposive and instrumental, that preference formation does not precede the formulation of strategies, or that national preference and intergovernmental bargaining are so completely manipulated by supranational officials as to be meaningless categories” (518). The approach I suggest here is compatible with Moravcsik on all three of these points, including the notion that preferences precede strategies -- but at the same time his basic framework can be challenged for assuming that the constitutive processes of national preference formation are not causally influenced by the interaction context of the EU.

In short, and as a general statement, current researchers overlook the distinction which I am attempting to draw. But an important exception here is recent work by Alberta

Sbragia (1992, 1993a, 1993b).⁵⁷ She points out that “each national government shares power *with other national governments* rather than have power exercised over them by a political center” (emphasis in original) (270). Further, while the Commission is a “pivotal” institution:

...the national governments have, through the use of qualified majority voting, accepted the sharing of power with one another rather than with the Commission. Integration has thus proceeded through the willingness of national governments to submit to one another - not to the Commission...The member-states, acting in the Council of Ministers, are consequently the ultimate decisionmakers. Introducing qualified majority voting under the Single European Act has not changed, constitutionally, the collective weight of the nation-state (270-1).

The first point to mention is that this conceptualization is compatible with an intergovernmental perspective since it acknowledges that member-states remain the “ultimate” gate-keepers and that integration has not been characterized by the systematic surrender of national sovereignty and construction of a new, amalgamated “center.” But fitted with intergovernmentalist lenses even a careful observer would miss the significance which Sbragia’s argument implies.

Sbragia offers important insights into viewing the “collectivity acting as a singularity” and the new “bargaining space” which has been opened up with the extension of qualified majority voting. I would emphasize three additional points.⁵⁸ First, in many ways member-states are “locked-into” participation in the EU. “Opt-outs,” derogations and escape clauses notwithstanding, the possibility of a member-state permanently leaving the EU appears remote (but certainly not inconceivable). Arguably, even the threat of “withdrawal” from the EU would have serious credibility problems, which speaks to the degree in which member-states today perceive a shared community of economic fate or at least a lack of meaningful alternatives.⁵⁹ In fact, today the opposite threat may be more credible, the fear of “exclusion” and the threat of being left out of a “hard core” area of

⁵⁷ Another notable exception is Cameron’s (1993) “international regime-as-polity” model (53-59).

⁵⁸ Also important and before the shift to QMV, were the “jurisprudential developments” of direct applicability, direct effect, and supremacy which had greatly expanded the Community’s legislative presence (Bermann 1994, 354).

⁵⁹ Although this is just an impressionistic example, the recent discussion in Britain, which the *Financial Times* described as a “visceral anti-EU feeling,” over the possibility of withdrawing from the EU was not met with much response or concern from the other national capitals (*Financial Times*, February 15, 1995). Also, the EP’s committee on institutional affairs has recently entertained a report by Labour MEP David Martin who advocates the development of an instrument which would allow a member-state to leave the EU (*Agence Europe*, no. 6447, March 24, 1995).

integrationist-minded states (eg. the original Six with the exception of Italy in the area of EMU, Schengen states in the area of border controls, etc).

Moreover, as Milward and his associates have pointed out, one of the distinctive advantages of integration over interdependence is its “irreversibility,” or the “certitude that once a fundamental bargain has been agreed upon by a number of governments, it is not likely to be easily reversed” (Raneri & Sørensen 1994, 6). While not “absolutely” irreversible, changes in member-states’ domestic policies would more likely result in limiting further integration rather than reversing bargains already in place (Milward & Sørensen 1993, 15). Schmitter (1993) hypothesizes that following Maastricht, “the point-of-no-return has been passed and member-states will find it politically impossible to defect from the Community as a whole and increasingly difficult to be “selective” in the implementation of specific rules and regulation” (28). The high degree to which member-states are “locked-into” continuous participation and the interaction context of the EU implies that, in theory as well as practice, the ability of member-states to tabulate their national interests first and then meet in Brussels to bargain is increasingly unrealistic. Further, the already high degree to which national political systems are interpenetrated and mutually dependent on the EU system shows no signs of decreasing (Majone 1993). Today there are few areas of national policy-making which are unaffected by the EU, and many predict that this the process of “penetrativeness” (Lindberg’s term) and the “Europeification” of national policy-making will continue (Anderson & Eliason 1993; Ladrech 1994).⁶⁰ Milward & Sørensen (1993) have argued that:

Elusive notion though it is, the pragmatic delineation of irreversibility as a new system of international relations can be discerned in the Treaties of Rome as well as in Community Law...However, it is the concept of *acquis communautaire* which more than any of the treaty provisions expresses the importance attached to the notion of irreversibility within the European Community (16).

In support of this argument, Weiler (1991) adds that “the constitutional infrastructure “locked” the Member States into a communal (read: Community) decisionmaking forum with a fairly rigorous and binding legal discipline” (2429). Even member-states like Britain

⁶⁰For an interesting comparison which clearly shows the degree to which national political systems have become “penetrated” by the EC/EU, compare Wallace (1971) with Sbragia (1993b)! Writing in 1971, Helen Wallace observed that “the Communities have not penetrated dramatically into the national political scene,” since “their impact on the national level seems to be different in degree rather than in kind from that of other international organizations” (522, 538). She also found that national politics was relatively insulated from the European issue-area and domestic economic planning had not been deeply affected, national actors had not become socialized into the Community process, the impact of the EC on national parliaments was limited, and few businessmen had begun to think in European terms. Writing two decades later, Sbragia (1993b) observes virtually the exact opposite for each of these points.

who fiercely resist any encroachment by the EU on their “separate sense of identity” have begun to notice that the country’s largely unwritten constitution is being replaced by EU legislation (*Financial Times*, February 15, 1995).

Second, I would argue that Sbragia’s observation further reflects an evolutionary pattern identified by neofunctionalists writing in the 1960s and 1970s. Neofunctionalists pinpointed a key relationship which was emerging between supranational institutions and national political systems. Specifically, they postulated a “symbiotic” relationship between supranational institutions and national sovereignty (Haas 1958, 486-527; Lindberg 1965, 205).⁶¹ For example, Haas concludes his case study of the ECSC by arguing that the essence of supranationality is the “symbiosis of interministerial and federal procedures” (526). Lindberg and Scheingold (1970) are the most explicit on this relationship:

Observers have usually described the Community institutional system in terms of conflicts between supranational power and national sovereignty. To do so is to assume that each gain in capability at the European level necessarily implies a loss of capability at the national level. We reject this “zero-sum” interpretation. European integration, although it may involve conflicts, is more accurately seen as a way in which new forms of decision capability are created to cope with new problems and to achieve new goals...the relationship between the Commission and the Council, as between the European Community and the national political systems, is more nearly a symbiotic relationship than a competitive one (94-95).⁶²

Ironically, considering his view of much of the early integration literature as “piquant but watery soup,” (20) this perspective is supported by Milward (1992) who has richly documented the ways in which integration strengthened and facilitated the “reassertion” of the nation-state.⁶³ Likewise, Wendt (1994) raises the notion of “disarticulated”

⁶¹Caporaso (1974) supports this characterization (see esp. 177). Ludlow (1991) makes the point that “an “adversarial” model of Commission-Council relations is seriously misleading. The Commission needs the Council and its member states and engages them in its business at every stage of the political process. For its part, the Council needs the Commission and, when the system is working properly, turns to it repeatedly both as a source of leadership and as the instrument specially designed to implement policies “in the general European interest”” (87-88). And Weiler (1991) argues that the evolution of the Community during its “Foundational Period” [1958 - mid-1970s] effectively “ruptured” the premise of a zero-sum relationship between the Community and its member-states, which in part “derives from the unique legal-political equilibrium of the Community structure” (2429). See also Hughes (1993, esp. pg. 47).

⁶²See also pp. 260-2. This concept illustrates how non-cumulative integration research can be. For recent examples which “reinvent” the symbiosis metaphor, see Taylor (1993) and Chryssochoou (1994).

⁶³While he would likely disagree (given the “straw-man” he has constructed), Milward’s argument is quite complementary to a neofunctionalist perspective. For example: “But is there in fact an antithesis between the European Community and the nation-state? Does the evolution of the Community imply the replacement of the nation-state as an organizational framework and its eventual supersession? It is the argument of this book that there is no such antithesis and that the evolution of the European Community since 1945 has been an integral part of the reassertion of the nation-state as an organizational concept...The

sovereignty, in which political authority is not centralized in the nation-state, but at the same time “the erosion of individual state sovereignty does not imply the erosion of the state...by transferring it upward to a collective, states may actually strengthen their capacity to solve problems” (35) (more on this below). Of course the “disarticulation” of national sovereignty and its “rearticulation” at the level of the collectivity has not happened overnight. The evolutionary nature of this “symbiotic” relationship has not always been a happy marriage, nor has the process been linear. Rather, this development occurs in fits and starts, or as Lindberg and Scheingold put it, “the Community has a very uneven and irregular pulse” (103).⁶⁴ But Jaques Delors’s remark that the EU has had “eight years of success, a decade of crisis, and 16 years of stagnation,” (Ross 1992, 487) notwithstanding, the impact of these changes on the constituent national systems have been cumulative. The transfer of sovereignty upward to the collective, has strengthened the “collective” power of the EU.⁶⁵

This constitutes the third, and equally important point. Once the assumption of a *intergovernmental-supranational* dichotomy and a zero-sum relationship between national sovereignty and supranationality are rejected, a very different conceptualization of “power” comes into focus. The “power” of the EU system is *not* defined by the degree to which national interests are transcended or how much sovereignty is stripped from the nation-state; rather, “the collectivity as singularity” is the main repository of power. The growth in the “collective weight of the nation-state” (Sbragia’s term) has been perhaps the largest benefactor of European integration. But defining this “collective” power is an elusive task. The power of the “collectivity as a singularity” is closely akin to Mann’s (1987, 1988, 1993) definition of “infrastructural power.”⁶⁶ According to Mann (1993),

“infrastructural power” is the institutional capacity of a central state...to penetrate its territories and logistically implement decisions. This is a collective power, “power through” society, coordinating social life through state infrastructures. It identifies a state as a set of central and radial institutions penetrating territories (59).

European Community has been its buttress, an indispensable part of the nation-state’s post-war construction” (2-3). For an argument remarkably similar to Milward’s, see Puchala (1988).

⁶⁴Consistent with this evolutionary imagery, Lindberg and Scheingold suggested that “even though its pulse is irregular, the normal functioning of the Community can be represented in terms of a rising curve. This is meant to indicate that expectations about collective decision-making have risen in response to the steady growth in the functional scope of the Community” (103-104).

⁶⁵The case of EMU is instructive here; while EMU (if it ever occurs) would be a “quantum leap” in integration it would not lead to the creation of a European superstate. But it would signify a massive and qualitative shift of national monetary authority and sovereignty to the collective level (ie. the transfer of full monetary authority to the European System of Central Banks).

⁶⁶I thank Leon Lindberg for suggesting this linkage.

Replacing “central state” with “collective decision-making system” and “society” with “constituent national systems,” we arrive at a very suggestive description of the EU system! To paraphrase Mann, “infrastructural power” in this sense represents the power of the “collectivity as a singularity” to penetrate and coordinate the activities and social relations of constituent national systems through its own infrastructure.⁶⁷ This analogy allows us to view the EU as a locus of collective, or “infrastructural power” where the institutionalized capacities of the collectivity orders the relations with constituent national systems.⁶⁸

Infrastructural power does not reside in a “supranational executive” but in the EU system as a collectivity (Lindberg 1963, 52). Viewed in this way, the EU as a unique form of regional governance becomes apparent. Many now consider the EU as closer to a version of “cooperative federalism” than either an intergovernmental body or an incipient supranational state (Sbragia 1992; Wessels 1991; Kirchner 1992). The concept of “infrastructural power” may help flesh out the complex and unique features of “cooperative federalism” in the EU system. Finally, a good indicator of “collective” or “infrastructural power” is Lindberg’s concept of “penetrativeness” (1971, 104-09; 1965, 221-22) which can be systematically traced across constituent national systems at different points in time viz-a-viz the scope and “depth” of changes in the range of choices and resources of national decision-makers, as well as account for variance in the degree of compliance with EU legislation (ie. the lower the compliance, the lower the degree of penetrativeness). “Penetrativeness” is an indicator of changes in the *nature* of national preference formation over time, and by comparing different time periods (eg. the 1960s and the 1990s) the research goal here would be to trace the effects of the EC/EU as a collective decision-making system on the constituent national political systems and whether this altered the constitutive processes of national preference formation.

⁶⁷To carry the analogy through, those who assume a supranational-intergovernmental dichotomy hold a definition of power equivalent to Mann’s notion of “despotic power,” or autonomous state power *over* civil society, derived from “the range of actions that state elites can undertake without routine negotiation with civil society groups” (1993, 59). Translated into the EU context this would be the degree of autonomous supranational power which could be exercised *over* constituent national systems, or the “despotic power” of the Commission, for example, to act arbitrarily and without constraint from constituent units.

⁶⁸Lindberg drew a similar distinction back in 1966. Specifically: “we must distinguish between the European Community system seen as a set of institutions and a characteristic operational code and the European Community conceived in terms of what, for want of a better term, we might call the “infrastructure of integration.” By this I mean the customs union, the new intra-Community trade patterns, the gradual interpenetration of businesses, the network of contacts and consultations established among businessmen, farmers, traders, laborers, civil servants, etc., and the political impact of these patterns and commitments upon the policy-making processes of the participant governments” (237).

VI. “Multiperspectivity” in Action - The Case of COREPER

An instructive example of “multiperspectivity” which provides a preliminary sketch of how the constitutive processes of national interest and preference formation have become endogenous to the interaction context of the EU can be found within the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER). Often considered synonymous with intergovernmentalism, COREPER is composed of ambassadors of the fifteen member-states which acts as the “administrative substructure” (Wessels 1991, 140) of the Council. But COREPER is also a central institutional site within the EU system which illustrates “multiperspectivity” in action. Originally designed to prepare the Council’s work, COREPER has quietly evolved into an important decision-making body of the EU.⁶⁹ As Hayes-Renshaw et al. (1989) argues, “during this pre-Council phase, the role of [COREPER] is decisive since they are the true spokesmen of their governments at the negotiating table” (132). Based on a recent study, Lionel Barber (1995) concludes:

To observe how Coreper operates is to understand how the European Union works...One of the best kept secrets in Brussels is that *90 percent* of EU decisions are resolved informally in Coreper before they even reach ministers [in the Council]...*Coreper’s position inside this power nexus is unique: it has legislative and decision-making powers.* Its permanent presence in Brussels, alongside the Commission, gives it an extra edge (emphasis added) (*Financial Times*, March 11/12, 1995).

Rometsch and Wessels (1994) also estimate that approximately 90 percent of Council decisions are made at this level (213).⁷⁰ Equally significant, a recent Council draft report on the “Functioning of Maastricht” concludes that the Council’s decision-making process would be improved if *more* procedural decisions could be taken by Coreper! (*Agence*

⁶⁹The origins of COREPER date back to the ECSC and the decision by the Special Council of Ministers to create a “Coordination Committee” (COCOR) in February 1953, under Article 10 of the internal rules of procedure. The Treaty of Rome establishes that the rules of procedure of the Council “may provide for the creation of a committee composed of representatives of the Member States” (Article 151). COREPER and the function of “permanent representative” was agreed to by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs at a meeting on January 7-8, 1958 (Noël 1967). Under Article 4 of the Merger Treaty COREPER was formally recognized: “A committee consisting of the Permanent Representatives of the Member States shall be responsible for preparing the work of the Council and for carrying out the tasks assigned to it by the Council.”

⁷⁰Wessels (1991) estimated that roughly 80 percent of Council decisions were made in Coreper I by means of the A point procedure. Writing in 1989, Hayes-Renshaw et al. reported this figure to be “more than” 75 percent (133, fn. 22) ‘A points’, or ‘agreed points’ are passed by the Ministers of the Council without discussion. An example which vindicates intergovernmentalist assumptions regarding member-states as the ultimate gatekeepers, but which works against their assumptions that this decision-making process is extremely coherent is the “A point” directive which the Fisheries Council adopted on the protection of pregnant workers! (1608th Council Meeting, Fisheries, Luxembourg, October 19, 1992, Press Release 9041/92) (cited in Dinan 1994, 247).

Europe, March 25, 1995, 5). Claude Cheysson, the former French foreign minister, has been reported as claiming that COREPER is more powerful than the Commission! (Barber 1995).

COREPER meets weekly, and the sessions usually last one or two days. Since 1962, COREPER has been divided into two separate bodies. COREPER II includes the Permanent Representatives, or Ambassadors, and they handle the more sensitive and controversial political issues, working mainly for the Foreign Ministers and Ecofin. The Deputy Permanent Representatives make up COREPER I and they handle the more technical issues in policy areas such as the internal market, the environment, transport, fisheries, social affairs, etc.⁷¹ But far from handling merely technical details and covering trivial policy areas, COREPER has developed important decision-making capacities. In terms of substantive issues which are settled within COREPER, Barber (1995) notes that in the past few months alone they have “settled the terms of a new trade pact with Russia, agreed a work-plan for the countries of central and eastern Europe to join the EU, and resolved a mind-numbing row over how to set up an EU administration in the Bosnian town of Mostar.” COREPER will also be closely involved in much of the preliminary work for the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) to review the Maastricht Treaty.

The permanent representation from each member-state differs in composition, and the administrative-grade officials include both career diplomats and technicians (senior civil servants). Overall, the national delegations include a higher proportion of technicians over diplomats since the “highly-detailed technical Community dossiers cover an increasing range of issues,” but the post of permanent representative itself is normally held by a senior ranking diplomat from each member-state’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs “because of the high premium put on expertise *and* negotiation” (emphasis added) (Hayes-Renshaw et al. 1989, 125). Permanent Representatives generally have close and high level contacts with all the ministries of their home states as well (including informal channels such as by telephone), which “provides them with a much more direct means of influencing governmental opinion in the capital than is the case from Brussels” (ibid, 130-31).

Also, each permanent representation differs by size and “margin for interpretation” from national instructions. First, the total number of personnel varies considerably; for example in 1988, Ireland had a delegation of 53; France, 60; Germany, 42; Italy 36; Britain 40; and Spain, 103 (Hayes-Renshaw et al., 124). Sbragia (1993b) explains that the comparatively large size of the Spanish delegation is due to the Spanish government’s

⁷¹ Agriculture has its own separate Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA). Also relevant is the Antici Group which is linked to COREPER II and plays a coordinating role in preparing the agenda and time schedule for COREPER meetings, the Council of Ministers, and European Council summits.

awareness of “the need to expose its own civil servants as rapidly as possible to the Community’s ways...the government is using its COREPER delegation as a mechanism of socialization” (Spain joined the EC/EU in 1986) (6).⁷² Second, the margin for interpretation which permanent representatives have from national instructions varies by member-state and by issue-area. Certain issue-areas, such as institutional reform, are “taboo subjects” where national instructions are highly specific and non-negotiable (Hayes-Renshaw et al. 1989) (But note the role of COREPER in preparing for the 1996 IGC).

Some member-state delegations have a relatively wide margin for interpretation. For example, the Irish Representative has a wide “margin of manoeuvre,” *“he often moulds the instructions in the interests of the consensus in COREPER.* Because of the more limited number of Community issues which are perceived as being of direct and vital national interest, the instructions from Dublin are rarely dogmatic” (with the exception of agriculture) (emphasis added) (ibid, 131).⁷³

Within COREPER, “different ministerial origins do not appear to give rise to traditional rivalries; the interdependence of the dossiers necessitates a horizontal approach” (Hayes-Renshaw et al. 1989, 128). Permanent Representatives have a tendency to distrust the experts from their home ministries “who are often regarded as being too involved in their own narrow portfolio to have a horizontal vision,” and likewise, “national experts claim that permanent representations are not always rigid enough, that the diplomats, *rather than push national interests, ‘go native’ and end up being more understanding of the positions of other Member States than of their own*” (emphasis added) (ibid).

Since a representative from the Commission is always present at these meetings, the “continuous dialogue” between the Council and Commission is highly developed and cultivated at this level. And especially at the working-group level, where technical knowledge and expertise is such a valuable commodity, “the Commission’s officials have often had the advantage of having a better overview of the positions of all the Member States than officials from any one of them” (Rometsch and Wessels 1994, 213).⁷⁴ But the

⁷²Hence a specific hypothesis here would be to expect comparatively large COREPER delegations for the newest member-states - Austria, Sweden, and Finland - in order for their national elites to become socialized into the EU. For a more general theoretical treatment of “socialization” in international relations, see Bukovansky (1992).

⁷³Hence a specific prediction here is that there would be systematic variation in the degree to which interests and preferences were shaped by the EU’s interaction context depending on the “margin for interpretation” in national instructions to their Permanent Delegations.

⁷⁴There are a large number of permanent and *ad hoc* subcommittees and working groups (at any given point in time they range between 120 to 200) which often make initial technical assessments of Commission proposals (there is always a representative from the Commission present). For a more elaborated discussion, see Nugent (1991, 107-110). Perhaps the most important is the Monetary Committee which deals with

Permanent Representatives are not “structural dopes” (Giddens’ term) they are experts of technical detail and accomplished diplomats. According to Dinan (1994), “Member states rank the permanent representatives among their most important diplomatic missions. The caliber and effectiveness of permanent representative officials determines to a great extent how countries fare in the Community” (250). To understand why member-states consider this such an important position, the role of the Permanent Representative in the EU decision-making process should be underlined. According to Barber (1995), “Committee members eat, drink, and breathe EU issues seven days a week. Every six months, they and their wives go on trips - to Greek islands, Scottish whiskey distilleries, or to Goethe’s home in Weimer - to cement the bonds with their colleagues. By dint of their permanent presence in Brussels, they are virtually condemned to succeed” (*Financial Times*, March 11/12, 1995). And as Hayes-Renshaw et al. (1989) argues:

As the major channels of information on EC matters, *the officials in the permanent representatives are in a prime position to influence the formulation of national policy towards the EC...*The permanent representation thus acts not only as a central post-box for all documentation and correspondence exchanged between the Community institutions and the Member States, but also as a type of *benevolent censor* (emphasis added) (129).

These points confirm a good number of hypotheses which neofunctionalists made early on. As noted above, neofunctionalists were among the first to recognize the importance of this regional interaction context evolving in postwar Europe. In 1958, Haas hypothesized that:

...a complex pattern of interaction between national ideologies on the one hand and the beliefs of the office-holders in the central institutions on the other will come about. The eventual changes produced at the national level will constitute one of the indicators of the degree of integration as the process continues, while the analysis of this interaction is one of the crucial problems of this study - and of any study of political integration (19).

Haas also described COCOR as a “novel community-type organ” where “the members have grown to know one another well; negotiations tend to become less and less formal; increasingly a process is initiated of seeking the best compromise in terms of a common technical solution to a given economic problem” (ibid, 491). Writing in 1963, Lindberg noted that, in practice, the “distinction between the role of elaboration and preparation and that of final decision has become obscured by a vast congeries of permanent and ad hoc groups that have been created between the Commission and the Council” and in particular,

issues related to the EMS, capital movements, international monetary relations, and EMU - as a result, this Committee has “unusually privileged access to both the Commission and the Council” (Nugent, 109).

the establishment of COREPER represents the “*principal liason between the Community and the Member States*” (emphasis added) (53) (see also Hayes 1984, 188).

Ludlow (1991) similarly observes that it is “inevitable in a system of bureaucratic intermingling of this kind that the borderline between initiating institution and the decisionmaking institution becomes blurred” (103). And Johnston (1994) has argued that COREPER “is not completely a national instrument. Permanent Representatives, immersed in the work of the Community and aware of other countries’ political preferences and constraints from their frequent negotiations with each other, can adopt a larger frame of reference than their own countries’ needs” (30) (see also Noël and Étienne 1971). This echoes an earlier observation by Lindberg (1965) who describes a more general process of changing viewpoints; specifically, “the members of the Community do not confront each other only or chiefly as diplomatic gladiators; they encounter each other at almost every level of organized society through constant interaction in the joint policy-making contexts of officials, parliamentarians, interest group leaders, businessmen, farmers, and trade unionists” (230).

As a result, he argued “what we should seek is a way of directly approaching the constant and complex interaction and interpenetration between the Community and national institutions, between policies and processes” (202). In many ways this question is just as relevant as it was in 1965. As this section has briefly illustrated, the role of COREPER in the collective decision-making context of the EU provides a good look at the ways in which national preferences and interests have become endogenous to interaction. The Permanent Representatives do not dictate preformulated national interests and preferences in a lock-step fashion from their home ministries as intergovernmentalist assumptions would lead us to predict; rather these interests and preferences are shaped and reshaped during the process of interaction and the informal exchange of viewpoints. Contrary to the intergovernmentalist account, national preferences and interests are perhaps even being formulated on the first floor of the Charlemagne during the Permanent Representatives lunchtime sessions.⁷⁵ As Barber (1995) reports, “the absence of note-takers means that ambassadors and the Commission can be selective about reporting the contents to their national capitals. “Its very simple,” [a participant says], “there are no spies.”

⁷⁵Michael Butler, the British Permanent Representative from 1979-1985, discusses the importance of these lunchtime sessions; for example, “In their formal discussions, [Permanent Representatives] have of course always to speak to the instructions which they have received from their governments...But in addition they frequently meet collectively but informally, often over lunch...even if several major differences between member states remain, quite often a solution begins to emerge through the mist of these informal meetings” (1986, 30).

VII. Conclusion: Future Research Themes

Earlier, it was argued that the transfer of sovereignty upward to the collective has strengthened the “collective” power of the EU. But what is this “collective” power used for? Does “collective” power strengthen the capacity to solve problems? As Milward (1992) has argued, European integration has never really been about the transcendence or absorption of the nation-state, but rather the reinforcement of and buttress for national policies and domestic priorities. The true origins behind integration were embedded in the “strength of mutual assumptions about stability, welfare, and the need for a managed interventionist response to economic change” (117). Do these collective assumptions still exist?

These collective assumptions are subject to growing pressures for change (both domestically and internationally). Since the 1980s, there has been a general trend across Europe toward the “privatization of public space,” where “the reduction of public functions and of the citizen’s dependence on the state has become a common theme of political debates and public policy” (Wallace, 1993, 294). As Ross (1994) puts it, “the high tide of 1980s neo-liberalism had brought a theoretical assault on virtually all forms of public intervention in the economy,” and “strong neo-liberalism, proposing a return to the disciplines of market harshness, a retreat from state intervention and the deconstruction of social protection, has moved into the mainstream” (147, 313).

In fact, the postwar international economic order, or what John Ruggie (1982) has termed the “embedded liberalism” compromise⁷⁶, increasingly appears to be threatened by his hypothetical worst-case scenario; namely, the “resurgent ethos of liberal capitalism” (229). According to Schwartz (1994), “Far from being normal...the stability and successful state intervention of the postwar period represented a dramatic departure from the typical processes of the global economy. The global economy is in fact moving back to the future, resembling more and more the global economy of the nineteenth century” (vii). This atavism of sorts is characterized by the pattern in which “international market forces impelled capital movements, trade, and migration, and when states at best coped with the consequences of the market forces and at worst collapsed before them” (ibid, 5). Evidence of this threat to the continued viability of national governance is seen in recent crises within

⁷⁶The distinguishing feature of “embedded liberalism” is the collective understanding that “unlike the economic nationalism of the thirties, it would be multilateral in character; unlike the liberalism of the gold standard and free trade, its multilateralism would be predicated upon domestic interventionism” (Ruggie, 209). The differences among the industrialized countries “concerned the forms and depth of state intervention to secure domestic stability, not the legitimacy of the objective” (ibid, 210). Today, it is the legitimacy of state interventionism itself (ie. the social purposes of political authority) which is challenged by an ethos of liberal capitalism.

the European Union (EU) (such as the recent ERM crisis of 1992) (Cameron 1993). Can the “collective weight of the nation-state” in Europe counter the destabilizing trends of the global economy? Can the EU increase its “infrastructural power” to avert Schwartz’s prediction? Perhaps. As Ross (1992) has argued this case, “Deepening - pushing a new kind of federalism in Europe beyond the point of no return - has been an overriding priority, since it represents an urgent consolidation of a threatened European model of society and the endowing of a new European regional entity with the means to act internationally” (507).

But perhaps not. According to Haas (1964), a novel feature of the EC/EU is its “pragmatic synthesis of capitalism and socialism in the form of democratic planning” (68). However, as Scheingold (1971) tells us, the EC is oriented “more toward a market economy than toward planning” (378). Further, he adds: “This “pragmatic synthesis” was certainly not common ground at the outset of integration...the consensus that the founders perceived in the ECSC lay in the future” (ibid). Is this consensus converging toward a neoliberal conception of the EU as a gigantic free trade zone? Some recent EU initiatives support this conception, such as the Commission’s proposal to create a “Euro-Mediterranean Economic Area” with North Africa and the Middle East.⁷⁷ And the Commission has also initiated negotiations to establish a free trade zone with Mercosur, the South American trade grouping (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) possibly as soon as 2001.⁷⁸ By then, it also appears likely that several Eastern European countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria) will have been granted accession to the EU (will full membership rights?), which may strengthen the argument for a “wider” EU based on the free trade zone conception. Would the EU as a free trade zone lose its “collective” power to insulate member-states from destabilizing forces in global economy?

Completion of the Internal Market has largely been an exercise in liberalization and deregulation. As such, the EU is essentially a “structure for imposing discipline on

⁷⁷According to David Gardner, who is citing a senior Commission official, a free trade zone of this magnitude would take 10-15 years to complete, could include up to 40 countries and encompass over 800 million people! (*Financial Times*, October 20, 1994). Of course, the motives here also include mitigating the long term implications of mass migration, fundamentalist extremism, terrorism, drugs, and so on; essentially, as Gardner puts it “a strategy of containment,” since there is no question of EU entry for these countries

⁷⁸Since 1986, the EU has been Mercosur’s largest trading partner, and the southern cone of South America is the fastest growing market for European exports. In 1992, for example, the EU accounted for 27 percent of Mercosur exports (versus 21 percent to North America), 48 percent of foreign direct investment, and 42 percent of the grouping’s foreign assistance. And between 1988 and 1993, European exports to Mercosur more than doubled from \$5 billion to nearly \$11 billion. (*Financial Times*, November 25, 1994).

governments that might otherwise meddle with industry, as a referee in an enormous free market” (Dobbin 1993, 71). The creation of the Internal Market and the elimination of the remaining physical, technical, and fiscal barriers, will be “tantamount to a reduction of the role played by public authorities and, consequently, the erosion of the mixed economy” (Tsoukalis 1993, 99). In effect, the White Paper initiated a qualitatively new phase in integration, which “touched at the very heart of national economic sovereignty” since, “fiscal harmonization, monetary policy and capital movement, state subsidies, and even industrial standards are the basic material of which the economic role of the state consists” (ibid, 86). And, as a result, the “contradictions between trade liberalization and the mixed economy, which had been lurking for years in the background, slowly came to the surface” (ibid). At stake, in other words, is the relationship between the state and the economy. Taken to its logical extreme, the liberal, deregulatory perspective advocates minimal insulation of the domestic economy from unregulated international economic forces, and hence suggest a highly unstable and “turbulent” (ungovernable?) international economic order.

According to Streeck (1994), “European integration has become locked in a negative, market-making, deregulatory mode” (3). This pattern in turn reflects the “disengagement” of politics from the economy, designed to “liberate and accommodate market forces instead of trying to domesticate them – so as to end once and for all the use of public power for market-correcting purposes” which is the only remaining national political option which can be imposed on internationalized national economies without “jeopardizing the integrity” of the European nation-state (ibid, 8). In short, the predominant emphasis on negative integration effectively rules out the capacity for EU-level “market-correcting” policies and objectives. Is there an alternative? Can the EU develop new regulatory schemes which break this pattern? Majone (1993) argues that “neither privatization nor deregulation have meant a return to laissez-faire or an end to all regulation” since the state has not retreated but redefined its functions; specifically, “administrative regulation...is rapidly becoming the new frontier of public policy” (83).

Can the EU use its “infrastructural power” to develop a coherent industrial policy? The outlook appears quite bleak. As Streeck (1993) points out, “the Internal Market economy will be governed, not just by industrial policy, but by competition policy, social policy, regional policy and trade policy as well -- and by, most likely unresolvable, conflicts and contradictions between these” (38). Most importantly, following the Treaty on European Union (TEU), European industrial policy appears heavily weighted toward an emphasis on deregulation and the establishment of an open, competitive environment for industry. While the Treaty’s provisions on industrial policy are somewhat vague

(intentionally?), Article 130 enshrines the principle of maintaining a “system of open and competitive markets.” While the Treaty adds that the Council “may adopt specific measures in support of action taken by member states,” decisions must be made unanimously. From this, it follows that a French-style approach of targeting sectors and constructing “national champions” is simply not possible at the European level.

But are there other alternatives? What about the role of business? Can strategic alliances between the Commission and big business improve European competitiveness? Perhaps. In 1979, the Commissioner for Industry, Viscount Etienne Davignon, recruited the CEOs of the then-twelve largest European electronics firms into a “European Round Table of Industrialists” (ERT) which was designed to foster cross-border collaboration. By the early 1980s, the Commission actively “began to champion the concerns of European multinationals,” and together they developed European-level programs in which firms could cooperate in “pre-competitive” technology (Green 1993, 6). The success of their first programme, the European Strategic Programme for Research and Development in Information Technology (ESPRIT) (1985-88)⁷⁹, eventually led to similar initiatives such as RACE (Research in Advanced Communications for Europe), BRITE (Basic Research in Industrial Technologies for Europe), JESSI (Joint European Submicron Silicon Initiative), and a litany of other joint R & D programmes. By fostering the development of intra-European “networks” and cross-border collaboration, the Commission often acted as a “marriage-broker,” which “marked a significant departure” from the earlier interventionist approach (Tsoukalis 1993, 50). However, it must be emphasized that the Commission’s approach is rife with internal tensions between the more “interventionist ethos” of DG XIII (Electronics and Telecoms) and the “laissez-faire ethos” of DG IV (Competition) (Sharp & Pavitt 1993, 137; Ross 1994). As Sharp (1991) has shown with the case of telecommunications: “On the one hand the RACE initiative of DG XIII seeks to create a broadband fibre optic network infrastructure across the whole Community - a *grand projet par excellence* - on the other hand, directives from DG IV lay down firm guidelines for the deregulation and liberalization of the telecommunication market” (394-5).

What will the emerging post-1992 European industrial policy look like? In October 1990, the Commission attempted to address this question with their paper, “Industrial Policy in an Open and Competitive Environment: Guidelines for a Community

⁷⁹ESPRIT’s success resulted in a five year successor programme, ESPRIT II, which was approved with more than double the original ESPRIT budget (3.2 billion ECU) (Flamm 1990, 282). It should be noted that some take a more skeptical view regarding the importance of these R & D efforts as a form of industrial policy. Strange (1988) for example, writes, “the budget for ESPRIT is a pathetic \$400 million, literally peanuts by American standards. The same may be said of EUREKA” (76).

Approach.”⁸⁰ In effect, the Commission rejected any type of *dirigiste* approach, by deeming sectoral policies as ineffective and emphasizing that the ECs role should be to maintain a “level playing field” and a competitive environment.⁸¹ This new approach is based on “horizontal” coordinating policies to act on the environment in which firms make up their own minds. Further, the Commission is assigned to uphold aggressive competition policies to thwart protectionist public policies and promote a stable macroeconomic environment.

Additionally, as Ross (1994) argues, while this document “invoked the latest in trendy arguments to justify “framework” public intervention to promote smarter firm decision-making, the deepest text, however, argued against the initial bowing and scraping and for the rehabilitation of the idea of industrial policy albeit in redefined form” (150). For example, the paper recognizes that “in the past, particularly difficult problems of adjustment have been dealt with at the Community level” (eg. steel, textiles, and shipyards) (49). “Likewise, the Community has and should continue to pay particular attention to the areas which play a central role in the development of Europe’s economy and industry, such as telecommunications, semi-conductors, aeronautics, and the maritime industry” (ibid). While the specific provisions are vague, the recognition of certain “strategic industries” may enable future EU-level policies to be developed, especially if competitive disadvantages relative to Japan and the US persist or become exacerbated.

Hager (1985) has concisely framed this general issue, namely, “the misapplication of liberal principles to an illiberal world risks sacrificing the existence of Western Europe as we know it: a group of free enterprise welfare states uniquely open to each other...the choice is not between protectionism and free trade, but between European and national protectionism” (413, 428). Perhaps the core issue is whether the EU can develop a neomercantilist policy between the extremes on free market liberalism on the one hand and ‘Fortress Europe’ on the other.

In tracing the origins of the ECSC, Ranieri and Sørensen (1994) find ample evidence of mercantilist motives. For example, “the new attention in the postwar period to domestic priorities, in the form of industrial, agricultural or regional policies, clearly required a new form of international agreement which would allow a greater degree of insulation of the domestic economy from international economic movements and

⁸⁰La Politique Industrielle Dans un Environnement Ouvert et Concurrentiel Lignes directrices pour une approche communautaire, (COM(90) 556), EC Commission, Brussels, October 30, 1990.

⁸¹For example, “The experience of the 70s and 80s has shown that interventionist sectoral policies are not an effective instrument for structural adaptation...”(14)

unregulated market forces” (3). And as Milward (1992) documents, European commercial policy appears to be a “peculiar mixture” of liberalism and protectionism, which reflects a “new form of neo-mercantilism” (130) based on a shared “ideology of growth” (42) and the belief that “domestic policy was not in the end sustainable unless this neo-mercantilism could be guaranteed by its Europeanization” (134). Cocks (1980) adds that “the pursuit of affluence” was the “main link between...the formation and subsequent progress of the European Communities, and...the continuing legitimation of capitalist social relations” (25).

Is there a plausible “European” model of neomercantilism? Can the “collectivity acting as singularity” develop unique solutions unavailable at either the national or global level? Are the recent increases in the EU’s structural funds just side-payments (as intergovernmentalists would suggest) or is this an increase in “infrastructural power” and an attempt by the “collectivity acting as a singularity” to create a new redistributive dimension to the EU? (compare Marks (1993) & Pollack (1995) for an interesting debate). According to Hettne (1993), “self reliance was never viable on the national level (for most countries) but may be a feasible development strategy on the regional level,” a form of “*collective self reliance*” (emphasis added) (230). As a result he argues, “neo-mercantilism is emerging as the major ideological challenge to global liberalism,” and this new form of “regionalism” is “emerging in the grey area between the free-trade area model, on the one hand, and the Fortress model on the other” (227).

The EU *may* increasingly converge toward the neo-liberal model of a gigantic free trade zone and continue to resist or lack the capacity of developing a regionally-based form of neomercantilism. However, given the highly unstable and volatile nature of this capitalist order, namely “the resurgent ethos of liberal capitalism,” and unregulated market forces in an increasingly internationalized economy, the European nation-state may be left with no choice. As a result, being able to discern the “infrastructural power” of the EU and the capacities of the “collectivity as a singularity” to solve common problems is an important research question to pursue further.

In conclusion, this paper has advanced three core arguments. First, the EU has gradually evolved into what Ruggie has called a “multiperspectival” polity, or a novel system of rule and regional governance which structures the context in which member-states’ preferences and interests are formed and a quality of interaction which shapes the character and context of “national” interests. Second, although the neofunctionalist research program became increasingly ad hoc and reactive, leaving no clear direction for revision, integration research since the mid-1970s has failed to assimilate key insights heralded by this earlier body of theory. As a result, contemporary integration research assumes

(implicitly or explicitly) a single-dimensional intergovernmental-supranational dichotomy. But as neofunctionalists argued, the qualitative dimension of supranationality denotes a unique interaction context where supranational institutions and intergovernmental machinery and national political systems are organized and arranged according to functionally differentiated and overlapping competencies and authorities. This qualitative dimension of supranationality includes supranational institutions and the “nonsupranational elements of supranationality” (eg. intergovernmental machinery, the mobilization and empowerment of subnational governments, etc.). As argued above, this multidimensional image is captured by the aggregate concept of the “collectivity as a singularity.” In this collectivity, the relationship between supranational institutions and national sovereignty is “symbiotic” rather than zero-sum, and the “collective weight of the nation-state” has been the leading benefactor of integration.

Finally, rather than just revisiting earlier neofunctionalist writings, this paper has argued that linked to the ontological and epistemological advances offered by constructivism which treats identities and interests as analytically endogenous to interaction, integration research can gain new insights into the processes of national preference formation. Rather than assume that member-states *first* define their interests, and *then* meet in Brussels to bargain - this paper has argued that the constitutive processes of national interest and preference formation are inseparable from the interaction context in which member-states bargain, negotiate, settle disputes, and so on. By briefly examining the role of COREPER, albeit in a preliminary fashion, this analysis suggests that interests and preferences are shaped and reshaped *during* the process of interaction and the informal exchange of viewpoints. In short, if there is a case to be made that the EU is a “multiperspectival” polity, then a constructivist approach offers the most promising theoretical “lens” and set of “starting assumptions” available. Why bother? Otherwise, our theories of integration will continue to overlook the possibility that EU member-states construct their identities (and their attendant interests and preferences) in particular ways *as member-states* of a “part formed” political system which has cumulatively changed the character and nature of the “game” in European politics.

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