Dynamics of European Unification: a Conceptual Framework

by
Witt Raczka
Die in dieser Arbeit vertretenen Auffassungen sind die des Verfassers und nicht notwendigerweise die der Forschungsgruppe Internationale Beziehungen

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the International Relations Research Group
ABSTRACT

The process of European unification occurring around a core of Western European nation-states has generated a body of scholarly research. But few authors have placed the phenomenon within a more general framework of international relations. This paper makes such an attempt by focussing on the political dynamics of sovereignty. This concept is simply taken for granted in virtually all studies in the field. We approach it by first specifying the purposive character of state behavior and then by emphasizing the question of its declining effectiveness in an increasingly interdependent environment. States have two alternatives for dealing with interdependence and the ensuing loss of autonomy: either by pooling separate sovereignties or by transferring sovereignty onto a higher level of authority. As a result of this twin process a new political actor emerges (though not necessarily a new state), capable of acting more effectively in the international system. Its territorial convergence and functional expansion are also stressed. The picture is completed by the discussion of other structural and behavioral dimensions of the unification process at the governmental and societal levels.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Introduction

The European Community's (EC) dynamic social, economic, and political environment has stimulated current debates on the new national authority structures and regimes for the movement of people, products, and capital. The Treaty of Maastricht, following the Single European Act and the radically shifting political realities following the collapse of the USSR and the Cold War can be interpreted as a renewed attempt of the EC-member states to enhance their authority. Unification can be viewed as a means to gain better control over the environment. Unification, however, leads directly to the problem of national sovereignty.

We do not speak about sovereignty as a legal or normative concept, but as an empirical one referring to the re-arrangement of existing, effective authority in response to changing environmental conditions. Sovereignty is conceived of not from a static, normative perspective but in dynamic terms, as suggested by historical experience. For example, the loose confederation formed by the Swiss cantons towards the end of the XIIIth century developed into a federal state 600 years later. The independent Dutch provinces were federated for more than two hundred years before a unitary state was established. Scotland merged with England to create a virtually unitary United Kingdom as well.

In these last two instances, unification was a significant condition for the important role the new sovereign units played in world affairs, while the Swiss confederation probably inhibited the cantons' annexation by their much more powerful neighbors and therefore helped them preserve their security. Sovereignty does not simply imply the emergence or fusion of states into larger units. Even though this may be the case, there is also the possibility for states to pool sovereignty rights in specific issue areas only. In that respect the overarching notion of unification becomes central. Unification can thus be provisionally defined as the process whereby national actors voluntarily give up some aspects of their sovereignty.

Thus, we can ask: what are the forces driving unification? While state security and ambitions towards greater power and autonomy may have prevailed in the past, the states are increasingly concerned with factors such as technological progress, economic growth, and socio-cultural conditions. The intention of states to create conditions favorable to the successful pursuit of these ends may turn out to be difficult, if not impossible, because of tendencies to cling to sovereign authority. Sovereignty under conditions of inter-connectedness and interdependence of states and societies has challenged the states' ability to provide for the security and autonomy of their peoples. Interdependence has created a growing gap between nominal and effective authority. In the past, striving for self-preservation, wealth, and influence characterized power politics. The current European unification processes suggest that these states try to close the gap between formal and effective authority through negotiation, leading to convergence of mutual interests and the acceptance of a common destiny. In Europe "it is time to reflect on the nature of sovereignty, to make problematic for the study of international relations what has previously been taken as an analytic given" (Krasner, 1988:86).

1) Traditionally, sovereignty is defined as final and absolute state authority on a given territory, recognized as such by other states, and international legitimacy (Hinsley, 1986:158; see also Waltz, 1979:96).
2) Occasionally this type of policy degenerated into the denial of others' sovereignty, implying war and annexation.
Given our interest in voluntary as opposed to forced unification of state actors, a differentiation between the concepts of integration and association is necessary. More than just the sum of pre-existing units, integration refers to a process of merging of states, which results in a new whole or union. By contrast, association reflects an ever closer connection among states, suggesting a kind of addition. Our working hypothesis is that European unification is characterized by both processes. The notion of an "ever closer union" embodied in the Treaty of Rome by no means specified which of the two processes, or their final destinations, should be given preference.

This paper examines these phenomena in a broad perspective. First, we will ask why European unification processes are taking place and what basic rationale, motives, and purposes they involve. Next, we will discuss the ways and means of unification and the role of sovereignty. Finally, we will outline a multidimensional model which should be useful in capturing the dynamics of unification. This macro-analysis should be applicable to other regions or/and time periods. Far from contradicting the dominant realist (or "power politics") paradigm of the discipline of international relations, studying and theorizing about political unification may be quite compatible with it.

Goals of unification: the question of effectiveness

Early theorists dealing with post-World War II European unification processes focused on the short-term, immediate goals of unification. They confused the "purpose with the means", thereby inhibiting significant progress in regional integration research (Hansen, 1973; Puchala, 1980). Our long-term perspective seeks instead to unveil the major determinants of such processes, unencumbered by details of bureaucratic politics, day-to-day decision-making, or narrow sectoral analysis. By tracing and explaining state actors' long-term objectives and motives, we will be able to specify particular causal links and distinguish between shifting objectives.

For that purpose we use the analogy developed for the individual level by Maslow. We hypothesize that both at the individual and collective levels, human and/or state purposes can be represented succinctly in terms of the search for security, sufficiency, and autonomy.\(^3\) Maslow’s well-known analysis (Maslow, 1943; see also DeCaprio, 1974:411) established such a hierarchy of needs at the individual level. He gave clear priority to man’s striving for bio-physical preservation, the search for food, warmth, and shelter, etc. Only after his survival was assured would man turn toward satisfying his desires for the accumulation of material goods. Their satisfaction and the perception of relative sufficiency would in turn set in motion strivings for personal autonomy, self-realization, and the quest for meaningfulness in life. Though simplified here, the pertinence of Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs for explanations of motives and behavior patterns as a function of environmental conditions is widely accepted.

The analogy of a corresponding hierarchy of collective or national needs can be drawn for the states. Buzan’s model of the constitutive elements of a nation-state\(^4\) finds in a nation’s quest for security elements of self-preservation and assurance of continuity. The history of mercantilism, (see Rosecrance; 1986) shows that not only self-preservation but also resource

---

3) However, their specific meanings will vary whenever we move from one level to the other.

4) His model’s three sets include a nation-state’s physical base: population, territory, resources; basic national ideas, values, symbols; and its principal political institutions (Buzan, 1983:38-40).
accumulation became an important motivational factor. While modern technological progress has reduced the significance of land as a criterion of wealth and prestige, and thus rendered territorial expansion and occupation less relevant avenues of building power potentials, the ambitions of many state actors to obtain greater wealth and self-sufficiency has remained an important source of conflict in inter-state relations. Although often a goal in itself, relative self-sufficiency and material self-reliance must be viewed as intermediate or preparatory states of enhancing autonomy and international influence.

According to Waltz, states are "social actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination" (1979:126). Similarly, Kissinger argues that states not only pursue security, but also, "absolute security": strength sufficient to insure independence from others (1966: 549). Disseminating national ideals, values, and interests, founding institutions to regulate and manage other actors and the quest for prestige and status in the international system are all expressions of nation-states' will to gain autonomy and control the international setting. Needless to say, relative autonomy and influence are the privilege of those who are relatively self-sufficient, capable of providing for their own security and are thus less vulnerable to others' ill-willed intentions or unfavorable external circumstances.

Thus a comparable hierarchy and temporal sequence in the area of public needs and national necessities of security, sufficiency, and autonomy can be postulated as well. This process is by no means unidirectional or teleological in nature. Its direction depends on the nature and dynamics of the environment. For example, a nation-state that loses its economic autonomy and influence vis-à-vis new trade and financial centers is likely to suffer a relapse into protectionism and a renewed emphasis upon wealth accumulation to retain its power base. Similarly, if economic conditions change from general prosperity to prolonged recession collectivities will increasingly become more materialistic and security-minded. Figure 1 on the following page summarizes this discussion of the "motivational" dynamics of states.

Traditionally, members of the international system have attempted to achieve the above-mentioned sequence of needs through power politics. States pursue both absolute and relative gains by influencing and controlling one another through conflict and cooperation. This perspective assumes that the state actors exercise full control over a given territory and population.

Consequently, while unification of several states results, by definition, in an end to power politics among them, this by no means implies that the new unit will not continue to pursue power politics with respect to the international system's other members. Unification processes thus do not put an end to power politics. Rather, from a theoretical perspective this focus on unification complements and enriches the power politics paradigm, as is particularly obvious

---

5) Here, "public" refers to an unspecified aggregation of individual needs while "national" will pertain to collective-level necessities. Since the expression "necessity" lacks the emotional connotations of "need", it is more appropriate to identify it with groups and their actions.

6) On the resurgence of protectionism and mercantilism in the wake of a decline of hegemonic powers see, for example, Kindleberger (1973) and Gilpin (1981).

7) Inglehart (1979) links peaceful and prosperous times to the emergence of post-materialist attitudes. Todd (1990), emphasizes the contribution of conditions of general insecurity and suffering to the emergence of conservative and highly religious postures. See also Raczka (1991: Ch.3).
when a longer temporal framework of inter-state relations is being adopted. Additionally, the sharp boundary between power politics and unification, as drawn here, will turn out to support a more subtle and complex differentiation among unification phenomena.
It is precisely in this context that one has to examine the nature and origins of European unification and the history of its shifting objectives. The two world wars and the intervening severe economic depression in the late 20s suggest that in a system of highly interdependent actors (economically and security-wise) the competitive pursuit of security, sufficiency, and autonomy turned out to be ineffective and even counter-productive, not to mention costly, in human and material terms. Later, in a world of superpower domination, the unilateralist West European states' foreign policies (e.g., France and UK in the Suez crisis or France in Indochina) proved equally ineffective, as were their attempts to unilaterally manage their economic problems (and possibly at the expense of others) within a system of highly interdependent economies (e.g., Western governments in the aftermath of the oil crisis or France in the early 1980s). In an increasing number of instances therefore, power politics served neither the national nor public interest: not only has it failed to advance the cause of given nation-states internationally, but it contributed to frustration of socially aggregated individual needs.

Whereas power politics between states affects their effective authority, unification is a classical response for managing supreme nominal authority or sovereignty. Both may be seen as responses to interdependence. Having reduced their specific vulnerabilities and considerably increased their common resource potential, the European actors have tried to enhance their financial, military, and other capabilities to play a more active, responsible, and influential role in world affairs, much more akin to traditional competitive relations among states.

To what extent did unification in its various stages help member-states more effectively realize their objectives? Has their pursuit followed dynamic behavior patterns of our framework? The evidence of post-WWII events and agreements shows clearly that security issues dominated the political arena even though resolutions were often non-military in nature. Between the first Brussels Treaty (1948) and its modification (1954), all significant political events, including the creation of the Atlantic Alliance (1949), its structural integration (1951-1952), the coal and steel accord (1952), and the aborted European Defence Community (1952-1953), addressed European security vis-à-vis the Soviet threat. In the end, given their vulnerability, European reliance on American protection through NATO proved to be an appropriate solution, although the bilateral links to the US have for long overshadowed purely European endeavors. Indeed, while European states gained enormously in terms of security, this clearly happened at the expense of their autonomy, which in any case they were unable to fully exercise. Put differently, while Washington welcomed European unification efforts for the sake of security, the United States tended to subordinate their interests and use them to enhance its own autonomy and capacity to act in the international system.

Their security assured, the Europeans could now concentrate on domestic and international economic matters, including gratification of public needs, self-sufficiency, and accumulation of wealth. The establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom (1958), together with a gradual implementation of external and internal economic regimes (or institutionalized norms and rules embodied in the customs union and common market, respectively), created a much larger area for the free circulation of people, products, and capital, stimulated competition and productivity, and thus furthered technological progress.

---

8) For the discussion of national and public interests, see Kratochwil (1982).

9) Keohane and Nye argue persuasively about unification (integration) as being primarily a response by the states to their growing levels of interdependence (1975: 371-374).
and economic growth. In turn the standards of living, access to resources, and reduction of vulnerabilities was enhanced (Mendes, 1986). After a period of relative stagnation, inter-state negotiations leading to the Single European Act (1986) and the "Europe 1992" program, renewed interest in the final implementation of the common market provisions. These provisions were supposed to cope more effectively with internal economic problems (e.g., unemployment), but they also aimed at building up the competitiveness of European economies with respect to their principal American and Japanese rivals (see Lodge, 1986:206).

By the end of the 1960s, growing assertiveness during GATT negotiations and inter-state trade relations broadly speaking, confirmed that the European Community had to become a major economic center and trading power. Not surprisingly, EC members started demanding greater political responsibility as America's world leadership began to erode. The inauguration of European Political Cooperation (1970) followed by the regular and increasingly institutionalized meetings of the European Council (since 1974) signal the beginning of the Europe's new political role (see Schoutheete, 1986; Bulmer and Wessels, 1989). Apart from setting economic priorities, the Single European Act (SEA) also called for a clearer projection of the EC international political image and for more coordination of European economic and political security. The momentum developed by the SEA’s codification of existing practices led to the 1991 Treaty of Maastricht. The new defense role defined by this treaty signaled the union’s determination to assert itself on the international scene.

The history of the European union’s objectives suggests that the member-states’ cooperative attempts to attain greater autonomy and influence in the international system have been effective. From seeking economic self-sufficiency and capabilities ("civilian power Europe") to claims for more responsibility for political and military security, one could argue that their present international status could not have been achieved had they unilaterally relied on their own resources and capabilities, and depended on competitive power politics.

Such a conceptualization of the dynamics of motivational forces seems indispensable for a better understanding of the European unification process. It helps to pinpoint the stages of its evolution and to relate them to particular intra- and extra-European events and shifting conditions. Now that we realize the why of the process, we are ready to tackle the how of it, that is to say, the ways and means of unification.

**Means of Unification: the Structure and Boundary of Sovereignty**

Not incidentally, we will have to consider that "dependent variable" whose elusiveness inhibited theorizing about political unification in the 1970s. We are primarily concerned here with the emergence of new authority structures that transcend sovereignty. This implies the re-organization of governmental decision-making, the creation of new institutions based on legal and political commitments of the participating governments. The question to be addressed is how these new authority structures will emerge at the expense of the hitherto existing ones, and what their scope or spatial domain is.10

---

Nature of Unification

Unification does not only mean political amalgamation or fusion resulting in the emergence of a higher, "supranational" level of authority, but also, an ever closer harmonization and coordination among traditional states on an "extranational" level. Put differently, while supranationality involves the transfer of national sovereignties within a given scope, extranationality entails the pooling or sharing of sovereignty among actors without, however, formally giving up their sovereignty. We are thus concerned with both integration and association as two distinct dimensions of the European unification process.

The former refers to the creation of a Community with its own institutions, legal personality, and political capacity. The member states limit their own sovereignty and transfer portions of it to the supranational level, to the Community's emergent executive body, the Commission, accountable not to the states but to the European Parliament (which has the power to dismiss it), its representative body whose role in the Union's legislative process has been enhanced in the Maastricht Treaty, and to the Court of Justice, the judicial organ, which insures the primacy of communitarian law over national jurisdiction in specific domains.

On the other hand, and especially since the late 1960s, member-states have increasingly engaged in joint decision-making. This has led to greater cooperation among them within such typically confederal bodies such as the Council of Ministers and the European Council and to their strengthening in the overall institutional framework. Needless to say, neither is collectively accountable to anyone and only their participants are individually responsible to their respective national parliaments and constituencies.

Nevertheless, one finds a growing convergence of membership, formalization, and institutionalization between the two structures as exemplified in the Single European Act and, in particular, in the Treaty of Maastricht, that suggest more than just traditional forms of intergovernmental diplomacy. Within both structures, decisions may be made either unanimously or by various majority procedures (as exemplified by the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty), but the real difference between them is the existence and role of European unitary executive, legislative, and judiciary bodies. The treaty of association differs from conventional agreements in that it precludes unilateral nullification or secession, establishing fundamental loyalty to the union, a new body politic, albeit without statehood. This has led Taylor to remind us of Dahrendorf's notion of the two-track Europe and his view of the unification process as representing not only the pursuit of the union's interests per se, but also of the sum of its national interests (see Taylor, 1982).

Internationally, the Commission has sought recognition, within its sphere of competence, for its representative and treaty-making powers, particularly in the area of international trade and economic cooperation, including tariff and commercial agreements binding to all the member-states. In the meantime, the European Community has become a full member of the

---

11) Hoffmann (1989), Bulmer and Wessel (1989), and Keohane and Hoffmann (1990) use the expression of "pooled sovereignties" as distinct from the ceded ones while Pinder (1981), on basically the same grounds, distinguishes between "extra-" and "supranationality". See also Dankert (former president of the European Parliament and currently Dutch minister for European affairs) and his linkage between integration and supranationality (1982:4-5). The concept of a "shared sovereignty" has been used by Sir Geoffrey Howe, the UK's Deputy Prime Minister (see Financial Times, 11 and 12 September 1990).

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Otherwise, the union has been represented by either the rotating presidency of the Council or by its individual member-states (Brewin, 1987:8-10; Lak, 1989).

Generally speaking, the 1991 treaty establishing the European Union confirmed the above-mentioned two-track constitutional evolution by establishing a collective or joint authority to pursue the sum of its participants' interests, on the one hand, and unitary organs with interests of their own, on the other. However, as Weiler (1982) reminds us, this does not prevent member states from occasionally treating the union as an instrument for the maximization of national interests.

Both international and domestic factors influence individual states in the way they deal with the union. For example, France and the United Kingdom, the only European nuclear powers and permanent members of the UN Security Council, have been the most reluctant to cede their sovereignty in defense and foreign policies to a supranational level. A keen interest in integration-cum-supranationalism, however, is shown by smaller, interdependent actors, e.g., the Benelux countries, and those who have large and strong economies but inadequately low political status, e.g., Italy and Germany.

Domestic factors influencing state roles might be considered as follows: unitary and strongly centralized states, where internal political authority is relatively highly concentrated, as in the UK, Portugal or France, would have the biggest difficulties supporting supranational solutions. On the other hand, federal states like Germany and Belgium, or non-unitary, strongly regionalized states such as "federalizable" Spain and even Italy, are likely to least resist the future supranational (though federal) authority structure. The question is therefore that of the strength of the nation-state in particular cases: early self-identification as a nation together with uninterrupted statehood makes it harder to adjust to the surrender of sovereignty. The difference between the two leading forces of the unification process, France and Germany, reflects their unique histories and constitutional developments: the former favors association and extranational Councils, whose actors are individually responsible to their national

14) Wallace (1982) and Brewin (1987) offer what they consider an appropriate concept of confederation describing the EC's actual state. We argue, however, that the correspondence they make between federal and confederal authority structures and supra and extra-national levels is only partially accurate. Indeed, while both supranationalism and federalism imply the member-states' loss of sovereignty to superior units, the concept of confederal authority structure sees in state sovereignty the basis of its internal political organization. The alternative to a federal organization would be a unitary state, an option not precluded theoretically by the concept of a supranational authority. In a nutshell, federal is more restrictive than supranational and is to be seen as its subset. On this point see also Sidjanski (1990) and Safire (1991). Furthermore, being qualitatively different, one should avoid placing associative and integrative processes on the same continuum by saying, as does Wallace, that the Community's political system - a confederation - is "less than a federation..." (1983).
15) During the negotiations leading to the intergovernmental conference on political union at Maastricht in December 1991, the UK foreign secretary rejected the integration process (leading to supranationalism) in favor of associative structures and coordination procedures (Financial Times, 14 November 1991).
16) This has been confirmed by the smaller EC members' criticism, during the meetings leading to the Maastricht summit, of attempts by France and UK to reinforce such intergovernmental institutions as the European Council and the EPC (cf. Le Soir, 5 June 1991).
17) According to Wallace, "those who cling to a unitary model of the sovereign state may find it difficult to accept the concept of division of sovereignty" (1982:65).
parliaments, while the latter emphasizes integration and a stronger supranational executive (Commission) accountable to an equally supranational European Parliament. So it is not surprising that WWII’s sharp weakening of the European nation-state and traditional notions of sovereignty facilitated the development of the unification process within the emerging, postwar structure.

One should not ignore how devolution’s dual aspects, upwards to a superior level and downwards to the regions, may well proceed in a parallel and mutually reinforcing fashion (Sidjansky, 1990). We might also consider how military mobilization tends to facilitate states’ unitary organization and that the involvement of major European powers in world affairs preceded or paralleled domestic centralization efforts and influenced their character. Accounting for such factors might help us explain why some state actors clearly opt for associative structures and inter-governmental policy-making processes, instrumentalizing the emerging union as a means towards furthering their particular national interests.

Finally, opting for integration over association might also reflect member-states’ fear of the union’s collapse or fragmentation due to the inherent heterogeneity among them. While a strong supranational decision-making center promises control over such disruptive forces, homogeneity might prove a significant inhibiting factor. For example, economic and cultural similarities in Scandinavia demonstrate the power of associative structures on lower and intergovernmental levels to connect units without sacrificing sovereignty (Stälvant, 1990). Similarly, consider how the goal of monetary stability can be achieved either by a system of gradually narrowing margins of national currency fluctuations and their ultimately irrevocably fixed exchange rates or by creating a single currency and monetary authority (Panic, 1991; see also Hansen, 1973:230). While the convergence of economic performance and currency stability have been relatively easy to obtain among the core EC economies of comparable development level (Germany, France, Benelux, Denmark) on the basis of an ever closer coordination, the difference between them and the periphery (Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland) and the desire for stability clearly points to the political need of resorting to a single authority.

**Domain of Unification**

While the locus of a decision-making structure relates to the issue as to how nation-states manage in common their sovereignty, the question of scope is related to the territorial and functional boundaries. The distinction is by no means trivial; one need only recall the recurrent themes of Europe à la carte or à plusieurs vitesses (confirmed by the British unique stance in the Treaty of Maastricht) to show that the idea of only some EC members adhering to a given functional process (e.g., to the European Monetary System and then to the Monetary and Economic Union) does not preclude the existence of flexible and discontinuous boundaries.

---

19) See The Economist (3 April 1990); Financial Times (6 June 1990); The European (9-11 November 1990).

20) Taylor identifies preferences for associative links with instrumental approaches to the pursuit of union goals. He adds that supranationalism (here: federalism) presumes political elites act in the "interests of the greater number in the longer term" (1990:182).
Political unification (via pooling and/or transferring sovereignty) is probably the best way to insure the coincidence of economic, cultural, societal, and political boundaries. Indeed, while the great extent of inter-societal interactions and identifications render the existing borders increasingly permeable (and therefore politically less meaningful), the newly emerging transnational societal community and its territorial/functional area, made possible by the new sovereignty management, may be a greater factor in the pursuit of public and national interests.

The emerging political union’s sovereign character is fixed spatially (both functionally and geographically); it is nominally enclosed (Magnusson, 1990; Walker, 1990). Within this boundary state actors abandoned unilateral action and adopted instead a supranational or extranational posture. While several authors have defined governmental activities by enumerating possible fields of action (see, for example, Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970:71), this paper’s first section has developed general ideas about motives and purposes for state actions as a basis for a more systematic analysis of unification’s functional domains and boundaries.

So far, we have suggested that the motivation behind unification reflects a general desire for a more effective and efficient pursuit of the national interest. Consequently, we will first examine the societal environment and then consider these objectives in a security-sufficiency-autonomy hierarchy. These functional criteria may be considered as in Table 1 on the following page.

Several things merit comment. First, one finds here broad domains useful for a preliminary but theory-driven classification of governmental functions. Lindberg and Scheingold defer a much more detailed, practice-derived analysis. Second, the borderlines between domains are highly permeable in both the security-sufficiency-autonomy continuum as well as the social/public and state/national functions. For example, we may see how the Single European Act’s provision for the free movement of products, capital and labor enhanced the Treaty of Maastricht’s negotiations on police and judicial coordination. Similarly, internal policies of economic growth and stability could today scarcely be dissociated from external economic actions such as participation in trade negotiations or international monetary arrangements, while the EC’s Common Agricultural Policy plays an important role not only in protecting certain domestic socio-professional groups (public interests), but also, by enhancing economic self-sufficiency (national interest) with important international implications. Also, as the Economic Community’s role vis-à-vis the Central and Eastern European countries indicates, commercial relations and economic aid are foreign policy tools whose importance goes beyond economics. Of course, these functional linkages have influenced integrative and associative processes via the so-called "spill-over" mechanism, though this dynamic appears to have been over-rated by the neo-functionalist school. Third, seeking specific objectives in one functional domain or level of application might not be fully compatible, and indeed could be contradictory, with another. For example, mobilizing economic resources for national security purposes may, in a society stressing individualism and hedonism, encounter strong public resistance. Similarly, a nation’s efforts towards economic self-sufficiency, insofar as they distort international competition and exchange, could well have a negative impact on the satisfaction of public material needs, broadly conceived. In any case, it is the art of political leadership to pursue both national and public purposes, ponder their relative significance, and minimize incompatibilities or conflicts.
Table 1: Functional domains of unification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SECURITY</th>
<th>SUFFICIENCY</th>
<th>AUTONOMY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td>Police and Judicial Affairs:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- crime, drug, fraud fighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- immigration asylum, visas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic Growth and Stability:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- single-market provisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- productivity employment research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- money supply, taxation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Affairs:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- health, education, culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- social rights, welfare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ecology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL</td>
<td>Military Affairs:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- strategies, procurement, organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External Economic Affairs:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- foreign trade &amp; investment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- exchange-rate policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign Affairs:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- diplomatic attitude actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- aid and assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the emerging European union's division of labor between integrative and associative structures, the Commission has gradually expanded its involvement in domestic and international economics and trade as well as the movement of production factors ("sufficiency"-economic affluence and influence). It has also increasingly intervened in social affairs (culture, social rights, education, health, environment, etc. - as formally confirmed by the Maastricht Treaty) as well as economic aspects of foreign policy. On the other hand, national security issues continue to be dealt with mostly unilaterally or within traditional intergovernmental frameworks but even here progress has been achieved in the Maastricht Treaty by formal recognition of the hitherto dormant Western European Union's role in defence matters.
While legislative decisions and executive actions (by either extra- or supra-national authority) are limited to a particular domain, territorial boundaries limit their geographical scope. Here, progress in the unification process consists of the spatial extension of authority through the admission of new members while the authority's sovereign character fixes it nominally to given territories and populations. As a response to new magnitudes of interdependence, the spatial dimension of sovereignty helps bring together economic, cultural, and political aspects of social life. This convergence, in turn, contributes to a reduction of vulnerabilities vis-à-vis other actors as the former external environment now becomes domestic. Political management of sovereignty between states helps achieve greater effectiveness of authoritative action by reducing spatial disjunctures between political organization's nominal boundaries and other social activities.

This section has examined unification's locus and scope as a problem of the domains of a new political authority. Both concepts, furthermore, have been two-dimensional. By nature, authority structures are organized within the framework of pooled and/or transferred sovereignties and its areas of application have been defined in terms of functional and territorial domains. Viewing unification processes in terms of sovereignty management allows one to observe, on the one hand, the emergence of a new authority structure (political "deepening") better equipped to mobilize available resources and transform them into more effective policy measures and capabilities and, on the other, the enlargement of disposable resource potentials ("widening") as illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 2: Double effect of the unification process: wider scope and deeper authority
Dimensions and Determinants of Unification

So far, our "structural" approach de-emphasizes the process of political decision-making per se. Naturally, both structure and process influence each other; while the former shapes the latter and endures it in time, political process, when either dramatic or habitual, alters structure. In a somewhat different language, Dehousse and Weiler view structure as a legal-institutional framework providing a fixed and relatively rigid image of the situations while simultaneously affecting the conditions of their change.\textsuperscript{21)}

It must be said, however, that while the structure of authority is crucial to the understanding of the political unification process, scholars examined other aspects as well. For example, Frei (op.cit.), has rightly distinguished between state and society, and divided the latter further into the two sub-dimensions of transnational interactions (transactions), and common identity and identification. As above, we may also distinguish between structure and behavior aspects. We consider first those sets of norms, rules, and institutions (a "regime") which regulate inter-societal transactions and are visible in the economic domain. In particular, they concern the gradual abolition of internal barriers between the participating actors and the building of a common external frontier separating populations. In Europe, the creation of the free-trade area and then the common market consisted precisely in the removal of obstacles to the movement of products (goods and services) and production factors (labor and capital). Beginning in the late 1950s, periods of rapid liberalization were followed by the reimposition of barriers and only now, with the implementation of the Single European Act and the "Europe 1992" program, is the common market likely completed. As to the external regimes, the customs union is a classical example of a common (tariff) boundary affecting the movement of products although, with the trends toward global liberalization of world trade, various non-tariff barriers have already become more effective. It has also been shown that internal and external regimes considerably influence patterns of production and trade among member states and between them and non-members (Harrop, 1989; Mendes, 1987). Additionally, further extension of the economic regime's commercial aspects into monetary dimensions is likely to additionally redirect trade and capital flows.

Beyond purely economic aspects of transactions, by abolishing the physical obstacles to the intra-union movement of people, erecting a common external boundary, and formalizing border procedures, the Schengen agreement (1990) will further affect the magnitude and patterns of communication between those who are in and those who are out. Nonetheless, one should stress that, while these formal social levels may condition transaction flows they cannot account for their intensity.\textsuperscript{22)} Furthermore, both transactional and socio-psychological aspects of unification's societal dimensions can be reinforced by such other formal elements as the Maastricht Treaty's provision for common citizenship. People may well prefer communicating with those belonging to the same polity, who are "covered" by the same legal system, and who identify with the same political leaders. Apart from functional or utilitarian aspects,

\textsuperscript{21)} Dehousse and Weiler (1990: 242-248). Others describing the relationships between structure and process in international relations include Keohane and Nye. They view structure in terms of long-term incentives and constraints (1973: 117). See also Genco (1980: 71f). Wallace importantly emphasizes behavioral changes in contrast to the relative rigidity and discontinuity of structures (1990:9).

\textsuperscript{22)} See Keohane and Nye's distinctions among formal and behavioral aspects (1975: 368-369) on the basis of Balassa's categories of economic integration (1961). This parallels our distinction between structure and process on the political-authority level.
however, Dehousse and Weiler (1990:244-246) rightly emphasize the law's symbolic dimensions, its impact on the socio-psychological dimension, the eventual emergence of mutual identification, and the community formation process.

Both instrumental and affective forms of inter-connectedness tend to influence each other. Indeed, since each social transaction requires a minimum of mutual confidence, increases in their number and their continuity over time will likely contribute to the development of communal links. However, one would need to include an intervening variable stressing their positive and balanced character. Conversely, stimulated by the growing socio-cultural similarities, the emergence of common identities and identifications facilitates and reinforces communication among individuals by providing them with the necessary trust and symbolic familiarity.23 Not surprisingly, therefore, economists now increasingly tend to include in their models of interdependence socio-cultural factors such as common language and values that seem to account for trade and capital flow patterns24, though their impact would seem to be even stronger in the case of labor migration.

Our attention to regional dynamics may at times be overshadowed by broader global developments. One might go beyond the analysis of society's centrifugal forces (which, so to speak, work under the surface of political institutions) and take into account the centripetal forms originating in the states' external environments and acting "from above".

Inter-state sensitivities and vulnerabilities ensure that politics play a dominating role in the unification process. We have discussed how considerations of external security and stability encouraged European governments to undertake important integrative and coordinative steps in spite of a relatively low level of social involvement. Similarly, as Bulmer and Wessels (1989) argue, the relative inability of individual actors to respond effectively to the demands of the international environment in the late 1960s and early 1970s brought European states into closer cooperation in areas such as foreign policy and the introduction of a monetary regime. For the latter, out of concern for the preservation of economic links and facing international instabilities (resulting largely from the relative weakness of American leadership), several Western European governments established a regional currency regime, which in turn has affected the regional and international economic patterns. This example indicates international environment dynamics affecting social trends, a pattern complementing the primary role of transnational interdependence more widely accepted among scholars previously discussed.

The external environment not only shapes transaction patterns, but also stimulates and re-molds social identifications and attachments of the people more significantly than if they remained mere functions of transactions. In other words, political mobilization of populations, stimulated by external threats and opportunities, is oftentimes a particularly effective means of generating a sense of "we-feeling" and support.25 From this point of view, international tranquility would deprive states of an important reason to unite in the pursuit of common goals. The theoretical issue, then is about the nature and magnitude of external stimuli favoring or impeding unification. If small enough, individual states might act unilaterally, thus reinforcing

---

23) This argument has been emphasized by Puchala (1971), Zinnes and Muncaster (1987) and by Merritt et al. (1988).


25) For example, see Tilly's argument about the linkage between warfare and the making of nations and nation-states in Europe (1985).
and legitimizing their existing sovereign authority. If too big, they might forego regional solutions, attempt to globalize the issue, and thus weaken the argument in favor of a strictly regional unification. Thus, external threats and opportunities may catalyze or hinder the unification processes.

This brings us to the crucial role of the Atlantic Alliance and US-European relationship. Any state or group of states intend on being more active, responsible, and influential in world affairs must be capable of granting rewards (or promising to do so) and punishments (or threatening to do so). In the post-WWII period Europe traded autonomy for security to the United States by accepting a hierarchical authority structure in NATO and a subordinate position, a relationship reinforced by American insistence on bilateralism (cf. Kaplan, 1988:26ff.). Enhanced by the Soviet threat, this structure and internal cohesion survived four decades of US-Soviet antagonism. But while the Atlantic Alliance, as established by the Washington Treaty of 1949, was a purely inter-governmental organization of sovereign states, its subsequent transformation into an integrated military structure with a joint command (1951-1952) was an important step in Euro-American relations and a clear example of pooled sovereignty. This structure endured long after the most intense levels of superpower tension. Since the early 1950s it hindered member-states' autonomy in the military domain; those feeling uncomfortable with it (e.g., France and Spain) opted for a much looser cooperation.

NATO's existing organization is challenged by two broad phenomena. The first is the growing incongruity between the international system's military and economic structures. The increasing strength of the European economy argues for a structural change in US-European political relations (Buzan et al., 1990:139). Secondly, changes in the superpower security framework have dramatically altered the international strategic situation during the 1989-1991 period including Europe's own position in it. Thus, while Europe feels less external pressure to rely on the US, it has also become more capable of providing for its own security, regaining autonomy and engaging in regional defense; political unification has followed suit. The traditional US insistence on European unity, far from being an end in itself, also served the "containment" of Europe under American leadership (Devuyst, 1990).

We may now see how the European union will be unable to further political unification, and take on a more influential role in world affairs as long as its security provisions continue to depend on the United States and American leadership within NATO. Since the first task of any state is to provide security and assure self-preservation, the inability or unwillingness to do so (with a continued reliance on external protection) will hinder not only its influence among other states, but also its claims on its own population's loyalty and allegiance. At the same time, our analysis suggests that the European unification process involves overcoming not only domestic institutions, but self-interested trans-regional authority structures. If one's own security provisions are so relevant to a political union's build-up and if in the meantime the crucial decisions on defense matters have been transferred to an organization dominated by a third party, then we may be better able to understand the tug-of-war between NATO and

26) See in particular Le Monde (2 May 1991), The Guardian (29 April 1991) as well as Le Monde (18 October 1991) and The Wall Street Journal Europe (18-19 October 1991) on US reactions to Franco-German proposition to create common army units. During the NATO's November 1991 Rome summit, however, the United States adopted a more conciliatory attitude to the efforts by the Europeans toward their own defense structure - a much more pro-European stance that may have been influenced by two fundamental developments: further accelerated demise of the Soviet threat and America's own domestic economic problems (see International Herald Tribune, 9-10 November 1991).
Europe on the role of the West European Union. In this respect, the essential link between the two processes is acknowledged by the Maastricht Treaty's emphasis on the European union's own defense policy.

The effect of social and international events and conditions on unification will depend largely on the actors' willpower and determination. It is therefore important to examine their internal political characteristics to determine when and in which direction the process might evolve, as Sandholtz and Zysman (1989) or Moravcsik (1991) indicate. While all recognize the importance of changing international economic and security structures, and consider them favorably for the furthering of European unification, they stress the importance of political elites for the exploitation of external challenges and opportunities. The Europeans responded adequately to the enduring Japanese challenge only when their economies became affected, and only after a sufficient convergence of opinion on how best to respond in common occurred. In a nutshell, while the external environment may favor unification, domestic political dynamics and national or Community elites strongly influence governmental efforts. Moravcsik specifically suggests that the closer the governing elites are to the center of the political spectrum the less they will resist authority shifts by pooling or delegating sovereignty. Indeed, during the periods leading up to the Single European Act and then to the Treaty of Maastricht the evolution of French and British attitudes seem to confirm Moravcsik's hypothesis.27)

This brief analysis of the dimensions of the European unification is represented in Figure 3 on the next page.

Regional unification's four basic dimensions are represented here: the two structural or formal dimensions of political authority (A) and social regime (R), the two processes - or behavioral aspects - of common policy making (P), of social transactions (S) and community formation (C), constituting together instrumental and affective interdependence; all mutually influence each other. Apart from the structure versus process division (the vertical broken line), one can also find a social versus state-related categorization, the horizontal line, as emphasized by Karl Deutsch. His interest in the process of inter-societal "community formation", as well as in the inter-state "political amalgamation" led him to conceptualize unification as a two-phased phenomenon (Deutsch, 1957; see also Puchala, 1971).

In the middle of the above system we have placed multilateral negotiation (N) ultimately directly or indirectly affecting all four dimensions. For example, 1991 intergovernmental negotiations leading to economic and political unions are concerned primarily with the establishment of a new authority structure (i.e., A), while efforts aimed at influencing the Yugoslav crisis amounted to the emergence of a common foreign policy stance (i.e., P). Generally speaking, however, the common policy response P may either directly aim at a

27) A brief analysis of the "Europeanness" of the main French political parties indicates that the rightist nationalists (Front National) and the leftist Communists and environmentalists exhibit a particular aversion to European unification, while the Centrists, Giscard d'Estaing's close-to-the-center UDF, and the mainstream of the Socialist Party seem to be most in favor. Somewhere in-between are the conservative RPR and the left wing Socialists (Financial Times, 27 September 1990). On the other hand, the British House of Commons debate on the forthcoming intergovernmental conference in Maastricht features an odd, anti-European coalition formed by the right wing of the Conservative party and the left-wing of the Labor party, with the centrist Liberal Democrats particularly in favor of further unification and with the mainstream of the two biggest parties somewhere in-between (Financial Times, 20-22 November 1991).
specific target or amount to measures affecting societal inter-connectedness. As to the latter, bad economic conditions, for example, could lead to the development of common monetary and fiscal policies.

One should stress the fact that the whole system is not a causal one unless we add to it the following two sets of factors: stimuli (T), such as threats and opportunities and intervening factors uniting the political will, external authority structures (like NATO), or technological progress and economic growth strongly affecting the social dimension.

---

28) Stimuli may come, of course, from national, union-oriented, or extra-union environments.
As mentioned above, one or more of these dimensions have been used interchangeably by various scholars in theorizing about unification. In contrast, we here argue in favor of a more comprehensive approach which not only distinguishes among these various aspects and dimensions but also combines them in a unified theoretical framework. Furthermore, while unification's directions may have been guided largely by the functional linkages discussed earlier, the dynamics of the process - its advances, stagnation, and decline - have been crucially determined by internal and external events and conditions. Some of them have evolved over time; others have taken political leaders by surprise. All this will ultimately shape emerging union's state.

Conclusions

Where much of the research on the European Community is limited to specific, sometimes particularly narrow, sectors and domains, this paper adopts a much broader perspective, including the overall nature of the emerging European political system and the broad conditions of its evolution. This discussion centered around the concept of sovereignty. The discussion converged in the development of a dynamic conceptual model.

First, we tried to understand the motivations which may be at the roots of the whole process of unification. The time horizon required that we address them in rather general terms of the ordered sequence of security-sufficiency-autonomy where the prior achievement of a lower end-state is considered to be the pre-condition for the pursuit of the higher end-state.

We then argued that the dynamics of interdependence, and therefore the ability of states to exercise control over their environment, contrast highly with the statics of their authority as defined by sovereignty. In other words, the emphasis has been laid upon the growing gap between the nominal and effective authority actors command. As a result, we argue that it has become increasingly inefficient and ineffective for states to pursue policies intended to satisfy both public and national interests within the traditional framework of power politics. While the radical solution of sovereignty denial (through war and annexation) seems to be increasingly costly and ultimately counterproductive, the voluntary and positive management approach to unification seems to be more and more rational. And this is what the whole process of unification is all about.

Having spelled out our *problematique*, we examined the means states have chosen to come to grips with authority's locus and scope. Since sovereignty fixes a given authority spatially, the unification processes we have discussed represent various combinations of the political, economic, and cultural dimensions of social life. These kinds of processes seem to be potentially much more effective. Two principal avenues we have described can be distinguished. The first consist in establishing associative political structures on the basis of pooled or shared sovereignty. Here, a new joint authority coexists with the traditional state; the participating actors retain the supreme decision-making power. The second approach features the transferring or devolution of sovereignty to a higher-level authority to produce a new "whole which is more than just the sum of its parts".

We have also argued that the failure of the nation-state to act in the name of public and national interests during the 1930-1945 period, and its subsequent weakening, have contributed strongly to the relative ease with which the actors were ready to abandon portions of their sovereignty. This process facilitated unification in terms of the establishment of integrative structures. While with time the nation-state seems to have recovered much of its past
legitimacy, association among actors and joint inter-governmental decision-making have surfaced as the favored path. In sum, the strength and dynamics of nationhood and statehood have been important factors accounting for the particular nature of Europe's emerging new political system.

We have made a crucial distinction between the structure and process of unification: while the former is basically legal in character and reflects the actors' long-term commitments, the latter is primarily political and refers to policymaking and behavior. Furthermore, while the structural dimension, providing actors with long-term incentives and constraints, clearly shapes and channels broad patterns of the political process, particular political decisions, especially dramatic ones - also affect the structure itself. We then introduced this distinction to both social and formal regime dimensions (with the latter's functional and symbolic roles) and informal (instrumental and affective) inter-connectedness. As a result, we have obtained a more complete and coherent view of unification as a four-dimensional phenomenon.

Having adopted such a long and broad perspective we have attempted to emphasize its general rather than unique character in terms of patterns of inter-state relations. Indeed, in a system of world politics where the state actors clearly play a dominant role, the phenomenon of unification next to power politics seems to be one way of coping with interdependence. In this respect, the former does not contradict the latter, as some have argued, but rather complements it: together with its opposite of sovereignty denial and annexation, sovereignty pooling provides solutions to problems traditional power politics cannot overcome. To go even further, as apparently confirmed by the new European union's emergence, prior unification may be a sine qua non for the participating actors to re-embark on a still more ambitious road of power politics (but now with common resources and capabilities) and reassertion in the international arena - something they would have never attained had they continued to act within the limits imposed by the statics of sovereignty.

To be sure, the final destination of this process is not easy to see: as in the past, it will depend on many unpredictable events and conditions in both social and inter-state environments. As shown by the collapse of the USSR and the breakup of the long-established East-West framework, unexpected phenomena will continue to intervene in the dynamics of European unification. While considering the process open-ended, we have here sought to conceptualize and comprehend structural and motivational conditions. Systematic analysis based on formalization and hypothesis testing will be the next step.
References


DELORS Jacques, "Europe’s ambitions" Foreign Policy 80, Fall 1990.


DEVUYST, Youri "European Community integration and the United States: toward a new transatlantic relationship?" Journal of European Integration XIV/1, 1990.


HANSEN, Roger D. "European integration: forward march, parade rest, or dismissed?" International Organization 27/2 (Spring).


TOENNIES, Ferdinand Community and society (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft). East Lansing, Mi.: Michigan State University Press, 1958 (1897).


