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"Now You See It; Now You Don't": Expose and Critique of Approaches to the Study of European Integration

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This is a theoretical discussion and development of elements of a framework of analysis that will be applied to a forthcoming study of the EC's climate policy. The emphasis will be on the Commission's climate policy goals and achievements to date, and the interests of the major member states.

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1. EC STUDIES: A 'SUB-FIELD' IN NEED OF THEORY

The internal market concept of the post-85 period of EC developments and the generally enhanced role for the organization at present have invited political scientists' attention after a long period of neglect, since about the mid-1970ies. The study of EC policy is again at the forefront of the curriculum, and may be considered quite faddish in the sense that interest is likely to disappear when other events at the world stage command attention. However, for those interested in theoretical developments in the field, the upsurge of EC activity poses interesting problems, and their interest is hopefully a long-term one insofar as they have a wish to contribute to theory-development in political science in general.

In this paper I wish to pay especial attention to the body of literature that is commonly referred to as 'integration theory'. I am interested in how theories of integration for the present period of EC policy are developed, and in particular I want to address what one can term the shortcomings or the problems with this body of theory. In so doing I ask what in general theories of IR (international relations) can be of use in the study of the EC, as well as what in other theory traditions can be drawn on.

Before I can address these questions I, however, need to provide a delineation of the concept of integration and of what integration theory refers to. As Kelstrup has remarked, "in a strange, but very interesting way the problems related to European integration "fall between" two major sub-disiplines within political science, international relations theory and comparative politics" (Kelstrup, 1992, p. 17). There is thus a level-of-analysis problem to be confronted at the outset. This is present in the debates between neo-functionalists and intergovern-mentalists, to be discussed later: on the one hand, states in their domestic setting may be assumed to generate policy *towards* the EC 'at home'; on the other hand, the EC as an IO (international organization) may be subjected to systemic factors and should be treated as an actor on this level. Third, neo-functionalists might add that individuals-cum-bureaucrats are the actors to be studied, and these are situated partly at the domestic level, partly in the EC, but can also be studied in terms of e.g. organization theory, asking how their interaction with the organization influences their behaviour, and how the organization and its environment condition actors' behaviour.

What we usually lump together to as 'integration theory' therefore does not fit into any traditional classification of political science sub-disiplines, although as we shall see below, there is a current debate about these sub-dividisons[1]

1: Jönsson remarks that "most contemporary international issues involve a complex mixture of domestic and international political processes that cannot be well understood separately" (Jonsson, 1993, 155). Likewise, Kratochwil (1993, 78) remarks that "to view international politics as distinct from domestic politics is based on mistaking the historically brief period of the balance of power for a paradigm in international politics in general".

themselves in the field, related in particular to the criticism of the assumptions of neo-realism and interest or preference formation.

A solution to the question of what constitutes integration theory may thus be to look at the two dominant theory traditions, neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism, which represent the bases for most present-day theoretical analyses, as they evolved to become the dominant approaches to the study of the EC. In the following a delinenation of the main characteristics of these two traditions is therefore provided (which does not purport to be exhaustive, but to pinpoint the main theoretical concepts and assumptions of these two approaches). This forms the basis for a discussion of theories or approaches to integration in the present period because present-day analysts largely have used them as at least a theoretical starting-point.

In this paper I shall argue that two main problems with current approaches exist: One, many of them assume that state interests are determined *prior* to bargaining at the EC level, and that the state is for the most part a unitary actor. Second, current approaches are often, if they do not follow an intergovernmentalist-realist logic, too eclectic to be very useful for the purpose of generating integration theory. This criticism admittedly has partly to do with the level-of-analysis problem - inherent in integration theory - but it is also directed at the conspicuous lack of discussion of the question of which *scope* integration theory should aim at. Many case studies of EC integration in a given policy area end up with a theoretical 'check-list' of variables that are found to have importance but where there is no theory of their *relative* importance. If intergovernmentalist-based approaches tend to be static in their determination of fixed state interests, eclectic approaches that look at a policy-process in a given case or issue-area tend to become theory-poor in that they induce from their findings which actors (Commission, Parliament, interest groups, etc.) are important for the policy process and the final outcome of it, but lack any theory of how the EC as an IO relates to the states at the systemic level. There is also the problem of generalization here: is the policy area studied representative? This in turn poses the question of how comparable policy-processes in various issue-areas are. With the varying degrees of formal and informal competences in the EC, this is a very real problem. There is thus a problem of how to deal theoretically with the different case studies of EC policy that emerge in the present period. (The designation of this as a problem naturally depends on the theoretical aspirations of the analyst of integration).

After the discussion of the present state of integration theory and its assumptions in part 1, I move to the discussion of how the role of EC institutions may be conceived with especial regard to the role of the Commission in part 2. I maintain that the focus on the Commission is warranted by the fact that very many of the empirical studies of integration in the present period conclude that this actor is a major one vis-a-vis the states as well as within the EC. In a study of integration in EC energy policy I e.g. found that this institution played a major role - as architect of policy, creator of arena and participatory networks - which

extends far beyond its formal role (Matlary, 1993). This conclusion was reached from an intergovernmentlist starting-point where states were assumed to be the major actors in an issue area traditionally considered the domain of strong state actors. This makes the empirical conclusion the more interesting , especially as other case studies arrive a similar conclusions: For instance, in a study of the Commission's role in deregulating the telecommunications sector where state actors also used to be the dominant ones, Sandholz found that "the Commission played the leading role in promoting collective action..the evidence clearly supports an independent role for the Commission" (Sandholz, 1993a, 242,269). In section 2 I will therefore focus on how one may develop theory about the Commission's role, suggesting that we need to consider the role of the informal networks and organizational environment as well as the role that aspects of cognitive interest change may play for understanding what goes on between the state and the EC in day-to-day policy-making.

2. PART 1: CONTEMPORARY INTEGRATION THEORY

2.1 The legacy of integration theory: Neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism

Integration can be variously defined; from a description of a state of affairs to the designation as a process. Most EC studies in the present period are not legal-institutional, but process-oriented. They are thus mainly concerned with increases in decision-making power, which can be *formal* - the creation of new EC comptences or the introduction of majority procedure instead of unanimity; which may strengthen the role of the EC; - or *informal*, where there is not a transferral of decision-making power to the EC, but where it can be shown that the latter's importance has nontheless increased. How to study informal integration is an empirical question which need not concern us here.

My use of the concept of integration is here a processual one, rather narrowly defined to concern the formal and/or informal transfer of decision-making power to EC institutions. Formal integration then refers to the increase in EC decision-making power through the creation of new competences or the changes in e.g. decision-making procedures towards majority voting; informal integration refers to the increase in EC influence in various policy-areas that empirically can be documented to take place, but where there is not necessarily any corresponding 'comeptence'. For a discussion of other definitions of integration, Kelstrup provides a good overview (Kelstrup, 1992, 31-33).

Traditional theories of the integration in the EC in the fifties - essentially about the creation of the ECSC and Euratom and the subsequent signing of the Rome Treaty - can be classifed in four groups: *federalist*, represented by political organisations like the European Movement and inspired by American federal ideas and the basis of much of Spinelli's work; *functionalist*, which in its original form dates back to David Mitrany's quest for a peaceful evolution of

international politics through the creation of global fora (Mitrany, 1943); *transactionalist;* represented by the work of Deutsch, which looked at how increasing contact between peoples would results in the emergence of an international security community (Deutsch, 1957); and finally of most theoretical significance, *neo-functionalist* , "inspired by Jean Monnet in terms of practical politics and by Ernst Haas (Haas, 1968) in terms of academic application" (Panild, 1989, 4).

Neo-functionalism emphasized that successful supra-national cooperation in some areas would lead to further integration through a 'spill-over' effect, often from areas of 'low' politics to those of 'high' politics, i.e. defense and foreign policy. This 'spill-over' was both politically motivated as well as functional in the sense that common rules in one area would lead to a demand for further commonality of rules in another area. Interest groups would e.g gradually realise that Brussels lobbying would be more important than lobbying at national parliaments, and this in turn would create more integration. Caporaso and Keeler remark that "spill-over shouldered a great deal of the burden of explaining change" (Caporaso and Keeler, 1993, 8).

Neo-functionalism focuses on the policy-process, arguing that the self-interested state is in fact a reality but that the states further their interest when the Commission is able to manage a negotiating process that arrives at common solutions. In the words of Ernst Haas in 1970: "neo-functionalists rely on the primacy of incremental decision-making over grand designs, arguing that most actors are incapable of long-range purposive behaviour because they stumble from one set of decisions to the next. Ever more controversial and system-transforming policies emerge, starting from a common initial concern over substantively narrow but highly salient issues." (Haas, 1970, 607).

Originally neo-functionalism put forth the technocrat-bureaucrats of the EC as the main policy-makers. These were engaged in incremental policy-making with various interest groups at the regional level, and eventually policy-making in one area would lead to links with other areas in the process of bargaining, it was argued. This in turn led to integration in an almost automatic and mechanistic fashion. After de Gaulle's temporary withdrawal of France from the Community however; Haas, the main theorist in this tradition, revised his theory to take account of this type of unusual, non-incremental - or dysfunctional - action.[2] As Nye remarks, the response to incremental policy-making may also be withdrawal from the integrative process, something not envisaged by early neo-functionalism (Nye, 1970, 802).

2: The first work on neo-functionalism by Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces,* came in 1958. Here his theory of functionalism was based on a shifting of loyalties towards the EC in the citizenry. In his later work, *Beyond the Nation-State,* from 1964, he assumes a self-interested state. See M. Saeter's discussion of Haas in Sæter, 1971, chapter 1.

One of the concepts central to the explanation of integration takes place in neo-functionalism is as mentioned that of 'spill-over'. Haas used the term to cover both linkages stemming from technical or economic characteristics and from linkages created by politicians in order to forge integration. The main point was that linkages, however initiated, would force policy-makers to redefine their problems in an increasingly more common way. Thus, these problems must be handled at a political level beyond the nation state.

In his later writings, Haas assumes that the states will accept integration because it furthers their own interests: "there is no common good other than that perceived through the interest-tainted lenses worn by international actors".[3] However, the political actors change their interests as interaction between themselves and Community institutions take place, thus a *constant redefinition of interests is necessary*. EC institutions are seen to develop a common ideology or even common interest that are able to bridge conflicting national interests. The role of these institutions is thus very important: the reason why integration occurs is that they provide a *redefinition* of problems at the community level.

This *dynamic* view of states' interests may be useful for our understanding of why the states accept and support integration. The stress on *process* in neo-functionalism may be a useful point of departure for a conceptualization of changes in both interests, 'policy problems', and actor roles. Is is e.g fruitful to assume that policy mandates from the European Council 'translate' themselves into Commission proposals? I think not. The very general mandates from the Council probably often offer very considerable scope for policy-making at the drafting stage of a specific policy-proposal. Further, the definition of a given state interest may initially be given by domestic interests, however, this does not preclude that these interests may *change* in the process of bargaining. Further, the state-as-actor must be decomposed into at least government and issue-area bureaucrats. The latter becomes closely involved in the EC bargaining process and resembles the neo-functionalist techno-bureaucrat. The neo-functionalist tradition thus offers scope for theory-building about the potential importance of the policy process itself.
However, as the EC did not develop as far towards further supra-nationality throughout the 60ies and 70ies as expected, the original integration theories became less interesting to the analyst. With French EC policy under de Gaulle and the Luxembourg compromise of 1966 the phenomenon to be explained was the lack of integration. A major theorist of integration concludes his analysis of this period on the note that the EC lacked "any sense of where (it) was going" but that interdependencies had increased steadily (Taylor, 1983, 87).

An approach that stressed the strong nation state as actor was termed *intergovernmentalism*, and can largely be seen as the response to the lack of integration in the 70ies. It relied on the realist school in international relations, and maintained that a 'national interest' could be established for each state, and

3: Haas quoted in M. Saeter (1971) , *Det politiske Europa* , p.44

that the 'high' politics of defense and security determined state action in areas of 'low' politics like trade. As we shall see subsequently, this became the theoretical basis for much empirical work on the EC in the 1970ies and 80ies.

2.2 Current contributions and their theoretical assumptions

Essentially the contributions towards explaining the adoption of the Single European Act (SEA) and the embrace of the 1992 programme, which are the major events in the post-85 integrative process, can be grouped into three: Those that emphasise growing *economic interdependence* whereby common market rules become very important: those that look to *inner reform* in the EC itself, arguing that current integration is the result of "investments made many years ago in establishing a particular style of multilateral negotiation" (H.Wallace, 1990); and those that emphasize *domestic politics* in arguing that the logic of political and economic events in Europe makes it desirable on the part of the state to seek EC integration.

Wayne Sandholtz and John Zysman argue that international economic interdependence is the main driving force behind the 1992-project: "In an era when deregulation - the freeing of the market - became the fad, it made intuitive sense to extend the European market to cure all ailments" (Sandholz and Zysman, 1990, 112). The authors argue that the general economic climate towards freer markets - called deregulation - underlies the positive attitude towards 1992 in all major national governments, industry and business groups, and in the Commission itself, whose role they single out as being of major importance.

The EC high technology cooperation that evolved before the actual 1992-concept testifies to the importance of economic factors. National R&D programs being too small in scale to compete with similar US and Japanese programs, cooperation seemed the only logical solution. Margaret Sharp analyses the importance of technological integration, concluding that the global trend towards large-scale organisation in R & D demanded a joint European response. The fear of lagging behind technologically was prominent in the major European nations (Sharp, 1990, 50). Formal EC programs came in addition to private company cooperation, and to the trend towards industry mergers in Europe. As such, formal integration in this area in the launching of programs like ESPRIT, RACE, and BRITE were really extensions of already existing informal integration in the business world (ibid., 50) Also, the demands for globalization of the economy form the basis of the argument on the part of Albert Bressand and Kalypso Nicolaides that "networks, as organizational settings for transnational economic activities, are becoming a critical dimension of global economic interaction among advanced countries and are notably playing an essential role in in the changing dynamics of European integration" (Bressand and Nicolaides, 1990, 64; Bressand, 1993). However, even if it is undeniable that economic structural change underlies the need for the creation of an efficient European market, and that the general trend towards deregulation expresses this, the urge for change would probably not

translate itself smoothly into EC policy. Sandholtz and Zysman see virtually no differences of interest between national actors, EC institutions, and business elites in the 1992 endeavour, and Bressand and Nicolaides seem to have an overly optimistic view of how politics works.

It seems that the explanation for the launching of present-day European integration must be looked for both within the EC as well as on the domestic level. The explanatory approach that termed *inner reform* of the EC refers to the specific style of negotiation and policy-making that has evolved over a long time in the Community. H. Wallace points out that "the EC has acquired a robust and innovative mode of negotiating that goes a long way to explaining both its achievements and its magnetic attraction for other countries" (Wallace, 1990, 213). This mode is characterized by many sub-groups that formalize interaction and negotiation between interest groups, national experts, and bureaucrats in Brussels. The Commission itself has increasingly become the agenda-setter for proposals under the 1992-umbrella, and is a full partner in all policy-making: "The Council really consists of 12 member governments and the Commission. Any practioner of negotiation well recognizes the crucial power of the drafter of the texts, which remains the Commission's prerogative" (ibid., 216). This view is supported by Wolfgang Wessel's study of administrative interaction between the EC and national government officials: it results in a sharing of loyalty and fusion of power between politicians and bureaucrats (Wessels, 1990, 229). He proposes what he terms the "Fusionthese" of integration where EC institutions, especially the Commission; pursue two strategies towards two sets of state actors: "Unabhangige EG-Organe legen ihre Zustandigkeiten expansiv aus und treten mit einzelnen nationalen Regierungen und Verwaltungen in Koalition um andere nationale Aktore zu einer Ausweitung der Aufgabenwahrnehmung der EG zu bewegen" (Wessels, 1992, 49). This allows for an expansion of policy *scope*. Further, the *contents* of policy are influenced by the extensive, permanent interaction between issue-specific Commission officials and national bureaucrats: "Bei der Ausubung der Initiativmonopols hat die Kommission uber 500 Expertgruppen eingerichtet die..zur Einbindung nationaler Verwaltungen dienen..etwa ein Viertel aller hoheren Beamten der Bundesregierung - als teil Ihres ublichen Dienstgeschaftes (sind) an der EG-Problemverarbeitung beteiligt" (ibid., 46).

The third approach to current European integration is here termed the *domestic politics* approach. As a general approach to the study of EC policy-making it has been developed by Simon Bulmer (Bulmer, 1983). He underlines the need for an analysis of domestic politics and actor capacity as a precondition for analysis at the EC level. Bulmer calls for a delineation of the 'policy style' of each state (Bulmer, 1983,2) in an effort to penetrate the 'black box' of a state's decision-making, arguing that it is a fundamental weakness of the intergovernmental approach that the actor capability and policy strategies of its most fundamental actor, viz. the state, have not been explored analytically. He points to the fact that "the same political organizations (as are involved in EC policy-making) are involved in national politics. The methodological implication of this is that EC-policy-

making should be examined in the same way as domestic politics" (ibid., 3).

Among analysts that prefer an intergovernmentalist analytical framework but who also look at how domestic interests are generated, Andrew Moravcsik's work is central (Andrew Moravscik, 1991). He distinguishes between what he terms supranational and intergovernmental institutionalism, asserting that the former is dominated by key actors such as international business groups and EC institutions; the latter by governmental elites of the largest member states, in this case confined to the UK, France, and Germany. Bargaining between these actors is in the supranational model a question of linkage politics and "the upgrading of common interests", whereas the intergovernmental model assumes that lowest-common-denominator outcomes are the only realistic ones. Smaller states are here appeased by "side-payments": the larger ones participate because the threat of exclusion is efficently used in for example the relationship between France-Germany and the UK.

Moravcsik's explanation of integration thus leaves little if no room for EC and non-state actors. Further, states are not seen to link issues and issue areas in EC policy-making, but are supposedly operating within rigid limits. However, the author himself states rather surprisingly that "state interests change over time, often in ways which are decisive for the integration process but which *cannot be traced to shifts in the relative power of states* (my emphasis)" (ibid., 27). Thus, there is a call for an explanation of integration that goes beyond intergovernmentalism, although this is neither made explicit in the model nor explored further.

Paul Taylor and Stanley Hoffmann have in recent years made contributions from an intergovernmentalist starting-point. Hoffmann defines the EC as but an international regime with "a set of norms of behaviour and of rules and policies..facilitating agreement among the members"(Hoffmann, 1982, 33). This view of the role of EC institutions is however too limited as it seems to preclude attributing independent policy-making power to EC institutions . Hoffmann wrote this in 1982, thus before the SEA and the growth of the agenda of the EC in the latter part of the 80ies evolved, and the political reality of the EC was thus different then from what it was in the 90ies. On this view, the input to the policy process is seen as coming from the states only, where the EC provides an arena for bargaining and some common rules that disipline member state behaviour but little else. [4]

In an article as recent as in 1991 Taylor puts forward a similar theory of integration. He offers "a dynamic view of intergovernmentalism (which) highlights the ways in which existing political elites might pursue international

4: Hoffmann however modifies this view in an article from 1990, with R.Keohane, "Conclusions:Community Politics and Institutional Change", in W. Wallace, *The Dynamics of European Integration*, London: Pinter. Here the EC is characterized as "stronger than a mere (?) international organization, weaker than a state", p. 279

integration for their own selfish reasons" (Taylor, 1991, 109). Member states are "pushed to accept some constraints in their struggle to promote their own interests by the fear of being marginalized.." (ibid.) If a state exits, it may be left out permanently and the rest might form ever stronger coalitions. Selfish interests dictate that all members accept common rules for the economy and the security system, a point noted also by Geoffrey Garrett in applying game theory to cooperation: If the EC were a single game, all would seek to have a 'free ride' in being protectionist at home and hope that others would promote free trade, but since the EC is a rather permanent institution in the sense that noone has left it yet, this will not work (Garrett, 1992). There were thus self-interested incentives to agree to integrative measures like the SEA at the time, he concludes.

Integration happens, these authors argue, because the political and economic problems facing the European region are such that cooperation is necessary. In the opinion of Taylor, the building of consensus tends to be dominated "as much by a fear of being left out as by an enthusiasm for new benefits.."(Taylor, 1991, 117). He views the role of the legal system of the EC as a reflection of the reigning politics of the most powerful states - it is the political will on the part of the member states that determines the strength of EC institutions.

Garrett however acknowledges that an approach that treats the EC like a 'conventional case of multilateral cooperation' is not very fruitful. Most theories of international cooperation assume that "no substantive political authority is delegated to international institutions" (Garrett, 1992, 534). They are therefore not suited to be applied to the study of the EC. However, he nevertheless concludes that 'power' politics in the traditional realist sense underlies the policy-making of EC institutions. He e.g. makes the (unsubstantiated) claim that "the principles governing decisions of the European Court..are consistent with the preferences of France and Germany..the EC legal system serves the purposes of the French and the Germans extremely well" (ibid., 558).

The three approaches to integration discussed above stress different actors as the major ones. Informal transnational economic networks and the entrepreneurial role for the Commission are seen to be most important by Sandholtz and Zysman, Bressand and Nicolaides, and Sharp. Wallace and Wessels attribute a major role to EC institutions, especially the Commission; while Moravcsik, Hoffmann, Taylor, and Garrett pursue an intergovernmental approach where the states remain the decisive actors.

By looking at intergovernmental approaches to EC integration one finds little that is of use in explaining how states and EC institutions interact and why states accept integration in the form that implies a transfer of sovereignty to EC institutions. There is no framework for attributing independent roles to EC institutions beyond the formal-legal roles they employ. Why does the state accept integration? Game theory does explain why states 'stay in the game' instead of exiting - because the EC is not a single, zero-sum game, but a series of games where there are advantages for some at one time, for others at another time.

Garrett lays out the logic of this very well, citing the explanation for British agreement to the SEA as one of perceiving that the advantage of staying in is more important than winning each time. The fact that states elect to remain inside is thus not surprising. The poorer countries receive financial aid when they support the internal market; the Germans need to be integrated in order to be allowed to unify, the French need to contain the Germans inside the EC, etc. In short, the logic of participation is that the advantages of staying in outweigh the disadvantages of staying out in the longer run. This logic is entirely consistent with intergovernmentalism, in fact, it is based on this approach. The EC is an arena. The Court facilitates the control of the rule-adherence: as a watch-dog, it can efficiently ensure that members do not 'free-ride'. The Commission is a 'broker' of interests which also serves to facilitate inter-state bargaining.

However, although this perspective seems a very convincing one for explaining the persistence of the EC, it does not tell the full story, I would argue. There is probably more independent influence over policy-making in EC institutions than what this theory allows for, and there is real interaction between the states and these institutions in a process that may result in integration. States' domestic issue-specific interests are probably altered in this process of interaction. A theory of integration thus needs to consider not only domestic political interests and state capacity, but also how states' interests change and how EC institutions use their independent role to pursue their own interests.

An interesting conclusion that emerges from the consideration of the present-day approaches to integration is that many empirical studies point to the importance of the Commission, but that there are few theories of how the Commission works. Sandholz remarks that "the intergovernmentalist argument implies that states form their preferences via some hermetic national process, then bring their interests to Brussels. The implication is that EC institutions have no impact on the formation of state interests." (1993b, 3). A theory of the role of the Commission must of course address the question of who the 'state actors' are, and to what extent their interests are determined prior to entering the EC arena, but must use this as a starting-point for the analysis of further interest formation within the decision-making fora of the Commission, I would suggest. Perhaps interests are generated in these fora and 'fed' back to the states?

As remarked at outset, intergovernmentalism provides a systemic-level theory of how states interact, premised on the assumptions of international anarchy and indivisible, national state sovereignty.[5] But what is logical yet awkward, given this, is the role of the IO in this theory: it becomes some sort of residual category. In addition, contemporary EC policy-making is so multifaceted and complex in terms of types of actors and arenas that "das Intergouvernmentalismus ist für sich genommen zu schwach um die hochentwickelte Ausübung auf EG-Ebene adequat zu erfassen" (Tömmel, 1992, 206).

5: Kelstrup discusses the assumption of sovereignty in more detail (Kelstrup, 1992)

Intergovernmentalism is really not a theory of integration - it has no concept of processual integration at all. It seems appropriate when one wants to understand the major bargains between the EC and the states, like the SEA, but even then it is hampered by its reliance on the state as unitary actor and its concept of interest formation. This will be further discussed in section 2 below.

The empirical case studies of integration in the present period are in an interesting way pointing to the importance of agenda-setting, and further, agenda-building; the latter referring to the extension of the scope of EC policy-making. The Commission here is the central actor, or the central actors. The various DGs, their working groups, networks, etc. present an actor structure that is both unique and little theorized about. The case studies to date can be said to suffer from this lack of a developed body of theory to apply to the workings of the Commission (this does not necessarily imply a criticism of these studies). My point is that the usual theoretical starting point of intergovernmentalism has not served us well: it is not well suited for the empirical reality that we are now gradually uncovering. The historical alternative, neo-functionalism, is alluded to by many contemporary students of integration as potentially useful, at least in part (Burley, 1993; Sandholz, 1993; Keohane and Hoffman, 1990; Wallace, 1990), but no studies employ this framework of analysis fully. Schmitter, who worked with Haas on developing neo-functionalism, provides an analysis of its potential usefulness today, and concludes that it went wrong in major assumptions and predictions, but that some concepts may be starting points for contemporary theory development (Schmitter, 1992).

In the following I shall discuss some of the central concepts of contemporary IR theory that have a direct bearing on how we may develop theory about the role of the EC, especially the Commission as an IO. The current discussion in the literature on interest formation and how interests are changed in the international context is of particular relevance here. One can approach the role of the Commission from various theoretical traditions - organization theory, bargaining theory, theories of collective action in IR, etc.

But before we look 'inside' the Commission, as it were, I will first examine the assumptions behind the concept of interest formation and mediation in intergovern-mentalist-realist theory and some thinking critical of this tradition.

3 PART 2: "DECOMPOSING" CENTRAL CONCEPTS OF INTEGRATION THEORY: ACTORS, INTERESTS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

3.1 The state as unitary actor, its interests as given: The criticism of neo-realism

A major debate in IR concerns the status of realism and the variants of neo-realism. I would suggest that this debate is highly relevant for integration theory. As we have seen, integovernmentalism is based on realist assumptions: the state is the major actor, a state interest can be determined, and this is possible prior to

entering the EC arena. In essence this is the analytical framework that I myself adopted for the study of energy policy, and it proved a fruitful one in many respects (Matlary, 1993). Although I modified it to include an analysis of interest formation at the domestic level and the state's ability to determine state interests in contrast to the influence of societal groups, still my basic assumption was that interest formation took place *prior* to EC level bargaining and that the state was the major actor. However, in some of my cases I found that it was in fact the Commission that 'defined' viable policy options - 'interests' - and this leads me now to reconsider some of the current criticism of realist assumptions in IR.

Hollis and Smith maintain that "realism can fairly be called the dominant theory in the history of IR" (Hollis and Smith, 1992, p.27), and its assumptions are still pervasive. They include, in some form or other, a presumption of an anarchic world order - which can be conceived of, crudely, as a state-of-nature condition, as in Hobbes and Morgenthau, but which equally well can be a 'social construct', as Wendt eloquently shows (Wendt, 1992). The international system is on the realist view characterized by sovereign states and non-sovereign, i.e. anarchic, inter-state relations. IOs will only be important as actors if they are powerful in the sense of having formal powers that can support policy. (The EC with its unique formal structure and supranational legal powers ought thus to be regarded as a major actor on the logic of realism!)

If realism were the "rationalization of Cold War politics" (Hollis and Smith, 1992, 28), behaviouralism was not a criticism of the *assumptions* behind the theory, but rather a methodological corrective. Now the stress was on the induction of hypotheses from large number of data, and actors other than states became relevant. The role of IOs here was not related to that of states in any *a priori* way, however. The behaviouralist phase in political science shunned *a priori* assumptions and institutional analysis. Olsen contrasts two definitions of the field of political science from the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences: In 1932 the creed is that "Political science, without a theory of the state..is basically unthinkable." In 1968 Easton writes in the same publication that "basically the inadequacy of the state concept as a definition of subject matter stems from the fact that it implies that political science is interested in studying a particular kind of institution or organization of life..". The interesting point here is that while behaviouralism and later, transnationalism and interdependence theory (Keohane and Nye, 1972, 1978) made both non-state actors and 'low politics' like economic policy equally relevant to political science as 'high' politics, these developments had little impact on integration theory. Neo-functionalism was abandonned by Haas in 1976, when he pronounced it dead for lack of predictive ability (Haas, 1976). The reasons for this were mainly to be found in EC developments themselves. The curious situation was that at a time in the general IR disipline when the stress was on 'transnational actors' and types of interdependence, there was no incorporation of these concepts into integration theory, something which would have been theoretically logical. The fate of institutional analysis of IOs was within regime theory. Regimes might be seen as

'intervening variables" between states that would provide rules and norms for state behaviour (Krasner, 1983).

Much of the recent literature on cooperation among states has focussed on the systemic level of analysis, and used rationalist approaches to cooperation, like game theory (Milner, 1992). The assumptions underlying this literature has been essentially realist: the question is 'why cooperate under anarchy'? The actors, here states, are assumed to act rationally in a Weberian *zweckrational* manner, meaning that they act towards a goal that is determined first (Weber, 1973). Cooperation can however also be a result of learning about a (scientific) problem (Haas, 1990) as well as tacit, imposed or negotiated explicitly (Keohane, 1984, Oye, 1986).

A criticism against this literature concerns its systemic level of analysis. Milner remarks that "this literature is remarkable in its neglect of domestic politics" (Milner, 1992, 481). State interests are starting points, 'givens', often assumed rather than arrived at through empirical analysis. To the extent that the analyst assumes anarchy he will come to varying conclusions about the possibilities of cooperation. The place of the IO in these theories is that of an *arena* that imposes rules of the game to varying degrees. Applied to the EC, this amounts to analytical approaches that start from assumptions of state interests, often based on structural-systemic factors, where the EC arena is one of bargaining over these essentially static interests. The formal rules of the EC constrain interstate bargaining, but nothing more. Recently the emerging literature on multilateralism attempts to theorize about the role of IOs and the informal arrangements between states. The latter may or may not become formal IOs, like the EC. Ruggie points to the EC as 'the undisputed anchor of economic relations and increasingly of a common political vision in the West(!)" and faults realists like Waltz for having neglected the EC completely because it was not a 'unified state' (Ruggie, 1992). However, I find that this literature (Ruggie, 1992, Caporaso, 1992, Martin, 1992) perhaps ought to bring to mind the familiar theme of old wine in new bottles: "Many processes that do not go under the name of multilateralism.. such as regional integration..have occupied our attention"..but "multilateralism is not extensively employed as a theoretical category and (it) is rarely used as an explanatory concept" (!) (Caporaso, 1992,601). It is unclear to this reader what this concept entails that e.g. the regime concept cannot capture. Multilateralism seems to be about the formal and informal principles of cooperation between states over time, and is defined by the above authors by induction from Europan history. Applied to the EC, it purports to identify the principles of interstatal cooperation that 'surround' the EC. I suppose this concept is meant to capture the 'subplots'of the EC like e.g. the formal Schengen agreement. Ruggie identifies what he terms Monnet's idea of a 'shared conception of Europe' as an example of multilateralism (Ruggie, 1992, 601).

At this stage of conceptual development I am not convinced that multilateralism is more than another methodological fad in the field, however.

3.2 Domestic and international-level non-state actors

If we go beyond some of the assumptions of intergovernmentalism, what do we arrive at? Can one usefully conceive of actors that belong in neither the domestic nor the international or systemic category, that transcend issue areas, and that are neither clearly formal nor informal?

As we have seen above, one of realism's assumptions is that of the state as a unitary actor. By implication this lays down a strict divison between the domestic and the international levels. Both subnational actors and IOs suffer accordingly in theoretical terms. Jonsson points out that "...American scholarship has by and large adhered to 'state-as-actor approaches. ..only those subnational actors which loom lage in the US political system have been highlighted" (Jonsson, 1993, 154).

As of late there has however been much talk about the 'Europe of regions', implying that the role of the nation-state is perhaps on the wane. Empirically this is evidenced by the proliferation of regional interest groups in Brussels - some Danish communes e.g. have their own representation there, and increasingly regions that take issue with their nation-state like the Italian Liga Lombardia use the EC as an arena. Ethnic groups like the Catalans, Welsh, Basques and Bretons have opened up representations in Brussels.[6] The empirical evidence for this development is strong enough for us to conclude that there important regional non-state actors dealing directly with the EC.

Further, there is an increasing number of pan-European actors that represent a functional, not a territorial, interest: the interest groups, widely conceived, often located in Brussels. In the post 85-period there has been a great increase in these. Functional representation does not have any legitimation in modern democratic theory, but is the more prevalent in practise, as studies of modern lobbying shows. In the EC system of policy-making, these groups have a formal place as well, they are incorporated into the committee system in a way that is unique compared to the national polity, where functional representation is very rare.[7] About ten years ago a blooming literature on corporatism in Europe developed, and there was much talk about corporatist features of the state. (Schmitter, 1974, 1977). One task at present ought to be to look at the relevance of this literature for the study of the relationship between the Commission and interest groups. Sub-national and international actors like NGOs play both formal and informal roles

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6: P. Schmitter discusses these aspects of region-building in Europe in "Interests, Powers, and Functions: Emergent Properties and Unintended Consequences in the European Policy", unpublished paper, Stanford University, April, 1992 where he develops a typology of emerging new 'policy types' in Europe.

7: Apart from the theories of functional rerpesentation associated with corporatism in the inter-war period in Europe, democratic legitimation for representation has been based on plesbiscitarian norms of democracy. For a discussion, see J.H. Matlary, *The Role and Status of Associations in Democratic Theory: A Normative Analysis.* mag.art. thesis, University of Oslo, 1983

in the EC: their informal role is thought to be very substantial (Tömmel, 1992). In my study of EC energy policy, I found that interest group input was especially important at the pre-decision and drafting state of legislation. Often only two or three people in a given DG work on a given proposal, and they were thus in need of this kind of input from other actors.

One may then have regional actors that are *regional* only, like e.g. the Catalans, or regional actors that are also *functional*, like e.g. a trade association from a particular region. In addition, there may be functional actors that are national only, like e.g. the Committee for the US Chamber of Commerce in Belgium, an important EC actor.

There is some evidence that the Commission seeks to increase its influence in given policy areas by developing a clientilistic relationship with sub-national actors (Tömmel, 1992; Schmitter, 1992; Marks, 1993). This can of course be a strategy to attack the role of the state in a pincer movement: subnational actors get backing from the Commission, and can in turn strengthen their position vis-a-vis the state while the Commission increases its powers in the issue-area. A study of the Commission's structural policy concludes that "since 1990, the Commission has been elaborating an expanded conception of partnership - "social partnership" - encompassing NGO's, particularly regional labour and employer organizations. While it lacks authority to enforce participation of the social partners in structural decision-making against the wishes of a member state, and does not yet challenge the right of member states to determine the formal composition of the regional side the partnership triangle, the Commission has served notice of its ambition that the "social partners must be more involved..than in the past" (Marks, 1993, 11). Structural policy is on this author's view a two-tiered process, "involving decentralization of decision-making to sub-national levels of government as well as centralization of powers at the supranational level" (ibid., 17). In an interesting theoretical discussion of this strategy towards the creation of informal powers on the part of the Commission, Tömmel points out that "gerade die schwache und unvollendete Systemstruktur der EG und das weitgehend ungeregelte Verhältnis zu den Mitgliedsstaaten das Auskristallisieren neuer Politikinhalte und Verfahrensweise begünstigt haben" (Tömmel, 1992, 200). This raises the intriguing issue of formal versus informal powers: on the one hand, the EC is unique in its possession of the *acquis communitaire* - the legal rules, and this makes for formal power. On the other hand, it is unique in being 'loosely' structured, able to take initiatives and choose arenas and participants, as well as the mode of policy-making. The latter can e.g. be defined very legalistically, very technically, or as a research issue where the policy problem is not yet clear, to mention but some modes of decision-making. I will return to a discussion of this issue in the concluding part.

The conclusion that suggests itself is that for both *empirical* reasons - sub-national actors are important , and increasingly so, in the integrative process - and *theoretical* reasons - the state as unitary actor-assumption is abandonned

once we abandon variants of realism - we should include multilevel actors in any theory of international politics. Further, is there any reason to uphold the divide domestic-international with regard to the actors? Actors from a national ministry may, in the capacity of issue-area experts, be part of a Commission working group and/or an informal network. Is it sound to assume that they 'represent the national interest'? This brings us to the question of interests and their formation.

3.3 In the eye of the beholder? Interest formation as *zweckrational* or cognitive activity, or both

Turning now to the realist assumption that an actor defines his interests *prior* to the policy-making process, implicit in intergovernmentalism, and pervasive in our way of thinking about politics, I want to pose the question of how sound this assumption is. Can one fruitfully suppose that the actor's interests can be separated from the policy process, or the policy interaction in the sense that it is defined *prior* to the commencement of that process itself?

Such an analytical approach to understanding the state's and other actors' role in EC policy-making may have important limitations. First, it presupposes a rigid and static delineation of the stages in the political process, and that they can be viewed separately: Actors' interests are static, not dynamic, and the policy 'problem' is a given: it does not influence the formulation of actors' interests. The policy-process is essentially an arena for bargaining between actors over some issue that is determined prior to the process of bargaining itself. This has the implication that the role of EC institutions largely is limited to their formal functions.

Variables of a dynamic kind from the neo-functionalist tradition that relate to the importance of the process itself for *inter alia* interest modification may here be relevant. However, in order to conceptualize the policy bargaining process whose outcomes are in some cases not explicable by initial state interests one must go beyond intergovernmentalism in looking for theoretical solutions to the understanding and the analysis of outcomes of this process. An explanatory theory based on the notion of linkage politics, in turn also based on intergovernmentalist assumptions, provides a way of conceptualizing the bargaining in a somewhat crude yet consistent manner: the Commission designs policy that satisfies the interests of the states yet which implies an increased role for itself. Further, this in turn presupposes that the policy 'problem' is exogenous, a 'given', to which the Commission reacts by putting together something that the states find acceptable because of trade-off possibilities.

In one of the cases I studied in my work on EC energy policy, however, the

European Energy Charter,[8] there was no exogenous 'problem', just a very general idea on the part of the Dutch premier Lubbers at at European Council meeting. The Commission created the policy issue by and large, and also defined the scope for state interests in it by formulating a proposal for an energy charter *before* the states had thought much about the issue at all. The arena for policy-making as well as the participants in it were also determined by the Commission; it simply speeded up its own work before any other actors - states or alternative international organizations - had started theirs. Before long it had carved out an essential role for itself in the charter process.[9]

This type of case can clearly not be analyzed very well employing an intergovernmentalist approach. In an analysis of the UNCED-process Underdal suggest that the policy process itself generates important variables that may have significant explanatory value (Underdal, 1992). Among these are the potential ability to actually define the policy problems and solutions, and to define the access to the policy arena. Further, the process may also generate an 'informal culture' , "into which participants are more or less effectively socialized" (Ibid., 10). He further points out that "the distinction between organizations-as-arenas and organizations-as-actors does not imply a ranking in terms of importance...arenas are important in their own right and for different reasons" (Ibid., 11). A consequence of this is that the process of policy-making itself, or the arena, may generate its own stakes, or goals. This theoretical perspective is potentially very useful for formulating hypotheses about the process of interest modification itself that we now know takes place in the bargaining in the EC system. In the charter case, the role of the Commission was determined to a pivotal one: it defined the 'problem' or issue, the 'solutions' or actor interests, it invited the participants into an arena it created for the specific charter purpose, being first based on the 12 member states, then extended to the OECD. Yet the process itself remained an EC one, and in DGXVII there is now a 'charter secretariat', in fact, a new IO within the Commission.

Further, the factual input provided by Commission and interest group experts can thus be assumed to have played key roles, perhaps not only in terms of the factual arguments themselves, but also to the extent that the participants were able to use factual argumentation to present 'national' interests. An important processual variable is thus probably *learning as a way of modifying interests* - note that this does not specify who 'learns' from whom. The fact that the

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8: The Charter is a legally binding agreement between OECD countries, the CIS, and Eastern Europe to adopt free market rules for the production, transportation, and sale of energy. Its protocols are currently udner development. The intention of this regime is to facilitate foreign investment in the energy sector in the CIS, which is in a state of crisis.

9: The Commission established the negotiating targets and the institutional seting for the charter process very quickly through a series of meetings with the Russians in the Fall of 1990. At this stage the national governments had not decided on what to think of the charter. See Matlary, 1993, op.cit.

Commission obviously attaches much importance to the creation of working groups indicates that it employs a 'learning-by-discussion' approach that it hopes will lead to both cooptation and consensus.

The term 'epistemic community' has been used to denote a network of knowledge-based experts which through its expertise both influence and even direct policy and which identifies and develops the interests of the formal actors (here the states, EC institutions) that it represents (Haas, 1992; 1990). An epistemic community is usually made up of academics, or experts, in a field, and is postulated to have a potential ability to define the policy 'problem' and its 'solutions', ie. possible interests, to policy-makers: "what matters is that the members (of the epistemic community) are respected within their own disipline and have the ability to influence those within their immediate disiplines and extend their.. influence ..reaching major actors in the policy coordination process" (Haas, 1992, 380). Applied to the EC, Haas thinks that e.g. "the idea of a single Europe, tracing the efforts of Delors and the European Commission" may provide evidence of an epistemic community at work (ibid, 388). For an old student of the history of ideas like myself, it is reassuring that ideas again are thought to have some influence on politics; however this is nothing new. The idea that policy 'interests' are suggested by an expert elite and are not generated 'from below' by a generalist-politician thus seems quite obvious, and in the EC context the role of the Commission in using experts very heavily as a tool to introduce new policy proposals is a clear candidate for this kind of analysis. For instance, when DGXVII wanted to propose a CO2 tax in 1990, an expert report on the policy tools to abate greenhouse gases was commissioned. Not unexpectedly did it conclude that a CO2 tax was a good idea, given the problem. The Commission had backing for its controversial proposal. However in this case it was not the epistemic community that influenced the policy-maker, but the opposite. Tömmel makes a similar point when she notes the extensive use that the Commission makes of experts and researchers, but she also notes that "die EG is weitgehend unabhängig vom Urteil Ihrer Berater" (Tömmel, 1992, 201)

Applied to the EC in general, it would seem that few policy networks could be termed epistemic communities as policy-making usually does not involve extensive requirements for knowledge that is scientific. But one does argue and justify one's position in terms of *fact* and not in terms of *interests* in the 'normal', day-to-day policy-making process in the EC. The notion of interest identification and modification through the medium of a learning process is therefore relevant. The Commission in the study of energy policy referred to above consistently opted for the full political procedure in terms of choosing a directive approach instead of direct application of e.g. the competition legislation. This was, I argue, a deliberate choice to meet opposition from states and interest groups in a gradual and inclusive decision-making process. The element of learning is arguably part of this strategy. The formal structure of the EC is ideal for incorporating various decision-makers in such a gradualist process. The process of interaction of the various interests was thus allowed to become extensive, and initially opposed interests were gradually modified. The

Commission typically launched a radical proposal for then to allow for modification of this, while it in turn re-launched an equally radical proposal after a prolonged policy-making (and learning) process.

As neo-functionalism underlined, interests do change in and by the policy process itself, and participants are not essentially clear-cut national representatives, but rather 'socialized' into the common 'culture' of policy-bargaining, especially if they see themselves as experts performing professional tasks. The *zweckrational* conception of interest formation relies on the assumption that the actor is able to determine a goal of his political activity, viz. his 'interest', and the means to approximate this goal. Often this goal is indicated by structural conditions - in energy policy e.g. producer countries have different interest from consumer countries - but once such an interest has been determined, the assumption is that it is constant *qua* interest whereas it can be altered in bargaining for trade offs or can be changed in order to reach another goal, e.g. in the EC case, the value of participating instead of exiting. Thus, even if interests change, they are still formed on a *zweckrational* logic.

Haas terms his approach an attempt to bridge the "gap between positivist-empirical and relativist-interpretive phenomenological approaches" to social science (ibid., 368). As such, it is one of several such attempts, as we shall see below:

A fundamental challenge to the epistemological assumptions of the former conception of interest formation comes from ordinary language philosophy in the Wittgensteinian tradition. This is part of an old debate about the 'idea of a social science', to paraphrase the title of Winch's famous little book (Winch, 1967). At issue is the perennial problem of what social science is about and what it can aspire to achieve in terms of explanation. At the two extremes of a continuum are those that would argue that causal explanation and strict prediction in social science is possible, and those that hold that all that social science can be about is uncovering the meaning of social action to the participants themselves, who share in an intersubjective set of rules that interpret action. The dispute is *inter alia* over how to interpret action: For instance, by observation one cannot determine what really goes on when someone blinks his eye - is it an automatic reflex movement? When one winks, however, there is a meaning to the action that can only be understood by knowing the rules that govern the interaction - the winking probably indicates that an utterance should not be taken seriously, to mention but one meaning that is commonly attributed to winking (although there may be others). The importance of this example is even clearer in Norwegian, where there is but one word for both blinking and winking. The whole point of this is to show that observation will not yield the meaning of a social action unless the rules that govern the interpretation are known to the

observers.[10] As an outside observer I cannot on this view determine an actor's interest by observing his behaviour. This amounts to an epistemological, and for some, also an ontological, criticism of the premise of *Zweckrationalitet* that underlies the positivisitic approach to social science. The second part of this criticism is that causal explanation is impossible because we, as observers, do not know the meanings of the actions that take place between the actors. One extreme of this view is the 'constructivist'[11] argument that reality is socially constructed and that a description of what goes on in a political context therefore always must be 'wrong' because it is done by an outsider.

Applied to interest formation, one could advance the idea that actors at the domestic level have one kind of interest there, depending on the context in which one acts - e.g. the 'rules of the game' in a national Ministry of Energy result in one kind of interest, the rules in an EC working group in another. An

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10: The major work by Wittgenstein is the *Philosophical Investigations,* (1958) which starts with the famous quotation from St. Augustine *Confessions* where he tells the reader how he learnt a language as a child: the grown-ups pointed to objects and named them. Every object had a name; sentences were collections of names correlated with specific and constant meanings. But this is a very primitive understanding of language, says Wittgenstein; words have various meanings according to their various uses, and there is no one determination of meaning - which one is appropriate will depend on the context in which it is used. On the obvious level, the problem of how to interpret action is met when we encounter foreign languages, as there is most often not a word-by-word translation possible, and even after translation, the meaning is not 'full' if we do not know what the action usually signifies in the context in that language's own culture. I can in fact testify to the importance of the 'deep' rules of meaning myself: In the first years of marriage my husband and I would often misunderstand each other although we used the same words for what we talked about. This was no factual puzzle, however: the rules of meaning for social action that he interpreted by were different from mine; his coming from a different culture and society. Although he came to Norway from Hungary as early as in 1956, and studied in Norwegian, he had not learnt the all the 'deep' rules of meaning in Norwegian culture. What we quarrelled about was not how to describe a social action, but which set of interpretive rules to apply to it. "Society is not just outside the individual, but inside him as well, part of who he is" and all reality is dependent on our conceptualiszation of it, remarks Pitkin in her application of Wittgensteinian principles to political theory (Pitkin, 1972). It follows from this that an actor's interest varies with the meaning of the context in which he remains - and "detached, objective, scientific observation of action is impossible" (Pitkin, 242)

11: There are various groups within the 'reflective', 'constructivist' or 'interpretive' tradition. For those familar with European intellectual history and historiography the term 'hermeneutics' comes to mind immediately. Wilhelm Dilthey and Friedrich Schleiermacher developed *Hermeneutik* as a principle of understanding history contextually. In modern philsophy phenomenology is close to this orientation. Husserl and Heidegger should be mentioned. Further, in ordinary language philosophy there has been a continous criticism of empirical-inductive social science. Thus when (mostly) American political scientists - Ruggie, Cox, Ashley, Kratochwil - now rediscover 'interpretation' in social science they are rather late in appreciating a continuous European intellectual tradition into which studies of politics have been embedded in spite of the behavioural phase in the field.

analysis of interest formation at the domestic level will on this view aim at uncovering the 'rules of assigning meaning' to action in this context. The same will be essential in EC fora, formal or informal. Only when one knows about this can one interpret the goals or interests of the actors.[12] The *acquis communautaire* represents the formal rules of the EC, but there are many ways of interpreting these rules. Burley and Mattli have studied how the Court has used legal rules to carve out an ever-widening role for itself, arguing that "law...is widely perceived by political decision-makers as 'mostly apolitical', and thus lawyers are given a more or less free hand to speak for Commission, the Council of Ministers and the national governments. The result is that important political outcomes are debated and decided in the language and logic of law" (Burley and Mattli, 1993, 44). One could say that law represents a particular type of interpretive set of rules, which is closed to non-legal participants. Other sets of rules may be constructed through the invention of new terms in 'euro-speak', which Schmitter documents has increased in its vocabulary very much in the present period (Schmitter, 1992,51). The purpose of these new terms is to create meanings within a context which may in turn influence behaviour towards the creation of a corresponding reality: if everyone e.g. talks about the internal market concept as a desired goal, this may certainly influence their behaviour towards creating such a market. The salient question then becomes who created the concept and defined its meaning in a set of rules prior to discussing its policy content.

3.4 Inside and outside the EC Commission: An organization and its environment

The Commission appears to be the organization within the EC which is the least well understood in terms of how it works and may work: "despite the unquestionable importance of the Commission, fresh thinking about its future role and *modus operandi* is lacking" (Metcalfe, 1992, 124).

It has unique formal powers as the inititator of policy, 'guardian of the treaties', and implementor of policy, and it is party to all negotiations between the states in the Council of Ministers. Its strong formal powers are thus coupled with eminent informal possibilities for exerting influence. I say 'possibilities' because it seems that strong skill and leadership are needed in order to utilize these possibilities. Thus it makes much of a difference whether the President of Commission has such an ability: the same is true for individual Commissioners.

Tömmel noted that while the Commission has strong formal powers, it is also characterized by a 'fluid' kind of interactive mode with members states - it is free to design the type of policy process it wants to a large degree (Tömmel, 1992). The

12: My own initial (but not yet very well thought through position) is that interests in political action are formed and do exist as *zweckrational*, thus I do not accept a radically constructivist position that would deny this. Interpretation in the sense of discovering the 'rules of meaning' is however necessary in order to understand the process of interest formation in a context. How this can be done is an empirical question which is very challenging.

Commission can often choose the policy procedure and the participants in such a process - it can set up an expert group or a workshop, and thus on principle act intentionally to coopt members. As we saw, there was some evidence of this strategy in structural policy. However, it may be to overdraw the picture to assume such as a degree of strategic thinking - the Commission is small and ill coordinated, dependent on outside expertise, and relies heavily on traditional methods of management, according to a major analyst (Metcalfe, 1992). The obvious theory tradition to turn to for aid on how to develop our thinking about the Commission is organization theory. Metcalfe diagnoses the situation thus: "(the Commission's) distinctive character as an organization is ill-defined. There has been very little analysis of the Commission from the perspective of contemporary organization and management theory...it is astonishing that the Commission has failed to attract more than minimal attention from organization theorists.." (ibid). I am not very well read in this body of theory, but I would think that some of the problem stems from the artificial divide between domestic politics, hence domestic organizations, and IR, hence IOs. Jönsson has commented on the lack of connection between theory about IOs - interorganization theory - and organization theory (Jönsson, 1986, 1993).

A major point here is that one needs theories about what goes on 'inside' the Commission as well as 'outside' it: by 'inside' I mean themes centering on the relationship between the various DGs and the internal issues between these and the Presidency of the Commission, etc. By 'outside' I think of the Commission and its environment, both the other EG institutions, the member states and the external world in which the Commission enters as an international actor and negotiator. But 'inside' cannot be separated from 'outside' in any meaningful way: the various DGs may 'play solo' vis-a-vis each other to some extent, but their ability for doing so will depend on how well they 'play together' as a team, as the Commission. Cohesion is thus a precondition for individual success. Also, the 'outside' is intimately connected with the 'inside': the policy issues will always be mandated by the states though the European Council or through some earlier major bargain between the states and the EC. This provides the formal-legal legitimacy for the Commission's activity. However, informal legitimacy is indispenable - just consider the fact that the EC enjoyed very strong supranational powers in competition policy since 1957, but that only in the post-85 period has there been enough legitimacy on the part of the states for the Commission to apply this legislation to any radical degree. The relationship between the Commission and the states is thus a delicate one that is ignored at one's peril, as the people in the Commission well know.

But the environment of the Commission refers to much more than the major bargains between states and the EC. In day-to-day policy-making it refers to all the informal contacts, meetings, networks, etc. that surround the formal organization. A theoretical direction which seems to me to be very promising in terms of offering a scope for analysing both formal and informal variables is what Jonsson calls ' interorganizational theory' (Jonsson, 1986). This is by no means a body of theory that has been developed very far within the realm of international

relations; rather, it consists of theories of intraorganizational interaction, usually within the nation-state. It has, as of yet, been little applied to the international arena. What is so interesting here, especially with regard to the EC, is the emphasis on the role that an organization and its environment may play in linking issue areas, creating networks and informal decision-making fora, setting the agenda, and proposing solutions. Such an organization is a 'linking-pin' organization, one that has 'extensive and overlapping ties to different parts of a network ..(it is) a node through which a network is loosely joined' (ibid.,42). The difference between the formal and informal organization is fleeting, and the major decision-makers, often bureaucrats, are 'boundary-role' occupants in their capacity to communicate betweeen the organization and its environment. It is individuals who interact, not the organizations of 'the state'. Based on these elements of organization theory, Jönsson lists a number of variables that make for transnational or international organizations' success: the more technical the policy issues are defined as being, the better; the more they can be classified as 'low politics', the better; the more significant the formal role of the organization is, the better, the more multiple the links the organizations has with other actors, the more likely it is to succeed in becoming a 'linking-pin' organization. Even a cursory glance at the EC, especially the role of the Commission, reveals that it enhibits strong features that point it the direction of it being such an organization.

Indeed, many analysts of the Commission's role in the present period emphasize what they call a 'network approach' to policy-making. Network analysis is used particularly in public policy analysis at the national level, stressing the importance of informal relationships surrounding policy-making (Bomberg, 1992,3). Typically, bureaucrats from different organizations and; applied to the EC, member-states; are involved in long-term working relationships that need not be formalized. They define the range of policy options -'interests'- as part of the process of defining the policy problem, i.e. setting the agenda. Marsh and Rhodes develop a typology of networks: The most 'entrenched' is the policy community, where actors share loyalties and basic orientations, the 'loosest' is the issue network which brings together actors from various fora by virtue of one common interest only, viz. that of the issue in question (Marsh and Rhodes, 1991). Some studies are now appearing that apply a similar approach to the Commission's role, notably in the field of the environmental policy (Mazey and Richardsson, 1993).

Neo-functionalism stressed that bureaucrats might gradually develop loyalties to the EC or to the issue area in question through their participation in decision-making in 'low politics' areas. This may arguably be the end result of network participation. At least one may at the outset agree that there is no *a priori* reason to uphold a distinction between the national and the EC level here: The participants in the various informal and formal networks spun around the Commission are there qua experts, partaking in discussions that are largely *fachlich*. With such a self-definition of the political activity that goes on, there need not arise any conflict between the traditional loyalty to the home

government and one's expert role. On the same logic as was applied to the study of the Court: the more legal it is seen as being, the more political its activity may become (Burley and Mattli, 1993), we can say that the more *fachlich* the work under the auspices of the Commission be, the more sucessful the latter's policy role may be.

If in addition to this interest formation not only is characterized by *Zweckrationalitat* but develops in a "combination of education, indoctrination and experience" (March and Olsen, 1989), then the Commission may play both the role as broker as well as that of educator. March and Olsen hold that the organization itself has a very strong influence on how interests are formed: "political institutions are collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate actions in terms of relations between roles and situations. The process involves determining what the situation is, what role is being fulfilled, and what the obligations of that role in the situation are. When individuals enter an organization, they try to discover, and are taught, the rules" (ibid., 160) An objection to this view if applied to the Commission is that the latter is not an entrenched organization with well-developed sets of rules and routines, but very 'fluid' and open. Both these views are to some extent correct. Only empirical work will be able to tell in what cases the one or the other view may be the best approximation of reality. However this may be, I think it is fruitful to start to hypothesize about how Commission actors may design policy arenas and modes that will provide the most integrative outcomes for them (on the assumption that this is the goal), and vice versa, to think about how state and non-state actors will wish to define a problem and its solutions, in what type of fora, etc., in order to achieve their goals. However, if one does not share in my essentially *zweckrational* conception of interests, one may concentrate on how to uncover the rules of meaning in the Commission itself. It should be possible to design research, through the use of interviews, that will yield knowledge about how actors perceived their interests at the outset of participation in EC policy-making, and throughout the process. If interests changed, why and how did this happen? I shall not pursue this line of reasoning any further here, but only point to the possibilities inherent in the body of organization theory combined with other theory from policy analysis and IR. Theoretical refinements of integration theory must go beyond intergovernmentalist starting-points in order to capture present-day complex integration.

4 CONCLUSIONS

In a 'stock-taking' exercise of integration theory Caporaso and Keeler point to several theoretical problems with this body of theory: empirical studies yield inductive hypotheses, yet against what can these be tested if there is but one case, viz. the EC? This is the problem of theory scope mentioned earlier. Neo-functionalism did not solve this dilemma, in fact, argue the authours, "there is an unmistakable feeling that, as theories, functionalism and neo-functionalism recapitulate the substantive process they are trying to explain" (Caporaso and

Keeler, 1993, 7). But if one moves to variants of neo-realism, one resorts to hypotheses that largely ignore the EC as an IO, which is not what we would want, given the empirical evidence discussed above that EC institutions matter much in a variety of ways.

A possible solution to this is to aim at so-called 'mid-range' theory whose scope is state-EC interaction, and where the key is the dynamic element of this interaction. Wessels puts it thus: "(man sollte)..zumindest 'komparativ-statisch' (arbeiten); anzustreben ist aber letzendlich eine 'dynamische' Theorie, die Erklarungen fur Wachstums- und Differenzierungsprozesse..liefert" (Wessels, 1992, 36).

States may start out with an initial interest, defined by domestic politics, but notably domestic politics is not divorced from EC politics: the perception of what it entails to be a member or prospective member of the EC has consequences for interest formation at home, as also Sandholz points out (Sandholz, 1993b). As discussed above, interest formation is at least not only *zweckrational,* therefore an analysis of domestic interest formation should also consider contexts at home as well as how interests are, to the extent that they are *zweckrational,* aimed basically at the home audience. I have elaborated upon the idea set forth by Putnam (Putnam, 1988) that states play 'different games' at home and in the EC, and that the clever state will be able to play both (interrelated) games to its own advantage (Matlary, 1993). The conception of interest underlying this theory is wholly *zweckrational.* However, if we in addition incorporate considerations of contextual interest formation, we have a tool for classifying interests that take into account that some interests have nothing whatsoever to do with achieving anything at the EC-level, but are, as in the Norwegian case, statements of Norwegianness as opposed to foreignness, to mention one example. This is very clear when the leader of the Agrarian Party states that "we are different from other peoples, have different values", however the corrollary to this argument is instrumental, viz. we should therefore not become EC members. With a 'wide' concept of interest formation - both in terms of whether it is instrumental and/interpretive-contextual - and how the interaction state-EC determines the context of the interest formation itself, viz. that it is logical to speak of one context only; not an state versus EC one - we are equipped to generate hypotheses about both state and non-state actors within a theoretical framework that is not only about European states and the EC, but theoretically also about any states and IOs. I would suggest that further theoretical work on EC policy processes and the conditions under which integration may result concentrate on these processual variables centering on interest formation, decision-making fora, and design of policy mode. Sometimes this will be a supplement to the intergovernmentalist determination of the conditions for state-EC interaction in general, but in main I would think, an alternative to the latter. One may in this endeavour draw on several emerging schools in IR and other theory traditions in political science.

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