



# ***A Comparative Political Approach to the EU Formation***

***Stefano Bartolini***

*University of Bologna*

*e-mail : bartolin@spbo.unibo.it*

*Working Paper*

*No. 04, February 2006*

*Working Papers can be downloaded from the ARENA homepage:*

<http://www.arena.uio.no>

## Abstract

In this paper I relate Europeanisation to the processes of nation states formation and consolidation. The paper first offers a general framework for the historical interpretation of the integration process. It then describes that same process in analytical terms, sketching the implications of actors' boundary transcendence. In the third section the paper relates this new constellation to the historical 'triangles' representing the processes of nation-state formation and internal political structuring. In the conclusion, the paper discusses the integration process in relation to different conceptions of 'political modernity' and in view of the different 'political projects' that can be pursued through it. Europeanisation is seen as a new phase of development characterised by an uneven process of territorial *de*-differentiation. This de-differentiation generates tensions due to the decoupling of the formerly territorially overlapping principles of identity, solidarity and legitimised decision rules within the nation state.

*Reproduction of this text is subject to permission by the author.*

© Arena 2005

This paper sketches a historical and analytical framework for the interpretation of the process of Europeanisation. The paper does not discuss empirical cross-cases variations and leave aside concrete exemplary evidence. I relate Europeanisation to the processes of nation states formation and consolidation. The latter completed the within-Europe territorial differentiation of the middle age common heritage based on Christian cultural identity, Latin high-language and culture, and Roman public law, Germanic common law, and Church Canon law. Europeanisation can be seen as a new phase of development characterised by an uneven process of territorial *de*-differentiation. This de-differentiation generates tensions due to the decoupling of the formerly territorially overlapping principles of identity, solidarity and legitimised decision rules within the nation state.

In the following pages, the specific process of European integration and its institutions are central to what is defined as 'Europeanisation'. Yet, the more general term is preferred because it encompasses a larger web of interactions, exchanges and transformations of European societies and polities that go below, above and sometimes beyond the strict set of European Union institutions and policies.

## Europeanisation in historical terms: developmental process of territorial de-differentiation

In a broad historical perspective, Europeanisation can be conceived as the sixth major developmental trend in the history of Europe since the 16th century. Following Rokkan's seminal work <sup>1</sup> we can distinguish five macro-developments in the history of nation-state making in Europe. The first was *state-building*, with its historical progressive coincidence of regulatory orders in economic, administrative and military spheres under the supremacy of a single set of hierarchically organised territorial institutions. The second was the *development of capitalism* that - notwithstanding its potential early un-bounded nature - was nourished within the capsule of the state in view of the formation of the national

---

<sup>1</sup> Rokkan, S., 1999. *State Formation, Nation Building, and Mass Politics in Europe. The theory of Stein Rokkan*. Edited by P. Flora with S. Kuhnle and D. Urwin. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

market. The third was *nation-formation*, with its strengthening of cultural boundaries and the creation of equality areas of cultural solidarity and common cultural standards. The fourth was the process of *democratisation*, with the progressive articulation, recognition and legitimation of the institutional channels and political organisations for internal voice structuring. The fifth was the development of the *welfare systems*, with the growth of social citizenship rights for the culturally homogeneous national communities, aimed at providing a substantive complement to political democracy.

State building and nation building created the wrapping within which capitalism developed and was often nourished. Party systems and welfare states constituted the crucial mechanisms of political identification and legitimation that stabilised societies characterised by high rates of socio-economic changes. Europeanisation – to which Rokkan never devoted much attention<sup>2</sup> – can be read as a *sixth* powerful driving force for the European system of states, nations, economies, democracies and welfares. As such, Europeanisation has to be related to the other developmental phases.

Figure 1 summarises the relationship between Europeanisation and the previous five processes of historical development. The process of European integration resulted historically from two types of problem-pressures after the two World Wars. The first was the unbearable costs of the rivalries of the European states system in an era of war technologies whose destructive power had become disproportionate to the stake of the rivalries themselves. The second was the growing pressure deriving from the slow but significant economic peripheralisation of Europe in the post-World War II world economy and the corresponding perception of the inadequacy of the European state and of its boundaries as a principle of efficient economic organisation in the world competition. In other words, Europeanisation can be interpreted as a response to

---

<sup>2</sup> Flora, P., 2000. Externe Grenzbildung und interne Strukturierung – Europa und seine Nationen, Eine Rokkanische Forschungsperspektive, *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 10: 157-166.

the weakening of the European state system and to the new pressure of capitalist world development, as Figure 1 indicates.

(Figure 1 about here)

Yet, Europeanisation has to come to grip with the other threads of development: with the *national*, *democratic* and *welfare* states. The relationship between Europeanisation and the features of nation-building, democratisation and welfare developments results problematic and somehow contradictory. Nation-building, democratisation and welfare state development were processes closely linked to the state as a bounded territory and to its internal cultural homogeneity. The mechanisms of democratic decision making and those of redistribution of the material resources similarly assume and rest on both strong collective identities and solidarity ties - that is, high cultural costs of exit - and on the physical inability or difficulty to subtract resources from the social obligations contracted on a territorial basis (that is, high material costs of exit). The process of European economic integration of the second half of the 20th century - to the extent that it was an answer to the new trend to free trade and liberalisation at the international level - has progressively represented a direct challenge to national cultural systems, national political decision-making, and national redistributive mechanisms and policies.

This sets Europeanisation at the core of a potential contradiction between the processes of state-system overcoming and of further capitalist development, on the one hand, and the processes of 'national' identity, legitimation and political decision-making, on the other hand. State rivalries overcoming and further capitalist development are inherently predicated upon the transcendence of boundaries among the pre-existing system of European states, in view of achieving the 'scale' sufficient to overcome the inadequacy of such states as a capsule of economic and military competition. On the contrary, 'national-welfare-democracies' are all predicated upon the control of the state of the

redistributive capacities, cultural symbols and political authority. While the first processes require boundary removing, the second processes are historically built on the capacity to successfully ‘lock in’ the resources controlled by economic and cultural forces within the decision-making process of the territorial state. In this sense, the tension between the project of a stateless market building at the wider European level and the nationally bounded cultural, redistributive and political capacities represent a profound structural contradiction and not a purely growth imbalance.

## Europeanisation in analytical terms: boundary transcendence

Analytically, Europeanisation can be defined as a process of nation state *boundary transcendence*, resulting into a process of *de-differentiation of European polities* after five centuries of progressive differentiation in legal and administrative systems, in social practices and in cultural and linguistic codes, in economic transactions and regulations of the market, and in social and political institutions. Europeanisation points to a process of growing permeability and/or of lowering of the external boundaries of territorial systems, and in particular of that specific territorial system represented by the nation state.

This definition leaves open the problem of the distinction between ‘Europeanisation’ and what is normally referred to as ‘globalisation’. The latter too can be defined in terms of boundary transcendence and at the analytical level there seem to be little difference apart from the geographical specification. For sure, boundary transcendence is much more intense and institutionally assisted within Europe than at the global level. The difference between Europeanisation and globalisation is however more clear when Europeanisation is defined historically more than analytically, as it is done in the first section of this paper. Then the argument clearly applies only to areas – such as Europe – where the development of the specific form of the nation-state created an historical high *overlapping and coincidence of different types of boundaries*: cultural, economic,

politico-administrative and coercitive. Europeanisation, therefore, can be distinguished from globalisation in general not only for the intensity and the institutionally driven scope of boundary transcendence, but also for the specific consequences of the latter in relation to the historical legacy of boundary building.

In Table 1 I present a scheme of the different types of boundaries that distinguish membership according to different criteria. The table identifies four dimensions of boundary building among units in the economic, cultural, politico-administrative and coercion/extraction domains. Unfortunately, we do not have established names for these different types of boundaries. In order to retain the term 'boundary' for the more abstract concept of 'closure code and rule', one should invent new names to clarify the distinction and to avoid the tedious and continuous repetition of 'cultural boundary', 'economic boundary', etc. By insisting on the terminological difference I want to underline the fact that one needs to keep these different boundaries as distinct as possible at the conceptual level.

*(Table 1 about here)*

The process of market building and the formation of economic boundaries have their focal point in the openness of transactions in a given geographical area and in the necessary correlates of property rights agreements, exchange options and factor mobility. The cultural boundaries define a membership space characterised by the traits of the inhabitants (language, religion, ethnicity, national identity, etc.). In principle, as we know, cultural identities are not necessarily concentrated geographically. However, I am interested here in the historical cases in which some sort of territorial concentration and the cultural identity of the individual is defined and reinforced by the continuous interaction in the geographical space with his/her cultural fellows. The politico-administrative boundaries identify those primarily legal boundaries that differentiate among different functional

regimes and regulatory systems such as educational systems, welfare regimes, labour markets, courts' jurisdictions, etc. The 'coercion/extraction' boundaries define that territorial space within which a single central authority exercises its ultimate right to the physical coercion of the subjected population.

It is difficult to conceive of these boundaries as analytically distinct for a variety of reasons. The first and more obvious is that our daily experience and our historical memory refer to a situation of large, if not complete, overlap of these different boundaries. The modern nation-state successfully integrated these boundary-building processes. Nation-states are characterised by boundaries that are simultaneously military, economic, cultural and functional. Crossing the boundary of the state one passes, at the same time, into the imperium of alternative extractive and coercion agencies, into a different economic market, into a different cultural community and into a different set of functional regimes as educational systems, welfare state, legal jurisdictions, and so forth. This (territorial) *coincidence* of different type boundaries has been the nation-state distinctive trait - that distinguishes it from earlier or different forms of political formations (*politische Verbände*) - and its legitimacy principle. The modern nation-state was based on a collectivist criterion of exclusion meant to monopolise certain advantages for the members of the state groups, in various but coinciding functional areas in which citizens' rights and obligations are sharply distinguished from the rights and obligations of 'foreigners'.

The second reason why it is difficult to conceive these boundaries as separate is that, while we can easily construct the ideal type of their coincidence - i.e. the ideal type of the sovereign, unitary, autarchic and culturally homogeneous state - we find it difficult to identify pure cases of each type of boundary. A few almost pure examples come to mind. The primordial hunter-gatherer community had primarily cultural boundaries, as kinship links set almost insurmountable barriers to the externals; but for long time it did not possess a distinct territoriality. Those 'imperial' territorial hierarchies that encompassed different cultural groups and included substantially closed different market areas represent a

pure force/coercion/extractive boundary. The Roman Empire had a clear perception of where its *limes* - its military borders - lay and where its *civitas* - Roman citizenship - ended. Furthermore, between *limes* and *civitas* there were several additional intermediate borders, for instance the politico-administrative borders of militarily subject populations that were left to run their internal matters according to their traditions and rules. Pure market boundaries existed beyond political administrative borders in those free-trade areas that encompassed city networks, such as the Hanseatic League, within which the respect of basic economic rights was guaranteed across cultural, military, and politico-administrative borders.

The third reason why it is difficult to conceive the different boundaries as separate is that we have no names to indicate the territorial situations in which they do not overlap and coincide. For instance, we are familiar with situations in which force/coercion and politico-administrative territorial claims are not coterminous with cultural identities, creating thereby various types of 'cultural peripheries'.<sup>3</sup> It is more difficult to label those other territorial situations in which, for instance, economic boundaries do not coincide with politico-administrative boundaries; or the cases in which cultural identities and community membership space is not coterminous with economic markets rights and transactions.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Such 'cultural peripheries' can be distinguished as 'external', 'interface', or 'enclave' - according to whether the cultural stigmata defining the area or group find support across the politico-administrative border or not, and whether they are surrounded or not by the central dominant cultural community. For a discussion of the different types of cultural peripheries see S. Rokkan and D. Urwin, *Economy, Territory, Identity. Politics of West European Peripheries*, London, Sage, 1983.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, Middle Age thinking was more 'flexible' in terms of sub systemic boundaries. For a rich series of examples of 'lack of coincidence' in the modern sense see Hintze, O., 1962. *Soziologie und Geschichte Staat und Verfassung*, edited by G. Oestreich, Goettingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht; and Gierke, O., 1988 (1900), *Political Theories of the Middle Age*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Along each type of boundary the development of rules and codes of closure may set or raise boundaries. At the same time, new technologies and/or rights of exit may actually lower or remove existing boundaries. In short, for each dimension of culture, economy, administration and force, exit options and boundary building interact. In Table 2,<sup>5</sup> the type of exit options and boundary building are summarised for each main subsystem to clarify this interaction.

(Table 2 about here)

These boundaries define sets of cross-boundary transactions and sets of control measures. The (potential) units of these transactions and control in different subsystems are goods and services, corporations, physical persons, messages, territories and even 'roles'. For each subsystem one can identify potential exit options and, at the same time, boundary building mechanisms. As specific technologies and rights of exit may continuously develop, they generate pressures on existing boundaries. On the other hand, history also provides a continuous invention or re-invention of boundary building mechanisms.

Having clarified my use of the concept of boundary building and boundary transcendence, I can move to a slightly more operational definition of 'Europeanisation' for the purpose of this paper. Europeanisation is a process (whose roots, and causes do not interest us in the economy of this paper) with the following key effects:

- 1) Europeanisation considerably expands the capacity of intra-state institutional (e.g., local-regional governments), collective (functional and membership groups), and individual (firms, corporations, individuals) actors to access external, extra nation-state, resources and therefore to exit not only the

---

<sup>5</sup> This table is adapted from S. Rokkan 'Entries, voices, exits: Towards a possible generalisation of the Hirschman Model', *Social Science Information*, 13, 1974, 39-53, 43. I have added the line corresponding to the politico-administrative subsystems -- that Rokkan sets together with the force-coercion subsystem -- and I have added and moved items of exit units and boundary mechanisms.

production, but also the consumption of a number of national private and public goods.<sup>6</sup> External ‘resources’ that become increasingly accessible are of three types: *regulation* resources, *jurisdictional* resources, and *material* resources. That is, against the regulations of their state territorial hierarchy, actors can access and invoke regulations issued by the extra-state cross-national hierarchy. Against the jurisdiction of their territorial state, actors can invoke the arbitration of international courts and judicial regimes. Against the potential limitation in access to state material resources, actors can autonomously access international financial markets, rating agencies, mobile capitals, etc.

2) Europeanisation considerably reduces the capacity of state and territorialized hierarchies to autonomously set and modulate the level of boundary transcendence in the economy, cultural, administrative and even coercion domains. As a result of the growing accessibility of external regulatory, jurisdictional and material resources, the policies of territorialized hierarchies (nation-state political authorities) tend to be more often based on the principle of anticipated reactions to the options of potentially mobile actors/resources. The domestic political production is considerably constrained by the potential costs of the exit options that are available to those actors/ resources. This is particularly true in the fields of *regulation* (definition of the rules of the game); *allocation* (direct allocation of goods, services, duties), *arbitration* (control and limitation of the conflicts among qualified actors); less so in the fields of *protection* (defence from others’ offence through coercive sanctions); and *jurisdiction* (guarantees about the compliance to the commitments taken by social actors and their respect of the services and performances promised and dues).

---

<sup>6</sup> In relation to the nation-state boundaries, the exit options here discussed are not limited to the Hirschman’s total exit of secession and emigration. The peculiarity of Europeanisation it is exactly that it allows ‘partial’ exits that do not necessarily requires physical mobility and infrastructure relocation. On Alfred Hirschman concept of exit as applied to the state see Hirschman, A. O., 1978, Exit, Voice and the State, *World Politics*, 31: 90-107.

In this framework, the capacity, the scope and the effectiveness of the political production of public goods is dependent upon the control of the boundaries between different authority arenas of the nation states. The higher the control of the transaction across authority arenas, in principle the more extensive and effective is the capacity of autonomous production of public goods and the higher the capacity of the internal hierarchy to stabilise and legitimise its domination position. Also the incentives to internal political structuring (see below) of the territorial system depend on its external closure.<sup>7</sup> The level of boundary transcendence to be allowed in various domains is less and less the result of domestic political decision relative to struggles of power and/or cooperative negotiations within the territorial polity.

3) Europeanisation distributes in an uneven and differential way exit options and access to extra-territorial resources. Not all actors (institutional, collective, and individual) are endowed with the same 'structural capacity' and 'interest orientation' to exit and to transcend boundaries. Therefore, considerable redistribution of market, political and institutional power is likely to result within the state.

4) As a result of point 1, 2, and 3, Europeanisation tends to modify the terms of the established domestic 'political exchanges'. Such political exchanges are less and less based on the 'locking in' of some relevant actors/resources and therefore are less and less shaped by the effective production of behavioural conformity by the territorial hierarchy. Different types of domestic resources (votes, organisational strength, capital and investment control, institutional authority, political participation, professional credentials) lose centralised

---

<sup>7</sup> I first elaborated the relationship between boundary closure and internal structuring in Bartolini, S. 1998. *Exit Options, Boundary Building, Political Structuring. Sketches of a theory of Large-Scale Territorial and Membership 'Retrenchment/Differentiation versus 'Expansion/Integration (with reference to the European Union)*. Florence: EUI Working Papers SPS No. 98/1.

‘convertibility’;<sup>8</sup> they are less likely to be exchanged at the centre of the territorial system in view of reaching negotiated orders and compromises. Some actors/resources can subtract themselves from the costs involved in national political exchanges by exiting, transcending the boundaries and leaving the domestic games. Others actors/resources – usually the less mobile and more territorially bounded – find that their negotiation strength is devalued by the sheer boundary transcendence capacity of the other, formerly locked in, actors/resources.

## Europeanisation and the triangles of nation state political structuring

In Figure 2 I have represented the process of nation state formation and consolidation through three fundamental ‘triangles’. The figure helps to identify more clearly the potential implications of Europeanisation for the nation state political structuring.

(Figure 2 about here)

The figure should not be read as a pure temporal sequence. First, different nation-states followed different temporal trajectories, something that is left aside in this paper. More importantly, a) there were continuous interactions between the three main processes of *centre-formation* and consolidation, of *system building* and of *political structuring*; and b) there were continuous interaction within each of the three spheres. In the system building sphere, the production and reproduction of the symbols of *national identity*, the development of *social sharing (welfare) institutions*, and the institutionalisation of *political participation rights*, reinforced the centre formation in a cultural and administrative dimension. They also legitimised

---

<sup>8</sup> I expand the discussion of the concept of ‘centralised convertibility’ in Bartolini, Stefano, 2005. *Restructuring Europe. Centre formation, system building and political structuring between the nation state and the EU*, Oxford, Oxford University Press , 44-46.

decision rules to stiffen or loose the control of exit options for relevant actors/resources. Similarly, the building of extensive cultural, social and political equality areas strengthened the territorial loyalties and solidarities. The latter made possible the democratic political structuring of the nation state through the internal differentiation of the population along ideological, corporate and territorial lines, without engendering the survival of the nation-state itself.

Within each sphere interactions are also evident. In the centre formation sphere, the internal hierarchy could enlarge the scope and the reach of its monopolistic production of behavioural conformity in various and expanding domains by its continuous efforts to control external boundaries and to make membership groups to progressively correspond with territorial groups. Within the system building process, a self-reinforcing circle develops between the strengthening of national identities and the welfare institutions of social sharing and between the former two and the principles of political participation to decision making. In the internal political structuring sphere, the concrete outcome involved a different balance between the '*cleavage structures*' (political alignments represented by parties and party systems), the 'articulation of '*corporate interests*' (interest organizations and movements), and the establishment of '*centre-periphery relations*'. The process resulted in different equilibriums among the corporate, territorial and politico-electoral<sup>9</sup> forms and channels of political representation within each nation state.

In general, the localistic ties on which early territorial representation rested became progressively dysfunctional to the effective structuring of voice. Territorial representation was insufficient to satisfy the progressive internal differentiation of interests that socio-economic modernization produced within the territory. The effective structuring of voice within the nation-wide territory required cross-local linkages based on other kinds of affinities than those of a pure

---

<sup>9</sup> Electoral representation is often defined as 'territorial' because it is unquestionably based on the territory. In modern representation, however, electoral competition is meant to represent the internal political diversity of every single territorial constituency.

territorial nature. Yet in the more decentralised polities, centre-periphery relations got institutionalised in forms of federalism that somehow limited the centralised organisation of corporate intermediation structures and cleavage systems. In some cases the corporate interest intermediation structures acquired a role and an importance much bigger than in those cases where cleavage structures and ideological-electoral alignments were the dominant structuring mode. In short, different equilibriums between the three main forms of political structuring do characterise the experiences of different European polities.

The democratisation process of the 19th century and the development of internal political oppositions were processes of internal differentiation of externally consolidated territorial units. The internal structuring of voice options was mainly a function of such external territorial consolidation and boundary stability. Voice institutionalisation was a consequence of the declining opportunity for exit determined by the consolidation of the modern bureaucratic nation state. The latter, claimed control over both the economic, cultural and politico-administrative boundaries. The centralisation of its political administrative, economic and cultural processes meant that conflict could be voiced and solved only following the same logic; i.e., by centralisation of claims and political divisions.

Whether we look at Europeanisation in historical terms, as a developmental sequence, or in analytical terms, as a set of logical and likely consequences, the inherent tension between unbounded socio-economic transactions and the still bounded principles and practices of national cultural-political legitimation is likely to dominate the future of the Europeanisation process.

Europeanisation, and in particular the institutional process of European integration more clearly and directly affect the first triangle of 'centre-formation'. The creation of a new inter/supra-national centre, with its 'constitutionalised'<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> I use the term 'constitutionalised' in a soft sense, meaning that the bulk of the treaties implied activities, rights, etc. are defended by the Court of Justice autonomous jurisprudence.

goals of national boundary transcendence and exit options openings, affects the national political authorities in the direction indicated by the four points of the second section of the paper. To a large extent this was meant to be the case since the beginning. It was the core project of the integration.

Yet, Europeanisation also affects the nation state system-building sphere. This is more obvious in the sphere of social equality and social sharing institutions. Exit options from the once integrated cultural-economic-administrative coinciding boundaries of the state have increased rapidly, particularly in the sphere of economic rights and transactions. They have already considerably reduced the possibility for national political authorities of transferring to consumers of a given territory the cost of the political regulation of the market within that territory. More generally, the low control of the boundaries and of the resources locked within the territory may lower the level of public good political production in the field of social citizenship.

In the field of cultural equality, exit options are less evident. Cultural bonds, i.e. the sentiment of loyalty one feels toward the group he/she belongs to, are normally regarded as an element increasing the costs of exit options. In many ways, many observers even complain that national identities prove too resilient and advocate proactive action in the direction of system building at the European level: that is, the creation of some level or sphere of European identity. There is, however, another side to the impact of Europeanisation in the sphere of cultural identity. Cultural solidarities may sometimes be stronger at the sub-national level than at the national one, and they may exist or have existed across national boundaries. Under the fore mentioned conditions of declining exit costs in the economic and administrative spheres, such traditions of sub-national or cross-border cultural identifications may be revived, reinforced and re-mobilised.

Finally, Europeanisation affect indirectly even the sphere of political equality and political participation rights established at the nation state level. 'National democracy' is obviously devalued by the empowerment of the executives as against the national representative bodies; by the low political

accountability of most European Union institutions; by the considerable de facto curtailment of 'national' political options in various policy fields. There is however a deeper and more important sense in which national democracy is affected by Europeanisation. Beyond the specific 'democratic deficit' at the European Union level (notwithstanding, of course, the formal equality of political participation rights), Europeanisation redistributes political participation and political influence assets, producing new forms of political inequality by empowering and disempowering different kinds of political actors. Moreover, it also modifies the national mechanisms and avenues of political representation.

This latter point merits some further analysis even in a cursory paper like this. In analytical terms the impact of Europeanisation on national political representation can be seen from three different perspectives. The first concerns the *balance* among the three main forms of political representation (territorial, corporate and electoral); the second concerns the *modalities* or the '*structure*'<sup>11</sup> of each representation subsystem; the third concerns the problems of the *individual actors* and organizations prevalent in each subsystem.

Given the potential incompatibility<sup>12</sup> of the three forms unless a single unifying actor harmonise them, it is likely that changes in the *balance* favouring one of these channels is going to have feedback effect on the other. The theses suggesting that the European integration empowers interests groups to the detriment of political parties, or those pointing to the growing relevance of a new politics of territoriality within the EU, belong to this type of 'equilibrium' problem.

---

<sup>11</sup> I use the term 'structure' not to identify physical objects or institutions, but the property of the relations among the parts in a system or subsystem. See Easton, D., 1990. *The Analysis of Political Structures*, London, Routledge, 14.

<sup>12</sup> By 'incompatibility' I mean that no political system can be structured only in centre-periphery territorial terms, or only in corporate representation terms, or only in electoral majoritarian terms. In its pure form, none of these representation principles is likely to be acceptable. In real cases a different combination of the three principles occurs.

The modalities or the structure of each channel of representation - that is, the predominant national pattern of systemic *interaction* among the stable set of key actors - may be affected by the inconsistencies between European and national interaction patterns. The theses suggesting that the mode of interest intermediation at the national or sector level - be it corporatist, pluralist or 'etatist' - is challenged by the different EU pattern in the same area, is an example of this 'subsystem interaction' effect. Similarly, the European Union institutions and negotiations shifting the balance of domestic political power and redistribute control over policy initiative. Opening and closing channels for domestic actors to influence the initiation of policy, they contribute toward a decline in policy competition among national parties leading toward what I have called elsewhere forms of national 'collusive democracy'.<sup>13</sup>

The third perspective involves changes concerning the *individual actors* and the *specific organizations* that operate in each subsystem. This kind of questions concern, for instance, 1) the way in which specific local territories or types of local government are differentially affected by the new opportunity structures; 2) how individual parties suffer higher or lower internal tensions; 3) if specific interest organizations manage to keep their internal cohesion.

(Table 3 about here)

Table 3 summarizes the points made above. These three types of questions are connected but they should be kept separate. The balance among the three channels of political representation may change giving a new emphasis to a specific channel to the disadvantage of the other, but this may leave unchanged the traditional pattern of interaction in that channel. Similarly, it is possible that the territorial integration affects mainly the type of interest intermediation (weakening, for instance, a corporatism model to the advantage of a pluralist one)

---

<sup>13</sup> See Bartolini, S, 2000. Collusion, Competition and Democracy. Part II, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 12: 435-470.

without however changing significantly the key actors and the leading organizations. Party reactions to challenges emerging at the European level may lead to the declining relevance of partisanship as such, to changes in the predominant pattern of competition, to changes in the individual organizations (splits, new movements, etc.).

Summing up, the trust of the argument so far, is that in the past political structuring and boundary building in the economic, cultural and administrative field were part of the same process. Therefore, we must expect that boundary reshaping will have strong influence on the domestic forms of political structuring. New boundaries, new types of boundaries, and competition among different boundaries modify the opportunities for exit of individuals, groups and territories. As a result they also affect the conditions for and the modalities of political participation, influence, and equality.

## Conclusion: Europeanisation as ‘approach’ and as ‘political project’

The argument sketched in this short paper is that the Europeanisation process has a potential effect of political de-structuring for the nation state. I will argue in this conclusion that this - provided it is true - may be regarded as more or less problematic according to the approach one follows toward the European integration and, in the end, according to the political project that it is pursued through the European integration.

The peculiarly European experience of the formation of nation-states has been interpreted in this paper as a specific historical process in which the development of a wide-ranging (beyond local) identity (the national one, primarily) interacted with the creation of other political and social equality areas within which interest confrontation was disciplined by the development of social sharing principles and of collective(ised) decision-making capacities. Within this ideal type description, the *structural profile* of the nation-state is given by a close

relationship between identities, interests and institutions of social solidarity and of political decision-making.

With respect to this structural profile, the *dynamic processes* linked to Europeanisation and discussed into the first part of the paper 1) challenge the historical boundaries of the state through the process of their transcendence; 2) challenge the coincidence of such boundaries due to the imbalances and different speed of boundary transcendence in different domains (with the economy being the dominant and driving one); 3) reduces the capacity of locking in at the domestic level relevant actors/resources endowed with new opportunities of exit unequally distributed; 4) challenges the domestic institutions of social sharing and those of representation and political decision making.

To put it shortly, the Europeanisation process has a potential for challenging the very essence of what we can regard as *political modernity*: that is, the idea that *some degree of coherence* is necessary between cultural identities, socio-economic practices, and rules/institutions.

This is an idea of classical political sociology and more generally of modernity (and of 'modernisation'). This idea of a necessary *coherence* assumes that a 'modern' society is formed by virtue of the fact that a collectivity of human being a) share common understanding about what is important in their lives (identities, which are socially produced); b) mostly interact with each other inside this collectivity (practices; activities people pursue, by meeting, forming groups, sharing residential location, exchanging goods, communicating and exchanging information); c) and have ways to decide and determine how to regulate their lives in common (rules of the polity). Socio-economic practices may be closely related to social identities. However, many social practices are not related to social identities. Social practices with no relation to social identities are exactly those social practices that are enormously expanding within the Europeanisation process.<sup>14</sup>

This issue of 'coherence' or 'coincidence' of boundaries has an impressive genealogy, and it could be recognised as the central problem and concern of large part of classical sociology (e.g.: Talcott Parson would speak of the integration of the cultural, economic and political sub-systems). The liberal view of modernity seemed to have a nice solution to the coherence of these levels: the nation state was a community bounded in terms of (legitimated) rule setting and identity (the national) within which the most important social practices (economic, communication, rituals, etc.) link the people inside its boundaries. If people shared a sense of their being part of one collectivity, most social practices were bounded territorially and the polity had legitimate rules for taking collective and collectivised decisions, including those crucial ones that imply redistribution choices to the disadvantaged.

Whenever accelerated social and or political change produced a rapid extension of socio-economic practices beyond locally rooted communities and identities, (e.g. industrialisation, urbanisation, social dislocation, redefinition of politico-military boundaries, etc. in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>) the uprooting of traditional identities went together with the crisis of the collective rule setting and institutions. The sociology of the classic age (Durkheim and Weber as key figures) can be seen as an attempt at re-conceiving somehow orderly relations between the extended socio-economic practices, uprooted social identities, and political adaptation in decisional rules.

To put it differently it could be said that whenever social practices extend and social identities get uprooted, polities are in need of adaptation. The nation state solution might not have been a perfect solution everywhere, but it was clearly a dominant model and frame of mind. This is witnessed by the fact that after the crisis of the WWI and WWII the proposed solutions were still in this line of thinking. The variety of people on territories was reduced and bound by a

---

<sup>14</sup> In this formulation and in the discussion that follows I have been strongly influenced by Wagner, Peter, 1996. *Crisis of Modernity: Political Sociology in Historical Context*. In

relatively coherent set of convention for action (increase national homogeneity). Within nation states, franchise expansion, social right institutionalisation and channelling of voice via mass parties and welfare bureaucracies were strengthened, increasing the boundaries with the outside people. All sort of social practices, including the economic ones, were re-nationalised with respect to the relatively high openness of some of them in the last phase of the 19th century and the gold standard.

We could put the problem in the following terms: the considerable extension of the social practices following various forms of political, social and economic mobilisation was made to overlap strongly with the rules for collective deliberation (in the polity defined as nation-state) and many of the socially important means of individual orientation (social identities). The creation and strengthening of 'communities' such as the nation, the class (and others) were means by which the political problematic could be fixed. In a sense, this was what had to be represented and at the same time it coincided with the unit within which it could be represented.

Since the end of the 1960's Europeanisation is a new phase of massive expansion of socio-economic practices and interactions that is breaking up the three-layered coherence between identities, practices and institutions - if we want to use this language - or a rapid dismantling of the coincidence among different types of nation-state boundaries, following my earlier terminology. There is less and less overlap among the economic, political and cultural boundaries of the nation-state, or, again with a different terminology, there is a higher dissonance between the spheres of social identities, and those of the enlarged social practices. According to several accounts, also the formation of social identities is freer than in the past from the strong determination of cultural and social policies emphasising the national identity and controlling cross-boundaries exchange of people, messages and goods.

---

Stephen P. Turner, ed. *Social Theory and Sociology. The Classics and Beyond*. Cambridge (Mass.)/Oxford, Blackwell, 97-116.

As far as the polity is concerned, it is obvious that the very idea of political deliberation depends on concepts of boundaries, membership and representation. At the same time, however, it is clear that we witness a process by which the 'interests' and more broadly the 'social practices' to which politics refer are no longer easily confinable to any space and therefore it becomes increasingly difficult to define membership groups for political deliberation. Equally difficult may become to build a community with a significant degree of shared values and therefore a substantive base for common deliberation.

The perception of this situation is accompanied by the differentiation of the possible solutions to it. Simplifying in a radical way one can identify three basic approaches toward an answer. These approaches bear some resemblance also to different epistemological schools, to different cultural traditions. What is more important, these different approaches end up being also three different ways to see the process of Europeanisation and to define its ultimate nature and meaning.

A first line of thought continues the project of classical sociology in the sense that it tends to perceive the existence of a certain overlap between social identities, political boundaries and social practices as a precondition for establishing new political agency and a 'rational' political order. The scattered elements of identities, interests and institutions need to be reconciled in some way into a new coherent order. If this reconstruction of 'political modernity' will not occur at some different scale than the nation state, tensions, conflicts, and problems will emerge that may jeopardise the specific elements of the European civilisation.

In this perspective the Europeanisation process - and in this case the European Union in particular - is both a main source of problems and also a possible, may be the only possible, solution to the problems. The EU is therefore seen as a potential project for regaining some degree of coherence between extended social practices, social identities, solidarity ties and rules of deliberation at the European level. Eventually, this is the yardstick with which and the lenses through which the process of Europeanisation is seen and judged.

This 'political project' of reconstructing modernity at the above nation-state EU level requires action to rise the external boundaries of Europe so far rather weak and basically limited to economic trade and some administrative and regulative regime. It requires some level of territorial locking in of the too potentially mobiles actors/resources. It requires, above all, some system building, that is the creation of at least a layer of cultural identity able to sustain the creation of social sharing institutions and the legitimation of decision rules. Only in these conditions, centralised (this time at the European level) political exchanges may be restored based on the self-reinforcing logic of the material and cultural costs of boundary transcendence and by the increased political production of public goods at the new level.

In a second perspective, the European (and even global) extension of socio-economic practices is seen as less problematic. The difficulty or unwillingness to conceptualise every macro-social intellectual category leads to the conclusion that the human individual, without assuming specific identity ties, has to be taken as the sole methodological reference point. From this point of view social identities and their transformations are seen as unproblematic or irrelevant. Communities and collective entities tend to be seen as based on highly contingency social and moral bases. At the same time, and consequently, any coherence of identities, socio-economic practices and rule setting institutions is not only no longer possible, but also no longer necessary. The colossal expansion of socio-economic practices beyond localities and nations will have some sort of self-regulating capacity and the corresponding empowerment of individuals will free them. Collective and collectivised decisions no longer need to rest on well-defined membership groups' definitions and on practices of participation and representation. A variety of different forms of accesses and an enriched set of actors (among which experts, bureaucrats and lobbyist are especially important) may easily 'legitimise' a fragmented decision-making process that is not only multi-layer, but also multi-sites.

Within this frame of mind, Europeanisation in general and the European integration is seen, evaluated and judged mainly as a solution to the growing problems of instrumental co-ordination of this enormous extension of socio-economic practices and fragmentation of interests and identities. As political agency is unlikely to emerge and unnecessary (indeed, there is no perception of the need to reconstruct any political agency), the European Union can be seen as the gigantic 'forum' for co-ordination games. Not only the split between identities, practices and institutions is seen as unproblematic, but it may also be welcome and prized. No political re-structuring of Europe being necessary, the fragmentation of cultural, social and even political equality areas are not likely to generate dangerous tensions, even in the perspective situation of a security or economic crisis in the area.

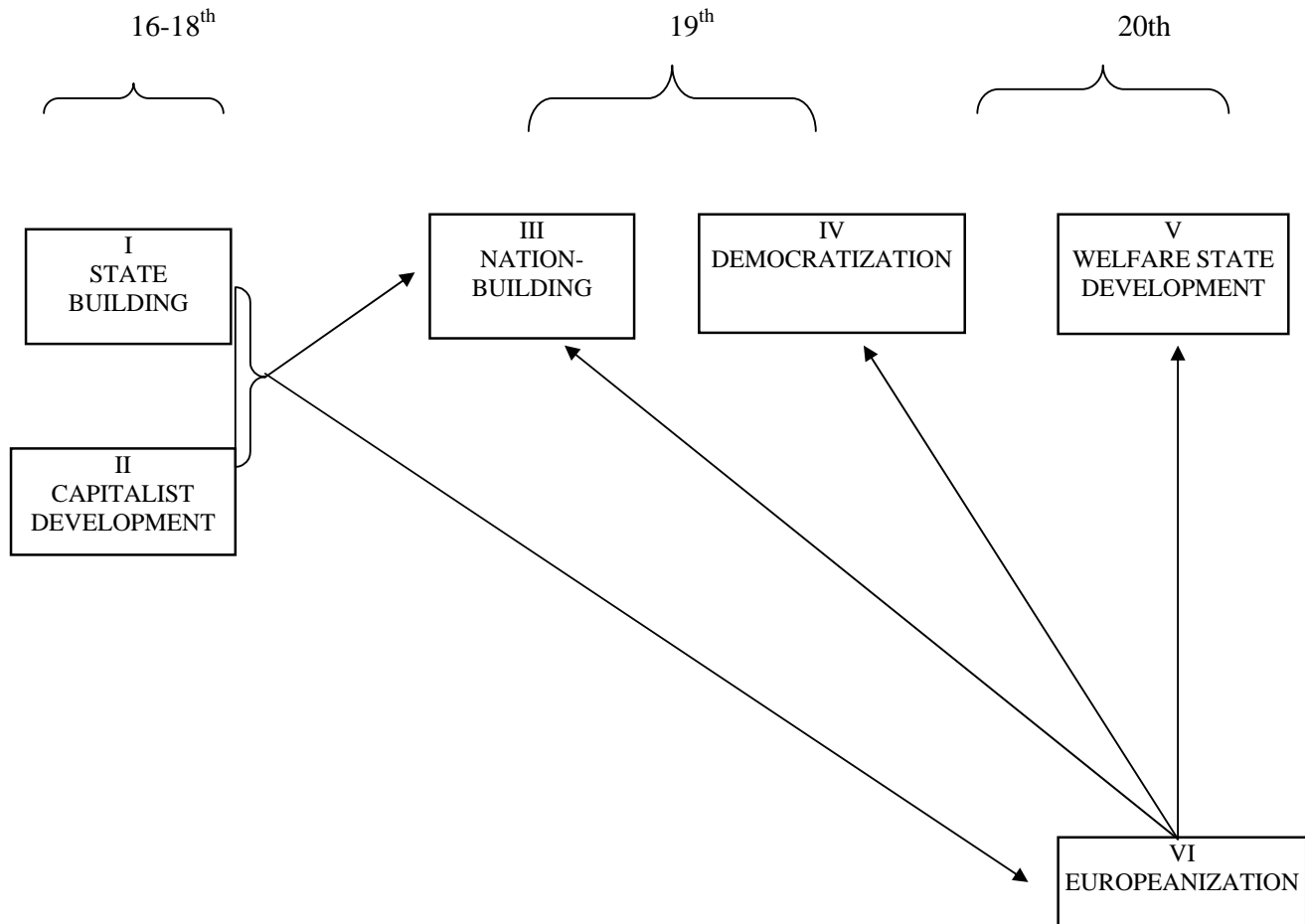
In a third perspective, the disenchantment with 'political modernity' – as I have identified in this paper with as a coherent relationship between social identities, practices and institutions – couples with a corresponding disenchantment with the idea of autonomous individual actors/subjects and their rational and instrumental interactions. The scepticism about the validity of any social science concepts leads to a devaluation of social science theory in its classical structuralist as well as in its contemporary rationalistic premises. The problematic aspects of the social order are not related to some objective determinants and contradictions, tensions, conflicts, etc, but rather to the ways these are 'constructed' ideationally. Therefore, even if the split between identities, interests and institutions for political deliberation is acknowledged, the possibility that a different legitimising principle and discourse can be advanced successfully is left open. Indeed, what was here called 'political modernity' or 'individualistic co-ordination' solutions and perspectives are seen as nothing else than successful legitimising social constructions.

This perspective sees and reflects upon Europeanisation and the European integration project assuming that we can not discuss models for the future based on generalised social science knowledge and learn from past history of nation state

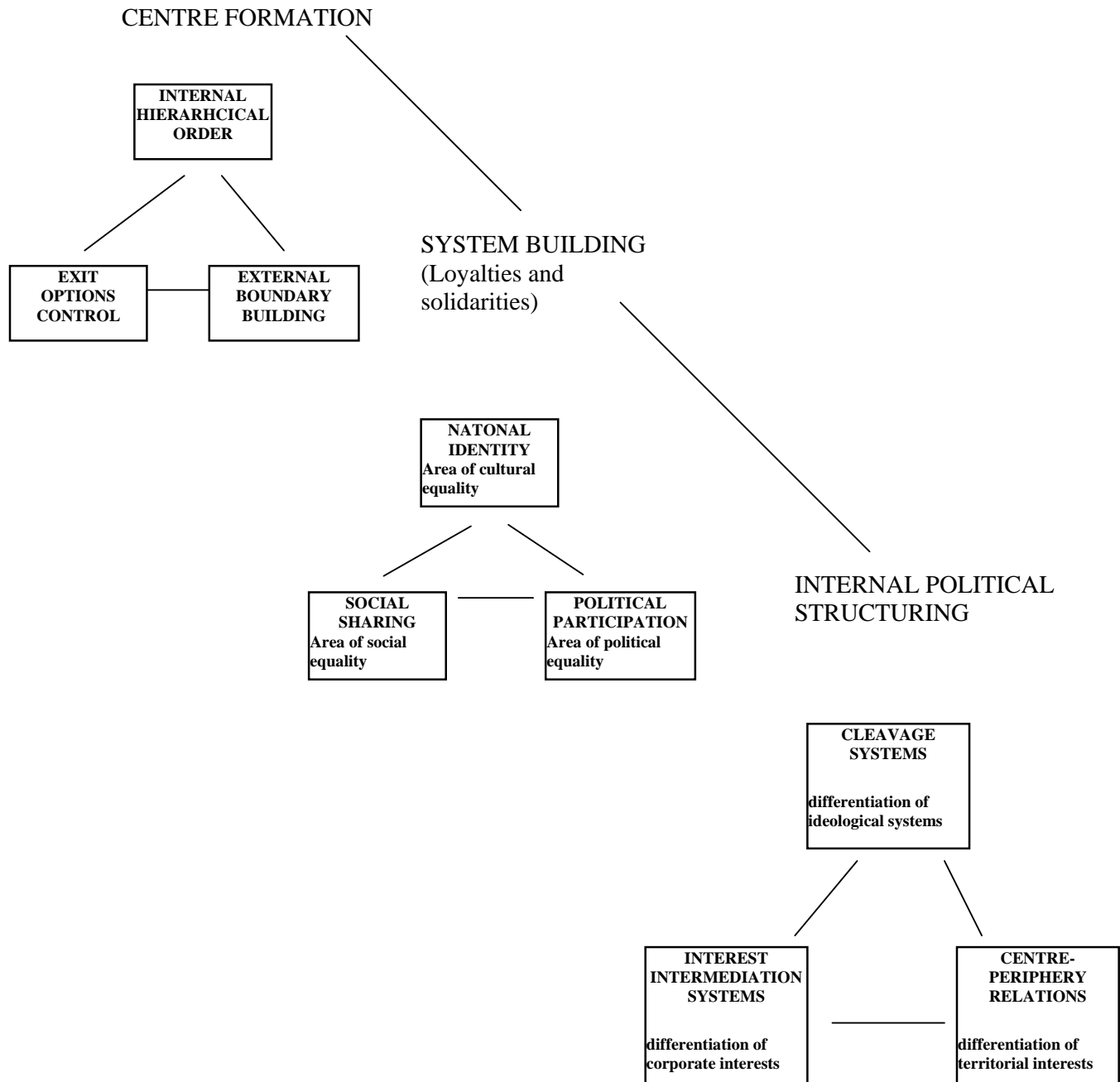
formation. At the same time, we cannot for sure legitimise a European order on merely individualistic premises. This perspective invites to focus on how this order is 'constructed' in the mediation between identities, social practices and institutions. In this case it is more difficult to see on what ground such Europeanisation 'non-project' can be built, discussed, or evaluated. However, this perspective implies that a polity with a 'rational' and stable order can be constructed and legitimised even if identities, practices and institutions do not tend to some form of coherent set, and even if the triangle of identity-social sharing and legitimated decision-making is definitely broken.

The three perspectives/approaches referred to in this conclusion could be regarded primarily as three different interpretative schemes of the current problems of the 'Europeanisation' process. To a large extent they are different interpretative schemes based on different methodological premises. Yet, they also are three 'realities' coexisting one with the other. They 'exist' in the sense that each of them has its own cultural underpinning, represents real and identifiable interests of different actors, and is also linked to specific institutional settings and solutions. In this sense, the three perspectives are also three different 'political projects' for the uneasy mix of identities, interests and institutions that characterises the current state of the European polity(ies).

*Figure 1: The six developmental trends in European history since the 16th century*



*Figure 2: The triangles of 'nation-state' political structuring*



*Table 1: Types of boundaries*

	the boundary is defined in terms of:			
	market transactions	cultural traits	politico-administrative claims	force military/coercion claims
<b>the limits surrounding the territories are defined as</b>	fringes	margins	borders	frontiers
<b>these limits are created and consolidated by the processes of</b>	market- building	nation-building	functional regime building	state-building
<b>focal point for operationalisation of the territory</b>	economic rights, property rights, exchange options, factors' mobility, common currency	membership space characterised by the traits of the inhabitants (language, religion, ethnicity)	political-social rights, regulatory systems (education, welfare, labour market)	central repressive and extractive agencies

*Table 2: Exit options and boundary building*

	<b>exit option units</b>	<b>boundary building mechanisms</b>
<b>economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-goods</li> <li>-services</li> <li>- tourists</li> <li>- corporations</li> <li>- investors</li> <li>- customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- embargoes</li> <li>- tariffs</li> <li>- labour-market controls</li> <li>- credit/capital controls</li> <li>- nationalisation of economy</li> </ul>
<b>culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-messages, news</li> <li>-styles, ideas</li> <li>-fashion, fads</li> <li>-scribes, scientists</li> <li>- religious/ideological orders</li> <li>- intellectuals</li> <li>- missionaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-prohibition</li> <li>- censorship</li> <li>- loyalty-building rites/symbols</li> <li>-control of socialising agencies</li> <li>- nationalisation of culture</li> </ul>
<b>politico-administrative (functional regimes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- voters</li> <li>- candidates</li> <li>- legal claimants (judges/cases)</li> <li>- sub-state governments</li> <li>- students</li> <li>- welfare recipients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- protection of citizenship</li> <li>- national specific social rights</li> <li>- professional credential codes</li> <li>- national jurisdiction</li> <li>- national educational title system</li> </ul>
<b>force/coercion/extraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- soldiers, armies</li> <li>- police</li> <li>-spies</li> <li>-underground movements</li> <li>-organised crime</li> <li>- tax</li> <li>- territorial secession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- territorialisation of defence</li> <li>- territorialisation of policing</li> <li>- borders controls</li> <li>- territorial extraction system</li> <li>- restriction on residence</li> <li>- restrictions on travelling</li> </ul>

*Table 3: European integration and changes in the domestic political structuring*

	Changes in the BALANCE among channels	Changes in the SYSTEMIC INTERACTIONS within each channel	Changes in the INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONS of each channel
territorial unites	rebirth of territorial politics?	changing logic of centre-periphery	territorial 'winners' and 'losers'
corporate organizations	empowerment of 'interests'?	changing modalities of interest intermediation	interest differentiation affecting the cohesion and solidarity of established domestic interest organizations
electoral organizations	decline of mass-politics?	changing pattern of party-electoral competition	party splits, new electoral alignments