Robert Schuman Centre

Reconstructing European Space:
From Territorial Politics
to Multilevel Governance

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Introduction: The Rise of "Regional Europe"

In the emerging system of multilevel governance in the European Union, sub-central territorial units have recently received much attention. A conceptual problem in this respect is that the creation of a supranational legal order and of a Single Market at the European level coincides with considerable diversity of territorial structures within Member States. This not only creates immense problems for the construction of an equitable and balanced European framework of territorial politics (Scharpf, 1991), it also makes a coherent theoretical treatment of the phenomenon difficult. It is the latter problematic this chapter will address.

A constructivist approach is advanced here to overcome a number of divisions that have traditionally prevented a holistic treatment of the subject. There is, as far as the regional element in such an analysis is concerned, the distinction between regional*ism* and regional*ization*, signifying the emphasis on either the 'politics from below' or, by contrast, on the 'politics from above'. Another significant gulf divides the study of European integration - in which the state as an ordering principle is often treated as a static presence - and the work on state theory - where the contingency of the state as a framework for politics is spelt out. Clearly, any treatment of the transformation of territorial politics in Western Europe must be able to capture adequately developments on, and interactions between, all three levels of analysis: region, state, Europe. What is called for - and what this chapter seeks to provide - is an analytical framework allowing for the integration of what have so far remained partial treatments of the subject. This is an exercise which is very much in the spirit of "encompassing comparison" (Tilly, 1984).

One reason necessitating renewed efforts to inject theoretical foundation into the debate about the emerging 'regional Europe' is the failure of traditional integration theories to conceptualize the territorial aspects of European governance. Integration theories have either concentrated on the interests and loyalties of specific groups, classes or economic sectors (Haas, 1958), or else tended to reify territorial cleavages as "national interests" of the Member States (Hoffmann, 1966; Moravcsik, 1991). Obviously, the increase of both regional interest mobilization (Mazey and Mitchell, 1993; Benz, 1993; McAleavey, 1994) and of EU activity in the field of regional and structural policy (Keating and Hooghe, 1994; Tömmel, 1992) which recent years have witnessed was anticipated neither by neo-functionalists nor by intergovernmentalists. Yet it is arguably this policy-space which proved to be one of the most dynamic areas of European integration in the post-Single European Act phase.

Regional policy has since 1987 gone through two far-reaching reforms, turning it into the second-largest item of the Union budget. In a parallel development, the more inclusive notion of 'economic and social cohesion' has been introduced to the Treaty by the Single Act, a goal that was further developed by the Maastricht Treaty. Maastricht also introduced a consultative "Committee of the Regions" representative of local and regional authorities enhancing the role of the 1988 Consultative Council.

The interplay of the 'bottom-up' process of regional lobbying at the centre and of 'top down' regionalised policy making from the Union centre means that the traditional two-level game of domestic-international linkage (Putnam, 1988) is being replaced by a novel system in which direct access channels link regional actors, Member State governments and European institutions (Leonardi and Nanetti, 1990; Marquand, 1991). These are the foundations of 'multilevel governance' (Marks, 1993).

Yet, for a number of reasons, this process is much more complex and multi-faceted than the often-cited notion of a "Europe of the Regions" suggests. For one, the state is not in decline with respect to the resources it confers on the actors operating at this level - if regions are growing in significance within the Euro-polity, it is certainly not by replacing states (Anderson, 1991; Borras *et al.* 1994). Indeed, central governments can, relative to sub-central units, benefit from the transfer of competences to the European level through specific arrangements made for policy implementation (McAleavey, 1994). National governments, after all, have been compensated for this transfer of competences with the growth of exclusive participatory rights in the European decision-making process (Weiler, 1981). Neither is a regionalized Europe necessarily the general trend of the emerging supranational legal order (Hessel and Mortelmans, 1993) - the tension between centralization and decentralization in European integration in the link between Member State and Union is equally discernable in the relationship between regional and European level actors.

Secondly, the interventionist nature of EU regional policy is not only in potential, but in actual conflict with the deregulatory, neoliberal regime of the Single Market (Fernandez Martin and Stehmann, 1991; Wishlade, 1993). Despite the relative growth of structural funds expenditure within the Union budget, the prospects for a systematic policy of territorial equalization moving away from the traditional state-centred mode of redistribution (Wallace, 1982) - something that would be in line with the declared intention of the Union - remain limited (McKay, 1991). Against the background of the limits to regional intervention in

the economy (Hebbert, 1984), the policy conflicts at the European level mean that for most regions the implications of *national* macro-economic policy-making remain, for the time being, dominant (Borras *et al.*, 1994).

Thirdly, the fact that regional interests and resources have been structured for centuries by the respective states has led to widely diverging types of regional empowerment and very different modes of territorial politics (Rokkan and Urwin, 1982). Even if some convergence among the paths of regionalization in Western Europe has been identified (Krosigk, 1986) the continuing disparities are significant enough to cause fundamental difficulties in the attempts at harmonizing or integrating the regional level in the course of European integration (Engel, 1993; Benz, 1993). Consequently, any analysis of the relationship between regions, Member States and the European Union must address the specificities of individual regions and the environment of domestic structures as well as the general dynamics of European processes.

Conceptualizing Regions, States and Europe

Defining 'region' is a hazardous and, it could be argued, futile task. Choosing analytical categories always carries the risk of either blurring the lines between what is empirically relevant and what is not - the invention of "analytical cat-dogs" (Sartori, 1991) - or else preventing comparative analysis on the basis of too great disparities. This problem is especially pronounced in the study of regions, where concepts from the disciplines of law, political science, geography, history and economics are competing, and where, as a result, the desire to have comparable units at any rate vies with the tendency to accept a basic incomparability.

Adding to these conceptual problems the disagreements of European integration theory and, within that theoretical debate, the lack of an explicit conception of the state, the analytical chaos of addressing the regional issue in the Union is almost pre-determined. What is needed is not simply a useful - that is, flexible while precise - notion of what constitutes a 'region', but also concepts of 'state' and 'Europe' which are compatible, for it is only through looking at the relationships between these levels that we enhance our understanding of multilevel governance.

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Considering such difficulties, empirical research - if it is to recognise that theory matters and should be explicit at the outset of a research effort (Keohane and Hoffmann, 1991) - ought to be based on three foundations: it must follow, firstly, a *constructivist* epistemology, that means it must conceive of territorial units on all levels as social constructs; it must, second, view the political significance of territorial units in the nature of the *processes* for which they provide containers - therefore the emphasis in research must be on processes rather than static arrangements or 'events'; and thirdly, such research must be aware of and address the *agency/structure problem*, meaning that no level in the studied process must, *ex ante*, be assumed to be ontologically primary.

The relevance of a constructivist perspective on 'region' is apparent: in many cases the significant phase in the establishment of regional governments - and, as a corollary, the social and political construction of the 'region' - is still in living memory. Yet the point here is not only that at some stage in history institutions were created and given certain administrative competences. More importantly, the construction of a region is seen to involve the development of territorial identities, the structuring of social relationships in space and the perception of this space as an arena for public policy-making. It is because of this that the idea that regions as either institutions or territorial spaces are exogenously given must be rejected, since these are acquire their political significance only through the context of social interaction (Bourdieu, 1991).

A constructivist view of 'region' is that of a process involving four 'stages' of institutionalisation: "1) assumption of territorial shape; 2) development of conceptual shape; 3) development of institutions; and 4) establishment as part of the regional system and regional consciousness of the society concerned" (Paasi, 1986: 121). This evolutionary understanding of 'region' forces us to conduct longitudinal analysis. What is necessary is a look at the long-term structuration of political and social relationships in order to identify which elements in the region-building process have occurred (Paasi, 1986; Paasi, 1991). How 'strong' a region is, is therefore neither reducible to certain constitutional or budgetary powers, nor to current survey data on 'regional identity'.

A further aspect concerns ontological assumptions. It is in this respect that a lot of the literature on 'regionalism' is removed from the literature on 'regionalization'. In the former, the concern is about the formation of ethnic identities and the mobilization of mass support in the name of these. Thus, these theories are commonly emphasising the primary role of agency in the process of region-building: they see the fundamental determinants of political

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development in the actions of individuals and groups. Consequently, regions are seen as coming into being 'from below'. Regionalization literature, on the other hand, deducts the emergence of regions from the necessities of state restructuring and policy-efficiency (Forth and Wohlfahrt, 1992). Regionalization and regional policy-making have traditionally been top-down processes by which the state centre has devolved competences and distributed resources to lower levels, a view that usually implies that regions can only be understood as part of, and therefore as ontologically subordinate to the larger state structure.

Such coexistence of these different approaches to the understanding of the region-building process - something which has contributed considerably to the general confusion surrounding the concept of 'region' - is an expression of the agency/structure problem which is of concern to all the social sciences. While perhaps no final resolution of this basic dilemma is possible, efforts have been made towards this end by conceptualising actors and structure as co-constituting each other in the process of structuration (Giddens, 1984; Onuf, 1990; Cohen, 1991). Without going into the details of this approach, we can note here that recent advances in regional geography have been utilizing structuration theory (Paasi, 1991; Murphy, 1991). The resultant conception of regional actors and structures is consistent with the demands of constructivism and process-based research: it requires going back in time and determining, on the one hand, the influence of structures on regional actors' identity and intentions and, on the other the impact of individual or corporate actors on the evolution of structure.

A compatible, constructivist view must also be taken of the state. Traditional literature often implicitly assumes the state as a unitary actor or an "apparent whole" (Cerny, 1990). Yet, for the purposes of the analysis undertaken here it is important to note that not only the nation (Anderson, 1983), but also the state is a social construction. Walzer has argued that the state, as much as Anderson's "imagined community", is

> invisible ... [and needs to be] personified,... symbolized ... and imagined before it can be conceived. ... The image does not so much reinforce existing political ideas (though it may later be used for that purpose) as underlie them...the image provides the starting point for political thinking, and so long as it is effective, no other starting point is possible (Walzer, 1967, p.194)

In such an understanding of the state, symbolic politics - and, as argued above, territorial politics are to a significant degree symbolic politics - are more than simply important. Symbolic politics come 'first', in that it is through them that

[handwritten at top: in the absence of regionalism symbolic politics or take a different course... loss of legitimacy]

spaces or arenas are constituted or maintained. Only then can 'real' political bargaining take place.

Consequently, the emergence of individual states as well as the construction of nations has been contingent on the interplay of historical macro- and micro-developments (Rokkan, 1973; Flora, 1981). Indeed, the conceptual and semantic move of conferring upon "state" the characteristics of oneness and unitary action was in itself a process of construction (Luhmann, 1990). Consequently also the state ought to, in the context of research on territorial politics, be recognized as a container for processes of structuration. It is through such a perspective that change as well as continuity becomes visible (Cerny, 1990; Poggi, 1990). Analysis of the internal differentiation within the state then opens up the possibility of studying transformation within and beyond the state.

In the framework of such processes territorial politics have, in the past, been important in determining the stability of individual states (Hueglin, 1989; Sharpe, 1989; Keating, 1991). Their significance derives from the principle of territoriality - the claim to exclusive jurisdiction within a territory - which is inherent in the concept of statehood (Ruggie, 1993). Such claims to superiority of the state could only succeed as result of a process in which smaller as well as larger territorial units lost their claims to autonomous rule - the process rather than the event of 'Westphalia' (Krasner, 1991). In this way economic and cultural centres became the centres of political systems, or, if not, policentric economic and political territories - like both the Rhine and the Po valley during the early modern period - were comparatively late in being incorporated into the modern state system (Rokkan, 1973).

The relationship between the state structure and territorial political systems can follow three generic modes:

- regional actors are an integral part of central decision-processes (as in federal systems)
- regional actors have a privileged channel of interest intermediation with the centre (such as the existence of regional institutions or regionalised political party systems)
- regional decision-processes are severely constrained by the interests formulated, and the structures maintained by actors at the centre.

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This is the territorial expression of, respectively, inclusion, access and control structures in the modern state (Cerny, 1990: 36-42). Each of these are, of course, ideal-types, and an honest assessment would admit that the complexity could not be reduced to such categories. Yet, as a way of incorporating the territorial politics differences in Western Europe mentioned above, differentiating between such modes as part of a process-based conceptualization of the state is necessary.

In the present context, a similar conception ought to guide the investigation of how Europe has come to be seen as a political space for joint decision-making. This cannot be simply the "agreement among key Member State executives" as the rationalistic explanation goes (Moravcsik, 1993). It is a long-term process which

> *is*, contrary to some other statements, "a thread woven into the fabric" of the European society - at least in the 1990s. The European Community and its institutions are based on more than the just 'political will' of heads of governments or just legal treaty properties (as important as they might be). They are reactions to persistent, fundamental patterns of West European political and social developments (Wessels, 1991, p. 136).

Yet, in traditional accounts of European integration it is all too readily accepted that politics and policies are, in fact, defined within a European space. A constructivist account of that process has to focus on the creation, not simply of joint policies or common institutions, but on the discourses and practices which must have preceded these activities in order to make them possible. The argument here is that the European project is about more than economic rationality and utility-maximisation. It is also, crucially, about those reflexive foundations that provide the legitimacy, the purpose and ultimately the *rationale* for common governance.

The considerable advances of constructivism in international relations in recent years also have their value as contributions to the study of European integration. It is important, in this context, to examine the construction of "Europe". This includes, but goes beyond, the debate about whether there is a 'European identity' able to compete with established national identities (Smith, 1993; Garcia, 1993) At stake is also the more general discourse about "Europe" - the way in which the region has come to be seen as a natural space for politics (even if these are adversarial).

The building-blocks for a constructivist perspective on "Europe" are there: in literature and the arts, in general, the presence of a specifically 'European'

dimension is long recognised (Lützler, 1982). Yet, this 'Europe' clearly is a social and political construct: there is no 'natural' boundary (Isensee, 1993) - indeed current attempts at constructing such a boundary to the Euro-polity are fraught with difficulty and contradiction (Christiansen and Jørgensen, 1995). The acceptance of a specifically European perspective to politics in this region was, indeed is, contingent and competing with alternative visions such as 'the Atlantic' or 'the West'.

At the same time, the construction of this 'Europe' has depended on the parallel construction of an 'Other' against which a separate identity could be established (Neumann and Welsh, 1993). There are also diverse national interpretations of what 'Europe' actually constitutes (Wæver, 1990). Indeed, the success of the European project might well depend on the distinctive of the interpretation each nation can extract from the discourse on 'Europe'.

This approach indicates that the political meaning of 'Europe' has structuring impact on the present which is, to a large extent, independent of any current rationalization that is preoccupied with 'facts' or 'interests'. A constructivist perspective on the presence of 'Europe' is bound to show the elements of structure that are, respectively, underpinning and weakening the significance of that space. At the same time, a constructivist perspective will, of course, also confront the state with its 'unnatural' nature. Thus a straight record might be set where in the past the nation-state has often been reified as the only imaginable framework for political processes - since constructivism tends to illuminate the contingency of *any* territorial configuration of politics, it would certainly help to understand better the significance of the parallel processes of Europeanisation and regionalisation.

Conceptualizing Territorial Politics in the West European State System

The elements of structure which are most relevant for territorial politics in Western Europe can be grouped into three broad categories: institutions, identities and economics. Institutional structures consist of the legal-administrative framework of - and around - the state, thus going beyond a mere legal definition of the 'constitutional order'. At a first level this is recognition of the institution 'state' itself, i.e. the fact that the division between public and private, and between inside and outside - the institution of hierarchy and exclusiveness which follows from the doctrine of sovereignty - has during the past centuries significantly shaped the nature of politics and governance (Cerny,

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1990). At a second level, constitutional structure arranges political life within the boundaries of the state in a certain way.

This structural power of constitutionalism operates through a number of channels. Constitutional norms and stipulations convey 'rights' and obligations on different actors. Limitations placed on the political agenda predetermine the conceivable range of action. Administrative and fiscal powers confer resources to some actors as opposed to others, while legitimacy is derived from acting within a constitutional framework.

Yet, it would be wrong - and inconsistent with a constructivist approach - to regard such a constitutional order as static. The view taken here is that a constitution is a process that, even though relatively stable, is subject to political action and therefore also to change - ultimately, the strength of a constitutional order is only found in individuals' support for, and compliance with, the principles it espouses. Still, it is seen as an element of structure because it is by definition exerting a diffuse influence on the public policy process, the structuring of interests and of resources - an influence which is beyond the individual actor's reach and which he or she must accept as given.

The notion of 'identity structure' recognizes the significance of the historical process of nationalism which has created distinct communities - nations - in Western Europe. Even if these are understood, for the purposes of the present research, as socially constructed, they are nevertheless very 'real' in their consequences (Smith, 1995). In particular, the structural power of identities is seen to lie in the underlying assumptions about the boundaries of collective political action. Nationalism and related concepts of identity-formation can, of course, be constructed in different ways. The main distinction is usually drawn between ascriptive and associative constructions of the 'nation', with the former creating considerably higher barriers to entry into the group. Yet both confront political actors with constraints and opportunities which are beyond immediate control. Nationalism implies that norms like equality, solidarity, even liberty - norms which need to be regulated within a collectivity - are set by the nation for the nation. The consequences for politics are immense, even more so because they remain to a large extent implicit and thus removed from the agenda. One development - important in this context - is that in Western Europe, through the fusion of the concept of nationalism with that of statism, it has acquired a profoundly territorial meaning. The definition of 'nation' is intimately bound up with authority over the institutions of a state and thereby the acquisition of, and control over, territory.

Yet, we ought to consider that this state of affairs might well be in a process of change. Recent departures in political theory, while recognising the traditional link between national identity and citizenship, argue that 'post-national politics' - the legitimation and democratic governance of novel political systems - are possible and indeed practical. A variety of proposals regarding a conception of post-national citizenship have been made (Habermas, 1992; Jachtenfuchs, 1995; Tassin, 1992). As discussed below, the competing relevance of the nation and of the 'post-national' must be ascertained through empirical research. The argument here is merely that "identity matters" - an argument that ought neither to imply nor to exclude the primacy of any of the multiple identities that bear on territorial politics.

Economic structure, finally, is taken into account in recognition of the significance it has had for territorial politics, in particular. There are a number of dimensions to this structural component: on the one hand, national economic systems are located on a spectrum between market and state, that is, they exhibit a distinct compromise between vertical and horizontal decision-modes in relation to the economy. In Western Europe, the general post-war consensus has been to rely on a fusion of liberalized market with considerable regulatory and budgetary intervention from the public sector. Whether this consensus over the 'mixed economy', *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* or *dirigisme* is still present in the 1990s or not, what is clear is that systems emerged quite differently from one state to another and indeed from one region to another. In that the nature of such a system implies significant boundary conditions for the possibilities for, and the requirements of, regional or industrial policy, such systemic environments imply structural constraints and opportunities for territorial politics (Helm and Smith, 1989).

On the other hand, the structure of the economy itself has important implications for the execution of these politics. Firstly, national and regional institutions are dependent to some extent on the economic base of their territory: this determines not only the fiscal viability of public activity, but also the degree to which social and economic interests are able to influence policy-making on different levels. Secondly, given that economic development must to some extent be uneven, it creates cleavages, and therefore competitive advantages between territories and dependencies between levels of economic and political decision-making. Again, the view taken here of economic structure does not imply that it is not malleable to action, merely that changes to the economic systems and situations of states and regions are difficult to institute in the short-term. And, as with constitutionalism and nationalism, economic structure takes its power from the implicitness of the assumptions on which it is based.

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Actors on all three levels studied here derive their material strength as well as their legitimacy not only from their internal arrangements, goals and strategies, but also from the way they are positioned structurally within the system of multilevel governance. Matching the levels of agency with the structural dimensions leads to the matrix below - it is a way of visualizing the territorial expression of a "structured field of political action" (Cerny, 1990):

Structural Dimensions / Agency Levels	Structure$_{Institutions}$	Structure$_{Identity}$	Structure$_{Economy}$
Actors$_{Regional}$			
Actors$_{Member\ State}$			
Actors$_{European}$			

Figure 1 Levels of Agency and Structural Dimensions in European Multilevel Governance

These three structural dimensions are 'political opportunity structures' (Kitschelt, 1988) - effectiveness of political action depends, according to this concept, on systemic parameters on which actors have no immediate influence. For them, this structural position is, at the outset, exogenous, yet at the same time it might offer opportunities for political action which are specific to the respective actor's structural environment - thus the concept implies structural constraints as well structural opportunities as the foundations for dynamic change:

a) they can derive authority and resources from constitutional powers, administrative and legislative competences and budgetary capacity to intervene regulatively in the social, political and economic life of the region;

b) political actors may mobilize historical identity patterns which convey added legitimacy to their claims and facilitate the forging of territorial interest associations, coalitions and networks cutting across secondary cleavage lines;

c) they might be offered support from the structure and potential of the regional economy, including both the way in which it is inserted into the production and trading system of the Single Market and the vitality its internal make-up: sectoral structure, the degree of public-private interaction and relevant locational factors.

The influence of national systems on all these parameters is clearly strong. This is visible, in particular, perhaps, in respect to the institutional dimension - it is for this reason that most comparative works on territorial politics look at states rather than individual regions. Yet, mere reference to the national environment is an increasingly limiting procedure in the study of regional constrains and

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opportunities. The West European development is one of increasing internal differentiation and of transnational structuration.

Almost all larger systems in Western Europe have developed mechanisms of internal administrative differentiation: in Spain by the differing speeds towards, and consequently the varying degrees of, regional autonomy contained in the post-Franco constitution; in Italy by the distinction between ordinary and Special Statute region; in the UK with respect to the arrangements made for the 'territorial management' of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; in the federalised Belgium through the distinction made between communitarian and territorial government. In post-1989 Germany, the process of unification brought about a specific regime for the former GDR, creating a complex set of policy-making structures which, while designed to be "transitional", might yet fundamentally reshape territorial politics in this 'united' Germany (Czada, 1994b; Lehmbruch, 1994; Sturm and Jeffrey, 1993).

In relation to the economy, the nation-state environment is an even poorer guide to the structural location of regions. Here great diversity of growth rates and other indicators remains even after decades of rather extensive efforts at internal equalisation. Discrepancies in Italy are particularly indicative of this state of affairs: against the EU average of 100, the 1988 per capita GDP index was 58.7 for Calabria and 137 for Lombardia; the respective unemployment index for Calabria was 259.4, for Lombardia 44.4 (European Commission, 1990). Needless to say, across the territory of the Union the discrepancies are even greater. Considering that not only public authorities, but also individual business firms, regional interest associations and development agencies are regional actors, such differing economic situations are relevant in assessing actors' potential in negotiating systems.

The contest over ethnic loyalties has been strong in parts of Western Europe. Where 'ethnic minorities' have successfully staked a claim to their separate identity - that is, in regions where the centre has recognized special rights - structural opportunities are present (Rokkan and Urwin, 1982). This implies a powerful position of regional actors where the demarcation *vis-à-vis* the centre is particularly strong and a weak one where few historical factors can be mobilized in opposition to the dominant identity in the state. The political relevance of such identity patterns becomes apparent in regions where these have, for example, given rise to a political party - such as the CSU in Bavaria - regional actors, and here primarily the regional government, are in a privileged position to negotiate within the national as well as the European system.

The resultant politics can be conceptualized as consisting of three main features, loosely related to the structural components above: the process of regional policy-making, the process of identity-formation and the process of

institutional reform. Clearly, all three corners of this conceptual triangle have distinct features: regional policy is concerned with addressing, through regulative or fiscal intervention, imbalances in the economic development of the polity. Institutional reform is understood here as the restructuring of legal and administrative relationships between public authorities acting on different territorial levels. 'Identity-formation' describes the usage of discourses as well as specific policies aimed at endowing territory with a political meaning of its own.

Yet, despite their distinctions, all three processes are intimately linked: regional policy-making will, through tests of effectiveness and other evaluations, lead to pressures for new institutional arrangements, while politics of identity-building create problem logics for policymaking as well as pressures for institutional reform. Institutional forms, in turn, influences the running of regional policies and the formation of territorial identities. Nevertheless, none of these inter-linkages should be understood as following an automatism: the mismatch between the dynamics of economic regulation, on the one hand, and institutional responses, on the other, has been identified as the "paradox" of regionalization (Trigilia, 1991). Similar observations have been made about processes towards regional institutional-building and identity-formation (Forth and Wohlfahrt, 1992).

Consequently, the triangle of territorial politics is to be seen as one of potential tension as well as of potential harmony between the processes at its corners. What is required for focused empirical research is a generic model that encompasses the three territorial levels which provide, between them, the arena for political action in the system of European multilevel governance.

Conclusions: The Emergence of Multilevel Governance in the European Union

The notion of governance refers to non-hierarchical systems of political negotiation, regulation and administration which have moved beyond the traditional understanding of the hierarchical and sovereign state as the ultimate arena for decision-making and conflict-resolution. Recent departure in the literature has recognized that this is the terrain to which European integration has taken West European politics (Schmitter, 1992; MacCormick, 1993; Jørgensen, 1995; Jachtenfuchs, 1995; Christiansen, 1994; Matláry, 1995), yet the call for more empirical research into the actual functioning of emerging negotiating systems remains valid (Scharpf, 1992). It is against this background that this chapter investigates in some detail the transformation of West European territorial politics.

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The departure from the self-contained nation-state as *the* political arena and the conceptual move to the idea of European governance implies the analytical ability to 'cut across' state boundaries. Consequently, the investigation here concentrates on the most significant territorial levels involved in the European public policy processes: EU, Member State and region. The relations among these territorially defined actors are thus not seen to be hierarchical - an understanding which is a decisive break with some of the literature on the European Union. Yet, neither are we talking about a 'round table' type of negotiation system: actors' resources are distributed very unequally, and not all the bargaining includes all the actors - something with does create enormous normative problems (Zürn, 1995). The process implied by the term multilevel governance is to all means and purposes a horizontally as well as vertically asymmetrical negotiating system.

The territorial dimension to European integration does not exclusively revolve around the traditional area of regional policy or economic cohesion of the polity. In critical ways it touches upon all three points of the triangle that has been suggested as an analytical model. In the case of Britain, for example, the changes in the field of regional policy are probably most marked: it is in this respect that a clash between hierarchical state structures and the neo-liberal withdrawal from redistributive policies clashes with the extend and nature of EU structural funding. Core concepts such as additionality, programming and partnership have enabled local and non-state actors to participate in the policy-process to a degree that was previously impossible. It is under such conditions that ostensibly objective regional policies can be expected to open new opportunities and cause new constraints, and it is here that the potential for change will be welcomed by some as much as its preclusion will be sought by others. In other words, it is in cases like this one that regional *policies* most probably turn into territorial *politics*, demonstrating the heightened relevance of a study conducted within the wider system of European multilevel governance.

The way in which the process of European integration has forged new alliances - across territorial levels, sectoral boundaries and the divide between public and private - is novel and perhaps unique. The creation of policy networks, replacing established bureaucratic or political channels of decision-making, can constitute a decisive break with domestic traditions. But, as the struggle over 'additionality' has shown, the challenges implied by European integration are neither easily accepted by national level actors, nor do they necessarily carry the day. The politicisation and (re)nationalisation of regional policy remain critical options and trends in this direction can be identified.

With regard to the European impact on territorial identity discourses, the significance of new trends is easier to identify and more difficult to dismiss. The main changes, that is, from exclusion to inclusion, from a national focus to a

European focus, from a backward-looking and primordial to a future-oriented and associational discourse, are a break with centuries of political practice in most regions. The short-term change in the late 1980s thus constituting also a change of long-term processes. In this regard, the process of European integration has opened new avenues of the construction of regional identities - opportunities which the relevant actors are using to the full.

Yet, also in this respect a number of cautionary notes are called for. Firstly, there must be an awareness of the distinction between, on the one hand, symbolic politics which maintain a discourse of their own, and the lived social reality of regional identity. It is in this respect that the transformation of Europe in the discourses of territorial identity has not done much to change mass attitudes in the region. There appears to be an easier acceptance of European symbols and the European context to regional politics, yet no basic change in the way of life or the political practice of citizens. Significant change *has* taken place on the level of bureaucratic and political elites. In regions, which by definition present a potential for multiple identities, the political action of elites cannot consist simply of the making and implementation of public policy, but also - crucially - of its justification and legitimation. Consequently, the recourse to "Europe" in the discourse of politics of the region reflects not only a change in the usage of symbols, but - this is the difference between elite and mass attitudes - also a change to everyday social practice. In the absence of empirical data on changes in mass attitudes, it remains an open question as to how far the changed elite identity will seep into the consciousness of the region at large. This future development does not depend only on the degree of the politicisation of political conflict in the region - and the resultant intensity of mass mobilisation on the basis of changed symbolism - but also on the nature of mass-elite relations which vary significantly across political cultures.

On the whole, however, the territorial politics of Western Europe have undergone structural change. Political groups have changed their course of action, their demands and their discourses, but such developments would not be significant without a change also in the underlying matrix of opportunities and constraints. The process of European integration has reshuffled this matrix, and the structural framework for territorial politics in the mid-1990s is very different from the situation, say, only 10 years ago. It is in this respect that the short-term changes in the relations between Europe, states and regions, which are widely observed, are indications of changes also in the long-term evolution of territorial politics. How the new opportunities and constraints afforded by the integration process to actors on the regional and national level will be managed and utilized, remains to be seen. While the continuity of conventional political practice is a possibility, the expectation must be that regional politics will use the avenues which are opened up by European integration, and consequently that changes

which are currently 'only' symbolic will result in substantial changes - that is, changes of public policy and institutional reform - in the future.

None of this implies images such as the dissolution or 'withering away' of states or the disintegration of Europe. By contrast, the evidence found in support of the model of multilevel governance indicates that interdependence grows across and within territorial levels of governance, that the number of relevant actors within the networks of territorial politics increases and that, consequently, the trend is towards further integration. The state as a framework for policy is not diminishing, but - in interaction with other levels - continues to be the most important reference point for territorial politics. Yet, as state level actors are clearly enmeshed in a multitude of cross-level links, they have lost the ability to project the traditional image of the state - a bounded space of autonomous competence and exclusive decision-making. The increasing number and intensity of links between regions, and between actors on the regional and European level, means that the state boundary is loosing its character as the inside/outside divide of politics. These are far-reaching, deep changes with reverberations beyond the territorial domain. They imply new problematics in the processes of democratisation and legitimation of governance as well as immense problems for the restructuring of non-territorial systems of redistribution in Europe, important arenas of politics and policy-making in which the territorial aspect often remains hidden. Territorial political change and European integration are, therefore, important processes not only in limited policy areas or for some sections of society, but with a wider relevance for the foundations of politics. Further research will have to show the precise direction in which this transformation towards multilevel governance is taking Europe, its states and regions, and which repercussions it has for the wider questions of political and social change. This chapter merely sought to show that a constructivist perspective is a valuable, if not essential, way of organising this research agenda.

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