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National Fragmentation or the Evolution  
of Suprastate Structures?**

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## EUROPEAN NATION-STATE UNDER PRESSURE: NATIONAL FRAGMENTATION OR THE EVOLUTION OF SUPRASTATE STRUCTURES?

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The contemporary European nation-state is coming under a twofold pressure pattern. On the one hand, nationalistic and regional movements push for a reduction of responsibilities at the nation-state level. In Eastern Europe several societies fragmented at the beginning of the 1990s. Contrarily, in the context of the European Community, the development of supra-state or supranational structures can also be observed. The crucial question, of course, is, which of those processes is more pervasive in the long run: national fragmentation, the viability of the nation-state, or the evolution of supranational structures? In trying to analyze those trends I presented a conceptual framework, called *three levels of state structures*. If we want to assume that, in the case of the European Community, the evolutionary drive for supranational integration is stronger than the potential of fragmenta-

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tion, then one systemic answer implies that processes of societal learning are at work. They reflect historical experiences (e.g., the tragedy of World War II) and new structural conditions, such as the transformation of competition from military to nonmilitary means, the self-logic of the economic rationale (pressuring for concepts like a single European market), and changes in the value system. Evaluated historically, one crucial justification for supranational integration should be based on the argument that this, possibly, will introduce more autonomy for the European regions.

### **A SHIFT OF THE PARADIGM OF HOW TO ORGANIZE THE STATE**

Within half a century Europe was devastated twice by World Wars that crushed many of the established structures and uprooted the old order. The shock wave of World War II cut a line of division through Europe that selected the legitimation of governments and political systems. In 1989 Europe again witnessed a structural revolution, the collapse of Eastern European communism. The outcome of this change is not totally unambiguous. There seems to be a race between two competing concepts of how to organize society, democracy versus nationalism, and the longer the economic agony and malaise continues, the stronger the national element might build up pressure (Bauböck, 1991; Lauber, 1992). With the exception of Eastern-Central European countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, and perhaps Bulgaria, our democratic expectations for those newly developing societies should be moderate, at least in the near future. We might observe a combination of semidemocratic and semiauthoritarian government policies, i.e., the inclination of governments to use nationalism and partially religion as a reference for legitimation and as a means of mass-mobilizing people during the crucial process of transforming the economy and society. Nationalism as emotion addresses such phenomena very properly (Koizumi, 1992). The "model of South Korea" might serve as a reference for how to continue and support industrialization (a Russian official once told this to me privately).

The crucial argument seems to be that democracy cannot solve conflicts peacefully if democracy is narrowed down to the ritual of elections, without a certain political culture and a civil society that guarantees a minimum standard of basic rights to individuals and to ethnic minorities. The tragic chronology of events in former Yugoslavia serves as a good example (Wagner, 1992; Hummer & Hilpold, 1992).

Referenda were used by the republics to legitimate their secession from Yugoslavia, from the center. Slovenia started first (December 1990), followed by Croatia (May 19, 1991) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (February/March 1992). Even in Montenegro a referendum was initiated (March 1992) to justify the fusion with Serbia to create Yugoslavia III. Croatia is an excellent example of the ambiguity of how to decide on referenda with a contradictory outcome: the Serbian minority in Croatia copied the same means, to legitimize their breakaway from Croatia, that were used by the majority Croats to split from Belgrade. On May 12, 1991, the Serbs in Croatia carried out their referendum and thus anticipated the Croats by seven days.

In the long run there are strong arguments speaking in favor of democracy. From a historical perspective the implementation of democracy is not an accident but serves functional demands of advanced industrial societies (Campbell, 1992). Industrialization and democratization in Western Europe and North America operated as processes, structurally linked with each other. For those Eastern-Central European countries, relatively advanced in the overall context of Eastern Europe, the establishment and acceptance of democracy appears stable; therefore an authoritarian reversal of the chosen and selected path toward democracy would be quite difficult (New Democracies Barometer/Neue Demokratien Barometer, 1991). But addressing the near-future dimension of the successor states of the Soviet Union, the political outcome, embedded in economic turmoils, is not yet determined. The race between a more democratically or more nationalistically biased result, especially in the Caucasus regions and in Central Asia, is still open. Currently many observers have the impression that in the short run the nationalistic drive (in connection with a conservative or fundamentalist interpretation of Islam or Christian Orthodoxy) pushes more strongly and more competitively.

What do the political events, post-1945 and now post-1989, tell us about the concept of the state? For Western Europe we can agree that democracy and market economy have proved their viability, despite the awareness of significant variances of different national styles (Waarden, 1992). Speaking generally, democracy and market economy still can be constructed as issues within the borderlines of the nation-states, at least theoretically. (For democracy this assumption is, of course, truer than for the economy that always acted globally interdependent.) Now a new challenge seems to be rising. The European nation-state as such comes

under strong pressures. At the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century the central paradigm on how to organize and structure a state could be captured by the notion of the totally sovereign nation-state. Historically, if we trace back the conceptual roots of the nation-state, we might agree with Ernest Renan (*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, Paris, 1882) to place the birth of this idea in the French Revolution, 1789 (Gellner, 1988a). The international outcome was a world system consisting of aggressively competing nation-states, with a Europe paralyzed by rivaling power centers. The two World Wars shockingly proved that this paradigm could not be sustained anymore; it had reached its limits. Western Europe responded by introducing one of the, historically, most ambitious "large-scale social experiments," to use here a notion of Umpleby and Trappl (1991, p. iv). A slow, but steady shift of the paradigm spread in the Western European political environment, embedding the sovereign nation-state in a cross-regional network of integration. Politically this process found its manifestation in the formation of the European Community (EC) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

Currently the European nation-state is exposed to a twofold pressure pattern. Eastern Europe experiences the fragmentation of several states, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1991, Czechoslovakia in 1992, and we should not forget the collapse and absorption of the German Democratic Republic 1989–1990. And in Western Europe the process of integration has reached a crucial point with the Treaty of Maastricht (signed in February 1992). So the paradox seems to be that in Eastern Europe many nation-states "evaporated," when exposed to the momentum of national fragmentation, whereas in Western Europe the nation-states lose some of their sovereignty to newly emerging suprastate structures.<sup>1</sup> The question will be: Which process is more pervasive and viable in the long run? And can the EC prevent the danger of becoming infected by disintegration pressures? Figure 1 shows the relevant developments after 1945.

<sup>1</sup>Adding a personal comment, my impression is that the European political science community often neglected, in its theories on the state, the rise of those new suprastate structures, i.e., the EC framework. During a discussion of a paper from Bernhard Kittel (1993) at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the spring of 1993, I pointed at this, personally perceived, deficit.

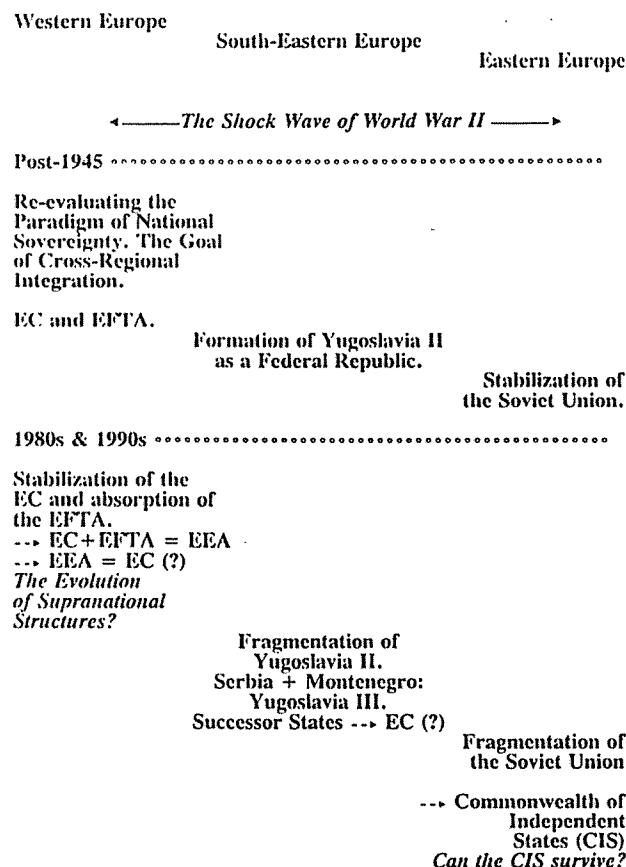


Figure 1. State structures under pressure.

### A CONCEPT OF DESCRIBING STATE STRUCTURES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Aware of the demand for a historical perspective, we should try to employ a conceptual framework of the state that has the explanatory power to address those contemporary political phenomena. Figure 2 visually presents such a model that I labeled *three levels of state structures*. It will serve as a conceptual leitmotif for the empirical analysis.

The nation-state structures are represented as the "dominant line," symbolizing that thinking and acting in reference to a nation and nation-state were the paradigm deep into *the* twentieth century. Histori-

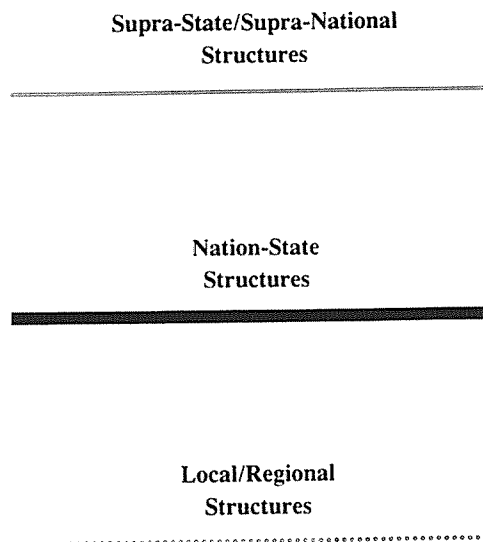


Figure 2. Three levels of state structures.

cally this had a high price; the autonomy of regions and locally grown structures was sacrificed. The formation of politically unified German and Italian nations in the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s implied, as a consequence, the absorption of independently deciding local political units. Great Britain, one of the "oldest" states in Europe, can rely on a long parliamentary tradition in comparison to most continental European societies. So the political structures in Great Britain reflect clearly what one ultimate outcome of national unity meant: eliminating regional autonomy. Until the present the parliamentary system of Great Britain still lacks the implementation of a second chamber that serves a geographically (and spatially) power-balancing federal function, like the Senate in the United States or the Bundesrat in Germany. As a bottom line conclusion we must say that, historically, the building of nation-states demanded a loser, namely the independent local and regional structures.

Now leaving aside the discussion, whether a national concept or national movement ultimately is directed toward the formation of an independent statehood (Barry, 1991), Gellner (1988b) elaborated sharply the following dilemma: the number of "potential nations" is larger than the number of possible states. Thus there operates a process of selec-

tion that decides which regional pool, that self-declares itself as a nation, can actually implement nation-state structures. Dominant regions, the nuclei of future nation-states, attempt to deprive other regions of the possibility of realizing their proclaimed status as a nation.

Parallel to the collapse of fascism and the reimplementation of democracy after 1945, Western Europe experienced one of the most challenging large-scale social experiments. We can label these processes as the formation and development of supranational or suprastate structures. This supranational experiment focused politically on two manifestations, the EC and EFTA. Both were initiated in the 1950s, with the main difference that from the beginning the EC targeted a much deeper-going framework of integration. Whereas the EFTA primarily represents a loosely coupled network, aiming at economic cooperation, the EC proclaimed the goal of supranational integration, linking economic and political structures. Speaking in midterm historical perspectives we can conclude that the concept of the EC proved to be more competitive and falsified the EFTA. Chronically the EFTA was weakened by permanently losing member countries to the EC: Great Britain and Denmark switched to the EC in 1973, Portugal in 1986, and by the end of 1992 also Austria (1989), Sweden (1991), Finland (March 1992), Switzerland (May 1992), and Norway (November 1992) had officially applied for membership in the EC. The serious question is whether the EFTA can survive the formation of the European Economic Area (EEA), a joint project of the EC and EFTA. Most observers doubt that it can. On May 2, 1992, the foreign ministers of the EC and EFTA signed in Porto, Portugal, the Treaty for the EEA. It demands that the internal (single) market that came into effect on December 31, 1992, should address the EC and EFTA. However, by mid-1993 the EEA still was not implemented, because the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty proved to be more difficult than expected; in addition, the negative outcome of a public referendum in Switzerland, an EFTA member, further delayed implementation. (On December 6, 1992, by a thin margin of 50.3%, the Swiss electorate rejected the plan of the government to join the European Economic Area.)

At this point a preliminary conclusion seems possible. Either policy makers decide for the option of a cross-regional integration, or they reject it. But if they go for integration, then this creates a self-dynamics and demands a far-going process. You cannot only integrate economically and leave political issues and domestic political structures un-



touched. So the concept of the EC turned out to be a highly viable option in the Western European environment. After a crisis of the EC in the early 1980s, which some experts labeled as "Eurosclerosis" (Garret & Weingast, 1991), the EC again captured momentum by the mid-1980s. In 1985 the Commission's White Paper was issued, which promoted the idea of creating an internal market, addressing the entire EC. This concept fed into the Single European Act (SEA) (1986-1987), which officially implemented the goal of creating an internal market by the end of 1992. And the Treaty of Maastricht, which was signed on February 7, 1992, mobilized a new push for integration.

Among the central features of Maastricht are (1) the ultimate and "explicit" goal of a European Union, (2) a common Union citizenship, (3) acceptance and support for the principle of "subsidiarity," (4) Economic Union, and (5) Monetary Union. According to Pauly (1992) the European Monetary Union, now already in its first stage, is designed to run through two more stages in the 1990s. The second stage should start in 1994, when the European Monetary Institute will come into operation. Intentionally this should clear the way for the third stage (1997-1999): the creation of the European Central Bank and the replacement of the national currencies by the European Currency Unit (ECU). Pauly (1992, p. 111) emphasizes that carrying "the same currency in their pockets" would have an enormous symbolic impact on the Europeans (see also George, 1991).

Referring to our model of three levels of state structures and assessing the future development of the EC (also having in mind the displacement of the EFTA), we can see how challenging those new processes are. As a political outcome for Western Europe we can note that the nation-state, which was historically extremely successful in absorbing local units, now itself comes under strong top-down pressures. Possibly the growth of this level or stratum on the top, called supranational (or suprastate) structures, unfolds a new drive, creates and writes a new chapter in the history of the European state.

Asking for reasons for the successful implementation of the EC, our first attention must focus on World War II and its consequences. Already in the interwar period there were attempts to foster European integration, like the Pan-European Union, initiated by the Austrian aristocrat Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi (Urwin, 1991). But such attempts were suffocated by the rise of aggressive nationalism and fascism. It was the impact of World War II that created new conditions,

a *tabula rasa*, that helped the building of the EC. Several factors played an important role:

1. World War II itself was one of the key variables. It proved drastically the insufficiency of the paradigm of the totally sovereign and "egoistically" acting nation-state, bound in chronic conflicts with the other nation-states that operated under the same premise.
2. World Wars I and II eroded the power base of Europe. At the turn of the century single European states could still be regarded as global powers. But after 1945 this global power competence shifted to the two new superpowers that emerged as an outcome of 1939–1945, the United States and the Soviet Union. To put it simply: the European governments realized that only a united Europe could regain global importance.
3. During the Cold War period the communist threat from the East served as a pressure constraint that fostered Western European coordination. Post-1989 fears were articulated that this might again imply Western European disintegration. Surely, the threat of communism evaporated, but now it is the perceived "spreading chaos in the East" that operates as an incentive to create the "Fortress Europe" in the West as a basis for order.
4. Narrowed down simply, one central feature of the EC was and is to functionalize the century-old competition between France and Germany. The EC operates as a framework, built around those two states, that buffers the potential of deep-going conflicts. France and Germany still carry a high stake in the EC. For Germany it offers a frame to legitimize its growing role of economic dominance. And for France the EC structures are a possibility to bind, and thus neutralize again, this German potential. (Although currently the reunification problems weaken the economic dominance of Germany.)
5. Of course, the European nation-states still exist and still there are national interests, and possibly the European nation-state can never really be transcended. On the other hand, the EC offers an optimal framework where the nation states have learned to translate their competition from military to nonmilitary means. Economic competition serves such a function, and the crucial point is that the EC and the internal market prove to be an environment better adjusted to the interests of advanced European economies than the previous system of sovereign nation-states.

6. If we want to understand the process of the EC integration sufficiently, we must also consider the role "ideational" factors play (Garret & Weingast, 1991). Garret and Weingast elaborated this aspect. Simple rational choice models cannot explain the formation of the EC, if the impact of ideas, like "the creation of a shared belief system" (Garret & Weingast, 1991, p. 4), is neglected. In the absence of a "natural route," the EC institutions are constructed "focal points" that function as strongholds for developing a shared belief system (Garret & Weingast, 1991). Personally, I want to add that this can be interpreted as a learning from historical experience. The catastrophe of World War II fostered an integration-oriented thinking among the Western European policy makers and the public.

#### **HISTORY AND FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY: CYCLES OR EVOLUTION?**

A reflection of the process and history of EC integration raises the following questions: Does this process operate under an evolutionary premise, i.e., the growth of supranational structures, or is there a potential for cycles, implying the possibility for a fall-back into nation-state acting, and the fragmentation or paralysis of EC institutions? Concerning the current rise of nationalism in Eastern Europe, there are fears that this national wave might infect EC member societies. And if not that directly, it might have other integration-blocking effects on Western Europe (Jachtenfuchs, 1992).

On the issue of theories of how social systems change, Umpleby (1991) discusses several conceptual tools like trends, stage theories, cycles, and social evolution. Stages and evolution can be described as a "sequence of problem-solving efforts," whereas cycles indicate "fluctuations" or a "repetition of stages." Umpleby also gives empirical examples of those different conceptual approaches.

The crucial question is, related to the development of the EC and embedded in a long-term historical perspective (as seen by a "virtual or constructed observer" in the future), what will be the primary behavior pattern of the EC: cycles or evolution?

If the first is the case, then the consequences will be:

1. The EC never really can or will develop a true supranational or supranational structure.

2. A pan-European identity as primary frame of reference is a nice myth, cultivated in political rituals, but not a manifestation of real-politik. Regional and national identities are always more important than some vague feelings of "Europeanness."
3. The nation-states are the most viable, competitive political units, immune to absorption attempts from a supranational level.
4. Any integration attempts, going far beyond economic purposes, will be efficiently blocked.
5. Nationalism, currently the dominant drive in Eastern Europe, can always erupt chronically in human history and will size down "overgrown" complexes.

However, if a directional or stage-oriented evolution is the primary drive, reflected in the EC formation, then we are confronted by different scenarios:

1. There are historical and societal processes of learning and problem-solving at work. Political and economic structures have the capacity to adapt and adjust to new environmental conditions.
2. The European nation-state is a viable manifestation, historically, but not necessarily the final chapter, the end of history (to use here a notion of Fukuyama, 1989). A new stage appears possible, the rise of supranational structures. The transformation is difficult, paralleled by secondary ups and downs or cycles, conflicts, and the nation-state might never be completely absorbed, but slowly the power center will gravitate to the supranational level. In practice, a dual political decision-making process (national/supranational) will always remain. This duality might even be widened through the acceptance and inclusion of regional decision-making units.
3. Supranational structures in the European environment serve the interests of advanced industrial societies. The economic rationale can unfold its dynamics in the cross-regional and nation-state transcending market more optimally than in segmented markets of sovereign nation-states. To balance the allocation effects of such a cross-regional market, the economic integration must be linked to a legal and political framework of integration.
4. Too many elites in Europe have a stake in integration. So they will push forward integration, bypassing the short-term and midterm obstacles. Denmark is a good example. After the first referendum on

the Maastricht Treaty, where a majority said no (June 1992), a second referendum was introduced by the government in May 1993; now approval, as recommended by almost all political parties and major interest groups, was achieved (Branegan, 1993; Sullivan, 1993).

5. The development of a European identity, assessed in a historical perspective, is not more or less likely than the development of a national and nation-state identity. If the French or Americans were able to form an identity, why should there not be a potential for a European supranationality?
6. Referring to *realpolitik*, Western Europe has an interest in recapturing a global position of dominance, from which it can efficiently compete against the United States and Japan. There do not appear to be many alternatives for Western Europe other than continuing the integration process of the EC. Speaking chauvinistically, the spreading chaos in Eastern Europe and immigration pressure patterns from the east and south act as strong incentives for creating a "Fortress Europe" with well-protected borders against the "outside world."
7. Possibly national conflicts are chronic. National conflicts can have very different manifestations. Parallel to trends of ethnic diversification and dehomogenization, Western Europe experiences the rise of extreme right parties (the Front National in France and the New Democracy in Sweden) and populist anti-immigration pressure movements (for example, the attacks of the radical right against the Turkish community in Germany) (Ignazi, 1992; Pierre & Widfelt, 1992). Another conflict axis can be seen in the growth of political movements that aim at more regional autonomy in Western Europe. The Lega Nord in Italy, under the leadership of Umberto Bossi, who won 8.7% of the votes in the elections in April 5-6, 1992, is a political representation of such developments, demanding more autonomy for northern Italy from the political center in Rome. However, on this particular issue of regionalism the crucial argument should be: delegating sovereignty from the nation-state level to the suprastructure could serve as a prerequisite or motivation for again allowing more autonomy at the local and regional level. In the "age of supranationalism" the regional structures might recapture some of their historically lost sovereignty. Assessing such potentials under the premise of *realpolitik*, Jachtenfuchs (1992) sees only weak attempts in the EC to support regional autonomy. However, Ridinger (1992) strongly emphasizes the importance and usefulness of more regional

autonomy. He argues that there is an economic rationale for a "Europe of the regions," because only more regional self-competence for economic problems and problem solving can efficiently help backward regions. In summary, the argument would be that at least some specific types of national conflicts (e.g., the demand for more regional autonomy), even if they are chronic, can be more easily solved through the implementation of supranational structures.

Following the Maastricht Treaty, signed in February 1992, four referenda were carried out in EC member countries to ratify the treaty. On June 2, 1992, the Danes rejected the treaty with a narrow margin of 50.7%. This created significant irritations for the EC policy makers, climaxing in the question of whether the EC structures per se might be questioned by the European public. With a majority of 68.7% the Irish people overwhelmingly approved the Maastricht Treaty (on June 18, 1992), but again in France only a very narrow positive margin of 51.05% was achieved (September 20, 1992). On the basis of the EC Edinburgh summit (December 1992), where Denmark was granted a series of opt-outs from the treaty design (not too dissimilar to the British privileges), a second referendum was initiated in Denmark on May 18, 1993; now a majority yes of 56.8% was realized. Two days later the British House of Commons passed, with a margin of 292 against 112 votes, the treaty (the oppositional Labour Party abstained from the vote). Thus by mid-1993 the Maastricht Treaty was ratified by all EC members, with the exception of Great Britain: here an approval of the House of Lords still was necessary. However, those problems in implementing the Maastricht Treaty clearly reflect the ambiguity of the whole issue of cycles versus evolution. Even if we assess that the evolutionary drive for integration is more competitive than fragmentation attempts, we still must be aware that there are potentials for integration-blocking shifts, possibly preventing the evolution of strong supranational structures; this game or race is not yet decided. Figure 3 summarizes those dilemmas.

#### **THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL FRAGMENTATION IN EASTERN EUROPE**

Focusing on the recent events in the Soviet Union, pre-1991, and in Yugoslavia, it amounts to a challenging project trying to model these

(1) Cycles  $\longleftrightarrow$  (2) Stage-Oriented Evolution

*(1) Historically the nation state is the most successful and viable manifestation of state structures and will never be absorbed by supra-national structures.*

*(2) Despite the viability of the nation state there will be, in the long run, an evolution of supra-national structures that will overtake the nation-state units. The EC-integration is the primary force for this process.*

Figure 3. The future of the Western European nation-states.

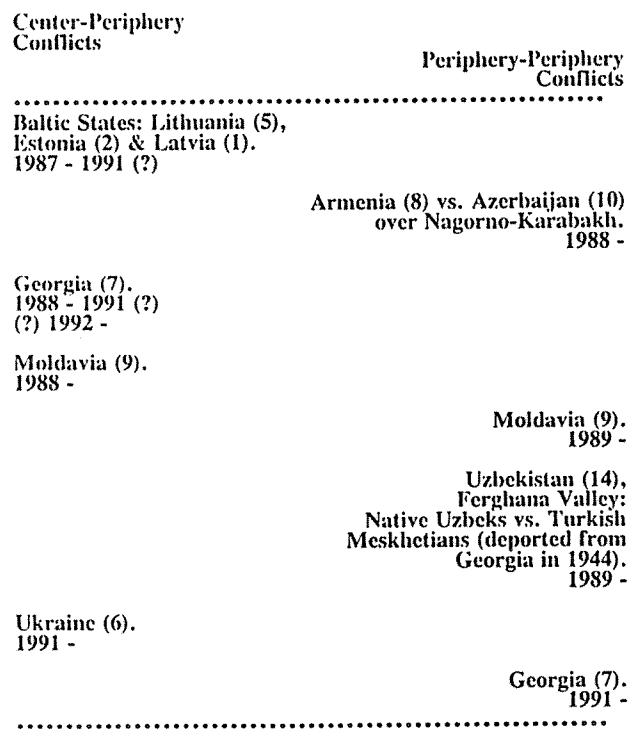
processes of fragmentation. Again taking the Soviet Union as the primary framework of reference, two aspects of the national breakup appear significantly interesting: (1) the role and importance of trend-setter republics and (2) the observation that centrifugal or "center-away" tendencies<sup>2</sup> can be explained, to a large extent, by an economic rationale.

In multiethnic societies, where ethnic diversity and ethnic pluralism find corresponding federal structures, as was the case in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia, the consequence is that processes of change or reform do not operate at the same speed in all republics. While some republics acted as trend setters, the political elites in the other republics chose a path of observation and/or the public mass movements developed later. In Yugoslavia it was Slovenia that, around 1989, openly manifested its will to act independently within the framework of the Yugoslav federation. For the Soviet Union clearly the Baltic states occupied this strategic niche of playing trend-setter roles. Figure 4 tries to give an overview of the chronic conflicts in the Soviet Union after

<sup>2</sup>This notion of "center-away" tendencies was spontaneously created by Matjaz Mulej, a Professor of Economics at the University of Maribor in Slovenia, during the Eleventh European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research in Vienna, April 1992.

1985 (I relied primarily on Smith, 1992). Two aspects are represented: (1) we attempted to distinguish between center-periphery and periphery-periphery conflicts and (2) we tried to give an indicator for a relative wealth ranking. Here GNP per capita figures were chosen. As a source we used a data compilation by The Economist Publications (1991, p. 52). Accordingly, the 15 Soviet republics had the following relative GNP per capita ranking: Latvia 1, Estonia 2, Belorussia 3, Russia 4, Lithuania 5, Ukraine 6, Georgia 7, Armenia 8, Moldavia 9, Azerbaijan 10, Kazakhstan 11, Turkmenistan 12, Kirghizia 13, Uzbekistan 14, and Tadzhikistan 15.

The Baltic states were the trend setters for national fragmentation in the Soviet Union. They presented the political model of how to secede from the union and how to implement the breakaway policies.



**Figure 4.** Chronic national conflicts in the Soviet Union post-1985. Figures in parentheses indicate relative GNP per capita ranking: 1-15. (Source: *The World in 1992*. London: The Economist Publications)



Analyzing the secession momentum of the Baltic republics, it is conceptually useful to structure this process into five phases (as a source of the chronology of events see Bögeholz, 1991, pp. 285–310).

1. Phase I: Open Conflict Manifestation: On June 14, 1987, in Riga, the capital of Latvia, several thousand people protest against the coerced deportation of Latvians to Siberia under the surveillance of Stalin. August 23, the annual “anniversary” of the Hitler-Stalin pact (1939), becomes loaded with crucial symbolic meaning. During August 1988 mass demonstrations take place in all of the Baltics, following the publication of the secret protocols to the Hitler-Stalin pact.
2. Phase II: Replacement of Language: In September and October 1988 Russian is replaced as official language by the native Baltic languages.
3. Phase III: Declarations of Sovereignty: Between May and November 1989 all three Baltic republics give a declaration of sovereignty.
4. Phase IV: Declarations of Independence: Almost “naturally” those manifestations of sovereignty lead to declarations of independence in 1990. Lithuania is first (March 11), followed by Estonia (March 30) and Latvia (May 4). Lithuania is put under severe pressures from the center, culminating in an economic embargo. As a mode of compromise Lithuania is willing to “temporarily suspend” its declaration of independence.
5. Phase V: Final Implementation of Independence: In the context of the failed conservative communist coup, August 1991, the Baltic states “reactivate” their implementation of independence. On August 24 the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, recognizes their independence and broad international recognition follows shortly afterward.

It is interesting to observe the impact of the “Baltic model” on the other Soviet republics. In the period August–October 1989 Moldavia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, and the Ukraine follow the replacement-of-language path. And concerning the adoption of sovereignty and independence, it took only two crucial events to trigger a rapid spreading. On June 12, 1990, Russia (RSFSR) gives a declaration of sovereignty and shortly afterward, in the period June–December 1990, all the other republics have followed and adapted to this new status quo. August 18/19–22, 1991, the communist coup shocks the public. Following its

crackdown, in the period August–December, all republics create new conditions by giving declarations of independence. Figure 5 presents a summary.

After having elaborated the effects and impact of those trend-setter republics, I want to point at the second aspect that is important for the momentum of fragmentation: the economic rationale for secession. Referring to Figure 4, we can draw the following conclusions. The main center-periphery conflicts did not primarily follow a cultural line of differences. The “Western Slavic Nations” did not clash with the Muslims of Central Asia over the future of the Soviet Union. Instead the center-periphery conflicts focused on the relations of the center to the Baltics, Georgia, Moldavia, and also the Ukraine. Totally aware of the historical background, concerning the annexation of the Baltics and Moldavia by Joseph Stalin in the 1940s, it should be emphasized that the major secession republics had relatively advanced socioeconomic

Declarations of Sovereignty	Declarations of Independence
.....	
1989	
Baltic States Lithuania, Latvia & Estonia. Azerbaijan & Georgia.	
.....	
1990	
	Spring: Baltic States & Georgia.
June 12: Russia.	
June-December: Uzbekistan, Moldavia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan, Kazakhstan & Kirgisia.	
.....	
1991	
	August 18/19 - 22: Failed Communist Coup.
	August-December: Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizia, Tadjikistan, Armenia, Turkmenistan & Kazakhstan.

Figure 5. Comparing the declarations of sovereignty and independence in the Soviet Union (1989–1991).

positions compared to the Central Asian republics. So at least a hypothesis can be formulated: a "relatively" advanced economic position creates incentives or an environment that fosters breakaway ("center-away") tendencies, if the economic competence does not correspond with political structures that serve the interests of those economically developed regions. There is a high chance that trend-setter republics will be the developed regions. And the chronology of the national fragmentation in the Soviet Union verifies this hypothesis more than it falsifies it.

For Yugoslavia, our second major case study, this also holds true. Analyzing the center-periphery conflicts after Tito (who died in 1980), we can observe the following pattern. Slovenia acted as a trend setter, always introducing the crucial "center-away" policies first. In September 1989 Slovenia gives a declaration of sovereignty, including the right to secede from Yugoslavia. In February 1990 the Communist Party of Slovenia splits from the domineering federal party, and on April 8 and 10 the first free elections are held. On December 23, 1990, Slovenia initiates a referendum on the issue of independence: 88.5% of the voters approve. Taking this sequence of events as a framework of reference, the following ranking of the centrifugal drive can be discussed: (1) Slovenia, (2) Croatia, (3) Macedonia, and (4) Bosnia-Herzegovina. Marking the first free elections and the referenda as crucial events, our suggested ranking is supported.

First free parliamentary elections: Slovenia (April 1990), Croatia (April/ May 1990), Macedonia (November 1990), Bosnia-Herzegovina (November/December 1990), Serbia and Montenegro (December 1990).

Referenda on the issue of independence: Slovenia (December 1990), Croatia (May 1991), Macedonia (September 1991), Bosnia-Herzegovina (February/March 1992), and Montenegro (March 1992).

The referendum in Montenegro was based on the issue of unity with Serbia; 95.94% approved, although there were only limited effects of mass mobilization concerning the low participation rate of 66.04%. As a direct political outcome on April 27, 1992, Yugoslavia III is formed, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, consisting of Serbia and Montenegro. We should add that there is still a potential that Montenegro might try splitting again from Belgrade to form an independent

state. In 1993 several movements in Montenegro openly articulated independence demands.

Focusing on the trend-setter role of Slovenia and on that of Croatia as the first direct follower, this behavior appears directly compatible with the previously discussed secession pattern in the Soviet Union, again addressing the economic rationality. Also, Slovenia and Croatia were socioeconomically the most advanced republics and the formation process of the EC's internal market might have acted as an additional incentive to secede (Wagner, 1992). Taking the GDP per capita for 1988 as an indicator, on the basis of 1972 prices, the following relative wealth ranking results (Zizmond, 1992)<sup>3</sup>: Slovenia 1, Croatia 2, Serbia 3, Montenegro 4, Bosnia-Herzegovina 5, Macedonia 6, and Kosovo 7. The major exception in this economic rationale scenario is the Kosovo province, economically a backward region. Already in the early 1980s severe unrest destabilized this region. At the center of this conflict lies the dilemma that the majority of the Kosovo population, the Albanians (figures speak of a 77% to 90% margin), seek autonomy from Serbia but the Serbs refuse to allow secession, because they consider Kosovo as their "historical heartland." So Kosovo turned early into a chronic trouble spot. An independent human rights commission, located in Belgrade, estimated that between 1979 and 1988 about 58% of all the persons who were sentenced for political reasons came from the Kosovo area (Libal, 1991). Parallel to Slobodan Milosevic's ascendancy to power and his presidency over Serbia, the center put more pressures on Kosovo and systematically reduced its autonomy, culminating in the shutdown of the regional parliament of Kosovo in July 1990. The political resistance of the Kosovo Albanians cannot be explained by our economic rationale hypothesis; it is massively fed by the Serbian oppression that uses political and military means.

#### REASONS FOR THE NATIONAL FRAGMENTATION IN EASTERN EUROPE

Summarizing our observations on the fragmentation processes in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia, which can easily be labeled major historical breakdowns of state structures, it is interesting to try to

<sup>3</sup>I thank Prof. Egon Zizmond and Prof. Matjaz Mulej for having generated this specific compilation of data upon request.

localize the "reasons." Approaching such a task, I want to stress four factors that played a crucial role.

### **Factor 1: The Contradiction Between Federal Structures and Communist One-Party Rule**

Although federal structures were implemented in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, their intended effects became biased by a political system that was structured on the basis of a one-party monopoly (White et al., 1982). A one-party structure blocks the efficient processing of issues.

Parallel to that a chronic legitimization deficit existed for the borders and territorial units. Neither in the Soviet Union nor in Yugoslavia I (interwar period) and II (post-1945) could those politically drawn borders refer to a legitimizing referendum. So what has happened, at least in the Soviet Union, may be interpreted historically as the continuation of a process that had fragmented in the aftermath of World War I the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and now finds its completion in Eastern Europe.

### **Factor 2: Pseudo-Suprastate/Supranational Structures and De Facto Semination State Structures**

The communist ideology pretended to create a new man and nation, the nation of Soviet and Yugoslav people. If successful, this would have implied the formation of a new supranationality. But the official goal was sharply contrasted by the everyday practice of communist policies. A one-party system does not offer features like flexibility and elasticity to balance multiethnic or multinational relations sensitively. In the Soviet Union the Russians and in Yugoslavia the Serbs de facto controlled the system, leaving mixed feelings for the other national groups. This contrast between supranational goals and a semination state reality, as exercised by the communist realpolitik, massively fed centrifugal tendencies of the periphery republics (see Figure 6, a modified version of Figure 2).

Smaller ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, like the Baltic peoples or the Moldavians, a Romanian language pool (Smith, 1992), were permanently exposed to the dangers of absorption and assimilation. So

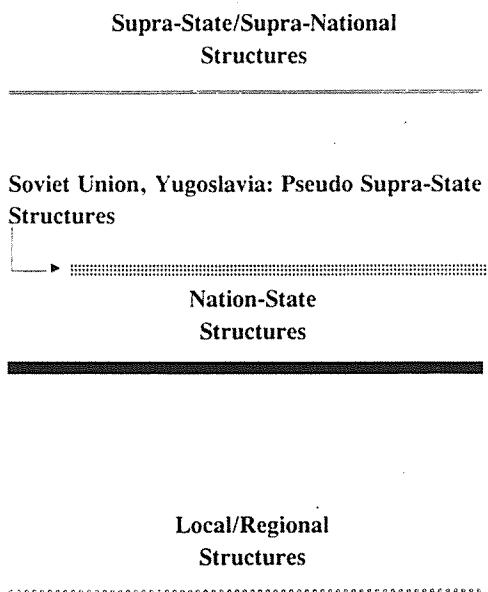


Figure 6. Three levels of state structures.

independent statehood (or as in the case of Moldova, possible unification with Romania) was closely linked to the issue of national survival.

### Factor 3: The Economic Rationale for Centrifugal Processes

Centrifugal tendencies are not created by economic calculations, but economic calculations are crucial, concerning the issue of secession. If a center-away movement can argue on the basis of an economic rationale, this will foster political demands like national independence. To put it simply: an economic rationale for secession creates an environment that will increase the probability for political secession.<sup>4</sup> Testing this hypothesis empirically on the recent developments in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, we can observe such a pattern for the center-periphery conflicts. The future lesson is: a government should always be sensitive

<sup>4</sup>Based on systems theory notions it is possible to structure society into different subsystems, such as the political and economic systems. Employing the term "economic rationale" then indicates that each subsystem operates according to its own intrinsic rules; thus we can say that the economic system has a self-logic. We could discuss further what the self-logic or rationale of the political system would be, and so on.

that not too many imbalances are created between economic and political centers.<sup>5</sup>

The formation process of the EC's internal market possibly accelerated the breakup momentum in Yugoslavia (and in the Soviet Union?). Perhaps the new political elites in Slovenia and Croatia acted under the political assumption of joining this EC market in the near future.

It also makes sense to apply the economic-rationale hypothesis to the fragmentation of Czechoslovakia, another Central European trouble spot. Following the June elections of 1992, the political elites (or the "political class") in the Czech and Slovak republics agreed on dividing Czechoslovakia. Thus the transformation of communism into democracy, referred to as the Velvet Revolution in the period 1989–1991 (Wheaton & Kavan, 1992), also surfaced as the national question of Slovakia. And on January 1, 1993, Czechoslovakia stopped existing and was replaced by two new states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. We should add that this splitting was never justified by a referendum and it is also highly questionable whether a popular vote would have supported such a national division (Gyarfasova, 1992; Turnovec, 1992). This division was mainly decided through a top-down approach by the political leaders of the government parties (Vaclav Klaus in the Czech Republic and Vladimir Meciar in Slovakia). However, referring to the economic-rationale hypothesis, I believe that two comments are crucial: (1) the drive for secession was by far not as unanimous in the Slovak public as it was in Slovenia and Croatia; (2) engaging in some speculations or a "thought experiment" (*Gedankenexperiment*), we can construct the following scenario: if the economic cards had been distributed differently so that Slovakia was the prosperous part, Slovakia would have seceded with a clear political determination before 1992.

#### **Factor 4: The Self-Dynamics of the Breakdown of the Political Centers**

The obvious breakdown and collapse of the political centers and the active center-away policies of the trend-setter republics in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, in 1991, created a new situation. Now the

<sup>5</sup>Continental China might be challenged by such a development. The economic boom in the southeastern coastal regions could create a cleavage for China, in which the economically prospering South would compete against the political center in Beijing.

late-follower republics came under pressure to react politically. Once the trend setters had implemented their agenda of secession, parallel to the disintegration of the center and its powers, this fostered a self-dynamics where the late followers had no real alternative than to strive for independence. Otherwise their position or scope of political action in the international arena and world system would have suffered disadvantages. In the Soviet Union those late followers were clearly the five Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, and in Yugoslavia the republics Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Having already elaborated the economic-rationale hypothesis in detail, we cannot avoid the question of whether this self-dynamics of fragmentation also corresponded to certain economic needs. One crucial question could be posed as: if the "overarching" federal structures of society turn dysfunctional, do smaller political units appear more competent and competitive in their economic behavior and acting?

#### **CONCLUSIONS: SCENARIOS ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN STATE STRUCTURES**

Is it possible to formulate a rational policy program for a political center that wants to cope with nationalism at its periphery, but under a humanistic and democratically oriented premise, rejecting coercion? If we are willing to enter such a debate, the following pair of strategies appears reasonable: (1) trying to save the state structures and, if this is not possible, then (2) trying to divorce those state structures peacefully.

(1) Saving state structures by federalizing or confederalizing the system: If nationalism is on the rise and the political center refuses to use military force, a rational policy program should try to anticipate possible demands of national movements in the periphery. The simplest strategy seems to be opening the state structures early enough. If those structures are too central, federalizing the system is the appropriate policy (including autonomy for the provinces) or, in a next step, confederalizing the structures (i.e., developing a federation of states and thus approaching a supranational design). Of course, this does not offer an absolute guarantee. There could be such a strong momentum of self-dynamics where even federal or confederal structures are perceived as too narrow by national movements. Here we can mention the problems that Canada and Belgium have with their multinational status. However, one



fact should be clear: without federal or confederal structures the probability of survival gravitates toward zero.

(2) A peaceful divorce of state structures: A state divorce can have two different goals: either (1) aiming at the implementation of confederal structures or (2) trying to create totally separated and independent statehoods. The first option coincides, more or less, with the program of saving state structures through a process of federalization or confederalization. The second option addresses the process of creating new states. As a preliminary bottom-line conclusion it is rational to argue that a total splitting without any eruption of violence is more difficult to realize than a peaceful confederalization. If still intended, then the following features must be recognized:

Isolated elections and referenda, not embedded in a democratic political culture or civil society and thus ignoring the exposed status of minorities, cannot solve conflicts peacefully.

Special protection of minorities and legal implementation of their rights in the new constitutions.

Federalizing the structures of the new and smaller statehoods.

Balanced criteria on how to draw borderlines and a political will to keep those borders open and transparent from the beginning.

Close cooperation between those new states at the international level.

Assessing the policy programs of the political centers in Yugoslavia and in the Soviet Union, we can offer the following evaluation:

1. Yugoslavia: A goal-failing policy program of the center. Belgrade missed the opportunity to confederalize Yugoslavia early enough. Contrarily, the Serbian leadership partially tried to tighten the control, especially over the Kosovo area since 1987–1988. This of course fed the centrifugal tendencies in Slovenia and Croatia. On the other hand, Croatia also implemented a nationalistic version of statehood, so Serbian and Croatian nationalism counterfed and escalated the conflict level. Concerning the current focus of the Yugoslav civil war, concentrating on the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the native

Muslims run the risk of becoming squeezed between the policies of Serbia and Croatia.

2. Soviet Union: A semi-goal-failing policy program of the center. In the aftermath of the Russian declaration of sovereignty on June 12, 1990, Mikhail Gorbachev openly manifested his willingness to re-think the federal structures of the Soviet Union. This led, in 1991, to a new draft treaty on the Union of Sovereign Republics and its signing was scheduled for August 20, 1991. The communist coup aborted this plan. Following the crackdown on the coup, Gorbachev still tried to realize a Union of Sovereign States, but Yeltsin bypassed this by forming the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (December 8 and 21, 1991).

Why should the policy of the Soviet center be qualified as semi-goal failing? Speaking in theoretical terms, the basic goal of the CIS seemed to be rational, namely the creation of supranational structures. However, the crucial point is that the CIS cannot realize its initial intentions. To a large extent the CIS turned into an artificial construction. If there is still something viable concerning the CIS, it is its clustering into one or several subfederations (Götz, 1992). But the label "semi-goal failing" also addresses a different ambiguity. The eruption of full-scale inter-republic warfare has been prevented so far, although the regional crisis management has collapsed partially. Some observers still express their hope that full-scale warfare between the major republics of the former Soviet Union can be efficiently blocked and neutralized in the future.

We also should not forget that there are still some cohesive forces in operation that sustain a CIS core:

1. The distribution of nuclear weapons and ICBMs in Russia, Belarus, the Ukraine, and Kazakhstan creates a threshold against direct military involvement, because nuclear weapons raise every military confrontation to a high risk level.
2. The former Soviet and the current Russian governments behave differently than the Serbian elite, by avoiding open border discussions and, at least in principle, having accepted the centrifugal tendencies of the republics. Of course, a pervasive danger lies in the potential that a self-dynamics of conflict escalation can develop in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet system.

3. Economically, the former Soviet republics are heavily interdependent and there is no outlook for a near EC membership. In addition, the vital interest of receiving Western aid is an incentive for sustaining current networks of cooperation.
4. It appears that the current leaderships of Belarus and Kazakhstan consider a special relationship to Russia as strategically important. If the CIS fragments, can those three republics form a subfederation, and will there be one or two federations of the Islamic republics?

On the other hand, those cohesive forces are challenged by several developments:

1. The periphery-periphery conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh "survived" the collapse of the Soviet Union and escalated dangerously. In May 1992 it turned into an open interrepublic war when Armenian troops invaded Azerbaijan to cut a corridor through to the isolated Nagorno-Karabakh pocket. Future escalations are a realistic scenario.
2. In Moldova a double conflict loading developed. The center-periphery conflict, manifest since 1988, was additionally loaded with periphery-periphery conflict cleavages. Parallel to the secessionist movement of the majority Moldovans from Moscow, the minority Russians and Ukrainians, primarily clustered at the east bank of the Dniester River, tried to break away from Moldova. They announced the independent Trans-Dniester Republic and since then the fighting has escalated between Moldovan troops and separatist Russians. It reminds one very much of a Yugoslav-style conflict, as Russia has threatened to play the card of direct military intervention.
3. The ethnic periphery-periphery conflicts in Georgia are also complicated, as there is a potential for direct conflict with Russia concerning the issue of South and North Ossetia.
4. Between Russia and the Ukraine the latent conflicts were openly manifest after August 1991, following the crackdown on the communist putsch. In the center of that rivalry are the future status of the Crimean peninsula, now politically a part of the Ukraine but with a Russian majority population, and the control of the Black Sea Fleet (Carney, 1992).
5. Large Russian population pockets outside the territory of Russia, e.g., in Kazakhstan, Latvia, Estonia, the Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan,

always represent a potential for direct interventions from Russia, with the ultimate scenario of a military conflict.

6. Linked to the possibility that the economic malaise is long-lasting and that the economic reforms suffer from serious setbacks, the weak economic performance potentially creates an environment that favors or "selects" a process of dangerous political radicalization.

Summarizing our analysis of the development and future of the European state structures in a preliminary conclusion, we can draw several assessments: (1) In Eastern Europe the fragmentation of state structures is the dominant drive, clustering several societies. (2) For Western Europe, and the EC as its nucleus, we can pose that the drive for integration seems to be stronger, although we should be careful with deterministic predictions for the future (referring to the Western recognition policies of the successor states of former Yugoslavia, it appears that partially old historical alliance patterns reemerged). Still there is a potential for integration-blocking effects, and the viability of nation-state structures has not yet been falsified. Perhaps the EC will be caught in its current structures, preventing the EC integration to transcend into a new stage. Conceptually I phrased those dilemmas with the notion of cycles or the evolution of supranational structures.

Under the premise that we assume a continuation of EC integration, one challenging question is: Why was the integration of the EC, so far, successful, but why did it fail in the case of the CIS? One possible answer might be that a successful supranational integration demands that, as a prerequisite, the independence of the smaller political units is guaranteed. Possibly the republics of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia must run through a phase of establishing a status of, at least, semisovereign national statehood before they can think of crafting a new supranational integration. Again, referring to the conceptual leitmotif of the *three levels of state structures*, it appears that as a historical justification for such an architecture we should be prepared to allow more regional autonomy. If this becomes part of the shared belief system of the main actors and policy makers within the EC, seriously accepting the principle of subsidiarity, then the integration process of Western Europe on the whole might be substantially supported and stabilized. The European nation-state is under pressure, endangered by national fragmentation or absorption into supranational structures. And the historical political outcome is not yet determined.

However, if we believe that there is an evolutionary drive for integration in Western Europe, manifesting itself in the development of the EC, this also demands a systemic explanation. Focusing on the concept of self-organization, such a systemic (cybernetic) answer could emphasize that there are societal processes of learning at work, reflecting several issues: (1) the tragedy of World War II and its implication for the European power base, (2) the successful transformation of competition from military to nonmilitary means, and (3) the prevention of aggressive nationalism and war. In addition, (4) the European integration serves the economic rationale of advanced countries, (5) the political elites have a stake in integration, and (6) ideational factors that change the common belief and value systems favoring ideas of integration, play an important role. In summary, the simple answer would be: the evolution of supranational structures is a systemic process, reactive and pro-active, adapting the European societies to new conditions that are the outcome of history.

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#### DISCUSSION OF CAMPBELL'S PRESENTATION

**Mulej:** I would rather speak of the "center-away" parts of Yugoslavia than of the "breakaway" parts. For example, the recommendation which was put into the memorandum by the Serbian Academy of Sciences was to have Yugoslavia without Slovenia. Slovenia was thought not to fit the Serbian model, being of a background that was too far away from their own background. "Breakaway" implies too much of an independent decision by the Slovenians and the Croatians.

**Campbell:** It is instructive to compare events in the former Yugoslavia with events in the former Soviet Union. Under Milosevic, the Serbs tried to recentralize Yugoslavia. This meant narrowing or abolishing the autonomy of the regions of Voivodina and Kosovo. However, this was the wrong program. At a time when they should have opened the system, they tried to close it. As a result, Slovenia and Croatia said they wanted to leave. Consequently, the Serbs came to the conclusion that Yugoslavia could not be saved. But they wanted to make sure that those territories settled by Serbs would be part of a Greater Serbia. Montenegro then joined Serbia. Step by step, conflict between the center and the periphery escalated.

In the former Soviet Union the project of federalizing the system has been launched so late that it could only be partially effective. Of course, it may not have been possible for Gorbachev to introduce change earlier. While in the Soviet Union the decentralization program

was implemented too late and produced an uncertain outcome, there were efforts in Yugoslavia to recentralize the system.

**Koizumi:** In terms of your *three levels of state structures*, I believe what is happening is that the suprapstate structure of the European Community is developing at the same time that some parts of countries are breaking away. A fragmentation is taking place. This creates the possibility of making new entities between the suprapstate structure and the local and regional structures. The situation is very complicated both in Yugoslavia and in the former Soviet Union.

**Campbell:** There is a paradox. It might be possible to buffer nationalism if it is coupled with suprapstate structures that allow regional autonomy.

**Mulej:** The European Community has emerged from several wars. We should not forget that, either.

**Campbell:** There is a process of learning. At least in the European context we cannot operate as we used to.

**Mkrtchian:** In Armenia, one of the former Soviet republics, every person has his own plot of land, his own home. It is really important in Russia to have private ownership, since there has been no market economy there, until now.

**Umpleby:** Are you saying that Armenia is farther ahead in its economic reform than Russia?

**Mkrtchian:** In agriculture, yes, and in shops. But the economic situation in Armenia is currently very bad.

**Mesjasz:** This kind of factual approach has been very useful, but we are at a systems science conference. What generalizations would you draw from your analysis?

**Campbell:** There is the notion of the evolution of societal systems. This model of *three levels of state structures* points out that there might be evolutionary directions in the context of Europe. This is not a coincidence; this is a learning process, perhaps an evolutionary trend or direction. And this I would label as the underlying theoretical framework. Then we could look for conditions under which such an experiment (such as the European Community) might be successful.





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