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THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY BETWEEN THREE WAYS OF LIFE

A cultural analysis

**Michael Shackleton**

**Secretariat of the European Parliament, Luxembourg**

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## Introduction

What kind of institution or set of institutions is the European Community (EC) becoming? What kind of decisions is it likely to take and how is it likely to take them? The discussion in this paper will revolve around three possible scenarios for the EC's future development, which differ in terms of the strength of central EC institutions, the extent of the enlargement process and the character of the legislation enacted at EC level. The first assumes that the EC will not develop strong central institutions, that it will be willing and able to accommodate as many states in Europe as wish to join and that it will only legislate to the extent necessary to ensure the efficient regulation of the large economic area due to emerge out of the 1992 programme. The second supposes that EC institutions will continue to place a premium on the equal status of all members and hence the need to respect rules of equity in decisions taken, that candidates for membership will find it difficult to obtain the endorsement of all concerned for their applications, and that regulations will seek not just to create a level economic playing field but also to combat economic disparities between members. And the third takes as its premise that the decisional structure will be strengthened with greater stress on individual members making sacrifices in the interests of the whole, that the decisions on enlargement will reflect the position of the majority and that the shape of the legislative agenda will be similarly be determined by a majority with no one member able to block its development.

The three scenarios are not exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. Other futures can no doubt be

imagined just as the future itself will escape neat categorisation. Nevertheless, these scenarios have not been chosen at random. They are derived from two assumptions: first, that within the institutions of the EC different organisational forms are to be found: institutional unity combines with organisational variety; and second, that the various organisational forms generate different outcomes: how the EC organises, so it behaves. In turn these assumptions are linked to a particular body of literature which argues that individual preferences are reflected in different kinds of social relations which themselves generate diversity of outcome. The literature has been developed, under the heading "cultural theory", notably by Wildavsky, Thompson and Ellis<sup>1</sup>. They argue, in particular, for the importance of the concept of "ways of life", each associated with a specific decision-making form and with a specific kind of outcome. This paper will suggest that the three scenarios outlined above can be linked to three of the competing "ways of life" identified by cultural theory: individualism, egalitarianism and hierarchy. The relative strength of these ways of life will determine what the Community will look like in the years ahead.

The paper is divided into four parts: the first outlines the way the development of the EC and its decision-making machinery has been traditionally conceptualized; the second introduces cultural theory including the three ways of life; the third applies the theory and the three cultures to the Community; and the fourth and final part considers the future development of the EC and suggests that the existing balance between the three ways of life is subject to major strain at the

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<sup>1</sup> See in particular Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky, Cultural Theory, (Boulder, Westview, 1990).

present time. If hierarchy becomes more clearly marked in the move towards a "deepening" of the EC, then it would be likely to provoke the threatened or actual withdrawal of existing member states; if, on the other hand, individualism assumes a greater importance, under the impact of "widening", then the Community would be threatened with dissolution. Hence the central importance of the third way of life, egalitarianism.

### The evolution of the European Community

Traditionally discussion of the EC's development has been couched in terms of a continuum with at one end, the Community amounting to little more than the agglomeration of the member states that compose it and at the other, a European superstate within which national sovereignties have been pooled. Writers have variously claimed that the EC remains essentially a collection of states, that it is evolving inexorably in the direction of a superstate or that it is somehow stuck between the extreme points of the continuum. In all three cases, however, the argument is cast in terms of the Community's movement or lack of it along a line between two points.<sup>2</sup> Differences arise from assessments of the direction of travel rather than of the nature of the conveyance.

The central argument has been between realists and idealists. Idealists point to the unique characteristics of the EC and seek to reveal the underlying nature of the process of integration

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<sup>2</sup> Such linearity has been noted by others, for example, Juliet Lodge in her article "EC Policymaking: institutional considerations" in the book she edited The European Community and the Challenge of the Future (London, Pinter, 1989), p.27.

taking place between Western European states. Within this process, states are seen as willing to make concessions and even to allow themselves to be over-ruled by others in the interests of common solutions. Realists, by contrast, stress that even intense cooperation between states does not diminish the importance of the nation state in Western Europe, still less does it change the power political basis of the international system. States are portrayed as retaining the ability to veto changes with which they are not in agreement and which they consider not to be in their interest.

On both sides of the argument there is a shared assumption. The protagonists agree that the politics of the EC can be explained in terms of conflicts of interest resolved through the decision-making process. The interests involved may be modified over time, they may be pursued with more or less success but their existence is uncontroversial. Thus for the idealists the important development was the way in which member states gradually came to redefine their interests in favour of forms of decision-making which gave greater powers to institutions at the EC level, while the more sceptical realists underline the way in which the states protected their interests by determining the speed at which and the terms under which these developments took place.

The strength of this common assumption can be established by seeing how the realist and idealist literatures developed over time in response to the perceived progress (or lack of such progress) in the EC's institutional and policy development. In the early years immediately following the establishment of the Community the idealist literature was dominant. Member states appeared

to be willing to concede sovereign rights in a manner unimaginable prior to the second world war. Haas's "expansive logic of integration"<sup>3</sup> supposed that the process of integration was generating a momentum which states would not be able to control. Their interests were not immutable but subject to redefinition, under pressure from interest groups in specific functional areas.

An important indicator of the changed definition of interests in idealist writing was the way in which the traditional consensus rules used in international organisations were modified. For example, under the 1951 Paris Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, the assent of the Council, representing the states, was required only on a limited range of issues, and even on these, unanimity was not required in the majority of cases. This pattern looked set to repeat itself under the terms of the EEC Treaty which stipulated a major move to majority voting in the third stage of the transitional period after 1965. But it was precisely this stipulation that prompted the first major crisis in the Community's evolution and raised doubts as to the extent to which the member states would be willing to cede sovereignty.

The French decision to cease to attend Community meetings for six months and only to resume participation following the adoption of the so-called Luxembourg compromise gave strong succour to realists and the view that the concept of the national interest was far from dead. Hoffmann was in no doubt that this episode demonstrated irrefutably that the nation state in

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<sup>3</sup> Ernst Haas, The Uniting of Europe, (Stanford, Stanford University Press), Chapter 8, pp.283-317\_

Western Europe was obstinately determined not to become obsolete<sup>4</sup>. In the 1970s and early 1980s the mood turned yet more clearly against the idealist camp as the divisions between the member states grew. There was an increasing feeling that the Community was not equipped to reach decisions even when the interests at stake were relatively minor.<sup>5</sup> As a result Taylor concluded that "the process of European integration was more likely to begin again if the goal of unification were consciously abandoned in the short term and if some of its supporting doctrines were discarded"<sup>6</sup>.

And yet the expectations of writers, like Taylor, were dramatically challenged by what happened during and after 1985. In the Single European Act the Community not only established the ambitious goal of completing a single market by the end of 1992 but agreed that the achievement of this goal depended on an improvement in the decision-making process. In particular, under the revised version of Article 149, a new procedure was established, known as the cooperation procedure, which permits the broader use of qualified majorities. The procedure applies to decisions specifically related to the achievement of the single market, individual research programmes and some structural policy issues. Although only 10 Treaty articles are affected, they cover between a third and a half of the legislative output of the Council of Ministers and

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<sup>4</sup> Stanley Hoffmann, "Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation State and the Case of Western Europe" in Daedalus, no.95, 1966, pp.862-915.

<sup>5</sup> For the example of fishing policy, see Michael Shackleton, "Fishing for a Policy? The Common Fisheries Policy of the Community" in Helen Wallace, William Wallace and Carole Webb (eds.) Policy Making in the European Community, (Chichester, John Wiley, 1983), pp.349-371.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Taylor, The Limits of European Integration, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1983), p.312.

therefore provide greater scope for individual states to be outvoted.

Here was a procedural change which really seemed to alter the balance between the Community institutions and the member states. The result was not only an increase in the frequency of majority voting but pressure for its use to be extended beyond the areas designated in the Single European Act. In the run-up to the two intergovernmental conferences (IGCs) convened at the end of 1990, for example, the Commission proposed that majority voting be extended to social affairs, the free movement of people, the environment, research and taxation<sup>7</sup>. And when the Heads of State and Government met in December 1990 in the European Council, they agreed on a mandate which explicitly stated that "the extension of majority voting will be examined by the conference (on political union), including the possibility of making it the general rule with a limited number of exceptions".<sup>8</sup> Once again states appear to be willing to redefine their interests in ways which conflict with realist expectations.

But why have these changes come about? Some have argued that the Community has built up a momentum which can only be stopped at the risk of endangering the whole structure, a risk that no-one is willing to take. Emerson has suggested that "the old metaphor of integration theory - on a bicycle you must keep moving, or you fall off - seems valid again".<sup>9</sup> But such

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<sup>7</sup> Commission of the European Communities, Commission Opinion of 21 October 1990 on the Proposal for Amendment of the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community with a view to Political Union, COM (90) 600 final, pp.11-13.

<sup>8</sup> Financial Times, 17 December 1990, p.2

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Michael Emerson, "1992 and after: the bicycle theory rides again" in The Political Quarterly, 3: 1988, pp.289-299.



a mechanical analogy leaves unclear why the momentum started in the first place and what keeps it going. It also does not give an answer as to how far the process can be expected to go. On this question it is those who are more sceptical about the process being able to advance who have offered more compelling arguments. Two in particular have often been used to explain the reticence of member states to cede more powers to the central institutions.

The first argument draws attention to the constraints imposed by the nature of the international system, a system which lacks central authority and where security is scarce. In an anarchic world no state can risk subordinating its ability to pursue its security interests to an unreliable external authority. The second finds the constraints not at the systemic level but at the level of the internal structure of states where public opinion remains attached to domestic power structures and has not acquired a wider loyalty to a European level of government. As Haas has pointed out, general support for European unification is not matched by a willingness to give a European government the right to have the final say over individual governments. Only 36% of an EC-wide sample chose the European solution when asked in a 1986 opinion poll.<sup>10</sup>

These two arguments are themselves problematic. The first fails to explain adequately why the member states have made the concessions that they have to the central institutions of the Community. It also fails to indicate what the precise limits of such concessions might be. The second can not account for the way in which attitudes evolve (after 1986 support for European

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<sup>10</sup> Ernst B. Haas, "The Limits of Liberal Nationalism in Western Europe" in Beverly Crawford and Peter Schulze (eds.) The New Europe Asserts Itself, (Berkeley, Berkeley University Press, 1990), p.345.

solutions did rise in the polls!) and can not preclude the possibility that acceptance of the European solution may come about. If it did one could only conclude that the loyalties of European citizens were no longer what they had been. Why they had changed would remain mysterious. To offer a possible explanation of such developments, we will now turn to cultural theory.

### Cultural theory presented

We have suggested so far that in the argument that has pitted realists against idealists, the politics of interest can explain what has happened since the EC came to being. All agree that states have interests but it is the nature of those interests that is at dispute and the extent to which they are subject to modification in the integration process. A fundamental feature of cultural theory is that it challenges the centrality of the politics of interest. It denies that we can simply assume that interests are givens that everyone has without asking where they come from. As Thompson and Schwarz have pointed out, such an assumption is neither self-evident nor beyond dispute. If one accepts it, it becomes impossible to deal with the question: "how do policy actors who behave in their own best interest come to know where that interest lies?"<sup>11</sup> To begin to answer that question it is necessary to look at the sources of interests and the forces that keep them in being within the political arena. If we do this we are obliged to recognize, for example, the need for policy to be justified. Not all claims to legitimacy will do; rather all

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Thompson and Michael Schwarz, "Beyond the Politics of Interest", in Divided We Stand, (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), p.49.

organisations construct and respond to their own set of shared values which constitute a particular culture. And such a culture will only survive and flourish if people are prepared to support it.

Cultural analysis, as discussed here, suggests that the shared values and norms which make up a culture are not infinitely varied: only a limited number of cultures are viable. It posits five such viable ways of life - hierarchy, egalitarianism, fatalism, individualism and autonomy. These ways of life derive from a specific typology which considers the involvement of individuals in social life on two axes: group and grid:

"Group refers to the extent to which an individual is incorporated into bounded units. The greater the incorporation, the more individual choice is subject to group determination. Grid denotes the degree to which an individual's life is circumscribed by externally imposed prescriptions. The more binding and extensive the scope of the prescriptions, the less of life that is open to individual negotiation".<sup>12</sup>

By combining these two axes, one can identify the different ways in which individuals can be involved in social life. Where integration into a group is high and the degree of regulation inside the group is also high, as in the case of the high-caste Hindu villager, relations between the members of the group are hierarchical; where integration is high but regulation is low, as in the case of the member of the self-sufficient Western commune, then relations are egalitarian;

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<sup>12</sup> Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, op.cit. p.5.

where integration is low and regulation is also low, as in the case of the self-made entrepreneur, then relations are individualistic; and where integration is low but the degree of regulation is high, as in the case of the Italian peasants described by Banfield,<sup>13</sup> we have a fatalistic way of life. And for those who seek to avoid all forms of manipulative social relationship, there is the option of living the life of the autonomous hermit.

The resultant typology can be represented as follows:

		INTEGRATION (Group)	
		High	Low
REGULATION (Grid)	High	<b>Hierarchical</b>	<b>Fatalistic</b>
	Low	<b>Egalitarian</b>	<b>Individualistic</b>

These ways of life are not simply a convenient device for categorising social reality. They arise out of the preferences of individuals and have important consequences for the development of those preferences. It is precisely because some people put a high value on being able to behave

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<sup>13</sup> Edward C. Banfield, The Moral Basis of a Backward Society (New York: Free Press, 1958).

as they wish and are not concerned to promote group solidarity with others any more than is necessary to ensure their freedom of action in a stable environment that an individualist way of life can flourish. Similarly, there could not be a hierarchical way of life unless some placed importance on living in an environment where the rules laid down are tight and clearly-defined and roles well differentiated. In the same way, egalitarianism depends for its existence on people who insist on the need not to be subject to control but within groups that are sharply differentiated from the rest of society, while fatalism thrives on those who accept severe limitations on their ability to influence their environment and are not willing or able to seek to compensate for this by seeking closer group ties with others.

Each way of life generates diverse interpretations of the world and justifications of action. Douglas and Wildavsky<sup>14</sup>, for example, discuss the way in which the idea of risk is looked at from within different ways of life. For hierarchs, risk is something to be managed by competent institutions following well-established procedures; for individualists, risk is a commodity to be welcomed as offering challenges which it is possible to meet because of the essentially benign nature of the environment; egalitarians consider the views of both hierarchs and individualists as complacent and are much more inclined to see the world as fragile and risk taking as an extremely precarious pursuit; and fatalists take a very passive view considering that their actions will in any case have little impact on the likelihood or not of risks leading to adverse consequences for them.

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<sup>14</sup> Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky, Risk and Culture, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983).

Within each way of life people are not free to behave precisely as they choose. They are constrained by their chosen culture to consider certain acts more sensible than others and to act accordingly. However, if they begin to feel ill at ease in that cultural context, they will move into the realm of another way of life, more in keeping with their own individual value preferences. In different roles, given different institutional contexts, individuals may find themselves behaving in ways which support different ways of life. But this proviso does not alter the underlying contention of the analysis that culture constrains what people do and the way they interpret the world.

Not only are people not able to behave as they choose, they cannot use arguments to justify action indiscriminately. Each way of life generates its own set of rationales and individuals are not free to select between them without putting their own way of life at risk. Certainly the rhetoric of one way of life can be borrowed from another but the effect is to weaken the latter at the expense of the former. Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky cite the fate of the American Whig party in the 1840s. Electoral failure led many of its hierarchical elements to copy the anti-authority rhetoric of the Jacksonians. The result was initial electoral success followed by disintegration of the party within 10 years. "In winning the electoral battle, the Whigs lost the cultural war".<sup>15</sup>

At a more general level the relationship between the ways of life is critical in determining the

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<sup>15</sup> Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, *op.cit.*, p.263.

character of any polity. They are in competition with each other but at the same time, they depend upon each other for their viability. If one is eliminated, the whole character of a society changes. This is precisely what happened in Cambodia in the 1970s where the victory of the Khmer Rouge was also a victory for egalitarianism over the other ways of life (except perhaps fatalism?). And yet such a "victory" is inherently unstable in that it suppresses a range of individual preferences which, according to cultural theory, cannot be eliminated. They form part of the human condition. The question always is the balance or perhaps more precisely the imbalance, between the different ways of life and how it varies from society to society and in the same society over time. And it is this question as it applies to the EC to which we will now turn.

#### Cultural theory and the European Community

One central characteristic of the EC at the present time is that it is becoming a source of debate and disagreement far beyond the confines of the institutions themselves. There is a recognition that the development of the Community beyond the role of a traditional international organisation means that much more is at stake for those living outside as well as those inside the Community than anyone had imagined even a relatively short time ago. An ever-widening circle recognize that the future shape of the EC will directly affect them. Hence the potency of the symbol of "Fortress Europe" in the United States: it suggests a shape that will be anything but neutral in its effect. A far cry from the Euroclerosis that was identified in the early 1980s!

From a cultural point of view, the essential feature of this debate is the argument about the character of the organisations that will shape the future. As suggested earlier, a single institutional structure harbours a range of organisational forms and it is the relative fortunes of these forms that will govern behaviour. As the EC organizes, so shall it behave. If it organizes on a hierarchical basis, then one can expect a quite different outcome from an organisation based on individualist or egalitarian principles.<sup>16</sup> This is not to argue that one form of organisation will dominate the operation of the EC but rather that the nature of the balance between the different forms will influence the shape of outcomes. Hence the importance of identifying those forms at a time when the debate about the shape of the institutions is gathering momentum. Those institutions do not exist separately from the arguments about their operation and their objectives. In the midst of those arguments the different ways of life compete against each other.

The overall shape of that competition revolves around four particular issues:

- i) the role of central institutions;
- ii) the scope of legislation;
- iii) the level of differentiation in the decision-making process; and
- iv) the extent of leadership.

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<sup>16</sup> The discussion here will be restricted to the three so-called active ways of life, namely hierarchy, individualism and egalitarianism but cultural theory would suggest that the other two ways of life can help to elucidate the character of the EC.



Grid/group analysis provides a clear idea of how proponents of each way of life regard these issues. A different pattern of overlap between them emerges in the case of the first two as compared with the third and fourth.

As far as central institutions are concerned, they can only be acceptable to individualists in as far as they allow them to pursue their own lives with the minimum of regulation. By contrast, hierarchs are attracted to institutional development in as far as it permits them to preserve their status and to manage the world more efficiently. Egalitarians are more ambivalent in that institutions can help reduce differences in society but can also create a remote bureaucratic elite.

When it comes to the extent of legislation, there is again greater prospect of shared perception between hierarchs and egalitarians: each can favour action for different reasons, while individualists like to minimize the volume of intrusion into their lives. For them rules are acceptable as long as they do not go beyond providing a broad framework for behaviour which permits people to pursue their own interests in conditions of security.

On the question of differentiation in the decision-making process, the alliance is one between egalitarians and individualists. Neither group wishes to treat individuals differently, the former because of its support for equality of outcome and the latter because it favours equality of opportunity. By contrast, hierarchy is premised on the notion that there are and should be differences and that those differences are beneficial to the working of society.

By the same token, hierarchs are very willing to contemplate the development of leadership as a way of overcoming divergent interests. However, for both individualists and egalitarians the idea of leadership is uncongenial. This is a necessary consequence of low grid relations where relations between individuals are subject to the minimum of outside control and decisions have to gain the approval of all affected before being put into effect.

However, these attitudes do not exist in a vacuum in the Community. The EC institutions themselves reflect divergent organisational forms which each bolster different ways of life. Hence the support that individuals, groups or governments give to these various forms is not neutral as between ways of life. Their preferences will influence the kind of organisation that they will try to create in the EC and will in the process modify outcomes in accordance with the relative strength of individualism, hierarchy and egalitarianism. To make the point more concretely, let us consider each of the three ways of life in turn.

From an individualist perspective, the important features of the EC's organisational structure in relation to the four areas identified above include the following: the subordination of the central institutions to the member states is assured by the fact that governments nominate Commissioners and are responsible for policy implementation; the thrust of Community, both in the original Treaties and in the Single European Act of 1986 is the removal of constraints on freedom of movement of goods, people, services and capital; the existence of a veto right is guaranteed to all states (under specific circumstances) in the policy-making process and one of the jobs of the European Court of Justice is to ensure that policy is implemented in the same way

in all states; and through the use of the mechanism of six-monthly Presidencies of the Council, no state is able to assume a permanent leadership role.

The preservation of these features is not the unique aim of one individual of group but has certainly been heard most often from the British government in recent years. The *locus classicus* of individualist thinking is probably Mrs Thatcher's speech given at Bruges in September 1988. She made clear her own commitment to minimal government in the Community context combined with a resistance to the enhancement of the powers of the central institutions. "The Treaty of Rome was intended as a charter for economic liberty. Our aim should not be more and more detailed regulation from the centre; it should be to deregulate, to remove the constraints on trade and to open up." Increased regulation from the centre would contradict the progress that she saw as having been achieved domestically: "We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them reimposed at a European level, with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels."<sup>17</sup>

From this point of view the extensive legislation arising out of the SEA was acceptable because the new rules embodied in the legislation were essentially designed to ensure fair play between economic actors in a single market. Its perceived importance was such that the British government was prepared to accept majority voting as a way of overcoming the resistances of more protectionist governments. On the other hand, it resisted strongly the introduction of

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<sup>17</sup> Speech given by the Rt.Hon.Mrs Margaret Thatcher at the opening ceremony of the 39th academic year of the College of Europe, Bruges: 20 September 1988, issued by the British Embassy Press Service in Brussels.

measures which would extend Community competences beyond the realm of fair-play rules and subject member states to more constraining kinds of limits on their freedom of action. It is on this basis that one can explain, for example, the British refusal to sign the Charter of Fundamental Social Rights which other states were willing to subscribe to in December 1989. In the British view such a charter risked justifying the introduction of legislative proposals at EC level in an area best left to national legislation or no legislation at all. The fact that the Charter was couched in very general terms, open to diverse interpretations, could not by itself make it palatable.

One intriguing issue is how far commitment to individualist forms of EC organisation extends in British political life, in particular on the left of the political spectrum. Until relatively recently the dominant view in the Labour party was that its objectives on the national level were best secured by restricting rather than widening the scope of Community rules. But now the party appears to have undergone a major conversion. It strongly supports, for example, the establishment of a social charter at European level as a complement to the single market. But the depth of the conversion remains to be tested. The Social Charter is particularly favourable terrain in that it combines egalitarian objectives with the sense that those objectives cannot be achieved domestically. Other areas are less favourable. Labour was, for example, in very broad agreement with the position of the Prime Minister, John Major, when he argued that the EC was not ready for political union and a common security and foreign policy in the light of its response to events in the Middle East.<sup>18</sup> This event showed the extent to which the

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<sup>18</sup> Financial Times, January 23, 1991, p.1.

commitment to different ways of life can vary as between issues and underlined the continuing importance of the individualist culture in British attitudes to the Community across the political spectrum.

What then of the role of hierarchy in the EC organisational structure? Again let us consider the four issues raised earlier. First, the central institutions are given significant powers under the Treaties whether in the form of the Commission's sole right of legislative initiative or of the binding rulings of the Court of Justice. Second, there is no intrinsic limit on the extent of Community policy: Article 235 of the EEC Treaty allows the Community to legislate in any area that the states agree requires regulation. Third, the use of qualified majorities does allow differentiation between states and prevents one state blocking the development of the EC. And finally, the introduction of institutions such as the European Council and the Troika (the previous, present and prospective Presidencies of the Council) does permit the exercise of an important degree of leadership.

From this perspective there is nothing odd about developing the role of the Community and in so doing giving its central institutions a greater status. To achieve this it is important to establish a degree of differentiation between the component parts of the Community with each being willing to make sacrifices in the interests of the whole. Under such circumstances, it cannot make sense to allow member states the right to exercise a veto to defend their own interests. Such a view is again not the exclusive property of any individual or group but it can be illustrated from a publication of the Commission:

"...if the matter is viewed purely in terms of interests, it could well be that in areas where all the Member States have relinquished their freedom of action to the Community, the vetoing of a Community decision on the grounds of national interest could prejudice the vital interests of other Member States in that they would be harmed by the paralysis of the Community. By contrast, a State accepting the Community system and relying on its inner logic, its institutions and their rules and traditions can rest assured that these will provide all reasonable safeguards.

In the general interest the Community must take account of the essential interests of its members. The institutions are therefore bound to give these interests every consideration. Indeed the Community's ultimate objective of an ever-closer union among its peoples would not be feasible if one nation's vital interests were to be severely harmed".<sup>19</sup>

In other words, member states can put their trust in the ultimately benign nature of the EC and its decision-making structure, because the general interest will always be formulated in such a way as to incorporate particular interests.

This commitment to a particular structure of decision-making is accompanied by support for the extension of the scope of Community policies. This has been particularly true in the period following the adoption of the SEA. When he spoke to the European Parliament in January 1990 the President of the European Commission, Mr. Delors, considered it self-evident that the single

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<sup>19</sup> Emile Noel, Working Together: The institutions of the European Community, (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1988), pp.25-6.

market would require a substantial amount of additional rules in order to enable to it to function:

"The Single Market is an indivisible whole. It extends beyond the single market to solidarity through economic and social cohesion, to the social dimension, to the environment and to research and monetary cooperation, which contribute to competitiveness. It implies the creation of a single economic and social area, without which the Community would be a hollow creation, devoid of vitality and political will".<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, he sought to defend the Commission against the accusation that it was obsessed with deregulating the economy:

"Is it deregulation to lay down Community rules for take-over bids, mergers, the European company statute, or to ban insider-trading?

Is it deregulation to harmonize tests and certification procedures, the labelling of goods, or the conditions for allowing pharmaceuticals on to the market - as part of a realistic policy for informing consumers and defending their interests?

Is it deregulation to harmonize flying time for pilots or hours at the wheel and rest periods for lorry drivers - to avoid the social dumping and the distortions of competition which might ensue?"<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, Supplement 1/90, p.14.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

There could hardly be a clearer presentation of the desire to distance oneself from the individualist way of life at Community level!

What then of egalitarianism? Can one argue that the EC as an organisation reflects elements of egalitarianism? At first sight this would seem rather unlikely. The kind of organisations that are normally identified by the cultural theorists as displaying such marks seem very far removed from the activities of the bureaucrats of Brussels. Examples include religious sects, such as the Amish,<sup>22</sup> environmental groups, like the anti-nuclear Clamshell Alliance,<sup>23</sup> or radical organisations, such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee which opposed American involvement in Vietnam.<sup>24</sup> These are bodies that exist on the border of traditional politics: they are voluntary in character, they reject ideas of leadership in favour of 100% participation of the membership, they are subject to schism with dissenters free to leave at any time, they reject compromise as an inadequate response to political conflict and they make a clear distinction between those inside the group and those outside with blame for the world's problems lying beyond the group's frontiers.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Douglas and Wildavsky, op.cit., pp.104-110.

<sup>23</sup> Gary L. Downey, "Ideology and the Clamshell Identity: Organizational Dilemmas in the Anti-Nuclear Power Movement", Social Problems, Vol.33, No.5, (April 1986), pp.101-117.

<sup>24</sup> Emily Stoper, "The Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee: Rise and Fall of a Redemptive Organization", in Jo Freeman, ed., Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies, (New York: Longman, 1983), pp.320-24.

<sup>25</sup> For an extended account of the outlook of egalitarians, see Douglas and Wildavsky, op.cit., chapter VI, "The Border is Alarmed", pp.102-125.



It would, however, be mistaken to assume that simply because egalitarianism has normally been applied to the fringes of the political system this means that it makes no sense to apply it to the EC. Both in terms of the policy-making process and of policy content there is ample evidence that the Community reflects the claims of the egalitarian way of life and would look quite different if these claims were not taken into account. Indeed the future of the Community will depend quite crucially on the extent to which this way of life continues to flourish.

Consider again the four issues raised earlier which serve to differentiate between the ways of life. In organisational terms, from an egalitarian standpoint, the relative autonomy of the central institutions of the Community offer the opportunity of achieving objectives that cannot be gained through the traditional channels, the legislative agenda incorporates the aim of the reduction of differences, most notably since the SEA by the inclusion of goals such as economic and social cohesion, non-differentiation is assured both by the formal involvement of all in decision-making and by respect of minority views and leadership is heavily restricted by the need for consensus in the decision-making process.

Such egalitarian principles have played an important part throughout the history of the Community. From the time of its inception the Community opted for a clear egalitarian principle, equality between states. This may now seem to have been an obvious choice but it was certainly not seen as such at the time of the establishment of the ECSC when the question of relative weight on the Council had to be settled.

"The Benelux countries and Italy feared that they would find themselves in a minority given the scale of their coal and steel production as a percentage of the total, and they argued for the unanimity rule. Germany advocated representation in proportion to production, which, not unnaturally, scared her partners".<sup>26</sup>

Monnet was convinced that the way in which this issue was settled would have a major bearing on the ethos of the new institution: "The right to say "no" was the large countries' guarantee in their dealings with each other, and the smaller countries' safeguard against the large".<sup>27</sup> In the event he was able to persuade Adenauer that the Community should be based on the principle of complete equality.

The temptation for some states and in particular, the larger ones to go beyond this egalitarian structure is always there. It is often visible in the way that the small states complain about the way in which decisions are taken behind their backs. A recent example was the Dutch complaint that the French and British colluded over the establishment of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, designed to provide loans for Eastern Europe. The Dutch felt that the other two came to a deal about where to site the agency (in London) and who should head it (Jacques Attali, a close associate of President Mitterand) without allowing the other states to have a say as to whether or not Dutch proposals for the site and the head should be accepted.

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<sup>26</sup> European Documentation, Europe - A Fresh Start: The Schuman Declaration 1950-90, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Periodical 3/1990, p.21.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Monnet, Memoirs (London, Collins, 1978), p.353-4

The strength of egalitarian ideas is therefore often witnessed in the breach.

Nevertheless, the desire to ensure fairness as between states and respect for minority rights in the decision-making process is strong. It is the reason why no-one within the institutions would formally suggest that documents cease to be translated and interpreted into all nine working languages, a stipulation which is unique among international organisations and often baffles outsiders, particularly from Anglo-Saxon countries. It is also the reason why there is so much stress on the importance of achieving consensus. The system is very costly in terms of time and resources but one which remains strongly entrenched. Although it has evoked the charge of institutionalizing the "tyranny of the dictatorship of the minority" from within the European Parliament<sup>28</sup>, it continues to play an essential role in ensuring acceptance of the Community framework by national governments.

States remain eager to obtain consensus in the Council even if there is provision for majority voting. Although the process is secret - itself a symptom of high group relations, marking the gap between the group and the outside - it is well documented that the Presidency at any meeting does not seek to point the finger in a very explicit manner at states in disagreement with the majority view. The position of each delegation is more or less clear from their statements in the discussions. When it comes to take a vote, it is established practice for the chairman to state that there is a majority for a particular line and only if there is some doubt in the matter will a

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<sup>28</sup> David Martin, European Union and the Democratic Deficit, John Wheatley Centre, West Lothian, Scotland, 1990, p.15.

vote be taken.

To illustrate the depth of commitment to consensus more clearly it is worth going back to the cooperation procedure. Its introduction in 1987 was seen both as a way of accelerating decision-making by providing for greater use of majority voting and as a mechanism which would allow the European Parliament a greater say in the decisions made. It certainly gives significant rights to the Parliament in the sense that if it can persuade the Commission to accept the amendments that it votes, then those amendments can only be replaced by an alternative text by unanimity in the Council. This proved of significance in the spring of 1989 when car emission standards for small and medium-sized cars were discussed. At its first reading the Council adopted a common position by a qualified majority which then went back to the Parliament. The latter confirmed a number of amendments which it had adopted at first reading which sought to impose severer emission standards than those accepted by the Council. The Commission was then asked whether it accepted the amendments of the Parliament. It said that it would and as a result, the Council was faced with an awkward choice. It could vote against the revised proposal and reestablish the common position by unanimity; it could accept the revised proposal by qualified majority; or it could allow the proposal to lapse. The first option was not possible to achieve because the common position had been adopted by a qualified majority and some states, notably Germany, Denmark and Holland, supported the stricter stance of the Parliament. The last option was unpalatable because it would create a legal void and leave car makers with the uncertainty of not knowing whether or not they would have to build cars to different specifications in different national markets. So finally after much deliberation it was agreed in

the Council to adopt the amended proposal by a qualified majority.<sup>29</sup>

This was a chastening experience for the member states who saw how Community institutions really could start to exercise influence by playing on the divisions between them. Their response reflected the continuing strength of the desire for consensus. They then made sure that all the common positions they adopted between the spring of 1989 and the end of 1990 were unanimous. In this way they were able to reestablish their initial position at second reading if they wished without having to face the awkward choice that had confronted them in the case of car emissions. In other words, the Member States reasserted the importance of the need for them all to agree together on the nature of policies to be adopted. They did not want to be subject to undue differentiation.

It might be objected that the discussion of egalitarianism so far has simply shown the importance of rules of equity in the process of decision-making. Is it not necessary to go beyond procedural egalitarianism to show the importance of the egalitarian way of life in the Community? Is there any way in which the Community institutions are committed to egalitarian values in a broader sense?<sup>30</sup> From a cultural point of view the important thing is to recognize that organisational structure and policy outcome are related. In as far as the EC reflects egalitarian features in the

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<sup>29</sup> Francis Jacobs and Richard Corbett, The European Parliament, (London, Longman, 1990), p.170

<sup>30</sup> The claim that such values are visible in EC environmental policy is made by in the article by Aaron Wildavsky, "Doing More and Using Less: Utilization of Research as a Result of Regime", in Dierkes, Weiler, and Antal, eds., Comparative Policy Research, pp.88-91, quoting Eric Ashby.

way it works, then it will also generate policies which reflect the egalitarian objective of the reduction of differences.

To make the argument more forcefully, consider Olson's argument that in a voluntary organisation where coercion is not available to enforce the view of the strongest, there will necessarily be unevenness in the contributions made to the provision of public goods.<sup>31</sup> The rational actor will see no reason why he should make sacrifices for the public good because he will continue to benefit provided everyone else maintains their contribution. Hence the familiar problem of the freerider, which becomes ever greater as the size of the organisation grows. As interests diverge, so the chance of those with smaller interests to exploit the large-interest members will increase.<sup>32</sup>

The relevance of this argument should be clear. First, the Community is voluntary in character and designed to achieve a range of public goods. It is true that the Treaty of Rome does not provide for the possibility of a member leaving and that with the very particular exception of Greenland, the Community has never up to now decreased in size. It is also true that the details of departure would be of staggering complexity. But it remains the case that secession is neither expressly forbidden nor preventable by the use of force applied by the centre, should a member consider that it could achieve the goods provided through the Community more effectively, by

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<sup>31</sup> Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1965).

<sup>32</sup> Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky, Risk and Culture, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983), p.115.

other means.

Second, the Community does combine equal votes with unequal contributions and thereby prevents larger states from monopolizing the policy agenda. Thus member states do not contribute on a proportional basis towards the achievement of objectives. The creation in 1970 of a system of own resources explicitly broke the link between the size of a state's contribution and the level of its stake in relation to a particular aim. Revenue is no longer earmarked for a specific purpose once it is agreed that an objective be financed out of the Community budget and not from national budgets. Hence expenditure patterns can and are influenced by small as well as large states: objectives do not purely reflect the interests of the larger states.

An obvious example was the decision taken at the Brussels European Council meeting in February 1988 to double the funds allocated to structural spending in the poorer parts of the Community.<sup>33</sup> It was a decision which surprised most observers but the general explanation was that it was part of the price that the richer states were prepared to pay to persuade the poorer ones to accept the introduction of the single market. The latter had the power to block the central objective of the former and thus to win significant financial advantage. However, such an interest-based explanation needs to be expanded to take account of the organisational structure of the Community. It is because the Community is structured in the way that it is that economic and social cohesion could be converted from a slogan into something more substantial,

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Shackleton, Financing the European Community, (New York, Council on Foreign Relations, 1990), pp.31-36.

specifically designed to promote equality of outcome in the economic sphere. Egalitarianism was a necessary condition for the doubling of the funds; it could not have taken place if only hierarchy and individualism competed in the Community arena.

That there are doubts as to whether the funds are sufficient to achieve the objective is not relevant from a cultural point of view. What counts is that the goal was established and now constitutes an important reference point for justifying policy on egalitarian grounds. It should not come as a surprise that the Spanish government has argued in the negotiations on Economic and Monetary Union that such a union can only be contemplated if there is an interstatal compensation fund which makes it possible to counteract any adverse effects arising from the union.<sup>34</sup> It is a further example of the ability of smaller-interest members to influence the agenda of discussion, thanks to having equal votes and despite not making equal contributions.

The importance of these egalitarian elements in the organisation of the Community is considerable. The commitment to the search for consensus, however long it takes, the resistance to any forms of differentiation between members and the dislike of leadership are important sources of stability and serve to hold the group together in a way that would not be possible if the other ways of life were stronger.<sup>35</sup> If, for example, leadership were substantially strengthened in the EC and hence a greater degree of inequality were permitted to enter

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<sup>34</sup> Financial Times, 12 March 1991, "Spain seeks EC fund to boost economies of poorer members".

<sup>35</sup> A similar point is made in the unpublished typescript of Steve Rayner, "The rules that keep us equal", prepared at UC Berkeley.



the arena, then the willingness of some to consider withdrawal could be expected to increase. In this sense the strength of egalitarianism will determine the future of the Community. For the time being it serves to connect the individualists and the hierarchs. But if it is weakened, then the tension between these two ways of life will grow substantially. To this issue we will now turn.

### The future evolution of the EC

The future shape of the European Community has never been so widely debated as it is at the present time. Inside the EC the political agenda has expanded far beyond the decisions taken in 1986 to establish a single market by the end of 1992. In the course of 1990 German unification brought with it an expansion of the size of the Community and did not hinder an agreement to convene two intergovernmental conferences to debate treaty changes designed to pave the way for economic and monetary union as well as political union. Outside the EC there is a growing interest in membership: by the end of 1990 four states had applied officially to join (Turkey, Austria, Malta and Cyprus) and others had expressed the determination to seek membership, notably Sweden and Hungary.

What will be the outcome of this debate? Any attempt to answer this question solely in terms of an opposition between idealist integration and realist intergovernmentalism is bound to be inadequate. To posit an expansive logic of integration as an unchangeable feature of the Community scene seems no more helpful than arguing that member states will never be willing

to cede powers that go to the heart of national sovereignty in such areas as economic management or defence policy. A more satisfactory answer needs to be sought in the interaction between the three ways of life that have been discussed in this paper. Cultural theory cannot by itself offer a prediction as to how this interaction will evolve but it can suggest what the Community will look like if one or other of those ways of life does prevail. This was the purpose of presenting three scenarios at the outset which can now be considered in more detail and be set against certain empirical evidence.

The first scenario envisaged weak central institutions, support for wider membership and legislation limited to the efficient operation of the single market throughout the Community. Here we have the individualist way of life. The second scenario, the egalitarian one, looked to continued respect of rules of equity in the decision-making process, enlargement only on the basis of the consent of all and policies geared to the creation of equality of outcome, not just equality of opportunity. The third scenario stressed the growth of sacrifice by the parts on behalf of the whole, saw enlargement as determined by the majority and expressed support for legislation where the majority rules. It should be recognizable as the hierarchical way of life.

### **The balance between the ways of life**

What can we observe as happening in terms of the relationship between these three ways of life? It might be comforting to believe that the Community could continue with a balance between the three ways of life not unlike the one that exists at present. However, the contention here is that

this is not so. The argument is divided into three parts: first, it is claimed that the hierarchical way of life is gaining ground and can be heard with increasing clarity in the Community; second, it is suggested that the reinforcement of hierarchy will necessarily provoke a response from the other two ways of life, individualism and egalitarianism; and third, it is argued that this response will involve a heightened tension between the individualists and the egalitarians with the former prepared to consider a break from the existing system.

There is little question that the hierarchical way of life is growing in strength in the European Community. Although there is major disagreement as to how a structure of authority should be developed at Community level, there is widespread acceptance that some such structure has to come into being. The general shape of the argument is familiar. It draws attention to the weakness that confederal structures like the Community have experienced in historical terms. Both in the United States in the late 18th century and in Germany in the 19th century, confederation did not survive for very long. Hence it is assumed that the same will prove to be true for the Community. More immediately, it is noted that the challenges that the EC is facing from outside its borders reveal the essential weakness of an entity which is unable to speak with one voice but whose component parts have ceded their independent powers so to do. The GATT negotiations show how difficult it is for the Community to act as one in the face of an outside world, insistent on negotiation. Hence the pressures that are growing up to create a structure which is capable of undertaking such negotiation in an authoritative way.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Samuel Brittan, Financial Times, December 13, The case for a European President.

What though is the evidence that this kind of argumentation is winning the day? First, one can see how policy makers themselves are using much more readily the language of hierarchy. As indicated earlier, at the Rome European Council meeting in December 1990 it was agreed to examine in the IGC on Political Union the possibility of making majority voting the general rule in the EC. This is a far cry from the Single European Act and the decision to extend majority voting to an extra 10 articles of the Treaty, with the aim of hastening the achievement of a single market. The direction of change is clear even if the speed is still to be determined.

Second, one can observe the extent to which alternative kinds of structure have ceased to be the stuff of practical politics. The perceived costs of leaving the organisation have grown dramatically and encouraged all to look to the Community as the central decision-making mechanism for European states. In no Member State does any major political party propose leaving the EC as part of its electoral platform. As mentioned earlier, the British Labour party has steadily changed the position that it adopted in 1983 when it stated in its manifesto that it reserved the right to withdraw if it considered this to be in the interests of the British people. Now the party is prepared even to endorse a single currency provided there is convergence of Community economies and increased support for education, technology and transport from the EC.<sup>37</sup> This kind of change combined with the enthusiasm of so many non-members to join the EC suggests that the boundaries of the group are being substantially strengthened.

Third, there is a growing argument about who should do what which reinforces the hierarchical

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<sup>37</sup> "Labour outlines terms for EMU", Financial Times, December 19, 1990.

way of life. It is no longer a question of whether a significant degree of authority should be exercised at the European level but how it should be done and who should have the final word. This can be well illustrated by looking at the issue of the management function of the Commission. As long as the activity of the Commission was seen strictly as one of implementation under the control of the Council, its behaviour was not the subject of strong controversy. This is not to say that it did not have important powers but these were limited in terms of domain. As the Community and more particularly, the Commission acquires broader powers to act, so its behaviour comes under stricter scrutiny. Is it up to the job to act authoritatively?

The case of competition policy shows up well how there is concern about whether the Commission can resist the pressures of national governments in cases which are contentious. Under the single market programme it was agreed that the Commission should be given the right to decide whether or not to allow mergers within the Community. This was subject to two particular conditions. First, the combined worldwide turnover of all the parties has to exceed 5 billion ECU and second, the turnover of any one of the parties within the EC has to exceed 250million ECU. Below these thresholds the national authorities remain responsible; above them it is the Commission's responsibility.

The first major test of this new power came with the decision of the Commission to allow the merger of two Netherlands coffee companies, Egberts and Van Nelle. This was despite the fact that their merger would give them 70% of the Benelux coffee market and seemed therefore to

risk constituting an abuse of a dominant position contrary to the Treaty of Rome. What is interesting about this case is that it provoked a debate as to whether the Commission was able to put aside national or sectional interests in reaching a decision. It was noted that the Commissioners for the two countries most directly affected, Holland and Belgium, voted against the initial recommendation of the British Commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan, responsible for competition policy, and that the latter appeared to drop his initial position too readily in the face of that opposition. Brittan's opposition can be seen as arising essentially from an individualist claim that the single market should be freely competitive and that mergers such as this one risked raising new barriers to such freedom. But his position seemed to be a minority one within the Commission. Under such circumstances, one commentator raised the question as to whether it might not be necessary to take the power on permitting mergers away from the Commission and to give it instead to an independent agency.<sup>38</sup> To assume powers is also to open oneself to the argument that one is not exercising them properly and that they had better be taken away from you!

There are therefore good grounds for saying that the voice of hierarchy is being heard ever more clearly inside the Community. It is not that everyone is agreed as what is to be done but they all see the need for the issue of authority relations to be addressed. But what are implications of this for the other two ways of life? What is happening to them as hierarchy grows in importance?

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Rice, Financial Times, December 10, 1990, "Storm in a coffee cup highlights EC contest over competition"

Individualists find themselves obliged to adapt their thinking to that of the Community rather than the other way round. In Britain, for example, the influential free-market think tank, the Institute of Economic Affairs, recently criticized the negative point of view of the government and argued for a "market-based vision of European integration". In such a vision power would have to be decentralized and the Community institutions made accountable but there would also have to be wider powers for the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice.<sup>39</sup> The British government implicitly accepted the strength of this argument in the early stages of the Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union. It put forward the idea that the Court of Justice should be given the right to fine governments that flout its decisions. The reason for this was that Britain felt that it had a better record in implementing Community decisions than others and that such a move would help to speed up the implementation of the 1992 programme. But as the *Financial Times* pointed out, it was somewhat ironic that "a sovereignty-conscious UK should come up with one of the most supranational proposals since the 1952 European Coal and Steel Treaty provided for the unused power to suspend budget payments to a recalcitrant government."<sup>40</sup> From a cultural point of view such an increase in the powers of the central institutions must weaken the individualist way of life. It would legitimise the extension of the role of the Court in a way which would be felt far beyond the area of the single market.

What these responses show is that a limited role for institutions and an increase in their powers have had to be accepted as not in contradiction. The reason for this must be in part because the

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<sup>39</sup> "Right-wing group calls for leading role in EC", *Financial Times*, December 10, 1990.

<sup>40</sup> *Financial Times*, Wednesday, February 6, 1991, p.20.

proponents of the hierarchical way of life have been successful in broadening the agenda as to what the EC is and should be. The notion that the single market has implications that go beyond the establishment of an area without artificial barriers or obstacles to trade is not a self-evident truth. Rather it shows one way of life proving more powerful than its competitors.

And what of the egalitarians? Their presence has been heard with increasing clarity since the decision was taken to create a single market by 1992 with all the potential this might have for increasing inequality between and within states. The first fruits of their efforts came with the decision to double the structural funds referred to earlier. Now the debate is centered on the creation of a social dimension to accompany the single market. The Commission has come forward with a wide range of proposals, designed to encourage equality of condition in relation to areas like working conditions, industrial relations and health and safety. However, the difficulty is that there is not the same kind of interrelationship between issues that existed in the case of the structural funds. President Delors admitted openly in his speech to the European Parliament in January of this year that states were dragging their feet on giving any legislative shape to the Social Charter that 11 out of 12 of them had signed back in December 1989.<sup>41</sup> The result is that there is a degree of frustration among those eager to achieve a social dimension and threats to put at risk the free market elements of 1992. And here we see the potential for a growing rift between the ways of life which will be reflected in the workings of the Community.

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<sup>41</sup> Commission Information briefing of 23 January 1991, pp.3-4.



Cultural theory implies no inevitability about the relative importance of the different ways of life. All will continue to coexist even if one gains in strength and those that are weakening will seek to redress the balance. Thus it would be a mistake to assume that the new European architecture will only reflect the elements of hierarchical organisation. To understand why, consider the logical implications of the hierarchical way of life for member states. It would mean that they would be called upon and expected to make sacrifices in the general interest in a much more dramatic way than they are now. Luxembourg, for example, would not be able to resist calls to permit voting rights for Community nationals (above all, for the Portuguese nationals who make up 8% of the population!), nor could it stand so firmly against the introduction of some form of common rules on the taxation of unearned income as well as on disclosure of information on bank accounts. As it is, there may be pressure for movement on these issues but it is premised on the assumption that Luxembourg cannot be overruled by the vote of other states.

The pressures exerted from the standpoint of one way of life evoke counter-pressures from the other ways of life. The argument about the character of the Community will not end here as one might think if one assumed that integration was an end in itself and coming close to realization. The reason for thinking so is most vividly demonstrated if one considers the possible impact of additional members of the Community on its internal working and structure.

## **The issue of enlargement**

From the point of view of the hierarchical way of life, enlargement can be accommodated. As long as there are clear rules laying down who gets what and a clear structure of authority, based on the majority principle, then there can be any number of new members in the EC. However, enlargement is a more controversial issue from the point of the other two ways of life: it offers a lifeline to individualists and constitutes a substantial threat to egalitarians. To make this point more clearly, let us consider again the four issues which we adopted for distinguishing between the three ways of life. A constant increase in the number of states would have a marked effect on the ability of proponents of each way of life to justify their actions inside the Community.

First, consider the case of the role of central institutions. If the membership increases, it is very reasonable to suppose that the individualist way of life will revive. It will become increasingly difficult for central institutions to operate in a technical sense with ever growing numbers of language combinations. Only to increase the number of languages by two from 9 to 11 would increase the number of combinations by 38 from 72 to 110, using the formula  $(n \times (n-1))$  where  $n$  is the number of different languages). More importantly, there will be the question of the acceptability of the decisions that the institutions would take. The competition case cited above shows how strong national pressures can be within an international bureaucracy. One will be able to recognize the response of individualism to this dilemma when it calls for more power to be concentrated at national level and for a reduction of the effective role of the Community

institutions, creating a weaker grid of obligations at EC level. From an egalitarian perspective the situation would be much less comfortable. It would be more and more difficult to maintain the rules of equity in the decision-making process. The range of concerns to be accommodated across member states would widen and make it increasingly likely that no decisions could be taken rather than that decisions could be taken that gave satisfaction to all involved.

The second issue was the scope of legislation at Community level. At present, those favouring a limited EC role are very much on the defensive as the agenda continues to broaden outside the area of a single market. However, there is no reason to believe that this is an irrevocable movement. No-one can yet tell to what extent the effects of the Single Market will prove to be acceptable within the Member States and how far they will want to deal with perceived difficulties on a national basis. And an increase in the size of the Community will pose the problem more starkly in that it will raise the issue of the homogeneity of the group. As numbers rise, so the difficulty of reaching agreement will grow and the willingness of states to accept being in a minority, where interests are so diverse, will decline.

There is at present a balance between geographical areas of Europe, especially between North and South, which would be severely tested with expansion particularly to the East. It is not a coincidence that the states that benefitted most from the increase in the structural funds were also those that were most concerned about the effect of the Community giving aid to Eastern Europe. Spain and Portugal, for example, argued that this aid be financed by the Member States rather

than the Community.<sup>42</sup> They feared that the financial advantages they gained from the funds might be put at risk if they had to compete in any way with the poorer states to the East. Within an enlarged Community this issue would prove still more difficult to handle. It will prompt a major struggle between egalitarians, wishing to give substance to the principle of solidarity and equality of outcome on a wider scale than exists at present, and individualists who will not wish to see the Community engaged in an effort at redistribution on the scale that will be necessary given the extent of the disparities in wealth that would have to be surmounted.

As far as differentiation between members in the decision-making process and acceptance of leadership are concerned (the third and fourth issues), the difficulties that exist at present will necessarily increase with any enlargement. The present structure does allow for all states to feel that they have an opportunity to put their point of view and to be able to resist any pressure to give up what they consider to be a vital interest. All states can exercise a certain level of leadership through their six-month Presidency of the Council of Ministers. If the Community grows, then this structure will also change. States will hold the Presidency still more rarely than they do at present (every six years) and the voice of the small will either be heard less often or else contribute to an ever-reduced level of efficiency. Hence again the likelihood of a renewed conflict between the ways of life. Individualists will seek from hierarchs greater latitude for all in the framing and implementation of legislation; egalitarians will insist on the importance of maintaining equality between members despite the inefficiencies involved as well as of reducing inequalities of condition in spite of the financial costs.

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<sup>42</sup> Agence Europe, 10 March 1990.

It is not obvious that this argument can be settled within the existing structure of the Community. A number of commentators have tried to imagine what Europe will look like in, say, 30 years and have concluded that the EC will necessarily be subject to a change in size. Edward Mortimer in the *Financial Times*, for example, has argued that most of the peripheral countries, notably Britain, Ireland, Spain and Portugal will remain in an institution which he names "the United States of Western Europe" but that Denmark would create closer links with the rest of Scandinavia and that Greece will rediscover a new role as leader of the Balkans.<sup>43</sup> He draws attention to the possibility of a dynamic which would lead to some members leaving as well as new members joining the EC. Such a conclusion is perfectly compatible with cultural theory. To argue the contrary position, namely that enlargement and deepening can both be accommodated, is much more difficult to sustain if the central tenets of cultural theory are correct.

### Conclusion

This paper has sought to make three main claims. First, it has argued that the traditional debate between idealists and realists has concentrated on the politics of interest and has not given sufficient attention to the origins of those interests. Second, it has suggested that cultural theory, based on grid/group analysis and positing the existence of three active ways of life, provides a means of filling this gap in the literature on the EC. Third, it has maintained that the future

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<sup>43</sup> Edward Mortimer, "When the lion lies down with the lamb in 2020", *Financial Times*, 24 January, 1990.

development of the Community will crucially depend on the way in which the conflict between individualism, hierarchy and egalitarianism unfolds.

The central element of these claims is the contention that the Community institutions work on the basis of competing organisational principles which generate different ways of life. These ways of life do not inhere in participants in Community life but in the institutional arrangements themselves. Their importance lies in the maxim that as we organise, so we behave. We can only understand how the Community operates in terms of the relative strength of each of the ways of life. What individuals, groups or states do is both influenced by hierarchy, individualism and egalitarianism and in turn, has an impact on the vitality of these ways of life.

This attempt to link institutions and ideas about what they are designed to achieve leaves much to be explored. It does not specify the conditions under which the different ways of life will come into play in the policy process. It does not speculate on whether the Community will evolve independently of the member states in terms of the relative strengths of the ways of life. And it cannot offer a mechanism for predicting the outcome of specific struggles over the future shape of the Community.

However, cultural theory does provide a different way of assessing the evolution of the EC. We should put behind us the stark dichotomy between the forces of intergovernmentalism and integration and the idea that the latter are starting to gain the upper hand. Rather we need to recognize that the decisional process reflects a much deeper clash of values about the way in

which Europe should be governed. Once we take this step the approach outlined here opens the way to a more variegated and useful mode of explanation of EC activity.