



CENTRO STUDI SUL FEDERALISMO

RESEARCH PAPER

A FEDERALIST FRAMEWORK THEORY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Roberto Castaldi



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CENTRE FOR STUDIES ON FEDERALISM – TURIN

INTRODUCTION

There are competing visions about the future of European integration. To some extent they depend on the analysis of the European integration process so far, and thus on the theories employed to grasp it. The process has started more than half a century ago, and many different explanatory theories have been developed and refined to account for the events observed, just as many academic disciplines got involved in the enquiry of the integration process.

Among those theories, federalism has had a peculiar history and role, since it is the official ideology of a European political movement promoting European political unification. Therefore, the literature often analyses if federalist ideas and personalities played a role in the process. Intergovernmentalist authors focus on national governments and tend to neglect such a role [Milward 1992; and Moravcsik 1998]. However, in Italy a whole stream of mainly collective books on the history and role of pro-European and federalist organizations and personalities produced quite some evidence about their role [Levi and Pistone (eds.) 1973; Pistone (ed.) 1975, 1991, (ed.) 1992, (ed.) 1996; Pistone and Malandrino (eds.) 1999; Majocchi L.V. 1996, 2000; Paolini 1988, 1989, 1994, 1996; Levi 1990; Morelli 1990; Malandrino (ed.) 1993, Landuyt and Preda (ed.) 2000, Pasquinucci 2000; Preda and Rognoni Vercelli (eds.) 2001, and (eds.) 2004; Caraffini 2002]. In Britain too, some scholars identify the federalist influence against intergovernmentalist opposite claims [Burgess 1989, 1995, and 2000; and Pinder 1986, 1989, 1990, 1996, 1998, 2000]. However, the fact that federalism is considered mainly, if not only, as a normative theory or a political movement has resulted in the analytical

aspect of this tradition to be usually overlooked and neglected. The aim of this research is to analyse the analytical aspect, while in this introduction a few remarks about the normative aspect will clarify the federalist starting point.

Mario Albertini¹ construed federalism as a political thought or ideology [1962, 1963-1993, 2000; and along those lines see also Levi 1973, 1987, 1990; Rossolillo 1989 and 1990; Montani 1999]. Actually, on the basis of Mannheim and Ricoeur' terminology, it would be an utopia, a political thought aiming, and at least partially managing, to transform the existing political order – against ideology, which legitimises and consolidates it [Mannheim 1953 and Ricoeur 1986]. Indeed, all political thoughts start as instruments to think the future, to interpret the social processes, and to mobilise social energies to transform or preserve it. At the beginning they generally identify new social needs, and take time to affirm themselves, by changing the social order. Then, as soon as their goal has been obtained to a reasonable degree and their political elite has become mainstream and joined the rank of powers, it will turn to the consolidation of the new order. Liberalism, democracy, socialism, communism, nationalism were all born utopias and as they were successful they turned ideologies. This may happen for European federalism as well, but since a European federation is not – yet? - in place, it is still in its utopian phase.

Albertini offers an important contribution to the study of political thoughts by identifying their tripartite structure. Any utopia or ideology needs to identify a characteristic and specific value or social need, in favour of which to mobilise. Then, it must propose specific institutions to effectively guarantee that value, i.e. specific political goals. Finally, it must convince people that “now” is the time to mobilise, therefore it generally proposes a vision of the historical and social process to suggest that it is possible to successfully mobilise to reach those goals, and that the time is ripe for action, or will soon be. Thus Albertini distinguishes a value-aspect, a structural or institutional aspect, and an historical-social aspect in all political thoughts. On this basis, it may also be possible to distinguish different groups

¹ Albertini (1919-1997) was professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Pavia and President of the Union of European Federalist and of the Movimento Federalista Europeo in Italy for many years. His was the main contribution to the development of the Italian academic federalist school. Albertini wrote many articles about European integration, mainly in Italian and French, but he is almost unknown in the current English-based international academic debate [he is not even mentioned in the otherwise excellent analysis of European integration theories proposed in Rosamond 2000, nor in Burgess 2000]. Still he was considered a main figure of the Italian debate and after his death two selections of his most important articles on the subject have been published in Italy in 1999 - in the following notes I will refer to Albertini's articles indicating both the date of the first publication and the date of the publication to which reference is made. In the References also the existing English version of a few of his articles are mentioned. An English collection of some of his main articles is forthcoming edited by John Pinder and myself. He never wrote a major systematic book about European integration. His theory has to be reconstructed from a vast series of articles published since the late 1950s. The lack of a systematic work by Albertini makes it very difficult to do any justice to his complex thought, on which still exists only one monograph [Terranova 2003; see also Pinder 2002].

within the same political thought according to their strategic choice of the course of action best suited to realise their goal, for example between reformers and revolutionaries. A difference in one of this crucial aspect may entail a difference in the overall ideology. This allows for instance to distinguish socialism and communism, as the former institutional aspect is state regulation and intervention in the economy within a democratic system, while the latter is the abolition of private property and the state ownership of the mean of production under the dictatorship of the proletariats.

Albertini suggests that the federalist value is peace, following Kant's argument that peace is not truce, and requires a cosmopolitan organization to solve international controversies by law, and on the consideration that the only way to have an effective cosmopolitan organization is along federal lines. The institutional aspect is the federation or federal state – as opposed to a unitary state on the one hand, and to a mere confederation without any transfer of sovereignty to the central institutions on the other. The historical-social aspect is the overcoming of the division of the world in conflicting nations and classes due to the growing interdependence in scope and extension. The former refers to the strength of the interdependence among people, and the latter to the extension of interdependence to a growing number of people and territories. This makes the old nation-states too small to effectively handle the main problems for the survival of any society – security, economic development and now also environmental sustainability – and requires larger federal units [Albertini 1963-1993]. It is clear that after the atomic bomb the problem of peace has come up on the agenda, and that the growing interdependence is widely recognised and used to explain such processes as regional integrations in Europe and elsewhere, or the growing number of international agreements, regimes, and organizations at all levels. And this also explains the coming into existence of federalist organization only in the XX century, although federalist authors can be traced back in history for several centuries.

Albertini also identified that federalism merged cosmopolitanism and communitarianism, unity and diversity. So it is most appropriate to think that the value aspect of federalism comprises both peace - and the cosmopolitan solution of global problems such as environmental protection [Montani 2004] – and the appreciation of cultural diversity [De Rougemont 1995, Marc 1996]. This is due to the fact that the federation is not only an appropriate instrument to think the unity of mankind within a pluralist multi-level system of democratic government, but also to let cultural diversity express itself within each state, without national homologation.

Any political thought generally includes also an analytical aspect, and thus combines elements of “truth” – it is most appropriate to speak of reality-congruence as Elias suggests [Elias 1978, 1987, 1991] – and mystificatory ones as well, especially during the ideological phase. There are two main forms of ideological mystification. One is the camouflage of a value judgement into an analytical proposition, for example the idea that nations are eternal entities, eventually sleeping, but destined to awaken, characteristic of nationalism [Gellner 1964-1974, 1983, 1997]. Another is considering as obtained to a reasonable degree political aims which are only very partially realised, as with liberalism, democracy or socialism in one country, while freedom, equality and solidarity are still maintained as universal values.

These ideological mystifications are necessary to legitimise a given order, and to avoid undergoing continuing processes of radical changes. In the utopian phase the mystificatory element consists in an analysis which overemphasises the aspects favouring the recognition of the need of the value or social need proposed, and neglecting the opposing ones. However, in this phase, the analytical aspect tends to contribute to the growth of human knowledge as it considers elements previously neglected. Any political thought identifies a given value or social need as the most important one at a given time on the basis of a given analysis of the social process at that time. If it is the first to do so, it will probably employ some new analytical categories to look at the situation from a new perspective that allow to recognise the new social need. In other words, if the utopia really identifies a social need caused by the historical evolution, and thus has an impact on its social reality, this probably indicates that there are some important analytical aspects of reality-congruence to be considered.

So far so good for federalism as a political thought. It is time to turn to its analytical aspect, especially in relation to European integration. Wheare focused on federalism as an institutional structure, or more specifically on federal government [1941, and 1963-1980]. Friedrich considered federalism as a process [1968]. Albertini's view, originally included both their insights within the tripartite structure of federalism as a political ideology, considering federation, the institutional aspect, and aim, of federalism as a process [1963-1993]. Similarly, Burgess suggests that “in the context of European integration, federalism is both a dynamic process and a goal to be attained”, and he mentions several aspects of federalist thought which can be used to build a new framework theory, but he explicitly refuses “to suggest an alternative theory of European integration” [Burgess 2000: 28 and 184].

The distinction between the goal and the process allows federalist analytical thought, just like other theories, to evolve during the process to come to terms to the empirical realities of the process, even if the final federalist institutional goal did not change. John Pinder used

the term “neo-federalism” or “incremental federalism” to let everybody realise that federalist thought did not end with the original idea that a constituent process was necessary to make a federal constitution to unite Europe [1986]. This was indeed part of the federalist normative aspect and strategy, but it has evolved with time, as this research will show.

In his study on European integration theories, Rosamond suggests that “Unlike the other theories [...], there is no clear-cut academic school of European federalism and certainly no leading lights to compare with the likes of Karl Deutsch, David Mitrany and Ernst Haas” [Rosamond 1999: 23]. In Italy there has been a federalist academic school led by Albertini, which has been overlooked within the international academic debate, probably because their writings are mainly in Italian. Significantly, they have produced a review, first in French, in the attempt to intervene in the international debate and to influence all the federalist organizations in Europe, than in Italian, and currently in Italian and English. *Le Federaliste*, than *Il Federalista*, and now also *The Federalist*, begun in 1958 and is thus even older than *The Journal of Common Market Studies*. This review offered a place for the federalists to develop their ideas, and although it published also normative and political commentaries, it includes very significant analytical papers too, with useful scientific insights, to which frequent reference will be made. Particularly interesting was the interdisciplinary character of the review, as it was the debating review for political scientists, lawyers, historians and economists with a federalist background.

The federalists had a political goal and organization. This forced them to continuously develop their analytical tools to make a realistic assessment of the integration process in order to try to direct it towards their goal. A sound analysis of the situation is a necessary precondition to develop a political strategy. Precisely the recognition of the distance between social reality and federalist goals and the need to distinguish between their normative preferences and the social data is at the basis of the Italian federalist school, which revised the analytical and normative stands of the federalist authors at the beginning of the process. To do so, they had to consider the limits of the other existing theories, but also their useful insights that the federalists needed to consider to grasp the dynamics of the process.

This research attempts to sketch the useful insights this school put forward, and the framework theory² it can contribute to develop. Indeed, federalism is a normative theory, but

² Framework theories use different pre-existing theories and concepts to explain some limited and well-defined aspects of the complex process they study. But they try to use them in a complementary way, thus making the framework theory more effective than each of its components [Warleigh 2000: 174]. I am aware of the problems of coherence they pose to the researcher. One of them is that of hierarchy. Many theories can be criticised for their unilateral perspective. At the same time no researcher can grasp or describe the whole reality. It is necessary to make a selection and indicate the relevant aspects of reality to try to explain or understand a particular phenomenon or process. In other words, it requires imposing a hierarchy of causal factors on an event or process, which generally has many different causes. In order to retain the useful insights of different hierarchies

within this tradition it is possible to identify an analytical core. I search for the analytical tools employed by the federalists to understand specifically the unification process, before developing a strategy to reach their normative goal. They also developed a wider theory to study long-term historical processes which built on insights developed within political realism, historical materialism, and the theory of ideology. While Albertini developed the basic sketch of this theory, several federalist scholars contributed by examining in more details one of its aspect, so Pistone focused on political realism [1964, 1969, 1970, 1973, 1977, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 2001], Rossolillo and Montani on historical materialism [Rossolillo 1966, 1968, 1972; Montani 1999, especially ch. 2, and 2004], and Levi on the theory of ideology [1970]. Unfortunately, none of them has provided a wide general account of the wider theory, while making reference to it, and I have reconstructed it in my PhD thesis [Castaldi 2002].

I am undertaking an analytical enterprise analogous – although rather different in its contents – to Moravcsik's attempt to establish an analytical (neo)liberal IR theory [Moravcsik 1992] and his following liberal intergovernmentalist EU theory [especially 1993; 1995; and 1998]. Therefore, just as Moravcsik is criticised from a liberal standpoint, I may be criticised from a federalist one by all those who refuse the possibility to distinguish the analytical aspect from the normative core of a political ideology as argued by Long [1995] for liberalism. Long criticises Moravcsik's idea to “offer a liberal *analysis* from which liberal prescription follow” because what specifically characterises liberalism are precisely its prescriptions [1995: 498]. Indeed, Long is right in emphasising that a political ideology is characterised by its normative aspect. However, this does not imply the impossibility to identify the analysis on which those prescriptions are based and the analytical categories which sustain that analysis.

Long is also right in emphasising that from the same analysis different normative prescriptions may follow according to the value perspective of the observers [see also Croce 1977]. It is precisely for this reason that the following theoretical proposal has an analytic value without an intrinsic normative stand. Still - just as Moravcsik had to refer to the term “liberal” to define his theory since he used insights developed within the liberal tradition to modify the orthodox realist view of international relations - I cannot but call “federalist” this theoretical proposal for the same reason. It is the only way to pay the proper tribute to the authors who first developed those insights proposed here in a systematic form.

of causal explanations there is the need either to present a new and more articulated hierarchy, or to indicate the interrelation between different variables, or finally to state clearly which aspect of the process the different categories are best suited to explain and how they can be used in a complementary way to provide a more effective understanding. And even if a new framework theory may provide a more complex understanding of a given social process, it will still be taking into account only some of its aspects.

The research is thus structured as follow. In the first chapter I will address the issues of the disciplinary discourse and the level of analysis to which the federalist framework theory refers, employing Peterson's framework of analysis. I will summarise the main issues addressed by the different theories to identify those aspects that are more relevant in this research, and which can be better approached with the federalist framework theory proposed. In the second chapter, I will sketch the development of federalist normative and analytical thought. In the third chapter I will analyse in details the methodology and the concepts employed by the federalist scholars, and the resulting framework theory. The use of different analytical tools for different issues explains the development of a complex theory, which includes elements taken from different schools of thought. Albertini's conceptualisation of integration as a process will be discussed before introducing his explanatory scheme of super-systemic change. A brief historic account of the integration process based on such a scheme will follow in chapter four. In this context a specific table will provide a synthetic application of Albertini's scheme to the whole integration process. Thus a comparison with alternative explanations by other theories, especially in relation to the SEA, which has been extensively discussed at academic level, will be proposed. Finally an identification of the contact points between Albertini's theory and other approaches and school of thoughts, and of some of the gaps of current theories which he may help to fill will introduce an evaluation of his contribution to the current debate.

Thus I will try to provide a systematic view of the insights developed by several federalist authors by proposing a framework of analysis to study the European integration process. It is an ambitious attempt, probably deemed to failure. However, it is based on the reflections of important authors, to whom the useful aspects of the proposed framework have to be ascribed. Consequently the key elements of the following framework are not particularly original. If this research has any originality, this lies in the attempt to propose them in a systematic fashion, showing their exploitation of the useful analytical tools developed by other theories. The many remaining shortcomings of the framework theory proposed are obviously due to my own efforts to provide a systematic version of the insights developed within the federalist tradition.

CHAPTER 1. A FEDERALIST CRITIQUE OF EXISTING GRAND THEORIES OR WHAT A FEDERALIST FRAMEWORK THEORY CAN OFFER

1.1 Locating the federalist framework theory: on methodology, disciplinary discourse, and level of analysis

The academic debate on European integration and the European Union is more and more divided into different disciplinary approaches. International Relations, International Political Economics, Economics, Comparative Politics, International, Comparative and Constitutional Law, History, Political Theory and Philosophy are now all involved in the study of European integration and thus implicitly claim to be a proper intellectual setting to explain at least some aspects of European integration and the European Union [see on this issue Rosamond 2000: chs. 7 and 8].

So far each discipline went his own way. Political theory and philosophy discuss about the finality of integration, the existence, creation or impossibility of a European people, the democratic deficits, European constitutionalism and other normative aspects. Lawyers debate about what is the EU – a *sui generis* international organization, as it suits international lawyers, or a polity in its own right to be studied by constitutional and comparative ones - the role of Law and of the Court of Justice within the integration process, and European constitutionalism. Political scientists also focus on what is the EU, and on studying its institutions and policies, as if it was a polity in its own right. IR theorists compare integration with other forms of international cooperation and regimes, tackle the issue of defining integration and its dynamics and main actors. General histories of the process are often proposed to sustain a grand theory either by historians or by political scientists and IR theorists, while most historians focus on specific events or phases, or actors within the process. Economists concentrate on economic integration and monetary union, on the Common Market and the European “economic” policies.

Federalist theorists tried to reach a general understanding of the process on which to identify an appropriate strategy to reach their goal. Therefore they had to consider most of these issues, and to try to exploit the useful insights developed in different academic disciplines. Among them were philosophers, political scientists, historians, economists, lawyers working together and eventually creating a wide federalist framework theory. They all focused

on the dynamic historical process of European integration rather than on the static phenomenon of the European Union considered as a definite institutional framework at a given time. Obviously, they did consider the ECSC, the EEC and Euratom, the EC, and then the EU at each stage, but always considered as a transitional equilibrium. Their aim was mainly to understand the potentialities of each new institutional framework on the one hand, and its contradictions and lines of tension that could be exploited to further advance the process [for example Albertini 1961-1999a, 1965-1999a, 1976-1999b, 1979-1999b, 1986-1999a; Jozzo 1983, A. Majocchi 1990; L.V. Majocchi 1973 and 1985; L.V. Majocchi and Rossolillo 1979; Padoa Schioppa 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, 2001, 2002; Pistone 1996, Rossolillo 1975, 1982, 1986, 1995; Spinelli 1960, 1980, 1983, 1985; Velo 1976]. Federalist scholars were not interested in explaining specific aspect of the process, but the dynamics of the process itself. They would consider all relevant specific aspects within the wider context and not outside of it. On this basis the framework theory is useful to account European integration as a process, but can help to shed light also on some of its specific characters on which certain disciplines focus, by placing them within a wider framework.

Burgess suggests that recent literature focuses on specific case-studies, leaving unclear their relationship with the whole integration process, and that middle-range theories have dropped the theoretical ambition of grand theories which were too normative and not empirically valid [2000: 47]. However, the limits and shortcomings of each and every main grand theory, including liberal intergovernmentalism, also brought about new attempts to develop bridges among theories and eventually new framework theories [Warleigh, 2000]. The reconstruction of federalist insights and the proposal of a federalist framework theory will go hand in hand with an analysis of the other theories and of their insights revised or included in the framework, and of the shortcomings avoided thanks to the other categories employed within the framework theory.

Against the trend in federalist theorizing, in the last two decades a new emphasis on middle range theory has developed together with a mistrust for so-called “grand theories” of integration, notwithstanding the rise of liberal intergovernmentalism. To justify this new trend scholars developed useful distinctions of the different levels of analysis involved in European studies. Peterson’s distinction between the sub-systemic/meso-level, the systemic, and the super-systemic level of analysis within the EU decision-making system [Peterson 1995: 71] can help to locate the federalist framework theory properly and thus to understand its aim and significance. Peterson distinguishes the different kind of decisions within the EU and the integration process, and proposes to apply different theories to different level of analysis, thus

supporting disciplinary and methodological differentiation to offer a proper picture of European integration. At the same time Peterson’s own theoretical work refers mainly to the sub-systemic level and is essentially based on the methodology of comparative politics.

Peterson associates different types of decisions with specific actors, levels of analysis and a characteristic kind of rationality. He refers the super-systemic level of analysis to history-making decisions that “alter the Union’s legislative procedures, rebalance the relative powers of EU institutions, or change the EU’s remit”, such as Treaty reforms, strategic agenda setting and long-term decisions about the budget, and particularly significant rulings by the European Court of Justice. The systemic level relates to policy-setting decisions providing the direction for specific EU policies. The sub-systemic or meso-level considers the concrete implementation of the policies [Peterson 1995: 72-73]. This distinction is based on the object and content of the decision. Although any decision may have unintended consequences – and this is a controversial issue in European integration theory - it is generally possible to identify its object and content. This makes possible the use of this distinction by different approaches, which may agree on this less controversial identification, but may disagree about other aspects of the decisions, such as the main actors in the decision-making process or the consequences of the decision.

Table 1 **Levels of analysis in EU decision-making** [Peterson 1995: 71].

<i>Level</i>	<i>Type of decision</i>	<i>Dominant actors</i>	<i>Rationality</i>
super-systemic	history-making	European Council, National governments in IGCs, European Court of Justice	political, legalistic
systemic	policy-setting	Council of Ministers, Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER)	political, technocratic, administrative
sub-systemic/ meso-level	policy-shaping	Commission, committees, Council groups	technocratic, consensual, administrative

Peterson scheme indicates much more than just the different level of analysis. The first two columns of the table fulfil that function. The second two are already the result of a theory, from which derives the identification of the main actors in the integration process. The same applies for the kind of rationality employed in the decisions, which very much depends on the definition of the relevant actors. Therefore the second part of the table is much more controversial and may easily be criticised. For example it does not mention at all the European Parliament (EP), which has steadily acquired more power and is certainly a significant actor at least at the systemic level, given its power of co-decision on legislation and of assent on commercial agreements. And, if the Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe will enter into force, the EP will also acquire the power to propose amendments to the Constitution, and will thus have to be recognised as a relevant actor on the super-systemic level, if previous initiatives such as the Draft Treaty of European Union of 1984 are not consider sufficient evidence of the already existing possibility for the Parliament to play a role at that level. Also the role of the European Central Bank needs some recognition both in relation to the definition of the monetary policy – at systemic level – and of the constitutional disposition about monetary union – at the super-systemic one.

It is worth mentioning that Peterson implicitly maintains the possibility of developing a proper explanatory theory for only one level of analysis in isolation from the other levels. He suggests that different theories are best suited for different level of analysis. This implies that it is possible to study one level of analysis without taking into account the others. More specifically Peterson is concerned mainly with the sub-systemic/meso-level, as is shown in his second table.

Table 2. Models for understanding multi-tiered EU decision-making [Peterson 1995: 84].

<i>Level</i>	<i>Decisive variable</i>	<i>'Best' model(s)?</i>
super-systemic	change in wider political/economic environment	macro-theories
systemic	institutional change	new institutionalism
meso-level	resource dependencies	policy network

Peterson develops the concept of policy network as an analytical tool to explain meso-level decision making, and he favours new institutionalism as the best systemic level theory. But he does not provide any indication about the best theory at the super-systemic level³, where all grand theories can be located.

1.2. The original normative version of all grand theories

There are three crucial issues that each grand theory needs to approach. What is the European Community or Union? What are the origins and thus the dynamics of European integration? Who are the relevant actors within the process? Eventually, from a normative perspective, but following a given analysis of the process, each theory may also discuss the possible and/or preferred end-point of European integration, and how to get there.

It is important to look at their origins and development as all theories, including federalism, did evolve to cope with the events that together form the integration process. There are basically three broad streams of grand theories, with many sub-species which evolved during the process: realism, neo-functionalism – to distinguish it from Mitrany's functionalism, opposed to regional integration [especially 1933, 1963, and 1965] - and federalism. All started as normative theories, as they existed before the start of the process and dealt with how to conduct European integration, if at all. In the 1940s and early 1950s the issue was not to explain and understand the process, but to direct it. Only after the start of the process, an analytical or descriptive aspect could be developed. I shall now briefly summarise the original and simple formulations of these three approaches, before considering their evolution and the contribution of specific authors and personalities to the theory and practice of the integration process.

Realism has taken many forms – such as internationalism, confederalism, unionism, and later intergovernmentalism – during the process. Its basic original tenets are clear. The states have all the power and sovereignty, and will never give them up. Therefore, the main

³ He maintains that the change in the wider political and economic environment is the decisive variable to explain super-systemic change. This claim implicitly dismisses all macro-theories that privilege internal dynamics of European integration and are thus at least partially independent from external factors. Peterson considers super-systemic change as primarily the European answer to global change, which may be explained by macro-theories such as neo-functionalism, neo-realism, and now liberal intergovernmentalism. Still, he criticised neo-realism – and this critique can partly be applied to liberal intergovernmentalism as well - for not recognising the EU as something more than an alliance of nation states and an international organisation, and neo-functionalism for failing to consider the strong intergovernmental features of the EU [Peterson 1995: 83-84. A more detailed analysis and critic of both theories within a proper theoretical framework is offered in Rosamond 2000, ch. 3 and 6].

actors of the process are the national governments. They made treaties and thus control the goal, dynamics and timing of integration. As they are unwilling to give up their sovereignty, integration is just a sophisticated form of international cooperation, and the European Communities are just strengthened alliances or international organizations. Brought to its extreme limits this view may challenge the very use of the term integration, in place of cooperation [see two opposite view in the Journal of Common Market Studies: Beloff 1963; Taylor 1968].

This position has had a clear impact on the process. Realist thought favoured some form of international cooperation in Europe through a confederation, thus not impinging on national sovereignty. It manifested itself very clearly already in 1948 at The Hague Congress where this line won the day, and brought the creation of a weak international organization such as the Council of Europe. This organization may be considered as the false-start of the European integration process, and it is often not even mentioned in the literature on the subject. However, the realist or intergovernmentalist position has almost been the official policy of the British government throughout the process, with few temporary exceptions. Eventually, this was the main reason why the UK did not take part in the true start of the process, the negotiations to establish the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) after the Schuman declaration. The previous commitment to the transfer of sovereignty on the issue was the main obstacle to British participation. The realist position was thus present at the beginning of the process, but the very start of integration with the ECSC, with limited competences, but some supranational features, spelt its first defeat.

Neo-functionalism on the contrary came out as the initial victors, and has since then been the almost official position of the European Commission. Neo-functionalism aimed at the creation of a European federation. However, it considered the existence of a community providing an identity to the individuals and commanding their loyalties, as an essential element to construct a state [Deutsch 1952-1966: 78-79]. Consequently, to build a supranational state there is the need for sociological integration creating a sense of community strong enough to provide identity and loyalty, although they need not be as strong and exclusive as former national ones. The relationship between social learning and community building is particularly strong in neo-functionalism, where integration is seen as a process of collective social learning and community building [Haas 1963]. Therefore, considering impossible to reach a federation at a stroke, neo-functionalism endorsed a gradualist path to create solidarity among the European peoples and create strong interests by economic elites and bureaucracies in the integration. Thus neo-functionalism conceptualises integration as aiming at the creation of a

new political community, and based on a shift of loyalty caused by the preference convergence of economic and technical elite.

The success of integration in one area may then bring about a process of spill-over so that integration would be applied to other areas, until a political community and then union could be reached. The concept of spill-over, initially considered as the allegedly expansionary tendency of integration to enlarge its scope and to reach new issues related to the one already integrated and ultimately providing the basis for political integration, served to link the economic and the political realms. The originally supposed automatic nature of spill-over has been often criticised for undervaluing the concerns about national sovereignty and identity which neo-realism considers as a dominant feature of EU politics. In fact neo-realism and neo-functionalism are antithetical views and were developed in opposition to each other [Rosamond 2000: 74-75].

Neo-functionalism considers the Communities as supranational organizations, between a purely international or intergovernmental organization and a federal state. Thus the term integration was useful to distinguish the process from simple international cooperation on the one hand and from political unification on the other. The Communities were supranational organizations because of their pre-federal structure and their potential evolution in a federal direction. The success of integration, and hence its deepening required the active involvement and entrepreneurship of the European High Authority, later Commission, seen as the motor of the integration process.

Federalism, or constitutionalism, was initially also very clear and simple. The crisis of the nation-states required Europe to unite to survive as a political entity, although probably initially under the protectorate of the American super-power. A federation was considered the only institutional formula to create an efficient central government compatible with the greatest autonomy of the member states. Therefore, the only way forward was the call of a European constituent assembly or procedure to let the European people decide its own destiny. The goal was the federation, the main actor the European people to be mobilised by the federalist vanguard. This vision was already sketched in the Ventotene Manifesto, drafted by Spinelli, Rossi and Colorni, in 1941.

After the war, the superpowers helped to rebuild the old nation-states as their satellites, and the federalist initially turned to the national governments to reach the European federation. When the governments initiatives produced the Council of Europe and the ECSC, the federalists criticised them and continued to call for a real federation. They seized the opportunity offered by the European Defence Community (EDC) to advance the idea of a

European Political Community (EPC), to be based on a Treaty-Constitution drafted by a constitutional Assembly rather than an IGC. After an initial success, the defeat of the EDC was seen as a realist victory and a federalist defeat, and the birth of the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom, as the triumph of neo-functionalism. Since then neo-functionalism and realism or intergovernmentalism have been the main theoretical contenders, while federalist theorising was marginalized and developed out of sight.

1.3 The analytical development of the grand theories: following the process

With a clear picture of the theoretical starting points it is possible to analyse the evolution of the different theories in relation to the unfolding of the integration process. At this point there is no need to analyse the causes, actors and dynamics of the process - which will be done later – but only the impact of the process on theorizing within the main grand theories, although the evolution of federalist theory will be addressed in more details in the next chapter. The unfolding of the integration process produced two main waves of theoretical revision aimed at keeping the basic claims of each grand theory while incorporating the data of the historical process. This has brought each tradition to develop useful concepts, but also to exploit those events that challenged other theories to affirm itself and to marginalize the others.

At the beginning of the process all theories had a normative character. The 1948 Congress at The Hague was a success for realism, as it produced the Council of Europe, with no supranational powers. However in 1950 the Schuman Declaration, inspired by Monnet, signed a clear neo-functionalist success. The Declaration proposed the ECSC as the first step towards a European federation. It thus set the goal shared by federalist and neo-functionalist, but definitely chose the neo-functionalist gradualist strategy. Monnet placed much emphasis on the role of institutions, and endowed the ECSC with a pre-federal institutional setting, characterised not simply by a Council of Ministers of an intergovernmental nature, but also by a High Authority, seen as the embryo of a future federal government, a parliamentary assembly, and a Court of Justice. This was coherent with the openly stated long-term aim of European federation. Indeed, the parliamentary assembly was weak and non-elected, but the High Authority had significant powers, even if limited to coal and steel.

Monnet was a man of action rather than theory, but he is often associated with neo-functionalism. He was rather a gradual federalist [see Albertini 1977a; Pinder 1986, 1993, 1997,

2000]. This became clear when following the Korean War and the American request to rearm Germany he proposed to create the EDC on the model of the ECSC. How could a neo-functionalists propose to integrate the army? A military problem required military solution - I shall come back to this issue when sketching the federalist framework theory – and Monnet exploited that crisis to advance the European project, thanks to Pleven readiness to take up the proposal and bring it forward. Spinelli convinced De Gasperi that a European army required a European democratic government. Military sovereignty is not a technical matter, and a defence community implied a political community. De Gasperi's initiative resulted in art. 38 of the EDC Treaty, and then in the Ad Hoc Assembly charged to draft a Treaty-Constitution for the European Political Community (EPC), which it did in the one-year time assigned. These events were clearly favourable to the federalists, as they proved that an attempt to transfer crucial aspects of sovereignty required political union, which could only be made by a constitutional procedure. Realism and neo-functionalism had little to say on the issue.

However, the Korean War ended, France had serious problem in its colonies and changed several governments, Stalin died, and few days later the French Assembly rejected the EDC Treaty by a handful of votes, thanks to the strange alliance between the right-wing Gaullists and the communists. The parliamentary debate showed that many French MPs thought that by killing the EDC they would prevent German rearmament as well. What a misjudgement! Realists could rejoice, claiming that events had shown that the nation states – and France is usually the ideal type of a nation state – could not willingly relinquish their sovereignty. This was summarized in the idea that “the times were not ripe”, even leaving aside the conclusion, or the hope, that they will never be. The world was back in place, and federalist fantasies could finally be dismissed as utopian once and for all. The dream of integrating different nation states could be abandoned and international cooperation revived along traditional lines. Federalists were shocked.

Several important theoretical questions were put aside, since history seemed to make them irrelevant. The EDC had collapsed, but realists had little to be happy about. How could it possibly happen that six nation states had actually signed a Treaty to merge their armies? That they had also started a sort of constituent procedure and drafted a Treaty-Constitution? And that four of them - the fifth, Italy, would not have problem in ratifying if only the government had put it on the parliamentary agenda -had even ratified the Treaty which allowed all that? The EDC project proved that political integration could be pursued under certain conditions. Obviously, if the situation coercing the states to take that path changes,

also the integrationist choice can be abandoned. Furthermore, it confirmed the federalist claim that, if there is the willingness to pursue political union, a constituent procedure rather than an intergovernmental conference is necessary. As all political battles, it is possible to win or lose. The federalist had lost, but their claims had not really been disconfirmed, and they would provide a starting point for a thorough revision. This is probably one of the reasons for some contemporary theoretically informed historical researches to start their analysis of European integration from the birth of the EEC, paying only cursory attention to the ECSC and the EDC project [Milward 1992; and Moravcsik 1998]. It would be very difficult to neglect federalist influence in this period, or to claim that the national governments were the only relevant actors.

At any rate after the fall of the EDC only neo-functionalists had a way forward: put into brackets, possibly forget about, this pretentious, failed attempt, and start again more modestly with gradual economic integration. Later on Monnet himself offered a self-criticism about the “short cut” of the EDC, which was forced on him by events, even if it was not the most promising path to European integration [Monnet 1978: 343]. The birth of the EEC and Euratom was the triumph of neo-functionalism, which found a theoretically sophisticated compendium in *The Uniting of Europe* [Haas 1958]. The realists could also claim that integration could only concern low politics, but not high politics – a useful distinction - and that the new European Commission was weaker than the ECSC High Authority. Only the federalists had to reinvent themselves.

The first years of the EEC were very successful, contrary to the federalists pessimistic predictions [Spinelli 1960; Pistone 1988]. The transitional periods to the Common Market were even shortened. Federalists were waiting for the coming into force of qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council in 1967, which could give new dynamism to the process. Neo-functionalism was at its peak [see Lindberg 1963], and the assertive Hallstein Commission – coherently with neo-functionalism orthodoxy – took bold initiatives to promote integration. De Gaulle, who was back power in France took the chance for a showdown. He refused precisely the overcoming of unanimity, the safeguard of national sovereignty, which was prescribed by the Treaties. The empty chair crisis, and the resulting Luxemburg Compromise brought about the first wave of theoretical revision.

Realist theorists could rejoice once again. Even if it was written in a ratified treaty, QMV would not really enter into force. Facts were harder than theory - and power than right - and national sovereignty could not be so easily eroded. The national governments were reinstated as the main actors. Neo-functionalists offered an honest self-criticism and

undertook a thorough revision, acknowledging the role of national governments, that spill-over may not always work and that fall-back and other options were possible [Haas 1958-1968; Lindberg 1967; Lindberg and Scheingold 1970, and (eds) 1971; Schmitter 1969 and 1971].

This revision brought scholars to focus on several aspects of the process, which will be used also in the federalist framework theory, such as the institutional capacities of the European institutions and their functional scope, as well as the structure and rules of European decision-making, and the national and supranational leadership [Lindberg and Scheingold 1970: 113]. Schmitter identified several possible trends in European integration now admitted by neo-functionalism, which excluded the irreversibility, the linearity and even the direction of the process. It is hard to imagine a more thorough revision of the original theory as the one proposed in the following summarizing table.

Table 3. Alternative actor strategies [Schmitter 1971: 242].

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Spillover</i>	Increase both the scope and level of an actor's commitment concomitantly.
<i>Spill-around</i>	Increase only the scope while holding the level of authority constant or within the zone of indifference.
<i>Buildup</i>	Agree to increase the decisional autonomy or capacity of joint institutions, but deny them entrance in new issue areas.
<i>Retrench</i>	Increase the level of joint deliberation, but withdraw the institutions.
<i>Muddle-about</i>	Let the regional bureaucrats debate, suggest and expostulate on a variety of issues, but decrease their actual capacity to allocate values.
<i>Spill-back</i>	Retreat on level and scope of authority, perhaps returning to the status quo prior the initiation of integration.
<i>Encapsulate</i>	Respond to crisis by marginal modifications.

Therefore the 1970s saw the revision of neo-functionalism, the assertion of neo-realism, while federalist theoretical development went unnoticed. Grand theories took little notice of the growing role of the Court of Justice, which gradually established the principles of implicit powers, of the prevalence of Community law, of the autonomy of the Community order, and eventually, later on, of mutual recognition. Only lawyers understood the

significance of these events, and of the coming European Constitutionalism based on the Court jurisprudence [see Mancini 1998, 2000, 2004]. Weiler clearly described the interaction between law and politics, and pointed out the conditions which initially favoured the expansion of the Court's role: unanimity reassured the national governments that all community legislation was what they had decided, therefore they were all interested in having it applied uniformly across the board [Weiler 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1995, 1997, 1999]. Milward and Moravcsik develop a similar view to explain the acceptance of an institution such as the Commission and the general framework of integration: it helped consolidate and guarantee that mutual commitments were fulfilled [Milward 1992; and Moravcsik 1998]. However, the Court's rulings effectively consolidated European integration, and once QMV entered into force in the 1980s the national governments could not unravel the powers of the Court.

If Weiler's analysis with reference to the Court is right – which should be admitted by neo-realism and intergovernmentalism, which employ a similar argument in relation to another supranational institution, the Commission - this shows that national governments can take decisions with unforeseen consequences that strengthen integration. This would significantly qualified, although not necessarily disconfirm, Moravcsik's claim that national governments generally have more accurate knowledge and are more able to foresee the consequences of decisions than supranational actors, as neo-functionalism suggests.

Federalists do not argue that supranational actors and pro-European and federalist organizations and personalities have more accurate knowledge, but that they can raise themselves to a European perspective instead of a national one [Albertini 1959-1999b, 1965-1999a: 243-244; and 1966-1999b: 72-73]. The need to abandon a pure national perspective to push forward the process is maintained by Albertini also in the analysis of the role of different institutions in the process. For example he notices that the Council or other intergovernmental committee proved unable to make a plan to reach political union, even once they had set such a goal [Albertini 1984-1999a; Burgess 2000: 135-6 for example]. This happened in the 1970s both for monetary union and for the general goal of European Union by 1980 [Bulmer and Wessels 1987: 89; also quoted by Burgess 2000: 130]. This opens the way for initiatives by the European Commission and/or Parliament. And this explains why in 1954 and in 2001 to draft a Treaty-Constitution, a Charter of Rights, and a European Constitution a different procedure had to be set up, from a simple IGC.

Anyway, the main grand theories did not pay much attention to the Court of Justice. This is particularly strange for federalism, since in *The Federalist Papers* Hamilton clearly described the role of the judiciary in a federation [Hamilton, Madison and Jay 1788-1987:

Papers LXXVIII-LXXXIII, especially 437-438]. The Community, and then the EU, are not – yet? – a federation, but they are a multilevel system of government. Where there are two potentially conflicting poles of power, the judiciary can be effective as it can count on the support of one or the other. Therefore it can make its judgement for the better, enjoying real autonomy. This is a configuration of interdependence recognised and analysed in details by Elias as “the monarchical mechanism” with reference to the role of the absolutist kings of France, who increased their power by keeping a balance between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie [Elias 1969-1983, and 1978]. It is well-known in its empirical based and summarised in the motto “the onlooker gets the best of a fight”.

The 1970s were a difficult period on the international level, and different initiatives, with few successes and many setbacks characterised the European integration process. The first wave of theoretical revision continued and the beginning of the 1980s offered a clear theoretical picture. Neo-functionalists noticed the difficulties and the lack of momentum of integration, but this could well suit their new complex refinement which included all possible integrative and disintegrative outcomes. Lawyers were successful in showing the relevance of the Court of Justice and the effectiveness of law as an integrative factor [Mancini 1998, 2000, 2004; Weiler 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1995, 1997, 1999]. According to neo-realist and intergovernmentalist theorists European integration had come to resemble other international regimes and confederations [Hoffman 1982; Wallace 1982; Tsoukalis 1982]. Paul Taylor even theorised *The limits of European integration* [1983]. A theory based on the idea that sovereign nation-states have a constitutive tendency to preserve their sovereignty cannot but have difficulties in explaining the progress of European integration. At every set back neo-realist theorists suggested that this was conclusive proof that the limits of possible integration had been reached.

Obviously neo-realism and neo-functionalism had alternative success, the first being up-held after every set-back, and the second after every success. Thus neo-realism enjoyed great attention for a short time after the fall of the European Defence Community (EDC), which supposedly showed the impossibility to overcome national sovereignty on such a sensitive issue such as defence. Few people bothered to discuss what conditions had made possible the signature of a Treaty to establish the EDC, its ratification by four countries, and its fall at the French National Assembly by only a few votes and thanks to the strange alliance between Gaullists and Communists, after a few years in which there would probably have

been a majority in favour of the Treaty⁴. Similarly, neo-realists claimed that the empty chair crisis and the Luxembourg Compromise showed the impossibility of qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council, because it would undermine national sovereignty. However, QMV in the Council is now the general rule within the EU legislative procedure, with few if important exceptions where national vetoes are still in place, although there has been a consistent trend to reduce those exceptions in the last twenty years. And after the presumed stagnation of European integration in the 1970s and the failure of the Werner plan for monetary union, suggestions that the limits of European integration were reached appeared [Taylor 1983], just before a new “re-launch”.

The Single European Act and the following Single Market 1992 project took them all by surprise and triggered a renewed interest in the subject and a second wave of theoretical development. Only the federalists were ready, this time. QMV was finally introduced - against realist claims that the national governments would never give up their veto – and even the European Parliament was strengthened. Why had this happened? The federalists attribute a great role to the direct election of the Parliament and its Draft Treaty, which forced the governments, if they were to refuse it, to do something else [Spinelli 1980, 1983, 1985; Levi 1982a, 1982b; Albertini 1984, 1985, 1986; Pinder 1984 and 1985; Lodge 1984 and 1986; Jozzo 1985; Majocchi L.V. 1985; Rossolillo 1986; Padoa Schioppa, 1988, 1989, 1991; Burgess 1989].

Neo-functionalists replied that the Single Market was not the E.P. project, but the Commission’s proposal [Sandholtz and Zysman 1989]. But they could not explain why a re-launch or a spill-over was happening at that time, and not a decade earlier or later. This weakness in relation to the timing of different decisions is particularly clear for neo-functionalism. Following the rapid development from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom, Haas counted on the spill-over for the progress of integration, but did not set any temporal range to test his hypothesis [Haas 1958]. After the empty chair crisis, which showed the relevance of national government, Haas himself offered a self-criticism of neo-functionalism, and inaugurated a new research agenda to refine it. When in the middle 1980s the Single Market project was launched, to be soon followed by the Monetary Union project of the Maastricht treaty, neo-functionalism was soon revived [see for instance Sandholtz and Zysman 1989, Nugent 1995, Ross 1995, Wincott 1995]. This series of events was considered as an example of spill-over, masterfully crafted by the Delors Commission entrepreneurship – little notice was

⁴ This period of the European integration process has received relatively little attention in the English-speaking debate: see Fursdon 1980; Lerner and Aron 1957. While a few detailed studies have appeared in Italian: see Albertini 1977; Preda 1990, 1994, 1996, 2003.

taken that this implied that if previously there had been little momentum, it was because previous Commission were not good enough: was this really the case?

The Maastricht Treaty spelt the failure of the IGC on political union, but carried the new-named European Union towards the single currency, notwithstanding British opposition. Neo-realism gave way to liberal intergovernmentalism, which has recently gained more and more ground, especially after his seminal work *The Choice for Europe* appeared in 1998 [see also Moravcsik 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997]. Liberal intergovernmentalism is very sophisticated and accurate, but still focus on national governments as the main actors, and on the preference convergence of the elites within the main member states as the key independent variable [Moravcsik 1993, 1995, 1997, and 1998]. Intergovernmentalists explain the SEA with the neo-liberal consensus within national political elites, which brought about the single market project, and only as a side-effect some institutional innovations [Moravcsik 1991 and 1998].

Moravcsik shows great methodological awareness and care, an extraordinary knowledge of the relevant literature drawn from many different disciplinary discourses, and provides a great deal of empirical data to substantiate his claims. Still, many scholars have opposed some of them on solid ground. For instance, Burgess tries to show the influence of federalist figures and ideas in the integration process [Burgess 2000], against Moravcsik's claim that their impact on the process was of little significance, but in a few occasions [Moravcsik 1998: 4]. However, Burgess locates himself on a different plane, employing a different methodology, proposing some useful neglected evidence, but not an alternative theory to study European integration. This work has been partly done by some federalist authors, particularly in Italy, thanks mainly to Altiero Spinelli and Mario Albertini.

Liberal intergovernmentalism is much more sophisticated than previous theories, but is not more focused on the timing of certain decisions. The identification of the national preferences of the main countries at the time of the “grand bargains” is made ex-post, after each grand bargain has taken place. But the theory can say little about why and when a new one should occur. Moravcsik does not even ask why there has been a rapid succession of intergovernmental conferences (IGCs) in the 1990s, or how was it possible that in December 1984 the Italian presidency called a vote on the convening of an IGC, ignoring the Luxembourg Compromise, and against furious protest by the United Kingdom (UK), whose participation in the IGC was unclear and at risk for a few days, according to Moravcsik himself [1991: 41]. These questions are crucial for a proper account of the integration process, although they do not fit liberal intergovernmentalism. The federalist framework tackles precisely these issues, and thus recognises also the role played in certain occasions by the

European institutions and by federalist personalities and organizations. They are relevant mainly in making a bargain happen. While during the bargain itself their role is minimal, compared to national governments. Therefore the federalist framework does not challenge Moravcsik's main findings in relation to the intergovernmental bargains, but indicates its limits and opens up a vast new field of inquiry, which he chose to ignore.

Another shortcoming of liberal intergovernmentalism, not present in the federalist framework, is the reduction of the relevant actors to the most powerful member states. Moravcsik apparently bases his liberal argument on the role accorded to national preferences and their intensity rather than national power, as realism would do, to analyse the bargains and their results. However, he definitely used power as the basic function to identify the main actors: Germany, France and the UK. It is hard to believe that the preferences of all other countries were never intense enough to be relevant. And, incidentally, also the exclusion of Italy as a major player should at least be discussed and explained. Indeed, Italy has always been the weakest of the big states, but it managed to be recognised equal voting rights and so on with France and Germany. Furthermore, the Italian role in the phase in which Britain was not part of the Communities, was probably more important for the overall result of the bargains than the British one. Hence it is possible to argue that an overestimation of the British role in European integration underlies the argument – as is often the case in the English-language literature.

From a realist perspective it is possible to argue that intensity preference is only a second level, and subordinate variable, which assumes a decisive role in Moravcsik's theory only because he identifies the main actors on the basis of their power. Considering the most powerful states in the process, endowed with similar power, although each of them may have been particularly powerful in one area or another, intensity preference becomes crucial. But this choice of the main actors to be considered, implies also a serious historical bias, as also other countries and the European institutions have occasionally played a major role in the process. Moravcsik suggests that the role of European institutions has generally been overestimated, but since at the basis of his theory is an identification of the main actors which does not include them, this is hardly surprising. And the same goes for other countries.

Milward shows the crucial part played by Belgium in relation to the ECSC bargain [1992: ch. 3], incidentally on the basis of an argument which can be used to support Moravcsik's basic insight. The Belgian intensity preference in relation to its coal industry was very strong, and this resulted in a strong influence on a bargain whose main aim for the major players, France and Germany, was actually Franco-German reconciliation. This can be used to

support generally Moravcsik's main argument, but at the same time undermines his focus on the three most powerful states.

Similarly, art. 38 of the EDC Treaty and the European Political Community (EPC) project cannot be understood without considering Italy's crucial role and the influence of federalist ideas and personalities on the Italian government at that time [see Willis 1971; Pistone 1982, 1991 and 1992; Albertini 1984-1999a and 1985-1999a; and Preda 1990, 1994, 1996, 2003]. And also the Italian government call of a vote at the Milan Council in 1985, notwithstanding the Luxembourg Compromise, was decisive in bringing about the IGC that produced the Single European Act. Such a move cannot be understood without taking into account the Italian Parliament vote in favour of the Spinelli Project – the Draft Treaty on European Union proposed by the EP, which had almost unanimous support by all Italian MEPs – before the European Council meeting⁵. All this shows the limits of a theory focusing on just the three main member states.

Since Moravcsik hopes that his findings can be generalised to develop a theory useful for other cases as well, it is worth noting that the grand bargain occurred in 1787 between the thirteen American states would not be comprehensible with his theory. It is well-known the crucial role of the Connecticut Compromise in the drafting of the American Constitution establishing the first federal state in history. If theorists were to focus only on the preferences of the most powerful states, a small state such as Connecticut would not be considered. Still, given that the idea of a representation proportional to population in one chamber and equal for every state in the other branch of the Legislative was an historical innovation, the role of this small state cannot be underestimated.

Another important difference between the federalist framework and Moravcsik's historical account is its historical starting point. He chose to start with the birth of the EEC, and thus reduced the previous phase of European integration to preliminary, and essentially insignificant events, which he only mentions briefly as preceding the first grand bargain [1998: 86]. This is a serious methodological fallacy as considering that period may significantly alter his findings. Europe Day is the 9th of May, remembering the Schuman Declaration of 1950, which is usually considered as the start of European integration. It is well-known that it was drafted by Monnet, and that only a few of his collaborators were involved, and that the speech was made by Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, with the agreement of the prime minister, while the rest of the government and the Quai d'Orsay were left out of the process,

⁵ The Italian Chamber voted in favour of the draft Treaty with a bipartisan overwhelming majority. At the European Parliament, basically all Italian MEPs and groups voted in favour of the Draft Treaty, which overall passed with a majority over 80% [on this issues see also Lodge 1984 and 1986; and Burgess 1989 and 2001].

as they would have probably opposed it and modified it significantly [see Monnet 1976; Pinder 1997: 220-221; Burgess 2000: 64-67].

Considering that the most innovative feature of European integration has been its institutional framework, which was made up for the ECSC on the basis of the Schuman Declaration, ignoring this phase constitute a serious problem for liberal intergovernmentalism. At the same time it is a necessary problem, because otherwise it would be impossible to maintain the predominance of economic motives over political ones as the driving force in European integration. Milward holds the same theoretical stand, but he pays attention to that period and thus while stressing the economic foundations of integration he had to conclude that “there is no intention to deny the political motivations which are conventionally and correctly ascribed to the Treaties” [1992: 208]. Burgess rightly points out the weakness of the thesis “that the origins of the EC were primarily economic and social but that they were politically motivated” recalling that the goals were political and the means economic [2000: 75-76]. Indeed, within the federalist framework this opposition will be overcome. An integrative step seen as economically detrimental would not be accepted, but in extraordinary conditions. This does not imply that the only, or even the main reason behind it, is economic. But there must usually be a convergence. The relationship between politics, and specifically institution-building, and economics within the process, is a complex one which is specifically addressed by the Italian federalist tradition, without taking the short cut to subordinate one to the other.

Moravcsik recognises that the most innovative feature of European integration is its institutional framework, but he pays very little attention to some of its crucial aspects and evolution. The direct election of the European Parliament and its long-term impact on European integration is never appropriately addressed. On the contrary he considers concession in relation to the EP powers as minor adjustments. Still the very existence of the only directly elected supranational Parliament needs to be explained. Especially if we consider the long-term opposition to such a development by many states, and the fact that when the decision to accept the direct election was made in 1974, some states, namely the UK and Denmark, refused it. And only the year before the first scheduled direct elections they joined in, so that the 1979 election were held in all the nine members states. Considering that in some countries, and especially in Britain, national sovereignty is supposed to express itself through the election of the Parliament, the direct election of the EP is a very significant institutional innovation. The European Union is the only organization with a directly elected Parliament, which is not – or maybe not yet – a state.

Moravcsik's structural underestimation of the existence of the EP is hardly surprising since the Parliament powers and role do not manifest themselves during the intergovernmental bargains, although they may have been significant in bringing about some of them, especially the 1985 IGC. Similarly, the influence of the European Court of Justice is never addressed properly, as it does not play a role in the intergovernmental bargains analysed by Moravcsik. Eventually on the ECJ also the federalist reflections are generally insufficient, while useful considerations, and fully compatible with the federalist framework, have been proposed by authors such as Mancini [1998, 2000, 2004] and Weiler [1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1995, 1997, 1999]. But on the general issue of the development of the European institutions and of their relation with substantive integration, the federalist framework can offer an important contribution, thus also explaining the different rate of success between the EEC and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

Although there has been a continuing refinement of those macro-theories to take into account the originality and complexity of the EU, their basic difficulties are structural as they involved the core assumptions and tenets of neo-realism – and also of liberal intergovernmentalism – and neo-functionalism concerning the nature and the actors of the integration process. The attempts to develop a synthetic theory from those two can be criticised because of the incompatibility of the core assumptions of the two original theories [Warleigh 1998, pp. 6-9].

Basically these theories focus on different key variables to explain the process. Realism focuses on changes in the wider international context, liberal intergovernmentalism on domestic policy priorities, and neo-functionalism on intra-Community relationship. Significantly, Burgess explicitly considers them all in his federalist account of European integration [2000: 86 for example]. The federalist framework theory explains super-systemic change, taking into account the interaction of these variables and not just one of them, while at the same time, taking into account the general public and pro-European movements and personalities influence. Both neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism have their weakest point in explaining why a certain decision has been taken at that particular time. And this is the issue on which the federalist framework can offer a major contribution.

Federalist scholars were concerned with understanding the dynamics of the process, rather than developing a parsimonious theory. Unlike Moravcsik, they did not embark in a comparison of different explanations in relation to a series of hypothesis, to show which one was more effective, but attempted to develop a more complex framework which allowed for a limited number of different explanations to be used in relation to specific cases and times.

What may seem an easy methodological eclecticism, was in fact a theoretical attempt to exploit different useful insights instead of considering them as competing ones. This work implied a revision of some of the original categories of federalist thinking. For this reason, this research will also offer a brief account of the evolution of the federalist thinking, before putting forth the framework theory that can be reconstructed mainly from Albertini's writings.

I will also try to show how federalist authors used selectively the insights of realism, intergovernmentalism, neo-functionalism, and social constructivism. Each theory emphasises unilaterally some aspects present in the European integration process. However, academic sophistication is now very high and many authors of each tradition recognise the existence of the others, although, having paid this annoying tribute, they generally continue to study and analyse the process from one perspective, on the basis that authors of other schools have already explored the others. Thus each tradition provides useful insights for those aspects of the process on which it focuses, but is unable to consider it in its complexity.

Basically, the federalist framework offers a useful account of European integration, and complementary to the liberal intergovernmentalist one. Neo-realism and liberal intergovernmentalism consider the integration process as the outcome of political negotiations between self-interested nation states. Therefore they leave little room for any significant role by non-governmental actors and European institutions. These theories reduce the process only to national governments bargaining. But there is much else to be accounted for in the process, in order for those bargains to take place. In brief, the framework theory reconstructed from the federalist tradition exploits many insights of existing theory and offer a complementary view of liberal intergovernmentalism, thus limiting its heuristic value as a theory able to grasp one recurrent phase of the European integration process, but not the whole process.

The federalist framework theory is particularly helpful to understand the timing of super-systemic decisions, while liberal intergovernmentalism is helpful to explain the results of certain intergovernmental bargains. The federalist framework also helps to recognise the different roles of the various actors in the process, from national governments and parliaments, to European institutions - and not just the Commission - and federalist ideas, personalities and movements. This does not mean that they all play an equally important role, nor that they influenced the process in each and every moment. But there are a few roles that need to be played for integration to proceed, and each actor is able to fulfil just one of them, although several actors may fulfil the same one. Finally it offers valuable insights about the

relationship between various aspects of the process such as institutional development and substantive integration [see for instance Rossolillo 1975].

Specifically, the federalist framework avoids the neo-functionalist underestimation of politics in the European integration process. Federalists recognise the crucial role of national governments and of political considerations in the process - and, contrary to what most commentaries attribute them, they do not believe that national governments can support European integration for the sake of the federalist ideology. Thus while they recognise the role of several European political leaders, federalists also do not accept the view of European “saints” criticised by Milward. At the same time, federalists accept the possibility for European institutions to play a specific role in the process, including the European Parliament, which is often underestimated by all other theories. The federalist framework identifies the specific role that national governments and politicians, European institutions, and federalists ideas and organizations can play in the process. These are different roles, which will be investigated in some details later on.

CHAPTER 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERALIST THOUGHT

It seems appropriate to briefly sketch the development of federalist thought and action in relation to European integration [see Levi and Pistone 1973], before reconstructing the federalist analytical framework that can be derived from this tradition. This is required because the evolution of federalist thinking is generally unknown or not recognised – also because a federalist academic school only took roots in Italy. This account is also useful to highlight the development besides a federalist normative thinking of an analytical aspect too. And it is not surprising that federalism, just as most other theories of European integration, was first developed only as a normative one. After the First World War, and then during and after the Second one, the idea of a federal Europe was proposed to ensure peace on the continent. The idea of creating a new and more peaceful order was widely shared and different theories dealt with this issue identifying both the ultimate goal and the means to achieve it.

Federalist and neo-functionalism⁶ both favoured a European federation, but proposed different views about how to establish it. The federalists suggested to elect a European Constituent Assembly to draft a European Constitution to establish the European federation [Spinelli 1950, now in Levi e Pistone (eds.) 1973]. The functionalists considered such a jump impossible at the time, and called for a gradualist path, which starting from economic integration would lead to political union slowly but surely and without a break. This is the classical dichotomy of federalism and neo-functionalism, and generally here the story ends. But there is an important following.

As the process got started along neo-functionalist lines, the federalists eventually understood that both theories were right and wrong at the same time. Federalists believed to be right in identifying a necessary condition for the establishment of the European federation, but had to recognise that the political conditions were not there for such an event immediately to take place. In other words, the federalists had to accept that their ultimate goal in Europe was not attainable immediately, and that a long struggle would be required to create the conditions in which it was possible. They had to come to terms with reality, which differed significantly from their hopes, in order to try to influence it. This also proved them, that they could be part of the process, but certainly not the main actors. Apparently, neo-functionalists

⁶ The term neo-functionalism makes sense only in the academic discourse, where functionalism is used with reference to Mitrany's theory, but on the public and political debate, neo-functionalism is generally called functionalism. I will stick to the appropriate academic use of distinguishing the two.

did not undergo such a transformation and apparently continued to believe that a break such as a European constituent assembly would not be necessary to reach their goals. Eventually this explains why neo-functionalists occasionally have offered thorough self-criticism after some set-backs of European integration [Haas 1968].

The federalists had to make do with the neo-functional path on which integration started, and tried to exploit it to convince the national governments of the need to convene a European constituent assembly to create a political union. They went close to success with the EDC and EPC projects. Until 1954 they have been part of the process, trying to exploit it to create a European political union. They failed and in the following decade they were divided about what to do and about the usefulness or not of the EEC in view of the political union.

Here are mainly relevant the choices of the people who then became the Italian federalist academic school. After the failure of the EDC Treaty in 1954, they lost any hope in the ability of the governments to bring the process forward and called for the direct involvement of the European citizens. For about a decade a significant part of European federalists tried to mobilise directly the European citizens through the Congress of the European People – which tried to replicate Gandhi's Indian Congress initiative that brought to Indian independence – and later on, mainly in Italy, the European People Voluntary Census. Notwithstanding some local successes, these campaigns only managed to keep the federalists organizations alive, although shrinking, at a time in which European economic integration was successfully going on and there was even little debate about political union. In other words, they have not played any significant role in the integration process, but started investigating it analytically, and came out of this period with significant theoretical innovations, which eventually brought them to completely alter their strategy and to play again a significant role in the process.

This intellectual operation was made easier by the existence of a political organization that had to work in the real political environment, and which forced the federalists to confront the political elites in the different countries, and thus to change part of their view to remain in touch with reality and the process. This painful process took about a decade in which the federalists had to explain why their predictions were all going wrong.

From the 1954 fall of the EDC Treaty, the federalists initially draw a few lessons. First, that the national governments could not be trusted to bring the integration process to its end, which the Schuman Declaration itself has defined as the European federation. The national governments were at the same time, instruments of and obstacles to the process. This idea will bring some useful theoretical revision, which will be analysed in next chapter. Still, the very

fact that the EDC Treaty, the Ad Hoc Assembly and its draft Treaty-Constitution occurred, showed that the time were ripe for a European federation. The goal was there, four countries had ratified the EDC Treaty, and the idea that it was absolutely necessary to wait a long time to ask the people to build a federation was disproved. Therefore they called on the European people, and dismissed the intergovernmental relaunch at Messina, and the birth of the EEC. At a time in which they believed possible to create a European federation, establishing just a Common Market, and with a weaker institutional structure than the ECSC – given the lost of power of the Commission, in relation to the High Authority – was considered as a means to deceive the European citizens, which were still much in favour of European unity. Furthermore, its institutional structure was considered too weak to achieve real economic integration.

On this basis were built the federalist campaigns, especially in Italy, in the following decade. Still the EEC flourished, and the federalist had to come to terms with it. Thus Pinder developed the distinction between positive and negative integration [1968]. The institutional framework of the EEC was sufficient to sustain negative integration. Positive integration, i.e. the development of positive European policies not well-defined in the Treaties would require stronger institutions, and especially QMV instead of unanimity. Significantly, the Rome Treaties themselves foresee the beginning of QMV during the third phase of the transitory period towards the Common Market.

Building on this idea, Albertini suggested that the start of the third phase of the transitory period, together with the termination of the Atlantic Pact, would bring again the problem of political union into the agenda. On the one hand QMV would undermine national sovereignty, and help to trigger an endogenous integrative dynamics. On the other hand, the success of economic integration was creating the economic conditions to end the European subordination to the US, which De Gaulle wished to exploit, creating a European political confederation lead by France. His resolution to keep the UK out of the EEC was interpreted as the result of his conviction than British entry would prevent any step towards a European foreign policy autonomous of the US. On this basis it would have been possible for the federalists to call for the transformation of the confederal structure into a federal one [Albertini 1965-1999a]. However, De Gaulle commitment to national sovereignty brought the empty chair crisis, the non-application of QMV, and at the same time the collapse of the project of a political confederation.

Albertini then reached the conclusion that the national governments would take a gradualist path within which an infinite series of step could be made without reaching the final

goal of federation. Neo-functionalist integration was asymptotic to the European federation. The federalists should thus exploit the gradualist integration to create the conditions in which a leap forward to the federation was possible. He suggested that Spinelli and the early federalists were right in identifying the condition for the federation to be established, while the neo-functionalist were right in recognising that integration could start at that time only as a gradualist enterprise.

On this basis he developed the theory of constitutional gradualism. Accordingly, the federalists should stop campaigning only for their ultimate goal, but should demand intermediate institutional steps aimed at creating the conditions for a constituent procedure to be convened. According to constitutional gradualism to have the possibility – which is not a guarantee of success – of establishing a European constituent procedure to create a European federal state two institutional conditions are necessary. The first is the existence of some form of European democracy and particularly of a directly elected European parliament. Even if its powers were initially insignificant, the direct election would give the EP such a legitimacy, that its call for more powers would be difficult to go unanswered. The EP would thus become a long-term advocate of European democracy, thus strengthening the federalist camp. Furthermore, it would force political parties to discuss European issues, and eventually to build up European parties and platforms.

The second condition was the effective acquisition of some crucial element of sovereignty to the European institutions – either a European army or a European currency, but after the collapse of the EDC only the project of a European currency remained feasible. This second condition was based on a crucial assessment about the nature of monetary and defence sovereignty. Up to now, the European integration process has dealt with two very different types of sovereignty. Economic sovereignty has allowed for a gradual process of pooling of sovereignty and decision-making within an institutional framework based on a balance between supranational and intergovernmental elements. But monetary sovereignty did not really allow for gradual monetary integration.

This diagnosis has been confirmed by the historical process. At first there was monetary cooperation in the forms of the ‘snake’ and the European Monetary System. They both failed to include any supranational institutions and decision-making system, but only the duty to coordinate the central banks support for the currency in difficulty. The Treaty on European Union (TEU) then set precise deadlines to create the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) based on a process of economic convergence built on a set of convergence criteria. Once again the process of convergence did not include any significant supranational

element - the creation of the European Monetary Institute, to prepare the establishment of the European Central Bank (ECB), is not relevant, as it did not have a significant role in respect to the convergence process. Each member state alone had to undertake the economic policy to meet the convergence criteria. The process of convergence was a preparation for the transfer of monetary sovereignty. It was not a gradual transfer of sovereignty. Monetary sovereignty cannot be pooled or shared, but only transferred: either the national central banks can decide their national monetary policy and interest rate or the European Central Bank can. It is difficult to conceive an intermediate integrative step between cooperation and unification in this field.

Therefore the transfer of monetary sovereignty would create the problem of having some form of sovereignty being handled at European level in a not completely democratic way – in the absence of a federal government. This would help to produce a strongly felt democratic deficit and allow the European parliament and the pro-European movements to campaign for a European constituent procedure to create a European government, at least for the issue on which sovereignty was already handled at European level. The creation of the Euro and the opening of a constituent debate and procedure through the Convention seems to confirm this idea. And it is interesting that in a polemical context, important political figures have taken similar positions about the relation between the EMU and political union [see Issing 1996 and Portillo 1998. A detailed account of constitutional gradualism is in Albertini 1966-1999b, 1973-1999, and 1976-1999b, but the reasoning behind these ideas will not be considered in details as this paper focuses on the federalist analytical theory rather than on their strategy and normative thought].

The choice of the Monetary Union as a crucial intermediate target also followed from previous reflections about European integration and the following recognition of a window of opportunity for federalist campaign to this end. Albertini had previously argued that the success of economic integration created the economic conditions for European independence from the US. This fact was also triggering the collapse of the international economic and monetary system based on Dollar convertibility, as Triffin had foreseen [Triffin 1966]. When the crisis would come, it would be possible for the federalists to propose monetary union with some chances of success. Thus at the end of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s the federalists discussed the issue of economic and monetary union [Albertini 1969; Jozzo and Mosconi 1969; Triffin 1971; Ossola 1971 and Albertini 1971⁷]. The federalists believed that

⁷ Significantly, the first 1971 issue of *Le federaliste* - published in March, thus before Nixon's declaration of the Dollar inconvertibility - is entirely devoted to this problem, just as the single issue of 1974 [Majocchi 1974; Montani 1974; Moro 1974; and Velo 1974], although the discussion started already in 1969, and continued later

monetary union, which implied real power devolved to the European institutions, together with the democratic fact of the European election could provide the conditions for a discussion about who governs Europe, and thus possibly open the way for a democratic constituent procedure to set up a federal government. This plan was then summarised in the federalist slogan “European election, European currency, European government”. Albertini’s main articles during the late 1960s and 1970s express theoretically this strategic shift [Albertini 1967-1999b, 1968-1999a, 1969-1999b, 1971-1999b, 1976-1999b, 1979a-1999b, 1979b-1999b].

Albertini’s strategy is not neo-functionalist. He did not identify the intermediate goal of monetary union because “economic and monetary union (EMU) followed logically from the idea of a custom union” as Burgess attributes to Hallstein and Spinelli [2000: 87]. He did not theorise any automatic implication. He was just looking for the condition which could create a situation of power favourable to the start of a European constitutional process.

Starting from this period the federalist thinking and strategy was again effective and significant in the European integration process. After a decade in which their action was out of touch with the process, and which brought them to think again about the dynamics of the process, they had come out with a new strategy and vision of the European integration process. This new strategy was made possible by a new understanding of the process, which continued to be developed afterwards. It is this aspect of federalist thought that is relevant for this research. Still, this brief overview of a certain phase of federalist development in relation to their strategy shows that they have been more significant in certain periods of the process than in others, and also that precisely the period in which their significance was minimal, forced them to revise their analytical categories and helped to produce a new framework theory to grasp the dynamics of the integration process. From now on, I will not consider the federalist campaigns anymore unless they can be taken as proof of a theoretical innovation. It is time to turn the attention to the analytical aspect of the federalist tradition.

on [see Velo 1976, and the proceedings of an important conference published in 1978 edited by the Movimento Europeo and the Movimento Federalista Europeo. A useful discussion of the events from the fall of the Bretton Woods system to the birth of European Monetary System (EMS) is offered from a federalist perspective by Mosconi 1980; and Padoa Schioppa T. 2002].

CHAPTER 3. THE FEDERALIST FRAMEWORK THEORY

3.1. The Italian federalists' aims and methodology

The federalist framework theory is rather unusual in academic terms, as it exploits insights taken from different theories, even if it was developed at a time in which they were seen as contradictory ones. The federalists used different analytical tools to explain various aspects of integration within a coherent framework of analysis, thus developing a complex macro-theory. A brief consideration of their aims and methodology are needed to understand how they came out with that theory.

Albertini, the leading Italian federalist scholar, devoted much of his work to the study of federalism and nationalism as ideologies [Albertini 1960-1997 and 1963-1993]. Still he realised that the crucial problem for the federalist movement was to produce an analytical theory in order to properly understand the European integration process. Only on such an understanding would it be possible to elaborate a strategy – or a theory of transition – to try to reach the federalist normative goal. His theoretical enterprise had a clear practical aim, and was not devoted to the academic discourse alone. This allowed him not to pursue methodological pureness, and to use different analytical tool to grasp the complexity of European integration, but still identifying a limited number of important actors and variables.

Albertini was only interested in integration as a process, and therefore his theory can be located only at the super-systemic level of analysis. He argued that the study of the single stages of the process in a static fashion is of limited value. This was due to the fact that comparative politics requires a relative stability of the institutional framework of the polities to be compared, in order to refer the changeable data of politics to the stable institutions. But this assumption does not stand for the European institutional system [Albertini 1965-1999a: 235]. In the European integration process what remains constant is the evolutionary nature of the process, which manifests itself especially in the changes of the institutional framework⁸.

This makes most comparative accounts of the EU inadequate in a few years. Still their specific value is that by explaining the current institutional changes, they show the new possibility of action opened by the new institutional framework, both for the EC and then EU

⁸ The emphasis on the institutional changes of the EC and then EU, which characterised the federalist theory will be discussed later on [see Rossolillo 1975].

itself, and for the federalists to exploit the institutional tensions to increase the federal character of the institutional framework itself. Comparative accounts can also highlight the EU growing “state-like” nature [see for example Hix 1999; but also Pinder 1986, 1993, and 1998]. This is increasingly done today and may indicate that only recently the EU has acquired those characteristics that have brought many scholars to discuss the EU as a system of government or as a polity in its own right. And at the same time this shows the need to use other approaches to explain the integration process that has developed for decades, and may continue for a long time, in a dynamic fashion.

In other words, comparative politics cannot conceptualise the movement of the process, and develop an ideal type of the integration process. However it is helpful in understanding the intermediate individual historical situations created during the process, which cannot be part of the ideal type, but which define the possibility of action within the process [Albertini 1984-1999a: 210]. Montani has refined these concepts and proposed a specific terminology. He applies Menger and Hayek’s notions of “spontaneous order” to those institutions created by human actions and decisions, but not following a conscious plan. But these spontaneous social institutions become stable and irreversible only when they are recognised and embodied in public political institutions. Therefore Montani suggests to use this terminology also to refer to the transitional stages of the European integration process [Montani 1999: 73-74, 80-82].

Moravcsik opposes the theory that integration was significantly due to unintended consequences of intergovernmental decisions [1998: 479-482]. Still, the wide-spread idea of continuous relaunches of integration suggests that each decision was taken for specific reason and having in mind its future consequences, but was not considered as a step in a process. And this seems to be confirmed by the fact that the debate about the ultimate destination of the process has been taboo for a long time, until Joscha Fischer’s speech at the Humboldt University in 2000. Also Lady Thatcher’s book, in which she admits that she had not understood what kind of dynamics the SEA would promote, seems to disconfirm Moravcsik’s claim [Thatcher 1993].

Federalists suggest locate properly the comparative studies within the framework offered by the ideal type of the process. It is not possible to explain one aspect of the integration process or the EU decision-making in isolation from the others. To provide an effective understanding, it is necessary to identify the value of different approaches in relation to different aspects of the process, but they must be placed within a single framework.

Albertini maintained we observe politics through institutions. We study the French foreign policy because there is a French government in a French state [Albertini 1965-1999a: 235]. The politics of European integration cannot be referred to a European government in a European supranational state. And even if the latter was to be the end-point of the integration process, it cannot be considered as an omnipresent motivation of the different significant actors of the integration process. This would be to assume that every actor wants a European supranational state. But if this were true the European state would already be in place. Therefore Albertini tried to create a “provisional reference theoretical framework for the data of the European integration process” [Albertini 1965-1999a: 234; my translation]: an ideal type - different from reality, but able to catch the main features – to conceptualise the movement of the process⁹. To this aim he considered particularly useful some lessons to be drawn from the unification process of Germany and Italy and from the birth of the USA [Albertini 1976-1999b: 221-222; 1986-1999a: 298-300].

The elaboration of the ideal type required to assume an end-point of integration which was to be out of the scheme, but which could provide an insight of the relevant data of the process. Albertini assumed that integration is different from usual forms of international cooperation – while Moravcsik for example makes the opposite assumption and considers integration as a particularly sophisticated form of international cooperation, and therefore wishes to generalise theoretical findings about European integration to international cooperation and regimes. The difference lied in the necessary supranational character of at least some of the institutions created by an integration process, compared to international cooperation. This assumption was based on the existence of some elements of supranationality in the ECSC and then in the EEC; which would characterise integration but not cooperation [see also Beloff 1963 Pickles 1963; Wessel 1996: 51-57; the same distinction is used, but not explicitly discussed, in Twitchett 1980: 22-24]. This is coherent with the origin of the ECSC without the UK, precisely because of prior acceptance of the supranational character of the new organization required by the French invitation to join in the negotiations.

Accordingly cooperation takes place when no national sovereignty is pooled or transferred, when the institutional framework is purely intergovernmental and generally based on unanimity. Integration refers to the pooling of sovereignty and therefore requires the creation of some kind of supranational institutions and/or the renounce to the power of veto within the intergovernmental institutions. It is important to make clear that integration does

⁹ Albertini is aware that an ideal type requires a theoretical input and at the same time, precisely for this reason, the ideal type can never match history and cannot have a strong predictive value [Albertini 1986-1999a: 293-294].

not require the setting up of an institutional framework which is entirely, or even mainly, supranational - this would probably resemble more a supranational unitary state than any institutional setting the European integration process has produced so far [see Dehousse and Weiler 1990: 251]. But it requires some degree of supranationality. Otherwise there is no need to use a different word than cooperation to describe it. And a characteristic feature of the European integration process is precisely the creation, beside the traditional intergovernmental institutions, also of some supranational institutions - such as the European High Authority and then the European Commission, the European Court of Justice, and later on the directly elected European Parliament and the European Central Bank [see Rosamond 2000: 10-11]¹⁰.

This distinction provides a clear demarcation line between two concepts which are often confused, and which would be otherwise very difficult to separate clearly¹¹. Thus Albertini imagined a possible continuum from the cooperation of nation-states endowed with exclusive sovereignty, with no element of supranationality involved, to a European federal state, with a prevalence of supranationality [Albertini 1984-1999a: 210]. The integration process could be seen as a period in which both elements exist. But the crucial dividing line was to be the concept of statehood. The establishment of even a weak form of European federal state was the conceptual end-point of integration, which made the process irreversible¹² [Albertini 1961-1999a: 226. A recent discussion of this issue is in Montani 1999: 73-74, 80-82].

The federalists stood on Spinelli's position that the foundation of a European state required a democratic legitimacy that can be guaranteed only by a democratic constituent procedure¹³. The decision to start such a procedure would open the way for the final decision,

¹⁰ It may be argued that the integration process has seen an increase of the supranational elements, through the direct election of the European parliament and its progressive increase of power, and through the creation of the European Central Bank. However, this does not imply any prevalence of the supranational aspect over the intergovernmental one.

¹¹ At the same time it needs to be stressed that this is only an analytical distinction. To differentiate cooperation and integration does not necessarily imply a preference for one or the other. It is possible to have a normative preference for one of them, but it is also possible to believe that they are best suited for different issues. Furthermore there is no need to analytically think of them as a continuum in which cooperation is the first stage of integration. It may occasionally be the case historically, but the establishment of such a theoretical link would require a proper theory to be sustained.

¹² At different times the federalists have hoped that some other intermediate steps could be sufficient to make the process irreversible [see Majocchi L.V. 1973].

¹³ Since there is not a democratic political institution with the power to create a European government there is no public discussion about this issue. A European democratic constituent procedure is necessary to have such a debate and to take such a decision. To create a European government there is the need for many national governments to agree on this issue, and furthermore to agree on a constitutional text. This is extremely unlikely if not impossible. Such a decision may be taken only if a strong external pressure together with the public opinion force the governments to take such a decision and to start a constituent procedure in which the will of the European citizens as such may manifest itself [see Spinelli and Rossi 1941-1998; Albertini 1961-1999a: 227, and 1984-1999a: 213; for a discussion of this position see Levi and Pistone 1973; and Chrysochoou, Tsinizelis, Stavridis, Ifantis 1999: especially 14].

for the reach of the conceptual end-point of integration. But the integration process was in itself something different, not based on that final decision, and which still needed to be conceptualised. In other words Albertini accepted Spinelli's identification of the final step needed to create a European state, but he also drew on Monnet's gradualism to conceptualise the integration process as something different from that eventual theoretical final decision. This is similar to Forsyth suggestion that a confederation or federal union is not yet a federal state, but "a union of states in a body politic" or "the process by which a number of separate states raise themselves by contract to the threshold of being one state, rather than the organisation that exists once this threshold has been crossed". This idea allowed Forsyth to understand that this situation was "the intermediary ground between the inter-state and the state worlds, of going beyond the one but of not unequivocally reaching the other" [Forsyth 1981: 2-3 and 6] This vision, sketched by Albertini already in the late 1960s and by Forsyth in 1981, has a high degree of reality-congruence with the situation of the EU, and shows their deep understanding of the process.

Building on this idea, and on Elazar's research, Burgess suggests that the distinction between federation and confederation may have lost its theoretical salience, and be misleading. On this point Albertini and the Italian federalist school took a different, and insightful, path, although they share with Elazar the idea that federalism can be a new paradigm which overcome in many significant respects the distinction between the study of international relation and political science . It is obvious that in the spectrum between a fully-fledged federation or federal state, and a classical confederation there are an infinite intermediate positions of organization with just some federal characters. However, this does not make the distinction useless to conceptualise where a given intermediate position lies on the spectrum from a static comparative perspective. Furthermore, the theoretical significance of that distinction lies also in its corollary in relation to the dynamics of integration processes. The idea that between confederation and federation *tertium non datur* refers to the model. Historically there may be several intermediate positions: the issue is if they are sustainable in the long-term, or if they have not built-in such tensions and contradictions that they must move in one direction or the other. If this is the case, the intermediate positions being only an instable equilibrium between opposing tendencies, none of them can constitute a theoretical model in its own right. It is theoretically significant in this respect, that the integration process can be considered as a series of institutional changes – including even of the name of the organization which crystallises the level of the integration process at a given time – which have gradually but steadily increased their federal features.

On this basis Albertini sharply distinguished the federalist normative theory – first of European constitutionalism and then of constitutional gradualism about the condition to create a European federal state - and the process of European integration, which needed to be studied and explained, and which includes the many intermediate positions between federation and confederation which constitute a temporary unstable equilibrium among the forces towards unity and those for division. Thus he could consider the integration process as a process that could create the condition for the foundation of a European state by a democratic constituent procedure. But this was not a guaranteed outcome, nor was the process aimed at this purpose in the consciousness of the main actors.

It is important to stress that this does not imply a linear or teleological view of the integration process. On the contrary Albertini claimed that it was possible for the integration process to reach many times a situation in which the foundation of a European state is possible without actually taking such a decision. It is always a matter of political will and it is not possible to take a deterministic stand about the development of the integration process [Albertini 1966-1999b: 66. Thus Albertini’s conceptualisation of the integration process is still radically different from, and critic of, neo-functionalism: see Albertini 1968-1999a: 261-262; 1985-1999a: 273-275; and 1986-1999a: 305. This issue will be discussed during the examination of the concept of “European occasional leadership”].

3.2. The elements of the process: unification, integration and construction

As Burgess recalls, “integration” is a vague concept on which scholars have discussed for a long time [Burgess 2000: 37; Puchala 1972]. Indeed different theories attribute more relevance to institution-building, functional scope, substantive bargains, etc. In order to conceptualise an ideal type of the integration process Albertini tried to identify its essential elements. He proposed to distinguish, for analytical purposes, the concepts of unification, integration and construction, to describe different fundamental aspects of the process [the following account is based on Albertini 1985-1999a: especially 275-276; and Albertini 1986-1999a: 290-292, but the distinction was developed much earlier and was already sketched in Albertini 1963-1999a: especially 66-71].

He defined “unification” as the specifically political process of overcoming exclusive national sovereignty and of pooling or transferring it to the European level, over a limited number of issues. This is the most general concept, useful to grasp the long-term significance

of what is generically called the European integration process. The concept of “unification” comprises both the gradualist phase of the integration process and the possible eventual final decision to constitute a European state. While he normatively opts for a federal Europe, Albertini’s definition of “unification” may refer to any process of pooling or transferring national sovereignty to the European level.

Albertini employs “integration” with reference to the scope and issue-areas involved in the process, or more precisely with the competences and powers attributed to the European level on given issue-areas, that historically consisted in the gradualist process of economic integration along neo-functional lines. This term was chosen because its semantic connotation recalled somewhat technocracy.

Finally, “construction” identifies the process of institution-building at European level, which can be assessed by constitutionalist - or federalist – criteria. Its semantic connotation recalls the voluntary element, the political will necessary to build or construct something.

This distinction conceptualises different aspects of the process that one single term could not properly recall. While “unification” indicates the political character and significance of the process, “integration” allows to see an historical process focused on economics, and “construction” points out the voluntary element, the political will, needed to push the process ahead, together with the institutional aspect which is at the core of the “unification” process [a useful discussion of the concept of “construction” appears already in Albertini 1961-1999b: 97-103]. These elements were somewhat all recognised during the first wave of theoretical revision of neo-functionalism, but Albertini’s terminology allows to see them more clearly, and to investigate specifically their relationships.

Some degree of “integration” is necessary for “construction” to occur and thus for the “unification” process to advance [Albertini 1985-1999a and 1986-1999a]. However, the strength and capacity of the institutional system limits and constrains the possibility for economic “integration” as well [Albertini 1985-1999a: 276-279]¹⁴. This was another way of conceptualising the insight proposed by Pinder with the distinction between positive and negative integration with reference to the institutional framework necessary to support them

¹⁴ For example he argues that the completion of the single market was made possible by the introduction of qualified majority vote within the Council. And even if often deliberation were taken by unanimity, the possibility to take them by majority provided an essential pressure on reluctant states to accept a compromise. This claim has also recently been made by the Commissioner Mario Monti, see the report of his speech in *Il Corriere della Sera*, 12/3/2000 and *La Repubblica* 12/3/2000. Many other authors explain the institutional changes introduced by the Single European Act (SEA) - and especially the possibility to decide by qualified majority – by the need to produce the legislation required by the Single Market project [see for example Moravcsik 1991, pp. 32, 40-42; and 1998, ch. 5, pp. 314-378]. This would confirm that it was considered impossible to reach that level of economic integration without the previous strengthening of the institutional system capability and efficiency [a different view about the role of institutions is argued in Stavridis 1997].

[1968]. For this reason Albertini claimed that the crucial factor to assess the level of the “unification” process is the level of “construction”, or of the institution-building process, as different institutional frameworks and the related decision-making procedures allow for different decisions and actions to be taken¹⁵. However, he recognises that national governments can agree to strengthen the European institutions only in order to achieve some political objectives, that is to obtain certain European policies needed to solve a common problem. Integration and construction are thus strictly linked in a dynamic fashion. A given integrative goal, may require certain advancements in the construction. If the latter are not agreed upon, the goal will not be reached, the problem will not be solved, and the issue will come again on the agenda. The tension or contradiction between the levels of integration and construction can thus produce an internal dynamics in the unification process. Therefore, He believed all three terms refer to essential elements of the process and have a useful analytical and descriptive value.

Albertini considered the institutional framework in broad terms, comprising institutions, procedures and powers, which could be different according to the competence. He also realised that it depends on decisions and compromises by the states, as well as the procedure by which they are made, thus acknowledging the intergovernmental character of most of the crucial decisions about European integration [Albertini 1965-1999a: 242].

This view is not opposed to liberal intergovernmentalism in relation to the final role of intergovernmental bargain, but only about the relative importance of the institutional framework. Moravcsik dismisses federalist influence as a major one, because it did not matter on substantive distributional issues but only on institutions: “Only in pure areas of institutional reform – the formation of the European Council and direct elections to the Parliament – do we see consistent attention to geopolitical interests and ideology” [1998: 240; also 139, 478, 489]. And he suggests that “Government also treated transfers of sovereignty to international institutions as separate from – and generally subordinate to – substantive agreements” [1998: 499]. But this claim stands only because Moravcsik’s analysis starts with the EEC. However, integration began with the ECSC, that was negotiated on the basis of the prior disposal to transfer of sovereignty to a supranational High Authority, and this prevented Britain from taking part in the negotiations and then in the ECSC. Moravcsik turns thing around claiming that the fact that such a condition was not imposed on the negotiation for the EEC, shows its essentially economic aspect [1998: 142]. What is extraordinary, and needs to

¹⁵ However it is possible to maintain that the “construction” has remained within the “integration”, in two senses. On the one hand it produced an institutional system based on the coexistence of intergovernmental and supranational elements, and on the other hand this was applied essentially to economic issues.

be explained, in the history of international cooperation is precisely the precondition imposed at the start of the process. And its lasting influence is clear by the fact that the EEC institutional framework was basically modelled on the ECSC.

It is precisely its institutional framework which made European integration so special, as Moravcsik occasionally concedes referring to the birth of the EEC: “This framework was embedded in a set of quasi-constitutional institutions unique among international organizations” [1998: 86]. Still he does not draw any significant theoretical consequence and considers European integration as just an example of international economic cooperation among others, including EFTA [1998: 494 and following]. But the main question should be why the EEC-EC-EU has been so successful compared to EFTA and other international economic organizations. And the answer cannot but consider the influence of its peculiar institutional framework. A main difference between the federalist theory and liberal intergovernmentalism is thus in the assessment of the importance of the institutional framework. Albertini recognises that construction is functional to integration, as Moravcsik claims. But he also realises that the level, and thus the success, of integration depends on the institutional construction. Thus the federalist framework theory is more complex and precise as it recognises both aspects of the relationship between construction and integration.

3.3. The dynamics of the process

The definition of the essential elements of the integration process left still some major questions unanswered, e.g. why the integration process had started in the first place, and why the old cooperation formulas were not employed? In other words, what were the general conditions which allowed for the start and the development of the qualitatively new integration process? Having distinguished first cooperation and integration in general, and then the specific concepts of “unification”, “integration” and “construction”, and having analysed their relationship Albertini’s tried to define the dynamics of the process.

He claimed that the “unification” process was based on a simple dynamic: the confrontation between the elements of unity and division [Albertini 1965-1999a: 241-243]. He was building on Spinelli’s claim that the political division concerning European integration is between federalist and nationalist, unity and division, and not the traditional left-right distinction [Spinelli and Rossi 1941-1998: 8]. William Wallace suggests that “the European Community is a constitutional system which has some states attributes, but which most – or

all – of its constituent governments do not wish to develop into a state, even while expecting it to deliver outcomes which are hard to envisage outside the framework of an entity which we would recognize as a (federal) state” [1994: 15]. This paradox is the dynamics of the process: the need of political union to solve common problems with the political unwillingness of national governments to transfer sovereignty to the European level. The force towards unity was also the general condition for the start of the integration process: the long-term historical crisis of the nation-state. Albertini discussed specifically three aspects and expressions of the crisis of the nation-state.

First, with the Second World War the European nation states lost much of their power and role in the international scene. The emergence of the US and the USSR as the two superpowers was considered by Albertini as a consequence of the industrial mode of production¹⁶, which required large economic and political units to exploit the economies of scale allowed by the level of technology acquired [Albertini 1966-1999b: 62-63]. The European nation states were just too small to do the same, and this explained the pressure towards economic cooperation and then integration after the war¹⁷. Therefore the first manifestation of the nation-state crisis is its inability to control the economic process satisfactorily [Albertini 1961-1999a: 224-225]. This explains the drive towards economic integration.

Second, the appearance of the two superpowers and of the Cold War produced a decline of national sovereignty. The European nation states foreign policy depended on the wishes of the Superpowers. They were not even free to fight a war between themselves anymore [Albertini 1966-1999b: 62]. They lost control of their own defence, which rested ultimately on the US and USSR foreign policies and on nuclear deterrence [Albertini 1961-1999a: 225]. This was a particularly important aspect as the defence of the territory and of the

¹⁶ Albertini used the concept of “mode of production” in a non Marxist fashion and within a non Marxist theoretical framework. This is clear in his writing, although he never wrote a proper theoretical discussion of the concept itself [a brief discussion can be found in Albertini 1965a-1999a: especially 109-111; and 1976. A more detailed analysis of the concept is now offered by Montani 1999: 47-98; and Castaldi 2002: ch. 3].

¹⁷ Such views had been expressed also much earlier within the federalist literature in Italy and especially in the UK [see Seeley 1871-1989 and 1895-1911: especially 18-19, 349-350; Agnelli and Cabiati 1918; Einaudi 1918a-1986, 1918b-1986, 1945-1986, 1948a-1986, 1948b-1986, 1956; Robbins 1937, 1941, 1952, 1971, 1985; Spinelli and Rossi 1941-1998, Spinelli 1944-1991, 1945-1991, 1947-1991, 1948-1991, 1958-1991, 1959a-1991, 1959b-1991, 1961-1991, 1967-1991; Toynbee 1948]. Albertini federalist’ school paid great attention to this literature [see Pistone (ed) 1975; Malandrino (ed.) 1993; Pistone and Malandrino (ed.) 1999] and published yearly in The Federalist a section on “Federalism in the history of thought” where essays from these great authors were proposed, and also a book series called “The Federalist Library” in which many of these authors’ essays were printed or reprinted in Italian. Although based on a very different theoretical framework and inspiring different conclusions about European integration, the impossibility to have a successfully economic reconstruction at national level, and therefore the economic reasons behind the integration process are extensively discussed in Milward 1992.

citizens has been at the core of the concept of the nation state and of national sovereignty in the past [Albertini 1965-1999a: 237]¹⁸.

Third, the decline of national sovereignty, and particularly the impossibility for the European states to wage war against each other, had produced a European unity *de facto*. This international distribution of power made European integration possible, and indeed the only viable way to control the economic process and arrange the possible controversies between European states. But this unity *de facto* was politically weak. It did not provide a framework for normal political action, i.e. there were no European elections to win in order to join a European government. And even after the direct election of the EP, up to now the results of the European election have not been the crucial determinant for the composition and policies of a European government, if the Commission can be considered as the embryo of such a government. Therefore there is not a European political class and a European will and responsibility, and it is not possible to mobilise a European consensus¹⁹. A European sovereignty had not been created; the nation states were still sovereign, but their sovereignty was declining, because they could not control the economic process nor their own defence [Albertini 1966-1999b: 62]²⁰. The need to solve common problems together, given the crisis of nation-states, pushes towards the advancement of the unification process [Albertini 1965-1999a: 236-237].

This analysis of the deep causes of the process may seem normatively connotated, but it just expresses more clearly the insight of Milward's famous title *The European Rescue of the Nation State*. Milward does not clarify from which threats the states needed to be rescued, nor how European integration saved them [on this issue see also Burgess 2000: 62-64], while Albertini offered an answer, indicating the threats, the inability to solve certain problems, and the way integration could be perceived as rescuing the member states rather than abolishing

¹⁸ The recognition of these two aspects of the crisis of the European nation-states derived from the use of a revised version of the analytical categories developed by historical materialism and political realism, or more precisely, the German school of *raison d'état*, which Albertini and other Italian federalists studied in some depth [see Pistone 1969, 1970, 1973, 2001; Rossolillo 1972; Levi 1975; Castaldi 2002: ch. 2].

¹⁹ From this analysis Albertini drew the normative conclusion that only with the establishment of a European government will it be possible to overcome these problems [Albertini 1961-1999a: 225-226].

²⁰ This analysis is not accurate today. With the establishment of the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Euro, a European monetary sovereignty has been established. It is questionable if this will require the establishment of a European government to deal with economic affairs or if the Stability and Growth Pact will be sufficient to sustain the monetary union [see Issing 1996, Montani 1997, and Portillo 1998]. The issue of multi-tiers and multi-speed integration would also need to be discussed in this context as only 12 of the 15 Member states take full part in the Monetary Union. The current discussion about the modification of the Stability and Growth Pact shows the difficulty of having a single market, a single currency and 12, or 25, national economic policies, simply coordinated by the Pact. The need of a European economic policy managed by a European federal government to complement the ECB is suggested by bankers themselves [Padoa Schioppa T. c2004].

them. Integration is not a zero-sum game. The success of the process would help the member states just as it can strengthen the European supranational institutions [Burgess 2000: 66-67].

The element of division in Europe is the absolute sovereignty of the nation-state [Albertini 1959-1999b: 377-380]. This allows the political conduct of the European citizens to remain within the limits of normal national politics, which is based on the pursuit of national power and does not deal with the integration process itself. Therefore the political division in national election is not between unity and division but between left and right. The creation of a new level of government – even the gradual creation of the institutional framework to ensure such a government – is an institutional revolution, which is outside the scope of normal politics. Those who fight to gain national power cannot also be thinking about the way to overcome that power. Therefore the strength of the force of division is the force of the nation-state itself. Given the crisis of the nation-state, which is a general condition for the integration process, this strength is declining, but still predominant [Albertini 1965-1999a: 237-241].

This predominance of the force of division characterises the process. On the one hand there is the crisis of the nation-state. This manifests itself in the need to solve common problems together, i.e. with the inability of each single nation-state to solve certain problems alone. On the other hand national governments try to preserve their sovereignty. This means that at the same time there is an institutional division together with the need to solve common problems jointly. The solution is to take the relevant decisions within a European framework, but to leave the decision-making power to the national governments [a similar conclusion is reached by Peterson 1995: 72]. Therefore the attempts to solve a common problem manifest themselves in the transfer of competence in relation to a given issue from the national level to the European integration process and not to a European government. This transfer takes the form of an advancement of the level of “integration” and/or “construction”.

Although Albertini did not use the following terminology, I believe he was trying to account for the difference between the transfer and the pooling of sovereignty. The latter implies a common management of the competence, while the former refer to a transfer of power to an autonomous institutional centre – which has always been the federalist goal, and which was not taking place at that time. This distinction may be exemplified with the pooling of economic sovereignty throughout the integration process, and the transfer of monetary sovereignty occurred with the creation of the Euro.

Albertini emphasised that the transfer of competence is directed towards an institutional framework composed by national governments and special and transitional

European institutions. The latter concur in the definition of the European institutional framework and distinguish European integration from simple cooperation. But the European institutions are part of “construction”, within the unification process, and therefore they change during the process. This is why it is more accurate to describe the transfer of competence not to the EC, or the EU - which refer to specific and transitional institutional frameworks, which changed features and occasionally even name - but to the “unification” process itself [Albertini 1965-1999a: 241-242]. This insight follows from the recognition of the different aspects of the unification process. Integration and construction develop together, and thus the institutional framework must be considered in its development, rather than as a data.

This point is extremely important, as it accounts for the continuous institutional development and change of the EEC-EC-EU. After each and every Treaty a great deal of scholarly attention is devoted to the examination of the new competences and institutional features, and often some tentative conclusions about European integration are reached on this basis. This brought some authors to change opinion several times on the dynamics of the process on the basis of the latest Treaty, or to maintain the same view notwithstanding the changes made by each new Treaty²¹. Albertini includes institutional change within a theoretical framework, rather than trying to build a new one after each Treaty change.

This point has far-reaching consequences for the theoretical debate about the correctness of the sharp divide between confederation and federation, or more precisely about the old say that between the two *tertium non datur*. From Albertini’s perspective it is clear that his idea makes sense with reference to stable models. Indeed, there can be an almost infinite number of institutional framework which can be located on the continuum between federation and confederation. And so far the EEC-EC-EU was always in between these two models. The issue is if any of the institutional framework within this continuum can be taken as a third model in its own right, or if the very fact that the EEC-EC-EU underwent continuous institutional changes is not the proof that any intermediate stage implies such inherent tensions, and is unable to cope with the tasks assigned to it, that reform is needed. In

²¹ For instance Telò, who generally offers useful commentaries to each Treaty, in 1992 considered Maastricht as the outcome of an essentially functionalist process; in 1993 he called on the socialist parties in Europe to mobilise in favour of a more federalist institutional framework; while in 1998 he noticed a change in the nature of the process in favour of intergovernmentalism and light coordination [see Telò 1992, 1993, and Telò and Magonette 1998]. On the contrary Moravcsik sees confirmation of his liberal intergovernmentalism after each Treaty [see Moravcsik 1991, 1993, 1998].

this case the continuous increase of the federal features of the EEC-EC-EU²² would show the persistent value of the *tertium non datur* concept.

All transfer of competence changes the situation of power as some elements of social life pass from the sphere of division to the one of unity, i.e. from discrete states to the EU. By definition the transfer will concern only those problems that the nation-states cannot solve alone, otherwise the member states would not accept it. Therefore the transfer should improve the situation, and this may push towards new transfers to the “unification” process. The similarity of this idea with a weak form of spill-over is clear. But Albertini claims that each step does require a political decision, and thus a political struggle, and excludes any deterministic path towards strengthened integration.

At the same time Albertini claimed that each transfer of competences or powers implies that decisions previously taken democratically at national level, are then taken within a non democratic European framework. The essence of democracy is the link between citizenship, elections and struggle for power, parliament and government, which characterise the democratic state. But the integration process may only produce the conditions to create a European state and not the creation of the state itself, which requires a constituent decision. Therefore some of these elements will always be missing in the European framework. Hence the request for European democracy can be used to support innovative reform of the institutions. Although he did not use the expression, Albertini was actually describing what is usually called the “democratic deficit” and the mechanism that produces it [Albertini 1965-1999a: 242-243, 1966-1999b: 63-64].

Federalist scholars sketched an ideal type of the process, described through the concepts of “unification”, “integration” and “construction”, whose dynamics is determined by the confrontation between the long-term crisis of the nation-state and the predominance of inertia based on the desire and instincts of the nation-states to preserve as much sovereignty

²² Indeed, this increase has not been linear, as the EEC institutional framework was less federal than the ECSC one, and the Luxembourg compromise blocked the application of QMV, still provided for by the Rome Treaties. However, looking at the whole process, it is clear that the role of the ECJ, the direct election of the EP, the continuous increase of its powers, the greater accountability of the Commission to the EP, the expanding application of QMV, the creation of the ECB and the Euro show a consistent trend towards federal institutions. Indeed, this developments were accompanied by strengthened intergovernmental cooperation for instance on the second and third pillar at Maastricht. However, it is not surprising, but on the contrary fits the federalist’ theoretical framework, that when new competences are attributed to the European process, at first intergovernmental cooperation prevail and only later on, as this proves insufficient, there is a gradual shift towards the Community method and a more federal institutional framework. It should also be noticed that to a certain extent intergovernmentalism can be part and parcel of federalism. The German Bundesrat is precisely composed by the representatives of the Landers’ governments, and all federation have a chamber which represent their member states. Furthermore, a European federation would be composed by historically consolidated nation states, and would probably be more decentralised than any other federation in the world [see Levi 1997 and 2002].

as possible. The next step will be to provide an explanatory scheme of how this general ideal type can be applied to the study of the integration process, and particularly to what Peterson defines as super-systemic change.

3.4. An explanatory scheme of the “unification” process

Having proposed a general ideal type of the “unification” process, Albertini sketched the specific conditions for decision to be taken in relation to the eventual advancement of the unification process. This attempt produced an explanatory scheme of European integration based on three main elements.

The first one was derived from the general condition of European integration: the crisis of the nation state. This crisis was based on the impossibility of controlling nationally the economic process and the defence of the state, which manifest itself in the existence of supranational problems. Confronted with such a problem the nation states would probably try different measures of cooperation to cope with it. But for them to accept any transfer, and even any pooling, of sovereignty a real crisis on one of those supranational issues was required. Albertini accepts the realist claim that states always try to keep their sovereignty. Therefore the first condition for the advancement of the unification process was the existence of an internal or external problem not solvable at national level and a subsequent crisis, to make the problem felt as urgent and important [Albertini 1965-1999a: 240-243; 1966-1999b: 65-73]. The deeper the crisis was socially perceived as urgent, and the greater the chances that the nation states may accept a pooling or a transfer of sovereignty on that particular issue, thus advancing the “unification” process²³.

Here it is possible to relate Albertini to contemporary social constructivists and realist writers as well. Albertini’s scheme is based on a double concept of crisis. One is the “objective” long-term historical *crisis of the nation state*. This can be seen as an historical process, which provides the basis for the European unification process, and which manifests itself in specific problems that the nation states are unable to solve individually. This recalls Milward’s claim

²³ This also implies that the final decision to create a European government and a European state – which is not part of the ideal type of the integration process - will not be taken unless a deep crisis arises. Another important element in that situation would be the existence of a European *de facto* power centre created during the integration process [see Albertini 1965-1999a: 242-244; 1966-1999b: 68-70]. Eventually, however, the crisis may relate to the Union itself rather than to the members states. As integration deepens and influence citizens’ life to a greater extent a inherent tension in the institutional framework which prevent it from addressing a common problem which is felt to require European solutions, may be perceived as a crisis in itself and trigger such a decision.

that integration is used by the nation states “to cope with certain historically-specific and well-defined economic and political problems” [1984: 493]. Indeed. Federalists do not claim that governments and politicians build Europe because it is a nice ideal, but because it solves real problems. Not only that, but the problem must be socially perceived as important for the government to take integrative steps pooling or sharing – or even transferring in the case of the EMU – their sovereignty to solve it.

Albertini called such a situation a specific *crises of national power* on a determinate issue, caused by and reflecting the general crisis. Here is the difference with Milward’s theory. He admits that there may occasionally be problems better solved by integration, as there may be not. The federalists consider the specific crises of national power as results of the general historical crisis of the nation-states. A new crisis is thus just a matter of time, and their task is to understand on which issue it may arise. The crises of national power acquire special relevance precisely because of their being socially perceived, and federalist activity may contribute to bring about or strengthen such a perception. Furthermore while the crisis may be “objectively” the result of external factors such as different international events, its being socially perceived necessarily refers to the internal European arena. The possibility for both external and internal factors to produce the crisis will be better exemplified in next chapter, but what is crucial now, is that to produce effects a specific crisis of national power needs to be socially perceived [Castaldi 2001].

This concept is crucial as it determines both the timing and the issue on which it will be possible to advance the unification process. This implies a recognition that the federalist personalities and movements may campaign in favour of a European federation and propose a number of ideas and schemes to promote it, but they will have a chance to be heard only if their proposal will be a useful answer to a socially perceived crisis of national powers. When there is no such crisis, the federalists may denounce the long-term crisis of the nation-state, but they will have little or no chances to actually advance the process. In normal times the national governments are perfectly able to manage the situation and to defend their national sovereignty.

Furthermore, a crisis is not enough to advance the process; other conditions are required too. The second element of the explanatory scheme is thus an innovative proposal to solve the problem on which the crisis has arisen. Given the supranational nature of the problem on which the crisis arises, the proposal must provide for a deepening of integration or construction, or for the conditions of that deepening in relation to the issue concerned

[Albertini 1966-1999b: 66-68; 1968-1999a: 265-266]²⁴. Confronted with the failure of the Council of Europe, and the persistent problem of establishing a stable relationship between France and Germany Monnet proposed to create the ECSC to provide for a European management of coal and steel, the basis of the heavy industry of that time, for which France and Germany had fought several wars. This is an example of the kind of innovative ideas. Next paragraph will analyse in more details the different innovative proposals at the basis of the different steps of the unification process.

The third element is a *European occasional leadership* [Albertini 1973-1999b: 185-193; and for an historical account Albertini 1979-1999b: 257-260]. Albertini is well aware that single individual innovators or pro-European movements do not generally have the power to put an issue into the official agenda of the national governments, nor can they appeal successfully to the public opinion. A national political leader or a national or European institution is needed to take up the proposal and put it into the agenda and support it. At the same time Albertini claims that no national political leader will risk his career because of his pro-European attitude. The European leadership is thus “occasional” precisely because any national leader may provide it only if the innovative proposal really solves the current crisis. It is the solution of the crisis, and therefore the strengthening of his own political role and position, that interest a national political leader, not necessarily the building of a federal Europe.

The idea of the “occasional nature” of the leadership provides the theoretical link between the crisis and the European leadership. It explains why a European non-occasional leadership does not exist, why there is no major national leader who devotes his political action to the creation of a European state as an answer to the crisis of the nation state. Given this “occasional nature” a crisis is needed for a national leader to provide a “European occasional leadership” and support an integrative proposal. This also makes the federalist analysis of national leaders who did promote certain steps, quite similar to authors such as Milward or Moravcsik, who consistently claim that national leaders promoted European integration only when this served their national interest [Milward 1992: 318-344; and Moravcsik 1998]. Indeed, some leaders may have also had a personal inclination towards nationalism or federalism, but basically any government has to pursue the national interest if it wants to stay in power. This also explains why national leaders who have been crucial in making certain steps in the “unification” process at certain times, have taken different stands at other times.

²⁴ This element also recalls the contemporary social constructivist claim about the determinant role of ideas in the integration process. It must be stressed that not all problem and crisis have a supranational character. But only the supranational one will require an integrative solution. Therefore they are the only relevant ones in an attempt to explain the integration process.

A fourth element may be added to the scheme: the existence of these conditions throughout the period in which a decision is taken and ratified. Changes in the national political situations may have a deep impact on the European unification process, especially if they undermine the power of a European occasional leadership. The changes of the French governments and of their attitudes towards the European Defence Community Treaty is just one example [Albertini 1973-1999b: 188, 195]. This is an important element for the result of an initiative proposal, although it is not relevant in the conceptualisation of the conditions for the possibility of the advancement of the process. The specific decision - and eventually ratification if needed – which advance the “unification” process, ultimately always depend on the political will and support. Therefore it may not be reached even when all conditions are in place if the European innovators and the European occasional leadership are unable to create a strong coalition to support the decision.

3.5. The actors

Albertini’s explanatory scheme implies an unusual and flexible identification of the crucial actors in the “unification” process. Different actors may be relevant at different stages of the process and during the various phases that may bring a decision. For the time being the analysis of the relevant actors in the emergence of the crisis of national power and in the creation of the consciousness of that crisis will be set aside, but will be discussed in the application of the scheme.

The first issue to discuss is therefore the identification of the potential innovators. Albertini claims that national politicians cannot propose an innovative idea to advance the integration process, for three reasons. First, they are occupied in the fight for the national power. Second, if they have the national power, they do not want to give it away. Third, they are used to try to solve any problem with the power at their disposal, which is the national power. Therefore the innovative proposal can only come from somebody whose main concern is not with national politics, but with European integration itself [Albertini 1961-1999a: 227-228]²⁵.

Albertini thinks about people such as Monnet and Spinelli and in general to the pro-European and federalist movements [Albertini 1959-1999b, 1966-1999b, 1976-1999b, 1977a,

²⁵ At this point I am discussing the relevant actors in the elaboration of the initial innovative proposal to solve a crisis of national power. This refers to the second element of Albertini’s scheme. It should not be confused with the third element: the “European occasional leadership”, which is provided by a very different range of actors.

and 1979-1999b. A detailed historical account of the role of the pro-European movements in the process is offered by Levi and Pistone (eds.) 1973; Pistone (ed.) 1975, 1991, (ed.) 1992, (ed.) 1996; Pistone and Malandrino (eds.) 1999; Paolini 1988, 1989, 1994, 1996; Levi 1979, 1990; Morelli 1990; Malandrino (ed.) 1993, Landuyt and Preda (ed.) 2000, Pasquinucci 2000; Preda and Rognoni Vercelli (eds.) 2001, and (eds.) 2004; Caraffini 2002]. Their role is precisely to provide the innovative ideas which may solve a specific urgent crisis on supranational issue by advancing the unification process [Albertini 1969-1999b: 171; and 1989-1999b: 425]. They can make such innovative proposals precisely because they are the only ones to blame the crisis of the nation-state for the failure to solve the problem at national level²⁶. Therefore the innovators must be autonomous from national politics [Albertini 1955a-1999b, 1955b-1999b]. Participation in national politics implies to be in government or in opposition and to have a confrontation rather than a dialogue with your political opponents. Any decision about Europe requires the agreement of many national governments that may be led by leaders and parties of different colours. Only a political movement that does not take part in national politics can dialogue with all parties and try to build the supranational and cross-party coalition needed to take any decision about the unification process²⁷. Accordingly, the federalists' main task should be to develop these innovative ideas - given that national politicians will usually prefer first to try simple intergovernmental cooperation – and to gather some initial support for them to be considered.

However, although plausible, this argument is not necessary to the federalist framework theory. The essential element is the recognition of the need of an innovative proposal to advance the process. But it is not necessary to assume that innovative ideas only

²⁶ In order to make an innovative proposal to advance the process and to create a political coalition to support it, there is the need to think about the “unification” process as the political priority: this is to take the division between federalism and nationalism, or unity and division as the essential political distinction. In this sense the pro-European movements are the political class of the “unification” process. And Albertini proposes to call them “organised Europeanists”. Their action goes in two directions. On the one hand they try to identify the innovative proposals to advance the process that may be taken up and accepted by the national governments. To this end they try to link it to the most urgent problem of the time – the crisis. And they will have more chances to be heard when the crisis is acute and socially perceived. On the other hand they try to create a coalition to support the innovative ideas. Albertini identifies two types of people that are of particular interest. On the one hand “organizable Europeanists” are national politicians in favour of the unification process - although they do not accept its priority and do not think and act without an input from the pro-European organisations - and those who have left national politics because they recognise the crisis of the nation-state but have not chosen yet to get involved with the “organised Europeanists”. On the other hand there are “diffuse Europeanists”: the member of the public with a generic positive attitude towards European integration - this may sound strange in Britain where public opinion has always been very sceptical about European integration, but in Italy for instance public opinion has always been enthusiastically in favour of European integration. These “diffuse Europeanists” are the popular strength to be mobilised in the political struggle for the creation of a European state by the “organised Europeanists” [the first description of these concepts without this specific terminology is in Albertini 1959-1999b, and this terminological proposal in Albertini 1965-1999a: 243-244; and 1966-1999b: 72-73].

²⁷ Therefore the Union of European Federalists and its national sections do not take part in national politics and in any election.

come from federalists. As their only political aim is the advancement of the process towards European federation, this is what they try to do. But they may not be successful while other actors may be. Also European institutions or even national governments most concerned by the current crisis may occasionally identify integrative steps to solve it. Thus what is interesting in this scheme is that it identifies as an essential element the innovative idea, but leaves open to the researcher to find out, in different occasions, where the idea came from. It does not attribute any exclusive right on this issue to the federalists, or to the Commission, or to national governments, although it considers more likely that the federalists, and possibly European institutions take the initiative.

A second set of actors can provide a European occasional leadership. This concept bears some similarity with the idea of the role of an entrepreneur in the process. But it is important to distinguish them. In Albertini's scheme there are two levels of entrepreneurship: the innovators, and the "European occasional leadership". The latter can be provided by a number of actors: a national government - or just a Prime Minister or a Minister of Foreign Affairs – a national parliament, the European Commission, and in the latest part of the process the European parliament too. It is for this reason that different theorists and historians have been able to attribute a particular role to some political leaders such as Schuman, Spaak, Adenauer, De Gasperi, Delors, Mitterrand, Kohl and others in the advancement of European unification. The concept of "European occasional leadership" tries to include this kind of figure by indicating their role in the process²⁸. At the same time it takes into account also the role of national and European institutions which may not be easily identified with one single person, and which have been often overlooked before the emergence of the new institutionalist scholarship.

There is no need to attribute the actions of national leaders in favour of European integration to federalist ideology. At the same time it must then be recognised that the very fact that European integration – which is different from cooperation and implies some transfer or pooling of sovereignty - was in the national interests, shows that the national sovereignty was declining, and that the nation-states were unable to solve certain problems alone: this, and nothing else, is the crisis of the nation-state. Milward's book very title in fact undermines most of his argument. Milward aggressively tries to confute that federalist ideas and personalities had any impact on the process. And his main thesis is that European integration was made in the national interest, and that the EEC-EC-EU was made by the

²⁸ From a radically different theoretical and political perspective Milward proposes a similar conclusion in relation to the occasional involvement in the integration process of those he calls "European Saints" [Milward 1992: 318-344].

nation-states, for the nation-states, and controlled by the nation-states. Still the very idea of “The European rescue of the nation-state” indicates that the nation-state needed to be rescued. Milward is right to say that European integration was in the national interests, and that it was made by the nation states. But this only shows that the nation-state absolute sovereignty was not viable anymore. The recognition of the crisis of the nation-state is actually implicit in all his argument. Furthermore, it is not completely true that the EEC-EC-EU has always been controlled by the nation-states. Also other actors were involved in the process, and his analysis implies a structural under-estimation of the European institution, and not just of the Commission, but also of the EP and especially of ECJ.

Another important aspect of the concept of European occasional leadership is that it provides an important theoretical link between different perspectives about the actors in the integration process. With the concept of the innovators Albertini put into the picture what he called the political class of the “unification” process, which is generally not taken into account in other macro-theories. But Albertini assigns only an initial role to this kind of actors. These actors very rarely influence directly any decision. For their proposal to enter the political agenda a “European occasional leadership” is needed. This concept links the sphere of ideas with the one of power. It provides a bridge between the social constructivist emphasis on the role of ideas, and the realist and intergovernmentalist stress of the role of power, and therefore of national governments.

Once an innovative idea has been brought into the political agenda by a “European occasional leadership” the negotiations to reach an agreement on the issue will start. In this latter phase the main actors are the national governments. At this stage the European institutions may also play a role, but it is unlikely that it will be a major one. The innovative idea will require an advancement of the level of “integration” and/or “construction”. And this is the consequence of a political decision, often an amendment of the Treaty, which requires a unanimous intergovernmental agreement and the ratification by the national parliaments. Therefore this final stage of the super-systemic decision-making process is well explained by a theory such as liberal intergovernmentalism [see especially Moravcsik 1991 and 1998].

This also implies that the innovative idea sets what Moravcsik calls the “core bargain”, while the details and the concessions at the margins, required for an agreement to be made are obviously not included. For this reason Moravcsik is right in his claim that supranational entrepreneurs have no wider access to crucial information in the intergovernmental decision-making process, where the intensity of national preferences set the bargaining positions. Indeed, since the governments’ aim is not to advance integration but to solve the crisis, they

generally meet knowing already what the core bargain will have to look like in order to solve it. But they have to make it in such a way that nobody loses out, in order to be accepted and ratified. His theory is very fit in explaining this phase of the process. But the core bargain was identified before the intergovernmental phase started, and the timing and the issue concerned relate to the crisis and cannot be explained only through liberal intergovernmentalism.

CHAPTER 4. APPLYING THE THEORY

4.1 A historical account

It is probably easier to understand the federalist framework theory by also taking into account the historical view of the process developed by the federalists²⁹. The application of his explanatory scheme to the integration process will help to assess its usefulness and its ability to shed new light on some aspects of the process. A useful example is the SEA, which has been the object of a great deal of academic reflection, and will be considered in more details than other events.

Albertini suggests that after the Second World War the main problem in Europe was the containment of Soviet expansion. The only possible answer was an American defence of Europe. This produced the coincidence between Atlantism and Europeism and brought the creation of the Council of Europe as a symbol of European unity, but without any real power [Albertini 1965-1999a: 245-247].

However a European contribution was needed and required first of all the stable location of Germany in the western side. This implied a stabilisation of the Franco-German relationship. The problem for France became to create such a link with Germany as to make war impossible between the two in the future. Monnet's proposal of the ECSC aimed precisely at neutralising the German heavy industry of coal and steel, for the control of which France and Germany had fought in the past. And Schumann was ready to take it up and propose it officially. The following intergovernmental negotiations brought the ECSC³⁰.

Following the start of the Korean war the USA were afraid that a similar scenario would repeat itself in Germany, and thus asked for a German contribution to the defence of

²⁹ Once again Albertini never wrote a systematic book with a historical account of the integration process, and his view have to be reconstructed from a number of articles. However, some Italian scholars analyse the process having in mind Albertini's theory [Levi 1979 and Pistone 1999], while other considered the process from a federalist perspective, but without a deep knowledge of Albertini's writings [Burgess 1989 and 2000; and Pinder 1998. In the following account more emphasis will be devoted to the evidence about the role of the innovators and the occasional leadership, which are generally not considered in other theories. The role of the national governments in the negotiations that brought to each single decision is generally recognised and does not need to be restated here.

³⁰ For Monnet this was the first step towards a federal Europe, as stated in the Schumann declaration. Even if the single decision which open a new stage of the process are not linked one to the other in the mind of any national government, they may be linked in the mind of the innovators who propose them. The significance of Albertini's constitutional gradualism may be recognised only within this perspective [see Montani 1998].

Europe. The possibility of a new German army raised French fears once again³¹. Monnet used this new crisis to propose a European Defence Community [Monnet 1976: 393-397 and 400-408; and also Fursdon 1980: especially ch. 3]. Pleven provided the “European occasional leadership” by putting the proposal into the agenda and calling an intergovernmental conference to discuss it. At this point Spinelli was able to point out the contradiction of having a European army without a European government. His proposal of a political union to be made through a European constituent procedure was the basis of a new “European occasional leadership” provided by De Gasperi³². The Italian government obtained an agreement to link the project of a European Political Community (EPC) to the EDC Treaty through the art. 38, which gave to the Parliamentary Assembly of the EDC the task to write a Treaty-Constitution for the EPC. Afterwards De Gasperi managed to start the work of the Ad Hoc Assembly – based on the enlarged ECSC Assembly - without waiting the ratification of the EDC Treaty. It was an attempt to start a European constituent procedure³³. However the changes in French national politics – also due to the changing international situation, especially in Algeria – brought to an end the initial occasional leadership and this eventually resulted in the collapse of the EDC Treaty at the French National Assembly [see Lerner and Aron 1957; and Furdson 1980]³⁴.

³¹ While the problem of stabilising the Franco-German relationship can be considered as an internal problem of European integration, this second crisis has a clear link with external developments.

³² Thanks to their role during the war and the resistance both Monnet and Spinelli had access to, and influenced, even the highest institutions and leaders. While Monnet’s influence on the French foreign policy is generally well acknowledged, Spinelli’s is less well-known [see Levi and Pistone 1973; Pistone 1991 and 1992; Melchionni 1996]. Milward claims the federalist did not have much influence, even within the Italian establishment [Milward 1992: 15-17 and 331-333] The opposite view is suggested by Italian scholars mentioned earlier, and by some of the Italian leaders and their families [see Einaudi 1956 and 1986; Catti De Gasperi 1969 and 1979]. It is interesting to point out that while Milward’s account of the birth of the EEC is very detailed and well-documented, he produced very little evidence to sustain his claims in relation to the federalist movements and De Gasperi’s action. A detailed and documented analysis of the history and role of the pro-European organisations is provided by Pistone (ed.) 1992 and 1996. In relation to De Gasperi’s role very detailed accounts, which also reproduce many official documents of the time, are provided in Albertini 1977b; and especially in Preda 1990, 1994, 1996.

³³ There are few books available in English about the history of the EDC Treaty and the EPC project – also because Great Britain was not part of the process at that time. On the contrary the Italian historiography has produced many detailed studies of those events [see Preda 1990, 1994, and 1996; Pistone 1991 and 1992; and also Albertini 1965-1999a: 248-251; 1966-1999b: 66; 197-1999b: 187-195; 1979-1999b: 251; 1985-1999a: 273-276; 1994-1999b: 338-341; and especially Albertini 1977b entirely dedicated to this issue]. Albertini points out that both Spinelli’s and De Gasperi’s initiatives were initially successful because the EDC Treaty provided for the transfer of an essential element of sovereignty to the European level. This is precisely one of the conditions Albertini mentions in his theory of constitutional gradualism. Furthermore in the EDC-EPC projects it is possible to see the combination of gradualism and constitutionalism. Monnet and Pleven initiative started as a new gradualist step in the integration process. Spinelli and De Gasperi realised it was a step which required a political union. Therefore they were able to insert in the process the constitutionalist method through the art. 38 and the Ad Hoc Assembly. This would confirm Albertini’s view that to reach a politica union a European constituent procedure is required.

³⁴ It may be argued that this failure was possible because the crisis on which the EDC proposal was based, was socially perceived as acute, but in reality not very important. The French public was scared of a German rearmament, and this brought to the proposal of the EDC. But at the same time, Europe was defended by the

This phase is important because, although the initiative ultimately failed, it contradicts most other theories, and exemplifies the role of the crisis. Monnet is often considered as a functionalist, favouring a European federation as the ultimate goal, but endorsing integration of technical sectors managed by supranational technocratic institutions. So why after the ECSC, did he propose the EDC, whose core bargain was basically the creation of a European Army? This was the only possible answer to a crisis on military issues. The Korean war brought the American request of German rearmament. The solution could not be related to transports, atomic energy, and similar technical issues. The crisis determines the timing, and its nature determines the sector of the integrative proposal³⁵.

The fate of the occasional leaderships is crucial to the success of the proposal. By the time the EDC Treaty was put to a vote in the French National Assembly, the crisis had vanished and the European occasional leaderships as well. The Korean war had ended, and Stalin had just died, thus fostering hopes for a *détente*. The National Assembly debate shows that many French MPs believed that not ratifying the EDC would also avoid German rearmament, a gross miscalculation indeed [see Lerner and Aron 1957; and Furdson 1980]. The French government had changed several times, and the Gaullists were now in power, while Shuman was not. In Italy De Gasperi was sick and out of the government, and although he spent his last days asking for the ratification of the EDC Treaty, he had not the power anymore to get it done.

The federalist framework identifies the conditions for a decision to be taken. But it does not imply that it will. On the contrary, if those conditions do not last, the decision is not likely to be taken. And even if the conditions last, the occasional leadership may prove not strong enough to gather the consensus needed to get an agreement on the proposal. The federalist scholars thus created a useful and flexible framework of analysis to focus on crucial aspects of the process, but without blinding them in relation to the various actors involved.

Going back to the federalist vision of the process, the economic re-launch of the “unification” process is clearly understood. One of the aspects of the process of the crisis of the nation-state emphasised by Albertini was precisely, its inability to control the economic process. The very fact that a wider market was necessary to exploit the economy of scale permitted by modern technology was crucial in bringing about the Common Market. Thus the

USA and given the international situation there was not a serious risk of a new confrontation and war between France and Germany. The second and third elements of the crisis of the nation-state identified by Albertini may be used to sustain this argument. The crisis was psychologically acute, but it was not based on a serious threat. Therefore it was possible to refuse a European solution of the crisis and allow for a German rearmament.

³⁵ Moravcsik implicitly acknowledges this by using mainly geopolitical argument to account for the EDC failure, to which however he refer only incidentally and does not devote significant attention [Moravcsik 1998: 135-136].

positive experience of the ECSC allowed for the success of the initiative in relation to economic integration, and atomic energy. After the Messina conference, and thanks to Spaak's "occasional leadership", the EEC and Euratom were established in 1957. The federalist dismissed both at that time, but later recognised the value of the EEC as a framework where the unification process could advance.

An analysis of growth rates within market systems of different sizes strengthens this argument, which grounds the EEC in economic interests, but within the framework of the crisis of the nation-state. Since the end of the XIX century the US grew much faster than the European countries, which were still seen as the Great Powers of the time. This gap continued to increase until American growth doubled the average European one. The gap decreased after the creation of the EEC in 1957, but only for its member states, which had an almost double growth rate than Great Britain in the period 1950-1973 [for a detailed analysis of this problem see Cipolla 1962-1965: especially 62-72; and Milward 1992: 396]. From an economic perspective this also explains the attractiveness of the EEC, compared for example with EFTA, and its tendency towards enlargement.

At the same time this also shows the importance of the EEC institutional framework, and the difference between the Common Market and a simple free trade area. Milward and Moravcsik's views of this phase show the economic motives in favour of the EEC. However, they overlook the always crucial institutional aspect, and thus underestimate the political implication of the EEC, and consider a free trade area an almost equally plausible solution. If it is true that integration is linked to the level of construction, the institutional aspect is crucial to the success of integration. Thus Moravcsik's claim that "supranational influence, mostly from national groups of federalists, was limited to the EC's institutional form" [1998: 139] acquires its proper significance. Indeed, federalists' influence can only be directed towards the institutional aspects, and not to the distributive outcomes of specific bargains. But what was most significant of the EEC was precisely its institutional form. This allowed for its success, compared to EFTA, and for its successive evolution.

Both Milward and Moravcsik suggest that Britain was wrong – or would have been wrong – not to participate on political ground as the EEC was an economic and not a political enterprise. This assessment poses several theoretical problems especially for liberal intergovernmentalism. A crucial claim of liberal intergovernmentalism is that supranational entrepreneurs do not have superior ability or knowledge than national governments, which disposed of accurate information and assessments of their own and their partners preferences, and of the consequences of the different possible decisions [Moravcsik 1998: especially 60-67].

If this was the case, how is it possible that the British government misunderstood the fundamental aspects of the birth of the EEC? To save his theory Moravcsik is forced to claim that British calculations were correct, that the UK had good economic reasons to stay out, and also to hope that the negotiations to bring about the EEC would fail in the first place [Moravcsik 1998: 122-135]. However, the gap in the growth rate of Britain and the EEC members prove him wrong.

Moravcsik takes this position notwithstanding overwhelming contrary evidence that he dismisses or misinterprets:

The MAC's [Mutual Aid Committee] analysis focused primarily on commercial considerations, calculating the gains and losses by sector. The long-term interests of Britain, the MAC concluded, clearly lay in closer ties to Europe, with its expanding market for industrial goods, but in the short-term the country faced adjustments costs imposed by eliminating preferences on Commonwealth trade and the lowering of trade barriers with Europe. The MAC report concluded: "(i) membership would weaken the United Kingdom's economic and consequently political relationship with the Commonwealth and the Colonies; (ii) the United Kingdom's economic and political interests were worldwide and a European Common Market would be contrary to the approach of freer trade and payments; (III) participation would in practice lead gradually to further integration, and ultimately perhaps to political federation, which [would not be] acceptable to public opinion in Britain; and (iv) it would involve the removal of protection for British industry against European competition." [Moravcsik 1998: 127].

The conclusion of the report shows that it was not primarily concerned with commercial considerations, just as the debate within the British political class [Moravcsik 1998: 123-124, 128-129]. It is unclear why Moravcsik does not believe the self-criticism of British politicians in charge at that time. They had not any advantage by admitting a decade or more later that they got it completely wrong. Still, Moravcsik claims they were "unlucky that the EC proved more successful than they or anyone else expected" [1998: 123].

The institutional framework of the EEC, although less supranational than the ECSC, was still basically moulded on it. The most significant supranational features were the Commission's initiative powers, the provision in relation to future application of QMV³⁶, the

³⁶ Albertini claimed that economic integration would require a common government and ascribed the success of the EEC to the *de facto* unity which forced the governments to find an agreement when needed [Albertini 1965-1999a: 248-251]. Furthermore, in order to achieve greater independence from the US, De Gaulle attempted to bring foreign policy within the scope of the Community, although trying at the same time to weaken its

possibility for the Parliamentary Assembly to be directly elected, and especially the ECJ's powers [see Weiler 1982 and 1997]. They were to give shape to much of the process later on.

The 1970s are often considered a period of eurosclerosis, but there were two major initiatives and decisions, and the seeds for a third one [a similar analysis is proposed in Burgess 1989, and Pistone 1999, ch. 5]³⁷. The late 1960s and early 1970s see two parallel pro-European initiatives. On the one hand Monnet and his Action Committee proposed the creation of a European provisional government, composed of the head of state and government of the members state, to provide the impetus towards a European political union. This proposal, supported by the French President, brought the creation of the European Council³⁸. On the other hand in 1967 the Italian federalists joined the other European movements in campaign for the direct election of the European Parliament, foreseen in art. 138 of the EEC Treaty [see Albertini 1967-1999b; Majocchi L.V. 1996 and 2000]. In 1969 a law by popular initiative was proposed in Italy for the unilateral direct election of the Italian members of the EEC Parliamentary Assembly [see Albertini 1969-1999b]. The action of the Italian parliament and government, and the “occasional leadership” provided by Giscard D'Estaing helped to bring about the decision to have the first direct election of the European parliament.

It is also worth mentioning that the European economic boom was suddenly brought to an end by Nixon's declaration of the inconvertibility of the Dollar – which *de facto* had functioned as the Common Market currency – and by the following Oil crisis [see Mosconi 1980; Montani 2001: 56-57]. This crisis on the economic and monetary sector - which the federalists had foreseen as recalled earlier - allowed their idea of monetary integration to be taken up. Spinelli, then a European commissioner, immediately proposed a European monetary union to cope with the crisis. On this basis the first official discussion and projects

supranational character. At this point, in 1965 Albertini formulated an interesting and wrong prediction: with the beginning of the third phase of the transitional period of the EEC and the introduction of QMV in the Council, the road for new initiatives towards political union would open up again [Albertini 1965-1999a: 251-254]. Albertini was wrong: the crisis of the “empty chair” brought the Luxembourg compromise and stopped the introduction of QMV, notwithstanding the EEC treaty provisions. However, in the contemporary political and academic debate the introduction of QMV provided by the SEA is considered as a major element in giving new impetus to the integration process up until the creation of the Euro [a comparison between the results of the SEA and what the EC should have become in 1967 according to the Treaty, and without De Gaulle intervention, is offered in Kehoane and Hoffman 1991: 16]. Also Lady Thatcher maintains that if she had known the long term consequences of the SEA on the integration process she would have not accepted it [Thatcher 1993: especially 555-557]. Albertini's prediction was wrong in 1965, but the hypothesis on which it was based seems to have worked twenty years later.

³⁷ The following account is interesting because it is radically different from other theories, and it points out the role and activities of the “innovators” and it links their results to the emergence of a new crisis and of a new “European occasional leadership”.

³⁸ The institution proposed by Monnet was accepted, the proposed aim much less, although the first declarations about the European Union were made in this period [see Monnet 1976: ch. 21].

about monetary integration and eventually union begun³⁹. But the idea and different technical aspects of the project had been developed earlier within the pro-European organisations: Le Federaliste publishes in 1968 the first elaborate proposals about monetary integration, and in 1970 an important public seminar is held in Turin and some of the interventions are also published in Le Federaliste. From 1968 to 1974 the review focused mainly about the possible schemes for monetary integration formulated by many federalist economists and taking into account different aspects of the project [see Jozzo-Mosconi 1968; Albertini 1969; Jozzo and Mosconi 1969; Triffin 1971; Ossola 1971; Albertini 1971].

After the Oil crisis, the project of monetary union seemed stalled, and the federalists tried to revive the Werner Plan and offered a new series of reflections and initiatives with important public seminar held in Pavia, Turin, Paris and Rome in 1976 and 1977 [see Albertini 1973-1999b; Majocchi A. 1974; Montani 1974; Moro 1974; Velo 1974a, 1974b, and 1976; Montani and Velo 1977; the proceedings of the main seminars were published in Thema n.1, 1977; Movimento Europeo and Movimento Federalista Europeo (eds.) 1978.]. They obtained the support of important figures of the economic and political elites, such as Triffin, Werner, Romiti, Maginifico, Colombo, Stammati and other, and finally the proposal of monetary union was then re-launched by Jenkins in a discourse in Florence in 1977 - based on a previous discussion with some federalist economists [later published in Jenkins, Werner, Triffin, Biehl, Montani 1978; on the federalist struggle for monetary union in this period, in the context of the theory of constitutional gradualism proposed by Albertini, see the excellent Majocchi L.V. 2000].

Roy Jenkins provided a “European occasional leadership” in relation to the project of monetary union, and found some support in Giscard d’Estaing and Schmidt. This paved the way to the creation of the European Monetary System. This felt short of the monetary union by 1980, hoped for at the beginning of the decade, but together with the direct election of the EP, constituted a federalist success and was the basis for the 1980s more spectacular developments.

In the short term the most fruitful of these three developments was the direct election of the European Parliament. This gave the Parliament a new democratic legitimacy, and the strength to propose a Draft Treaty on the European Union, thanks to Spinelli’s leadership. Confronted with such a bold project the national governments had to consider again the problem of advancing the integration process. The European parliament’s attempt to have its

³⁹ Once again an external event determines the nature of the problem to be solved and therefore the kind of initiatives about European integration on this crisis and the following initiatives [see Montani 1998].

draft approved by the national parliaments generally failed. But the Italian parliament endorsed the Draft Treaty, and at the Milan Council of 1985 the greatest pro-European public rally ever took place to support the so-called Spinelli Project. All these combined pressures brought the Italian Presidency to call a majority vote to convene an IGC to amend the Rome Treaty [see Andreotti 1986]. It was the first time that a new formal IGC had been called since 1957. It was the first time that QMV was applied within the European Council, notwithstanding the Luxembourg compromise and against the protest of some member states, and particularly of Great Britain. For a few days it was even doubtful if Britain would have taken part in the IGC itself [Moravcsik 1991: 41, and 1998: 363-364]. This clearly shows that the procedure employed was really innovative. The so-called re-launch of European integration which came out of this IGC with the SEA was very much the result of an idea by Spinelli and an occasional leadership provided by the European parliament and then by the Italian parliament and government [see Albertini 1984-1999a; 1985-1999a: 282-286; and Pistone 1999: ch. 6].

Most accounts of the Single European Act provide detailed and convincing explanations of why the IGC produced the particular bargain known as the SEA. What is missing is the explanation of the start of the IGC itself, which was an extraordinary event, and opened the way for a series of reforms. Moravcsik points to the neo-liberal ideological convergence and the national preferences of the most important member states to explain the outcome of the IGC, the neo-liberal project of the Single Market. Still, he considers the negotiations of the SEA an “unexpected success” [Moravcsik 1991: 20]. A similar judgement is expressed by Keohane and Hoffmann, who provide a different explanation for the SEA from Albertini, but based on much the same conceptual elements – Delors leadership during the negotiations, supranational process but intergovernmental final decision - although within a far less clear and developed scheme [see 1991: 3-17]. Moravcsik’s basic explanation is convincing but he structurally undervalues the contribution of the European institutions and particularly of the Commission to the negotiations [a useful complementary view is offered in Sandholtz and Zysman 1989; Burgess 1989 and 2000; and Pistone 1999: ch. 6]. The federalist framework theory, and the following analysis helps in making this success expected, and in explaining how the IGC was convened in the first place.

After the SEA the federalist framework applied to European integration provides a radically different account, compared to neo-functionalism that see a spill-over effect from the single market to the monetary union. In a federalist reading, the fall of communism and the prospects of the German reunification provided a crisis. To inextricably link Germany to

Europe, it was necessary to guarantee a European control over the essence of German sovereignty, the Deutsch Mark. This brought a revival of the project of Monetary Union thanks to the joint occasional leadership provided by Delors, Mitterrand, and Kohl [see Pistone 1999: ch. 7, especially 62, 65, 66, 71]. Once again the federalist view provides a link between an external variable, a consequent crisis felt within the EU, and the subsequent integrative steps. As Moravcsik points out, since Germany was the great loser in the core bargain, she was able to set the rules of the bargains, providing for a European control of the future single currency based on much the same values than the German system: sound fiscal policy and autonomy of the central bank [Moravcsik 1998].

At the same time the insufficiency of the progress towards political union – which was discussed in a discrete IGC – made by the Maastricht Treaty forced the governments to agree on an evolutionary clause providing for its revision in only four years. The subsequent IGC brought the Treaty of Amsterdam, which should have produced decisive steps towards political union and a reform of the institutions to prepare for the EU enlargement. Once again, the failure to reach these goals forced the governments to include the provision that a new reform would be undertaken before the number of the member states reached twenty. In the meantime, on German demand, a Convention representing national governments and parliaments and the European Parliament and Commission was established to draft a Charter of Right. This was endorsed at the Nice meeting of the European Council, but was not recognised legal value. At the same time the Nice Treaty failed to establish a suitable institutional framework for the enlargement, and thus soon afterwards a new Convention was called to draft a European Constitution, which was then agreed upon with some amendments by the following IGC⁴⁰.

This last analysis may be considered as referring to an internal dynamics of European integration. The failure to reach a commonly set goal, forced member states to reconvene, re-discuss the issue and find a new solution. The internal developments of the integration process, and their perceptions by the governments and the public, pushed towards new reforms. At the same time they may be considered as old reforms since they are the institutional means to reach already established goals.

⁴⁰ To be sure the draft Constitution is far from establishing a European federation, but strengthens the link between the EP and the Commission, enlarge the scope for QMV, communitarises further the second and third pillar, establishes a European foreign minister responsible to the Council, but also vice-president of the Commission, provides for a more stable presidency of the Council, and not just for strengthened cooperation in different sectors, but also for structured cooperation on defence – which was forbidden by the Nice treaty – thanks to the initiative of France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg, followin the Iraq war and the European division on this crisis.

This extremely brief sketch offers a necessarily incomplete and fragmentary application of the federalist explanatory scheme of the integration process. However it was useful to point out that it allowed to consider the integration process more as a continuum than as a stop-and-go enterprise, at least in the mind of the innovators which proposed different steps to advance the process. It also helps in linking various stages of the integration process. And through the concept of crisis it explains the timing of the entrance of certain ideas on the agenda and the following decision-making procedure. The SEA case for example shows that this theoretical framework poses some different questions, and therefore provides different answers, from most existing theories. Before discussing the outcome of the IGC the reflection should focus on the calling of an IGC in the first place. In a period of supposed eurosclerosis the call by majority vote of the first IGC since 1957 requires a proper explanation. The link between the action of the pro-European organisations, the first direct election of the European parliament, the Spinelli's Draft Treaty, the Italian parliament support and the call of the IGC is remarkable for two reasons. First, it provides a plausible explanation for the call of the IGC. Second, it allows us to see as a continuum events which started in the late 1960s and which produced a result in the late 1970s and then in the middle of the 1980s.

4.2. A longitudinal application of the federalist theory

The proposed application of the federalist explanatory scheme may be summarised in the following table which focuses on its main theoretical elements. Nor Albertini nor any other federalist authors ever proposed such a table, which is indeed oversimplified, but shows the possibility of applying the scheme to the whole integration process.

Table 4. Application of the federalist explanatory scheme to the integration process.

Date	Problem/crisis	Innovator and idea	Occasional leadership	change/result
1949	Franco-German relationship	Monnet and ECSC	Schuman	ECSC
1950 1951	Korean War and German rearmament EDC	Monnet and EDC Spinelli and Constituent Assembly and EPC	Pleven De Gasperi	EDC Treaty Art. 38 and EPC project
1951-4	Changes in French national politics and government brought to the collapse of the EDC (and EPC).			
1950s	Economic reconstruction and Germany	Mansholt and EEC Monnet and Euratom	Spaak	EEC Euratom
1966	“Empty chair” crisis	De Gaulle	De Gaulle	Stop Qmv introduction Luxembourg compromise
1970	Lack of government	Monnet and European provisional government	Giscard D’estaing	European Council
1970	Democratic deficit	UEF	Giscard D’Estaing	Direct election European Parliament
1971	Dollar inconvertibility	UEF	Werner, Jenkins Giscard D’Estaing, Schmidt	Snake EMS
1980s	Economic failure Direct election of the EP	Spinelli and EP Draft Treaty (1984)	Craxi-Andreotti Milan 1985	IGC
1980s	Economic failure	Delors	Kohl-Mitterrand	SEA
1989	Fall of USSR and German reunification	Delors	Kohl-Mitterrand	Maastricht

This is one possible application of the federalist scheme, aimed at showing the usefulness of the link between crisis, ideas and power as applied to the study of the integration process. This link explains both the timing of some crucial decisions and also the nature of the integrative steps taken. Indeed, it tells very little about the details of the result of the international bargaining. Liberal intergovernmentalism is certainly more effective in relation to this aspect. But it is less effective in explaining why certain decisions were taken at given time.

The European organisations may propose a number of innovative ideas in relation to different issues. But these proposals will be successful only if they are related to the main problem on which a crisis has arisen. Federalist personalities and ideas had an impact only under those conditions, otherwise they were basically ineffective in pushing the process forward. The crisis determines the direction of European integration. This is shown very clearly in Monnet's first two proposals. To stabilise the Franco-German relationship he proposed to manage jointly coal and steel which were the basis of the military industry at that time. But confronted with the American request for a German military contribution to the European defence, Monnet proposed the application of the ECSC scheme to the military field. A military crisis could be exploited and solved only with an integrative proposal on the military field. And this was a strange proposal for a man often considered as a functionalist.

The crisis also provides the link between the innovative idea and the emergence of a "European occasional leadership". Without the crisis no political leader would take up the new integrative proposal. When there is not an important crisis it is unlikely that new integrative proposals will enter the agenda. An integrative proposal will generally be accepted because it may solve the problem, not because it advances integration. The latter is the price to be paid for the solution of the problem¹.

Finally, the crisis links external and internal variables. The crisis needs to be socially perceived within the European countries, but it may be an international crisis, or an internal crisis originated from external events. Albertini would not accept Peterson's view of integration as an answer to external developments. But indeed the table above clearly points out also this possibility. Three events may exemplify this point. The stabilisation of the Franco-German problem is an internal European problem, although linked to the general international situation and these countries participation in the western alliance. Nixon's declaration on the inconvertibility of the dollar is an external one. In other crisis there may be an original external event that produces an internal crisis. For example the Korean War in itself does not require any integrative step. But the following American request for a German

¹ A similar argument about integration as a price is developed in Milward 1992.

military contribution produces a European problem because France is unwilling to accept a German army. It is this last element which constitutes the crisis, but all is linked to previous external events. Here it is not relevant to discuss if this crisis is more internal or external. The point is to show that an internally perceived crisis may be originated by internal or external developments. There may be external events and international crisis with such an impact on Europe to require an integrative answer, such as Nixon's declaration. Still, if they are not enough socially perceived, this may result mainly in talks about monetary union, rather than establishing it.

Finally, it would be possible to apply this scheme also to certain "failures" or step back in the integration process. If a national political leader is strongly against integration he may have the power to produce an internal crisis and to propose a new disintegrative idea to solve the crisis. De Gaulle produced the "empty chair" crisis when confronted with something which he considered a crucial problem and a terrible prospect: the loss of the veto power within the Council at the beginning of the third transitional period in 1967. This was seen as the definitive loss of French national sovereignty on economic issues. Hence he proposed the disintegrative idea not to apply the provision of the Rome Treaty in relation to qualified majority voting within the Council. And he was endowed with the power characteristic of an "occasional leadership" which allowed him to obtain the Luxembourg compromise. It subsequently took the integration process twenty more years to reach the possibility of deciding by qualified majority with the SEA.

In sum, this discussion, whilst brief, demonstrates the applicability of the federalist framework theory to the integration process and points out the theoretical significance of the various elements of the scheme, which Table 3 attempted to synthesise.

CONCLUSIONS

This still fragmentary reconstruction of the main elements of federalist thought about the European integration process shows the potential of the framework theory, which can now be shortly discussed and summarised.

Albertini's works can be a useful reference in relation to the federalist view of European integration, against the complaint about the lack of an "academic school of European federalism and certainly no leading lights to compare with the likes of Karl Deutsch, David Mitrany and Ernst Haas" [Rosamond 2000: 23]. In Italy there is a federalist academic school, on the basis of Albertini's works, although its members have not written in English and so far have probably been more interested in acting on the basis of their understanding, than in spreading their own views.

But what is more interesting is their methodology. Trying to understand in order to act they did not stick to one single methodological school, and could try to use the best-suited approach to different issues. Historical materialism and the concept of mode of production are used to examine long-term historical processes and particularly the crisis of the nation state in relation to its inability to control the economic process. Realism and the concept of *raison d'état* are adopted to explain the member states tendency to retain as much of their own sovereignty as possible notwithstanding the need to solve common problems together. Elements of institutionalism and path-dependence theories can be found in the relevance given to the concept of "construction" and in the theory of constitutional gradualism. The old federalist and constitutionalist view is adopted in relation to the condition for the establishment of a European state, considered as a possible final decision of the "unification" process and conceptualised outside the general ideal type of the process.

A special discussion refers to functionalism. Its gradualism is accepted, although shorn of any technocratic and determinist strand, thus recognising the political aspect of the integration process. The potentially determinant roles of the European institutions and of the national governments, in providing the "European occasional leadership" and in taking the decisions, is thus part and parcel of the framework theory. Therefore the identification of the actors and of the significant elements of the integrative dynamics expressed in the explanatory scheme are very different from neo-functionalism.

Traces of the social constructivist emphasis on the role of ideas and entrepreneurship can be recognised in the concept of the socially perceived crisis of national power, and in the

role assigned to innovators and ideas. The concept of “European occasional leadership” provides the link between ideas and power and a bridge towards intergovernmentalist accounts of the last phase of the decision-making process at super-systemic level. This implies both a recognition of the heuristic value of intergovernmentalism in relation to this last phase, but also a limitation of its capacity to explain the whole process of super-systemic change.

Also Peterson’s attempts to explain super-systemic change as a response to external international developments has a role in the federalist theory as one possible cause of the crisis of national power – which however may also derive from internal developments as table 3 and the following discussion show. Thus the federalist account can incorporate Peterson’s one, by reducing it to one possible cause of the different crises that may require integrative responses. This allows the framework theory to explain the same events that Peterson’s view can explain, but also to explain many others in which there is not a strong connection between external variables and European integration.

Furthermore, and notwithstanding the clear normative preferences of the authors who developed it, this explanatory scheme is open-ended. It has some predictive value only in relation to the conditions of possibility of outcomes. Unlike realism, which assumes the impossibility of creating a European state because the member states will always maintain their sovereignty, and which can be criticised for its circularity [Rosamond 2000: 151-155]. Furthermore is difficult to explain satisfactorily the creation of a European monetary sovereignty from a realist and an intergovernmentalist perspective). It is also different from the first neo-functional theory, which included as the inevitable result of the integration process a new political community [Haas, 1958-1968: 14], although later on many neo-functional scholars, including Haas himself, have criticised this original claim.

However, the federalist theory cannot be considered just a patchwork of elements taken from different theories for two reasons. First, this theory was developed much earlier than the emergence of the institutionalist, intergovernmentalist, and social constructivist academic schools. Second, the authors considered used elements now to be found in those school within an original and complex but clear framework of analysis for “history-making” decisions. They explained the links between the different elements and therefore also between the elements which are common to other theories.

Both the ideal type and the explanatory scheme may provide a useful framework to design new research projects and to guide different empirical studies. They may also be used and refined to understand which aspects of the integration process different theories are better able to explain. At the same time this theory is a critic to the structural limits of other macro-

theories, well-described by Rosamond and Peterson too. Those limits have also provoked some scepticism about grand theory and an academic focus on middle-range theories, and on the explanation of systemic and sub-systemic change in particular, before the development of liberal intergovernmentalism. The federalist tradition provides a macro-theory that tries to conceptualise and explain super-systemic change using the useful insights of many theories, but trying to avoid their unilateral perspective.

Obviously this theory may also be criticised on a number of issues. For example it rarely takes into account the role of the ECJ in the process - while a great deal of useful research on the issue of legal integration and the role of the ECJ has emerged [Weiler 1982, 1990] - until recently [Pistone 1999: 39-40]. This is probably due to the fact that federalist authors probably unconsciously focused their attention on the aspects and the actor that they could influence. Still this theoretical neglect is particularly surprising since the federalist tradition had identified the reasons for the crucial role of supreme or Constitutional Court within federal state, that is within multi-level systems of democratic government [Hamilton, Madison and Jay 1788-1987: Paper LXXVIII-LXXXIII, especially 437-438].

Furthermore, some aspects of this theory are underdeveloped. The lack of any systematic works, both in relation to the theory and the subsequent historical account of the integration process, is a further obstacle for the spread and use of this theory, which this research tries to remove. However, it provides many useful insights, and tries to include a great deal of complexity together with a reasonable amount of clarity in the identification of the crucial elements of the process and their relationships. Their methodology allowed these authors to look at the process from different perspectives, recognising the economic aspect emphasised by neo-functionalism in the concept of “integration”, but also the relevance of the political and institutional element – so much present in new institutionalism and also in liberal intergovernmentalism where it is subordinated to the substantive bargains - and links them to the ideas of “unification” and “construction”.

Furthermore, this framework avoids to assign explanatory priority to only one element of the process or to only one set of actors, as most other theories do. Hence this scheme takes into account the role of non-governmental actors and ideas into the process, through the concept of the innovator and the integrative proposal. But it also recognises the predominance of power through the concepts of crisis and of “European occasional leadership”, and the essentially intergovernmental character of the last phase of the decision-making process that leads to super-systemic change. It provides a link between internal and external variables through the concept of crisis and the importance of its being internally socially perceived.

And it exploits the concept of “crisis” to explain the time and the direction of super-systemic change.

It is this organised complexity which is most interesting as it provides an indication of the useful insights of different theories, but at the same time limits their claims to explanatory priority. It points out to the need for different perspectives and methodological tools to provide a complex but coherent theory to explain super-systemic change. In this sense the federalist framework theory may be considered as a new starting point to revive grand-theory by facing the task to describe and explain the complexity of super-systemic change and avoiding any unilateral perspective which favours only one element of the process at the expenses of all others. This can be a useful way to rethink integration theory provided it is carried out with sufficient analytical clarity. This requires to avoid to mix up different theoretical elements without a proper coherent framework, which was essentially the criticism moved to the theories which attempted a synthesis of neo-functionalism and neo-realism. The federalist framework theory can be considered as an attempt to pursue a clear identification of the links between the different aspects and actors of the process within a complex but coherent framework.

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RESEARCH PAPER

Centro Studi sul Federalismo
Via Real Collegio, 30
10024 Moncalieri (TO) - Italy
Tel. + 39 011.6705024
Fax + 39 011.6705081
E-mail: info@csfederalismo.it

