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Intra-Regional Balance of Power and Economic Integration: The Origins of the European Community*

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What made possible the voluntary formation of the European Community? The answer to this question lies in the distribution of capabilities in Europe after the end of World War II. Centralized integration took place because three conditions occurred at the same time. First, the emergence of the Soviet Union as an overwhelming symmetrical common threat to France, West Germany, Italy, and the Benelux gave them incentive to cooperate. Second, the aggregate power of the threatened states was sufficient to counter the threat. Third, no single state within the balancing coalition was more powerful than all the others taken together. This allowed them to surrender decision-making authority over important economic sectors to supranational institutions without concern that these would be dominated by a single state.

Keywords: European Union, economic community, political integration

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of Europe is a history of conflict. Mutual fear, suspicion, and hatred have hampered cooperation and bred war on the Old Continent for as long as written records tell. Yet, as the dust of World War II settled, the bellicose European states buried their animosities, reconciled, and laid the foundations of a new type of economic community. In 1951, France and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) first agreed to combine their heavy industries.[1] Joined by Italy and the Benelux states (Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg) the former enemies met in Paris to sign the treaty establishing a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) "based on a common market, common objectives, and common institutions" (ECSC, 1951). Soon after, in 1957, the six states took another major step toward an economic union with the signing of the Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC). Europeans chose to form an economic coalition by surrendering decision-making power to a central authority. This unprecedented move required each of them to trust a long-time enemy with the right to influence important aspects of its economic policy. Following their footsteps, many regions around the world have attempted to deepen economic cooperation, but none have been as successful as Europe. How did the European states overcome their mutual distrust? What made possible the voluntary formation of the ECSC in 1951 and the EEC in 1957?

Answering these questions is important because economic cooperation has become

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[1] Throughout the text FRG and West Germany are used interchangeably.

essential for state peace and prosperity. Regional powers must work with each other to be able to compete with the economies both of dominant states and of an increasing number of regional blocs with various degrees of integration and development. For example, the full potential for cooperation between states in Northeast Asia could be achieved only if they are able to reconcile as the European states did (see Calder and Fukuyama, 2008).

We argue that European integration became possible as a result of three conditions that applied simultaneously in the region after the end of World War II. First, the Soviet Union presented a significant threat to the six continental Western European states. As none of them had sufficient resources to effectively balance internally against it, they had strong incentive to form a defensive coalition to contain the opponent. Second, the combined economies of the Six had the potential to match the power of the rising hegemon when closely integrated and functioning as a single industrial base. Third, no single state among them was powerful enough to dominate a multilateral organization and impose its preferences on the other five members. This led each country to believe that it could surrender decision-making authority over important sectors of the economy without concern that the ECSC or EEC would become tools of control for one strongest state. The first two conditions gave the Six strong motivation to integrate parts of their economies in an attempt to balance the common adversary. The absence of a dominant power among them allowed the effort to succeed.

Our argument presents a modification of Sebastian Rosato's work explaining European integration as balancing against a powerful competitor (Rosato, 2011). We revise his approach by highlighting the importance of the distribution of capabilities among the original member-states for their initial decision to pursue integration. Specifically, we show that the absence of a dominant power among the six Western European states was vital for their decision to form a coalition. Our analysis thus refines Rosato's theoretical model suggesting that internal power dynamics only affect the format of cooperation (integration or unification) after the decision to form a coalition has been made (Rosato, 2011: 31). Using primary and secondary sources, we account for the considerations of both major and minor states in choosing integration as a strategy to address their security concerns.

The next section of the article lays out the logic of our explanation and develops the argument about states' considerations of relative power and their impact on the willingness to integrate. The third section applies this theoretical framework to explain why the six original member states decided to join the ECSC and proceeded to form the EEC. The last section summarizes the findings and based on them offers implications for regional integration theory and practice.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Centralized integration can take place when three conditions simultaneously occur in a region. First, the emergence of an overwhelming symmetrical common threat provides the motive for cooperation. Second, the aggregate power of the threatened states is sufficient to counter the threat. Third, no single state within the balancing coalition is more powerful than all the other members taken together.

2.1. Overwhelming Symmetrical Common Threat as Motive for Cooperation

Common security threats shape the trajectory of cooperation between states. When facing

a powerful opponent, states seek ways to increase their power in order to guarantee their survival (Mearsheimer, 2001: 156; Snyder, 1997: 43; Walt, 1987:18). Threatened countries have two ways of matching the power of an adversary—mobilizing resources to increase their own capabilities (internal balancing) and joining forces with other threatened countries (external balancing; Mearsheimer, 2001: 156–157). Depending on the depth of cooperation, external balancing can be further divided into two subtypes: alliance and integration (Parent, 2011: 9; Rosato, 2011: 25–26). The difference between alliance and integration is that the former constitutes an intergovernmental agreement to coordinate policy, while the latter entails surrendering policymaking authority in certain policy areas to a supranational organization.

States choose their balancing strategy depending on the level of threat that they face. They are generally averse to defense cooperation as it entails risks of abandonment and entrapment in conflicts over foreign interests (Snyder, 1984). When the adversary has similar capabilities to their own and security can be achieved through domestic mobilization of resources states prefer to balance internally. When facing a superior opponent whose power can only be matched by joining forces with others, leaders accept the risks of cooperation and form alliances (Mearsheimer, 1989: 156). If the common threat is overwhelming, states can further increase their aggregate power by integrating their economic or military capabilities. In the anarchic international system, there is no guarantee that the supranational organization controlling the merged resources will remain impartial and act for the mutual benefit of all member states. Consequently, integration is the least preferable balancing strategy, because it goes against a state's desire to control its own policy and resources (Rosato, 2011: 30).

Integration becomes an acceptable defense strategy when the threat is too great to be addressed by internal balancing or an inter-state alliance. The reason is that integration is a more effective way of balancing than the alternatives (Rosato, 2011: 28–31). Through collective management of resources states can achieve better efficiency and increase their aggregate power. Moreover, integration allows for the benefits of economies of scale, such as lower costs of production, which lead to higher economic growth (Moravcsik, 2013: 35–41). Such advantages are unobtainable through internal balancing or alliances: the amount of resources that a state can mobilize for internal balancing is fundamentally limited, while alliances lack the supranational organizations allowing efficient policy coordination.

To provide sufficient impetus for integration the potential aggressor should enjoy approximately a three to one power advantage over each individual threatened state.[2] The three-to-one ratio is a widely accepted estimate because often the attacker is at a natural disadvantage against the defender and needs at least thrice more power at the attacking point to achieve victory (Mearsheimer, 1989; Rosato, 2011: 26). In other words, when the adversary enjoys a smaller advantage than this, either internal balancing or allied resistance would be sufficient to deter or defend against an attack. However, if the aggressor outweighs each target by a margin of three to one, integration becomes an acceptable option, preferable to being dominated by an adversarial power.

Finally, integration can occur only if the common threat is symmetrical for all potential members of a prospective defensive community.[3] If the threat is asymmetrical (i.e. if some

[2] The power ratio here is based on the combination of total military and economic assets that a state and its adversary has at hand, as we are interested in the overall balance of power between the two.

[3] We accept Stephen Walt's (1987) view that a state's level of threat is determined by the opponent's aggregate power, offensive power, geographic proximity, and aggressive intentions.

states feel less threatened than others) those that feel more threatened will prefer to pursue integration, while the less concerned ones will have incentives to avoid it. As a result, an asymmetrical threat will create divergent preferences among the states in the region over the necessity of integration for balancing. In this case, the less threatened states would rather pass the buck of restraining the opponent to the more threatened ones (who could proceed to integrate among themselves) or pursue an alternative defense arrangement (such as an alliance that does not require relinquishing of sovereignty). If the participation of the less threatened states is essential for successful balancing through integration, the integrative effort is likely to fail.

2.2. Sufficient Aggregate Power for Balancing through Integration

Another condition necessary to provoke integration is that the threatened states have enough aggregate power for successful balancing (Rosato, 2011: 26–27). If the adversary's offensive capabilities are so overwhelming that a defensive coalition is unlikely to prevail in a conflict, states will have little incentive to cooperate (Walt, 1987: 29). Leaders need to believe that the merging of their countries' resources will make it possible to counter the threat before engaging in costly integrative efforts. Based on the logic described in the preceding subsection, a coalition will be able to balance when its aggregate capabilities amount to more than one-third of the threatening state's power. When the combined power of the threatened states is estimated to be above this threshold, they will pursue integration believing that it will allow them to successfully deter or defend against the adversary. Conversely, if the combined capabilities of all target states are less than one third of those of the threat, they will seek other ways to preserve their sovereignty.

The aggregate capabilities of a coalition consist of military and latent power (economic and demographic; see Mearsheimer, 2001: 55–82). To increase their aggregate capabilities and remain competitive against the adversary states can integrate parts of their militaries, economies, or both. In general, leaders prefer to keep integration to a minimum considering its downsides: restricted policy autonomy and potential opportunities for other members to gain unfair advantages from cooperation (see Snyder, 1997: 44). Therefore, states pursue only as much integration as necessary to maintain aggregate capabilities sufficient for balancing. In addition, they are averse to merging sectors where the surrendering of policy autonomy could create additional security risks (Rosato, 2011: 34). Economic integration is thus preferable to military integration, because economic policy rarely has immediate effects and states can back out of disadvantageous agreements before they produce negative security consequences. Military power, on the other hand, once put under the control of a common organization can potentially be used (or misused) immediately. As a result, states are reluctant to surrender vital defense assets to a supranational organization preferring to keep them under national control instead.

It follows that the scope of integration efforts is determined by the balance of power between the threatening state and the targets. States only merge sectors where integration improves their chances of competing against the adversary and avoid combining more sectors than necessary to achieve this aim. Integration proceeds in stages starting from the least risky areas of cooperation and can expand until the benefits of integrating an additional sector are offset by the downsides.

2.3. Intra-regional Balance of Power

Finally, integration is only possible if no single state within the region is predominantly powerful. States facing a common threat and having sufficient power to balance against it have strong incentive to integrate. However, they also need to be relatively confident that the supranational organization controlling their merged resources will be managed for all members' collective benefit, not an individual state's particular interest. If a single state is powerful enough to take control over the organization, other states will decline to participate, because there is no guarantee that the dominant state will not abuse the collective resources to their detriment (on state concerns about relative gains see Grieco, 1988). Even if the dominant state has no intention to force its preferred policy upon other members at present, its behavior could change in the future should it become the master of the organization (see Jervis, 1978; Mearsheimer, 1994/95).

The most certain way to prevent the abuse of power is to include only those states that do not have the capacity to dominate an organization in the first place. Put simply, no single member state should have more power than all the other member states combined. When this is the case, members will have sufficient collective leverage to thwart attempts even from the relatively strongest state to hijack policymaking within the common institution. The balance of power within the region is therefore crucial for the relatively weaker states' participation in integration efforts, for they cannot safely surrender policymaking authority to an organization that can potentially be dominated by a single state. Put differently, states are not likely to participate in cooperation that can lead to unification (defined as cooperation where "a single state makes policy for the entire group"; cf. Rosato, 2011: 15, 23). Voluntary integrative efforts are more likely to commence when potential participants are confident that they will retain control over the policies of the organization.

3. THE SUCCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The European Union today presents a unique case of successful economic integration. The foundations of present day Europe, however, were laid in the first decade after the end of World War II when Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands cooperated to build the first institutions that allowed the region to enjoy decades of economic growth and the longest period of peace in the written history of the continent. Therefore, to probe the plausibility of our version of the realist theory of regional integration, in this section we turn to the period of formation of the ECSC and EEC.

3.1. Why European States Pursued Cooperation

The original six member states of the ECSC and EEC were driven to cooperate by the need to defend against a rising common threat. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) had emerged from the war as a potential hegemon, militarily and economically superior to the rest of Europe. By 1950, in terms of personnel and expenditure, the Soviet Armed Forces outmatched the French by a ratio of 9:1 (Rosato, 2011: 43–44). Four years of German occupation had left the former great power severely weakened and the war it started in Indochina in 1946 aggravated the situation. Having committed substantial resources to the losing conflict in the remote Southeast Asian region, the French were incapable of

balancing the Soviets by themselves (Hitchcock, 2004: 172–177). None of the other Western European powers had better prospects of matching the threat. Defeated in the war, Germany was without an army, economically devastated, and politically divided into two new de-facto states, which stalled its potential for quick recovery (Urwin, 1995: 14). The remaining four states had militaries, which taken together constituted but a small fraction of the Soviet force (Rosato, 2011: 43–44). The USSR also had superior fighting capabilities, giving it an additional advantage (Rosato, 2011: 43, 45). None of the six continental powers had an industry capable of production matching the scale of the rich in resources and manpower competitor (Rosato, 2011: 44–45). Internal balancing was unattainable immediately after the end of the war and the prospects were the capabilities gap between the West and the East of Europe would only increase over time (Rosato, 2011: 45).

The leadership of the two European states with potential to be major powers—France and West Germany—recognized that they could not compete with the Soviet Union individually (MccGwire, 1987: 2). Western states likely perceived Soviet power to be even greater than it actually was, particularly in the years immediately after the end of the war (MccGwire, 1987: 2). French policymakers were deeply concerned about their own ability to stop the threat. The head of the Provisional Government of the French Republic Charles de Gaulle thought it "very possible that Russia will take over the entire continent of Europe in due course," while his Foreign Minister Georges Bidault asked, "Who is going to stop Attila; he is covering more territory every day" (quoted in Creswell and Trachtenberg, 2003: 8). The Chancellor of the FRG, Konrad Adenauer felt that the "threat to German security was so great that the West Germans needed to do whatever the allies would let them do" to defend against it (Trachtenberg, 1999: 112). In his memoirs Adenauer wrote that "no single European country could guarantee a secure future to its people by its own strength." Regarding West Germany, he added, "We were a small and very exposed country. […] By our own strength we could achieve nothing" (Adenauer, 1966: 416).

The minor powers harbored no illusions about their own vulnerability.[4] In 1947, uncertain that Italy would be able to handle a rebellion instigated by Italian communists, then Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi contacted the French authorities to ask for cooperation in averting the domestic crisis. Commenting on Italy's ability to handle the situation, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) concluded that "In view of the existing inadequacies in arms and equipment of the Italian Army and security troops […] the Italian government would probably not be able to regain control of North Italy unaided" if the Italian Communist Party (ICP) received outside support (CIA, 1997). Overall, the Italian Armed Forces' ability to defend the nation against a much more potent foreign military threat was questionable at best (Varsori, 1992: 263–266). Weaker than Italy, the Benelux states also recognized that they did not have resources for balancing.

The Western world perceived Soviet intentions to be hostile and aggressive (Heuser, 1991). In 1946, the American diplomat George Kennan wrote an analysis of Soviet policy (known as the "long telegram") where he concluded that the USSR did not envision "peaceful coexistence" with capitalist states (Kennan, 1946). The telegram was accepted in Washington as a basis for a new US policy of a global containment of the USSR (Fenby, 2018: 44–45). Soon after Winston Churchill delivered his "iron curtain" speech, which defined the Soviet

[4] We categorize Italy as a minor power, because it had little potential to dominate European institutions, although its capabilities place it closer to France and West Germany than to any of the Benelux states throughout the entire studied period.

threat and had a strong impact on public opinion across Western Europe. In 1948, a US policy paper concluded that Soviet leaders pursued "the political conquest of western Europe" and intended to achieve it through "political, economic, and psychological warfare against all elements resistant to communist purposes, and in particular attempting to prevent or retard the recovery of and cooperation among western European countries" (Heuser, 1991: 20; NSC, 1948). Bidault expressed Paris' concurrence with this concern when he appealed for a formal treaty with the United States based on the understanding that "the Soviet menace now threatened the whole of Western Europe" (Fenby, 2018: 371). German leaders also saw the USSR as a serious threat (Rosato, 2011: 72–73). For Adenauer, "The aim of the Russians was unambiguous. Soviet Russia had, like Tsarist Russia, an urge to acquire or subdue new territories in Europe" (Adenauer, 1966: 78). He worried that the European balance of power had been destroyed by the war and that Western Europe had become vulnerable to Moscow's ambitions (Adenauer, 1966: 319).

The minor states shared the apprehensions of Paris and Bonn. Fear of the Soviet Union and its growing influence was most prevalent in Italy where the ICP came close to overthrowing De Gasperi's government and taking power over the newly democratic state (J. E. Miller, 1983). The other three nations also saw Communist expansion as an ever-present danger. In September 1948, when he was Prime Minister of Belgium, Paul-Henri Spaak gave the famous "speech of fear" at the United Nations where he eloquently summarized Western Europe's perceptions of threat. "There is only one great power that exited the war having conquered foreign territories, and this great power is the USSR," he said and added addressing the representatives of the Soviet Union: "The truth is that your foreign policy is today bolder and more ambitious than the policies of the Tsars themselves" (Spaak, 1980). The realization of this threat is what had led in 1948 to the signing by Britain, France, and the Benelux of the Brussels Pact—the defense agreement that would become the foundation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949 (where Italy became a founding member and the FRG joined in 1955; Hitchcock, 2004: 64–65).

Finally, Europeans had well-founded doubts about the will of the US to participate in the defense of the Old Continent (Rosato, 2011: 52). The opinion that American forces should be withdrawn and Europe left to balance the Soviets by itself had many supporters in Washington (Trachtenberg, 1999: 114). Particularly before 1950, when the Korean War created a sense of imminent threat of Communist aggression and prompted an expansion of American commitments, the US planned for very limited involvement in Europe against the Soviets. Washington intended to interfere only when its help "could make the difference between success and failure" for a state that was already capable of fighting off the threat on its own (Jervis, 1980: 574). European leaders were without doubt aware of US reasoning. French policy was therefore focused on preparing for the possibility that America could consider retreating from Europe (Rosato, 2011: 52). Adenauer's self-proclaimed motto at the same time was "Help yourself and the United States will help you" (Adenauer, 1966: 417). With such considerations in mind, Western European leaders made the first moves toward cooperation to counter the rising threat.

3.2. Why European States Chose to Balance through Economic Integration

Taken together, the continental states could hope to compete against the Soviet Union in economic development. In the decade between 1947 and 1957, the aggregate economic power of France, West Germany, and the four minor states roughly equaled that of the

adversary (Rosato, 2011: 44). Thus the combined economic capabilities of the six Western European states were sufficient to match the economic potential of their common competitor. Since the aggregate economic power of the coalition was enough to allow successful balancing, it provided the rationale to attempt to cooperate to counter the threat.

European leaders realized that simple economic policy coordination would not be sufficient to outmatch Soviet potential. The belief that European states only had a chance to resist domination by engaging in closer cooperation with one another was prevalent among Western European policymakers in the years after World War II. In 1947, Charles De Gaulle stated that for France to avoid conflict with the Soviets, Europe needed to be "organized into a single system" (cited in Rosato, 2011: 61). A group of French political elites produced a leaflet arguing that integration was the only way for Europe to survive Russian expansionism (Rosato, 2011: 62). Then French Prime Minister Antoine Pinay thought that "if we are caught between the two giants of the last war, we shall be crushed, while if we are united, we could talk as equals to equals" (quoted in Girault, 1992: 83). His successor, Guy Mollet, also supported centralized European community based on balance-of-power considerations (Rosato, 2011: 185). Jean Monnet—the creator of the ECSC and EEC—explained his reasoning in the post-war years: European countries could not "go beyond recovery towards steady expansion" individually; they could grow their economies only "if conditions were created enabling those countries to increase their resources by merging them in a large and dynamic common market" (Monnet, 1963: 205). As West Germany needed time to recover after the war, joining forces with others was viewed in Bonn as a way to simultaneously reconcile with former enemies in the west and balance against the east (Rosato, 2011: 73, 80). Adenauer promoted the idea that "Europeans have to unite in some form" and believed that integration was crucial for the economic reconstruction of Europe (Dülffer, 2007). As early as 1945 he wrote, "In the long run, the French and Belgian demand for security can only be met by the economic integration of western Germany, France, Belgium, Luxemburg and Holland" (Adenauer, 1966: 36).

Support for integration was even stronger among the weaker Western European countries. Italian decision-makers, including De Gasperi and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlo Sforza, viewed European integration as a way to supplement Italy's weakened power and restore Italy to prosperity (M. Miller, 1995: 57). The Benelux states were the first to pursue cooperation through the Treaty of London in 1944, which was aimed at establishing a Benelux customs union—an "integrative organization" that would contribute to their collective economic growth (Bleich, 1948; Soetendorp, 2014: 35). Seeing wider membership as more beneficial and less prone to failure, they soon proposed cooperation on a broader scale, including France, West Germany, and possibly Britain (Soetendorp, 2014: 35–36). The Benelux agreed that they needed assistance from regional major powers in order to effectively protect themselves. At the signing of the Statute of the Council of Europe in 1949, then Luxembourg Foreign Minister Joseph Bech stated, "Europe *must* unite, if she is to survive and to maintain in the post-war world the glorious place which has been hers throughout the history of humanity" (Bech, 1949). As Pierre-Henri Laurent attests, "Most Lowlanders by the mid-fifties felt strongly the necessity to protect their sovereignty by renouncing it" (Laurent, 1970: 376).

The understanding that economic cooperation needs to take the form of integration to maintain competitiveness against the Soviet Union was prevalent among decision-makers in continental Western Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s. As a Luxembourg newspaper reported about the first Congress of the European Movement in March 1949, prominent

representatives of Western European states emphasized in many different ways "the need for Europe to unite or perish" (Demeuse, 1949). Integration, however, was not the only option available to each individual European state and there were many domestic actors (particularly in France, West Germany, and Italy) who opposed the idea of united Europe and advocated for alternative solutions, such as preserving neutrality (Bindi, 2009: 11–12; M. Miller, 1995: 58). The decision to join the common institutions followed a bargaining process, where each state weighted the benefits of integration against its inherent risks.

3.3 Why European States Agreed to Build Supranational Institutions

The main problem faced by Western Europeans regarding regional integration was achieving balance of power within a coalition consisting of states with asymmetric capabilities. Although they realized that balancing the Soviet Union would be impossible without involving West Germany, France, Italy, and the Benelux were aware of the dangers of reviving the beaten aggressor and accepting it within the new regional order (Fenby, 2018: 258–259; Jervis, 1980: 569). If the FRG was allowed to rebuild its industry, it had the potential to achieve quick economic recovery, overtake the victors, and likely threaten them once again possibly in coalition with the Soviets. The Germans, on their side, worried about French dominance over their recovering industry. Yet, the regional balance of power after the end of World War II worked to increase the chances of cooperation—because none of the participants was predominantly strong, European powers felt reassured that the new organizations will not be dominated by a single state's interests as integration went ahead. This favorable distribution of power was most clearly reflected in the negotiations leading to the formation of the first European institutions. No single state could force its preferences regarding the format of cooperation upon all others and this allowed them to negotiate a mutually acceptable outcome.

French policymakers believed that the distribution of capabilities in Europe allowed the German threat to be contained within the framework of regional institutions. Throughout, Monnet planned for France to take the lead in controlling West Germany's revival through economic cooperation (Gillingham, 2004: 144). Robert Schuman, another key architect of European integration, argued that recovering the German economy was necessary for balancing, but France needed to harness West Germany lest it became France's rival and even its "master" (Rosato, 2011: 66). Pinay reportedly agreed that "a common market designed along lines acceptable to the Germans would pose a serious threat to the French economy" (Rosato, 2011: 193). The French were thus "prepared to endorse integration only if special arrangements could be made" to maintain French economic power within the EEC (Rosato, 2011: 192).

The minor states were also concerned about West Germany's return to power. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg issued a joint statement in 1947, proposing that "the requisite control measures are taken to prevent the recurrence of the German threat." The document advised against stimulating the German economy with aid "which would give it an advantage over the economies of the Allied nations" but did not object to the economic reconstruction of West Germany per se (*Luxemburger Wort*, February 26, 1948). Despite their concerns, the Benelux chose to join the negotiations regarding the formation of a cooperative economic agreement that would include West Germany. With the support of Paris, they could hope to successfully restrain Bonn if it attempted to push policy in an unfavorable direction.

The official blueprint for integration came from Paris. In 1950, Schuman made public

Monnet's idea to merge the coal and steel industries of Western European states and place them under the control of an "impartial high authority." The plan would make it possible to revive West Germany's productive capabilities and guarantee that they could not be used to threaten France or any other member of the international organization that would govern their use (Hitchcock, 2003: 65–66). The proposed organizational structure would allow to preserve the organization's impartiality. The high authority would "work for a balanced relationship" in Western Europe, where the collective power of the other members would restrain German resurgence (Schwartz, 1995: 510). A Council of Ministers and a Common Assembly would protect the interests of each state and serve to check the power of the High Authority. An advisory Consultative Committee representing social interest groups and a Court of Justice would further restrict the ability of any single member to dominate policy-making within the ECSC (Urwin, 1995: 50). In addition, individual states would not be able to exercise excessive influence through financial contributions as the budget of the ECSC would be funded by direct tax on coal and steel production gathered from the producers (Urwin, 2014: 100). This institutional design intended to maintain impartiality would later be preserved in the construction of the EEC. A Commission consisting of nine representatives (two each from France, West Germany, and Italy, and one each from the Benelux states) would administer the implementation of the Treaty of Rome, which established the EEC. Again, a Council of Ministers would give voice to the member governments in coordinating policy, bestowing each individual state with power to veto or delay the implementation of acts of which it disapproved. A Parliamentary Assembly (the future European Parliament) consisting of elected delegates from each state would serve as a consultative body with the power to dismiss the Commission. The EEC would also have a Court of Justice to handle disputes and be a "guardian of the Community" (Urwin, 2014: 106–107).

While the Schuman Plan would allow the FRG to join the "Western Club," the terms of membership were not entirely satisfactory for the defeated state (Urwin, 2014: 82–84). On one side, the plan presented a chance to free West Germany from the restrictive International Authority for the Ruhr—the organization established to control German industry after the war (Urwin, 1995: 45). Yet, the Germans remained concerned that if they joined the proposed organization, France would gain disproportional influence over the common institutions. Bonn could not bargain to be given more power than the other members, since this would have raised suspicions of renewed ambition to dominate Europe (Rosato, 2011: 80–81; Urwin, 2014: 82–84). What West Germany wanted was an institution that would remove the obstacles to its economic development and allow it to maintain parity with the other Western European powers. For instance, German policymakers hoped for limiting the competencies of the High Authority and leaving its producers to work in conditions of free market competition (CVCE, 2013; 2016b).

West Germany accepted the Schuman plan after being reassured that its industry will not be subject to unrestrained supranational intervention (George, 1985: 5). Adenauer's fear that joining the ECSC could mean surrendering control over the German coal and steel sectors to its former adversaries was resolved by the French accepting revisions to the original Schuman Plan (Adenauer, 1966: 1946; Urwin, 2014: 82–84). Most importantly, France agreed to the creation of a Council of Ministers to scrutinize the High Authority. The resulting institutional structure (backed also by the Benelux) reduced the possibility that France would dominate decision-making within the Community (George, 1985: 5). The FRG's support for the EEC followed a similar line of reasoning. As the State Secretary at the Foreign Office Walter Hallstein (who went to become the first president of the Commission of the European

Economic Community) explained, West Germany had no choice but to agree to the terms that limited its power in the EEC or be suspected of having hegemonic ambitions (Rosato, 2011: 205–206). Consequently, the Germans conceded to French demands in connection with the organization of the EEC after making sure that their equal rights were guaranteed.

The four minor states also accepted the Schuman Plan after successfully negotiating satisfactory assurances that European institutions would not be dominated by a single state. From the onset, Italy demanded equal status in the ECSC, even though its economy, marred by unemployment and "the highest tariff barriers in Western Europe" was much less competitive than the French or German's (Dedman, 2010: 92). At the Schuman Plan negotiations, Rome's delegate Paolo Emilio Taviani stated that Italy was going to "fight hard to gain a position of equality" (Ranieri, 1988: 348). As then Prime Minister of Italy Mario Scelba stated at the Council of Foreign Relations in 1955, the "disadvantageous position in which Italy is placed […] demonstrates that the Italian problems *must* be dealt with in the context of international cooperation." The Italians, he added, "would not tolerate Germany becoming another *Great*, remaining ourselves in an inferior position" (quoted in Vigezzi, 1992: 103, emphasis in original). Thus Italy's agreement to join European institutions became conditional on assurances that the impartiality of the ECSC and EEC would not be threatened by any single state.

Rome's demands were accepted and reflected in the design of European institutions. In the ECSC, the High Authority guaranteed Italy's equal status and power as the Germans and the French (Urwin, 2014: 48–50). In the EEC, Italian concerns about the impact of cooperation with major industrial powers on its relatively weak economy were addressed with several special provisions. Among them were the establishment of a European Investment Bank and a European Social Fund, which intended to provide economic assistance to the less competitive firms and unemployed workers in Western Europe. The new institutions were included in an appendix to the Treaty of Rome under the name of "Protocol Concerning Italy," which was intended to be the primary beneficiary (Perron, 2004: 72). The Italians also gained the right to appoint two members in the Commission—the same as the economically stronger neighbors (Urwin, 1995: 80–81).

The Benelux states, with their weak power positions, were particularly sensitive on the issue of European institutions' impartiality. They remained apprehensive about having to accommodate the policy preferences of the economically superior West Germany and France (Gillingham, 2004: 247). The three countries expected their influence within the organizations to be guaranteed and for French and German powers to be limited. When preparing for negotiations for the establishment of the ECSC, Dutch, Belgian, and Luxembourg officials met to discuss a common position regarding the Schuman Plan. They agreed on opposition to "a High Authority which would take final decisions without the scrutiny, for example, of an international parliament" and call for "equal representation for all the countries" in its board, among other measures to demand to safeguard the interests of the weaker participants (CVCE, 2016c). Later, the Benelux became actively involved in the formation and design of the ECC. In 1955, Joseph Bech, Paul-Henri Spaak, and Johan Willem Beyen—foreign ministers respectively of Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands—presented a joint memorandum to France, West Germany, and Italy urging the expansion of the ECSC to more fields. The text emphasized that "convinced that independent institutions were a guarantee for the smaller countries, the Three stressed the need for a joint authority with powers of its own" (CVCE, 2016d). The proposal was discussed at the Messina Conference in 1955, attended by all six members of the ECSC (CVCE, 2016a). The Benelux idea of

"constructing a plan in which various national interests and pressures could be overridden by an *esprit communitaire*, based on potent institutional devices like the High Authority of the ECSC" contradicted at the time with French, German, and even Italian skepticism regarding supranationalism. An International Committee headed by Spaak was delegated to prepare the draft agreements addressing these and other issues needed to set up a common European market (Laurent, 1970: 378–379, emphasis in original). The so called "Spaak Report" produced by the Committee meticulously addressed each state's particular concerns and thus became the foundation of the EEC (Laurent, 1970: 381–383).

The Benelux succeeded in winning concessions regarding their status in the ECSC and EEC (Dedman, 2010: 62; Gillingham, 2004: 247–249). Ultimately, Monnet had to agree to offer "special deals" to each of the minor powers to reassure them and elicit their participation in the Schuman Plan (Gillingham, 2004: 247). These included granting one seat in the High Authority to each of the three states, the establishment of the Council of Ministers that allowed them to have the same institutional power as the other members, providing subsidies to their steel and coal sectors, and adopting a weighted voting system in the Common Assembly that prevented the monopoly of power by France or West Germany. Later, the FRG agreed to allow Belgium and Netherlands special status over their connections with the overseas territories as well (Urwin, 1995: 72–75). This comes to show that the minor powers had significant bargaining clout of their own, amplified by close policy coordination among themselves. France and West Germany accommodated the weaker states' demands because their participation was important for the success of the coalition.

In sum, each of the Six agreed to join European institutions after its concerns about the format of cooperation had been sufficiently addressed. Each state was sufficiently confident that given the distribution of capabilities at that time, none of the major powers would be able to dominate the new coalition and enrich itself at the expense of the other members. The minor states did not fear being subdued to the interests of either France or Germany as they could side with one powerful partner each time the other made a threatening move. In a similar way, by securing the membership of the minor states, each of the two major powers could rely on their support to restrain the other.

It follows that the balanced distribution of power in Western Europe is what allowed the creation of impartial European institutions. The ability of all six states to negotiate and have their respective positions taken into account was decisive for the success of initial integration efforts. Should one state have been overwhelmingly powerful, the others would have opted out of the ECSC and the EEC would have never been envisioned.

4. CONCLUSION

This article has explained what made possible the voluntary creation of European regional institutions in the 1950s. It has shown that states were able to overcome their mutual distrust because three conditions applied simultaneously in the region after the end of World War II. First, the Soviet Union emerged as an overwhelming common threat to France, West Germany, Italy, and the three Benelux states motivating them to pursue cooperation to balance against the potential aggressor. Second, the six states believed that together they had the potential to match the power of the rising hegemon when closely integrated and functioning with a single industrial base. Third, the symmetrical distribution of capabilities among the Six allowed them to surrender decision-making authority over important sectors

of the economy without concern that European institutions would become a tool of control for one strongest state.

Our analysis addresses several weaknesses of Sebastian Rosato's account of European integration. According to Rosato (2011), the Soviet threat prompted Western Europeans to integrate as a way of balancing. To present meaningful resistance against the Soviets, "the Europeans would have to establish a single military and economy," which required "the creation of a central governing authority" (Rosato, 2011: 2). Cooperation took the form of integration (instead of unification) because "France and Germany were fairly evenly matched" and saw joint leadership as the best way to prevent each other from dominating the region (Rosato, 2011: 3).

This explanation is incomplete in two main regards. First, it does not focus on perceptions of threat, especially within the balancing coalition, which as seen in the preceding discussion, were important for alliance decisions. Second, Rosato leaves the relatively weaker states out of the discussion. Thus, the decisions of Italy and the Benelux to voluntarily surrender decision-making authority to an organization that can easily be dominated by West Germany or France remain unexplained. West Germany, in particular, presented a great potential threat to the minor states due to its capabilities, geographic proximity, and history of aggression (see Walt, 1987: 5). Integration with either major power could endanger the minor states' sovereignty no less than occupation by Russian forces. In addition, France and West Germany's reasons to satisfy the minor powers' demands with regard to the institutional design of the new organizations to secure their participation in the coalition remain puzzling.

The present research offers a fuller account of the alliance choices of both major and minor states by highlighting their considerations of the distribution of power within the region. Contrary to Rosato's view, integration only happened because none of the states had the potential to dominate the coalition; unification (where one state would be in charge of policy-making) was not an option that would have been accepted by any of the member states regardless of the overwhelming Soviet threat.

The theoretical framework used to explain the economic integration of continental Western Europe can be applied to account for the failure of military integration. Europe's fear of Soviet military expansion (amplified by the break out of the Korean War in 1950) provided the Six with a strong incentive to form a balancing coalition. The European states believed that they could build sufficient combined capabilities to give meaningful resistance to the USSR, provided that the US offered some assistance at least until the West German army was rebuilt (Rosato, 2011: 108–113). However, a European Defense Community failed to materialize. The main reason was likely that, as Churchill observed, "it was very difficult to overcome French fears of a revived German army" (Churchill, 2002: 960). Neither France, nor Italy and the Benelux could expect to contain a German military built to counter the USSR even if it was incorporated in a common European defense force. Consequently, they could not risk transferring control of their military forces to a supranational organization that could easily be dominated by West Germany.

The theory can also explain Great Britain's decision not to become a partner in the Schuman Plan. The reason was that for Britain the benefits of integration would not have outweighed the costs. On one hand, London felt relatively less threatened by the USSR than the six continental states. In 1950, Britain generated "as much coal as all these countries together and about half as much steel" making it capable of matching Soviet production capabilities by itself (*Het Vrije Volk*, June 6, 1950). Britain was also shielded from the Soviet threat by the English Channel. On the other hand, if London joined the ECSC (and

later the EEC), it would have not only to surrender control of its coal and steel industry, but also to accept such policies as the adoption of common tariffs on non-member states, which would have hurt British exports. With such considerations in mind, it was unsurprising that "since 1945 the British have never wanted to go further than international cooperation, with individual governments retaining the last word" (*Het Vrije Volk*, June 6, 1950). Having opted out of integrating with the central European powers, by 1960, London had negotiated a separate trade bloc—the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)—with Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland, which offered an alternative to the EEC, without requiring political integration.

The above findings have implications for centralized cooperation and integration in other parts of the world. First, the rare combination of circumstances that led to the formation of the future EU is not currently present in any other region, and hence its results are unlikely to be replicated. Most importantly, member-states of such regional organizations as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or MERCOSUR, for example, do not face an overwhelming common competitor perceived to have aggressive intentions that would provide sufficient motivation to pursue deeper integration. In addition, in regions where there is significant power asymmetry between states, cooperative efforts are even less likely to be successful as minor states would not be willing to enter organizations that could be easily dominated by their neighbors.

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