

IDENTITY AND INTERESTS IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION THEORY: THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE CFSP

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Abstract

The paper aims to analyze the evolution of the Common Foreign and Security Policy from the stand point of two competing approaches: the intergovernmentalist theory, based on rational institutionalism, and the constructivist theories in integration studies. I also attempt an evaluation of their analytical importance inside the theoretical research concerning CFSP. The contribution of this paper lies in emphasizing that even if interests, material and negotiation power and asymmetrical interdependence are useful starting points in analyzing the potential influence of states on early institutional evolution, power alone does not explain the final outcomes of this evolution or of the policies pursued inside the CFSP.

Keywords: *rational institutionalism, constructivism, interests, identities, logic of consequentiality, logic of appropriateness.*

Introduction

The paper aims to analyze the evolution of the Common Foreign and Security Policy from the stand point of two competing approaches: the intergovernmentalist theory, based on rational institutionalism, and the constructivist theories in integration studies. I also attempt an evaluation of their analytical importance inside the theoretical research concerning CFSP.

In the first part of the paper I discuss the main theoretical assumptions associated with intergovernmentalism with an emphasis on liberal intergovernmentalism. In this section I will also underline the methodological roots that the liberal intergovernmentalism borrowed from rational institutionalism. In the second section, I seek to outline the constructivist approaches in integration studies, with their emphasis on the importance of identity for the evolution and the implementation of CFSP. In the third section and fourth sections, I briefly consider the evolution of the CFSP institutionalization and I will present some empirical cases that can be successfully explained using identity as an independent variable. I conclude with an evaluation on the dynamics and interactions between interests and identity and I seek to assess the advantages and disadvantages that rest with each theory taken into consideration.

The contribution of this paper lies in emphasizing that even if interests, material and negotiation power and asymmetrical interdependence are useful starting points in analyzing the potential influence of states on early institutional evolution, power alone does not explain the final outcomes of this evolution or of the policies pursued inside the CFSP.

The intergovernmentalist approaches and rational institutionalism in theorizing the CFSP

In the following section I will present the intergovernmentalist (IG) approaches in theorizing the CFSP. The first part of the section contains an overview of the different types of IG and their place inside the larger field of integration studies. In the last part of the section, I will present the hypotheses formulated by these theories regarding the field of CFSP.

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Before embarking on the presentation of the theories brought into discussion, I want to stress their intellectual roots in the field of international relations¹, a point to which I will return to during the following presentation. As for IG approaches, although they might appear to favor realist assumptions in their explanations, they are not realist per se. As Rosamond points out, “intergovernmentalists of various persuasions are distinguished from realists because they are attentive to the fact that the (international) politics of European integration takes place within a very specific institutional environment”². The IG approaches are rather liberal institutionalist in their origins because they treat the EU as an international regime where national security is not the dominant motivation, states power is not based on coercive capabilities, state preferences and identities are not uniform, and interstate institutions are not insignificant³. This association is justified in the light of the fact that these theories emphasize the influence of institutionalization on state behavior.

IG emerged in the context of the lack of progress in European integration in the late 1960’ and of the apparent failure of neofunctionalism in explaining these phenomena. One of the first proponents of the IG approach was Stanley Hoffmann, the most famous supporter of traditional or classical IG. His main theoretical concern was to emphasize “the importance of national interests in the international politics of post-war Europe”⁴. He explained the tension between integration and diversity in Western Europe after the Empty Chair Crisis through the incursions of supranational principles and institutions in the sensitive areas related to national sovereignty. In order to ground his explanatory approach, Hoffman⁵ resorts to the distinction between high politics (the politics of “vital national interests” and military security) and low politics (dominated especially by economic matters). In Rosamond’s formulation, Hoffmann’s basic assumptions about the integration at that moment was that high politics is an autonomous domain, “virtually immune from the penetration of integrative impulses”⁶, even if the governments were cooperating in the field of low politics in order to maintain control over the areas where intersocietal transactions became pervasive. In other words, his theory didn’t give much chances of success to integration in domains like foreign policy and national security.

In the same IG tradition, economic historian Alan Milward tries to argue that, rather than undermining the nation-state, the integration process and the EU saved it. He points out that after the Second World War, European governments were confronted with two dilemmas: rising interdependence and societal discontent. They opted for integration as a solution to the need to provide public policies for their domestic constituencies and to mitigate the negative effects of interdependence.⁷

The preoccupation for the domestic context of the state is also illustrated by liberal IG, one of the most developed theoretical strands of IG. Andrew Moravcsik is the main exponent of this theory which has some main characteristics: it is an application of rational institutionalism used to explain interstate cooperation; it is a “«grand» theory that seeks to explain the broad evolution of regional

¹ For a broad discussion on the relationship between the field of international relations and European integration studies see Morten Kelstrup and Michael Williams, (ed.) *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration. Power, Security and Community* (London: Routledge, 2000).

² Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration* (Basingstoke, Macmillan and New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 141-142.

³ Andrew Moravcsik and Frank Schimmelfennig, “Liberal Intergovernmentalism”, in *European Integration Theory* ed. Thomas Diez, and Antje Wiener (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 68;

⁴ Rosamond, *Theories...*, 76.

⁵ Stanley Hoffmann, *Sisiful european. Studii despre Europa (1964-1994)*, trans. Elena Neculcea (București: Curtea Veche Publishing, 2003).

⁶ Rosamond, *Theories...*, 77;

⁷ Alan, Milward, *apud*. Rosamond, *Theories...*, 138-139.

integration”⁸ and it is a parsimonious theory that uses a limited number of parameters (among which the decisive one is the domestic issue-specific preference structure of a few major states)⁹.

Regarding the first characteristic mentioned above, the theories in the fields of international relations or European integration studies that build on rational institutionalism share some basic assumptions: individualism, state-centrism, materialism, egoism and instrumentalism¹⁰. Individualism refers to the fact that the agent (and not the structure) with given and relatively stable identity and interests is the primary generator of social practices. In the rational institutionalist approaches in international relations and European integration studies, the agent is not the individual, but a collective actor: the state, whose unitary character is assumed. Materialism refers to the fact that the distribution of power and wealth are the main variables that explain the processes and variations in international politics. This doesn’t mean that institutions are not important but that they are generated by the materials interests of agents and do not modify their identities or interests, only cost-benefit calculations. The institutions are intervening variables between the actors and the environment and between individual and collective action. The good functioning of institutions depends on their utility to the actors. They act on the basis of concern for their benefits and not for the others benefits (they are egoistic). The last characteristic of rational institutionalism, instrumentalism, refers to the fact that actors act according to rational instrumentalism: they try to maximize their own utility. But generally, this assumption is relaxed through “bounded rationality” which assumes that actors don’t have to be strict utility maximizers, to possess all the information about the consequences of their actions or to have the capacity to process this information¹¹. Building on these characteristics it can be argued, like Schimmelfennig, that “the assumption of rational states acting in a materially structured system and the rationalist indifference to actor-specific cognitions and individual as well as social meanings suggest an *objectivist* analysis”¹². Moreover, theories that are rooted in rational institutionalism emphasize that agents operate according to the logic of consequentiality, not according to the logic of appropriateness. “In a logic of consequentiality, behaviors are driven by preferences and expectations about consequences.”¹³ and this logic is associated with anticipatory choice. On the other hand, the logic of appropriateness is associated with obligatory action¹⁴ and it involves fulfilling the obligations of a role in a situation¹⁵ and actions are chosen by recognizing a situation as being familiar, typical.

Returning to the other characteristics of liberal IG, it is worth mentioning that the latter is using three theoretical subcomponents: a liberal or societal theory of national preference formation; a theory of international negotiations and a functional theory of institutional choice¹⁶. The main assumption of liberal IG is that rational and unitary states are the most important actors in the international anarchical context and international institutions such as the EU are the result of negotiations between states that “continue to enjoy pre-eminent decision-making power and political legitimacy”¹⁷. The “unitary actor” character of the state is given by the fact that domestic political

⁸ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, “Liberal Intergovernmentalism”, 67-68.

⁹ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, “Liberal Intergovernmentalism”, 85.

¹⁰ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe. Rules and Rethoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18-19.

¹¹ Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO...*, 19;

¹² Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO...*, 21, author’s emphasis;

¹³ James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions. The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 160;

¹⁴ March and Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions...*, 23;

¹⁵ March and Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions...*, 160-161;

¹⁶ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, “Liberal Intergovernmentalism”, 69;

¹⁷ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, “Liberal Intergovernmentalism”, 68;

negotiations, representation and diplomacy generate a consistent preference function¹⁸. However, this does not mean that domestic actors don't play an independent and significant role in the negotiations beyond the state because "multiple representation can be consistent with the rational actor model - as long as it is consistent with a preference ordering."¹⁹ Thus, the liberal character of IG comes from the fact that it offers an interpretation of national preference formation which tries to take full account of the diversity of commercial, industrial, monetary and social interests in a state and "the readiness of the nation-state to negotiate agreements if the complex balance of different domestic interests requires it"²⁰. As one of the analysts and admirers of Moravcsik's theory, Roger Morgan, observes, although the theoretician of liberal IG accepts that the idea of Europe –the vision of a European federation- has played some role in the integration process, Moravcsik insists that "the EC has been, for the most part, the deliberate creation of statesmen and citizens seeking to realize economic interest through traditional diplomatic means". The paradox is that these traditional means lead to a result which is very non-traditional indeed: the persistent widening and deepening of the EC/EU by "repeated transfers of sovereign prerogatives"²¹.

From a liberal IG perspective, international cooperation can be explained by three processes: states define their preferences, then they negotiate agreements and they create or adjust institutions in order to secure certain outcomes²². Thus, Moravcsik considers that "EU integration can be best understood as a series of rational choices made by national leaders. These choices responded to constraints and opportunities stemming from the economic interests of powerful domestic constituents, the relative power of states stemming from asymmetrical interdependence, and the role of institutions in bolstering the credibility of interstate commitments"²³. His perspective was sometimes criticized because it favours economic interests and explanations dominated by producers' interests. This critique seems legitimate taking into consideration that the supporters of liberal IG acknowledge that its ideal application on a concrete case is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)²⁴. CAP is a policy which has a prevailing economic side dominated by the interests of the producers. Moreover, Moravcsik considers that state preferences regarding European integration have reflected mainly concrete economic interests rather than other general concerns like security or European ideals. However, Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig acknowledge that in non-economic domains, like foreign policy, the economic factor can be less important in calculations regarding a specific policy. Also, the authors admit that geopolitical interests had a role, albeit a secondary one, in European integration²⁵.

Concerning the relative bargaining power –considered by liberal intergovernmentalists a crucial factor in determining the outcomes of an international negotiation, they argue that it is determined by asymmetrical interdependence: the uneven distribution of the benefits of an agreement, and by the information about preferences and agreements²⁶.

The institutional framework is considered by liberal IG as an important element in facilitating positive sum negotiations²⁷. Institutions help states to collectively arrive at a superior

¹⁸ Moravcsik's theory of state preference formation resembles the logic of two-level games theory in foreign policy analysis. The seminal article for this theory is Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", *International Organization* 42, 3 (1988): 427-460.

¹⁹ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 86, n. 4;

²⁰ Roger Morgan, "A European 'society of states' - but only states of mind?", *International Affairs* 76, 3 (2000): 568.

²¹ Moravcsik *apud* Morgan, "A European 'society of states'...", 568-569.

²² Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 68-69.

²³ Moravcsik, *apud* Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 69.

²⁴ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 77-79.

²⁵ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 70.

²⁶ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 71.

²⁷ Rosamond, *Theories...*, 142; Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 72.

outcome by reducing transaction costs and providing the necessary information in order to reduce state's uncertainty about each other's behavior and future preferences. Also, liberal intergovernmentalists claim to accept some of the assumptions traditionally attributed to neofunctionalism and historical institutionalism such as the fact that institutions can have unintended and unwanted consequences but also argue that the later theories overinterpret their consequences²⁸. Moreover, Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig accept two limitations of liberal IG²⁹. The first is related to the fact their theory explains best policy-making in areas where social preferences are relatively well defined. Thus, "the weaker and more diffuse the domestic constituency behind a policy and the more modest or uncertain are "the substantial implications of a choice, the less predictable are national preferences and the more likely ideological preferences and beliefs" may be influential. The second limitation acknowledged by the authors refers to the fact that in the case of both high transaction costs and asymmetrical information, supranational institutions will have greater influence.

As I have mentioned above, traditional IG were sceptical regarding advanced political integration, especially in the fields of foreign policy and security. These domains were considered as highly connected with the survival of the state and belonged to the deepest layers of state sovereignty. Thus, IG insisted that the analysis of these areas can be approached appropriately only through interpretation of intergovernmental negotiations by the schools of thought tributary to rational institutionalism.

In his analysis regarding CFSP, Koenig-Archibugi³⁰ argues that the integration, generally and specifically in the field of CFSP is decided in Intergovernmental Conferences, that lead to "grand" bargains, whose terms are written in the basic treaties of the EU. Regarding integration in the CFSP area, the European governments had different positions that influenced the duration of the negotiations. The author mentions the situation that occurred during the 1996-1997 IGC which lead to the signing of the Amsterdam Treaty, when EU foreign ministers or their representatives met more than twenty times to discuss the possible revisions of the provisions regarding CFSP in the Maastricht Treaty. Generally, the option for deeper integration in the case of the CFSP is related to pooling sovereignty (when states accept to take decisions that apply to all without the possibility of national veto) or to delegating sovereignty (the process through which states transfer their decisional power regarding an issue or a field to supranational institutions in the EU). Concretely, the pooling of sovereignty refers to accepting the qualified majority voting system in the Council of Ministers for the decisions in the CFSP field (or at least decisions regarding implementation) and delegating sovereignty means increasing the powers of the Commission and the European Parliament in CFSP, mitigating the intergovernmental character of the CFSP through the fusion of the three pillars and financing CFSP operations from the community budget instead of ad-hoc contributions from the states.³¹

Approaching the issues of state preferences, Koenig-Archibugi makes the observation that although, in the 1990's, most states that wanted a supranational CFSP also wanted including defence in the EU's competences, this coincidence was not general: some states supporting the deepening of the integration didn't want to extend it to issues of defence and security and viceversa. This observation is confirmed in the case of France, that encouraged the creation of a European defence identity but opposed taking decisions on a supranational level in CFSP or in defence and security matters. The position of the UK, until 1998, was to oppose both undertakings. From 1998, the attitude of the British government approximated the French government's position: they did not oppose a role in defence for EU, but kept its reticence towards supranational procedures, favouring

²⁸ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 75.

²⁹ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 76-77.

³⁰ Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, "Explaining Government Preferences for Institutional Change in EU Foreign and Security Policy", *International Organization* 58, 1 (2004): 137-174.

³¹ Koenig-Archibugi, "Explaining Government Preferences...", 140-141.

intergovernmental procedures. Koenig-Archibugi attributes the progress of CFSP to the convergence of French and British positions. By contrast, the Netherlands, during the 1990-1991 IGC, supported a supranational foreign policy but opposed the development of a European defence³².

As I have mentioned earlier, the standpoint of rationalist institutionalism assumes that the agents act according to instrumental rationality and that the pre-eminent explanation is based on material factors. From here it can be deduced that governments would prefer different institutional arrangements because they have different interests and different resources. In the first interpretation, focusing on interests, governments support or oppose the creation of institutions or decision-making procedures if they believe or not that these will determine results that correspond to their exogenously determined interests³³. Thus, in the context of the CFSP, states' opposition to supranational institutions is related to the concern that once introduced, the EU would take decisions that would be contrary to state preferences. Regarding the pooling of sovereignty, states might fear that the supranational institutions might have the tendency to privilege the preferences of a majority of member states, especially where the preferences of some states do not correspond with those of the majority.

The second interpretation, that stresses the distribution of resources (power) as an explaining factor of the variations in the interests of each state is usually associated with realist theories in international relations. From this perspective, the states whose power allows them to pursue an independent and effective foreign policy do not manifest the tendency to give up their autonomy in favour of supranational institutions. On the other hand, less powerful states are more interested in developing a more integrated foreign and security policy because of two reasons: 1. in the hope that their influence in global issues will rise when the EU will act as a global actor; 2. because a more robust institutional framework might constrain the more powerful states, whose foreign policy might become threatening, not to become a danger in the future.³⁴

1. The constructivist approach, integration studies and the theorizing on CFSP

In this section of the paper I will emphasize the explanations provided by the constructivist approaches³⁵ regarding European integration in the field of foreign and security policy. In the first part of the section I describe the general characteristics and assumptions of the constructivist approaches in international relations and their most important versions. I will then try to present their relevance for integration theories and their explanatory value in the context of the evolution of integration.

Although they differ in some of their assumptions, the constructivist approaches exhibit some common characteristics. First of all, they question the claim of rationalist approaches to explain the socially constructed world solely through conventional procedures of rationalist research³⁶. Another characteristic of the approaches discussed here is their scepticism towards "grand theories" that try to explain all social practices regardless of space and time³⁷. Constructivism tends towards a rather contextualized theorization that does not claim to be a general theory of social sciences and most constructivists even refuse to call their explanatory model a "theory", preferring to consider it an analytical framework³⁸.

³² Koenig-Archibugi, "Explaining Government Preferences..." 140, n. 9.

³³ Koenig-Archibugi, "Explaining Government Preferences...", 143.

³⁴ Koenig-Archibugi, "Explaining Government Preferences...", 144.

³⁵ These approaches are often called "sociological institutionalism", defined as "a version of institutional research inspired by constructivism" (Risse 2009: 158). However, the approaches discussed here include a broader range of approaches that stress other factors besides institutions, such as Self/Other interactions – which may be included in the strand of poststructuralism/critical constructivism.

³⁶ Rosamond, *Theories...*, 172.

³⁷ Thomas Risse, "Social Constructivism and European Integration" in *European Integration Theory*, ed. Thomas Diez, and Antje Wiener (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 145.

³⁸ Christian Reus-Smith, "Constructivismul" in *Teorii ale relațiilor internaționale*, ed. Burchill, S. et al (Iași: Institutul European, 2008), 221.

The first assumption of constructivist approaches that I will present³⁹ refers to the importance that they assign to ideal or normative factors. Thus, “to the extent that structures can be said to shape the behaviour of social and political actors [...] constructivists hold that normative or ideational structures are just as important as material structures”⁴⁰. As Wendt argues: “this does not mean that material power and interests are unimportant, but rather that their meaning and effects depend on the social structure of the system”⁴¹ to which they belong. Moreover, the normative or ideational structure in which the agent acts constitutes his social identity. This assumption is related to the fact that the sociological institutionalism approaches emphasize what I previously defined as the “logic of appropriateness”. Unlike instrumental behaviour, the one guided by rules and norms differs through the fact that actors try to do the “appropriate thing”, to determine the adequate rule for a given social situation. Concerning the analytical importance given to the non-material structure it can be argued that the constructivist approaches are often regarded as privileging structural rather than agent-based explanations. But this observation is only valid for some of the versions of constructivism, as we shall see below.

Another assumption of constructivist approaches is that identities structure interests which in turn influence behaviour. Unlike the approaches in rational institutionalism, the constructivists emphasize the fact that the interests and preferences of the actors are endogenous to processes of institutional interactions, emanating from them. Moreover, the constructivist author Bill McSweeney raises the argument that identity and interests are mutually constituted⁴².

A third major assumption of constructivism is that agents and structures are mutually constituted – although an author such as Wendt is considered to privilege the structure. Thus, the majority of constructivists claim to share the structurationist perspective which emphasizes both the impact of non-material structures on identities and interests and the role of actors’ practices in maintaining and transforming these structures⁴³.

The assumptions shared by the constructivist schools in international relations can be correlated with the ones in integration studies. The first observation I need to make in order to determine the assumptions of constructivism in integration studies is that even though it can be used to generate theoretical propositions and hypotheses that can be tested or supplemented with rationalist explanations of institutional effects, authors like Risse consider that constructivism does not present itself as a concrete integration theory, but rather as an ontological or meta-theoretical perspective⁴⁴. The same author considers that the emphasis on the ideational, cultural and discursive origins of national preferences is complementary, rather than substitutable to agent-based rationalist approaches⁴⁵. However, the extended use of constructivism in integration studies, if not as a theory but as an analytical framework, and the interest shown in integrating its assumptions by the representatives of other integration theories (Frank Schimmelfennig⁴⁶, Ulrich Sedelmeier⁴⁷) can be interpreted as a confirmation of the theoretical and analytical value provided by this approach.

³⁹ This presentation of the general characteristics of constructivist approaches draws on Reus-Smith, “Constructivismul”.

⁴⁰ Reus-Smith, “Constructivismul”, 215.

⁴¹ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 20;

⁴² Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Ch. 7 especially 130.

⁴³ Reus-Smith, “Constructivismul”, 216.

⁴⁴ Risse, “Social Constructivism...”, 158.

⁴⁵ Risse, “Social Constructivism...”, 146.

⁴⁶ Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO...*

⁴⁷ Ulrich Sedelmeier, „Collective Identity”, in *Contemporary European Foreign Policy*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes et al. (London: Sage, 2004).

In the field of European integration theories, constructivist approaches must be based on three foundations: to view the units on every level as social constructs, to assess the political significance of these units in the nature of the processes for which they provide containers and not to assume the primacy of any level⁴⁸. As we will see in the next part of this section, these epistemological directions were more or less pursued in constructivist research regarding the EU. However, regardless of the privileged level of analysis (system, unit, or both), constructivist approaches take into consideration the fact that states' identities influence their interests and policies, even in the field of security, considered to be a part of high politics. In addition, changes in the collective identity of actors inside states can modify their interests in the international environment⁴⁹. Thus, in the case of the EU, collective identities may affect the attitude of governments towards European treaty reform in two ways which are often complementary: governmental elites make choices on European integration on the basis of their identities and/or the public develops preferences to which the elites conform in order to gain votes. This last relation includes influences from both directions: even though elites are constrained by public opinion, the latter can be influenced by the discourses of the elites⁵⁰.

Koenig-Archibugi also considers that a supplementary explanatory factor (in addition to the identity of governmental elites and of the public), important for the perceptions on supranational integration in CFSP, is the constitutional culture of a state. The latter is defined as the image that a state has regarding its sovereignty and the legitimacy and practice of multi-level governance inside its territory. The author identifies two such cultures: one that conceives of sovereignty as unitary and indivisible and whose prerogatives are mostly centralized (France, UK), the other in which the prerogatives of sovereignty can and ought to be distributed between multiple territorial levels, according to the principles of subsidiarity or of comparative efficiency. The article of Koenig-Archibugi concludes that keeping the prerogatives of sovereignty at the level of the state is not a purpose shared equally by all states, because some of them have shown a willingness to promote strong forms of political integration in Europe⁵¹.

Another direction of research in constructivist integration studies emphasizes the treaty reform process, a research subject traditionally dominated by liberal intergovernmentalists. However, in the constructivist approach, the focus is rather on the structurationist perspective -as opposed to a liberal IG focus on actors with exogenously determined interests, and on accepting a larger category of actors exerting influence on the treaty reform process. The influence of structure refers to the established formalities and routine practices of intergovernmental conferences and to the path-dependent institutional developments but also to the discourses that constrain and define the preferences of the actors involved⁵².

A different direction of research, sharing the same analytical framework, seeks to explain and interpret the enlargement of the EU in the context of the substantial financial cost involved by this process, especially in the last wave. This approach stresses that the enlargement to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe can be explained only by taking into consideration the acceptance of norms and of shared standards of legitimacy according to which the EU cannot reject the requests of membership from countries that invoke values like democracy and the free market. Such an approach that appeals to the explanatory power of ideational and normative factors is characteristic to Frank

⁴⁸ Thomas Christiansen, "Reconstructing European Space: From Territorial Politics to Multilevel Governance", in *Reflective Approaches to European Governance*, ed. Knud Erik Jørgensen (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1997), 54;

⁴⁹ Koenig-Archibugi, "Explaining Government Preferences...", 145;

⁵⁰ Koenig-Archibugi, "Explaining Government Preferences...", 146-147;

⁵¹ Koenig-Archibugi, "Explaining Government Preferences...", 166;

⁵² Thomas Christiansen and Knud Erik Jørgensen, "The Amsterdam Process: A Structurationist Perspective on EU Treaty Reform", *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)* 3, 1(1999): 3-4;

Schimmelfennig⁵³. Although he is rather a liberal IG his analyses try to find a “third way” between rationalist and constructivist research programmes. However, for Schimmelfennig the norms of democracy and free market do not constitute the identity of member governments of the EU, but are rather external constraints for governments that are preoccupied by their reputation on the international stage.

Another constructivist way to approach issues concerning the CFSP and enlargement is through reference to the construction of EU’s identity in relation to a significant “Other”. For example, the discourse about the EU as a normative or civilian power constructs the USA as its “Other”⁵⁴. In a different line of thought, the EU’s “Other” is not a spatial one, but a temporal “Other”. As Ole Waever argues, it is “Europe’s own past that should not be allowed to become its future”⁵⁵. In this interpretation, the European past, characterized by militarism, nationalism and the balance of power as a norm of behaviour in international relations is the major securitization that the EU states operate. Scholars such as Rumelili reject this view arguing that internally located difference does not exclude difference located externally and that the latter can be a source of tension in the Self/Other interactions between the EU and its neighbours and prospective members⁵⁶.

A closely related research strand analyzes two opposite trends in the construction of the European polity. The first emphasizes the idea of “United in Diversity” and values like democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and social market economy. From this perspective, the European institutions seek to construct a European post-national civic identity whose values are sought and embraced by the ones who aspire to become members. Such a conceptualization of identity is inclusive to those perceived as being the “Other”. A second construction of European identity is the more exclusive one that emphasizes the idea of “fortress Europe”, with a common history and cultural heritage based on Judeo-Christian values. This last vision of Europe was brought forward by Euro-sceptics and right-wing politicians and became salient in the debates concerning immigration from outside the EU and Turkey’s prospective membership in the EU⁵⁷.

The methods of research used by the above mentioned constructivist approaches include the analysis of the dominant discourses and practices adopted in the performance of identity and the analysis of the processes of socialization. From the perspective of these approaches, discourses can be seen as guiding political action towards appropriate behaviour in the context of an agreed environment⁵⁸.

In conclusion, the added value of constructivist approaches to European integration is threefold⁵⁹. First of all, by accepting the mutual constitution of agent and structure, it can help us understand better the impact of Europeanization on the state. The fact that constructivism emphasizes the constitutive effects of laws, rules and policies, allows us to study how are actors’ identities and interests shaped. Membership in the EU influences the way in which actors perceive themselves and are perceived by the others and involves the voluntary acceptance of a specific political order as legitimate⁶⁰. Moreover, analyses from a structurationist perspective focus both on the way in which the global structural environment contributes to the emergence of an identity for the EU and on the

⁵³ Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO...*

⁵⁴ Helene, Sjurson, „The EU as a ‘normative’ power: how can this be?”, *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, 2 (2006): 235-251.

⁵⁵ Ole Waever, “The EU as a Security Actor: Reflections from a Pessimistic Constructivist on Post-sovereign Security Orders”, in *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration. Power, Security and Community*, ed. Morten Kelstrup and Michael Williams (London: Routledge, 2000), 280.

⁵⁶ Bahar Rumelili, *Constructing Regional Community and Order in Europe and Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁵⁷ Risse, “Social Constructivism...”, 153-155.

⁵⁸ Rosamond, *Theories...*, 120.

⁵⁹ Risse, “Social Constructivism...”, 151.

⁶⁰ Risse, “Social Constructivism...”, 148.

way that actors inside de EU define the global environment in order to give a reason for a cohesive identity of the EU⁶¹. Second of all, using constructivism we can investigate the degree to which the cohesion of the EU in international relations influences the perceptions of other actors about EU's actorness⁶². The third way in which constructivism can help us study European integration is through the discursive approaches that allow us to examine how the EU and Europe are constructed, how other actors relate to this structure and how a European public sphere is developed.

The dynamics of identities and interests inside the CFSP

In the next section I will make a short presentation of the evolution of the CFSP without going into details. Then, I will approach the analysis of the CFSP from the perspective of the assumptions presented in the previous sections and I will include relevant examples in the course of the evolution of CFSP.

The origins of the CFSP can be detected in the European Political Cooperation (EPC) which was started in 1970. Before this moment only cooperation inside international trade negotiations existed. The necessity of creating an instrument which would be more efficient than the EPC, for managing foreign policy and security, was illustrated by events such as the Gulf War, the wars in Yugoslavia and other external factors associated most often with the end of the Cold War. The essential characteristic of the EPC was its strictly intergovernmental structure and its weak institutionalization.

The entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty also meant the creation of CFSP. The latter was to be a part of the so-called pillar structure together with the European Communities -the first pillar- and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)-the third pillar. Despite the criticism from the partisans of a more profound "communitarisation" of the CFSP, the Maastricht Treaty represented the moment when the CFSP was institutionalized as a sector of European policy. The importance of the TEU for the institutionalization and governance of the CFSP is illustrated by four effects that it had: it involved a greater coherence and rationalization of policy-making in this field; it made CFSP legally binding for the member states, including compliance mechanisms; it introduced several authoritative decision-making rules, such as qualified majority voting (QMV) –even if for a small number of issues- and allowed for a greater degree of autonomy for the organizational actors in the European foreign policy⁶³. What is significant for the TEU is the explicit mention, in the Preamble, article B and article J.4.1 the necessity for the EU to assert its identity on the international scene that could manifest itself through a common defence policy, "which might in time lead to a common defence"⁶⁴.

The next treaty taken into discussion, the Amsterdam Treaty, included, besides the provisions related to the coherence of the CFSP and common interests, reforms in three other areas of CFSP: decision making, implementation and financing⁶⁵. Regarding the first area, it was agreed upon codifying the doctrine of "flexibility" which permitted a state to abstain from any action inside the CFSP even if he was required to accept the EU decision and abstain from actions that might endanger it. Although this provision was an important exception from the rule of consensus, it didn't apply to decisions in the field of defense and didn't exclude the right to opposition from a member state that could thus block an action. Regarding implementation and representation, the Treaty of Amsterdam introduced the position of High Representative for the CFSP, which also held the position of secretary general of the Council of Ministers, but was subordinated to the EU Presidency.

⁶¹ Ben Rosamond, "Discourses of Globalization and European Identities", in *The Social Construction of Europe*, ed. Thomas Christiansen *et al* (Sage: Londra, 2001), 158-173.

⁶² Rosamond, *Theories...*, 179.

⁶³ Michael E. Smith, *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: The Institutionalization of Cooperation* (Cambridge: University Press, New York, 2004), 177;

⁶⁴ TUE, Article B.

⁶⁵ Smith, *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy...*, 227-231;

Regarding financing, the treaty provided for the first time that the EC budget will be the main source of finance for the CFSP, although the Council could unanimously decide otherwise.

After Amsterdam, the next significant treaty was Nice which entered into force on the 1st of February 2003. Even if the European Security and Defense Policy was a key subject in the discussions from Nice, and “although until that time the Western European Union was effectively merged with the EU, specific treaty provisions in this domain actually were quite few”⁶⁶. A notable exception through which the ESDP was mentioned in Nice was the renaming of the “Political Committee” in the “Political and Security Committee” and charging it with exercising political control (under the responsibility of the Council) and strategic direction of crisis management operations. Another significant evolution in the Nice Treaty (determined by the controversy generated by the composition of the Austrian government in 2000) was allowing for a majority of four fifths of the member states in order to suspend certain rights for a member that violated EU’s fundamental principles. Regarding the decision-making process for CFSP, Nice brought the evolution of the principle of “flexibility” into “enhanced cooperation” by basing it on provisions applied to JHA in Amsterdam. “Enhanced cooperation” was meant to safeguard the values and serve the interests of the EU whenever it manifested its identity as a coherent force on the international scene. However, using consolidated cooperation was limited because of the lengthy process of approving an action through this method and the fact that it did not apply to matters that might have military or defence implications⁶⁷.

The next important treaty for the European integration in all areas, not only CFSP, was the Lisbon Treaty. So let us note what were the most significant changes brought about by this treaty. First of all, it eliminated the pillar structure of the EU. However, if we take into consideration the fact that this structure referred to different sets of rules for decision-making, the second pillar is still in place. This is because although Lisbon extended the “community method” of decision-making to all domains of EU action, CFSP remained outside its area of application⁶⁸. The Lisbon Treaty transformed the High Representative for CFSP, which only had the attribution to assist the Presidency, in High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. He/She is charged with ensuring the coherence of external action and is supported in fulfilling this mission by the European External Action Service. Thus, the problems of the former Representative, which was evaluated as “a foreign policy spokesperson with no real resources or mandate”⁶⁹, were surmounted. However, a potential source of dispute may be the fact that the High Representative shares the function of external representation with the President of the European Council.

With regard to decision-making procedures, the Lisbon Treaty stipulates a bridging clause (*pasesrelle*) that allows for the European Council to extend, through unanimity, the area of QMV in the field of CFSP (but not in the field of Common Security and Defense Policy). “Thus, the Lisbon Treaty preserves a dynamic element in the CFSP by which the unanimity rule can be gradually restricted without needing to follow the procedure of treaty revision”⁷⁰. Concerning implementation, a provision worth mentioning is the possibility to use enhanced cooperation in defence matters. Referring to the values and the identity of the EU, the Treaty formulates them as objectives that the EU should not only respect but also actively promote. Thus, we will have cases in which it will be necessary that the Common Commercial Policy “not only pursues trade-related objectives [...] but takes into account and even contributes to other dimensions, such as human rights and sustainable development”⁷¹.

⁶⁶ Smith, *Europe’s Foreign and Security Policy...*, 234;

⁶⁷ Smith, *Europe’s Foreign and Security Policy...*, 235-236;

⁶⁸ Jan Wouters, Dominic Coppens, Bart De Meester “The European Union’s External Relations after the Lisbon Treaty” in *The Lisbon Treaty EU Constitutionalism without a Constitutional Treaty?*, ed. Stefan Griller and Jacques Ziller (Vienna: SpringerWienNewYork, 2008), 147-148;

⁶⁹ Smith, *Europe’s Foreign and Security Policy...*, 258;

⁷⁰ Wouters, Coppens, De Meester, “The European Union’s External Relations...”, 163;

⁷¹ Wouters, Coppens, De Meester, “The European Union’s External Relations...”, 148-149;

Identity: explanatory factor or epiphenomenon

In one of studies concerning the CFSP, Smith⁷² argues that interests also depend on social interaction and discursive practices, so that member states of the EU can find cooperative solutions even without a hegemonic leader of quid pro quo negotiations. As I've seen, IG stresses the fact that states behave in terms of narrowly defined rational instrumentality and their positions regarding policies derive from internal concerns of governmental elites. Smith argues that rather than following this path, EU member states have learned to define some of their foreign policy preferences, even if not all, in terms of collectively determined values and purposes. This does not mean that member states started to behave irrationally, but rather that the shared purposes of the EU have become part of their interest calculations because of the evolution of EPC/CFSP. In the latter case, the main reason for the gradual transition from the logic of consequentiality to the logic of appropriateness is the fact that the EU's institutional mechanisms discouraged the formation of fixed national preferences on a rising number of issues. These mechanisms also socialized the involved elites in the direction of articulating a common European policy on these issues.

According to the logic of appropriateness, the decision-makers and policy-makers do not just calculate which strategy is the best in order to promote their interests in a given situation, but also ask themselves which is their specific role in that situation and what obligations prescribes that role. Thus, the formation of preferences -which actors may pursue strategically – is endogenous to social interaction and to the process of identity and social role formation⁷³. From this perspective, highly institutionalized social environments condition actors to rely on values, ideas and shared knowledge when they make a decision. When institutions are missing or weak, as was the case with the EPC, states resort to egoistical decisions based on their specific foreign policy traditions. Thus, while rational institutionalist approaches can explain the intergovernmental origins and the initial limited purpose of the EPC, its expansion, impact and results require arguments based on constructivist assumptions.

Unlike cooperation on economic matters where institutions often are a rational instrumental response to the problem of incomplete contracting, political cooperation does not involve a clear result that can be easily measured by participant states⁷⁴. Thus, the CFSP is a model for positive integration, which involves more abstract and symbolic purposes, a domain in which preference formation and perceptions on social standards are at least as important as strategic action. Moreover, the fact that the CFSP area does not have clear boundaries (because issues from different domains are included in its framework) the limits of intergovernmental explanations become even more significant. As argued by Smith⁷⁵, the fundamental principle of cooperation in the area of foreign policy is that UE member states must avoid adopting fixed positions on important issues without previous consultation with their partners. This principle suggests we cannot view cooperation in this area as a rational instrumental process in which states bring their predetermined, fixed positions and preferences to the negotiation table. Rather, the reason that underlies CFSP decision-making is the gradual institutionalization of communicative processes directed towards "learning by action" and creative, incremental adaptation.

Smith considers that this type of interaction, that substitutes the actor-centred rational instrumentality, can be identified through three criteria. First of all, the way decisions are made is different: debate is privileged over negotiation; negotiating favours is not the main objective and participants try to find solutions based on the common definition of the problem. Even when states show a preference for status-quo and most of the others favour collective action, those that oppose

⁷² Michael E. Smith, "Institutionalization, Policy Adaptation and European Foreign Policy Cooperation", *European Journal of International Relations* 10, 95 (2004): 95-136.

⁷³ Sedelmeier, "Collective Identity".

⁷⁴ Smith, "Institutionalization...", 101.

⁷⁵ Smith, "Institutionalization...", *ibidem*.

may accept a solution without resorting to negotiations. The result is an increased number of such middle positions that reflect the will of the group as a whole, not the lowest common denominator determined by the status-quo states.

The second phenomenon that may indicate the transition towards the logic of appropriateness refers to agenda setting and leadership. As noted before, versions of rational institutionalism, consider that the most powerful states have the last word on foreign and security policy. In cases where the logic of appropriateness plays a greater role, power is defined in terms of arguments, language and ideas oriented towards collective action. Thus, assuming leadership may come from any legitimate actor among states or EU institutions, not only from those with a greater material power.

One last element, indicative for the existence of a substitute for instrumental rationality, is linked to changing the institutions and policies. Thus, this will depend not only on the discourse of the participants, but also on the inclusion of new actors in the system and on the expansion and redefinition of common values. This type of change may indicate that state interests are not necessarily determined solely by the domestic contexts and that they are more flexible than rational institutionalists argue.

As we have seen, with the Maastricht Treaty and then with the Amsterdam Treaty, the foreign policy system of the EU, represented until then by the EPC of the EC, started to develop from being just a forum of debates mostly decentralized to a system with its own cooperation culture which involved standards of behaviour, shared meanings and a common language. Maastricht bought about the extension of representatives (“CFSP counsellors”) in the COREPER and more representatives from other institutions such as the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. Then, the Treaty of Amsterdam created the position of High Representative for CFSP and increased the number of special representatives for certain problems. These provisions increased the impact of communication through formal (like the COREU) and informal networks and encouraged the formation of epistemic communities of experts⁷⁶. This system, supplemented by the rule of consulting the other states before adopting a decision in order not to take them by surprise, lead to the institutionalization of the “coordination reflex”. As Hill and Wallace note: “The liberal institutionalists’ image of rational policy-makers bargaining with each other within established regimes leaves too little room for this *engrenage* effect [...] Officials and ministers who sit together on planes and round tables in Brussels or in each other’s capitals begin to judge ‘rationality’ from within a different framework from that they began with”⁷⁷.

In addition, concrete actions collective and common declarations increased in number since Maastricht, including positions that did not necessarily reflect the interests of the most powerful states. Among the most efficient and significant collective action generated by the creation of the CFSP and defining collective interests in the EU was the Stability Pact for Central and Eastern Europe⁷⁸. This involved the cooperation of the Commission and the member states in order to pressure candidate countries in the area to solve problems related to borders and minorities. The most important treaties and agreements generated by the Pact were the so-called “good neighbour” treaties between Hungary and Romania and Hungary and Slovakia. Aside from the Pact, there have been other common actions, “most of limited scope but with considerable political impact” which included support for the Middle East and former Yugoslavia peace processes and for the democratic transition in the Russian Federation and South Africa⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ Smith, „Institutionalization...”, 106.

⁷⁷ Christopher Hill and William Wallace “Introduction: Actors and Actions” in *The Actors in Europe’s Foreign Policy*, ed. Christopher Hill (London: Routledge, 1996), 12.

⁷⁸ Fraser Cameron, “Building a common foreign policy: do institutions matter?” in *A common foreign policy for Europe? Competing visions of the CFSP* ed. Helene Sjursen and John Peterson, (Londra: Routledge, 1998), 68.

⁷⁹ Cameron, “Building a common foreign policy...”, *ibidem*.

Sedelmeier⁸⁰ illustrates the impact of the EU identity through some notable examples. I mention here only three of the most significant. The first of these examples refers to the diplomatic sanctions imposed on the Austrian government of 2000 which included the Freedom Party lead by Jorg Haider. Although this example concerns the foreign policies of the member states rather than the foreign policy of the EU, the reaction is hard to explain without referring to the impact of the identity of the EU as a promoter and defender of democracy and human rights. The governments that initiated the sanctions might have had instrumental reasons, aiming not so much at Haider, but at the domestic party politics, in an attempt to discredit extreme-right parties or centre-right that accepted cooperation with them⁸¹. Even from this perspective, it is difficult to understand the participation of all member governments without taking into consideration the role of the EU in the field of democracy and human rights and the fact that this role conferred a strong legitimacy to the initiative. It would have been problematic for a government to refuse to participate since this could be perceived as a refusal to act according to the EU's identity. Thus, even from the perspective of an analysis that focuses on instrumental motives, the instrumental use of references to the EU's identity worked only because the role of the EU had become taken for granted. Moreover, argues Sedelmeier, this example illustrates that "instrumental 'norm entrepreneurship', motivated by domestic party political struggles, can contribute to 'norm emergence' at the EU level."⁸²

Another example cited by Sedelmeier is the collective endorsement by the EU for the military intervention in Kosovo. From a rational-instrumentalist perspective this is hard to explain considering that some of the EU states are neutral and in many cases the public opinion was critical of the NATO intervention. "Some policy makers were concerned that the bombing campaign would be counterproductive to achieving the declared goals, while others were concerned about the negative precedents it might set for the credibility of international law and the role of the UN."⁸³ However, it can be argued that the members of the EU that could have opposed the military intervention consented to the declaration of endorsement made by the European Council in Berlin because this document justified such an action by referring to the fundamental norms of the EU's identity.

The third example concerns the decision to collectively promote the abolition of the death penalty. Thus, the decision is difficult to explain on the basis of material incentives: there are few rewards from the public opinion and it creates tensions with states with capital punishment, especially concerning extraditions. Sedelmeier explains this decision by emphasizing "the legitimacy that the EU's identity bestowed on the arguments of these advocates as an important resource."⁸⁴

As we can see from these empirical examples, identity can be used successfully as an explanatory factor both for the interactions between member states and for their relations with outside actors. Even though in some cases promoting policies based on norms may be motivated by egoistical interests of some governments, it is less likely that these policies are adopted collectively by all governments in the absence of some characteristics of the EU's identity such as safeguarding democracy and human rights. "Thus, while identity-based advocacy might have been used instrumentally, such instrumental use only induces compliant behaviour because EU identity has acquired a certain degree of taken-for-grantedness among the member governments"⁸⁵.

⁸⁰ Sedelmeier, "Collective Identity", 123-140;

⁸¹ Sedelmeier, "Collective Identity", 133.

⁸² Sedelmeier, "Collective Identity", 134.

⁸³ Sedelmeier, "Collective Identity", *ibidem*.

⁸⁴ Sedelmeier, "Collective Identity", 135.

⁸⁵ Sedelmeier, "Collective Identity", 137.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to present the debate between two theoretical approaches of European integration in the field of CFSP: rational institutionalism and constructivism, and the main schools of thought that use their analytical framework. I have noted that the assumptions underlying the two approaches and the explanatory factors they each emphasize are often different although some theoreticians stress the fact that they are not incompatible and try to use them in a complementary way. I've also noted that some policies, attitudes and declarations emanating from the CFSP are better explained by referring to the interactions between factors such as the identity, values and norms of the actors than by emphasizing power and bargaining games in which the maximization of the benefits of the actors is sought.

Even if interests, material and negotiation power and interests defined according to these factors are useful starting points in analyzing the potential influence of states on early institutional evolution, power alone does not explain the final outcomes of this evolution or of the policies pursued inside the CFSP. Moreover, we cannot explain the evolutionary stages, some of them of major importance, of the CFSP only by referring to the logic of consequentiality. The latter must be supplemented with the logic of appropriateness and with the emphasis on the transformational potential of actors' identities and interests in the process of socialization inside the EU.

In accordance with authors such as Meyer and Strickmann⁸⁶ or Fearon and Wendt, I also argue for a pragmatic approach that stresses the interaction between changing material structures and ideas because "rationalism and constructivism are most fruitfully viewed pragmatically as analytical tools, rather than as metaphysical positions or empirical descriptions of the world"⁸⁷. Or as Ole Waever put it, even if power politics can explain the initial emergence of cooperation in the European area during the Cold War they might not explain much in the present because "situations can obtain different supporting conditions later on"⁸⁸. Thus, in order to grasp the full dynamics of the European project we need to investigate its social construction and its interaction with all relevant actors.

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⁸⁶ Christoph O. Meyer and Eva Strickmann, "Solidifying Constructivism: How Material and Ideational Factors Interact in European Defence", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, 1 (2011): 61-81;

⁸⁷ Fearon and Wendt *apud* Meyer and Strickmann, "Solidifying Constructivism..." 67;

⁸⁸ Ole Waever, "Insecurity, security, and asecurity in the West European non-war community" in *Security Communities*, ed. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 75.

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