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# Understanding the Dynamics of European Politics*

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**Abstract:** There are fears that the development of a Europe of Variable Geometry, where distinct countries are able to select their policy preferences from a menu of historical policy options rather than signing up for new policy initiatives, provides a basis for destabilizing the European Project. However, the paper shows that this fear has no real basis. The reason is that when the political processes of the Project are considered in terms of political culture, two culturally based political factions can be argued to have emerged in Europe. Here, the distinct variable cultural positions actually stabilise the interactive political process. A detailed explanation of this is provided through both historical processes and the use of well developed theory.

**Keywords**: political culture; enlargement; regulation; political science

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## 1. A European Variable Geometry

The European Union (EU) was formed in 1957 and involved 6 countries that harbored hopes for the creation of a European wide project (Historymole, 2007), and its development occurred through five distinct enlargements. In a speech on July 10, 2000 at a Ministerial meeting the President of the European Parliament Nicole Fontaine asked if an increase in the size of the membership of the European Union to 27, 28 or even 30 Member States would change its very nature. It is not only the nature of the European Project that is changing; it is also its dynamics.

In 1997, the Amsterdam European Union summit focused on drafting a treaty to update and clarify the Maastricht Treaty. It was also interested in preparing the EU for enlargement and the entry of certain 'access countries' from the former Soviet bloc, which included Countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CCEE), as well as Malta and Cyprus. The UK government dropped its opt-out position on the social charter, and sections on public health, consumer protection and the powers of the European Parliament were strengthened in relation to a wide range of social

policies. In the Council of Ministers, decisions were not taken on by a simple majority vote or unanimity, but a qualified majority. Qualified majority voting (QMV) has effectively replaced unanimity voting, and has been applied to a range of issues including social exclusion, customs and data protection. Also, the Schengen Agreements abolishing border controls were incorporated into law for all EU states except the UK and Ireland, as well as enhanced co-operation on asylum, law enforcement and immigration issues.

With QMV the Treaty also provided for the conceptual emergence of integration échelonnée by adopting time or space differentials between Member States in their adopted policy profiles, referred to respectively as multi-tier, multi-track, multispeed, variable-geometry and à la carte. The multi-tier option would have a core group of full members, with acquired successive "circles" of differentiated associates. The multi-track Europe is aimed at a mode of integration whereby the pursuit of common objectives is driven by a group of Member States that are both willing and able to "deepen" their integration in some policy areas (the assumption being that the others will follow later). While admitting differences, the Member States maintained the same objectives, which would be eventually reached by all members in due time, and were all guaranteed full participation in the related decision-making processes. Like multi-track, multispeed provides for closer co-operation between those countries wanting closer integration on certain issues over time, though all Member States would ultimately reach the same policy profile, and avoids the notion of differentiated integration. The Europe of Variable Geometry (EVG) perhaps provides for the strongest development distinctions among Member States, allowing for a variety of profiles to co-exist, enabling enhanced co-operation and permitting pioneer groups and a vanguard of developmental activity (Barbier, 2004). According to Missiroli (1999:8), EVG provides for a

> "lasting or permanent separation between a core of countries and lesser developed integrative units. Such Europe differentiated by space, therefore, goes further in institutionalising diversity than a mode of integration differentiated by time: whereas the latter would define and maintain a full range of common objectives and goals, differentiation by space takes a less ambitious approach and acknowledges that, due to its internal diversity, Europe will and should organise itself, at least for the foreseeable future, around various integrative units".

The concept of EVG had an antecedent assignment associated with it as explained by Collins (1994:133,135, cited in Papoutsaki, E.,1999) and permitted the use of European institutions outside the European Community by a Member State of the Community to achieve goals unachievable through the institutions of the Community. The Europe à la carte would allow a Member State to pick and choose, as if from a menu, the policy area in which it would like to participate while at the same time be a minimum number of common objectives would be maintained. Each of the space and time forms of differentiation can be related to one another, and hence they all offer doom mongers for the stability of the European Project food for thought, as we shall see in due course.

So how did these options come about and why? To adequately respond to this question there is a need to understand something of the procedures of the European Project. Under the Treaty of Nice there are three pillars of policy provision: EC Treaty; Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP); and Police & Judicial co-operation in Criminal Matters (PJCC). In the (first pillar) Treaty establishing the European Community and (the third pillar) for police and judicial cooperation, the decision to authorize enhanced co-operation is taken by (second pillar) CFSP. Enhanced co-operation may relate to the implementation of a common action or a common position, but not to matters with military implications or in the field of defence. If recourse is made to the possibility of referral to the European Council, that body then takes the final decision and acts unanimously. In any event, only those members of the Council representing Member States participating in enhanced co-operation take part in adopting these decisions. Any country wishing to participate in enhanced co-operation may make a request to do so to the Council and to the Commission. The final decision is subject to different procedures from one pillar to another. The acts and decisions adopted do not form part of the Union acquis(1) and are binding only for those Member States participating in enhanced co-operation, and are directly applicable only in those countries. Expenditure arising from such cooperation is to be borne by the participating Member States.

The European Project is composed of two decision making bodies – the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers – and the agency that carries out their requirements: the Commission. The main legislative procedure (introduced within the Maastricht Treaty) by which law can be adopted in the European Community is "codecision". This gives the European Parliament the power to adopt legislation jointly with the Council of the European Union, requiring the two bodies to agree on an identical text before any proposal can become law.

The codecision procedure was introduced by the Treaty of Maastricht and gives the European Parliament the power to adopt instruments jointly with the Council of the European Union. The procedure comprises one, two or three readings, and has the effect of increasing contacts between the Parliament and the Council, the co-legislators and with the European Commission. In practice, it has strengthened Parliament's legislative powers in a variety of fields including:

- the free movement of workers,
- right of establishment, services,
- the internal market,
- education (incentive measures),
- health (incentive measures),
- consumer policy,
- trans-European networks (guidelines),
- environment (general action programme),
- culture (incentive measures) and
- research (framework programme).

However, the codecision procedure has been modified through various agreements allowing greater flexibility in the instruments of policy decision. It is now possible for different members of the European Project to opt for policy distinctions on certain matters, for instance with respect to policing and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and refugees and displaced persons. Measures relating to agreed policy over such issues involve setting minimum standards, as is the case with the temporary protection of displaced persons unable to return to their country of origin. Policy provision can now be made within a European Council Declaration for differential policy provision, the free movement of nationals of third countries and illegal immigration providing examples of such policy provision.

Effectively, then, policy making and implementation can operate on a contoured political plane, satisfying the requirements of political factions. For instance, a faction may be interested in enhanced co-operation for the specific area concerning refugees or displaced persons, seeking faster policy integration, thereby creating a differential in the speed of European development. It is such a differential that has been referred to as a two-speed Europe (TSE). When several factions arise around a variety of issues, then a multi-speed Europe may be referred to. In contrast – for Missiroli (1999) – variable geometry is related to policies that are more or less methodically carried outside the existing treaty rules, but they need to comply with the spirit of the integration process, be related to space and subject matter and be open to new "opters-in".

EVG finds its roots in the notion of pioneer groups, when the then French President Jacques Chirac attempted to create the prerequisites for the emergence of TSE. This resulted (in March 2004) in a mini-summit consisting of the leaders of France, Germany and the UK. The purpose of the summit was to formulate a common position for the spring European Council. There were two positions on EVG:

1. Its supporters argued that it would create provisions for closer co-operation between those counties wanting greater progress on certain issue connected with closer integration.
2. Its opponents feared that factions created by the EVG would result in a "vanguard of countries" with the obvious intention of facing up to the reality of an enlarged Europe without reference to the conflicts of constitutional Treaty.

For Brandier (2004), the second position is consistent with the formation of a process of "prior consultation" that involves various Member States operating together as a precursor to discussion in the Council. This process should, Brandier suggests, be seen as the start of a

European process from which EVG and hence European Project membership differentiation can arise. Policy issues that are in this position include the single currency, defence, police and judicial co-operation.

However, a propostion by Barbier (2004) is that this process should be seen not simply as one of differentiation, but rather as a tool of a “Europe à la carte” that would allow for the entry of a multi-speed Europe. This would inevitably lead, it is suggested, to a loss of institutional cohesion, and ultimately to the demise of the European Project. Barbier also suggests that to avoid this, there is a need for a process of reflection that offers prospects for everyone and is not merely designed to mask other interests.

There are others with a similar view for the European Project demise. For instance, the Chairperson for the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee and German Social Democrat MEP, Jo Leinen, welcomed the recent EU treaty reform discussed in London in 2007, but claimed that concessions made to Britain would result in a "two-speed" Europe (EU Business, 2007). It was noted that EU Treaty concessions established new guidelines for the 27 member European Project’s future on the outline of a treaty of reform to replace the failed constitution. According to Leinen, the new treaty that was agreed in substance preserved the intended constitution. It unveiled a new voting system to come into force and confirms the existence of a two-speed Europe. As part of this, Britain, for instance, has a four policy “red line”: it has not adopted the euro; has not joined the Schengen visa-free travel zone; will not be bound by the charter on fundamental rights, elements of judicial and penal policy; and will not commit to aspects of the common defence policy. This development would appear to underscore the imminent arrival of both EVG and a multi-speed Europe. Leinen notes that if participants are able to define their own red lines and ultimatums, then it will be the end of the European Union.

The intention of this paper is to explore the dynamics of the European Project while noting the rise of the EVG option, and to comment on the likelihood of the “Barbier proposition”. To do this, it will adopt the principles that arise from a theoretical frame of reference called Knowledge Cybernetics (KC). This will require a clear identification of the effective agents involved in the European Project and their relationship. However, using the systemic concepts of KC, political agents can only operate durably with interests and purposes if they maintain cultural imperatives that are responsible for behavioural orientation and continuities. Once the agents have been identified, there is also a need to explore their related cultures.

## 2. Exploring the European Project

### 2.1. Identifying Political Agents in the European Project

The idea of a two speed (or even a multi) speed Europe has proved controversial. For instance, the Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs, after talks with his Italian counter-part in Budapest on February 19, 2004, claimed that TSE was ‘very negative’ and might ‘lead to the collapse of the EU’ (Templeton Thorp, 2004). Such a model would, he argued, make it difficult for new members to catch up with long-standing members and widen, rather than diminish, existing national differences. Agreeing with him, Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini also emphasised the need for a rapid agreement on the proposed EU constitution and for closer transatlantic ties, extended to the Mediterranean basin. Austrian agricultural commissioner Franz Fischler has also warned that TSE may be ‘the beginning of the end’ for a united Europe, with the EU breaking up into several smaller groups and Austria side-lined because of its inability to support current proposals on defence and justice (Carter, 2003).

TSE emerged after earlier failures to agree on a EU constitution, mainly driven by France and Germany, who suggested that a group of EU members (mostly comprised of the original six countries of the Treaty of Rome, minus Italy) might move more clearly towards closer integration, with the others following at a later stage (Fray, 2003).

As a result, two factions emerged that may effectively be regarded as independent “agents of

policy" within the European Project: the Old Europe group and the New Europe group, both of which have different interests resulting in specific and distinct policy orientations. Both groups also constitute the potential emergence of a political structure that is contrary to the other group (i.e., variable geometry as opposed to constant geometry). As such, the two groups can be argued to be in political conflict.

The nature of and support for the two groups is instructive. The New Europe group (a term coined by the US defence secretary Rumsfeld and which implied the existence of the Old Europe group) tended to be opposed to the EVG and included the UK and Italy and the Nordic states. This New Europe grouping generally held policy positions that supported the Iraq war, and supported the widening but not deepening of the EU. They also opposed the idea of the EU as a challenge to US power. In contrast the Old Europe group tended to include those most opposed to the Iraq war, and those favouring the further development of the EU. It was also seen to act as a cohesive power able to challenge the 'hegemony' of the US 'hyper-power' in a more 'multi-polar' world (alongside China, Russia, and perhaps India and Brazil). These policy positions are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 about here

For Gillingham (2004) the drafting of the constitution, monetary union and the creation of a Common Foreign and Security Policy are all technocratic, top-down efforts to deepen integration that have led to economic troubles and further eroded public support for the European idea. Also envisaged is the idea that enlargement will only exacerbate existing problems.

Most analysts saw France, at that time under President Chirac, as pushing hardest for TSE, with Germany as its major partner leading a pioneer group of EU countries pushing for rapid EU integration. France and Germany have long seen themselves as the driving forces behind the EU, with Germany leading in terms of industry and economics and France in terms of politics, diplomacy and control of the European Commission. In recent years however, a waning appears to have developed due to, as some argue (Fray, 2004), the:

- Decline of German economic power since reunification with East Germany following the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Widespread German questioning of its once-dominant social-market model in the face of globalisation and resurgent Anglo-Saxon economic challenges.
- Economic rise of the UK.
- Rapid replacement of French by English as the dominant language of the EU with the entry of the Nordic Countries and the CCEE.

This led France and Germany to perceive the dangers of an Anglo-Saxon, transatlantic, free-market takeover of the EU. Under the Portuguese EC President Barroso, free-market commissioners in 2004 seem to have gained many of the levers of power. As a counter to the power implications of this change in Europe and under the continuing maintenance of national sovereignty, the Franco-German 'core' would push forward with TSE towards closer integration on a voluntary basis and on a number of closely defined projects. Germany would also press for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, supported by France.

In addition to geopolitical differences, there are also differences between the core group and others over social, economic, employment and Human Resource Management (HRM) policy. Germany's foreign minister Joschka Fischer talked of this as an "avant garde" that would take European integration forward. The core group favoured an economic model closer to 'Rhenish capitalism' (Albert, 1991) most characteristic of Germany, with a social market, 'communitarian' focus emphasising dialogue between social partners (the State, employers and trade unions), a long-term, collaborative emphasis, close relations between banks and industry, and a high degree of social protection with emphasis on employee participation, consultation and representation. In contrast, the others tended to favour an Anglo-Saxon model oriented to shareholders and a more short-term, adversarial free market; this was as opposed to support for stakeholders, with an emphasis on reducing social costs and employment regulations to make hiring and firing employees easier.

In 2004, most French voters would have liked a more rapid EU political and economic integration, a position also then popular in Belgium and Luxembourg. However, there was frustration at the rising number of inter-governmental deals and the possible paralysis of decision-making with an enlarged EU of 27 members. Within Germany, the original view however was that the 'core' would draw other countries in. It was not perceived that it would leave them behind and outside as a defensive, self-interested coalition more concerned with blocking reform of EU agricultural policy and take-over regulations. This is in addition to defying punishment for breaching the stability and growth pact underpinning the Eurozone (Lindley-French, 2004). This development would appear to contain a paradox that leads one to wonder how the demand for more integration relates to the defying of the punishment for breaking commonly established rules.

There is another case of this paradoxical "enhanced integration" coupled with "higher-speed Europe." It relates to the German demand for an increase of corporate taxation in new Member States for the sake of justice and equity (e.g., the unethical attraction of capital and stealing of jobs). Even though this political cloud seems to have dispersed, it dominated the news for some time, even though no one then spoke of lowering corporate taxes for the sake of justice and equity.

Perhaps one explanation for the lack of apparent recognition of such paradoxes lies in the human ability to partition issues with ideological and emotive boundaries. These partitions isolate them from other related issues that have also become so bounded.

Reflecting on the new CCEE membership, there has been a tendency for new States to fear being excluded to the outer fringes by an exclusive, permanent 'hard core', rather than enjoying equality in decision-making with the use of TSE as a threat to influence future integration projects. This was especially so as Germany has appeared to focus on its alliance with France rather than reconciliation and closer ties with CCEE (Grabbe, 2003). This allows us to reflect on two things:

- Firstly, Germany had been for many years a very active supporter of the inclusion of Poland into European and Western structures (first NATO, and then the EU). It was only under Gerhard Schröder that this started to change, ultimately turning into a quasi-neutral stance, and despite several reservations (the labour market, for instance). One of the major driving forces behind this change was the shifting economic and social situation in Germany.
- Secondly, the expression of "two-speed Europe" seems somewhat strange when applied, in particular, to France and Germany, since the economic growth of these two countries, even against the rest of EU, has not been imposing (discounting events of the 2008 global recession).

However, other EU leaders have downplayed the splits on EVG. Thus, for instance, the Irish leader Bertie Ahern claimed that the dispute that emerged after constitutional talks collapsed was one of emphasis rather than substance (EU Business, 2004). Some Conservative politicians have seen the price for approving EVG as an end to the Common Agricultural Program (CAP), freedom from EU regulations and an end to the EU monopoly in trade negotiations, allowing the UK to explore entry into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) alongside continuing access to EU markets – i.e., the 'slow-track' members scaling back their model of the EU into a free-trade zone more open to the rest of the world but bound together by NATO.

## 2.2. Cultural and Ideological Differences

Discussion has occurred concerning the positions of two European factions, Old Europe and New Europe, and it has been argued that these have arisen to support different phenomenal interests. Here, however, these groups also have related cultural and ideological positions, which will be considered now.

Culture is the commonly held and relatively stable belief system (beliefs, attitudes, values and

behavioural norms) that exist within a social collective. Culture is embodied in symbols, rituals and heroes that are reflected in organizational communication, manners, dress codes, social rules and norms, and role models (Williams et al., 1993; Hall, 1995; Randlesome and Brierly, 1990).

In contrast, ideology may be defined as the systematic body of ideas and position on material practice that occurs through an organisation of beliefs and attitudes – religious, political or philosophical in nature – that is more or less institutionalised or shared with others (Yolles, 1999). It provides a total system of thought, emotion and attitude to the world. It refers to any conception of the world that goes beyond the ability of formal validation. Ideology can also be seen in terms of a sort of "elaboration knowledge" that enables ideas of social action to become established as policies. However, it is also a manifestation of culture (Yolles, 2006), and the two are tied together. An identification of ideological differences within a group therefore provides an indication of differences in cultural orientation. While culture is a pattern of beliefs and values that drive attitudes, and a set of accepted normative practices, ideology is a condensation of the belief system that informs behaviour. As such ideologies support given purposes and practical strategies, and goal formation would be harnessed as part of an ideological system.

### 2.2.1. Culture

The two European Project groups, Old Europe and New Europe, are each seen as political agents that operate with the intention for the implementation of supported policy. In Table 2 an attempt has been made to show the distinctions in the cultural belief systems that spawned them. These cultural positions have been given names. The New Europe group is seen to have a "Developmental culture", the term taken from its attitude towards integration. The Old Europe group is said to have "Rhenish culture", a term noted earlier that refers to the type of capitalism it supports. Their differences are explained by the belief characteristics listed. The cultural distinctions embedded in this table would be expected to reflect the attitudes, values and beliefs of each cultural group, with indicators for normative behaviour.

Table 2 about here

### 2.2.2. Ideology

A common way of examining cultural difference is through beliefs about individualism and collectivism (Oyserman, 2002), which is also appropriate for exploring distinctions between Developmental and Rhenish cultural positions. Individualism refers to the doctrine that all social phenomena (their structure and potential to change) are in principle explicable only in terms of individuals – for instance, individuals' properties, goals, and beliefs. Collectivism in principle and ideally relates to people coming together collectively to act unitarily through normative processes in order to satisfy some commonly agreed and understood purpose or interest.

For Viskovatoff (1999), the unitary-plural relationship that is related to individualism-collectivism can be represented as a duality that in sociological theory is expressed in terms of action theory and system theory. He notes that individualists try to reduce the social to the actions and mental states of individuals, while collectivists argue that there is something irreducible about the social that cannot be expressed at the level of individuals. He further notes attempts by Bourdieu and Giddens to overcome this individual/social dualism. Both are post-structuralists, perceive reality as chaotic, disorganized and fragmented, and view the social world in terms of the decentred subject.

For Hofstede (1991), the distinction between individualism and collectivism is that the individualist has a preference for socially closed surroundings where individuals care for themselves and their immediate kin, as opposed to collectivism in which dependencies occur on groups of others. Collectivism occurs in any form of social collective, whether it is the State, as is Hofstede's sphere of interest, or any corporation. However, the distinction between individualism and collectivism can take a more serious political dimension when it is associated with ideology and processes of power. For instance, in the Encyclopaedia of Marxism (2004) the distinction between individualism and collectivism is represented as in Table 3.

Table 3 about here

There are a number of forms of both individualism and collectivism that are particularly useful within the context of political culture. Originally suggested by Ron Allen(2), it is possible to identify four types of individualism: conservative, capitalist, socialist and democratic, listed in Table 4.

Table 4 about here

White and Nakaruma (2004) were interested in the tension and conflict within HRM processes in Japanese subsidiaries in China. As such they explore the distinctions between Individualism and Collectivism, on their way to an inquiry into the differences between the types of Collectivism supported by China and Japan. Two forms of Collectivism that they identify are organisational and network. Organisational Collectivism occurs where participants perceive the organisation in terms of a set of exchange partners, contextualising interpersonal relationships within its boundaries. In Network Collectivism the organisation is perceived as an arbitrary boundary around a collection of individuals with whom participants enjoy strong, weak or no particularistic relationships. A brief summary of these classifications is given in Table 5.

Table 5 about here

White and Nakurama argue that Individualists and Collectivists place different priority on individual and group goals (Hui, 1988; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989; Triandis et al, 1988; Wagner and Moch, 1986; Yamaguchi, 1994) and differ in their tendency towards independent and interdependent self-constructs (Erez and Earley, 1993; Markus and Kitayama, 1991). These ideas are easily connected with the notions of Gemeinschaft (taken as community) and Gesellschaft (sometimes taken as association) as proposed by Toennies (1957). Further connection can be made with agent orientations that are characterized by notions of idiocentricity with its orientation towards the collective as a set of social contracts between the rational wills of its individual members, and allocentricity with its orientation towards an emphasis on understanding the individual within the context of the larger collective (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), and as discussed by Triandis (1995, 2003).

In Table 6 the notions of Toennies are related to that of Triandis and of White and Nakurama, and in so doing two new classifications for cultural orientations are formulated: relational and transactional. These classifications can be taken together and summarised as a set of attributes that have been consolidated into an ideological position directed as they would be to purposes and gaols. The attributes assigned arise from Yolles (2005, 2007), and are shown in Table 7. Transactional Collectivism adopts principles of association created through social contracts, and the membership sees loyalty to the collective as secondary. Relational Collectivists, however, share cultural space, require understanding to exist in the collective amongst the membership who, incidentally, sees the collective itself as the object of their primary loyalty. Comparing these characteristics to that offered in Table 1, there does seem to be something of a correspondence between New and Old Europe groups and supported types of Collectivism. Perhaps one can say, therefore, that the New Europeans adopt transactional ideology, while the Old Europeans would support relational ideology. This would fit in with the idea that all the participants in the European Project are committed to the collective and its development, but adopt distinct ideological and political positions in relation to the way in which agreements and development should occur. If it were discovered that the New Europeans were not Transactional Collectivists, but rather pure Individualists, then their lack of commitment to the collective notion would likely weaken the potential stability of the European Project itself, especially during times of criticality.

Table 6 about here

Table 7 about here

## 3. The European Project as an International Joint Alliance

The "Barbier proposition" was previously discussed. In order to explore its propositions and determine its feasibility, joint alliance theory can be used as it arises in KC, which has previously been applied to the developing relationship between agents in a variety of situations (Iles and Yolles, 2002a, 2002b, 2003). It builds on existing theory and research on international alliances and joint ventures (IJVs) (e.g., Kelly and Parker, 1997; Iles and Yolles 2002a; Yolles, 2000, 2006), and conflict processes (Yolles, 2002, 2006). These approaches can be used to analyse the developments within the European Project and the interrelationship between different national partners.

Previous research on IJVs has identified the importance of partner selection and the criteria used to select partners in an alliance, as outcomes are affected by the nature of the partner selected, the mix of skills and resources available to the alliance and the relative bargaining power of the parties involved (Geringer, 1991). For example, the Franco-German axis may have worked well because it involved two of the largest, most powerful states in the EU with a relatively shared vision of an integrated Europe and complementary power bases (Germany in industry and economics, France in politics and administration) who had enjoyed initial success in earlier ventures. Any EU defence initiative is likely to fail without the involvement of the UK, which offers much-needed military assets. Prospects of a successful alliance with a new access country member in a weaker bargaining position, with a different vision of Europe and with little history of successful collaboration, are less positive. The strategic objectives of the partners (which may be asymmetrical, conflicting or opaque or may change over time) will also be important, especially where partners possess complementary resource capabilities (Harrigan, 1985). The institutional environment, nature and extent of prior relationships and level of initial success in an alliance may also affect alliance performance (Gray and Yan, 1997).

Trust between partners (e.g., Gill and Butler, 1996) is also likely to generate more successful alliances, and is more likely to be developed through multi-level, sustained interactions and communications and mutual support. The recriminations following the fall-out after the Iraq War between several EU members are likely to have resulted in diminished trust between EU states. In turn, enhanced trust is likely to lead to enhanced learning (from the prospective partners and about them) and greater 'knowledge migration'(3) between them (e.g., Iles and Yolles 2002a,b, 2003; Schuler 2001). Any benefits from an alliance are likely to be distributed asymmetrically according to the organisational learning, absorptive and knowledge-migrating capacities of the partners (e.g., Pucik, 1988).

A recurring theme in studies of alliances has been how managerial style and cultural differences can destabilise alliance foundation, formation, implementation and restructuring (e.g., Iborra and Saorin, 2001). Li et al (2002) found that members of the top management team in any alliance often find it difficult to work together, especially if they come from different cultures (as is the case in the EU). Factionalism within a top team is a major hazard to alliance success, resulting in poor communications and inefficient decision-making, affected by the relative status and power of the partners. As an illustration of this in the EU, one faction, led by the UK with membership including Spain, Portugal, Italy and CCEE, opposed the other anti-war faction led by France and Germany (with Spain switching sides after the election of a left-wing government following the Madrid bombing).

So how do alliances form and how are they successfully maintained? When a group of autonomous agents form a joint alliance action, then they need to develop common interests or purposes. This is illustrated in Figure 1 in which a suprasystem defines the collection of agents (defined in terms of the Old and New Europe groups) intending to enter the joint alliance - within the context of this paper, the 27 States that form the European Project; the terms used are defined in Table 8. In Figure 1 the Old Europe agent is shown, with its metasystem, figurative system of relational ideology, as being interactive with the New Europe agent. The interaction between the Rhenish figurative system and the Old Europe system occurs through a perhaps complex and involved network of interactive processes that facilitate the Rhenish ideological

vision phenomenally as part of its Old Europe systemic structures and mechanisms. Where the Old Europe group is seen as an essentially autonomous agent, the interconnection between the system, figurative system and metasystem define each group, with the Old Europe group having a Rhenish metasystem and relational figurative system, distinct from the New Europe group with its transitive figurative system and Developmental metasystem. This model starts to become complex when each of the nation states of France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg (who are classed as Rhenish) and their interactions are illustrated. It becomes even more complex when the nation states of UK, Italy, CCEE, Nordic States are included as an interaction part of the New Europe system. For the purposes of analysis, each of these interactive components needs to be explored separately at a "lower focus" of examination (to will be revisited shortly). At their respective foci of examination, the network of processes would also be explored in some depth.

Figure 1 about here

This figure is illustrative of the ability to analytically distinguish between distinct classes of consideration, cultural, ideological, and phenomenal, each having identifiable interactive cybernetics influences. This figure arises using the paradigm of Knowledge Cybernetics (Yolles, 2006 & 2010), a theory that has developed through cybernetic principles and metaphor that explain the utilities of the interconnections between the metasystem, figurative system, and the (event related phenomenal) system. It is concerned with social dynamics based on knowledge and knowledge processes, and recognises the importance of communications and control.

Alliances are not always politically successfully, and often fall into conflict. However, the theory of boundary critique originally developed by Ulrich (1981), which has been elaborated on by Midgley (1992, 1998, 2000) and Midgley et al (1997), has been integrated into KC. It has roots in the work of Churchman (1970, 1971) where he attempts to find ways of improving problem situations. He defines improvement of a problem situation as a systems problem, which involves decisive boundaries. The boundaries constrain what should be taken into account in a particular situation. Making decisions about which boundaries to accept in an analysis is therefore crucial, and involves maximising the appropriate information. Change the boundary that defines the system, and you are likely to change the nature or meaning of a given analysis. In a development of these ideas, Ulrich (1981) questioned how inquirers could rationally define their boundaries. Rational inquiry is essential in that assumptions held by all stakeholders in a situation should necessarily be seen as potentially valid. Together with this, a sufficient condition is that the inquiry process that enables analysis to occur has boundaries that should enhance the ability for boundary critique. Boundaries are created through the values, ethics and knowledge of view-holders, and debating the boundaries can thus be seen to be in part an ethical process. In identifying a boundary, ethical tensions develop than can easily be elaborated as conflict (Crick, 1962).

Table 8 about here

Every suprasystem that has associated with it an existential dimension also has a morality. In its analytical form, this morality is called ethics (Luhmann, 1995). Mackie (1977) defines ethics as the general theory of right and wrong in choices and actions, and of what is good or bad in dispositions, interpersonal relations and ways of living. It thus comes under the scope of politics. It can also be seen as the totality of conditions for deciding the bestowal of esteem or disdain (Luhmann, 1995). Ritual is associated with this, possessing a form of behaviour independent of context, and involving stereotypical elements having symbolic expression of wider social concerns (Douglas, 1966; Leach, 1976). It enables one to assign sacredness and profanity to objects of attention resulting from ethical tension, and this will involve some form of marginalisation (Midgley et al, p469, 1998; Yolles, 2001). If no consensual boundary can be agreed upon, then one boundary is made dominant through the elaboration of these tensions, when the ethical differences become contested and a conflict process ensues. It is through this domination of one boundary that the marginal region is made sacred or profane. This process is symbolically expressed as ritual and helps support the system as a whole. Two further considerations may now be noted:

1. The marginal area is likely to be subject to change within and between agent systems as

the nature of the issue based on suprasystem changes over time, and this will affect the meaning of the conflict for each agent.
2. There is likely to be a loss in behavioural potential for at least one agent in the developing conflict that may have an impact on beliefs about what is scared or profane; this loss will affect variety generation.
3. When political processes are engaged and involve the allocation of power, marginalisation of at least one of the participants normally results.

One can speak of political boundary problems (Habermas, 1987) and imply political boundary critique (Ulrich, 1981), and this can be linked through ideological/ethical contexts to marginalisation. Political processes likely occur as an ontological connection that enables an agent to use what may be called 'operative intelligence(4)' that arises (from what in cybernetics is called an 'autopoietic couple') that enables ideological images and power based behaviour to become effectively implemented (because the agent self-produces that behaviour through a network of its own processes). Power can thus be envisaged not as directly creating marginalisation, but is rather indirect and operates through the principles of governance that support it, and becomes embedded in the culture (Yolles, 2001).

From this we need to better appreciate the nature of the relationship between power, politics and marginalisation. We can speak of political boundary problems (Habermas, 1987) and imply political boundary critique, and this can be linked through ideological/ethical contexts to marginalisation.

Boundary critique is about making critical judgements concerning the phenomenal boundaries that are perceived around us. Consider a group of agents in a suprasystem that interact regarding a certain issue. If the boundaries of that issue are differentiated so that perceived differences occur that are then complicated, conflicts arise. Boundary critique can be seen as one approach that can inhibit the elaboration process. The manifestation of boundary critique into a mechanism that can be applied to the resolution of problem issues may be explained using the ideas of Piaget (1977). An agent normally sees other agents as phenomenal objects who are differentiated from self, and towards which that agent acts without personal attachment. This is distinct from the subject that has associated with it personal attachment. The difference in object and subject orientation has implications for the distinct behaviours towards others that an agent adopts. Consequently, one way of dealing with the elaboration of differences is to manifest a process of subjectification into the suprasystem. This change requires the notion of associative projection attributed to Piaget (Yolles, 2006), and an agent capable of this is by definition capable of interrelating or coordinating the different perspectives in the political arena, underpinned as it is by deductive reasoning. Boundary critique is central to this, and with respect to the potential for improvement can result at best in a process of subjectifying the phenomenal object. In so doing the comprehension and deductive reasoning of one agent that arises from patterns of behaviour of another are subjectively assumed by the one. It operates to provide a capacity for an agent to change the relationship between the object and subject through the coordination of perspectives, therefore creating a new frame of reference and a new boundary.

Issue boundaries are basically formed in the existential domain of an agent, arising from worldview knowledge. Figure 2 uses the Social Viable Systems model of Knowledge Cybernetics (Yolles, 2006) to provide an expression of the differentiated boundaries from which a marginalised area is created. An agent is here seen in terms of analytically distinct components of an agent, including the phenomenal systems where social structures reside that facilitate and constrain behaviour that affects a larger suprasystem; a figurative system that involves a figurative base of directed images that are a reflection of knowledge, and determine ideology; and a metasystem of political culture and knowledge. Here, there may be a plurality of autonomous agents represented that can operate autonomously and only interact phenomenally. Within the context of a political system, phenomenal interaction means political interaction. Within the European Project, this means a political process that results in political action over given issues, and this may include formal (e.g., debating chamber) and more informal (e.g., "backroom" agreements) political processes that result in political action. An illustration of political action is the implementation of policy as an instrument of governance. There are a large number of potential interactions between a set of numerous participants that are too complex to graphically demonstrate using the detailed graphical form of Figure 2 (and it is therefore likely

that in due course a simpler representation will emerge, for instance by adopting representations from dance choreography). It is for this reason that two agents in interaction can be illustrated in a simple manner. The two specific agents displayed are the Old and New Europeans.

Figure 2 about here

In both of the agents shown, the existential domain defines the issue boundaries that enable collective political strategy and action to develop. The ideological or strategic images or system of thought that populates the noumenal domain can be manifested in the phenomenal domain as a political structure that defines the situation, and the worst case scenario is that there may be as many of these perceived structures as there are participants.

These distinct perspectives constitute a basis from which political behaviour derives. It arises from ideological and ethical judgements that determine the nature of behavioural responses. It also creates a pattern of anticipation for an agent that enables it to respond to the political behaviour of other agents. This anticipation may involve associative projection that enables the agents to come to terms with the differences between the agent perspectives, referred to as attributive projection – a pathology that can exacerbate the conflict situation, particularly because the problem of cultural differentiation and knowledge migration is ignored. The virtual image or figurative system of thought for each agent is likely to be quite distinct, probably in proportion to the cultural differences. Behaviour is autopoietically defined, and constitutes the manifestation through political or operative processes the patterns of actions that comprise (conflictual) behaviour.

According to van Eekelen (1999) the EU as an institution would benefit from flexibility, enhanced cooperation and variable geometry. The idea that there are 27 participants of the European Project linked into various forms of alliance in EVG leads to the assumption that the entire system is highly complex and hardly susceptible to a predictive analysis. However, rather than starting from a phenomenal view of the European Project, it is simpler to take an existential view. This means that rather than considering 27 participants, there are only 2 that stem from Developmental and Rhenish cultures.

Note that the coupling that occurs through the political systems supported by each of the European groups is a political process that may result in a variety of outcomes typical of conflict analysis that involve a win/loss or some form of compromise.

In Figure 3, differences are shown to be contested between the two groups in the figurative system domain through what Schutz and Luckmann (1974) call lifeworld(5), and reflect the notion that agents in the suprasystem operate from their own local ideologies or other images or systems of thought. These differences are elaborated on in Schwarz's (1997, 2002) viable systems theory, where phenomenal competitive or conflictual behaviour results through symbolic expression in ritual, which is referred to as the competitive or conflict process. It is the nature of the differences that are contested and the way that they change that determines whether an interactive competition or conflict results.

Within the context of a political struggle, the elaboration of contested political differences is influenced not only by the ideology that contextualises it, but also ethical dichotomies (as stressed by Ulrich). Other influences that are not of particular concern here include the rational processes that drive an agent's images, and by the cybernetic processes involving communication and control that enable them to achieve their goals and objectives within the conflict process. Attempts to encourage social collectives locked into a conflict to modify their noumenal images (e.g., their ideology-ethics) and thus develop a behavioural adjustment are important at this level. Within the political context, such behaviour may be considered in terms of achieving legitimate agreement on policy and its implementation within a given political structure. Forcing agents to merely modify their behavioural patterns extrinsically will prove ineffective, because this requires a transformation that involves structural and cultural change and internal shifts within their boundaries. These boundaries arise from cultural differences, which, in the case of Rhenish and Developmental culture in the European Project, are listed in Table 2.

Figure 3 about here

Ideas are transformed into (policy) action within the noumenal domain through information. It is here that political worldview differences are contested. The contesting process defines a political purpose that will be directly responsible for the manifestation of either competition or conflict. In so doing, intention is realised through the creation and strategic pursuit of goals and aims that may change over time, and this enables agents through control and communications processes to redirect their futures. The strategic process derives from a relational logic that is connected to agent rationality or appreciative processes. This will likely be different for both agents (Old Europe and New Europe) in the suprasystem involved in contesting differences. As part of this, each agent will pursue its own missions, goals and aims. This results in an organisation of thought and action that ultimately determines the behavioural possibilities of the agents.

This is conditioned by ideology (Transactional and Relational, illustrated in Table 7) that acts as a filter for information (Holsti, 1967), and that can be created or driven through political influences. This intellectual framework enables policy makers to interpret the behavioural world politically. It involves ethical orientations that form a centre for systemic interests, and provides an image of the future that enables action through politically correct strategic policy. It also gives a politically appropriate view of the stages of historical development, with respect to interaction with the external environment. It is also of interest to note that marginalisation can now become a political process. With marginalisation, one agent is able to drive the suprasystem towards a particular structure over and above other such related political interests. It would here seem clear that the ability to marginalise others is a form of power.

Another consideration for the process of marginalisation is that it has an impact on the potential of the agents in the situation. Thus, it may increase the potential of one agent and reduce the potential of another. Potential can be enhanced through cooperative processes. All situations have the possibility of cooperative attributes that can be expressed in terms of properties.

Cooperation is related to competition, and they are exclusive by degree with more of one in a particular area of activity implying less of the other. As such, evaluating the degree of cooperation and competition involved in a suprasystem is a boundary problem as well. To assist judgements about the boundary, a number of cooperative and competitive process characteristics have been defined for the set of interactive agents (Guha, 1993). While one might expect that both competitive and cooperative processes can arise in both individualistic and transactional and relational collectivistic cultures. It may therefore be easier to structure the adherence to cooperative processes in relational collectives, since the stability of the entire collective is more important than the individuals who depend on it.

This can be expressed in terms of Figure 1. Here, the individual agents (the Old and New Europe groups) each have their own purposes and interests within the conflict situation. Their interconnection occurs phenomenally in an interactive suprasystem. The conflict is likely to be maintained as long as the depicted situation remains, that is that the conflict behaviour is maintained through a structural coupling that indicates a shared past and future history of conflict or conflict potential.

One way to address the conflict is for an outside agency to establish structures that constrain rather than facilitate the conflict. Another way is to envisage the suprasystem as an autonomous "superholon"(6), and shift the structural coupling to the existential or noumenal domains. In the existential domain, the two existential systems may become structurally coupled so that agent understanding arises through processes of communication and knowledge migration.

For example, Transactional and Relational ideologies may start to influence each other, if not in substance then at least in relation to the design of new policies or political processes or structures. This can deal with issue differentiation, and resolves the problem of there being two issue boundaries in the first place. Alternatively, in the noumenal domain it may be possible for coordinated perspectives and formal or informal laws that guide conduct to develop domain through figurative system structural coupling, and this affects agent purposes that might evolve together. In the same way, Rhenish and Developmental political cultures can learn from each

other. The coordination of perspectives may also be possible, if not directly then at least through some sort of mediation. An explanation of this will be given shortly using a parent-child metaphor.

Conflict situations can be addressed within joint alliances when structural coupling occurs (Yolles, 2000; Iles and Yolles, 2003). The alliance approach is illustrated in Figure 4 where agents can develop formalised common normative existential and figurative suprasystems. Each autonomous agent interacts through a form of structural coupling with the common suprasystems in their respective domains through lifeworld processes. In this way they can maintain a shared future that extends from a shared history, and shared interests and purposes can develop that are able to override conflict processes. Ultimately, the determinant of whether such an alliance is possible is if the agents are able to engage in lifeworld processes in which existential (e.g., cultural beliefs or knowledge) and figurative (e.g., regulation or polity) commonalities can be developed. These commonalities do not require that each agent loses its status as an autonomous entity.

The EU has developed agreed commonalities to which individual nation states conform. The degree of conformity, however, is a function of the structural coupling that exists between nations and commonalities. In the noumenal domain there is a common supra-figurative system that constitutes common laws and agreed images, but individual nation states also maintain their own individual virtual systems. The common and individual virtual systems maintain a structural coupling that is different from the structural coupling that occurs in the phenomenal domain.

It should be recognised that the interactive suprasystem is actually itself an autonomous system expressed through its symbolic ontological nature as a phenomenal domain. The noumenal domain that extends from this maintains a common supra-figurative system that is structurally coupled with the individual figurative systems, so that common laws and shared images are mutually developed over time. There is also an existential domain that has not yet been considered. This will have a supra-metasystem that operates as a reservoir for a European culture from which European values and beliefs and ultimately patterns of knowledge emerge. The individual existential systems from each nation state are embedded in this, and are structurally coupled with the supra-metasystem. It is through this that European culture is developed, which will change both over time and as new members states enter into the EU.

Figure 4 shows only the Old Europe agent; the New Europe agent is implied but not shown because of the increasing complexity that this would produce. An emergent culture is possible that is the result of alliance formation through the creation of a mediating group. In alliance theory this is often referred to as an alliance child that develops its proprietary culture that has influences from both parents (here the Old and New Europe groups). The parent-child metaphor is a useful one to promote understanding of the process. This emergent outcome for the child might be a balance between the cultures or knowledge that will have to spontaneously develop its proprietary ideology and political system. The parents must be accommodated in this, at least by satisfying something of their purposes and interests. The child may develop into playing a variety of roles. Perhaps the weakest role is when the child develops into a facilitating agency that mediates between the parents. More probably it will develop autonomously and over time, maturing in its own way. It is the nature of that maturity that is central to the entire development of the European Project.

Figure 4 also illustrates the possible rise of pathologies, represented by the bar across the loops connecting the system types. These can occur in a variety of ways, and they interfere with the potential to develop a coherent European Project. While there is no space to explore such pathologies here, the concept is explained in detail by Yolles (2007a).

Figure 4 about here

Whether or not a child alliance arises, there is another attribute of having broad cultural conditions such as those of Rhenish and Developmental. Both cultures may be thought of as being dispersed agents (Yolles, 2006). Each is disembodied because it is not normally possible to associate them with a single structured social organization, even though there may be

individual organizations with a given orientation that constitute it. This is because as a dispersed collective agent it has the capability of spontaneously establishing local social organizations of that particular cultural orientation, some of which may rise to bid for social power and control of the social community. As such, the dispersed agent is comprised of a plurality of individuals who may be interconnected by communication that is either indirect (e.g., books) or direct (e.g., interactive). It has an existential domain where beliefs (including beliefs about behavioural norms) and values exist. Behavioural norms are usually adhered to by members of a cultural orientation due to a shared history, and from this one can conceive of an implicit social structure that limits the individual's potential for behaviour. It may be expressed, for instance, as a moral code that may or may not be enforced by law. Orientational beliefs can also limit the ideate content of the noumenal domain, this ideate being composed of images or systems or coherent patterns of thought (that may include its ideology, notions of morality or forms of rationality) that may be maintained by constructed information.

The dispersed agent therefore has at least three interconnected ontological distinct domains. It is autopoietic because it is able to phenomenally self-produce its own components (like patterns of communication or behaviour) according to its own orientation principles (autogenesis) through a distributed network of processes. In effect, this network of processes is likely to be able to phenomenally manifest the dispersed agent's own ideate. The network may involve inherent political or operative processes that may function at a personal level, and may become associated with ritual.

## 4. Overview and Comment

Political culture underpins the very formation of the international political alliances. Through this, a representative government develops a new relationship with its alliance partners, recognising that they will condition any decisions that it takes. However, since the partnerships are plural, and each partner will have distinct and incommensurable paradigms with purposes and interests that may either not coincide or which may be mutually contradictory, the alliance may require an umpire while each government attempts to defend its own interests. Such an umpire is likely to not always be successful in dealing with the incommensurability that arises. There may be various ways of resolving this, one of which may be to structure the interaction through a set of joint alliances such that the incommensurabilities disappear into subsidiary paradigms, and thereby harnessing local cultures.

Participating governments in the European Project tend to naturally seek partnership with each other in order to gather sufficient strength through the sharing of power and responsibility in order to deal with the pressure of disrupting international developments. The recently developed economic crisis (Money Watch, 2009) is an illustration of this. The supra-national community recognises that their partners, who can now be seen to operate as a web of alliance partnerships, condition the decisions that they take. The socio-economic and supra-national partnerships are interdependent. The European Project hence develops into a multinational alliance that develops a decisive influence over the location, distribution and organisation of economic power and wealth.

The European Project should also be seen as being involved in a centripetal political process as it enlarges and develops an increasing social intensity and complexity. In addition, it is creating a political basin for membership countries while acting as a mediating agency. Political management determines ultimately whether or not the participant governments adopt an individualist or collectivist stance, and political mindedness determines the type of ideology that is supported. Whatever the political temperament of a cultural grouping of the European Project, if it is able to maintain itself as an integrated entity and therefore have a future, it depends on its capacity to maintain some level of integration and coherence. It has been shown that one way of exploring this is through the application of joint alliance theory, and one purpose for the formation of an alliance is to provide shared stability for the operation of its membership.

In this paper the "Barbier proposition" was initially set up as a proposition in need of further exploration. Following this, the development of the European Project was examined, and in so

doing it was noted that a development into two opposing factions/groups seems to have stabilised: Old and New Europe, and it was also shown that each could be associated with a proprietary ideology (relational and transactional), and political culture (Rhenish and Developmental).

Given that the divisions between the two factions exist in a stable way, then how does one try to maintain the European Project as a stable and durable entity? One way is to consider it as an international joint alliance, and then to explore alliance theory to seek ways to ensure that it can be maintained. Seeing the internal political dynamics of the European Project in terms of two stable agents rather than in terms of its 27 members makes understanding the processes that develop easier. Each agent can also be influenced by a cultural imperative. The need within this context is to ensure that the two cultural groups are structurally coupled, their interaction proving the possibility of durability. Were they to become structurally uncoupled, pathologies might arise that could infer with the development of the Project.

This summary of the paper should be considered as defining an implicit research agenda, the outcome of which might improve our understanding of the way that collectives such as the European Project operate. Let us try now to identify what pragmatic evaluations, if any, have been achieved from this study.

An ideal world would be one in which the development of a complex human system involving 27 or more Member States were able to sit in a single assembly and discuss logically and rationally the issues that confront them, towards a sensible and unique solution. This world does not exist. The EU as a whole is moving towards the creation of a universal cultural norm simply due to the harmonisation of various beliefs, though this does not suggest that the inevitable result will be a homogeneous European culture devoid of difference – far from it. However, there are many incommensurable worldviews that derive from distinct composite cultures and their derivative paradigms that are linked to policy and action. Two main paradigms have been broadly distinguished, each of which derive from a particular EU cultural position that may be associated with those for and against a two-speed Europe, and that create the basic global EU platforms upon which distinct factions can develop. As interests develop over particular issues, political processes become engaged, and so factions arise. These agentic factions operate to create local power positions within the global platform of the European Project, so the autopoietic processes that manifest policy are plural, and enable different views to be contested and challenged. This is a normal process and should be embraced.

If the proposition posited here about the two cultures or the European Project is correct, and if the models are adequate, then the pathologies that arise in the interactive and developmental processes will be transparent, and explainable within the context of normal political theory. The significance of these models, however, is that they can provide clear indicators of the pathologies that normal political explorations may not so quickly identify. To manifest this potential of exploring pathology, however, there is a need to explore in some depth the nature and significance of the pathologies that are possible, ideally through the use of exemplars.

The models here also suggest that within a durable European Project fractionation is an expected evolutionary consequence of the dynamic processes involved in the development of the project. It should therefore not be seen as something to be feared. The danger is, however, that power differentials in the European Project will be structured in and become institutionalised. In such a scenario, a strong central (likely despotic and potentially paternal) power block emerges that has the capacity to marginalize other factions. Where boundary critique is not engaged, issues are not properly discussed and ethical considerations are not adequately explored.

To overcome the potential for despotism, there is an essential need for complex international joint alliances like the enlarged European Project to engage in adequate communications processes, so that the ideological dynamic between the transactionalists and relationalists does not create a barrier to common understanding, and meanings can be apprehended and addressed. This is essential if boundary critique is to be engaged. Lifeworld processes, which occur with communication and meaningful transfer of knowledge across the cultural divide, are vital to this. However, it is not possible to simply hope that boundary critique will be engaged within a

lifeworld context. It needs to be facilitated, and the facilitation mechanism needs to be structurally embedded in the organisation. This means that there is a need for the enlarged EU to invest in the creation of a senior intermediary role that becomes part of its information structure and is able to address issues by facilitation through the creation of appropriate lifeworld processes. As an illustration, this could enable a multi-speed Europe to develop over each issue as factions arise and disperse, and the complex political situation can be addressed through intermediary facilitation. With a multitude of participating members of the European Project, it is not easy to predict the outcome of the interactions that develop. It is for this reason that a less complex cultural model can be usefully examined.

The nature and social form that defines the relationships between the participants of the European Project defines its morphology. Morphogenesis, which is change in this nature and form, of the European Project can be explored in terms of the dynamic processes of viable systems as presented by Schwarz (1997, 2002) and explored by Yolles (1999, 2000a, 2006). For instance, while new forms of partnership can evolve, other possibilities include a stagnant period in the European Project in which little maturity of the Project takes place.

Finally, it is possible to refer back to the "Barbier proposition". It postulated that the development of EVG should not be seen as one of differentiation, but rather as the tool of a "Europe à la carte" that is not constituted as a two-speed but rather as a multi-speed Europe. However, if a joint alliance child develops and matures within the European Project, then whether it becomes responsible for a Europe à la carte must be determined by its cultural and figurative nature, and these will be influenced by the alliance parents in their structural coupling. Hence, the Barbier proposition would appear to be more of a fear than an argument.

Barbier also contends that a multi-speed Europe and its implied Europe à la carte would result in a loss of institutional cohesion and ultimately to the demise of the European Project. However, this does not appear to take into account the notion that the European Project appears to have coalesced into two distinct and interacting cultural groups that have their own ideological positions (Transactional and Relational) that have become manifested as the Old and New Europe groups. While other groups may also arise, they too are likely to be tied to either the Rhenish or Developmental culture.

Barbier's idea, that reflection needs to be built in to the political system so that prospects for all are made visible and not merely designed to mask other interests, is actually central to the entire essence of the European Project, because it is only through this that international joint alliances are possible.

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## Endnotes

(1) The term acquis is used to refer to the total body of EU law accumulated so far.

(2) Posted in 2003 at http://www.usenet.com/newsgroups/talk.politics.libertarian/msg08333.html (accessed on July, 2007).

(3) The term operative intelligence is a Piagetian concept that refers to the informed cognitive manipulation and transformation of objects by a reflecting subject, and exemplifies logical processes and freedom from domination by immediate experience (Jenks, 2005). These logical rules are constraining, and this very constraint allows us to understanding how rational behaviour can progressively emerge from more primitive "pre-rational" mechanisms (Paillard, 2000). While the notion of operative intelligence was at its inception directed towards child development, it also has great significance for organization development, and the notion has thus been adopted for durable "living" social collectives (Yolles, 2009; Yolles & Fink, 2009). The reason for adopting Piaget's terms is that the concepts of autopoiesis and autogenesis can be more simply represented in autonomous "living systems" like the social in which intelligences may be assigned. While Maturana & Varela (1979) were responsible for the idea of autopoiesis, Piaget (1950) formulated the idea of operative intelligence for his research into child development, and the two appear to adopt equivalent principles while using different language. Piaget saw reality as a dynamic system of continuous change defined in reference to dynamic change through transformation, and states ((Demetriou, Doise & Van Lieshout, 1998). Transformations refer to any kind of change, while states refer to the condition in which a thing or person can be found between transformations. Operative intelligence is the active part of intelligence that is responsible for the representation and manipulation of the transformational aspects of reality, and it involves all actions that are undertaken so as to anticipate, follow or recover these transformations. It frames how the world is understood, and it is contextually adaptive (Schoenfeld, 1986). It operates through two functions: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation refers to the active transformation of information that can be integrated into existing mental schemes, and accommodation refers to active transformation of mental schemes, enabling referencing of individual interactions. Piaget also has the notion of figurative intelligence which is the static part of intelligence that derives contextual meaning from experiences involving operative intelligence. It involves any means of representation that may be used to maintain mental states that intervene between transformations. However, Piaget's notion of figurative intelligence can be adapted to become dynamic if one sees figurative intelligence as the creator of a figurative base that develops noumonally in any personality. Now this occurs through a dynamic process of sedimentation of cultural and epistemic beliefs that result in the figurative attributes housed in the

figurative system, and so figurative intelligence can be elevated into a dynamic process equivalent to autogenesis that develops from a higher order set of principles by which operative intelligence is guided. The Piagetian terms are more intuitive, have less mystery enshrouded in enigma, and so are more easily accessible to non-specialists. Thus, it is for instance it is more intuitive to refer to the operative intelligence of an autonomous political system, than to its autopoietic capacities.

(4) The term operative intelligence is a Piagetian concept that refers to the informed cognitive manipulation and transformation of objects by a reflecting subject, and exemplifies logical processes and freedom from domination by immediate experience (Jenks, 2005). These logical rules are constraining, and this very constraint allows us to understanding how rational behaviour can progressively emerge from more primitive "pre-rational" mechanisms (Paillard, 2000). While the notion of operative intelligence was at its inception directed towards child development, it also has great significance for organization development. The notion has been adopted for collectives by Yolles (2007).

(5) The lifeworld is a place where communication occurs and the intended meanings can be apprehended by those involved for the purpose of agreement or consensus over issues of interest.

(6) The term holon was originally coined by Koestler (1967), but here is taken to mean a (phenomenal) system that is accompanied by a (noumenal) figurative system and (existential) metasystem.

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# List of Figures and Tables

**Table 1: Two broad European supporting policy positions on European Development**

| Attitude Issue | New Europe | Old Europe |
|---|---|---|
| Position on EVG | Mostly against | Mostly supporting |
| Iraq War | Mostly supporting | Mostly opposing |
| Integration of EU | Mostly widening | Mostly deepening |
| EU as challenge to US | Mostly opposing | Mostly supporting |
| **Likely Group Membership** | UK, Italy, CCEE, Nordic States | France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg |

**Table 2: Broad distinction between two European agents and their cultures**

| Cultural Indicators | Belief Characteristics | New Europe Developmental Culture | Old Europe Rhenish Culture |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attitudes, Values, Beliefs | Type of Capitalism | Competitive | Cooperative (Rhenish) |
| | Time frame | Short-term | Long-term |
| | Central characters | Shareholders | Stakeholders |
| | Market | Free | Social |
| | Relationship to others | Adversarial | Communication and dialogue |
| Attitudes Predicting Normative Behaviour | Social policy imperatives | Reducing social costs, employment regulations to make 'hiring and firing' easier | Close relations between banks and industry, long term collaboration between employers and trade unions, social protection, employee participation, consultation and representation |
| | Position on Iraq war | Supportive | Opposed |
| | Development of EU | Widening | Deepening |
| | Power position to US | Cooperative | Challenging |
| | Integration | Developmental | Rapid EU political and economic integration |
| | Political process | Pairing deals feasible | Creating greater potential for collective agreement as opposed to pairing deals |
| **Likely Group Membership** | | UK, Italy, CCEE, Nordic States | France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg |

**Table 3: A Distinction between Individualism and Collectivism**

| Ideology | Ethos | Origin |
|---|---|---|
| Individualism | Emphasizes the autonomy of the individual as against the community or social group. | First used in a translation of de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* in 1835. |
| Collectivism | Emphasizes the priority of the community as a whole or the group as against the individual. | Coined in the 1880s, originally as a synonym for common ownership of the means of production. |

**Table 4: Types of Individualism**

| Type of Individualism | Nature |
|---|---|
| Conservative | Based upon an unquestioned acceptance of the capitalist status quo, upon an uncritical endorsement of what is, and that many in the UK associate with the UK Prime Minister Thatcher during the 1980s and 1990s. |
| Capitalist | Concerned with competitive and possessive individualism; interested in the individual and their properties and needs rather than greeds; is more about individualism as an end, as an effect, as a purpose, as a destination, as an accomplishment, and as an attainment. |
| Socialist | Concerned with cooperative and rational individualism, relating to distribution of goods according to need as opposed to greed. |
| Democratic | Concerned with a rational political economy which social democrats believe will be much more conducive to, and promotive of a healthy and positive kind of individualism. The more rational society becomes, the more radical will be the working concept of individualism, and the more comprehensive and versatile will actual and real individual persons are. |

**Table 5: Comparison of individualism and two types of Collectivism (White and Nakaruma, 2004)**

| Characteristic | Individualism | Collectivism | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Network | Organisational |
| Basic unit of social System | Atomistic individuals | Relational dyads that link individuals | Dyads linking individuals and collective |
| Basis of identity | Personal attributes | Personal attributes, especially those involving dyadic relationships | Group affiliation |
| Exchange | Bilateral and reciprocal relationships between individuals | Bilateral and reciprocal relationships between individuals | Bilateral and reciprocal Relationships between individual and their collective. |
| Object of loyalty | Self | Self and exchange partners | Collective |
| Dominant consideration in goal pursuit | Self | Personal gain and relationship with exchange partners | Relationship with collective |

**Table 6: Takes on two Types of Collective Ideologies**

| Authors | Transactional | Relational |
|---|---|---|
| Toennies (1957) | Gesellschaft (association) collectives support individualism and the agent's proprietary belief system. Provides for social ties without requiring community (Gemeinschaft) processes. | Gemeinschaft (community) collectives involve a sharing of social/physical or cultural space and they form an organic whole. Social influences on agent's values, beliefs, self-identity and behaviour are external. No distinction is made between influences from relationships with other individuals and influence in relationships with particular collectives. |
| Triandis (1995, 2003) | Ideocentric collectives are defined as collective of social contracts between the rational wills of its individual members. | Allocentric collectives have an emphasis on understanding the individual within the context of the larger collective. |
| White and Nakurama (2004) | The network collective is an object of secondary loyalty. It is seen as a set of individuals with which an agent has direct, indirect or no ties. The collective is not an entity separable from the individuals who comprise it. People and their relationships with other exchange partners are objects worthy of loyalty. Agents would identify and pursue goals that benefit themselves and their set of exchange partners. They would not place a high priority on goals and objectives of other individuals with whom they do not have a salient direct or indirect tie, even though they may be members of the same collective. There is little interest in "collective" goals not directly contributing to personal goals or the goals of those with whom they have a particularistic relationship. | The organisational collective is an object of primary loyalty, as a set of individuals who have ties with the same collective entity. It is also a separate entity with an exchange relationship to the individual, and the source of benefits and other resources important to the individual. Relationship with the collective as a whole is a primary object of loyalty. When conflicts arise, the collective has precedence over any loyalty and relationships with particular individuals in the same collective. Individuals exert effort in pursuit of collective goals and objectives, even at the expense of their own interests or those of others in the collective with whom they have direct ties. |

**Table 7: Some of the Characteristics that define the two Ideologies in the European Project and their broadly associated group support**

| Characteristics of culture | Transactional | Relational |
|---|---|---|
| Type group | New Europe | Old Europe |
| Respect | The collective is not separable from the individual. | The collective is a superior organic whole. |
| Honour | Relationships to other individuals are important and must be honoured. | Relationship to the whole is important and must be honoured. |
| Synergy | Individuals and their proprietary belief systems important. | The whole is influenced by relationships with individuals and influence in relationships with particular collectives. |
| Allegiances | Individual social contracts are important. | Gaol seeking should be for collective benefit. |
| Learning | Goal formation should be for individual benefit. | Collective gaol formation takes precedence over personal gaol formation. |
| Sensibility | Ideocentric collectives are important, operating through social contracts between the rational wills of its individual members. | Allocentric collectives are important, where the members operate subjectively. |

**Table 8: Principles relating to the development of joint alliances**

| Characteristics | Meaning of terms for Joint Alliances |
|---|---|
| Phenomenal system | Usually referred to as the system in which behavioural events are manifested, and involving a set of structured parts that interact, work together, and permit coherent behaviour. |
| Figurative system | Virtual images constituted as a figurative system of thought that can be manifested (through what we shall in due course refer to as operative intelligence) as systemic events. |
| Metasystem | The cultural or paradigmatic dimension of an agent that enables decision making and control to occur. |
| Interests | There should be long term mutual interests in an alliance developing. The agents in a suprasystem should be able to work and interact with each other cooperatively, without the threat of passive or active violence or disadvantage that acts as a constraint on viability. |
| Purposes | Purposes that are seen as strategic aims and objectives of corporate organizations should be compatible. Strategic aims and objectives of agents should be compatible, ideological and ethical issues should be made transparent, and communication should permit the development of plans. Political processes should serve the needs of suprasystem stability rather than individual agents. Controls should operate through clear identifiable criteria that are not intended to favour given agents such that others have their potential diminished. |
| Influence | There should be a sharing of knowledge to enable the creation of a new paradigm that rules the alliance and guides its behaviour. T there should be a knowledge migration between the agent worldviews enabling them to understand each other. This will ultimately guide the development of cooperative behaviour. It also relates to trust (a function of belief), and if this is not apparent then it should become an aim. |
| The whole | The competencies of the alliance should be greater than that of any one operating partner. |
| Culture | Cultural compatibility between partner organizations is important. This includes political culture, and its consequences (e.g., political processes). This does not mean that a culture must be homogenous, just that the cultural beliefs should not be contradictory. |
| Trust | Trust between organizations is essential, reducing the need to elaborate on procedures. This does not mean that controls can be dispensed with. |
| Interconnections | Open communications between the partners involved in an alliance is essential. |
| Relational change | Change in the partner relationships can inevitably involve volatility. |

**Figure 1: A Suprasystem of Agents Forming a Joint Alliance, With its Own Existential and Virtual System**

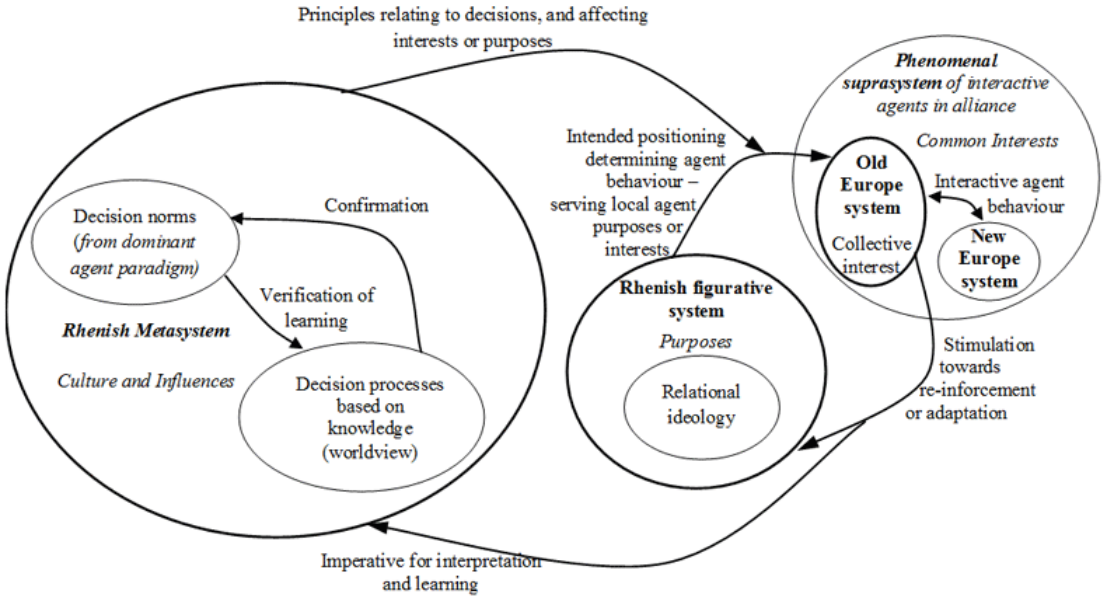

**Figure 2: Illustration of the Relationship Between the Two Autonomous Agents in Conflict**

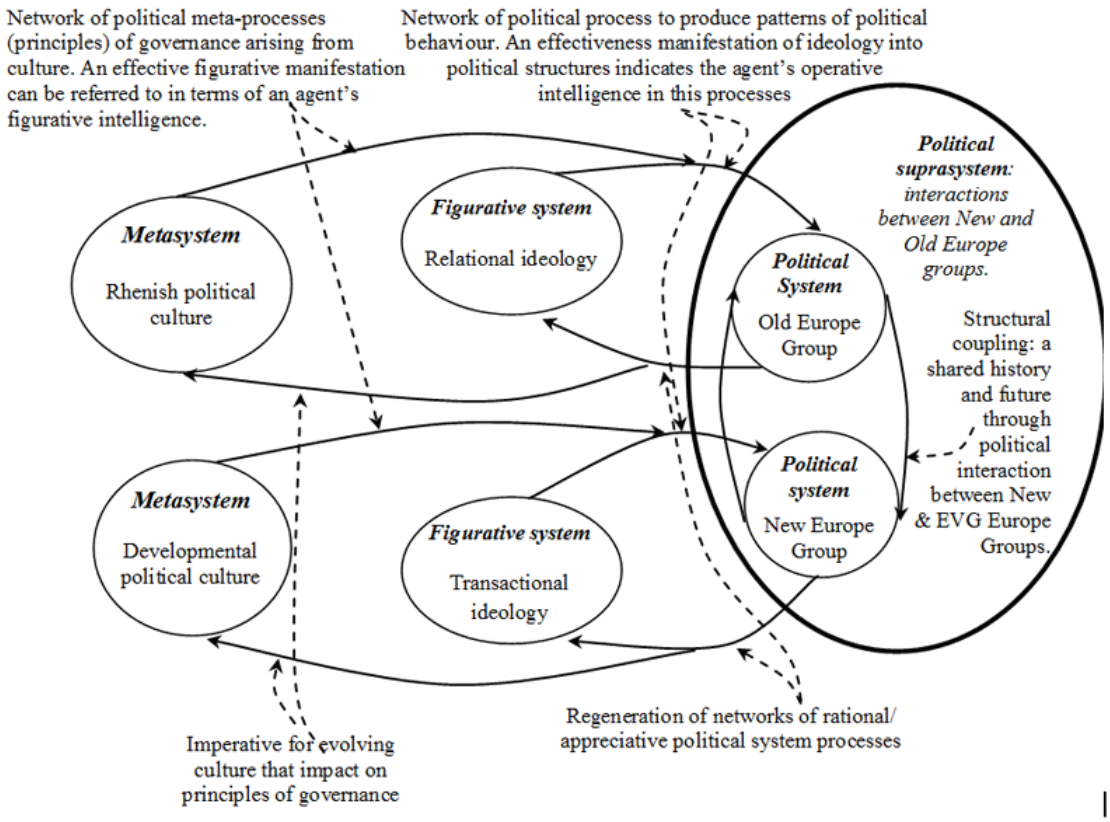


**Figure 3: Explanation of how Issue Boundaries can be manifested as Conflict**

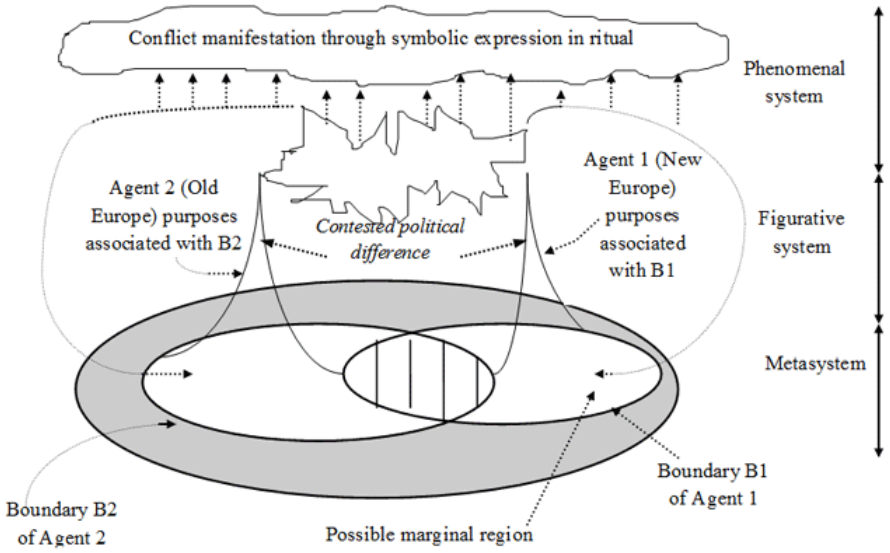
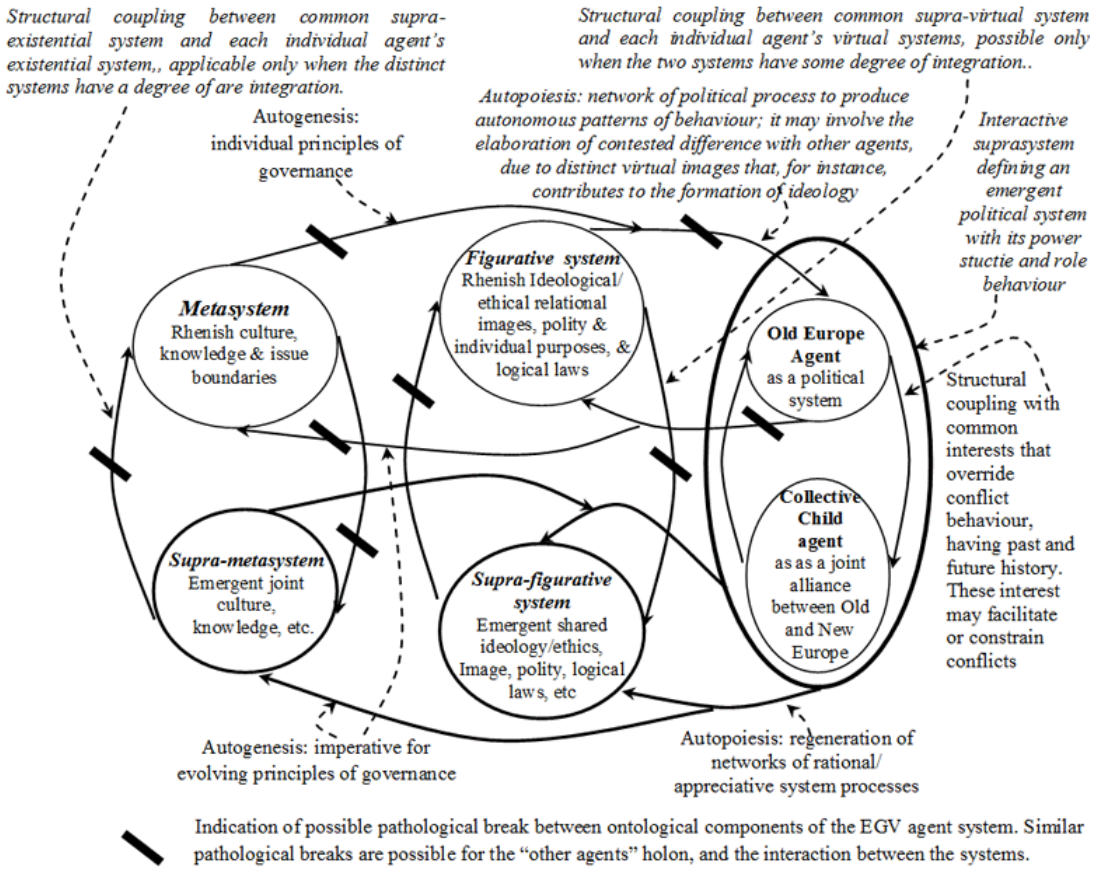
**Figure 4: Relationships between the Old Europe agent and the joint alliance child (as an agent in its own right) developing from the interaction between the Old and New Europe agents**