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Change Dynamics in Intra-EU Inter-State Relations: Preliminary Observations and Hypotheses

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Abstract

This article explores the idea that changes in the constitutive principles of the modern state order brought about by the process of European integration may reflect in change dynamics in the organization and conduct of diplomacy inside the European Union (EU) among the member states. The notion of the EU as an interstitial order between democracy and diplomacy is first sketched and some preliminary observations on the changing nature of diplomacy inside the EU are discussed. This is followed by an outline of a set of research questions, hypotheses are formulated and a methodology for studying change dynamics in intra-EU diplomacy is addressed.

Introduction[1]

The modern state order can be conceived of as an "antihegemonial commonwealth of states" (Watson 1992:182) interacting with each other in an anarchical international environment with no overarching authority.[2] The inter-state interactions are regularized by a set of formal and informal norms, rules, routines and procedures associated with diplomacy. As a social structure, diplomacy continuously constitutes states as actors and at the same time is being constituted by states, which makes it the carrier and the product of the modern state order (Bátora 2005). Given this role and function of diplomacy, changes in and of the state order are reflected in the way diplomacy changes. Put differently, studying changes in and of diplomacy sheds light on the changes in and of the modern state order (ibid.).

One of the most profound current challenges to the core principles of the modern state order is the European Union (Duchêne 1973, Krasner 1995, 2004, Olsen 1996, 2004, Schmitter 1996, Keohane 2002, Fossum 2002, Kagan 2002, Linklater 2005). As Robert Cooper (2003:3) argues, the end of the Cold War marks "a fundamental change in the European state system itself. […] What has been emerging into the daylight since 1989 is not a rearrangement of the old system but a new system. Behind this lies new form of statehood, or a least states that are behaving in a radically different way from the past." This emergent revolution in state behavior is conditioned by the

[1] I would like to thank Bedanna Bapuly, Isabella Eiselt, Johan P. Olsen, Johannes Pollak and Peter Slominski for useful comments and suggestions.

[2] When I refer to the 'modern' state order, I mean the set of principles introduced in the Treaty of Westphalia following the end of the Thirty Years' War. Although 1648 is usually referred as the year of the start of the modern state order, it took several centuries for the set of 'Westphalian' principles including sovereignty to become the dominant practice among states. Following Ruggie (1993), the modern state order is here seen as consisting of disjoint, mutually exclusive states with fixed territories. It also needs to be noted, though, that there have always been exceptions and the principle of sovereignty was hardly ever realized in its pure form (see Krasner 1999). The term 'modern state order' hence serves here as an analytical ordering device referring to a particular paradigm putting premium upon the sovereign state as the core unit for organizing political life.

gradual consolidation of an intra-EU politico-administrative environment which, as another practitioner had argued in a recent theoretical analysis, is of a non-anarchic nature and the EU hence represents "a zone of mixed hierarchy marked by overlapping levels of governance" (Collard-Wexler 2006:398).

Due to these developments, there is a growing sense among academics and practitioners that intra-EU inter-state relations are taking on forms and organized patterns different from the globally established standards of the modern state order. In other words, new patterns for organizing diplomacy may be emerging inside the EU among the member states (intra-EU diplomacy[3]) differing from the way diplomacy is conducted outside the EU. While a small number of academic analyses have touched upon the latter *problematique* in recent years (i.e. Nilsen 2001, Hocking and Spence 2002, 2005, Keukeleire 2003, Bátora 2003, 2005, Blair 2004, Hocking 2004, Jönsson and Hall 2005, Henrikson 2006), assessments of the change dynamics vary quite substantially and by and large remain at the level of abstract theorizing and/or insightful but preliminary observations. What is more, besides the seminal report by ambassador Karl Paschke (2000), change dynamics in intra-EU diplomacy has not been subjected to any comprehensive research. There is a persistent lack of empirically grounded analyses and sound data documenting the nature of the change dynamics in the organization and conduct of intra-EU diplomacy. The goal of this article is therefore to outline a research agenda for examining the change dynamics in intra-EU inter-state relations by focusing on intra-EU diplomacy.

The article proceeds in three steps. The first part discussed the notion of the EU as an interstitial order between the traditionally separated institutional spheres of democracy and diplomacy. This is followed by an outline of a number of preliminary observations on the changing nature of diplomacy inside the EU. The second part identifies research questions and outlines a general analytical framework for analyzing the changing nature of diplomacy between the EU member states. The conclusion summarizes the argument and lists expected outcomes.

The EU as an interstitial order between democracy and diplomacy

It is a common understanding that intra-state and inter-state politics happen in rather different environments. The domestic political environments are characterized by institutional density, hierarchical relationships, shared interests, and strong collective identities, while in the international political environment there is lack of strong institutions, few rules, and conflicting interests and identities (March and Olsen 1998:944). Most theories of international relations hence envision interstate interaction as a two-stage process. In the first stage, coherent state actors are created from multiple individuals and sub-state entities through the organized and institutionalized interplay in the domestic political processes including political socialization, participation and

[3] It needs to be stressed that the current article focuses predominantly on the functions and organization of traditional embassies of EU member states in other EU member states. It does not deal with the emergence of an EU diplomatic corps which serves as an external variable influencing the bilateral conduct of diplomacy within Europe. The same holds true for the intense bilateral contacts between and within member states' ministries, and national ministries and EU institutions. Finally, the article does not deal with policy substance but with organizational and institutional aspects of intra-EU bilateral diplomacy.

discourse. In the second stage, the coherent state actors cooperate and compete in an inter-state sphere with few rules and no overarching structure of authority. Political order is then "defined primarily in terms of negotiated connections among externally autonomous and internally integrated sovereigns" (ibid., p. 945). The two spheres are governed by two different sets of expectations and institutionalized arrangements structuring political action. In the intra-state environment these can be subsumed under the set of institutionalized processes associated with *democracy*, while in the inter-state environment, the overarching institution is *diplomacy*. While the former rests on the principles of representation and popular participation and control, the latter is the prerogative of selected experts working behind layers of secrecy and exercising a considerable amount of fiat in decision-making. A fundamental difference between the intra-state spheres and the international sphere is related to the nature of authorization of representatives. In intra-state political representation, representatives are authorized by citizens through elections, a process which Pitkin (1967:43) describes as "vesting authority". Authorization of diplomatic representatives, however, is a prerogative of the head of state (in some countries still a monarch) in whose hands political responsibility for external representation formally rests. Moreover, the authorization to act on behalf of the state is also embedded within the institution of the foreign service itself – when somebody becomes member of the diplomatic service, s/he is by the nature of becoming member of the professional group of state officials also authorized to represent his/her state externally. Somewhat simplified, diplomats are hence in principle not authorized to act on behalf of their state by the domestic political constituency, but by the authority of the head of state using his/her prerogatives in the foreign policy realm. Hence, diplomatic representatives are only indirectly exposed to electoral accountability, but more held accountable by what Pollak (2006:115) refers to as *administrative responsibility* related to soundness of financial resource management, observation of legal rules and procedures, and goal attainment.

The process of European integration leads to a growing blurring of the boundaries between the intra-state- and inter-state environments. As Bartolini (2005:375) argues, European integration results in a process of de-differentiation of European polities following several centuries of differentiation in the national legal systems, administrative orders, economic transactions, and social and political practices. Yet while the coincidence of administrative, political, cultural and economic boundaries of the state are being disjointed, the integration process seems unable to produce any new form of closure and overlapping boundaries at the European level. Policy making processes in the EU evolve in a complex system of multi-level governance in which national democratic systems interact with each other and with the EU institutions in multiple forums and in multiple ways (see for instance Kohler Koch 1999, 2003, Egeberg 1999, 2006, Nugent 2003, Trondal and Veggeland 2003, Hix 2005). Sovereignty in the EU is *pooled* among Member States, which prompts political leaders and national bureaucrats to act according to established notions of appropriate conduct encouraging 'rationalist and unheroic' arts of bureaucratic compromise (Keohane 2002:760). The EU can hence be seen as "a frame of common action and effect" (Puntscher Riekmann 2003:15). Simplifying somewhat, it is no longer obvious what in the relations between the Member States constitutes 'high politics' traditionally managed by diplomats

following the specific rules and norms of diplomacy and what, on the other hand, represents the more mundane kinds of 'domestic' political processes subject to the procedures and rules of democracy in the respective member states. The effects of this blurring are reinforced by the decreasing ability of Member states' governments to work according to specific national timetables, which as Ekengren (1998) reports in his seminal analysis, are increasingly supplanted by a multitude of policy-specific EU-wide timetables and deadlines connecting civil servants throughout the EU in administrative networks hammering out policies. Intensification of horizontal policy coordination across executive branches of member states' governments is paralleled by a decreasing ability of national parliamentary assemblies to exercise effective control of these processes (Pollak and Slominski 2003). These developments generate an emergent intra-EU order, in which the two traditionally disjointed institutional spheres of state – democracy and diplomacy – increasingly overlap leading to what Duchêne (1973) refers to as the *domestication* of relations between member states. In the view of Ruggie (1993:172), the EU is hence a 'multiperspectival polity' in which it is "increasingly difficult to visualize the conduct of international politics among community members, and to a considerable measure even domestic politics, as though it took place from a starting point of twelve separate, single, fixed viewpoints." The challenge faced by analysts, as Claes' (2003) study of the impacts of the European Economic Area agreement on Norway had shown, is that the legal framework of the EU and the institutionalized political processes associated with it structure politics in ways which cannot be satisfactorily explained neither from an intra-state perspective focusing on democratic processes nor from a purely inter-state perspective placing the premium on diplomatic processes. EU governance can hence be better comprehended as "political organization in the field of tension between democracy and diplomacy" (ibid., p. 277, my translation).

From an organization theory perspective, such overlaps of institutionalized spheres or organizational fields each featuring a different set of norms, rules, structures and practices may lead to *institutional collisions*. These are situations, where several logics of appropriateness might be evoked and actors are forced to choose between competing institutional sets of criteria guiding action (for elaborations see Thelen 1999, Clemens and Cook 1999, Orren and Skowronek 2004, Olsen 2004). Institutional collisions have transformational potential as they may lead to mobilization of particular actors rallying in defence of particular institutional orders and/or attempts to export symbols and practices of one institution in order to transform another (Friedland and Alford 1991:255).

Development of political or social structures between or across established institutional spheres or organizational fields may also lead to institutional innovation and change in a process which Morrill (2006) terms *interstitial emergence*. In this process, new kinds of practices gradually evolve through the rise of 'alternative practice frames' by *elasticity* of existing frames and/or by 'borrowing' and gradually institutionalizing practices, norms and structures from other institutionalized spheres or fields.[4] This involves the shaping of rules, structures, norms and

[4] Morrill (2006) defines an *interstice* as "a mesolevel location that forms from overlapping resource networks across multiple organizational fields in which the authority of the dominant resource network does not prevail. Interstices typically arise when problems or issues persistently spill over from one organizational field to another." He further identifies three stages of *interstitial*

practices applied within each of the respective institutionalized spheres. It may also lead to innovation in established notions of appropriate organizing, rules and practices in a gradual process of *recombination*, *refunctionality* and *catalysis* (Padgett 2001, Padgett and McLean 2006).[5] This dynamics of transposition across institutional orders may not only lead to institutional change but also to *change of the ways how change happens*. In such processes, established sources of legitimacy and power are re-cast and new modes of organizing political life are structured.

Institutionally embedded at the center of the overlap between the institutionalized spheres of diplomacy and democracy are the foreign ministries. The very raison d'être of these agencies of state is to manage the intersection between the intra-state sphere and the inter-state sphere. Their organizational units located abroad (embassies, consulates and missions to international organizations) perform the function of diplomatic representation and the foreign ministry is a support mechanism in this respect. At the same time, the foreign ministry is an integral part of the government and thereby operates in the context of intra-state political representation with all the respective procedural consequences and expectations of political accountability. The overlaps within the EU of the institutionalized intra-state and inter-state spheres challenge the role and functions of foreign ministries and embassies in the conduct of intra-EU diplomacy. The next section addresses the emerging challenges in more detail.

Diplomacy inside the EU: some preliminary observations

Despite advancing European integration, the structure of bilateral diplomatic relations between EU Member States remains intact so far (Hocking and Spence 2002, Bátora 2005). An indication of this is the fact that embassies of EU Member States in other Member States have structures, functions and staff on par with their embassies in third countries. Moreover, there has been a proliferation of Member States´ embassies and consulates in other Member States. An example is the ongoing construction of Member State embassies in Berlin (Bátora 2005), as well as the building and inauguration of new embassies *in* and *by* the new Member States.[6] In short, the structure of bilateral diplomatic representation between the EU Member States is not only maintained, but is in fact being renewed in an isomorphic manner in accordance with established traditions and standards within the global organizational field of diplomacy[7]. Yet, as Olsen

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emergence: "innovation, when interstitial networks of players experiment with alternative practices to solve problems affecting multiple organizational fields. […] A second mobilization stage requires the development of critical masses of supporters and resonant frames for alternative practices. A third structuration stage occurs to the extent that alternative practitioners are able to carve out legitimated social spaces for their practices. […] Structuration ultimately can modify the institutionalized narratives used to account for formal, organizational practices and reconfigure the institutional context by creating new organizational fields that compete with and modify established fields."

[5] Padgett and McLean (2006:1468) situate organizational invention in the dynamics of reproduction of multiple networks and identify three steps in the process. First, *recombination*, which is produced "when one or more social relations are transposed from one domain to another, mixing in use with relations already there." Second, *refunctionality*, which emerges "when transposition leads not just to improvement in existing uses but, more radically, to new uses – that is to a new set of objects with which to interact and transform." Thirdly, *catalysis* is "when these new interactions feed back to alter the way existing relations reproduce."

[6] See the proliferation of Member State embassies in Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, Bratislava, Ljubljana, Valetta and Nicosia. For instance, Austria has opened new embassies in Valetta and Nicosia in 2005. Another example could be Slovakia's decision to open new embassies in Tallinn and Vilnius in the near future (see *Správa o stave siete zastupiteľských úradov SR v zahraničí v r. 2005 a východiská pre jej ďalší rozvoj* [Report on the state of the network of Slovak missions abroad in 2005 and points of departure for its further development]**,** Bratislava: MFA; http://www.foreign.gov.sk/pk/mat/197-material.htm)

[7] For the concept of *organizational field* see DiMaggio and Powell ([1983] 1991). For a conceptualization of diplomacy as an

(2003:524) points out, a puzzle for students of organizations examining European integration is that although formal organizational structures (or 'façades') in Member States' public administrations remain unchanged, new practices and routines have been introduced within the existing structures. Foreign affairs administrations are not an exception.

Analysts have pointed to the fact that the EU represents a new kind of environment for the conduct of bilateral diplomatic relations between Member States. According to Keukeleire (2003:32), the intra-EU inter-state interactions are characterized by *interrelational goals*, which relate to the need of improved mutual understanding, predictability of national policies, greater solidarity and overall strengthening of mutual relations between Member States. This view is shared by Spence, who points out that in negotiations between EU Member States there is a "higher order agenda" relating to the fact that negotiated agreements limit potential of conflict in the future and "this is the overall, yet unspoken, aim. […] Of course, rivalry for influence between the Member States persists, but what characterizes the system is commitment to togetherness and the seeming unshakability of Member States' resolve to strengthen the system of European governance" (Spence 2004:256-257). Given these emerging systemic differences between an intra-EU environment and an extra-EU environment for state-to-state relations, there has been a growing sense among policy-analysts and diplomatic officials that the system of bilateral diplomacy within the EU is undergoing various forms of change, which might lead to the emergence of differences between the way diplomacy is organized and conducted inside the EU as opposed to outside the EU. As Whitman (2005) noted, there is a need to

> "draw some distinctions between different *strands of European foreign policy.* We have *intra-European diplomacy* [...] which results in tactical and strategic alliances. But we also have *extra-European diplomacy* which consists of member states national foreign policies, areas that fall to community competence (much of which is foreign economic policy) and we have our common foreign, security and defense policies under the CFSP and the ESDP and our common internal security policies. (italics in the original).

Reflecting upon the change dynamics, Stephen Wall, the Europe Advisor of Tony Blair, argues that European integration processes have radically changed the work of British embassies in the EU. While previously the embassy personnel in Member States' capitals would spend most of their time hammering out EU negotiating positions and various policy issues, this function is now mostly centralized in the governmental offices in London, where the civil servants manage direct contacts to counterparts in the governments of other Member States.[8] In part this has to do also with the increasing information exchange over the COREU network, in which member state governments share foreign policy information. This increases mutual awareness of foreign policy positions and actions and might be decreasing the role of member states' embassies in mediating intra-EU bilateral relations in the field of foreign policy cooperation. As a source from the Research Unit of the British foreign office pointed out in 1994,

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institution using the notion of organizational field see Bátora (2005, 2006).

[8] Stephen Wall, interview at http://fpc.org.uk/articles/160

> "[b]ilateral contacts have increased due to CFSP; Coreu telegrams, that bypass the sort of national embassies in community capitals, because Foreign Ministries can now communicate directly with each other through this network. Also telephone contacts. If I were to be posted in for example Dublin or Paris, it would not be much of this traffic that would pass through me, because it goes directly from the Foreign Office here to the Foreign Ministry in Dublin. To that extent the work of the bilateral embassy has become less intense, due to the direct communication between Foreign Ministries" (cf Ekengren 1998:69).

Arguing in a similar fashion, senior German ambassador Karl Paschke (2000) pointed out in his seminal report that there are particular functions (i.e. conducting formal negotiations with the host country government, briefing home government, trade promotion) that the German embassies in the EU Member States no longer need to perform. However, other functions, notably public diplomacy, have been gaining in importance in the work of embassies in other Member States. As a result, Paschke sees "a new type of 'European Diplomacy' with its own functions and characteristics" emerging (ibid.). Although, this report remains the only comprehensive analysis of the changing role of bilateral embassies in the EU available to date, a number of foreign ministries in the member states have also reflected upon the emerging specifics of the diplomatic work inside the EU. The Austrian foreign ministry points out that,

> "Austrian embassies based in the other EU Member States have had to assume new and additional tasks beside their traditional classical ambassadorial work. Although and important part of the workload is handled by the Austrian representation in Brussels, the embassies play a substantial role as *hubs* and *lobbying centres* for Austrian interests. Their direct access to decision-makers in the EU partner countries has proved to be a sine qua non in terms of preparatory and follow-up work on EU plans and projects" (emphasis added).[9]

The Swedish foreign ministry is a bit more general in its description of its work in the EU, but still conveys that there is a difference between the work of missions inside as opposed to outside the EU:

> "Officials both from Stockholm and Brussels participate in EU meetings and discussions of the issues take place between Stockholm, Brussels and the missions abroad. Work pertaining to the EU varies depending on the country of operations, particularly when the country is a member of the EU as opposed to a non-EU member."[10]

A number of foreign ministries see the mainstay of the embassies' role inside the EU to be the promotion of national positions or inputs in the formation of the EU policies. The Slovak foreign ministry clarifies this in the following manner:

> „[There is a need] to create ad hoc alliances with other EU Member States with similar views. [...] The process of increasing EU integration will hence require – seemingly paradoxically, but in fact quite logically – also the strengthening of bilateral relations between Slovakia and the EU Member States, which will enable us to maintain an authentic Slovak voice on the

[9] See http://www.bmaa.gv.at/view.php3?r_id=22&LNG=en&version= (accessed June 3, 2006).

[10] See http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2059/a/19981 (March 9, 2006).

European and the world scene. For these reasons it is necessary to finalize in particular the development of the network of our missions in EU Member States.“[11]

Championing the implementation of specific organizational procedures for intra-EU diplomacy, the German foreign office has had a network of the so called *EU-Affairs officers* in charge of EU policy in all of its embassies inside the EU and in the accession countries. The system, which has been in place since 1995 and has been extended progressively as new countries joined the EU and the pre-accession negotiations, serves Germany „to directly lobby our partners in favour of German positions and to fully assess those of the other Member States on European policy issues. This is a major prerequisite for successfully bringing our interests into the process of formulating European policy objectives and demands.“[12]

Besides such new tasks, procedures and practices, membership in the EU had also brought about a differentiation of the discourse used by foreign ministries to denote the object of their work. There is an increasing tendency at foreign ministries of exempting the EU-agenda from what is usually covered by the term foreign policy and/or a tendency of making a distinction between EU-related policies and policies towards other parts of the world. The home-page of the Italian foreign ministry, for instance, makes a distinction between „European Policy“ and „Foreign Policy“[13], thereby indicating that it does not considert the former to be a part of the latter. The British FCO web-site makes a distinction between „Britain in the EU“ and „International Priorities“.[14] Similarly, the home page of the German foreign office provides the banners of „Europe“ and „Foreign Policy“.[15] Awareness of this difference, although expressed rather in geographic terms, can also be found on the home-page of the Austrian foreign ministry, where under the banner „Foreign Policy“, we can click on „Europe“ and „Extra-European area“.[16] It is interesting to note that the distinction between a regional-integrationist policy and foreign policy is specific of foreign ministries in the EU as one does not find any such differentiation on the web-sites of the foreign ministries of non-EU countries.[17] While virtually all member states foreign ministry home-pages feature one or another form of a distinction between foreign policy and European policy, there is no unitary model of how such a distinction is made. This does not concern only the discursive level of foreign ministry home-pages, but also policy substance, and may be related to the fact that the EU as such keeps evolving dynamically. As Hocking (2005:14) argues, this leads to

[11] Správa o stave siete zastupiteľských úradov SR v zahraničí v r. 2005 a východiská pre jej ďalší rozvoj [Report on the State of the Network of Slovak Missions Abroad in 2005 and Possibilities of its Further Development] Bratislava: Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005, p.8

[12] There are currently EU Affairs Officers in the German embassies in all EU Member States, and also in the accession states Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, and in the German Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. For more information see “The Making of German European Policy” at http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Europa/deutschland-in-europa/entscheidungsfindung.html (accessed August 16, 2006).

[13] See www.esteri.it/eng (accessed August 16, 2006)

[14] See www.fco.gov.uk (accessed August 17, 2006)

[15] See www.auswaertiges-amt.de (accessed August 16, 2006).

[16] See www.bmaa.gv.at (accessed August 17, 2006)

[17] Based on a review of the home-pages of foreign ministries of Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Norway and the United States accessed on August 17, 2006.

> "the need to adapt to a situation in which the demarcation lines between what is not yet a 'European domestic policy' but is neither 'foreign' policy, are increasingly blurred. At the centre of this puzzle lies the core issues of policy coordination – a complex one in which policy actors play differing roles depending on the nature of the issues involved as well as the political and bureaucratic cultures in which they are located."

These ambiguities are demonstrated in a number of the case studies of the adaptation processes in Member States' foreign ministries featured in the volume edited by Hocking and Spence ([2002] 2005), as well as in Bátora's (2003) study of the change tendencies in the Slovak foreign ministry and in Nilsen's (2001) analysis of the work of the Norwegian embassies in Copenhagen and Stockholm.

In sum, while there is a growing sense among academics and practitioners that state-to-state diplomacy within the EU is organized and conducted in different ways than outside the EU, assessments of the change dynamics either vary considerably or remain at a fairly vague and abstract level. There is no clarity as to the magnitude of change and the direction of change of diplomacy between EU Member States. Ambiguities are strengthened by the fact that besides the aforementioned report by the German foreign office (Paschke 2000), there are to date practically no comprehensive analyses of the change dynamics in intra-EU bilateral diplomacy. As stated in the introduction, this article seeks to provide some initial steps to fill this gap by sketching a research framework. The following sections outlines research questions and suggest a methodology for studying the change dynamics in intra-EU diplomacy.

Towards an intra-EU mode of diplomacy? Emerging research questions.

Institutions are markers of a polity's character and the way they are organized makes a difference (Olsen 2007). The way diplomacy is organized as an institution shapes the character of the inter-state diplomatic order and provides some of the core features of modern states as political entities. It is important to explore the evolving ways in which diplomacy is organized inside the EU, which in turn can provide us with indications of what kind of political entity the EU is. Inspired by the above mentioned preliminary assessments in the academic literature and by the organizational developments described in strategic reports of European foreign ministries, the lead-question that arises is the following: **Is there an intra-EU mode of diplomacy emerging?** The focus of the analysis can be made more specific by three sub-sets of questions.

First, given the fact that a comprehensive analysis of the change dynamics in intra-EU diplomacy is still missing, the first set of questions that need to be addressed is exploratory: Are state-to-state diplomatic relations organized and conducted in a different way within the EU than outside the EU? If so, what are the characteristic features of intra-EU diplomacy? More specifically, do Member States' embassies within the EU have different functions, organizational structures, tasks and procedures than outside the EU? Are the changes in the way state-to-state diplomacy is organized and conducted so profound that we can speak of a different kind of diplomacy within the EU as opposed to outside the EU? In short, what is the *magnitude of change*?

Second, given the large variations in the way states in Europe were constituted (see Tilly 1975, Rokkan 1975), an institutionalist perspective alerts us to the possibility of variations in how Member States adapt structures of their governmental administration to the process of European integration. However, harmonization of administrative law in the Member States and increased mutual interactions across national administrations may also be leading to greater convergence in the way Member States' public administrations are organized (Olsen 2003). The second set of questions that needs to be addressed in the analyses of intra-EU diplomacy hence concerns the *direction of change*, i.e. whether there is a uni-directional development of practices of intra-EU diplomacy throughout the EU or whether individual Member States or their grouping organize and conduct their intra-EU diplomacy differently: Are the changes in the way diplomacy is organized and conducted similar or identical in all Member States or are there different change dynamics in individual Member States? Can we speak of the emergence of a coherent set of EU-wide practices, routines, structures and procedures for organizing intra-EU diplomacy? In short, is there a single intra-EU mode of diplomacy emerging or a multitude of modes?

Third, since diplomacy can be conceived of as a key institution of the modern state order externally constitutive of states as units of political organization (Watson 1982, Der Derian 1987, Held et al. 1999, Bátora 2005), the third set of questions is at a more abstract level and concerns the implications of the intra-EU change dynamics in diplomacy for the emergence of a European polity: What do the changes in the way diplomacy is organized and conducted within the EU tell us about the Member States as sovereign units of political organization? What do these change dynamics tell us about the EU as an emerging polity? Does the EU remain a collection of states or do the emergent patterns of intra-EU diplomacy indicate that some form of European statehood might be in the making?

How then would one go about finding answers to the three sets of questions outlined here? The following section outlines an analytical framework.

A primer on intra-EU embassies: Multiple conceivable patterns of change

The notion that there is an intra-EU mode of diplomatic representation emerging is premised on an implicit assumption that diplomatic representation among Member States of the Union is different than standard diplomatic representation between states otherwise. If diplomatic representation around the world is embedded in standards and organizational arrangements carried by a global organizational field of diplomacy, and informed by a global system of norms and rules providing diplomats from various countries around the world with a shared logic of diplomatic appropriateness (for elaborations of this dual conceptualization see Bátora 2005), an intra-EU mode of diplomacy different from the established global diplomatic system would have to differ in terms of both the organizing arrangements and standard notions of what is appropriate diplomatic conduct.

The question is, of course, which organizational arrangements would be suitable object of analysis of the change dynamics in the intra-EU diplomatic practice. The foreign ministries are a natural choice as the collection of studies featured in the volume edited by Hocking and Spence

(2005) shows. Yet, as Hocking (2005) himself points out, foreign ministries of EU member states are susceptible to a broad range of pressures leading to change and the process of European integration may be but a part of the overall adaptation process in which foreign ministries respond to budgetary cuts, the rise of non-state actors, the information technology revolution and globalization more generally. A focus on *change dynamics in member states' embassies inside the EU*, on the other hand, might be of greater relevance in relation to the questions raised above. Permanent embassies as a standardized way of organizing diplomatic representation are one of the core specifics of the modern diplomatic system (Anderson 1993, Berridge 1995, Hamilton and Langhorne 1995, Rana 2002). Martin Wight (1977:53) went as far as calling permanent embassy "the master institution of the modern Western state's system."

Besides a *functional explanation* of the existence of embassies related to the need to gather information on foreign societies, communicate with foreign governments and represent the interests of the home government, there is an equally important *symbolic explanation* of their existence. Embassies serve the purpose of a *dual kind of symbolic representation*. First, the presence of one's own embassies in the territories of other states and the presence of foreign embassies in one's own territory provides the continuous symbolic recognition of one's own state as a sovereign entity. Second, the collection of embassies in a particular capital is a continuous symbolic recreation or reenactment of the state order as a whole. One might argue, that this 'totemic quality' of the collection of embassies in any given capital serves the same purpose as other kinds of symbolic representation of imagined communities through symbolic items such as national flags[18] or through symbolic collective organized bodies such as parliaments. Given their character as carriers and products of an institutionalized system of inter-state interactions, embassies hence serve as powerful *organizational myths* for organizing diplomatic representation.[19] This means that states establish embassies in other states irrespective of the actual usefulness and effectiveness of these organizational arrangements.[20] In sum, embassies can be seen as organizational carriers of diplomacy as an institution binding the modern states together in a system of rules, norms and procedures regularizing interactions. Changes in the organizational structures, functions, tasks and roles of embassies are hence a good indicator of changes in diplomacy as an institution.

Given the character of the EU as a polity-in-the-making, a study of changes in organization, functions and role of Member States' embassies in the EU might benefit from the methodological approach of multiple competing hypotheses suggested by Robey and Boudreau (1999). Referring to the work of Chamberlin ([1890] 1965)[21] they point out that in an explorative study in which various outcomes are possible, "entertaining multiple, competing hypotheses may protect researchers from

[18] As Friedrich (1948) argues, "representation is a matter of existential fact; […] *Repraesentare* means to make present something that is *not* in fact present. A piece of cloth may in that sense represent a vast power complex, or the Stars and Stripes the United States of America" (cf. Pitkin 1967:92).

[19] For the notion of organizational myths see Meyer and Rowan (1977).

[20] To nuance this statement, it needs to be noted that financial constraints and specificity of interests do not allow countries to establish embassies everywhere. This of course concerns mostly micro-states, but not only them. One could argue that countries without permanent embassies in other countries free-ride on the established systemic character of the modern state order.

[21] Chamberlin, T.C., 1890, "The method of multiple working hypotheses": *Science, Vol.* 15, pp. 92-96; reprinted 1965, Vol. 148, p. 754-759.

too strong an affection for favourite theories" (Robey and Boudreau 1999:179). It is plausible to envision institutional change dynamics in intra-EU bilateral diplomacy as evolving along at least three conceivable paths. First, the institutionalized structures and procedures of bilateral diplomacy prove robust and resistant to radical forms of change, and diplomacy is organized and conducted in the same way inside and outside the EU; second, foreign affairs establishments of member states respond to the changes in the intra-EU environment along a multitude of nationally-specific adaptations in practices and procedures of intra-EU diplomacy; and third, there is an overarching EU-wide pattern of change leading to the introduction of new structures and practices of intra-EU diplomacy. Three hypotheses about institutional change dynamics in intra-EU diplomacy can hence be formulated.

(a) The status-quo hypothesis: *The organization, functions and role of Member States' embassies in the EU remain unchanged.*

Institutions have been seen as buffers against arbitrary change (March and Olsen 1989). As any other robust institution, diplomacy provides actors with 'institutional lenses' for interpretations of events in its environment, facilitates the creation of shared accounts of history, and hence produces a protective belt of ideas and meanings around its own existence.[22] Thus, changes in the environment such as the process of European integration are perceived and accommodated in accordance with the established logic of appropriateness informing diplomacy (i.e. in accordance with basic notions of what a state is and how it interacts with other states) and they are reflected through *resistance to change* of the organizational basis of diplomacy.[23] In the context of the current analysis, this would imply that Member States' embassies in the EU would continue enacting their traditional role and maintaining organizational structures, routines, functions and procedures on par with embassies outside the EU. The organizing standards of the global organizational field of diplomacy would be maintained through isomorphic change at member states' embassies. The role of member states' embassies inside the EU would also remain the same as the role of member states' embassies outside the EU.

(b) The fragmentation hypothesis: *The organization, functions and role of Member States' embassies in the EU change in a collectively varying manner.*

This hypothesis is premised upon the notion that public administrations in EU member states are characterized by different national traditions, histories, administrative structures and cultures, which lead to differences in their patterns of adaptation to EU-integration (Page and Wouters 1995, Mény et al. 1996, Wiener 2000, Börzel 2001, Knill 2001, Olsen 2003). This applies also to foreign affairs administrations (Stein 1982, Hocking and Spence 2005). In response to the emerging changes in the intra-EU environment some individual Member States or their groupings may be introducing changes in the organization of their intra-EU embassies including specific

[22] For an elaboration of the concept path dependent institutional adaptation see March and Olsen (1989, 1995), Krasner (1988).

[23] It is important to note that status quo and resistance to change does *not* necessarily mean stasis. Effective resistance to change *of* an institutional order may in fact imply change *in* the institutional order, i.e. gradual path-dependent adaptation in line with the institutional identity. For a discussion of these processes see Olsen (1992).

organizational structures, units or staff. An example could be the above mentioned German practice of appointing EU Affairs Officers in all German embassies in the EU and in the accession countries. Another example could concern change in the focus on particular functions of embassies such as for instance the growing importance of the public diplomacy function identified by the Paschke report. Yet, while some member states may be introducing structural, functional and procedural changes, other member states may maintain the traditional structures and procedures in their intra-EU embassies or may introduce different kinds of changes designed to support their specific national policies and approaches in the intra-EU environment. Besides the fragmentation due to country-specific strategies for organizing intra-EU diplomacy, fragmentation in intra-EU diplomacy may also result from the variation in member states' participation in the different community policies (Europe-a-la-carte). An example may be the Schengen agreement, which may lead to convergence in practices and operative procedures in consular affairs in the embassies of participating member states (Pasarín 2006), while there may be persistence of nationally-specific practices and structures in the embassies of non-participant member states (i.e. the U.K., Ireland and the ten new Member States).

In theoretical terms, this would mean multiple adaptations of member states to the standards of multiple policy-regimes or intra-EU policy fields. These adaptations might bring about refunctionality of intra-EU embassies of some member states introducing new notions of what are appropriate structures, procedures and roles of embassies. Intra-EU diplomacy would hence be characterized by competing models of appropriate organizing.

(c) The metamorphosis hypothesis: *The organization, functions and role of Member States' embassies in the EU change in a collectively identical manner***.**

The organization of policy making in the EU has involved the emergence of certain elements of standardization in the way national public administrations of member states operate and co-operate (Ekengren 1998, Sverdrup 2000, Olsen 2003, Egeberg 2006). Modern diplomacy as an institution has been characterized by its propensity to evolve as a system of rules and procedures regularizing inter-state interactions.[24] This 'tendency towards systematization' and standardization inherent in modern diplomacy is likely to simplify diffusion of new practices and procedures to all member states in the EU. Using these perspectives as the point of departure, this hypothesis denotes a situation in which evidence of increasing convergence around a particular shared set of practices, principles and routines of intra-EU diplomacy would be found in all member states' foreign services. A hypothetical example would be the adoption of the practice of appointing EU-Affairs Officers to intra-EU embassies by all member states. Moreover, new and EU-wide shared notions of the appropriate role of the embassy would emerge.

In theoretical terms, this would be a uni-directional collective process of profound change [25]

[24] By contrast, the diplomatic practices of ancient China, Greece or Rome had not developed the character of a diplomatic system (Hamilton and Langhorne 1995, Berridge 1995).

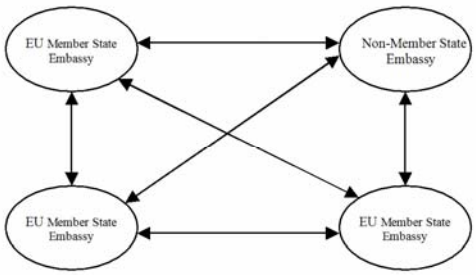
[25] Change 'in a collectively identical manner' does *not* necessarily imply convergence. Units of analysis may be changing in an identical manner, and, at the same time, keep the differences that characterized them to begin with.

Given the above discussed character of the EU as an interstitial order between democracy and diplomacy, one would expect a greater 'democratization' or domestification of the work of the embassies due to their involvement in the EU policy-making processes. This would involve a transposition of the democratic standards applied in policy making in intra-state spheres to the work of embassies in the inter-state sphere. Following recombination and refunctionality of member states' embassies, a gradual process of catalysis would stabilize a new system of intra-EU diplomatic relations. Intra-EU diplomacy would hence emerge as a new organizational field featuring new standards and generating isomorphic pressures upon the participants.

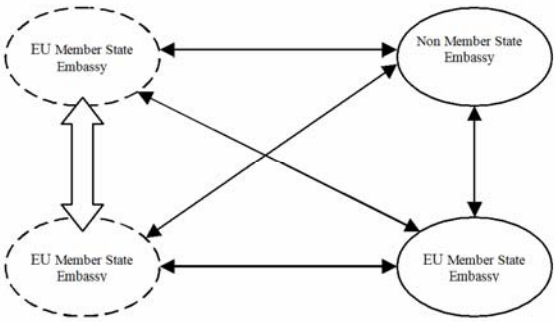
Figure 1 below provides an graphical overview of the hypotheses.

Figure 1. Hypotheses on change dynamics in Member State embassies in a Member State capital (graphics by Isabella Eiselt)

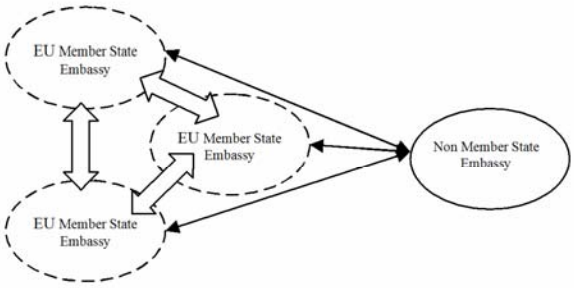
(a) Status-quo hypothesis



(b) Fragmentation hypothesis



(c) Metamorphosis hypothesis



Findings validating one of the hypotheses will provide a basis for a theoretical discussion of the emerging character of the European polity. Validation of the status-quo hypothesis would indicate that the EU remains a traditional kind of inter-state cooperation. On the other hand, validation of the fragmentation hypothesis and of the metamorphosis hypothesis would indicate different degrees to which the EU may be departing from the confines of traditional inter-state cooperation and may represent a locus of change within the global state order.

As alluded to above, for the purposes of collecting data for an investigation of the change dynamics in intra-EU diplomacy, a focus on foreign ministries of member states is useful but does not suffice. The national MFAs operate in varying institutional environments, adapt to varying national administrative conditions, and change will therefore likely be marked by nationally specific variations. It hence makes sense to look for convergence and divergence in practices of intra-EU diplomacy in the collection of *member state embassies located in one or more EU capitals.* A core challenge when exploring the direction of change is finding appropriate instruments for *measuring convergence*. As Olsen (2003) observes, there are currently no satisfactory indicators of what might constitute convergence in administrative systems of EU member states. What is more, there is little consensus in the literature as to what convergence might actually mean. To this end, proper indicators including factors covering organizational structure, functions and role of embassies need to be developed.

Conclusion

Given the role and function of diplomacy as a constitutive institution of the modern state order, a focus on the changes in diplomacy provide us with an analytical lens for studying change dynamics in the modern state order. It was argued that the EU represents an interstitial order between intra-state spheres of member states governed by the principles of democracy and the inter-state sphere informed by the principles of diplomacy. These overlaps of may lead to dynamics of change and innovation in the organization and conduct of intra-EU diplomatic relations. In the academic literature, these changes have not been analyzed to any large extent so far. Assessments that are available were usually part of larger studies focusing on broader trends of change in the EU or in diplomacy. Hence, although contributions in the academic literature and the reports by foreign

ministries indicate that there is a growing sense of differences between the way diplomacy is conducted inside the EU as opposed to outside the EU, virtually no comprehensive study has focused specifically on the change dynamics in intra-EU diplomacy so far. Although, as noted above, the Paschke report (2000) is an exception here, it remains a practitioner's view focusing strictly on the changes in the intra-EU embassies of one member state. There is a need for academic analyses covering a broader spectre of member states' diplomatic services, in which more general patterns of change in intra-EU diplomacy could be analyzed.

In an attempt to provide a first step in this direction, the current paper has pointed to some of the conceptual puzzles that the emerging intra-EU diplomacy represents and identified some of the core research questions that a comprehensive investigation of the change dynamics would need to address. More needs to be done in terms of suggesting proper methodological tools and the choice of cases for an investigation of this kind.

In terms of possible benefits of the analytical focus suggested here, both practical and theoretical outcomes may be expected. At a practical level, analyses may provide insights into the emerging modes of operation and role of national diplomatic services within the EU context, based on which suggestions of administrative and organizational improvements can be proposed. Furthermore, best practices in organization and conduct of intra-EU bilateral diplomacy can be mapped out. Findings can serve as a basis for the training of diplomats in the foreign services of the current Member States and in the potential candidate states (i.e. Western Balkans).

At the theoretical level, the analytical focus proposed here allows for a discussion of the emerging nature of the European polity. This concerns the changes in the statehood of individual Member States as well as the emerging character of the EU as a political entity. At a more abstract level, contributions can be made to the ongoing debates in the study of political institutions concerning the co-existence and co-evolvement of new and old institutional orders (March and Olsen 2005) and the endogenous change in institutional orders (Eisenstadt 1964).

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