

IV.

This pattern of policy execution in the field of foreign relations in various small states has been closely related to a certain pattern in their internal social structure and politics. It is here that some of the specific characteristics of the European small states stand out. Within all of them many cleavages have developed with time. As stressed in the literature on consociationalism, they have been either ethnic and religious or more 'functional' - class, economic or regional, as can be found in ethnically or religiously more homogeneous societies like Sweden, Finland or Austria.

These cleavages and the movements of protest related to them have not necessarily differed from those in larger European societies. But they have been much more varied, and above all much more articulated and intensive in their orientation to the center than those in other contemporary small states - as for instance in Singapore. This difference has its parallel in that between many ancient city-states on the one hand, and classical Athens or Rome, on the other.

Given the special institutional density of social relations that tends to develop in such small societies, the impact of intensive impingement of the periphery on the centres can be very problematic, thus calling for the development and use of special institutional mechanisms and arrangements. Of central importance in this respect is the fact that in those European small states which have been successful in maintaining their continuity, a combination of two patterns of political organization and activity has developed, namely the combination of a very strong allocative and cooptational mode of internal political arrangements together with a strong emphasis on more open, principled but symbolic politics, evident for instance in referendums or even in elections.

Cooptation occurs largely through continuous interaction between the executive, the bureaucracy, the parliamentary commissions and the relevant interest groups, and only rarely in the parliamentary plenum. Even when defined in ideological terms, parties are much more important as a sort of channel through which this process of cooptation, allocation and negotiation goes on. 'Open' parliamentary debate and the workings of 'real' politics in small countries are much more dissociated than in many larger countries. This formal pattern may take the form of 'classical' consociationalism, *Proporzdemokratie*, or of a semi-corporatist democracy like Sweden in the 1970s. The very strong emphasis on the allocative and cooptational aspect of