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Maurizio Cotta

Polity:  
The third dimension of political life.  
An introductory exploration.

*To my old and new friends of the Centre for the Study of Political Change of the Università di Siena.*

*Working with you over so many years  
has been intellectually stimulating, rewarding and utterly enjoyable.*

**Maurizio Cotta**

POLITY: THE THIRD DIMENSION OF POLITICAL LIFE.  
AN INTRODUCTORY EXPLORATION

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Polity: the third dimension of political life.  
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***Abstract***

Political phenomena are predominantly discussed and analysed through the two broad conceptual lenses of politics (being the field of power and all its connected aspects) and policy (being the field of purposeful interventions and programmes of public authorities). This article maintains that a third conceptual lens, that of polity, which is much less widely explored and theorized, requires comparable attention if we want to understand political life more comprehensively. The polity dimension, which concerns the construction and definition of a bounded space within which politics and policy processes are typically confined, is a constitutive element of political life. The phenomena and processes pertaining to it as well as the crucial relations between this field and the fields of politics and policy must be more analytically studied. The article briefly broaches an agenda for a more systematic development of the third face of political life.

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### **1. Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres**

Gallia is divided into three parts: this famous incipit by Julius Caesar in his *De bello gallico* can be usefully applied to the discussion this article proposes for a more articulated understanding of political experience. Politics, policy, polity are three terms that, although not always consistently used, can profitably and parsimoniously help us to explore analytically and divide our ‘Gallia’, that is to say the great variety of political phenomena.

I will start from the first two terms which are the most commonly used in the language of political science and whose meaning is better established. *Politics* is clearly the most ubiquitous and also stretchable of the two concepts. A simple look at the current definitions shows that the same word is used to indicate comprehensively the entire world of political phenomena (and in this sense it would include both policy and polity), but also to identify a more precise part of it. I will use it here in the second and more restrictive sense, which becomes clearly circumscribed whenever the concept of politics is opposed to that of policy (see for instance Lowi’s magisterial discussion of relations between the two concepts) (Lowi 1972). It is pretty clear that in this case politics refers to what we might call the ‘machinery’ of political life and to the processes which produce policies as their outputs. Power, or if we prefer, following Lasswell (1950), ‘who gets what, when and how’, and everything which is connected to this momentous reality, can be seen as the core of this concept. The old concept of *policy* (or going back to its eighteenth’s century antecedents, *police* or *policey*) (Smith 1763) has received, in the twentieth century, renewed attention with the expanded role of contemporary states and their propensity to devise (and implement) wide programmes of intervention in the economic and social life of nations. For policy we can once more use the definition offered by Lasswell, ‘a projected program of goal values and practices’ (1950, p.71), or Lowi’s one, ‘a policy is a rule formulated by some governmental authority expressing an intention to influence the behaviour of citizens.....by use of positive and negative sanctions’ (1985, p. 70), or Anderson’s slightly vaguer formulation as ‘a purposive course of action followed by an actor...in dealing with a matter of concern’ (2023, p.5).

That the interest for politics in its *stricto sensu* meaning has for centuries dominated political studies is fully understandable. Power and the whole range of phenomena related to it (institutions, actors and processes of different types which generate, manage, transfer, control or distribute power) represent the core of political experience and depending on the period, place and the prevailing optimist/pessimist mood of the observer stimulate both the strongest hopes and the strongest fears. The sheer quantity of studies on democracy, its mechanisms, procedures, actors, as well as discussions about totalitarian, authoritarian and other types of non-democratic regimes, demonstrates well the crucial interest in the politics dimension<sup>i</sup>.

Policy studies for their part have been particularly stimulated by the interventionist and welfare-oriented positions of democratic governments since the Second World War. State interventions in the fields of healthcare, pensions, income redistribution, infrastructures and economic stimulations have attracted the attention of political scientists and generated wide ranging explorations about the variable policy formulae adopted in different countries, and on the processes connected with formulating, deciding and implementing them<sup>ii</sup>.

The reciprocal connections between the two domains have been highlighted in many studies starting with Lowi's seminal article (1972).

While these two dimensions probably comprise about 90% of political science studies<sup>iiii</sup>; they do not exhaust, however, the whole set of political phenomena. There is a third dimension – for which I use the concept of polity – which typically receives much less explicit attention yet deserves to be evidenced as its importance cannot be underestimated. As we will see it has to do with defining aspects of political experience.

In order to specify its analytical meaning, we should focus on what is often taken for granted and accepted without further discussion by politics and policy studies: the fact that both politics and policy phenomena are (predominantly) 'confined' within a given (political) *space* variably denominated state, nation, political community, polis, empire, etc. The polity dimension of political experience refers precisely to this: political phenomena happen inside a 'bounded' rather than an open-ended space. This easily perceivable fact entails two main aspects. On the one hand, more or less impenetrable, more or less porous borders between different units characterize political life. On the other hand, a significant degree of internal cohesion is maintained within these borders. A polity is thus a political unit rather clearly separated from other units and at the same time a unit which constitutes a fairly dense community of belonging.

The relevance of these two interconnected aspects of political experience is made more evident when we reflect on the fact that they are probably what most strikingly distinguishes political life from economic life. In the latter case borders (which may indeed exist also at this level, but mainly as a consequence of politics) are rather an obstacle than a necessary condition; for political life on the contrary, borders create what, based on all evidence, seems to be an unavoidable condition. Economic life does not exclude elements of belongingness, but they are far from being as important or even as necessary as in political life.

We can briefly conclude that the polity dimension must be considered a fundamental condition of political life. At the same time, as we will further discuss, variability with regard to this dimension is quite large: according to our definition both territorially gigantic Russia and tiny Luxemburg or Singapore, both centralistic China and loosely confederal EU, highly homogeneous Norway and extremely diversified India, qualify as polities.

The importance of the third dimension of political life becomes immediately clear as soon as we think about crucial aspects of the other two dimensions. When considering major aspects of the politics dimension, such as authority, legitimacy, compliance, support, citizenship, we are immediately forced to connect them with a defined space, or field of play. The authority of political rulers, whether democratic or non-democratic, is fundamentally circumscribed by the polity they are part of; it drastically declines as soon as state borders are crossed. This is not to deny that there may be an influence of some external rulers (if they belong to a very prominent state), but its nature is quite different from that exercised at home (and in fact is strongly dependent on the latter). The same applies to other important political actors or institutions: parties are national, parliaments and executives are national. Their authority and influence apply to a territory and to the people belonging to a given political community. This is not denied by the existence of a supranational parliament or other institutions; in such cases there is also a supranational polity of some kind (as with the EU).



A similar condition applies also to policies. Public policies (which rely on the authority emanating from national institutions and thus from national politics) exert their influence within a well-defined area, typically coinciding with the political community (or a section of it) as it exists at a given moment. The taxation policy decided by the German parliament applies within the borders of the German state; the healthcare policy decided by the Italian parliament applies to Italy. All this is so obvious that normally we do not even need to mention this condition. On the contrary, we may be surprised when this assumption does not hold. This happens in two different and opposite types of instances. The first is when the authority of nationally decided policies is challenged and rejected within a section of the political community; such a situation arises when that section of the political community is setting itself apart from the existing one and is attempting to build a new polity. This situation in fact confirms the basic assumption: it simply suggests that the definition of the political community is in this case contested.

The second instance is when policies decided in one country ‘spill over’ to another one which is unable to prevent their impact. Such a situation indicates that for some reason (the imperial role of one country?) there is a condition of dependence of a political community from another one. A good example are some policies (sanctions for instance) emitted by the United States which, owing to the global role of this country, can impinge significantly over actors (firms for instance) of other countries. This would open a discussion which cannot be broached here about so-called ‘empires’ as a special type of polity.

Even such a sketchy and preliminary discussion shows the relevance of polity, the third dimension of political life. This dimension provides the (variable and potentially changing) borders for both politics and policy. It can thus be seen as a *sine qua non* for the other two dimensions.

A renewed caveat at the end of this preliminary discussion is required: the specification of the three dimensions is an analytical instrument with the purpose of better understanding different components of political life. There is no need to remember that real life does not see such clear distinctions. In fact, the strict interconnexions between the three faces often make it difficult to separate them empirically.

A couple of terminological clarifications are also required. The first is that the polity concept is sometimes used in an expanded sense: polity is then conceived as the whole conflation of the *stricto sensu* meaning of polity plus the politics and policy aspects that characterize a country. The concept of polity corresponds thus to that of political system<sup>iv</sup>. While it is obvious that in the end the three dimensions together concur to define the full political state of a unit, the purpose of my analysis is to zoom in on a specific dimension rather than conflate and confuse the different dimensions. The second clarification concerns the concept of state, often used as a synonymous of polity. I prefer not to use here the state concept because of its defined time and cultural boundaries as well as its complexities thoroughly discussed by O’Donnell (2010) which tend to bring together again what I propose to analytically separate.

Having established the importance of the polity dimension, it is time to articulate with greater details its main aspects. A developed ‘political science of polity’ should have at least the following ‘chapters’:

- a. Definition and theoretical foundations. What is a polity and its meaning.
- b. Morphology of polities: variations between polity forms.
- c. Polity dynamics: polity building and unbuilding. Successes and failures: when, how, with what problems; which factors favour or impede polity building.
- d. Polity maintenance: how polities are perpetuated over time.
- e. Polity and politics: how the two dimensions interact.
- f. Polity and policy: how the two dimensions interact.

In this article I will only briefly delineate these ‘chapters’.

## 2. *The polity dimension of political life: starting from a definition and extending beyond.*

In order to provide a working definition of the third dimension of political life we can start again from the fact that this aspect is normally assumed as a given. Italy, Germany, the United States, Luxemburg, today, and the kingdom of Prussia, the kingdom of the two Sicilies, the free city of Hamburg two hundred years ago, etc. are (or were) the accepted *loci* where political actors are formed, where struggles about power and its allocation take place, where institutional limits to the exercise of power are erected. They are also the *loci* where public programmes about education, healthcare, taxation, internal and external security are discussed, decided and eventually implemented. As a rule, actors involved in these games, but also observers who scrutinize and analyse them, do not raise many questions about this spatial dimension: they accept it as a postulate.

How shall we then define a polity? I propose to start with a rather general definition: ***polity as a (relatively) bounded and stable political space able to ‘confine’ within its borders the most important actors, institutions and processes of politics, and the most relevant policy decisions and implementations.*** Borders, separating polity ‘A’ from polities ‘B, C, D, etc.’, are a paramount feature of political life and characterize this dimension. Although ambitions to create a ‘universal polity’ which would eliminate borders by incorporating the whole globe have recurrently appeared in history (mostly under the concept of empire), these attempts have (so far) always failed and limiting borders have not disappeared. They have possibly been moved.

Highlighting borders as the fundamental defining feature of the polity does not mean that the degree of closedness/porousness of polity borders may not vary. At one extreme the borders may transform a polity into a ‘fortress’ with little or no exchanges with the external world (the ‘hermit kingdom’ of North Korea might be a case in point). Polities may surround themselves with concrete or barbed wire walls and position armed forces along them. At the opposite extreme the borders might be so porous that illegal crossings are constantly happening without the authorities of the relevant polity being able to prevent them (the tribal territories of Waziristan between Afghanistan and Pakistan, or some Sahel regions could today offer a good example). This extreme could in fact signal a situation where one polity is on the verge of decaying (or retreating). The fact that borders between member states of the European Union have today lost much of their impact may suggest that a broad European polity is in the process of (slowly) supplanting traditional national states or at least that a multi-level arrangement with two polity levels can (temporarily?) exist.

Today borders typically have a territorial definition; they are clearly drawn on geographic maps, but we know instances where borders had a ‘cultural or ethnic’ definition as in the case of ‘tribal polities’ or of polities based on loyalty bonds as feudal states (where it was the personal link of allegiance of feudal lords to their *suzerain* which defined a territory rather than vice versa). In any case, even when borders are territorially defined, personal aspects may be relevant: members of a polity living outside its territory may be considered at least under certain aspects still part of their polity of origin (they may vote, be called to military service, etc.), while under other important aspects they fall under the jurisdiction of the polity where they are residents.

To better evaluate the meaning of borders as a crucial feature of a polity we must further reflect upon some of the consequences they typically entail. The first important consequence of the existence of polities as (relatively) self-contained entities is the *great divide* it generates between domestic and international politics. Politics within the borders of a state (*domestic politics*) tends to display rather different features from politics between different states, or across their borders (*international politics*). It is not uncommon to say that a monopolistic/sovereign authority (or more broadly the presence of a dominating authority) defines the first (Weber 1922), while anarchy (in the literal sense of the word, the lack of an overarching authority) defines the second (Waltz 1979). Even if it is right to underscore the limitations of the concept of sovereignty (Krasner 1999) and to not fully accept the concept of anarchy as defining the international scene, it is obvious that the bonds keeping together the latter system are much weaker than (or at least rather different from) the bonds operating within domestic systems. It is no coincidence that, in spite of many attempts to bridge this gap, separate disciplines and communities of scholars (with rather different assumptions and theoretical frames) study the former and the latter (Farrell 1966, Waltz 1979, Milner 1991, Chaudoin 2015).

A second significant consequence to be underlined is that individual or collective, human or material movements/exchanges between different polities typically acquire a special status compared to what happens within their borders. It is no coincidence that they are generally assigned different names: a journey is just a journey when it begins and ends inside the borders of a polity, but it may become (with a number of potential material or immaterial consequences) an expatriation, immigration, or emigration when it entails crossing the borders. A basic economic act like the sale of a product becomes (also) an export or import when polity borders separate the buyer from the seller. The names of these simple phenomena change (and names do count in public life) and with them also the rules by which they work.

As mentioned before, the fact that the polity dimension with its bounded definition of space plays a crucial role in political life is probably what contributes most to making politics (*lato sensu*) different from economy. Economic activity is potentially ‘open ended’ while political activity tends to be bounded. Effectiveness, profitability but also fairness and trust are crucial qualities of economic exchanges. Reciprocal identification, cohesion, consensus, but also loyalty and obedience, are crucial in political relations.

Why is it so? The reason seems sufficiently clear: economic activity is about selling/buying scarce goods (things or services) which are produced and demanded. Sellers and buyers are interested in maximizing the private benefits deriving from these transactions; they typically prefer to have the largest choice and not to have a predefined target of customers/producers.

This is not to deny that in specific situations a producer might prefer to have barriers protecting him from competitors and thus be able to raise the price of his products. Or that a customer may prefer ‘national’ products to foreign ones because she trusts the former as having better quality certification. Yet these aspects do not have a predominant role in economic life and are in many ways politically induced.

Political activity is more concerned with the production of public/common goods (whatever their contents might be: order, peace, economic welfare, justice, control of violence, even repression, etc.) which any society (and also economic activity) needs and which the ‘invisible hand’ cannot provide effectively (Greenwald & Stiglitz 1986). The production of such goods can be said to be less ‘natural’ than that of economic individual goods. To be produced on a sufficient scale they require a ‘visible hand’, i.e. some form of overarching authority, legitimized or in any case successfully asserted. Whoever exercises this authority must be assured of the loyalty, obedience and support of the people over whom this authority applies. Political authority has therefore to do with a relatively stable situation based on the clear identification of those to whom it is applied. A bounded space plays, therefore, a crucial role in ensuring this condition: political authority and the existence of a polity are thus strictly connected. In a similar way, it would be difficult to imagine policies produced by public authorities directed to unidentified receivers rather than to a defined and finite target. It is a matter of limiting costs and maximizing benefits (we might call it the ‘economy’ of policy-making). The existence of a bounded community seems also a crucial prerequisite for a regular policy-making process. This has also to do with the fact suggested by Lowi that policies are in the end based on some direct or indirect degree of coercion (1972).

Without opening a discussion here about causality and its direction, it seems rather clear that linkages between politics as well as policy on the one hand and polity on the other are crucial. If it is difficult to conceive of political authority and public policies without a defined political space (polity), it would also be difficult to imagine a polity to exist without elements pertaining to the power and authority which govern it, but also without policy processes that positively contribute to maintaining the political community. A more specific treatment of these relationships will be articulated in the last part of this article.

An important consequence of borders is that they contribute to enhancing the cohesion of the political community defined by them. The density of interactions within the spatial definition of a polity is definitely greater than across the borders. The most visible and simple consequence is the identification of the members of a polity by a common name (French, Italians, Belgians, Dutch, etc), to which tend to be attached specific qualities, feelings of pride, etc. This internal cohesion (created and maintained over time with a plurality of means) provides a strong base for supporting political authorities and their actions. It can be immediately anticipated that the quality and degree of this internal cohesion may vary significantly in connection with aspects of the politics dimension. The feelings of being part of a polity in a democracy and in an authoritarian regime are bound to be deeply different.

### **3. Polity morphology**

Having defined what a polity is, we may proceed to briefly survey its concrete expressions and explore their variations. The current morphology (or the prevailing image) of polities does not seem apparently to provide a wide range of variations. States (often also called nations or sovereign nations) are the typical polities of today. Some common features seem to characterize them: a clear external autonomy, strong control of the internal space, very clear borders (and thus a clear distinction between who is in and who is out), a continuous internal space (with few exceptions of exclaves and enclaves), a high level of internal cohesion and rather homogeneous legal and political conditions for the (individual and collective) components of their space.

A broader historical view, but even a more careful analysis of contemporary cases, indicates, however, that a much greater range of variation has existed over the centuries and would suggest greater caution when interpreting the apparent homogeneity of today's reality and even more when extrapolating future developments.

It is enough to look back somewhat, more or less until the first years after the Second World War, to find the very significant presence of an important polity specimen, the colonial empire, which in many ways was rather different from the current polity model. The British and French empires are particularly relevant cases, but the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Danish, Belgian, and German empires should not be overlooked. This special polity type, which at some point covered a very large part of the globe, was defined by the very sharp internal distinction between the 'metropolitan' component and the 'colonial' ones (Crowder 1964). The rights and duties of the two different components were significantly different in this polity type. It was, for instance, possible to have democracy in the first and an authoritarian/paternalistic regime in the second; broad political rights for the individuals in the first and not in the second, etc... The British Empire showed a further internal difference between truly 'colonial' components and 'dominions', the latter having a higher status although not full independence. The British Commonwealth and its historical transformations during the twentieth century would add complexity to the analysis of this special polity. Once deprived of their colonies the metropolitan components of these empires apparently continued to maintain most of their traditional features. Yet under many aspects they were no longer the same.

In Europe, if we move further backwards, we find an experience such as that of the Habsburg empire with its dual monarchy phase (1867-1917) which combined under the same monarch two relatively separate areas, briefly designed as Cisleithania and Transleithania, plus some further complications such as the Kingdom of Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina being a condominium between Austria and Hungary. Each of the two parts had within its confines some further internal special autonomies or special regimes. This configuration meant that the internal space was very segmented and far from homogeneous.

Even France, possibly the most 'state like' entity of Europe, with a long history of a strongly centralized administration, had within its borders until the 1786 Revolution very significant differences between the so-called *pays d'états* and *pays d'élection*, the most important of which were the fiscal regime and the existence or not of representative bodies.

The Holy Roman Empire, until Napoleon, was another instance of a highly complex polity composed for a long time of more than a hundred highly autonomous internal units. More in general, feudal states of the Middle Age were highly decentralized and heterogeneous polities.

Past and present cities or city states (Hansen 2010, Lantschner 2022) – from Florence to Hamburg, from Venice to Geneva or Zurich, ancient Damascus or today's Singapore – have also exhibited a long and often glorious tradition of *polityness* with very special features.

Commercial alliances and commercial companies have in the past acquired a political dimension and generated some rather peculiar types of polity. The Hansa League is an important case of a politico-economic alliance between merchant guilds of cities from different countries which created a transnational space with a special system of governance. Among the trading companies flourishing between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century (the East India Company, the Dutch India Company, the French Compagnie des Indes, etc.), the British East India Company, able to establish a large political space under its effective dominance in India, was probably the most successful case (Bowen 2005, Stern 2011). Such companies had armies, navies, ambassadors, mints etc., and controlled large territorial domains.

Even this non-systematic historical excursus on variations in the morphology of polities suggests that we should view with some scepticism the idea that the contemporary state should be seen as a sort of Hegelian final stage of history, which accomplishes and ends the development of this aspect of political life. In fact, a more careful examination of the contemporary states indicates that far from irrelevant variations exist also among them. The distinction between unitary, regional and federal polities provides a first if somewhat rough way of accounting for different levels of centralization/decentralization within contemporary state polities. Another dimension that may or may not correlate with the previous one is the degree of homogeneity/heterogeneity of the internal space of a polity. A good example is the case of Scotland (and to a lesser extent Wales) within the United Kingdom as compared to England (as the rest of Great Britain). While Scotland enjoys today a significant amount of devolution (and has its own parliament), England does not and is still directly ruled by the parliament of the United Kingdom. Some similarity existed in Italy until 1970 as special regions enjoyed a fairly strong autonomy which the rest of the country did not have. Spain also has had a very differentiated regionalism for some time. On a more limited scale the special condition of Puerto Rico in the United States provides a further example of the special treatment of a territory.

The European Union offers today another highly interesting case where a developing 'super-polity' is superimposed over a large group of traditional nation states, defined as the 'member states'. This quite unique situation has created two significant levels of political space – national and European – producing what we might call a 'polity of polities'. In the old Westphalian perspective and its language of sovereignty such a structure would be unthinkable: there can be only one sovereign for each polity! In reality we find that, albeit not without some problems, sovereignty can be 'sliced' and compounded according to different models (Kropp & Behnke 2016). This obviously suggests that the concept itself of sovereignty requires some rethinking, or that we should more carefully distinguish between its normative (and also propagandistic) aspects and the empirical ones (Krasner 2001).

To add further degrees of variation, some very significant international arrangements such as the IMF and WTO should also be discussed in this context as they are emblematic of something which could be labelled as a functionally limited polity.

To sum up: some form of definition of a bounded political space, within which a more or less concentrated political authority is exercised and recognized, and policies produced by that authority are put in place, is a recurrent phenomenon in all ages. This is the essence of the polity dimension of political life. The morphology (size, borders, internal structure of the space, etc.) of polities can, however, change very significantly in time and space. The analytical instruments for exploring, classifying and eventually measuring morphological variations in the polity dimension should therefore define a very large subsection of the polity research field.

#### **4. *Polity stability and change***

That polities are, as a rule, fairly durable social entities (in some cases their existence may span centuries) is a fact. This is possibly the main reason why they are often taken for granted and in some way ‘disappear’ from the ongoing political debate, which concentrates on more volatile and at the same time visible phenomena pertaining to policies and their formulation, change and implementation, or to politics events such as elections, parties’ developments, government formation, etc. We must, however, remember that polities have also been (although less frequently than many aspects of policy or politics) contested entities throughout history. Even a cursory look at European and, even more so, at global history clearly indicates that polities undergo, over time, processes of formation, transformation, unification, collapse or dismemberment, etc... These processes are often rather turbulent and violence-involving. The fact that polity changes affect strong internal allegiances and are linked to mutations of the international scene is obviously the reason for these features. The relationship between polity changes and war is particularly significant and works in both directions, with wars causing polity changes and polity changes or crises often triggering wars. Moreover, as I have already mentioned and will later discuss more at length, changes at the polity level tend to have quite significant consequences for the internal politics and policy dimensions of political life.

Both polity continuity and polity change need therefore to be described and explained. As continuity is the relatively more common situation (and thus less likely to draw attention) it is perhaps easier to begin with change. I will briefly distinguish between three main modes of polity change: polity creation, polity dissolution and polity transformation.

*Polity creation.* Political narratives often describe polities as ‘natural’ (or even in some cultures as ‘God given’) entities, and this view may be applied in particular to borders which are often proclaimed as natural or sacred (Gellner 2008). Interestingly enough, this type of discourse is frequently used, sometimes with success, by political movements who fight for the creation of a new polity which in fact does not yet exist, but the reasons for which are considered self-evident. A more empirical approach, however, shows that all polities were at some point in time created or recreated. The creation point may be very far back in the past and this makes it easier to sell

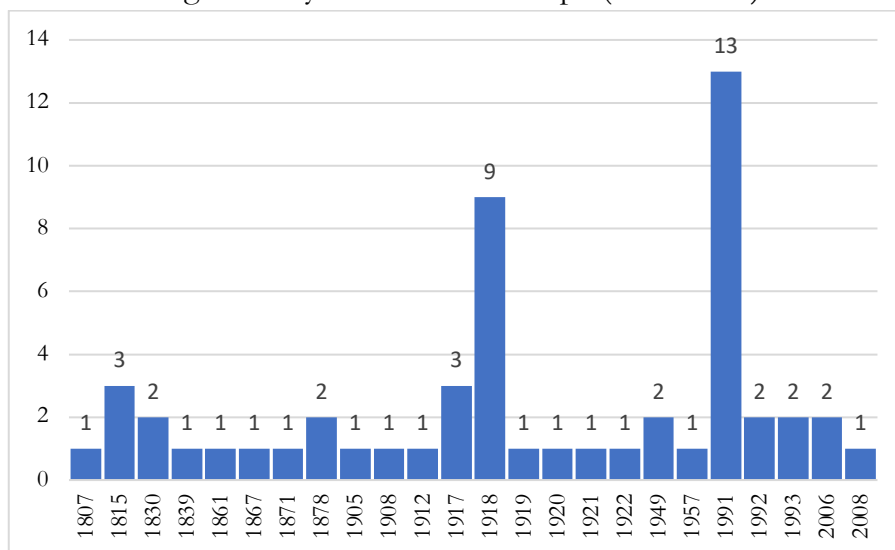
the ‘natural’ character of a polity (Japan could be a case in point). In other cases, it is easier to appreciate the artificial character of a polity: the making of it is under the eyes of the observers. An empirical survey of cases shows that the creation of new polities (and we might also add the numerous failed attempts) is a not-so-infrequent macro-phenomenon but its occurrences are irregular in time. Looking at the distribution over time of these events we find ‘creation waves’ entailing a large number of cases in a relatively short time span and periods when creations are rare. Important waves took place, for instance, with the crisis of colonial empires after WWII, when a large number of new states were generated in Africa and Asia, or with the breakdown of the Soviet Union which also had a significant impact. Going further back, the First World War in Europe and the European earthquake produced by Napoleon prepared the ground for waves of (or attempts at) new creations.

Exploring these waves would provide important insights for the study of the factors explaining this phenomenon. Changes in the international arena, but also internal crises of existing polities, may offer plausible explanations. Cases not linked to a specific wave would also require our attention.

An important aspect in this process is how the birth of a new polity is produced and how its identity is constructed (or ‘imagined’ if we adopt the well-known concept proposed by Benedict Anderson) (1983). A polity creation is in most cases connected to the vicissitudes of a pre-existing polity or polities: it may happen by *separation* from an existing polity (Pavkovic & Radan 2016, Griffiths 2016) which remains in place but downsized, by the *destruction* of a polity or by the *unification* of two or more polities. It is more difficult to imagine the creation of a polity *ex nihilo*, in an empty space (this mode was perhaps approached in some sparsely populated and thinly organized areas of Africa).

As for the identity of the new polity, previously suppressed/unrecognized ethnic or national groups, linguistic or culturally defined communities, historical precedents and memories, but also forward-looking projects offer potential grounds for ‘imagining’ a new polity.

Fig. 1 Polity creations in Europe (1800-2021)



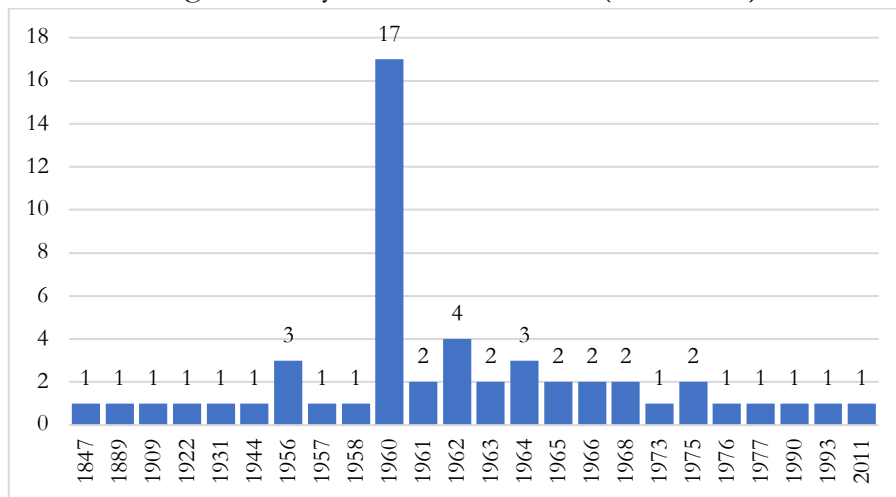
Data for Fig 1 to Fig. 4 were collected by the author on the basis of historical accounts of individual countries.



An analysis of the last two centuries shows that between 1800 and 2021 in Europe at least 54 polity creations took place (to which should be added a few that have not received international recognition) (Fig. 1). Two peaks happened in 1918 (the end of the First World War) and in 1991 (the fall of the Soviet Union) Some of these creations proved ephemeral, but most of them were fairly durable. Nearly all took place by way of separation from a larger polity or through the dissolution of the same and only very few by way of unification or of incorporation of one polity into an already existing one. We must also reckon with a number of (so far) failed attempts to create a new polity. These are cases where the issue makes its way into the political agenda, political movements or parties support it, some institutional steps may also be made but in the end the goal is not achieved (South Tyrol, Catalonia, Scotland can be examples).

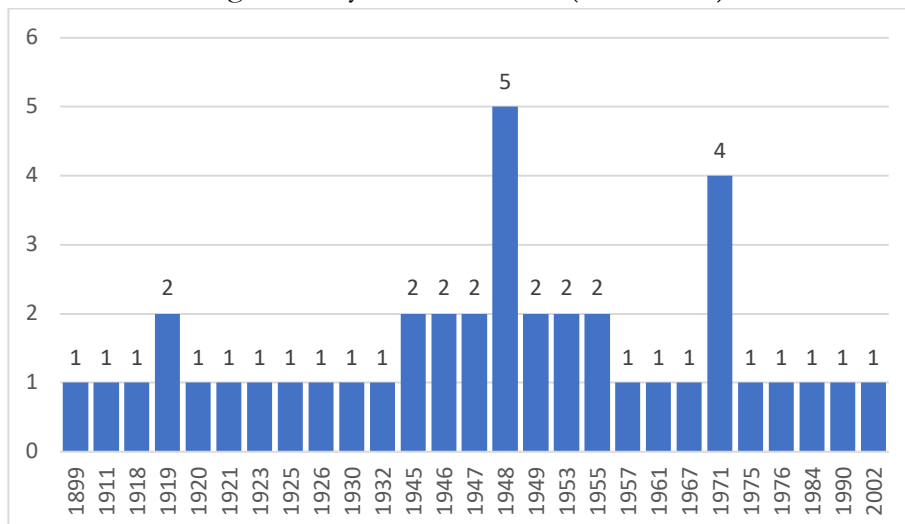
In Africa, most of the 53 polity creations happened through the collapse of the European colonial empires and were concentrated between the 1950s and 1960s with a modal peak in 1960 (Fig. 2). Only few cases can be found before or after this period.

Fig. 2. Polity creations in Africa (1800-2021)



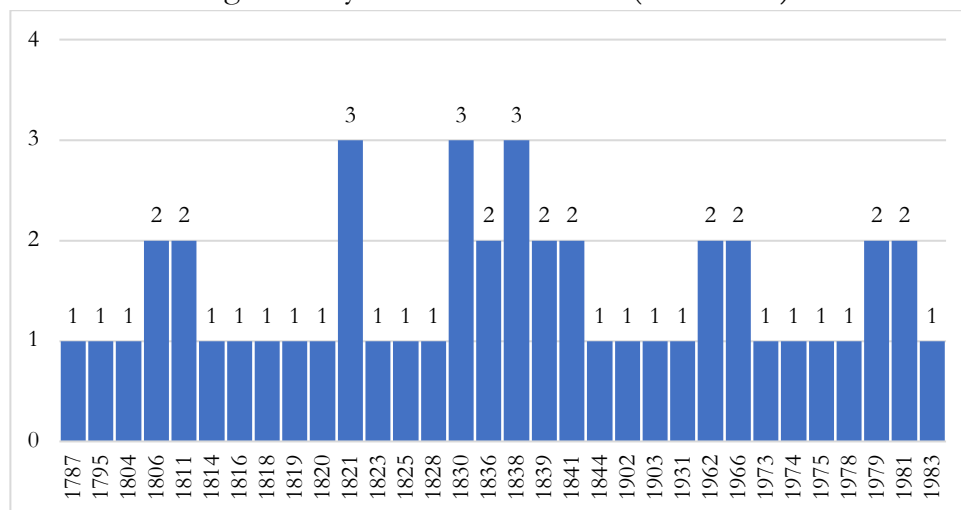
In Asia the 41 creations recorded took place throughout the twentieth century with a concentration of cases after the First World War and around the Second World War (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 Polity creations Asia (1800-2021)



In the Americas the great bulk of the 47 polity creations happened during the first three decades of the nineteenth century coinciding with the breakdown of the Spanish empire. Another group of generally small states came to independence in the second half of the twentieth century through the demise of the British colonial empire (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Polity creations Americas (1800-2021)



The creation of a new polity may be preceded by an intermediary stage which can be loosely defined as ‘autonomy’. In such cases many elements bound to be crucial for the life of the new unit (administrative apparatuses, elections, parties, etc.) can already develop, but another polity still maintains a superior authority. Unrecognized *de facto* situations, often linked to a conflict through which a seceding territory is able to free itself from the grip of a previously controlling polity, may also exist before the formal definition and international recognition of a new polity. In some cases, it may be difficult to ascertain whether a polity is really new or rather the result of a transformation. For instance, was the Russian Federation in 1991 a new polity or simply a continuation of the Soviet Union with a reduced territory? And is unified Germany after 1989 a new country or simply the continuation of the Federal Republic of Germany with an expanded territory?

*Polity dissolution.* The opposite phenomenon is the dissolution of a polity (Wimmer 2018). The frequency of this phenomenon is not very different from that of polity creations. In the four geographic areas we have examined the end of a polity is a recurrent phenomenon. A total dissolution is when a polity completely disappears and its political space is fully taken by another polity (or by more polities); a less extreme case is whenever a polity loses a significant part of itself, but the rest of it at least continues with a diminished size. It is difficult sometimes to distinguish the two situations clearly. The end of many Italian regional states in 1861 and of the Church State in 1870 and the incorporation of their territories into the new Kingdom of Italy were clearly a series of dissolutions (by incorporation). A similar, but somewhat ‘softer’ case, is that of the 27 old German states which in 1871 were absorbed within the peculiar monarchical

federalism of the Second Reich, yet preserved some attributes of their previous independent status (their monarchies, constitutions, diplomatic services, etc.). A clearer case of dissolution by incorporation was that of East Germany, the DDR, whose life ended in the Federal Republic of Germany. Czechoslovakia was also dissolved, giving birth to two different countries (Czech Republic and Slovakia) and the fall of Yugoslavia generated seven new states (Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and later Kosovo). In Africa a great number of pre-colonial “kingdoms” were either fully dissolved into the new colonial empires or downgraded to internal ethnic communities without a sovereign status.

The peaceful or forceful dissolution of a polity, when it entails the incorporation of its territory and population into one or more other polities, obviously raises important questions as to what happens to the territorial and personal elements of the disappearing polity once they have become part of the new polity/ies. How are they integrated into the new political space? Do they maintain something of their original identity in the new environment? Or are they fully fused? Obviously, this is a potentially significant issue for the new polity which has engineered the incorporation. Different experiences show that the acquired parts may prove more or less easy to ‘digest’. The Italian case and the troubles with its *Mezzogiorno* or later with South Tyrol may be an example; more dramatic is the case of Western Sahara where the incorporation into Morocco succeeded only partially and ignited a bloody resistance war.

A very special case is the incorporation of a growing number of European states into the European Union. Due to the special character of the EU, incorporation (‘accession’ in Brussels’ jargon) does not mean here the dissolution of a member state. It involves, however, significant changes, which produce a partial redefinition of the political space (on some important domains – market rules, personal mobility, monetary system – the national space is fully superseded by a European space), of the power structure and of broad sets of policies. The experience of an important confederal polity turned into a federal one, as the United States, shows that in the long run the originally independent founding members have not dissolved, but their status has been significantly downgraded. It must also be noted that this transformation was not so peaceful and at a certain turning point it triggered a bloody internal war. Switzerland showed a to some extent similar path with the *Sonderbund* war of 1847.

*Polity transformations.* Polity transformations may have to do with the size of a polity or with more qualitative aspects. Of the first type are expansions and contractions of polities, which are something in between the two previous instances of creation and dissolution. Some polities expand by incorporation of other polities or of ‘pieces’ of them. Other polities may lose more or less significant parts of their territory.

The regional Kingdom of Sardinia progressively incorporated territories subtracted from the Austro-Hungarian empire and other regional states of the peninsula, transforming itself into the Kingdom of Italy. It is common to consider Italy in 1861 as a new state (although many important elements of continuity existed with the old Kingdom of Sardinia) but subsequent expansions (in 1866, 1870 and 1918) are normally considered just a transformation/expansion of the same polity. In many ways the incorporation of the former DDR into Federal Germany was for the latter just a transformation while for the former it was a dissolution.

Incorporations bring about consequences in the field of politics and policy both for the incorporating polity and for the incorporated one. The adaptation of the incorporated territory to the features of the new polity may entail greater or lesser problems. If the weight of the former is significant it may alter some aspects of the incorporating polity.

Polities on the other hand may lose pieces of their territory. Sweden lost Norway in 1905, the United Kingdom lost two thirds of Ireland in 1921 and might lose other regions in the future. Germany lost Alsace and Lorraine after World War I, Pakistan lost Bangladesh, etc... Losses of a territory may be a deliverance if the lost region created problems which were difficult to solve, but may also leave revenge feelings lasting for decades.

The meaning and impact of such changes may be related to the size of them, but not only. The significance of a given 'piece' may depend also on the narrative politics has developed about it. The symbolic importance of Rome for unified Italy did not depend on the size of the city. The territorial and population size of Istria was not so great yet this region played a significant role in political discussions in Italy after World War I. The loss of Ukraine after the dissolution of the Soviet Union was for Moscow not only relevant for its size but also for the historical narratives about the identity of Russia shared by the top leadership of the latter country. Up to the point that it has induced Putin to a bloody *reconquista* war.

Transformations may also entail changes that do not concern the external borders but the internal structure of the polity. Processes of centralization, or vice versa of decentralization, may significantly transform the quality of a polity while its defining features vis à vis the external world remain unchanged.

The United States is a particularly striking case of progressive centralization of a polity which originally was of a confederal nature with very strong autonomy (some would say sovereignty) of the founding states, well expressed in some crucial constitutional norms (as the composition of the Senate, the mechanism for the election of the president and the distribution of competences between federal and state level). After the civil war the federal sovereignty was more clearly affirmed as prevailing. Interestingly the name itself "the United States of America" from plural became singular! Switzerland on a smaller scale is another example.

As for decentralization Spain has progressively transformed itself from a strongly centralistic state under the Franco regime to one with large regional autonomies. A similar process has concerned Italy. The process of Scottish and Welsh devolution has also significantly altered the internal structure of the UK.

South Africa, with the abolition of apartheid, can be said to have redefined itself as a polity by incorporating the non-white majority. A dramatically meaningful 'internal border' within the polity was thus abolished.

An important example where territorial enlargement was combined with a deepening of the internal cohesion is well represented by the EU especially from the 1990s onwards. As a result, the transformation of the European Union over time has been extremely significant.

Exploring these different forms of polity change opens a broad area of research on the consequences these may entail. What happens when a polity is created, dissolved or transformed? On the other hand, we may ask when and why such changes happen. As we will briefly see, this

discussion immediately brings into the picture the relationship between the polity dimension and the other dimensions of political life, that is to say politics and policy.

*The consequences of polity change.* A polity change, which entails a restructuring or rescaling of the political space either upwards or downwards and a change of the borders, typically brings about both external and internal consequences.

Externally, as the international system is made by N polities with their specific borders and sizes and is defined by their relations, changes in the number of units and in their size are potentially relevant. A polity change may affect, to a greater or lesser extent, a region or even the entire international system and thus the relations of the polity/polities directly involved in the process with the other polities. Power equilibria may change significantly. New borders may or may not be accepted by neighbouring countries and can in the latter case create opportunities for conflict. The magnitude of these effects can vary significantly, not only depending on the size of the new actor but also on the role it can (or tries to) win in the international system. Just to mention a few examples, the unification of Italy in the nineteenth century projected in the European landscape a middle level state with the ambition to gain 'its place' among the existing 'powers'; even more consequential was the creation of the German empire in 1871. Vice versa, the dissolution of the Austrian-Hungarian empire and of the Soviet Union left a profoundly altered space in Central Europe and in the Balkans in the first case, and in Central-Eastern Europe and Asia in the second. The expansion of the United States throughout the nineteenth century and its internal transformations progressively altered the regional equilibria in the Americas and prepared the ground for the new global equilibria of the twentieth century.

The internal side of the picture may also be significant. The creation of a new polity implies by definition the shaping of a new internal political space with its specific features. Vice versa, the dissolution of a polity opens the way to a redefinition of that space which is incorporated in one or more new or already existing polities.

Changes in polity size through incorporations or secessions, by enlarging or reducing the internal space, also entail potentially significant effects on the shape and features of the political community. Societal (economic, cultural, religious, etc.) and political aspects can be involved. The unification of Italy in 1861 (and following additions) has brought together rather different societies, cultures and economies. The incorporation of the DDR into the Federal Republic has created an internal imbalance between 'two Germanies' (and the distinction between *Ossies* and *Wessies* within its population) which did not exist before. On the contrary, the division of Czechoslovakia has created two ethnically more homogeneous states.

Polity changes may also entail changes at the levels of politics and/or policies. Political actors and institutions may be affected: the separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom created in Ireland a new party system and weakened the Liberal party in Britain. The unification of Germany after the fall of the Berlin wall gave greater strength to the extreme left and also to the extreme right in the larger Germany; as for policies, it extended to the new *Laender* the same currency and the same welfare system of Western Germany.

Secessions eliminate the secessionist claims and in the new separated states challenge the (self-) definition of the secessionist parties.

The consequences of polity changes on the external and internal side suggest a very simple and basic consideration: polities with their specific definition of the political space contribute to shaping on the one hand (to a greater or lesser extent) the international order, and on the other hand the domestic order. Polity changes reverberate therefore in the two directions. They open relevant fields of exploration on the one hand for the discipline of international relations, and on the other for domestic political science.

*Polity duration.* While different types of changes at the polity level obviously attract the attention of observers for the multiple consequences they entail, the duration over time of a polity format is often taken for granted and implicitly viewed as the default option, as if some mysterious inertia force was at work. Duration may thus seem a non-phenomenon. However, the fact that polities sometimes break down indicates *a contrario* that there must be positive forces which operate to support the persistence of a polity and that the weakening of them may produce the opposite result. A more careful analysis suggests that specific instruments are in fact at work to keep a polity going.

The huge investments in symbolic policies that we see in many polities are perhaps the most visible instrument of polity maintenance to be detected. Anthems, flags, ceremonies, national uniforms, celebrations, monuments, etc. are clearly instrumental in maintaining and enhancing feelings of belongingness. Other politics and policy phenomena play a perhaps less visible but very substantial role in ensuring that the life of a polity continues. The ability of central authorities to constantly obtain rule compliance by great numbers of individuals and by collective social entities, the presence of mass elections which enable the citizens of a polity to participate in some way in collective decision making and to feel part of a country, education policies which imbue a common language and common memories among citizens, social policies which assign significant providences to the members of the community, are just some examples of polity building and polity maintaining instruments. Obviously, the degree of success of these different factors may vary, but it is easy to assess that without the positive impact of a broad and multiform line-up of politics and policy provisions, it would be difficult for a polity to persist. *A contrario* it is not difficult to find proofs that when these politics/policy instruments are ill conceived or ineffective their negative consequences for the stability of a polity can soon be felt. Electoral and institutional mechanisms which marginalize ethnic minorities as well as language, religious and education policies which disregard existing diversities can trigger the upsurge of secessionist movements challenging the existing definition of a polity. Polity duration may become more uncertain.

##### ***5. A more analytic exploration of the relationship between polity, politics and policies.***

While I will not approach here the crucial relationship between polity related phenomena and international relations, which would deserve a very specific discussion, I will concentrate my attention on the domestic side of political life, that is to say on the realm of political science *stricto sensu*. Here we must tackle more directly the relationship between polity and the two other faces of political life – politics and policy – I have evoked more than once in the previous pages.

For analytical purposes, I will distinguish two sets of relations: a. the polity-politics set, and b. the polity-policy one. For each set we can envisage two directions of influence: from polity to politics and from politics to polity in the first set; from polity to policy and from policy to polity in the second. Again, the caveat applies that reality is always more mixed and fuzzy than the analytical view.

*Polity-politics.* The first set of interactions suggests a broad series of reflections. It is easy to see that the two aspects are both statically and dynamically interconnected. As briefly mentioned at the beginning of this article a polity, which became crystallized at a given point in time with its specific configuration (its territorial extension and borders, but also its peculiar organization of the internal space), also defines a specific realm of politics. We thus have Switzerland as a polity and Swiss politics, Germany as a polity and German politics, China as a polity and Chinese politics, etc. Politics fundamentally operates within a polity space and is bound by it. To put it more explicitly, for each polity we typically have a peculiar political regime, a specific set of political institutions, political processes such as elections and government formation, and political actors such as parties, interest groups, citizens, etc. All these elements are defined and operate within the political space defined by an existing polity. Vice versa, it would be difficult to imagine a polity without an institutional and political infrastructure to keep it together and make it work both internally and externally.

The two aspects have a degree of reciprocal independence which becomes evident when the polity definition remains constant while regime, institutions, parties etc. change. It is a bit more difficult to imagine the opposite situation where a polity is transformed and politics aspects survive through it. Yet it is not completely impossible: consider for instance the fact that political actors (parties, leaders, etc.) may survive a significant polity change and continue to operate in a new polity (the Congress party of India existed when India was a colony and continued in independent India)

At the same time the two aspects are also inextricably linked. The reciprocal connections are made even more clear when events which alter or even disrupt this relationship happen either on one side or on the other.

We can view this possibility first from the polity perspective. The most drastic polity events – polity creation and polity dissolution – have equally drastic impacts on the politics side. Whenever a new polity is created (for instance because of the dissolution of an empire) new institutions must be put in place, new political elites are formed, new parties emerge, a new citizenship is defined. The overall configuration of the political regime is also at stake. It is true that a new polity may inherit political components which existed before its creation and there is not necessarily an *ex nibilo* creation. When a new polity emerges from the folds of a larger polity which has exploded or through a separation process, political elements which had a local character in the former may be ‘upgraded’, so to say, to a national status. A regionalist party and local leaders may acquire a ‘national’ character in the new political space. Political traditions and values of the old polity can possibly maintain their influence, but such a transmission is not necessarily assured. The old components may not always fit well into the new environment and have to undergo a process of adaptation. An interesting case is that of the independence

movements of colonies which sometimes become the monopolistic party of the new polity when its freedom from the colonial empire is gained. From an opposition stance they transform into the new often authoritarian and oppressive role (a good example is the Algerian FLN).

The dissolution of an existing polity typically entails also a dissolution or at least a deep downgrading of the previously existing political institutions and actors. Some of these elements may be rescued in the new polity or polities which take the place of the dissolved one. An interesting example is that of Alcide De Gasperi, the Italian prime minister after WWII and previously one of the leaders of the catholic People Party, who had been an MP in the Austrian-Hungarian *Reichsrat* before WWI. A similar case was that of Tomas Masaryk in the newly formed Czechoslovakia after Versailles or of Eduard Shevardnadze when Georgia separated from the Soviet Union.

Things can also be seen from the opposite perspective, how politics affects polity both in a positive and a negative way. It is most obvious what politics can do in a negative sense to a polity. The numerous examples of secessionist parties or movements which appear across the world within existing polities and challenge peacefully or violently the existing definitions are a good example (Wood 1981). Many of them fail to destabilize the existing polity (for the time being in South Tyrol, Scotland, Catalonia, Iraqi Kurdistan, etc. secessionist movements could not destabilize their country), but a number of them succeed and provoke secessions that lead to the birth of a new state (the cases of India and the secession of Pakistan, of Pakistan and Bangladesh, of Yugoslavia and Slovenia, Croatia, etc., of Sudan and South Sudan), or to a conflictual situation where polity definition is uncertain or disputed (Donbass, Abkhazia, Transnistria, etc.). Unable to trigger a full secession, autonomist movements may produce a decentralizing transformation of the polity which may stabilize it, or in other cases be an interim solution until a full separation takes place.

On the positive side we can suggest that the normal working of politics and the fact that it does not challenge the existing definition of the polity can be seen as a continuing confirmation of that

polity (*un plébiscite de tous les jours* to use the famous sentence by Renan) (1882). Elections (both in democratic and authoritarian regimes), by making citizens participate in a common political event, can be seen as an important act that confirms the existing polity and builds a feeling of belonging. The same role is played by more symbolic events such as national day festivities.

*Polity-policy.* This relationship too can be seen from both directions. That the existence of a polity creates a well defined limit to the effects of policies is easily seen. Policy effects will typically apply only to members of the polity or to those who live or operate within its borders. This means also that an individual, by becoming a member of a polity (by birth, immigration or other reasons), is automatically endowed with a large bulk of policies and their effects. At the same time the borders of a polity typically protect its members from policies emanating from authorities of different countries, and at the same time deprive them of the advantages they could obtain from them. Welfare or fiscal policies offer important examples of the consequences that may derive from belonging to one or the other country. In some case they are so significant as



to induce individuals or firms to emigrate from the original polity to another one seen as more advantageous.

In a dynamic perspective, the fact that policies are strongly associated with an existing polity suggests that polity transformations should have a potential impact on policies. When a polity is incorporated into a larger unit it is highly probable that there will be a significant transfer of policies from the latter and that its original policies will undergo important changes. A good example is provided by the incorporation of East Germany into the Federal Republic of Germany: huge changes in economic, labour, education and welfare policies took place in the eastern Laender as a result (Hassel 2010). Another important example concerns the so called *Acquis Communautaire* which new member states gain (or have to submit to) by accessing the EU (Hille & Knill 2006). A huge set of policy measures is thus acquired by a state by the simple fact of becoming a member state of the EU. Sometimes, however, in order to facilitate the incorporation of a country, a (temporary or permanent) special treatment may be granted and the accessing country is allowed to maintain some of its specific policies. Vice versa, exiting a polity is sometimes the extreme instrument a country (such as the UK with Brexit) chooses to free itself from policies that are disliked. The creation of a new polity entails, necessarily, the build-up of a whole set of new policies, while the collapse of a polity will also produce the erasing of policies.

The internal structure of a polity may also be relevant at the policy level: the autonomy granted to internal subdivisions may allow for significant policy differences across them, while centralized polities produce a greater homogeneity of policy conditions.

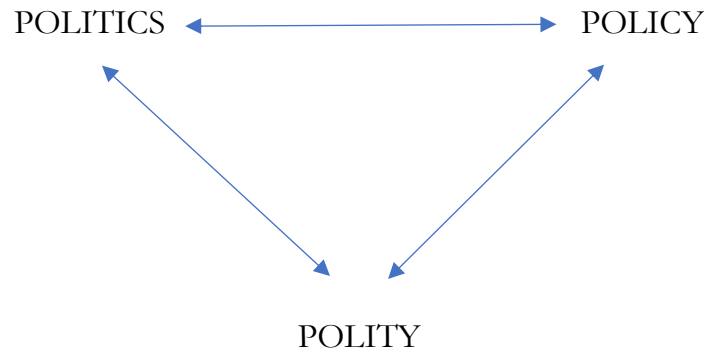
If we adopt the opposite perspective, we can see the positive or negative impact that policies can have on the polity dimension.

The broad literature on nationalism has widely shown the importance of certain policies, such as education and language policies, for the shaping and consolidation of a polity (E. Weber 1976). The teaching of national languages, national literatures, and national histories has been typically promoted by nation states with the clear purpose of building and spreading a common feeling of identity and thus strengthening the legitimacy of a specific polity shape. Other policies as well, for instance welfare policies entailing significant elements of intra-polity solidarity, or the extension of suffrage may be seen also in this light (the nineteenth century experience of Germany is a good example in this direction) (Rose 1972).

On the other hand, policies may have also disruptive effects on a polity. The imposition of one language in a multilingual polity may backfire and stimulate secessionist movements. Religion or ethnic policies according privileges to one religion or ethnic group and suppressing others may also produce similar effects. Harsh civil conflicts plaguing the unity of the polity may ensue; in some case a secession might take place or else a rearrangement of the polity recognizing autonomy or special rights for some components. The separation of the Republic of Ireland from the UK, of Pakistan from India, of South Sudan from Sudan, the transformation of Belgium from a francophone and centralized polity into a federal polity, etc., offer poignant examples of the potential transformative effects of the policy-polity relationship.

It is easy to conclude that the two edges of the polity-politics-policy triangle linking polity with politics and polity with policy (Fig. 5) deserve empirical as well as theoretical attention, and that two-directional flows must be researched for both.

**FIG. 5** *The polity-politics-policy triangle*



## 6. Conclusion

This preliminary exploration suggests a few tentative conclusions. The first and in my view most important concerns the need to fully recognize under the heading of *polity* a broad and specific field of political phenomena. While many specific aspects of this field have received scientific attention – in some cases to a considerable degree (for instance the theme of nationalism or ethnic separatist movements) – the broader view and all the implications of these phenomena have often been missed. In view of its crucial constitutive role for political life, the polity dimension deserves a comprehensive view and more systematic empirical explorations of its main aspects. The variable morphology of polities does not only require systematic descriptive information and the development of typological categories, but also a better understanding of the internal and external conditions influencing this variety. The dynamic processes which determine duration, decline and collapse or new formations of polities are crucial research subjects for their potentially momentous international and domestic consequences. These processes need to be addressed with specific theoretical frames.

The second conclusion concerns the importance of a better understanding of the relationship between the polity face of political reality and the other two more commonly examined faces such as politics and policy. Separating analytically the three fields for the purpose of better understanding their specific features should not lead us to forget the crucial interactions which exist between them. The prevailing attention given to the politics-policy nexus should not obfuscate the extremely important interaction flows between polity and politics or between polity and policy. Important political phenomena are in fact determined by such interactions.

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<sup>i</sup> It is worth mentioning that sometimes the word “polity” has been used in this connection. A good example is the Polity Project, which over the years has collected a variety of data concerning essentially the politics dimension ([www.systemicpeace.org](http://www.systemicpeace.org)) to produce a “polity score” which is essentially a measure of regime quality.

<sup>ii</sup> The high number of journals devoted to the study of policies is another indicator of the field’s relevance.

<sup>iii</sup> An analysis of articles published by the American Political Science Review between 2010 and 2019 shows that fewer than 10% of them refer to polity topics as defined in this article, that is to say to themes concerning formation, dissolution, transformation of polity units, or to the internal definition and articulation of the political space.

<sup>iv</sup> This is for instance the meaning of polity in the well-known *Polity project* launched by Ted Gurr (Gurr 1990).

## APPENDIX

*Polity creations.* Dates of polity creations used in the article figures are specified here. Autonomy (A), separation (S), unification (U) are the possible paths to polity creation.

*Africa:* 1847: Liberia (S); 1889: Ethiopia (U); 1909: South Africa (A); 1922: Egypt (S); 1931: South Africa (S); 1944: Ethiopia (S); 1956: Morocco (S), Sudan (S), Tunisia (S); 1957: Ghana (S+U); 1958: Guinea (S); 1960: Benin (S), Burkina Faso (S), Cameroun (S+U), Central African Republic (S), Chad (S), Democratic Republic of Congo (S), Gabon (S), Ivory Coast (S), Madagascar (S), Mali (S), Mauritania (S), Niger (S), Nigeria (S), Republic of Congo (S), Senegal (S), Somalia (S+U), Togo (S); 1961: Sierra Leone (S); Tanganyika (S); 1962: Algeria (S), Burundi (S), Ruanda (S), Uganda (S); 1963: Kenya (S), Zanzibar (S); 1964: Malawi (U), Tanzania (S), Zambia (S); 1965: Gambia (S), Rhodesia/Zimbabwe (S); 1966: Botswana (S), Lesotho (S); 1968: Guinea Equatorial (S), Swaziland/Eswatini (S); 1973: Guinea Bissau (S); 1975: Angola (S), Mozambique (S); 1976: Saharawi Islamic Republic (S); 1977: Djibouti (S); 1990: Namibia (S); 1993: Eritrea (S); 2011: South Sudan (S).

*Americas:* 1787: United States (S); 1795: Kingdom of Hawaii (U); 1804: Empire d'Haiti (S); 1806: Etat d'Haiti/Regne d'Haiti (S), Republique d'Haiti (S); 1811: United Provinces of New Granada (S), Paraguay (S); 1814: Santo Domingo (S); 1816: Provincias Unidas del Rio de la Plata/Argentina (S); 1818: Chile (S); 1819: Gran Colombia (S); 1820: Haiti (U); 1821: Peru (S), Mexico (S); Republica Federal de Centro America (S); 1823: Brazil (S); 1825: Bolivia (S); 1828: Uruguay (S); 1830: Republic of New Granada (S), Venezuela (S), Ecuador (S); 1836: Peru-Bolivian Confederation (U), Republic of Texas (S); 1838: Honduras (S), Nicaragua (S), Costa Rica (S); 1839: Peru (S), Bolivia (S); 1841: Republica de Yucatan (S), El Salvador (S); 1844: Santo Domingo (S); 1902: Cuba (S); 1903: Panama (S); 1931: Canada (S); 1962: Jamaica (S), Trinidad and Tobago (S); 1966: Guyana (S), Barbados (S); 1973: Bahamas (S); 1974: Grenada (S); 1975: Surinam (S); 1978: Dominica (S); 1979: Saint Lucia (S), Saint Vincent and Grenadines (S); 1981: Antigua and Barbuda (S), Belize (S); 1983: St. Kitts and Nevis (S).

*Asia:* 1899: Kuwait (A); 1911: Mongolia (S); 1918: Kingdom of Yemen (S); 1919 Transjordan (A); Kingdom of Hejaz (A); 1920: Greater Lebanon (A); 1921: Sultanate of Nejd (A); 1923: Turkey (S); 1925 Syria (A+U); 1926: Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd (U); 1930: Mandatory Syrian Republic (A); 1932: Iraq (S); 1945: Lebanon (S); Syria (S); 1946: Philippines (S), Transjordan (S); 1947: India (S), Pakistan (S); 1948: Israel (S), Myanmar (Burma) (S); Malayan Federation (A), North Korea (S); South Korea (S); 1949: Indonesia (S), Taiwan (S); 1953: Cambodia (S), Laos (S); 1955: North Vietnam (S), South Vietnam (S); 1957: Malayan Federation (S); 1961: Kuwait (S); 1967: South Yemen (S); 1971: Bangla Desh (S), Bahrain (S), Qatar (S), UAE (S); 1975: Papua New

Guinea (S); 1976: Vietnam Socialist Republic (U); 1984: Brunei (S); 1990: Yemen Republic (U); 2002: Timor-Leste (S).

*Europe:* 1807 Duchy of Warsaw (S); 1815: German Confederation (S+U), Netherlands (S); State of the Church (S); 1830: Belgium (S), Greece (S); 1839: Luxemburg (S); 1861: Italy (S+U); 1867 North German confederation (S+U); 1871: German Empire (U); 1878: Romania (S); Serbia (S); 1905: Norway (S); 1908: Bulgaria (S); 1912: Albania (S); 1917: Finland (S); Georgia (S), Ukraine People's republic (S); 1918: Armenia (S); Azerbaijan (S), Czechoslovakia (S), Hungary (S), Iceland (S), Latvia (S), Lithuania (S), Poland (S), Yugoslavia (S+U); 1919: Austria (S), 1920: Estonia (S); 1921: Ireland (S); 1922: Soviet Union (U); 1949: Federal Republic of Germany (S), German Democratic Republic (S); 1957: European Economic Community (U); 1991: Armenia (S), Azerbaijan (S), Belarus (S), Croatia (S), Estonia (S), Georgia (S), Latvia (S), Lithuania (S), Macedonia (S), Moldova (S), Russian Federation (S), Slovenia (S), Ukraine (S), 1992: Bosnia-Herzegovina (S), Federal Republic Yugoslavia (S); 1993: Czech republic (S), Slovakia (S); 2006: Montenegro (S), Serbia (S); 2008: Kosovo (S)

To these should be added some unrecognized polities such as Transnistria (1992), Abkhazia and South Ossetia (2008); Donetsk Republic and Luhansk Republic (2014).