POLITICAL UNIFICATION
A Comparative Study of Leaders and Forces

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PREFACE

An understanding of regional institutions is an integral part of the field of international relations. This book not only examines the successes and failures of regional associations in four areas of the contemporary world, but also suggests a general framework for the study of regionalism. Hopefully it will enhance our understanding of the mechanisms of political unification in areas other than those examined here.

At the same time this book illustrates a sociological approach to international relations, a subject that is more often examined from a historical or legal viewpoint. The sociological approach focuses on relations as we know them now rather than on those that existed among states in earlier periods; to the degree that the sociology of earlier periods is explored, it is with an eye to what we might learn from these periods to broaden our understanding of contemporary international relations. Moreover, this sociological approach is concerned with social, political, and economic forces; the formal structures of institutions are studied, but always in relation to the social forces that created the institutions and always with the question in mind: How well do these institutions fit international reality? Our approach combines a traditional power analysis with the Parsonian theory of action and with conceptions of cybernetics and communication theory introduced by Karl Deutsch. Thus even a reader who has no specific interest in regionalism may find these pages of value, for they illustrate a new and rising approach to political science in general and international relations in particular.

The research methodology used in this study illustrates the efficacy of combining techniques. Data were obtained through statistical computations, interviews, textual analysis, and observations; for our purposes, at least, no single technique could cull all the data that seemed available and relevant.
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