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A SUBJECTIVE SELECTION FROM FACTS AND IDEAS RELATED TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PRIOR TO BREXIT

ABSTRACT: The results of the British referendum last summer came as a surprise for many of us. Unanswered questions regarding the further development of the EU increased as a result. According to some even the future of the Union is doubtful. One may wonder if there were any warning signals in the EU-British relations which indicated the surprising outcome of the referendum. Is there any reasonable approach to this complex problem which may help to come closer to the understanding of what happened in the perception of the majority of British citizens about the EU? A short summary of the conflicts in the history of Europe may be helpful to understand the need for fundamental changes in Europe seven decades ago. An overview of theoretical concepts regarding the foundation of a peaceful Europe brings us closer to understanding the basic idea of European integration. And finally, the question whether the governments of member states and the institutions of the EU in Brussels pursued a wise policy, regarding the tempo and speed in building the community, begs answers as well. This paper aims at reviewing some facts, ideas and developments related to the three issues mentioned above.

KEYWORDS: balance of power, securitization, integration, security community, functionalism, neo-functionalism, pluralistic community, amalgamated community, federalism, Europe of nations

SECURITIZATION OF HISTORY

Jack Levy, an American political scientist, prepared a summary of the European wars between 1495 and 1945 and identified 114 wars in which great powers participated in one or both sides. Statistical data also revealed that France was the most frequent participant of those wars. It is of common knowledge that the victorious powers hold Germany responsible for the most destructive conflicts of all, the two world wars.¹

For centuries Great Britain used the balance of power politics as one of her most important foreign policy tools to influence the rivalry of the continental powers. A famous statement by Winston Churchill is a good characterisation of the balance of power politics pursued by the successive British governments: “For four hundred years the foreign policy of England has been to oppose the strongest, most aggressive, most dominant Power on the continent. ... We always took the harder course, joined with the less strong Powers, made a combination among them, and thus defeated and frustrated the Continental military tyrant whoever he was, whatever nation he led”. Just before the Second World War Churchill characterised his attitude to military alliance as follows: “If Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a

¹ Levy, J. S. *War in the Modern Great Power System: 1495–1975*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983. 88–91.

favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons”.² Lord Palmerstone, British foreign secretary in the first half of the 19th century, even though he was of the view that there was a natural affinity of democracies, once declared that “England has no permanent friends; she has only permanent interests”.³

For a long time the United States distanced itself from Europe. George Washington, the first president, at the end of his term in office warned his successors about the dangers of European conflicts and suggested that they should stay away from them. In 1823 the fifth president of the US, James Monroe further developed the concept by sending a warning to the European powers not to intervene into the internal affairs of the Western Hemisphere. Prior to the announcement of the “Monroe Doctrine” the president refused a British proposal regarding a joint Anglo-American opposition to a possible European intervention in Spain’s former American empire. According to the extended doctrine any attempt on the part of the European powers to impose their system on the Americas would be viewed as dangerous to peace and safety.⁴ The “Monroe Doctrine” remained in force – with the exception of the last two years of the First World War – until the beginning of the Second World War. After the war a lengthy debate in the Congress was followed by a decision by which the US committed itself to long term security cooperation with the Western European countries.⁵ At the same time the US expressed full support for close political, security and economic cooperation of the countries in the region.

Security has become a major issue of the European integration. The argument that Europe’s past must not be Europe’s future figured in speeches of European leaders especially on commemorative occasions. References to Europe’s history were strongly present in speeches of German politicians. In one of his major speeches in 2000, foreign minister Joschka Fischer said: “Fifty years ago almost to the day, Robert Schuman presented his vision of a European Federation for the preservation of peace. This heralded a completely new era in the history of Europe. European integration was the response to centuries of precarious balance of powers on this continent, which again and again resulted in terrible hegemonic wars culminating in the two World Wars between 1914 and 1945. The core of the concept of Europe after 1945 was and still is a rejection of the balance of power principle and the hegemonic ambitions of individual states that had emerged following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, a rejection which took the form of closer meshing of vital interests and the transfer of nation-state sovereign rights to supranational European institutions. ...A step backwards, even just standstill or contentment with what has been achieved, would demand a fatal price of all EU member states and of all those who want to become members; it would demand a fatal price above all of our people. This is particularly true for Germany and the Germans”.⁶

Jacques Chirac, the president of France, also took special opportunities to underline the importance of history in building a peaceful Europe. In a speech he characterized the Franco-German relations in the following way: “Germany, our neighbour, our adversary yesterday, our companion today. ...What France and Germany have experienced and undergone in history is unlike anything else. Better than any other nation, they grasp the

² Ziegler, D. W. *War, Peace and International Politics*. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1990. 203–204.

³ Walt, S. M. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987. 33–34.

⁴ Valone, S. J. (ed) *Two Centuries of US Foreign Policy*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995. 4–8. and 15–16.

⁵ The resolution initiated by Senators Vandenberg and Connally was adopted by the US Senate on June 11, 1948.

⁶ Buzan, B. and Waeber, O. *Regions and Powers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 361–362

deep meaning of peace and of the European enterprise. They alone, by forcing the pace of things, could give the signal for a great coming together in Europe.⁷

In Great Britain the use of history was somewhat different from the way Germans and French argued in favour of integration. British foreign secretary Robin Cook wrote in an article during the Kosovo war in 1999: “There are now two Europes competing for the soul of our continent. One still follows the race ideology that blighted our continent under the fascists. The other emerged fifty years ago from behind the shadow of the Second World War. Prime Minister Tony Blair in November 2000 in Zagreb said in a speech: “The 15 member states of the EU – countries that in the lifetime of my father were at war with one another – are now working in union, with 50 years of peace and prosperity behind us. And now, holding out the prospect of bringing the same peace and prosperity to the Eastern and Central European nations and even to the Balkan countries”.⁸

Securitization of history has been clearly demonstrated by the leaders of the largest and most powerful members of the European Union, which are the ones who have had the most direct experience in traditional power politics and also suffered from the consequences of it. History as an object of securitization has been emphasized in the strongest way in the statements by German politicians. Mutual securitization of history by France and Germany has been confirmed by the quotations from speeches of politicians of the two countries. Great Britain securitized history and the European integration differently, which can be explained by the special balancing role she played in the European conflicts. She joined the European Economic Community later and the differences in fundamental issues soon surfaced.

THEORIES AND IDEAS ABOUT INTEGRATION

Two theoretical schools competed in the first half of the twentieth century regarding the explanation of behaviour of states and the relations among them. Political realism, the older concept and practice, had the view that international relations are conflictive by nature, wars are unavoidable, and states are the primary and dominant actors in them. In the international system security is the most important concern of states and military force is its principle guarantor. The concept and practice of the balance of power belongs to the political realist school. The First World War, the first global war, triggered sharp criticism of political realism and strengthened the position and influence of classical liberalism. Liberals rejected balance of power politics and the use of secret diplomacy in the relationship of states. They saw more chances of cooperation among states which can be promoted by international institution. Conflicts among states can be avoided because harmony of interests exists in their relationship. The first explanation of the liberal view of international relations and its implementation in international politics can be found in Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points.⁹

European developments in the 1920s and 1930s produced increasingly convincing arguments against the liberal concept and the political practice based on it. Edward H. Carr British historian criticized the liberal view of harmony of interests among states and opened the way for the emergence of a more articulate political realist explanation of international relations. The publication of his book “The Twenty Years’ Crisis” in 1939 opened the first

⁷ Buzan and Waeber. *Regions and Powers*. 362–363.

⁸ Buzan and Waeber. *Regions and Powers*. 363.

⁹ Wilson, W. “The Fourteen Points”. In Williams, Ph., Goldstein, D. and Shafritz, J. (eds), *Classic Readings of International Relations*. London: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning, 1999. 23–26.

major debate between the liberal-utopian and the realist understanding of world politics. Carr considered political realism as a more correct and efficient approach to international relations, but didn't discard utopia completely since he viewed it as a means and way to promote changes in international relations. He suggested that any political thought must be based on elements of both utopia and reality.¹⁰ In the subsequent years and decades these two approaches influenced the explanation of international relations at theoretical level. In practical terms governments followed foreign policies characterized by a mixture of suggestions of both theories. East-West rivalry and especially the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War reflected dominantly political realist views regarding international relations. Even if in other regions of the world ideological conflict was not as intense as in Soviet – American relations, political realism had stronger influence than liberalism almost everywhere. Western Europe was an exception. Due to the lessons of history Western European countries decided to begin an unchartered course, which some experts characterized as common adventure to the unknown future.

After the Second World War liberal thoughts regarding international relations survived and emerged in different ideas of integration. Securitization of the past and the lessons learned from history influenced the evolution of liberal ideas and policies in Western Europe. One of the frequently quoted representatives of integration theorists was David Mitrany, a British political scientist, who belonged to the *functionalist school* of integration theories. Mitrany suggested that a peaceful international order can be achieved through cooperation among functional areas of different countries. He opposed the use of old formal /constitutional/ ways, because they would constitute impediments to the creation of a working international system. Links among societies of different countries and the development of habits of cooperation would be more efficient. In practical terms it meant, that the solid foundation of peaceful international relations could be laid down in people to people contacts. Mitrany also expressed an important warning: "The problem of our generation, put very broadly, is how to weld together the common interests of all without interfering unduly with the particular ways of each. ... We have already suggested that not all interests are common to all, and that the common interests do not concern all countries in the same degree."¹¹ The first example of functionalist links between Western European countries was the European Coal and Steel Community.

American political scientist Karl Deutsch, one of the representatives of the *transactionalist school* of international relations, studied the formation of political community among nations. He came to the conclusion that the minimum condition for the existence of international political community was the community he called *security community*. In theory he identified two kinds of political communities: first, pluralistic; second, amalgamated/united. Pluralistic political community can be a security community which is politically fragmented. United political community can be a federation of states or a nation state with central government. European integration started with the creation of a security community. The Brussels Treaty of 1948 and the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 were the most important steps in this process.

¹⁰ Carr, E. H. "The Realist Critique and the Limitations of Realism". In Williams, Ph., Goldstein, D. and Shafritz, J. (eds), *Classic Readings of International Relations*. London: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning, 1999. 39–43.

¹¹ Mitrany, D. "The Functionalist Alternative". In Williams, Ph., Goldstein, D. and Shafritz, J. (eds), *Classic Readings of International Relations*. London: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning, 1999. 312–313.

Karl Deutsch also invested intellectual capital in the identification of possible stages of integration. According to his model the evolution of modern nation-states can be the example for the development of an international political community, or the emergence of united security communities. At the first stage functional links, such as trade, migration, services, military and security cooperation are established. At the second stage, due to the mutual benefits of collaboration the intensity and the scope of transactions increase. The third stage would be characterized by the generation of socio-psychological processes that lead to the assimilation of peoples and their integration into larger communities. Communication, personal connections and learning about each other is crucial in this process. The fourth stage of integration would be the emergence of one political community via assimilation of a number of smaller political communities. The fifth stage is the conclusion of the integration process with the creation of institutions which would represent and protect the identity and interests of the international political community. This would be the final stage of the emergence of a *united security community*.¹²

In Karl Deutsch's view peaceful change in international relations has its origin in the perception and identification of people. That is why sentimental change precedes institutional change, social assimilation and community formation precedes political amalgamation. Other integration theorists criticized Deutsch for his neglect of international institutions and the emphasis on social change as the primary source of political change.

Deutsch's contemporary, Ernst Haas also an American political scientist followed the footsteps of David Mitrany and called his theory neo-functionalism. In opposition to Deutsch, Haas believed that international institutions have the primary role in the process of integration because they are the ones who can encourage shift in cultural orientation and political loyalties of people thus contributing to political unification. Haas' intention was to give political dynamism to the process of integration by putting emphasis on the role of international institutions. The neo-functionalist theory assumed that with the spread of functional links and with the extension of the range of international activities more and more functions will be performed under international authorities. Inclusion of new functional areas sets into motion political processes that generate demand for further steps. National governments shall face a dilemma of surrendering additional autonomy or risking the achievements the community has attained so far. The neo-functionalist theory assumed that political pressure will grow on governments to move towards greater unification. Haas described integration as an intense political process. In this process numerous political actors, while pursuing their own interests put pressure on one another to move toward policies that are collectively and also individually beneficial. In this continuous game of bargaining there would always be governments who are reluctant to give up additional elements of sovereignty, while others would resist risking the previously achieved level of integration. When Western European integration slowed down in the 1970s, theorists lost their enthusiasm regarding further research on the problems of integration. But the dilemma of setting priorities right – whether social or political, emotional or institutional changes have priority – remained with the governments and bureaucrats in international institutions.¹³

¹² Puchala, D. T. "The Integration Theorists and the Study of International Relations". In Williams, Ph., Goldstein, D. and Shafritz, J. (eds), *Classic Readings of International Relations*. London: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning, 1999. 314–318.

¹³ Puchala. "The Integration Theorists...". 319-322.

Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, well known representatives of the American neo-liberalist school of international relations theory, introduced the term “*transgovernmentalism*” in connection with everyday operations of international institutions in general. With growing interdependence governments have become more sensitive to foreign developments, which might impact political, economic and social conditions of national societies. In order to explain a more refined and more articulate approach to international realm they identified two types of transgovernmental behaviour, which they thought to be valid for the European integration as well.

First, transgovernmental policy coordination takes place when working level officials of different government bureaucracies communicate informally among themselves. At working levels, in face-to-face situations government officials often convey more information than on higher levels of governments. As working level meetings become regularized, and the sense of collegiality gradually develops on the basis of common profession, a transnational reference group begins to emerge. Second, transgovernmental coalition building takes place when lower level units of national governments attempt to involve lower level units of other governments or transgovernmental institutions to influence the decision making process of their own government. Professional experts in national governments opt for transgovernmental coalitions when they are not able to get high level support for the solution of an internationally recognized problem which requires urgent actions. History of multilateral diplomacy recorded a number of cases from the period of the Cold War in connection with arms control and environmental issues.¹⁴

STAGES OF INTEGRATION AND GREAT BRITAIN

Since the late 1940s European construction has emerged under the mix of liberal ideas of international relation theory and political strategies conceived by French and German politicians. It would not be easy to identify which of the two components of the mix has been more influential throughout the whole process of integration. One of the principle architects of the European integration, Jean Monnet, was a neoliberal institutionalist with a strong sense of realism. He emphasized the importance of institutions in the solution of common problems. His method of negotiations was characterized by a great deal of informality and the use of political and psychological approach. Monnet’s basic idea was to unite people and not to form a coalition of states. This political objective was a fundamental deviation from the traditional balance of power politics pursued by European states for centuries.¹⁵ In this sense he clearly distanced himself from the traditional political realist theory and practice.

The close connection between Mitrany’s functional theory and one of the major practical steps of European integration is demonstrated by the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community. In this sense functionalism as an idea, as a product of the theory of international relation can be considered the principal driving force in relation to political strategy. In the subsequent years the relationship between theories and strategic steps

¹⁴ Keohane, R. O. and Nye, J. S. “Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations”. *World Politics* XXVII/1. 1974. 44–48.

¹⁵ Mazzucelli, C. *France and Germany at Maastricht*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997. 23–26.

in relation to integration seems to be changed and the concepts about integration became the theoretical generalisation of practical steps, which took the primary role. Deutsch's theory about the tempo of community building reflected the strategic plan of Monnet concerning the timetable of the practical implementation of ideas driving integration. Haas' neo-functional theory in fact, constitutes the theoretical generalisation of Monnet's suggestion regarding the role of international institutions as forums of common decision making with a view of solving common problems.

In the 1950s and 1960s both in strategic plans and international relation theories a vision took shape about five stages of European integration:

- establishment of functional links among member countries
- increase in scope and intensity of transactions among societies
- generation of socio-psychological processes that lead to assimilation of people and their integration into larger communities
- emergence of one political community via assimilation of a number of smaller political communities
- finally, the process of integration concludes with the creation of institutions, which would represent and protect the identity and interest of the international political community. This would be the final stage of the emergence of a united security community.

Countries which go through these five stages of integration would form a federal state. However, at the moment there is a great deal of uncertainty about the stage where the member states of the European Union stand. For sure, substantial progress has been achieved on stages one and two with the establishment of functional links and expansion and intensification of all kinds of cooperation. Assimilation of people and community formation has been less successful so far. Though central institutions of the EU, such as the European Council, the European Parliament, and the European Commission issued directives, passed laws with the assumption that progress had been made on stages three, four and five, it remained questionable whether national societies were able to follow the tempo of common actions by the governments. In addition to uncertainties at the level of societies discord among governments has increased recently. Disagreement has been growing, regarding the new risks in the international environment, above all the mass movement of people to Europe from conflict ridden regions of the world. While the successful securitisation of history gave a huge impetus to integration in the 1950s, attempts at common securitisation of new security risks and challenges failed so far. Different perceptions of threats, diverse needs of exertion of identity and sovereignty emerged as an impediment to common securitisation of new risks in the second decade of the twenty first century.

Great Britain did not join the initial phase of integration for a number of reasons. Though the British Empire suffered a heavy blow in the two world wars, there were hopes to preserve special links with the Commonwealth, with which Great Britain had preferential trade relations and did not want to risk those important economic ties. There might be some other explanations for the British disinterest in European integration. One of them was the comparably better shape of the British economy right after the war. In 1945 the GDP per capita in Great Britain was about 90 per cent higher than the average for the six founding members of the European Economic Community. By 1961 Great Britain realised that economic cooperation inside the Commonwealth was losing competitiveness and the Conservative Government initiated negotiations for membership with the European Communities. By that time the difference in per capita GDP between Great Britain and

the EEC countries dropped to 10 per cent. After long and difficult negotiations, De Gaulle, the French President, vetoed British membership.¹⁶

The gap between GDP per capita between EEC countries and Great Britain narrowed further. It stood at 6 per cent by 1967 and the Labour Government applied for membership, but failed again due to the veto of President De Gaulle. Finally, after De Gaulle was out of presidency, in 1969 Great Britain applied for membership for the third time at the initiative of the Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath. The new French President, George Pompidou offered support this time and Great Britain joined the EEC in 1973. At the beginning of British membership the average per capita GDP in the six EEC member states was 7 per cent higher than in Great Britain.¹⁷

The membership remained controversial both between the Conservative and the Labour parties and also within the parties. The Labour Government initiated a referendum in 1975 and 67 per cent of the population was in favour. This outcome of the referendum did not change the principal division between those who wanted to maintain closer relationship with Europe and those who did not. In 1983 the left wing of the Labour Party led by Tony Benn and Michael Foot promised the withdrawal from the EEC in a manifesto which led to the split of the Party.¹⁸ In 1988 Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher explained the conservative view on the EEC in a speech at the College of Europe in Bruges. She emphasized that the best way of building a successful European Community is the willing and active cooperation of independent and sovereign states. She warned that suppression of nationhood and concentration of power at the centre of European conglomerate would be highly damaging. She identified the encouragement of enterprise as the most important priority of community policies and warned against the danger of distraction by utopian goals. In her introductory remark she warned the audience: "If you believe some of the things said and written about my views on Europe, it must seem rather like inviting Genghis Khan to speak about the virtues of peaceful coexistence."¹⁹

Prime Minister Thatcher's critical views on the EEC were softened somewhat by her successor John Major, who finally signed the Maastricht Treaty and accepted the idea of political integration. However, the preservation of sovereignty of the British Parliament remained a matter of constant worry. After 1997 the Labour Government with Prime Minister Tony Blair took significant steps (St. Malo Agreement on common defence, signing of the social chapter) which brought Britain closer to the EU. He also considered joining the euro zone seriously but Chancellor Gordon Brown convinced him not to do so. In 2011 the debate on EU's budget led to a British veto by Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron and relations took a downward turn again. In 2013 David Cameron announced the referendum which took place on June 23rd 2016. Results of the vote with 72.2 per cent turnout were: 51.9 per cent to leave, 48.1 per cent to remain in the EU.²⁰

¹⁶ Campos, N. and Coricelli, F. "Why did Britain join the EU? A new insight from economic history". VOX. 3 February 2015. <http://voxeu.org/article/britain-s-eu-membership-new-insight-economic-history>, Accessed on 12 April 2017.

¹⁷ Campos and Coricelli. "Why did Britain join the EU? A new insight from economy history".

¹⁸ Wilson, S. "Britain and the EU: A long and rocky relationship". BBC. 1 April 2014. www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-265151129, Accessed on 12 April 2017.

¹⁹ Thatcher, M. "Speech to the College of Europe: 'The Bruges Speech'". 20 September 1988. www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332, Accessed on 12 April 2017.

²⁰ "UK votes to leave the EU". BBC. www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu_referendum/results, Accessed on 17 April 2017.

CONCLUSION

European integration has been an adventure to the unknown future. Securitisation of the history was a fundamental motive for theoreticians and politicians who laid down the foundations of this complex process and construction. Integration theorists conceived five stages of integration which follow each other in a logical sequence from the establishment of functional links up to the creation of a political union, practically the federation of European states. The first two stages, the establishment of functional links and the expansion of voluntary interactions by willing states happened easily and in a comparatively short time. Stages three and four, the evolution of the sense of community at the level of national societies with the involvement of more and more countries proved to be a much more complicated and difficult task. With the enlargement of the EU this task has become even more difficult. Two important questions need to be posed here. First, have the national governments informed and educated their population properly to become part of this community? Second, have the institutions of the EU followed the evolution of the community carefully and have they raised the awareness of the people of what was happening in the EU? The answers to these questions would probably differ substantially country by country.

A British political scientist, professor Vernon Bogdanov said in one of his lectures: "Europe has been a toxic issue in British politics, and it has caused divisions, unlike most issues, it has caused divisions not only between the parties, divisions which perhaps could have been handled, but also deep divisions within the parties. The fundamental question is this: is Britain part of Europe? Geographically of course, the answer is yes, but what is the political answer? For much of British history the answer is no."²¹ According to professor Bogdanov Great Britain has always had a limited commitment to the European integration because her historical experience has been totally different from that of the Continental powers. Evolution of the British political system took more than three centuries and the adaptation of that system to the system of the EU proved more difficult than the adaptation of other member states, first of all the founding states.²² That was the fundamental reason why the idea of a federal European state has been unanimously rejected in Great Britain.

One of the reasons of why Great Britain did not join European integration at the beginning was her special relationship with former colonies. During four centuries Great Britain invested a lot of money in the building of the Empire and consequently enjoyed the benefits of cheap agricultural import which was crucial for food supply. The Empire disappeared but the Commonwealth survived the past decades and the revitalisation of former political and economic ties can be an obvious option for Great Britain after BREXIT. Beyond the Commonwealth new opportunities could be discovered in other regions of the world. It is highly probable that the US – British relationship will become more important for both countries in the future.

The British exit is not the only unexpected challenge for the EU. Disagreement on new security risks has emerged in the past few years. It would be desirable for the remaining member states to come to agreement regarding the secularization of those new risks. Securitisation of history of the 1950s can be a useful precedent to follow.

²¹ Bogdanov, V. "Britain and the Continent". Lecture at Gresham College on 17 September 2013. 1–2. <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lecture/transcript/download/britain-and-the-continent/>, Accessed on 19 April 2017.

²² Bogdanov. "Britain and the Continent". 7–10.

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