

THE POSTMODERN ISSUES AND THE THEORY OF INTEGRATION

Aurelian-Petruș PLOPEANU*

Abstract

European Union continues the integration process as a postmodernist structure. From an institutional optics, the European Union integration is balancing between federalism and intergovernmentalism in the debate sphere. The relation between EU accession and the effects towards economic growth, future integration issues, the federalism and the constitutionalism of the European Union, the neo-neofunctionalism and the liberal inter-governmentalism theories and the welfare of the European Union integration system are very important in my epistemological attempt and I will try to be persuasive in this direction.

Key words: integration, federalism, liberal inter-governmentalism, welfare

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1. Introduction

The integration theory can be viewed in three different dimensions:

- a) the first stage focuses on the process of defining and explaining the integration from 1960s till today, trying to merge and to answer some main themes about the possibility of explaining the outcomes provided from the process or/and the causality of the European integration birth place and date;
- b) the second stage is based on the analysing governance, from 1980s onwards and the main goals answer some polemical elements such as the origin of European Union political system, the description of European Union political processes and the characterization of the European Union regulatory policy.
- c) the last stage is the hardest one to put in place, the constructing of the European Union from 1990s onwards and is tempting to incapsulate the attempt of defining the integration and the concept of governance and their consequences and the impact between social and political influences and the integration development.

* Aurelian-Petruș PLOPEANU (aplopeanu@gmail.com) is PhD student of Economic Department at "Al. I. Cuza" University of Iasi, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. He will receive his PhD in 2009. His research interests include: economic growth, religious (cultural) determinants of economic growth. His teaching interests include: political economy, structural political economics.

2. The federalism of the European Union

The Europe's modern state started in the 16th and early 17th century. In the same period of time, the sovereignty was the instrument in order to manage a state. As time goes by, the modern state was enriched with the development of legitimacy of territorial state. The sovereign state was a monopoly from an economic point of view, because no other rival or competitor had the authority and the power of it.

In terms of Albert Dicey, the goal of an union is to integrate multicultural communities, but not to assimilate them. So, a federal union, following the last sentence, must have the rule of a constitution (aquis) for the recognition of diversity, minority etc. It is a unifying force, but also a power for maintaining all the differences.

„Federalism in the context of the European Union is the application of federal principles to the process of European integration, where the term "integration" refers to the sense of a coming together of previously separate or independent parts from a new whole" [Wiener, Diez, 2005, 30].

The basic idea of the federal union is the theory of association. All the states, in a benevolent and voluntary way, based on a contract, treaty or other mutual example, are putting together with the respect of rights, recognition, reciprocity, tolerance and equality. Again, the federal institution of organisation is „anti-absolutist and anti-centralist, its watchwords being autonomy, solidarity, pluralism, citizenship and a subsidiarity that has implications for the building of a union from the bottom upwards rather than a hierarchical top-down approach" [Wiener, Diez, 2005, 30].

We'll try to explain why some important economic steps have created an union with an unknown nature or intrinsic structure.

The political movement of federalist party wasn't dead at all with the Hague Congress from may 1948. The federal ideology was alive „in the threat of war and the practical experience of World War II itself" [Wiener, Diez, 2005, 30], being a response in the realm of the post-war period. The federal idea was developed inside the consciousness of the intellectual Resistance to german military attack „was tantamount to a spiritual revolution of ideas, federalism also comprised many radically different conceptions of Europe and divergent political strategies about how to achieve what was broadly conceived of as a „federal" Europe" [Wiener, Diez, 2005, 30].

The Ventotene Manifesto from 1941 was the most important federalist act during second World War. The theory of „federalism by instalments" (Jean Monnet) and the „democratic radicalism" (Spinelli) were two examples of federalist thought. They were completed with the „Proudhonian federalism" which contains political and sociological ideas based on the concepts of european society and the mechanisms for spreading federalist values among nation states. All these writings revolve around the dignity of a person and it involves a highly searching critique of advanced capitalism because „to restore man as a whole person by rescuing him from the modern capitalist state whose mass society has effectively cut him off from his family, neighbours and local associations, reducing him to the isolation of anonymity in a monist world where he finds himself confronted by global society...as an isolated individual, man is ultimately cut off from himself" [Wiener, Diez, 2005, 31].

To solve this inconsistency or inconvenient, the personalist federalism, a very complex system, try to integrate the man in his society, in acting for a decision-making process, decentralization and local autonomy. Also, this system tries to emphasize the role of res-

pect towards diversity and minority. Many analysts consider that the personalist federalism is very closed with the utopian federalism.

One of the most elaborate thesis around the building of Europe is belonging to Andrew Moravcsik and his liberal inter-governmentalist model or the so-called LI model.

In contrast with the federalism, the LI model seems inevitably a flawed one. Federalism represents a perfect rational approach to European integration theory, the liberal inter-governmentalist model was never taken seriously into account because its approach was labeled as „geopolitical explanation of national preferences”. This liberal model wasn’t ever integrated into a single mechanism. Moravcsik removes federalism from neofunctionalism.

3. The Neo-Neofunctionalism

The Neo-Neofunctionalism is a theory of regional integration where the non-state actors play an important role in the dynamic field of the integration process. All the regional institutions based on self interests try to use the „spill-overs” and the „unintended consequences”, the result being although a conflictual action with the decentralisation of national governments authority.

The regional integration theories in which the neo-functionalist is taken part must be analysed both, by an ontology and epistemology elements. That is why many of the economic growth theories put in the centre of analysis the institutional paradigm, based on six different versions:

- a) a „rational” version based on liberal intergovernmental action
- b) a „historical” version, based on one hand on multiculturalism and identity approach and second hand on the „path-dependency” of institutions;
- c) an „epistemic” version which promotes „the normative and professional communities that cluster around specific issues – arenas and influence the making and implementing of regulations” [Wiener, Diez, 2005, 49];
- d) a „legal” element;
- e) a „political” version;
- f) a „sociological” point of view;

The core of institutionalism is the so-named Multi-Level Governance (MLG). The MLG model promotes „an arrangement for making binding decisions over a multiplicity of actors that delegates authority over functional tasks to a set of dispersed and relatively autonomous agencies that are not controlled – de jure or de facto – by a single collective institution” [Wiener, Diez, 2005, 49].

4. Liberal inter-governmentalism (the LI model)

Andrew Moravcsik’s overview of liberal intergovernmentalism is based on four elements: the level of abstraction, preferences, cooperation and institutions.

At the first level of knowledge, the highest level of abstraction, we can encompass a rationalist institutionalism where the European integration is based on the international politics framework where the states play a central role in this vision and where the institutional disorder must be managed in order to maintain and develop the equilibrium and welfare by a hegemon or centralized institution for taking political decisions. In this rationalist framework, based on “rational choice”, the homo economicus calculates and

evaluates the utility of his action and chooses the best one in accordance with the new circumstances. The rational choice assumes that:

- a) „Humans are purposive and goal oriented.
- b) Humans have sets of hierarchically ordered preferences or utilities.
- c) In choosing lines of behavior, humans make rational calculations with respect to:
 - the utility of alternative lines of conduct with reference to the preference hierarchy;
 - the costs of each alternative in terms of utilities foregone;
 - the best way to maximize utility.
- d) Emergent social phenomena -- social structures, collective decisions, and collective behavior -- are ultimately the result of rational choices made by utility-maximizing individuals.
 - Emergent social phenomena that arise from rational choices constitute a set of parameters for subsequent rational choices of individuals in the sense that they determine:
 - the distribution of resources among individuals;
 - the distribution of opportunities for various lines of behavior;
 - the distribution and nature of norms and obligations in a situation”. [Turner, 1991, 354].

In this aspect, a rational institutionalist international relations model emphasizes the role of institutions from worldwide to accomplish the maximum utility of sovereign national states and intergovernmental negotiations as a collective product (output).

At a medium level of abstraction, the liberal intergovernmentalism is based on a liberal paradigm of state preferences, a bargaining theory with functional theory of institutional choice. „These theories are used to explain a sequence of negotiation outcomes: domestic negotiations on national preferences; then, international negotiations on substantive international cooperation; and, after agreement has been reached, international negotiations on the choice of institutions” [Wiener, Diez, 2005, 77]

As Moravcsik agrees, these liberal thesis are pointing out that the foreign policy outcomes and future arrangements of sovereign national states continue the social pressures from inside the corpus, pressures based on aggregate and included preferences through political institutions.

About the bargaining theory of international relations theory, Moravcsik considers that the resulting international negotiations outcome depends on „the relative bargaining power of actors” [Wiener, Diez, 2005, 77]. He defines the bargaining power in terms of assymetrical distribution of information and benefits of a specific agreement. Every nation state with a superior information stock and with a better diffusion of it can benefit from a bigger output value.

In the end, using the „functional account” to draw the international institutions design and development, we can conclude that these international institutions are shaped by national states in the aim of manage the international cooperation agenda.

Two very important features characterize the LI model: the recrudescence of domestic politics instead of a core-level decisionist and second the international institutions. That is why the national states are key elements in this representation (abstract and real) of European Union integration theory and their preferences as issue-specific are the most important actions these states apply. If a state has a power position inside the international relations structure, its personal preference (economic, political, strategic) is fundamental and it is part of international bargaining. In this model, it is emphasized the first important element and

the strengthened role of nation states, that is why the European Union integration policy is viewed in an inter-governmentalist optics as an attempt to enrich states executives with new resources and attributes and to weaken the different domestic interest monopolies. The role of state in this case is solving an individual problem, which became a European policy dilemma extremely high, from a larger use of national autonomy in foreign relations to a reducing process of domestic transaction costs and different kinds of asymmetries.

In the 1980s, both theories, the neofunctionalist and the intergovernmentalist ones weren't critical because of the lack of internal contradictions. Other theories were neglected, such as neo-marxism and the Critical Theory. The last one was developed by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, two representative members of the 30's School of Frankfurt.

5. The Welfare of the European Union integration system

After the first oil crisis in the 1970s, the European Union welfare state was balancing between a success era to a „silver one”. This silent development proved once again that the welfare state was over and such a perspective was pitiful. The finish of the golden era was a good start for a transition period of permanent austerity, a period known as „post-Maastricht silver age”. During the 1970s, the European Union states had also a high percentage of national autonomy which lived together with the „embedded liberalism” worldwide and with intrinsic market integration ruled by supranational actors from the European Union system. Still in the 1970s the world was confronted with major economic and financial crisis (such as the recrudescence of oil prices on the global market and the collapse of the Bretton Woods system) which developed another level of international economic system: the stagflation was contagious, so the inflation became higher and higher, the level of economic growth was stagnant and the rate of unemployment was extremely high. In such circumstances, the international economic regime was chameleonic and it sounds for a rapid and structural change. Facing new dilemmas and different complex issues and elements, such a previous order ought to be upgraded. The update of the system from the traditional strategies of fiscal and monetary management was clear because new challenges, increasing speculative capital transactions and the recrudescence of the offshore capital markets, the deepening of the floating exchange rates because of the Bretton Woods collapse and the biggest dynamics of monetary instability, were escalating the international arena. The anarchy dominates not only the markets, but also the political and the world of university, which practically do not succeed to decipher the way in which this financial world works. We were floating in pure mystery. The only certainty was that the system was changing, but the consequences of this transformation were unpredictable. The system had become unpredictable, its architecture, length and functioning being made according to unknown laws, or simply at random.

„As Eichengreen notes, after 1973, playing “catch up” by applying existing technology often developed in the United States was no longer enough to power strong growth. Productivity growth across Western Europe slowed dramatically, for instance: “Between [the 1960s] and [the 1970s], the average rate of growth of output per worker fell by 50 percent in France and Germany, 60 percent in Britain, and 75 percent in Italy. Henceforth, for impressive growth to take place, new, groundbreaking technology had to be developed in European nations themselves. For this innovative and dynamic process, however, the institutions that had served Europe so well in the rebuilding of the postwar years were ill-suited...Thus, a number of European economies that had performed well in previous periods

now experienced mounting difficulties. And then, of course, there were the entitlements. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but as early as the 1950s, Western European governments had essentially “bought” peaceful social labor relations and limited wage growth with the creation of an elaborate set of government entitlement programs. In the very short term, the cost of doing so was minimal, while the benefit it brought to economic growth in the form of wage moderation and peaceful labor relations was significant. In the longer term, it proved to be a singularly bad economic bargain, something apparent as early as the years following the oil shock of 1973, when people began to extensively make use of entitlements that were created during a time of great economic prosperity and full employment” [American, 2007].

The Europe’s answer towards such a problem was the adoption of European Monetary System which played an important role to rediscover the pride of the monetary and financial stability.

After the second oil shock in the late 1970s, the Europe’s social initiatives were brutally ejected from the equation. The Commission’s directives like the company’s insolvency, the collective redundancies and the transfer of enterprises hadn’t harmonized the economy to the new higher prices. The nation state hadn’t been rescued by the late 1950s policy, so the great transformation of Karl Polanyi was finished and arrived by the end.

A possible reaction for such a defeat was to put in the first place the necessity for relinquish the European integration. Also, „a complex syndrome of economic decline and institutional stalemate linked to ineffective and ill-designed (under the new circumstances) mixed economy arrangements and welfare state schemes at the domestic level; insufficient and/or distorted competition as well as persisting barriers to the formation of a truly continental market on a scale similar to that of the United States of America and Japan, and thus able to promote and sustain rapid and incisive innovation; inadequate policy making and over-all steering capabilities at the supranational level, in order to cope with both intra-European and external interdependencies” [Ferrera, 2005, 113].

In order to attempt to a full recovery the main aim on European Union’s hands was to promote an integral European markets’ efficiency to calm down the stagflation disease from the member states and to eliminate all the discomfort on the business stage.

As we can see, the European integration theory is provocative and needs an appropriate understanding. From an institutional optics, the European Union integration is balancing between federalism and intergovernmentalism in the debate sphere. European Union continues the integration process because:

- the quantitative accumulation of nation states into a supranational power in order to complete with success the major economics in the world;
- to escape and to face international order disorder such as different financial and monetary crisis;
- to jeopardize the traditional nation state with its conservative institutions and actions and to develop a postmodernist supranational institution according with the new progressist and socialist paradigm (Vladimir Bukovski).

Rational choice institutional mechanisms represent the new paradigm in order to study the European institutions and the upgrading process itself. At the beginning, this model tried to emphasize the role of institutions – rules, different constraints – for making and to augment the collective decisions which cannot be based just on preferences.

For encapsulating the European Union politics into the rational choice theory, we can see the problem divided in two main study areas:

- the voting power studies – which reveals how different institutions optimize or not the transfer of power to the intrinsic different actors;
- the procedural studies – which is based on the role of institutional features who generate the process of decision-making.

The importance of institutions in promoting prosperity and wealth began with the Arrow's theorem and the thesis of Coase. Other models try to demonstrate such things and objectives. From the „structure-induced equilibrium”, many economists asked themselves whether it is possible that institutions can promote stability, trying to answer in which specific ways „the institutions channel legislators self-interest in structure-induced equilibrium to end possible voting cycles” [Downing, 2002, 22]. After the first wave comes the second-generation models which encompass the role of new rules and constraints (institutions) in order to create the main „structure-induced equilibrium”.

The politics of (re)distribution role of the United States Congress is followed, but the tyranny of the majority rule it is not enough in this institutional realm because, otherwise, this will mean that the institutional environment is autarchic. In reality, this place is interdependent and it follows a continuous strategic interaction between these institutions. „The place is made of small committees covering limited jurisdictions. Reducing the number of players, and reducing the dimension of conflict, reduces the probability of cycling and the opportunities for vote trading...these exogenous institutions are built into the formal model because they are known to exist in the real world but are not explained by it” [Downing, 2002, 22].

The third generation models try to discover the key-elements in the birth of institutional rules. It is said that „since all legislative choices are majoritarian they should determine not only what happens now but also what rules will operate in the future. Any legislature is therefore run under „remote majoritarian choice” [Downing, 2002, 23]. In this case, the institutional view must be endogenous, because all the previous decisions are standing still as they serve the majority's objectives.

Again, the promoters of game theory believe that institutions are the main element for promote equilibrium in repeated games. Because the individuals haven't the motivation to divorce from the equilibrium strategies and rules, they haven't a different individual behaviour. That is why „different institutions may also be Pareto incomparable, where some actors gain and some lose from a different institutional form. Thus, institutions both within legislatures and across bureaucracies may form some local equilibria, though not achieve a wider efficiency for the actors concerned” [Downing, 2002, 26].

In this light, we can say that European Union represents a postmodernist project and an experiment because the Bruxelles bureaucracy must include and take into account the new opportunities that arrive. The EU system is vast and complex, the established relations between institutions are quite difficult to implement efficiently. The European institutions' literature can be divided in two different approaches which follows specific issues: one can be the power indices for the measurement of the organisational agents' power; and the second we can name the usage of non-cooperative game theory. The first theory focuses on the role of the participants' power to decide and the second cannot take into the majority of thinking the potential coalitions of power (for exemple, different mutual contracts and coalitions between states in the Council of Ministers or European Parliament), just those alliances which were formed in a connected way. So, if we have a spatial descriptive picture, then we can say about somebody's power.

Because the European Union institutions are enough articulated, we can use this model in order to develop and to define the role of each actor within, for example the Parliament, the Commission, the Court of Justice or the Council of Ministers.

The power index mechanism can facilitate the argument of the constitutional power of individuals in a strict form and also can measure the „constitutional power of different bodies where the rules of voting are straight-forward” [Downing, 2002, 27]. A conflict with this method is given by the impossibility of combining such measures or taking into account for the power of different with no voting games’ rules of procedure.

The spatial analysis is capable to demonstrate in which ways different actors are following the rules in order to produce outcomes in a particular gain based on the appropriate participants’ alliances. That is why the European Union overleap the initial agenda, because the non-intended elements which are on the base of the European action treaty. „it has been argued that the conditional agenda power of supranational bodies such as Parliament, the Commission and the European Court of Justice enables the selection among a set of possible equilibria, accelerates European integration and dilutes responsibility for politically unpopular measures.” [Downing, 2002, 27].

6. European Union, an imperfect rational construction

Europe began colonial and it was, from a historical point of view a continent of servitudes. Paul apostle said “Our country is in heaven”, but E.U. rational construction is an idolatry, a limit and an extension of our variety to replace God. The error becomes bigger the more we consider that such an institution take the place of wisdom, promoting prosperity and equality removing love for your neighbour. “The assumption of the national identity has to take the aspect of an offensive of creativity and not that of a tribal indecent competition. In order not to let the demons, that sleep in the sense soul of each people, come to light, the angels of the nations must be contributed by a principle higher than them. In other words you will not honour your national identity if you do not work in the name of some values that are above the “local”. To serve hallucinated the angel of nation is an ill-fated heresy. To serve together with the spirit of the community is the legitimate way to seraphic way” [Pleșu, 2003, 97].

The idea is that what should rule a human construction is not in this world, but it represents the appeal to the spiritual and God’s letter.

The Christian hypothesis which claim that everything is managed under the God’s law and the process of human knowledge is imperfect and limited is replaced by the followers of the European ideology with another hypothesis which, in full postmodernist era, must fill up the vacuum left behind from the Gott ist tot idea, through the presence of the self-centered economic rationality.

European Union, as a modern and protestant construction is based on the assumption that it can be everything, hesitating to understand the superior values which it is subordinated to: the divine. It prefers to act instinctively aggressively and immorally, as a finite order against a transfinite order. The treatment to all this is a model of a Trinitarian free market system, an upgrade of the neoclassical theory and validated only through Christian faith. In the European Union model, the Christian faith may be the ferment for a sustenance development in future through rationality and sympathy (or natural attraction) of a superior free market model.

Any political and economical construction must be based on a religious sphere. Without a spiritual genetic code, every human and rationalist institution system-building will be eroded and, without doubt, false. The relationship between European Union and the religion realm is called "friendly secularization". This complex process of secularization of Europe is both a disolution phase of the illusion, based on human consciousness progress towards the level of the invisible world and an undeniable social fact [Martin, 1978; Greeley, 2003]. "The most interesting issue sociologically is not the fact of progressive religious decline among the European population, but the fact that this decline is interpreted through the lenses of the secularization paradigm and is therefore accompanied by a "secularist" self-understanding that interprets the decline as "normal" and "progressive", that is, as a quasi-normative consequence of being a "modern" and "enlightened" European. It is this "secular" identity shared by European elites and ordinary people alike, that paradoxically turns "religion" and the barely submerged Christian European identity into a thorny and perplexing issue when it comes to delimiting the external geographic boundaries and to defining the internal cultural identity of a European Union in the process of being constituted" [Eurotopics, 2007].

The political and economic integration process is immutable, but it must follow the religion institution core. Europe must recognize from a historical point of view its Christian origin which encompasses the native origin of unity and the diversity in religious faiths. But the birth of Europe's christianity has a roman brand, so its development must face this reality, that it evolved as a democracy like in United States of America where the protestant ethos was intrinsic with the melting-pot process.

In the preamble of the Charter Fundamental Rights of the Union, in the Draft Constitution of European Union it is clearly said that the Union is founded on some intrinsic characteristics such as the indivisibility, the universal values of human dignity and the key elements of freedom, equality and solidarity, all put in together with the spiritual and moral heritage of the Union. But in this vision there isn't an explicit approach about God or the Christian religion.

The relation between religion and society is complex and from a durkheimian perspective it is divided in three different types: a paleo-durkheimian model; a neo-durkheimian model and a post-durkheimian model.

The first model, the paleo-durkheimian mechanism, requires the co-extensive presence of church in society, as a link between the individuals and the sacred things and energies. This relation between church and individuals is not coming from their free will, but merely is forcibly imposed by the societies rules and constraints.

The second model (widespread in the protestants states of north-west of Europe), the neo-durkheimian model promotes the free choose of the individuals with their elusive belief to belong to a denomination.

Finally, the post-durkheimian model, it is modulated in the postmodernist times, where the spiritual force is no longer intrinsically linked to society, because of the self-shaped religious and pluralist attitude of the individuals towards religious belongings and moral beliefs. This new stage is in contrast with the durkheimian traditional society and releases an anomistic instable society caused by steady erosion of standards and values of peoples. My conjecture is this: the European Union seems to be included in such a steady state, in a post-durkheimian model, where the sacred is very different and uncoupled with the profane and where the function of religion is foregone considered exogenous and no longer valid in a political and economic sphere. That is why the profound decline of the church institution or

the identity one, must be fill up in the socialist terms with different evanescent institutionalism and individualised spiritualities as Harvieu-Leger considered. It is ineluctable that all over Europe, the social solidarity is directly influenced by the religious institutions.

7. Conclusion

Federalism represents a perfect rational approach to European integration theory, the liberal inter-governmentalist model was never take seriously into account. This liberal model wasn't ever integrate into a single mechanism. Moravcsik removes federalism from neofunctionalism. Two very important features characterize the liberal model: the recrudescence of domestic politics instead of a core-level decisionist and the international institutions.

European Union represents a postmodernist project and a continuous experiment, because the Bruxelles bureaucracy must include and take into account the new opportunities that arrive. The EU system is vast and complex, the established relations between institutions are quite difficult to implement efficiently.

The political and economic integration process is immutable, but it must follows the religion institution core. Europe must recognize from a historical point of view its Christian origin which encompasses the native origin of unity and the diversity in religious faiths. European Union seems to include a steady state, in a post-durkheimian model, where the sacred is very different and uncoupled with the profane and where the function of religion is foregone considered exogenous and no longer valid in a political and economic sphere.

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