

The Grand Theories of Integration Process |and the Development of Global Communication Networks*

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The article considers the role and value of grand theories as a basis for the study of integration processes and global communication networks. The authors also consider the role of these theories in the study of globalization and regionalization.

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In the first half of the twentieth century regional association of different levels consistently associated with military, political, and trade organizations, as evidenced by the activities of the League of Nations in the sphere of sovereignty and collective security, etc.

However, after the Second World War the issues of economic cooperation came to the forefront and integration unions started to appear in the international arena along with free trade zones, regional banks, and the like, which primarily relied on the productive forces along with the simultaneous liberalization of economic relations.

Meanwhile, in the developing countries the process was, on the contrary, protectionist in its nature, which expressed in the desire to protect the newly acquired independence and was manifested in the form of sub-regional cooperation (ASEAN¹, ECOWAS², etc.).

The present stage of development of theoretical studies of integration processes is associated with events in the world politics between the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s. The main reason for the intensified research activity was the collapse of the bipolar world order after the Soviet system disintegration. At the same time one also observed an accelerated economic growth in the periphery countries, with the result that China, India, and several other countries began to compete with the strongest economies of the world. Their amplification has led to increasing political ambitions and dissatisfaction with the policy implemented by the United States and brought the conviction of the need for an integration of blocks under the regional leaders in order to build a new balance of power in international relations. All this has significantly contributed to the expansion of the scope and a quantitative growth of research in the field of integration processes.

Today the integration stands as one of the defining trends of current development of international relations system and of the world in general. 'Integration' (Latin *integratio*) means a 'restoration' and 'uniting of individual parts into an entity'. The term 'integration' may have different meanings depending on the application and branch of knowledge.

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¹ Association of South-East Asia.

² The Economic Community of West African State.

In the present paper we focus on the term ‘political integration’ and define it as ‘a political process leading to the unification of various states and other political forces to coordinate and consolidate their activities’ (Kosov and Fokina 2009: 187).

Political science investigates the processes of political integration from the viewpoint of different theories, which one can divide into three levels according to the level of specificity and concreteness of the concepts and propositions: grand, middle-range, and micro-range theories. Each level is based on the development of alternative paradigms (*e.g.*, realism/neorealism, liberalism/neoliberalism, etc.).

In order to understand the ideological foundations of the theoretical study of the processes of integration, let us present an historical outline of the origin of two classic grand theories of federalism and functionalism since many new approaches contain theoretical foundations of federalism / functionalism yet are guided by small- or middle-range theoretical constructs oriented at the contemporary practice of political integration and global communication networks.

The first attempts to study the phenomenon of political integration ideologically originate in Europe of the early 1920s. They are connected with the end of World War I in 1918 which brought about the necessity, perceived both by societies and by the political elites, to develop new forms of peaceful coexistence. In that period, the need for theoretical understanding of the events as well as the political elites’ urge for an expert advice led to the emergence of the pan-European movement characterized by a critical attitude towards national statehood. The debate over the indicated issue and its scientific systematization gave birth to two theories: federalism and functionalism.

Federalism

The theory of federalism emerged in the situation of the crisis of nation-states after the events in the global political life and, in particular, on the European continent. The French political leader Jean Monnet together with the Italian politician Altiero Spinelli developed the theory of separation of power between the national and supranational level. Prominent politicians and top officials of the post-war European countries (French President Francois Mitterrand, the first German chancellor Konrad Adenauer and others) supported this idea.

The federalists based their research on the ideas that the final stage of the political integration processes is the emergence of the state with federal structure. According to the theorists of federalism, such pattern of integration allows creating an efficient system of cooperation between federal subjects and central government. Thus, the two levels of government – central and administrative-territorial (national and territorial) – act as the basic elements of a federation. In this situation, the central government concentrates the powers for the solution of general problems, while the authorities of federal subjects have certain powers in the matters of local importance.

The theory launched sharp debates in the scientific community regarding the issue of the degree of centralization within the federal framework. The discussion helped to define several types of federal structure, depending on the degree of interaction between the two levels of government. At the same time they took account of such factors as the level of democratic governance, the development of political pluralism, etc. that could contribute to the emergence of distinct types of federations: centralist, balanced, and decentralist. One should note that the centralist type of federal structure gained the largest support among the advocates and critics of the theory of federalism (Avdonin 2007: 3).

Another bright theory is the theory of neo-federalism. American political scientist John Pinder combined theoretical analysis on the issues of the European integration and prepared practical recommendations, thus laying the foundation of the theory (Pinder 1991) which is based on the idea of moving towards supranational decisions. Another well-known representative of neo-federalism is Amitai Etzioni, who considers the formation of the 'political community' as the main goal of integration. The 'political community' must have the following components: the control over the means of coercion, the presence of the decision-making center, and a common orientation of the citizens of the community.

Functionalism

Functionalists also criticized the idea of the nation-state, but unlike their opponents, they considered as an alternative to the federation the system of international institutions whose form and content depend on the functions they fulfil. The main ideas of the functionalists were formulated in the 1940s by the creator of this approach, the English scientist David Mitrany, and referred rather to the principles of international co-operation than to the integration of the European continent (Pinder 1991).

The proponents of functionalism determined the expansion of non-political tasks as a prerequisite for international cooperation. Thus, according to Mitrany's concept of 'spill-over' interaction, initially states integrate in certain areas and then, these partially integrated states gain a necessity for further integration in related field, which in turn leads to the emergence of special supranational coordinating institutions and subsequent acceleration of political integration processes.

Functionalism was instrumental for the creation and development of the United Nations and a number of its specific institutions. Nevertheless, functionalism had a significant disadvantage since it simplified the notion of political integration, which, according to this approach must simply follow the economic one. The political integration in the European Union has shown that actually the need for the transfer of sovereign powers to a supranational body is the key to the process of integrative cooperation.

The next step in the study of political integration became the neo-functional approach of the 1960 and 1970s. The most outstanding representatives of this approach are Ernst Haas, Karl Deutsch, Leon N. Lindberg and others. The neofunctional theorists adhered to the fundamental functionalist ideas which they further elaborated and expanded.

Neo-functionalism became widespread in the USA and is manifested in two methodological alternatives. One of them is the communication theory of the American political scientist Karl Deutsch focuses on the analysis of the integrating communities within a broader context of international relations. Another theory, directly associated with the works of Ernst Haas, focuses on the analysis of regional political integration.

Deutsch defined the social communication as a basis for integration which is the relationship between interdependent subjects co-producing a certain system product, which they will be deprived of if separated (Deutsch 1978: 198). From his point of view, the international integration is accompanied by the convergence not only of the states but of the societies as well. The determining factor for the former is the legal implementation, while for the latter the most important is the emergence of 'community feeling' formed in the process of intensive communication as well as the existence of institutions and practical tools aimed at ensuring 'peaceful change' in the long term (Deutsch 1957: 5).

Thus, within the international integration one can find some legally arranged political organizations as well as the associations of states united by 'a sense of community', which, from Deutsch's point of view, are qualitatively at a higher developmental level than the treaty relations between states which are fragile by their nature.

The neofunctional approach of Ernst Haas contained a more specific analysis of political integration based not only on Mitrany's functionalism, but also on the analysis of political practice. He considered the specific actions of political actors of the integrating states as the main driving forces of integration. Haas determined political integration as the process when the political actors of several individual national systems tend to reorient their loyalty, goals, and political activities towards a new center, whose institutions have jurisdiction or apply for its extension in relation to the existing national states' (Haas 1958: 16).

Thus, to ensure their interests the participants of this process can use the supranational political level, which is superior to the one of the nation-state. At the same time, there is a gradual transformation of national interests in the direction of supranational alliances.

Another element of the neofunctional theory by Ernst Haas, is the concept of spillover process. This concept implies that a fruitful cooperation in one area inevitably has an impact on related areas and gradually expands its range, making the integrative interaction more stable and long-lasting. The neofunctional theory of political integration has gained a wide popularity while the ideas based on it served as the major analytical models of many research projects. However, optimism dynamic development of the neofunctional analysis was not combined with the actual political practice and the stagnation of the European Economic Community (EEC), of the 1970s, because of the divergent policies primarily of the integrating states. All this has affected the occurrence of the neo-functionalism critics while reducing its impact on the views of researchers' integration processes.

During the period of crisis of the neofunctional theory another representative of the American political science – Stanley Hoffman – became the main competitor for Ernst Haas and his followers and came up with the idea of inter-state approach to the study of political integration.

Stanley Hoffman was critical of the neofunctionalist idea about the decisive significance of supranational bodies in the process of political integration. He also emphasized that the supporters of neofunctional approach did not take into account the external factors and the impact of the national security interests of state members of the integration process. Hoffman's idea relied on the basic theoretical concepts of international relations and considered the process of integration as a process of interaction between states to ensure their own national interests.

According to Hoffman, the integration process depends on the states' willingness to delegate a part of their sovereignty to supranational bodies. This very factor is determinant for the development of positive dynamics of integration. Within the interstate approach one distinguishes two areas of integration cooperation: a 'high' level (foreign policy and security issues) and a 'low' one (economic, social, and humanitarian sphere, *etc.*) (Avdonin 2007: 5). The 'low' area of integration comprises the main areas of cooperation allowing an intensive cooperation between states on mutually beneficial terms while the 'high' area of integration has certain limitations in the coordination of national interests and national security.

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To summarize, we can say that the theories of federalism/neo-federalism and of functionalism/neo-functionalism have become classic theories and served as the basis for fur-

ther comprehension of integration. The origins of new theories associate with the emerging in the 1980s modern forms of cooperation among states at different levels as well as with changing international conditions and approaches in international cooperation and with the formation of new institutional relationships at all levels of regional integration.

The emergence of supranational actors at the contemporary international geopolitic arena concentrating certain sovereign functions of national states and their increasing influence on the global political and economic environment brought the qualitative content of globalization to a new level.

For a long period globalization has been considered the basis for the development of a modern system of international relations while the processes of regionalization have been regarded as secondary. However, finally, it turned out that the regionalization processes underlie the emergence of qualitatively new forms of institutional relations and thus, foster the origins of regional groupings, the latter being able to act as centres of power. Through the increasing cooperation in various spheres, the emerging regional systems become the centres of attraction in the region. The emerging association, gradually moving from economic to political cooperation, can acquire a transnational nature of global network links.

One should note that on the one hand, the emergence of global communication networks provides new opportunities for all actors of the international relations, on the other hand, the emerging dependence of the sovereign states on the trends and tendencies in international affairs may adversely affect the national consciousness, first of all, of the small nations and states.

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