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International Integration Theories: From Idealism to Globalization

SEKHRI Sofiane
University of Algiers

Abstract:

This paper's main aim is to discuss the development process of international integration theories. In order to reach this purpose, the article initially defines international integration and international integration theories. Afterward, this academic contribution examines the different theoretical frameworks in relation to international integration starting from discussing both Idealism and Liberalism. The paper follows this path through the study of other theoretical perspectives, this includes Functionalism, Neo-Functionalism, Federalism, Confederalism, Intergovernmentalism and, ultimately, Globalization.

Keywords: Theories, International Integration, Idealism, Liberalism, Functionalism, Neo-Functionalism, Federalism, Confederalism, Intergovernmentalism, Globalization.

المُلخَص:

يحلل هذا المقال مسار تطور نظريات التكامل الدولي من خلال دراسة معمقة لمدلول الاندماج الدولي وأهم المراحل النظرية التي عرفها بداية بالطرح المثالي الذي مهد الطريق لفكرة التكامل الدولي وساهم بقوة في ظهور وانتشار المدرسة الليبرالية التي نشأت في رحمها وتطورت في فروعها أهم مدارس ونظريات واتجاهات التكامل الدولي ومن أبرزها الوظيفية، الوظيفية الجديدة، الفدرالية، الكنفدرالية، نظرية التكامل الحكومي (بين الحكومات) وأخيرا نظريات العولمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النظريات، التكامل الدولي، المثالية، الليبرالية، الوظيفية، الوظيفية الجديدة، الفدرالية، الكنفدرالية، التكامل الحكومي (بين الحكومات)، العولمة.

Introduction:

International integration is a process of combining two or more political and international units, notably states, into one entity through the removal of barriers to free trade and the free movement of people or through the assigning of state powers to a supra-national centre, such a process aims at reducing tensions and conflicts between states and promoting economic development and social welfare in the concerned countries.

Accordingly, international integration theories deal with the study of the different theoretical and analytical frameworks that are concerned with the different modes of international integration, with other words, international integration theory examines the different scientific thoughts and outlooks that are devoted to the study of the different types of assimilation between international units and actors, in particular states.

The most significant theoretical frameworks on the subject are: Functionalism, Neo-Functionalism, Federalism (Supra-Nationalism), Confederalism, Intergovernmentalism and Globalization. Therefore, the article attempts to put the study of international integration in a sequential manner through the examination of these most prominent theoretical frameworks.

However, before starting the study of the above-listed theoretical theses, it is essential to provide an outline of Idealism and Liberalism as these two schools represent the theoretical background to the field of international integration theories.

Idealism:

Idealism or the Idealist School is a theoretical tendency based on a philosophical analysis and subjective explanation of political events and practices.

Idealists' main question is: What ought to be done? This stems from the philosophical nature of Idealism as philosophy means "the art of logic" and Idealists behave within a set of norms and ethical values, in contrast to Realism, which is a theoretical framework based on the material explanation and analysis of political phenomena, notably the Realists emphasis on power and national interest, through questioning what has been done, which itself stems from the definition of politics according to Realism as "the art of possible" since real-politics deals with events and phenomena according to the reality of matters. In this framework, Realism assumes that rational decision-maker has to neglect ethics and norms by finding any possible way and using any

possible tool in order to sustain state power and reach national interest.

Contrary to the so-called the radical schools of international relations theory such as Marxism and Dependency which criticized the state of the international order and called for major changes within the universal system, Idealism did not offer a critical analysis of the international order since Idealists did no more than providing an optimistic imagination of an ideal international order based on the respect of global ethical values and universal norms, international cooperation and common security.

Despite that the roots of Idealism go back to the works of the Greek philosopher, Plato, who imagined a model of an ideal state or city, the emergence of Idealism in international relations is related to the so-called Wilson's fourteen principles as the former American President, Woodrow Wilson, presented a range of norms that should end wars and international armed conflicts in a speech delivered to the American Congress in January 1918.

The same proposed norms were presented by President Wilson to the world leaders in the Paris Peace Congress of 1919 to be considered as the principles of universal peace and international integration.

The most prominent Wilson's propositions are: The rejection of secret treaties between states, the reduction of the scope and level of armament, the use of diplomatic and legal instruments to settle conflicts, the respect of people's right in self-determination, the promotion of democracy and democratic regimes in the world, the liberalization of world economy and interstate trade exchange and the creation of international organizations and institutions with the aim of guaranteeing common security.

This explains why Idealism is usually referred to as Wilsonianism seeing that the groundwork of Idealism derived from Wilson's Idealistic proposals. On the other hand, Wilson's emphasis on international cooperation, peaceful interactions, free inter-state trade and the supremacy of international institutionalism demonstrates that Idealism is without hesitation the cradle of international integration theories.

Liberalism:

Liberalism is a theoretical framework concerned with the promotion of individuals' rights and freedoms.

In the field of international relations, Liberalism is more than a theoretical framework; it is a political, economic and ideological trend

that aims to promote liberal democracy and liberal economy in the international system.

Similar to Idealists, Liberals consider the universal extend of ethical and normative values founded on democracy, justice and cooperation as the merely manner to call a halt to war and armed conflicts globally. Unlike the Realistic theoretical outlook that focuses upon the evilness of human-being, the Liberal approach denies the wickedness aspects of individuals and focuses on the goodness of human-being and highlights the fact that people have an ability to cooperate and live in harmony within a liberal and democratic system.

The roots of Liberalism in political studies date back to the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries through the writings of John Locke on the promotion of human rights and individual liberties and Immanuel Kant's works on Democratic Peace Theory through the linkage between the promotion of peace and the promotion of democracy. However, the emergence of Liberalism as a theoretical framework was not that strong till the end of World War II due to two main reasons:

-Obviously, following the end of the Second World War the Eastern Bloc adopted Marxism, which anticipated the collapse of Capitalism, as an ideology. On the other hand, The Western Bloc adopted Liberalism, an ideology that defended the promotion and maintenance of Western values.

The employment of Liberalism as a theoretical framework by the Western Bloc was apparent in Francis Fukuyama's book entitled "*The End of History and the Lat Man*" in which Fukuyama explained how liberal values have always defeated dictatorships through human historical process, including the overcoming of Fascism and lately Communism. According to Fukuyama and contrary to Marxism which predicted the defeat of Capitalism, the historical context of human development led to the victory of Western liberalism (1).

-The revival of Wilson's principles was evident through the creation of international institutions with the purpose of organizing international relations along with the implementation of the Bretton Woods system by establishing a liberal international monetary system and creating financial and trade institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Within this framework, the strength of Liberalism increased as an opposite thesis to Realist anarchy and state dominance since it emphasized a possible organized co-existence within a peaceful and multi-actors international system.

Generally, Liberalism is founded on the following thoughts:

- The Liberal Theory of Economics which traces its roots to the works of Adam Smith and David Ricardo who advocated the reduction of state intervention in running economic affairs between individuals and groups in accordance with the Liberal slogan “let do, let go, let pass”.
- The matter of high/low politics is a defining divergence between Realism and Liberalism since Realists consider high politics matters such as state survival and security as relevant, while Liberals consider low politics issues, notably, economics and social welfare as vital subjects.
- For Liberals, influencing international units is achievable through attraction and communication as there is no need to employ coercive tools and hard power to sustain state rule and leadership in international relations, with other words, leadership is reachable through soft power, a term coined for the first time by Joseph Nye in a book entitled, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (2) as a counter thesis to Paul Kennedy’s book on *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (3).
- Liberalism rejects several Realist thoughts such as anarchy, state predominance and states struggle to maintain power and national interest. Moreover, Liberalism provides an anti-Dependency thesis by arguing that relations between international actors are non-zero sum games and mutual dependence between states is possible in a peaceful and cooperative international system. In this perspective, Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane coined the Liberal idea of Complex Interdependence which implies a peaceful international system in which states are tied together through complex low politics relations based on a win-win outcome (4).
- Liberalism is also associated to Democratic Peace Theory. In Kant’s words, “peace can be perpetual” through a domino-effect of democracy in the World as democracies will never go to war against each other. In this framework, Kant outlined the idea of a “Pacific Federation” which is an international order that might be built by increasing the number of states with democratic-republican constitutions (5). In the same framework, another Democratic Peace Theorist, Stuart Bremer, explained the continuation of war and peace through the existence and/or absence of democracy(6).

Democratic Peace Theorists claim that liberal democracies are distinguished by their ability to establish peaceful relations among themselves, a character which goes back to their shared democratic values and legitimate institutions.

A common thread, from Rousseau, Kant and Cobden, to Schumpeter and Doyle, is that wars were created by militaristic and dictatorial regimes for the own vested government's interests without taking the people's standpoint into consideration as people, according to Liberals and Democratic Peace Theorists, are peace-loving by nature.

This liberal-democratic perspective helps explaining why in modern history wars have been traditionally launched by and against Fascist, Nazis and undemocratic regimes, starting from Germany and Italy in the World-Wars through the several armed conflicts during the Col-War era without neglecting the war against international terror during the last two decades, notably in Afghanistan (2001).

As one of the great philosophical and ideological products of Western civilization, Liberalism has had a profound impact on the shape of most modern societies.

Liberalism advocated liberty of individuals, democracy and constitutionally guaranteed rights, and privileged freedom of speech and equality before the law.

Liberalism claimed that market capitalism best promotes the welfare of all within the society and individuals should be free from arbitrary state power.

Liberalism remains a powerful and influential doctrine; its ideas are realized in recent democratic transitions in both hemispheres and manifested in the globalization of the world economy.

In this framework, the American political thinker Samuel Huntington described global democratization as coming in three waves in a work entitled *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*(7).

The third wave of democratization started from Portugal in 1974 and lasted until the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and comprised thirty countries from Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe. It was preceded by the two other waves: The first wave began with the beginning of the 19th century and involved North America and Western Europe and the second wave began with the Allied victory in

World War II to comprise around 36 globally recognized democracies (8).

On the subject of the globalization of the world economy, *the world has become a global village through* the globalization of production, consumption and markets. The expansion of trans-national trade through the growing of cross-border movement of goods, services, technologies and capital led to the emergence of increasing economic integration and interdependence at the national, regional and local levels.

The prime evidence in this framework is the creation of several geographic areas called free trade zones where goods may be landed, handled, manufactured and re-exported without customs intervention.

On the other side, The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which was replaced by the World Trade Organization (WTO) committed to the task of ensuring that trade flows as smoothly and freely as possible.

Accordingly, it is not mistaken to assert that along with Idealism which is considered as the cradle of international integration theories, Liberalism provided the ideological, economic, political and theoretical ingredients and tools to international integration and international integration theories.

Functionalism:

Functionalism is a Liberal trend that appeared in international relations after World War II. The fundamental ideas of Functional School derived from natural and biological studies on living organisms and thanks to the American sociologist, Talcott Parsons, this type of studies was introduced into the field of social research.

Functionalism focuses on the functional interaction that exists between components of the living organisms with the intention of creating a steadiness; on the other hand, Functionalism is highly influenced by the growth process of living organisms, from a primitive to a complex stage.

In relation to international relations, the Functional School aimed to reduce states conflicts and divisions that led to the tragedy of World War II.

The first step in this attempt was the journal article of the British historian and political thinker, David Mitrany, entitled: "The Functional Approach to World Organisation" in which Mitrany related the existence of conflicts and wars in the international system to the world division into disjointed national units (9).

In order to establish international peace and stability, David Mitrany suggested a theoretical framework based on two main elements: “function” and “need”. In this framework, Mitrany ignored the significance of high politics, the state and national interest in his analysis as he raised the opportunity to reach a common interest between the different international actors.

According to Mitrany, the efficient way to establish global peace is to push other international units to integration in accordance with the principle of the “Doctrine of Ramification”.

In Mitrany’s perspective, the success of any integration project requires the ignorance of integration in the political field and high politics’ matters and the concentration on non-controversial subjects such as integration in technical and economic matters.

The development of international cooperation in a particular technical and economic field leads to the need to cooperate in other related technical and economic fields, the growth of such process will require more needs to cooperate and interact in more complex fields creating a hyperlink between the different international units, particularly states, which are involved in the integration process.

The need for further cooperation will automatically boost the integration process moving from cooperation in primitive technical fields to partnership in more complex domains, this strong development in the integration process will undermine any attempt to impede it by governments as decision-makers will realize the existence of common benefits and interests in integration.

With the purpose of ensuring the accomplishment of the integration process, David Mitrany proposed what he called functional agencies which are, according to his perspective, complex networks of international organizations that are dedicated to oversee the development of the integration process.

Neo-Functionalism:

Neo-Functionalism is generally seen as an expansion of the Functionalism proposal as Mitrany’s integration scheme was the theoretical background to Neo-Functionalism. That is to say, Neo-Functionalism is the application of Functionalism to the study of European integration. The apparent success of the European Coal and Steel Community reinforced the sketch of strengthening international peace and socio-economic ties through integration and, therefore, many political scientists observing the process believed that this path would achieve a gradual shrinking of states power.

The major step in this trend was the book of the American political thinker, Ernst Haas, entitled: *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces, 1950-1957*(10).

Contrary to David Mitrany who ignored the role of political elites and actors in his Functionalist proposal of integration, Ernst Haas attempted to provide a new dimension to the concept of integration through highlighting the role of political elites in launching and boosting integration process.

According to Ernst Haas, integration occurs when there is a strong conviction in the minds of political elites that there is a huge interest linked to the integration process as integration requires decision makers' motivation and readiness to give up state power to new functional agencies and institutions at the supra-national level.

As already stated, the work of Ernst Haas considered Western European integration as a model of analysis. Haas major contribution in this framework was the invention of the term "Spill-Over" in the field of international integration theories.

Haas divided Spill-Over into three categories:

- **First: Technical/Functional Spill-Over:**

It is close to Mitrany's Doctrine of Ramification despite a little difference in relation to the role of political actors and elites in integration. To be precise, integration process commences when political elites are aware that the development of international cooperation in a particular technical and economic field leads to the need to cooperate in other related technical and economic fields, and the growth of such process will require more needs to cooperate and interact in more complex fields creating a hyperlink between the different states involved in such integration and, in due course, contribute to the establishment of a lasting peace.

According to Haas, the experience of European integration followed the path of the Technical/Functional Spill-Over as it was launched by the founders of the European Union, the former French Prime and Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, and the French political economist and diplomat, Jean Monnet, who both provided what is known as the Schuman Declaration, a proposal that placed the Franco-German production of coal and steel under one Common High Authority, as they both believed that the ideal way to reduce armed conflicts in Europe was to control the coal and steel industry as it was considered at that time as the nerve of war.

The development of the Franco-German cooperation in coal and steel industries led to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which was formally established by the Treaty of Paris in 1951 and comprised in addition to France and Germany, Italy and the Benelux states; Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

The development of technical and economic cooperation within the European Coal and Steel Community led to the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) through the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, with effect from 1958.

- **Second: Political Spill-Over:**

The success of technical and economic Spill-Over leads to complex economic cooperation which itself requires political cooperation that would end up creating a political union through the adoption of a supranational constitution or the establishment of a federation with a supranational government.

- **Third: Geographical Spill-Over:**

It is related to the expansion of the integration process geographically. The prime sample in this framework is the accession of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark to the European Community in 1973, The European Community's enlargement to the south by the accession of Greece in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986 and the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995 and European Union's territorial enlargement to the East in 2004, 2007 and 2013.

Undeniably, Classical Functionalism and Neo-Functionalism remarkably contributed to the development of international integration theories; however, many issues remain with no answer in the Functionalist and Neo-Functionalist theses:

- First, both Mitrany and Haas shared the idea that technical cooperation is the starting point of integration; this entails the existence of an advanced technical base in the states involved in the integration process, which is not always the case, notably in developing and underdeveloped states.

- Functionalism and Neo-Functionalism focused on the phenomenon of international integration which implies international cooperation and ignored another significant aspect of international relations which is international conflict.
- Both Functionalism and Neo-Functionalism supposed that political elites and actors will never obstruct integration process, this assumption does not reflect the reality of all integration projects, for instance, political actors and matters hampered the Maghreb Union project.
- Ernst Haas idea of Political Spill-Over is hardly achievable even in the case of Haas favorite model, which is European integration, as the EU has failed to agree on a common constitution or to establish a political federation, furthermore, in many cases EU states have demonstrated little appetite to put the common security and foreign policy into practice.

Federalism (Supra-Nationalism):

As one of the prominent models of integration, Federalism refers to a system in which sovereignty is constitutionally shared between a central governing authority and constituent political units such as states or provinces. Leading examples of federated states include the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Russia, Austria, Australia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela.

In a federalist system, the power of national and local governments is handed to a central or federal government and supranational bodies and agencies. With other words, Federalism is a situation in which the most important policy areas of the member states are placed under supranational control.

The components of the federation share resources, welfare and development and enjoy a relative freedom in managing economic and social activities as well as public services, however, sensitive sectors and matters such as defense, foreign policy and international treaties, diplomacy and currency are usually under the management of the federal government.

In this framework, the difference between supranational and national should be seen as processual as the supranational stage commences where the power of the national units terminates and

any interaction beyond the authority and jurisdiction of national governments is classified under the supranational/federal level.

Federalism implies the following elements:

1. Pluralism:

Federalism is a system of governance that requires the participation and involvement of several states or provinces, to be precise, Federalism is a multi-actor system.

2. Cooperation:

Federalism requires the existence of constant cooperation within and among the states and regions involved in the federalist system.

3. Territorial Division:

Federalism is a territorially organized division of governance and decision-making.

4. Supra-Nationalism:

Ideologically, supra-nationalism opposed nationalism that sanctified the state sovereignty. Within the federalist system each national political structure has a special function in decision-making and possesses a certain autonomy in managing general affairs so as to create and maintain a balanced system, however, this association of national governments and political structures agree to give up some of their powers to supranational governments and units.

Leading Federalist Theorists such as the American political thinkers Paul Peterson, David Epstein and the American-Israeli scholar, Daniel Elazar, in addition to the British academic, Michael Burgess, have largely contributed to the analysis and development of the federal doctrine and the federal system, notably in the United States and Europe.

Confederalism:

The confederalist system goes back to Confederate States of America, or the Confederacy, in which a confederal government was created by the eleven Southern states of the United States after they seceded from the Union between 1861 and 1865. Confederalism is generally known as a union of states in which each member state preserves some independent control over internal and external affairs.

Similar to the federalist system, **confederate governments are multilateral systems of government, but** in contrast to

Federalism, Confederalism is an association of states in which the system of government or administration is based on the maintaining of national sovereignty at the national level despite the transfer of specified powers to a higher authority for reasons of convenience, mutual security or efficiency.

This model of governance is similar to an intergovernmental organization in which the member states coordinate policies and actions but retain their autonomy and sovereignty.

American scholarship dominated research on Confederalism, among the prominent thinkers in this framework were the American historian, Merrill Jensen, and the American Professor of Economics and Political Science, Thomas Palfrey.

Despite the existence of some supranational elements in the European Union model, the EU remains as the prime example of a union of states in which member states are not yet prepared to renounce national sovereignty, with other words, the EU is a prime model of Confederalism.

Intergovernmentalism:

The Political thinker, Stanley Hoffman, established the theory of Intergovernmentalism in his book *The State of War: Essays on the Theory and Practice of International Politics* (11). Hoffmann's theoretical perception was later developed by the political scientist, Andrew Moravcsik, with his theory of Liberal Intergovernmentalism, which involved a more fundamental critique of Neo-Functionalism (12).

Intergovernmentalism is seen as a reaction and a counter-argument to Neo-Functionalist Approach to European integration. This theory of international integration relies heavily on Realism, notably the predominance of states and their governments in international relations. Hoffman criticized Neo-Functionalism as he believed that integration had to be viewed in a global context, and that regional integration was a smaller part of global system. He believed that the major deficiency in the Neo-Functionalist Approach was the prediction of inevitable further integration within the Ramification/Spill-Over process. This assumption was seen as especially inaccurate with the changes to the economic climate in the start of the 1970's (European economic recession). He also argued that even though national interests could be a reason to integrate with some parts of government, this process will never include higher politics such as national security. According to the

Intergovernmentalist Approach, the national governments involved in the integration process controlled the degree and speed of European integration, rejecting the Neo-Functionalist idea that states were overwhelmed by demands from interest groups and powerless to face the uncontrolled growing international integration.

Intergovernmentalism treats states and national governments in particular as the primary actors in the integration process. Despite similarities with Realism, Intergovernmentalism differs from Realism and Neo-Realism due to its recognition of the significance of international institutionalism as it considers international integration as an institutional process along with its intergovernmental dimension.

Two prime examples of intergovernmentalist international integration are: (1) The European Union since it is no more than an economic and political intergovernmental organization that operates through a system of supranational independent institutions and intergovernmental negotiated decisions by twenty eight member states, (2) The African Union which is a continental intergovernmental union, similar to the EU but less integrated, consisting of fifty four African states.

Globalization Theories:

Globalization is the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world values, products, capital, services, cultures and individuals.

Globalization reflects a global world in terms of benefits and damages as the world is global in terms of trade, transactions, capital, services, culture, political orientations, investment, migration, technology, knowledge, as well as environmental challenges, global warming, water shortage, air pollution, over-fishing, nuclear threat and international terrorism.

Many leading theorists have analysed Globalization in different ways as some say it is a widespread modernity, some say it is a post-modernity and some emphasised its distinctiveness and matchlessness. All disciplines and specializations seem have become implicated in globalization studies, from ethnic areas and women's studies, to literature, the arts, language, cultural studies, the social sciences, history, law, business administration, and so on.

In international relations, Theories of Globalization imply Theories of Liberal Economy since Globalization deals with the emergence of a globalised economy involving new systems of production, finance and

consumption and worldwide economic integration. The new transnational or global cultural patterns, practices and flows of ideas and thoughts of a global culture involve ideas of Social and Identity Construction in Theories of Globalization. The emergence of global political processes, the rise of new transnational institutions, and concomitantly, the spread of global governance and authority structures of diverse kinds imply Democratization Theories in the field of Globalization. The unprecedented multidirectional movement of peoples around the world involving new patterns of transnational migration, identities and communities favored Immigration Theories in Globalization as well as Theories of Gender and Ethnicity. Unequal trade relations and Northern economic domination in the global system as a whole involve anti-Globalization literature; this includes the Marxist thesis and Dependency.

Conclusion:

The above-discussed theoretical frameworks on the subject of international integration demonstrated that Idealism was the starting point of international integration theories. Within this framework, Idealism shaped Liberalism and within the Liberal tendency the most prominent international integration theories emerged. Inside this coming out process Functionalism appeared to develop the “Ramification Doctrine” and then the Neo-Functionalist thesis came into sight to illuminate European integration and explicate the “Spill-Over” process and, afterward, Intergovernmentalism attempted to provide a counter-argument to the Neo-Functionalist outlook. Within the same course, Federalism and Confederalism appeared as incompatible political and theoretical perspectives and the process of international integration outstandingly increased leading to a complex global integration explained by different Globalization Theories involving different dimensions and spheres including, economics, politics, human, culture and so on.

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