

The European Integration: Theories in a Historical Perspective

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Summary

This book is a historical essay on the long road towards supranationalism in Europe. It presents how European states constructed gradually a peaceful community of states. This in contrast to the former system of authoritarian sovereign states, of colonial empires characterised by authoritarian centralisation policy, territorial conquests, military, economic and cultural imperialism, and wars. The book presents the ideas of the most important representatives of confederalism and federalism of European civilization, including Aristotle, Althusius, Grotius, Suarez, Vattel, Saint-Pierre, Penn, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, Tocqueville, Proudhon, Eötvös, Renner, Coudenhove-Kalergi, Madariaga, Hantos, Rougemont, Brugmans, Monnet, Spinelli, Hallstein, Tindemans, or Delors. It also describes the most important legal documents of federalist states and international developments, and of international human rights.

The first chapter deals with the development of the European idea. This is followed by five chapters presenting the ideas of the federalist founding fathers of the European Community (Coudenhove-Kalergi, Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, or Altiero Spinelli) who all believed in the classical idea of a peaceful world federation. They also represented ideas and principles whose roots go back to the American and the Swiss constitutions, to the ideas of the United Nations, and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. After the Second World War they stood before the challenge to transcend national sovereignty to avoid new wars. They proposed different federalist approaches, but mutually influencing one another.

As an example, the author presents the founder of the Pan European Movement, Coudenhove-Kalergi. He is described as a constitutional federalist, who was in favour of a classical constitutional parliamentary federation composed of two chambers (representing the persons as Europeans and as citizens of their own states) following the Swiss example. Due to historical circumstances, however, it was not possible to establish a 'United States of Europe' after the war, and this constitutional federalist alternative failed.

Jean Monnet – again in the author's view – was a federalist-functionalist. The guiding idea of Monnet's method was to surpass national sovereignty by starting the struggle against the dogma of the 'indivisibility of sovereignty'. The essence of his idea was to gradually dismember the sovereignty of nation states by a federalist-functionalist method. The 'Monnet-method' meant to cut parts of sovereignty from nation states and to transfer them to independent supranational institutions, organized following a federalist institutional model. For example, with the establishment of the ECSC, Monnet separated the coal and steel production sector from the sovereignty of the six constituent nation states and organized it independently, under the direction of the supranational High Authority. Thus the core of an economic integration emerged outside the national governmental sphere of the six states. Monnet believed that integration in one area would generate a 'chain reaction', and more and more areas would be transferred gradually to a supranational level. His method worked in the sphere of economy: the Rome Treaties established

the EEC and the EURATOM. However, this 'chain-reaction' was only partially successful in the area of political cooperation. The supranational federalist political plans of the European Defence and Political Community, which were proposed in conjunction with the Monnet-method, were voted down. The golden age of federalism ended in 1954. The supranational European Community remained without governance: the dilemma of political union was not solved.

The essay regards the attack of De Gaulle on supranationalism as a turning point in the development of the European Community (7th chapter). After the Luxembourg Compromise, although the economic community remained functional, political cooperation continued outside the framework of the Rome Treaties following a more confederalist model. 'Intergovernmental supranationalism' emerged gradually: the European Council was established, the role of the governments strengthened, but the governments accepted the supranational European Community and the European law.

The 8th chapter investigates how the federalist Altiero Spinelli could solve the problem of political cooperation between the supranational European Community and the governments. He proposed to introduce the subsidiarity principle into European law to regulate and define precisely the division of competences between the federation (supranational EC) and the member states. In Spinelli's interpretation subsidiarity regulated the transfer of competences from the national level to the European Community level. This transfer was based on negotiations and agreements among governments. The national governments could safeguard the 'sovereignty' of their nation states in all the areas they regarded as of national interest, but they were subordinated to the European law otherwise. I.e., subsidiarity represented a compromise between the federalists and the intergovernmentalists. With the lack of European governance subsidiarity became the most important guiding principle of the European policy.

Jacques Delors was successful in continuing the federalist policies of Monnet, Spinelli, and Hallstein. He presented subsidiarity as a federalist-functional principle and differentiated it from the unionist-functional interpretation. He emphasised the necessity to establish a single market, an economic and monetary union, and to gradually transfer the necessary powers from the nation states' level to the supranational level. He also proposed to enlarge the areas of supranational cooperation, to diminish the role of veto, and to realise the union of nation states and of peoples based on the principle of unity in diversity. He was successful in establishing the Single Market, and in getting the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty signed by the members.

The 9th chapter presents the different integration theories that were developed on the basis of the European Union's construction in practice: neofederalism (John Pinder), neo-functionalism (Ernst Haas, Leon Lindberg), transactionalism (Wayne Sandholtz, Alec Stone Sweet), interdependency (Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye), liberal intergovernmentalism (Andrew Moravcsik), and classical confederalism (Margaret Thatcher). These integration theories represented the gradual emergence of a real European policy.

The 10th chapter deals with the Treaty on the European Union of 1992. The federalist-intergovernmentalist compromise made it possible to establish, through the Maastricht Treaty, an intergovernmental supranational union of nation states based on two-level governance: the supranational Economic Community and the intergovernmental political community, i.e., the European Union. The author emphasises that, in practice, this intergovernmental supranationalism meant that the national governments accepted European law, but also safeguarded their national sovereignty in all fields deemed of national interest. They supported supranationalism on the level of the 'lowest common denominator'. The Treaty on the European Union, for example, strengthened the nation states, but the supranational European Community remained functional, and could gradually develop because supranationalism became the interest of governments. This chapter

also investigates the debates around the Maastricht Treaty.

The next two chapters (11th and 12th) deal with the further development of the European Union. The author describes a process whereby, thanks to the federalist initiatives and the compromises between the federalists and the intergovernmentalists, the integration process could continue. Indeed, governments gradually transferred, as shown by the Treaty of Amsterdam, more and more competences to the supranational level. The Treaty of Nice made the enlargement of the EU possible. In 2002 the Euro was introduced.

The 11th chapter deals with the Fischer-plan and the discussions around it. The author regards the proposals of Joschka Fisher as an important idea to establish a parliamentary federation with two chambers. This construction would adequately represent the interest of the citizens as Europeans and as citizens of the respective member states.

The 12th chapter deals with the most important ideas of the Draft Constitution of 2003, and of the Constitutional Treaty of 2004. The reform proposals in these legal documents meant a new type of intergovernmental and supranational union of nation states based on multilevel governance and subsidiarity. The author emphasises a merit of the Constitutional Treaty, namely that it summarised the achievements of the European integration process as well as the values of the European Union.

The author regards the ideas of the Fischer-plan and of the Draft Constitution of 2003 as alternatives for the future. The reader is advised to think and discuss further along those ideas. She regrets that both alternatives (Fischer-plan, Constitutional Treaty) were rejected, and Europe remains without proper governance until today. But she believes that the reform process could continue, and in the future the necessary reforms, new legal and institutional forms will gradually come to the fore.

The book contains, as an appendix, the summary of the ideas and the principles of the Treaty of Lisbon.

In the author's conclusion it would be necessary to rethink the role of the federalist ideas and of European supranationalism in the construction of Europe, but from the point of view of the European citizens (persons). In her opinion the establishment of a democratic parliamentary Europe is necessary as a replacement of the council-type Europe. It could contribute to gradually transcend the democratic deficit and to shape the new principles and institutions of the European Union as a peaceful and more democratic community of states and of citizens.