

Theories of European Integration II



Items to be covered

- **The Two Main Recent Theories of European Integration**
- **Neo-Functionalism and Supranationalism**
- **Neo-Functionalism's Roots**
- **Neo-Functionalism's Four Main Features**
- **Evaluation of Neo-Functionalism**
- **Liberal Intergovernmentalism (LI) and the Member States**
- **Liberal Intergovernmentalism and its Roots**
- **Liberal Intergovernmentalism and Andrew Moravcsik**
- **What Role for Supranational Institutions?**

Theories of European Integration – more recent developments

Today, there are two main theories of European integration - Neo-Functionalism and Liberal Intergovernmentalism.

These provide us with two contrasting visions of what the EU system of government is actually supposed to look like.

These alternate visions or world views are: a supranational system of governance versus an intergovernmental organisation

Theories of Integration: Neo-Functionalism

- **Neo-functionalism** – the view that the EU is becoming a supranational state which is incrementally inheriting all the tasks traditionally carried out by member states.
- In this view the **nation state is transferring its powers and sovereignty upwards to the European level in political, sectoral and geographical terms**. This transfer takes place from the nation state to a supranational set of authoritative institutions.

Source: Schmitter, 1996: 2

Neo-Functionalism and a Supranational View of Integration I

Neo-Functionalism: analytic focus concentrates on
supranational institutions – EU Commission, ECJ,
EP (and more recently also the ECB)

Key author: Ernst B. Haas

In his 1958 text *The Uniting of Europe* Haas argued that:

**economic integration, however defined, may
be based on political motives and frequently
begets political consequences**

(Haas 1958: 12).

Neo-Functionalism's Roots: Critique of David Mitrany's Functionalism I

Neo/Functionalism is a reaction against Functionalism and the idea that economics and politics can be kept separate and that integration can be confined to areas of low politics

Functionalist David Mitrany argued in 1930:

**‘peace will not be secured if we
organise the world by what divides it’**

(Mitrany, 1943: 96).

**(...that statement obviously refers to the nation state
system...)**

Neo-Functionalism's Roots: Critique of David Mitrany's Functionalism II

- Haas – lack of the political makes the functionalist account unrealistic
- How is it possible for technical and economic integration to actually happen and for political cooperation to remain absent?
- For Haas political motives stimulated cooperation in the first place; sometimes political cooperation is also an unintended consequence of technical cooperation

Neo-Functionalism's Features I

1. Neo-Functionalism focuses upon Process:

‘... integration is the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states...’
(Haas, 1958: 16)

Neo-Functionalism's Features II

2. The Centrality of Supranational Institutions: 'potential agents of integration' (Haas, 1958: 29)

For Haas two things were required if European integration was to be successful:

1. A central government which stood apart from those of the member states – i.e. supranational institutions
2. The development of a European consciousness

Neo-Functionalism's Features

III

3. Transfer Of Loyalties: The Role Of Political Elites

‘As the process of integration proceeds, it is assumed that values will undergo change, that interests will be redefined in terms of regional rather than purely national orientation and that the erstwhile set of separate national group values will gradually be superseded by a new and geographically larger set of beliefs’ (Haas, 1958: 13).

Neo-Functionalism's Features

IV

4. Spillover – Political, Technical And Geographical

- **Political Spillover** – the political activities at the supranational level 'spill over' to affect loyalties of key political actors at the member state level.
- **Problematic assumption** > is spillover a quasi/automatic process or does it need a politically willed decision to start it ...

Neo-Functionalism's Features

IV

4. Spillover – Political, Technical And Geographical

- **Technical Spillover – the cooperation between countries in one policy area can trigger cooperation in other related areas – e.g. cooperation on coal and steel policy (ECSC) triggered the formation of EEC.**
Problem > how technical is technical cooperation

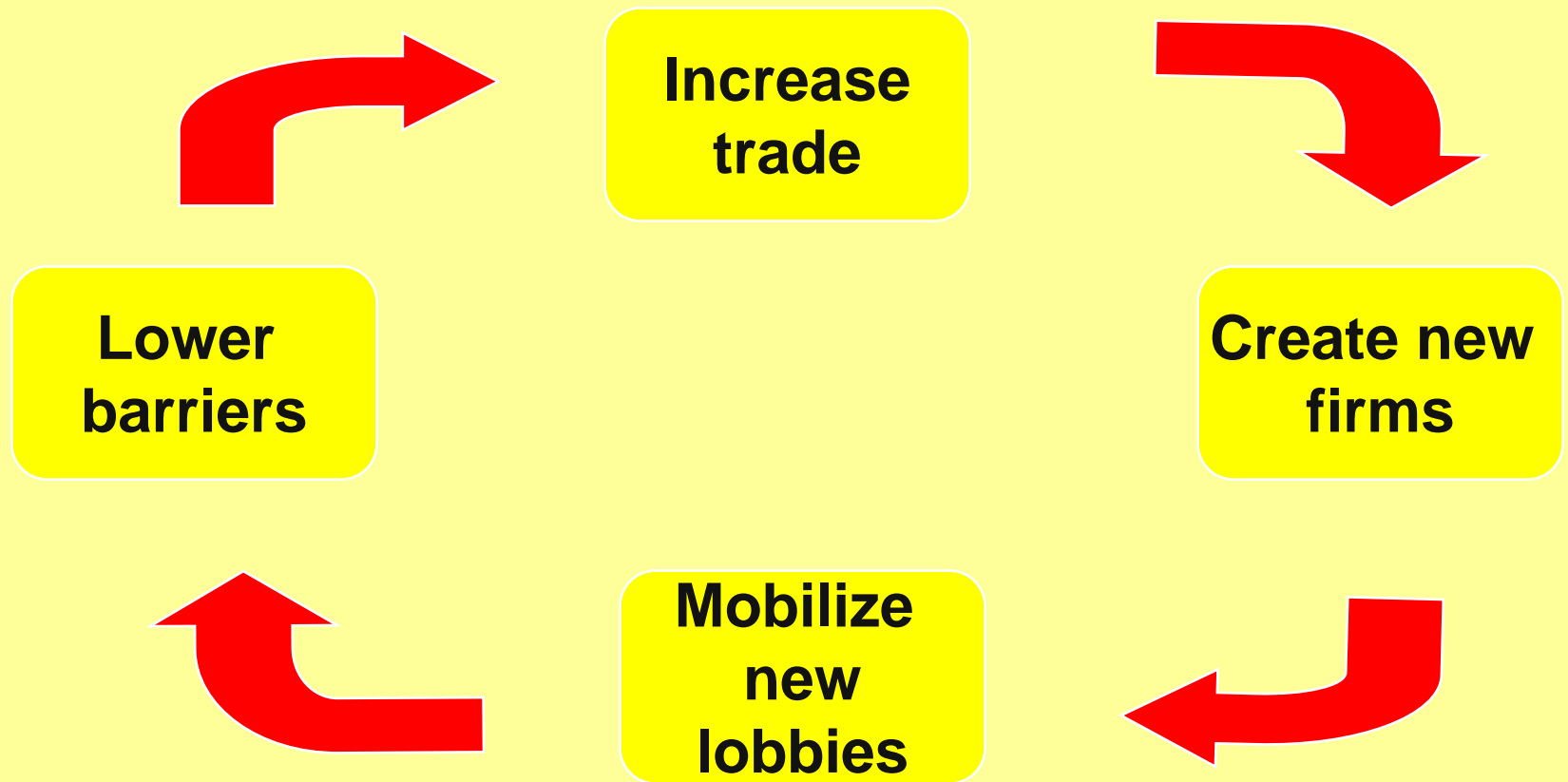
Neo-Functionalism's Features

IV

4. Spillover – Political, Technical And Geographical

- **Geographical Spillover: the benefits of being part of a European alliance - and the costs of being outside of it – lead countries to join EEC/EC/EU (e.g. UK in 1973), explanation of various rounds of enlargement from the 1980s – to present**

Causes: Spillover



Evaluating Neo-Functionalism

1950s and 1960s – neo-functionalism works:

- **POLITICAL** – the ECJ and Commission adopting constitutional roles for themselves
- **ECONOMIC** – ECSC had spillover in technical terms – EEC
- **GEOGRAPHICAL** – In the 1960s various members of the European Free Trade Association made overtures to join the EEC

But 1970s proved disappointing for the theorists – ‘eurosclerosis’, oil crisis, member states inward looking – or was this rather a De Gaulle problem ??

1980s – neo-functionalism revived with the Single European Act (1986)

Dream shopping



Liberal Intergovernmentalism and the Member States

Liberal Intergovernmentalism – EU as an intergovernmental organisation limited to the **collective pursuit** of those tasks which protect and enhance the **sovereign authority** of its member states (“**Zweckverband**” – administration union in German legal terminology)

Focus is upon:

- the **member states** and how they **interact** with one another in the **Council of Ministers**
- the ‘**grand bargains**’ made in Treaty form

LI and the EU as an Intergovernmental Organisation

Liberal Intergovernmentalists view the EU as a:

**‘successful intergovernmental regime designed to manage economic interdependence through negotiated policy co-ordination’
(Moravcsik, 1993: 474).**

Key foci of the LI approach:

- The **domestic interests** of the EU member states
- **Intergovernmental bargains** between these states

Liberal Intergovernmentalism

Roots I

LI can be seen as having two main sets of roots:

- 1. Reaction against / critique of Haas's Neo-Functionalism**
- 2. Product of the IR theory school of Realism**

LI Criticisms of Neo-Functionalism

2 Main Criticisms of Neo-Functionalism (Moravcsik, 1993)

- 1. Neo-functionalism had failed to predict the trajectory of European integration (particularly from the 1970s)**
- 2. Neo-functionalism lacked a theoretical core and so failed to predict future developments and adapt its theoretical statements to the reality of integration**

Liberal Intergovernmentalism: The Work of Andrew Moravcsik

EC is best seen as an international regime of policy co-ordination

‘the substantive and institutional development of which may be explained through the ... analysis of national preference formation and intergovernmental strategic interaction’
(Moravcsik, 1993: 481).

Three Main Features of Liberal Intergovernmentalism

- 1. the assumption that state's behave rationally**
- 2. a liberal theory of national preference formation**
- 3. an intergovernmentalist analysis of interstate negotiation**

Source: Moravcsik, 1993.

The Role of Supranational Institutions in the LI Account ?

**‘The decision to join all but the most minimalist of regimes involves some sacrifice of national autonomy, which increases the political risk to each Member State[I]n the intergovernmentalist view, the unique institutional structure of the EC is acceptable to national governments only insofar as it strengthens, rather than weakens, their control over domestic affairs, permitting them to attain goals otherwise unachievable’
(Moravcsik, 1993: 507).**

The Role of Supranational Institutions in the LI Account ?

Moravcsik:

- EC institutions were designed by the member states in such a way as to strengthen the member states own governments.
- They aid policy coordination between states
- They have exactly the amount of power which member states want them to have

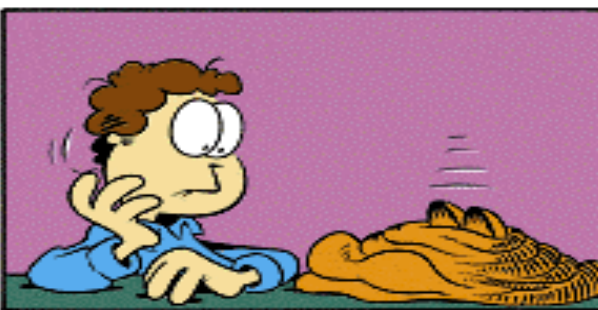
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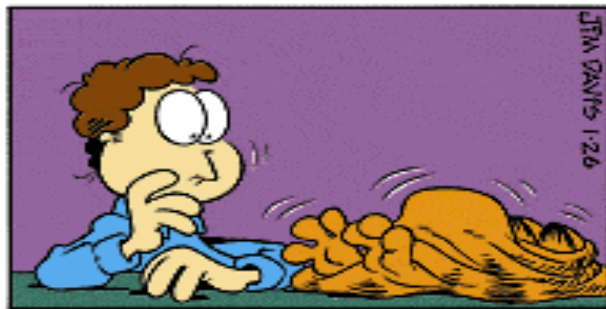
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