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Perspectives on federalism - Federalism and Regional Integration

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Abstract

In the introduction the topic of the special issue is introduced, followed by an overview of the single contributions and some general remarks.

Three of the contributions specifically address aspects of federalism theory as theory of regional integration, and it is concluded, that federalism theory indeed is a fruitful approach when analyzing regional integration projects both within and outside Europe. It is encouraged to broaden the scope of analysis and include federations when analyzing regional integration and in this way overcome the paralysis caused by the (false) equation ' $n = 1$ ' where n is the number of regional projects in the world and 1 being the European Union. It is then suggested to combine federalism theory and neo-functionalism and apply it outside Europe.

Other contributions analyze the relationship between micro- and macro regions; the roles of China and the US in Asian and the roles of the EU and the US in Egypt.

Key-words:

Federalism theory, regional integration theory, neo-functionalism, EU



1. Introduction

This special issue of 'Perspectives on Federalism' is devoted to articles which in one or the other way touches upon federalism theory, or regional integration or both. Several of these contributions show that federalism theory is indeed a very useful tool, in helping to understand regional integration (Castaldi, Dosenrode) or the lack of it (Møller) although one contribution has to dismiss federalism theory as of any use (Li Xing and Zhang Shengjun).

This issue falls in three groups. In the first, the question of analyzing regional integration is approached (Dosenrode, De Lombaerde). In the second group processes of regional integration are analyzed (Castaldi, Møller, Li Xing and Zhang Shengjun), and in the third group extra-European relations with the EU are looked into (Christensen, Zank).

In the first article (*Federalism Theory and Neo-Functionalism: Elements for an analytical framework*), Søren Dosenrode proposes a draft for an analytical frame for analyzing regional integration consisting of federalism theory and neo-functionalism. The article begins by discussing the concept of regional integration setting up a staged model for categorizing it. This is followed by an analysis of federalism theory and neo-functionalism. One argument of the article is to understand federalism theory as a regional integration theory. Another is to look at federalism theory as complementary to neo-functionalism when trying to explain regional integration. Dosenrode argues that federalism theory, in an extended Riker-McKayian way, is able to explain the cases of 'big bang' integration (USA, Australia, Canada), but not an 'organic' integration process like in the EU and perhaps in Asia. Neo-functionalism, on the other hand, is not able to explain this relatively fast form of integration, but it is – in its new version - able to analyze and explain the 'organic' or slow integration processes like those happening in Europe, and other places in the world. Thus the two should be seen as complementary and they are, jointly, a frame catching most processes of regional integration. Keywords of the contribution are: Regional integration, federalism, neo-functionalism.



Philippe De Lombaerde's research note (*How to 'connect' micro-regions with macro-regions?*) aims at connecting the two concepts of sub-national regions (micro-regions) and supra-national regions (macro-regions), which are disconnected concepts in the academic literature. They are studied by distinct academic communities between which there is very little communication. In his note De Lombaerde, suggests three ways to 'connect' the two phenomena and he argues that a dialogue between the two communities could open new avenues for research and lead to a better understanding of inter-polity and inter-economy relations, in a more general sense. In his exploratory Note, De Lombaerde suggests that micro- and macro-regions can be connected (i) at the conceptual level, (ii) through their similar roles as emerging international actors, and (iii) through the interplay between macro-regions and cross-border micro-regions. Keywords are: Regions, micro-regions, macro-regions, international actor,

Bjørn Møller's contribution (*Pan-Africanism and Federalism*) analyzes federalism as applied in Africa in the dual sense of 1) a devolution of power from what would otherwise be unitary and centralised states to lower levels of governance and 2) a transferral of authorities upwards from the state level to that of the African Union. Whereas the former is deemed to be a feasible and sensible way of transforming certain states, the assessment of the latter is much more sceptical. Grand schemes such as a "United States of Africa" are held to be both unrealistic and unhelpful, whereas a more gradualistic approach is deemed to be more constructive and helpful. Keywords are: Federalism, federal experiments in Africa; African regional integration.

Roberto Castaldi's article (*The dynamic development of the European Communities (and then Union) and the relationship with EFTA and the Council of Europe*) take as starting point, that federalism, neo-functionalism and realism-intergovernmentalism offer different visions of European unity, evident in different European organizations such as the Council of Europe to the ECSC, EEC/EC/EU, and EFTA. Castaldi's article develops two heuristic schemes that help explain the success of the ECSC, EEC/EC/EU over other European organizations. The first concerns construction, integration and unification, the second includes crisis, initiative and leadership. The neo-functionalist initial success deeply



influenced and shaped following the developments, but one needs the federalist frame to understand the processes. Key words are: Federalism, neo-functionalism, realism, European Coal and Steel Community, European Free Trade Area, European Council.

The article of Li Xing and Zhang Shengjun (*One Mountain with Two Tigers- China and the United States in East Asian Regionalism*) argues that regionalism in East Asia since the end of the Cold War has been largely shaped by the interactions of China-US relations, influencing and determining the development and transformation of economic and political cooperation and integration in the region. The article offers a framework of understanding the importance of the inter-connections between China-US relations in East Asia during different periods as well as their dynamic nexus with the evolution of regional integration process. The theoretical reflection of the article concludes that neo-functional theory of regional integration, which is largely generated and shaped by the historical evolution of the EU political project, cannot be applied as an overall conceptual framework in understanding regionalism in East Asia. Conventional theories of international relations driven by power rivalry, geopolitics, political economy, balance of power, etc, are still more fertile when analyzing the dynamics of East Asia. Keywords are: Regional integration, neo-functionalism, federalism, realism, Asia, China, US.

In Wolfgang Zank's article we turn to the roles of the US and the EU in the Mediterranean (*Cooperation or Silent Rivalry? The EU and the USA in the Mediterranean – The Case of Egypt*). The US has for years been the single most important external power in the Middle East and Egypt has played its role. But this has changed over the last years, as the EU has entered the scene. Due to enlargements the EU came geographically much closer, and the Internal Market has generated a gravitational pull which goes beyond economic problems. Furthermore, the EU has gradually built up a coherent policy on many fields. The EU has become the “reform anchor” and most important cooperation partner for Egypt. The progress towards increasing Egypt's “Stake in the Internal Market” places cooperation on an increasingly institutionalized basis.

In terms of military cooperation the US is still *the* partner for Egypt. But outside the military sphere institutionalized cooperation is comparatively weak. In particular the failure



of the US to conclude a free-trade agreement has been crucial. But it would be wrong to see the US and EU as rivals. Their roles are rather complementary.

The article explores developments in a long-term perspective. Internal and structural developments have had a heavy impact, but at important junctions ideas and strategies for gaining political legitimacy were powerful factors, too. The keywords are: Middle-East, Egypt, EU, Soviet Union, US, foreign policy.

2. Perspectives on federalism as regional integration theory

Notwithstanding their high individual qualities, the contributions are too different to allow for a conclusion as to the question ‘is federalism theory useful as regional integration theory’, but the contributions of Castaldi, Dosenrode and Møller, which explicitly approached federalism theory all came out with a positive answer to the ‘usability’ of federalism theory as a theory of regional integration. Castaldi in analyzing different European integration projects, Dosenrode in setting up a frame for analyzing regional integration, in which he argues for supplementing federalism theory with neo-functionalism, and Møller in demonstrating the federal vision of African unity as well as in explaining why it has a hard time to come about. The three contributions each show federal theory’s potential, and thus encourages scholars to use it and develop it further within the field of regional integration. The use of federal theory outside Europe should be encouraged. There has been reluctance within the European branch of international relations theory to look at federations as what most of them are, namely successful regional integration projects¹. Including the federations as field of analysis would help overcoming the paralysis due to the wrong notion of ‘ $n = 1$ ’, where it for years have been stated that regional integration proper only has taken place in Europe and thus the size of the sample equals one. Including *e.g.* Australia, Canada, Germany, India and the USA would open the scoop and contribute to establishing one part of a regional integration which should ultimately be our goal. The other part of a regional integration theory could then take its starting point in neo-functionalism. Using a combination of neo-functionalist and



federalism theory potentially gives us a tool when analyzing the potential for regional integration not only a tool to explain what already happened. As an example, applying neo-functional tools on East Asia, would give interesting clues as to the drivers and blockers of further ASEAN-integration. ASEAN started out as an intergovernmental organization, primarily focused on economic cooperation, free-trade. But in spite of this, new dimensions of the cooperation has been adds *e.g.* the wish to create a community by 2015 consisting of three pillars: an ASEAN political-Security Community, an ASEAN Economic Community and an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

Neo-functionalism would warn of too large enthusiasm though; what looks like a case of a clear cut regional integration process with a spill-over etc. does not have the potential to end with state-hood, as *inter alia* the units are too different ranging from established democracies to brutal dictatorships. Mapping the worlds regions and sub-regions, according to 'integrative potential' would help us understanding the dynamics at work be they of cooperative character or integrative character.

... There is a lot to be done, but there is no reason not to be ambitious, as we do not have to start from scratch.

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¹ I refer to Dosenrode in this issue for further details.