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**Theories of integration
and the future of the EU**

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Abstract

The paper attempts to answer the question how much existing theories of European integration are useful for the reflection about the future of the European Union.¹ First, the most often cited theories like neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism and liberal intergovernmentalism are analyzed to determine their theoretical background and assumptions. The paper is trying to show that the so called “theories of integration” are at great extent just rationalizations of historically experienced practice of the European integration and each of them is focused on different aspects of this process. Therefore, it can be shown that their subjects are, in fact, different. I refer to my book on *The Object of Knowledge in Social Sciences* which had been published in Polish in 1979 (*Przedmiot poznania w naukach społecznych*, Warsaw, PWN), in which a distinction between an object of investigation and an object of knowledge had been elaborated. In conclusion, the paper argues that existing theories of European integration are useless for any predictions concerning the future of European Union. Therefore, reflection on the future of the EU is calling for a genuine creativity and new ideas. Some suggestions regarding this issue have been formulated at the end of the paper.

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Confronted with the ambitions of the students of European integration to develop its theory one has to ask why should European integration need a theory? Or, what such theory can be used for? After all European integration has been a process that started in international politics in the post war Europe with quite specific intentions, goals and measures which have been explicitly formulated by appropriate actors and concrete steps to achieve them have been undertaken. Another words, we are talking about political reality which had its initiators (e.g. R. Schumann. J.

¹ This paper has been prepared for the conference **What will be? Analysis and Visions for Europe** and presented on September 25th 2009 in the Klagenfurt University.

Monnet, K. Adenauer and others), has emerged in effect of political decisions and has materialized in a form of international treaties. Does such process need further explanation to be supplied by “theory”? Shouldn’t we limit our interest just to the history of European integration? There is also a problem with justifying attempts to formulate a general theory of the EU. Simon Hix, cited by Ben Rosamond, formulated objections to such ambitions quite clearly: “We do not have a general theory of American or German politics so why should there be a general theory of the EU?” (Rosamond 2000; 17). Developing “theory” of European integration may be perceived as a way to turn specific flow of events, that is political decisions and their consequences, into an autonomous “object”, detaching it from the will of people and placing it above the real current of politics. Another words, European integration might appear as a Hegelian force (spirit) directing activities of people. Among variety of possible answers to the question formulated at the beginning there are two which seem to be especially relevant in the present discussion. First, European integration can possibly be used as a pattern for regional integration which could be followed in other parts of the world. Therefore, the theory of European integration could serve as a general theory of regional integration. Although such a role may seem to be confirmed by integrative initiative on other continents there are serious objections which point out to the specificity of European context and its process of integration (Wallace, 1994). Also, the cases of integration elsewhere have nowhere achieved European level of integration. Another answer to the question “why should we need a theory of integration” might be that such theory would help us to predict the future of European integration which means also the future of the European Union.

In the present paper I would like to show that such expectations are totally unfounded. Let me start with initial reflections devoted to the future as a subject of a scientific research in social sciences.

The future, as an object of research, is a case of a clearly unscientific subject (since future does not exist at the time of reflection) which scientists do not want to give up. Also, popular expectations addressed to science would not allow them to give up. The reflection on the future of Europe seems to be especially good illustration of peculiarity of theoretical status of future-oriented research. Social scientists undertaking so called “future studies” are especially in difficult situation because, in addition to the peculiarity of their subject (the future), they have to face also specificity of their disciplines, sociology, political science etc. The specificity of social sciences include theoretical problems as well with meanings of the basic epistemological categories as with ontological distinctions. For example, the opposition “objective-subjective” must take into consideration the dual position of the human beings in the process of cognition of social reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). However, despite theoretical problems with reflection about the future in social and political matters such reflection is indispensable for current decision-making and for justification of the corresponding actions.

It is quite natural that dealing with questions about the future we expect to profit from the relevant theories. In social sciences, however, such expectation may appear groundless because of the very limited predictive potentials of social theories. One should not be confused by the idea of predictive capability which, according to methodology, supposed to be one of the main features of any theory, along with capabilities to describe and to explain. First, those characteristics have been formulated with natural sciences in mind, and – second – in philosophy of science

understanding of prediction usually had very “technical” meaning which not necessarily can be suitable for the social matters which usually have more complex nature than the subjects of natural sciences. Therefore, for most of philosophers of science it is clear that “theory” in social sciences is of a very “soft” category.

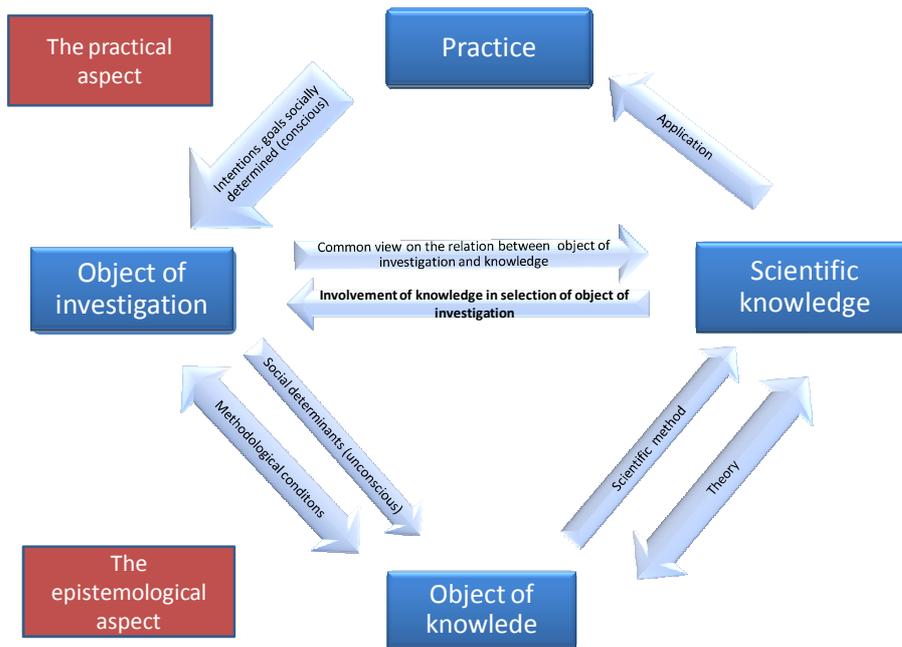
Jonathan Turner, sociologist, puts this in the following words: “Any analysis of sociological theory should begin with a blunt admission that, from the perspective of ideal scientific theory, sociological theorizing has a long way to go” (Turner 1974; 8). Theorizing of political science seems to be in exactly the same situation. Theories of integration as a possible support for reflection about the future of the EU appears to be still more complicated, because those theories are even more distant from the ideal of scientific theory than most of social theories.

In the following part of the paper I will briefly analyze the process of cognition in social sciences focusing on theoretical status of theory and the nature of knowledge obtained in those disciplines. My aim at this point is to show that - if certain basic methodological requirements are observed - different social theories, even those competing for the status of the most correct ones, may in fact be rather complementary than rival. Epistemological arguments for this thesis are usually either neglected or deliberately missed due to the variety of interests which usually are involved in social matters. The European integration studies makes an especially good area of political science to illustrate such situation. I will attempt to show that different theories of integration are just the forms of “theorizing ex-post”, that is theorizing about the process that has been accomplished. Such a work might be justified if the aim of a theory would be just explanation. However, “theories of integration” are also used to formulate visions of the future of Europe. Therefore, it is important to stress that such theorizing is serving mostly predefined views on the

future of integrated Europe and are built on the basis of presumptions which reflect specific interests and preferences. In consequence, different theories can claim cognitive validity while offering competing ideas of European integration. Therefore, theories of integration are of no much help in the reflection on the future of the EU. In order to explain how is it possible that two competing theories may be both correct I have proposed to distinguish an object of investigation (which may be common for different theories), and an object of knowledge (which may be different in case of different theories).

Epistemological apparatus proposed in the next section helps to explain how is it possible to study the same object (an object of investigation) and to obtain knowledge which corresponds only to some of the possible aspects of this object. My suggestion is that the object covered by the acquired knowledge and explained by the relevant theory should be identified as an object different from the intended object of investigation. It is what I want to call an object of knowledge . Therefore, different theories of the same object of investigation (in our case it is European integration) may be, actually, instances of theorizing about different objects of knowledge.

The whole network of epistemological relations has been presented below in the diagram taken from my 1979 publication (Niznik, 1979).



The upper part of the diagram presents the practical aspect, and the lower one the epistemological aspect of the process of knowledge making (the process of cognition) in social sciences. The practical aspect refers to the common, every-day thinking about relation between scientific knowledge, its practical applications and initiation of further research. According to such approach scientific knowledge can be applied in practice and whenever new problems or new goals appear – in practice or within the body of knowledge already available - further questions and research tasks are formulated for the researchers. This way their object of investigation (object of research) is designated. As a starting point for choosing (or designating) an object for research existing knowledge is used. It is clear that also at this stage different elements of knowledge at hand, as well as different theories may be used and already at the start of the process of inquiry attention of the researcher may be directed toward specific aspects of the selected object of investigation (but such observation requires some kind of epistemological awareness which in a common

sense approach is usually absent). Nevertheless, the common assumption is that results of research would add new elements to the existing scientific knowledge about the investigated object.

Such simplified look at the process of origin of scientific knowledge is overlooking a number of factors which can be identified if epistemological aspect of this process is taken into consideration. This aspect includes some of the findings of philosophy of science and sociology of knowledge. First, epistemological analysis points out that every research is being conducted in a specific “methodological conditions”. It means a specific paradigm which includes specific conceptual apparatus (Kuhn 1970). In addition to those conditions there are other, mostly unconscious, factors which have their impact on the researcher embarking upon particular research task. Such as personal preferences, biographical experience or social context of the undertaken research. It is clear that their influence is especially strong in social sciences. Perception of the object of investigation by a particular researcher is determined by all those factors and – in effect - her/his attention is focused on a specific aspect of this object. So, the knowledge obtained, refers to a quite different object than the one that had been designated (usually in general terms) although this difference is usually unnoticed since we tend to be blind for certain aspects of reality (Wittgenstein 2000 ; 298-299). Therefore, what can be reached in the process of cognition is an object of knowledge, which corresponds only to one of the possible aspects of the object of investigation. However, in every-day thinking the whole epistemological analysis which is needed to see those limits is usually absent. This is why the knowledge obtained used to be accepted as the truth about the researched object of investigation. In consequence, if in the whole process the rules of the scientific method were observed, such knowledge is added to the existing

body of knowledge and becomes the basis for a theory. It is then quite possible that different or even contradicting theories of the “same” object (phenomenon, process etc.) can all be correct. The fact that they, actually, are the instances of theorizing on different objects (of knowledge) for variety of reasons may be completely overlooked and in some cases deliberately covered.

Let me now move to European integration, the subject which became an object of investigation for a number of political scientists conducting EU studies which resulted in different theories. Those theories usually compete with each other, although attempts to integrate their differences are also present in some of the theoretical proposals (Peterson 1995, Richardson 1996). With all limitations and restrictions that make the term “theory” in social sciences a kind of overstatement (if compared to the theory in natural sciences), the situation with theories of integration seems to be still more problematic. It has been shown in a number of analysis (Rosamond 2000; 189, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006) and further on will be also argued in the present text that theories of integration have a definite contextual character. It means that they have originated in a specific historical circumstances, reflect specific approaches to politics and especially represent quite clear stand with regard to the role of a nation state.

Political scientists discussing “theories of integration” are far from unanimity in understanding of what should be counted as theorizing about European integration. Depending on the scope of their analysis they either present numerous theoretical approaches to integration (Rosamond 2000, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006) or concentrate on just a few major positions in this area which are corresponding to the most intensely debated answers to the question of what kind of political entity European Union is (Pollack 2005). Probably the best known and, indeed, an

excellent book on the topic is Ben Rosamond's book on Theories of European Integration (Rosamond, 2000). Rosamond, unlike most of other specialists on European integration, demonstrated high level of awareness of variety of factors determining the nature and the content of so called "theories of integration". He has adopted a reasonable distance to the very use of the concept of "theory" in the context of European integration. Also, his extensive references to sociology of knowledge make his discussion of theories of integration a fascinating excursion into methodology and philosophy of social sciences. At the same time, however, in a relatively concise text Rosamond in a very readable way builds quite a comprehensive landscape of conceptualizations of European integration. Concentrating on the first line of controversies in this area, which have appeared in the debate between neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism, Rosamond discusses also a number of other theoretical attempts which show that coexistence or even complementarity of those dominant rivals in theory of integration is possible. Myself, I was especially attracted to this book because I discovered that more than twenty years after my book on Object of Knowledge in Social Sciences was published (only in Polish, which makes it impossible for Rosamond to know it) someone presented almost identical view on the nature of social sciences, referring to the same constitutive factors and using the same arguments.

Let me now recall the basic ideas of those major "theories of integration". One should notice that the conceptualizations used can be quite misleading. For example, the term "neofunctionalism" suggests close links to functionalism. Only more detail analysis of Ernst Haas ideas, which made the basis of neofunctionalism, and comparing it with the works of David Mitrany, the leading figure in functional theory of integration, can show that their views on the nature of European integration are

radically different. One of the main differences has been well pointed out by Rosamond, who suggests, that “ Functionalism was primarily a theory of *post-territorial* governance, whereas neofunctionalism was an early theory of *regionalism*” (Rosamond 2000; 69).

Another source of confusions can be the term “intergovernmentalism”. In the current European debate this term most often refers to one of the general approaches to European integration. It can serve as description of the EU governance system stressing its (supposedly) basic mechanism of decision-making. In its another use it can indicate intentions of political leaders with regard to the preferable – or in some cases exclusively acceptable – form of relations between the EU member states, which exclude or radically limit the role of supranational authority in these relations. However, the works on “theories of integration” use the word “intergovernmentalism” as a “theory” which attempts to answer the question what is the nature of European integration or, in other words, of what is European integration (or European Union) an instance .

I would like now move to a more systematic, although very brief presentation of the main “theories of integration”. European integration from the very beginning , that is since ECSC had been founded, was – by its very idea - undermining the state-centred approach to politics. The tension between this most established view on international politics and new forms of political relations which were initiated with the beginning of European integration, is probably the most important factor in development of theories of integration and in theoretical dispute over the nature of the whole process. With the progress of integration the simplest and most basic distinctions became problematic. For example, what is “domestic” and what is “international”. Ben Rosamond quite extensively discusses the basic question

whether International Relations is the proper discipline for studying European integration (Rosamond 2000; 157) . There is no doubt that EU studies located on the ground of IR have been most often framed into intergovernmental approach, because the main subject of this discipline are relations between the states. Some authors believe that IR might be the right discipline for studying the process of integration and especially its initiation but must be replaced by comparative politics when the analysis of the EU system is taking place. Indeed, intergovernmentalism reflects state-centric approach and its main problem is position of state and its role within an integrating totality. Within such approach the problem of a nature of the EU political system seems to be falsely formulated since the only recognized actors in politics of the EU are the member states.

Neofunctionalism – on the other hand – concentrating on the process of integration itself has been from the very beginning focusing on the supranational powers and competences of the emerging political system. This is why neofunctionalism used to be, sometimes, identified with federalism.

It should be noted that what have been accepted as theoretical ideas on European integration was, in fact, an instance of theorizing ex-post about empirical process that have already been in progress. Ernst Haas' first book on European integration - published after first years of experiences of the European Coal and Steel Community, at the moment when the next step of integration has been initiated - had immediate reference to practice with the start of European Economic Community (Haas, 1958). Also, it looked as a correct theory because the initiation of EEC had been perceived as a confirmation of the idea of a spill-over which, according to neofunctionalism, was a crucial mechanism of integration.

The next observation which can be made at this point is that representatives of different theoretical orientations start with different premises while seemingly attempting to answer the same or similar questions. However, if formulated on the ground of different premises the same questions usually open quite different areas of possible answers. For example, Rosamond pointed out, that Stanley Hoffmann who presented an early critique of neofunctionalism and opened a theoretical venue for intergovernmental view on integration had perceived economics and politics as quite separate. On the other hand the strong linkage of the two has been the basic assumption of neofunctional approach of Haas, Lindberg, and others. Therefore, theorizing on the basis of different assumptions is most likely leading to different theoretical positions. As it will be shown later such different theoretical positions address in fact different objects of knowledge. Another words, from the very beginning those authors aimed to prove some of their initial thesis which were different and - as long as the dissimilarity of their objects of knowledge was not noticed – might look contradictory.

The initial success of neofunctional reasoning could be attributed to its fundamental premises which relied on the common beliefs and observations. For example neofunctionalists suggested that economic integration would inevitably lead towards political integration. There are enough everyday observations which may assure us that there is no such thing as purely economic process, completely detached from politics. Therefore, such assumption must have looked quite convincing. The same applies to the idea of “spillover”, the fundamental mechanism which, according to neofunctionalism, has been pushing integration further on. In fact, this idea has been so much a part of a common knowledge that in many languages it is expressed in proverbs. For example, in Polish there is a proverb

saying: “if you give him a finger, he will grab the hand”. According to the “spillover hypothesis” integration in one sector of economy – due to the obvious functional links - would inevitably push for integration in other sectors, and the integration in economy would spillover into politics. The beginning of European integration looked exactly as implementation of this rule. The initial six partners of ECSC within 6 years moved from coordination of steel and coal production toward further economic cooperation within European Economic Community. Also, political aspirations of this next Community were quite explicit despite the “economic” name of the new organization. Although economic spillover supposed to work by itself, it needed some measures of coordination which made necessary the emergence of supranational authority with clear political competences. Moreover, the process of integration affects mentality and attitudes of important figures in member states leading to “loyalty transference” which is necessary if the new supranational institutions are to function properly. Such loyalty transference can be easily explained and justified by the neofunctional belief that the main aim of the process is welfare and well being of people involved which can be better secured by new form of international coexistence and cooperation. In this situation distinction between what is “domestic” and what is “international” had to fade out. Of course, empirical research, for example those on national identity, made the criticism of neofunctionalism an easy task. But the careful analysis of the rival “theory” show that the main reason for opposing neofunctionalism can be found at the level of initial assumptions, political beliefs and values. Another words, those who reject neofunctional perspective on European integration are looking for such “theory of integration” which develops their different presumptions and support their specific value structure.

The intergovernmental opposition to neofunctionalism, best represented by the works of Stanley Hoffman (1964, 1966), have been stimulated by assumptions and questions which did not bother representatives of neofunctionalism. First of all the question which later got the French expression of “finalité”, that is the question where the whole process of integration is heading to, or what the final form of a new political system might be. The intergovernmental view from the very beginning was determined by a strong realist position regarding the nature of international politics in which the leading role supposed to be played by the states. Therefore any development which might change this role had been rejected as unrealistic. At the background one can find strong attachment to the value of the state’s sovereignty. With such a starting point it is easy to find arguments pointing out to the weaknesses of spillover hypothesis or to question the idea of dependence between economy and politics. In consequence, intergovernmental approach was not so much interested in the integration as a way to weaken or even only modify the role of states but in integration as a new environment for the state’s actions in which member states remain the basic actors. Another words, both “theories” pretending to grasp the same subject – European integration - have been referring to the knowledge about its different aspects, which at the end reflected different objects of knowledge. While neofunctionalism indeed tried to look for a new quality in this international experiment, intergovernmentalism was interested in challenges which this experiment created for the states and any hypothesis that would take into consideration the transfer of power to a supranational authority had been rejected.

Andrew Moravcsik, with his liberal intergovernmentalism, added still more complications to the understanding of this concept. Moving his attention from the decision-making process of the EU to the factors that decide about member states

positions in intergovernmental bargaining Moravcsik stressed importance of domestic matters for common decisions in the EU. His liberal intergovernmentalism simply takes into consideration the impact of domestic politics of member states on the process of European integration. Moravcsik suggests, that “An understanding of domestic politics is a precondition for, not a supplement to, the analysis of strategic interaction among states” , (Moravcsik, 1993; 481). Putting “European integration “ in the place of “strategic interaction among states” opens a very useful venue for explanation of variety of episodes in the history of European integration which took place only because of domestic issues of the member states . One of the recent example is the failure of ratification process of the European Constitution in France and Netherland in 2005 referenda. What makes Moravcsik’s idea still more confusing is the fact, that , depending on the way his arguments are used , liberal intergovernmentalism can also be read – probably against intentions of its author - as a support for neofunctionalism. For example, it is quite possible that sometimes domestic pressure can be in favour of spillover, if extending integration into further sectors of economy or a public life would seem to be beneficial for the particular state. Also, as a kind of support for neofunctional logic can serve Moravcsik’s opinion on the democratic legitimacy in the European Union: he believes that there is no problem of democracy deficit in the EU because , after all, decisions in the European Council are made by representatives of members states who are democratically elected in their countries. In fact, the idea of a “two- level game” – gaining domestic support for the actions that are instrumental for the integration (international dimension) , which can then stimulate such behaviour of electorate which is favourable for domestic politician – can be also perceived as an argument useful to bridge the gap between neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism (Putnam, 1988).

Therefore, those “theories” should not be perceived as competing paradigms. At their backgrounds we can easily find different leading questions (“What is the role of nation state in the integrating Europe?” vs. “Why and how the process of integration is progressing?”), which were stemming from different conceptions of acceptable political settings (“Member state’s position must not be undermined by supranational institutions” vs. “Common interest of integrated Europe reflects best interests of member states”) , referring to different structures of values (Westphalian vs. post- Westphalian) . Of course, this last difference, indeed, indicate competing views on main political objectives. But those views are not the results of different theories but initial premises which determine political preference, and in consequence lead to separate “theories”. Therefore, Ben Rosamond is right when he states, that “intergovernmentalism is a *political preference* held by a range of actors within the EU” (Rosamond 2000;153).

In order to see better differences in theoretical aims of both approaches one can simply ask the questions about certain theoretical or logical inconsistencies. One of such questions, addressed to intergovernmentalism, is: “why states participate in activity which limit their autonomy?”. Of course, there is a number of possible answers which may refer to quite different theories. “Two-level game” discussed earlier is one of them. The very question, however, as well as possible answers show that intergovernmentalism needs also other approaches, nor excluding those that have been declared as rival theories , in order to solve different puzzles that have been created by the process of European integration. In case of this particular question a supporter of intergovernmentalism might simply answer that the states participate in the process of integration only as far as their autonomy is not threatened. Such an answer would not be satisfactory because the limits imposed by

the process of integration on the state's autonomy are too visible even if decision-making procedures seem to be based on intergovernmental bargaining as a fundamental mechanism. More satisfactory would be an answer which, in fact, needs neofunctional approach to integration; the states participate in integration for reasons which may be in each case different but in every case this participation serve some kind of their particular goals.

The way European integration is conceptualised in intergovernmental approach indicates a kind of "conceptual inertia" (Niznik 1979; 106). The deep-rooted concepts – like "state" or "sovereignty", for example - have been redefined because of the pressure of current political reality but remains of their old, outdated meanings, are still present.

The problems with conceptualization of the current political reality in the integrating Europe led to some terminological inventions which took for granted what had been observed in the EU and on the basis of the current political practice created conceptual and theoretical novelties. This is the case with the idea of Multi-Level Governance or with an Open Method of Coordination (Niznik, 2006; 8). Both ideas fit well into a new approach to the developing political reality in the EU, which had been diagnosed as a "governance turn" in the EU studies. The first one clearly intends – within so called "governance turn" in EU studies - to pacify the controversy over federal (neofunctional at the background) or intergovernmental course of EU development. The latter offers solution in such cases of policy-making when there is a need for a common policy but existing legal provisions leave the right of decision to the member-state 's governments. The development of such conceptual inventions show that existing "theories of integration" are unable to grasp the full specificity of European process of integration. Therefore, we should not expect that such

inadequate “theories” would be helpful in predicting the future of the European Union, which will be determined by the variety of factors both of internal and external origin.

What is the meaning of the “governance turn” in EU studies? This was not the turn in theorizing style or the turn in theoretical preferences, but the move toward different problem area. And the reason for this move was not theoretical dissatisfaction with one or other theory but opening to the different aspect of the process of integration that came together with the Treaty on the EU. At the same time, however, this turn –with MLG idea – created alternative for the state-centred perspective of intergovernmental approach to the European integration. This way MLG has been sometimes perceived as the replacement of neofunctionalism, which certainly was not the case. The governance turn reflects only the change of the object of knowledge in the EU studies, and not the replacement of one theory of integration with another one. In fact, such a “turn” could be understood as an empirical solution of at least one dilemma in theoretical debate over the European integration, which is the question whether European Union is one of the known forms of political phenomena (e.g. an international organization) or it is a “sui generis” political system. Moving to the centre of the EU studies the phenomenon of governance seems to confirm the idea of European Union as a “sui generis” political entity. In fact, such confirmation may be found also in the views of the informed politicians. Denis MacShane, a former British minister for Europe, commenting the 2009 election of President of the European Commission, characterized this position in the following words: “In theory it’s one of the most powerful jobs in the world. But this is Europe, where the normal rules don’t apply” (MacShane, 2009).

Therefore, speculating about the future of the EU on the basis of existing “theories” – which are mostly ex-post rationalizations of some aspects the integration

practice – does not look very promising. The phenomenon of the European Union calls for a genuine creative ideas which would go beyond the current controversy over federalism versus intergovernmentalism (Nižnik, 2007). The future of the EU seems to depend mostly on the wisdom of Europeans. Unfortunately, so far, there are no signals of a surplus of wisdom in Europe. On the contrary, in the member states' public debates European matters are most often appearing in the framework of local politics for which European interest is a too abstract idea. It is clear that the lack of thinking in terms of “European interests” makes us blind to many opportunities that European integration may open. Although global challenges made their way to the public discourse there is no common awareness of a fact that global threats can be easier controlled by common policies and institutions. There are more elements in the most acceptable vision of the contemporary politics and social life which are basic and important but their role in the discourse about European integration is mistaken. For example, the elevation of the ideal of democracy to the position of an absolute value and an organizing element of the whole European discourse made it very difficult for people to accept the role of elites. Also, the paramount importance of democracy has imposed on the European discourse a very specific structure of sense which pushed to the side other values which at the beginning of the European integration served as the leading ideals (Nižnik, 2008). Probably most important of them is solidarity, which is still present in the European discourse but most often on the lip service basis.

Concluding, I would like to recall Michael Burgess' reference to Spinelli suggesting that European Union “is the product of the interaction between what exists and what must exist” (Michael Burgess, 2000; 280). Everything indicates, that we underestimate the role of “what must exist” and what probably will be a decisive

factor in the future development of the EU, e.g. global reshuffling of the world scene which will force Europeans to a deeper unity. Therefore, although theories of integration might be only a kind of intellectual exercise and offer very little to predict the future of the EU, we certainly need further theorizing in order to get our best from what is inevitable any way: more integrated Europe, proud of its diversities but also with a stronger common identity of Europeans.

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