

**EUROPEAN INTEGRATION THEORY IN TIMES OF CRISES:
UPDATING 'THE OLD DEBATE'
WITH A MORPHOGENETIC APPROACH**

Özer BINICI, PhD Candidate

Department of International Relations and European Studies
Metropolitan University Prague
Prague/Czechia

Abstract

This research seeks to contribute to the literature on how to utilize the explanatory approaches of European Integration Theory to understand the broad and complex nature of the European integration dynamics and its politics in times of crises. The recent literature encourages the scholars to remain open to pluralism of approaches and shows that Neo-functionalism provides much convenient account to understand short- and medium-term outcomes of the European Union's crises decide in comparison to (New, Liberal) Intergovernmentalism and Post-functionalism. Nevertheless, Neo-functionalist theorizing requires further investigation to shed light on its potential to deeply examine European integration dynamics in times of crises. This research argues that Margaret Archer's Morphogenetic approach provides a convenient meta-theoretical foundation for Neo-functionalist kind of theorizing, especially in terms of spill-over and counter-vailing forces logics, and to engage with pluralism of the approaches within a larger Neo-functionalist framework. For this purpose, the revised Neo-functionalism of Arne Niemann is fused with the Morphogenetic explanatory approach and, the main explanatory concepts of (New) Intergovernmentalism and Post-functionalism are accommodated within a larger Neo-functionalist framework. The research presents explanatory reflections on the post-crisis management of the Schengen regime followed by

the 2015 Migration crisis, and its medium-term European Union level governance and regulation outcomes through various kinds of spill-over forces and feedback loops within the nexus of the interaction between supranational, governmental, and non-governmental actors, alongside the rules, procedures and norms triangle of the EU Politics. The research concludes that the Schengen regime has been updated after the Migration crisis as a result of the unforeseen consequences of the earlier institutional arrangements and the entrepreneurship activities of its emergent properties.

Keywords

EU Crises; European Integration Theory; New Intergovernmentalism; Neo-functionalism; Post-functionalism; Schengen.

1. INTRODUCTION: EUROPEAN INTEGRATION THEORY IN TIMES OF CRISES

The recent research efforts on post-crises management of European integration show that the grand schools of the explanatory approaches of European Integration Theory (EIT), which are Neo-functionalism, (Liberal, New) Intergovernmentalism and Post-functionalism (Hooghe and Marks 2019; Wiener et al. 2018), are not mutually exclusive, even though the literature in the field of a dispute more over the most important factors that drive European integration than 60 years (Brack and Gürkan 2020). The recent studies use syncretic and eclectic frameworks to explain decision-making outcomes of specific policy coordination at the European Union level (EU) by combining different approaches (Börzel and Risse 2018; Schimmelfennig 2018; Schimmelfennig and Winzen 2019).

Wiener and Diez (2018) use the Mosaic metaphor to capture the current state of the art in the literature of EIT. This metaphor points out that the theoretical approaches of European integration are never exclusive and necessarily competitive, rather there will always be a reference to at least more than one of

the approaches that form part of the mosaic. This metaphor is the concrete expression of what this research seeks to argue. In this vein, this research aims to contribute to the literature on how to utilize the explanatory approaches of EIT in the post-Maastricht era to understand the broad and complex nature of European integration and its politics in times of crises.

The research on the short- and medium -term management of the Eurozone and Schengen regimes (followed by the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and 2015 Migration crisis, respectively) highlights that both crises had several characteristics in common: they were triggered by exogenous crises which caused the perception of the existing functional-dissonances on the juridical architecture of the related EU policy domains. After that, both crises catalyzed mass-level politicization within member states and eventually brought intergovernmental and inter-institutional distributional conflicts. In response to the crises, the decision-makers of European integration have redefined the regulation and governance capacity of the related policy domains, incrementally. In this vein, the main explanatory concepts identified by the three grand schools were acutely observable in both crises (Schimmelfennig 2018).

The literature highlights that the steps taken to overcome the Eurozone crisis have enhanced the role of EU level regulation and governance capacity in all fields of economic governance (Börzel and Risse 2018; Dehousse 2015; Niemann and Ioannou 2015). However, there was no short-term integrative progress during the management of the Schengen regime followed by the Migration crisis (Börzel and Risse 2018; Schimmelfennig 2018). Frank Schimmelfennig argues that “because intergovernmental conflict and domestic politicization were similar in both crises, (Liberal) intergovernmentalism and post-functionalism cannot explain the variation in outcomes” (Schimmelfennig 2017, 15). However, the Neofunctionalist explanation which emphasizes variation in transnational interdependence and supranational capacity across the two policy areas provides a “more convincing account of the crises outcomes” in comparison to (Liberal) Intergovernmentalism and Post-functionalism (Schimmelfennig 2017, 15). Börzel and Risse share a similar view with Schimmelfennig in relation to the management of the Eurozone crisis, however, they scrutinize the explanatory power of Neo-functionalism in the case of the Schengen. They assume that given

the public support and supranational capacity, Neo-functionalism cannot explain why functional pressures to strengthen common asylum and migration policies did not create more integration starting from the beginning of the Migration crisis (Börzel and Risse 2017, 11). Considering the short-term consequences of the Migration crisis, it brought a backlash or no-substantive integration over the Schengen regime, in terms of the reintroduction of border controls by several member states, the suspension of the Dublin protocol, and the rejection of the implementation of automatic quota system led by the Visegrad group countries, Spain and France (Schimmelfennig 2017, 10-11). Smeets and Zaun (2020) use two intergovernmental claims to explain this backlash: the lack of political impetus at the intergovernmental level and operational/institutional capacity at the EU level. Nevertheless, considering the medium-term governance changes over the Schengen regime, the power and duties of the EU governance and agencies have been extended in the fields of external border management and migration-related policies, which were exclusively maintained by member states prior to the Migration crisis.

Niemann and Speyer (2018) argue that Neo-functionalism provides crucial insights to understand important aspects of the medium-term management of the Schengen regime such as the establishment of the European Border and Guard Agency (EBCG). They argue that given the functional interdependencies between the abolishment of the internal borders and the need for strong cooperation on external border management, the Migration crisis catalyzed its establishment as the most plausible solution. Nevertheless, their research also highlights that mainstream Neo-functionalism cannot capture some of the driving forces of the process, which can affect the endogenous decision-making dynamics in the forms of 'countervailing or disintegrative pressures' (Niemann and Speyer 2018, 24-28). Therefore, although the recent literature shows the effectiveness of Neo-functionalism to understand short- and medium-term outcomes of the institutional mechanisms provided at the EU level as responses to the crises, the conducted research also encourages the scholars to remain open to pluralism of approaches and to utilize them interchangeably according to the context.

Based on this background, this article attempts to develop an integrated theoretical framework that utilizes the explanans of the three grand schools on an empirical ground to enrich our understanding of the European integration dynamics deeply, especially in times of crises. To do so, it takes Arne Niemann's 'revised Neo-functionalism' as a starting point and claims that this theoretical approach can be further developed and fused with a Morphogenetic explanatory approach (Archer 1995, 2020) to generate a baseline framework that can be informed by the explanans of the Intergovernmentalist (Bickerton et al. 2015) and Post-functionalist schools (Hooghe and Marks 2019) and it is open to having a dialogue with critical integration theory (Bulmer and Joseph 2016).

This research acknowledges Niemann's attempt to reformulate the early Neo-functionalism as an important contribution to the re-assessment of Neo-functionalist kind of thinking and theorizing, especially, in terms of an engagement with pluralism of the approaches and broader fields of social science, such as organizational theory and the role of entrepreneurship in social organizations. However, this research also claims that the Morphogenetic approach provides a much more convenient meta-theoretical orientation for Neo-functionalist kind of theorizing, especially in terms of engagement with spill-over and counter-vailing forces logics, in comparison to Niemann's meta-theoretical orientation and to engage with pluralism within larger Neo-functionalist thinking.

The central question in this research asks 'How does the fusion of the revised Neo-functionalism with Morphogenetic approach help to address its explanatory deficiencies, and to engage with pluralism of the approaches to overcome those deficiencies? Hence, the research engages with the literature in terms of an intra-, inter-, and meta-theoretical debate.

The first section presents the current state of the art in the literature. This section retraces the debate on European integration (theory) in times of crises through a critical discussion in light of recent ontological developments in the study of politics, namely the agent-structure debate and pragmatic turn in the study of EU Politics. The second section presents the theoretical section in which the revised Neo-functionalism is further developed and fused with the Morphogenetic explanatory approach. This section also accommodates the

explanans of New Intergovernmentalist and Post-functionalism schools within a larger Neo-functionalism framework. The third section represents an 'illustrative study' (Levy 2008, 6-7), which examines the medium-term outcomes of the 2015 Migration crisis at the EU governance level with the revisited Neo-functionalism based on the secondary literature. Given the limited scope of the paper, this case was selected to benefit from the conducted research in the field to accommodate the perceptions of the three schools of thought on an empirical ground. The last section comprises conclusion remarks in which the findings, limitations, and future research directions of the Neo-functionalism kind of thinking and theorizing are discussed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section firstly introduces the revival of the traditional explanatory approaches of European integration in the post-Maastricht. Secondly, the explanations of those approaches concerning the management of the Schengen and Eurozone regimes after the crises they faced are reflected. Although the management of the Eurozone crisis was not included in the empirical section, most of the conducted research focused on these two crises from a comparative perspective. The findings of the already conducted research carve out the focal point for the further claims of this article.

In the post-Maastricht era, the traditional explanatory approaches of European integration, namely Neo-functionalism and Intergovernmentalism, have been revised by new generation studies. These studies largely benefit from the emergence of the New Institutionalism and Governance studies to catch up with the current developments in the study of politics and social science (for a guiding discussion, see Haas 2004).

The new generation of Neo-functionalism scholars defines the institutionalization of the EU as the extension of any kind of EU institutions, rules and norms, whether related to the economic policy domains or not. The emergence and evolution of the institutionalization at the EU level create further endogenous feedback loops, such as 'rule-making capacity', 'the intensification of

transnational activities/actors', and 'supranational capacity' (Stone-Sweet and Sandholtz 2010, 7-8). In the long term, the intensification of the feedback loops causes integrative spill-over forces, which allow some policy domains to be developed more rapidly than others in terms of governance and regulation capacity (Stone-Sweet and Sandholtz 2010, 12). In this fashion, Neo-functionalism scholars take the side of Historical and Sociological Institutionalism in reference to the definition of institutionalization.

'The revised Neo-functionalism' of Niemann stands as the standard framework of today's research on Neo-functionalism tradition (Niemann 2006, Niemann et al. 2018). The approach expands the ontological sphere of the original Neo-functionalism from what Ernst Haas (2001, 2004) called soft-rationalism to the soft-constructivism with an eye on the institutional context of EU Politics. The approach perceives European integration as a dialectic process between spill-over and counter-vailing forces, which "occurs under certain conditions" (Niemann et al. 2018, 52) – usually as a result of externally induced crisis. Niemann has further developed the concept of 'social spill-over' to discuss the role of socialization and social learning processes between the elites who are involved in the EU decision-making process, along with some other spill-over concepts which will be discussed in the next section (Niemann et al. 2018, 52-53). 'New Supranationalism' stands as another recent approach that is in line with Neo-functionalism tradition. It differs from the traditional Neo-functionalism due to its emphasis on the role of ideational innovation and discursive interaction rather than the reinforcement of the initial feedback loops. The approach argues that in the post-Maastricht era, the technical actors and supranational bodies drive European integration through the manipulation of national political leaders via the deliberative power of ideas (Schmidt 2018, 109).

Liberal Intergovernmentalism revises the traditional Intergovernmentalism of Stanley Hoffmann (1966) within the logic of Rational Choice Institutionalism. It explains the institutional evaluation of European integration in three separated but interrelated stages: 1) the formation of state interest at the domestic level where "commercial liberalism comes out a head of geopolitical and ideational interest", 2) the subsequent stage of inter-state bargaining where "intergovernmentalism outperforms supranational entrepreneurship", 3) the

formal institutionalization of the EU institutions where “rationalism defeats federal idealism” (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2018, 66-70). Liberal intergovernmentalism assumes that the institutionalization process of the EU can be best understood as serious of rational choices made by member state governments, which is driven by the egoistic logic of what is in for me (Moravcsik 2018, 9-21).

The New Intergovernmentalism is a recent theoretical approach from the Intergovernmentalism tradition which rejects the usefulness of Liberal Intergovernmentalism to provide a concrete understanding of the European integration in the post-Maastricht era. Like Liberal Intergovernmentalism, New Intergovernmentalism acknowledges the role of domestic formation of state interests as the main impetus to create the demand for change on the EU level institutionalization (Schimmelfennig 2015, 727). However, unlike the former, it argues that the deliberative and consensual decision-making process has become the guiding principle of day-to-day decision-making at all levels of the EU, rather than hard-bargain seeking (Bickerton et al. 2015, 711).

According to New Intergovernmentalism, the exogenous forces act as triggers to create indeterminate institutional effects to change the governance and regulation capacity at the EU level. To balance the rising dysfunctionalities of an existing regime, the member state governments take an unprecedented leadership role at the European Council and create EU level de novo bodies and agencies, such as the European Central Bank (ECB) or Frontex. The creation of de novo bodies allows national governments to block the power of the European Commission and other supranational bodies, as they are out of the purview of the supranational institutions.

New Intergovernmentalism argues that national governments have regained control over the institutionalization process in the post-Maastricht era (Bickerton et al. 2015, 703-714). The approach presents “a milder version of intergovernmentalism” which leaves room to investigate the role of institutional initiatives and deliberation within the institutional dynamics of European integration, especially in the European Council (Smeets and Zaun 2020, 7). Andrew Moravcsik acknowledges the importance of the role of information and discursive deliberation in the daily practices of the EU. However, He further

claims that the role of deliberation during the governmental decision-making processes should be considered as a form of intergovernmental consensus and, that the constructivist argument about the EU's socialization effect on the "reflexive willingness of state representatives [to 'deliberate' (or 'argue')]" has validation "only in a minority of cases that are less important and more consensual" (Moravcsik 2018, 10).

Post-functionalism challenges the elitist and functional-efficiency rationale of the two mainstream explanatory approaches. Unlike them, this approach emphasizes the role of politicization as a social-psychological dissension factor that creates constraining dissensus on the continuity of European integration (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1). According to Post-functionalism, a crisis at a regional level reveals the functional mismatch between the efficiency and jurisdictional architecture of the EU. This situation further triggers the intensification of politicization at the domestic level contestation of politics, which aggravates the mobilization of collective identities in terms of exclusive/inclusive identity politics towards the EU (Börzel and Risse 2018, 97-104; Hooghe and Marks 2019). Although Post-functionalism is silent regarding the long-term direction of European integration, it perceives the politicization as a counter-vailing force against further integrative measurements, which stems from non-rational 'psychology' (Moravcsik 2018, 12-13).

To summarize, the recent theoretical research in the field allows for locating the main theoretical approaches of EIT within the ontological perspectives towards the concept of institutionalization while keeping an eye on certain contextual factors. Namely, to think about the development of the level and scope of European integration in terms of crises-induced decision-making processes in association with the rise of politicization, in the meantime, considering the role of EU's polity ideas and its policy consequences at a domestic, supranational, and international level. Furthermore, the literature also shows that these contextual factors should not be considered contradictory by the approaches, rather they can be used interchangeably.

Jones, Kelemen and Meunier's (2015) 'failing forward' approach can seem one example of this kind of integrated and pragmatic approach. This approach perceives European integration as a piecemeal and incomplete

intergovernmental reform cycles, and adds a Neo-functionalist ingredient to the Intergovernmental bargaining process. The approach assumes that European integration advances with the initiation of incomplete governance structures as a result of lowest common denominator bargains and solutions. This incompleteness eventually reveals the dysfunctionalities of the related policy domains and led to further crises. To cope with a policy failure, the member states' governments create once again incomplete governance structures and so on. It bears that if there will be desirable alternatives to cooperation, then there will be no further integrative steps. In a similar fashion, Zaun (2018) argues that during the short-term management of the Migration crisis, the asymmetric interdependence between the host and non-host countries put the latter in a powerful bargaining position. Hence, non-host countries were able to reject the implementation of automatic quota system.

Nevertheless, considering the medium-term developments within the Schengen regime followed by the Migration crises, Niemann and Speyer argue that the various endogenous path-dependence factors blocked the way towards disintegration given the functional interdependence between the Schengen and “consequent need for strong cooperation on the external border management” (Niemann and Speyer 2018, 25) and, this (Neo)functionalist rationale eventually introduced new power and duties at the EU governance level. However, they explicitly indicate that their research should be seen as ‘potential for further refinement of neofunctionalist theory’ (Niemann and Speyer 2018, 39), and their explanation fails back to trace the interaction between the endogenous and exogenous dynamics of the EU decision-making process. Indeed, the revised Neo-functionalism, in general, fails to show how the relationship exists between the exogenous factors and their integrative pressures (Menon 2007, 365).

Taking the findings together, the current literature encourages further studies to think about the role of multi-agent collaboration and deliberative power of ideas at the EU governance level while being “open to the pluralism of the approaches [...] to evaluate which approach or combination of approaches best serves to explain” (Schmidt 2018, 15). The crucial distinction between Neo-functionalism and Intergovernmentalism remains on the issue of whether the EU policy-making outcomes are driven by the unintended consequence of the earlier

arrangements of the European integration or by the (domestically-driven) national interests of the member states` governments in an era of interdependence (Moravcsik 2018, 7-23). In the long term, Neo-functionalism claims that the initial settings of the EU “inevitably reduces the control power of member states over the course of integration and causes the institutionalization process at supranational level whereby new organs, subunits, and administrative practices [...] are designed to improve the performance of the organization in the wake of some major disappointment with earlier output” (Haas 2004: p. xlvi, as cited in Binici 2020, 78-79).

In the following section, this research utilizes the Morphogenetic approach as an alternative meta-theoretical perspective on the revised Neo-functionalism and argues that the Morphogenetic approach allows the latter to overcome its shortcomings as it stands today while engaging with the explanatory approaches of EIT in a pluralist sense.

3. FUSING THE REVISED NEO-FUNCTIONALISM WITH THE MORPHOGENETIC APPROACH

This section contains two parts. The first part evaluates the meta-theoretical assumptions of the revised Neo-functionalism within the context of the agent-structure debate and suggests an alternative one based on the Morphogenetic theory. The second part illustrates the main explanatory variables of (New) Intergovernmentalism and Post-functionalism, namely, the role of consensual decision-making at the EU level, the politicization of the EU and its relationship with domestic contestation of (EU) politics, within the spill-over and counter-vailing forces logics of the revisited Neo-functionalism.

3.1. The Meta-theoretical Assumptions of the Revised Neo-functionalism and a Morphogenetic Criticism

The revised Neo-functionalism modifies the ontological scope of the early Neo-functionalism in several aspects. Firstly, in contrast to earlier Neo-functionalism, which mostly focuses on the agency, the revised Neo-functionalism identifies equal ontological status to the agency and structure, and it takes an analytical dualist position towards the agent-structure debate while adopting Anthony Giddens' notion of structuration (Niemann 2006, 25-27). Secondly, although it set out the rational choice assumptions of early Neo-functionalism as a starting point, some solid rational choice principles are disabled. Niemann relaxes the assumption that "actors' preferences are shaped by fixed interest and external constraints, rather actors' preferences are various and preferences do not result from random choice but reflect deliberative behavior" (Niemann 2006, 25). This maneuver allows the revised Neo-functionalism to identify a learning capacity for the actors which is the ability to understand the outside world and act upon it. Hence, soft constructivism becomes an integral part of this ontology (Niemann 2006, 25-27). Finally, the revised Neo-functionalism perceives the functional interdependencies, international system of states and domestic structures, and traditions of member states as the structural and cultural properties. Governmental and non-governmental elites, supranational actors, public, and all kinds of organizations are understood as agents (Niemann 2006, 15-52).

Niemann's attempts to develop the original Neo-functionalism towards the concept of structuration should be understood as an important contribution to reconsider on some important assumptions of the earlier Neo-functionalism, such as elite socialization and social learning, which are one of the main axes of the current discussions within the discipline of International Relations (Menon 2006, 361-363). Moreover, its meta-theoretical engagement with the structuration theory allows moving from mainstream New Institutionalism to the approaches which engage with institutions within the context of organizational theory and the deliberative role of discourse and ideas. The structuration theory provides

important insights to investigate the nexus of entrepreneurship and opportunity within the context of the agent-structure debate (Mole and Mole 2010).

However, the revised Neo-functionalism “rests on a theoretically inconsistent view” (Menon 2007, 365) of the ‘nature of the actors’ and ‘collective action’, especially, in terms of entrepreneurship activities in relation to opportunity costs. It assumes that collective actions “are not merely [an] aggregation of individual preferences, but individual actor’s objectives are influenced by and derived from the social group with which an agent interacts and identifies” (Niemann 2006, 26). This assumption prevents the approach to have a clear leeway for the meta-reflexivity of the agencies because it portrays state representatives “as capable of changing their preferences through endogenous process of learning. In contrast the preferences of the supranational institutions are portrayed as exogenously defined and resolutely resistant to change. These institutions become agents of integration, because they tend to benefit from the progression of this process” (Menon 2007, 365). Consequently, the revised Neo-functionalism produces the mechanical assumption of New Institutionalism, that the “agency is indeed constrained or channeled by institutions, however, defined” (Haas 2004, xlvii). Whereas the traditional Neo-functionalism anticipates that “the actors adjust the failure of earlier behavior to realize their perceived interests, therefore, the later choices [mainly] are result of unwanted and unforeseen consequences” (Haas 2004, xxvi) of past. According to Ernst Haas, “instead of developing a notion of positive gains, the spill-over was driven by a postulated fear by the actors of suffering losses unless further sectors were integrated (Haas 2004, fn17). In this context, the revised Neo-functionalism false back to shed light on the relationship dynamics between the initial generative mechanisms of the EU to advance the existing integration.

Niemann underlines that the revised Neo-functionalism “does not strive for ontological purity” (Niemann 2006, 25) and, his approach acknowledges the dual nature of the structure and agency, that they mutually constitute each other (Niemann 2006, 26). In fact, according to the structuration theory, if the structure and agency are separated from each other, they cannot be ontologically existing and analytically being understood (Sarason et al. 2006, 289). The structuration theory further assumes that the actions of agencies create the structure, and the

structures enable and constrain the further actions of the agency within the social system. The further assumption is that the structures are subjective and virtual, which means “they are held in mind of agents until instantiated in the actions” (Mole and Mole 2010, 231). For this reason, structures do not exist independently from the human mind until they are initiated through practices. In a nutshell, within the structuration logic, “actors unconsciously reproduce rules and resources” (Mole and Mole 2010: 234) and the social systems emerge as a reproduction of relations between actors and collectivities, and those structures are being simultaneously the medium and outcome of actions in the practices. This interpretation inescapably “elides the structure and agency together and makes impossible to trace the interaction between them over the time” (Newman 2019, 110).

In contrast to the structuration theory and as its alternative, Margaret Archer proposes the Morphogenetic approach as an interdisciplinary explanatory program based upon the ‘Critical Realist’ understanding of the philosophy of social science to study entrepreneurship activities in any kind of organization (Archer 2020, 137). The approach focuses on the agent-structure debate and suggests making an analytical distinction between agential and structural realms, as well as among structural and cultural realms to study the realm of all kinds of institutions independently from the realm of ideas (Greener 2005, 66). It claims that in the historical context of a given organizational system, the rules, designs and resources compose the structural and cultural constraints which also enable the actions of actors within the organizational system. An unexpected change in the system creates opportunity for agents to conduct entrepreneurial activities. The agents view the structural and ideational challenges in the social systems and act to “change the existing rules and resources to their advantage” (Mole and Mole 2010, 233). The institutionalization of the system is seen as the result of the political struggle between holders and challengers of the system. In a nutshell, alongside the structural and cultural interests and properties, the Morphogenetic approach presents “a third kind of interest which is the reason[ed] interests of agents [...] Agents may well define their own real interests completely differently to the vested interests inherent in their structural role(s) and/or cultural belief(s)”

(Newman 2019, 124) and hence there is a level of maneuverability for the reflexive power of the agency. In other words, the approach “allows for the identification of material interests, ideational (cultural) interests, and agential interests, while simultaneously accepting the social construction of each” (Newman 2019, 124). The approach further assumes that the structure and agency should be understood as relative and in terms of emergent properties, that “one stratum could be micro to another macro strata; however, that same macro strata maybe micro to an alternative strata” (Mole and Mole 2010, 234). Hence, in contrast to structuration logic, the Morphogenetic approach claims that opportunities exist independently from social structures. Its perspective on the actor’s interest formation not only allows for rational choice or logic of appropriateness or learning but also temporal differentiation of interests. However, it is an ideal type of explanatory methodology, which cannot explain or purport to explain anything at the empirical level unless merging its regulative role in theorizing practices with substantive theories (Wight 2006, 287).

3.2. Fusing the Revised Neo-functionalism with the Morphogenetic Approach

The Morphogenetic approach suggests three interrelated stages of examination to analyse any form of institutional change at a formal level: Structural Condition (T1): the analysis of structural and cultural conditions that influence the structural content of action and the organizational system as the rules and resources which create emergent properties and situational logic for interaction. Social Interaction (T2-T3): the interaction of structural factors with agency and between agencies in terms of advantages/disadvantages and compatibility/incompatibility. Structural Elaboration (T3-T4): the modification of previous structural/cultural properties with the creation of new organizational properties and constraints in terms of rules and resources as a result of the social interaction stage (Archer 1995: 82-89). On this basis, the ‘before, during after, schema’ constructs the main analytical scheme of the approach (Newman 2019, 109).

The analytical scheme of the Morphogenetic Approach can be reconstructed within the revised Neo-functional logic in the following way: An external shock, which reveals itself independently from the project of the European integration, triggers an ascent of the dysfunctionalities of the earlier institutional arrangements (structural conditioning) of European integration in the relevant policy area(s) (T1). In turn, the rise of perception of the externally induced dysfunctionalities and discrepancies provokes conflict between the actors of EU Politics and causes the politicization of the European integration in domestic politics in the social interaction stage (T2-T3). This (dys)functional rationale eventually invokes the decision-makers of European integration to redefine the regulation and governance capacity of the related policy domains at the EU level (Niemann 2006, 29-56) (T3-T4). In other words, the structural conditions of the European integration inevitably cause an inter-distributional conflict and actor dissatisfaction and thereby politicization. However, Neo-functionalism further argues that the conflict is closer to being resolved in the process itself and this eventually leads to unforeseen integrative outcomes in terms of the extension of the institutionalization process in the EU legal order (Stone-Sweet and Sandholtz 2010). The last phase constitutes the structural elaboration stage of the institutionalization process of the European Integration within a Morphogenetic jargon.

The revised Neo-functionalism uses six explanatory variables for the conceptualization and operationalization of the historical-functional context of European integration, which are located within the domestic, supranational and international structural/cultural realms along with the politics of actors who are involved in the process of decision-making. These variables are, respectively, 1) functional spill-over, 2) exogenous spill-over, 3) political spill-over, 4) social spill-over, 5) cultivated spill-over and 6) counter-vailing forces (Niemann 2006, 29-50). In the following section, these conceptualizations are introduced via a Morphogenetic reading, and explanatory assumptions of (New) Intergovernmentalism and Post-functionalism are reflected within the spill-over and counter-vailing forces concepts.

3.2.1. *Exogenous Spill-over*

This concept is one of the structural components of the revised Neo-functionalism, which gives an account to investigate the relationship between the initial integration process and the external context within which the European integration process is located. The presupposition is that “exogenous factors -although they can constitute an obstacle to further integration, generally encourage or provoke further integrative steps” (Niemann 2006, 33). The supposition is that the external pressures caused by a shock or crisis at international level become less exogenously determined and eventually create further (dys)functional integrative spill-over pressures (Schmitter 1970, 848). New Intergovernmentalism and Post-functionalism share a belief with the exogenous spill-over logic which advances that external shocks cause indeterminate outcomes regarding the durability of the European integration process. Meanwhile, the Intergovernmentalist school claims that exogenous shocks show the state of disequilibrium of the current integration dynamics and constitute an obstacle for the further integration (Bickerton et al. 2015, 719), and Post-functionalism is agnostic concerning the effects of exogenous pressures on the long-term development of European integration (Schimmelfennig 2018, 974-975).

3.2.2. *Functional Spill-over*

The concept of functional spill-over is another structural component of the revised Neo-functionalism. It is a “mechanism arising from the inherent technical characteristic of the functional tasks themselves. The idea that some sectors within industrial economies are so interdependent that it is impossible to treat them in isolation” (Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991, 5). The attempts to integrate certain functional tasks will inevitably lead to problems that can only be solved by giving more tasks to the regional community level. In this regard, the logic of functional spill-over refers to “a situation in which the original goal can be

assured only by taking further actions, which in turn create a further condition and need for more action, and so forth” (Niemann 2006, 30).

The integrative logic of the relationship between the exogenous and functional spill-over forms can be observed while using “logical deduction, comparison with the last experiences under similar conditions” (Niemann 2006, 62) and by focusing on the cognitive perception of external challenges by decision-makers (Niemann 2006, 63). In contrast to Neo-functionalism, Intergovernmentalist tradition tends to understand the role of functional-rational in relation to the domestic preference formation, and Post-functionalism argues that dysfunctionalities eventually cause the rise of politicization in terms of identity politics, which counters the functional-rational.

3.2.3. *Cultivated Spill-over*

The cultivated spill-over logic assumes that as the integration process advances, the supranational institutions take their own forms over time and it would be increasingly difficult to control them by their founders, i.e., member state governments. The further assumption is that the manipulation of the elites by the supranational institutions causes unforeseen integrative policy outcomes. This concept contains two basic rationales. Firstly, it indicates further integrative pressures of EU level institutions and de-novo bodies. Secondly, it refers to a perception of change on actors who are involved in an interaction process with the supranational institutions, and European level agencies, as well as epistemic communities and technical knowledge experts in general during the decision-making process (Niemann 2006, 42-47). The second rationale also bears with the social spill-over logic as it was discussed below.

In contrast, New Intergovernmentalism downgrades the role of supranational institutions and de-novo bodies regarding their power to provoke further integrative steps. It assumes that the EU level agencies are not “hard-wired to seek ever closer union” (Bickerton et al. 2015, 713) and their manipulative power can be controlled by the member state governments which preserve any unintended task expansion at the supranational level (Hodson and Puetter

2019). Post-functionalism is silent and ill-suited to investigate the integrative impact of supranational level forces (Schimmelfennig 2018, 974-975).

3.2.4. *Political Spill-over*

The political spill-over concept refers to the integrative support of the non-governmental elites and public in a broader sense based on incentive-based learning capacity. The political spill-over pressures “arise[s] from the pluralist nature of West European societies. In such societies, [...] politics is based on a conflict between groups, each of which pursue their own (welfare) aims. [...] the idea that such elites will undergo a learning process, developing perception that their interests are better served by seeking supranational rather than national solutions” (Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991, 5). Nevertheless, the external pressures and domestic constraints also affect the behaviour of non-governmental elites and public. For this reason, political spill-over pressures may be inadequate to create integrative support if counter-vailing forces are on the forefront (Niemann 2006, 36-37).

New Intergovernmentalism asserts that to prevent unwanted coalitions and influences at the EU level, such as pressures from transnational interest groups and supranational lobby activities, member states’ governments have taken a leadership role in the European Council. To this extent, New Intergovernmentalism downplays the role of non-governmental elites regarding the creation of integrative pressures (Bickerton et al. 2015, 713). Post-functionalism moves from the elitist and functional perception of the above-mentioned two approaches. It presents the role of mass mobilization in terms of exclusive/inclusive collective identities as a counter-vailing force against further integrative steps (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1113-1114).

3.2.5. *Social Spill-over*

The social spill-over concept was developed to analyse governmental elite behaviours in the decision-making process of the EU with reference to the 'social learning' (Checkel 2001), 'communicative action' (Habermas 1987) and the 'logic of truth seeking/arguing' (Risse 2000) concepts of soft constructivism (Niemann et al. 2018, 52-53). The social spill-over logic assumes that during a social interaction process, the actions of agents do not contain only the logic of appropriateness but also the logic of truth-seeking and arguing. In such an action, the actors can argue strategically and need to be convinced more sound arguments (Niemann 2006, 37-42). Therefore, the success of reaching consensual outcomes depends on the logic of rationality oriented towards a common understanding by the actors.

Intergovernmentalist tradition ignores the manipulation of national elites by supranational and non-governmental elites within the context of a social learning capacity. Even though New Intergovernmentalism opens a space for the investigation of the role of deliberative decision-making outcomes, the reached decisions reflect the goal-oriented actions of member states' governments in terms of simple learning logic between them (Schimmelfennig 2015, 729). Post-functionalism is silent about the integrative role of elite socialization at the EU level, rather it argues that the politicization creates constraining dissensus on the national elites to reach consensual decision-making outcomes (Börzel and Risse 2018, 93).

3.2.6. *Counter-vailing Forces*

The counter-vailing forces concept aims to locate disintegrative forces within the revised Neo-functionalist framework, which can cause a standstill or work against the institutionalization process of European integration. Niemann identifies two main counter-vailing forces: 1) 'Sovereignty consciousness', which refers to the "extreme form of nationalism, which encapsulates actors' lacking disposition to delegate sovereignty to the supranational level" (Niemann 2006,

48). 2) 'Domestic constraints and diversities', which refers to "opposing parties, the media/public pressures or more indirectly by structural limitations, such as a country's economy, its demography, its legal tradition or its administrative structure" (Niemann 2006, 48).

The counter-vailing forces is a broader concept that can accommodate micro-level political analysis tools under its empirical focus (Niemann 2006, 47-50). This research advocates that the degree of politicization and domestic contestation of the EU politics can be located within the indicators of the concept of counter-vailing forces in terms of the structural and cultural properties. This helps us not only to provide a much more accurate analysis of the historical and domestic context of European integration in terms of state/society relations but also to look at different explanatory concepts of the three schools of thought within a larger Neo-functional framework through the spill-over and counter-vailing forces logics.

4. EMPIRICAL REFLECTIONS: THE POST-CRISIS MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHENGEN REGIME FOLLOWED BY THE 2015 MIGRATION CRISIS

This section presents a 'plausibility probe' case (Levy 2008, 6-7) based upon the secondary literature to demonstrate the empirical relevance of the theoretical revisions provided in this research and to throw light on how the modification of the revised Neo-functionalism via the Morphogenetic approach adds value to the existing literature. The empirical investigation focuses on the short- and medium- term management of the Schengen regime followed by the 2015 Migration crisis. Given the limited scope of the paper, the Readmission agreements are discarded from this section to focus on the endogenous reactions at the EU level (on this issue, see, for example, Smeets and Zaun 2020).

4.1. An Exogenously Induced Crisis and Exogenous Spill-over Logic

The Migration crisis challenged not only the management of refugee flows, migration, and asylum issues but also other related policy domains of the Schengen regime such as free movement, external border management and police cooperation. Since 2015, the increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees on the EU borders put pressure on the periphery countries of the Schengen area. The refugee crisis eventually caused the temporary reintroduction of the internal border controls in a considerable number of member states. Eventually, the Migration crisis challenged one of the building blocks of the EU project in the post-Maastricht era: the free movement of people and the abolishment of internal borders (Schimmelfennig 2018, 975-976).

Keeping the Exogenous spill-over logic in mind, it can be claimed that an external shock triggered the perception of the dysfunctionalities of the existing EU level governance settings of the relevant policy domains. This situation further catalyzed political and institutional crises in the internal dynamics of the European integration project to redefine the configuration of the institutional settings of the Schengen regime as expected by three schools of thought. Neo-functionalism further assumes that as long as the spill-over forces are at play, an external crisis becomes incrementally internalized by the functional/institutional configuration of the regime, which gradually causes the extension of the level and scope of the EU level regulation and governance capacity in the related policy domains.

4.2. Structural Conditioning and Functional Spill-over Dynamics

In parallel with the completion of the Single Market, the Schengen regime has been created to operationalize and ensure the good functioning of the abolishment of internal borders and free movement of people across the European continent. The abolishment of the internal borders in the post-Maastricht era has caused the external border management to be of the building blocks of the European integration project as well. Beginning in 1987, the

Schengen regime has spilled around the EU project to ensure the good functioning of the internal integration and the external border management. The provision of the Lisbon Treaty identifies the legal basis of the Schengen regime in the fields of framing 'the area of freedom, security and justice', developing 'common asylum and migration policy' and 'integrated border management' (Eur-Lex 2012). While external border management does not mean asylum and migration management or judicial cooperation, all of these fields are functionally linked. In all these fields, the EU and member states share competences to develop common policies based on the solidarity principle, but the functionality of the Schengen area mainly depends on the individual responsibility of member states (Lavenex 2010, 463-470). In other words, the national border guards and authorities have first-degree control and surveillance rights on their territorial borders. In this respect, the Schengen regime contains a low level of resource and administrative governance capacity in comparison to the Eurozone regime. In order to support the cooperation between national border guards and to create risk analysis related to the border control issues, the Frontex agency was established in 2004. The Frontex can seem as the concrete expression of the aim of developing an integrated border management system and, it stands as the main body of the EU in relation to the control of the external borders of the Schengen area. Beginning in 2006, the joint operations were carried out in support of the member states on the Mediterranean coast through the operations of the Hermes, Triton and Poseidon. In the field of judicial cooperation, the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) and European Judicial Network; and in the field of asylum application and migration management, the Dublin regulation and European Asylum Support Office (EASO) coordinate and support the member states activities (Peers 2020).

The 2015 Migration crisis led to new challenges which manifested the insufficiency of the existing financial and technical mechanisms of the Frontex agency and the Dublin system. The existing configuration of the Schengen regime was insufficient to overcome the border control problems and manage refugee flow after the peak of the Migration crisis. Additionally, the different opinions of the EU members regarding the allocation of asylum seekers and

migrants have raised concerns about the continuity of the Schengen project (Carrera - Den Hertog 2016).

Regarding the functional spill-over, the following argument can be made: the perception of the externally induced dysfunctions and discrepancies of the existing regime triggered the politicization of the EU and eventually induced the decision-makers to redefine the earlier institutional configurations of the existing regulatory and governance capacity of the Schengen regime in terms of its rules, procedures and resources.

4.3. Social Interaction: Cultivated, Political and Social Spill-over Pressures vs Counter-vailing Forces

In relation to cultivated spill-over pressures, one of the first reactions to the Migration crisis was the '10 Point Action Plan' which was presented by Dimitri Avramopoulos, the Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Commissioner of the EU, during a joint meeting of the Foreign and Interior Ministers chaired by the EU High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini in April 2015. After the meeting, Mogherini and Avramopoulos highlighted the need for a consistent reaction to the migration crisis at the EU level (European Commission 2015a). One of the earliest short-term solutions of the European Commission was the proposal of the relocation of asylum seekers from Greece, Hungary, and Italy and redistribution of them among the EU members to share responsibility and ensure solidarity among the members. The main aim of the allocation system was to overcome the dysfunctionality of the 'first entrance' clause of the Dublin system. The proposal was initially prepared by the EASO and proposed by the Commission in its final form in September 2015 (European Commission 2015b). The European Council agreed with the proposal, however, its actualization remained unsuccessful as it was rejected by the non-host countries of the EU led by the Visegrad group (Schimmelfennig 2017, 10-11).

After the failure of the relocation system, the European Commission continued to highlight the dysfunctions of the current Dublin regulation, but it changed the direction of the discussion on the Schengen regime from the

management of asylum-seekers and refugees to the management of the internal and external borders of the EU (Niemann and Speyer 2018, 33). In December 2015, the Commission adopted a new proposal to restore the Schengen regime which emphasized the urgent need for technical and functional harmonization between member states, the creation of the European Border and Guard Agency and a regulative institutional mechanism to link the information exchange between external border control, asylum and return management agencies of the EU, such as Europol, Frontex, and EASO (European Commission 2015c). The Commission's attempts have led to the adoption of the two EU regulations in 2016 and 2019, which have transformed the Frontex agency into the European Border and Guard Agency (EBCG), and have also introduced new elements to the EU level governance capacity in the fields of internal/external border management and migration-related issues (Deleixhe and Duez 2019, Niemann and Speyer 2018).

In reference to the political spill-over, the European business associations and transnational NGOs played an active role in creating further support on the revision of the Schengen regime. The European business interest groups supported the need for enriching governance capacity on the external border management to overcome the existing dysfunctionalities of the Schengen regime (Niemann and Speyer 2018, 37). The other important non-governmental political pressures came from the United Nations Refugee Agency and European human rights organizations (Schimmelfennig 2018, 977). For example, the Meijers Committee and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles emphasized the inequality of the current Dublin regulation due to the first entry procedure and its neglect of the fundamental human rights. They pinpointed that the creation of the EBCG and its further practices should not create an irresponsible entity towards the fundamental human rights with an executive operational power and staff at the EU level (Fernandez-Rojo 2019).

With reference to the social spill-over, the literature findings show that during the earlier periods of management of the Migration crisis, the attempts to redistribute the asylum-seekers were insufficient because the crisis' politicization was penetrating the issue of national sovereignty within the absence of a transnational and liberal/cosmopolitan discourse and a common

understanding of the issue between the member states (Börzel and Risse 2018: 88). Meanwhile, the European Commission's entrepreneurship attempts played an important role in changing the quality of the communicative action between the governmental elites from bargaining to consensus during the medium-term management of the Schengen crisis. The Commission used the information from the EU agencies and supported the members of the Directed General of the Migration and Home Affairs to persuade national governments to take further integrative steps (Niemann and Speyer 2018, 32-37).

Considering counter-vailing forces, the Migration crisis brought a strong level of politicization in the EU (members) on the issue of sovereignty and solidarity. Even though the legal traditions and state/society relations of the member states are crucial factors in understanding the positions of member states regarding migration-related issues, the geographic locations of the members were the key motive to drive the rise of sovereignty consciousness within the member states (Schimmelfennig 2018, 978). From the beginning of the Migration crisis, especially, the populist parties of Southern and Eastern Europe mobilized anti-immigrant sentiments and exclusive collective identity definitions towards the issue of asylum seekers and refugees (Börzel and Risse 2018, 111). Nevertheless, cultivated spill-over, political spill-over and social spill-over pressures pushed the (dys)functional rationale of the earlier arrangements towards the need for more integration, while balancing the existing of strong counter-vailing forces in the medium-term with the manipulation of the national leaders via a deliberation process within the institutional structures of the EU.

4.4. Structural Elaboration

The medium-term institutional outcomes of the management of the 2015 Migration crisis have enhanced the governance capacity at the EU level in certain fields of the Schengen area, which were under the exclusive competence of the member states prior to the crisis (Niemann and Speyer 2018, 27-29). In November 2019, the Council adopted a revised regulation on the EBCG (EU Regulation 2019). This regulation provided new developments to the EU level

governance capacity, especially in the fields of border management and migration-related issues. Firstly, the Frontex agency has been updated to the EBCG, which is a much stronger agency in terms of staff capacity and technical equipment. Secondly, the mandate of the EBCG has been extended to support member state activities on the border controls, return management, and cooperation with third countries. Thirdly, the European Border Surveillance system (EUROSUR), which coordinates and exchanges information among all the authorities responsible for external border surveillance, is now incorporated into the Frontex agency to improve the functionality of the latter. In terms of the inter-institutional dynamics, the European Parliament has been involved in the appointment process of the EBCG's executive director, and the EBCG has compliance and accountability for the fundamental right protection during the conduct of its operations. In addition, the EBCG can now provide support for a particular member state to control borders in terms of identification and documentation. Considering the changing dynamics of the Schengen regime, it is worth mentioning that the member states are still the key actors in the management of the external borders and migration-related policies. Nevertheless, the steps taken have allowed the extension of the power and duties of the EU governance and agencies, in the fields, which were exclusively maintained by individual states prior to the Migration crisis (Niemann and Speyer 2018: 26-28). In this regard, the Schengen regime has been updated after the Migration crisis as a result of the unforeseen consequences of the earlier institutional arrangements and the entrepreneurship activities of its emergent properties.

5. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

This research was conducted for several purposes which are, respectively, related to the theory-building and empirical investigation sides of the theorization of the European integration with special reference to the EU's crises decade. Regarding the theory-building side, the recent developments in the inquiry of the explanatory approaches of the EIT are elaborated on with a critical

discussion in the light of the agent-structure debate, and the explanatory concepts of the Intergovernmentalist and Post-functionalism traditions are accommodated within a larger Neo-functionalism framework with the help of the Morphogenetic approach. This theoretical fusion was intended to capture different aspects of the broad and complex reality of the European integration dynamics and its politics in a pluralist sense. In the empirical section, the decision-making process of the post-crisis management period of the Schengen regime and its medium-term EU level governance and regulation outcomes were analysed with the revised Neo-functionalism, the latter informed by the three schools of thought within the spill-over and counter-vailing forces logics. The research also further specified the relationship dynamics between the different spill-over and counter-vailing forces logics through a temporal delamination to overcome the analytical deficiency of the revised Neo-functionalism as it stands today.

The research findings show that Neo-functionalism not only identifies and explains the main driving forces of the medium-term outcomes of the Schengen regime followed by the 2015 Migration crisis, but also demonstrates why short-term solutions during its management were insufficient, and how the advancement of integration is conducted through various kinds of spill-over forces despite the existence of strong countervailing forces. In particular, the role of supranational and technical actors was critical to influence the governmental elites to reach consensual and integrative decision-making outcomes during the medium-term management of the Schengen regime. In this manner, the cultivated spill-over forces played a much more active role within the EU's inter-institutional dynamics rather than what is expected/predicted by the New Intergovernmentalism and Post-functionalism. On this point, the findings of this research also highlight that the role of the quality of the communicative action within inter-institutional dynamics of the EU is a crucial factor to cultivate integrative pressures and its generative mechanisms require further investigation to study the role of entrepreneurship within the nexus of the EU Politics and agency.

Finally, the results of this study encourage us to think about the inquiry of theorizing European Integration in a pragmatic sense, to move beyond the

limitations of the individual approaches and examine the European Integration within the wider area of the study of politics. In this context, the research suggests of the benefits of considering diverse “epistemological and methodological standpoints” (Rosamond 2007: 15) to study the complexity of European Integration and its politics. Current Neo-functionalists are aware that the approach cannot explain every aspect of European integration, but its disciplinary context allows to provide pragmatic theoretical investigations within the light of the recent pragmatic turn in both the social science studies and the management of the EU.

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