

ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКА ІНТЕГРАЦІЯ: ІСТОРІЯ ТА СУЧАСНІСТЬ

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NARRATING INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION IN EUROPE: ITALY'S VIEW

Abstract. EU's economic and political challenges open a new page of the European integration history. The Eurozone crisis and challenges presented by Brexit enhanced scholars from various countries to analyze and rethink about the future of the European integration and EU as a whole. The paths of the differentiated integration present a specific interest in this article. This kind of integration is becoming more and more popular among politicians and researchers in their efforts to demonstrate a pragmatic approach how to re-start the integration process. This article will outline the issues framed by the differentiated integration in Italy, a founding member of the European Union. Moreover, it presents an attempt to apply the principles of differentiated integration to some of the politics: political and economic governance in the EU. The article poses the question to what extent the political fluidity will be necessary in order for the EU to still remain solid tackling common economic and political challenges.

The article presents the opinions of the Italian scholars and politicians referred to the differentiated integration. The first part of it theorizes the concept of differentiated integration and presents an evolution of scholars' thoughts starting from the mid-90s. The second part of the article reveals the challenges of the EU, the European integration process and the implications on the Italian Republic. It tries to show how Italy manages to overcome the present integration challenges.

Key words: *differentiated integration, Italy, EU, disintegration, neo-functionalism.*

In a profoundly heterogeneous and interdependent world, cross-disciplinary dialogue referring to understanding the roots and causes of EU's (dis)integration future present a special interest. It points to a global shift towards scepticism in the main sectors such as politics, economy and culture [21]. The importance of the differentiated integration seems to have a new way of scholars' attention. It comes with the European Monetary Union, Schengen zone and leads to more current Fiscal Compact, European Stability Mechanism. Italy, being a founding member-state, by joining the Economic and Monetary Union, strengthened its international influence in the Brussels-based decision-making process, stabilized its economy and successfully modernized its industry. However, we also saw that major political formations started to elaborate new positions towards European integration with the aim to reassess the role of integration versus disintegration approach [20, p. 3]. As a result, we have seen Big Europe's change of face – new ruling political forces and their ideas and positions about the EU and European integration project.

Therefore, the relevance of this research topic stems from the need to identify the place and role of the Italian Republic in Europe, identifying and analyzing foreign political factors that led to its position in the integration/disintegration processes. On closer examination of this argument, it is possible to assess whether there are systematic similarities and differences that sharpen the ability to analyze and predict the Italian foreign policy development. Moreover, it would be crucially important to analyze Italy's role in the Mediterranean region, taking into consideration its energy, migration and security challenges for Europe. These issues are relevant to both foreign policy and national security. They also need better tuning, given the current political conditions in Italy. Finally, a more balanced approach is required to reflect Italy's role in trying to impact the development of strategic communication.

This experience can serve to develop new conceptual and theoretical, scientific and methodological approaches for other countries in their endeavour to establish and develop multilateral relations with EU member-states.

The novelty of the research lies in the attempt to analyze progress and outcomes of the Italian (dis)integration policy. The object of study is the place, role and importance of the Italian policy at various EU development steps. The interdisciplinary nature of the research and complexity of the problems justify the use of adequate methods. The structural and functional methods can be applied to the analytical framework in which the Italian Republic operates in the structural framework of an international relations system that affects foreign policy behavior.

Problem Rationale. Nowadays, it's absolutely no surprise that one of the most stable projects in Europe – EU – is showing the signs of its disintegration. The political fluidity towards not only Brexit, but other “Exits” is influential enough in order to acknowledge that political integration of the EU is shifting between trajectoring towards integration or disintegration. My idea lies in the attempt to rethink and re-evaluate Europe's integration project by presenting Italy's modern history of integration and disintegration tendencies through changes in differentiated integration discourse. In a profoundly heterogeneous and interdependent world, cross-disciplinary dialogue referring to understanding the roots and causes of EU's (dis)integration future present a special interest where global powers will redefine fundamental rules of foreign policy. In this case, the Italy's foreign policy will present a special case study.

Theoretical foundations. The concept of differentiation presented in the EU law provisions followed European integration process from its very beginning. Its discourse started to appear immediately in the 1970s as political ideas. These years' positive approaches towards differentiated integration were rather limited due to disputes between followers of ‘wide’ and ‘deeper’ integration theories. They were reflecting more about the vertical integration when shifts of competencies from national to European level happened [11, p. 10].

The discourse on differentiated integration was enhanced when the EU was conceptualizing itself among the followers of intergovernmentalism and supranationalism at the beginning of 1990s. It was presented after Maastricht Treaty was signed by EU member-states and seriously negotiated already in Amsterdam

Treaty. The latter one opened the talks referred to the framework of common foreign and security policy as far as a number of new countries were to join the EU [23]. In this case, the discourse about differentiated integration was launched mapping the first pillar of the European integration process and providing opportunities for the EU member-states to cooperate within some formats.

The number of papers referring to the impact of the differentiated integration were presented by A. Kolliker [13], Usher [26]. The dialogue on the Amsterdam and Nice Treaty provisions were accomplished by theorized opinions of A. Stubb [24]. Moreover, the challenges of the differentiated integration are being analyzed by contemporary scholars in various European countries. This article will majorly analyze researchers and works from France (Y. Bertoncini [4], T. Chopin and C. Lequesne [6]), Germany (K. Holzinger [11], N. Koenig [12]), Switzerland (F. Schimmelfennig [18]), Poland (T. Grosse [10]) etc.

It is possible to acknowledge that the upper front for the differentiated integration started to be in 2015 when Britain voted in favor for ‘Brexit’ fuelling controversy among other EU member-states about their future. It raised core dilemmas how to reconcile the heterogeneity with the EU referring to political, economic and institutional framework for the member-states.

Among the Italian scholars who are focusing their attention towards dilemmas of differentiation integration are researchers from International Relations Institute. Gianni Bonvincini and Nicoletta Pirozzi are researching and theorizing the concept of differentiated integration as well as its evolution whereas Adriaan Schout reflects opinions on the EU existential threat.

Alessandro Marroni, Nicoletta Pirozzi and Paola Sartori present in their researchers majorly the disputes on the impact of the differentiated integration on the CFSP and CFDP. The fluctuations of thoughts about EU enlargement and differentiation presents Barbara Lippert. These scholars presented their joint publications dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome celebration. As the result, the research “EU60: Re-Founding Europe. The Responsibility to Propose” [14] is one of the most complex editions dedicated to current challenges referring to

EU and differentiated integration. The authors tried to analyze every EU policy where differentiated integration had impact, starting from economic and monetary policy till common foreign and security policies. It means that the scholars would like instead of “Let-it-Be” approach their on “Let-it-Build” way.

Among the Ukrainian scholars who were elaborating the concepts of differentiated integration it is possible to nominate I. Grytsyak [1], V. Kopijka [2], O. Shapovalova [3].

The researchers of the differentiated integration have tried a number of times to present some essential classifications referring to this type of integration. One of the first scholars who succeed was A. Stubb. His idea lied in theorizing differentiation integration though three major concepts: time (so-called ‘multi-speed Europe’ allowing different countries to integrate in different time slots), space (‘Variable Geometry’ – differentiation according to territory or region specifics), matter (‘A la Carte’ – choosing specific sectors in which the integration is being conducted) [24, p. 285]. Stubb’s ideas were merely innovative at the end of 90s but received a number of criticism at the beginning of millennium. The major reason was the fact that differentiated integration required sectorial and territorial aspects but could explain the proposals for deepening and widening of Europe. For the case-by-case differentiation, such as the Schengen Area or Euro Stubb’s ideas on differentiated integration were fully-fledged [18, p. 3]. It was realized when the Amsterdam Treaty came into force and Schengen acquis was integrated into the EU acquis. At the same time, however, the functional and structural mechanisms were not fully covered by the scholars differentiated classification. Holzinger and Schimmelfennig proposed their own classification framing it into six different dimensions with two extremes: a) territorial vs. functional differentiation; b) constant vs. temporary differentiation; c) nation-states level vs. multi-level differentiation; d) within EU treaties vs. outside EU acquis; e) EU level decision-making vs. intergovernmental decision-making; f) internal differentiation (only for EU member-states) vs. outside the member-states area differentiation [11, p. 297].

In such a way, differentiated integration encompasses a variety of socio-economic and political interests within the EU and outside its boundaries. Other scholars continue to speculate on the conformity of the three instrumental principles of the differentiated integration: 1) opt-outs presented by the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and Euro currency; 2) format of ‘enhanced cooperation’ presented merely in the economic policy; 3) cooperation EU+ in the framework of practical conformity with the European standards (Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance) [7, p. 8].

Together but risking being apart: Italy’s view. The differentiated integration may embark various challenges as well. The sovereign debt crisis in Italy started disputes about re-thinking European integration process and EU as its format.

The history of Italy can be characterized by a considerable influence on global processes and, especially, on the development of the European integration. As a founder of the European Community, and subsequently the European Union, it remained to be an active supporter of the integration process and also managed to play a prominent role in European politics. Since its existence, Italian foreign policy decisions have always been contentious: starting from the end of Cold War Italian foreign policy experienced a high degree of volatility influencing Italy’s position between two poles – Europe and Atlantic Alliance. The second half of the XXth century shows us that under the influence of external and internal factors, Italian foreign policy is increasingly emphasizes Europe.

In addition, one of the main elements of a European contribution of Italian construction is spread ideas of federalism. This is confirmed by the words of the Italian economist, Chairman of the European Central Bank, Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa: ‘Italy has always sought to create a united Europe based on the supranational principle’. However, Pier Domenico Tortola reflects that in the time of especially eurozone crisis, EU member-states are facing structural imbalances even more. It means that the époque of easy decisions ended up presenting its spill-over effects. The scholar stipulates on the importance of the neofunctionalism approach proving that from the economic point of view, the structural imbalances of the

Eurozone where entrenched in the economic integration system [25, p. 10]. Therefore, it becomes increasingly difficult to solve them via exclusively technical or political measures. Meanwhile, Tortola raises talks that the impact of the current disintegration effect started when EU tried to fasten the 'low' integration in order to have a 'high' one. According to the scholar, such 'high' political integration caused the impact on the slowing down the European integration drivers [25, p. 4]. It also reveals that some political leadership will be required from the EU member-states unless the negotiations will be enhanced towards the impact of the disintegration tools which tend to be more asymmetric.

For Italian political mainstream European integration was seen as a leading benchmark of monetary, economic and political union based on federalism at the beginning of 90-s. Starting from the mid-90s Italy called for the ever-closer integration referring to economic and political issues in the framework of the differentiated integration. Italian politicians and governmental officials made their EU Presidency in 1996 merely focused on negotiations with the EU, with other EU member states about positive impact of differentiated integration [8, p. 38-39].

The story of the 1996 seems to be repeated for Italy and the European Union also 20 years later. Alessia Potecchi, President of the Democratic Party Assembly in Milan, names several major impacts of Italy's joining the Eurozone. The most vivid challenges are presented in figures: a 10 per cent drop in the products per capita rate between 2008 and 2016 (in comparison, when Euro was introduced, the Italian average income per capita was higher up to 20 % in comparison with the average Eurozone member) [28]. Moreover, the Eurozone crisis had a social policy impact especially on the youth unemployment. The austerity measures imposed on Italy were devastating for citizens income [29, p. 17]. Italian economists attribute the crisis of 2009-2011 with the specifics of Italy joining the Eurozone. Especially, it came to be evident in 1992, when panic gripped the European monetary system associated with exchange rates, which led to the devaluation of Italian lira against the German deutschmark [30, p. 237]. Ferrara explains such results by inability of Europe to

adequately "protect and promote protection of national economies even through financial resources in the EU budget" [9, p. 21].

Even Dr. A. Potecchi stipulates that the competitiveness of Italy in comparison with other European core members has been disadvantaged since the establishment of the Eurozone. Europeanization of the domestic economy led to the creation of burden which Italy wasn't able to cope with in due time. Moreover, the convergence criteria according to the Maastricht Treaty enhanced such an aggravated situation for Italy [28].

In the same way Maurizio Ferrara presents that the challenges for Europe hesitating between economic Europe and social one are to be enhanced. The Italian leadership as well as European will be beneficial if these two aspects of Europe are going to reconcile [8, p. 21]. The tensions between the national welfare states, where Italy is making a part, and the path to further integrate started to be present since the 1980s and increased in the 1990s. As far as the European integration is merely based on the economic integration, a lack of competition and freedom of movement became firstly evident. The introduction of the Economic and Monetary Union was done on the "let-it-be" basis and therefore its impact wasn't enough calculated on the national economies. The results are turned into the current crisis both on economic and political levels in Italy enhanced by the social protection needs and austerity measure imposed by the EU. These tendencies opened the doors to more Eurosceptic forces coming to activate the latent conflict between the rich and the poor in number of the EU member-states. Italy is one of them. It is experiencing the huge contrast and raise of populism and nationalism towards external threat that the migration flows are presenting. However, the first impact was economic one enhanced by the austerity measures since 2011 [9, p. 26].

The processes of deepening and widening of the EU impacted both new and old member-states. Therefore, Italy had to compel and compete with other member states and to enhance its growth and employment. However, at the same time, together with Greece, it started to fail in adjusting to other Maastricht criterias. Ferrara names it 'internal devaluation' when cutting labor costs and social spending

were done in order to equilibrate the national debts. As a result, it provoked the raise of nationalistic and populist tendencies within the country [9, p. 29].

The presence of disintegration in EU political mainstream is underlined by the Prime-Minister of Italy, Paolo Gentiloni. He stipulates that centrifugal Europe faces challenges which lead the EU to the unpredictable future. He imposes on importance to have operability and efficiency of Juncker's Plan which should be as effective as Marshall's one [5]. Gentiloni sees the way-out for the EU only via stronger social Europe which focuses merely on steady growth and investments. Moreover, he presents the priority for Italy in 2017 to see Europe with 'higher speed' [15].

Such type of integration, according to the opinion of Yves Bertoncini, can be effective after having passed some test on legitimacy due to the disputes among the EU member states [4, p. 3]. In reality, it didn't merely happen neither in Italy nor in any other European state. The paradigm of stable democracy seems to have vanished into abyssal depths, especially in the light of its apparent lack of strength and vision to lead us through this period of lingering turbulence where global powers, like US, China and Russia will redefine fundamental rules of foreign policy. In this situation, Italy remains to be an important guarantor of security especially when the threats are coming to be focuses in its strategic region of the Mediterranean Sea. Given the instability along the external borders of the EU, it is vulnerable to the migration flows coming to the European Union.

In such a way, the differentiated integration imposes the presence of uncontrolled areas or flexibilities in the political decision-making. Romano Prodi stipulates that the threat for Italy in the Mediterranean Sea remains not in the migration flows themselves but that since 2014 they are becoming more and more uncontrolled [22]. Moreover, he compels that the global economic crisis has never been solved and its spill-over effects are visible as presence of the civil war in Syria and political instability in Iraq. "Today there is no leadership that unites different wills. European leaders behave like weather forecasts. The referendum on Brexit has in fact shown the fragility of a Europe" [22].

However, the implications of the differentiated integration may have the tendencies towards the disintegration scenario approaching. As far as the driving force of the European integration remains economic integration, it is necessary to analyze the trends of it in various fields. Trade is being of utmost importance both of national and European level. However, the tendencies demonstrate that comparing to the trade between EU member-states, some of the member-states will enhance their bilateral trade with the partners outside the EU. In such a way, Italy was included into the list of the founding members (together with Germany and France) who wants by 2020 to increase trade relations with China, African continent and other emerging and developing markets [17, p. 17]. However, it also means that within the EU Italy would like to expand its impact in the South European region where traditionally it considered being a leader. These implications indicate that Eurozone core member-states are tending to cooperate with Eurozone periphery especially Greece, Portugal and Spain. It means for Italy a double-favourable periods [19, p. 3]. However, it also means that Europe is having a threat of splitting to different regional dimensions or groups.

How the EU member-states are going to decide to orient themselves towards more welfare or further integration, the future of Italy and Europe as a whole will depend. In this respect, the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella claims that the words of famous A. De Gasperi are more than crucial to remind: “the solidary for common reason and joint feeling of freedom and justice. In order words it means, that the only way for Europe to resist is in uniting forces from majority of the EU member states. Such steps are necessary in order to stand against “the march of irrational forces” presented by the voice of populism, propaganda and claims to nationalism.

Since its origin in the 1950s, the European Union had never been exposed to such a succession of destabilizing events. At the peak of the present crisis, starting from the wake of the Eurozone, followed by migrant flows and a number of referendums in the UK and Italy, we clearly need to better explore the historic roots of these challenges as they will fuel our concerns for the next few decades.

Building the future of Italy in the EU will require to evolve more resources, unity of intents and solid trust in the fundamental values of the integration process. It will have to overlook the common European challenges rooted in the past, because the present ‘vicious circle’ of European integration will required a closer solidarity between the member-states, their generations of citizens and values.

The year 2017 is a crucial not only for Italy but for Europe especially in its attempts to redefine diplomacy and politics. Italy as well as other major European countries are trying to become more flexible, from one side, and more solid, on the other. Therefore, it means that in a highly differentiated European reality, the member-states are still feeling threat referring to their future within the EU.

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Анотація. У статті представлено погляд на виклики, що пов'язані із процесами інтеграції та дезінтеграції в Європейському Союзі. Свій погляд на цю проблематику подано у контексті аналізу італомовних джерел та літератури. Шляхи розвитку диференційованої інтеграції становлять особливий інтерес у контексті сучасних викликів держав-членів Європейського Союзу, особливо після заяви Великої Британії про вихід із ЄС. Цей вид інтеграції стає все більш і більш популярним серед політиків і дослідників, оскільки уможливорює демонстрацію до застосування прагматичного підходу до оновлення процесу інтеграції. Еволюція євроінтеграційного погляду Італійської Республіки як держави-засновниці ЄС здійснено також крізь призму розуміння диференційованої інтеграції. Перша частина статті теоретизує поняття

диференційованої інтеграції. Проаналізовано період від початку 90-х років ХХ століття, коли цей термін було введено до основоположних договорів Європейського Союзу. Подані думки щодо диференційованої інтеграції провідних істориків та політологів Італійської Республіки. Друга частина статті розкриває сучасні виклики ЄС та євроінтеграційних процесів через розуміння диференційованої інтеграції, а також показує як ці виклики прагне подолати Італійська Республіка на сучасному етапі свого розвитку.

Ключові слова: диференційована інтеграція, Італійська Республіка, ЄС, дезінтеграція, неофункціоналізм.