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## THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL INTEGRATION: THE PERSPECTIVES OF NEOFUNCTIONALIST THEORY

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### Abstract

*This paper is qualitative research of the concept of political integration. It represents case study of the concept of political integration appearing in the theory of neofunctionalism. The research focus could be identified with the concept of political integration, in the perspective of the theory of neofunctionalism. The purpose of this research paper is the cognition of a various types of the concept of political integration and its activating, from the perspectives of neofunctionalism. In the scope of this paper, for the purpose of the research, content analysis method and comparative method are used. Also, a special accent is laid on the terms of integration in a political sense, the term of political integration as a part of this broader one and the concept of spill-over effect. Within the concept of political integration, it could be understood various types of political integration. In parallel, the concept of spill-over effect is examined as concept with a huge role in the theory of neofunctionalism. The synthesis of the two mentioned concepts, the one of political integration and the one of spill-over effect, would answer the question of the activating the process of political integration, and its potential dependence of existing other types of integration in a political sense.*

*Key words: political integration; neofunctionalism; spill-over effect*

### INTRODUCTION

This paper is a qualitative research of the concept of political integration. It represents *case study* of the concept of political integration appearing in the theory of neofunctionalism. The research focus could be identified as the concept of political integration, in the perspective of the theory of neofunctionalism. The purpose of this research paper is the cognition of a various types of the concept of political integration and its activating, from the perspective of the theory of neofunctionalism. In the scope of this paper, for the purpose of the research, *content analysis* method and *comparative method* are used. Also, a special accent is laid on the terms of *integration in a political sense*, the term of political integration as a part of this broader one and the concept of *spill-over* effect. Within the concept of political integration, it could be understood various types of political integration. On the other side, the concept of *spill-over* effect is examined as concept which plays a huge role in the theory of neofunctionalism. The synthesis of the two mentioned concepts, the one of political integration and the one of *spill-over* effect, would answer the question of the activating the process of political integration, and its potential dependence of existing other types of integration in a political sense.

The presence of the term integration, especially integration in a political sense in everyday political life, is enormous. Lot of political scientists and political philosophers are talking about the political integration, as a method of exceeding the dominant existing concept of the nation

state. The phenomenon of the political integration and also in general, integration in a political sense could be connected with the present form of regional integrations that are occurring in the international constellation and relations. As an initial point, the integration in a political sense and narrowly, the political integration could be identified in the European Union. The European Union is the first project following the *integration in a political sense*, based on the theory of neofunctionalism, and also, in which the concept of political integration is adopted as a theoretical concept and is transformed in empirical reality. In that sense, the concept of political integration is projected according the neofunctionalist theory of integration.

The existing connection of the concepts of integration as a general term and political integration, as a particular term, would be examined through the logical method of deduction. The term integration could be viewed from different angles and it could be understood in different senses. There are various manifestations of the term *Integration*. The integration could be interpreted as a social integration, cultural integration, integration in a political sense, integration as a method in mathematics and other meanings of the term. This paper examines the concept of integration in a political sense, as a wider concept, and narrowly, the political integration as a subcategory of the integration in a political sense. This categorizing of the integration as a term is based on the relation that the term builds with different fields of the social living, and with different scientific disciplines.

## THE INTEGRATION IN A POLITICAL SENSE

### *The meaning of the integration in a political sense*

The integration in a political sense and the political integration are relating to the social sciences in broader sense, and narrowly to the political and economic sciences. The meaning of integration in a political sense, could be identified with *uniting, unifying, organizing in a group* of two or more units. On the other side it represents “*centralization*” (Hoppe 2007, 109). In that dimension, understood as *uniting* and *centralization*, the integration always could be connected and based on several conditions and elements (Ilievski 2015, 12):

- Establishing unified law frame,
- Creating common institutions,
- Developing decision-making center,
- Projecting *identity*.

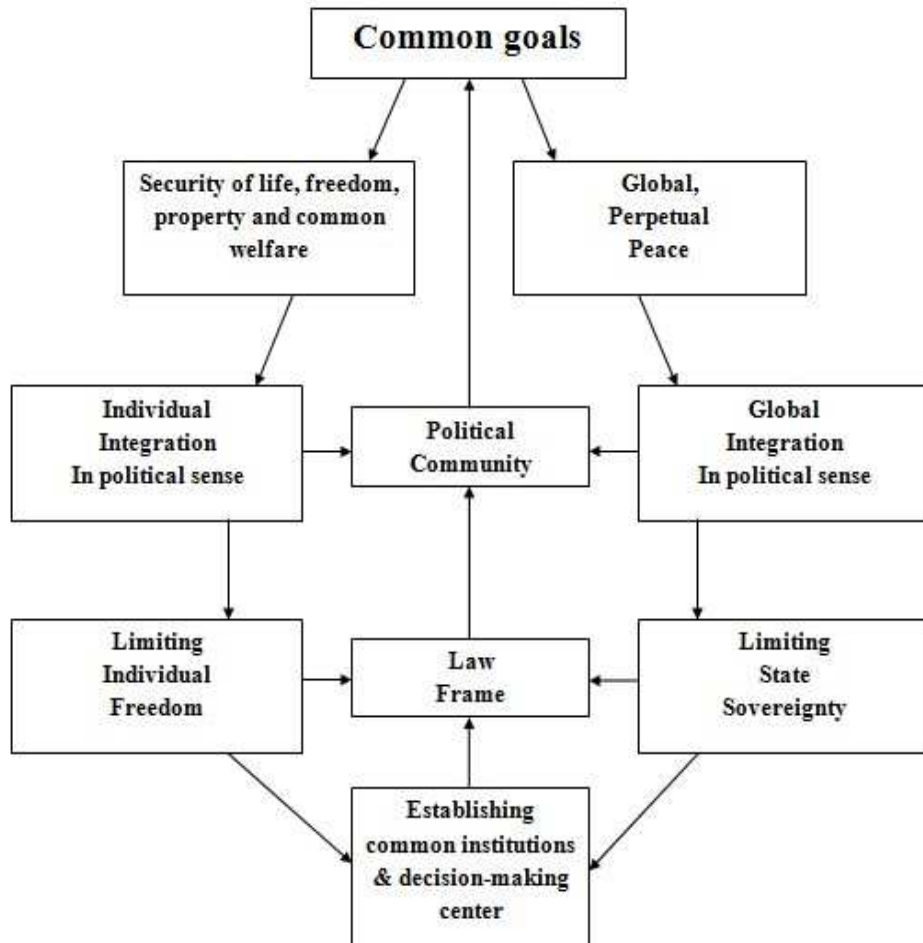
This category of the term integration could refer to a potential uniting of two or more political units, and applying to them the four mentioned conditions. In that dimension, the integration in a political sense results in building a *political community*, with the political units as its contents, through establishing same frame of rules, creating common institutions with the power of decision-making, and projecting an identity of the integrated community (instead of previous existing identities of the political units). The main point in this integrating activity is the process of delegating the autonomy of the political units to the newly formed political community.

### *Theories of integration in a political sense*

The first theories of *integration in a political sense* locate their origin in the theories of social contract. In that sense, the social contract could be identified with integration, but on individual level. The subjects of the integration are the individuals, which limit their *freedom* in a favor of a newly established *political community*. Implicitly, of this kind of integration, are writing several philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. According to these social contract theories, before the establishing of the social contract, *state of nature* (Hobbes 2010, Ch. XIII) is present in the social relations. This condition could be recognized as a condition without any political authorities, the human behavior is characterized as selfish and destructive, resulting in a *war of all against all* (Hobbes 2010, Ch. XXIII). The solution of this unpleasant condition becomes the *Leviathan*, which symbolize the state, as a form of individual integration in a political sense. In the same direction, John Locke, finds the state – the form of social contract and individual integration in a political sense, as a guaranty of *human life, liberty and property* (Locke 2006, 230). Jean Jacques Rousseau, as his integrationists' predecessors, determines the social contract as a *social consensus*, or a *social will*, developed with the purpose of establishing and remaining a *common welfare* (Rousseau 1978, 47-53).

At the same period, Immanuel Kant, goes one step further, and provides the basis for *global integration in a political sense*. Kant proposes his idea of global federation (Kant 1917, 53) that consists of republics that delegate their sovereignty to upper state level, and achieve a global integration in a political sense. His inspiration of this idea could be located in the aspiration of achieving a *perpetual peace*. He finds the global integration in a political sense as a method for achieving a greater good – *perpetual peace*, in the same way as the theorists of social contract, finds the same one for achieving security of life, freedom, property and common welfare. In the late XX century, there is another political philosopher that revives the Kant's ideal of global and *perpetual peace*, but with enhanced inspiration of the global political activities in that period. Emery Reves, in the same direction as Kant, is developing a theory for global integration in a political sense, a theory of global federation (Reves 2006, 139-140). His tendency is achieving a global peace, and, the same as Kant, he finds the global integration as a tool for his theory's purpose. In all of these theories (for integration in a political sense), could be distinguished:

- Common goals (achieving security of life, freedom, property, common welfare, global, perpetual peace)
- First methods of achieving the goals (individual integration in a political sense and global integration in a political sense – establishing (global) political community)
- Second methods of achieving the goals (limiting the individual freedom or autonomy and limiting the state sovereignty – establishing law frame)
- Third methods of achieving the goals (establishing common institutions and decision-making center).



**Figure 1: Analyze of *integration in a political sense***

By the term *integration in a political sense*, it could be understood various forms and interpretations of the term integration. It could be examined two different differentiations that are involved in the broader term of integration in a political sense. The first one is based on a *sector* variable:

- *Political integration,*
- *Economic integration.*

The second one is based on a *geography* variable:

- *Regional integration,*
- *Global integration.*

The last categories - regional integration and global integration, could correspond with the first categories of political and economic integration. It would be in the same scope with the integration in a political sense. The main relation, that determines the last category, is developed on dependence of a territory variable. The second categories, the economic and the political integration indicate accomplishing the previous mentioned four conditions, which are applying in the economics and (foreign) political policies of the governing.

This paper emphasizes the first category of the broader meaning of *integration in a political sense* – *political integration*. In the following part, the term integration would be used in its political sense.

## NEOFUNCTIONALISM AND THE *SPILL-OVER* EFFECT

Neofunctionalism is a theory that anticipates the regional integration and its theoretical goal - achieving *regional integration*, represented as establishing supranational institutions in certain sectors, with a specific method – “*incremental approach*” (Majone 2009, 112). This theory signifies a “synthesis of the theoretical functionalism of David Mitrany and the pragmatist approach of governing of Jean Monnet” (Mansour, 2011). Functionalism is a theory of international relations, emerging as a result of promoting the obsolescence of the *State - concept*, as a dominant form of social and political organization (Hammarlund 2005, Ch. II). It is always connected with a *global integration*, excluding the possibility of regional integration. The functionalists focus on the common *interests* and common *needs*, shared through the states, in the process of global integration, inspired by the erosion of the national sovereignty, and the wide knowledge of the scientists and experts in the process of policy-making (Rosamond, 2000). The goal of functionalism as a theory could be identified with a potential establishing of network that connects the states, in a form of supranational institutions. As a result of the networking, interdependence would be established among the states, which would appear as a guaranty of achieving and maintaining peace between them.

The substructure of functionalism – the neofunctionalism, goes one step further within the scope of intergovernmental cooperation, with a final destination, *full intergovernmental fusion*, in form of supranational structure. Besides the functionalism, the theory of neofunctionalism corresponds with *regional integration*. The supranational structure or supranational organization would become a *political union*, (Michael 2012, 30) which represents *finalite politique* (Kovacevic 2013, 185). The key element in the theory of neofunctionalism is the *spill-over* effect (Majone 2009, 104,105). The effect of *spill-over* takes the central position in this theory and according to Leon Lindberg: “it refers to a situation in which a given action, related to a specific goal, creates 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” (Laursen 2005, 5). The *spill-over* effect is the effect from the ongoing process of integration (in political sense) and specific integration in certain sectors that *spontaneously* leads to integration in another sector. In that direction, the initiation of integration in one sector would produce integration in another sector. The establishing of common institutions that govern certain social issue would be followed by extending their authority of decision-making in other specific sector. This logic of *spontaneously* extending authority of decision making of the supranational institutions is called *spill-over* effect. According to Jean Monnet, “achieving integration in one sector leads to a *spill-over* into other policy areas. This would lead to integration in these policy areas and in turn, more *spill-over*” (Dunn, 2012). The integration in one sector is stimulated, and it stimulates integration in another sector.

In this paper, using the concept of *spill-over* effect, it would be examined the possibility of initiation a political integration, as an overcoming process, of some other potential type of integration, part of the *integration in a political sense*. It would be examined the possibility of stimulating the process of political integration, by an over going process of economic integration, and their relations of dependence.

## THE PERSPECTIVES OF NEOFUNCTIONALIST THEORY

The theory of neofunctionalism is making a compromise between the *full integration*, which lies in the political unifying of the states, and the will of the states for preserving their *sovereignty* and *independence*. Also, that compromise is done between the *concept of the nation state*, and the *concept of integration*, as a process of forming supranational level of governance. On the other side, besides the forming of supranational level of governing, division exists between the sectors that are under supranational rule, the sectors in which some coordination of the national policies exists, and sectors in which the states completely conserve their decision-making capacities. Opposite to the theory of (euro)federalism, which anticipates the political integration exclusively as a *status*, established *quickly* with the highest legal act – Constitution; the theory of neofunctionalism with its *incremental* approach, perceives the political integration as a *process*.

### *Defining the political integration*

Ernst Haas, eminent researcher of the European integration and neofunctionalism, defines the political integration, as follows:

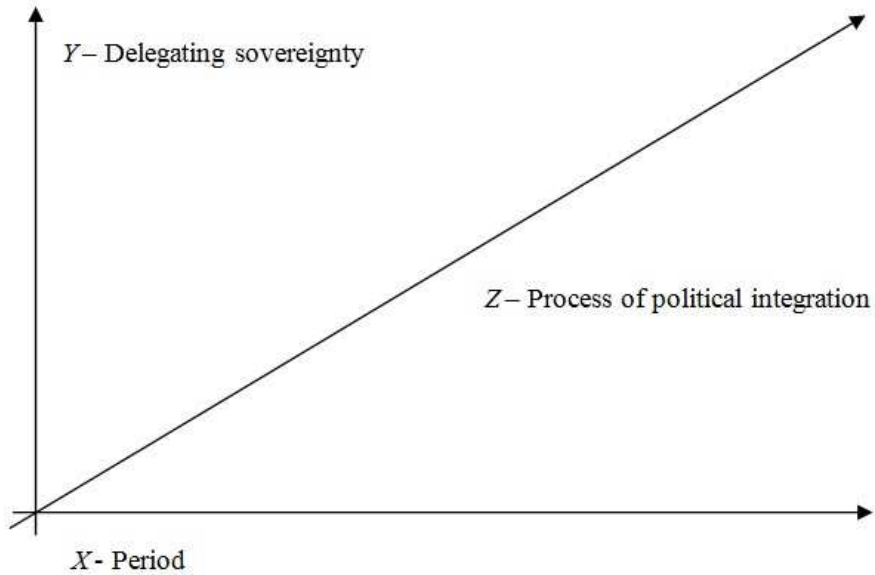
The process whereby nations forgot the desire and ability to conduct foreign and key domestic policies independently of each other, seeking instead to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision-making process to new central organs. (Lindberg 1963, 3).

From this definition, it could be observed several essential elements of the concept of political integration:

- The political integration is a process,
- Making joint decisions,
- Delegation of the activity of decision-making,
- Certain policies of decision-making,
- New central organs.

In Haas's definition, the political integration in its bit as a political concept is a *process*, which obviously presupposes certain *period*. In that context, the political integration is perceived as a *process*, that differs from potential existence of political integration as a *status*. This process represents the activity of *delegating* the power of decision-making to new central organs, which includes delegation of the sovereignty, from a national level, to a newly established – supranational one. According to the interpretation of Haas's definition, it could be concluded that the independent variables of the process of political integration are:

- The *period*
- The *delegation* of the sovereignty.



**Figure 2: Variables in the *process of political integration***

The process of political integration depends on activity of delegating sovereignty, in certain period. From that angle, the *period* and the activity of *delegating* sovereignty, determines the *process of political integration*.

**Table 1: Variables in the *process of political integration***

Independent variable 1	Independent variable 2	Dependent variable
<i>Period</i>	<i>Delegation of the sovereignty</i>	<i>Process of political integration</i>

Perceiving from the aspect of the decision-making sector, Haas focuses on the *foreign policy*, and other key domestic policies. That could be understood as *delegating* the sovereignty in the scope of *foreign and security policy* from the State to the supranational organization. Following the process of political integration, particularly, its finish point, the supranational organization holds the power of decision-making in the sector of foreign and security policy.

From the above mentioned about the integration in a political sense, there is only one element to add, when we are referring to the concept of political integration, besides the integration (in political sense). It is the sector in which the integration occurs, particularly it is the sector of *foreign policy*. Despite the elements of the integration (understood in a political sense), as a broader category, and the political integration as a narrow one, the last involves one more, which is determining and specifying it as a *political*.



## *The political integration as a process*

Understood as a process, the (political) integration could be divided into several segments. It starts with *cooperation* between the states, qualified as a *non-formal cooperation*, which participate in the process of integration in certain sectors, while using the *unanimity* as a form of decision-making and as an instrument for conserving their sovereignty. As a starting point, in the process of integration, according to Roberto Castaldi, “The cooperation takes place when no national sovereignty is pooled or transferred, when the institutional framework is purely intergovernmental and generally based on unanimity” (Castaldi 2007, 37). The next segment, that could be understood as a stage, in the process of (political) integration, covers the institutionalization of the cooperation manifested as a process of creating certain institution, where the states holds the *last word*, in the process of decision-making through the *unanimity*, that is essential for passing a decision. It could be stated that the states, have been engaged in international cooperation, and have been part of various international cooperative organization, but the concept of the (political) integration goes a step further (Heinonen 2006, 2). The international formal cooperation has been initiated and regulated by an intergovernmental treaty. When an institution with autonomy is established, supranational by its nature, transformation in the structure of the states participant in the process, is taking place. This transformation could be identified as moving from one stage to another, from *cooperation*, to *integration*. The final point of the (political) integration process, results in establishing finished political community – “*finalite politique*” (Kovacevic 2013, 185), where the supranational institutions have absorbed the essential scope of the national sovereignty. And according to Haas’s definition, the essential scope of the national sovereignty is represented by conducting of *foreign* and other domestic key policies. The (political) integration represents the moment of delegating the sovereignty, from national to supranational level, which presupposes:

- Establishing *supranational institutions*,
- Overcoming the *unanimity* as method of decision-making (Castaldi 2007, 37).

According to the author Hannu Heinonen, the process of political integration could be divided in three major stages, with a specific accent on the prevailing relations between the state and the supranational entity:

- Coordination – the lowest level of cooperation;
- Harmonization – the higher level of cooperation, which usually involves harmonization of the national legislation or adoption of a common legislation. On this level, all legislation is still national, and all policies and instruments are nationally controlled and implemented, although they might be regionally agreed;
- Integration – is the highest level of cooperation. Some of the traditional decision-making powers of nation states have been handed over regional level, and regional rules and decisions supersede national legislation (Heinonen 2006, 7).

The integration could be identified as the highest level in the process of cooperation, or the process of cooperation could symbolize the first stage in the process of integration. In a similar way to Heinonen, Professor Goran Ilik, established three gradations in the process, with a specific accent laid on the decision-making process. According to him, the process, run through these gradations:

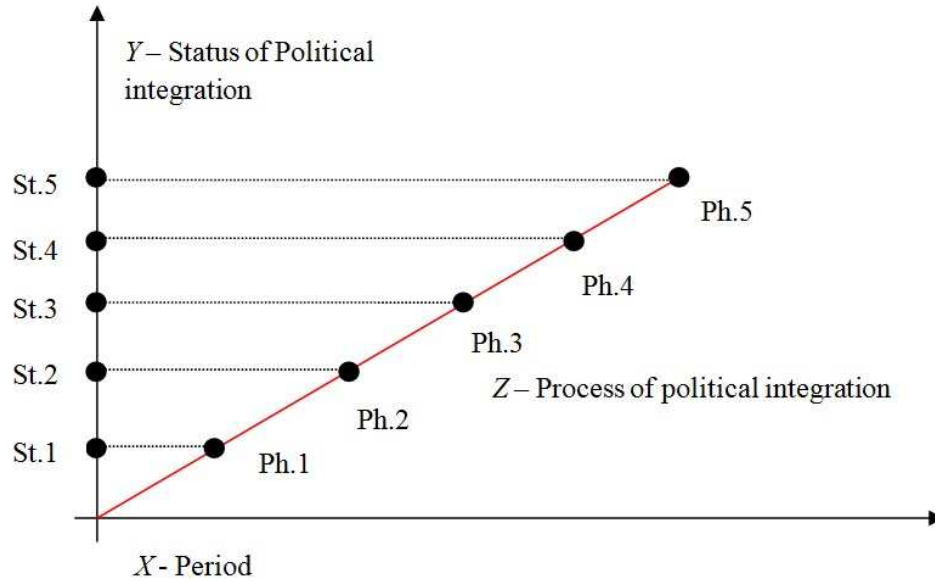
- Gr.1: Soft intergovernmental cooperation of the national resources, decision-making based on unanimity;
- Gr.2: Strong intergovernmental cooperation of national resources, contractual based, decision-making based on unanimity;
- Gr.3: Supranational instruments, supranational decision-making based on qualified majority voting (Ilik 2009, 125).

The three gradations mentioned above, are manifested in the process of political integration, with a specific focus laid on the decision-making method, which tends to transform the decision-making process's principle, from unanimity to (qualified) majority voting. The author Soren Dosenrode claims that the process of political integration could be distinguished into several phases, generally taken:

- Ph.1: *Ad hoc* intergovernmental political cooperation;
- Ph.2: Institutionalized intergovernmental cooperation – voluntary agreement of persistent character which shapes behavior, limits the freedom of action and creates expectations about how the participants behave;
- Ph.3: Institutionalized intergovernmental coordination – synchronization of activities among the states to cooperation;
- Ph.4: Partial or supra-nationalized integration – the states have passed over a part of their sovereignty to a supranational authority which has autonomy and may follow policies of the member state governments;
- Ph.5: Full integration – the member states have handed over the major part of their decision-making power (“sovereignty”), to the supranational entity and have stopped being direct subjects of international public law (Dosenrode 2010, 8-9).

### ***The political integration as a status***

According to Dosenrode and his phases in the process of political integration, it could be concluded that each phase in the process of political integration, represents a *status of political integration*. Besides the claims that the concept of political integration could symbolize a *process*, each phase in that process, remains *status of political integration*. So the meaning of the concept of political integration could be connected with a *process of political integration* and a *status of political integration*. Following this logic, it evolves, that all five *phases* represent five *statuses* of political integration. Phase 1, or *ad hoc intergovernmental political cooperation*, represents the first status of political integration, and so on. The last phase, *full integration*, symbolizes the last status of political integration. In this sense, the political integration could be defined as a status in the process of political integration, which involves the amount of the delegated national sovereignty and the decision-making power of the supranational entity, especially in the scope of *foreign and security* policies.



**Figure 3: The relation between *the process of political integration* and *the status of political integration***

Indicators of the achieving the *status of political integration* would be the existence of supranational institutions and the leading principle of the decision-making process. Status 1 of political integration involves non-existence of supranational institutions, following unanimity as an exclusive principle in the decision-making process. Status 5 of political integration, involves prevailing supranational institutions, especially in the sector of foreign and security policies, and decision making process based on (qualified) majority.

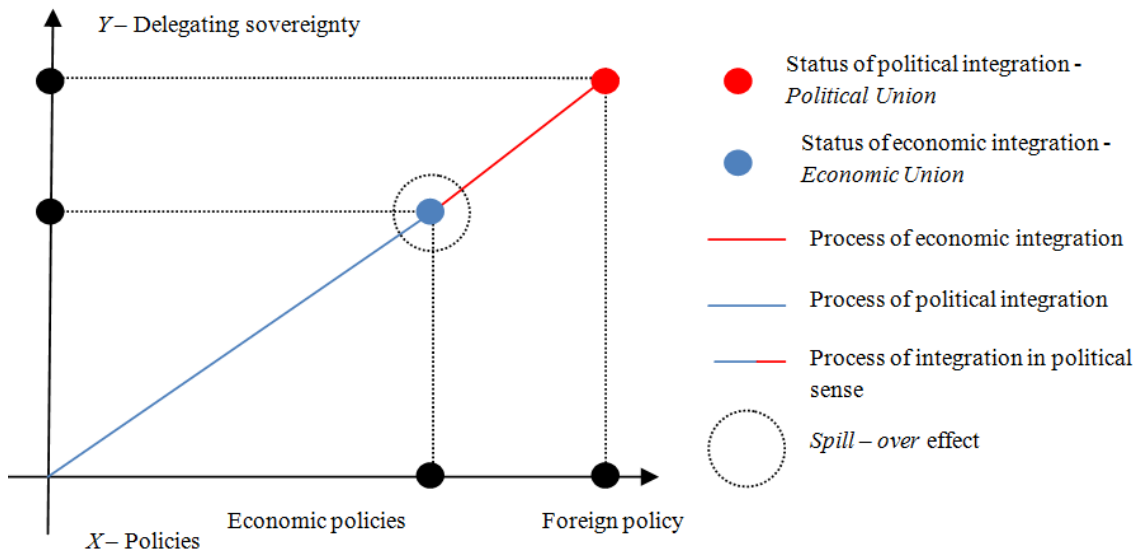
**Table 2: Indicators of *status of political integration***

<i>Status of political integration</i>	<i>St.1</i>	<i>St.2</i>	<i>St.3</i>	<i>St.4</i>	<i>St.5</i>
<i>Indicator 1</i> (Existence of Supranational institutions)	No	No	Yes (emerging)	Yes (prevailing)	Yes (dominant, especially in F&S policies)
<i>Indicator 2</i> (Decision-making principle)	Pure unanimity	Pure unanimity	Dominant unanimity	Unanimity and (qualified) majority	(Qualified) Majority

**Activating the process of political integration**

The essence of neofunctionalist theory is the *spill-over* effect. As previously mentioned, the integration from one sector is initiating the integration of another. Also, the differentiation between the concepts of integration and political integration are examined. The concept of *integration (in political sense)* contains the concept of *economic* and *political integration* as a two concepts. Leon Lindberg qualified the economic integration, as a concept of *political nature* (Lindberg 1963, 2). This statement, could be connected with the *spill-over* effect, and according to it, the economic integration could be an *initial point*, for activating the process of political integration. The integration in economic policies, *spontaneously*, following the neofunctionalist logic, could stimulate the integration in political matters. The both types of integration are interdependent, perceiving from the angle of neofunctionalism. The political integration could be started and it could achieve its last stage, while the economic integration is already active and taking place.

The political union is incorporated as a final stage in the process of economic integration, which is also the result of the finished political integration process. According to this, the process of economic integration and the process of political integration project the same end that corresponds with the *full integration*. Following this logic and the two cases previously mentioned, it is obvious that the process of political integration could be initiated by an ongoing process of economic integration, as a result of the *spill-over* effect. The activation of the process of economic integration, spontaneously would lead to initiation the process of political integration. The both processes of integration, in their last stages, would tend to become one single process of integration (in political sense), tending to achieve *full integration*, or *political union*.



**Figure 4: Political integration in the perspective of neofunctionalist theory**

## CONCLUSION

At the end of this paper, it could be concluded that the concept of political integration, involves several interpretations, and the activation of *the process of political integration* is based on the concept of *spill-over* effect, deriving from the theory of neofunctionalism. The concept of political integration is a sub-category in the broader category of *integration in a political sense*.

The first meaning of the concept of political integration is connected with its understanding as a *process*. *The process of political integration* could be defined as a process where the states, in certain period, delegate their sovereignty to a supranational entity, especially in the sector of *foreign affairs* and other key domestic policies. The second meaning of the concept of political integration is connected with its understanding as a *status*. *The status of political integration* could be defined as a status that involves the amount of the delegated sovereignty, from national level to supranational entity, especially in the sector of foreign affairs and other key domestic policies. The activation of the *process of political integration*, due to the theory of neofunctionalism, is inspired by the ongoing economic integration. The political integration *spontaneously* emerges in a certain phase in the *process of economic integration*, as a result of the *spill-over* effect. In that dimension it could be claimed that there is a relation of *dependence* between the process of *political* and *economic integration*.

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