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A two-speed Europe – a risk of total disintegration, or an opportunity for the development of the European Union? an attempt at a projection

Abstract: The economic and debt crises in the Eurozone have exacerbated divisions within the European Union and are leading to an increase in competition among the Member States. The aim of this paper is to attempt to answer the question of whether this proposed “two-speed Europe” will lead to the total disintegration of the EU, or rather to its development in other dimensions. The structure of work and the analysis conducted in this paper are devoted to this question. A fundamental issue is the character of multipolarity at the regional level. What role will be played in the integration process by the currently discussed idea of a “two-speed Europe”? The author has adopted the method of critical analysis of literature. As the result of the analysis it has been shown that the “two-speed Europe”, will lead the current integration of Europe to total ruin, entailing dangerous economic and political consequences resulting from the collapse of the integration project.

Key words: integration, multipolarity, disintegration, two-speed Europe, development

Introduction

The current interdependence among entities in international relations is simultaneously accompanied by a trend towards multipolarity. This process in particular concerns the European Union (EU), at the regional level as well as in the global arena.

The economic and debt crises in the Eurozone have exacerbated divisions within the European Union and are leading to an increase in competition among the Member States. As a result, the dynamics of integration processes and also disintegration processes influenced by the crisis are leading to an inevitable evolution of the EU. The possibilities of the EU to exercise its influence and share in the creation of a new, multipolar order will depend on the form taken by the European integration project in the coming years.

A fundamental issue is the character of multipolarity at the regional level. Will the EU evolve in the direction of cooperative or confrontational multipolarity? To what extent will it support the integration of the new Member States? What role will be played in the integration process by the currently discussed idea of a “two-speed Europe”? To what degree could the disintegration of the EU contribute to the growing tendency towards confrontational multipolarity in the global arena?

The aim of this paper is to attempt to answer the question of whether this proposed “two-speed Europe” will lead to the total disintegration of the EU, or rather to its development in other dimensions. The structure of work and the analysis conducted in this paper are devoted to this question.

Disintegration of European states in selected political, legal and economic doctrines

The roots of the concept of European disintegration can be found in political, legal and economic doctrines relating to international relations dating back to the second half of the 18th century.

Among them, we can find separatist tendencies. They are evidenced by the doctrine of one of the greatest expert in the law of nations of the time, Swiss lawyer Emer de Vattel (1714–1767) (Sadowski, Szymaniec, 2011, pp. 13–15, 20–21, 29–30). According to Vattel, the subjects of the law of nations – which modifies the law of nature – and at the same time, the entities operating on international arenas, should always be sovereign nations – states. This was the principle that Vattel stood by strongly. Nations, irrespective of their size, are independent and equal to each other, as in the light of the law of nature, it is not strength that determines the law, but justice and obligations towards others. Therefore, relations between sovereign states must be based on the principle of equality, and no state may interfere with the internal affairs of another (Malec, 1999, p. 148). Vattel considered the state of peace, not war, between nations as the natural state and supported limiting the use of violence in international relations, but also believed that sometimes war may constitute an efficient means of enforcing justice. He accepted the use of war not only in case of injustice being committed, but also if the national security is at threat. He also did not rule out the possibility that both sides of an armed conflict may be right in some respects (Vattel, 1958, pp. 53–67, 90, 329–331, 354–367, 593–597).

Vattel's views gained popularity among the academics of his time. Their echoes are found in, for instance, the reflections of a Scottish thinker and Professor at the Edinburgh University – Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), presented in his work published at the end of the century, in 1792, entitled *Principles of Moral and Political Science*, which constitutes a synthesis of the author's considerations on the subject of morality, the foundations of law and politics. He claimed that nations – states are artificial persons, which hold – similarly to natural persons – certain rights, arising from certain actions (such as ownership of a territory), or agreements and customs. If other means of defending one's rights prove unsuccessful, the ultimate means the state may use is military force. According to Ferguson, war should be considered justified or fair not only in case of open aggression expressed by one state towards another, but also if a somewhat potential threat exists, which the Scottish author covers by the scope of each state's right to defend itself. "Nations are, [...] almost in every instance, mutual objects of jealousy and distrust". Therefore, they may only consider themselves safe as long as they are able to protect their own rights (Ferguson, 1792, pp. 300–301). Alike Vattel, not believing in the possibility of completely eliminating military conflicts from international relations, Ferguson called for their humanitarisation. By negating the possibility of close peaceful cooperation, also for the purpose of settling any possible disputes between states comprising the international community and even the Concert of Europe, Ferguson – just as the Swiss lawyer – presented a view which could be considered anti-integration (Sadowski, Szymaniec, 2011, pp. 13–15, 20–21, 29–30).

Trends supporting disintegration of European states can be found in the doctrine of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814). He is the author of *The Closed Commercial State*

(*Der geschlossene Handelsstaat*). The main idea behind it was that the state should constitute a closed space in commercial terms, just as it is closed as a territory governed by one legal system. The concept of the closed commercial state is therefore an extreme consequence of the sovereignty of states. The German philosopher justified his idea with arguments of an ethical nature, namely, he stressed the injustice and exploitation caused by the current colonial policy of European states. A division of Europe, and then the rest of the world, into self-sufficient economic areas should eliminate the cause of war, which is the desire to gain access to resources. Therefore, the transformation of the current international community into a system of closed commercial states – which may possibly exchange goods by barter – in the long-term should lead to the total elimination of war (Fichte, 1996, p. 154). Fichte's views therefore reflect on his dreams of eternal peace. Only this time, realisation of that dream should not lead to integration, but radical disintegration of states. Fichte's idea was of a socialist utopian character, with strong republican roots. It is a radical extension of the concept of sovereignty and self-sufficiency of the nation, presented by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *The Social Contract* and in the draft constitution for Corsica (Sadowski, Szymaniec, 2011, pp. 13–15, 20–21, 29–30).

Towards the end of the 18th century, an ethnic definition of the nation emerged in the European thought, whose concept was developed by a German thinker of the 'Sturm und Drang' era, Johann Gottfried Herder (Szymaniec, 2008, pp. 18–36). At the dawn of the next century, nationalistic ideology began developing, towards which Fichte himself greatly contributed – through his Addresses to the German Nation, presented during the Napoleonic Wars in 1807 (Fichte, 1963, pp. 160–173). The character of those ideas became strongly anti-integration. This also affected the science of economics. Some of Fichte's concepts relating to the closed commercial state inspired the representatives of the so-called 'Nationalökonomie', i.e. an economic thought developed mainly in German cultural areas which saw the nation managing its resources as the foundation for its considerations. As Jerzy Chodorowski noted, Fichte may be considered the precursor of the German "anti-integration economic doctrines," supported by the representatives of various political trends: from democrat Friedrich Naumann (1860–1919) all the way to the Nazis (Chodorowski, 1972, p. 19).

The political, legal and economic thought of the second half of the 18th century also makes references to anti-integration concepts. On the opposite side, we have Vattel's and Ferguson's reflections on international relations, which accentuate the national sovereignty, as well as Fichte's socialist utopia, which started the "national economy" doctrines with strong disintegration overtones. Whereas the views of Jean-Jacques Rousseau on international relations were so ambiguous that they could serve both Kant and Fichte. However, it should be emphasised that in all of those concepts we can find seeds of ideas which were developed, in various directions, over the next two centuries (Sadowski, Szymaniec, 2011, pp. 13–15, 20–21, 29–30). Those contemporary critical economic doctrines which take into consideration EU disintegration drivers, unequivocally point out to structural problems.

J. Sozański (Sozański, 2014, p. 10) deems the research into the EU law an extraordinarily complex discipline, given the amount of legislature (over 90 thousand legal acts), growth dynamics, intricate structure and the resulting difficulties in application and presentation within the doctrine. The Lisbon Treaty has further tangled up system mecha-

nisms and structure, which however has as yet been reflected in neither the application of law by EU and member states authorities, nor in the literature, which in particular all ignore a new, hierarchically exposed category: the EU values and the related broadly meant human rights and general principles, thus contorting the shape of the system. The EU's powers having been weakened, such situation adversely affects the consistency and efficiency of the legal regime, as well as the implementation and application of law. Another material change is including, in the EU treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, harmonised with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and Strasburg jurisprudence, connected with the EU's (not yet performed) obligation to access ECHR. Opening of the EU legal regime onto international law and the legal system of the UN and other international organisations has further undermined the autonomy of the EU system. Such repeated distortions of *acquis*, caused by EU authorities' pragmatism, is to a material detriment of the EU and its population, consequently leading to disintegration.

R. Cox (Czaputowicz, 2007, pp. 283–288) observed that critical theories focus on analysing how a given political system has come to be and how it should be modified. It is so, because these theories challenge the idea of a sovereign state as a form of political commonwealth, a form defining the identity of the commonwealth's participants. Supporters of critical theories strive to develop an alternative theory of international relations and to overcome the problems posed by the existence of sovereign states, with a view to creating post-sovereign global politics, contradicting that implemented within the EU.

Even before the onset of the 2007 economic crisis, there appeared theorists of the European integration questioning the *status quo*. Some researchers deemed integration in certain fields excessive and suggested that the Union should withdraw from some areas or more often use mechanisms of flexible integration (Scharpf, 2006, pp. 20–25). Other suggested a deeper integration in terms of both substance (social policy, defence or external relations), and system model (constitution for the EU, political union or federation). Important factors included the debate over democratic deficit and inefficiency of EU's implemented policies, so frustrating for EU population (Schmidt, 2006; Ławniczak, 2014, pp. 36–40).

On the back of the economic crisis, stronger have after 2008 been opinions that Europe is 'over-integrated' (Scharpf, 2014, p. 18). While formal powers of EU institutions have been growing, the resources those institutions could use to implement EU policies have remained unchanged. In numerous areas, integration initiatives proved asymmetric and partial only. Critics believe the integration has become too deep, entering new areas, accompanied by excessive optimism, which however lacked any intellectual reflection. Selective negative integration, leaving behind key sectors of the economy, as well as the unavoidable threats of positive integration, all have given rise to the population's disappointment and distrust (Giandomenico, 2002, p. 383; Ławniczak, 2014, pp. 36–40). Against this background, the following paradox comes out, so characteristic of the current inter-paradigm period: discarding the 'ever closer union' paradigm and controlled disintegration (including, for instance, more widespread application of opt-out clauses, as well as instruments enabling a closer cooperation among fewer states) are here seen as the only way to save the guiding principle of the united Europe. Fritz W. Scharpf

has particularly clearly stated the idea; he maintains that, following the implementation of Euro-rescuing steps, the EU has become an authoritarian regime run by technocrats (believers in false religion of monetarism) or institutionalised manifestation of creditor states' control over debtor states (Scharpf, 2014, pp. 3–4). The crisis has brought forward a discord between declared solidarity and practically implemented maximising of sovereignty by leading states (Scharpf, 2014, pp. 3–4; Ławniczak, 2014, pp. 36–40; Czaputowicz, 2014). The discord has revealed that the integration based exclusively on 'managing interrelations' may prove difficult to sustain (Hayward, 2012, pp. 10–12). In such circumstances, Scharpf sees the only hope in a revolt of debtor states (acting with strong support of their populations), leading to disintegration of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) or to such remodelling of EMU which would more evenly distribute the cost of overcoming the crisis (Scharpf, 2014, pp. 13,17; Ławniczak, 2014, pp. 36–40). The EU, created in line with the still existing integration paradigm, has proven weak, which makes the Union unable to counteract the ongoing limitation of public authorities' ability to solve material social and economic problems, while this limitation is among the consequences of globalisation (Conrad, 2012, p. 245). Despite the opinions voiced in the course of a debate over democratic deficit, the problem is not so citizens' control of decisions of public or quasi-public bodies (e.g., with accountability mechanisms), as such bodies' ability to control decision-making processes in social, economic and international relations (Lord, 2009, p. 15; Ławniczak, 2014, pp. 36–40). Among proposed answers to the problem of the EU's structural insufficiency is that given by federalism, on which a new consolidation-oriented integration paradigm might be based in the post-crisis Europe (Conrad, 2012, p. 245). In some respects, the EU already operates as a federation; it might also be called a 'reinvented confederation' (Kelemen, 2007, p. 305; Ławniczak, 2014, pp. 36–40). This notwithstanding, federalism for long remained put on the back burner by European integration theorists (Witkowska, 2013b, p. 178). It was treated as a normative theory of even ideology or, at best, as a descriptive and hardly inspiring approach, which has failed to provide material knowledge-enhancing explanations or analogies useful in studying the contemporary EU. However, supporters of federalism argue that it may be an up-to-date and valuable theory, which not only pertains to the issues fundamental to integration process (such as the division of powers between supra-national and national tiers or the principle of subsidiarity), but also explains the operation of the current and shaping of the future institutions of the European Union (Kelemen, 2007; Ławniczak, 2014, pp. 36–40). The fundamental problem preventing the potential of federalist thought from being used is sticking to the rigid conceptual frame of its conventional current. Indeed, if federalism is to realise the 'United in diversity' motto, then one must bear in mind that Europe today lacks any politically material form of 'unity', be it the sense of European identity or European belongingness (Conrad, 2012, p. 248). This statement urges those discussing the federalisation of the EU to revise accepted views on state and democracy. Joseph H. H. Weiler points out the specific structure of the EU political system. The federal (top-down) hierarchy of legal rules is accompanied by the confederal (bottom-up) hierarchy of actual power and authority, which allows to see the EU system as an innovative form of non-domination institutionalisation (Weiler, 2003; Ławniczak, 2014, pp. 36–40). It could serve a basis for a global cosmopolitan political culture and constitutionalisation (or just legal formalisation) of transna-

tional interrelations. This system does, however, reveal serious drawbacks, referred to above. The consensus-led decision-making process prevents flexible response to signals from the dynamically changing world. Moreover, the yesterday consensus may become the dictate of individual states if the others have changed their preferences. Abandoning these rules would require member state citizens to develop a sense of identification with EU co-citizens. However, shifting the democratic practice from the national level onto the EU level appears impossible without prior rewording of the federation idea and its separation from the statehood in the form of a nation state (Schmalz-Bruns, 2010). Accordingly, new federalists see it necessary to go beyond the familiar model of the nation-state democracy. The democracy of a supra-national federation would be so far from the national democracy, as the latter is far from the democracy of ancient Athens. The new federal reconfiguration of democracy calls for a new approach to the theory of democracy, going off the well-trodden paths of thinking and imagining democracy organised differently from what it looks like in the nation states. It is thus a current of thought opposite to the EU constitutionalisation in the first ten years of this century. It should be stressed that this paradigm is still in the initial development phase and may thus develop in various directions. However, it inspires discussion on a possible solution to the crucial problem faced by the existing federalist ideas: a lack of a deep sense of identity among Europeans. Replacing the search for identity with a focus on trust as the constitutive value of federation might enable the development of institutional structure founded on non-centralised understanding of democracy. Democracy would thus be based not on the sovereignty of a uniform people, but on non-hierarchical coexistence of multiple national and sub-national political communities, accompanied by the European *demos*, so that they would not affect one-another's status of a carrier of rights. It is such federation only that could be a both legitimate form of organising society, and effective tool to cope with the changing world, including manifestations of arbitrary behaviour within and without (Ławniczak, 2014, pp. 36–40).

A two-speed Europe – risk or opportunity for the development of the EU?

Currently, the European Union is drifting ever farther from its ideals. The most visible changes began to occur at the start of the economic crisis at the turn of 2007 and 2008. In truth, these changes had been visible before, but today their consequences are slowly leading to the total reconstruction of the European community. The EU no longer resembles the institution which it aimed to become at the start of its existence. It is also different from the EU which functioned at least to a certain extent in the 1990s and at the dawn of the 21st century. The EU project at the beginning assumed on the one hand balanced and sustainable developed of the Member States, and on the other community actions including aid from the stronger members for the benefit of the weaker ones. Nowadays, the EU is an organisation in which divisions in levels of development, the nature and extent of national problems, and certainly the increasingly clear disparities between the national interests of individual states. Paradoxically, the problems began at the moment that a common currency was adopted. At that time, the growing distance between the rich countries of the north, such as Germany, the

Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Norway, and the countries of the south, such as Spain, Portugal, and Greece.

The authors of a group paper published by the University of Nantes entitled “*Europe: Crise et critique*” (Auffray-Seguette, Leclerc, Ferry, 2015), noted that the absence of democratic legitimacy of the EU was associated among others with lack of sufficiently clear signs of the creation of EU citizenship, as well as with the technocratic character of EU policies. Such a rational, non-populist critique of the EU suggests two conclusions; first, that the centralist institutional construct of the EU, not supported by democratic legitimisation, is unsatisfactory for many states and citizens, and second, that the EU has distanced itself from activities which have a real chance of improving the welfare of its citizens, not in this case meaning centrally planned strategies, but rather increased economic freedom.

The ongoing internal disintegration of the EU is apparent in the great cultural differences between the separate segments of the Union. These differences concern a great many issues, from decision making styles, the definition of authority, time management, aspirations, and work ethics, to methods of teaching, obtaining knowledge, and education. Money is treated differently in different segments, as are borrowing and attitudes towards saving. The type of consequences that can arise from these differences under a top-down generation and implementation model of economic policies can be understood based on the example, for instance, of Bulgaria, which for quite some time has attempted to follow a German model. Moreover, the main institutions of the EU are currently striving to increase their control over the discrepancies among individual states. These institutions are taking on the role of policeman, in hopes that thanks to such an approach they will gain greater control over future events (via, for instance, financial pacts). Meanwhile, the countries of the periphery are losing control over their own debt burdens, as decision concerning their fiscal policies are starting to be made elsewhere.

This division of Europe is increasingly noticeable, with the countries centred on Germany, France, and Italy on the one hand, and the unstable “outlying” countries of the south, now transformed into lenders and debtors. This division entails serious consequences regarding the current form of the EU. It is no longer a federation whose aim is to benefit all of the members of the community, but rather a group of institutions which are being used to create spheres of influence (in particular for the benefit of Germany).

Discussion on the topic of differentiated integration (a Europe of differences) has appeared in the theory and practice of the functioning of the EU as a result of a deepening divergence in categories of economic development, cultural heritage, and national preferences in political and social policy¹ (Zielińska-Głębocka, 1999, pp. 25–26). As a result

¹ **The multi-speed model** is based on the assumption that the Member States will decide to implement the same policies and actions, though not simultaneously, rather at various tempos. This means that all the EU countries accept the common aims resulting from the integration project, and thus accept the existing *acquis communautaire* and agree to its further development. However, some of these countries may choose to implement at a faster pace, while others will choose to join the leading group at a later date. This deceleration of the tempo of integration by the second group may be due to delays in adapting to mutually agreed criteria or to national preferences.

of turbulence in the EU,² referred to as a crisis of identity, there has been a return to these concepts, and there is much to suggest that they will find a rationale and ultimately an application. One indication of such a tendency is a nine-page document prepared by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled “*Ein starkes Europa in einer unsicheren Welt*” (A Strong Europe in an Uncertain World), which suggests opening the doors to the development of a two-speed Europe.

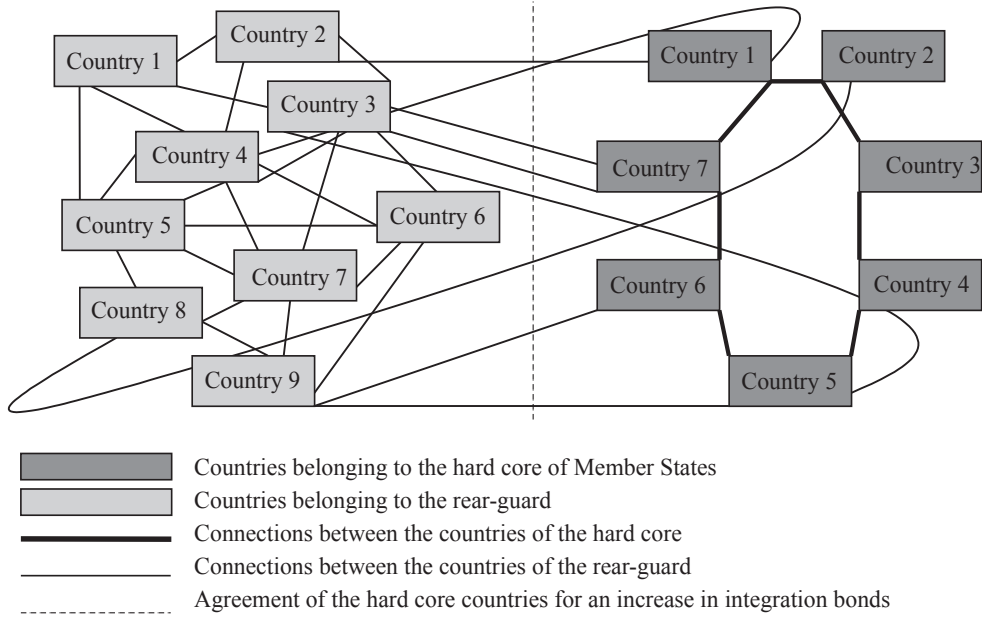


Figure 1. A diagram of a two-speed Europe

Source: Own work based on: (Bachmann, 2004, p. 1).

Currently, in the wake of the aforementioned EU crisis, we are faced with the task of creating a multivalent model which combines elements of the multispeed model and the variable geometry model. The integration model which has been proposed, and which itself is a development of the processes described above, can be described as a new-old two-speed model (NOTSM).

The variable geometry model assumes differing methods of implementing integration tasks, and provides for less solidarity. The basis of this variable geometry model, appearing also in the concentric circles model, is the creation of a group of “core” countries which will implement selective cooperation in defined types of policies, such as technological, industrial, or energy policy.

² Symptom of which are, inter alia, the gigantic debt of the EU countries, the permanent stagnation of the European economy, the support of the European electorate for the destructive policy of the parties ruling the EU, the lack of economic growth, the demographic gap, the Eurozone crisis, the immigration crisis, Brexit, increasing Euroscepticism, unemployment, the growing developmental disproportion among national economies, the lack of adequate regulation of monetary policy on supranational level, and the increasing tendency to particularism in the interests of individual countries.

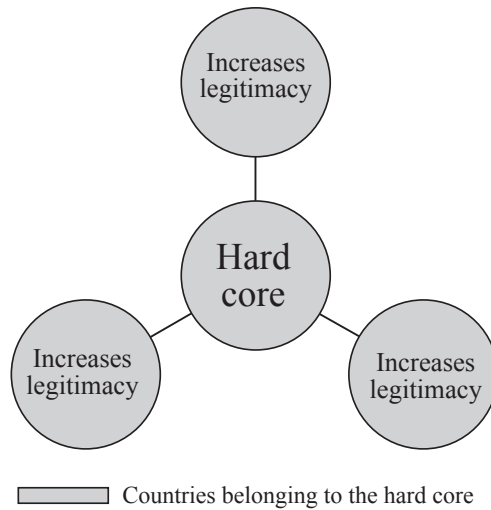


Figure 2. Flexibility and legitimisation towards the countries of the hard core

Source: Own work based on: (Bachmann, 2004, p. 10).

In the literature, a two-speed Europe is defined as one in which the European Union is permanently divided into two groups of countries (Fig. 1). Within the first group (the hard core), the network of mutual ties is more dense, and the number of areas of integration is greater than those between this first group and the second group (the rear guard³), and this difference between the two groups can only be overcome with the approval of the first group (Figs. 2 and 3) (Bachmann, 2004, p. 1).

This NOTSM model proposed involves the implementation of the same policies and actions in the various countries, but not at the same tempo. The Member States which choose to implement these policies simultaneously and on the principle of unanimity will form the core group of countries. This first group of countries would by design create a political union resembling a federal superstate, whereas the remaining countries would stay at their current level of integration. Those Member States which cannot or do not wish to implement common policies towards the achievement of common aims together with the core would have the opportunity to join the leading states at a later time.

³ Within the rear guard group, subgroups can be identified:

- the willing and able group (WAG): a group which has become part of the rear guard despite meeting the requirements of the intensified cooperation project, and which has expressed a willingness to participate in the project;
- the unwilling but able (UAG): a group which has become part of the rear guard as a result of its own unwillingness to engage fully in the intensified cooperation, but which meets its requirements for participation;
- the unable but willing group (UWG): a group which has become part of the rear guard as a result of its own inability (failure to meet requirements of participation) to participate, but which nevertheless is willing to participate;
- the unwilling and unable group (UUG): a group which neither meets the requirements for participation, nor is willing to participate.

In practice, however, this would mean their marginalisation, which as a result would lead to the division of Europe into two zones, an A zone and a B zone, and further lead to disintegration.

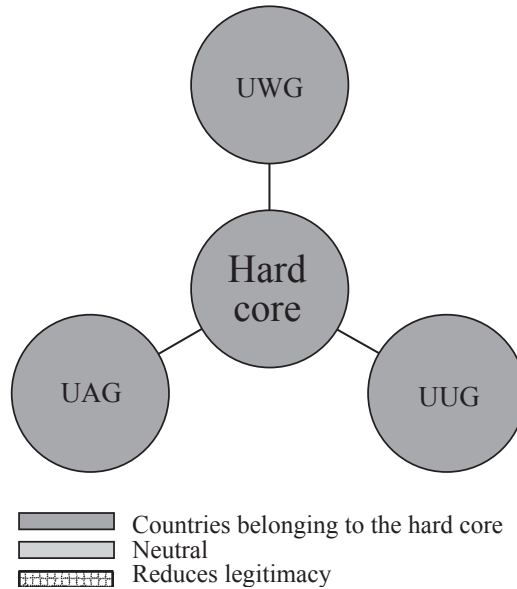


Figure 3. Flexibility and legitimacy towards the UAG, UUG, and UWG

Source: Own work based on: (Bachmann, 2004, p. 11).

In Europe, the game has already begun, and its result will ultimately be decisive in shaping the balance of power in the EU and the future state of its integration. The tone of discussion is being set by France, Germany, and Italy, already known as the Big Three.

The plan to establish a “European army”, which is meant to be an antidote for the integration problems of a post-Brexit EU, may signal the beginning of a lasting change in the EU balance of power. The mini-summit, which took place on the island of Ventotene on 22 August 2016 with the participation of leaders of France, Germany, and Italy, was the beginning of a new alliance within the EU. Francois Hollande, Angela Merkel and Matteo Renzi hope that the tightening cooperation in defence will be a test of the potential of the countries of Europe to integrate. This plan, championed by the Big Three, to tighten defence cooperation is in fact quite realistic, as Brexit has removed the greatest barrier to the creation of a European army. The greatest influence on the future of the EU will be had by the countries of Western Europe, whereas those countries which remain outside the Eurozone, or which refuse to cooperate with Brussels, will risk ever greater marginalisation. For this reason, full integration of the EU will no longer be a topic of discussion, replaced by partial and fragmentary integration.

The discussion on deepening integration by creating a “defensive union” has itself opened another debate. This debate centres on the tightening of integration in accord

with the two-speed Europe model in a new guise, the NOTSM model. The Italians have already presented a plan for a Union comprising 7 to 12 countries. This is confirmed by the words of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paolo Gentiloni, who stated that Italy will fight for the creation of a “smaller circle” within the EU. The criteria for acceptance into this “circle”, according to Gentiloni, will be a common currency, participation in the Schengen Treaty, and greater coordination of defence. Such an approach threatens the EU with division into “core” and “periphery” areas. It also threatens the Visegrad Group with division. It can be assumed that the “core” (from among the current 28 countries of the EU) would be formed by, apart from Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Austria. Those countries which would remain outside of this “core”, due to their unwillingness to deepen integration, would be those which have not introduced the common currency, nine countries including Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Sweden, and Great Britain (until the formal implementation of Brexit, i.e. until 1 April 2017).

The consequences of this proposed NOTSM model for the “peripheral” countries will primarily consist of their marginalisation in terms of the redistribution of funds from the EU budget. In the case of many countries, including Poland, the budget for the years 2014–2020 is the last one in which these countries are to be significant beneficiaries of structural funds which support modernisation and development. After this time, the Eurozone would be the primary mechanism for redistributing funds among the Member States of the “old Union”. Funds earmarked for countries remaining outside the Eurozone will have only marginal significance. In such conditions, for a real convergence to take place, nearly all the funding would have to be provided by the new Member States themselves, which would considerably delay the achievement of this convergence, or even put in question the possibility of bringing the economic development of the countries of the “periphery” up to the level of the developed countries of Europe forming the “core”.

If the “peripheral” countries were to find themselves in this second Europe, with a slower speed of integration, then entry to the high-speed Europe, the Europe of the Eurozone and “core” countries, would be extremely difficult and dependent on the achievement of an economic level equal to the developed countries. Without the support of structural funds from the EU, the convergence process would be exceptionally difficult, if not completely impossible.

The position of the nine “peripheral” countries, including Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, will not be taken into account in the decision-making process regarding the creation of a fiscal union, as these countries do not belong to the Eurozone, and thus do not have the right to vote on systems of establishing sanctions making decisions within the new fiscal union.

The stabilisation fund, created with the participation of the countries singled out as “peripheral”, will be earmarked for the countries of the Eurozone, meaning that countries which do not experience difficulties due to their retention of national currencies will support those which have problems resulting from a common, politicised currency. This is nothing more than agreement to pay the price for financial problems for which a given country is not responsible, as the current crisis is not a crisis of confidence in individual countries, but a crisis of the Eurozone as such. For this reason, a basic consequence of

this decision will be a drop in competitiveness of the economies of the “peripheral” countries, as a result of the planned unification of the tax sector.

A crucial consequence of introducing this division into Europe will be the lowering of the credit rating of the national currencies of the periphery. The guarantee of loans to the amount of billions of Euro to the IMF from the central reserve banks on conditions which remain unknown is an invitation to speculative games which will result in the significant weakening of these currencies. As a result, there will be turbulence and disturbances in the currency and monetary policies of these countries, and in the long run, the spectre of another financial crisis will arise.

Another consequence of this division in “EU A and EU B” will be a breakdown of European solidarity, which does not bode well for a common policy on Russia, or for chances of solving the immigrant crisis and sharing in the defence of EU borders. The old Europe of the West would concentrate on the problems of its part of the continent, further deepening the disproportion along “core-periphery” lines. Such a division would also have a rebound effect on the NATO forum. It is for this reason that the USA reminds Europe that its guarantee of security is not only NATO, but also the EU. The creation of a two-speed Europe will mean for nine countries of the EU, mainly for those countries in the eastern part of the continent but in particular for Poland, a weakening of this guarantee of security. The diversification of levels of integration and the creation of a “little EU” would lead to a weakening of the guarantee of security for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The proposed NOTSM model will be an opportunity for Russia to expand its influence in Europe and to limit the solidarity of the countries of Europe in the face of a potential threat.

NATO plays a key role in the military sense, but the EU provides security and “scares off threats” at the political level, for example by the threat of the application of sanctions as was the case with Russia. For this reason, each “crack” in European solidarity will undermine the possibility of close cooperation and the guarantee of stability.

The creation of an “Intersea” zone between the Baltic, Adriatic, and Black Seas, would only partially compensate for the division of Europe along a two-speed model. The states of the eastern part of the continent are only now building economic and military strength, making them vulnerable to pressure on the part of Russia, for whom every disruption in the EU will be an invitation to such activities. The simple fact of the division of Europe into A and B zones will also weaken the security position of the Baltic States.

Summary

A “two-speed Europe” is at the moment a very realistic possibility, all the more so since the declaration of the prime minister of Belgium, Charles Michel, that in Rome in March of 2017 during a planned meeting of EU leaders a final decision is to be reached regarding the choice of the future model of integration. At that time, the EU is also set to decide what common actions to take in the areas of security policy, migration, and economic growth.

The question also remains of how to tighten defence cooperation – and whether to do so at all. It must be remembered though, that Brexit has retarded the drive towards inte-

gration, and that the possibility of the division of Europe into “core” and “periphery” has become real like never before. Moreover, behind the scenes of the debate on the creation of a “European army”, a real struggle is taking place to determine who will be the leader of Europe in the nearest future.

The “two-speed Europe” which is currently being proposed by the countries of “old Europe” is a conception which, in the form that it may ultimately be implemented, will lead the current integration of Europe to total ruin, entailing dangerous economic and political consequences resulting from the collapse of the integration project. It will also be a significant threat for order and security at the European and global levels.

The division of Europe into A and B zones will result in a weakening of the internal bonds of the Union, and rather than further integration – to total disintegration.

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Europa dwóch prędkości – ryzyko całkowitej dezintegracji czy możliwość rozwoju Unii Europejskiej? Próba projekcji

Streszczenie

Kryzys gospodarczy i kryzys zadłużenia w strefie euro wzmocniły podziały w Unii i prowadzą do wzrostu konkurencji między państwami członkowskimi. Podstawowy dylemat dotyczy charakteru wielobiegunowości na poziomie regionalnym. Jaką rolę w procesie integracji odegra propagowana obecnie idea „Europa dwóch prędkości”? Celem opracowania jest próba odpowiedzi na pytanie: czy proponowana „Europa dwóch prędkości” przyczyni się do totalnej dezintegracji czy rozwoju w innym wymiarze UE. Temu celowi zostanie podporządkowana cała struktura pracy oraz przeprowadzona analiza. W pracy przyjęto metodę krytycznej analizy literatury przedmiotu. W efekcie przeprowadzonej analizy wykazano, że „Europa dwóch prędkości” doprowadzi obecną integrację europejską do całkowitego zniszczenia, a tym samym spowoduje groźne konsekwencje gospodarcze i polityczne upadku integracyjnego projektu.

Słowa kluczowe: integracja, wielobiegunowość, dezintegracja, Europa dwóch prędkości, rozwój