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MULTI-LIBERAL-EUROPE: A FREE SOCIETY THROUGH DIFFERENTIATED INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: *This paper examines the relationship between two major ideological traditions in the European integration process—liberalism and European federalism—and explores the potential for their synthesis into a coherent political framework.*

Methods: *The central research problem concerns the persistent heterogeneity of European Union (EU) member states with respect to their capacities and preferences for deeper integration, which continues to obstruct the realization of a free and united Europe. The study aims to investigate whether existing institutional mechanisms can facilitate the convergence of liberal and federalist ideas. The guiding research question is: Can liberalism and European federalism be combined into a viable political model for the EU through the mechanism of enhanced cooperation? Methodologically, the paper employs a theoretical analysis that integrates ideological inquiry with institutional examination. Attention is given to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, with a focus on enhanced cooperation as a pragmatic means of enabling differentiated integration. This framework is used to assess how diverse member states might simultaneously advance liberal and federalist objectives without requiring uniform participation.*

Results: *The findings are presented in the conceptual model of Multi-Liberal Europe, a scenario in which member states apply liberal principles and federalist stages of integration in a differentiated manner.*

Discussion: *This model provides a flexible, transitional mechanism for reconciling divergent national trajectories while maintaining broader momentum for integration. Although conceived as a provisional arrangement, the model aspires ultimately to contribute to the long-term vision of a Free and United Europe.*

Keywords: Liberalism, Federalism, Multi-Speed Europe, Differentiated Integration, EU

INTRODUCTION

This paper represents a theoretical journey into two distinct ideologies and explores the possibility of their emergence into a new ideological amalgam through a pragmatic institutional mechanism.

The first ideology is liberalism, specifically understood as classical liberalism, and its reflection on social issues. The second one is (European) federalism, partially integrated into the structure of the European Union. The ideological concept, derived from their possible

emergence, is that of Multi-Liberal-Europe, or differentiated integration, and the institutional basis is the mechanism of enhanced cooperation, as stipulated by the Lisbon Treaty.

Multi-Liberal Europe is a concept and/or a potential political scenario where the member states of the EU, non-uniformly, are applying the activities of liberalism and federalism. The concept is graphically presented as a federal-liberal core, surrounded by less integrated member states.

Liberalism and federalism involve the transfer of state sovereignty, primarily to individuals and, secondarily, to the federal level of governance. The shift in sovereignty is a component of the broader social change, as envisioned by the four liberal integration activities: *liberalization*, *privatization*, *decentralization*, and *supranationalization*. Furthermore, federalism, or the political integration toward federalism, encompasses the achievement of particular integration stages, such as Ad Hoc intergovernmental cooperation, institutionalized intergovernmental cooperation, Institutionalized intergovernmental coordination, partial supranationalized *integration*, and *Full (political) integration*.

Differentiated integration refers to processes in which member states progress through various stages of integration according to their preferences and capacities. The conceptual framework of Multi-Liberal-Europe could serve as a *tool* for accommodating member states' diverse capacities and preferences regarding the stages and processes of federalism and liberalism integration. The tool is expected to be of temporal significance, while the goal is to achieve fully federal and liberal European integration, as articulated in the vision of Free and United Europe.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The paper's literature review is based on three primary sources. Namely, the first source is classical liberal literature, the second, federalist literature, and the third, literature on the phenomenon of differentiated integration.

First of all, the classical liberal literature involves works from **Friedrich A. Hayek**, namely his *The Road to Serfdom* (The Institute of Economic Affairs, 2005); *Individualism and Economic Order* (The University of Chicago Press, 1948); *The Constitution of Liberty* (The Definitive Edition, Routledge, 2011); *The Intellectuals and Socialism* (The University of Chicago Law Review, The University of Chicago Press, 1949). **Ludwig von Mises** and, in particular, his masterpiece *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (Ludwig von Mises Institute, Auburn, 1998) are among the foundational works used in developing the first part.

The second part, identified with *Federalism - Global and European* is based on the following literature: **Immanuel Kant** - *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History* (Yale University Press, 2006); **Emery Reves** - *The Anatomy of Peace*, (Arbinger Institute, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006); **Altiero Spinelli & Ernesto Rossi** - *The Ventotene Manifesto* (The Altiero Spinelli Institute for Federalist Studies, 2013); **Friedrich A. Hayek**, namely his *The Road to Serfdom* (The Institute of Economic Affairs, 2005); *Individualism and Economic Order* (The University of Chicago Press, 1948); and **Ilya Somin** - *A Cosmopolitan Case against World Government* (FEE Stories, Foundations for Economic Education, 2017).

The third part, the one dedicated to differentiated integration is inspired by the following works: **Jean-Claude Piris** - *The Future of Europe, Towards a Two-Speed EU?*, (Cambridge University, New York, 2012); Giandomenico Majone - *Europe as the would-be world power: The EU at Fifty* (Cambridge university press, 2009); and **Jan-Emmanuel de Neve** - *The European Onion? How Differentiated Integration is Reshaping the EU* (*Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 29, No. 4, University of Oxford, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

The central research problem concerns the persistent heterogeneity of European Union (EU) member states with respect to their capacities and preferences for deeper integration, which continues to obstruct the realization of a free and united Europe.

The study aims to investigate whether existing institutional mechanisms can facilitate the convergence of liberal and federalist ideas.

The guiding research question is: Can liberalism and European federalism be combined into a viable political model for the EU through the mechanism of enhanced cooperation?

Methodologically, the paper employs a theoretical analysis that integrates ideological inquiry with institutional examination. Particular attention is given to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, with a focus on enhanced cooperation as a pragmatic means of enabling differentiated integration. This framework is used to assess how diverse member states might simultaneously advance liberal and federalist objectives without requiring uniform participation.

I. LIBERALISM

One of the most fundamental questions in political philosophy and the social sciences concerns the optimal political organization of a society that enables individuals to secure their existence and achieve well-being.

Various schools of thought and traditions offer different approaches to this inquiry. While some have been realized in specific social contexts throughout history, most have failed to achieve their goals.

1. Meaning & Ideology

A tradition that offers an answer to this question and has been consistently realized across various social realities is liberalism. The contemporary understanding of liberalism covers numerous variations. However, this paper will focus on the schools and traditions of *classical liberalism*.

The broader meaning of *classical liberalism* or (*big-tent approach*) *libertarianism* (Boaz, 2019) involves schools and traditions inspired, related, and represented by John Locke, Adam Smith, David Hume and Scottish Enlightenment tradition, John Stuart Mill, Manchester School of Economics, Frederick Bastiat and French Liberal School, Individualist-anarchism tradition, Austrian School of Economics, Popper's philosophy of Open Society, Anarcho-capitalism, Objectivism, Chicago-School, Public-choice theory, Big-tent approach libertarianism, and other theories providing justifications and interpretations of individual liberty and free society. Furthermore, classical liberalism in a narrow sense is associated with the tradition of Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich von Hayek, Murray N. Rothbard, Peter Boettke, and other notable Austrian School economists (Powell, 2012).

There is debate over whether classical liberalism constitutes an ideology, despite the term's negative connotations. Ideology can be defined as a set of beliefs that reflect, critique, and propose an alternative to social reality, along with strategies for effecting change and *bringing the ideal into reality* (Rothbard, 2010). Accordingly, the concept of ideology comprises three integral components: eidology, ideology, and ideotely (Sarkanjac, 2009). Eidology aligns with ideology as a critique of social reality (Ilik, 2012); ideology represents the dynamic or the normative aspect of ideology, while ideotely describes the goals and the processes of attainment (Ilik & Ilievski, 2017).

If ideology is understood in this neutral manner, liberalism can be categorized as one. The liberal critique of social reality (*liberalism's **eidology***) reflects the dominant approach in handling social issues. This relates to the pervasive role of government in addressing economic and social problems, almost always at the expense of human liberty and efficiency. It is a critique of numerous government activities, such as *initiating wars, violating individual rights, incriminating victimless acts, maintaining a central planning economy, excessive taxation, regulation, and legislation, manipulation of monetary politics, inefficient functioning*, as well as a *failure to deliver (criminal) justice* (Von Mises, 1998; Hayek, 2005). **Anti-etatism** is the *eidology* of liberalism.

The liberal alternative to the current social status quo—ideology—is one in which the principle of individual self-ownership serves as a fundamental socio-political guiding principle. Building upon the traditions of Locke (2006), Nozick (1974), Rothbard (2002), and Rand (1967), self-ownership asserts the right of an individual to own their body (life), actions (freedom), and the outcomes of those actions (property) (Ilievski, 2016). The axiological system derived from this principle is grounded in values such as peace, individual liberty, private property, freedom of exchange, and non-interference, thereby constituting the moral justification for liberalism. Additionally, the economic rationale of liberalism supports the more efficient allocation of resources within a liberal political framework than within a centrally planned one (Palmer, 2013).

Liberalism aspires to achieve a **free society**. A free society is characterized by the presence of a night-watchman state (or alternative private governance), spontaneous order, and adherence to the rule of law. The **ideotely** encompasses the strategy and the process of societal and politico-institutional change aimed at this goal. The visions of social change in a democratic context presuppose a peaceful approach. The primary method is *educationism* (Rothbard, 2010), where actions are rooted in ideas, and the mission of liberals involves disseminating knowledge through books, pamphlets, articles, lectures, and similar media. Recognizing that ideas thrive within social contexts, there's a clear need to mobilize and organize movements and social strategies. The proponents — *open centers, cadres, or secondhand dealers of ideas* (Hayek, 1949) *work toward change by providing educational, communication, leadership development, and networking opportunities*. The focus of educationism is on effecting ideological change, believing that once this change is accomplished, *social change* becomes inevitable (Blundell, 2001; Stringham & Hummel, 2010; Boettke, 2016; Ilievski, 2022).

2. Liberalism as an integration process and as a stage goal

To achieve the final goal, first initiated by the ideological shift towards liberalism and second reflected in processes of social change, national governments need to undertake activities such as *liberalization, privatization, and decentralization*.

Liberalization refers to a governmental approach aligned with the principles of self-ownership and non-interference in the economy. This includes policy inclinations such as reduced taxation, stable monetary policies, transparent and minimal spending, decriminalization of victimless crimes, free trade, open borders, and a relaxed criminal justice system. In essence, it advocates for minimal interference in people's lives and interactions (Palmer, 2013).

Privatization entails the transfer of government-owned businesses and properties to private ownership, along with the marketization of areas previously subject to government regulation (Rothbard, 2002).

Decentralization or **subsidiarity** entails shifting authority for necessary collective actions to the lowest (political) level possible (Buchanan, 1975).

The objective of these activities corresponds with the ultimate vision of liberalism, embodied in the concept of a **free society**. The goal is operationalized in a peaceful, democratic, and transparent **night-watchman federation** and **states** (or **alternative private governance**), **spontaneous order**, and the **rule of law** (Butler, 2013).

The notion of a night-watchman state denotes a strictly limited government, primarily tasked with safeguarding individual lives, freedoms, and property through institutions such as the army, police, and judiciary, and with ensuring the enforcement of agreements between parties (D’Amato, 2018). Moreover, it points to a clear separation of powers (legislative, executive, and judiciary branches) to prevent their potential abuse.

The anarchist tradition emphasizes private governance within a stateless society (Rothbard 2002; Barnett, 2014; Hoppe, 2001; Osterfeld, 1986; Ilievski, 2022).

Spontaneous order (or natural, polycentric, economic) refers to the social order (Ilievski, 2021) that emerges consequently not of human design but of human actions (Hayek, 2011; Bamyeh, 2009; Ilievski, 2015). It arises from the voluntary relations individuals engage in, thereby organically forming societal structures.

The rule of law is the extent to which the law is respected by political elites and citizens.

II. FEDERALISM: GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN

The theory of federalism involves academic traditions and schools that emphasize the *consolidation of political entities into a unified political community*, referred to as *finalite politique* (Kovacevic, 2013). Moreover, it can signify an approach that separates and restructures powers within a unitary state into federal and state levels (Weingast, 1995). Federalism typically bears a geographical dimension, identifying a specific region as the territorial basis for this form of governance.

3. Global federalism

Immanuel Kant developed a philosophical foundation for advocating a global Republic in his work “Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History” (originally written in 1795). Throughout history, the enduring societal aspiration of idealists, cosmopolitans, humanists, and pacifists has been the pursuit of sustainable and uninterrupted global peace. As one of these proponents, Kant proposed an approach for realizing this aspiration, advocating for the creation of a global federal republic. Additionally, Kant outlined a prerequisite for membership in the federation: only civilized states that adhere to republican governance would be included (Kant, 2006). He strongly believed that a state's internal organization profoundly shapes its foreign policy orientation, thereby making membership in the federation crucial.

In his book “The Anatomy of Peace”, published just after the Second World War, *Emery Reves* revived Kant's idea. He remarked, “Our political and social conceptions are Ptolemaic. The world in which we live is Copernican” (Reves, 2006), linking the nation-state to Ptolemaic thought and embracing world federalism as a Copernican solution. Aligned with the Kantian tradition, Reves advocated for universalism and collective sovereignty as means to foster global peace.

While the theoretical notions of global federalism appear progressive and cosmopolitan, they face numerous critiques, including some from liberals. Although liberal

ideals are universal and applicable to individuals (Boaz, 2019), the practicality of establishing a single global government is widely perceived as challenging, if not dangerous, to human liberty. Ilya Somin outlined three primary dangers associated with the concept of global government:

“Stifling of diversity and competition; elimination of the possibility of emigration and ‘voting with your feet’; and the rise of global despotism, perhaps even culminating in totalitarianism” (Somin, 2017).

Friedrich Hayek also warned about this approach, noting that “We shall not rebuild civilization on a large scale”. (Hayek, 2005; Bloor, 2019)

4. Euro-federalism(s)

The idea of a European federation is not a new one, nor a uniform one, and at least 2 theoretical interpretations could be introduced - Spinelli's and Hayek's. Although both promote unity and peace among individuals and nations (Fouéré, 1968), their approaches are fundamentally different.

Altiero Spinelli emerged as the major ideologue of Euro-federalism (Ilievski, 2012) during and after World War II, championing the ideotely of *European federation*. He has aimed to ensure peace on the continent and globally. Spinelli authored the “Manifesto of Ventotene: For A Free And United Europe” (1941) in collaboration with Ernesto Rossi while imprisoned by the Italian fascist regime on the island of Ventotene. Although initially a communist, Spinelli later distanced himself from communism, adopting an anti-Stalinist stance (Boucart, 2018). However, the most controversial aspect of his federalism is his pro-statist approach, evident in his vision for European unity. In the Manifesto, remnants of his communist heritage are evident.

“...in a revolutionary crisis, would be opportune to distribute in an egalitarian manner, in order to eliminate parasitic classes and in order to give the workers the means of production that they need, so as to improve their economic conditions and help them reach greater independence.” (Spinelli & Rossi, 2013)

On the opposite end of the *federalist spectrum*, Friedrich Hayek, a prominent figure in liberalism, also articulated his vision of United and Free Europe. This could be termed federal liberalism, emphasizing the liberal foundations of his federalist ideals. Although both Hayek and Spinelli share the primary goal of uniting European countries (Hayek, 1948, 2005; Spinelli & Rossi, 2013), Hayek's conception of Federal Europe is fundamentally liberal. He dedicated two chapters in his books, 'The Prospects of International Order' in 'The Road to Serfdom' (1944), and 'The Economic Conditions of Interstate Federalism' in 'Individualism and Economic Order' (1948), to the question of European unity. His liberal vision of a united Europe can be summarized as:

“An international authority which effectively limits the powers of the state over the individual will be one of the best safeguards of peace. The International Rule of Law must become a safeguard as much against the tyranny of the state over the individual as against the tyranny of the new superstate over the national communities. Neither an omnipotent superstate nor a loose association of “free nations” but a community of nations of free men must be our goal.” (Hayek, 2005)

Following this statement, his federalism serves as an instrument of liberalism, aimed at safeguarding human liberty, free markets, and the rule of law on the continent. Moreover, Hayek believed that certain powers, traditionally held by the nation-state, could neither be "exercised by the federation nor by the individual states... there would have to be less government all round if federation is to be practicable" (Hayek, 1948).

Federico Ottavio Reho, comparing Hayek and Spinelli’s federalisms, almost perfectly interpreted the vision of Hayek:

“...a limited framework for continental openness, not a strong and intrusive central government. It only deals with core federal functions – defence, foreign policy and the four freedoms of the internal market – and it encourages decentralisation and competition, not centralisation and harmonisation.” (Reho, 2017).

The main difference among variants of European federalism lies in the roles and authorities of the federation and its member states. While Hayek points to the need for strictly limiting both levels of authority and enabling free markets, Spinelli’s approach is embracing a powerful federation envisioned to engage in activities such as central planning, redistribution, nationalization, and other (more or less) socialist policies.

III. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESSES: DIFFERENTIATED INTEGRATION

After World War II, European integration processes emerged in a diverse form, encompassing political, economic, and differentiated integration. These ideas did not align with Spinelli’s or Hayek’s ideological principles; instead, they were rooted in the theory of *neo-functionalism* and its resulting *spill-over effect* (Majone, 2009). Neo-functionalism signifies a compromise between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism, blending nation-state unanimity to advance stages of integration with decision-making carried out by supranational bodies.

5. Political and economic integration

Ernst Haas, an eminent researcher of European integration, defines the (political) integration as:

“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).

Political integration processes involve states gradually transferring their sovereignty to a supranational entity within a defined timeframe (Castaldi, 2007). Additionally, the term 'political integration' also refers to a distinct stage within this process, highlighting the extent of sovereignty delegated from a national level to a supranational one, particularly focusing on foreign affairs and other crucial domestic policies.

There are five stages in the process of political integration: *Ad-hoc intergovernmental cooperation*, *institutionalized intergovernmental cooperation*, *Institutionalized intergovernmental coordination*, *Partial supra-nationalized integration*, and *Full-integration* (the states are no longer actors of international public law) (Dosenrode 2010). All the higher stages involve the previous ones.

Neo-functionalists argue that the first steps of political integration are initiated by an ongoing economic integration (Heinonen, 2006). Political integration naturally arises at a certain phase of economic integration, triggered by either the spill-over effect or the domino effect (Majone, 2009).

Economic integration involves the delegation of sovereignty and the establishment of supranational institutions in economic areas of public policy, representing a distinct stage within the integration process (Ilik & Ilievski, 2018). This progression is often categorized into five stages: *Free trade cooperation*, *Customs Union*, *Common Market*, *Monetary Union*, and *Economic Union*, which encompasses common monetary and fiscal policies along with

shared institutions (Holden, 2003; Ilievski, 2015). Additionally, each higher stage encompasses and builds upon the previous ones.

Political and economic integration processes are interdependent rather than independent. They are mutually determined, following the spill-over effect, making it impossible to achieve the final stage in each process separately. Economic integration stimulates political integration and vice versa.

While both these conceptualizations function on a symmetrical basis, involving all states on equal terms, another concept of integration emerges, known as *asymmetrical* or *flexible integration*, often referred to as *differentiated integration*.

6. Differentiated integration

Differentiated integration could be identified as the process where member states progress through various stages of integration based on their preferences and capacities (Ilievski, 2015, 2018). This differentiation typically involves two types of member states: one more deeply integrated within the entity, delegating a significant quantity of sovereignty, and another less integrated (De Neve, 2007). The process incorporates at least two integration stages—the *integration core* and the *integration orbit* — within a single integration process (Tekin & Wessels, 2008) as defined by Brandi and Wohlgemuth (2006).

Applied in public policy, differentiated integration manifests as variations in the implementation of European policies (Jakub & Rafał, 2023) and the intensity of members' participation in the European political system (Majone, 2009). These variations are influenced by integration of actors who select policies and express their willingness to participate (Jensen & Slapin, 2010).

Differentiated integration within European integration processes diverges from symmetrical integration, allowing for varying speeds or stages of political and economic integration (Gierlich & Riedel, 2021). This concept covers diverse formal and informal arrangements, whether within or outside the EU treaty framework (Matarrelli, 2012).

7. Models of differentiated integration

The EU has adopted and/or inspired at least three conceptual types of differentiated integration, determined by the variations' nature (Holzinger & Schimmelfennig, 2012). The first one serves the models of **Two-Speed-Europe** and **Multi-Speed-Europe** (Piris, 2012). The differentiation is perceived as a temporal category, and the process as a tool of achieving symmetric integration, while accommodating member states' preferences.

The second type is based on territorial differentiation, dividing Europe into a more-integrated West and a less-integrated East, represented through the models of **Core-Europe** and **Europe-of-Concentric-Circles** (Ilik, 2020).

The last type introduces the models of **Variable-geometry** and **Europe-à-la-carte**, both based on the areas of integration (Von Ondarza, 2013).

The models of differentiated integration could be specifically applied in the processes of European integration. Certain member states participate in certain common policies while others do not. A visible example of differentiated integration is the cooperation established within the Schengen Zone and the Eurozone. Additionally, these differentiations are further institutionalized within the Lisbon Treaty (Lisbon Treaty, 2009), which stipulates the mechanism of **enhanced cooperation** (Ilik, 2023), framing potential differences in particular areas of integration.

Before the mechanism of enhanced cooperation, *the Open Method of Coordination* was formally initiated by the Lisbon European Council in 2000. It is described as a form of ‘soft’ law. It is a form of intergovernmental policy-making that does not result in binding EU legislative measures, and it does not require EU countries to introduce or amend their laws (EUR-Lex).

IV. RESULTS: MULTI-LIBERAL-EUROPE

Friedrich Hayek has developed a vision of a united and free Europe rooted in liberal ideas. He advocated that human freedom should serve as the fundamental organizing principle, emphasizing that a market economy is of huge importance for maintaining well-being and prosperity. In his vision, the federation's authorities would be restricted to maintaining an army, conducting foreign policy, and organizing fiscal and monetary policies in a strictly liberal manner.

8. Differentiated liberalism

The realization of federal liberalism’s vision covers an incremental process of transforming states. This process involves the transfer of state sovereignties, primarily to individuals (Ilievski, 2015), and secondarily to a federal level of governance. The shift in sovereignty is a component of the broader social change, as envisioned by the four liberal integration activities: liberalization, privatization, decentralization, and supranationalization.

However, not all member states may share identical preferences or capacities for the federal-liberal transformation processes. These divisions raise a potential issue concerning the dominant principle of unanimity in decision-making within the EU. One potential solution could derive from the approach of differentiated integration, based on the experiences within European integration processes. This could involve the application of conceptual models provided by integration theorists to address the challenges arising from diverse state preferences and capacities.

If the mechanisms of differentiated integration could be utilized to support the political and economic integration within the EU, furthermore, they could serve as a tool for advancing federal liberalism in Europe. This would entail an asymmetric fulfillment of liberal activities, gradually aligning with the vision of liberalism in Europe. Implicitly, Hayek suggested the approach of differentiated integration in his work "The Road to Serfdom":

“...the need for some such other organization should not form an obstacle to a closer association of those countries which are more similar in their civilization, outlook, and standards.” (Hayek, 2005)

If certain European countries demonstrate both determination and capacity to take further steps in the pursuit of liberalism, they could be encouraged to do these within the framework of European integration, thereby serving as a federal-liberal political structure.

9. Model of Multi-Liberal-Europe

Considering the models of differentiated integration, the most suitable for a liberal approach appears to be the model of Multi-speed Europe. This model allows for differentiation, to serve as a tool to gradually achieve a symmetrical, Free, and United Europe. It is anticipated to hold temporal significance in realizing the final vision.

The processes of differentiated integration in liberalism differ from those in political integration, despite both involving the transfer of authorities to the individual and federal levels. However, both political and economic integration, along with liberalism, can be

viewed as integration processes. The former follows a five-stage progression, while the latter encompasses four activities, all carried out by the member states.

The instrumental nature of a Multi-Liberal-Europe lies in stimulating and advancing the integration of liberalism within Europe by fostering various paces of adopting liberal activities. Member states serve as the primary actors, participating in these different paces. Those most deeply integrated in liberalism could form the liberal core of integration, while other states might implement liberal activities to a lesser extent. This liberal core could potentially represent a partial realization of Hayek's vision of a free society. However, the ultimate fulfillment of this vision may occur when all European countries participate in the liberal core.

Furthermore, the model of Multi-Liberal-Europe is not solely dependent on the Multi-Speed-Europe framework. Other models, such as Europe-à-la-carte or Variable-geometry, could also be employed. Member states might choose specific areas in which they wish to promote liberal integration processes. Countries with similar liberal policies could form groups to exchange experiences, offer mutual assistance in achieving higher levels of integration, and serve as examples for those less integrated. The integrational mechanism of enhanced cooperation (outlined in the Lisbon Treaty, 2009), which provides an institutional framework for differentiated integration, could be formally utilized in promoting liberal integration processes.

Finally, achieving a Free and United Europe requires a bottom-up approach, emphasizing the need for decentralized change. In this context, the model of Multi-Liberal-Europe aligns with liberalism as both a strategy and a process toward realizing a free society in Europe. It serves as a political framework that initiates and guides liberal integration processes among member states, facilitating progress towards the final goal of a liberal and united European society.

10. Discussion: Model of Multi-Private Europe?

The variations within the Austrian School of Economics present two contrasting visions of a free society—one being minarchist (as seen in the interpretations of Menger, Mises, and Hayek) and the other anarchist (as represented by Rothbard, Hoppe, and Block). This dichotomy leads to different interpretations of the concept of liberal/libertarian differentiated integration.

While the minarchist perspective aligns with Multi-Liberal-Europe, the anarchist interpretation might be termed as Multi-Private-Europe. The exploration of the anarchist perspective on the concept of differentiated integration could be a subject for future research or a scholarly discussion.

CONCLUSION

Classical liberalism is understood as an ideology that embraces a critique of the social status quo, moral and utilitarian justifications for the idea of individual liberty, a strategy for peaceful social change, and a vision for a *free society*. The main pillars of the ideology are the concept of a night-watchman state (or alternative private governance), spontaneous order arising from human action, and the rule of law, or equal respect for the legal rules in a society. The change towards liberal vision involves three main activities: liberalization, privatization, and decentralization.

On the other hand, federalism is a theory involving academic traditions and schools that emphasize the consolidation of political entities into a unified political community. One of the two forms it can appear in is global and European federalism. European federalism covers the ideas for uniting Europe; however, these ideas are not uniform. Knowing that, Hayek's and Spinelli's version of European federalism can be found at both ends of the federal spectrum. Spinelli's federalism is (more or less) a socialistic one, while Hayek's is a liberal one.

Federalism introduces the processes of political integration, which involves gradually transferring their sovereignty to a supranational entity within a defined timeframe. Furthermore, differentiated integration in the EU embraces the variations in the implementation of European policies and the intensity of members' participation in the European political system. These variations are determined by the preferences and the capacities of member states for moving to the stages of political integration. Differentiated integration is represented by models of *Two-Speed-Europe* or *Multi-Speed-Europe*, *Core-Europe* or *Europe-of-Concentric-Circles*, and *Variable-geometry* or *Europe-à-la-carte*.

Multi-Liberal Europe is a concept and/or political scenario deriving from the model of Multi-Speed Europe, where the member states of the EU, non-uniformly, are applying the activities of liberalism and stages of federalism. Furthermore, it could serve as a tool for accommodating member states' diverse capacities and preferences concerning the federalism and liberalism integration processes. The tool is expected to be of temporal significance, while the final goal is achieving a liberal European integration, manifested in the vision of Free and United Europe.

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