

**Systemic Change En-Route:  
The Underlying Causes for Brexit**

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## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND PUBLICATION STATEMENTS**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to give an alternative understanding to the Britain's exit (Brexit) from the European Union. Given the various reasons provided by existing literature in the study, this thesis focuses on examining the underlying causes for the affair as reflected in the primary research question: **"What are the underlying causes for Brexit?"**. To answer this research question, the thesis relies on a theoretical framework consisting of neorealism as a theoretical paradigm paired with the concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality to approach Brexit as a particular issue. Neorealism argues that as an international system, the EU is governed under the ordering principle of anarchy. Due to the lack of clarity in the end goal, this thesis sees the European integration project to be undergoing a systemic change. This involves a shift from the ordering principle of anarchy (like in IR) to that of hierarchy (like in a nation state) which is explained by the concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality. The main argument in this thesis is that in its progression towards the aim for an ever closer union, the EU goes through the process of bundling its own territoriality and – due to the lack of its own geographical territories – unbundling the member states' territoriality at the same time. This thesis interprets the process as a move towards federalization. This is why, unbundling territoriality as a requirement of EU membership becomes a threatening course of action for member states' sovereignty which also explains the resistance against Europeanisation. Brexit is a form of response to this process. This alternative understanding is then used to shed a new light to the key issues in the Brexit referendum.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Research Background**

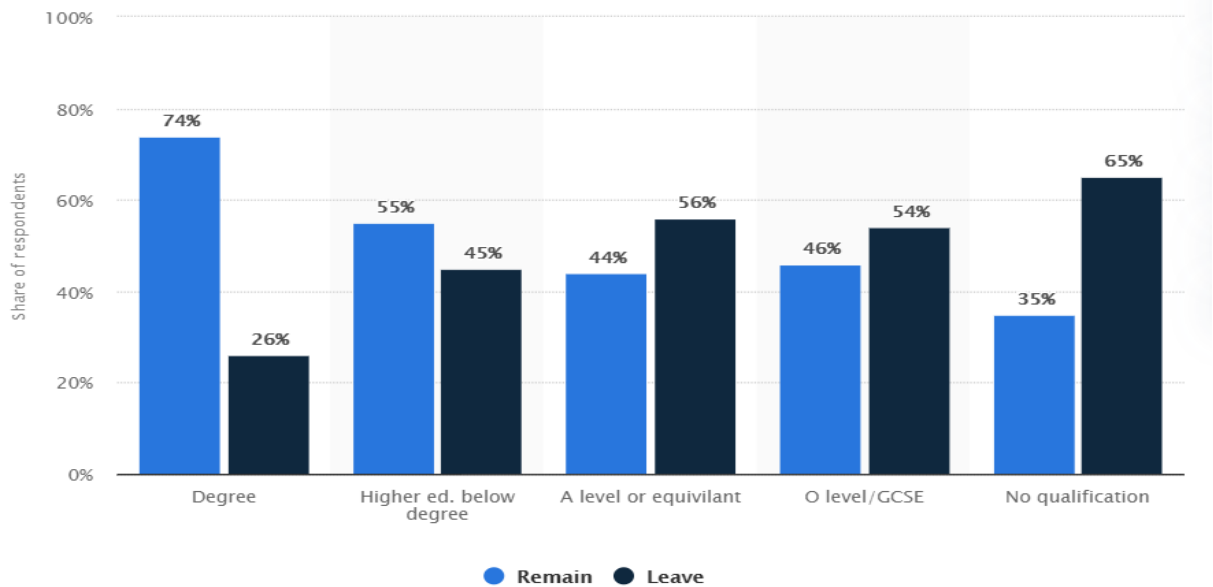
In welcoming the 2015 general election, Prime Minister David Cameron promised the British public to hold an in-out referendum as part of his campaign. This attempt was not only aimed to ask the British public their views on the EU membership – whether the UK was better within or without the EU. The actualization of the 2016 in-out referendum was due to several reasons. First, the referendum was called for to unite the Tories and stop the members of this political party from ‘banging on’ about the Europe (Bicquelet, 2016; Wright and Cooper, 2016; Mason, 2016) and would thus give Cameron the opportunity to focus on domestic reform (Wright and Cooper, 2016). Second, the rise of UKIP had somewhat become unsettling as ‘some surveys suggested the party was being supported by up to 15 percent of the electorate’ and such thing worried the Tories not because UKIP would ‘take their seats but they would take enough of their votes to hand victory to Labour’ (Wright and Cooper, 2016). In that sense, calling for an EU referendum was seen to be the best option for Cameron to see off the challenge from UKIP, as well as putting the Labour Party on the back foot in a hope to strike a new deal with Brussels on the British terms of membership (McTague, et.al., 2016).

Prior to the referendum, Cameron set out his four conditions, which if had been met, would have convinced him to campaign to stay in the European Union: (a) protecting the single market for Britain and others outside the Eurozone; (b) boosting competitiveness in the DNA of the whole European Union; (c) exempting Britain from an ‘ever closer union’ and bolstering national parliaments, and; (d) tackling abuses of the right to free movement, and enabling Britain to control migration from the European Union, in line with PM Cameron’s manifesto (BBC

News, 2015). Unfortunately, instead of being a means to achieve a better bargaining position within the EU, the debate turned into a matter of whether UK could survive without the membership.

In 1975, a similar in-out referendum had been conducted in the UK precisely when the British people were given the chance to vote directly to decide whether the UK should leave the then European Economic Community. The 1975 referendum was led by Harold Wilson, the state's leader from the Labour Party, and initiated based on his promise to renegotiate the terms of membership for the UK. At the time, the government was in favour of remaining within the EEC but Wilson's cabinet was deeply divided. Those who opposed the membership argued that the Tories were responsible for the EEC membership, stating that the previous Tory government 'lured us (the UK) into the Market with the mirage of the market miracle' (Barbara Castle cited in Robertson, 2016). The campaign for staying in the EEC was heavily supported by big businesses compared to that of opposition. For instance, donation from Sainsbury's and BP's alone were three times the total amount for donation towards the 'No' campaign (Robertson, 2016). Besides the financial power, big businesses had the advantage of the workforce as well. The workforce of big businesses were more unionized compared to those of SMEs. Furthermore, big businesses had the tendency to employ graduates and as has been shown by a recent survey, there is a link between one's educational attainment and their voting behaviour.

**Figure 1.1.1 Brexit Votes in the UK by Educational Attainment, 2016**



*Source: Statista Research Department, 2016*

The voters then embraced the 1975 referendum with a “Yes” victory margin of about 67 percent to 33 percent with a 64.5 percent turnout (Iyengar, 2016). The situation surrounding the 1975 referendum revolved around the creation of the common market and focused on economic integration of the EEC. Since this referendum, successive treaties had shifted the economic focus of the EEC to a political one, transforming the regional community into a political union which is at present known as the EU (Wright and Cooper, 2016).

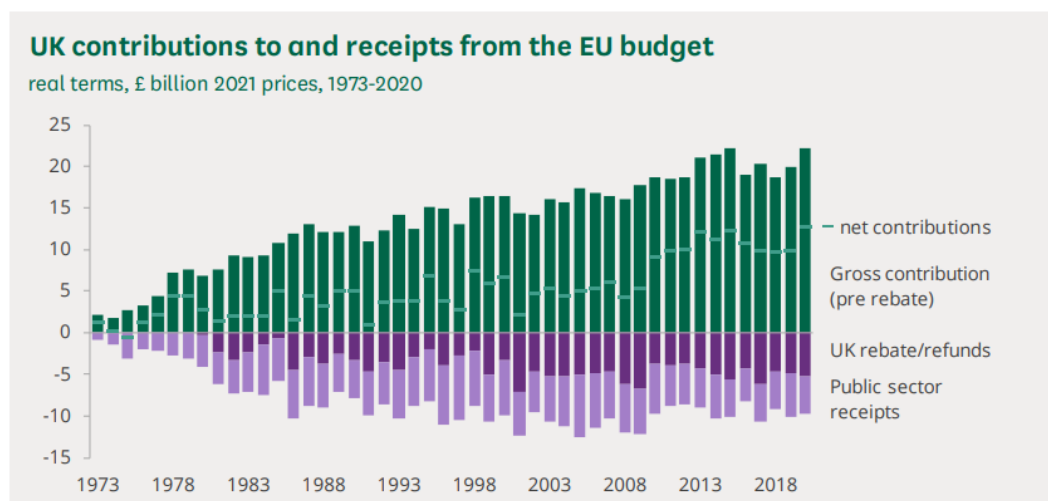
Just as the one held in 1975, the 2016 referendum was held under a deeply divided party situation. However, the latter was held by a Conservative leader in comparison to the first. Similar to the 1975 referendum, the Remain campaign in 2016 focused mainly on economic benefits that come with the EU membership. Between the two referendums, the UK has witnessed a rise in the number of SMEs. Unlike big businesses that supported the campaign for staying in the EEC, smaller businesses were much less supportive of the EU. This was particularly due to two reasons (Robertson, 2016). First, they hardly enjoyed the export advantages but still had to comply with all the EU rules and regulations. Second, entrepreneurs

were less likely to be graduates. According to figure 1.1.1 people with lower educational attainment were more likely to vote 'leave' than 'remain'.

Unlike the referendum in 1975, the issues surrounding the 2016 EU referendum revolved around the issue of immigration and sovereignty. Immigration was seen as one of the most important issues facing the British public prior to the referendum (Blinder and Richards, 2020:2; Day, 2018; Osuna et al, 2019). This issue was endorsed by Leave Campaign which was supported by Boris Johnson who later became a key figure of the Leavers. Another focus of the Leave Campaign was of taking back control – that is taking back the freedom that has been taken over by the EU. This particular focus amplifies the significance of the other issue. Combined together, the issue then became that of the freedom to control the UK's own borders and immigration. In general, supporters of Leave Campaign believed that the UK should attract more immigrants based on the skills they had not by what passport they held, especially those wishing to stay on a long-term basis (Why Vote Leave, [voteleavetakecontrol.org](http://voteleavetakecontrol.org), accessed 2 March 2020). They refuse to let just about anyone into the UK just because of their possessions of EU passports, essentially undermining the function of UK borders as filters.

In terms of economy, according to the official website for the Leave Campaign, not only will leaving the EU give the UK back the control over immigration, it will also enable the UK to save approximately £350 million a week to spend on priorities such as the NHS, schools, and housing. As one of the richer member states, the UK had become a net contributor of the EU budget. In 2020 alone, "the UK made the third largest net contribution to the EU budget in absolute terms and the fifth largest net contribution per head of population" (Keep, 2022:12-13).

**Figure 1.1.2. UK Contributions to and Receipts from the EU Budget,  
from 1973 to 2020**



*Source: HM Treasury, European Union Finances 2020, July 2021 (and previous editions). HM Treasury. GDP deflators at market prices, and money GDP March 2022 (Quarterly National Accounts), 31 March 2022 (as cited in Keep, 2022:11)*

Meanwhile, nationally, the UK has been suffering from insufficiency in terms of infrastructure and public services. The rapid growth of population had not been accompanied by the growth in infrastructure and public services in a similar speed. The underfunding of NHS is one of the more prominent crises debated in the public sphere. Since 2010, real expenditure on the NHS had increased by less than 1 percent per year with no planned increase from 2018 (Maynard, 2017:109). Meanwhile, demands for healthcare from the public had excessively increased, for example, breaches in mixed sex wards, worsened waiting times in emergency departments and planned surgery particularly since 2013-14, worsened life expectancy and infant mortality (Charlesworth and Bloor, 2018:2).

Housing became another one of the more prominent economic issues due to the jump in house prices since 1996 caused by demands for housing assets which vastly outpaced their supply (Mulheim, 2019:25). The collapse in housing

services was furthered advanced by a sudden stop on mortgage lending to first-time buyers (p.38). Houses turned into scarce commodities and thus affecting their affordability. House prices skyrocketed and became out of reach for the general public. Not only did it affect house prices in sales but also rents consequently which resulted in the issue of housing inequality. Ironically, a boost in housing supply was not an effective answer as it was predicted to only lead to a growing number of vacant properties (p.7). The only way to salvage this crisis was for the government to make financial stability in the mortgage market a policy priority as ‘a return to higher rates of home ownership will require more fiscal intervention either to subsidize FTBs or reduce financial incentives for landlords’ (p.7).

**Figure 1.1.3. UK Contributions to, and Public Sector Receipts,  
from the EU Budget, 2016 – 2020**

UK contributions to, and public sector receipts, from the EU Budget £ million					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>UK contributions to the EU</i>					
Customs duties and levies	2,463	3,172	2,608	2,711	2,352
VAT contributions	2,677	3,040	3,074	2,966	2,822
GNI contribution	11,856	12,154	14,267	14,044	16,077
VAT & GNI adjustments	-	258	-2,505	-777	990
UK rebate	-3,878	-5,633	-4,247	-4,516	-5,201
<b>Gross contributions (after rebate)</b>	<b>13,118</b>	<b>12,993</b>	<b>13,198</b>	<b>14,430</b>	<b>17,043</b>
Total Public Sector Receipts	3,493	4,084	4,279	5,022	4,461
<b>Net Contribution</b>	<b>9,626</b>	<b>8,909</b>	<b>8,919</b>	<b>9,408</b>	<b>12,583</b>

Source: HM Treasury, European Union Finances 2020 (Keep, 2022:9)



The Leave Campaign claimed that by leaving the EU, the UK would also have more freedom to sign its own trade deals with third countries that are growing in terms of economic strength such as Australia, New Zealand, India, Brazil and China. This way, the UK would be able to seize more opportunities which would mean more jobs (Why Vote Leave, [voteleavetakecontrol.org](http://voteleavetakecontrol.org), accessed 2 March 2020).

The Leave Campaign's argument of the benefit of leaving the EU on the UK's economy was quite the opposite to that of the Remain Campaign's. Unlike the Leave Campaign's focus on both immigration and taking back control, the Remain Campaign made the economic argument the centre of their argument for staying within the EU. The Remain Campaign argued that without the EU, the UK's economy would suffer and it would be a slump that was hard to bounce back from. As Allen, et al (2015) predicted, Britain's exit would risk the country's economy. Compared with remaining in the European Union, 'there will inevitably higher trade costs with the rest of Europe, which accounts for about half of all UK trade. This will mean lower trade and foreign investment, and thus lower average UK incomes' (van Reenen, 2016:367). Brexit would put pressures on the government as they will need to establish 'new systems to operate outside the EU – such as systems for monitoring and processing immigration from the EU, more extensive customs and other checks on imports from and exports to the EU, and setting up new regulatory bodies' (Tetlow and Stojanovic, 2018:57).

Closer to the date of referendum, Leave Campaign brought onto the table the model of Australian point-based system for immigration and effectively sharpened the focus on their campaign towards immigration as well as how the UK is better off without EU membership as it will thus regain control over this cause. The response from the then PM Cameron was taken as an attack towards the Leave campaign rather than a defense which then created the image of 'general detachment from rational argument and empirical evidence' and

portrayed the Remain's highlight in the economic risk as 'a hysterical fear-mongering plot, no more anchored in reason than the leave side's mobilization of anti-immigration feeling' (Behr, 2016). As nobody on the Remain side fully anticipated the growth of support for Leave, they found themselves bombarded by 'an angry insurrection, channeling grievances that were well known' (Behr, 2016). The foundation of the long-reigning government had been corroded, particularly from the 'expenses scandal' surrounding the economic austerity, along with 'apparent immunity for the elite from any consequences of their prior mismanagement' (Behr, 2016). The referendum has given the public the opportunity to punish 'a generation of politics, regardless of party allegiance' (Behr, 2016).

The 2016 EU referendum resulted in the win for 'Leave' campaign by margin of 51.9 percent to 48.1 percent with 72.2 percent turnout. In England and Wales, the majority of the people voted to leave while in Scotland and Northern Ireland the majority of the people favoured to remain. From the result of the referendum, statistics bodies such as Ipsos MORI found that different subgroups in the UK voted differently. The study found that there was 'a huge differences in voting intentions by age, class, education level and ethnicity' (Skinner and Gottfried, 2016). In terms of age, a majority of people who are between 18 to 34 years of age voted to remain while those who are older than 55 years old voted to leave. In terms of occupation, the majority of people in work, students, mortgage holders and private renters voted to remain. Gender slightly affected how the people voted as a very small majority of women voted to remain while men voted to leave.

It was believed that the purpose of calling for the Brexit referendum was to exempt Britain from the obligation to work towards an "ever closer Union" as it was seen as increasing political integration that risks fading sovereignty for the UK (Parliamentary, 2015; Penrose, 2016). The demand for opting out of this

particular obligation was made clear in Cameron's letter to Donald Tusk in 2015 (see chapter 5). As an EU member state, the UK had secured opt-outs on a number of issues with regards to the integration project, so had other member states. However, as a part of the renegotiation of its membership in the EU,

‘the UK projected a certain reading of “ever closer union” and decided to disengage from that . . . to confirm that the attained conditions of union and political perceptions at any given time matter more than any supposed intrinsic meaning of the phrase, and belong to an ongoing history of an unpredictable development’ (Glendinning and Dunin-Wasowicz, 2016:12)

As soon after the result of the referendum came out, Cameron stepped back and passed the leadership to his successor Theresa May which made clear his position against the Leave Campaign. The process of exiting the EU was proven hard for the UK to do. Brexit negotiation led by Theresa May suffered from deadlocks as – at least – there are ‘three times in early 2019 the UK parliament voted down the Brexit deal negotiated by London and Brussels, and approved by the other 27 EU governments’ (Sandford, 2020). As leavers believed the deal being negotiated would leave the UK too closely entangled with the EU still, remainers believed that it was far worse than the then membership terms, leading to two forced delays to the UK's scheduled departure date from the EU (Sandford, 2020).

## **1.2. Problem Statements**

Up to when this thesis is written, written works that have been carried out and published in regards to Brexit is dominated by empirical literature with attempts to describe what Brexit is, what the causes are and how it unravels (Dennison and Geddes, 2018; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2018; Morrison, 2019). These written works have identified various reasons why the people in the UK voted Leave which mainly were found through statistics. Other Brexit literature also attempt to explore possible outcomes after the referendum in terms of the future of UK-EU

relationship (Brown and Waitzman, 2016; Oliver and Williams, 2016; Whitman, 2016; Raitio and Raulus, 2017), forecast the effects of the Brexit referendum both towards the UK and the EU (Sampson, 2017; Armstrong, 2018; Howarth and Quaglia, 2018; Gamble, 2018; Krotz and Schild, 2018). These literature vary in regards to policy areas that may be affected by the outcome of the Brexit referendum.

A significant portion of the published literature in Brexit acknowledges that immigration is a key factor in the Brexit referendum (Henderson, 2017; Trumm, 2020), even when it is compared to economy as campaigned by the Remain camp. These works see immigration as both the main cause of Brexit (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017; Abrams and Travaglino, 2018; Osuna et al, 2019) and as an instrument to trigger other deep-rooted causes in the British society such as distrust in the national government and Euroscepticism (Berman, 2016; Arnorsson and Zoega, 2018; Day, 2018; Bickerton, 2019).

In some of these literature, the authors make explicit that whatever the causes of Brexit vote are, these causes are rooted in one source that is the discontent in the national government (Abrams and Travaglino, 2018; MacLeod and Jones, 2018; Osuna et al, 2019). In order to make this point apparent, and in order to highlight the importance of contentment in the national government, comparisons between Brexit vote and Trump elections were also made. Although the two events are different from each other, both Brexit vote and Trump elections are argued to have strong relations to the rise of populism (Inglehart and Norris, 2016; Dos-Santoz and Diz, 2017; Obschonka et al, 2018). Both events involve the people's growing mistrust (Dos-Santoz and Diz, 2017) and discontent (Sampson, 2017; MacLeod and Jones, 2018; Osuna et al, 2019) toward the governments. Brexit is also declared as a decision in which rationality and economic assessment were not involved (Sampson, 2017).

Furthermore, the Brexit vote is also seen as linking to the issue of affinity and attachment to the British identity. In the literature focusing on the British identity, the project of European integration that comes with EU membership is believed to be eroding the national identity. The key to such argument is the primacy of the nation-state. In order to achieve a successful democratic government, the consent and participation of the governed are required (Sampson, 2017:179). In the UK, 'British people identify as the citizens of the United Kingdom, not citizens of the European Union' which leads to the belief that the UK must be governed as 'a sovereign nation-state' (Sampson, 2017:179; can also be found on Carl et al, 2019:283). EU membership erodes British sovereignty (Sampson, 2017:179; Osuna, 2019:2).

As the EU requires its members to abide by EU laws, it is inevitable that member states need to adjust their domestic affairs to accommodate the requirements of maintaining EU membership, for example, by opening a member state's national borders to allow for and support the free movement principles. These adjustments mean changes to the national system of member states. These changes are so profound they transform the workforce and society in the post-industrial era which heighten not only 'economic insecurity' (Inglehart and Norris, 2016:2-4, 11-12) but also 'cultural backlash' (p.29-30).

In relation to the issue of immigration, transformation in the workforce and society also affect changes in skill formation and factor inputs in British businesses (Bickerton, 2019:231). Free movement of persons allow EU citizens to work in another member state other than the one they come from which means that a state's labour market is open for other member states to access. Differences between national labour markets may affect how 'the structure of a labour market . . . influence the sort of vocational training available to workers' (Thelen, 2004 cited in Bickerton, 2019:237). Particular to the UK, such freedom has shifted employers' behavior of employment. In the post-war era, the British labour

market was dependent on state strategies for training provision which affected the quality of manpower or labour provided in the market. As trainings upgrade the qualities of an employee, higher wage is thus guaranteed for them compared to those without. Problems arise as every EU member state has a wide range of options in terms of labour market with the principle of free movement. Employers now have another option to fill the skill shortages in their businesses – either to provide training to increase the quality but decrease the quantity of their employees, or by employing more low-quality manpower (Bickerton, 2019:236-239). Relevant studies have found that there has been a fashion in the UK where low-skill, low-wage labour are more preferable than the ones with quality and not as cheap (Chan et al, 2010; Goodwin, 2013). Such fashion in the long run leads to decades of low productivity which in turn becomes ‘low-growth strategies’ (Bickerton, 2019:241) which, when combined with trade deficit, add stresses to the UK economy.

Not only did the British people vote to leave due to the way immigration transforms the structure of the UK’s national market, their tendencies to vote Leave have also been affected by the way immigration changes the demography in regards to ethnicity (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017:451-452, 456). Sudden changes to the ethnic dimension to a state’s demography is an important aspect of life that the people pay attention to because they ‘can reshape local politics, destabilising shared conceptions of the community’s identity and future’ (Hopkins, 2010:42-43) and therefore influence the people’s political behaviour (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017:452).

Sudden changes rarely give the society enough time to assimilate and thus these changes may be seen as threatening the nation. Therefore when immigration as seen as being too high and too soon – combined with a low level of trust in the government – Brexit vote can also then be seen as fueled by the need to resist changes brought upon by immigrants (Abrams and Travaglini,

2018:322). These changes are perceived to be threatening as they might transform British culture and identity (Osuna et al, 2019:2). To sum up, Brexit may be acknowledged as a form of resistance against the external power with the capability to enforce changes – that is the EU – to the many aspects of livelihood as previously known by British people in the UK.

The literature of Brexit are predominantly grounded in studies that place the weight either on the people of the UK or on the UK itself and how the country is run. Negative attitudes towards immigration and EU enlargement are correlated with voting for Brexit using data on individuals (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2018). These written works believe that the sources of Brexit are to be found within the state boundaries. The existing literature in Brexit assume that perfection of the people or/and the UK (as a state) is possible and therefore, the remedy to Brexit referendum, if offered, would then be found by fixing the imperfections that flaw the people and/or the state. Therefore, had these perfections been achieved – or flaws been fixed – Brexit would not have happened and the relationship between the UK and the EU would have flourished.

As these literature put the weight on the need for perfections in the people and in the UK as a state, they leave the possibility that the cause for Brexit may be located beyond the UK borders. In other words, the EU is assumed to be how and where it is supposed to be and thus remedies can only be offered to the state and/or the people; that is, they are expected to adjust to the EU system. These literature do not acknowledge that the problem may in fact lie within the EU or within the systemic relationship between the EU and its member states. It is almost as if the fact that Brexit is an IR issue first before a domestic one is neglected. After all, without an established relationship between the UK and the EU, Brexit would not have happened in the first place.

The other way for studying Brexit is if we divert from the use of empirical data as the anchor for studying Brexit and rely on a theoretical ground to approach

the phenomena. Such strategy would allow us to build a Brexit reality based on the guidance of theories being used. Closest works to analysis within theoretical framework in regards to UK-EU relationship would be those placed within the framework of theories of integration which start with the neofunctionalism – intergovernmentalism debate.

Neofunctionalist's account on integration consists of three main key points: (a) that a successful cooperation on one particular subject will lead to a spillover effect on other subjects; (b) elite socialization and loyalty transfer; (c) interest groups will team up and push the governments to speed up integration process (Jensen, 2016:57-59). To neofunctionalists, states are merely an arena in which 'societal actors operate to realize their interests' which explains their position in taking international relations as 'the interplay of societal actors' (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1114). As Hooghe and Marks (2019:1115) understand, 'neofunctionalism expects the path of integration to be jagged . . . but over time, policy spillover and supranational activism will produce an upward trend'.

On a different stance, intergovernmentalists see integration from a state-centric point of view where nation states search for 'mutually advantageous bargains' (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1115). In a more recent version, intergovernmentalism is combined with liberal theory of domestic formation creating liberal intergovernmentalism in which bargaining within states are driven by economic interests. Liberal intergovernmentalism argues that cooperation is a condition where two or more states become interdependent through a flow of demand-and-supply that creates interstate bargaining among themselves (Moravcsik, 1993).

In this thesis, Brexit is considered as a milestone in the UK-EU relationship and as such is thus treated as a phenomenon of international relations. As described above, existing literature on Brexit generally either draws on its current empirical facts or focuses on the forecast of the future of UK-EU relationship. In a



bigger scope, existing literature with conceptual or theoretical dimension of the EU focuses on EU integration without giving description of forecast on how a disintegration or a divorce from the EU would be. The problem with these approaches lies in their theoretical foci. In the earlier discourse of European integration, neofunctionalism is the theory that focuses on the emergence of the EU as a supranational body and has complete lack of respect for sovereignty on the state level. Its focus on integration takes away from the possibility of disintegration. The theory does not offer its readers the means to comprehend a divorce from the EU. Meanwhile, intergovernmentalist perspective simply describes European integration as a form of cooperation among states. It does not offer an account on how a trivial matter such as immigration would play an important role in European disintegration and trigger the people's desire to 'take back control'.

Today, the debate between neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism has been deemed obsolete in the study of European integration. In Graziano and Vink's (2013:36) word, there is a 'loss of analytical appeal of the almost four decades-long between neofunctionalists and intergovernmentalists' which has motivated a move on to 'a new stage in EU studies'. After the ratification of Maastricht Treaty, the EC receives a further development that allows the enforcement of further political integration and changes the institution into what we know now as the European Union. Due to this, political actors were discovering new domestic obligations as a consequence of the expansion of EU powers. Hence the need for analytical new centre in the literature of European integration which then lead to the trend in using the concept of Europeanisation and multilevel governance in discussing European integration. However, these two concepts are not without their flaws.

As a concept, Europeanisation generally discusses about how member states adapt their domestic affair to European regional integration (Vink and

Graziano, 2007:7). On a different occasion, Europeanization has also been defined either as 'an incremental process re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy making' (Ladrech, 1994:69) or as 'the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal, and social institutions associated with political problem solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules' (Risse et al, 2001:3). In sum, we may define Europeanization as:

processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies (Radaelli, 2003:30 also cited in Graziano and Vink, 2013:37)

Europeanisation is a concept that focuses on domestic administrative adaptation – changes that occurred within national political systems connected to European integration. Europeanisation as a concept acknowledges that every member state has different characteristics and capabilities which then affect the degree of adaptational pressure generated by Europeanisation. As such, the concept of Europeanisation puts the EU as the independent variable while the member states being its dependent variable. Europeanisation researchers place the focus strongly on the importance of Europe when explaining domestic changes. Thus, the products of these researches would put the focus on what the independent variable bring to the dependent variables and take away the importance of reactions from dependent variables for a possibility to better develop the concept as a whole.

While literature in Europeanisation have commonly misplaced foci, literature in multilevel governance lacks the details in which explanations to the

shift from importance of a state to a non-state unit for the people can be found. Literature of multilevel governance discusses about the changing relationship between actors at different territorial levels, both public and private, and about how power is spread both vertically between many levels of government and horizontally between governmental and non-governmental actors (Papadopoulos, 2007). To some extent, multilevel governance arrangements are moving Europe beyond Westphalian system and understanding the EU cannot be done in terms of sovereignty norms of the modern state system (Murphy, 2008:7). However, sovereignty norms are the basis of the modern state system, the system that EU member states are currently still working under. As such, continuous practice of multilevel governance may challenge 'the precise spatial configurations of modern state system, but not its ontological foundations' (p.16). Similar concern has also been shown by Allmendinger et al (2014:2707) although they form the argument in terms of territoriality of the EU. In the literature of multilevel governance, there is a gap between the lingering importance of nation states in the system and how multilevel governance comes about to replace them. In order to achieve this, deepened understanding of multilevel governance would require 'consideration of the emerging territorial arrangements and practices that are shaping how things are organized on the ground and how people conceptualize Europe as geographical construct' (Murphy, 2008:7) which is somewhat absent from the literature of multilevel governance.

The other way to achieve an understanding of European integration is through the lens of postmodernity. Postmodernity refers to: (a) simultaneity and superimposition that replace sequence; (b) decentering, dismembering, and dispersion of the subject; (c) language being made to turn in on itself to create a void of infinite signification (Ruggie, 1993:144). The problem that will be addressed in this thesis, however, begins by acknowledging that Brexit is a form of product that is resulted from the relationship between the UK and the EU; that is between a sovereign state and a system beyond national borders where said

state, along with other states, is part of that system. Therefore, Brexit is then understood as a product of international affair/relation and therefore, in order to capture a holistic understanding of the occurrence, it needs to be studied in terms of international relations. The issue with postmodernity is that in the field of international relations, it rarely offer substantive insight, rather its 'expressions are preoccupied with style and method' (p. 144-145). For example, works on postmodern capitalist mode of production and its consequences remain 'silent on the issue of the state and the system of states . . . as they are cast in a modes-of-production framework' (p.147). Because of this, postmodernity will not be used in this thesis as it can only offer limited views on the relations between states and system of states.

The problem with the existing Brexit literature is twofold. On one hand, existing literature that focus on the use of theoretical perspectives to give account for Brexit has used the discourse as a means to fix existing theories of integration (Schimmelfennig, 2018) instead of offering the means to look into Brexit and explain the phenomena. Particularly, these theories cannot answer how a trivial issue such as immigration could trigger a deeper and more foundational issue such as sovereignty. On the other hand, other literature in theoretical realm hint that existing theories of integration are not sufficient in explaining crises within the EU including Brexit (Borzel and Risse, 2018; Hooghe and Marks, 2019). In order to explain disintegration in a theoretical realm, intergovernmentalism has suggested to resort to a theory with 'strong credentials to offer an account of disintegration' (Rosamond, 2016:867).

With regards to the empirical findings on causes of Brexit, such theory must also be able to offer its accounts on keywords that are continuously used in the Leave Campaign such as sovereignty, control, identity, and immigration, as well as explaining why states would need to resist certain changes that happen in an international system – as suggested by Europeanisation. As Rosamond

(2016:867) suggested, either realism or neorealism may be the key to explaining Brexit. Because the Brexit issue revolves around the depletion of sovereignty which is possibly caused by immigration, whichever theory of the two ends up being chosen to do the job needs to offer strong accounts on international system and the role of state sovereignty in the system, and how important it is to a state. Between the two theories, neorealism is more suitable with its scope of IR which includes the importance of national sovereignty in an international system.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

With the various reasons why the people of the UK chose to vote Leave, there are two grounds which these reasons gravitate to; these are the issue of sovereignty that brought upon the public under the campaign for “taking back control” and the issue of immigration. Uncontrolled immigration as enforced within the EU borders is believed to be depleting the UK of its sovereignty. By taking this into account and in accordance to the explained problem above, this thesis attempts to understand how the two issues link to each other and especially how immigration threatens the UK’s sovereignty. The main question to be answered in this thesis is: **“What are the underlying causes for Brexit?”**

In support of this primary question, there four subsidiary questions to be answered in this thesis. These are as follow.

- a. How does the EU threaten the sovereignty of its member states?
- b. Why must a state resist changes in an international system?
- c. How does Europeanisation affect the balance of power between the EU and its member states?
- d. To what extent is the issue of the economy important to the UK’s survival in the EU system? How can the issue of immigration and economy be understood as linking to the campaign for taking back control?

#### 1.4. Aims and Objectives

The main goal of this thesis is to construct a Brexit reality through a neorealist perspective. By achieving this goal, this thesis answers how EU membership can be perceived as a threat to sovereignty and why it triggers resistance against Europeanisation in member states. In doing so, this thesis also explains how the issue of immigration relates to the case of sovereignty as reflected in the Brexit campaign of “taking back control”.

#### 1.5. Research Design

This section provides the explanation that justifies the design of the research and the way the knowledge is achieved. In other words, this section is dedicated to disclose the ontology and the epistemology of the research. Ontology is broadly defined as ‘the study of being’ which is concerned with ‘what kind of world we are investigating, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such’ (Crotty, 2003:10). Meanwhile, epistemology can be understood as ‘a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know’ (Crotty, 2003:3). Along with axiology, the study of value, ontology and axiology are important to a research because they ‘lay the foundations for how we, as individuals, understand the world we live in, the determinations we make about issues relating to truth, and the matters we consider to be of value to us individually, and to society at large’ (Edelheim, 2014:30-31 in Sol and Heng, 2022:81). Every research has a combination of both philosophical concepts of knowledge that differs from the others; this is what originality of a research depends on. In a research, ontology and epistemology are generally defined by the research questions being asked. The main research question being asked in this thesis is: **“What are the underlying causes for Brexit?”**.

### 1.5.1. Research Ontology

As a study of being, an understanding of a research ontology provides an initial ground where the research itself is made possible. The ontology of a research determines the nature of conduct of the research. According to Edelheim (2014:31 in Sol and Heng, 2022:81), the specific function of ontology, or the study of being, is to create:

‘the framework for how we, as individuals, connected in societies, make sense of the reality in which we live. The power of ontology is that it gives us the keys to unlock the way reality is understood, by taking as its object of study the actual being of things, matters, concepts, experiences, and words – essentially of everything’

Thus, a research ontology is important for a research for two reasons. First, a researcher must understand what it is their research attempts to address and on what ground their research stands, therefore, laying the foundation for the conduct of the research. As explained by Moses and Knutsen (2007:2), ‘underneath any given research design and choice of methods lies a researchers (often implicit) understanding of the nature of the world and how it should be studied’. Second, and as a result of the first, a foundational ontology provides a selection of epistemological stances a researcher may choose from.

With accordance to the main research question, there are two ‘beings’ being discussed in this thesis. The first ‘being’ of this thesis is the underlying causes for Brexit – what is asked to be found from this research. With this being said, the main research question in this thesis is ontological in nature and asks for an ontological answer. It does not ask why or how we know that certain matters are the underlying causes for Brexit, it asks what these matters are instead.

The second ‘being’ is Brexit itself. The study or understanding of Brexit as an occurrence provides a foundational understanding of the world the case has taken place in. In this thesis, Brexit is understood as a resulting occurrence of the

dynamics of relationship between the UK and the EU. The UK is its own sovereign state and therefore, any relationship established beyond the UK's territorial boundaries is considered international. As Brexit is considered as a result of IR, the ontology of this thesis needs to describe what IR is. In order to fulfill this need, this thesis uses neorealism as a theoretical basis to give a more thorough explanation based on theoretical understanding of how the international system works. This is discussed particularly in chapter 3.

### **1.5.2. The Form of Research**

The first step to be taken before conducting a research is to identify both a research paradigm and select a topic (Miller and Yang, 2007, also in Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte, 2013). A research paradigm may be understood as 'a set of beliefs and practices associated with a particular style of research' (Denscombe, 2014:326). There are two main categories associated with research paradigm – quantitative research and qualitative research. They differ in a way that a quantitative research generally asks closed-ended questions and is best for measuring, ranking, categorizing, identifying patterns and making generalization, whilst a qualitative research uses open-ended questions and focuses on describing, interpreting, contextualizing, and gaining in-depth insight into specific concepts or phenomena (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009). When a research project includes both a combination of numerical measurement and in-depth exploration, it is possible for mixed methods to be used. Mixing the two approaches is also possible to suit a research that involves both quantitative and qualitative data.

The best way to decide on the best paradigm to be used in a research project is by referring back to the questions being asked in the research (Bryman, 2004). By referring to the main research question provided in the previous sections and given the nature and the aims of the research, qualitative method is



chosen as the most appropriate approach to conduct the research. Qualitative research seeks ‘to study phenomena through a person’s perspective, paying attention to the context where they emerge’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 cited in Daher et al, 2017, par.1). Because of this reason, ‘experience and meaning’ (Daher et al, 2017, par.1) that include ‘thoughts, feelings, and interpretations’ (Given, 2008; Liamputtong, 2009) become crucial elements to reach a deeper understanding of the participant’s perspective that would thus improve the comprehension of social and psychological phenomena being studied in qualitative research projects. By selecting the appropriate research paradigm, a research epistemology may therefore be advanced.

### **1.5.3. Research Epistemology**

Whereas ontology is the philosophy of being, epistemology is that of knowing. Epistemology is ‘concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate’ (Maynard, 1994:10 in Crotty, 2003:8). In other words, epistemology may be understood as the branch of philosophy that asks: how do we know what we know? Both adequacy and legitimacy in research can be achieved by considering: (a) what constitutes a knowledge claim, including the assumptions that are made; (b) how knowledge is produced or acquired; and (c) how the extent of its applicability can be determined (Moon, et al, 2021).

The epistemological stance used in this thesis is constructionism/constructivism. This epistemological stance can be understood as ‘the view of that all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context’ (Crotty, 2003:42). Therefore, on the basis of this epistemological stance, meaning is acquired through construction instead of

discovery. As a result, constructionism/constructivism sees that there is no true or valid interpretation and this is represented in the aim of the research that is to provide an alternative understanding of Brexit. The construction of meaning or understanding in this thesis is done through theory-application method. This means, this thesis is theoretically-driven. It seeks to make an original contribution through theory-building as opposed to conducting new empirical research. Within the qualitative method, I focus on finding the answer to the research questions within a theoretical framework. A theoretical framework provides an avenue of approaching phenomenon under investigation. Thus, developing a theoretical framework means developing a new way of approaching an issue and, as a result, it opens a new gate to the area of study which remains unexplored.

This thesis provides a theoretical framework that is built from two main aspects. The first aspect consists of a reinterpretation of neorealism which is used as a theoretical paradigm, focusing on how and why its key elements are still helpful particularly in explaining IR phenomena. Based on the use of neorealism as the theoretical paradigm, this thesis understands that every phenomena in the world is caused both by underlying and intermediate causes. It treats current empirical data explaining the causes of Brexit as the intermediate causes and seeks to explain the underlying issue. In that, the thesis empathizes with Waltz's understanding of how international politics works, and therefore, uses his theory of international politics, also popularly known as neorealism, as a means to achieve the aim of the thesis.

A theoretical paradigm is essential as it provides a lens through which we see how the world works. Neorealism fits as a theoretical paradigm in this research due to its parsimonious nature. This parsimonious nature, which benefits neorealism in its use as a theoretical paradigm, is nevertheless where it also falls short. In order to address more specific issues, it requires assistance from theories or theoretical concepts with narrower focus. This thesis uses the concept of

political territoriality to examine systemic change in accordance with neorealist understanding – the shift from one ordering principle to the other. The EU is seen as undergoing a systemic change; that is, it is in the process of moving from the ordering principle of anarchy to that of hierarchy. With accordance to the process of Europeanisation, the dynamics surrounding this change requires EU member states to rethink where they stand in regards to sovereignty and self-determination.

The second aspect consists of a theoretical concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality which is used as a tool to describe a possible way a systemic change may go down within the EU. Neorealism allows the use of supportive theories with a narrower focus within neorealist framework. This technique is useful for approaching a specific case that is beyond the grasp of the parsimonious nature of neorealism. The concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality speaks of the coming together and the falling apart of a state by studying the way a political unit bundles or unbundles its territoriality. This concept is seen as appropriate to approach the way the project of European integration progresses with the assumption that the final destination of the EU is a total integration of the system.

Apart from the main research question, this thesis also asks four subsidiary questions. These subsidiary questions use open-ended question words such as 'how' and 'why'. Therefore, these questions lie in the epistemological domain instead of the ontological one. In other words, they are different in nature from the main research question. The subsidiary questions, however, are intended to provide supportive explanations for the answer to the main research question generated from the theoretical framework established in this thesis. Specifically, answers to the four subsidiary questions discuss: (a) how the EU may be seen to threaten the sovereignty of its member states; (b) why resistance from a state may occur against changes in an international system; (c) how the project of European

integration may affect the balance of power between the EU and its member states, and; (d) how the issue of immigration and economy may be redefined according to the theoretical framework as relating to the UK's survival as a sovereign state in the EU as an international system. The answers to these four subsidiary questions help explain the ontological nature of the main research question whose hypothesis, according to neorealism, is that the underlying causes for Brexit can be found within the EU as the international system in the case studied in this thesis.

The theoretical stance used in this thesis is interpretivism. This is not to say that interpretivism is used as a theory with which the theoretical framework is built. Interpretivism in this sense is used as a means with which the study is underpinned. This theoretical stance is used for 'informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria' (Crotty, 2003:7). Since the ontology of the first study is mainly concerned with the human world of meanings and interpretations and the epistemological stance is mainly constructionist in nature, interpretivism is chosen as the most appropriate theoretical stance for the research conduct in this thesis.

In terms of data, under this research methodology, the chosen method for data gathering is documentary analysis. This method is used to gather information from published work that contains relevant information and, therefore, primary data is not needed. Secondary data in the form of published journal articles, books, materials from newspapers and other articles are gathered from various official websites both governmental and institutional. Secondary data refers to the type of data which is not gathered by the primary user but has previously been gathered by someone else other than the researcher. Where empirical data is needed, this research limits it to data published up to when the result of Brexit referendum in 2016.

In order to ensure rigor, this thesis adopts verification strategy as the method for evaluation of this research. When used in qualitative research, verification refers to ‘the mechanisms used during the process of research to incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity and, thus, the rigor of a study’ (Morse, et.al, 2002:17). The mechanisms for verification in qualitative research are woven into every step of the inquiry to construct a solid product (Creswell, 1997; Kvale, 1989) by ‘identifying and correcting errors before they are built in to the developing model and before they subvert the analysis’ and therefore the analysis resulted from this method is ‘self-correcting’ (Morse, et.al, 2002:17). Further, qualitative research using verification for ensuring rigor is:

‘... iterative rather than linear, so that a good qualitative researcher moves back and forth between design and implementation to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature, recruitment, data collection strategies, and analysis. Data are systematically checked, focus is maintained, and the fit of data and the conceptual work of analysis and interpretation are monitored and confirmed constantly. Verification strategies help the researcher identify when to continue, stop or modify the research process in order to achieve reliability and validity and ensure rigor’ (Morse, et.al, 2002:17).

There are a few weaknesses that come from this research design due to the chosen methods to be used in this thesis. First, due to the vagueness of the end goal of the project of European integration, we do not know if the initial goal set since its conception has actually been achieved, or if it has evolved through time. Apart from the milestones of the progression of the project, a definite limit or perimeter to define the success or the failure of the project is nonexistent. Brexit may be interpreted as a unique or anomalic case in the project of European integration, but it can also be the first case of other following exits in the future. Apart from making predictions and forecasts – which the methods used in this thesis do not offer – we simply do not possess the means to achieve this knowledge.

Therefore, and as a result of the first shortcoming, any fair comparisons between the UK and other EU states cannot be made. To decide that Brexit is, or is not, a unique case in the history of European integration, fair comparisons must first be made against other EU member states. Such comparisons may only be studied at least under one of any of these conditions: (a) once the EU has ultimately evolved or dissolved, or: (b) once an exit of any other EU member states occur. Without any of the two conditions, comparisons between the UK and other EU states cannot be made fairly.

## **1.6. Thesis Outline**

### **Chapter One – Introduction**

This chapter outlines the overall introduction to the thesis. This chapter consists of the research background, the statements of research problem, the research questions, the aims and objectives of the thesis, the methodology of the research, the outline of the thesis, and the conclusion of the chapter. This chapter aims to give the readers an overall insight into the thesis.

### **Chapter Two – Literature Review**

This chapter outlines a number of existing groups of literature that offer different perspectives to understanding UK-EU relationship in general and Brexit in particular. This chapter explores the different views on UK-EU relationship to prepare the ground for rethinking the causes of Brexit and building a Brexit reality from a theoretical perspective in the realm of international relations. This chapter is divided into several sections highlighting different grounds that offer a rationale to the Brexit case. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the gap in the Brexit literature and, therefore, defines how this thesis contributes to the study politics

and international studies, particularly to the British politics and the politics in the European integration project.

### **Chapter Three – Neorealism**

This chapter begins with explaining why neorealism is better-fitted to build the case of Brexit from IR perspective in comparison to classical and neoclassical realism. The aim of this chapter is to structure a theoretical framework for purpose of analyzing the case of Brexit. This chapter offers an alternative way to understanding neorealism as a theoretical paradigm in IR. It does so by focusing on Waltz's version of neorealism particularly his understanding of ordering principles in a system structure. With help from reinvigorated views of neorealism, this chapter outlines how international anarchy needs to be seen in order to fully grasp Waltz's idea of ordering principles.

### **Chapter Four – Towards a Systemic Change: The EU Integration Project**

By understanding, or the lack of knowledge thereof, the end goal of the EU integration project to be, and thus acknowledging it as, an ongoing project of a total integration, this chapter aims to examine the symptoms of systemic change in the system's structure of the EU. In order to apply neorealist parsimonious understanding of system's structure, this chapter utilizes the notion of territoriality in order to describe how 'anarchy' and 'international relations' came about. The main argument of this chapter is that as the most debated and arguably the most important element in neorealism, the ordering principle of anarchy (or international anarchy) has its core in the singleness of state units. The chapter argues that the systemic change that the EU is suspected to be undergoing affects the singleness of its member states and, therefore, becomes an underlying threat of their sovereignty.

## **Chapter Five – The Brexit Key Issues: A Reinterpretation**

Chapter five aims to reframe the economy and immigration issues in the campaign for Brexit referendum by using the theoretical framework provided in the preceding chapters. This chapter sees that the neoliberal fiscal and monetary arrangements at the EU level push the flexibilisation of labour markets which resulted in the erosion of social security, particularly in the matter of employment security. The hike in the number of EU net immigration in the UK without the adequacy of welfare provision highlights the importance for taking the control for policymaking from the EU back to the national government.

## **Chapter Six – Conclusions**

This chapter consists of summaries and captures the essence of each chapter. This chapter describes the findings of the research project and concludes the thesis.

### **1.7. Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has outlined an overall insight of the research project by providing the introduction to the thesis. In the background, the chapter provides a brief description of the Brexit event – how it unfolded, campaigned, and ended. The chapter compares the Brexit referendum to the other one held in 1975 and spots the difference between the two referendums. Both referendums asked the voters whether the UK should leave or remain in the EC/EU, both were done after renegotiating the UK's terms of membership in the European integration project, and both initially aimed to unify the divided leading parties. However, whereas renegotiation leading up to 1975 in-out was substantially successful, it was not the case with the one leading up to the 2016 referendum. The 1975 referendum successfully unified the Labour Party then and the vote to remain won the majority. The 2016 referendum, on the other hand, failed to unify the



Conservative Party with the option to leave winning the majority of the votes. The 2016 referendum also called for a demand for exemption from working towards the project of ever closer union.

The problem statement began by asking how the 2016 referendum led to the decision to leave the EU. This section briefly discusses about existing literature that attempts to explain the causes of Brexit through empirical means such as immigration, economy, and the discontent in the national government. It also mentions the other way to finding the causes of Brexit; that is by theoretical means through the theories of integration such as neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism, Europeanisation, multilevel governance, and postmodernity. This section briefly suggests that these theories are insufficient in giving a meaningful explanation for Brexit, particularly in answering, for example, how a trivial issue such as immigration could trigger a deeper and more foundational issue such as sovereignty. The problem statement is followed by a set of research questions consisting of the main question to be addressed in the thesis and subsidiary questions to help find the answer to the main questions. The section is followed, then, by descriptions of the aims and objectives of the thesis, the methodology of the research, and the outline of the thesis.

The next chapter presents a literature review and underlines the gap in the study that focuses on finding the causes of Brexit by way of exploring the different views on the UK-EU relationship. The literature review divides the discussion into two main groups – one that sees the UK-EU relationship through the key issues in the Brexit referendum and one that sees it through theoretical perspectives. In doing so, the literature review further highlights the significance of the research project, and the contributions of this thesis to the study of European integration in the field of international relations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter focuses on exploring the views on UK-EU relationship to prepare the ground for rethinking the causes of Brexit and building a Brexit reality from a theoretical perspective in the realm of international relations. As a starting point, for such a project it is appropriate to consider how Brexit has been discussed before. By doing so, it will underscore the possibility of this project. In order to appropriately review the existed literature, the chapter starts with a summary of and discuss the key elements that highlight the UK-EU relationship. Thereof, the chapter moves to the discussion of Brexit to explore the key issues surrounding the phenomena, particularly those in the moment prior to the referendum. Thirdly, by taking the points from the first two steps into accounts the chapter looks further into how existed theories on European integration explain a disintegration such as Brexit. In this section there will be a discussion on why these theories do not suffice and what other theories might be useful to explain Brexit as an IR phenomena. By doing so, it will point out the gap in the literature and highlight the importance of this project.

The UK-EU relationship is complex and involves many aspects and elements. As a product of this complicated relationship, Brexit entails many issues and can be seen in various ways which would thus produce different explanations to “why did Brexit happen?”. Scholarship in European studies focusing particularly in the UK-EU relationship mostly agree that the reason Brexit happened was not reliant on one but a mix of two or more issues. Nevertheless, the three most prominent issues prior to the referendum were immigration which was brought up by UKIP as an issue that is most concerning that comes with the membership of the EU, economy which was used by Remain Campaign to endorse the benefits

of remaining in the EU and to counter the opposition, and sovereignty which was endorsed by Leave Campaign to highlight the importance for the UK to 'take back control'.

The discussions in finding the best explanation to Brexit do not stop there. Many of these literature also mention the importance of British national identity which refers to the sense of affinity or belongingness to the UK. The general argument is that people are more inclined to vote leave if they do not feel that they belong with the EU, leaving the study with further question why affinity towards the EU is not felt and why national identity has to be defended and saved from the threat of common EU identity. Brexit can also be seen as a populist revolt against the national government, especially for abandoning and excluding the 'left-behinds' from decision-making process which in turn frames EU integration process as far from being democratic. Furthermore, there is also a matter of Euroscepticism and treating the EU as an option along with the Commonwealth and English-speaking circle in the tradition of British political thinking. These traditions come down to what is later known as the 'awkward partner' which was made popular in the 1990s by Stephen George.

## **2.2. Between the UK and the EU: A Difficult Relationship**

The relationship between the UK and the EU can be summed up by what is generally known as the 'awkward partner' thesis. The awkward partner thesis is a broad notion that is very popularly used to describe the problematic relationship between the UK and the EU. It is a notion that is used in 'many academic books and articles' but has no 'theoretical underpinning' (Buller, 1995:33-34) therefore making it a loose concept without meaningful analytical tool if used for purpose of analyzing elements of the UK-EU relationship. Because of this nature, the 'awkward partner' thesis is more suitable to be utilized as a guide to go through the key elements of the UK-EU relationship.

Despite the same name, the 'awkward partner' thesis is not what Stephen George worked on in his book "An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community" which was first published in 1990 (Buller, 1995:33). It is, however, a clear manifestation of the 'awkward partner' notion. The main argument of George's (1994:255) work is that Britain's awkwardness with the EU is due to several reasons. First, there seems to be persistent domestic political constraints on the positions that the British government could adopt. George (1994:256) explains that Britain would witness a general increase in public attitudes towards Europe if free from the influence of Eurosceptic national political leaders and the British imperialist past. Second, adjustments that come with European membership is seen to have brought economic problems to the UK (p.257). This reason was especially true in the age of EC because at the time, the EC enforced a rule where the basis on which contributions to the common budget were calculated involved penalties for member states for conducting trade outside of the EC. Therefore, as Britain conducted most of its trade outside of the EC, it had to pay import levies for goods that were brought into the Community. Third, the British adversarial political system where government would generally have a majority in the Parliament seems to be incompatible with that of the other member states wherein compromise and coalitions are the norm (p.257-258). Because of this, Britain naturally has difficulties in presenting its interests in the way that does not appear to be against the common European interests. Fourth, for many leading political figures, relationship with Europe is seen as the least favourite option compared to partnership with the US (p.259-260).

As an old and widely-used notion, the 'awkward partner' thesis has received numerous critiques. The debate particularly centered on George's and Buller's arguments on the thesis. Buller's (1995) main issue with the thesis of 'awkward partner' was the blurred definition and limits of the term 'awkward' which were used to describe UK-EU relationship. In exploring his antithesis, Buller (1995) focused on the definition of awkwardness and the theoretical framework

used to build the thesis, as well as Britain's adversarial party system and attachment to the notion of formal national sovereignty which – as argued – were peculiar (p.38, 40). Apart from the debate between the two scholars, the awkward partner thesis is also criticized for its focus on the British central government. Awkwardness, as argued by Bulmer (1992:29) 'is not a policy dreamt up in Whitehall' but rather a product of 'endogenous constraints imposed on all British government' (Splett, 2000:32). However, as Buller has also mentioned, the term 'awkwardness' needs reassessing as there may have been changes in the way the UK approached the EU following the process of integration evolves that makes it 'not so awkward' anymore (UK in a changing Europe, 2016). For instance, British awkwardness 'could not be detected in the sense of outward appearance in terms of preparing, negotiating and ratifying the Single European Act' (Splett, 2000:57).

Regardless of the critiques, however, the 'awkward partner' thesis as a general discourse in UK-EU relationship has given scholarship in the field a general idea of what the UK-EU relationship is like. Therefore, it has laid the foundation for a continuous debate in the discourse of UK-EU relationship. In this section, I split the discussion based on the main elements of Britain's awkwardness with the EU.

### **2.2.1. The Federalist Views of European Integration**

The first awkwardness between the UK and the EU is the existence of a federalist perspective over the course of European integration. This perspective argues that federalism is something that the EU cannot be rid of, be it the notion that the creation of a federal Europe as the ultimate goal of the 'ever closer union' project, a state where it is currently progressing into (Mangiameli, 2013; Goebel, 2013), or simply a theory to comprehend the course of EU integration (Koslowski, 2011; Mueller, 2012). It is debatable to define the EU as an established federal being as the threshold has barely been met. EU's leading political bodies still miss 'the

autonomy that is typically attributed to the highest political body; its citizens are not yet identifying with the EU and are not in all bodies directly represented' (Verdun, 2016:107). However, from a stand-point of comparative study, by comparing with Canada, federalist features are indeed present in the EU (p.108).

Starting from an economic grouping that focused on a very specific project, ECSC (now the EU) has evolved into a more advance regional cooperation system. In each stage of its evolution, a main treaty was signed. With each treaty, this grouping received a wider range of capacities to serve more and more function that does not only cover economic activities but also slowly spilling over into political ones. Each treaty that marks the main development of the Union – particularly Maastricht Treaty and Lisbon Treaty – keeps adding 'seeds' of deeper political integration that would lead to a homogeneous Europe as orchestrated by federalist Monnet and Spinelli (Verdun, 2016:103). In this sense, EU can be seen as an emerging federal being (Mangiameli, 2013; Goebel, 2013:141-142). With the ever-growing level of complexity in its course of integration, the aim for homogeneity is essential in order to give the EU a democratic nature as it advances into a political union (Mangiameli, 2013:151; Heeg and Ossenbrugge, 2002:76). Although not many scholars would openly agree to the discourse of a federal EU, the EU 'is in fact already on a clear federal path' (Verdun, 2016:108).

A federal Europe would require its member states to surrender their national authorities to be handled in the supranational level as well as embracing a new European identity, leaving the member states, thus, without sovereignty or distinct national identity. As mentioned in the previous section, Britain has a peculiar attachment to the notion of formal national sovereignty, but also to its identity as being British. A federal Europe was not what the UK signed up for (Burke, 1967:163). Both Treaty of Paris and Treaty of Rome were declined, resulting in the UK not joining both ECSC and EEC. The then PM Attlee opposed Britain's joining ECSC by claiming that he 'would not accept the economy being

handed over to an authority that is utterly undemocratic and is responsible to nobody' (Reuters, 2020). The UK disliked many of the supranational elements in both Treaties as it was never fond of a political union (Burke, 1967:165) as well as being 'worried about damaging links with Commonwealth countries and it wished to pursue a 'one-world economic system' policy in which sterling was a central currency' (UK In A Changing Europe, 2020).

Through the course of history, we know that one of the reasons for the UK's hesitation in joining the EU was the fear that the long-term aim for such cooperation would be the establishment of a federal state in Europe in which the UK would be subject to such a supranational entity. The ambition to go global would be threatened if the UK's movements to maneuver beyond the borders of the EU are limited, particularly by the prioritization of the EU. Although the UK finally decided to join the Union, it did with a mindset that European unity was an essential factor 'in the struggle for freedom and progress throughout the world' (Reuters, 2020). When it finally joined, it did not join wholeheartedly which then leads to the next point of awkwardness.

### **2.2.2. The Orientation of British Foreign Policy**

The next point of the UK's awkward nature with the EU lies in the persistent views towards Europe as being an option than an obligation for the UK (Daddow, 2013; Wellings and Baxendale, 2015). European integration in this sense can be seen as a persistent 'policy dilemma' as it is addressed through strong tradition in the British political thought (Wellings and Baxendale, 2015:136). In the tradition of British politics, there are three circles that dominated the UK's foreign policy. These circles are the Commonwealth (or the Empire), the English-speaking countries, and Europe with the Europe circle of British foreign policy being continuously ranked the least important of the 3 circles (Daddow, 2013:213).

The UK has always put itself in the sideline of European integration, been a stranger and reluctant (Gowland and Turner, 1999; Wall, 2008; Gowland et al, 2010) as well as – as Margaret Thatcher claimed – taken the lonely role of a savior for Europe and Europeans (Thatcher, 1988; Daddow, 2015:80). Because of this, the problematic orientation of the British foreign policy and the attitudes towards European integration are not only about seeing the EU as an option but also about an ‘outsider’ tradition in the British foreign politics (Daddow, 2015) involving the view of ‘external otherness’ in which the UK-EU relationship continues to be seen as zero sum game ‘in which the UK power has been progressively eroded’ (Gifford, 2010:333). Even after finally being able to join the EU after the third attempt, ‘British support for the EU was running at not much more than half the EU average while openly critical attitudes were over twice as high in Britain compared to the EU27 as a whole’ (Daddow, 2013:211). Furthermore, although there has been no British leader since 1973 proposing another exit, none have also attempted seriously to challenge the strong notion of outsiderliness underpinning Britain’s status as a reluctant partner in the organisation (Daddow, 2015:85).

As a result of the attitude of treating Europe as an option, British foreign policy is always about whether or not Britain has made the right choice. These attitudes are particularly apparent from the conditionality of the relationship from the UK’s side by opt-out agreements and publishing red lines before negotiations were entered in to, making sure that these agreements are in line with Britain’s domestic politics agenda (Gifford, 2010:322,326). A clear example of this approach the Britain’s opt-out from the establishment of a uniformed EU currency, the Euro. In accordance to Brexit, it is believed that withdrawal from the EU would be more in line with expressed British identity constructions than would a continued EU membership (Daddow, 2015:85).



### **2.2.3. Euroscepticism**

Euroscepticism is another distinct tradition in the UK that marks the awkward relationship with the EU. It is perhaps the most spoken-of element of the awkward relationship between the UK and the EU. Britain's Eurosceptic tradition is heavily influenced by two key elements: (a) a realist appreciation of international affairs, particularly that of classical realism, which shapes the perception of Europe as a last resort, and; (b) the perpetuation of strong British nationalism as the core component of Euroscepticism which is built upon a distinctive take on the uses of history and a libertarian reading of the Britain's past (Daddow, 2013:214; Hooghe et al, 2002; Henderson, 2017:632).

Euroscepticism in the UK needs to be seen as 'an ideational construct with distinctive sets of discursive reference points rather than a simple appreciation of Britain's naturally given material interest' (Daddow, 2013:213). These points of reference involve various societal institutions such as the 'media, intermediary institutions, or political parties' from which most citizens rely on for information and education (Hooghe and Marks, 2009:10). The role of these actors become more prominent especially for those who have not settled with what they believe yet. Therefore, as a socially-constructed idea, Euroscepticism can be seen as a British tradition that is not only apparent in the British political circle but also in the daily life of its people.

In the British politics, particularly, Euroscepticism is a very strong conditioning element that effects the government's attitudes towards Europe. So strong the grip of Euroscepticism, Europhilia seems to not be norm in the British European rhetoric; Euroscepticism is. Instead of the battle between pro and anti-Europeanism, the debate of Euroscepticism in Conservative Party was more about hard Euroscepticism with the belief that the EU was aiming for federalization, and soft Euroscepticism which still disagreed with federalization but were integrating with cautious (Gifford, 2010:321-322). Of the two major political parties in the UK,

Labour is seen as the least Eurosceptical where the most positive UK governments – Brown and Blair administrations – in recent history were born from. However, that alone does not guarantee a shift away from the British Eurosceptic tradition.

Although the Labour Party successfully gave birth to a more pro-EU government compared to Conservative government, Labour administration made only little effort to win over the British people (Smith, 2005 in Gifford, 2010:323). The perpetuation of British Euroscepticism was due to Labour's failure in strengthening public opinion about sovereignty and social democracy. Despite the successful reconciliation between national interests and European policy, Labour avoided garnering public support for European integration (Bulmer, 2008 in Gifford, 2010:323). Due to such inconsistency, despite being less Eurosceptic than Conservative, Labour government successfully endorsed Euroscepticism. Gifford (2010:329) explains that 'the belief that the UK is somehow exceptional and can contribute something distinctive that is assumed to be missing in Europe has been a consistent theme of the Labour government and is continuous with its Conservative predecessors'. In Gordon Brown's (2003) words, "in persuading a global Europe . . . the only way forward is intergovernmental, not federal; mutual recognition, not one-size-fits-all central rules; tax competition, not tax harmonization, with a proper political accountability and subsidiarity, not a superstate".

Daddow (2013:212) argue that traditions are underlying variables in structuring an individual's belief system about who they are and how the world works; even so, they are not immutable. As such, traditions are closely related to a person's identity. As a tradition, Euroscepticism is, therefore, not just a view or way of thinking but also about sense of belongingness, a feeling. Peculiar attachment of the British people exists not only in terms of the notion of formal sovereignty but also in terms of belonging to the nation. As noticed by Harmsen and Spiering (2004:17-18), 'only in the British case does a sense of belonging to

Europe . . . appear to raise politically significant question'. Eurosceptics also continues to perpetuate the existence of the Commonwealth and English-speaking peoples in the British tradition of foreign policy orientation even during the period of EU integration. The idea of the creation of Anglosphere was born in response to criticisms about the lack of alternative vision to EU integration which reinforces the centrality of British national narratives as an opposition to European integration (Wellings and Baxendale, 2015:123, 136).

### **2.3. Key Issues in the Brexit Referendum**

Brexit is a multidimensional and multifactorial affair that involves many elements in the UK-EU relationship. Literature in Brexit that use the referendum vote as the centre for their projects have mostly focused on documenting correlations (Sampson, 2017:177). Voters are most commonly categorized on the basis of age, geography, education and ethnicity (p.175). From these literature, it was found that Leave voters are 'strongly associated with holding socially conservative beliefs, opposing cosmopolitanism, and thoughts that life is generally getting worse in Britain' (p.176).

There are various reasons why individuals would vote for Brexit depending on who they are and what they do. For example, Sampson (2017) categorized these reasons into two main categories. The first category of reasons relates strongly to the sense of primacy of the nation state which offers two main arguments. First, it argues that a successful democratic government requires consent and participation of the governed (Sampson, 2017:179). Second, it argues that nation states, democratic politics and deep international economic integration are mutually incompatible and at most, a state can only choose two to work with at the same time and in the same setting (p.180). However, this hypothesis does not directly threaten the sustainability of shallow integration agreements that aim to lower tariffs.

His second category revolves around the habit of instrumentalising the EU as a scapegoat for the people's discontent with the status quo. This hypothesis argues that the tendency for people to vote for Leave was sourced from public misinformation which led people to believe that the EU has somehow contributed to their negative feelings towards the status quo (Sampson, 2017:179). Because the fault lies in the distribution of information, this thesis argues that the prospect of the EU as a supranational political project is not threatened.

The forecast of the future of UK-EU relationship has also been a popular topic in the Brexit literature since early 2016 up to when this thesis is written. However, this topic is out of the context of my thesis project thus makes it irrelevant and therefore this particular issue will not be pursued further. Due to the complex nature of the study, it is difficult to cluster these elements into larger groups of reasons for the UK to leave the EU with clear separations from one key element to the other. By bearing this in mind, this section is split on the basis of key issues that were fought for in the Brexit referendum by Leave voters – immigration, sovereignty, discontent in the national government, and identity.

### **2.3.1. Discontent in the National Government**

During the Brexit referendum, the success of Leave campaign was seen to be reliant on two focuses (Abrams and Travaglino, 2018). First focus is the perception that immigration has been becoming out of control (see subchapter 2.3.2.). The second one sees Brexit as a phenomena of the rise of populism which is resulted mainly from a breakdown in political trust creating discontent in the national government. The discontent in the national government is believed to have its roots in forty years of economic neoliberalisation particularly since the UK joined the project of European integration and has taken its toll on the nation particularly after the 2008 global financial crisis hit. The long reign of neoliberalism has

reflected the deep divisions and inequalities which have become especially 'brutal under austerity measures' (Powell, 2017:226).

Neoliberalism is a popular discourse in the literature of UK-EU relationship which focuses on financial and economic perspective. Neoliberalism is a complex term that is difficult to be explained in a pure theoretical or practical way (Saad-Filho and Johnston, 2005:1). It would be wrong to reduce neoliberalism to some 'singular essence' as it is contradictory and polymorphic (Peck, 2010:13) or has many faces (Mudge, 2008). This is because neoliberalism is an over-stretched and ill-defined term (Venugopal, 2015:6; Mudge, 2008:703). Neoliberalism focuses on 'the market concerns of individuals and the extension of market rationality into other spheres of public life, such as education and health' (Temple, 2015:1).

The discourse of neoliberalism was predominant in the coverage by the UK media during the period of financial crisis and economic downturn (p.5). The neoliberal discourse was framed intimately with the issue of economic crisis, recession, and austerity (p.5). The practice itself started in the UK under Thatcher's leadership in the early 1980s as a solution to the 1970s economic crisis. Neoliberal policy agenda commonly refers to the practices of: (a) free trade and free capital mobility, monetary restraint, and budgetary austerity; (b) the flexibilization of labour markets and the repression of wage demands; (c) the privatization of public companies and services, as well as the workfarist restructuring welfare states (Hermann, 2007:62). Privatization of public assets became a main focus in the neoliberal restructuring under Thatcher's leadership in the UK. By 2000, the UK had virtually sold off 'all its infrastructure and service operations' and thus 'combined with budgetary restraint and chronic underfunding of services, the incidence and price of user fees increased, narrowing access to service provision' (p.66). As a consequence, the people were forced to resort to private companies 'to fulfill an increasing range of public tasks' which were more expensive and therefore creating more pressures and constraints a public matters became less

important than profit-making interests (p.66). Due to this, the practice of neoliberalism has been accused to have caused dissatisfaction and lack of opportunities for decades (Powell, 2017:228).

The thesis of discontent in the national government involves not only the public response towards the practice of neoliberalism but also the enforcement of austerity measures after the 2008 global financial crisis, how the people were excluded from decision-making process especially during Blair's administration, the discourse of 'left-behinds', and the rise of populism.

### *Austerity*

Soon after the global financial crisis hits, austerity become a very popular term and practice used across the EU, not just in the UK. Austerity measures are taken by a government as the easy way out when the country faces difficult economic conditions caused by budget deficit due to national debts or global economic crisis. Austerity measures are 'easy' because the focus is not on recovering or developing the state's economy by increasing productions but rather they instruct a government to reduce its expenditure, or rise taxes, or combination of both (Fairclough, 2016:57). The focus is on cutting expenditure rather than increasing revenue (Stanley, 2016:17). Ferry and Eckersley (2011, 2012 cited in Prowle and Harradine, 2013:213) describes austerity as 'a financial environment where the public sectors has to operate in a situation where the annual growth in financial resources is sometimes nil or even negative, whilst the Government is still attempting to enable growth in the economy at the same time'.

Despite the ways of understanding austerity, the more important side of the policy is the effect on the society. Because austerity focuses on cutting budgets, the more important task is to know where the cuts are made. Clarke and Newman (2012:305) argue that across the EU, 'welfare and public services have

been a main target for austerity packages . . . most of the national governments were cutting – or planning to cut – public expenditures between 2010 and 2013 with a strong emphasis on reductions in social protection programmes and public administration’. In the UK, the term ‘austerity’ has been used before the global crisis to describe the period immediately after World War II ended although as policy it was only introduced late in 2018 (Kynaston, 2010).

The way austerity is seen depends on how it is framed and justified; whether austerity is acceptable depends on whether the evidences are convincing (Fairclough, 2016:61; Morris, 2016). Austerity measures were introduced in Cameron administration in 2009 as an ‘economically necessary and morally desirable’ action to end the overdeveloped, ‘bloated’ state (Tuckett, 2017:24), caused by excessive government spending prior to Cameron’s administration (Summers, 2009). In order to justify this programme, such spending was framed as a repercussion of poor financial arrangement, that has been done not only by the banks but the people as well, that has caused the government to take a loan resulting in the government debt that needs to be repaid. In the Cheltenham speech, he explains that ‘the age of irresponsibility is giving way to the age of austerity’ (Cameron, 2009; Brady, 2009; Eaton, 2017). George Osborn’s speech in the same year highlighted that the need for austerity policy is ‘the honest choices in the world in which we live and we have made them today . . . we are all in this together’ (BBC News, 2009). In order to justify austerity measures, the construction of financial and economic crisis has been changed and reworked,

‘from the private to the public sector (from the financial services industry to public spending) . . . from a financial crisis to a fiscal crisis (centred on government debt) . . . from an economic problem (how to rescue the banks and restore market stability) to a political problem (how to allocate blame and responsibility for the crisis) . . . a reworking that has focused on the unwieldy and expensive welfare state and public sector, rather than high risk strategies of banks, as the root cause of the crisis’ Clarke and Newman (2012:300)

By framing austerity this way, Cameron's narrative not only demonizes the programme as selfish and individualistic but also stigmatizes recipients of welfare benefits (Patrick, 2017:145 cited in Tuckett, 2017:24). As well as being a necessity for economic recovery, the way this programme is framed adds a moral value that, as part of the reason for economic crisis, the people are obliged to see the successful enforcement of austerity policy (Clarke and Newman, 2012:303). In other words, the idea behind the cuts in public welfare is for people to stop being dependent on the state and so they can regain moral autonomy to work. Because of this, the blame shifts from banks to those who burdened the public purse – the unemployed, the disabled/sick, and immigrants – justifying UKIP's xenophobic excesses which then infused austerity talk and moral blame with a class and racial toxicity (Powell, 2017:229-230).

Cameron's austerity measures were aimed to achieve two goals which were to see that the structural current budget deficit eliminated and that National Debt as percentage of GDP would be falling through 'substantial reductions' in public expenditure (Mac Flynn, 2015). The verdicts are multifold. First, austerity measures adopted in the UK involve a continuous dismantlement of the broader social safety net such as reductions and limitations in accessing benefits, reductions in the availability of legal aid, spending cuts on local authorities' budget, and cuts in other services such as such as institutions for vulnerable people and social care services (Alston, 2018:12-15). Cuts and limitations on government spending on welfare mean that the standard of living that is guaranteed by the said government is also reduced. Sudden cuts, rather than a planned budget-reduce that is slowly and progressively implemented, create budgeting shock especially for the local authorities as they are the ones performing 'vital roles in providing a real social safety net' (p.1). In England, especially, austerity policies have resulted in the closing down of libraries in record numbers, the shrinking of community and youth centers as they become underfunded, the selling off of public spaces and buildings including parks and



recreation centers (Alston, 2018:1; Adams, 2017; Lusher, 2018). To reverse the trend of selling public spaces alone, the government would need around £100 million (Adams, 2017).

Second, in terms of macro economy, austerity policies that aim to reduce government budget deficit through spending cuts and tax increases give way to the increase number of unemployment. Although austerity program provides a rapid relief for a state's economic emergencies as it produces immediate cash from spending cuts and tax rises, it is nothing but rapid relief and must not be treated as 'a commitment to oversee the long-term reduction of public spending as a percentage of GDP' (Konzelmann, 2014 cited in Amann and Middleditch, 2017:349). Austerity policies lack the economic substance which involves a plan in increasing the state's productivity. Therefore, it is not suitable as a long term solution to financial crisis.

Third, the success of austerity measures is debatable whilst 'the evidence of its social costs is alarming' despite being continuously used (Clarke and Newman, 2012:301). Not only were the goals not met by 2015, austerity policy was seen as damaging more than benefitting. Studies have identified considerable managerial and governance failings in enforcing austerity measures at the expense of service delivery standards including the NHS (Prowle and Harradine, 2013:215-217). In the UK, the love for healthcare service is heightened to a religious level and NHS is commonly worshipped like a god (Waterfield, 2015; Dalrymple, 2018) which then creates a public norm that healthcare by NHS is a basic necessity that the government must not fail to provide. Yet, austerity has negatively impacted the national quality of health especially where the economic crisis hit hard (Brand et al, 2013:1). The NHS is forced to operate in an environment of virtually nil growth resources and the need to generate large scale efficiency savings (Prowle and Harradine, 2013:213). As the operational of NHS has been heavily dependent on public spending, austerity measures have caused 'several breakdowns in the

services provided in several NHSTs' which included 'many failings in patient care which it is believed led to many hundreds of avoidable deaths' (p.215).

A report by the United Nations on UK austerity claims that this policy has 'inflicted great misery on citizens' (Alston, 2018:2; Booth and Butler, 2018). The government's welfare retrenchment program 'will make the lives of Britain's poorest worse' (Taylor-Gooby, 2012:64). For instance, other than the healthcare services, austerity has adverse effects also on 'social determinants of health' such as 'falling incomes, high rates of unemployment, reduced funding for education, and higher taxation' (Brand et al, 2013:1). In addition to it, austerity measures in regards to bedroom tax, for instance, will disproportionately impact upon those who are disabled' (Meers, 2014 cited in Stanley 2016:17) while 'changes to the Working Tax Credit 'will impact disproportionately upon women by privileging a traditional single earner model in middle-income families' (MacLeavy, 2011:356 cited in Stanley 2016:17). The nation has also witnessed the slowest rate of development in the number of houses, creating shortage of housing with the already existing properties being priced so high. The Home Builders Federation, representing private developers, claims that the process of granting planning consent is slowed down due to the reduced number of planning officers to work for councils (Jones, 2018). Due to the difficulties in this department, the development of affordable housing has also suffered (Jones, 2018). Affordable housing or homes are a form of contribution from home developers, requested by the government in the related area, and is also known as the section 106 clause. This contribution is aimed to meet the need of the locals especially those who cannot afford houses at a market price. In Wales alone, the amount of money spent by the government allocated on planning departments has more than halved from £159 million in 2010 to £77.4 million in 2017-2018 (Jones, 2018).

The reworking of austerity construction, as mentioned previously, provides various reliefs to help the government ease the pain and pressure from austerity.

Particular to the UK, it seems that 'blame avoidance' pill has become the right – but not by any means effective – medication for the British Government. Blame avoidance refers to the method of 'attributing causes to global forces or supranational organizations such as the EU and IMF' (Clarke and Newman, 2012:303). For instance, in his 2013 Bloomberg speech, David Cameron makes another attempt at shifting the blame for his austerity measures by highlighting the British economic issue with the EU. He speaks about the concern of the future relationship with the EU that he promised to negotiate a better cooperation with the supranational entity.

### *The Rise of Populism*

Another dimension to the key issues in referendum is the breakdown of trust in politics which leads to a revolt against the established political elites (Abrams and Travaglino, 2018:311). To quote Goodwin and Heath (2016:9), "the vote for Brexit was delivered by the 'left-behind' – social groups that are united by a general sense of insecurity, pessimism and marginalization, who do not feel as though elites . . . share their values, represent their interests and genuinely empathise with their intense angst".

Public discontent in the national government, apart from the practice of neoliberalism and austerity, was particularly garnered from Blair's to Cameron's administration. Under Blair's leadership, the left was marginalized through the consensualist approach which shuts down meaningful antagonism, debate, arguments about political alternatives (Powell, 2017:228) which are useful to challenge and to better the government. A democratic way for contestation was missing from the New Labour's government. The practice of neoliberalism to normalize EU-wide insulation of markets was done without giving the people a chance to challenge it (p.229). When Cameron became the PM, austerity measures took place to aim at deficit reduction. His assertion of 'there was no

other way' shuts the chance for public debate yet again (p.229). The people were given the project and the end goal, but not the meaningful public debate or contestation which needs to be present in a well-functioning democracy. If democratic contestation is missing, it will be replaced by a confrontation between non-negotiable moral values – which Brexit is about (p.229).

The populist rhetoric of EU regime involves a refusal of conventional politics, hence a sort of brute rudeness, animosity towards elites, and anti-globalisation gestures that can take the shape of opposition to trade as well as xenophobic rejections of foreigners. The prospect of erasing nationality – as in the EU agenda or in progressive internationalism – runs the risk of subverting the democratic aspiration inherent in the concept (Berman, 2016:188). According to Sampson (2017) such ideas were used to shift the people's discontent with the status quo towards the EU. The vote for Leave is seen to derive from misinformed public that leads to a notion that the EU has somehow contributed to their negative feelings towards the status quo (p.179-180).

Mayer and Palmowski (2004: 574) argues that there are three themes of public debate about the EU: (a) the adequacy of EC and EU institutions given the growing size and complexity of the EU; (b) policy areas that should be in the sphere of EU policy making in relation to the critique that the EU acts beyond its competences; (c) the democratic legitimacy of EU institutions particularly in relation to the accelerated process integration without sufficient public debate. In the period leading up to Brexit, this is fostered by UKIP against not only the British political establishment but also the European Union by highlighting that 'unelected bureaucrats in Brussels were controlling UK laws and policies' so UK government does not have sufficient accountability over immigration rules. After all, the essential test of legitimacy is for a nation state to defend its populations from foreign occupation (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1115). The EU referendum,

whether intended or not, was a chance given by the UK government to the people to articulate their grievances and reject the status quo (Powell, 2017:226).

### **2.3.2. The Issue of Migration**

Immigration is argued to be a key factor in the Brexit referendum (Henderson, 2017; Trumm, 2020), even when it is compared to economy as advertised by the Remain vote. These works see immigration as both the main cause of Brexit (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017; Abrams and Travaglino, 2018; Osuna et al, 2019) and as an instrument to triggers other deep-rooted causes in the British society such as distrust in the national government and Euroscepticism (Berman, 2016; Arnorsson and Zoega, 2018; Day, 2018; Bickerton, 2019).

Changes in immigration rules due to the free movement principles are seen to be so profound; they are able to transform the workforce and society in the post-industrial era which heighten not only 'economic insecurity' (Inglehart and Norris, 2016:2-4, 11-12) but also 'cultural backlash' (p.29-30). In regards to the first, transformation in the workforce and society can affect changes in skill formation and factor inputs in British businesses (Bickerton, 2019:231). Free movement of persons allow EU citizens to work in another member state other than the one they come from which means that a state's labour market is open for other member states to access. Differences between national labour markets may affect how 'the structure of a labour market . . . influence the sort of vocational training available to workers' (Thelen, 2004 cited in Bickerton, 2019:237). Particular to the UK, such freedom has shifted employers' behavior of employment. In the post-war era, the British labour market was dependent on state strategies for training provision which affected the quality of manpower or labour provided in the market. As trainings upgrade the qualities of an employee, higher wage is thus guaranteed for them compared to those without. Problems arise as every EU member state has a wide range of options in terms of labour

market with the principle of free movement. With the provided options, now employers have more maneuver to fill the skill shortages in their businesses – either to provide training to increase the quality but decrease the quantity of their employees, or by employing more low-quality manpower (Bickerton, 2019:236-239). Relevant studies have found that there has been a fashion in the UK where low-skill, low-wage labour are more preferable than the ones with quality and not as cheap (Chan et al, 2010; Goodwin, 2013). This way, evidence proves that immigration has also reduced wages for lower-paid workers (Dustmann et al, 2013; Nickell and Saleheen, 2015). Such fashion in the long run leads to decades of low productivity which in turn becomes ‘low-growth strategies’ (Bickerton, 2019:241) which, when combined with trade deficit, add stresses to the UK economy.

Apart from that, there are also indications that strong public concerns over immigration, and its perceived effects on the country and on communities were central to explaining the vote for Brexit. The way immigration changes the demography in regards to ethnicity is argued to influence the tendencies to vote Leave (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017:451-452, 456). Public support for Brexit was significantly stronger in local communities that had experienced higher rates of ethnic change in the period preceding the vote. Citizens who became more cognizant of rising levels of immigration were more likely to switch their vote from Remain to Leave (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017). Sudden changes to the ethnic dimension to a state’s demography is an important aspect of life that the people pay attention to because they ‘can reshape local politics, destabilizing shared conceptions of the community’s identity and future’ (Hopkins, 2010:42-43) and therefore influence the people’s political behaviour (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017:452). Sudden changes rarely give the society enough time to assimilate and thus these changes may be seen as threatening the nation. Therefore when immigration is perceived as being too high and too soon – combined with a low level of trust in the government – Brexit vote can also then be understood as

fueled by the need to resist changes brought upon by immigrants (Abrams and Travaglino, 2018:322). These changes are perceived to be threatening as they might transform British culture and identity (Osuna et al, 2019:2). In short, Brexit may be acknowledged as a form of resistance against the external power with the capability to enforce changes – that is the EU – to the many aspects of livelihood as previously known by British people in the UK.

In relation to public concerns over immigration, there is also the issue of demonization of immigrants which is caused by what is called the ‘conflation of immigration’. This term refers to a condition where the boundaries of each different term of immigrants are blurred to then be advertised as one understanding of immigrants without paying attention to which term is actually the proper one to address them (Morrison, 2019; Buchanan and Grillo, 2004:41; Alia, 2005:26). Conflation of immigration commonly involves ‘dehumanizing language and imagery used by media, politicians and other key claims-makers’, as well as a consistent denial in acknowledging differences where they exist (Van Dijk, 1997:61-62 cited in Morrison, 2019:597). This issue revolves around the rhetoric of immigration in the UK which sees migrants as being parasites that come from poorer countries to invade and exploit the over-generous Britain due to its porous borders which leave it in a vulnerable state (Balch and Balabanova, 2016; Philo, et al, 2018; Morrison, 2019:595). In relation to this perception, literature that see European integration as a core-periphery relationship explains that the core states in the EU sees their peripheral counterparts as a buffer states that need to be developed to maintain a close gap of ‘velocities’ between the core and peripheral states (Heeg and Ossenbrugge, 2002). By doing so, issues such as migration could then be resolved (p.79).

The problem with existing Brexit literature that focus on immigration as the main reason for Brexit is while they argue that the key issue in the Brexit referendum is about how to deal with immigration level which was seen as being

too high, unfortunately, the majority of immigrants in the UK were third-country nationals – a large number of them are either students or seasonal workers – which, in other words, are not affected by the EU principle of free movement of persons (Abrams and Travaglino, 2018:311). Apart from that, there is also the discourse of symbolization of EU immigration by Angela Merkel's Germany which has extensively welcomed well more than a million purported refugees especially from the war in Syria. Berman (2016:188) argues that the extraordinary size of the refugee wave in 2015 has put pressure on the process of European integration. In this sense, further argued, the rise of immigration as a key issue in the Brexit referendum can be seen partially as a 'response to Berlin's unilateral choice to change the rules' as laid down in the Dublin Convention that stipulated where refugees must apply for asylum (p.188). The thoughts behind this rationale is that: If Dublin could be suspended easily by Angela Merkel, what other EU rules were vulnerable? 'Better exit now than sorry later' (p.188).

### **2.3.3. The Issue of Identity and Sovereignty**

The other key issue in the period leading up to Brexit referendum is, inarguably, the issue of taking back control which hints at the concern for the national sovereignty. The attempt to comprehend sovereignty in terms of European integration has been made by using a constructivist approach which bases its argument on a disagreement that sovereignty is usually understood in a positivist manner; that is, a political entity can either have it or not have it, there is no in-between (Aalberts, 2004). Such positivist view is particularly led by neorealist approach which argues that sovereignty must involve the capacity of a state 'to decide for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems' (Waltz, 1979:96). The positivist dichotomy of sovereignty strikes as a problem in understanding multilevel governance nature in the EU. As a remedy,



constructivism advertises itself as opposing the positivist stance and as such, is able to explain both change and continuity in change (Aalberts, 2004:39).

As a starting point, constructivism acknowledge that the course of European integration involves multi-level governance in its operational structure which is anomalous to the realm of international relations. Because the old-school theories cannot comprehend such anomaly, there comes the need for an alternative way to understand sovereignty. The thesis of multi-level governance does not neglect that 'boundaries of the Self' – sovereignty – are at stake, however, supranationalism and intergovernmentalism remain in place (Aalberts, 2004:37). Constructivism believes that states reconstitute mutual quality as sovereign states in their interaction within multilevel governance (p.41). Sovereignty, as understood in constructivism, is none other than a matter of 'collective intentionality' (p.41). Because integration is seen as a collective doing, this perspective argues that as long as states accept and act upon each other as being sovereign, they are. What matters to a sovereign state is its individuality in an international setting which is acquired through acknowledgement from other sovereign states. Collective identity, however, does not impact upon states' individuality because the discourse of sovereignty is 'sedimented' – permanent and durable (p.40).

In this sense, European integration is therefore seen as a collective identity formation which should not threaten a state's identity as an individual entity in an international setting. With this being said, such perspective suggests that a sovereign state may have two different identities – one that is distinct to itself, the other one that is to be shared. Sovereignty itself is seen as a mutual recognition among states which means that as long as states recognize each other as being sovereign, they are sovereign. This is where the issue arises. The problem with such idea is immediately reflected by Brexit phenomena. First, if sovereignty was truly a matter of collective intentionality and multilevel governance strengthens a

state's sovereignty, the discourse of taking back control should not have had emerged in the Brexit campaign. As long as the EU maintained states' individuality, immigration – which promotes integration and thus collective identity – should not have been an issue. Brexit is the result of an act of referendum. It was heavily reliant on what the people in the UK think of the UK; it was not about what other states think of the UK. In this sole case, it is the public opinion that matters. Therefore, even if it was true that a state's shared identity does not threaten its individuality, it becomes irrelevant if the people within the said state's territory think or feel otherwise. This is because Brexit was not a decision taken by another sovereign state but by a collective decision of the British people within the national territory. Sovereignty as a mutual recognition is thus the least of the issue as proven by Brexit.

By taking a different ground from constructivism, literature in Brexit that involves the use of state theory sees EU integration as a regional cooperation that comprises the need for dissolution of sovereign governmental authorities. As Heeg and Ossenbrugge (2002:76) explains, "an essential moment in the European project is the dissolution of homogenous territorial states which have undivided decision making capacities over a delineated political area as sovereign governmental authorities". The dissolution of sovereignty involves the reorientation and restructuring of states at the supranational level. There are three ways that the dissolution of sovereignty works (Heeg and Ossenbrugge, 2002). First, the de-nationalisation of the state where state is hollowed out of their capacities to be reorganized functionally and territorially at the EU level. This step involves the transfer of decision-making powers which causes states to lose partial sovereignty. Second, the internationalization of sovereign state where state has to slowly lift its social security package by reducing financial supports and leaves social risks to individuals in order to shift to join the arena of international competitiveness. Third, the de-statisation of political regime or the shift from national government to supranational governance.

Gifford (2010) explains that there are three dimensions to UK sovereignty. First, sovereignty as a political principle which consists of parliamentary sovereignty with monarchical sovereignty. Second, sovereignty is understood as rule exercised by the people as citizens usually found in a national political community. This dimension is also known as popular sovereignty. Third, sovereignty as understood in terms of economy. This dimension sees that public power is to be separated from private property and the market. It is, however, not mentioned how much or which type of sovereignty needs to be Europeanised for a nation state to be fully integrated into the EU.

As has been mentioned in the previous section, public perception of the European Union is characterized by a tradition of seeing Europe as the least important circle compared to the Commonwealth and English-speaking circle. This is not the only case. In relation to the three dimension of sovereignty, this view argues that stronger market (economy) sovereignty gets, the weaker political sovereignty becomes. This means that, as European integration requires member states to strengthen their market sovereignty, the less political authority they actually have because a sovereign market leaves authority to the market. This is why if a separate market sovereignty does exist, this will be contradictive to sovereignty as understood in terms of a sovereign nation state, both the politics and the people. As market works on benefit basis, so will it beyond nation state boundaries unless restrictions are applied to it.

The Brexit vote has confirmed the preference of a majority of the UK citizens. To them, a looser arrangement with Europe based on free trade and cooperation on common policies is more preferable than an economic and political union with the EU (Gifford, 2010:330). This means that sovereignty in terms of the politics and the people are more important than sovereignty in terms of economy in the UK where parliamentary sovereignty has been the only fully legitimate source of sovereignty (Baker, 2005:4 in Gifford, 2010:327). In other

words, this also suggests that from the UK's point of view, Europeanisation of economic sovereignty is not in itself enough for a regional integration project to turn into a project of political union with a potential to threaten the UK's sovereignty/individuality.

This assumption thus raised a point to be considered. If political and popular sovereignty need to be successfully Europeanised for a successful integration, that would mean that the state itself would be left with little to no sovereignty at all. When full integration is achieved, two questions remain to be answered: can a nation state still be considered as being sovereign or would the supranational body finally become a federal being? What would become of IR when the actors have no sovereignty? In order to discuss these concerns further, subsections below are provided to expand the coverage of concepts of sovereignty in this thesis.

## **2.4. Building a Brexit Reality through a Theoretical Perspective**

So far, most accounts of the Brexit referendum have focused on explaining variation across individuals and constituencies in the UK (Carl et al, 2019:282). As shown in the previous section, these works have relied on presenting facts by means of empirical analysis. Some of these works have even shown correlations between variables through quantitative ways in attempting to understand the vote for Brexit. In hope to contribute to the study, this thesis aims to find the causes of Brexit by assessing how the world hangs together – building a reality – by means of theoretical perspective. In doing so, I hope to present a new perspective for disintegration in the EU.

As a first step, I need to acknowledge that there is a set of theories that focus on studying European integration which are called theories of European integration. As the name suggests, these theories focus on describing and

explaining the emergence of the EU and its conducts. These theories were built to accommodate the gap of IR studies at the time of EU emergence as its complexity was considered an anomaly to IR studies. As it advances through time, the scholarship of EU studies shy away from IR as its parent discipline, treating itself as different from the rest of the global world (Rosamond, 1999:652). The term that is used to describe this is the inside-outside dichotomy (p. 653, 667). This term assumes that the EU is to be separated from IR. Scholarship in European studies focuses on the policy making and multilevel governance through political analysis which account for integration in the region.

With regards to the weighted focus on integration, theories of EU studies have failed to produce a theory of disintegration (Rosamond, 2016), thus creating an obvious gap in the study when faced with a disintegration affair such as Brexit. Disintegration in the EU studies is referred to other terms that involve divergence movements and opt outs but not a divorce such as an exit. Although theory of disintegration is absence, each theory of European integration has its own account in explaining Brexit. However, whether or not they provide sufficient means to embrace the wholeness of Brexit remains to be answered. In this section, I examine what theories of integration have to say about Brexit, particularly in relations to the key issues explained in the earlier section, and whether or not they are able to make the correlation between the key issues.

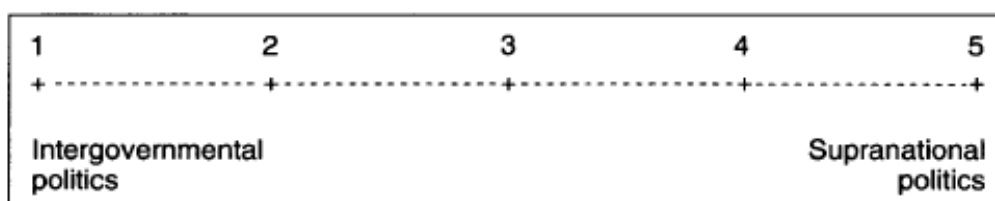
#### **2.4.1. Theories of Integration: Neofunctionalism**

One of the first theories especially developed with European integration in mind is neofunctionalism which was developed by Ernst Haas in 1960s. This theory began as a refined version of functionalism and therefore has a deep root in it. Neofunctionalism is a theory of European integration that believes in the globalization of nation states in the European region which is led by the European Union as the leader or the supranational body. Neofunctionalism consists of three

main key points: (a) that a successful cooperation on one particular subject will lead to a spillover effect on other subjects; (b) elite socialization and loyalty transfer; (c) interest groups will team up and push the governments to speed up integration process (Jensen, 2016:57-59).

Sweet and Sandholtz (1997) refine neofunctionalism by adding a model of continuum for governance in the EU. This version of neofunctionalism is called the transaction-based theory of integration (p. 302). According to them, integration process, particularly within the European Union, starts with intergovernmental politics and then progressively moves towards supranational politics (see figure 2.4.1.1). This movement is driven by three underlying factors which are transnational exchange, supranational organization, and facilitative rules with the first holding the most importance in the process of integration. As transnational activities expands, supranational body is pushed to expand its rules and organizational capacity to regulate (p. 306) Sweet and Sandholtz's theory of integration seeks to explain how integration shapes the preferences of government through bargaining process involving the 'three factors' (Sweet Stone and Sandholtz, 1997).

**Figure 2.4.1.1. Governance in the European Union**



*Source: Sweet and Sandholtz, 1997:303*

Despite the regards for being a theory that favours the supranationalism of the EU, neofunctionalism believe that states do have interests to be pursued. These interests are the elements that push nation states to advance with the spillover effect (Lindberg, 1963:107). European integration, in this case, can be seen as 'the development of devices and processes for arriving at collective

decisions by means other than autonomous action by member states' (p.102). As argued by Graziano and Vink (2013:32), neofunctionalism focuses on the societal driving forces of European political integration which implies the process:

'whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalty, expectations and political activities towards a new centre, whose institutions process or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states. The end result of a process of political integration is a new political community, superimposed over the pre-existing ones' (Haas, 1958:16)

European integration is also seen as an output of elite politicization. Neofunctionalism assumes that the process of integration is reflected in how political elites from member states interact within the higher institution. Jensen (2016:59) explains that elite politicization starts with a process of typical socialization which begins with 'the member states reps being hesitant at first, then they call each other by first names; then they want to change the world together'. A similar remark was made by Schmitter (2004:47) who argues that:

'regional integration is an intrinsically sporadic and conflictual process, but one in which, under conditions of democracy and pluralistic representation, national government will find themselves increasingly entangled in regional pressures and end up resolving their conflicts by conceding a wider scope and devolving more authority to the regional organisations they have created'.

During its early years, neofunctionalism frames Europe more as a case study of integration rather than as an arena where integration takes place (Rosamond, 2000:68). As such, neofunctionalism is placed in a weak position as an international theory. This is because integration in one region can be different to another in terms of process and limitations, including the end goal, which are dependent on specific environmental situations particular to a specific region (p.68-72). By making Europe a case study rather than an arena, neofunctionalism makes integration endemic to Europe, and therefore, constrains itself to being a theory of integration only for Europe.

Neofunctionalism sees international relations more as an interplay of societal actors, rather than a game arena for states. The theory releases itself from the constraints of assumption that places the importance of state desire for survival or economic gain in IR (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1114). The most important actors in neofunctionalist perspective are societal actors which include interests groups and, as such, integration is seen as cooperation and competition among these actors. The verdict is twofold. First, the importance of nation states is reduced; they are treated as arena in which actors realize their interests (p.1114). Second, this theory assumes that national governments could be disaggregated into its component group actors by which territorial elements are less useful than interests.

Neofunctionalism proposes the superiority of supranationalism and undermines the importance of nation-state system. As interest groups are seen to hold the utmost importance in the process of integration, neofunctionalism suggests that integration is therefore seen as a commodity of these elites. Public opinion and the people's values are less important than the interests of these groups in the process of integration. If they believe that siding with the supranational body is more promising, they will pursue it and regional integration will result (Haas, 2004:xiv cited in Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1114). Therefore, the maximum benefits from integration are only accessible to these elite groups.

Furthermore, as neofunctionalism focuses on integration and the supremacy of a supranational institution over nation states, it fails to explain the possibility where an 'exit' would take place in an integration scheme. Where intergovernmentalist approach would argue that Brexit would mean that the European Union no longer serve the interests of Britain, neofunctionalism would see it as the failure of the country to fit within the institution – had it had a proper approach to analyse such a phenomenon.



### *Multilevel Governance*

Multilevel governance is a different version of neofunctionalism. This variant focuses on the discussion on the changing relationship between actors at different territorial levels, both public and private, and about how power is spread both vertically between many levels of government and horizontally between governmental and non-governmental actors (Papadopoulos, 2007). The development of multilevel governance eradicates the traditional way of distinguishing between national and international (Aalberts, 2004:24). To some extent, multilevel governance arrangements are moving Europe beyond Westphalian system therefore, through this perspective, understanding the EU cannot be done in terms of sovereignty norms of the modern state system (Murphy, 2008:7). This calls for a need to shift the traditional way of seeing sovereignty. Theory of multilevel governance suggests that citizens within a regional integration scheme can have two different identities – European and national – that would not clash with each other. Where national identity is distinct and homogenous to citizens in each state, European identity is collective and heterogeneous due to the need to accommodate the various local identities of its member states.

In the age of multilevel governance, Aalberts (2004:41) argues that it would be more conducive if sovereignty is seen as ‘a matter of collective intentionality’. This means that a state would remain sovereign as long as other state see it so, thus reducing state sovereignty to mere acknowledgement from other sovereign states. Supporters of European integration also argue that European identity should not impact the individuality – which is directly related to sovereignty (see chapter 4) – of a nation state. The reason behind this is simply because the discourse of sovereignty is ‘sedimented’ which makes it permanent and more durable compared to European identity (p.41). This view, however, is not without challenges.

Literature in multilevel governance lacks the details in which explanations to the shift from importance of a state to a non-state unit for the people can be found. While governance become multilevel and multidimensional, the elements of democratic representation, party loyalty and core political loyalty remain deeply rooted in the traditional institution of nation state (Gifford, 2010:323). Sovereignty norms are the basis of the modern state system, the system that EU member states are currently still working under. As such, continuous practice of multilevel governance may challenge 'the precise spatial configurations of modern state system, but not its ontological foundations' (Murphy, 2008:16). Similar concern has also been shown by Allmendinger et al (2014:2707) although they form the argument in terms of territoriality of the EU. In the literature of multilevel governance, there is a gap between the lingering importance of nation states in the system and how multilevel governance comes about to replace them. In order to achieve this, deepened understanding of multilevel governance would require 'consideration of the emerging territorial arrangements and practices that are shaping how things are organized on the ground and how people conceptualise Europe as geographical construct' (Murphy, 2008:7) which is somewhat absent from the literature of multilevel governance.

The perception that both national and regional identities should not clash is also up for criticism with the occurrence of Brexit referendum. In the referendum, 'matters of identity were equally, if not more strongly, associated with the Leave vote – particularly feelings of national identity and sense of change over time' (Swales, 2016:2). The sense of change in national identity hinted at a shift towards European identity. Heeg and Ossebrugge (2002:81) argue that this is resulted from the loss of partial sovereignty and the transfer from government to governance in the setting of multilevel governance. Such change is inevitable when a state is reorganised and reoriented at the supranational level.

The other problem with this perspective is the belief that what matters the most for a state's sovereignty is recognition only on the basis of mutual recognition among sovereign states. This means that as long as states recognize each other as sovereign, they are sovereign. However, as I have covered in the previous section, the problem of sovereignty in the Brexit referendum was not based on a decision taken by an external party in the EU to stop acknowledging the UK as a sovereign state. It was by a collective decision of the British people within the national territory; these people were the ones that perceived that the UK's sovereignty was threatened. Sovereignty as international recognition is thus the least of the issue and instead, it highlights the importance of British sovereignty as the key to understanding problematic aspects of UK-EU relationship (Gifford, 2010). Gifford's (2010) notion of separated sovereignty also proves that sovereignty is definitely more than a mere acknowledgement from other sovereign states. Suppose sovereignty is truly a matter of collective intentionality – assuming that other member states still saw the UK as their equal in the EU – the matter of taking back control should not have thrived in the Brexit campaign. As long as the EU maintains states' individuality, immigration should not have been an issue towards the survivability of the UK's sovereignty.

#### **2.4.2. Theories of Integration: Intergovernmentalism**

Intergovernmentalism is another theory that was built with European integration in its core and emerged as a response to, particularly realist, disappointments in neofunctionalist empirical and theoretical strength (Hoffmann, 1966; 1982; Moravcsik, 1993; 1998). Neofunctionalism 'lacked the theoretical core clearly enough specified to provide a sound basis for precise empirical testing and improvement (Moravcsik, 1993:476).

According to intergovernmentalism, neofunctionalism seeks to replace power politics with a 'new supranational style' which is open to at least two sorts

of criticism. The first criticism is that it is unlikely for power politics to wither away. As intergovernmental take on European integration is based on realism, this perspective argues that 'the empirical evidence pointed overwhelmingly to the continued relevance of states and that there was no reason to suppose that this state of affairs would change' (Rosamond, 2000:73). Intergovernmentalist claims that nation states are still 'alive and kicking' and capable of shaping further the process of supranational integration even after years of European integration, states (Graziano and Vink, 2013:32). After all, it is not about the 'frequent and well-noted impotence of the so-called sovereign state' but it is 'its survival' (Hoffmann, 1982:21). The second criticism lies in the neofunctionalist consideration for normative values of states. To put the nation-states system at risk will be to put people's values at risk as well since nation-states are the best 'vessel' for the people's protection and thus, if the states system was to dissolve, this will 'jeopardize those freedoms' (Rosamond, 2000:73). Because of these weaknesses, neofunctionalism ended up mispredicting 'both the trajectory and the process of EC evolution' (Moravcsik, 1993:476).

By taking a different stance from neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism sees European integration as naught but merely a form of cooperation and competition among the government of nation states in the region of Europe. Intergovernmentalists would hesitate to refer to the European project as a regional integration but suggest it best being seen as an international regime (Hoffmann, 1982:33). Each member state has interests to pursue. These interests mainly focus on economic advantages and therefore, integration should leave sovereignty untouched. Nation states remain as the main actors in this theory in the form of governmental elites. Because of this very reason, the treaties of the EU only recognize state representatives as their legal signatories (Moga, 2009:803). In fact, any attempt to build a community beyond state is likely to be fraught and may lead to an intensification of the 'sense of difference' across borders (Cini, 2016:67). Supranational body is seen only as an instrument for the

members to gain as much benefit as possible while supranational actors, particularly the Commission, are merely the 'servants to the members' (p.28). 'Pool of sovereignty' as part of integration only happens because it is in national government's interest to hand over certain functions to the higher authority to make cooperation work more effectively, with an expectation that commitments among member states are then more credible (p.68).

Intergovernmentalist theory divides national politics into two categories – high politics and low politics. The first category refers to political activities, values, or elements which are unlikely to be compromised. Areas that are considered to be in high politics are 'foreign policy, security and defense, where national governments are less willing to transfer their authority to a supranational body' (Moga, 2009: 801). The second category, on the opposite, refers to those that are more likely to be compromised in a scheme of integration such as 'the economic and welfare policies and the vital national interests' (p. 800-801). Intergovernmentalism believes that the purpose of integration must be based on the aim to strengthen the national state. This is the reason why integration enters a stagnant mode when high politics is involved (Hoffmann, 1966:868).

Another strand of intergovernmentalism – liberal intergovernmentalism – sees international cooperation, including European integration, as 'exclusive product of national leaders, and . . . functional interests' (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1116). This variant brings together the element of state's rational behaviour, national preference formation, and interstate negotiation to build its main argument (Moravcsik, 1993; 1995). The European project is seen 'as the result of strategies pursued by rational governments acting on the basis of their preferences and power' (Moravcsik, 1993:496), 'domestically form their preferences and subsequently negotiate at the regional level' (Graziano and Vink, 2013:33). In a later version of his work, Andrew Moravcsik (1995:625) makes a strong remark that liberal intergovernmental theory 'remains indispensable and

fundamental to any account of regional integration'. As opposed to neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism neglect the existence of the elements of transnational 'exchange', does not acknowledge a supranational 'organization' and its facilitative 'rules' which are important for the pursuit of regional integration (Sweet and Sandholtz, 1997).

In understanding the European project as a way for nation states to find mutually-advantageous bargain (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1116), intergovernmentalism is heavily reliant on states' rationality and preferences on economy. To intergovernmentalists, an act of cooperation must be beneficial for the involving parties. Without rationally sufficient gains, cooperation is unlikely to happen, leave alone the project of further integration with aim for political unification. Due to this, once the institution has finished serving the members or if the members find it no longer benefitting, there is practically no reason for member states to stick with the institution, unless of course the institution can find a new purpose that would bring new benefits to the participants. Brexit can therefore be seen as signaling that cooperation with the EU is no longer beneficial – or that the benefit is outweighed by the costs – for the UK. The case of Brexit hints at the failure of the EU to provide further assistance that is rationally beneficial to Britain's preferences in pursuing the state's interests.

As has also been previously mentioned, the Brexit referendum has proven that to the majority of British people, a looser arrangement with Europe is more preferable than an economic and political union with the EU (Gifford, 2010:330). In intergovernmentalist perspective, this would be thus considered irrational. Sometimes states do lay economic preferences low in order to be able to pursue something else; in the Brexit case, it was sovereignty. Although intergovernmentalism still puts the importance of nation states and their governmental elites, the theory does not have sufficient explanation on whether or not sovereignty counts as an economic commodity in the European bargaining

process. The Brexit referendum has also proven that, although governmental elites are key actors in European cooperation, the people – when given the chance – can rise and halt or stop the process of European project, be it integration or cooperation. Because of the nature of the theory, the scope of explanation of Brexit case is therefore limited and insufficient to give a robust explanation.

### **2.4.3. Theories of Integration: Postfunctionalism**

Postfunctionalism is a theory of integration which is developed by Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks in 2009 as a result of disappointment in both functionalism and intergovernmentalism. They see the debate between both theories of integration as being no longer sufficient in interpreting the course and process of European integration particularly since the treaty that established the European Union was established in the early 1990s. The establishment of the European Union in 1991 marked the shift of European integration which previously focused on economy to a political union.

As a starting point, postfunctionalism agrees with both neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism that regional integration such as the case of Europe is triggered by a gap or 'mismatch', as used by Hooghe and Marks (2009:2), between efficiency and the existing structure of authority. In other words, these theories argue that (regional) integration happen because national governments lack the ability of delivering functions efficiently due to the long and, more often than not, complicated line of bureaucracy. However, unlike neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism, postfunctionalism does not presume that the outcome 'will reflect functional pressures, or even that the outcome will reflect these pressures mediated by their distributional consequences' (p.2).

Unlike postfunctionalist understanding of European integration as a conflictual process arising from 'incompatible belief systems' (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1117), neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist perspectives see it as a

result of transactions involving economic reasoning, despite the differences in their arguments. This is where postfunctionalist mainly differs. Hooghe and Marks (2009:2) noticed that up to when their work was being published, there had been no successful attempts in reducing the debate of European integration to rational economic interest; they argue that it was because it was simply impossible to do so. Economic preferences of interest groups as a focus in studying European integration were more appropriate for period between 1950s and 1980s. This is no longer the case since the signing of the Treaty of European Union in 1992. As the European Union was established and the focus of the cooperation shifted from economy to politics, deeper integration was thus required. As it happened, national governments became even more responsive to public pressures on European integration, and therefore it became inevitable that politics on the domestic and regional level became intertwined with each other (p.2).

In politics, it is political conflicts that make the differences, and these conflicts, as Hooghe and Marks (2009:2) argue, engage communal identities. Therefore, relying solely on economic reasoning to study European integration is simply insufficient. A postfunctionalist scholar would argue that one must venture beyond economic preferences of interest groups and shift the focus to the importance of identity in order to understand the course of European integration (p.5). What is important in this process is understanding the underlying conflicts. It is about 'who is involved, on what issues and with what consequences (p.2). It is about understanding what the key actors strive for.

The more prominent the role of multilevel governance is, the more decisive the role of identity becomes. This is particularly true in terms of regional integration due to the nature of governance (Hooghe and Marks, 2009:2). Governance is both used as a means 'to achieve collective benefits by coordinating human activity' and is 'an expression of community' itself (p.2). Because European integration adopts multilevel governance as its operational structure, the role of



identity in such project becomes indispensable. As explained by Hooghe and Marks (2009):

“Citizens care – passionately – about who exercises authority over them. The challenge of a theory of MLG is that the functional need for human cooperation rarely coincides with the territorial scope of community. Communities demand self-rule, and the preference for self-rule is almost always inconsistent with the functional demand for regional authority. To understand European integration we need, therefore, to understand how, and when, identity is mobilized” (p.2)

From this explanation we understand that a regional integration on a political level which has foundation in multilevel governance requires the identities of the people of its member states to be inclusive and to be open for changes in regards to shift and restructuring of national authorities. This is important to allow for functional pressures to take place and effects. This also means that exclusivity in identity may potentially bring disruption to the integration process due to a clash with functional pressures that occur.

The most prominent causal relations in postfunctionalist theory are those between identity and public opinion. First, postfunctionalism assumes that identity has greater weight in public opinion than for elites or interest groups. Second, identity does not speak for itself in relation to most political objects but must be politically constructed. Third, the more exclusively an individual identifies with an in-group, the less that individual is predisposed to support a jurisdiction encompassing out-groups. By bearing these causal relations in mind, postfunctionalism advances with the conclusion that the EU's role does not revolve only around finding the best economic transaction system that would benefit its member states. The EU is also:

“part of a system of multilevel governance which facilitates social interaction across national boundaries, increases immigration and undermines national sovereignty. Economic losers are more prone to feel culturally threatened than economic winners, but the fit is loose” (Hooghe and Marks, 2009:11)

In short, postfunctionalism sees European integration as ‘an experiment in identity formation in the absence of the chief force that has shaped identity in the past’ (p.23).

Compared to the other theories of European integration, postfunctionalist has the better ground in covering the key issues of Brexit and therefore to account for the phenomena. This is due not only to its focus on the importance of identity but also the detachment from economic reasoning that makes the theory better-equipped to approach the divorce between the UK and the EU. Due to its nature, postfunctionalism has the greatest leverage of explaining the origins, course and effect of Brexit as it provides a nuanced understanding of the rise of national identity, the clash between nationalism and international governance, the effects on EU politics (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1124). For instance, in the work of Frank Schimmelfennig (2018), a postfunctionalist depiction of integration/disintegration (see more in subchapter 2.5.) explains that the demand for Brexit was enabled by three causes: (a) unintended integration effects on national identity and the preservation of self-determination or sovereignty especially in areas of core state powers, causing persistent concerns which thus fuelled; (b) the rise of a Eurosceptic party (UKIP); and (c) it is also made possible by the availability of referendums (p. 1155, 1159, 1169).

In a postfunctionalist view, Brexit referendum depicts a clash between ‘functional pressures for integration and nationalist resistance’ (p.1123). The Brexit referendum is a very good example of how identity becomes a hurdle in a process of deep regional integration as explained by postfunctionalist theory. When mobilized correctly, the issue of identity becomes a great leverage to challenge the process of European integration.

In a way, the debate among the three theories represent the battle between Leave and Remain Campaign. Where Leave Vote campaigned for the regain of sovereignty by highlighting the problems of immigration and ‘taking back

control', Remain Vote fought back by predicting 'economic dislocation while avoiding any mention of European identity' (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1124). While neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism try to understand how integration processes on the account of economic transactions, postfunctionalism attempts to look at how integration may not do so due to a problem of identity and public opinion. A postfunctionalist student would argue that a 'study of mass politics has roots in political psychology not rationalist-economic logic' like in neofunctionalism or intergovernmentalism' (p.1117).

With that being said, the result of the referendum itself verifies postfunctionalist understanding of the causal relationship between the role of identity in deciding the longevity and the depth of multilevel governance, as well as the course of a deeper European integration. Postfunctionalism warns its readers to pay a close attention to the 'arena in which issue is debated because it affects the nature of conflict', for an example, 'mass politics in elections, referendum, and party primaries open door to the mobilization of national identity as constraint on integration' (Hooghe and Marks, 2019:1117). The Brexit payout, a postfunctionalist would argue, has proven its verdict that 'nationalism can subvert multilevel governance' (p.1124).

Both founders of postfunctionalism, Hooghe and Marks, have warned their audience to beware of the weaknesses of their theory. Postfunctionalism as conceived by both scholars is guilty of giving an incomplete account of the construction of identity. Due to this flaw, the theory does not have the capacity to explain, for example, Gifford's (2010:336) remarks about how the past Labour government successfully Europeanised the UK's economic sovereignty but failed in doing so for Britishness and, instead, 'has been complicit in reinforcing a national Euroscepticism which has been concomitant with its economic liberalism'.

Furthermore, postfunctionalism is also considered as an elegant theory and thus offers only simplistic expectations about the relative causal weight of identity and distributional calculus. Lastly, postfunctionalism is not a suitable theory to be used in a debate involving geographical factors such as territories as it gives an inadequate attention to geopolitics. Despite their pride in presenting postfunctionalism as being better in giving an account for Brexit, Hooghe and Marks also suggested looking somewhere else to find a better comprehension of EU disintegration. They believe that 'It can be illuminating to engage a theory in its own terms and to probe its use value in explaining phenomena for which it was not designed but which are in its field of vision' and it would be useful to look at EU disintegration using other theories that are not previously designed to explain EU phenomena (Hooghe and Marks, 2009:1128-1129).

#### **2.4.4. Theories of Integration: Europeanisation**

The theory of Europeanisation was born from neofunctionalist notion about how processes at the EU level are affected by societal preferences that are uploaded from the domestic level and intergovernmentalist focus on domestic state-related sources of European decision making and their consequences on the nature of EU institutions and policies (Graziano and Vink, 2013:33). Europeanisation is seen as a research agenda that has managed to end the exhausted debate between the two theories of integration by widening the research spectrum to topics such as the impact of EU institutions and policies on domestic political system (p.36).

As a concept, Europeanisation generally discusses about how member states adapt their domestic affair to European regional integration (Vink and Graziano, 2007:7). On a different occasion, Europeanization has also been defined either as 'an incremental process re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy making' (Ladrech, 1994:69) or

as ‘the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal, and social institutions associated with political problem solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules’ (Risse et al, 2001:3).

Olsen (2002, also cited in Bandov and Kolman, 2018:134-135) argues that Europeanisation is a multidimensional phenomenon which can be understood in five different ways. The first dimension to it is the changes in external territorial borders such as, for example, EU enlargement. Secondly, Europeanisation can also mean the development of institutions of governance at the European level while also referring to an act of central penetration of national and subnational systems of governance. Furthermore, Europeanisation can be seen as exporting forms of political organisation and governance that are typical and distinct for Europe beyond the European territory. Lastly, the phenomenon may also be understood as a political project aiming at a unified and politically stronger Europe.

In sum, we may define Europeanization as:

processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things” and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies (Radaelli, 2003:30 also cited in Graziano and Vink, 2013:37 and in Bandov and Kolman, 2018:134-135)

Europeanisation does not necessarily mean convergence, neither is it a political integration, nor a harmonization. Europeanisation is a concept that focuses on domestic administrative adaptation – changes that occurred within national political systems connected to European integration. It is a process of ‘domestic adaptation to European regional integration’ (Vink and Graziano, 2007:7). Europeanisation as a concept acknowledges that every member state has different characteristics and capabilities which affect the level of difficulty in

adjusting oneself to the EU. This level of difficulty, also known as ‘the degree of adaptational pressure’ which is generated by Europeanisation, depends on the fit or misfit between European institutions and domestic structures (Risse et al, 2001:7). The lower the fit, the higher the pressure. As such, the concept of Europeanisation puts the EU as the independent variable while the member states being its dependent variable.

The process of Europeanisation itself can be done in two ways: (a) top-down and; (b) bottom-up fashion (Dyson and Goetz, 2003). However, Schmidt (2009) argues that Europeanisation is a strictly top-down process – where it is done from the EU level and changes are to be found in the domestic level – while the bottom-up fashion is done through European integration where changes are brought from the member states to be found at the EU level, a process which is not the same as Europeanisation. In practice, however, top-down and bottom-up processes often take place simultaneously: ‘on the one hand EU policies are being adopted and implemented and, on the other, domestic actors participate in policy-making and standard-development’ (Radaelli, 2004 cited in Bandov and Kolman, 2018:139).

Vink and Graziano (2007:7-8) argue that the best way to study Europeanisation is by starting the focus on domestic level and ‘analyze how policies or institutions are formed at the EU level, and subsequently determine the effects of political challenges and pressures exerted by the diffusion of European integration at the domestic level’. Unfortunately, due to the majority of Europeanisation literature being performed within the top-down approach (Bandov and Kolman, 2018:142), Europeanisation researchers focus too much on the importance of Europe when explaining domestic changes. Thus, the products of these researches would put the focus on what the independent variable bring to the dependent variables and take away the importance of reactions from dependent variables for a possibility to better develop the concept as a whole.

The top-down and bottom-up ways of understanding Europeanisation put constraints on the theory to fully grasp the scope of Europeanisation itself. On one hand, the bottom-up process is not methodologically solid and makes it hard to draw the line between Europeanisation and European integration (Bandov and Kolman, 2018:142). On the other, the top-down approach allows only one direction of the process and thus ignores the role of domestic actors and their interactions in influencing the course of Europeanisation. This approach suggests that Europeanisation 'happens only if harmonization occurs with the EU's way of doing things' (p.142).

In the theoretical debate on European integration, theory of Europeanisation is the least mentioned in comparison and linked to the other theories of integration. There is not even a mention of Europeanisation as a theoretical advancement in postfunctionalist theory by Hooghe and Marks. The problem with Europeanisation is that it has no strong theoretical status until now because it is more concerned with domestic political change than EU political development, thus being more relevant for country specialists or comparative politics scholars (Graziano and Vink, 2013:40). Bulmer (2007) even argues that Europeanisation is not a theory but a phenomenon needing to be explained. As a theory, Europeanisation is built on an exaggerated use of hierarchical and vertical manner which is problematic because some processes of European integration indicate that integration happens horizontally between national governments, interest groups, and political parties as well (Bulmer, 2008).

Europeanisation is not yet fit for use as a theory as it lacks in research methods and design. Instead of being seen as a political integration theory, Europeanisation is best seen as a theory of 'multilevel institutional change' (Graziano and Vink, 2013:41). Also, its focus is on domestic politics and its changes which makes it more fitted to be used as an approach to studying domestic politics

and how EU has affected it. Since my thesis will be placed in an IR realm, Europeanisation is not the right theory to use.

## **2.5. Understanding Disintegration**

Earlier in this chapter I have mentioned, both implicitly and explicitly, that this thesis sees Brexit as a case of disintegration (see also subchapter 1.2.). The earlier sections have provided explanations on how theories of European integration would explain Brexit and why they are insufficient in answering the main research question asked in this thesis. However, the way this thesis treats disintegration, has not been properly addressed. Indeed, ‘what cannot be properly recognized and described cannot be adequately explained’ (Vollaard, 2014:2). This subchapter begins with discussions on the ways Brexit has been studied as a case of European disintegration and moves on to description on the ways disintegration is understood in this thesis.

This subchapter draws upon Hans Vollaard’s question in his work in 2014 which asks whether the EU is on the road to disintegration (2014:1). Disintegration, also mentioned numerous in the previous sections of the thesis (see subchapter 1.2. and 2.4.), is largely neglected at least at the theoretical level in the studies of European integration (also in Vollaard, 2014:2; Rosamond, 2000; Wiener and Diez, 2009). Taylor (2008) adds to this testimony by suggesting that EU theories today may lack the capability to recognize disintegration as ‘they no longer concentrate on the factors explaining the transformation of the entire EU system’ (as cited in Vollaard, 2014:2).

It is not to say that attempts in theorizing disintegration and explaining disintegration by means of theories have not been made. Despite the lack in theories of integration, a number of scholars believe that understanding disintegration is as simple as reversing integration. For instance, Schimmelfennig



(2018) answers this challenge and argues that postfunctionalism sees disintegration in reverse; he describes disintegration as a reduction – or an increase in terms of integration – in ‘the centralization level, policy scope, and membership of the EU’ (p.1156). According to Scmitter (2000), ‘a good theory of European integration should also work as a theory of disintegration’ (as cited in Leruth and Lord, 2015:759). Similar argument is made in the work of Benjamin Leruth, Stefan Gänzle, and Jarle Trondal who see that in neofunctionalism, theory of integration is seen to need to be able to explain disintegration (Leruth, et al., 2019:1015). Leruth and his team further argue that it is to be expected that the study of European disintegration will not stray from existing theoretical threads within EU studies and will be likely to go beyond EU studies to contribute to generic theories of change (p.1023).

As a practice – or process – Vollaard (2014:1) argues that disintegration has been ‘haunting the EU in recent years’ although in a weak sense. This can be seen from a few things such as: (a) Delors’ 2004 estimation on the EU’s collapse due to enlargement (Charlemagne, 2004 cited in Vollaard, 2014:1); (b) the rejection of the European constitution by French and Dutch voters in 2005 and the rise of Euroscepticism; (c) the possibility of Grexit due to the Euro crisis, but more importantly; (d) the practices of partial exit such as opt-outs and rejections to the European integrative steps.

These practices refer to the process of differentiated integration (Leuffen, et al., 2012) and differentiated disintegration. Differentiation has been an important key to the project of European integration since the post-1992 era (Leruth and Lord, 2015:754). According to Leruth and Lord, 2015:755), ‘the general concept of differentiation appeared for the first time in the primary Community law in 1986’, as stated in Article 8c of the Single European Act (now Article 27 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union [TFEU]):

‘When drawing up its proposals with a view to achieving the objectives set out in Article 7a [now Article 26 TFEU], the Commission shall take into account the extent of the effort that certain economies showing differences in development will have to sustain for the establishment of the internal market and it may propose appropriate provisions. If these provisions take the form of derogations, they must be of a temporary nature and must cause the least possible disturbance to the functioning of the internal market.’

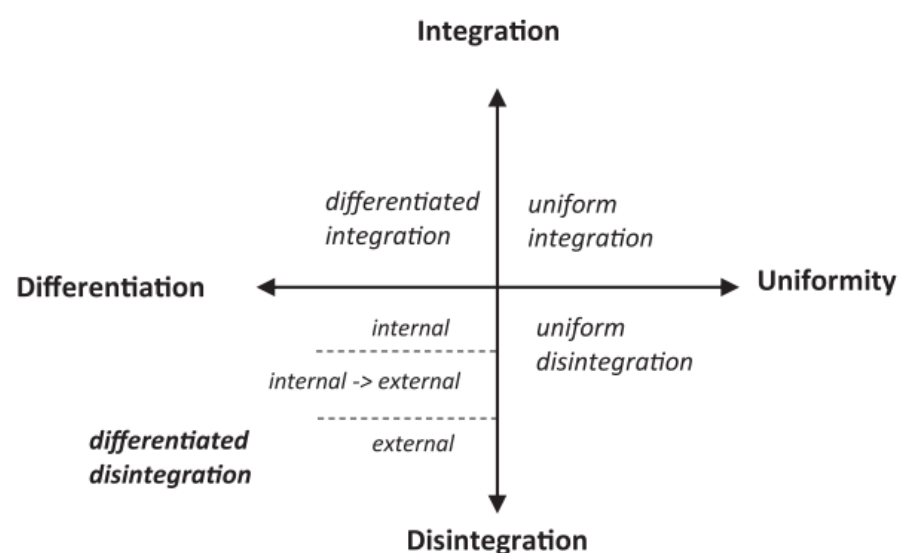
If the key to understanding disintegration is indeed to be found by reversing integration, the explanations for Brexit will therefore rely heavily on the understanding of the kind integrative path the UK has followed whilst being a member in the EU. During the period of its membership in the European Union, the UK – among a few other countries – had not been the most loyal participant of the integration process. A number of opt-outs and hesitance became the nuance of its life as a member state of the EU. The EU itself implemented what Dahrendorf (1979:20-21) recognizes as the notion of Europe *a` la carte*, referring to the common policies of differentiated integration ‘where there are common interests without any constraint on those who cannot, at a given point of time, join them’. The many names and forms of the notion of Europe *a` la carte* include *directoire*; two-speed Europe; two tiers; variable geometry; differentiation; *abgestu`fte* integration; subsidiarity; concentric circles; exclusion of the unco-operative and core Community (Wallace and Ridley, 1985). By 1996, there were at least 30 different varieties of differentiated integration (Stubb, 1996 cited in Leruth and Lord, 2015:755). Due to the many variations of differentiated integration, then, what do we make of differentiated disintegration? The following section discusses differentiated disintegration as differentiated integration in reverse.

### **2.5.1. Turning Differentiated Integration Upside Down**

Differentiated disintegration can be defined as ‘the selective reduction of a state’s level and scope of integration’ (Schimmelfennig, 2018: 1154). In the case of Brexit,

Schimmelfennig (2018) explains that there are two kinds of differentiated disintegration that took place during the period of the UK's formal withdrawal from the EU. First, the UK went through an internal differentiated disintegration between November 2015 and February 2016. During this period, the UK negotiated on the New Settlement for the UK within the EU (p. 1157). The negotiation was reflected from the letter that David Cameron addressed to Donald Tusk (see more in Chapter 5). The second kind of differentiated disintegration took place after the Brexit referendum. With the trigger of Article 50, the UK announced its formal withdrawal from the EU membership and therefore became a non-member. Despite this, the British government did not seek to cut ties with the EU entirely but wished to maintain a free-trade area and privileged market access in specific sectors (p. 1156) or selective integration as a non-member state (p. 1157). Due to the UK's position as a non-member and its wishes to keep maintaining some sort of relationship, the second kind of disintegration is thus called external differentiated disintegration.

**Figure 2.5.1.1. Differentiated Disintegration**



Source: Schimmelfennig, 2018:1156

The notion of two variants of differentiated disintegration was also supported by Benjamin Leruth, Stefan Gänzle, and Jarle Trondal in their published work in 2019 (p.1013, 1015). In their attempt to explain the meaning of differentiated integration, they resort to the work of John Erik Fossum (2015) who explains that due to the non-uniform kind of integration process in the EU, the projected future of the Union may combine: (a) accelerated integration for some; (b) outright disintegration for others, and; (c) greater differentiation in commitments to policies and institutions for all (cited in Leruth and Lord, 2015:756). By taking into account Fossum's (2015) notion of European integration, Leruth and his team (2019) suggest three forms of possible future of the EU post-Brexit.

The first scenario that they suggest is that the EU, seen from the perspective of rational choice approach, will break up due to member states' unwillingness to deal collectively with crises' (Hodson and Puetter, 2018 cited in Leruth, et al., 2019:1023) unless integration and cooperation can be perceived to be in the interests of member states – as suggested by intergovernmentalism. The second scenario sees Brexit as the key that unlocks and triggers the 'potential profound change' needed to further integration (p.1024). This scenario suggests that the process of European integration is now located where more powers need to be delegated to EU institutions in various policy fields to address new challenges; the UK hinders this progress. The third scenario suggests that crises arise from the UK's withdrawal will have only 'little profound effect on EU integration and governance' (p. 1024) as the EU will resort to 'pre-existing organizational traditions, practices and formats, reinforcing institutional path-dependencies' which have been successful in the past (Ansell and Trondal, 2018; Olsen, 2010 cited in p.1024). This particular scenario argues that if studies of differentiation build from organizational theories on 'meta-governance' (Egeberg and Trondal, 2018) – the 'ideas about how organizations emerge, rise and die' – differentiated disintegration can therefore be seen as 'contingent on existing

organizational formats' (p.1023) as differentiation itself is seen as 'profoundly path-dependent, locked-in, and structurally conditioned by pre-existing organisations and institutions' (p.1024).

Based on the above notion, Leruth, B. et al (2019) thus define differentiated disintegration as:

'the general mode of strategies and processes under which (a) member state(s) withdraw(s) from participation in the process of European integration (horizontal disintegration) or under which EU policies are transferred back to member states (vertical disintegration). Differentiation then refers to the scope and character of disintegration, such as the nature of the customs 'deal' that is currently being negotiated between the EU and the UK'. (p.1015)

With differentiation at play, the process between integration and disintegration is divided into four categories (see figure 2.5.1.1.). The process depends on whether or not the increases (integration) or decreases (disintegration) apply to all member states in a uniform (equal) or differentiated (unequal) manner (Börzel 2005; Leuffen et al. 2013: 8, cited in Schimmelfennig, 2018:1156). By using Brexit as a case in building the concept of differentiated disintegration, Schimmelfennig (2018) divides differentiated disintegration into three categories: (a) internal differentiation which happens when a member state remains in the EU but exits from specific policies; (b) external differentiation which happens when a state exits from the EU but continues to participate in selected EU policies; (c) the process between internal and external differentiation (p. 1154).

The analysis on Brexit as a case of differentiated disintegration say a little to none about the structure and/or the structural effect of the EU as an international system. For instance, Schimmelfennig uses postfunctionalism to base his argument and suggests that 'postfunctionalism attributes differentiated integration and disintegration to a politicization process, which shifts European integration issues from the arena of interest group politics to the arena of mass politics, where the 'identity logic' of politics has a larger role' (Hooghe and Marks,

2009:8 as cited on Schimmelfennig, 2018:1159). Much of postfunctionalist issue in explaining disintegration as a theory has been analysed in the previous sections (see subchapter 2.4.3.). The highlight of the analysis falls on the founders' – Hooghe and Marks – warning against postfunctionalist incomplete account on the construction of identity and their suggestion for finding a better avenue to comprehend of EU disintegration. Apart from that, postfunctionalist focus on identity makes it more appropriate as a tool for studying Brexit with expectations to find the cause(s) within the UK's territory (more on this in subchapter 3.2. regarding Waltz's political images).

### **2.5.2. The Issues with Turning Integration Upside Down**

Attempts to comprehend disintegration has been made by various ways, especially during the period of Brexit. The number of works in politics and IR with regards to understanding disintegration in relation to Brexit is not lacking. The theories of European integration have been expected to give accounts for disintegration such as in the case of Brexit. The previous section has covered why they are insufficient to fulfill this role. This section explores why reversing or turning integration upside down is a problematic method to approach disintegration especially given that differentiation is a notable element in the process of integration.

Despite the theoretical innovation in describing disintegration, there are a number of issues in adopting the above understanding of disintegration in this thesis. First, as hinted by the title of this thesis, Brexit is seen as a product, a side effect, or a result of a systemic change in progress within the EU. Whilst withdrawal of member states may or may not happen again in the EU, Britain's exit is unique to the UK only. The causes for other possible cases of disintegration in the future may or may not be similar to the case of Brexit. Based on the existing findings, it may be more proper to refer to such study as the study of Brexit and,

thus, the theoretical concept built upon Brexit as the theory of the UK's withdrawal. This would prevent the readers from expecting to find the causes for Brexit somewhere else other than within the UK's realm. The application of such views of disintegration will render this thesis unfruitful as this thesis attempts to avert the focus towards the EU's structure and see this particular disintegration as a part of the EU's integration process. After all, as mentioned earlier in this subchapter, there exists the possibility of another exit in the post-Brexit era (Leruth, et al., 2019:1023).

The second issue is the problem of theoretical inconsistency. In order to define disintegration as integration in reverse, there needs to be consistency both in the theory of integration and in the method for reversing the definition. For instance, Schimmelfennig's (2018) uses the word 'selective' (p.1154) in his definition of differentiated disintegration. He then moves on to stress his definition of the same term with a different word – 'unequal' (p.1156) – without explaining whether the two different words have the same or different meaning in his understanding of differentiated integration. Due to such inconsistency, one may ask, if each member state adopts selective integration/disintegration equally, does it still make integration/disintegration unequal? What does it exactly mean by being unequal? And, how can all member states integrate/disintegrate equally when their capabilities and resilience for such process vary? Further investigations into these questions are required to clarify concerns. Due to the scope, however, they will not be addressed in this thesis.

Another example of inconsistency is shown in the work of Benjamin Leruth, Stefan Gänzle, and Jarle Trondal (2019). Brexit, to them, can also be understood as a case of new form of flexible integration (p.1015). In general, integration refers to a process of convergence of a few elements coming together to become one, whereas disintegration refers to that of divergence such as a divorce, a breakaway, a detachment, or a withdrawal. In defining integration and/or disintegration,

direction – whether it is convergent or divergent – matters. To refer to Brexit as a form of flexible integration makes a perplexing contribution towards the definition of integration particularly in the way it differs from differentiated disintegration. If Brexit is a case of differentiated disintegration (divergence) how is it also a case of flexible integration (convergence)? Similar to the previous example, this inconsistency and confusion need to be investigated although will not be discussed further in this thesis.

Due to the issues in the way of disintegration is defined and understood in the previous section, this section rejects the notion that disintegration is integration in reverse. Indeed, as mentioned above, integration and disintegration have opposing directions – one refers to the attempt for convergence and the other for divergence. However, detangling and returning elements to the way they were prior to integration are not as simple as reversing the process. Despite the opposing directions, integration and disintegration are two separate processes that need their own separate studies.

This rejection also finds its support in the work of Leruth and Lord (2015) and Leruth, et al (2019). Both works indicate doubts in the consistency of the concept of differentiation. First, Leruth and Lord (2015:759) questions the extent of consistency between theories of differential integration with general theories. Given this question, if we were to understand disintegration simply as integration in reverse, we would also need to be able to explain whether a good theory of European integration still explain disintegration when differentiation is a profound element in the process. Second, as suggested by Leruth et al (2019:1025), ‘the EU and its integration process have always been a moving target, and so is the study of differentiation’ with Brexit as its ‘ground-breaking process of differentiated disintegration’. Any attempt in theorizing disintegration based on Brexit alone would lead the studies on the future of European integration ‘especially focusing on the consequences of the UK’s upcoming withdrawal from the EU on other



member states, policy areas and the European institutions' (Leruth, et al., 2019:1025).

Despite the insistence that theories of European integration should also be able to explain disintegration, more cases of withdrawal need to take place to be looked into to make effective contributions toward the studies. Similar to the case above, in its current stage, it is more appropriate to refer to the discourse as the study of Brexit as the current state of the studies of European integration are not yet equipped to explain European disintegration beyond Brexit. The use of a case study for establishing or advancing a particular theory's power for explanation exactly means that the theory is not there yet to explain such case, leave alone a more general idea. Therefore, looking for an answer in the theories of European integration, especially by assuming that disintegration is simply integration in reverse, will not be fruitful. In order to be able to decide whether Brexit as case study can be used to explain European disintegration at its current stage would require the study to include a scientific method for forecasting the best future prediction for the process of European disintegration. Only by studying European integration after it reaches its ultimate goal can then disintegration be defined as part or as the end of the integration process itself. This thesis does not attempt to explain the whole range of, and by no means to provide a theory of, disintegration. However, it attempts to find the underlying cause for Brexit by focusing on the system structure of the EU and not by using Brexit as the unit analysis for studying European disintegration.

### **2.5.3. Understanding Disintegration in This Research**

In this thesis, Brexit is seen as a form of disintegration with close relations to the way space – in the form of territoriality – is perceived and established both in the international and the domestic level (see chapter 4). In addition to the weaknesses mentioned in the earlier section, the concept of differentiation speaks more about

preferences rather than spatial building and maintenance of a system's structure. Due to this mismatch, the concept of differentiation is less effective in treating disintegration in this thesis compared to others with more information about how space is established and managed especially in relation to international relations and the maintenance of national sovereignty.

The concept of disintegration with regards to the perception and the establishment of space has been previously studied by Hans Vollaard. In his work in 2014, Vollaard contributes to the discourse of disintegration by deviating the focus from the use of theories of European integration. He rejects the persistence in reversing integration to explain disintegration and mentions that 'the conceptualization of European disintegration cannot be simply derived from definitions of integration turned upside down' (Vollaard, 2014:3). Vollaard's understanding of disintegration is based on Stefano Bartolini's (2005) theoretical framework of integration which explains the formation of polity in Europe in the past and today. In his understanding, a polity is described as integrating:

"when its external consolidation and internal structuring are strengthening both at the systemic and the actor levels . . . by stronger boundary control and system-building, a growing coincidence of boundaries of different nature and a decreasing permeability of boundaries, and, . . . by increasingly effective enforcement of behavioural conformity, increased structuring of voice and a rising behavioural conformity of the actors and increasing loyalty to the polity and fellow actors" (Vollaard, 2014:8)

With the above definition of integration, disintegration is subsequently defined in the opposite way. A disintegrating polity would find its control of boundaries and system-building weakened which leads to a 'decreasing congruence of boundaries and increasing permeability' as well as a diminished enforcement of behavioural conformity (p.8). This, in turn, decline the level of loyalty to the polity in question. In the case of European disintegration, Bartolini (2005:53 as cited in Vollaard, 2014:8) explains that 'the subsequent (partial) exits' – also known as differentiated (dis)integration in the other theories – do exactly that. The weakened political structuring within the EU, the decreased capacity to

enforce boundaries and behavioural conformity, followed by the weakened ability to foster loyalty and to allocate goods and values, reduce the EU's capability to lock actors and resources within its boundaries.

Despite his rejection against turning integration upside down to define disintegration, it is clearly reflected from his work that he agrees that disintegration is on the opposite direction of integration, i.e. he uses and reverses Bartolini's framework of integration to get an understanding of disintegration. What makes his understanding distinct from the way other scholars have done it, however, is that the reversion is done only to the definition; that is, both terms dwell in the opposite direction against each other. The reversion is not done to the method for integration and therefore disintegration is not integration being turned upside down in Vollaard's understanding.

Vollaard's conception of disintegration is similar to the way disintegration is seen in this thesis. His understanding of European (dis)integration has much to do with the role of boundaries and the extent to which these boundaries maintain the spatial integrity of a polity. This thesis agrees with his views on European integration being seen a process of redefinition of boundaries both at the EU level where boundaries are constructed through processes of integration, and at the state level where transcended boundaries are redefined through processes of disintegration (Bartolini, 2005 in Vollaard, 2014:8). From his understanding of Bartolini's integration and his inference of disintegration, it may be deducted that both integration and disintegration between the EU and its member states have inverse causal relationship with each other, i.e. where boundaries at the EU level are strengthened, those at the national level are weakened, *vice versa*.

This thesis views disintegration as a form of response toward a process of systemic change in the EU which involves not only the strengthening of the EU's boundaries but also the expansion of EU's capabilities and territoriality (see chapter 4). Disintegration is taken as a way to escape the intensity of the

advancement of congruence within the EU which is seen as threatening the integrity of the member states' (in this case, the UK) national territoriality. As this process of congruence is encapsulated in the word 'integration', the process of escaping from the congruence is thus understood as 'disintegration'. Both this thesis and Vollaard's conception of disintegration highlights the importance of boundaries in maintaining spatial integrity. Vollaard also mentions that state territoriality 'should be part of any account of European disintegration' (Karvonen, 2007:457 in Vollaard, 2014:3). However, he does not pursue this particular avenue and, therefore, it is different from the way this thesis focuses on disintegration. This thesis builds a theoretical framework which provides an understanding into how the dynamics of territoriality between the EU and the member states creates frictions which cause inconvenience significant enough to base a decision for taking an in-out referendum.

The second difference lies in the use of structural realism and the way it is seen from both perspectives. By reviewing the work of Mearsheimer and Rosato, Vollaard (2014:2-3) hesitates to use structural realism in investigating disintegration due to the very issue of turning integration upside down. Structural realism is seen to have 'exclusive focus on the state survival and security' and therefore it is 'neglecting the influence of international institutions and domestic politics' (Hoffmann et al., 1990; Krotz et al., 2012 as cited in Vollaard, 2014:3). Due to this, Vollaard sees it appropriate to throw the theory in the same pile with theories about European integration, international politics, comparative federalism, optimum currency ideas, and imperial decline. They are 'problematic' to be used as a basis for understanding disintegration as they suffer from a 'state bias', are 'too narrowly focused to explain the complex process of disintegration', or 'fail to interconnect coherently the manifold disintegrative factors' (p.1). In contrast, this thesis uses structural realism (neorealism) to set a theoretical background within which the concept of territoriality may be used in order to optimize the use of the concept. Structural realism (neorealism) has the very

parsimonious nature Vollaard (2014:6) argues to be important in providing an appropriate basis for the understanding of disintegration. This theoretical background gives foundational nuance in viewing the way the world works, especially how international politics runs.

## **2.6. Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has covered the discussion on the many faces of UK-EU relationship. This chapter started the discussion with understanding that the issue between the UK and the EU is multidimensional and multifactorial. The difficult relationship between the UK and the EU is seen through several key topics such as the federalist view of European integration, the orientation of British foreign policy, and Euroscepticism. As a manifestation of a difficult and problematic relationship between the UK and the EU, it is only granted that Brexit turned out to be a complicated affair which includes an array of different but interconnecting elements. The key elements of Brexit vote that have been discussed in this chapter include the lingering discontent in the government particularly in regards to neoliberalism and austerity measures, the issue of migration, and the issue of identity and sovereignty which all correspond to the Leave Vote in the 2016 Brexit referendum.

This chapter has also covered brief descriptions of theories of integrations including their key elements, arguments and criticism. In each section of the theory, the key elements are used to develop an insight to how each theory of integration sees the Brexit phenomena. Firstly, although theoretical arguments and debates over the course and development of European integration are abundant, a dedicated theory that speaks of European disintegration is absence from the study. Secondly, existing attempts in using the theories to explain a divorce suggest that Brexit is seen as rather as a process than a result. These are in no way sufficient to explain the phenomena. This is mainly because in this

thesis, Brexit is treated as an outcome – instead of a process – of an international relationship between the UK and the EU. Thirdly, all four theories of integration have each distinct flaw in engaging Brexit as an IR phenomena. All of them have, to some extent, provided explanations on the importance of sovereignty but insufficiently done so in regards to how it is important, or unimportant, for the continuation of the EU and what kind of relation sovereignty has with identity. Neofunctionalism worships and endorses the EU supranationalism and undermine the importance of state sovereignty. Intergovernmentalism, although being rooted in realist school, expect nation states to be acting rational and producing rational economic preferences; in this case, sometimes they are not. Europeanisation is underdeveloped as a theory and substantially suggests its readers to focus on domestic politics not IR. So far, of the four major theories of integration, postfunctionalism has the best leverage in explaining the origins, course and effect of Brexit. This is because it provides a nuanced understanding of the rise of national identity, the clash between nationalism and international governance, the effects on EU politics. However, postfunctionalism offers and incomplete account of identity, and how it relates to sovereignty.

Instead of providing the means to study disintegration, if anything, these theories use Brexit to fix themselves. Furthermore, these theories lack the account on how the discourse of immigration and identity play a role in raising the public concern over sovereignty which thus was translated into the campaign for ‘taking back control’ yet. From the literature review, we have also found that there is an indication that disintegration needs to be studied under realist/neorealist tradition. By taking the cues from existing literature about the importance of realism in the British discourse of European integration, as well as the possibility of using realism as a more appropriate means to explaining disintegration, the next chapter will deliver the task of comparing the three major theories of realism to each other. The chapter will cover the explanation to the decision why neorealism is the most promising tool and thus will be used in this thesis as a main

theoretical paradigm in order to answer the research question in this thesis in the scope of international relations. The next chapter will provide a thorough discussion on neorealism as the theoretical framework which is going to be used to answer the research questions in this thesis.

## CHAPTER THREE

### NEOREALISM: A THEORETICAL PARADIGM

#### 3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has covered the discussion of existing Brexit literature especially those that attempt to explain the reason behind the exit. So far, the attempts in explaining why Brexit happened have been anchored in empirical facts and thus highlight the gaps in the existed literature. The first gap is the lack of comprehensive theory that is dedicated to explain disintegration. The second gap lies in a more substantial issue; there is a lack of study that demonstrates how the issue of EU immigration links to the threats to the UK's sovereignty and how the issue triggers the need for preservation of UK identity as a sovereign state. These gaps make the ground for rethinking the causes of Brexit.

This thesis aims to examine Brexit by means of theoretical perspective in the realm of international relations. This project focuses on finding the cause of Brexit by putting the weight on the case for sovereignty, as discussed in the discourse of "taking back control" in the Brexit campaign prior to the referendum. The last chapter has hinted on the use of realism as a theory with the strongest power, yet, to explain European disintegration. However, the emissary of such suggestion himself argues that realism is difficult to sell because of its 'insistence on *raison d'état* in light of external security calculus' (Rosamond, 2016:867). Realism, as he explains, 'gives a poor account of one of the most important processes of contemporary world politics in a historically volatile region ... (and) ... rely heavily on the interplay between geopolitical structures and the security calculus for changes to patters of cooperation and conflict' (p.867 emphasis added). In explaining his worries, he suggests that disintegration such as Brexit be treated as an indeterminate process than an identifiable outcome. In contrast to this argument, this research project treats Brexit as an outcome than a process.



To see Brexit as a process is counterproductive to reach an understanding of why or how Brexit happens as it indicates that the end point of the affair is absent from the equation. However, it also needs to be highlighted that at the time his work was written, Brexit had not yet happened. At that time, his work was more predictive than it was retrospective.

Although hints have been thrown in European studies literature that realism may be of use to explain European disintegration, a lack of clearer direction lingers, especially one that points out which branch of realism it is to be used. Rather than being its own theory, realism houses several branches that make up a theoretical school. The three branches that dominate the school are classical realism, neorealism or structural realism, and neoclassical realism. By taking from where the last chapter ends, this chapter begins by differentiating between the three major branches of realism – classical realism, neorealism, and neoclassical realism – to highlight why neorealism is a better branch of realism to be used as the theoretical paradigm for this thesis. In order to appropriately review the theory, I continue the discussion by laying out the foundation of the establishment of neorealism as understood by Kenneth Waltz. Secondly, the theory is briefly explored by highlighting the key elements in various versions of neorealism. Thirdly, I will move on to the discussion on how neorealism has been criticized and how it has also been defended. By taking the points from these sections, I will describe how the theory is going to be used in this project and in what way it is limited.

### **3.1.1. Classical Realism**

Classical realism is the oldest branch of realist theoretical school and is also known as “realism”. Although theory of realism has dated far back in international politics, it gained the popularity as ‘classical realism’ after being studied by Hans Morgenthau in 1940s through his book *Politics among Nations*. Realism is

concerned by how the world actually is rather than what it is ought to be (Morgenthau, 1956:4) thus making it an empirical theory rather than normative. In line with such nature, the analyses of this theory are confined to subjective valuations of international relations (Georg and Sorensen, 2007:75).

Classical realism adopts a pessimistic view of human nature. Scholars of this theory believe that egoism and power politics – which are part of human nature – are the roots of international conflicts (Wendt, 1992:395). The pessimism, according to Jackson and Sorensen (2007:60), derives from continuous patterns of power politics as manifested by recurring conflicts, rivalries and wars. As opposed to neorealism, classical realist scholars see anarchy as permissive but not the main drive for struggle for power. The struggle for power at the international level is mainly due to *animus dominandi* which is the political mans' urge to dominate others. State is a collective reflection of mans' lust over power. Power is seen as the end where state is the agent of pursuing it. Therefore, state is ontologically superior to the system (Hobson, 2000:17).

Classical realism is certainly able to give various accounts for what causes Brexit. However, due to its centered focus on human nature as the primary force of international relations, classical realism places itself in a highly flexible commitment to the unit of analysis in the study. Classical realism does not give its students a sharp account on which actor or what exactly the focus of the study needs to be placed. There are numerous individuals involved in the Brexit affair and at least as many realist explanations that can be offered by this particular branch of realism. It is due to this high flexibility that classical realism is not suitable to give a proper explanation to the research questions presented in chapter one.

### **3.1.2. Neorealism or Structural Realism**

Neorealism is an upgraded version of classical realism with a new twist. Neorealism was first developed by Kenneth Waltz as an expansion of his theoretical notion of “political images”. By taking a different stance from its predecessor, neorealism departs from the perspective that the key problem of international relations issues are to be found in the international system. This key problem is what neorealists also call as the ‘underlying cause’. The most important actor in neorealism is sovereign state. Even so, neorealism does not neglect the fact that there are other types of actor in an international system. However, an international system is an arena dominated by sovereign states.

In contrast to classical realism, neorealism sees power merely as a means to achieve the ultimate goal that is to survive in the international system, nonetheless by maintaining sovereignty. The struggle for power is not based on mere lust but the need for states to stay sovereign. As long as states remain sovereign, other goals, such as being a hegemon, may then be pursued. The constellation of sovereign states within such international system is based on the amount of power that they possess. With imperfect information that is often, if not always, guaranteed in the system, states need to always be prepared to defend themselves to secure sovereignty and maintain peace. From this point, neorealism is further divided into two categories, offensive and defensive realism. The concept of offensive and defensive realism is established by John Mearsheimer. Mearsheimer himself, through his work, claims to be an offensive realist; it means that he believes that states, whenever possible, must strive for hegemony to ensure peace. In contrast, Waltz’s version of the theory is seen to resonate with defensive realism which argues that states cannot be too greedy when it comes to pursuing power. In order to ensure peace, it is advisable for states to maintain the amount of power they possess to be ‘just enough’. In this term, peace in offensive realist perspective is seen as the preparedness to engage

in a war, while peace in defensive realism is seen as the state of harmony of the absence of war.

Due to its highlight for sovereignty and international ordering principle, among other elements that thus make the theory, neorealism is more appropriate compared to classical realism to provide explanation for the research questions being asked in this thesis while maintaining the project to be grounded in IR realm. Although both theories place the utmost importance on states as the unit of analysis, classical realism sees states only as vessels for the leaders to pursue their subjective interests whereas neorealism sees a state as one unified entity and is not bothered with the domestic sources of its interests. Therefore, neorealism provides more area to maneuver in understanding international politics without having to worry about the interests or psycho-political processes in the mind of the state's leaders. Albeit, only one question remains: how does it differ from neoclassical realism?

### **3.1.3. Neoclassical Realism**

The most recent development of realism school is neoclassical realism. By bearing both classical realism and neorealism in mind, neoclassical realism was developed by Gideon Rose in 1998 to fill the gaps he found in the other realist theories. This was done by bridging the international system and the nation states with the focus being placed upon the foreign policies of nation states. He argues that in order to understand the way states interpret and respond to their external environment, one must analyse how systemic pressures are translated through 'unit-level intervening variables such as decision makers' perception and domestic state structure' (Rose, 1998:152) which includes the strength of a 'country's state apparatus and its relation to the surrounding society' (p.161). This other branch of school of realism, although acknowledges international relations as its parent discipline, focuses on and is used as an approach to foreign policy analysis which

seeks to explain 'what states try to achieve in the external realm and when they try to achieve it' (p.145).

Rose (1998:145) disagrees with Waltzian thinking that when approaching foreign policy, we need to just be content with empirical analyses or accounts – not theoretical explanations – simply because foreign policy does not rest in an autonomous realm. Instead, he anchors his theory upon classical realist understanding on how international politics works. Rose (1998) positions his theory in the field of foreign policy along with *innenpolitik* and, as he argues, Mearsheimer's offensive and defensive realism as both emerged from neorealist take on *innenpolitik*. In building his theoretical arguments, Rose (1998:151) explains that 'a good theory of foreign policy should first ask what effect the international system has on national behaviour because the most powerful generalizable characteristic of a state in international relations is its relative position in international system'. He makes the impact of relative power on foreign policy the primary subject of neoclassical realism and due to this, the theory differs from neorealism in two major ways.

First, neoclassical realism believes that the ordering principle in international system is nonetheless states' relative power, not anarchy as taught by neorealism. In contrast to neorealism, neoclassical realism explains that it is not that states seek security but they 'respond to the uncertainties of international anarchy by seeking to control and shape their external environments' (Rose, 1998:152). Neoclassical realism would mainly predict that 'over the long term the relative amount of material power resources countries possess will shape the magnitude and ambition . . . of their foreign policies' (p.152). This means, the more material power states possess, the powerful they become, and the bigger the magnitude and ambition of their foreign policies *vice versa*. Rose, however, does not provide further explanations on why a state would want to seek control and shape their external environments.

Second, neoclassical realism believes that it is not the structure of international system but the actual political leaders and elites' perception of relative power that matters because foreign policy choices are made by these groups of people (Rose, 1998:147). The theory uses Christensen's (1996) concept of two kinds of power that a state possesses. First, a state has national political power which is the ability of state leaders to mobilise their nation's human and material resources behind security policy initiatives. Second, a state has state power which is the portion of national power the government can extract for its purposes and reflects the ease with which central decision makers can achieve their ends. Because foreign policy is made by the government, it is state power that matters to neoclassical realism not national power. However, neoclassical realism does not simply state that 'domestic politics matter in foreign policy but specifies the conditions under which they matter' (Rose, 1998:167). What Rose does not manage to explain is his views on national interests. Given that what matters are the political elites, one may assume that neoclassical realism sees states as lifeless and because of that, there would be no such thing as national interests but the interests of these elite groups. Such notion carries a conflicting idea, especially in regards to state power primacy over national power, which makes it difficult to apply on the Brexit case. The vote for Brexit was driven not by state power (the government) but by national power (the totality of the people through the Brexit referendum).

Neoclassical realism is built as a realist theory of foreign policy with the aim to bridge processes between the international system and the state. Despite this, the theory fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of international politics. As Pollack (2012:4) explains, neoclassical realism is a theoretical degeneration of neorealism and it is theoretically inconsistent. Rose presents himself as a positivist in his work and at times supports the predictive power of theories which is the opposite of Waltz's idea of theory. This makes his theory seem to be built to have such predictive power. The problem with this expectation

is that for a theory to claim its predictive power, it needs to be proven over time through numerous amount of tests. Predictive power is a quality that a 'law' – not 'theory' – possesses. Furthermore, the need for Rose to imbue his theory with variables from unit level is what Waltz has previously warned. Waltz (1996) explains that the incorporation of threat or the various motivations of states' into neorealism would infuse what is a theory of international politics with unit-level factors and thus disqualify it as a true theory of international politics (p.56) and under most circumstances, 'a theory of international politics is not sufficient, and cannot be made sufficient, for the making of unambiguous foreign-policy predictions' (p.57). Although scholars must consider statement's assessments of threats in moving from international-political theory to foreign policy application, these considerations do not thereby become part of the theory; 'forcing more empirical content into a theory would truly amount to a regressive theory shift' (Waltz, 1997:916).

### **3.2. The Emergence of Neorealism**

Neorealism was developed by Kenneth Waltz in his book *Theory of International Politics* (henceforth TIP). TIP is a research project which is based on Waltz's first book *Man, the State and War* (henceforth MSW) in which he attempts to answer why international wars happen. His research question in MSW is what causes war. Waltz sees that the causes of war can be found in three different realms which he refers to as 'images'. In the first image, flaws or the causes for wars are to be found within the psychology of the humans. In the second image, flaws are institutional and are to be found within the structure of the state. In the third, the structure of the international system allows wars to happen. The core element in this image is international anarchy. This research will be conducted in the realm of the third image where UK-EU relationship, Brexit in particular, is seen as an international phenomenon. Framing UK-EU relationship as an international affair will help

capture a holistic image of the dynamics of the relationship between the two units involved.

To begin with the discussion on neorealism as how it is going to be used in this chapter, a brief summary of these images needs to first be provided. This step is necessary to give nuance in understanding how Waltz comprehends international politics. Since its establishment, neorealism has grown into a research program that diverges from the original theory's understanding of how international systems work, so far that a study even suggests that Waltz himself is not a neorealist (LaRoche and Pratt, 2018). This is why understanding the logic behind the establishment of neorealism is essential. This subchapter focuses on the summary of first, second, and third image respectively.

Furthermore, because Waltz's political images were established during the Cold War era, the language used in his work was heavily influenced by wars and the like. Indeed, since the Cold War period, international politics has evolved. The world has witnessed a growing number of cooperation based on more regional affinities and what used to be the ultimate aim – to be a hegemon – is now slowly being left behind in order to achieve other objectives traditionally known to dwell in the middle or low politics. However, Waltzian political images are still useful to locate where in political studies one issue must be placed. Therefore, particularly in the following sections, Waltz's affinity to the word 'war' would refer instead to a broader range of words such as 'conflict', 'problem', and/or 'issue'. Such adjustment needs not necessarily change the course and the use of Waltz's images to locate the causes of recurring conflicts in an international system.

From this point, the chapter is organized into three main sections. First, we begin by a brief description of Waltzian 'three political images'. This section aims to picture how the three images differ to each other. This section is also important to explain why the case being raised in this thesis should be studied in the third image which is the international realm. The second section will see this chapter



through the discussion of neorealism as a theory. In this section, main assumptions and critics of neorealism will be laid out in order to give justifications to the particular understanding of neorealism that will be used in this thesis. The third section discusses the issue of the concept anarchy as the anchor of neorealist theory. This particular section discusses why, despite the many number of criticism against anarchy, neorealism is still relevant and useful in the study of international relations.

### **3.2.1. First Image**

Waltzian first image tells us that the main causes of war are to be found within the nature and behavior of men (Waltz, 2001:16). Theorists included in this image suspect that wars are caused by 'selfishness, from misdirected aggressive impulses, from stupidity' and thus, according to Waltz, the solution for the elimination of wars is by 'uplifting and enlightening men or securing their physico-social readjustment' (p.16) – in other words, eliminating the imperfections of men. The first image is where behavioralism and psycho-political theories dwell.

Pessimists in the first image sees that men are naturally flawed. Optimists, on the other hand, sees that men are good and societies are basically harmonious and thus believe that the 'wicked' can be turned into the 'good' (Waltz, 2001: 20). Optimist realists progress to the establishment and development of liberal theories which will not be discussed here. With that being said, in regards to this thesis, should the first image be used, it shall be based on pessimist realism.

Theorists in this image vary from theologians such as Reinhold Niebuhr and St Augustine, philosophers such as Spinoza, and political theorists such as Hans Morgenthau. Reinhold Niebuhr believes that there is potentiality of evil in all human acts. He argues that pride is the source of the 'evil', explaining that man is 'a pigmy who thinks himself a giant' (Waltz, 2001: 21). Having the same basis of assumption with Niebuhr, St Augustine highlights the importance of self-

preservation in men but acknowledges that such importance is insufficient to explain all human behavior (p.22). As for Spinoza, self-preservation is seen to as the goal of every act of actor. Hans Morgenthau comes up with the idea of the *animus dominandi* – the desire for power – which explains that ‘the struggle for power arises simply because men want things, not because there is evil within their desires’ (p.34). Being one of the most popular realist theorist in the twentieth century, Morgenthau believes that ‘the test of political success is the degree to which one is able to maintain, to increase, or to demonstrate power over others’ (as cited in Waltz, 2001:35) thus emphasizing that power is an end in itself.

### **3.2.2. Second Image**

Waltzian second image explains that the main causes of war are to be found within the internal organization of states (Waltz, 2001:81). Scholars dwelling in this image believe that ‘the internal structure of states determines not only the form and use of military force but external behavior generally’ (p.125) Insufficiency in explaining human behavior as the main cause of war led a number of theorists to the assumption that the cause is to be found somewhere else. The second image starts with Augustine’s argument (p.32) that without the restraints of government, men would slaughter each other until man is extinct. The importance of a powerful force that is able to bind men together is also mentioned implicitly by Niebuhr, despite being a theorist that dwell in the first image, who argues that ‘men are not good enough to do what should be done for the commonwealth on a purely voluntary basis’ (cited in Waltz 2001:26).

The second image emphasizes that the main cause of wars would be on the container (the state) rather than the content (the people). In general, the second image houses theories that believe that the people’s behavior is dependent on the state. The second image understands that the internal organization of states is the key to understanding war and peace (Waltz, 2001:81).

War is understood as promoting internal unity and states with internal strife will seek particular wars to bring internal peace (p.81). As explained by Bodin, “the best way of preserving a state, and guaranteeing it against sedition, rebellion, and civil war is to keep the subjects in amity with one another, and to this end, to find an enemy against whom they can make common cause” (cited in Waltz, 2001:81). It is then clear that the second image highlights the importance of the unity of its actors, although not mentioned explicitly. The state in the second image can also refer to the government. Conflict may arise not because the state itself is badly structured but it can be that the defects are to be found in the government (p.82). Because the internal organization of states is important to understand war and peace, we can assume that according to this image, political parties may be blamed on the occurrence of international conflict depending on their significance in the process of decision-making. After all, internal structure of a state determines its external behavior.

### **3.2.3. Third Image**

Taking a different stance from his predecessors, Waltz argued that the main cause of war is to be found within the third image, the international system. As the first and the second image assume that wars arise from the imperfections of the conflicting units, they must assume the possibility of their perfection (Waltz, 2001: 119). This allows for fundamental errors in both images as history has shown that both men and states are imperfect and are completely able to make bad decisions depending on each one’s rationality.

Waltz sees ‘state’ as an entity that evolves when men shift from the state of nature to the state of civil. In the state of nature – as argued by Rousseau, Spinoza, and Kant – men are led by “instinct”, “physical impulses”, and “right of appetite”; and ‘liberty . . . is bounded only by the strength of the individual’ (Waltz, 2001:171). Agreements are useless as they do not possess binding power and thus

considered “ineffective”. Where there is no binding power such as rules, even making provision is impossible although desirable. Some men cooperate and set up rules while the others are forced to follow because those outside the cooperation cannot stand up against the efficiency of a cooperative group (p.171). Thus it is clear to Waltz that “in moving from the state of nature to the civil state man gains materially” (p.171). By quoting Rousseau, Waltz argues that “the passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by submitting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked” (p.172). In the state of nature, man possesses natural liberty which means that ‘he has a right to all he can get’. This, he abandons when he enters civil state in return for civil liberty and ‘proprietaryship of all he possesses’. This civil liberty that Rousseau understands is the abolishment of ‘mere impulse of appetite’ which is a ‘slavery’, while obedience to law is liberty (p.172).

The third image explains that beyond their national borders, states operate in an arena within a state of nature simply because there is not one overarching power that have the capacity to bind and force them to do anything, including to prevent them from engaging in a war with each other. This state, as Waltz understands, is anarchic as opposed to how a state operates in the state of civil that is hierarchic. This is where the dichotomy of anarchy and hierarchy in neorealism emerges. Anarchy is the ordering principle of international system whereas hierarchy is that of national/domestic one. Such dichotomy is essential in Waltz’s neorealism because it is intimately-related to states’ sovereignty which will be inspected further in the next chapter.

### **3.3. Neorealist Theory: A Summary**

Neorealism as a theory of international relations was built by Kenneth Waltz as a continuation of his concept of three political images. His work was published as a

book called the *Theory of International Politics* in 1979. Since the publication of this book, a number of scholars have also attempted to add their views to the theory, both in building and in rejecting the theory. Whilst having both positive and negative critics indicate that a theory is on the right track, 'scholars have become overly invested in undermining TIP with the use of contradicting evidence, and therefore have ignored the inherent difficulty in testing the theory' ignoring that 'the theory may remain useful if it is regarded as having explanatory value, and if it is not surpassed by a superior theory' (Bradshaw, 2019:3). This subchapter explores the key elements in neorealism explained by not only Waltz but also a number of other scholars who contributed to the theory. This will help justify the decision to use Waltz's version of neorealism.

Robert Gilpin's contribution towards neorealism starts by questioning how changes in international relations are supposed to be explained. Changes in his question include the rise and the decline of international orders and of hegemonic great powers, and the causes of great wars and long periods of peace. This main assumption of this version of neorealism is that instead of possibility, states make decisions based on probability of conflict. Gilpin argues that realism or its competitors were not scientific research programs, they were part complex intellectual tradition and part political ideology (Wohlforth, 2011:502). Having argued this, Gilpin's supporters such as Wohlforth (2011:501) assesses that, unlike Waltz's theory, Gilpin's neorealism is not tailored to Lakatosian history of physics and manages to say new and non-obvious things about international politics.

Glenn Snyder is another well-known neorealist scholar that has contributed towards the theory. His contribution expands the scope of neorealism with what he calls the theory of alliances. His version of neorealism focuses on the discussion about alliance formation and management in both multipolar and bipolar international system (Snyder, 1990). Snyder's theory, however, is heavily

influenced by the notion of 'superpowers' and 'military forces' – as he numerous mentions in his work – making it more fitted to the study of security.

Helen Milner also contributed to the theory of neorealism by first listing a number of criticisms towards several elements of Waltzian anarchy. Milner sees the international system as 'a web of interdependencies' as it helps to focus on the link between one actor to the other and help directs the attention to these actors' perceptions and knowledge of each other and their communications (Milner, 1991:84). Much of the game of international relations is about anticipating others' behavior as one's decision depends on the decisions of others. Because of this, interdependence needs to be considered as a central feature of the international system. Through these points, she highlighted that anarchy is not to be worshipped as the only important element in international politics. Other elements such as strategic interdependence is just as important (p.85).

Waltz's neorealism is built upon his work on political images. He positions himself in the third image and builds a theory which explains that international system is run under international anarchy as the ordering principle and what the implications of such system are. Anarchy is the foundational concept in neorealism; a central point from where other neorealist assumptions follow. The presence of anarchy in the system determines the whole department of international relations. In other words, anarchy must first be present before deciding whether a system is international or national. Anarchy lies in the core of an international system.

For an international system to work, there must be units that interact with each other within the structure of said system. The main units in an international system are sovereign states which are assumed in neorealism to be the most advanced unitary political systems. As the most important actors on an international stage, each sovereign state is seen as its own 'person'. This is due to several reasons. First, he explains that 'in the name of the state a policy is

formulated and presented to other countries as though it were . . . the general will of the state' (Waltz, 2001:178). Second, every state must have a foreign policy and there are times where foreign policies need single choices and 'some of these choices must be supported by the state as a whole or the state disappears – and with it the problem of state unity' (p.178). Third, not only do foreign policies need to be supported by the state as a whole, they also need to be spoken 'with a single voice' (p.179). Lastly, on an international stage, 'the unity of the state is simply the naked power of the *de facto* sovereignty' (p.178). Therefore it is fundamental for states to be – and to act – unitary on an international stage.

Because there are no higher power than sovereign states in an anarchic system, states are left to fend for themselves. States are free to do as they please and as they see fit to achieve whatever goal they want to pursue with whatever means they have as long as they exist in the first place. This is why, unlike in classical realism that believes that power is the goal, neorealism understands that the ultimate goal for every state in any international system is to stay sovereign. Power in itself is nothing but merely a means, an instrument, for states to pursue their goals.

In terms of how much power is needed, some states may pursue as much power as possible and have hegemonic aspiration in order to pursue not only the maintenance of sovereignty but also to achieve ambitious residual goals. Powerful states in an international system may have stronger global projection on the goals they would like to achieve and, with the amount of power they possess, they may have the tendency to become offensive. Some states, however, may be satisfied with just enough power to stay sovereign and tend to be less aggressive in terms of interacting with other states. Because states are assumed to want to stay sovereign, they are assumed to have defensive measure to keep them safe from external force that may be harmful. It is beneficial for a state to have as much information as possible about other states that may include how much power they

possess, the intentions of other states, and their likeliness to be friends or foes. However, it is very unlikely for a state to get perfect information of the intentions of others. This is where John Mearsheimer's version of neorealism differs from that of Waltz's.

Mearsheimer categorizes neorealism into two subgroups – offensive realism and defensive realism. Mearsheimer supports the notion that, where possible, it is better for a state to pursue as much power as possible and become a hegemon in the system, hence making him an offensive realist. On the opposite, Waltz argues that an international system will 'punish' a state for having too much power. In an international system, states may work with each other to serve their own interests first and common goods, if any, second. This includes creating a bandwagon against the hegemon.

In neorealism, power is based on 'material capabilities that a state controls' (Mearsheimer, 2010:78) and can be accumulated through several sources. Traditionally, the term power refers to a state's military assets that are ready at hand to be deployed when needed. Since the end of the Cold War, globalization grows even stronger and states in the global system are finding new ways to coexist with each other in a debatably more peaceful world. As such, the notion of power expanded. Furthermore, it must be highlighted that winning a war 'is not the only way that states can gain power' (p.79). The other sources of power that a state possess are those come from socio-economic assets such as 'a state's wealth and the size of its overall population' (p.78). This form of assets are inherently latent. This means that these assets are intangible and must be developed first before a state can benefit from them. Ultimately, it needs to be understood that it is not the latent power *per se* that makes up the sources for power for states but access to these sources.

These basic neorealist assumptions about international system are first and foremost based on how anarchy is interpreted in the theory. More recent IR



scholars who criticize neorealism tend to look very closely into a single concept of anarchy and isolate the concept from its background theory (Lechner, 2017:344). Such approach is problematic because due to the concept being foundational to the theory, once the concept is attacked and deemed wrong, the other following assumptions would crumble and need a foundational replacement to keep the theory coherent, or a major theoretical redefinition and restructuring. This is why we must attempt to understand how anarchy is seen in this theory and discuss the validity of its major criticism.

Criticisms of neorealism vary from the epistemological issues in the way the theory is conceived to the logic of its axioms that make the theory somewhat 'too sparse, too elegant, and too minimalistic' (Waeber, 2009:211; Ashley, 1984; Milner, 1991; Powell, 1994; Collard-Wexler, 2006; Donnelly, 2015; Rosamond, 2016:867, LaRoche and Pratt, 2018; Bradshaw, 2019:3). However, one of the most popular criticisms against neorealism is its conception of international anarchy. Because the understanding of anarchy is essential in this thesis particularly as a demarcational element that is also affected by the change in international system due to European integration (read: chapter 4), the following subchapter discusses the criticisms against anarchy and explains why it is yet relevant in the study of international relations today.

### **3.4. The Criticism and the Defense**

Waltz's project of theory of international politics (neorealism) is established on a ground where continuous theoretical research must take place. His project started with *Man, the State, and War* (MSW) in which he built the theoretical foundation for neorealism. As it lays the foundation to TIP, it must be treated as such and not as a separate theoretical project. As we have covered in the previous chapter, holistic approach is a very important key in using Waltz's version of neorealism. Not only because Waltz is committed to holism but also it is also to prevent his

readers from falling into the trap of contemporary neorealism that stems from Waltz's project of theory of international politics.

### **3.4.1. Neorealism as Positivist Theory**

The first error would be the assumption of Waltz's theory being that of a positivist – 'a set of generalizable, predictive laws with clear empirical implications' (LaRoche and Pratt, 2018:155). This error is strangely very common among scholars in the field of international politics. When read carefully, one shall find that Waltz stresses in his works that the focus of a theory lies in its explaining power. As he explains, 'rather than being mere collections of laws, theories are statements that explain them' (Waltz, 2010:5). Yet, numerous scholars attributed to his theory the demand for predictions and criticizing the theory for its lack of predictive power.

Buzan (1993) argues that in TIP, Waltz does not state a consistent position himself about the relationship between his theory and the empirical search to confirm or disconfirm predictions derived from it. Neorealism is said to need, and has failed to make, specific predictions about particular state behavior such as why state X go to war in circumstance Y (Vasquez, 1998). Furthermore, neorealism has been said to also fail to produce accurate explanations of international politics that are able to pass empirical tests (Vasquez, 1998). The criticism continues as Legro and Moravscik (1999) demand that realism (not only neorealism) must be judged according to its ability to generate empirically testable hypotheses and predictive capacities in the manner of a scientific research paradigm. In attempt to explain the process of European project, Collard-Wexler (2006:398, 427) claims that not only is neorealism incomplete in describing the EU but also failing to predict its emergence or explaining its functioning. He adds further that the theory lacks explanatory power and accuracy.

By contrast, Waltz (1997:916) explains that 'a theory's ability to explain is more important than its ability to predict . . . Success in explaining, not predicting, is the ultimate criterion of a good theory. Theories of evolution, after all, predict nothing in particular'. As a matter of fact, Waltz (1986: 334-337; 1997: 913-916) rejects positivist works that are derived from his theory. He attacks the positivism that is advocated by King, Keohane and Verba in 1994 (Waltz, 1997:917 cited in LaRoche and Pratt, 2018:157). Lastly, he challenges Lakatosian positivist view which states that the one way theories can be evaluated and tested is by 'pitting them against facts' (Waltz, 2003: vii, xiii). The simplistic notions about theory testing have been and remain part of intellectual stock of most students of political science (Waltz, 2003 also advertised by Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013).

### **3.4.2. Assuming States as Rational Actors**

The second error in reading Waltz's TIP derives from the first. His many followers, and critics, attribute to him that his theory 'assumes or must assume rational actors' (LaRoche and Pratt, 2018:157; Legro and Moravcsik, 1999). Because his theory is thought to be positivist, it must have the ability or power to predict. The issue in the second error starts here. In order to allow such 'positivist neorealism' to make predictions, it must assume rational state actors. Without rational actors, Waltz's theory would thus become useless as it would be 'difficult to see how [Waltz's theory] can reliably predict the outcomes of their behaviour' (Mearsheimer, 2011:125 cited in LaRoche and Pratt, 2018:157). This particular error is encouraged through Mearsheimer's work which continuously stresses the need for neorealism to include rational actor assumption because without it, it would apparently be difficult to see how Waltz's theory can reliably predict the outcomes of their behavior (Mearsheimer, 2011). In explaining the way Waltz's theory is that of defensive realism, Mearsheimer (2011) further argues that the possibility that the system will punish imprudent states gives them strong

incentives to act rationally which is why Waltz believes that the system ultimately acts in foreseeable ways.

Other scholars within the field have managed to divert the nature of Waltz's TIP from what he describes as a theory in its capacity to explain, to be that of a law which requires hypothesis testing to verify the theory's ability to predict (Schweller, 1996; Walt, 1987; Mearsheimer, 2001; Layne, 2006; Glaser, 2010; Monteiro, 2014; Rosato, 2015). Even worse, some have also advanced neorealism 'as a rationalist theory that tests foreign policy hypotheses' (LaRoche and Pratt, 2018:158). As has been mentioned in the neoclassical realism discussion, Waltz is opposed to imbuing his theory with variables from unit level as it will only degenerate the quality of his theory of international politics. As he explains, 'the chief virtue of a theory of international politics is its restriction to only those elements that are properly third image'; unit level theories tell us why different units behave differently despite their similar placement in a system (Waltz, 1979:72). Neorealism does not explain 'why particular wars are fought', it does explain 'war's dismal recurrence through the millennia' (Waltz, 1988:620). He carefully limits the collection of variables for his theory as a neorealist theory of international politics 'explains how external forces shape states' behavior but says nothing about the effects of internal forces' (Waltz, 1996:57).

The remedy to this error is but to read and comprehend the collection of Waltz's pieces of work where he continuously stresses that his theory must be evaluated based on its coherence rather than on its empirical accuracy (Waltz, 1982:681; 1997:916; 2003). After all, his theory focuses on abstraction of the real world, not the real world per se. As he explains, 'since structure is an abstraction, it cannot be defined by enumerating material characteristics of the system. It must instead be defined by the arrangement of the system's parts and by the principle of that arrangement' (Waltz, 1979:80).

### 3.4.3. Neorealist Materialism

The third error is the thought that Waltz is a materialist. Scholars in IR especially those opposing neorealism, are left unimpressed when the term 'capabilities' is used. Without much reference to Waltz's exact work where he mentions capabilities as indeed being those in material term, these scholars (e.g. Legro and Moravcsik, 1999; Glaser, 2010; Mearsheimer, 2010; Buzan, 2014; Foulon, 2015) judge Waltz's inference of capabilities as those being materialistic, mainly referring to military forces or economic wealth. For example, Wendt (1999:96 cited in LaRoche and Pratt, 2018:160) believes that, first, unlike his theory, Waltz's theory relies on materialist theory of structure that does not take into account the interaction between ideas and rump materialism. Second, 'in conceptualizing international structures', TIP makes 'the distribution of material capabilities the key variable' (Wendt, 1999:97). Another example, Williams (2005:12) believes that Waltzian neorealism assumes states to be 'materially self-interested rational calculators'. Glaser (2010:6) argues that Waltz's theory focuses almost 'exclusively on material power'. Buzan (2014:20) argues that Waltz 'is interested only in material structures'. In addition to these accusations, Qin (2016:34 cited in LaRoche and Pratt, 2018:160) also contributed by claiming that the distribution of material capabilities as the master variable of structural realism. In contrast to these assumptions, Waltz explains that:

'a systems theory requires one to define structures partly by the distribution of capabilities across units. States . . . have to use their combined capabilities in order to serve their interests. The economic, military, and other capabilities of nations cannot be sectorized and separately weighed. States are not placed in the top rank because they excel in one way or another. Their rank depends on how they score on all of the following items: size of population and territory, resources endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence . . . States have different combinations of capabilities which are difficult to measure and compare, the more so since the weight to be assigned to different items changes with time' (p.131).

Capabilities in Waltz's comprehension are the accumulations of states' total resources (Waltz, 2010:129-131). Separating a state's capabilities – focusing on a nation's strengths and overlook its weaknesses – is not the case. In his work, Waltz even considers this calculation as being 'strange' (p.130). TIP discusses about non material, quasi-relational power (Waltz, 1979:191-192; 1986:333-334). To him, domestic institutions and the diplomatic skills of particular statesperson are as important as economic and military power.

### 3.5. Understanding Neorealism Waltz's Way

Having explained the typical errors in reading Waltz's TIP, the question to be answered is thus how exactly we need to understand Waltz's neorealism. First, Waltz's theory of international politics stands above the *political images* as a theoretical foundation. For Waltz, images are 'heuristic standpoints' (LaRoche and Pratt, 2018:162-163). Images are lenses through which one may see and gain comprehensions over a phenomenon. Images help focus our attention on 'some phenomena that we would not otherwise see clearly but, in the process, necessarily obscure other phenomena' (p.163). Hence, different images offer different pictures or perspectives to one event; different perspectives then offer different explanations on the causal accounts of world politics. An image, in Waltz's words,

'suggests that one forms a picture in the mind; it suggests that one views the world in a certain way. "Image" is an apt term both because one cannot "see" international politics directly, no matter how hard one looks, and because developing a theory requires one to depict a pertinent realms of activity. To say "image" also suggests that in order to explain international outcomes one has to filter some elements out of one's view in order to concentrate on the presumably fundamental ones. In relating the first and second images to the third, I viewed the third image as "the framework of state action" and "as a theory of the conditioning effects of the state system itself". Explaining international

outcomes requires one to examine the situations of states, as well as their individual characteristics' (Waltz, 2001:ix)

His neorealism dwells precisely within the realm of the third image. Waltz (1979:72) highlights this argument by explaining that 'the chief virtue of a theory of international politics is its restriction to only those elements that are properly third image'. A system-level theory explains how different units behave similarly whereas unit-level theories is about explaining 'why different units behave differently despite their similar placement in a system' (Waltz, 2010:72). In his other work, similarly he argues that 'a neorealist theory of international politics explains how external forces shape states' behavior but says nothing about the effects of internal forces' (Waltz, 1996:57). Knowing whether one theory dwells within the first, second, or third image is essential in gaining inference from a phenomenon, in gathering the data needed for a study, and in producing analysis from the gathered data.

'A theory of international politics is thus not a theory of foreign policy, which would proceed from the unit-level characteristics of the second image. A theory of international politics views its whole realm of observation from within the perspective of the system taken by itself (international politics), absent the perspectives of the states' internal characteristics or the nature and behavior of man. The strength of this view is to be found in its ability to explain international outcomes in ways that the other two images cannot; it uniquely locates important causes within the structure of the international system, to the necessary exclusion of the other images (Waltz, 1959:ix, 230-232)'

Without knowing in which image one wishes to place a phenomenon, one risks confusing the foci and units of analysis of one's study. To know where one's study dwells in is to know where to find the dependent variables in the causal relations within the study – whether it is systems-level or unit-level causes one wishes to reveal. Because of this reason, Waltz's political images and theory of international politics (neorealism) need to be seen as a unity, one project, where

the first represents the heuristic foundation and the latter represents the body of the theory.

Why do a theory of international politics have to dwell in the third image? In TIP, Waltz argues that reductionist approaches – those in both first and second image – are inadequate (Waltz, 2010:18-37, 79). The inadequacy mainly comes from the assumption that solutions for a conflict following the first or the second image must take into consideration ‘the possibility of perfection in the conflicting units’ (Waltz, 1959:119). Perfection for states and/or men is impossible that even what a ‘liberal system’ can produce is a mere ‘approximation to world peace’ (p.119). The issue with the first and the second image, when applied to an IR case, is that even in ‘a world politics full of good or reformed people and good or reformed states . . . would still face the prospect of war because of the distinct dynamics of international politics’ (Waltz, 1959: 51, 72-79, 83ff, 108, 112-114, 125, 218-219 cited on LaRoche and Pratt, 2018:164). The verdict from such assumption is then ‘if conflict arises not only from defects in the subjects but also from the quality of the relations among them, it may be that no amount of improvement in the individual subjects would be sufficient to produce harmony in anarchy’ (Waltz, 1959:119).

On the other hand, systemic approaches and theories can also be misleading as some approaches do not carefully distinguish whether a causal factor found in one systemic approach can necessarily be applied in the case of international politics. To alleviate the issue with systemic theories, Waltz focuses on structural approach ‘to mark international-political systems off from other international systems, and to distinguish systems-level from unit-level forces’ (Waltz, 2010:79). After all, ‘a system is composed of a structure and of interacting units’ (p.79). This is also why neorealism is also known as structural realism.



### *Theory in Waltz's Understanding*

The previous section has established that Waltz's version of neorealism must be understood in a holistic fashion in order to capture the totality of his theory. As this thesis draws heavily on Waltz's version of neorealism, the most plausible way to analyze the gathered data in this thesis is thus by following the logic of theory in his perspective. Before moving on with this section, I would like to start with the problem that students of international politics often come across that has become a concern in Waltz's mind – that is 'students of international politics used the term "theory" freely, often to cover any work that departs from mere description and seldom to refer only to work that meets philosophy-of-science standards' (Waltz, 2010:1). The main issue that rises from such concern is the interchangeable use of two scientific items – 'theory' and 'law' – and the confusion between 'truth' and 'reality' (p.1-17).

Particular to the students of social sciences, theories and laws are often used interchangeably and are expected to generate similar products – descriptions of empirical facts. Waltz argues, however, that the two are essentially different. Laws 'establish relations between variables, variables being concepts that can take different values' (Waltz, 2010:1). An example of a statement of a law is 'if  $a$ , then  $b$ ' – where the relation between the two variables is invariant, making the law absolute. Where the relation is not invariant but highly constant, the law would read as 'if  $a$ , then  $b$  with probability  $x$ '.

Where laws identify invariant or probable association, theories do different tasks. Theories may be defined as 'collections or sets of laws pertaining to a particular behavior of phenomenon' (Waltz, 2010:2). Waltz (p.4) warns against the 'inductive illusions'; a notion that argues that what matters in the establishment of a theory is 'the accumulation of more and more data and the examination of more and more cases' in winning the truth and achieving explanation. A law may be established through a relation that has been found

repeatedly, through inductive means, through more and more confirmations that suggest regularities (p.1). This is perhaps a useful way to confirm a law. However, it is not a fruitful way to establish a theory. Waltz argues that data is fact that happens in real life do not say anything for themselves. The more data being thrown into a theory, the more associations there are between one variable to the other. Waltz is more concerned about finding out whether through numerous data or cases one would finally find something that is not known prior to the study. Such aim is not achievable through inductive inference. Induction would lead to a theoretical dead-end as it is supposed to be used together with hypotheses and laws (Waltz, 2010:7-8). 'Direct experience is neither certain nor uncertain, because it affirms nothing – it just *is*. It involves no error, because it testifies to nothing but its own appearance. For the same reason, it affords no certainty' (C.S. Peirce cited in Waltz, 2010:4). On inductive basis, one can only rest on faith, not knowledge (p.4). As explained by Waltz,

'rather than being a mere collection of laws, theories are statements to explain them. Theories are qualitatively different from laws. Laws identify variant or probable association. Theories show why those associations obtain . . . laws are established only if they pass observational or experimental tests . . . Theories cannot be constructed through induction alone, for theoretical notions can only be invented not discovered.' (Waltz, 2010:5)

Laws can be discovered but theories have to be constructed to exist. This is why Waltz (2010:5) suggests that one must not expect a theory or theoretical framework to produce a prediction. It would be wrong to specifically use a theory beyond its explanatory functions. Hence, unlike laws, theories cannot be deemed useless just because they do not pass experimental tests. The main reason being that because theories are made – not found – they must allow errors. As he further explains,

'Of purported laws, we ask: "Are they true?" Of theories we ask: "How great is their explanatory power?" . . . Laws are "facts of observation"; theories are

“speculative processes introduced to explain them”. Experimental results are permanent; theories, however well supported, may not last . . . Laws remain, theories come and go . . . Laws are “facts of observation”; theories are “speculative processes introduced to explain them”. Experimental results are permanent; theories, however well supported, may not last’ (Waltz, 2010:6)

With this being said, we understand that laws do not turn into a theory just because they are thrown together as a package. Unlike laws that focus their power on the number of regularities and repetitions – the quantity of data – the power of a theory lies in its quality as a means of explanation. In the case that some theories have generated higher level of regularities through induction, one might be able to predict what outcomes may be expected from a phenomena. However, one must also take into account that theory is not the establishment of truth nor is it the ‘reproduction of reality’ (p.8). Theory is the means to ‘construct a reality’ although ‘no one can ever say that it is the reality’ (p.9). Theory is a means of approaching the truth. Therefore, theory is best defined as:

‘a picture, mentally formed, of a bounded realm or domain of activity. A theory is a depiction of the organization of a domain and of the connections among its parts . . . A theory indicates that some factors are more important than others and specifies relations among them . . . A theory isolates one realm from all others in order to deal with it intellectually’ (Waltz, 2010:8)

A theory is not a mirror but a tool that is useful to explain ‘a circumscribed part of a reality of whose true dimensions we can never be sure’ (Waltz, 2008:84). Furthermore, ‘theory is artifice . . . an intellectual construction by which we select facts and interpret them’ (p.68). Theories help answer theoretical question, not factual ones; theories explain how something works and how it hangs together, not what is associated with what (p.69). A theory must be first, and foremost, consistent; it cannot be added by other – nor can it be stripped of its – elements in an *ad hoc* fashion. Mere hypotheses about ‘the association of this with that, no matter how well confirmed, do not give birth to theories’ (Waltz, 1979:8; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013 cited in Lechner, 2017:348). This is why Waltz’s

theory of international politics must be understood in a holistic manner instead of atomism.

### **3.6. Understanding Anarchy in Waltz's Neorealist Term**

The most important element that distinguishes the third image from the first and the second is the presence of anarchy beyond sovereign states' demarcated area. Anarchy was popularly introduced as a pre-determinant element in the realm of international relations under neorealism. As part of neorealism, the concept of anarchy has received quite a number of criticism. A major part of the criticism focuses on the notion that the theory fails to understand how cooperation among states may create hierarchical structure in the international system despite the binary dichotomy between hierarchy and anarchy as understood in neorealism. Neorealism has not been very popular in the discourse of Western European cooperation as it is thought to have failed to provide sufficient explanation to understand the advanced cooperation in the European project (Weber, 1997:322). Neorealist theorists have not really contributed ideas to the study of European integration and on the occasions that they have, the attributed European project to the shift in balance of power in the world system post-Cold War (US and Soviet) and is gravitated towards the trans-Atlantic relationship with the US (Pollack, 2010:4-7).

Difficulty in making robust contribution in the study of European integration, comes from neorealism dichotomous views between hierarchy and anarchy and lack of theory of integration (Collard-Wexler, 2006:415, 427). The EU has broken the monopoly of the state in the management of international affairs and due to the advanced integration project, the EU becomes an unusual hybrid between anarchy and hierarchy (p.412, 427). In the EU, anarchy is argued to have been mitigated by ECB, ECJ, and EC (p.406, 417, 427). Due to this issue, theories that base their arguments on international anarchy such as neorealism are left and

replaced by newer, more contemporary, theories with smaller scopes of study. This is also why neorealism has struggled to find its relevance in the middle of competing theories of integration.

### **3.6.1. The Issue of Anarchy-Hierarchy Dichotomy**

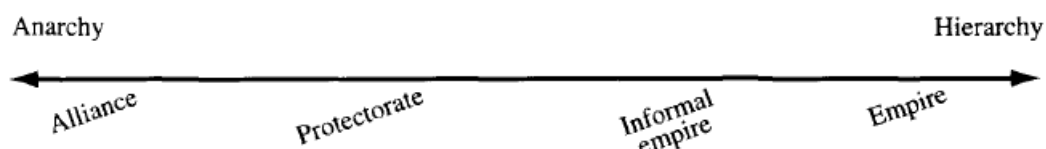
In the theory of international politics that Waltz built, there are only two ordering principles that a system may adopt: anarchy and hierarchy. The options are black and white – it is either this or that – i.e. an international system naturally and inherently adopts the ordering principle anarchy and without this ordering principle, a system ceases to be international. This is because there is not one overarching ruler, states are free to do as they see fit to pursue their interests. In understanding European integration, Waltz (2010:114-116) insists that despite its hierarchic sophistication in the institutional operation, the EU is nonetheless an anarchic system. He insists that hierarchy and anarchy are exclusive and exhaustive of each other where one cannot take place when the other is present. He uses this argument to explain the nature of European Union as well. Scholars that oppose this idea argue that Waltz is confused of his own theory; they argue that anarchy and hierarchy cannot be dichotomized as two polar opposites without any gray area in-between.

Helen Milner (1991) who, in her work, focuses her criticism against the dichotomy between anarchy and hierarchy argues that ‘the concentration of authority in any system is best gauged along a continuum, and not a dichotomy’ (p.76). To her, the black-and-white dichotomy between anarchy – that is between international and domestic politics – ‘seems to represent a conceptual and theoretical step backwards’ (p.81). Despite her criticism, Milner does not reject the idea of anarchy itself but rather argues that there are other variables that affect the constellation of sovereign states in an international system and thus must be included in the theory of international politics. She analogizes structural

focus on neorealism as a perfect market which does not mirror the real life situation where politics, according to her, seems 'ultimately to be about choice . . . in the presence of uncertainty, incomplete information, and guesses about the intentions of other actors' (p.85). In such case, it is not structurally-given solution that is important but something that materializes out of interactions between actors by taking into account uncertain variables involved in such interactions. Her solution, and contribution to the theory, lies in the focus on 'strategic interdependence' as an element as important as anarchy – if not more – that takes place in international realm.

Theorists supporting the grey area between anarchy and hierarchy argue that Waltz has been confusing himself for insisting that hierarchy and anarchy are exclusive and exhaustive. Some have even attempted to fix this grey area by adding more variables into the dichotomy of hierarchy-anarchy. David Lake (1996:10) believes that 'pure cases of anarchy or hierarchy seldom exist'. In his understanding, anarchy offers full residual rights of control to sovereign states after treaties that govern their relationship with others cede some of their control over their rights to determine their own fate (p.7). In hierarchical relationship, on the other hand, the state is subordinate to the system's dominance which in turn gives the system the right to make residual decisions. Whether a relationship is anarchic or hierarchical in nature, it depends on how the relationship between the two parties is mapped in the treaties governing this relationship. The treaties will specify 'explicitly or implicitly the terms under which they will pool their defense efforts and the residual rights of control retained by each' (p.7). He bases his model of international relations on a continuum of security relations (see figure 3.6.1.) which explains that between the two extreme points lies variation of international relations (p.6) based on where on the continuum the relationship is located. Despite the attempt to criticize anarchy as understood in neorealism, he uses neorealist assumptions of international system to support his theory.

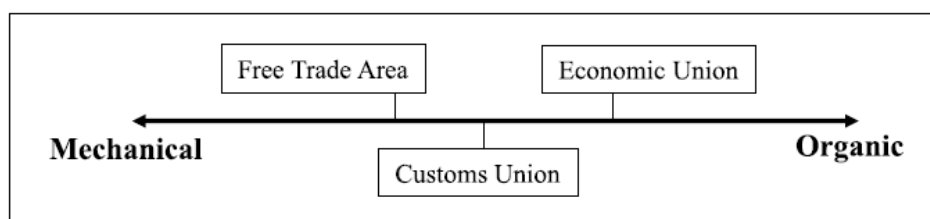
**Figure 3.6.1.1 Lake's Continuum of Security Relations**



Source: Lake, 1996:7

Ryan Griffiths (2018:138) makes a similar attempt in 'fixing' the anarchy-hierarchy dichotomy with his model of two-dimensional map of ordering principles which further creates 'four types of order' (see figure 3.6.3). Griffith tries to fill the grey area between anarchy and hierarchy by adding the dimension of social differentiation. He focuses his argument on the social dimension between anarchy and hierarchy, precisely between mechanical – or functional – and organic society. In Waltz's understanding, in hierarchic system, society is built on organic trait; each part of the society needs the other in the same system as it cannot survive on its own. On the other hand, in an anarchic system, society is based on mechanical – or functional – trait where each member of the system is established on its own and coexist with other members to serve functional gaps (see figure 3.6.2).

**Figure 3.6.1.2 Continuum of Social Differentiation**

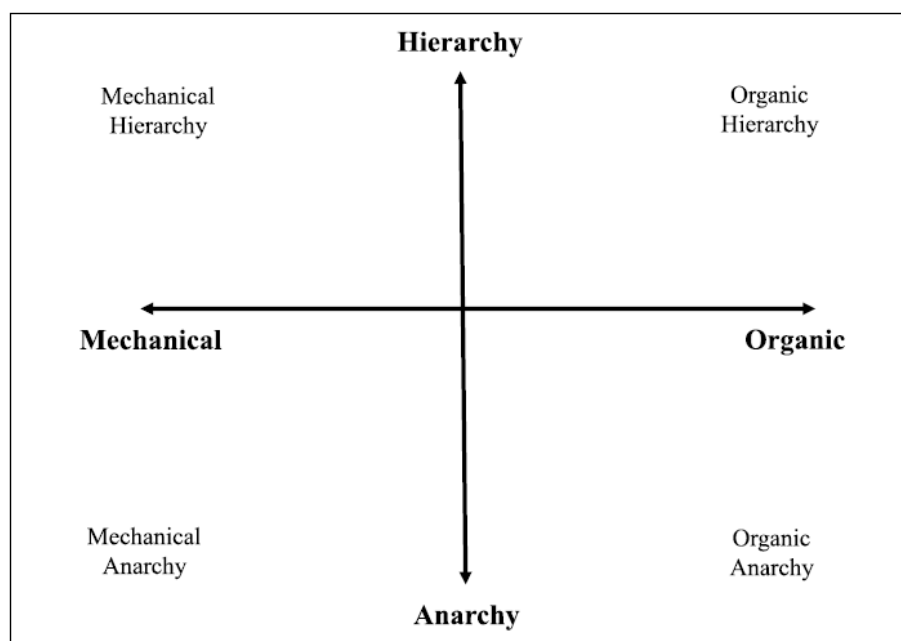


Source: Griffith, 2018:136

Griffith (2018:139-142) disagrees with Waltz's typology and argues that both mechanical and organic society can be established in both anarchic and

hierarchic society, hence the four types of order as presented in the two-dimensional map. It explains that: (a) mechanical anarchy is where the central government is absent, segmental differentiation is present, functional differentiation is absent; (b) mechanical hierarchy is where both central politics and segmentally differentiation are present with unstable level of labour divisions; (c) organic hierarchy is where complete political centralization and full functional differentiation are present; (d) organic anarchy is where central politics is absent but full functional differentiation is present.

**Figure 3.6.1.3 Griffith's Two-dimensional Map**



Source: Griffith, 2018:138

Critiques that focus on the binary of anarchy-hierarchy have consequently enriched the complexity of the grey area between the two extreme ends. Even so, they do not have a specific answer to their own questions about whether there are any other kind of ordering principle other than that of anarchic and hierarchical system.

Another way to understanding the fault in Waltz's anarchy-hierarchy dichotomy is offered by Jack Donnelly (2006) with his notion of hierarchy in



anarchy. He claims that 'hierarchy is present in every anarchic order' (p.141). Donnelly uses semantics to criticize Waltz's notion of anarchy. In building his argument, he allows differentiation of functions and all societies to mix. He explains that anarchy does not have an oppositional relationship with hierarchy. Therefore it is impossible for both terms to be polar opposites where they may exist together in one setting – history proven as he explains below (Donnelly, 2006:141).

"Anarchy – literally, without a leader (archos) or rule (arche) – is conventionally understood as the absence of government. Waltz . . . defines hierarchy as 'relations of super- and subordination' in which 'actors are formally differentiated according to the degrees of their authority, and their distinct functions'; a 'social division of labor among units specializing in different tasks' (1979:81, 114). . . . The opposite of anarchy is not hierarchy but 'archy', government, rule, political authority; 'empire' in its non-imperial sense. Hierarchy (superordination and differentiation) in anarchy is not only theoretically possible but is . . . historically common".

In explaining his position, Donnelly (2006 and 2009) fails to specify in his semantics understanding if the ordering principle of anarchy requires both leader and rule – or only one of the two – to be absent from a system. By reflecting on Waltz's work (1979), Lechner (2017:345) answers this challenge and explains that it is the absence of a common government that Waltz refers to in his concept of anarchy. Rules are always present in every form of international system. They are means with which states self-organise in an international system as a part of the mechanism for self-preservation. This mechanism is acknowledged in neorealism and can manifest itself in the form of hierarchical elements, i.e. international rules or law. Therefore, despite the presence of rules, international system still operates under the ordering principle of anarchy. The presence of rules does not negate the ordering principle of anarchy, therefore, the ordering principle of anarchy refers to the absence of a common or overarching ruler. This is the position Donnelly

later suggests in his other work (2015:418-419) while maintaining that anarchy is not an ordering principle.

### **3.6.2. The Defense**

The concept of anarchy is undertheorised (Havercroft and Prichard, 2017:260, 262) and open to contestation (p. 252, 253). However, 'modern IR theory has consistently underestimated the depth of the problem of anarchy in world politics' (p.261). Lechner (2017) finds that there is 'a more complex relationship between anarchy and hierarchy than supposed by critics and which recognize the important connection between the structure of international anarchy (whose key players are states) and the possibility of collective freedom' (as cited in Havercroft and Prichard, 2017:260).

Most critics of anarchy fail to understand the complex relationship between hierarchy and anarchy as suggested by scientific and normative structuralism (p.260). Despite the criticism, the concept of anarchy is still relevant particularly in the study of international relations if used correctly. In order to criticize the concept in an appropriate way, the context where a concept is used must be taken into account. In building his theory, Waltz is committed to holism and sees a theory as a set of concepts organized into a coherent whole (Lechner, 2017:342). Hence, in order to understand how the word 'anarchy' is used as a concept in neorealism, a holism approach must be taken.

A strong example of this argument comes from Donnelly's (2006, 2012, 2015) rejection of Waltz's understanding of anarchy. His take of the concept comes from an atomic approach which focuses solely on the meaning and the use of 'anarchy' as a word (Lechner, 2017), as well as adding variables which Waltz specifically does not use in his version of the theory (see previous sections. In doing so, Donnelly frees the concept of anarchy from its theoretical framework – neorealism. Donnelly's use of semantics is not only a method of atomism but also

leads to reductionism of the theory as a whole. By exercising the practice of reductionism, Donnelly's critique of anarchy 'targets not just the concept of anarchy but theories of anarchy and thereby expresses an anti-theory ethos tacitly accepted in the discipline' (Havercroft and Prichard, 2017:9). Interpreting a loose concept is principally different from interpreting a concept grounded within a theoretical paradigm, nuance, or background. As anarchy in neorealism is built as a concept within a theory – a constituent element of an aggregate – it would be wrong to analyze that particular concept by 'abstracting away the background theory' (Lechner, 2017:345). Due to holism, Waltz's theory must be seen as a wholeness of aggregate. In holism, a system has an identity of its own which is logically separate from that of its individual members. Metaphorically, taking a theory holistically is like understanding one full sentence that consists of several words where the sentence refers to a system and the words to its constituent elements. These words do not mean anything without the context that the sentence provides (Lechner, 2017:343). Therefore:

'while it is fully legitimate to interpret one element from the list by assuming away the rest . . . From a proper theoretical perspective, individual concepts are literally meaningless outside the framework of their host theory . . . A full-blooded theory of anarchy cannot be compressed into a concept of anarchy . . . Atomism equates objects to discrete things in the world (*which is inappropriate for abstract objects such as anarchy which is unobservable*) . . . We infer the presence of structure and this inference is a theoretical enterprise . . . In order to properly make sense of objects that constitute wholes (structures and systems), we need conceptual wholes (theories)' (p.343-344)

The heart of Waltz's theory is that international system is anarchical with anarchy having two different – but related – meanings. The first meaning refers to a condition of the absence of common superior. The concept of hierarchy and anarchy in Waltz's idea is that domestic politics is organized under common government while international politics is an interaction domain organized in the absence of common government or superior (Baldwin, 1993:14; Milner, 1991:69-

70; Lechner, 2017:342). Therefore the two concepts are mutually exclusive in the sphere of vertical order; this is where anarchy is understood as a demarcational concept. It separates 'international' from 'national'. Hence, the binary of hierarchy-anarchy dichotomy. The anarchic nature of an international system does not necessarily mean that the system is under chaotic condition. Due to the absence of an overarching ruler, there are no single units above sovereign states with authoritative power to make a state do or not do a certain thing. Because states are self-help in the absence of an overarching ruler, chaos – or wars – are allowed to take place in an international system (Booth and Wheeler, 2008:2; Hollis and Smith, 1991:7; Brown, 2001:4; Donnelly, 1996:87; Mearsheimer, 2001:30; Weber, 2010:14; Nye and Welch, 2011:4; Vinci, 2008:295).

The other meaning of anarchy in Waltz's understanding, and as a verdict of the first one, is as a horizontal order between equals. The absence of a common superior in an international system leads to sovereign states interacting with each other as formal equals. The horizontal order of anarchy refers to a condition under which interactions between formal equals are to be distinguished from a hierarchical order between subordinate and superordinate (Bull, 2002:17; Lake, 2001:130; Waltz, 1979:114-116; Lechner, 2017:342). In Lechner's words (2017:346),

'Waltz demarcates anarchical from non-anarchical systems of action. The demarcational concept of anarchy sorts out anarchical system (with no common superior) on one side (that of 'international politics') and hierarchical systems (with a common superior) to the other (that of 'domestic politics'). But it cannot explain what states do, with what consequences, once they find themselves inside the domain of international politics. This explanation requires the second, structural concept of Waltzian anarchy . . . Structural realism is a systemic theory, and integral to it are notions of structure and system. As mentioned, the term 'system' stands for a whole over and above a sum of elements, where the principle of systemic organisation is structure . . . For Waltz, the identity of a system is determined by its structure and its units. Because he studies systems

of action, he defines structure as action constraint . . . The proposition is that the units would have acted differently were it not for the constraints imposed on them by structure.'

In other words, Waltz explains that due to inherent constraints within international structure, states may not always get what they want. Furthermore, due to the binary of vertical understanding of anarchy, there would be no international system that would count as hierarchy unless states cease to see each other formally equal. In a situation where superordinate and subordinate relation is involved, the system would be that of hierarchical. At that point, international system would cease to be 'international'.

Despite the dichotomy, a system is not inherently still. Changes to variables of a system's characteristic may take place. Although a system can only either be anarchic or hierarchic, this does not necessarily mean that one is dismissive of some elements of the other. This sort of understanding is what atomic approach fails to provide (Lechner, 2017:352-354). In a holistic understanding of international anarchy: (a) a system with an overall anarchic structure may have limited elements of hierarchy and; (b) a system with an overall hierarchical structure may have limited elements of anarchy. The verdict is twofold. First, the presence of hierarchical elements 'would not change its overall character of anarchy as long as these hierarchical relations are not defining of it as a *whole*' (p.352). Second, critics focusing on the grey area between anarchy and hierarchy have not proven that the relationship between anarchy and hierarchy is not binary. What they do instead is proving that even within an anarchic system, some elements of hierarchy can be present.

A systemic change takes place when the defining feature of a system changes. In order to understand how it happens, we need to locate where the defining feature of the system is located in the structure. A structure consists of three layers. Starting from the deepest layer, these are: (a) unit arrangement; (b) functional differentiation of units, and; (c) distribution of capabilities (Lechner,

2017). As a demarcational condition of a system, anarchy is located only within the first layer of structure whereas the surface layers govern the constellation of states within the system. The surface layers are the arena where elements of hierarchy may be present in an anarchic system. A systemic change or a whole transformation of a system, in Waltz's understanding, will only happen if there is a change to the deepest layer that is the unit arrangement. A transformation into hierarchical system requires a break with anarchy as a demarcational condition. The verdict is twofold. Firstly, an anarchic system must transform into a world government – hence replacing anarchical arrangement with that of hierarchical – for a systemic change to happen. Secondly, whether a structure is considered international or national/domestic is dependent on the presence of anarchy within the deepest layer of the structure. This is why 'as long as no common world government or comparable global authority has been recognized by states, the international system will retain its anarchical form and there will be no change of the system into global hierarchy even if one superpower has gained total preponderance in capabilities' (p.347-348). After all, it is the lack of exogenous authority which makes the salient feature of international political system (Havercroft and Prichard, 2017:260).

Neorealist concept of anarchy is further explored by Hedley Bull. He explains that international system can be seen as a society where sovereign states coexist with each other. Bull's anarchical society depicts a society filled with meanings and norms, whose paradigmatic members are sovereign states and are bound by common rules. Due to this, his horizontal mode of anarchy is understood in the form of international law. In an anarchical society, it is essential that member states recognize each other's anarchical freedom.

Through vertical anarchy, we understand the absence of a common superior in an international system. Through horizontal anarchy, we gather that states acknowledge each other as formally equal. Through anarchical freedom, we

find an optimistic view of the nature of sovereign states in a negative form of peace. In the absence of a common superior, states are self-help and may do as they please. They also can never be fully sure about the intention of others. However, the act of abiding by international rules implies intention as rules cannot actively force states to act a certain way; there must be an active doing from states to follow rules. Thereof, in Bull's understanding of anarchical society, states are assumed to want to coexist peacefully with each other by following international rules and preventing themselves from annihilating each other.

The concept of anarchical freedom presupposes the coexistence of states and is endorsed by Bull as the collective freedom of the society of states (Lechner, 2017:343, 350) which is made possible by the structure of international anarchy (Havercroft and Prichard, 2017:9). Anarchical freedom in normative structural realist view is not the individual freedom of each member state, as a sovereign unit, but the freedom that each member state shares and respects collectively in an anarchical society. Such freedom is generated at the core of the system level. It is not the sovereign freedom each state possesses on its own. As Lechner (2017:354) explains, state members of an anarchical society hold rights of territorial integrity and sovereign independence under the common rules of international law (Bull, 2002:130, 146) because it protects a self-determining political community which realizes the rights to life, liberty, and community of its members (Walzer, 1992:54, 57, 61 cited in Lechner, 2017:354). Only if a state is free to determine its own constitutional structure can it ensure respect for rights (Nardin, 2011:2065).

The difference that is foundational between Waltz's and Bull's neorealism lies in Bull's assumption that states are bound into an international system by the authority of common rules, hence it is seen as a normative society rather than a mechanical system as described in the Waltzian neorealism. In this kind of societies, there are no common superiors to coerce states to accept and obey the

common rules. However, states do accept and obey these common rules without having to be coerced for 'they already accept the rules as they have internalized these rules as norms' (Bull, 2002:128-130 cited in Lechner, 2017:349). Although common rules are present and accepted, international society is anarchical because states are not made to accept common rules by a common sovereign – they do so because they have the intention to do so. Where Waltz places his theory on a mechanical basis, Bull does so on a normative basis. His theory offers an insight to what states 'ought' to do rather than what states 'will' do. Therefore, an occurrence of rule-breaking by one state does not invalidate the norms that states in international society ought to abide by its basic rules (p.349).

### **3.7. Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has covered the discussion of neorealism and structured a theoretical framework that is anchored in Waltz's version of neorealism. This chapter started the discussion with a brief explanation on why neorealism is a better-fitted IR theory – compared to classical realism and neoclassical realism – to provide explanations for Brexit especially in terms of understanding the need for separation in order to take back control over the nation from the EU. The chapter then begins discussing neorealism by briefly describing Waltz's three political images as the background nuance that has given birth to neorealism. The concept of three images is established to locate where causes of wars or, in this case, conflict, may be found. From the concept of three images, we gathered that Waltz's theory of IR is anchored in the third where the causes for conflicts or wars are to be found within the international system. This is because international systems are run under anarchy as an ordering principle.

The chapter then moves on to the summary of neorealism as popularly known in the field of IR. The main elements of neorealism as popularly known include anarchy as international ordering principle, sovereign states as the main



units in the international structure whose interaction make the system, and capabilities of the states as the driver for state constellation (polarity) in the system. Since its establishment, neorealism has grown and been studied further by other scholars such as John Mearsheimer, Helen Milner, Hedley Bull, Robert Gilpin and Glenn Snyder.

Despite the theoretical advancements, neorealism has also been critiqued since its debut in TIP. As one of the main theory in IR – and also a very old one – neorealism has found itself criticized in various ways. Even so, IR scholars have also found ways for defending neorealism. The defense mainly comes from the argument that IR scholars after Waltz that have taken interests in neorealism have misunderstood Waltz's comprehension of neorealism in various ways. The main, and very common, criticisms of neorealism derive from errors in reading and understanding Waltz's main works (*Man, the State and War*, and *TIP*). These errors include the assumption that that neorealism is a positivist theory, that neorealism must assume states as rational beings, and that neorealism prioritizes material capabilities. These errors are attributed to Waltz's theory of international politics by his readers and have been rejected by other scholars who made the attempts to defend Waltz's theoretical notions by referring back to his original works.

The chapter has highlighted international anarchy as the most important element of neorealism that is going to be used as an anchor in this thesis. Waltz's theory of international politics was established with international anarchy being understood as the ordering principle of an international system. Such notion of anarchy has been criticized particularly on the binary trait of the dichotomy between anarchy and hierarchy. There have been attempts to fill the 'gap' between anarchy and hierarchy with other types of international orders which then create a grey area between the two polar opposite. Atomistic method in criticizing international anarchy has also been used by way of semantics which explains that anarchy and hierarchy may be present in one setting and that the

two terms are not exclusive of each other. A comprehensive defense against such criticism was offered by Lechner who explains that as Waltz uses theoretical holism to build his theory of international politics, the elements of his theory must be understood holistically and with awareness that the elements are placed within theoretical structure. Waltz's dichotomy of anarchy and hierarchy is used to respectively distinguish between international system in which overarching ruler is absent and domestic/national system in which overarching ruler is present. By using his theoretical structure, anarchy and hierarchy are seen as ordering principles in which he explains that if a hierarchical ordering principle is to take place within an international system, said system would cease to be anarchic. The result is twofold. First, the system would be ruled under a global government. Second, as anarchy is replaced by hierarchy and a global government is born, IR would cease to exist and replaced by new domestic/national relations.

By referring to the main research question, neorealism is going to be used in this thesis by focusing on international anarchy and the importance of sovereignty for states in an international system. By using neorealist assumption that states ultimately strive to stay sovereign in an anarchic system, the hypothesis generated from this theory in regards to understanding the reason for Brexit by perspective of IR is that the UK's sovereignty is threatened by changes in the EU system which alters anarchy as its ordering principle. This hypothesis hints at the need for a closer look at the role of international anarchy in maintaining sovereignty. Thereof, the next chapter will be focusing on understanding how systemic changes in the EU threatens UK's sovereignty.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **TOWARDS A SYSTEMIC CHANGE: THE EU INTEGRATION PROJECT**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, an alternative way of understanding neorealism as a theory of international politics has been examined. It has provided an insight to the way neorealism is used in this research. By focusing on the theory as understood by Waltz, and as reinvigorated by other theorists that attempt to 'fix' the common issues of understanding neorealism, this thesis attempts to offer an alternative explanation on Brexit.

Brexit is a manifestation of the complicated and difficult relationship between the UK and the EU (see chapter 2). Various attempts to gather a thorough understanding of the occurrence have been conducted both through empirical and theoretical ways. Empirically, there are three groups of issues with which Brexit can be understood – discontent in the national government, the issue of immigration, and the issue of sovereignty as well as identity. Existing literature in this camp sees the underlying causes for Brexit as being rooted in the UK's domestic affair. That is to say that the underlying causes lie within the UK's territory such as the practice of austerity (Powell, 2017; Tuckett, 2017; Summers, 2009; Cameron, 2009; Brady, 2009; Eaton, 2017), the deep-rooted distrust in the government and Euroscepticism (Berman, 2016; Arnorsson and Zoega, 2018; Day, 2018; Bickerton, 2019; Daddow, 2013; Wellings and Baxendale, 2015). The other way of understanding Brexit is by means of theory. There are four theories of integration that explain how European integration takes place – neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism, postfunctionalism, and Europeanisation. In chapter two, I concluded that none of these theories can provide a thorough account on how and why disintegration occurs.

This research focuses on establishing an alternative theoretical insight to this affair. From the existing literature, we infer that Brexit can be seen as a form of response given by the UK in attempt to resist against the EU's capability to enforce changes – through the process of Europeanisation – to the many aspects of livelihood as previously known by British people in the UK (see chapter 1). By using the theoretical framework established in the previous chapter, this chapter aims to examine symptoms of systemic changes in the EU – and what these changes mean for the UK as one of its state units – from an IR perspective.

One of the most popular issues in the Brexit discourse is the problem of sovereignty, reflected by the campaign for 'taking back control'. This slogan depicts an issue of struggle for power between the UK and the EU in which UK's sovereignty is threatened by an external force which is the EU. In neorealism, to be sovereign is the ultimate goal for every nation state; without it, a nation state ceases to exist. A threatened sovereignty also signals the possibility of an underlying change within a state system's structure – a shift of ordering principle particularly from hierarchy to anarchy. In the previous chapter, we have discussed neorealist take on ordering principles. Furthermore, we have also discussed that a systemic change takes place when the defining feature of a system changes (see chapter 3). A systemic change or a whole transformation of a system will only happen if there is a change to the layer of unit arrangement, or the ordering principle of the system.

What the chapter has not covered is the implicit message in Waltz's understanding of the ordering principle of anarchy that his theory is highly dependent on the wholeness/unity of nation states as the most important actors in an international system. These units are understood to be single working individuals with no one to rule above them. This trait of being whole and 'single' is what makes up the dichotomy between anarchical and hierarchical ordering principles and therefore the notion of ordering principle itself. As international

system is governed under the ordering principle of anarchy, IR affairs are thus first about maintaining the singleness of state units and second about everything else international. Without this principal assumption about the singleness of state unit, the other assumptions about international politics simply crumble. With this being explained, the verdict is twofold. First, the most prominent sign of a systemic change – a shift from one ordering principle to the other – will therefore be the change in the appearance or disappearance of a state unit. Second, changes to the ‘singleness’ of a state unit are likely to be perceived as threats to the survivability of said state.

This chapter aims to examine the symptoms of systemic change in the system’s structure of the EU. The main argument of this chapter is that as the most debated and arguably the most important element in neorealism, the ordering principle of anarchy (or international anarchy) has its core in the singleness of state units and the systemic change that the EU is suspected to be undergoing is closely related to the singleness of its member states. In order to achieve this aim, this chapter is divided into three main sections. Following this section is a discussion on the process of systemic change which focuses on and highlights the importance of the changes in the singleness of state units. In this section, the changes in the singleness of state units are discussed by way of bundling and unbundling territoriality. In the second main section, the chapter focuses the discussion on how soft power in the EU has evolved since the day the UK joined the Union. This section lays down the changes in the EU’s soft power and explain what each change means for EU member states. In the third main section, the chapter analyses the changes discussed in the earlier section in terms of bundling/unbundling territoriality and examines the relations between these changes and the ordering principle of anarchy.

## **4.2. The Singleness of Nation State and the Shift of Ordering**

### **Principle: Bundling and Unbundling Territoriality**

Seen from the neorealist perspective, the structure of a system consists of three layers: (a) unit arrangement; (b) functional differentiation of units, and; (c) distribution of capabilities (Lechner, 2017). The layer of unit arrangement is the defining feature of a system, therefore, a complete systemic change can only happen if there is a change in this particular layer of the system's structure. Neorealism explains that there are two different ordering principles that define an international system (see chapter three). The first is hierarchy which refers to the arrangement of a nation-state; the second is anarchy which refers to the arrangement of an international system. Therefore, a systemic change refers to a shift between the two ordering principles, from one to the other. Although the two ordering principles are mutually exclusive, as mere elements, they may be present at the same time, e.g. hierarchical elements may be present in different forms of order in an international system, such as international agreements or international laws. This, we have discussed in the previous sections.

What has not been covered in the discussion is how the shift between the two ordering principles happens. In this thesis, particularly, we want to know how the shift from the ordering principle of anarchy to that of hierarchy occurs in order to examine the symptoms of systemic change in the EU. As discussed in the previous section, the most prominent sign of a systemic change is the change in the state unit, particularly in the singleness of the state unit. This thesis refers to the term 'singleness' as that particular trait of a state unit where it is assumed in the neorealist theory to be a whole, exclusive single political entity that is jealous for and protective of its sovereignty as the ultimate resource for its existence. A state is a political unit that is entrapped in a relatively fixed and permanent geographical territory. This is where the process of bundling territoriality occurs and births the singleness of state unit.

#### **4.2.1. What is Territoriality?**

Territoriality can be understood in a few ways. In its basic form, territoriality can be defined as ‘an individual’s behavioural expression of his or her feelings of ownership toward a physical or social object . . . for constructing, communicating, maintaining, and restoring territories around those objects in the organisation toward which one feels proprietary attachment’ (Brown et al, 2005: 578). In another instance, territoriality may also be defined as ‘the control of a given space and its resources by dominating human individuals or groups, after they have succeeded in neutralizing any internal or external competitors, and its use for political, social and economic ends’ (El Ouali, 2006:634). Territoriality may also be defined as ‘the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area’ (Sack, 1986:19). From the few definitions here, we can see that although being described differently, there are a few similarities that can be derived from these understandings of ‘territoriality’. These are the feelings of ownership and assertion of control – the territorial aspect of territoriality. This understanding helps explain why state units jealously protect sovereignty – the nucleus of their very existence.

Territoriality is a fluid concept that is commonly assumed as married to geographical terms. The social definition of territoriality, for example, explains that certain people belong to a certain geographical area – organic territoriality (Vollaard, 2009:38). In this understanding, geography draws the territorial borders and thus becomes the container of the people. This is, however, only partially true about territoriality itself. Territoriality does not necessarily need to draw its forces from geographical territory. For example, the mechanical or instrumental definition of territoriality explains that territoriality refers to the strategy to draw territorial borders according to geographical scale of a certain function – functional territoriality (p.46). European integration project is a prominent case where territoriality occurs by its functional terms.

Furthermore, territoriality can also be used as a means for politics. Political territoriality is often only understood in 'as the legal principle of territoriality of sovereign states' (Vollaard, 2009:688, 704). However, as similarly argued by El Ouali (2006:631), it is not at all exclusive to sovereign states. Political territoriality may be established and applied by political units in all political levels (Vollaard, 2008:20) and due to its political traits, it is more inclined to be married to geographical territories. Political territoriality is essentially 'an active strategy to control by controlling a geographical area' whose implication are labelled as 'the logic of territoriality' (Vollaard, 2009:687). By using this definition, territory can then be understood as a space based on a demarcated geographical area and needs to be permanently maintained through human action (p.690); it is not a 'passive given' (p. 691). This means that the political use of territory is neither an instinct nor Westphalian but a form of conscious act of those in charge of said territory (p.691). Thus, political territoriality may be defined as 'a human activity' which is used to establish and shape 'political relationships through socially constructed territories' and this activity may include the 'physical demarcation of a geographic area, as well as the establishment of coercive and socializing mechanisms and institutions to uphold territorial control' (Vollaard, 2009:691). Political territoriality, despite its affinity to the geographical aspect of territoriality, is basically territoriality in its mechanical or instrumental form.

In the rhetoric of maintaining the singleness of state unit – or state unity – we ultimately discuss about the state's territorial integrity due to the process of geographical entrapment of a state. Territorial integrity has been commonly interpreted as 'the principle that protects the wholeness/unity of a state's territory' as it 'reflects the territorial sovereign right of the existence of peoples represented by their states' (El Ouali, 2006:631 similarly understood by Carley, 1996; Elden, 2006; Corten, 2011; Askerov and Matyok, 2015; Marxsen, 2015). The principle of territorial integrity is not the same as the principle of stability of territories and borders (El Ouali, 2006:633). Territorial integrity is the final product



of 'the institutionalization or legalization of territoriality' (p.631) whilst borders are the result of the territorialisation process which, if successful, then leads to territoriality (p.634).

The phenomenon of territoriality lies at the core of the state system (El Ouali, 2006:631) which is due to two reasons. First, territoriality is related to the creation of state boundaries through the process of territorialisation (Vollaard, 2008:13). The process of territorialisation generates borders and the creation of state boundaries, or borders, leads to the 'exclusion of the Other' (Vollaard, 2009:698). Exclusivity is intimately-related to the singleness of a state unit. Second, territoriality is also related with internal socio-spatial control which is responsible for 'the social construction of Us' (p.698). This means that territoriality is the element that not only creates distance between states but also keeps a state distinct from each other. Territoriality is responsible for making a state its own unique individual in an international system whose prevalence must be maintained to prevent the creation of a world/global government. The exclusivity of territorial states is what makes international anarchy possible and, as such, is what guarantees the perpetuation of IR. This is what we therefore understand as 'the singleness of a state unit'.

Geographical aspect of territoriality is essential in the discourse of state territoriality. This is because the geographical boundaries resulted from the process of territorialisation function not only as borders but also as containers of all elements that make a state a state through the process of bundling territoriality.

#### **4.2.2. Bundling Territoriality: The Process of Birthing the Singleness of State Units**

I would like to start this section by quoting a passage from Vollaard's (2009:698) work.

"In the formation of states in Europe, territorial boundaries have functioned internally as a container in which military, political, but also economic, cultural and social relations are bundled, as has been the case with the creation of identity within state boundaries: territoriality is connected both with the creation of state boundaries (exclusion of the Other) and with internal social-spatial control (the social construction of us)" (Vollaard, 2009:698)

As suggested by the quote above, and discussions in the previous sections, bundling territoriality is a process that gives birth to the singleness of a state unity. This process generates territorial boundaries that are responsible for separating the inside of its territory from the outside, making the borders function as a 'container' (Taylor, 1994 cited in Vollaard, 2009:40). They keep what is within, within, and what is out, out – thus excluding 'the Other'.

In ensuring its strength and durability, territoriality needs 'legitimacy and a legal character that it cannot obtain without the tacit or explicit consent of internal and external rivals' (El Ouali, 2006:635). This may be achieved by institutionalizing territoriality where territoriality is packaged into a political realm and therefore 'bundled'. Bundling territoriality can be understood as a process of 'increasing coincidence and congruence of territorialities within a political realm' (Vollaard, 2008:13). This political realm is very particular to state as it is still the only political realm that is capable to provide legitimacy and legal character mentioned above as the exclusive owner of sovereignty. State has the right to protect the wholeness/completeness/unity of its territory (El Ouali, 2006) and therefore is able to ensure the strength and durability of territoriality. Once bundled, territoriality is contained and becomes an expression of a state. This

brings us to the second important element from the quoted passage earlier – the function of territorial boundaries as container.

As an expression of a state, not only is territoriality contained but also does act as ‘a container or mold for the spatial properties of events’ (Sack, 1983:59). The notion of state as container, as argued by Agnew, 1994:71), is closely-related to ‘the assumption of territorial sovereignty because the state-society identity is only possible on the assumption of state territorial sovereignty’. When we speak of the concept of territoriality as a container, we refer to a homonomous trait of said political realm. Although territoriality need not be territorial, territorially fixed, or mutually exclusive (Ruggie, 1993; Agnew, 1994), once a particular territoriality is bundled into a geographically-fixed political realm, it can no longer be seen as a loose concept. When bundled into a modern state system, territoriality thus becomes modern territoriality (Ruggie, 1993). A bundled territoriality becomes an expression of said political realm – state – i.e. territoriality that is bundled into a state concept therefore becomes state territoriality. This is where the notion of ‘territorial trap’ (Agnew, 1994) comes from. Once institutionalized, or bundled, territoriality is therefore ‘trapped’ within the geographical space where the political realm takes place. International system is a society of units consisting of ‘territorially disjoint, mutually exclusive, functionally similar sovereign states’ (Ruggie, 1993:150-151).

Although the durability and strength of territoriality are ensured by bundling it into a state, it does not necessarily mean that territoriality lies dormant. In an international system, changes happen which not only affect the polarity of the system but also to its main units, states (Ruggie, 1993:139). In this process, state territoriality is also affected as an expression of said state. Changes to modern state territoriality can be studied through understanding ‘how the modern political form itself was produced’ which is characterized by six stages of production (p.148). These are discussed further in subchapter 4.3.

### 4.2.3. Unbundling Territoriality: Making IR Possible

As opposed to bundling territoriality, unbundling territoriality can be understood as the attempt of decreasing coincidence and congruence of territoriality in said political realm (Vollaard, 2008:13). In order to establish international relations, 'non-territorial functional space . . . wherein international society is anchored' must be provided (Ruggie, 1993:165). In IR, states cannot maintain survival on their own and need help from other states. Therefore, their absolute individuation must be thinned out by way of unbundling territoriality to provide a space where two or more mutually exclusive territorialities can exist and cooperate (refer to the process of bundling territoriality in subchapter 4.3.1). Unbundling territoriality can be seen as a way of handling mismatches between supplies and demands that occur due to the state's (in)ability to satisfy functional demands within its territories (Vollaard, 2008:16). Task-specific, one-purpose jurisdictions are then created as a result (p.16). It is not certain which tasks to be kept bundled and which tasks can be unbundled; the choice depends on the reasoning (p.16). Due to its functional characteristic, the geographical extension of said state hosts overlapping jurisdiction – one that is endemic to the state and the other to allow other entities to fulfill the demands from functional gaps within the state's territory (p.16). These overlapping jurisdictions are what I discuss hereafter as 'soft spaces'.

In European integration literature, soft space is understood as a spatial extension where national boundaries are blurred and fuzzy (Agnew, 1994:60; Allmendinger et al, 2014: 2705-2706; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009; Heley, 2013; Koslowski, 1999:566; Popescu, 2008:420; Vollaard, 2009:705; Zielonka, 2001:519; p. 529). Blurred and fuzzy boundaries are a form of thinning out the absolute individuation and ultimately lower the intensity of a state's national authority. Because territory remains quintessential space for states (Allmendinger et al, 2014:2704), soft space is needed to provide a room where international affairs are made possible within a national territory, and political strategies and

approaches to an issue can be done without hurting a state's ultimate authority. The presence of soft space eases the attempt, for example, to insert new agendas in regards to European integration (p.2706). Because politics in practice retains a strong territorial focus (Cochrane, 2012:95) and practical politics continues to be conducted in and against a set of institutions whose jurisdiction is territorially defined (Goodwin, 2012:3 in Allmendinger et al, 2014:2704), blurred and fuzzy boundaries are necessary as they provide a room in which functional issues can be addressed internationally within a state's national territory without upsetting the sovereignty and authority of said state.

Unlike a state's monohierarchical status as a unit, there can be multiple number of territorialities in one territory that may be rooted from one or more sources of territoriality beyond said territory. The need to thin out a state's absolute individuation provides the opportunity for 'soft space' to take place and gives way to the peaceful collision of territoriality. Soft spaces are established as a result of the collision between territorial and relational space in spatial planning which is also a component of European integration (Allmendinger et al, 2014). It is a common occurrence for nation states to allow the establishment of soft spaces for other units to establish their territorialities in the territory of a host state.

As a product of relationship between units in an international system, soft space is a spatial construct that is temporary and subject to change as opposed to not being a spatial construct that is fixed. There are three different possible endings to the life of a soft space. First, a soft space may be disbanded after an agreed period of time. Second, involved parties may agree to extend the period of establishment of a soft space. Third, a soft space may be hardened and upgraded by way of involving more complex and binding agreements. The temporary dimension of soft space allow territoriality to evolve. Depending on the scale of the intensity of territoriality involved within the soft space, along with what the involved parties wish to do with it, soft space may compromise a substantial

portion of state's sovereignty and, therefore, the singleness of the state unit. The next section explores how the concept of bundling and unbundling territoriality applies to the EU and why, as a means for unbundling territoriality, EU's soft spaces are problematic.

### **4.3. From Functional to Political: The Process of Bundling EU Territoriality in the Member States' Territories**

The earlier sections have explained that a systemic change occurs when there is a break away from the deepest layer of a system's structure which causes a shift of ordering principle – from anarchy to hierarchy, or from hierarchy to anarchy. In many occurrences of shift of ordering principle, systemic change happens rather revolutionary (almost instantly) than evolutionary (as a slow process where changes happen little by little), for example, the annexation of Crimea into Russia, the breakup of East Timor and Indonesia, the breakup of USSR, and many more.

In this thesis, the European integration project is seen as a systemic change en-route. The systemic change is progressing by way of Europeanisation but has not manifested in a breakaway from any ordering principle, i.e. from anarchy to hierarchy for the EU. Through multilevel governance, the process of Europeanisation changes not only member states but also the relationship between actors at different territorial levels, both public and private, and about how power is spread both vertically between many levels of government and horizontally between governmental and non-governmental actors (Papadopoulos, 2007). It is safe to say that the EU has managed to become 'so deeply immersed and so effective in the domestic legal orders of its member states' (Claes, 2015:178).

In order to explore 'what forces might exist in nature' that may be responsible for such occurrence, Ruggie (1993:171) argues that a study of

transformation is needed. This argument highlights the importance of this thesis. By taking into account the ultimate importance of the singleness of nation state, particularly in the realm of IR, the process of systemic change by way of Europeanisation can be seen as the attempt of bundling territoriality for the EU within the geographical territories of the member states'. Because the EU does not have its own resources (particularly geographical territories and population) Europeanisation requires EU member states to unbundle their territoriality to make space for the bundling of EU's territoriality. At the same time, EU member states are also required to transfer part of their sovereignty to fuel the EU.

This section examines the bundling of EU territoriality as part of the process of systemic change. In particular, this section uses Ruggie's (1993) stages of establishment of modern territoriality which were used to examine the establishment of territoriality of modern (Westphalian) state. Ruggie's notion of establishment of modern territoriality is understood in this thesis also as the process of bundling territoriality due to the need for modern territoriality to be entrapped within particular geographical boundaries, such as that of nation states.

#### **4.3.1. Differentiation**

As understood by Ruggie (1993), the first stage to an establishment of modern territoriality is meant to be the process of differentiation. This process begins when the subjects of a geographical area embrace the land of their dwellings as a fact – 'social facticity'. This is how human collectivities differentiate themselves from one another (Ruggie, 1993:148). The stage of differentiation is where the 'bundling of territoriality' begins to take place. The bundling of territoriality generates two spatial demarcations: (a) the public and private realm, and; (b) internal and external realm (p.151). In the first demarcation, the public realm of a bundled territoriality is understood as where power of the whole spatial extension is located; it is where the monopolization on the part of central authorities of the

legitimate use of force is constituted. In the second, the bundled territoriality of a modern state system is territorially defined, fixed and mutually exclusive with other spatial extensions. Hence the 'territorial trap'. The stage of differentiation is inevitably about creating the sense of 'them' and 'us'.

The stage of differentiation in the EU, through its evolution, has been one of a process rather than a fixed and permanent settlement. Unlike the stage of differentiation that occurs to a state, the EU does not yet have an agreement to limit the scope of its expansion. When a new state becomes a member, the process of differentiating the sense of 'them' and 'us' recurs within the EU to accommodate the new EU border and whatever resources – material and immaterial – contained in the new member state. The stage of differentiation in the EU first got initiated when the very first agreement among six states was signed and established the ECSC. Since then, and prior to Brexit, there has been seven waves of enlargement of the EU.

The establishment of EU's territoriality is not based on the trap of geographical territories because the EU does not have its own geographical territories and it was established to serve economic function at heart. The EU was gifted functional territoriality at its initiation, not an organic one. Although the process of differentiation has definitely begun, the stage of differentiation in the making of EU territoriality is nonetheless a 'borrowed' process and it is ever changing. With every enlargement, the sense of what it means of being a citizen of the EU changes to accommodate the new 'EU territory'. The EU simply does not have that core state where the sum of power in the territory is aggregated because every member state has a share of power in Brussels. Furthermore, the stage for differentiation for the EU is based on how the subjects benefit from the EU. The sense of 'us' for the subjects of the EU is based not on the matter of 'who we are' but more about 'what we get that others do not' which is made clear in the other



stages of establishment of modern territoriality. Consequently, the process of bundling territoriality in the EU cannot, if possible at all, be easily achieved.

Because the establishment of EU territoriality is a borrowed process, the stages of the establishment of modern territoriality in the EU does not follow the order as prescribed by Ruggie. The EU does not have the state power needed to mobilise the state's resources, including its subjects. The EU needs either the government of its members to mobilise the resources on the EU's behalf or the people need to directly give their consent to be governed by the EU. In short, the EU needs the permission or consent from its subjects to fully establish its territoriality particularly as a political unit. This is one issue that the EU has been struggling with – the deficit of democratic legitimacy.

#### **4.3.2. Changes of Material Environment and of Strategic Behaviour**

The second and the third step to the production of modern territoriality are the changes of material environment and strategic behavior respectively. Ruggie (1993) argues that according to the world history, 'ecodemographic dimension of human collectivities poses the biggest long term challenge for social structure' and because of this, changes in the material world have the ability to strain existing social arrangements to the point of collapse (p.153-154). Changes in the material environment can alter 'the matrix of constraints and the opportunities for social actors, giving rise to different situations of strategic interaction among them' (p.154). These changes including new wealth, new instruments of economic transactions, new ethos of commerce, new regulatory arrangements, and expansion of cognitive horizon can undermine the personalistic ties and the modes of reasoning on which an authority rested (p.155). If the bigger institutions manage to exercise jurisdiction over and evoked the allegiance of their new inhabitants, greater institutional substitutability may be established and new loyalty be found.

The establishment of the European integration project was initiated by the Schuman Plan with hope to mediate the European states post-war and ensure that avoidance of future war can be achieved and maintained. The vision of such establishment was to pool French and German coal and steel production together with aim for reconciliation by starting a process of European federalization (Broeger-de Smedt, 2012:341; also in Spinelli, 1957 and Hoffmann, 1966). Although the project was aimed to achieve a federalization, as mentioned in the subsection above, the EU (or ECSC) was initiated to serve economic function at heart. The project of European integration was designed to reverse and reduce the degree of disintegration in the post-World War II era (Cretu and Chenic, 2021:7). The project was to be overseen by a supranational body called the High Authority which would consist of independent personalities representing only European interests whose decisions would bind member states based on majority voting (Broeger-de Smedt, 2012:341). Despite the immediate, and arguably lasting concerns over the federal nature of the project, the main function of the project lingers i.e. economy. Today, the High Authority of this European project is transformed into what we know as the Commission, the Parliament, and the Council.

The provision of new ethos of commerce in the EU is reflected in the establishment of the principle of four freedoms – of goods, services, capital, and persons – as set out in the Treaties. Originated in the Single European Act, the principle of four freedoms was directed towards the goal for a ‘Europe without frontiers’ (Wessels, 2012:760). The elimination of borders among members of the EU instantly expanded cognitive horizon of every member state, at least normatively. As national borders were blurred, new sources and resources of wealth appear. With influx of goods, persons, services, and capital as a result of the principle of four freedoms, new resources and opportunities for markets in each member state of the EU were opened up through expansions. The expansion for international market without border consequently increases the heterogeneity

of suppliers and of customer preferences. As a result of increasing scale and heterogeneity, and the abolishment of trade barriers, market competition sharpened and there came the need for price stability. The need for a means to maintain price stability was later addressed in the Maastricht Treaty.

Through its evolution, Maastricht Treaty had become one of the most important agreement in the development of the European integration project. The ratification of Maastricht Treaty signified a 'substantial transfer of competences from the national to the European level' (Barth and Bijsman, 2018:216). Maastricht Treaty transformed the European integration project into what we know now as the EU and blessed the progress of economic integration by also creating the European Monetary Union. Through the creation of the EMU, Maastricht Treaty represented a significant deepening of the integration process by marking the transition of the EC/EU from economic to a politico-economic organisation (Wessels, 2012; Barth and Bijsman, 2018; Cretu and Chenic, 2021:8-9). In order to support the operation of EMU, Maastricht Treaty also established European Central Bank (ECB) and paved the way to the establishment of Euro as the EU's common currency. As Maastricht Treaty established the EMU, ECB, and the Euro, it provided EU member states with asset of new means for economic transactions.

Changes in material environment, and the ever-changing nature of the EU, inevitably led to the need for changes in strategic behaviour. This is an unavoidable result of the spillover effect as explained by neofunctionalist theorists. The spillover effect from changes in the material environment led to the needs for expansions of EU capacity and capability. As the need for economic unity and stability becomes more and more urgent, structural reformations were thus needed to allow for politics to play a part in the integration project in order to accommodate this need.

By eliminating borders, the EU opens more opportunities for its subjects. The provision of opportunities in other member states forces a member state to answer challenges within its national scope (more in subchapter 4.4. in regards to soft spaces). For example, under EU rules, nationals of one EU member states can run the local offices in another state within the EU, hence breaking a traditional norm that politics ought to be run by nationals of said state (Cretu and Chenic, 2021:10). They are also enabled to run in the Parliament elections in the EU state where they live regardless of nationality (p.8). The provision of opportunities also means that anchors for political loyalty are slowly being changed. This way, the EU challenges nation states to reassess their operation – whether or not they have effectively answered the demands from their citizens.

Furthermore, citizens of EU member states are directly represented at Union level in the Parliament while member states are represented in the European Council (Cretu and Chenic, 2021:8). As such, the EU provides a provision for a new 'centre' for its citizens. The provision of a new centre at the EU level weakens that at the national level as it creates an alternative way for public to run to for solutions. Materialisation of a new core of power occurs when the new centre is accepted as an alternative to the national ones. In this sense, the next stages of the establishment of modern territoriality (social episteme and empowerment) are responsible for whether a new core power materializes or stay as a mere provision.

By considering the discussion above, at least institutionally, the empowerment of the Parliament is therefore the most significant step in the stage of changes of strategic behaviour. The Parliament is responsible for directly representing the citizens of EU member states at the EU level. The Parliament provides an alternative for citizens that are not happy with how things are operated at the national level to take it directly to the EU for a chance for a better change – one that fulfills public demands which cannot be fulfilled at the national

level. In other words, the EU provides an alternative 'centre' to its citizens through the empowerment of the Parliament (see chapter 5).

#### **4.3.3. Social Episteme and Social Empowerment**

Despite the changes in material environment, the establishment of territoriality cannot be completed without gaining recognition and acceptance from the subjects of a political unit. The processes where a state gains recognition and acceptance from its subjects are respectively the stage of social episteme and social empowerment in the establishment of modern territoriality. States are 'invisible' matters and it is impossible to grasp them without materializing them first. States, according to Walzer (1967:194 as cited in Ruggie, 1993:157), 'must be personified before it can be seen, symbolized before it can be loved, imagined before conceived'. In other words, social episteme can be understood as the way people conceive the matters that surround them and their relations to these environments. Social episteme concerns with the epistemic dimension of a society that comprises 'webs of meaning and signification' (p.157). The social epistemic stage rules, in Ruggie's words, 'the mental equipment by means of which people reimagine their collective existence' (p.169). In other words, the stage of social episteme is the stage where 'metageographical conception' is conceived (Murphy, 2008).

The process of social episteme needs to be accompanied by the process social empowerment. For a political unit to be functioning optimally, it needs both the recognition and the acceptance – that is the process of episteme and empowerment respectively. In the process of social empowerment, the new units of political discourse are inscribed in social life to produce new units of political order. In other words, the step of social empowerment is about getting society to accept the new unit as a political order of a collective existence.

There are three modes by which a new political unit can be empowered socially (Ruggie, 1993). The first one is by domestic social structure way which is reflected from the social episteme. In this mode, the sense collective existence is reinforced by way of symbolization with which symbols – e.g. flags and anthems – are made to represent this collective existence. Successful attempts at symbolization create unity among the people. At the event where attempts for symbolization are unsuccessful, symbolization still however creates units in regards to the people's imagination of the materialization of a state. These units are: (a) units of discourse which are fundamental to all thinking and doing, and; (b) units of feeling around which emotions of loyalty and assurance can cluster (Walzer, 1967:194-195 cited in Ruggie, 1993:160). As such, this particular stage is crucial in the establishment of modern territoriality as it plays a critical role in the formation of system of rule.

Although the end of Cold War changed the conceptions of Europe (Christiansen et al, 2012:686), the apparent stage of social episteme in the European Union began with the ratification of Maastricht Treaty. The treaty was intended to introduce elements of political union as part of the European integration project which involved the mission for an establishment of EU citizenship. Together with the creation of EMU, ECB, and Euro as a common currency among member states, Maastricht Treaty changed the conception of IR and removed many of its certainties, replaced it with something altogether more difficult to understand (Christiansen et al, 2012:686). Since Maastricht, other attempts to codify symbolic edifice of European identity have taken place such as the creation of the anthem of the EU, EU flag, and the nomination of 9<sup>th</sup> May as Europe Day.

The attempts on symbolization are not without issues. Symbolisation has an intimate relationship with the process of constitutionalisation. It is, according to Raz (1998, cited in Reh, 2009:641), the 'thickest' form of constitution (see the

next subchapter) and it asks for public recognition and societal consent – democratic legitimacy – from the subjects within said political system. The issue of democratic legitimacy is not that the people have not granted the EU their consent *per se*, but it is more about the ambiguity or vagueness about the final goal of the EU. The goal of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe was mentioned in the Treaty of Rome, significantly proclaiming the vague objective of the European integration project compared to its predecessor – Treaty of Paris – which referred to federalism as the future for Europe (Broeger-de Smedt, 2012:354). The treaty did not explain what form of an ever closer union will be, or how close will the ever closer union be, or what being the peoples of Europe mean. Clarity of the end goal of the integration project was never achieved. Even later in the Maastricht Treaty, which was supposed to represent a significant deepening of the integration process (Barth and Bijsman, 2018:216, 223), debates on the existence of a European public sphere and European demos were absent (Christiansen et al, 2012:696). In 1991, the debate on European integration started to be less about a means of securing peace (Muller, 2011 cited in Barth and Bijsmans, 2018:227) and its policies began to substantially interfere with domestic policies (Schrage Sternberg, 2013 cited in Barth and Bijsmans, 2018:227). Despite the lack of clarity about the future goal of the integration project, Maastricht Treaty did affect the creation of units in regards to the materialization of the EU as a unique political unit by stimulating more critical public engagement with European integration and debates about the EU democratic nature (Barth and Bijsman, 2018).

Due to such lack of clarity, the further development of not just European law, but also European discourse, was thus 'left to the individuals who would apply the treaties and use the legal tools provided to advance European integration' (p.355). In practice, the project of European integration has become more pragmatic than legal. Although it is based on principles, it is based more on the people 'to whom the project is entrusted and who, to the extent permitted by

political and economic conditions, will make of it what they want them to be' (Broeger-de Smedt, 2012:355). This is why the calls for European citizenship and forging European identity have remained both vague and elusive (Christiansen et al, 2012:696).

The attempts for symbolization of the collective existence of EU citizens aim to achieve legitimacy by 'enabling public recognition' and 'societal consent' (Reh, 2009:641). These attempts are made ultimately with aim for the establishment of a common European identity. However, as Scicluna (2012:445) explains, these attempt for the symbolization of European identity 'illustrates neatly the problematic nature of the project of European integration'. For example, the nomination of 9<sup>th</sup> May as Europe Day highlights the underlying problem of using a collective past experience as a basis for the establishment of a European identity (p.446). Europe Day was initiated to commemorate the Schuman Declaration which is seen as the seed of what we know as the EU today. In the west part of the EU, Europe Day is a day to be celebrated as it marks the achievement of the establishment of the EU (ECSC). In the east part of the EU, Europe Day on 9<sup>th</sup> May is interpreted not only as the anniversary of Soviet's victory over Nazi but also the further defeat, occupation, and oppression (p.443-446). Although 9<sup>th</sup> May is shared among member states as one important day to commemorate, the interpretations and the historical experiences are not commonly shared among all EU states. Due to the distinct experiences of states in the west and east part of the EU, we may thus raise the question of whether these experiences, their interpretations and the lessons learned are just too different to ground a common European identity that is robust and inspired by constitutional patriotism (p.444).

In addition to this, since the ratification of Maastricht Treaty, people are allowed to run for local office and in the Parliament elections in the EU country where they live, regardless of nationality (Cretu and Chenic, 2021:8-9). The issue



is, due to the lack of clarity of the end goal of the integration project, the EU does not have a solid basis for the establishment of a common vision and understanding of the integration project as they leave the duty for interpretation up to member states to then be redistributed in the grassroots level. Due to the inevitable difference of interpretation and understanding of what it means to be a member of the European integration project, the sense of local flavour of the European Union is thus created. After all, European citizenship is derived only from national citizenship and the citizens' main democratic anchor remains the nation state (Reh, 2009:641).

Social episteme, particularly through symbolization, plays a critical role in the establishment of territoriality because it provides the system of rule in question with means for extracting democratic legitimacy from the subjects. How the subjects interpret and understand the relations between their existence and said system of rule – the metageographical conception – are important because 'they play powerful role in organizing and shaping understandings of the world . . . how and why particular territorial strategies are pursued, and how the outcomes of those strategies may be shaping understandings and actions' (Murphy, 2008:9). Whether or not social episteme has successfully materialised may be tested when significant changes take place. The changes may lead either to 'a spatial reconfiguration of households . . . which more rigorously demarcated and separated private from public spheres and functions' (Ruggie, 1993:158) or of the production of new spatial forms which may be caused by material changes that require a need and a desire of a broad transformation in the existing social episteme (p.160).

The second mode of social empowerment is by way of territorial formation which concerns with where the right to rule in society would crystallize (Ruggie, 1993:161). In the spot where power is crystallized, central rulers become powerful because of their 'state-building mission', they have the ability to deploy power and

be regarded as socially legitimate (p.161). Unlike in the first mode where legitimacy is gained from the grassroots level, by way of recognition and acceptance from the subjects, legitimacy in the second mode is gained from the top level that is the government. Such is why a top-down mode of social empowerment is problematic for the EU. As per its current state, the EU has no central government where the right to rule in society would crystallize. It has no active 'state-building mission' and, if any, a state-like constitution which would give the central ruler of the EU the capacity to deploy power and be regarded as socially legitimate. Furthermore, as far as its ambiguous goal to achieve an 'ever closer union' stands, the lack of clarity means that member states have the flexibility to interpret it as they see fit as far as it does not deviate from the guidance from ECJ (see the next subchapter). All the more so as the ECJ owes the applications of EU laws to the government of the member states.

In order to enforce the second mode of social empowerment, the EU must be allowed the crystallization of central power and the legitimate right to rule. The ability to legitimately deploy power, particularly that of violence, is a unique trait of a state. Therefore, in order to be able to acquire this ability, the EU requires a transformation that involves a break away from its current ordering principle (anarchy) into that of a state (hierarchy), thus triggering a total systemic change. The elimination of other central powers and the birth of a new legitimate centre that is of the EU's will provide the EU with the legitimacy it so craves. However, with its members being sovereign states, the crystallization of a central power and legitimate right to rule conflict the ultimate goal of a state as explained by the neorealist theory (see chapter 2). This is why the EU struggles in the process of social empowerment, i.e. the deficit of democratic legitimacy.

The process of social empowerment in the EU has been heavily dependent on the first mode where recognition and acceptance are gained from the grassroots level – the people. This does not necessarily mean that it has been or

will be successful. As suggested by Weiler (2012:268), democracy simply is not in the DNA of European integration and it feels like a 'foreign implant' which means that to EU citizens in general, being 'European' is not some force that comes from within. To make matter worse, 'to most Europeans, "Brussels" seems like a kafkaesk "castle", like a distant, unreachable, bureaucratic power that intervenes in their life' (SZ, 07.12.1991 as cited in Barth and Bijsmans, 2018:223). In order to save the EU from the problem of democratic deficit, Weiler (2012:268) suggests that the solution have to come from within the member states. As he explains, "It will be national parliaments, national judiciaries, national media and, yes, national governments who will have to lend their legitimacy to a solution which inevitably will involve yet a higher degree of integration" (p.268). Weiler's suggestion of 'messianism' reflects a reversed notion of Milward's European rescue of the nation state as it suggests that 'it will have to be member states rescuing the EU in order to overcome the crisis facing the Union today' (Christiansen et al, 2012:697). This suggestion thus highlights my point earlier that the project of European integration is, as it stands, a 'borrowed' process.

The third mode of social empowerment is by way of the collectivity of territorial units which relates to the right to act as a constitutive unit of the new collective political order. This mode concerns about who can be designated as a power (p.162). In a Westphalian state system, this stage is precisely the one concerning the importance of acknowledgment from other sovereign states. In a society of sovereign states, the act of designation of a power – deciding whether a unit is sovereign – is inherently a collective act. This stage is crucial to a society of sovereign states as it is impossible to have a society of sovereign states without reciprocity of sovereignty (p.162).

#### **4.3.4. Society of Sovereign States**

Once a state's territoriality is all bundled, a sovereign unit is thus established. Together with other sovereign states, they create what is called a society of sovereign states. When a society of sovereign states is established – thus creating what we recognize as an international system or society – an issue arises with regards to common spaces. In a setting where mutually exclusive territorial states coexist, their formation creates a paradox of absolute individuation. This means that as every sovereign unit is expected to acknowledge and respect their mutual exclusivity, there is no space left within which basic tasks such as 'the conduct of diplomatic representation without fear of relentless disturbance, arbitrary interference, and severed lines of communications' can be anchored (Ruggie, 1993:164). Because no state in the system would manage to survive solely on its own, the paradox of absolute individuation needs to be thinned out. One way to create a long term solution among the mutually exclusive states is to 'unbundle' each of their territoriality (p.165). In Ruggie's words 'an institutional negation of exclusive territoriality serves as the means of situating and dealing with those dimensions of collective existence that territorial rulers recognize to be irreducibly transterritorial in character . . . Non territorial functional space is the place wherein international society is anchored' (p.165).

In the case of European integration project, the stage of unbundling territoriality is very clearly reflected from the need to open member states' territorial border to allow for the enforcement of the principle of four freedoms. As a member state opens its territorial border and joins the integration project, it becomes embedded 'within a dense institutional network that constrains and conditions the conduct of national foreign policies' and 'such constrains and conditioning generate a process of convergence in national policies by the increase in shared norms and interests in member states as process of adaptation or Europeanisation' (Whitman, 2010:26). The process of Europeanisation affects both how a member state maintain its relations with other member states as it

transforms intra-European states' relations through the progressive enlargement of the EU (Whitman, 2010) and, as a consequence of convergence, how a member state conducts its relations with non EU states.

This stage of the establishment of modern territoriality highlights the capability of a state to enter the international stage and establish IR with other sovereign states as their formal equal. In essence, the stage of the society of sovereign states thus revolves around the discourse of foreign policy. The EU's achievement in this sense can be seen from the creation of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The creation of CFSP reflects the EU's aspiration in playing as a powerful actor in the broader setting of international stage.

The initiation for CFSP raised concerns about 'the nature of the Union's actorness on the international stage' (Christiansen et al, 2012:688). Maastricht Treaty institutionalized a hybrid nature of the EU's external relations which conditioned 'all subsequent attempts to establish an integrated EU foreign policy' (Smith, 2012:700). In the governmental conference preceding the adoption of the Treaty, it was clear that the foreign and security elements were of 'immense sensitivity to the member states and there was little chance of them being communautarised' (p.688). Although the attempt to tame the extent of this nature was made in Lisbon Treaty, it had retained much of its character from Maastricht Treaty. However, up to when this chapter was written, all European states manage to 'retain the foreign policymaking and diplomatic infrastructure to pursue national foreign policies in international politics and this affects the EU's relationships with other great powers' (Whitman, 2010:26).

The EU's aspiration in playing a role in the broader sense of international stage is a difficult situation both to the member states and to the integration project. To start with, although the aspiration is there for the EU to be a powerful international actor, there has been difficulties in devising 'a clear grand strategy informing what range of capabilities would be necessary to give the EU the

greatest power and influence within international relations' (Whitman, 2010:25). The simplest answer provided by our theory thus far is simply because the EU is not its own sovereign state. In the setting of IR, the most advanced and powerful actors are sovereign states. Simply put, due to their mutually-exclusive nature, they are the reason IR exists in the first place. Therefore, in order to give the best chance to the EU to possess the greatest power and influence within IR, it first needs to place itself at the same level as sovereign states and to gain recognition from them. This will not happen unless a total integration takes place within the EU which results in a shift of ordering principle – thus allowing the EU to deploy power and have legitimacy as explained in the previous section. However, seeing that the EU integration project is a 'borrowed' process – and by considering that the ultimate goal of a state is to preserve their sovereignty – it is theoretically highly unlikely that member states would give up their sovereignty in exchange of being a domestic part of the EU.

#### **4.4. The Issue with EU Soft Spaces**

In the previous section, I have discussed that being in a society of sovereign states is the last stage of the production of modern territoriality. In a setting where mutually exclusive territorial states coexist, their formation creates a paradox of absolute individuation. In this stage, for IR to be established, single states must thus thin out their absolute individuation by way of unbundling their territoriality. By unbundling their territoriality, to a certain extent, a fictitious space is thus created. This fictitious space is characterized by its non-territorial and functional traits where tasks that require mutually exclusive states to merge their territoriality can be done.

In the literature of European integration, this fictitious space is also known as soft space. Soft space is that spatial extension where EU soft power (Goldthau and Sitter, 2015; Tuomioja, 2009; Michalski, 2005) and EU soft law (Falkner et al,

2005; Terpan, 2015; Schafer, 2006) may be legislated and enforced. It is where EU territoriality is birthed. Allmendinger et al (2014) explains that soft space is a means:

‘to address, challenge, and open up difficult and politically sensitive issues around identities and territory and spatial imaginaries with regards to European integration, and how spatial planning and governance is being used as a means through which reterritorialisation at the macroregional scale is being managed’ (p.2706)

Soft space is of a temporary nature. In the case of European integration project, paired with the lack of clarity about its finalité, the temporary nature of soft space is exactly where the problem lies. What will the end product of the integration be? What are the limits of the integration project? How much sovereignty does the EU need to feed its integration project? How much longer can member states endure the loss of sovereignty to fuel this very integration project?

The EU is an institutional form of a compound of states with a hybrid nature which incorporates features ‘usually associated with federal states’ (Scicluna, 2012:441; Christiansen et al, 2012; Schafer, 2007:9). Consequently, the setting of EU territoriality is that of a hybrid nature which consists of a few hard elements and predominating soft elements (Allmendinger et al, 2014:2707). The setting of these elements depends on how certain policies are treated at the EU level. The first form of setting is that of non-territoriality where there are no formal mandates for a political task with regards to spatial development. In other words, mandate for certain policies are non-existent or neglected at EU level. The second form is that of pooled territoriality which is characterized by sovereignty remaining with the nation states as building blocks. EU regulations in this category are based on national competences and managed by nation-state authorities. The third form is that of supraterritoriality where mandate and power are located at EU level.

Within soft space, the project of European integration brings forward a significant amount of shift of competencies from nation states to the EU (Heeg and Ossenbrugge, 2002:81). Such shift is marked by a major structural reorganization and strategic reorientation of state capacities, advocated by the EU, that are undergoing and result in three different forms (p.81-82). In the first form, states are de-nationalised. This means that nation states are hollowed out of their old organisation and being functionally and territorially reorganized with new capacities on supranational, national, and regional levels. Because the de-nationalisation of the state member states not only lose part of their sovereignty as decision-making powers are transferred upwards to supranational bodies, they also lose it to subordinate levels of territorial organisation due to a parallel decentralization of authority. In the second form, nation states are internationalized as national economies are shifted to international competitiveness. Due to this, national financial support for social security is generally reduced which then leads to the individualization of social risks. In the third form, states experience a decrease in the central role of official state apparatuses as there occurs a shift from government to governance on various territorial scales which involve coordination between a multitudes of actors. This form is known as the de-statisation of political regimes. As states are de-nationalise, internationalized, and de-statisise within the realm of soft spaces, it follows that soft spaces allow for challenges and obscurity for 'where power actually resides' (Allmendinger, et al, 2014:2706) especially in the context of European integration. Because of this, soft space helps with the process of bundling of EU's territoriality, precisely in the stage of 'changes of strategic behaviour' explained in the previous subchapter (see subchapter 4.3).

Consequently, these new arrangements for member states change them in three ways: (1) state's capacities are being reorganized on different spatial scales creating a multilevel project; (2) re-orientation towards competition especially in terms of economy; (3) the importance of government is slowly being



replaced by of governance for example from formal sanctions and bureaucratic top-down governance enforced by the government to round tables and institutionalized networks and partnership (Heeg and Ossenbrugge, 2002:84). What is more important about such process, however, is that reorganization of one's policies, leave alone a major structural and strategic rearrangement, can mean the 'shift from one kind of territoriality to another' (Allmendinger et al, 2014:2708).

With the vague goal and ambiguity of the *finalité*, the concerns over European integration project are a lot to do with whether EU soft space is more likely to expand or to shrink, and whether it is more likely to dissipate or to harden over the course of the integration progress. The discourse about EU soft space, how it not only functions as a space for establishing IR but also to replace national territoriality with EU territoriality, is consequently about whether a constitution for the EU will be established to accommodate EU territoriality and, if so, how it affects IR as conceived in neorealist term.

There are various conceptions and criteria of a constitution. The combination of these different elements and how they are perceived result in 'different interpretations of the procedure and the agenda of constitution-making' (Menendez, 2004:110 cited in Reh, 2009:630-631). Despite the absence of a constitutional text, at the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century the EU had already been 'operating with *de facto* constitution for several decades' (Scicluna, 2012:444) and therefore it would be wrong to deny the existence of a constitution of the European Union based particularly on two elemental reasons.

First, one of the major doctrines in the EU, the doctrine of direct effect, was established as a result of a constitutional reading of the Treaty of Rome which holds the nationals of member states, and the member states themselves, subjects to EC law (Scicluna, 2012). Second, ECJ's *Van Gend en Loos* judgment decided that the Treaty of Lisbon 'is more than an agreement which merely

creates mutual obligations between the contracting states . . . The Community constitutes a new legal order . . . the subjects of which comprise not only MSs but also their nationals' (Case 26/62 [1963]). In combination with the principle of direct effect, ECJ's *Van Gend en Loos* judgment shows that Europe's community has agreed on the existence of a thin supranational constitution (Reh, 2009:631).

ECJ rulings and judgments are important to the constitutional operation of the EU. This is due to the other major doctrine in the EU – the doctrine of primacy or supremacy of EU law. This doctrine was resulted from an ECJ ruling in *Costa v ENEL* in 1964 which explains that EU law takes precedence over national law. In this ruling, ECJ explains that 'member states had agreed to limit their sovereign rights in areas covered by EU treaties and could not adopt national laws that were incompatible with European law . . . any conflicting national law in areas covered by EU treaties cannot be enforced . . . (although) the Court of Justice does not have any power to strike down national law (as) this is a task for national courts' (UK in a Changing Europe, 2020 emphasis added). The primacy of EU laws is most apparent in the setting of supraterritoriality as it overrides both national and other international mandates.

#### *Principle of Superiority of EU Law*

The principle of superiority of EU law is one of the most fundamental characteristics that make EU law unprecedented and unique to this day (Claes, 2015:178). Not only has this doctrine become an established legal principle (Piris, 2000:8), it also has become a precondition for citizens' equality under Community law (Menendez, 2004:117). The CJEU often speaks of this principle and terms it as its own legal system, underlining its special and origin nature, and treating its autonomy as an axiom (Kwiecien, 2005:1481).

In order to achieve the goal of European integration, the existence and application of EU law are justified by the goal of achieving coherence, unity, and

effectiveness. In order to achieve these, EU law is equipped with the principle of 'direct effect' and 'pre-emption'. Together with the principle of 'direct effect' and the goal of 'uniform applicability', the principle of primacy of EU law is believed to 'constitute not only the foundation of effectiveness of the Community legal order but also play the role of the pillars of the unofficial European Constitution' and therefore 'seen as the embodiment of actual transfer of constitutional power to Europe' (Kwecien, 2005:1479; Reh, 2009:633).

Similar to the finalité of the project of EU integration, the theoretical clarity about this doctrine of superiority of EU law is also lacking (Claes, 2015). And due to this lack of clarity, there are only as many conceptions of superiority as there are member states. They are diverse and there is 'not one principle of primacy, but many in operations' (p.199). Largely, this doctrine can be understood in three different ways: (a) superiority in a full hierarchical way; (b) superiority in a conditional hierarchical way, and; (c) superiority in a heterarchical way (Avbelj, 2011). The three terms propose that EU law is superior to national law, albeit differently.

In the full hierarchical way, the doctrine of superiority of EU law is also understood as what is often called as the supremacy of EU law. As suggested by its name, EU law here is perceived as being supreme to national law. All EU law in itself becomes the law of the land and, therefore, part of the national legal orders (Avbelj, 2011:746). Because of this, not only is EU law able to block contradictory national law, it is also able to overrule national law even if the national law was enacted before EU law came into effect. Such is the case with Ireland. Consequently, the principle of supremacy gives the EU has a prerogative right to Kompetenz-Kompetenz to decide on a final resolution of a conflict (Avbelj, 2011:747). The EU is also given the right for preemption – this is the competence for policy-making which prevents the member states from enacting any legislation contrary to EU law. Furthermore, because the EU law is perceived to be supreme,

it binds the national authorities in interpreting EU law due to the duty of consistent interpretation which requires lower norms to be interpreted in line with the higher norms. In short, the supremacy of EU law can thus be seen as the 'grand structural principle of integration from which all the other structural principles derive and are in turn subsumed into it' (Avbelj, 2011:746). Without the principle of supremacy, the three normative ideals of EU law – coherence, unity, and effectiveness – will perish and, therefore, integration cannot be pursued (p.747).

In the conditional hierarchical way, the doctrine of superiority of EU law is commonly known as the primacy of EU law. The superiority of EU law is seen to be 'less rigid and categorical, less sharp-edged and intelligible' mode of EU law (Avbelj, 2011:747). The supremacy of EU law is not without limit as it can only be enacted within the EU scope and this must be exercised in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. EU law is also limited by the respect for identities of the EU's member states. The latter is made possible by the first. The second category sees the principle of primacy at least as a means for conflict resolution which enables EU law to prevail over national law in case of a conflict.

In the heterarchical understanding of the principle of superiority, the notion of supremacy is understood as 'the feature of supreme legal acts in the legal order of the member states and of the EU' (Avbelj, 2011:750). According to this understanding, the notion of supremacy is not the doctrine by which EU law operates. The heterarchical model of the principle of primacy resonates with intergovernmental relationship between the EU and its member states, and between the member states. While the principle of supremacy is intra-systemic, the principle of primacy is trans-systemic. The principle of primacy governs relationship in a horizontal fashion between autonomous legal orders, and that is exactly how EU law operates. Therefore, the principle of primacy is non-hierarchical in this model. In terms of conflict between EU law and national law, the heterarchical model argues that EU law cannot invalidate national law and

neither can national law invalidate EU law; the disapplication of national law in case of conflict with EU law is an 'exclusive outcome of the principle of primacy' (Avbelj, 2011:751). Even so, the duty of disapplication only arises after three conditions are met: (a) a conflict needs to happen; (b) there is a capability to produce direct effect, and: (c) the conflict happens within scope of the EU competences.

Despite the variations in approaching the doctrine of superiority, the ultimate aim for achieving unity, coherence, and effectiveness dictate that EU law must prevail over national law in case of conflict. This doctrine of superiority of EU law exists as a means to pursue these aims on the path of European integration project. Pragmatic considerations in the principle of *sine qua non* are the ultimate grounds for this doctrine of EU law (Kwiecien, 2005). This means that what is most important for them is that EU law is effectively applied and that member states 'cannot get away with non-compliance' (Claes, 2015:182). Furthermore, the doctrines and principles attributed to European law create a legal order with 'a structure apparently reminiscent of a federal state' (Broeger-de Smedt, 2012:340; Avbelj, 2011; Scicluna, 2012:441, 452). Although unlike in a fully federal system where the court has a direct say, the EU and its Courts are still able to declare the breach of EU law and oblige national authorities to leave the conflicting national law inapplicable to the extent of their inconsistency with EU law. Such obligation is addressed to member states which means that not only national courts are obliged to comply but also all national authorities (Claes, 2015:184). Consequently, in a conflict between national law and directly effective EU law – and this cannot be solved by consistent interpretation of national law – national courts of member states are obliged to apply EU law instead of national law (Trstenjak, 2013:72).

Additionally, a member state cannot exclude the application of EU law by means of subsequent national law which conflicts with EU law. This is because the

application of the principle of *lex posterior derogat legi priori* in relation between EU law and national law would render the achievement of the goals of the Union impossible (Trstenjak, 2013:73). This means that despite the differences, all three notions of the principle of primacy of EU law agree that at some point, national law of the member states must give way to EU law to be enacted and free from contradictions. The principle of primacy of EU law creates an order of importance or mechanism which dictates what member states can and cannot do, therefore making the principle one apparent source of hierarchy in the EU.

#### **4.5. Summarizing the Two-Step Theoretical Approach**

The main aim of this thesis has been to analyse the underlying cause for Brexit via neorealist perspective. From the symptoms shown by analysis from the other studies, as well as the main issues highlighted in the Leave Campaign, the suspicion falls on to the systemic change within the EU which has been caused by the ever-progressing project of European integration. In other words, Brexit is seen as a product, a side effect, or a result of a systemic change that is in progress within the EU. This systemic change involves a shift in the ordering principle, from that of anarchy to that of hierarchy, from that of inter- to intra-, from that of international to that of domestic. As the ultimate goal for any nation-state is to survive – to stay sovereign – the international system in which the nation-state dwells ought to keep running under the ordering principle of anarchy to maintain its relationships with other states international. A total systemic change would abolish state sovereignty within international system and turn the system into its own sovereign unit, turning the relationship within its territory into that of domestic.

The notion of such systemic change is encapsulated in theoretical framework established in this thesis. The framework comprises a two-step theoretical approach. Both steps have been discussed in Chapter 3 and 4 respectively. In chapter 3, the discussion of the first step provides an

understanding of how the world works, particularly the understanding of how an ordering principle governs the dynamics of elements within a system. The first step of the approach defines what the thesis understands as a systemic change. Meanwhile, the second step as discussed in chapter 4, provides a way of understanding how a systemic change takes place and how it affects the relationship and the dynamics between a state and the international system within which it is a part of. In summative terms, the two-step theoretical framework is to be understood as described below.

#### **4.5.1. The First Step**

The first step of the approach focuses on defining systemic change and begins with clarifying the understanding of ordering principle as accorded with the neorealist assumption of how the world works. In chapter 3, I explain that a systemic change takes place when the defining feature of a system changes. The defining feature in a system structure lies within the structure's deepest layer that is its 'unit arrangement' according to Lechner (2017), or its 'ordering principle' as understood by Kenneth Waltz. There are only two types of a unit arrangement of a system's structure known today – anarchy or hierarchy. Both types are mutually exclusive with each other as they are the demarcational condition of a system. They do not, however, negate the presence of each other's elements within one setting of a unit arrangement. An anarchical system structure may carry some hierarchical characteristics such as governance or order, *vice versa*. These elements may only be present in the surface layers – functional differentiation and/or the distribution of capabilities – of the system structure. As long as the contradictory elements stay within the outer layers, they do not define the nature of the system structure itself. Therefore, a systemic change or a whole transformation of a system occurs only if there is a shift of unit arrangement – or

ordering principle – either a shift from hierarchy to anarchy, or from anarchy to hierarchy.

An international system is seen as a system whose structure is governed under the ordering principle of anarchy. As an ordering principle, or a unit arrangement, anarchy refers not to the condition of instant chaos but simply to the condition where overarching ruler is absent. The absence of an overarching ruler makes the salient feature of international political system (Havercroft and Prichard, 2017:260). The ordering principle of anarchy also produces what is called as 'anarchic space'. Together with the absence of an overarching ruler, it guarantees the system's respect for sovereignty of each member states within an international system. Every member state in an international system is its own single person and each has equal formal status as being sovereign. Despite the demarcational boundaries, especially between immediate neighbouring states, the absence of an overarching ruler in an international system guarantees the presence of anarchic space between states. This imaginary space is what separates one sovereign state from the others despite the close geographical distance and thus guarantees the singleness of state units. This is why an international system that respects its member states' sovereignty must maintain the presence of anarchic space between states. Any attempt in eradicating this anarchic space would be seen as threatening the integrity of the singleness of a state and, hence, its sovereignty. In other words, as the singleness of state units signals the anarchic nature in the deepest layer of a system structure, any alteration that compromises the singleness of state units can be seen as a sign of a systemic change.

The singleness of the state unit in this thesis refers to that particular trait where state is seen as being whole, its own person, and thus exclusive single political. As its own person, a state unit is jealous for and protective of its sovereignty as the ultimate resource for its existence. A state is a political unit that is entrapped in a relatively fixed and permanent geographical territory; it is a



bundled package of territoriality. In other words, the process of bundling territoriality births the singleness of state unit. This point bridges the first and the second step of the theoretical framework summarized below.

#### **4.5.2. The Second Step**

Where the first step of the approach defines what a systemic change is, the second step describes the way a systemic change occurs. The second step of the approach picks up from the lack – if not absence – of provisions in the neorealist theory that describe the way a systemic change might occur, particularly the one which involves the shift from the ordering principle of anarchy to that of hierarchy. The second step sets off from an understanding that a transformation into hierarchical system requires a break with anarchy as a demarcational condition. The second step places the highlight on the singleness of state unit and utilizes the concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality to depict the process of a systemic change from anarchy to hierarchy and the way it affects sovereign states within said system structure; in this case, how the process of European integration disturbs the singleness of the UK as an EU member state and thus its sovereignty.

In chapter 4, it was explained that bundling territoriality is a process that gives birth to the singleness of a state unity. There are two important effects that the bundling of territoriality places upon a political entity. The first effect impacts the way a political entity assumes of itself. Territoriality needs ‘legitimacy and a legal character that it cannot obtain without the tacit or explicit consent of internal and external rivals’ (El Ouali, 2006:635) to ensure its strength and durability. In other words, it needs its own rights to self-determination. This may be achieved by bundling – packaging – its territoriality into a political realm therefore institutionalizing itself. As the exclusive owner of sovereignty, state is the only political realm known today that is capable to provide legitimacy and legal character. With the right to protect the wholeness/completeness/unity of its

territory (El Ouali, 2006), a state is able to ensure the strength and durability of territoriality.

The second effect impacts the way a political entity assumes of others. The process of bundling territoriality generates territorial boundaries that are responsible for separating the inside of its territory from the outside, making the borders function as a 'container' (Taylor, 1994 cited in Vollaard, 2009:40). In this sense, they keep what is within, within, and what is out, out – thus excluding 'the Other'. Therefore, when territoriality is bundled, a state becomes exclusive to other elements beyond its territories. Once bundled, territoriality is contained and becomes an expression of a state.

Bundling territoriality can be understood as a process of 'increasing coincidence and congruence of territorialities within a political realm' (Vollaard, 2008:13). This understanding is consistent with the definitions of both integration and disintegration adopted in this thesis. In subchapter 2.5.3., integration is understood as a term to depict the process of congruence or the coming together of elements in the process of polity formation resulting in external consolidation and internal structuring of said polity. This way, we may say that bundling territoriality is synonymous to the process of integration. Therefore, a successful process of integration will result in the creation of a bundled territoriality. Meanwhile, in the same subchapter, disintegration is understood as a way to escape the intensity of the advancement of congruence within a political entity. The process of disintegration is consistent with that of unbundling territoriality; both terms depict a condition of decreasing congruence within a political realm. This is also why Vollaard's understanding of disintegration (see more in subchapter 2.5.3.) is the closest to that understood in this thesis.

There are six steps in the process of bundling territoriality. These steps depict a process of a coming together of a state, therefore, a fully-integrated political entity. These steps are differentiation, changes of material environment,

changes of strategic behaviour, social episteme, social empowerment, and – when the political entity becomes fully bundled, and together with other bundled entity – the society of sovereign states. Due to the lack of clarity in the final goal of the process of European integration, an assumption thus needs to be made for analysis to be established. Based on the existing data regarding the Brexit referendum, this thesis assumes that the European integration project is going in the direction of the creation of one regional government, i.e. the United States of Europe. In other words, this thesis assumes the ultimate goal of the project of ‘ever closer union’ to be total integration which, in neorealist term, depicts a condition of a shift to a different ordering principle and therefore a systemic change; hence, the title of this thesis.

Once territoriality is fully bundled, a political entity becomes its own personal being; it becomes a state. Due to its extreme exclusivity, a fully bundled political entity – state – generates what is known as absolute individuation. In IR, however, this exclusive being cannot maintain survival on its own and continuously needs help from others. In a setting where mutually exclusive territorial states coexist, their formation creates a paradox of absolute individuation which prevents IR from happening. In order to establish a long-term solution, a state needs to thin out its absolute individuation – that is, to lessen its territorial integrity to a certain extent – to provide a space where two or more mutually exclusive territorialities can exist and cooperate. This is achieved by unbundling state’s territoriality. Therefore, it can also be said that unbundling territoriality is a state’s way of handling mismatches between supplies and demands that occur due to its (in)ability to satisfy functional demands within its territories (Vollaard, 2008:16).

Through the thinning out one’s absolute individuation by way of unbundling territoriality, an imaginary space is established to house said state’s relationship with another. This imaginary space is what is discussed in this thesis

as 'soft space'. Soft space has three main characteristics. First, due to the aim of establishing interstate cooperation as said above, soft space is 'functional' (Ruggie, 1993:165), 'task-specific' and has only one-purpose within its jurisdictions (Vollaard, 2008:16). The choice of which tasks need to be unbundled depends on the reason of the cooperation. Second, soft space is designed to be non-territorial to allow for different territorialities to collapse peacefully with each other. In order to establish interstate cooperation without creating territorial issues, and as a result of the thinning out of state's absolute individuation, national boundaries become blurred and fuzzy. This leads to lowered intensity of a state's national authority within soft space which provides an arena for addressing functional issues without upsetting the sovereignty and authority of the involved state(s). Third, soft space is temporary and subject to change; it is not fixed, nor is it permanent: (a) a soft space may be disbanded when the goal is achieved or when it is deemed to fail after a certain period of time; (b) it may be given more time to achieve the initial goal, or; (c) it may be hardened or upgraded and given more tasks/jurisdictions to involve more complex and binding agreements.

States commonly allow the establishment of soft spaces for other units to establish their territorialities in the territory of a host state in order to lengthen, if not perpetuate, their diplomatic relationship with each other, e.g. the establishment of embassies or other representative offices. The problem with this is that the temporary nature of soft space allows territoriality to evolve to an extent where it may compromise a substantial portion of state's sovereignty and, therefore, the singleness of the state unit. In the case of European integration project, this temporary nature of soft space, as well as the lack of clarity about the project's finalité, is where the problem lies.

The EU's soft space takes place within the geographical territories of its member states and cannot be done vice versa due to the absence of EU's own geographical territories. In other words, its territoriality is being bundled within

the geographical territories of its member states. The EU's soft space is the domain where EU soft power and soft law may be legislated and enforced. This is where EU territoriality is birthed. The setting of EU territoriality is that of a hybrid nature which consists of a few hard elements and predominating soft elements depending on how certain policies are treated at the EU level. The setting of EU territoriality is represented by three different forms, i.e. non-territoriality, pooled territoriality, and supraterritoriality. Through the setting of EU territoriality, a significant amount of states' competencies shift to the EU by way of de-nationalization, internationalization, and de-statisation. This results in a major structural reorganization and strategic reorientation of state capacities, challenging and obscuring the domain 'where power actually resides' (Allmendinger, et al, 2014:2706) thus portraying the 'shift from one kind of territoriality to another' (p.2708).

To sum this up in the neorealist language, the EU is, nonetheless, a system that is governed under the ordering principle of anarchy. The EU, as an anarchic system, consists of not only sovereign states but also anarchic space that formally separates one member state from the other. As mentioned earlier, the ordering principle of anarchy generates and provides anarchic space between sovereign states which helps determine the integrity of a state's boundaries which encapsulate its territoriality. Therefore anarchic space and sovereign states have an intimate relationship in maintaining the operation of an international system. Via soft space, anarchic space is managed by the EU with a projection and possibility of the evolution into one unified government. The process of bundling of EU territoriality within the geographical territory of member state involves the constant unbundling of member state territoriality in order for the project of integration to progress. This means that this process constantly compromises the integrity of state's wholeness or singleness which, thus, portrays the process of a systemic change – the shift from anarchy to hierarchy at the EU level – thus threatens the sovereignty and thus the survival of a state. In neorealist view, a

state's ultimate goal is its own survival in the international system. Therefore state is expected to protect its sovereignty at all costs; this includes withdrawing from a system that is predatory against state sovereignty.

#### **4.6. Concluding Remarks**

This chapter began with taking theoretical understanding from chapter three as a paradigm to offer an alternative explanation to Brexit, particularly from IR perspective. As a theoretical paradigm, neorealism translates the famous Leave Campaign slogan prior to Brexit – ‘taking back control’ – as depicting an issue of struggle for power between the UK and the EU in which UK's sovereignty is threatened by an external force, i.e. the EU. The question is, how? From a careful study of international system as understood in neorealist term, this chapter infers that IR affairs are thus first about maintaining the singleness of state units and second about everything else international. Therefore, this chapter takes off from two essential stand points. First, the most prominent sign of a systemic change – a shift from one ordering principle to the other – is the change in the appearance or disappearance of a state unit. Second, changes to the ‘singleness’ of a state unit are likely to be perceived as threats to the survivability of said state.

This chapter aims to examine the symptoms of systemic change in the system's structure of the EU by utilizing the theories of bundling and unbundling of territoriality understood under the theoretical paradigm from chapter three. As a foundation of the ordering principle of anarchy, the singleness of state units find its root in the process called ‘bundling territoriality’. In Vollaard's (2018:13) words, bundling territoriality is understood as a process of ‘increasing coincidence and congruence of territorialities within a political realm’. In other words ‘bundling territoriality’ can also be understood as a process where (political) territoriality is married (or trapped) into a certain geographical extension, resulting in the containment of all elements and logic of said territoriality into one imaginary

object we thus call 'the state unit'. The bundling of territoriality generates two spatial demarcations: (a) the public and private realm, and; (b) internal and external realm (Ruggie, 1993:151). This means that the singleness of state unit, birthed from the process of bundling territoriality, is what separates the 'within' (domestic or intra) and the 'beyond' (outside or inter). Thus it may be deduced that the process of bundling territoriality leads to the singleness of state units which creates a division between what is domestic to a certain geographically-trapped political unit (state) and what is foreign to it. Through the stage of differentiation, changes in material environment, changes in strategic behaviour, social episteme, and social empowerment, the ordering principle of anarchy is born. The process of bundling territoriality into a modern political form ends not with the creation of a single state unit but with the paradox of absolute individuation. States cannot survive solely on its own. In order to coexist with each other, each state must create imaginary non-territorial functional space to establish a relationship with other states. This can be achieved by thinning out the paradox of absolute individuation through a means called 'unbundling territoriality'. The process of unbundling territoriality makes IR possible.

The problem with EU territoriality is that its territoriality, as integration progresses, does not remain to serve only functional needs. The evolution of European integration project has moved the EU from serving not only functional, or even political, needs but also becoming more and more organic or state-like by invoking the sense of collective existence from its subjects – the peoples of EU member states. Bundling territoriality is a process that involves the entrapment of a unit within a geographical extension. Because the EU does not have its own territoriality, it takes place within the geographical territories of its member states and therefore renders the integration project as a borrowed process from EU member states. As a requirement to be a member, they must unbundle their territorialities not only for making space for EU to operate its function but also to allow for bundling of EU territoriality.

This space where national unbundled territoriality dwells within the national geographical territories is known as soft space. By means of soft spaces and through the process of unbundling national territoriality and bundling of EU territoriality, the EU is not only in the process of evolving itself but also its member states. Member states are reorganized structurally and their capacities reoriented, therefore challenging and obscuring where power actually resides. This process marks the shift from one territoriality to another and thus explains why bundling/unbundling territoriality that comes as a requirement for EU membership becomes a threatening course of action for member states' sovereignty. This process involves and results in the change of the singleness of EU member states which is the most fundamental element in IR. The change of singleness of states is a symptom of a total systemic change which involves, in this case, the shift of the ordering principle of anarchy to hierarchy; that of IR to that of state; that of 'inter-' to that of 'intra-'. Brexit is a form of response to this process and therefore explains the resistance against Europeanisation from the neorealist perspective.

As a form of resistance against Europeanisation, Brexit highlights the importance and the jealous protection of state sovereignty. The UK's withdrawal is different from, for example, the separation of Catalonia from Spain. After the separation from Spain, Catalonia needed to reinvent itself as a sovereign state. The separation of Catalonia from Spain referred to the birth of a new sovereign state from an existing sovereign state. It is fundamentally different from Brexit where the UK is a sovereign state demanding a withdrawal from a non-sovereign unit. Neither party in Brexit need to reinvent their formal status except for a few adjustments post separation. This affair does not result in a loss or a birth of a new sovereign state.

The next chapter will highlight the issues with EU soft spaces and explore the balance of power in the EU. The chapter will examine how the two issues link



with each other and explain what the relation means for the member states including the UK, particularly on the issue of migration and economy as the two most-debated issues after the concern of sovereignty.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE BREXIT KEY ISSUES: A REINTERPRETATION**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapters, I have explored the few key issues surrounding the Brexit affair. In chapter two, Brexit has been defined as a multidimensional and multifactorial affair that involves many elements in the UK-EU relationship. I grouped the factors relating to Brexit into three categories: (a) discontent in the national government; (b) the issue of immigration; (c) the issue of sovereignty and identity (see chapter two). By using the theoretical framework provided in chapter three and four, I explain how EU membership can be seen as threatening the sovereignty of its member states. The European integration project is seen in this thesis as undergoing a systemic change. The shift from the ordering principle of anarchy to that of hierarchy is explained by way of bundling EU territoriality and unbundling member states territoriality. The practice of Europeanisation is part of, if not in itself, the practice of bundling EU territoriality. From the theoretical framework provided in the earlier chapters, I hypothesize that Brexit, as a form of resistance against Europeanisation, is a way to save and preserve the UK's sovereignty.

The theoretical framework has provided an answer to how EU membership in general puts the sovereignty of member states at risk. But how does the threat for sovereignty link to the other issues in the Brexit referendum laid out in the previous chapters – immigration, economy, identity, and discontent in the national government? This chapter aims to examine the key issues in the Brexit referendum by using the theoretical framework provided in the earlier chapters of the thesis. The theoretical framework is used as an instrument to reframe these issues and explain how they are linked to the demand for 'taking back control' as campaigned by the Leave vote. In order to widen the discussion and to enrich the reflections on the issues presented earlier, this chapter also provides a brief look

into the historical development of the term 'sovereignty' and how it relates to the formation of identity within a political establishment. This way of discussing sovereignty captures the idea of how subjects correlate with their sovereign and how/where the sovereign gets their power from. It also corresponds with the steps of bundling/unbundling territoriality in the way that it provides descriptions on where power is crystalised and how legitimacy is obtained within a territory. By providing a discussion on wider perspectives of sovereignty this way, this chapter demonstrates how the process of Europeanisation threatens sovereignty through the bundling/unbundling territoriality as laid out by the theoretical framework.

In order to achieve this aim, the chapter is organized into four sections. The first section provides a discussion on sovereignty which is presented on the basis of crucial historical developments of the term. This section also includes a discussion on how the historical developments of the term 'sovereignty' relates to the formation of state identity as explained above.

The two sections following the first one reframe the key issues in the Brexit referendum campaign by using the theoretical framework provided in chapter three and four. In chapter four, it has been examined that the underlying cause for Brexit by arguing that the threat to sovereignty – the need for taking back control – is rooted in the systemic change en-route taking place in the EU. At the same time, and as a consequence, it requires changes in the structure of nation states to fit the requirements that come with EU membership. These sections reinterpret the Brexit key issues – economy and immigration consecutively – in relation to the bundling/unbundling territoriality and the EU soft spaces. In the Brexit campaign, economic issues were mainly highlighted as benefits that come with EU membership. On the other hand, immigration issues were highlighted as being harmful to the UK. The two sections attempt to repackage these debates with accordance to the theoretical framework provided in the earlier chapters. In

the subchapter discussing economic issues, the highlight is particularly placed on the establishment of the single currency as a way for symbolization of the EU. In the previous chapter, we gathered that symbolization is a way to gain social episteme and social empowerment – with both being stages in the bundling of territoriality of the EU, and at the same time unbundling of territoriality of the UK. The following subchapter discusses immigration as an issue as a product of the weakening of the UK's ability to manage its territorial borders as the state's filters or, in other words, its ability to maintain the integrity of its bundled territoriality. Economic and immigration issues are seen in this chapter as interlinking to each other and relating to the underlying cause of Brexit. Therefore, the subchapter also discusses other related issues as side effects of the weakening of such ability.

In the fourth section, the balance of power in the structure of the EU is examined. In conventional international systems, constellation of power is formed based on the difference in the units' sum of power. The game of balance of power is a means for fighting for a state's interests in said international system. This subchapter aims to discuss how much the EU's structural format allows its member states to fight for its interests particularly in the decision-making process. By the way this chapter is organized, therefore, it illustrates how tensions identified at a theoretical level in the previous chapters are playing out in practice.

## **5.2. Debating Sovereignty: A Historical Approach**

The constructivist approach on sovereignty as discussed in chapter two is problematic (see subchapter 2.3.3.). The characterization of the discourse of sovereignty as being sedimented – that is, permanent and durable – calls forth a debate as a historical look upon the development of the concept of sovereignty says otherwise. In his study, George (2022) has proven that the concept of sovereignty has undergone a number of changes since its conception as a philosophy, signaling that the concept or discourse of sovereignty is far from being

permanent. George (2022) explains that there are nine 'crucial developments' based on the history of Western politics that have significantly altered the way sovereignty may be defined today since its philosophical conception (p.30). Additionally, George (2022) also identifies three themes that emerged along with the developments of sovereignty as a concept. These are: (a) the sway from religious to secular ground 'withdrawing the religious from the political'; (b) the shift from a top-down to bottom-up fashion of authorization, and; (c) the interwoven development of sovereignty with the way people 'conceive and define' themselves (p.30). The nine crucial developments may be divided into three stages by looking at who the sovereign is and where sovereignty is located.

In the first stage, sovereignty is seen as a concept that was birthed with a theological foundation. The concept of sovereignty was first developed within heavy influence of religion, particularly of Christianity in the history of Western politics. In this stage, God is thought to be the sovereign and sovereignty is to be found in God. Therefore, legitimacy is nonetheless sourced from God himself. Saint Augustine argues that God is the creator of the universe and the hierarchical order conceived within it including humans' positions in the world (Augustine, 1984:348, 447-448). Even so, humans are given free will and therefore may go astray from God's path. Sufferings, whether from the sinful path or assigned from birth, are to be taken as punishment even for reasons beyond human comprehension. In order to seek for salvation and be rid of sufferings, humans must return to God's path. Human salvation is God's gift; it is from God and can only be found in God which, therefore, reaffirming the notion that any meaningful authorities come from God (George, 2022:34-35). It thus follows that any other sources of authority or power on earth must be understood as an aspect of God's plan. This means that any individual that holds power on earth that enables them to be rulers or to rule over their subjects are to be seen as enactors of God's will. Thomas Aquinas supports this notion and, later on, comes up with ways to prove God's existence; that is through natural reasons. Both Aquinas and Augustine

believe that authorities come from God. Aquinas explains that God is the ultimate source of knowledge and that human beings can know things about God through reason and revelation. As a result, he argues that the best form of governance is monarchy as it is the closest to the form of divine order of the world.

The above notion gets disputed in the works of Niccolo Machiavelli and, later, by Luther. Machiavelli argues that religion should not be taken as the truth as it is none other than a tool to support/solidify authority or power structure (Machiavelli, 1998:35). Religious discourse is flawed as it places the focus on the future rather than offering solutions to problems of the present. Machiavelli's idea of authority and its legitimacy leans more on a humanist perspective in that he prioritises the immediate benefit of the people and their survival over God's will. Machiavelli argues that the overarching authority was to be divided and shared between the knowledgeable (the representatives) and the powerful (the princes), therefore introducing the mechanisms for 'checks and balances' to the concept of sovereignty. Together, both sides form what is called a republic which is a more preferable form of a government in Machiavelli's terms. This is because it is more suited to survive longer with a wider pool of people providing wider opportunities to vary its responses than the single leader of a principality (Machiavelli, 1998:240 as cited in George, 2022:36). The particular role of the princely figure is to cleanse the political unit from issues such as corruption.

Whilst Machiavelli's rejection is rooted in the dissatisfaction in the focus of the religious discourse, Luther's frustration comes from the corruption and the growing pretense within the Papacy (Wolin, 1956:26) which needs to be fixed by a secular government (Höpfl, 1991:vii; Wolin, 1956:28). Luther's philosophy of sovereignty divided the world into two 'kingdoms' – one of God and the other of the world – separating the spiritual from the secular government, and therefore confirmed Machiavelli's notion. Similar to Aquinas, Luther (1991:33) sees God as the only source for truth but only in the spiritual realm. The verdict to him is, thus,

nobody is superior to anybody and everyone is equal in Christianity; their relationship with God is their own responsibility. Even so, the secular world still needs to have secular rulers. These people are those who have been gifted the divine authority to establish order as God's administrator and sword in the secular world (Höpfl, 1991:xvi). Their task is to ensure the provision of space for everyone to create a spiritual relationship with God unhindered (Wolin, 1956:39). In order to carry out this task, the people must give their consent to be ruled by God's chosen ones. Thus, Luther's philosophical contributions give sovereignty two important dimensions: (a) the separation of the secular from the spiritual, and; (b) the notion of equality between humans which then leads to the introduction of the element of consent which is essential in the later development of the philosophy of sovereignty.

The separation of the secular and the spiritual is later formalized by Bodin, thus marking the second stage of the historical development of the concept of sovereignty. To Bodin, religious faith is a private matter while the problems of the secular world need attention from a secular power-holder such as a monarch (Sabine, 1973:372-373). Bodin (1992:4) argues that monarchs are sovereign as they 'recognizes nothing, after God, that is greater than himself'. A monarch characterizes divine unity and sovereignty (Couzinet, 2013:62-63). Sovereignty in this sense is defined as the monarch's unique executive power to provide the final source of authority and jurisdiction in the secular realm (Grimm, 2015:15-16) which affects 'all the subjects in general' (Bodin, 1992:51). A sovereign is the source for and the giver of laws; he/she is not subject to his/her own laws, making his/her authority in the secular world absolute (Bodin, 1992:58). In Bodin's philosophy of sovereignty, legitimacy still comes from God despite the separation of realms. Therefore, regardless of their absolute authority, sovereigns are bound by God's characteristics. For example, God is bound by his promise (p.36); therefore sovereigns are also bound by their contractual arrangements with their subjects (p.15) and any break of promise would undermine the system at its

source. God also commands that consent is required in the matter of taking someone else's property; therefore, sovereigns are also prohibited from taking tax without the consent of their subjects with accordance to this particular law (p.39). The sovereign also cannot give away what makes the sovereign what is (p.18).

Further in the second stage, Hobbes advances the development of 'sovereignty' by eroding the role of God even further with the idea that religious myths had been instrumentalised to propagate fear which ended up creating disorders during his time (Tuck, 1996:xiii; Hobbes, 1996:491). As a result of the disorders, Hobbes' concern was to find civil peace and the prevention of civil war (Macpherson, 1968:9,21). The solution is ultimately about how to bring order into the equation so to free the people from fear (Tuck, 1996:xxvi). Hobbes refused to find the solution to his peace-finding problem solely through theological reasoning by arguing that God cannot be described and to do so is to limit God through our narrow conception, therefore doing God's infinity a disservice (Hobbes, 1996:23,250-251). Instead, he introduced another solution called the 'Fundamental Law of Nature'. This concept suggests that people must work toward peace to escape the continuous threat to their security. First, Hobbes explained that the 'Laws of Nature' prevents people from doing gravely harms to themselves (p.91). Second, Hobbes (p.70) argued that every person would attempt to secure a better life and has the freedom – the 'Right of Nature' – to do anything they need to survive (p.91). The application of the Right of Nature, however, makes life continuously competitive and might even lead to the 'danger of violent death' making the life of man nothing but sad and 'short' (p.9). Therefore, every person would also need to find a way to secure themselves against the intervention of others (p.70).

Peace may be achieved by way of cumulative renouncement of everyone's 'Right of Nature' equally (Hobbes, 1996:101). With equal renouncement of everyone's Right of Nature, justice arises. To maintain justice, Hobbes brings in the



sovereign which can be defined as the person who is able to wield the power given to him that enables him to enforce punishments for rule-breaking (Macpherson, 1968:44). It is the fear of punishment that shall be the solution to Hobbes' problem of fear of death and of fixing disorders. With this ability, the sovereign can offer protection from the gruesome fate in exchange for the subjects' obedience (Skinner, 1965:216).

In Hobbes' philosophy of sovereignty, a legitimate sovereign would be he who receives absolute submission from his people in exchange for his ability to guarantee preservation (Hobbes, 1996:153), thus shifting the source of legitimacy from God's hands to the hands of human leaders, as well as solidifying the second development of the concept of sovereignty. In being entrusted with the people's preservation through this submission, the sovereign ceases to act on his own accord. As the people unite and submit to the sovereign, he becomes the people's 'Representer' whose action carries the weight of the 'Multitude' (Hobbes, 1996:114,120). However, the 'Representer' needs to be understood in unity or as one person and cannot be understood in 'Multitude' (Hobbes, 1996:114). Only with unity can the sovereign represent the abstract notion of the political system that he leads (Skinner, 2005). Hobbes' concept of 'Representer' lays foundation to the development of the concept of representative (Tuck, 1996:xxxvi).

In the third stage of the development of the concept, the source of sovereignty moves further down to being within the hands of the people. This idea became more pronounced since Hooker's (1989) philosophical contribution to 'sovereignty' that focused on the development of the notion of consent. Different from Luther's idea of consent, Hooker departed from a belief that God gives people 'full power to guide itself' however they will to live (Hooker, 1989:141), further highlighting the separation of the secular and the religious realms. Hooker (1989:90) argues that the people need to give 'common consent to be ordered by some whom they all should agree upon' because without it, 'there were no reason,

that one man should take upon him to be Lord or Judge over another'. This idea is driven further by his understanding that humans are naturally bound by desires to attain goals beyond their capabilities to achieve alone. They are, therefore, forced to cooperate to satisfy them, creating the order of how humans live together (Hooker, 1989:87). Moore (1993:354-355) describes this as a form of 'rudimentary social contract'.

With common consent, the ruler has his role restrained by the people as a result. With this idea, Hooker's concept of sovereignty passed 'legitimacy' – from not only God's hands but also the hands of human leaders' as in Hobbes' philosophy – to the hands of the people. Moore (1993:355) explains that with the idea of legitimacy from the people, there opens the possibility of the displacement of the sovereign if the majority of the people so agree. This concept brings more power to the people to pass it upwards to their representative unlike the top-down models identified so far. At the same time, because any religious establishment – the Church – is nothing but a national entity consisting the exact same group of people making up the system, Parliament – as the people's representative – has the authority to define the Church's regime (Hooker, 1989:193-195).

### **5.2.1. Bottom-up Legitimacy**

The next crucial development of sovereignty took place when Spinoza contributed to the discourse. Spinoza argues that the most legitimate form of states are democratic in nature (Barbone and Rice, 2000:24-25). Sovereignty, according to Spinoza (2000:44), is the combined power of the commonwealth and possessed by whoever has control over the state, with the source of sovereignty being the will of the people. In accordance with this notion, Barbone and Rice (2000:26) explains that the state is a quasi-individual being which means that it is dependent on its citizens for its identity and vice versa (as cited in George, 2022:53). Based

on this understanding, it follows that any sovereign or form of government is simply the administrator for the people's will.

Spinoza (2000:42-43) believes that the people follow agreements only if it is beneficial to them and they have the constant right to withdrawal. Therefore, in order to preserve the state the sovereign must continuously satisfy the people (Malcolm, 1991:555) by avoiding the production of laws that would turn the people against the state as it would lead to the collapse of the state (Spinoza, 2000:60). In order to keep everyone satisfied at the same time, the sovereign must provide a unifying standard by which all people can be convinced (Spinoza, 2000:46) to engage based on their own will. With the various demands coming from the different individuals, the sovereign must employ laws that everybody finds reasonable – public good (Spinoza, 2000:58-59). For this structure to work, the people need to be willing to put the public good before their own private interests (Spinoza, 2000:36; Spinoza, 2007:211).

Further to the development, the increase of complexity in the philosophy of sovereignty, particularly since Hooker's rudimentary social contract, led to arguably the most important development of the concept – the social contract. *The Social Contract* was Rousseau's (1997) project for finding an ideal legitimate political society (p.41) and for describing how civil society begins from a sense of self-preservation which is best served by creating a group (p.49). To begin with, the theological is largely absent in *The Social Contract* other than Rousseau's assertion that religion can be utilized for enforcing authority (p.71) and for exploiting compliance from people (p.149). Following Hobbes' prescription for sovereignty, Rousseau argues that people are not only after a guarantee of safety; what they essentially look for is:

“a form of association that will defend and protect the person and goods of each associate with the full common force, and by means of which each, uniting with all, nevertheless obey only himself and remain as free as before” (p. 49-50).

Indeed, the solution to this quest is the presence of a sovereign. A sovereign in Rousseau's ideal, and as the title of his work hints at, refers to the practice of social contract in which "each of us puts his person and his full power in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole" (Rousseau, 1997:50). Rousseau's prescription of social contract requires that every person actively commits fully to – and thus being a part of – the system as a whole. This action marks the loss of the natural freedom of that person to act as they please. As a result, power that comes with every person in the natural world is pooled into one system creating a 'body' that has a unity, a common self, a life and a will (p.51). These elements respectively represent the sovereign, a common identity, sovereignty, and the general will. The system as an embodiment of these elements is thus enabled to offer a different kind of freedom – civil freedom – in exchange of the loss of the natural one.

The general will, which governs the direction of the system, is characterized as being 'always upright and always tends to the public utility . . . looks only to the common interest' (Rousseau, 1997:59-60). It may be interpreted as the aggregate of what each citizen believes is best for the community (p.124). As the system is made of the general will of its population, general will can therefore be understood as combined authority of which each member of the system has an equal share. Each person as part of the system is equally subject only to everyone. Equality is an indivisible necessity in Rousseau's notion of social contract. No one is above – or under, for that matter – anyone. By holding equality to the bottom of this concept, the people no longer act on the basis of instinct but that of justice. This is how the system's civil freedom offers increased security for its members as well as opens a variety of opportunities through social interactions such as the access to a moral freedom and the chance of personal development where one may learn to truly control oneself (p. 53-54).

With the united system being the sovereign and directed under the guidance of the general will, sovereignty thus may be defined as 'nothing but the exercise of the general will' (Rousseau, 1997:57) and in itself represents legitimacy due to general will being the aggregate of everyone's will/power. The exercise of the general will is demonstrated through the creation of laws (p.66). As governed under the general will, these laws must retain an abstract sense so that nobody specific is benefited or disadvantaged (p.62, 67). The sovereign, being the whole system, i.e. the people, i.e. the legislature, shall not be involved in particular affairs apart from aggregating power through the general will. The government, as the representative of the sovereign, is given the role to hold the executive power (p.82) and tasked to carry on with the particulars, i.e. administering laws created from the general will (p.59). In order to guarantee the legitimate run of the system, it is imperative to ensure the presence of a democratic moment when all the people are involved in instituting the state as a result of such mechanism (p.49, 117-118).

Sovereignty is understood slightly differently in Schmitt's (2005; 2007) work. To start with, Schmitt agrees with his predecessors that the sovereign has a task to protect its subjects, and particularly with Hobbes because the subjects' obedience is significantly important in obtaining such protection (Schwab, 2005:iii). Sovereign authority can only be found within the state structure due to the power it holds as a constitutional entity (Schmitt, 2005). The state or the 'political' (Schmitt, 2007:39) is defined as a decisive arena that is bounded by the strongest antithesis of human behaviours – friend and enemy (p.26-27). This arena is characterized by the intensity of its commitment that can provoke people to take the lives of its enemies (p.34-35). This is to say that the state is the only arena with the ability to identify friends and enemies effectively as well as to demand its subjects to put their lives at risk in moments of needs.

In Schmitt's idea, sovereignty has an intimate relationship with the capability to make decisions out of normal circumstances and guidance. Schmitt's thinking is partly based on Rousseau's and Spinoza's ideas that control must be both impersonal and sourced from the society. The laws must be made through the process of discussions and reasons in order to eliminate any decisive points with possibility of domination of others (Schmitt, 2005:11). Law is formulated in a way that guarantees the provision of rulings for any possible event within the normal guidance. However, Schmitt (2005:6, 12) also explains that there also will always be unpredictable situations where exceptions to the law need to be applied and decisions beyond the normal guidance need to be made for the preservation of the state. This is where he differs from his predecessors. To him (p.5), 'sovereign is he who decides on the exception' and he who defines what the normal is (p.15). As law is made to provide for normal guidance, the sovereign's most prominent role is thus to decide on the exception. The capacity to decide on the normal and on the exception makes the concept of sovereignty liminal to the political (p.5). Because the law is made for the usual/normal whilst the exception dwells beyond the limits of the law, the sovereign – in terms of the authority – precedes law (p.13).

In spite of knowing where the locus of sovereign authority can be found, Schmitt (2005:17) does have an issue with pointing out who or what the one highest power in the system is. This is because for each legal framework there is a person who decides the creation and the implementation of the framework (p.26-27). Additionally, there is also a decision about who is competent to be this decider (p.30). This is, however, not to say that there is no need for a leader. Where needed – such as, when threat to the system is involved – there must be a figure (Vatter, 2014:249) that would enable a Hobbesian top-down structure to sustain the order. A leader is, after all, the person who has the responsibility of underpinning the security of the system's structure to maintain the survival of the state (Kennedy, 2004:78).

### 5.2.2. About State Identity

The other problem with constructivist idea on the UK-EU relationship as laid out in chapter two is its notion of self and shared identities. As discussed above, sovereignty in the constructivist perspective is seen as a matter of collective intentionality; that is, as long as sovereign states accept and act upon each other as being sovereign, they are. Therefore, what is important according to this notion is the acknowledgement from other sovereign states. However, this is not particularly the case with Brexit. As mentioned previously, Brexit is an act resulted from a referendum. In other words, it is more about the general will of the UK's citizens and less about acknowledgement from other sovereign states. Brexit is about what the people in the UK think about the UK rather than what other states think about the UK.

George (2022) explains identity is secured upon an aspect of 'what the community unites around' which also serves as a basis 'to exclude or marginalise those who do not fit what is delimited' (p.80). The sense of identity with regards to the political is one of the recurring themes we have seen from the discussion on sovereignty above. In the first stage, we gather that God is the sovereign with sovereignty and legitimacy (and knowledge) being sourced from God himself. Therefore, the source of any identity is, nonetheless, God. In the second stage, we see a sway from theology to secular. The philosophy of sovereignty slowly gets separated from the connection to God as religion is either seen only as a tool (such as in the works of Machiavelli) or irrelevant due to the needs for secular leaders to solve secular problems (such as in the works of Luther and Bodin). The role and importance of God in politics get further eroded the further the concept of sovereignty advances. Following George's (2022) explanation of the anchorage of identity, it follows that God's significance is also eroded in the way identity is formed in relations to the later advancements of the concept of sovereignty.

From the brief discussion on the historical developments of sovereignty above, we can see that particularly since the introduction of 'consent' as an element to sovereignty, people are seen as having two differing identities – one of the self and one that is shared or common. This element is strongly advocated in both Spinoza's and Rousseau's philosophies of sovereignty. Whilst Spinoza argues that both state and citizens are interdependent for their identities, Rousseau's idea is slightly different. As a result of his prescription of social contract, power from every person in the natural world is pooled into one system creating a 'body' that has a unity, a common self, a life and a will which respectively represent the sovereign, a common identity, sovereignty, and the general will. A common identity here is understood to be resulted from the practice of social contract and, therefore, it is dependent on the continuous commitment of the people towards the preservation of the system. It thus follows that 'what the sovereign thinks is what the populace thinks' as long as they individually contribute their thoughts on 'what is for the common good to the general will' (George, 2022:96).

The relationship between sovereignty and identity is even more cherished in Schmitt's idea of sovereignty. In his understanding, there exists a definitive power which lies within whoever is given the role to decide on the exceptions (George, 2022:60). Despite the difficulty in knowing who exactly holds the highest power in the system with this regard, the leader of the system is given the task to guarantee the preservation of the state and therefore can be seen as the ultimate decider. He also holds the role as an 'overarching definitive reference point for communal identity' (p.61). Further to this, Schmitt explains that human's cognition is limited so that our knowledge 'cannot totally subsume every particular situation under fixed generalized responses to the future' (p.87). Therefore, personal intervention based on faith is required during exceptional times where exceptional decisions need to be made. For Schmitt (2005:5-6, 30-32, 55-56; 2007:38), it is through making these decisions that 'our existential political



commitment is asserted, as a fundamental belief for deciders, being definitive for their identity, and crucial to the integrity of their political group' (as cited in George, 2022:87). In this case, Schmitt agrees with Hobbes that each member must sacrifice their individuality to the community as it is fundamental to their own perseverance (Smith, 2011:194, 207 cited in George, 2022:96). The authorized sovereign also has a role as the decisive influence for the people's communal identity (p.96).

The above discussions on both sovereignty and how it relates to the formation of identity challenge the constructivist argument that collective identity does not impact upon states' individuality because the discourse of sovereignty is sedimented. Indeed, the context that this notion is brought upon is of international stage. However, as mentioned previously, the concern of sovereignty and identity in the Brexit case are both placed in the context of how the people in the UK feel about the UK-EU relationship and not in the context of international acknowledgement of the UK's sovereignty. 'Sedimentations' comes from the members' continuous commitment to the identity and/or sovereignty which provides the sense of solidity (George, 2022:174). As a basis for communal identity, sovereignty most often 'speaks towards the fundamental legitimization of authority it is directed towards exclusivity', therefore having two or more sources puts them in conflict and threatens their fundamentality (George, 2022:173). Due to this, the hegemonic status of sovereignty must be maintained to ensure its ability to provide legitimation remains predominant (Marchart, 2007:139; Critchley, 2012:101; Laclau and Mouffe, 2014 as cited in George, 2022:173). This point becomes more crucial since the very sense of identity is what imposes a certain sense of truth for the individual and others to recognise (Foucault, 1982:781 as cited in George, 2022:92). This is why, for example in Schmitt's understanding, at times where cognition is not enough as a basis for decision-making, a sovereign needs to rely on his personal belief (identity) instead.

This brings us back to our previous discussion in the previous sections. Prior to the discussion on sovereignty and identity, we deducted that if political and popular sovereignty need to be successfully Europeanised for a successful project of European integration, that would mean that the state itself would be left with little to no sovereignty at all (see subchapter 2.3.3.). Further, we were left with two unanswered questions. First, can a nation state still be considered as being sovereign or would the supranational body finally become a federal being? Second, what would become of IR when the actors have no sovereignty? From the provided discussion, a state may thus be assumed as a system structure that is formed by a group of people who voluntarily or involuntarily contribute part of themselves into one body that is designed to create and maintain order among them with goal to preserve their lives. It is animated by a source of life (sovereignty), led by an overarching ruler (sovereign), and identified as its own self due to the communal identity provided by its citizens. Not to be confused with authority, sovereignty – the supreme legitimate authority – at its core cannot be broken into several parts. Therefore, without sovereignty, state would cease to exist. Whether the EU finally transforms into a federal being is a question needs to be left to time to answer. Because essentially IR is made of interactions among sovereign states, it would cease to exist when sovereignty is absence from the actors. This answer, however, does not neglect the possibility of the creation of a global village if such time comes.

### **5.3. Reinterpreting the Issue of Economy in the Brexit**

#### **Referendum**

Although the discourse of leaving the EU was not particularly news, the timeline of Brexit officially begins with the then PM David Cameron's Bloomberg speech in 2013 discussing the future of the UK in the EU. In the speech, ex-PM Cameron declares that he is in favour of an in-out referendum pending a new settlement

for the basis of the UK's membership in the EU (Walker, 2021:4). The proposal for the new settlement for UK's membership within the EU was based on the UK's preferences on what limits the UK are willing to get by with in accordance to EU integration project. These preferences are clearly shown in David Cameron's letter to Donald Tusk in 2015. The new settlement for the UK's membership in the UK revolves mainly around three main issues – sovereignty, economy with regards to both economic governance and competitiveness, and free movement with regards to social benefits (Lang et al, 2016).

In terms of economic governance, the UK seek 'legally binding principles that safeguard the operation of the Union for all 28 Member States – and a safeguard mechanism to ensure these principles are respected and enforced' (Cameron, 2015). In the letter, Cameron explained that it is not in the UK's interest 'to stand in the way of measures Eurozone countries decide to take to secure the long-term future of their currency' but the UK wants 'to make sure that these changes will respect the integrity of the Single Market, and the legitimate interests of non-EU members' (Cameron, 2015). The safeguard mechanism should recognize that the EU does not only consist of Eurozone but also those member states that have not yet adopted Euro as their currency. Therefore, economic policies to govern the Eurozone must be produced ever so carefully so as not to negatively impact the non-Eurozone member states.

David Cameron acknowledges in his letter that the issue of sovereignty has been a central topic in the debate of UK's membership in the EU. In order to answer this challenge, he demands that 'Britain's obligation to work towards the "ever closer union" as set out in the Treaty' be terminated in a 'formal, legally-binding, and irreversible way' (Cameron, 2015). As a supplement to this demand, the UK requests that the role of national parliaments be enhanced in decision-making process by giving them the power to 'stop unwanted legislative proposals' (Cameron, 2015). Further, David Cameron also highlights that the EU needs to

commit to the full implementation of the principle of subsidiarity and fully respects 'the purpose behind the JHA protocols in any future proposals dealing with Justice and Home Affairs . . . to preserve the UK's ability to choose to participate' (Cameron, 2015).

As Fox (2015) described, "It is almost universally accepted that the first duty of government is the protection of its citizens, and as a former Secretary of State for Defence I (*Liam Fox*) naturally concur". The protection of citizens does not necessarily always refer to the protection from destruction in the traditional sense, in terms of military fights. There are two groups of threats that citizens have the right to be protected from – those related to national security and those related to social security. Where the first refers to the prevention of threats against sovereignty, the second refers to that against economic welfare. As both national and social security relate to each other (Neocleous, 2006), it thus becomes the duty of a national government to protect its citizens from both kinds of threats. In terms of social security, citizens in the UK have the right to be protected from the debasement of the national currency, the erosion of the people's earnings and the devaluation of national savings (Fox, 2015). In other words, the government has the responsibility to ensure the provision of safeguards for micro economy from damages caused by macroeconomic issues at the governmental level.

Despite the arguable success with the integration project, the EU has issues that flaws its relationship with the UK particularly that of economic governance – as also mentioned on the proposal for the new settlement in David Cameron's letter to Donald Tusk. Fletcher (2009) argues that the UK is the EU's trickiest customer that 'one only has to mention the words financial rebate, the euro, Schengen, and more recently immigration and criminal justice to know why'. This argument thus resonates with Fox's claim about the government's responsibility mentioned above.

Even with the lack of clarity in the end goal of the aim of ever closer union, the EU is nevertheless progressing towards becoming a fully-integrated economic power. According to Cretu and Chenic (2021), there are five stages of economic integration. They are: (a) the establishment of free zone exchange; (b) the establishment of a customs union; (c) the development of a common market; (d) a move towards partial economic and political union, and; (e) a full economic integration. The EU has followed this specific line of the process of positive economic integration and this involves “the transfer to new, common institutions of certain powers, competences and to a centralization of the decision-making process” (Cretu and Chenic, 2021). This also highlights the discussion in chapter four (see subchapter 4.2.2. and 4.3.) about a systemic change within the EU by way of bundling/unbundling territoriality.

The European economic integration provides a new ethos of commerce by way of the principle of freedom of movements to reach the aim for a ‘Europe without frontiers’ (Wessels, 2012:760). Blurred national borders as a result of the elimination of borders among members open the paths to new sources and resources of wealth. Through expansions, the EU opens more of these new sources and resources of wealth. The expansion for borderless international market results in the increase of heterogeneity of suppliers and customer preferences. As competition sharpened, as also mentioned in the previous chapter, arise the need for stability market competition sharpened. The need for a means to maintain price stability was then addressed in the Maastricht Treaty and therefore, a new currency and a new central bank were found.

### **5.3.1. Symbolisation of the EU by Way of the Single Currency**

The usage of Euro as a single currency brings advantages to the Single Market by way of reduction of exchange rate risks, increased specialization by expanding market and promoting free movements, increasing prosperity of citizens through

the widespread use of the principle of specialization and the unrestricted transfer of goods and services, and the 'elimination of the possibility for national governments to use a discretionary monetary policy to induce some artificial increases by extending credit' (Huerta de Soto, 2012 cited in Cretu and Chenic, 2021:11). Apart from the advantages, the single currency comes with disadvantages as well. The Euro 'represents a way of disciplining national governments' and this is believed to be the reason why there are still member states that have not yet joined the Eurozone (p.11). The Euro and its usage are regulated by the European Central Bank which is based in Germany. The centralization of decisions at the EU level restricts citizens' freedom of choice as the monetary policy that comes with the currency becomes the responsibility of the ECB. The adoption of the single currency thus represents a 'significant concentration of power in the hands of small group of individuals' (p.11).

The primary objective of the ECB's monetary policy is to maintain price stability – to make sure that inflation remains low, stable and predictable (ECB, 2022). The mandate for the operation of the ECB is laid out in the TFEU Art 127(1). According to the Treaty, the ECB shall act in accordance with the principle of an open market economy with free competition, favouring an efficient allocation of resources. However, the norm of 'one size fits all' that is adopted by the ECB seems to have been the biggest drawback for the reliability of the Euro as a means of exchange (Gros and Hefeker, 2003; Beck and Weber, 2005; Moons and Poeck, 2011; Smaghi, 2011; Vermeiren, 2017).

Since the early 1990s, money has been fading out from the EU monetary policy as it has been made out to be an information variable rather than being preserved as a key indicator of monetary policy by the ECB (Belke and Thorsten, 2007:11). As mentioned by Belke and Thorsten (p.12), 'changes in credit and money supply affect individual prices at different times and to different extents, thereby bringing about changes in overall demand and supply, investment and

consumption'. With real money being scarce and turned into information variable, money becomes a commodity that is excessively liquid (p.11, 18). Due to it being an independent institution rather than a governmental one, the ECB does not have the authority to print new money. Due to the liquidity of money resulted in inflation in asset price, many international asset markets experienced strong price increases (Belke and Thorsten, 2007:11). The international asset market inflation suggests that internationally the currency loses its purchasing power.

Furthermore, the ability for the Eurozone members to share economic shocks through capital and credit market is substantially lower compared how it is in the USA (Eijffinger, 2007:20). Unlike in the USA, national economic policies in the EU's case are better instruments to enhance the ability of individual countries to respond to economic shocks and to divergences (p.20). However, the ECB's 'one size fits all' monetary policy gives little manoeuvre for national governments to produce economic policies more suitable to them. This is why due to ECB's rigid monetary policy, it is common for parts of the EU to be prospering with high growth and low unemployment whilst in other parts of the EU, prolonged economic downturn and high unemployment become issues (Gros and Hefeker, 2003; Beck and Weber, 2005; Moons and Poeck, 2011; Smaghi, 2011; Vermeiren, 2017). This has 'widened rather than narrowed the gaps between the member states' and therefore ensures 'that an unstable structure became even more unsafe' (Fox, 2014b).

In the previous chapter, I explained that in the process of bundling territoriality, a new political unit can be socially empowered by way of symbolization, crystallization of power, and the collectivity of – or acknowledgement from other – territorial units (Ruggie, 1993). The stage of symbolization reflects the process where a new political unit is introduced to and acknowledged by the people, making it a part of their daily lives. In other words, it is the process to get the new political unit accepted by the people. In the case

of the EU, the ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht becomes a prominent stage of this process. The establishment of the single currency is an example that reflects the EU's process of social episteme among its citizens.

By referring back to the theoretical framework, the establishment of the Euro as a single formal currency of the EU can be understood as a way of symbolization. It is a part of the process of introducing the EU as part of the citizens' daily lives. The single currency was not only established as a means for price stability, it can also be seen as a means for reinforcing the sense of collective existence among the people within the EU borders.

As a means of symbolisation, the use of Euro becomes a success story for the stage of social episteme in the project of European integration. The Euro was established as the Union's formal single currency. In its journey to gaining the social acknowledgement, it was introduced in 1999 as an overarching currency to promote growth, stability, and economic integration in the EU. The Euro was first used for trade and exchanges between EU members whilst national currencies were used for domestic exchanges. In the early 2000s, the Euro gained an advance usage as an everyday currency. At this stage, the Euro has gained the acknowledgment and is further empowered by being the replacement for national currencies in many member states of the EU. The member states that used the Euro and agreed to be governed by the ECB make the Eurozone countries. Whilst being a means for price stability serves a functional purpose, the utilization of the Euro in relation to the collective existence serves much deeper, organic purpose, in hope for creating unity among EU citizens.

Although there are issues with other EU symbols, the Euro has successfully gained not only the recognition but also the acceptance from the EU citizens as it has become part of their daily lives. In the majority of EU member states, the Euro is no longer an overarching currency but it has become their national currency. In line with the theoretical discussion in the previous chapter (see subchapter 4.3.),



the stage of social empowerment of the EU by way of symbolization, the practice of replacing a national currency with the Euro means that there has been a shift of loyalty from the national level to the European level. Because the single currency oversees not only one particular state but the European Union as a whole, a Eurozone state must be careful not to trip other member states as their economies, particularly in relation to monetary and fiscal dynamics, have become one. A fall in the exchange rates of the Euro, for example, would significantly affect the whole Eurozone members – those that no longer have their national currencies to fall back on. With the usage of the single currency as a part of the citizens' daily lives, it becomes a 'unit of discourse which are fundamental to all thinking and doing' (see subchapter 4.3.). As a means for symbolization, the Euro has successfully gathered the democratic legitimacy needed for the deepening of the European integration project. Whether it is enough legitimacy for the EU to move forward with the integration project is a concern that needs to be addressed in a different research.

### **5.3.2. The Problems with the Euro**

The UK's Liam Fox (2016a) argues that the emergence of the Euro as the single currency has fundamentally altered the landscape of Europe. In the previous chapters, it has been mentioned that the ratification of Maastricht Treaty signified a 'substantial transfer of competences from the national to the European level' (Barth and Bijsman, 2018:216). With the ratification of the Treaty, the policies in the project of European integration began to substantially interfere with domestic policies (Schrage Sternberg, 2013 cited in Barth and Bijsmans, 2018:227) and its the debate began to be less about a means of securing peace (Muller, 2011 cited in Barth and Bijsmans, 2018:227).

Liam Fox (2014b) believes that the Euro and the Eurozone represent the single biggest risk to the global economic stability. He argues that the emergence

of the Euro as the single currency has fundamentally altered the landscape of Europe (Fox, 2016a). This argument is in line with the theoretical framework provided in chapter four with regards to soft space (see subchapter 4.4.). The replacement of national currencies with the Euro not only reflects the shift in loyalty from the national level to the European one, but also a shift in territoriality. It is a perfect example of how the bundling of EU territoriality not only asks the member states to unbundle theirs but also replaces them with that of the EU. In terms of currency, at least, the national territoriality has not only been thinned out but also disappears and is replaced with a different one. The fictitious, non-territorial, functional space (soft spaces) is no longer fictitious, non-territorial, or functional. It has materialized and turned into an organic element of the people's daily lives. Due to the replacement of national currency with the Euro, the Euro became something the people are identified with and cannot do without.

The replacement of the national currency with the Euro consequently removed the mutual exclusiveness between member states. The soft space in terms of currency between member states advocated by the EU has simply dissipated into an altogether EU space (Eurozone) which is governed how the EU sees fit by means of the ECB. The setting of EU territoriality in terms of the Eurozone is that of supraterritoriality as 'mandate and power are located at EU level' (see subchapter 4.4.). The case of the Euro and the Eurozone highlights the point made in the last chapter that soft spaces challenge and obscure 'where power actually resides' (Allmendinger, et al, 2014:2706) and therefore, what was once a soft space has now become a fixed/hard space. Furthermore, as states' capacities are reorganized at the EU level, this process also marks the 'shift from one kind of territoriality to another' (p. 2708). The UK's Gordon Brown refers to this form of setting as a 'major pooling of sovereignty' (as cited in Potton and Mellows-Facer, 2003:7). It is not to be confused with the setting of 'pooled territoriality' suggested by Allmendinger et al (2014) to refer to a less hard form of setting for soft spaces.

Despite the success explained above, some of the members – such as the UK – insisted on sticking to using their own national currencies and link them to the Euro in some way. For this case, the setting of EU territoriality takes a less hard form (pooled territoriality) as they retain related national competences and sovereignty (see subchapter 4.4.). In the case of the UK, the full adoption of the Euro to replace the Pound Sterling was halted by Gordon Brown's five-test policy. This policy tested: (a) 'whether there can be sustainable convergence between Britain and the economies of a single currency'; (b) 'whether there is sufficient flexibility to cope with economic change'; (c) 'the effect on investment'; (d) 'the impact on our (British) financial services'; (e) 'whether it is good for employment' (Gordon Brown as cited in Potton and Mellows-Facer, 2003:8, stress added). The Euro did not meet the conditions needed to pass the tests and therefore it was decided that 'joining the single currency . . . was not in the UK's interest' (p.8).

Ten years after the five-test policy, in the UK the Euro is still seen as 'intellectually flawed, economically incoherent and politically dangerous' (Fox, 2014b). As well as being 'ill-conceived and badly executed', the Euro has also 'wreaked economic havoc, created a source of global financial instability and consigned millions of young Europeans to long term unemployment' (Fox, 2016a). The currency is the 'inherent weakness of the Eurozone' which resulted in the EU's poor economic performance (Fox, 2014b). Despite the single currency and the attempt at integrating monetary policy, the economies in the Eurozone are no closer to convergence today than when the currency was created (Fox, 2014b).

Furthermore, The British economy is subject to the instability created by the issues in the Eurozone as the money used to bail the Eurozone crisis comes from the EU budget to which the British taxpayers directly pay to through the contribution to the budget. Every member state pays different amount to the EU budget as the numbers for the amount of contribution is based on each state's GNI. The more economically successful a country is, the more it pays into the

budget (Fox, 2016a). Therefore, although the UK has opted out from joining the Euro, it still has to 'pay' for its failures (Fox, 2016a). If the UK's preference is to safeguard its economy from the downfall of the Euro and the Eurozone, that rhetoric of the UK being the EU's trickiest customer (Fletcher, 2009) and an awkward partner (George, 1990; Fletcher, 2009) have now made sense particularly under the light of the theoretical framework provided in this thesis.

### **5.3.3. A Need for a Political Union?**

In order to salvage the integration project, Liam Fox (2014b) suggests a few options for the EU. First, the EU or the Eurozone, needs to enter into complete economic, monetary and political union. This is so that there can be free fiscal transfers required without the impediments of sovereign governments (Fox, 2014b; also suggested in other works such as Simms, 2017; Belke and Thorsten, 2007; Baskaran, 2010; De Streel, 2013). Second, an exit for the countries whose domestic economic require a lower exchange rate, mainly the 'southern European Eurozone members'. This is so they can take advantages of global trading opportunities so that their peoples might enjoy the fruits of the global economy (Fox, 2014b). Third, a German exit from the Euro which will allow 'Germany to have a currency more in keeping with its global economic strength and allowing the other Eurozone members to see a depreciation in line with their economic needs' (Fox, 2014b). Fourth, a complete abandonment of the integration project and a return to the pre-euro national currencies. However, this would 'represent a complete and absolute failure of the whole ever closer union act of faith' and therefore it would be unlikely to happen (Fox, 2014b).

A complete turn into a political union would mean a further deepening of supranational integration and a popular interpretation of this move is that a new federal state is evolving in Europe (Bednar et al, 1996 cited in Baskaran, 2010:312). This claim supports the discussion in the previous chapter that the EU was born

from a dream of European federalization (subchapter 4.3), it was established of a federal nature (subchapter 4.3), contains federal characteristics and features (subchapter 4.4), and is based on a legal structure reminiscent of a federal state (subchapter 4.4).

Although a complete political union has not been realized, the EU has gone on 'important supranational projects such as the Euro, Schengen travel area, and CFSP' which the UK chose to opt out from (Simms, 2017; also discussed in chapter 4). To the UK government, these projects represent further pushes to the development of a federal institution which would require a political union to function optimally. In other words, a total systemic change of the EU would be required to salvage the integration project from its inherent issues. However, this would be incompatible with the norm of sovereignty adopted by the Westminster Parliament. The norm of sovereignty which is generally adopted in the continental Europe is one which is 'conditional' compared to the UK's 'absolute' norm of sovereignty (Simms, 2017).

The position that the UK has been taking adamantly about the creation of a federalist Europe is to be with but not within. From Churchill's 1953 'We have our own dream and our own task. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked but not combined', to Thatcher's Bruges Speech confirming that European countries are better without the centralization of power in Brussels. It has always been in the interest of the UK to be cooperating with the other European countries. It has also always been in the UK's interest to keep the UK's independence and sovereignty to itself, as reflected by the Westminster Parliament's 'absolute sovereignty'. The problem with the EU's integration project is, at least from the UK's point of view, is the EU's ambiguous and vague final goal, limits to its expansion and deepening project. It was impossible for the UK to know exactly what the end goal of the European project was at the time it decided to join the membership. Whilst not wanting to be left out of the economic benefits

of joining the EU, the UK has been very careful with where and how the EU was evolving. By borrowing Daase and Kessler's (2007) concept of 'four kinds of dangers', we may conclude that the UK has had to produce decisions on EU membership based on an empirical knowledge that is 'unknown' which is the future of Europe, another empirical knowledge that is 'known' which is the fact that the UK is adamant about not willing to be part of a European federation.

#### **5.4. Reinterpreting the Issue of Immigration in the Brexit**

##### **Referendum**

The issue of immigration takes a very prominent spot in the moments leading up to the Brexit referendum in 2016 (Day, 2018; Gietel-Basten, 2016). It plays an important role in Brexit alongside other reasons such as 'the general willingness to take risks, right-wing views, older age and English national identity' (Henderson et al, 2017:631; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017:451, 460). The general views for why immigration is such an important issue vary greatly. It is impossible to pinpoint the issue of immigration – as a prominent driver for choosing Leave – on one particular reasoning such as the lack of infrastructure to support the growing number of population without linking it to the other such as the large influx of economic migrant, or the loss of jobs of Britons, or the rise of populism.

Each specific issue linked to immigration in the Brexit Campaign may be interpreted differently depending on what dimension of immigration is being seen. In chapter two, I have grouped the debate about key issues in the Leave campaign into three categories: (a) discontent in the national government; (b) the issue of migration, and: (c) the issue of sovereignty and European identity.

The first group argues that Leave supporters are more likely to have negative feelings towards the government. Regardless of which identity groups they come from, it is more likely for them to feel that their representative

institutions do not care about them (Henderson et al, 2017:643). The UK is one of the most crowded countries of Europe, especially in the southern region of the country. The rapid growth of population has impacted many aspects of the national life in the UK especially because the development of infrastructure in the UK does not go as fast as the increase in numbers of immigrants. There are also doubts and growing 'mistrust' (Dos-Santoz, *et al.*, 2017) that the national government is unable to protect the people from the effect of globalization and immigration particularly in regards to the government's failure to satisfy public demand in services such as housing, jobs, wages, and healthcare (Gietel-Basten, 2016). An increased wait time for mothers to give birth due to inadequate quantity of maternity units and overcrowded primary schools in some areas which are full to bursting are real examples of how the balance between supply and demand in social and healthcare services have toppled (Green, 2010). In terms of demography, the official projections for new households show that 'over the next 25 years, nearly 40% will be a result of immigration' and, as such, 'the pressure will move on to secondary schools and then housing' (Green, 2010). As an effect, the sense of abandonment advances the growing number and intensification of the left-behinds (Dos-Santoz, *et al.*, 2017).

The second group's main concern is how immigration from the EU changes the workforce and society in the post-industrial era. As mentioned in the Cameron's speech, the free movement of EU citizens particularly that of the Eastern European countries was not insignificant; it 'complicates the already clashing position between the need for skilled workers and cultural/social balance'. In other words, it heighten not only 'economic insecurity' (Inglehart and Norris, 2016:2-4, 11-12) but also 'cultural backlash' (p.29-30). The perspective all over the UK over this matter 'varies depending on how accessible the region is to migrant workers' (Fox, 2014). At the same time, a study conducted by Goodwin and Milazzo (2017) finds that the likeliness for people to vote for Brexit also depends on where in the state they reside. Public support for Brexit is significantly

stronger in local communities that has experienced higher rates of ethnic change in the period preceding the vote (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017:452, 462). This study also finds that even for citizens who initially supported the Remain Campaign, they were more likely to switch their vote to Leave when they became more cognizant of rising levels of immigration (p. 461-462). A different study by Arnorsson and Zoega (2018) produces a similar finding. They find that in regions where GDP per capita is low, a high proportion of the population has low education, a high proportion of the population is over the age 65 and there is strong net immigration, the likeliness is higher for people to be apprehensive of the EU, be suspicious of immigrants and not want them as neighbours, and to vote for Brexit.

Furthermore, the issue of immigration as campaigned by the Brexiters has also been seen as very closely related to English identity hence the rhetoric of Brexit being made in England (Henderson et al, 2017). Identity in this sense is not the common European identity as a supposed result of the European integration project but identity in terms of diverse ethnicities that are foreign to the UK. In a study by Henderson et al (2017), English identity was found to be a significant driver of the choice for Leave (p.631). This national identity is closely related to hostility to European integration, the sense of absence of political voice, concern about immigration, and support for parties of the right (p.638, 643). In answering this, Fox (2014; also on Fox, 2016c; Fox, 2019) explains that for integration to take place, it is not only the idea of diversity that must be embraced but also the ideas of commonality. Integration is not only about accepting differences but uniting them. The problem between immigration and identity is that despite the past success of integrating 'many different groups over many years', the rapid growth in numbers of immigrants over the past decade 'has made the process more difficult as resistance among the host population has increased and immigrants have increasingly settled in large communities often remaining cultural separate rather than just retaining their cultural identity' (Fox, 2014). In some cities in the



UK, there has been large sections that 'have become unrecognisable as part of England' (Green, 2010).

#### **5.4.1. Controlling Immigration**

Despite the differences in arguments for why immigration becomes an issue in the UK, the answer is the same – immigration must be tackled mostly by reducing the number of people coming into the UK (Cameron, 2011). During his leadership, David Cameron has repeatedly committed his government to 'reducing net immigration from hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands' (Green, 2010). The decisions on the government policy about immigration are seen as vital to the future of the UK, as Lord Andrew Green (2010) mentioned, 'This is not about money. Economic crises come and go. Demographic changes come and stay'. The UK needs to be able to control immigration by ensuring that there is a job for immigrants to come to; they cannot come only to claim benefits. This is also why immigration from the EU needs to be renegotiated (Gimson, 2014; Cameron, 2015).

Indeed, as David Cameron mentioned in his 2011 speech, the biggest influx of immigration come from non-EU countries whilst that of the EU's counted to a small proportion of overall net migration to the UK. Although, he added later that 'that's not to say migration from Europe has been insignificant' especially after the EU enlargement to the Eastern Europe. As mentioned in the previous section, in his letter to Donald Tusk, David Cameron specifically said that 'the current very high level of population flows from within the EU into the UK . . . have been unplanned and are much higher than forecast' and therefore, although steps have been taken to control immigration from outside the EU, the UK needs 'to be able to exert greater control on arrivals from inside the EU too' (Cameron, 2011).

The highlight of the UK's demands in terms of immigration as described by David Cameron (2015) in his letter to Donald Tusk is that 'when new countries are

admitted to the EU in the future, free movement will not apply to those new members until their economies have converged much more closely with existing Member States'. The UK has been struggling with unsustainable growth of population. The 'very high level of population flows from within the EU into the UK' has been unplanned and much higher than forecast. The UK has been struggling with having to cope with the pressures on schools, hospitals and other public services. Hence, reducing the number of immigration is the one way that the government sees fit to tackle this issue.

Supports for more control in immigration also comes from Liam Fox, the Secretary of State both for Defence from 2010 to 2011 and for International Trade from 2016 to 2019, who argued that control in immigration is needed to get 'good integration over time' (Gimson, 2014). The numbers and the quality of immigrants are the highlight of his belief. A fair and reasonable immigration policy would ensure that the UK's borders are 'more open to those benefitting the country, more closed to those burdening the welfare system' (Fox, 2014). Such policy would ensure that the UK government let the people 'who are coming in are going to be contributing to the wealth generation of the country, not just the wealth consumption of the country' (Gimson, 2014). In other words, such policy would see that the numbers of those who come to the UK as part of social or cultural migration curtailed (Fox, 2014).

Despite the different reasoning for the immigration issue, the core of the problem brought up in the campaign for Brexit was but about controlling who can and cannot enter the country. This view – or preference – is based on meritocratic value that is deeply-rooted in the daily lives of the British people, particularly in the operation of the government and its decision-making process. The last five UK's prime ministers – Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, David Cameron, Theresa May, and Boris Johnson – have been meritocratic and, in their own way, attempted to promote and provide equality for all regardless of their background.

Meritocracy refers to the norm where people are valued based on their merits – what benefits they can bring into the country. Menon and Wager (2021, emphasis added) describes meritocracy as ‘the idea that our (*the British*) system gives everyone an equal opportunity by giving out what we (*the people*) are able to put in, through our (*the people’s*) innate ability or hard work’ and it ‘has been a central part of the UK’s political consensus for decades’.

This norm is shared not only among and by the British government but also by the majority of the people in the UK. A study carried out by Menon and Wager (2021) shows that there is a “general belief among the British public that our (*their*) own efforts are key to getting ahead in life”, with 76 percent of the respondents viewing hard work as essential or very important in determining success. Meritocracy is the epicenter of the UK’s national interests and has been supported by the most powerful political parties in the UK and by the head of the government in almost every round of leadership since Margaret Thatcher. In fact, the Leave campaign’s argument on immigration and sovereignty signals issues with regards to this particular value.

As explained by Belke and Thorsten (2007:18) throughout history, relations between European nation states have usually been associated with a deliberate balancing of rewards against costs. This means that to some extent, meritocracy is not exactly unique to the UK only. Meritocracy in the UK is paired with the norm of absolute sovereignty which is adopted in Westminster Parliament (Simms, 2017). The EU membership restraints the UK from fully-implementing its own immigration rules which effectively ‘erodes Britain’s sovereignty’ (Sampson, 2017:179). As Fox (2016a) describes, “if we (*the UK*) cannot make our (*their*) own laws and determine our (*their*) own borders then we (*they*) are no longer a free and independent country” and therefore, “watching the PM taking the equivalent of a political begging bowl round some much smaller and poorer states, asking permission to change our (*their*) own benefit rules, is the clearest possible

example of how we (*the UK*) have lost control of our (*its/their*) own affairs” (stresses added).

Leave option was taken as an attempt to avoid a bigger loss from remaining in the EU (Dos-Santoz, *et al.*, 2017:537-538). The UK has ‘always been an outward looking and forward-looking nation’ and thus Brexit was seen as an attempt for ‘rejoining the rest of the world’ (Fox, 2016c). Despite being in the UK’s interests to be in a free and open trade relationship with its European partners, free movement of people is seen as an unacceptable cost for being a member of the European Single Market (Fox, 2016c). From a meritocratic perspective, it is more imperative for the UK ‘to look in detail at what level and kind of immigration might be relevant and beneficial to the UK’ (Fox, 2014). A meritocratic preference of immigration policy would see the national borders of the UK be filters that assure ‘that those who come to the UK are usefully economically active’ (Fox, 2014).

#### **5.4.2. Neoliberalism, Austerity, and the Welfare State**

This chapter sees the issue of immigration and economy – as debated in the Brexit referendum campaign – to be interlinking with each other. The previous section has reframed the issue of economic integration and symbolization of the EU through the establishment of the single currency, governed under the ECB. We gathered that the politics of the single currency was problematic as it was flawed and had led the EU to poor economic performance. This particular subsection examines how the issue of economy and immigration link with each other in relation to the European integration project.

In the previous chapter, we gathered that as part of the process of bundling of EU territoriality, the provision of new ethos of commerce in the EU is reflected in the establishment of the principle of four freedoms – of goods, services, capital, and persons – with aim to achieve the goal of ‘Europe without frontiers’ or

borderless Europe (Wessels, 2012:760). Borderless Europe normatively expands the cognitive horizon of the member states and pushes the sources and resources of wealth out of one member state into the others. The issue with this practice is that the provision of new ethos of commerce by way of borderless Europe reflects the practice of neoliberalism in the EU.

The expansion of international market without border increases the heterogeneity of suppliers and customer preferences, leading to opened opportunities and heightened competitions. In order to prevent national governments from applying protections to their economy, whilst also maintaining price stability, the EMU forces its members into a 'fiscal straitjacket' which restrains their monetary politics and pushes the adoption of budgetary austerity (Hermann, 2007:78). As their spending is limited due to austerity, their ability to 'confront unemployment and social exclusion is severely constrained' (p.78). As a consequence of these constraints and in order to reach the aim for convergence, EMU member states are compelled to 'introduce far-reaching reforms in labour and social policies' (p.78). The policies for maintaining price stability and budget austerity turned out to be the obstacles for the European economy towards achieving higher growth rates as opposed to what was advocated by the Commission. By maintaining budget deficits on the low and interest on higher rates, the European economy suffered from low economic growth if not stagnation. The ECB's policies prevent the EMU members from stimulating investments and creating aggregate demands in the market. As a consequence, the European economy was disabled from generating sufficient employment for the size of supply in the labour market (p.78). This takes us to the demand for controlled immigration as debated in the Brexit referendum campaign.

In the previous chapter, it was established that the process of unbundling territoriality of EU member states – the blurring of national borders, political practices in the soft spaces, as well as the bundling of EU territoriality – forces

them to answer whether or not they have effectively answered the demands from their citizens. It challenges them to reassess their operation. In other words, with the provision of opportunities as a result of the principle of free movements, the EU forces member states to answer challenges within its national scope.

The prominent challenges that the UK faced that came to the surface in the midst of the Brexit referendum were deeply 'rooted in the 40 years of neoliberalism which became essentially brutal under austerity program assaults of public services, welfare and work security' (Powell, 2017:226). The UK is one of the neoliberal front runners, alongside the US, who believe that the practice of austerity is the driver of economic growth. It forces the national government to sell the national assets and cut their spending. Cuts in the government's budget directly impact the welfare system and the people benefitting from it. The focus of practice of austerity is the erosion of governmental role in economy. It emphasizes the need for deregulation of labour market and brings forward the importance of private markets as the drivers of growth (Farnsworth and Irving, 2018:461). With limited budget for spending, the practice of austerity shrinks the welfare state and reconfigures the interest of capital, the needs of people and the role of the state (p.461, also see subchapter 2.3.1.).

The global financial crisis exposed 'the fundamental weaknesses and limitations of neoliberalism and forced policymakers to question core principles and change direction' (Farnsworth and Irving, 2018:461). However, instead of being the solution to the economic failure rooted in the practices of neoliberalism, the EU highlights and perpetuates the problem. The creation of EMU can be seen as an 'obvious manifestation of neoliberal restructuring at the European level' (Hermann, 2007:78). As suggested by Powell (2017:233), 'the EU was on many grounds hard to defend' particularly on the economic ground due to its insistence on neoliberal market conformity. In fact, the UK does 'far better economically' and has 'lower unemployment rates' compared to the Eurozone countries (Hermann,

2007:78). The difference in the (un)employment rates between the Eurozone countries and the UK, among other similar countries with lower unemployment rates, naturally affects the fashion in economic immigration. The economic stagnation and scarcity in work opportunities force labour to look for better chances elsewhere.

Despite having lower unemployment rates and better economy, the UK struggled to satisfy the demands for adequate infrastructure and jobs to balance the increase in population and supply of workers in the labour market. The big increase in EU immigration occurred after the A8 countries became the EU members in 2004 (Wadsworth, *et al*, 2016). Between 1995 and 2015, the number of immigrants from other EU countries living in the UK tripled from 0.9 million to 3.3 million, with net EU immigration being 172,000 compared to 191,000 net immigration from non-EU countries (Wadsworth, *et al*, 2016). According to a study by Sturge (2022), in the year ending June 2021, 3.4 million EU nationals were living in the UK and as of 2019, around 994,000 UK nationals were living in other EU countries excluding Ireland. In the year ending March 2020, this study presents the fact that work was the second most common main reason for immigration at 32 percent with formal study being slightly higher at 36 percent (Sturge, 2022). This means that between 2019 and 2021 alone, the UK's net EU migration was at about 2 million with over 30 percent coming for work (with a two-year discrepancy due to the lack of data presented in the study).

As described in Cameron's 2011 speech, the UK's problem of immigration is generated from a few sources particularly the crooked welfare system which disguised the issue of available jobs not being taken by Britons as 'lost' to immigrants and inadequate infrastructure and services to support the large number of immigration, alongside the issue of culture shock and the unwillingness of immigrants to integrate into the British culture. This is not to say that immigration has not been beneficial to the UK (Rolfe, 2017; Portes, 2019).

Statistics shows that EU immigration does not negatively impacted the UK's jobs nor economy (Wadsworth, *et al*, 2016). Compared to UK-born workers, more EU immigrants are in employments, have better education, and are more flexible (Wadsworth, *et al*, 2016; Rolfe, 2017). They pay more taxes, claim less benefits and, therefore, help improve economic deficit (Wadsworth, *et al*, 2016). Economically, they are simply more preferable. This is how they 'steal' jobs. Their flexibility make them more fitted to open/heightened competitions.

Despite this, 'inadequate infrastructure combined with largely uncontrolled immigration has diminished appreciation of the benefits that immigration can bring' (Fox, 2014; Coleman and Rowthorn, 2004). In other words, the UK does not have the means to welcome uncontrolled influx of immigrants while having to maintain the adequacy of its own welfare system due to the long-term practice of neoliberalism and budget austerity. Meanwhile, free trade and the free movement of capital are enhanced by Europeanisation at the macroeconomy level but also other issues such as monetary restraint and budgetary austerity, the flexibilisation of labour markets including the erosion of employment security (Hermann, 2007:85). The political arrangement in the project of European integration 'gives priority to competition and monetary issues at the expense of social demands' without sanctions for failures in achieving employment targets (p.85). In the previous section, it has been mentioned that maintaining social security is as much a national government's duty as maintaining national security. If a fair and reasonable immigration policy would mean more accessible borders to those benefitting the country and not to those burdening the welfare system (Fox, 2014), it would thus suggests that policy arrangements in line with borderless Europe have not been fair, nor have they been reasonable to the UK's national preferences.



### **5.4.3. The Problem of Criminals and Deportation of Unwanted Migrants**

In general, member states of the EU are obliged to treat nationals of other member states in the same manner as their own nationals as stated in Art 55 of the same Part and Chapter of TFEU. This rule is not limited to persons as in human beings but also ‘as regards participation in the capital of companies or firms within the meaning of Article 54’ which ensures that companies or firms that are established, located, and registered within the Union shall be treated in the same way as natural persons in the host country. These rules must be done without prejudice to the application of other provisions of the Treaties.

Apart from the issue of external border for EU citizens, TFEU also governs the uniformity of policies when it comes to the management of third-country nationals, both for forced and unforced immigrants. In terms of asylum, Art 78 TFEU sets out the vision to develop common asylum policies that ensure the uniformity of asylum status for national of third countries which is valid throughout the EU. The same law also aims to develop common procedures and standards in regards to accepting asylum applications. Other than that, under Art 79 the Treaty manages in particular the permits for long-term visits and residence for third-country nationals including those for the purpose of family reunification.

Based on these rules that govern immigration, and by taking into account the establishment of an integrated management system for external borders, the EU is essentially moving itself towards a more uniform Union. The integrated EU external borders will: (a) from outside, clarify the territories of the EU even further, confirming the more-unified status of the Union and; (b) from inside, unify its member states by blurring physical borders between members and by slowly shifting the political centre of each member state to that of the EU’s at the EU level. As stated in the Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council:

‘Union citizenship should be the fundamental status of nationals of the Member States when they exercise their right of free movement and residence. It is therefore necessary to codify and review the existing Community instruments . . . in order to simply and strengthen the right of free movement and residence of all Union citizens’.

Under the EU laws, EU citizens – criminals – are not to be prosecuted if not by means of EU rules. A clear example when it comes to this matter is concerning the issue of expulsion of EU nationals. As Nason (2017) explains,

“Deporting an individual to persuade other foreign nationals to avoid crime is not generally permissible under European Law: *Straszewski v SSHD* [2016] 1 WLR 1173. This is to be contrasted with domestic deportation policy for non-European nationals, a primary aim of which is to ‘deter...and prevent...serious crime generally and to upholding public abhorrence of such offending’: *DS (India) v SSHD* [2009] EWCA Civ 544, where it is very much encouraged”

The protections against deportation for EU nationals who have committed crime are ‘significantly stronger than those available to their non-European equivalents’ (Nason, 2017). For the cases of crime done by EU nationals, basic human rights provisions ‘are rarely relied upon due to the relatively low level of protection they offer compared to EU regulations’ (Nason, 2017). Through European Directive 2004/38/EC of 29 April 2004 – which was adopted into the UK domestic law by the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016 – the EU protects its nationals who commit crime in the UK on three levels: (a) the basic protection for those who have not acquired a permanent residency; (b) a mid-level protection for those who have, and; (c) a third-level protection for those who have been in a host member state for ten years continuously prior to the decision of deportation (Nason, 2017).

The only way that deportation may be conducted is when it is done for the reason of public policy and public security (Yong, 2017). Even so, referring to a crime which is done by an EU national on the ground of public policy and public

security is not as simple as it is against non-EU criminals. Prior to expelling an EU criminal from the UK, the basic protection regime requires that there should be a real risk of reoffending. As Nason (2017) explain, the main difference between expelling an EU criminal and a non EU one lies in the fact that for non-EU criminals, what they have done is considered already as a risk of reoffending while it is not the case for EU criminals. It also requires a court or tribunal whether the decision taken against said crime is 'proportionate' under Regulation 27(5)(a) which requires considerations of the factors as explained in Regulation 27(6):

"Before taking a relevant decision on the grounds of public policy and public security in relation to a person ("P") who is resident in the United Kingdom, the decision maker must take account of considerations such as the age, state of health, family and economic situation of P, P's length of residence in the United Kingdom, P's social and cultural integration into the United Kingdom and the extent of P's links with P's country of origin".

A mid-level protection is a regime that aims to cover EU criminals that already have permanent residency. According to this regime, before expelling an EU criminals with permanent residency from the UK, the Secretary of State must show that the risk they present is higher than that presented by EU criminals without permanent residency (Nason, 2017). Under Regulation 27(3), these criminals cannot be deported in respect of their permanent residency except on serious grounds of public policy and public security (Nason, 2017; Yong, 2017). Under the EU law on deportation and protection against expulsion, EU criminals must have done an extremely serious violation on the grounds of public policy and public security for the Home Office to be in a position to deport them (see SSHD v Tamas [2016] UKAITUR DA/00132/2015 (20 July 2016); SSHD v Van Dunem [2016] UKAITUR DA/01680/2014 (22 April 2016); Roszkowski v SSHD [2016] UKAITUR IA/50828/2014).

The next-level protection the EU offers to EU criminals is the one aiming those who have resided in the United Kingdom for ten continuous years prior to

the decision of expulsion. In order to be in the position to call upon deportation the Secretary of State must show to the Court or Tribunals that there are imperative grounds which can justify the decision. The tests for 'imperative grounds' must present very high threshold which means that the saving the criminal from expulsion will compel a risk to public security. For example, the case of *LG (Italy) v SSHD* [2008] EWCA Civ 19 demonstrates that the Court or Tribunals may still decide that 'removal' of the defendant is not necessary based on the five criminal convictions that the defendant has done – the latest being robbery and grievous bodily harm with intent. The grounds of public policy and public security was seemingly not the case in this matter – nothing more important than the freedom of movement of the defendant.

As a consequence, these particular EU rules 'weaken the UK's ability to remove foreign criminals from the country' which then will put British families at risk which justifies the idea that leaving the EU will actually lead to a safer Britain (BBC News, 2016). As the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union Cabinet, Dominic Raab, states, "It is putting the British public at risk because it effectively means we import criminal risk into the country and then the EU rules tie our hands in dealing with it" and with it follows the UK's failure to fulfill its responsibility as a state towards its citizens for public safety.

## **5.5. The Constellation of Power and the Game of Balance of**

### **Power in the EU**

In the constellation of power in the EU the member states hold the status as 'masters of the treaties' as confirmed by the ECJ (Grimm, 2009:109 cited in Scicluna, 2012:450) with the Council being their highest political representatives (Wessels, 2012:753, 761-762). The EU treaties themselves are described as constituting a 'derivative legal order' for the EU (Scicluna, 2012:450). Even so, the

equilibrium is not maintained and decided only by member states, or the Council as their highest representatives. Decision-making power in the EU is shared among the Commission and the Parliament (and the ECJ to a certain extent as it is responsible for interpreting the meaning of EU laws) alongside the Council. Therefore, the constellation of power in the EU exists primarily among these main institutions.

According to Kreppel (2018), the way the three institutions – the Commission, the Parliament and the Council – work together and the changing balance of power between them is largely a mystery. Each institution has interests and, in general, the Council is considered to be the intergovernmental institution whilst the Commission and the Parliament are considered supranationalist/integrationist. During the decision-making process, political/decisional intergovernmentalist and legal supranationalist/integrationist attempt to balance each other and the tipping point created from this act is described as the ‘foundational equilibrium’ (Weiler, 1999 cited in Scicluna, 2012:441). Unlike the Nash model of equilibrium which refers to international law as the centre of gravity for the units in a system structure, the foundational equilibrium describes the national authorities’ ability ‘to accept judicial doctrines that impeded state sovereignty because they ultimately control the legislative process’ (Scicluna, 2012:441). The tug of war between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism is the foundational equilibrium.

### **5.5.1. The Four Main Institutions**

The first main institution in the EU is the Commission. The Commission serves two functions in the EU. First, it is a legislative body with a monopoly for drafting bills. Second, it is a bureaucratic body which is charged with implementing legislation (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:358). Despite the lack of a formal role in the actual decision-making process, the Commission has ‘had a legislative role that extended

well beyond the technical introduction of policy initiatives' in the past (Kreppel, 2018). The Commission is considered as placed in the supranationalist-integrationist polar as opposed to the intergovernmentalist one. Whilst member states are regarded as 'masters of the Treaties', the Commission is regarded as 'the guardian of the treaties and an honest broker between member states and the EU institutions' (Kreppel, 2018). The role as an honest broker is exactly why the Commission is considered a powerful actor, i.e. 'it has a reputation for being an impartial provider of information and expertise that is above political fray' (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:362). Therefore, the Commission is an important partner for the Court when it comes to furthering European legal integration (Burley and Matlli, 1993).

The second main institution is the Parliament. The European integration project has been perceived to be elite-driven. The increasing suspicion and hostility towards the project involve criticism that the EU has failed 'to engage and respond to popular opinion' (Syrpis, 2008). The Parliament is the embodiment of the attempt to involve the citizens of the EU in the decision-making process. Members of the Parliament have been directly elected by the citizens of the EU since 1979 (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:357). Along with the Council, the Parliament is mostly a legislative institution.

The third main institution in the EU is the ECJ. It is one of the main EU institutions whose mandate is 'to interpret the EU's treaty base and secondary legislation passed pursuant to the treaties in the arbitration of conflicts among EU institutions and among them, member states, and citizens' (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:358). As a result of the Court's successful constitutionalisation of the EU's treaty base (p.358), the EU possesses a judicially constructed constitutional order based on its founding treaties (Scicluna, 2012, also discussed in subchapter 4.4). In addition to that, the Court has the capacity to interpret the Treaty in a strongly pro-integrationist manner (Wincott, 1994:588-9). This manner is enabled by the

Court's role and nature in the European integration project. The Court establishes in the 'Internationale Handelsgesellschaft' case that Community law takes precedence even over national constitutional law (Scicluna, 2012:449). This means that the EU's legal authority does not derive from the sovereignty of the member states but rather is sovereign in its own right. Article 171 of the Maastricht Treaty gives the Court significant powers of enforcement which enables them 'to impose a lump sum or penalty payment on a member state which fails to comply with one of its rulings within a time-limit laid down by the Commission' (Wincott, 1994:578) and therefore, brings the Court even closer to the status held by supreme courts in federal states (p.579).

Along with the Commission, the Court can deflect the criticism that it is acting in political manners by arguing that it is only doing its job. By using this very excuse, both the Court and the Commission 'are able to further the integration agenda because they can always credibly claim that they are only doing their jobs, impartially and apolitically' (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:363). However, unlike the Court, suppose the process of systemic change reaches the point where the EU turns into a federal state – that is to lose all the vestiges of being a process of unification and to entrench the rights and powers of its constituent members – the Commission would have to be 'drastically overhauled to match up to the standards of transparency and democracy which would be required in such a state' (Wincott, 1994:587).

The last main institution in the EU is the Council. The Council represents the intergovernmental dimension of the EU. According to Wessels (2012:754), 'the Council was used by heads of states/governments 'to exercise a role as constitutional architect for the Union' who drives the 'fundamental evolutionary dynamic of the EU system'. The Council is the embodiment of the national governments' commitment to 'protect their respective national influence by at least reinforcing their own institution in the EU architecture' (p.755). Just like the

other institutions, the Council is also treated (by most) as governed by homogenous member state interests (Kreppel, 2013). As mentioned above, the Council is the highest political representatives of the EU member states (Wessels, 2012). Due to the variation in understanding national interests 'informed by partisan ideology', there may be differences in policy preferences at the EU level (Kreppel, 2013). This is also why the Council is a highly decentralized institution in the EU. Nevertheless, the assumptions and expectation that decisions in the Council are based on homogeneous national interests continue to base a most analyses of the Council's legislative activity despite the lack in theoretical justification for these assumptions (Kreppel, 2013). The resulting effect is that the Council continues to be seen as a unitary actor in the EU.

The Council is a kind of legislature that has no full membership list and whose members have no opportunity to meet in regular plenary meetings, particularly due to a shifting membership structure that reflects different domestic political cycles and events (Kreppel, 2013). In comparison to the Commission and the Parliament, the Council lacks in the opportunity to play the political balance of power within itself and thus is less coherent. Therefore, although the Council may hold the most power in the EU, it is debatable that the Council can maximize its power in the EU as can the Parliament and the Commission. Assuming that the Council is a unitary actor vastly 'oversimplifies reality given the broad variety of governments at the national level, which can range from cohesive single-party regimes to decentralized broad coalitions' (Kreppel, 2013).

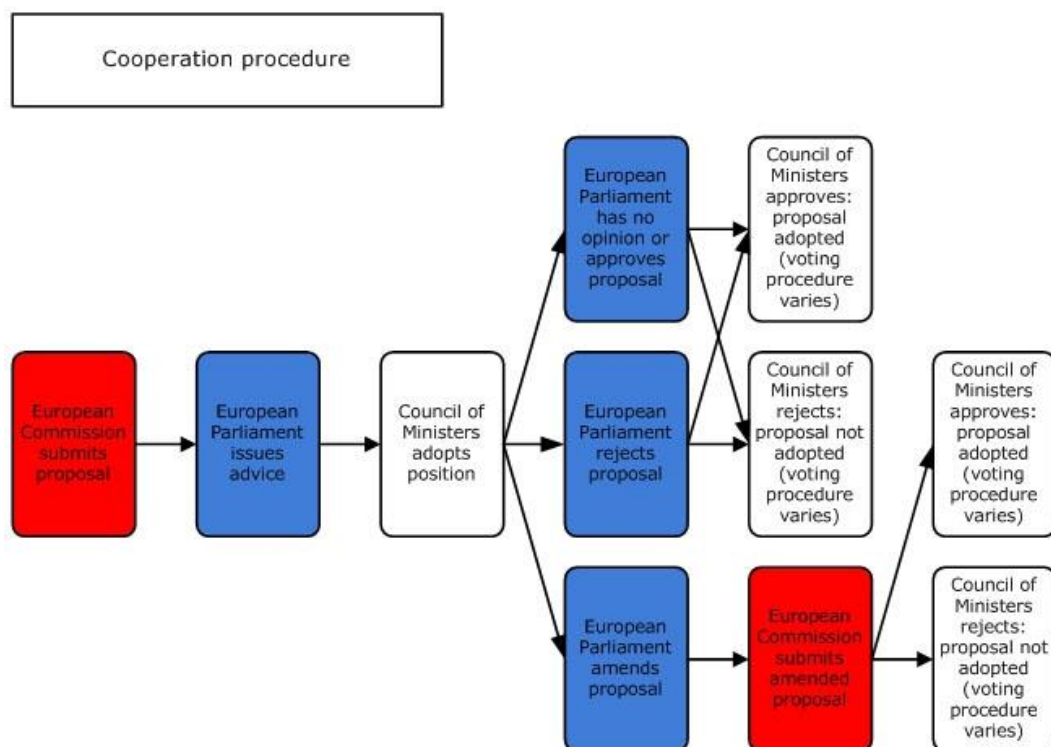
### **5.5.2. The Constellation of Power in the Decision-Making Process**

Up to when this chapter is written, there has been two main procedures for decision-making that are used by the EU institutions to adopt legislations – cooperation and codecision. Cooperation procedure was first introduced in the



Single European Act (Art 252 of the EC Treaty) in 1986. This procedure is abolished in the Treaty of Lisbon. In short, the decision-making process under cooperation procedure is as follows.

**Figure 5.5.2.1. Cooperation Procedure in the EU**



*Source: EU Monitor, Cooperation Procedure*

The balance between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism in the EU was upset 'by the introduction of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) and the expansion of European competencies' in the SEA (Scicluna, 2012:441). By replacing unanimity with QMV, the Council became more effective at the cost of national sovereignty. Qualified majority in a QMV method is reached if two conditions are met: (a) 55 percent of member states vote in favour and; (b) the proposal is supported by member states representing at least 65 percent of the total EU population. The QMV method of voting makes prominent the balance of power among national governments in the Council.

As a consequence, individual governments in the Council lost the power to veto legislation. The method of unanimity voting has two different effects on the Council (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:370). As it needs all participants to be in favour of the same vote, unanimity voting respects the sovereignty of individual member states. There will be no member state that is left out for choosing unpopular option. This method, however, cripples the Council as a collective actor. Achieving a decision which is agreed by every single government of member states relatively takes longer time and therefore less efficient than when a decision is made with, for example, a majority voting method. Since 1987, the members of the Council have thus come to embrace 'effective collective decision making in increasing numbers of policy areas' under QMV and moved away from unanimity voting method (p.357, 370).

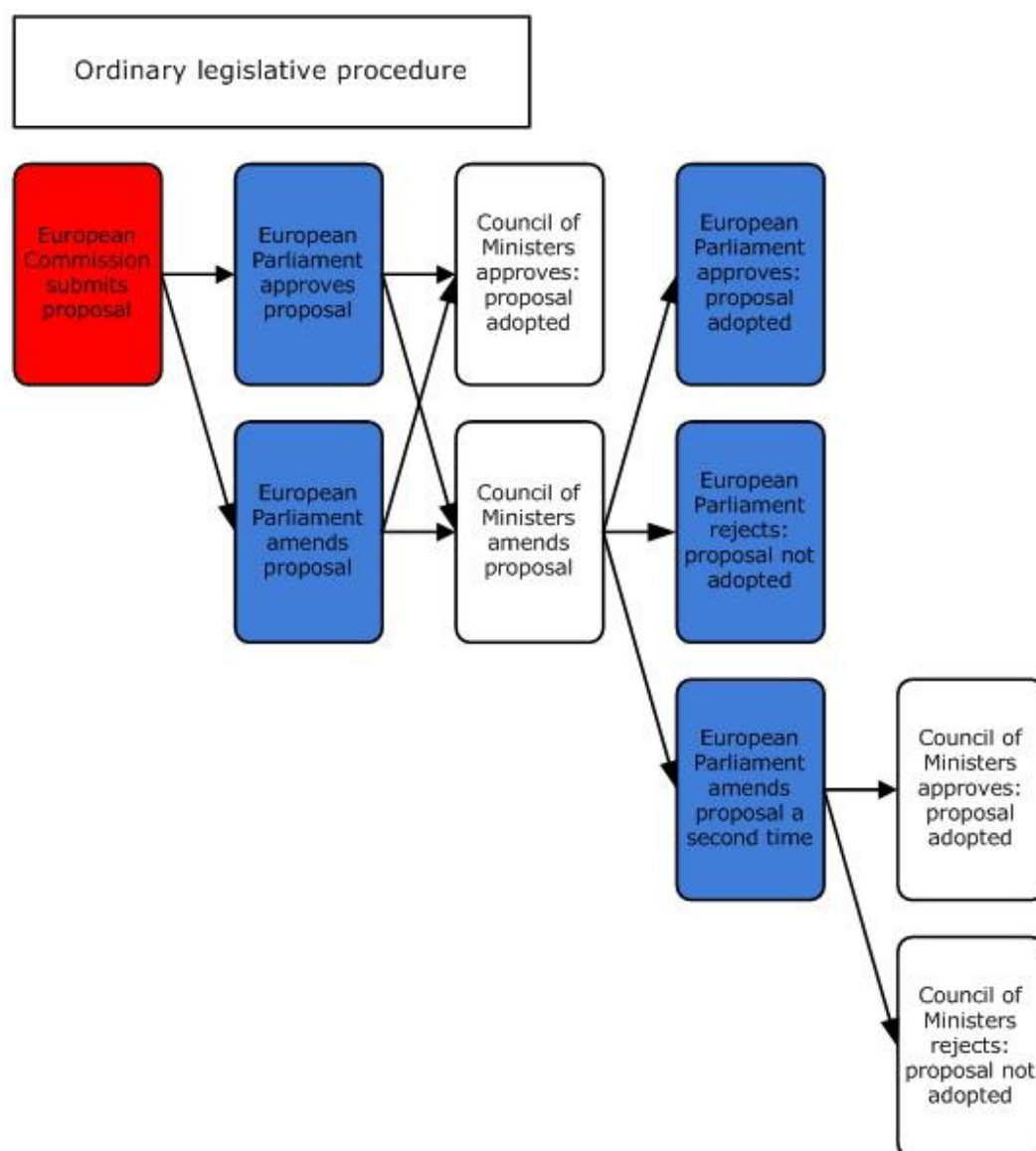
The ratification of the SEA gives the Commission 'many more opportunities to affect outcomes through policy implementation' through the establishment of EU legislation in the 1992 agenda about internal market (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:359). The Commission became the prime mover behind European integration with the effective removal of national vetoes in the Council (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:359). As the SEA lowers the power of the Council, it increases the significance of the Parliament in the process of decision-making. Before the ratification of SEA, the Parliament lacked any effective influence over legislation (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:358). It simply did not have much power in the EU compared to the Commission and the Council. The change in Council voting rules after the ratification of SEA also gives the Commission agenda-setting power which is shared with the Parliament under cooperation procedure (p.359). SEA gives the Parliament power to issue advice over legislation proposal submitted by the Commission although its power is limited to only advisory role. Final decision (rejection or approval) of a proposal remains solely in the hands of the Council.

The ratification of Maastricht Treaty in 1992 suppressed the power of the Commission's legislative agenda-setting even further (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:359). The Maastricht Treaty replaced the cooperation procedure for decision-making process with codecision procedure. The codecision procedure effectively placed both the Parliament and the Council in a bicameral legislature which increased the probability of gridlock during the decision-making process. Under the codecision procedure, however, the Commission may affect the gridlock by toppling the Council's ability to achieve its policy objectives by sharing policy preferences with the Parliament (Kreppel, 2018). Apart from this, as a consequence of the codecision procedure, the discretionary space available to the Commission to implement policy and to the Court to adjudicate disputes increased (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:359).

Apart from creating the codecision procedure, the Maastricht Treaty redirected the European integration project from an economic to a politico-economic one, initiated a monetary union, enshrined the principle of subsidiarity, and ensured the social dimension of the EU by creating European citizenship (Cretu and Chenic, 2021). It introduced changes for the Common Provisions of EU legal basis which appear to have given the Court a formal treaty backing to the practice of 'evolving the idea of unwritten general principles of law' in its jurisprudence and thus widens 'its scope of action from regulating a Common Market to something more like the role of a supreme court' (Wincott, 1994:576-7). The establishment of EU citizenship is an example where this applies. The establishment of the EU citizenship involves 'creation for the first time of a direct relationship between the Union and citizens as individual, rather than only workers' (Wincott, 1994:576). Although fundamental rights was explicitly excluded from the Court's jurisdiction and it was to remain outside the constitution of the Union, the establishment of the EU citizenship 'give individuals in the Union rights beyond those as workers' (p.577). As a result, the Court

recognizes the changes of the right to free movement from an economic basis to a political one (p.577).

**Figure 5.5.2.2. Codecision Procedure in the EU**



*Source: EU Monitor, Codecision Procedure*

Under a codecision procedure, the Parliament has an equal footing to the Council, creating what is effectively a bicameral EU legislature for all policy areas covered under such procedure. Under this procedure, the Parliament has greater formal power compared to the Commission as new legislation needs both a

qualified majority in the Council and an absolute majority in the Parliament to pass (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2001:358). Due to this process, direct communication between the Parliament and the Council increased in the form of informal negotiations and early agreements. The importance of the Commission's role as an honest broker of EU policy declined and thus, the Commission's ability to control 'the character and content of the policy outcome has diminished' as 'the Commission is largely excluded from decisions made through early agreements' (Kreppel, 2018).

The power of the Commission in the EU would have been further diminished by a trim in the number of the membership in 2014 as stipulated by the Treaty of Lisbon – from one to two members per nation state, to two-thirds of the number of member states. Prior to this, however, TEU introduced the Council to a new power for deciding the number of commissioners needed for the Commission to operate as laid down on Art 17(5) TEU. In 2009 the Council decided that the Commission would continue by having one commissioner per member state.

The Treaty of Lisbon makes significant changes to the institutional structure of the EU (Syrpis, 2008). There are two main beneficiaries of this treaty. The Lisbon Treaty is a strong articulation of the limits of European integration and thus makes the Council its first main beneficiary (Scicluna, 2012). The second main beneficiary is the Parliament as it is granted veto powers in some areas of the EU's jurisdiction (Syrpis, 2008). In addition to it, the Parliament was granted power to elect the President of Commission on a proposal from Council (Syrpis, 2008). The empowerment of the Parliament can also be seen as benefitting the Commission. The Commission is more likely to achieve its policy objectives when there is policy preference congruence with the legislative decision-makers (Kreppel, 2018). The empowerment of the Parliament benefits the Commission, particularly in specific

issue areas in which the Parliament is likely to support the Commission's initiatives during negotiations with the Council (Kreppel, 2018).

The Treaty of Rome and its subsequent revisions have turned the EU into a political system in which the member governments have delegated implementation and adjudication powers to the Commission and the Court. As examined by Tsebelis and Garrett (2001:365), 'this delegation of power creates a problem for the legislative branch: its agents may not carry out the intent of the legislation as they have a significant level of autonomy in their decisions'. Due to the complicated nature of the balance of power, for a member state to be able to effectively influence the decision-making process in the EU, being a hegemon or having dominant power is simply insufficient. Unlike a conventional game of balance of power in IR where nation states fight for their own interests, the game of balance of power in the EU makes it impossible for a nation state to fight as a solo player. Nation states are forced to play as a unitary group represented by an institution what we know as the Council. Consequently, nation states can no longer act as unitary actors that rely on their 'singleness' (see chapter 4) to exercise exclusivity, leave alone winning the game on their own.

The Council, although considered an intergovernmentalist institution compared to others, is also driven away from the grasp of the government of the EU member states. An altered version of Art 146 of TEU strongly enhances the autonomy of the Council from member states (Wincott, 1994:586). According to this particular rule, the members of the Council no longer formally act as delegates of their governments, instead they will be authorized to take binding decisions for the governments of their respective member states (p.586). In addition to this, the Council is also armed with a small European level civil service – The General Secretariat – which is 'parallel to the civil servants sent by the member states to service their members of the Council' (p.586). The formal recognition of this body serves 'to increase the independence of the Council of Ministers from member

states' (p.586). This means that, although the members of the Council are meant to represent the interests of their respective home governments, it is becoming easier for them to divert from the preferences of their respective home governments. Furthermore, the increased powers of the Council weakens 'the already feeble control of national Parliaments over ministers in the Council' (p.587). The weakened monitoring and mechanisms of accountability at the European level means that the autonomy of the Council has increased at the European level as well (p.587). As a consequence, this move can also be seen as a strong push towards federalism.

## **5.6. Concluding Remarks**

In the previous chapter, I have touched the subject of bundling of EU territoriality within the territories of its member states. In the chapter, I explained that the singleness of a state unit is the foundational element of the ordering principle of anarchy which results in both the absolute individuation of said state and the establishment of anarchic space between two or more states. IR happens when this absolute individuation is thinned out to allow for a relationship with (an)other sovereign state to be established. The EU does not have its own territories to allow for territorial entrapment to happen in the process of bundling of territoriality. The bundling of EU territoriality occurs within the territories of its member states which, as integration progresses and deepens, threatens their 'singleness' and thus their sovereignty.

The thinning out of a state's absolute individuation refers to the process of unbundling of its territoriality. Just as how different member states may interpret the meaning of 'ever closer union' differently (see subchapter 4.3), member states may react to and deal with the demands for unbundling territoriality differently. The UK is a clear example of this argument with a number of opt-outs taken against the moves towards the project of 'ever closer union'. Opt-out is, however,

not always a viable solution to discontent in the EU laws as the integration project is overseen and maintained not only by the member states via the Council but also by the other EU's main institutions – the Commission, the ECJ, and the Parliament.

Each push towards an ever closer union requires member states to unbundle their territoriality further. Challenges such as the lag in economic development and growth, the rise of (extreme) nationalism, populism, and Euroscepticism, show that resistance or pushbacks do take place as answers to the demands for unbundling territoriality. Seen as a resistance against the European integration project, Brexit showcases that the UK's concerns over sovereignty lie mainly in the matter of economy and immigration. This chapter has attempted to reframe these concerns under the light of theoretical framework established in the previous chapters.

This chapter began by stating that the issues of economy and immigration as related to 'taking back control' are seen as interlinking to each other and relating to the underlying cause of Brexit. In terms of economic governance, the UK's preference is to make sure that the operation of the Union respects the integrity of the Single Market and recognizes that the EU does not only consist of Eurozone but also those member states that have not yet adopted Euro as their currency. Therefore economic policies to govern the Eurozone must be produced ever so carefully so as to respect legitimate interests of, and not to negatively impact, the non-Eurozone member states.

The European economic integration provides a new ethos of commerce by way of the principle of freedom of movements to reach the aim for a borderless Europe. The Euro and the ECB were established as a result. The Euro has become a success story for the stage of social episteme in the project of European integration. It was established as the Union's formal single currency and was to be used between member states. It gained the acknowledgment and advanced into being used as an everyday currency. As an attempt of symbolization of the EU, it



was further empowered by being the replacement for national currencies in many member states of the EU. This practice reflects not only a shift of loyalty but also a shift of territoriality from the national to the European level. The case of the Euro and the Eurozone highlights the theoretical point made in the previous chapter that soft spaces challenge and obscure where power actually resides.

The primary objective of the ECB's monetary policy is to maintain price stability – to make sure that inflation remains low, stable and predictable. In order to maintain this stability, neoliberalism is used as the foundation of the EU's economic principle. This is problematic due to several reasons. First, the ability for the Eurozone members to share economic shocks through capital and credit market is substantially low due to the absence of an overarching ruler. Second, the ECB's rigid monetary policy widens the gaps between member states and ensures that the unstable structure of the EU become increasingly unsafe. Third, the EU's practice of neoliberalism results in a prolonged economic downturn and high unemployment rates.

The British economy is subject to the instability created by the issues in the Eurozone and, despite the opt-outs, it still has to 'pay' for the EU's economic failures. This is how the issue of economy and immigration relate with each other. Nationally, the UK struggles with the high and unexpected influx of EU immigrants. The size of the UK's growing population is not balanced with an adequate size of its welfare state which has been damaged by the practice of neoliberalism and budget austerity. At the same time, in the UK it is believed that the first duty of a government is the protection of its citizens and they have the right to be protected from damages at the microeconomic level which are caused by macroeconomic issues at the governmental level. Furthermore, the Union Law about deportation of criminals and unwanted migrants weakens the UK's ability to remove foreign criminals from the country, therefore, putting British families at risk.

Although the European integration project forces national governments to answer challenges within their national territories as described in the theoretical framework, the structure in the constellation of power in the EU prevents them from doing so. It constrains national government of the member states as they are given only limited amount of decision-making power to fight for their own particular interests compared to the main EU institutions. In the case of the UK, it thus translates to an understanding that the UK's national government cannot answer the demands of protections from its people because their hands are tied with regulations from the EU, therefore justifying the Leave option and the demand for taking back control.

## CONCLUSIONS

### *The background of research*

This thesis begins with a brief description of the Brexit affair from the moments leading up to the referendum to the result of the referendum. The introductory chapter makes a brief comparison between the 2016 Brexit referendum to the 1975 in-out referendum. The section highlights the differences between the two referendums with the most noticeable difference being the results of the referendums themselves.

The opening section of this thesis briefly explores various reasons for the 2016 Brexit referendum. The first set of reasons come from the demands set out in Cameron's letter to Donald Tusk: (a) the protection of the single market for Britain and others outside the Eurozone; (b) the boost of competitiveness in the DNA of the whole European Union; (c) Britain's exemption from an 'ever closer union' and bolstering national parliaments, and; (d) means for tackling abuses of the right to free movement, and enabling Britain to control migration from the European Union, in line with Cameron's manifesto. Other sources come up with a different set of reasons which focuses on the issues within the domestic politics of the UK such as: (a) to unite the Tories and stop the members of this political party from 'banging on' about the Europe which, if achieved, would give Cameron the opportunity to focus on domestic reform; (b) to see of the challenges that come from the unsettling rise of UKIP, and; (c) to put the Labour Party on the back foot.

Brexit is a multifactorial affair and, as well as the different reasons for the Brexit referendum, there are also various reasons for the votes with immigration being in the limelight for the Leave vote that it overshadows the economic justification fought by the Remain Campaign. Immigration is also seen as an instrument to trigger other deep-rooted causes in the British society such as distrust and discontent in the national government, as well as Euroscepticism.

Brexit has been seen to be relating to the issue of affinity and attachment to the British identity. The UK's membership within the EU is seen to have erode the British sovereignty.

This thesis aims to give an alternative understanding to Brexit. The objective is not to pin down the blame on one particular empirical phenomena but to look for the underlying causes for Brexit – one upon which the other reasoning and factors can be grounded by using theoretical means. This aim is broken down into one primary research question accompanied by four subsidiary questions. The primary research question to be answered in this thesis is: **“What are the underlying causes for Brexit?”**. The accompanying subsidiary questions focus on examining how EU membership threatens the sovereignty of its member states and thus justifying resistance against Europeanisation. In answering these questions the thesis has been also tasked to examine how changes brought by Europeanisation affect the balance of power between the EU and its member states. The thesis is also tasked to examine the extent of importance the issue of the economy has on the UK's survival in the EU system, as well as why it was not as effective for the Remain Campaign as taking back control and immigration for the Leave Campaign.

### *The literature review*

The chapter on literature review is tasked to find the gap in the literature of Brexit and UK-EU relationship where this thesis finds its originality and significance to the study. This chapter separates the various reasons for Brexit and vote Leave provided by existing literature into three groups – those that argue that Brexit was mainly driven by discontent in the national government, those that put the weight on the issue of immigration, and those that pin the blame on the issue of identity and sovereignty crisis. These modes for understanding Brexit treats the reasons for disintegration to be originated in the UK (member state).

Unlike the existing literature, this thesis sees that the EU (international system) is where the underlying causes for disintegration is to be found. The chapter explores various possible explanations for disintegration from the perspective of theories of integration (neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism, postfunctionalism, and Europeanisation) and describes the issues with these theories in giving adequate explanations for disintegration.

To begin with, neofunctionalism is inadequate as it is a weak international theory due to the focus on framing Europe more as a case study of integration rather than as an arena and therefore making integration endemic to Europe. It fails to consider that integration in one region can be different to another due to various aspects. The theory constrains itself to being a theory of integration only for Europe. Furthermore, neofunctionalism proposes the superiority of supranationalism and undermines the importance of nation-state system. The theory assumes that national governments could be disaggregated into its component group actors by which territorial elements are less useful than interests. Neofunctionalism does not provide a proper set of means for explaining disintegration.

Neofunctionalism houses the theoretical concept of multilevel governance whose focus is on the discussion on the changing relationship between actors at different territorial levels. The development of multilevel governance changes the traditional way of distinguishing between national and international – it moves Europe beyond Westphalian system. It calls for a need for a shift in the traditional way of seeing sovereignty and argues that understanding the EU cannot be done in terms of sovereignty norms of the modern state system. Sovereignty in the age of multilevel governance needs to be seen as a matter of collective intentionality. In other words, the concept sees a state to remain sovereign as long as other states see it so. The concept reduces state sovereignty to mere acknowledgement from other sovereign states.

Intergovernmentalism is next to be reviewed in the chapter. The theory sees European integration as a form of intergovernmental cooperation and competition among member states of the EU and argues that the EU is best seen as an international regime. Nation states remain the main actors in the European integration project and each has interests to pursue mainly those of economic advantages. The theory believes that European cooperation must not threaten nation states' sovereignty and therefore states are more likely to compromise the elements of low politics such as economy and welfare than the high politics such as foreign policy and defense. Supranational bodies are seen instruments for gaining benefits and the pool of sovereignty as a way of making cooperation more effective. Intergovernmentalism branches into liberal intergovernmentalism whose main argument lies in the importance of state's rational behaviour, national preference formation, and interstate negotiation. This branch on intergovernmentalism sees the European project as the result of the action of rational governments which are driven by domestically-formed preferences and power being negotiated at the regional level.

Intergovernmentalism is heavily reliant on states' rationality and preferences on economy. Therefore, a cooperation must be beneficial for the involving parties. There are two verdicts that can be inferred from Brexit from Intergovernmentalist perspective. First, Brexit can be seen as a reaction towards cooperation that is no longer beneficial between the UK and the EU. Second, if the cooperation is indeed beneficial, Brexit can thus be interpreted as an irrational choice taken by the people as they prefer a looser economic and political arrangement with the EU.

The third theory reviewed in the second chapter is postfunctionalism. This theory disagrees with the previous debate and argues that it is impossible to reduce the debate of European integration to mere rational economic interest. Postfunctionalism sees the Brexit referendum as a clash between functional

pressures for integration and nationalist resistance. Deeper integration results in an inevitable entanglement of politics in the domestic and regional level. The people's identities and public opinion are important elements for integration to postfunctionalism. According to this theory, when mobilized correctly, the issue of identity becomes a great leverage to challenge the process of European integration. Postfunctionalism gives account on how identity becomes a hurdle in a process of deep regional integration. The Brexit payout, a postfunctionalist would argue, has proven its verdict that nationalism can subvert multilevel governance. The weakness of postfunctionalism lies in its incomplete account of the construction of identity and its elegance in nature. It is only able to offer simplistic expectations about the relative causal weight of identity and distributional calculus.

The last theory reviewed in the chapter is Europeanisation. Europeanisation is a concept that focuses on domestic administrative adaptation – changes that occurred within national political systems connected to European integration. Europeanisation does not necessarily mean convergence; it is neither a political integration, nor a harmonization. This concept acknowledges that every member state has a degree of adaptational pressure that may affect how a member state responds to the process of Europeanisation. The process of Europeanisation itself can be done in two ways: (a) the top-down process which is done from the EU level with changes being found in the domestic level, and; (b) the bottom-up fashion which argues that changes are brought from the member states and are to be found at the EU level. Both processes often take place simultaneously. The theory has a few weaknesses. First, Europeanisation researchers focus too much on the importance of Europe when explaining domestic changes. Second, the top-down and bottom-up approach suggests that Europeanisation happens only if harmonization occurs with the EU's way of doing things. Third, Europeanisation has no strong theoretical status due to several reasons: (a) it is more concerned with domestic political change than EU political

development; (b) it is built on an exaggerated use of hierarchical and vertical manner, ignoring that integration also happens horizontally between national governments, interest groups, and political parties as well; (c) it lacks in research methods and design, and therefore is best seen as a theory of multilevel institutional change.

### *Methods and theory*

Theoretical approach has been used to formulate answers to the research questions and, therefore, has led to the production of a qualitative thesis. This thesis relies on a theoretical framework consisting of neorealism as a theoretical paradigm paired with the concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality to approach Brexit as a particular issue. This means, this thesis is positioned to seek answers by way of neorealist understanding of how the world works, particularly that of international relations. Neorealism is used for its explanatory power, resulting in the research project being limited to seek the underlying causes for Brexit through the neorealist perspective.

Neorealism is chosen for its highlight for sovereignty and international ordering principle, among other elements that thus make the theory. Neorealism dwells in the third Waltzian political image. This means that it sees that causes for problems lie within the international system. This is why it is more appropriate for the research question as it grounds the project in IR realm. Reductionist approaches – such as those in both first and second image – are inadequate in explaining particularly IR phenomena. The inadequacy mainly comes from the assumption that solutions for a conflict following the first or the second image must take into consideration the possibility of perfection in the conflicting units. Perfection for states and/or men is impossible. Compared to classical realism, neorealism triumphs because it releases itself from the constraints of the interests or psycho-political processes in the mind of particular state's leaders. In



comparison to neoclassical realism, neorealism is more theoretically consistent because it is not built to make predictions and thus releases itself from the obligations to be able to produce laws.

In the theoretical chapter, the criticism against neorealism and how it has been defended have also been examined. The theoretical framework used in this thesis is based on an alternative reading of neorealism which argues that the common way of understanding neorealism has three errors. The first error is the assumption of Waltz's theory being that of a positivist – 'a set of generalizable, predictive laws with clear empirical implications'. This results in the second error being the obligation for assuming rational actors. The third error is the assumption that Waltz's theory must include materialism, mainly that of military forces or economic wealth.

The main point of neorealism, as initially established, is that international system is governed under the ordering principle of anarchy. Anarchy in his understanding had two different – but related – meanings. The first meaning refers to a condition of the absence of common superior. The concept of hierarchy and anarchy in Waltz's idea is that domestic politics is organized under common government while international politics is an interaction domain organized in the absence of common government or superior. The anarchic nature of an international system, however, does not necessarily mean that the system is under chaotic condition. Due to the absence of an overarching ruler, there are no single units above sovereign states with authoritative power to make a state do or not do a certain thing. Therefore, a horizontal order between equals is birthed; this is the second meaning of anarchy in Waltz's understanding of anarchy. The horizontal order of anarchy refers to a condition under which interactions between formal equals are to be distinguished from a hierarchical order between subordinate and superordinate.

The concept of ordering principles is reliant on the assumption of the wholeness/unity of nation states as the most important actors in an international system. The singleness of nation states – their exclusivity – is what makes up the dichotomy between anarchical and hierarchical ordering principles and therefore the notion of ordering principle itself. A systemic change will result in a birth of a new state or disappearance of an existing one. Therefore, changes to the ‘singleness’ of a state unit are likely to be perceived as threats to the survivability of said state.

### *The Underlying Causes for Brexit*

Neorealism argues that as an international system, the EU is governed under the ordering principle of anarchy. This thesis sees the European integration project to be undergoing a systemic change. This involves a shift from the ordering principle of anarchy (like in IR) to that of hierarchy (like in a nation state). Neorealism is a parsimonious theory and cannot be used on its own to examine particular cases. Therefore, it requires assistance from other theories or theoretical concepts with narrower focus. In order to answer the research questions, this thesis has seen the use of the concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality. This concept is used under the neorealist paradigm to explain how a systemic change that involves the EU and the member states occurs.

The theoretical framework established in this chapter shapes the main argument for this thesis. That is, in its progression towards the aim for an ever closer union (by way of Europeanisation), the EU goes through the process of bundling its own territoriality and – due to the lack of its own geographical territories – unbundling the member states’ territoriality at the same time. Territoriality is an essential element in this understanding because it not only creates distance between states but also keeps a state distinct from each other.

The exclusivity of territorial states is what makes international anarchy possible and, as such, is what guarantees the perpetuation of IR.

Bundled territoriality occurs when territoriality is packaged into a political realm, and thus institutionalised. The institutionalization or legalization of territoriality results in territorial integrity. Due to the territorial entrapment in the process, territorial integrity protects the wholeness/unity of a state's territory. It reflects the territorial sovereign right of the existence of peoples represented by their states. The territorial aspect of territoriality refers to the feelings of ownership and assertion of control. This is why states jealously protect sovereignty – the nucleus of their very existence.

In this thesis, bundling territoriality is understood as a process consisting of six stages – differentiation, change in material environment, change in strategic behaviour, social episteme, social empowerment, and society of sovereign states. The first five stages create single/whole state unit. In the last stage, sovereign units live together creating, as the name suggests, a society of sovereign states. It consists of territorially disjoint, mutually exclusive, functionally similar sovereign states. This last stage of bundling territoriality creates both the arena for IR and the absolute individuation of a state. IR takes place when a relation between two or more sovereign states is established. The absolute individuation of a state, however, dictates that states are mutually exclusive. IR is only possible when this absolute individuation is thinned out and thus creates non-territorial functional space. Non-territorial functional space is task-specific, one-purpose jurisdictions created to satisfy functional demands that cannot be fulfilled by a state within its territory. The EU's territoriality is functional and its jurisdictions were meant to fulfill functional demands that were otherwise cannot be fulfilled nationally. It is not certain which tasks to be kept bundled and which tasks can be unbundled; the choice depends on the reasoning. The non-territorial functional space provides the arena where national and EU jurisdictions are overlapped in the geographical

territory of a member state. The overlapping jurisdictions are understood in this thesis as 'soft spaces'.

As a result of a thinning out of a state's absolute individuation, within a soft space national boundaries are blurred and fuzzy. Within soft spaces, the intensity of a state's national authority is lowered. Despite this, soft spaces are needed so that political strategies and approaches to an issue can be done without hurting a state's ultimate authority. As opposed to being a spatial construct that is fixed, soft space is naturally temporary and subject to change. Depending on what the arrangement is between the involving parties, this nature allows territoriality within the soft space to evolve. In terms of the EU, this nature is exactly where the problem lies. The EU's aim as laid out in the Treaties is ultimately to achieve the ever closer union. Its finalité – the form of the final destination – of this aim is unclear.

Due to the lack of clarity in the final destination of the aim of ever closer union, this thesis interprets the practice of Europeanisation and the European integration project as a move towards federalization. Within soft space, the project of European integration brings forward a significant amount of shift of competencies from nation states to the EU which is marked by a major structural reorganization and strategic reorientation of state capacities. In this process, states are de-nationalised, internationalized, and de-statisise. Soft spaces allow for challenges and obscurity for where power actually resides. These new arrangements and reorganization of member states mark the shift from one kind of territoriality to another. Since territoriality has very intimate relationship with the protection of sovereignty, we can now justify the call for taking back control in the campaign prior to the Brexit referendum by arguing that the practice of Europeanisation threatens the sovereignty of member states. This also explains why, unbundling territoriality as a requirement of EU membership becomes a threatening course of action for member states' sovereignty which also explains

the resistance against Europeanisation. Brexit is a form of response to this process. This alternative understanding is then used to shed a new light to the key issues in the Brexit referendum.

### *The Issue of Economy and Immigration*

Brexit has been defined as a multidimensional and multifactorial affair that involves many elements in the UK-EU relationship. In the literature review, the factors are grouped into three categories: (a) discontent in the national government; (b) the issue of immigration; (c) the issue of sovereignty and identity. The key to the Leave Vote demand was the issue of ‘taking back control’ and of ‘immigration’. Chapter four has examined the underlying cause for Brexit by arguing that the threat to sovereignty, the need for taking back control, is rooted in the systemic change en-route taking place in the EU. At the same time, and as a consequence, it requires changes in the structure of nation states to fit the requirements that come with EU membership. The main task in chapter five has been to reinterpret the Brexit key issues in relation to the bundling/unbundling territoriality and the EU soft spaces as part of the process of systemic change en-route. The chapter focuses on both economy and immigration, and treats them as interconnected to each other.

In terms of economy, the UK’s interest is to make sure that the changes made for the advancement of the Euro and the Eurozone countries will acknowledge and respect the integrity of the Single Market, and the legitimate interests of non-EU members. The UK demands that a safeguard mechanism that would protect non-EU members be established and that economic policies to govern the Eurozone be produced ever so carefully so as not to negatively impact the non-Eurozone member states. It is, after all, the duty of a national government to protect its citizens from not only threats in the traditional/military sense but also those against economic welfare. In other words, the government has the

responsibility to ensure the provision of safeguards for micro economy from damages caused by macroeconomic issues at the governmental level.

The European economic integration provides a new ethos of commerce by way of the principle of freedom of movements to reach the aim for a 'Europe without frontiers'. Blurred national borders as a result of the elimination of borders among members open the paths to new sources and resources of wealth. This process increases heterogeneity of suppliers and customer preferences. Competition is thus sharpened. In order to maintain price stability, a new currency and a new central bank were found. As a single currency, the Euro has fundamentally altered the landscape of Europe. The governance of the Euro symbolizes a substantial transfer of competences from the national to the European level and as part of the integration project, it substantially interferes with domestic policies.

The replacement of national currencies with the Euro not only reflects the shift in loyalty from the national level to the European one, but also a shift in territoriality. It is an example of how the bundling of EU territoriality not only asks the member states to unbundle theirs but also replaces them with that of the EU. The Euro no longer serves as merely a functional object but also as something that the citizens identify with. The replacement of the national currency with the Euro consequently removed the mutual exclusiveness between member states. The soft space in terms of currency between member states advocated by the EU has simply dissipated into an altogether EU space (Eurozone) which is governed how the EU sees fit by means of the ECB with mandate and power being located at EU level. As states' capacities are reorganized at the EU level, this process also marks the shift from one kind of territoriality to another. The case of the Euro and the Eurozone highlights the point that soft spaces challenge and obscure where power actually resides.

In the UK, the full adoption of the Euro to replace the Pound Sterling was halted because the single currency did not pass Gordon Brown's five-test policy. Based on the result of the test, joining the single currency was not in the UK's interest. Ten years after the five-test policy, in the UK the single currency and its economy are still seen as flawed, incoherent, unstable, and weak, as well as having led to long term unemployment. This is how the economy issue links to the immigration debated in the Brexit campaign.

The theory explains that the process of unbundling territoriality of EU member states – the blurring of national borders, political practices in the soft spaces, as well as the bundling of EU territoriality – forces them to answer whether or not they have effectively answered the demands from their citizens. The EU forces member states to answer challenges within its national scope and reassess their operation. The problems reflected in the five-test policy represented the effects and consequences of the long-term application of neoliberalism in the EU. In order to achieve the goal of 'Europe without frontiers' or borderless Europe, the EU pushed convergence by forcing EMU member states into a fiscal straitjacket which restrains their monetary politics and pushes the adoption of budgetary austerity. As their spending is limited due to austerity, their ability to confront unemployment and social exclusion is severely constrained. Neoliberal practices for maintaining price stability and budget austerity turned out to be the obstacles for the European economy towards achieving higher growth rates.

The core of the problem brought up in the campaign for Brexit was about controlling who can and cannot enter the country. It is believed that control in immigration is needed to get good integration over time. It is not that immigration has not been beneficial to the UK; economically, they are more preferable. The problem is that inadequate infrastructure in the UK combined with largely uncontrolled immigration has diminished appreciation of the benefits that immigration can bring. The very high level of population flows from within the EU

into the UK has been unplanned and much higher than forecast. At the same time, the UK has been struggling with having to cope with the pressures on schools, hospitals and other public services. These are the prominent challenges were deeply rooted in the 40 years of neoliberalism and worsened by the austerity program which harmed the provision of public services, welfare and work security. The UK struggled to satisfy the demands for adequate infrastructure and jobs to balance the increase in population and supply of workers in the labour market. The UK saw that reducing the number of immigration is the one way that the government sees fit to tackle this issue. A fair and reasonable immigration policy must ensure that the UK's borders are more open to those benefitting the country, more closed to those burdening the welfare system. Maintaining social security is as much a national government's duty as maintaining national security. However, the policy arrangements in line with borderless Europe have not been fair, nor have they been reasonable to the UK's national preferences; it gives priority to competition and monetary issues at the expense of social demands.

In relation to social security, borderless Europe also governs the conduct of deportation, specifically of criminals. The protections against deportation for EU nationals who have committed crime are significantly stronger than those available to their non-European equivalents. This particular set of EU rules weakens the UK's ability to remove foreign criminals from the country which then will put British families at risk because it effectively means that the UK imports criminal risk into the country while having the EU rules restraining the UK's government from dealing with the issue. Due to these reasons, the idea that leaving the EU will actually lead to a safer Britain is justified. The leave option was taken as an attempt to avoid a bigger loss from remaining in the EU.



### *The originality and significance of the thesis*

The originality of the thesis lies particularly in the specific use of the theoretical understanding of systemic change to provide an alternative justification for Brexit. The significance of the thesis itself lies in the way Brexit is seen as a case of systemic change in progress. The understanding of systemic change is provided by neorealism as a theoretical paradigm with the notion of the ordering principle of anarchy and hierarchy. A systemic change is reflected in the shift between the two mutually-exclusive ordering principles while the process of the systemic change is understood by means of the conceptual understanding of bundling and unbundling territoriality. The bundling of EU territoriality by way of Europeanisation threatens the sovereignty of the UK (nation state), hence Brexit also being seen as a resistance against Europeanisation. Underlying causes. The theoretical framework established in this thesis not only explains the underlying causes for Brexit but also provides a foundation for further research in the study of European (dis)integration.

### *The Limitations of the Thesis and Further Research*

This thesis has examined the EU as an international organisation undergoing a systemic change with a federalist projection. The systemic change is studied through the concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality seen under the paradigm of neorealism. As a paradigm, neorealism can be paired up with different and narrower concepts which will produce a theoretical tools to examine other dimensions of the phenomena. Due to time and space limits, this thesis only managed to examine Brexit as a response towards a systemic change by using neorealism and the specific concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality. It would be interesting to see how different theoretical arrangements give their account under the neorealist influence for the same problems addressed in this thesis.

Furthermore, the scope of international system in this thesis is limited to that of the EU. This thesis has not connected the EU to other international systems in the wider, more global scope. Therefore, it cannot determine how the relationship between the EU and its member states would be affected by other international affairs in the global scale, or if it would be affected at all. This thesis is solely dependent on the Brexit affair as the highlight in the disintegration in the EU. More breakup cases are needed in order to give a fuller account on seeing disintegration of the EU through the neorealist lens which sees things from the system's structure perspective. Therefore, comparisons can also be made and deeper understanding of why Brexit is unique will thus be achieved.

Further research on the UK-EU relationship issue is warranted. Due to the limited scope of study of this thesis, the suitability of the theory to examine similar cases in the other part of the globe remains a question. Further research is needed to confirm this. Additionally, whilst having been able to give an alternative perspective on disintegration in the EU – or Brexit, specifically – the theoretical framework in this thesis is by no means a theory of disintegration. It may be able to give a foundational basis to establish such a theory but much work still needs to be done to build a coherent theory of disintegration.

Additionally, the notion of shifting territorialities as understood through the concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality in relation to democratic legitimacy could be explored deeper by studying how exactly the people's metageography – the imagination of the materialization – of a state comes to fruition and what determines the success of such process. In chapter four, it was mentioned that successful attempts at symbolization create unity among the people and unsuccessful ones still however creates units in regards to the people's imagination of the materialization of a state which is crucial in the establishment of modern territoriality as it plays a critical role in the formation of system of rule.

This thesis lacks the methods to assess such process and further research must be done in order to address this issue.

Looking forward, further research on finding the right degree of sovereignty to determine the flexibility of singleness of state unit could prove quite beneficial to the literature. The study of systemic change by using the neorealist paradigm, paired with the concept of bundling/unbundling territoriality will also benefit from an examination on the cases with different EU member states. Different cases involving different member states could provide different dimensions and insight to systemic change in the European Union. This particular topic, if examined together with the previous suggestion, will help determine an optimum point for the advancement of European integration. It would also patch the work further into the building of, perhaps, a focused study of disintegration in the European Union.

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