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From Neo-Functional Peace to a Logic of Spillover in EU External Policy: a Response to Visoka and Doyle

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Abstract

In their recently published *JCMS* article, Gezim Visoka and John Doyle have proposed the concept of ‘neofunctional peace’ as a means to conceptualize the EU’s peacemaking practices in the case of the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. This article challenges the ‘neofunctional peace’ on conceptual and empirical grounds. We critically discuss Visoka and Doyle’s (2016) reading of neofunctionalism and question parts of their empirical evidence given for the existence of a ‘neo-functional peace’. Going beyond a mere critique of the article by Visoka and Doyle and arguing that the authors may not have fully exploited neofunctionalism’s potential for theorizing EU external policy, we stipulate a neofunctionalist logic for explaining integration in the area of EU external policy. Focusing on three spillover dynamics to explain the initiation of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue – functional discrepancies, supranational entrepreneurship and external spillover – we illustrate how neofunctionalism can be used to explain the extension of the scope of EU competences and action in the external policy realm.

Keywords: neofunctionalism; EU external policy; spillover; mediation

Introduction

In light of the various challenges the European Union (EU) is confronted with in its external relations – such as the Syrian civil war, the armed conflict in Ukraine or the crisis in the Sahel region – it is certainly an appropriate time to reflect on how to theorize the EU’s involvement

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in peacemaking and peacebuilding activities in particular and perhaps in external policy more generally.

In their recently published *JCMS* article, Gezim Visoka and John Doyle (2016) have made a noteworthy contribution in this regard, proposing the concept of ‘neofunctional peace’ as a means to conceptualize the EU’s peacemaking practices. Based on the observation that liberal peacebuilding frameworks do not provide a sufficiently adequate framework to explain the EU’s role in this field, and assuming that the EU’s external actions to promote peace in the international realm ‘should also be seen as self-mirroring of its internal dynamics of neo-functional integration and consolidation’ (2016, p. 863), they argue for understanding EU peacemaking through the lens of neo-functionalist integration theory. Their theoretical take thus also speaks to the broader argument that European integration theory may not have been sufficiently exploited to analyze the EU’s external action (Bergmann and Niemann, 2015b, p. 177). Therefore, a (critical) discussion of Visoka and Doyle’s conceptualization of neo-functional peace is not only of interest in the context of EU peacemaking practices in the Western Balkans, but also provides an interesting point of departure for reflecting more generally about neo-functionalist perspectives on EU external policy. Their article is a welcome contribution to put neofunctionalism back on the ‘radar screen’ of researchers studying EU external policy.

While we very much agree with the authors’ general point of departure, the article of Visoka and Doyle (2016) elicits a response due to several substantial conceptual and empirical flaws in their analysis that we would like to explore. First, we critically discuss the authors’ reading of neo-functionalism and challenge some of their implicit and explicit assumptions about how neo-functionalism is reflected within the EU’s institutional framework in terms of an institutionalized culture of depoliticization (section I). Second, we question whether the five ‘neofunctional features’ of the EU’s approach as mediator in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue identified by the authors really correspond with core neofunctionalist assumptions and challenge some of their empirical observations to prove a neo-functionalist logic in the EU’s mediation between Kosovo and Serbia (section II). In addition, the rationale of this response to Visoka and Doyle (2016) is not only to discuss the authors’ approach, but to take their article as an important stepping stone for further reflection on how neofunctionalism’s potential for theorizing EU external policy could be fully exploited. Thus, we go beyond a mere critique of their article in two respects: we go some way towards stipulating a neofunctionalist logic for explaining integration in the area of EU external policy more generally (section III). Moreover, we apply the specified neofunctionalist spillover logics to the question of why the EU has become engaged as mediator in the Kosovo-Serbia talks (section IV). To provide for comparability of the two articles, we

have deliberately chosen to study the same case as Visoka and Doyle (2016). Using neofunctionalism as a framework to explain the *initiation* of the EU-mediated talks, our analysis thus complements the authors' analysis of the EU's approach during the mediation process. Consequently, beyond offering a critique of Visoka and Doyle (2016), our main contribution to the literature is twofold: we further elaborate on and modify neofunctionalist assumptions to be applied to explain integration in the realm of EU external policy, and illustrate empirically the added value of a neofunctionalist explanation of the increase in terms of level and scope of EU competences and action in the external policy domain.

I. Neofunctionalism as an Institutionalized Culture of EU Peacemaking?

First formulated in the late 1950s and early 1960s through the works of Ernst Haas (1958) and Leon Lindberg (1963), neofunctionalism is based on the following basic assumptions: (1) integration is understood as a process rather than an outcome, which implies that integration evolves over time and unfolds its own dynamic; (2) decisions are taken by rational and self-interested actors that have the capacity to learn and change their preferences; (3) interaction is characterized by positive-sum games and incremental decision-making. From a neofunctionalist perspective, change is a function of spillover processes, encapsulating the hypothesis that 'the establishment of supranational institutions designed to deal with functionally specific tasks will set in motion economic, social and political processes which generate pressures towards further integration' (Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991, p. 4).

As Visoka and Doyle (2016, p. 865) rightly state, neofunctionalism has been rarely applied to EU external policy, and if so, often only more heuristically than as an entire theory (Bergmann und Niemann, 2015b, p. 171). Most frequently, neofunctionalism has been employed in the field of EU enlargement and neighbourhood policy (Macmillan, 2009; Özen, 1998; Renner, 2009). In addition, there have been isolated applications of neofunctionalism to EU trade policy and defence policy (Collester, 2000; Niemann, 2013). With respect to the EU's activities in the field of conflict prevention and resolution, however, neofunctionalism remains an untapped resource for conceptualization and theorizing. Thus, Visoka and Doyle's attempt to explore how neofunctionalism can be used 'to conceptualize the EU's peace support practices' (Visoka and Doyle, 2016, p. 862) is a worthwhile and very relevant endeavour. This added value notwithstanding, their application of neofunctionalism is problematic in the following respects.

First and foremost, the level of explanatory ambition of their analysis remains somewhat unclear. In the introduction of the article, they express their ambition to make the case 'for using

neo-functionalism as a framework to explain the EU's strategy for dealing with protracted conflicts' (Visoka and Doyle, 2016, p. 863). Their *de facto* application of neofunctionalism throughout the article, however, points to another research ambition: to demonstrate empirically that neo-functionalist theory has become engrained in policy-makers' thinking and practice as regards to the EU's peace support activities (2016, p. 863). According to the authors, the EU 'use[s] neo-functionalism as an approach to building peace' (2016, p. 866) in the neighbourhood and has applied 'neofunctionalist techniques' (2016, p. 867) to promote the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. In other words, the authors suggest that neofunctionalism has been the source of an institutionalized culture of depoliticization that lies at the core of the EU's foreign and security policy:

'at the heart of the EU's self-declared 'comprehensive' approach lies an embedded assumption that, in many cases, the most suitable framework to resolve regional conflicts and insecurity is the externalization of neo-functionalism, which, from the perspective of key EU actors, was the main impetus for the formation of the EU and consolidation of peace in Europe' (Visoka and Doyle, 2016, p. 865).

We do not argue that it is impossible to make this leap from theory to practice, but rather that doing so necessitates demonstrating empirically that neofunctionalism has become embedded in the EU's peacemaking culture and practice. Yet, the evidence provided by the authors is not sufficiently convincing to empirically substantiate the neo-functionalist footing of EU peace support practices. First, the authors note that the 2009 Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities explicitly mentions that the EU's involvement in mediating conflicts abroad is based on its 'own experience of a peace project' (Council of the EU, 2009, p. 6), taking this as evidence for their hypothesis that the EU's peace support activities are an externalization of its internal practices based on neo-functionalism (Visoka and Doyle, 2016, p. 866). However, the quote is taken out of its context, as the paragraph refers to the EU's distinct credibility to promote mediation as a peaceful tool to manage conflicts. While the Concept establishes a link between the EU's experience in peacefully managing internal conflicts and its credibility as a mediator in external conflicts, it does *not* make the argument that the EU's mediation practices are based on lessons learnt from EU-internal disputes (Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 6). In addition, the fact that the EU acknowledges its own experience as a peace project itself does not, in our view, provide sufficient evidence for the hypothesis

that the EU seeks to externalize its internal mechanisms to resolve internal conflicts in its peace support practices.

Second, the authors argue that the Regulation 230/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) ‘reflects a neo-functional view’ (Visoka and Doyle, 2016, p. 866), as it highlights the linkages between internal and external dimensions of security policy. However, only if there are functional interdependencies that result from these linkages and that create pressures for policy-makers to take further integrative steps in the field of EU security, could one speak of some neo-functional logic behind EU security policy (Haas, 1958: 297ff).

Third, if the authors argue that the embeddedness of neofunctionalism is a principle feature of the EU’s peace support practices (*cf.* Visoka and Doyle, 2016, pp. 864–867), it is necessary to demonstrate empirically that acting according to neofunctionalist assumptions has become a habit of EU policy-makers in this field. In sum, these examples illustrate the problematic empirical basis for Visoka and Doyle’s (2016) claims. While we do not seek to reject the possibility that there may be an empirical basis for making this argument, our point is that considerably more effort would be necessary to solidly establish this link between theory and reality empirically, a critique that also applies to their analysis of EU mediation between Kosovo and Serbia.

II. Neo-functionalism and EU Mediation between Kosovo and Serbia

In March 2011, the first round of talks between Belgrade and Pristina mediated by EEAS Counsellor Robert Cooper was held in Brussels. In October 2012, the talks were transformed into a high-level dialogue, with the two prime ministers of Kosovo and Serbia together with the EU High Representative meeting almost every month to achieve agreements on various issues that are intended to lead to a normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina (Bergmann and Niemann, 2015a; Bieber, 2015). In their analysis of the EU-facilitated dialogue, Visoka and Doyle (2016) extrapolate five key features that have shaped the process of EU mediation between Kosovo and Serbia and link them to key assumptions of neofunctionalist theory. We briefly recapitulate these five features identified by the authors and discuss their connection to neofunctionalist thought.

(1) The background conditions were ripe for both sides to initiate a peace process, whereby the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia emerged as a key condition for advancing the stalled EU integration process for both countries.

While we agree with the authors that the EU utilized a window of opportunity to bring the parties to the negotiation table (Visoka and Doyle, 2016, p. 867), the link to neofunctionalism as guiding the EU's action to initiate the mediation process remains somehow blurred. Two specific features of the pre-mediation period are mentioned as background conditions: (a) the protractedness of the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia that had seemed to become less amenable to a peaceful solution since Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) (Tanam, 2013, pp. 949–950); and (b) the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) advisory opinion that stated that Kosovo's UDI did not violate any applicable rule of international law (ICJ, 2010, p. 1). According to the authors, this was 'another accidental historical factor, which (...) needs to be taken into account when exploring neofunctionalist processes' (Visoka and Doyle, 2016, p. 868). How these factors reflect a neofunctionalist logic at play, however, remains unanswered. If the authors sought to demonstrate that spillover dynamics triggered the EU's involvement in the mediation process, a substantial linkage to neofunctionalist assumptions would have been necessary (*cf.* sections III and IV).

(2) Technical dialogue and agreements in areas of low politics permitted confidence-building, socialization, and development of mutual commitments.

We fully agree with the authors' assessment that the EU's mediation strategy was to start with rather low-key issues first and then move to more politically sensitive ones. However, we question the authors' claim that the EU's strategy 'permitted confidence-building, socialization and development of mutual commitments' (2015, p. 6). In contrast, recent analyses of the case (Bergmann and Niemann, 2015a; Bieber, 2015; Economides and Lindsay, 2015) suggest that one major shortcoming of the dialogue has been that it has not led to substantive trust-building and bilateral rapprochement between the conflict parties. Although the conflict parties managed to reach compromises on a number of important issues, the agreements have been interpreted radically differently in Pristina and Belgrade, resulting in their slow and lagging implementation (Bieber, 2015, p. 317). Moreover, it is questionable whether the dialogue process has led to some form of socialization process, particularly on the Serbian side. As Economides and Lindsay (2015, p. 1038) demonstrate, Serbia's altered approach to Kosovo is primarily a result of pragmatism and rational-strategic calculations, while non-recognition of Kosovo remains a firm red line in Serbian foreign policy. In fact, Serbian resistance against Kosovo's independence has even hardened, exemplified by Serbian attempts to prevent Kosovo's membership in UNESCO or sports' organizations such as UEFA and FIFA (Crisis Group, 2013, p. 10).

(3) Technical agreements had a spillover effect which launched a high-level political dialogue and resolved numerous outstanding sensitive political issues.

The authors' main argument here is that the initial agreements the parties reached on issues such as freedom of movement and custom stamps created pressures to resolve other issues such as integrated border management, which again necessitated the negotiation of more sensitive political issues such as the governance of Northern Kosovo, where a Serb majority resides (Visoka and Doyle, 2015, p. 9). However, the authors' assertion that this dynamic was a result of 'the choice and design of incremental steps, following neo-functional assumptions', taken by EU policy-makers, is not fully convincing. The authors do not sufficiently substantiate empirically that the extension of the scope of the negotiations and the transformation to a high-level political dialogue followed a specific design the EU had purposefully chosen for the negotiations, and that this decision was informed by a long-term EU strategy for how to proceed in the talks. Even if one accepts that EU policy-makers involved in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue acted out of a habit of depoliticizing politically sensitive issues, one could contrast this claim with the neofunctionalist argument termed by Schmitter (1971, p. 250) the 'functional paradox'. According to this logic, the more technical and depoliticized policy-making becomes, 'the easier it may be to get initial agreement but the less significant is likely to be the subsequent impact upon national structures/values and, indirectly, regional processes' (p. 250). In other words, a certain degree of (re-)politicization may be conducive to achieving substantial policy outcomes. In line with this logic, the results of the analysis of Bergmann and Niemann (2015a, p. 966) on this case suggest that EU negotiators' gradual realization that the discussions on almost every technical issue related to the much more politically sensitive question of Northern Kosovo's political and legal status led to the awareness that the dialogue had to be transferred to the highest political level in order to achieve further progress on settling the conflict (see also Bieber, 2015, p. 315).

Another conceptual issue is whether the adoption of a strategy of moving from low-key issues to more politically sensitive ones is unique to a neofunctionalist logic of EU peacemaking. There has long been extensive talk about the strategy of issue linkages in the negotiation literature (see Pruitt, 1983, p. 168). In peace and conflict studies, there is a considerable body of literature on issue-based and problem-solving strategies that describes exactly the strategic logic that Visoka and Doyle have associated with neofunctionalism (Hopmann, 1996; Kelman, 1996). Moreover, a comparison with the UN mediated status talks between Kosovo and Serbia in 2006/7 reveals that UN facilitator Matti Ahtisaari drew on a similar strategy in the first negotiation phase. Addressing practical issues such as decentralization, community rights and

protection of religious and cultural heritage first, Ahtisaari sought to move the parties towards narrowing their differences over practical issues first before turning to the question of Kosovo's final status (Perritt, 2010, p. 156).

(4) The ambiguous nature, technical language and transcendental meaning of agreements permitted progress on sensitive political issues [...] without negatively affecting the self-interest and domestic legitimacy of the parties.

In their analysis, Visoka and Doyle demonstrate the EU's purposeful strategy to commit the parties to ambiguously formulated agreements that could be interpreted in different ways as a means to avoid strong domestic opposition (Visoka and Doyle, 2016, p. 872). As the authors argue, the EU chose this strategy particularly in the technical dialogue phase:

'to reduce the potential politicization of these issues and create space for both parties to sell their domestic audiences these technical agreements as favourable deals in their national interest' (p. 872).

Although the authors do not elaborate on the link between (de-)politicization and neo-functionalism, their argument that the deconstruction of high-level issues into technical solutions enabled the parties to reach agreements is convincing and empirically substantiated.

(5) The EU rewarded parties based on the process and commitment rather than outcomes and impact of agreements, which does not exclude the possibility for encapsulation, spillback and retrenchment of all sides in the peace process.

Despite the achievements of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, the lagging implementation of the agreements demonstrates the incompleteness and fragility of this process (Bieber, 2015, p. 311). Visoka and Doyle (2016) rightly point to the limits of the EU's positive conditionality and critical uncertainties such as growing domestic resistance against the dialogue in Kosovo and the unpredictable EU integration dynamics of Serbia and Kosovo. According to the authors, 'these future uncertainties show that this neo-functional peace could experience setbacks' (Visoka and Doyle, 2016, p. 873). Again, the analysis lacks a clear argument related to neofunctionalist assumptions. One might ask whether any approach to peacemaking and mediation could exclude the possibility of setbacks and reversals to a peace process, thus questioning the uniqueness of such a risk to what the authors have termed a 'neo-functional peace'.

Additionally, the authors' allusion to what Schmitter (1971, p. 236) has termed 'spill-back' remains underexplored and raises, again, the question of neofunctionalism's applicability to this case. The concept of spill-back relates to a withdrawal from previous integrative steps and thus describes a process of dis-integration. In the case of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, however, the agreements between Serbia and Kosovo are a manifestation of mutual *co-operation* rather than *integration* between the two entities, which seems to be a stretch too far away from the original concept.

In sum, our discussion of Visoka and Doyle's 'neo-functional peace' and analysis of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia has demonstrated some weaknesses. One key criticism is the insufficient empirical substantiation of their claim that neofunctionalist assumptions have been embedded in the EU's peacemaking culture and practice. In addition, apart from challenging some empirical observations made by the authors, we argue that the concept of neo-functional peace, as they have developed it, takes neofunctionalist assumptions too far away from their original meaning and thus risks developing a caricature of neofunctionalism rather than a sound theoretically embedded conceptualization.

III. Neofunctionalist Logics for Explaining EU External Policy Integration

As the neo-functional peace postulated by the authors is problematic for the reasons given above, we suggest moving one step back from the concept of neo-functional peace and dealing with the question of what *neofunctionalism as a theoretical framework* could contribute to our understanding of EU external policy in general and the EU's peacemaking activities in particular. By doing so, we address the lack of theoretical depth of the analysis of Visoka and Doyle (2016) and seek to explore how a theoretical link between neofunctionalism and EU external policy could be deductively established from the theory's core assumptions. Therefore, this section uncovers (and specifies) the neofunctionalist logics for explaining integration in the area of EU external policy, that is the (gradual) increase in terms of level and scope of EU competences and action in the external policy domain.¹ Three factors are rather explicit in early neofunctionalist writings, albeit less with regard to external policy-making: (1) functional discrepancies and rationales; (2) socialization and learning processes; (3) the role of supranational

¹ The 'level' of integration concerns the degree/depth to which an issue/policy is governed by supranational institutions and rules. The 'scope' of integration concerns the breadth of issues dealt with at the European level. This also includes the breadth of EU action in a given policy area (*cf.* Niemann, 2006, p. 55; Schmitter, 1969, p. 163).

institutions. We seek to formulate a fourth spillover, here labeled (4) ‘external spillover’, which is less grounded in early neofunctionalism, but nevertheless rooted in neofunctionalist assumptions. Subsequently, we outline these factors/logics and briefly illustrate them with regard to the realm of EU external relations.

Functional Discrepancies and Rationales

The basis for the development of functional pressures is the interdependence of policy sectors and issue areas. Individual sectors and issues tend to be so interdependent in modern polities and economies that it is difficult to isolate them from each other. The tensions and contradictions that arise from the initial integration of one sector *vis-à-vis* other sectors tend to induce policy-makers to take additional integrative steps (Haas, 1958, p. 297). One can broadly distinguish two types of functional discrepancies: first, functional pressures come about when an original objective can be assured only by taking further integrative actions (Lindberg, 1963, p. 10). Second, when the governance/regulation of one policy area has negative implications on another sector, these tensions can often only be resolved when the latter is also integrated.

This logic can also be applied to and attributed considerable relevance in terms of expanding integration into external policy areas. It can be argued that during the course of European integration, internal policies have become more and more intertwined with external policy areas, also given the increasing issue density, which increased functional interdependencies (Pierson, 1998). In addition, functional discrepancies developed between different external policies. The literature has pointed to several functional interdependencies that are likely to have fostered the emergence or expansion of EC/EU external policy integration in terms of level and/or scope. For example, functional links and pressures have been identified between the customs union and the need for ECSC co-operation in international institutions (Haas, 1958, pp. 297–299), between the customs union and external trade and development policy (Peters and Wagner, 2005, p. 236), between development policy and democracy promotion (Keukeleire and MacNaughtan, 2008, pp. 332–333), between the internal market and migration policy (Monar, 2001), and between the single market and (external) energy policy (Matlary, 1997). Interestingly, in the field of security and defence – that has been lagging behind in terms of the level of integration compared to other areas of EU external policy – functional pressures stemming from the single market have largely been absent (Kenny, 2006).

Socialization and Learning

Neofunctionalists also considered support for the integration process amongst economic and political elites to be of great significance. Lindberg (1963) in particular attributed great significance to the role of governmental elites and socialization processes. He drew attention to the proliferation of EU working groups and committees, which brought thousands of national and Commission officials into frequent contact with each other on a recurrent basis. This increased the likelihood of socialization processes amongst civil servants within the Council framework, not least due to the development of mutual trust and a certain *esprit de corps* among officials in Community forums (Lindberg, 1963, ch.4). Neofunctionalists thus challenged the classic intergovernmental vision of decision-making based on national strategic bargaining and postulated the existence of a ‘supranational’ problem-solving process, ‘a cumulative pattern of accommodation in which the participants refrain from unconditionally vetoing proposals and instead seek to attain agreement by means of compromises upgrading common interests’ (Haas, 1958, p. 66). Neofunctionalists implied that these processes, by fostering co-operative decision-making and consensus formation amongst agents of member governments, would eventually lead to more integrative outcomes (Lindberg, 1963, chs. I and IV; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970, p. 119).

Even though clear cause-and effect relationships are notoriously difficult to establish concerning these phenomena, most of the literature that touches upon socialization processes in EU external policy-making broadly corroborates the neofunctionalist assumptions above. These processes have already been described in the rather unlikely context of European Political Cooperation (von der Gabelentz, 1979; Nuttall, 1992). The more recent literature on EU external policy-making confirms the findings that have been made concerning socialization and learning processes in the general EC/EU context and the EPC setting. Various bodies involved in EU external policy have been studied with rather similar results, like the studies on COREPER (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 1997; Lewis, 1998), the Article 133 Committee (Niemann, 2004), the Political and Security Committee (Howorth, 2010; Meyer, 2006), various Council workings groups on external policy (Juncos and Pomorska, 2006, 2007), the Central Europe Working Group (Niemann, 2006), the EU Military Committee and the Committee for Civilian Crisis Management (Cross, 2010). Implicitly, Visoka and Doyle (2016, pp. 868–869) also point to the impact of socialization processes on the mediation behaviour of EEAS and European Commission officials involved in the Kosovo-Serbia talks on part of the EU.²

² We are grateful to one of the referees for pointing this out.

The role of Supranational Institutions

As pointed out by neofunctionalists, supranational institutions are concerned with increasing their own powers and thus become agents of integration, because they are likely to benefit from the progression of this process. Once established, they tend to take on a life of their own and are difficult to control by those who created them. Supranational institutions may foster the integration process, for example, by acting as policy entrepreneurs, through promotional brokerage, lifting agreements beyond the lowest common denominator (Haas, 1964: 75ff; Lindberg, 1963, ch. 3), or through positions of centrality and authority in the Community's political system, capable of directing the dynamics of relations with various types of actors (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970, ch. 3; Nye, 1970, p. 809). In addition, institutional structures (of which the central institutions are an important part) have an effect on how actors understand and form their interests and identities (Haas, 1958).

Although overall the EU's institutions may not have been able to play quite the same integrative role as in some internal policy areas of the first pillar, they have nevertheless provided a certain impetus for greater co-operation and integration among the Member States in external policy-making. This can be witnessed across the various external policy domains: external trade policy (da Conceição-Heldt, 2010; Delreux, 2011; Elsig, 2007), development policy (Carbone, 2007; Grilli, 1993, pp. 90, 98), external migration policy (Bürgin, 2013; Trauner and Manigrassi, 2014), enlargement and neighbourhood policy (Jones and Clark, 2008; Macmillan, 2009), external environmental and energy policy (Mayer, 2008; Renner, 2009; Rietig, 2014), and even to some extent in the EU's security and defence policy (Krause, 2003; Riddervold, 2016).

External Spillover

The first three spillover logics are all endogenous in nature, they all stem and evolve from the European integration process itself. We seek to formulate a fourth spillover logic that we have labeled 'external spillover', which is less grounded in early neofunctionalism, but nevertheless largely rooted in neofunctionalist assumptions and thus deduceable from this body of literature. External spillover has three components/triggers.

First, the EU tends to increase its scope of external policy involvement as a result of the 'externalization' of its (economic) policies. As the EU is the world's largest economy, inbound regulation is likely to produce externalities for third parties. Even in the early years of the Community, market integration and joint policy-making in the economic realm created some type of common external policy where none had existed before (Schmitter, 1969). That the EU's

internal policies have a substantial impact on third countries has been increasingly noted in the literature (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009). This argument has been taken one step further by Damro (2012, p. 683) who suggests that ‘the single market provides the material existence of the EU as market power Europe that externalizes its economic and social market-related policies and regulatory measures’. As the biggest trading block in the world, the EU is capable of externalizing various internal policies, especially on regulatory standards (which affects many EU external policies, including trade, enlargement, environment, migration and development policy). The EU thus tends to make use of the large size of its market, which gives it very substantial bargaining power, in the attempt to get other actors to adapt to its policies and regulatory standards. The EU may also unintentionally externalize its policies simply because the size of the single market makes its standards attractive to others (Damro, 2012).³ As a result, third countries may seek to engage the EU in negotiations, which would also lead to an expansion of EU scope/action. The extent to which intentional and unintentional externalization have increased the scope of EU external action has not been sufficiently analyzed, yet (but see Damro, 2015).

Second, (successful) regional integration tends to be perceived as attractive, and thus creates expectations and demands from outsiders (Schmitter, 1969). This is well grounded in neofunctionalist thinking where integration begets further integration. The magnetic force of European integration has been visible during the various rounds of EC/EU enlargement since the early 1970s (Grabbe, 2014). Given the considerable change in a substantial number of countries and the consequential strategic benefits for the Union that it has brought about, enlargement has frequently been held to be the EU’s most successful foreign policy (Korte, 2013). Moreover, we witness that the growing institutionalization of CFSP and CSDP since the Lisbon Treaty has created additional demands *vis-à-vis* the EU to become more strongly engaged in preventing and managing violent conflicts like those in Ukraine, Syria or Libya. In other words, increasing expectations from outsiders create pressures for the EU to upgrade its diplomatic profile to manage and resolve various crises around the globe.

Third, and most removed from endogenous developments, external events and developments tend to spur further integration in terms of level and/or scope of European external policy-making. Two causal mechanisms can be offered here. (A) External events/crises to which the EU is supposed to react can have an integrative impact, even when the EU fails to perform adequately. For example, it has been argued that the EU’s failure during the Yugoslav crisis in

³ For initial evidence of the externalization of the EU’s market-related policies, see Damro (2012, pp. 695–696).

the early to mid-1990s exposed the inadequacies of the CFSP, which triggered a process of advancing this policy, including the development of a military dimension (Nuttall, 2000, ch. 9). (B) Another logic is grounded in the nature of many international problems and their perception. Regional integration is often viewed as a more effective buffer against disadvantageous or uncertain external developments. This is related to the perception that many problems go beyond the governance potential of individual Member States. Transnational phenomena and processes of economic globalization, migration, environmental destruction or international terrorism require a common approach (for instance, of integration partners) and external policies in order to tackle them with some success (George and Bache, 2000, p. 39). This exogenous aspect is linked to, and further explained by, an endogenous one. European democratic nation-states depend on the delivery of economic, social and other well-being to their people. Increasingly, due to regional interdependencies and more global problems, they lose their power to deliver these goods. To circumvent the decrease in influence over their territory, national governments tend to co-operate more closely on the European level, also with regard to external policy-making (Wessels, 1997, p. 286ff).

IV. The Spillover Logic and the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue

Having outlined a conceptualization of the spillover logic(s) in EU external policy, we now return to the case of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue to illustrate the explanatory potential of neofunctionalism for the case at hand. In contrast to Visoka and Doyle (2016), we do *not* argue that neo-functionalism helps us to explain the dynamics and outcome of the EU mediated talks between Kosovo and Serbia. Rather, we suggest that the spillover logics developed above contribute to our understanding of why the EU initiated the mediation process, thus providing an explanation for an extension of scope of EU external policy action. In other words, our explanation of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue may be complementary to Visoka and Doyle's conceptualization of neo-functional peace as the two contributions focus on different research questions.

Given that a comprehensive empirical substantiation of our argument would go beyond the scope of this paper, we seek to merely illustrate the utility of the spillover logic to understand the EU's mediation initiative. We argue that functional discrepancies stemming from EU enlargement policy, the role of supranational entrepreneurship by the High Representative and the

Council Secretariat, and the ICJ's Advisory Opinion on Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence as a significant external event triggered the EU's decision to initiate the mediation process.

Functional Discrepancies and Rationales

We argue that functional requirements stemming from the EU's decision to provide the Western Balkan states with the prospect of EU accession prompted the EU to initiate the dialogue on normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. In other words, tensions that arose from the EU's enlargement policy induced the EU to take additional steps of action in the field of CFSP in order to overcome the deadlock in EU-Serbia relations and move forward with the country's accession to the EU.

The Feira European Council in 2000 provided the Western Balkans countries with a membership prospect that became even more concrete in 2003 when the Thessaloniki European Council stated that 'the future of the Western Balkans is within the EU' (European Council, 2003, para 2). To realize this goal, the EU developed the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) as an important tool to provide economic and financial assistance to the Western Balkan countries and to establish contractual relationships until their envisaged accession to the EU (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2014, p. 243). The accession of the Western Balkan countries thus became an EU internal objective and a cornerstone of the EU's policy towards this region.

However, Serbia's path towards the EU proved to be more rocky than expected. Apart from the unresolved status of Kosovo that rendered EU-Serbia relations extremely difficult, Serbia did not make much progress on democratic reforms and rule of law (Economides and Ker-Lindsay, 2015, p. 1031). Additionally, Serbia continued its policy of non-co-operation with the ICTY, which caused a suspension of the negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement (Subotic, 2010, p. 600). When the UN General Assembly based on Serbia's request decided in October 2008 to seek an ICJ ruling on the legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence, EU-Serbia relations had ultimately reached deadlock. The strong tensions between the EU and Serbia also became apparent in the EU's decision to postpone any reaction towards Serbia's application for EU membership submitted in December 2009 (Economides and Ker-Lindsay, 2015, p. 1033).

The ICJ's advisory opinion issued in July 2010 provoked a considerable debate among the EU Member States within the Political and Security Committee (PSC) about how to react to the verdict and the Serbian draft UN General Assembly resolution that called for renewed Kosovo

status talks (Cooper, 2015). As Tannam (2013, p. 955) finds in her analysis of the PSC discussions at that time, ‘the consensus among states was to resolve the Serbia-Kosovo issue, and also to support Serbia’s membership of the EU, even if there were differences of opinion about Kosovo’s status’. In other words, there was a realization on the side of the EU Member States that there was no way to move forward with Serbia’s accession to the EU if no progress was made on the relations between Kosovo and Serbia (authors’ interviews with EU officials, autumn 2013).

Based on this consensus, the Member States finally managed to agree on a joint statement read out by HR Catherine Ashton on 22 July 2010 that announced the EU’s readiness to facilitate a process of dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade (European Union, 2010, p. 1). This statement became the basis of the UN General Assembly resolution adopted on 8 September 2010. In neofunctionalist terminology, the high salience of the goal of supporting Serbia’s accession to the EU and the realization that the status quo of EU-Serbia relations was unbearable if the EU wanted to achieve this goal finally triggered the EU’s initiative to engage as a mediator in the Kosovo-Serbia conflict.

The existence and strength of functional pressures stemming from the EU’s enlargement policy triggering the extension of EU action to the field of conflict management becomes even more plausible if one considers that there were hardly any credible policy alternatives for the EU. While stepping back from the goal of supporting Serbia’s EU membership was not considered an option, other ideas on how to react to the ICJ’s advisory opinion – such as moving the parties’ towards making a common statement on accepting the ICJ verdict – did not find the support of all EU Member States and were finally discarded (authors’ interview with former EU official, October 2013; see also Tannam, 2013, p. 955). Thus, functional discrepancies provide a plausible basic explanation of the EU’s initiative to start a mediation process between Kosovo and Serbia on the normalization of their relations.

Role of Supranational Institutions

The role of supranational entrepreneurship plausibly complements the neofunctionalist explanation of the EU’s initiative to mediate between Serbia and Kosovo. We find that the Council Secretariat and the High Representative (HR) played an important role in crafting the EU’s decision to initiate the mediation process. The Council Secretariat, represented by Robert Cooper in the PSC, took up a strong agenda-setting role in the PSC negotiations by proposing several drafts on how to possibly react to the ICJ judgement (authors’ interviews with EU officials, autumn 2013). As Tannam finds,

‘the secretariat played a strong mediating and problem-solving role, determining how far a state would compromise, identifying key areas of concern to individual states and on the basis of that information, presenting draft proposals’ (2013, p. 955).

HR Catherine Ashton gave high priority to the Kosovo-Serbia dossier and showed a strong personal commitment to initiate and conduct the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. Welcoming the ICJ’s judgment, Ashton interpreted the decision as opening ‘a new phase’ in EU-Serbia/Kosovo relations (European Union, 2010, p. 1), thereby framing the issue as having positive implications for Serbia’s and Kosovo’s path towards the EU (Amadio Vicere, 2016, p. 562). Together with the Council Secretariat and EU Member State officials, HR Ashton played a key role in the ‘intense negotiation and information exchange’ with Serbia between July and October 2010 (Tannam, 2013, p. 956). Catherine Ashton also personally engaged several times with Serbian President Tadic to convince him to let the Serbian draft resolution fall and instead support the EU’s document (authors’ interviews with EU officials, autumn 2013). In the end, the Serbian government was persuaded to co-sponsor the EU’s draft resolution. Ashton’s strong commitment to the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue became also apparent when the talks in October 2012 were transformed into a high-level political dialogue between the two prime ministers chaired by HR Catherine Ashton. As our interviews with EU officials indicate, the desire to prove the functionality of the newly established EEAS and Ashton’s fight for a tangible ‘success story’ were a key underlying motivation for initiating and conducting the mediation effort (authors’ interviews with EU officials, autumn 2013).

External Spillover

External events and developments may spur further integration in terms of level and/or scope of European external policy-making. External spillover pressures are also traceable concerning the EU’s decision to initiate the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. The ICJ judgment of July 2010 can be seen as a significant external event that created pressure for further EU action. Although the EU had been aware that the ICJ was going to issue its advisory opinion in July, it did not seem to be well prepared for it, resulting in a ‘big quarrel’ between Member States on the EU’s possible reaction to the judgment (authors’ interviews with EU officials, autumn 2013). Serbia reacted relatively quickly and circulated its own draft UN General Assembly resolution calling for renewed Kosovo status talks, putting additional time pressure on the EU (Economides and

Ker-Lindsay, 2015, p. 1033). The Kosovo government celebrated the advisory opinion as a victory for its efforts to increase Kosovo's international recognition. As both sides immediately sought to utilize the ICJ judgment for their national purposes, it was clear to EU policy-makers that only a timely, common response by all EU Member States – recognizers and non-recognizers – could tackle this sort of problem and prevent a further deterioration of the protracted Kosovo-Serbia relations which would have made Serbia's accession to the EU even less likely (authors' interviews with EU officials, autumn 2013). This imminent pressure on the EU was actually conducive to promoting a consensus among all Member States that EU action on this was needed, a consensus that has been viewed by diplomats as a great achievement (Tannam, 2013, p. 955).

Apart from putting pressure on the EU Member States to hammer out a common response, the ICJ judgment created the perception of providing a unique opportunity to the EU to overcome the divide among EU Member States on the question of how to react to Serbia's application to join the EU. As Sir Robert Cooper remembers, the ICJ judgment was perceived in the context of the deadlock of EU-Serbia relations at that time: 'So we put those two things together and it looked like an opportunity. Here was an unsolved problem, here was perhaps an opportunity to do something' (Cooper, 2015, p. 1). From a counterfactual point of view, it seems unlikely that the consensus of EU Member States to call for an EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina would have easily emerged without the ICJ judgment, since the split between recognizers and non-recognizers had already prevented the EU from making any substantial reaction to Serbia's application for membership in 2009.

Conclusion

Our analysis has challenged Visoka and Doyle (2016) on conceptual and empirical grounds. We have critically discussed the authors' reading of neo-functionalism and have argued that the link between the 'neo-functional peace' and neofunctionalist assumptions is often rather blurred. We also question whether neofunctionalism has been the source of an institutionalized culture of depoliticization at the heart of EU foreign and security policy, and argue that further empirical evidence is necessary to substantiate this claim. The 'neo-functional peace' risks taking neofunctionalism too far beyond its original meaning and thus developing a caricature of neofunctionalism rather than a sound theoretically embedded conceptualization. In our view, the authors have not fully exploited neofunctionalism's potential to theorize EU external policy

in general and the EU's peacemaking practices in particular. Overall, we argue that neo-functional peace is a promising concept, but needs further theoretical reflection and empirical substantiation.

Building on the argument that the authors have not fully exploited neofunctionalism's potential, we go some way towards stipulating a neofunctionalist rationale for explaining integration in the area of EU external policy. In doing so, we put forward the logics that early neofunctionalists had specified for (internal) economic integration and indicated that (and how) they work with regard to integration in the area of external policy-making. In addition, we advanced an additional spillover that, while rooted in neofunctionalist assumptions, is more specifically geared towards the external realm. If one takes account of change, the theoretical tools designed six decades ago cannot be left unaltered. Hence, if we allow a theory to develop with time, then this extrapolation towards an external spillover that we propose may be seen as a legitimate extension of early neofunctionalism.

While empirical developments and processes in the field of EU external policy have neither been sufficiently linked to neofunctionalist theorizing, nor been studied systematically with a view to probing neofunctionalist logics, it seems that there is substantial potential for neofunctionalism to explain the gradual increase in terms of level and scope of EU competences and action in the external policy domain. The deductively derived neofunctionalist logics are potentially applicable to all areas of EU external policy that have witnessed an increase in terms of level and scope of EU competences and action. To give a recent example, the EU's emerging role as an actor in international co-operation on cybersecurity could be an interesting field to study how the extension of EU competencies can be explained through neofunctionalist logics, given the seeming influence of supranational institutions such as the HR and the European Defence Agency (EDA) and functional links stemming from the single market and the realm of Justice and Home Affairs (Barrinha and Carrapico, 2016, pp. 109, 111–113).

With this article we thus hope to not only provide a critical and reasoned response to Visoka and Doyle's 'neofunctional peace', but also to spur a debate about how early and revised neofunctional logics can be used to explain integration of the area of EU external policy, more generally. The continuing scope for further refinement of the neofunctionalist spillover logics for EU external policy-making, the insufficient empirical probing of some of these logics (such as the impact of the 'externalization' of EU internal economic policies on the scope of EU external action), and the value-added of specifying the conditions that are conducive/obstructive to the unfolding of the spillover rationales in the external realm, suggest that there is substantial ground for further research emanating from this paper.

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