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THE PROSPECTS FOR INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: A LIBERAL INTERGOVERNMENTALIST PERSPECTIVE**

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to determine the probability of institutional reforms resulting from the debate on EU future held as a part of the “Conference on the Future of Europe” initiated in 2020. In the theoretical dimension, the analysis is based on the application of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach with its three assumptions: the strict categorization of intergovernmental decision-making built on the triad ‘preferences-negotiations-institutions’, the concept of *demoicracy*, and the need for differentiated integration. On this basis, three hypotheses for each reform are presented and verified, which leads to determination of their possible implementation. The main thought is the statement that, when adopting the liberal intergovernmentalism, the EU will remain an intergovernmental organization, founded on societies organized in nation states, but at the same time internally differentiated in terms of the quality of membership.

Keywords: EU institutions, member state, liberal intergovernmentalism, *demoicracy*, differentiated integration

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INTRODUCTION

The liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) is one of the most famous theoretical approaches in European integration research. According to its founder, Moravcsik, for thirty years it has remained an optimistic theory based on the assumption that transnational interdependence and collective intergovernmental problem solving are universal ways of managing of development of today's world. The historical significance of a process of European integration is defined by the continuity and evolution, rather than temporary ambiguities (Moravcsik 2018, 1670).

In the widely accepted view, LI is a theory that, in relative terms, overshadows all other approaches in the explanation of the functioning of the Council of the EU and the European Council (Naurin 2018, 1538–1539). However, it is also adequate, for example, for the study of legal integration within the Union. The principles of EU law, including the supremacy, are consistent with the adoption by the member states of the rules of effective enforcement of dispute resolution between them. The main reason of this behavior is the recognition that this is the best system of international collective action in the conditions of modern Europe (Phelan 2018, 1574–1575). Today, without stirring up controversy, it can be concluded that LI is a “grand theory” useful for explaining and forecasting of all aspects of European integration.

In 2020 the European Union is to launch a broad and in-depth debate about its fate within the Conference on the Future of Europe. One of the important elements of this debate must be the discussion on institutional reforms, which includes different directions and many proposals for specific solutions. The purpose of this article is to determine the probability of their implementation from the point of view of LI. Three core assumptions of this approach (the categories of intergovernmental decision-making, the concept of *democracy*, and the need for differentiated integration) are elaborated to move on to the discussion on current conditions of institutional reforms, both being a prelude to the analysis of the probability of implementing of five reforms commonly proposed in the literature. The main thought is the statement that, when adopting LI's assumptions, the EU will remain an intergovernmental organization, founded on societies organized in nation states,

but at the same time internally differentiated in terms of quality of membership.

CORE ASSUMPTIONS OF LIBERAL INTERGOVERNMENTALISM

The very first LI's idea is based on the view that the fundamental and almost exclusive role in EU political decision-making is played by the (governments) of member states. The analytical framework is built here on three categories. The first is the preferences of states whose formation is based on five conditions (Forster 1998, 350): (a) states behave rationally; (b) governmental preferences result from an intra-state process where important social groups articulate their interests to be aggregated by the governments, with final national preferences being shaped primarily by economic factors; (c) governmental preferences are influenced by the size of benefits from cooperation with other states and the certainty of these benefits; (d) governments are generally not willing to make concessions outside the scope of their objective interests, while the outcome of intergovernmental negotiations is determined by the relative intensity of preferences, therefore disproportionately representing the interests of the strongest states; (e) the policy sectors are not directly linked, with interlinking occurring only if other negotiation techniques of specific issues have been unsuccessful.

A paradoxical example of LI's analytical usefulness is the Brexit case. It is worth noting that, unlike in many previous cases, no significant differences were found between the governments of member states, which has been almost directly translated into institutional cohesion of the whole Union, including the European Parliament's following the arguments of the European Council. Member states' reluctance to oppose the position of the organization can be explained by the fact that the states did not mean to undermine future relations with their key allies. The erosion of the Union has therefore been assessed as an existential threat far greater than the minor aspects of the EU's general position being uncomfortable to some states (Patel 2018, 7–11). One of the leading LI representatives, argues, however, that this theory has proved unsuitable to explain the UK's preferences: Brexit has adversely affected the intense and well-organized interests of important

lobbies in London, being objectively contrary to LI requirements (Schimmelfennig 2018, 1591–1592).

The critics of LI believe, not without reason, that this approach underestimates the potential of identity politics by focusing on elites rather than mass politics (Kuhn 2019, 1226). One of the disadvantages of LI is considered to overestimate economic conditions as the basis of interstate relations, while diminishing the role of strictly political factors. Indeed, the Brexit example shows that the decision to vote for a referendum was dictated by requirements of the specific political situation in the UK, not by the pressure of most important interest groups who preferred to remain in the EU (Jensen and Snaith 2016, 1308).

The second LI's analytical category is the negotiations between states participating in European integration. In this respect this approach is based on four assumptions (Finke 2009, 466–473): (a) supranational actors do not have much influence on the outcome of intergovernmental negotiations; (b) the governments of the largest member states play the most important role in EU decision-making; (c) procedural restrictions are not particularly important when important state interests are negotiated; (d) intergovernmental negotiations are linked to the balance of power in the EU political system.

The third LI's analytical category is the institutions created by negotiations between states. Moravcsik introduces the concept of the “European constitutional settlement”, defined as a stable endpoint of European integration in the medium term. This settlement is the result of the specific political objectives of the member states, which are pursued in a context of management of different types of political and economic interdependence (Moravcsik 2008, 159–172; 2001, 176–179).

Pan, Hosli and Lantmeeters (2019, 20–21), analyzing the effects of the euro crisis, present two views on the shape of institutional solutions finally adopted. Firstly, the formation of national preferences has been largely influenced by powerful domestic forces, with a particular focus on important economic players, and, secondly, the terms of the final agreement have been determined by the asymmetric interdependence of states. While either party could lose or win, some of them suffered more than others.

Since the preferences of states are issue-specific, the institutional solutions may vary depending on the problem. The group of scholars believe that this was specifically reflected in the case of the euro crisis (where reforms have been introduced) confronted with the refugee crisis (where no reforms have been introduced). The different patterns of interdependence in both crises episodes, as well as the different constellations of preferences and interstate dynamics of negotiations, have led to completely different consequences. In both crises, member states aimed at retaining of the benefits of prior integration. However, during the euro crisis all states identified the disintegration of the eurozone as the greatest threat, while during the refugee crisis they did not find any overriding preference for a common response: a group of affected states demanded reforms due to migration pressures, and states not affected effectively blocked those demands (Biermann et al. 2017).

LI supporters most often argue that the final construction of the common institutions is mainly the effect of preferences of the relevant states in the specific domain, as they have the biggest bargaining power. Institutional preferences are also strongly linked to their material preferences. As a result of the euro crisis, the new and reformed institutions are characterized by governmental financial assistance with a fixed credit margin, along with supranational economic surveillance, which was clearly favored by Germany (Schimmelfennig 2017).

ACCESSORY ASSUMPTIONS OF LIBERAL INTERGOVERNMENTALISM

The first accessory LI assumption is the non-existence of EU democratic deficit. According to Moravcsik (2018, 1669), the democratic nature of the EU stems from the legitimacy chains intermediated by democratic governments of the member states. He points out that almost all views confirming the democratic deficit are based on majority, or even a populist, concepts of democracy, both being unrealistic and inappropriate for modern political systems, whereas modern democracies must temper respect for the majority with at least three other fundamental values: the respect for individual rights, the epistemic quality of decision-making and the limiting of the impact of overrepresented interests.

One of the specific ideas identified with LI, although also present in other theories, is the concept of *demoicracy*. According to Nicolaïdis, its protagonist, in the case of the EU the assumption of the preexistence of a single *demos* created by the “constitutional moment” must be abandoned. Instead, the European democracy should be rooted in the inherently heterogeneous democratic structures of the member states (*demoi*), and the European Union is created as a new type of political community based on the enduring multiplicity of its “constituent nations”. It is more than a particularly strong version of the confederation of sovereign states, for the nations here are connected directly and not just by their leaders. However, while these nations are organized in states, it is the states that should be at the center of European construction (Nicolaïdis 2003, 5–8).

The concept of *demoicracy* can be interpreted both as an expression of acceptance of the current stage of the Union, as well as a starting point for systemic reforms. The context of the debate on anti-democratic tendencies in some member states, which has been initiated in recent years, is also of great importance. These trends are being translated into a pan-European language, where, according to Kreuder-Sonnen, the apparent dichotomy of effectiveness and democracy becomes an increasingly common element of the debate. The European and the nationalist authoritarianisms are mutually reinforcing each other by creating an “authoritarian cycle” leading potentially to the collapse of the European political order. The expansion of negative trends in some *demoi* to the whole integration system should therefore be expected (Kreuder-Sonnen 2018, 461).

The second LI’s accessory assumption is the inevitability of differentiated integration. Schimmelfennig believes that the actors of integration are the member states, and some of them may opt to extend or limit their participation in integration processes, while the differentiation results from decisions taken by governments in international negotiations. The diversity is therefore becoming an evolutionary requirement for further integration. The inability to differentiate would make the shape of the EU political system based on the lowest “common intergovernmental denominator”, where the scope of integration would have been the result of decision of the state with the greatest negotiating power, that is to say, the

one having the most favorable option for exiting the integration system or the most vital interest in maintaining the status quo (Schimmelfennig 2011, 12–13).

The same scholar draws attention to the important paradox of differentiated integration, which results from its perception as a means to ensure the sustainability of the EU. The revisions of the treaties usually reflect the trend towards the deepening of integration: they are increasing EU powers by removing certain policies from the exclusive competence of states or by centralizing the policies already integrated. Since some states are reluctant to make such decisions, the differentiation may be the only way to maintain the coherence of the system and, in fact, creates an important anti-disintegration mechanism (Schimmelfennig 2019, 178–185).

BACKGROUND OF EU INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

The first general condition of EU institutional reforms is the need to answer the preliminary question whether changes should be introduced without treaty revision or, conversely, a far-reaching revision of primary law is necessary and, if so, what formula is best suited for this. The basic rule for any treaty reform today is to obtain the consent of all member states. However, there are proposals assuming that the requirement to reach unanimity is in fact a unique one from a comparative point of view. Fabbrini points out that even in the United Nations an amendment to the charter requires a two-thirds majority of members of the General Assembly, provided that the amendments are ratified by two-thirds of states, including all five permanent members of the Security Council. The lack of unanimity requirement had some precedents also in recent EU history: it would have not been possible to resolve the euro crisis without the adoption of agreements formally outside the EU structure (the fiscal compact or the ESM agreement). The treaty reform can therefore appear not in accordance with the formula of the new amending and supplementing treaty, but by adopting a completely new agreement to be ratified with no unanimity requirement. One can imagine, for example, the supermajority connected with non-implementation of the new treaty in states that have not ratified it. In fact, however, the states that were not able to ratify the new “political pact”, would be excluded from the (new) Union.

As a last resort, the new “political pact” could be seen as a step towards integration of states that are ready to build a stronger political union (Fabbrini 2019, 11–16).

The second condition of institutional reforms is the need to link them to the level of trust of the populations (*demos*). Torcal and Christmann, reviewing the literature, present two mechanisms for coupling trust in EU institutions with confidence in national institutions. The first is the congruence: a high level of dissatisfaction with the functioning of the state is projected to the functioning of the EU institutional system. The second one is, conversely, the compensation: a dissatisfaction and distrust in national administration can promote a positive attitude towards the EU institutions (Torcal and Christmann 2019).

The results of empirical research involving thirteen member states from all EU regions show that there is a significant consensus on the preferred institutional reforms among nationals of different states, an exception being only one dimension: the action against states that violate or do not implement EU law. Respondents in all the states surveyed prefer majority voting in the Council, but object to the exclusivity of the Commission’s legislative initiative. At the same time, the *quasi*-legislative powers of the Court of Justice of the EU are criticized in several states, while the power to impose sanctions in the form of financial penalties is perceived as the most harmful one (Hahm, Hilpert and König 2019, 17–18). It is worth remembering, however, that the final shape of states’ preferences is decided by governments. According to Wolf und Ossewaarde (2018, 47), three ideal types of national strategies for EU reforms can be distinguished: the dynamic support, the static support and the anti-integration policy. In practice, however, the largest group of attitudes remains blurred and cannot be assigned to any category. Anyway, there is a better chance for a deepened integration when decision-makers from the states with the greatest bargaining power are in favor of such solutions.

The third condition of institutional reforms is linked to the category of intergovernmental negotiations. According to Hodson (2019, 24–25), the quality of the negotiations results not only from preferences, but also from the individual characteristics of negotiators. The fundamental rule of EU political decision-making

is the consensus, and specific examples from the past show that the leaders could achieve positive results in the euro crisis, while found no compromise in Brexit case.

Csehi and Puetter indicate another problem in this respect: in the euro crisis the disparities between states have led to an increase of the role of technocratic ministers, whose decisions were separated from the influence of national pressure groups or societies. It can even be noticed that there appeared a kind of mechanism for integrating European high governmental elites, which has been retroactively translated into the creation of their preferences. Negotiations in intergovernmental forums were therefore not a functional addition to the predefined governmental preferences, but in fact one of the factors for shaping the latter (Csehi and Puetter 2020, 17–18).

The fourth condition of institutional reforms is related to the outcome of the negotiations, since the transfer of powers to the EU institutions deepens the differentiation of profits for individual states (Sadeh, Raskin and Rubinson 2019, 43). The institutional shape of the EU is also indirectly reflected in the quality of the organization as a whole and its international position. The European Union can be regarded as a “potential superpower” only in areas where member states have delegated significant competences to the EU institutions. However, such transfers of competences in other areas may be seriously hampered in the future, as the liberal nature of the EU is hampered by internal anti-liberal forces disrupting joint EU actions (Meunier and Vachudova 2018).

The fifth condition of institutional reforms therefore becomes the need to tackle the anti-liberal trends within the EU. There are two basic ways in this regard. The first is the reinforcement of mechanisms related to the principle of the protection of the rule of law. Hegedüs (2019, 12) presents the following proposals: (a) the establishment of a comprehensive mechanism for monitoring the state of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in the member states; (b) the creation of a mutual assessment mechanism for the rule of law; (c) the introduction of a conditionality principle in distribution of structural funds. The second way to confront anti-liberals is to take into account some of their demands. According to Hodson and Puetter, although they have been substantially strengthened in recent years, the anti-liberals still remain publicly

involved in further EU membership, and thus the Union in under threat not only from its Eurosceptic opponents, but also by the determination of pro-European governments to strongly oppose them. Some form of Eurosceptics' inclusion in the reform process must be found, for they represent interests of specific domestic groups with quite a significant public support (Hodson and Puetter 2019, 1166–1167).

SPECIFICATION OF EU INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

Among the many directions of EU institutional reforms, five proposals seem to be the most discussed (cf. Tosiek 2017, 370–371). The first is the introduction of a separate and more comprehensive institutional subsystem for the eurozone. There is, for instance, a need to appoint a eurozone “finance minister” with real competences or to create a separate sub-parliament within the European Parliament. An alternative may be to deepen intergovernmental features in the management of the euro area (Tiilikainen 2016, 6–7; Peers 2011, 4–8; Schoutheete 2014, 3–7; Veebel 2014, 48–54).

The second proposal is to deepen the cooperation of all or some member states in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. It is important to find an appropriate formula for moving away from the unanimity in favor of the principle of the qualified majority, coupled with introduction of the general jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the EU (Tiilikainen 2016, 5–6). The link between those reforms and the membership of most EU member states in NATO is an issue of vital importance here.

The third proposal is the long-debated reform of elections to the European Parliament. The suggestions in this regard include: (a) the pan-European electoral list (Bol 2016, 3; Stratulat and Emmanouilidis 2011); (b) the principle of double proportionality by determining the electoral result for the party list across the EU and only the subsequent distribution of seats between member states (Pukelsheim and Oelbermann 2015, 20–23); (c) the obligatory connection of the results of elections to the European Parliament with nomination of the President of the Commission, called the *Spitzenkandidaten* formula (Schmitt, Hobolt and Popa 2014, 10–13).

The fourth proposal is the fusion of the posts of the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission. The realization of this idea seems to be controversial primarily due to the prior experience of combining positions in institutions operating on two different logics of integration: intergovernmentalism and supranationalism. In the current EU institutional system, they are functionally separated, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy being the only deviating example (Wessels 2005, 26–27).

The fifth proposal is to strengthen the role of national parliaments in EU political decision-making. This tendency was reflected in the Treaty of Lisbon in its provisions on the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality and the role of national parliaments. In essence, however, the role of those parliaments is still very limited, certainly not characterized by the real inclusion in the legislative process. Supporters of the reinforcement of the role of national parliaments are gaining therefore more popularity in some Eurosceptic circles (Zalewska and Gstrein 2013, 21–25).

The important LI's feature is its openness to different types of institutional reforms: the new construction simply needs to increase the credibility of the obligations of the member states and the stability of the Union's political system. Both intergovernmental and supranational solutions are acceptable, with their application in specific areas being based solely on the specificities of the field (Schimmelfennig 2015, 189–190). Taking into account the main LI assumptions discussed earlier, three general hypotheses for each reform (that is, fifteen specific hypotheses in total) can be presented. In the first one (H1) the independent variable is the support of a specific reform solution by states with the best negotiating position in the area concerned. For simplicity, it is assumed that these states are Germany and France (G-2), as the euro crisis, the Brexit, and the rule-of-law problems have significantly weakened the positions of other large states (Italy, Spain and Poland). It can therefore be assumed that if a specific reform is preferred by the two largest member states, it will be implemented. In the second hypothesis (H2) the independent variable is the compatibility of a specific reform with the idea of *demoicracy*, that is, a strong increase in the indirect impact of national societies on EU deci-

sions. It should therefore be assumed that if the reform strengthens the role of *demoi*, it will be accepted. In the third hypothesis (H3), the independent variable is the inclusion of a specific reform in the principle of differentiated integration. Therefore, if a reform contributes to further differentiation, it will be adopted.

The simplified data relating to each general hypothesis and a specific reform, based on adherence to the abovementioned theoretical lines and the preferences of states as publicly known, is presented in table 1. On that basis, without resorting to complex mathematical methods, one can roughly determine which of the hypotheses have a chance for positive verification, and which are possibly illogical due to the lack of correlation between variables. In this situation the reform with the largest number of positively verifiable hypotheses has the best chance of being implemented.

The first reform (reinforcement of the eurozone institutional subsystem) enjoys the general support of the two largest states. According to Papaioannou (2016, 220–222), this reform should be at the top of priorities of European policy makers. To begin with, the EU must establish a clear, ambitious and concise program aimed at unifying institutional solutions within eurozone states and then establishing supervisory authorities effectively monitoring the financial situation in each of them. The institutional autonomy does not appear to be directly linked to the reinforcement or weakening of *demoi* in the eurozone states, but may negatively affect the role of *demoi* in other states. It is therefore difficult to indicate the correlation of this reform within the second general hypothesis. It is clear, however, that this reform would certainly be in line with the principle of differentiated integration.

The second reform (introduction of the qualified majority in CFSP as a general rule) is also supported by two largest member states. The dominating view is that the current institutional structures of the Common Foreign and Security Policy are extremely inconsistent. There are still differences between European External Action Service and the Commission with regard, for example, to development policy (Furness and Gänzle 2017, 488). However, this reform would not be in line with the demand for reinforcement of *demoi*, which would apply specifically to the states that have failed to build a blocking minority. If the principles of non-implemen-

tion of the decision by the outvoted states were maintained, it could result in a differentiated integration, being positively correlated with an independent variable of the third general hypothesis.

The third reform (for simplicity reduced here to the introduction of the mandatory *Spitzenkandidaten* formula) is not supported by Germany and France – and probably by most other states – as indicated in the appointment of the President of the Commission in 2019. This is probably also the case in relation to the general trend towards reinforcement of the European Parliament. Schoeller and Héritier (2019, 287–288), in result of an in-depth analysis of literature, prove that although the Treaty of Lisbon had formally increased the powers of the European Parliament in some areas (migration policy or budgetary control being good examples), the member states maintained their dominance. The Parliament has lost the interinstitutional struggle and, even using its informal powers, is not able to effectively gain an increased influence on the final political solutions. Moreover, in the absence of pan-European *demos*, the reinforcement of the role of a supranational parliament cannot be supported by proponents of *demoicracy*. At the same time this reform is rather indifferent from the point of view of differentiated integration.

The fourth reform (combination of posts of the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission) seems to be the concept pushed by extreme federalists. It would mean a strong reinforcement not only of the President, but also of the Commission as a whole, being almost directly proportional to the weakening of the role of state governments. In fact, in spite of some rumors, such a reform is not supported by Germany and France. Furthermore, the European Council is an important institutional expression of Union's polycentrism, with internal power diversity as its essence (Vogler 2020). The post-Lisbon practice indicates that member states are very reluctant even to confer on the Commission the power to adopt delegated acts (Tovo 2017, 704), which is a good manifestation of the deepening of practical intergovernmentalism of the EU in recent years (cf. Bickerton, Hodson and Puetter 2015). The combination of the positions of the President of the European Council and the Commission would not be supported by the representatives of the concept of *demoicracy*, being a neutral solution from the point of view of differentiated integration.

The fifth reform (reinforcement of the role of national parliaments) is being pushed mainly by Eurosceptic groups, which seek to weaken the supranational elements in EU decision-making in favor of a return to the state of integration of the 1960s, or even in favor of EU's disintegration. In fact, stronger national parliaments would undermine the autonomy of member states' governments (cabinets) and, in the absence of adequate resources on the side of parliaments, could block the EU decision-making process. Such a solution cannot therefore be realistically supported by national governments and will certainly not be supported by Germany and France. However, it would undoubtedly be in line with the principle of reinforcement of *demoi*, remaining indifferent to supporters of diversity of integration.

Table 1. Correlations between specific institutional reforms and LI assumptions¹

Reform	H1: compliance with G-2 preferences	H2: compliance with democracy principles	H3: compliance with principles of differentiated integration
1. Reinforcement of the eurozone institutional subsystem	+	?	+
2. Introduction of the qualified majority in CFSP as a general rule	+	-	+
3. Introduction of the mandatory Spitzenkandidaten formula	-	-	0
4. Combination of posts of the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission	-	-	0
5. Reinforcement of the role of national parliaments	-	+	0

Source: Processed by the author.

¹ Explanation of symbols: (+) – positive correlation; (-) – negative correlation; (0) – no correlation; (?) – ambiguous correlation.

The above analysis shows that, in the LI perspective, the probability of implementation of specific EU institutional reforms depends on three independent variables. One of them – state preferences – is largely subjective and may become a dependent variable in another study. The power takeover by the parties denying the existing European policies of the states (unlikely in Germany and quite likely in France) can change the preference correlations indicated above. The other two independent variables are strictly theoretical in nature and, as such, cannot be modified. However, it must not be forgotten that the dynamics of EU negotiations can contribute to the creation of partial or hybrid solutions.

In view of these limitations, it can be cautiously concluded that the most likely to implement are reforms that have achieved the highest level of overall correlation with all three independent variables. It is not difficult to see that the reinforcement of the institutional subsystem of the eurozone and, secondly, the introduction of the qualified majority in the CFSP as a rule, are those reforms. The reinforcement of national parliaments (one positive correlation) is unlikely to be implemented, while no probability concerns the introduction of the mandatory *Spitzenkandidaten* formula or the combination of posts of Presidents of the European Council and the Commission.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The liberal intergovernmentalism is still one of the most important theoretical approaches in European integration research. Its analytical framework invariably includes a reference to the preferences of states, their resources and negotiating capacity, as well as the quality of integration institutions. The LI's evolution has led to the inclusion, in addition to the main view of the dominant role of states in EU political decision-making, of two accessory assumptions: the negation of the democratic deficit coupled with the concept of *demoicracy*, and the idea of inevitable differentiated integration.

On this basis, and having regard to the current political conditions, three general hypotheses based on LI assumptions could have been presented for each of five reforms discussed in literature. The analysis results in a view that the most likely reform to be

adopted is the reinforcement of the institutional subsystem of the eurozone. However, it is difficult to predict whether this reform will be implemented in the process of treaty revision, in adoption of a completely new EU political agreement, or in concluding inter-governmental agreements outside the EU legal system. Either way, the EU will remain an intergovernmental organization, accepting the role of societies organized in nation states, but at the same time differentiated internally in terms of the conditions and quality of membership.

Nevertheless, two fundamental limitations of these conclusions must not be forgotten. Firstly, this study does not refer to the general likelihood of specific reforms, but to their probability from the point of view of LI. Representatives of other theoretical approaches would certainly come to other conclusions. Secondly, the future reform will be a part of a new “European constitutional settlement”, which aims to be a relatively permanent one. In this respect, Nicolaïdis (2018, 1628 –1629) believes that the reforms should express the “European sustainable integration”, which requires the consideration of the will of citizens as viable contributors to EU decision-making process. LI is therefore evolving towards acceptance of the role of mass politics. This view may create a further research direction.

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ИЗГЛЕДИ ЗА ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛНЕ РЕФОРМЕ ЕВРОПСКЕ УНИЈЕ ИЗ УГЛА ЛИБЕРАЛНЕ ТЕОРИЈЕ МЕЂУВЛАДИНИХ ОДНОСА

Резиме

Циљ овог рада је утврђивање вероватноће институционалних реформи које произилазе из дебате о будућности Европске уније, као дела „Конференције о будућности Европе” инициране 2020. године. Анализа је теоријски утемељена у примени либералне теорије међувладиних односа и њене три претпоставке: прецизна категоризација одлучивања на међувладином нивоу изграђена на тријади „преференције-преговори-институције”, концепт *демо*кратије и потреба за диференцираном интеграцијом. На основу тога, три хипотезе о свакој од реформи су представљене и проверене у овом раду, што омогућава утврђивање њихове потенцијалне имплементације. У раду се прихвата следећи основни аргумент: у случају примене либералне теорије међувладиних односа, ЕУ остаје међувладина организација, заснована на друштвима организованим у државе-нације, али истовремено интерно диференцираним у погледу квалитета чланства.

Кључне речи: институције Европске уније, државе чланице, либерална теорија међувладиних односа, *демо*кратија, диференцирана интеграција

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