

A revised theory of integration and complementarity in international relations: exploring the trend towards developing new intellectual frameworks An epistemological study.

مراجعة أدبيات التكامل والاندماج في العلاقات الدولية: التوجه نحو بناءات فكرية جديدة دراسة إبستمولوجية

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Abstract

The study reviews the literature on integration and complementarity in international relations from an epistemological perspective, which allows us to go beyond the theories and understand the hidden goals and projects behind them. The study also uses a historical approach to trace the integration paths and the accompanying literature. The study is divided into three main axes. The first axis deals with the problem of defining the concept of integration. The second presents a general critical reading of traditional theories and models, while the third presents modern trends in integration literature and models, with their practical implications in international relations. We conclude a set of results that call for transcending the Western centrality in theory and seeking a theoretical framework that respects the specificity of each region and does not respond to projects of domination and subordination, but instead builds integrative relationships based on fair and mutual exchange.

Keywords: epistemology, fusion and Integration, international relations, modern trends, Regionalism.

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Introduction

If we follow the position of the theory of integration among contemporary theories of international relations, we find that it occupies a central position among these theories. If the theory of the international system, the theory of international organizations, the realism school represent the schools that deal with relations within the framework of blocs, alliances, and decision-making theory, and game theory represents the partial approach, the theory of integration starts from the part (the state and all its agencies and influential social groups) to achieve the whole (integrating the political units into a more comprehensive political unit). Furthermore, this theory attempts to link the theoretical aspect and the scientific aspect of the integration process. This has led researchers to strive for a better understanding and development of the phenomenon in line with the changes in the international environment and to overcome the theoretical shortcomings and search for appropriate theoretical constructions.

the research question revolves around tracing the literary development of integration and deep research on the reality of the phenomenon to reveal the shortcomings in the traditional proposals presented and to investigate the theories and models and their field projections on the reality of international relations. This leads us to the following question: **How effective are the theories of integration and complementarity in understanding, interpreting, and building models that reflect the reality of the integration paths in international relations?**

We will ask a number of sub-questions to facilitate unraveling the mystery of the main problem:

- What are the most prominent challenges facing the field of integration and merging?

- Is there a conflict between the various proposals presented as a multifaceted phenomenon?

- What is the need that prompted researchers to search for new intellectual constructions?

- How did internal environmental factors and external environmental influences contribute to the development of the theorization process in integration and merging?

To answer the problem and the sub-questions, we have formulated a set of hypotheses:

- The more international relations move towards globalization and regionalism, the more they tend towards integration and fragmentation.

- The more integration paths increase, the more the complexity and diversity of these paths increase.

- The development of technology, communications, and transportation has created a more favorable environment for the integration process.

This study aims to review traditional literature by highlighting its shortcomings through previous integrated experiences and identifying the motivating reasons for seeking new intellectual structures. It also aims to clarify the nature of these structures through their field projections on the reality of integration and fusion in international relations, and to go beyond theory by adopting an epistemological study that provides us with the backgrounds on which theoretical arguments were built and their suitability for reality.

The study also aims to propose arguments that correct stumbling paths and evaluate the effectiveness of these models and theories, and to push the fluctuating results of regional blocs towards progress and stability in their performance. The historical method was also adopted to review literature and its development, to trace the evolution of integrated paths, examine them, criticize them, analyze them, and create an opportunity for a precise review of integration and fusion literature.

Previous Literatures

•Differentiation theory and the ontology of regionalism in Latin America:

This study addresses the theoretical models that explain regional integration, questioning the suitability of these theories to understand the problems facing this integration. It rejects functionalist approaches to interpreting the results of integration and proposes social-oriented theories, presenting social differentiation theory as a solution to the legitimacy crisis in social systems and a solution to globalization problems.

•A Revised Theory of Regional Integration :

The study aims to identify weaknesses in the literature on regional integration and complementarity, and criticizes many of the proposed models. Firstly, it argues that these models do not rely enough on quantitative measurement, while suggesting an alternative that relies on standard economics. Secondly, the study rejects the use of binary or multiple relationships to construct broad models or theories that can be generalized to dissimilar environments, as each model has its own specificity that must be considered in the theoretical construction of the integration and convergence process.

•A Litmus Test for European Integration Theories: Explaining Crises and Comparing Regionalism

This paper tests various theories of European integration in the face of different crises facing the European Union, such as problems resulting from illegal immigration and the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Despite the satisfactory results achieved by the European Union under the functionalist and liberal approach, the project of full integration remains far from reality, and the problem of the EU's expansion outside its borders is also a real test of the success of the integration and convergence literature.

The study is divided into three axes:

The first axis, entitled "The Problematic of Defining the Concept of Integration and Inclusion and its Reproduction" it addresses the issue of formulating the concept by considering the multitude of similar terminologies and concepts used in an ambiguous and unstructured manner, which has led to numerous literary attempts to define it. The axis also seeks to address the nature of the theory and its various political, economic, and even social dimensions

The second axis is entitled "Reviewing Traditional Literature on Integration and Inclusion": It provides an overview of the most important different theses that contributed to the establishment of the field of integration while clarifying their shortcomings and deficiencies by presenting the most prominent criticisms.

The third axis, entitled "Towards Modern Intellectual Constructions of Integration and Inclusion", it presents the most prominent modern theories and models that appeared on the ruins of traditional theses. These modern theories seek to provide greater flexibility to the theory of integration and inclusion to adapt to political transformations in the international environment. The axis also provides field projections of modern tendencies on the most prominent continental blocs, attempting to understand the obstacles and problems faced by each bloc and evaluate the suitability of these theoretical models for them. Finally, the axis concludes with a general assessment of the performance of these modern theses.

Firstly: the problem of defining and reproducing the concepts of integration and complementarity.

The examination of the phenomenon of integration and complementarity leads us to the first problem, which is defining the concept. Several models have attempted to define this term and presented several concepts. However, this plurality does not necessarily mean that they contradict each other, as each concept presented a revealing engine for the process of integration. We will review the various proposals that have sought to define this concept and reveal its secrets.

1. The translation problem of the integration concept

The French term "intégration" is translated to "تكامل" in Arabic, while the word means "merger" in French. This literal translation is not preferred by Western political circles because it directly reveals the purpose and goal of integration, which is sensed by the self-defense apparatuses in the Arab world and developing countries. This led many interested in the issue of "economic integration" to employ the Arabic terms "integration and complementarity" to conform to the concept of the term in French on the one hand, and to reconcile opinions on the other hand, in order to liberate the concept from its ideological contents and make it more acceptable in academic circles.

It is worth noting that the term "integration" caused a great stir when it was first used in Europe, and the Arabic translation of Bella Balisa's book "Economic Integration Theory" introduces the word "integration" as referring to the connection of parts to form a whole in everyday language, while in economic literature,

economic integration does not include such a clear meaning. Some authors incorporate social integration into the concept

2.The problem of multidimensionality of the concept of integration

while others include various forms of international cooperation under this title. Arguments have also been made to demonstrate that the mere existence of trade relations between independent national economies is a significant sign of integration. According to Balisa, economic integration is both a process and a state. As a process, it involves measures aimed at eliminating discrimination between economic units belonging to different nationalities¹. If we consider it as a state, it can be represented by selecting various forms of differentiation between national economies Heilperin argues that no matter what the history of the concept of economic integration, it has only recently become a slogan for action, and political circles, especially in the Third World, prefer to use the term economic integration instead of integration, which implies a kind of non-interference with the sovereignty of states and their Cultural particularities

Myrdal argues that economic integration is a concept "laden with values," and Syed Ahmed (1992) called the problem of adjusting the concept of integration as a "fuzzy concept". He believes that defining the concept of integration varies from one country to another, over time, and depending on the functions of the actors. This conceptual diversity creates a type of overlap that allows us to uncover the multidimensional behavior of this concept². This overlap results from the fact that the term used by political scientists, economists, and legal specialists is not fully defined. This raises the problem of defining the concept of integration by assigning it either a political or an economic nature, which casts a shadow on both fields and leads to the idea of defining it as an economic-political concept by considering the priority of the economy over politics.

This is similar to the dilemma of which came first, the chicken or the egg. Regardless of the starting point of our study, we cannot ignore the interdependence between the fields and the importance of integration between them in building comprehensive pictures to understand the phenomenon of integration and complementarity.

Secondly: Reviewing the traditional literature of integration and complementarity.

This axis is divided into two components, the first in which we discuss the intellectual origins of the theory of integration, and the second is a general evaluation view of traditional literature.

1.The intellectual origins of the theory of integration

The intellectual origins of the theory of integration and complementarity can be traced back to writers and philosophers who sought to ensure security and eliminate disputes and wars by establishing unions between governments or supra-national groups that include different peoples and are subject to them. This led to the emergence of the idea of a world government that unifies states under central authority with powers and competencies above those of the countries that implement them.

The intellectual foundations of integration are in line with the idealistic theories that emanates from the priority of ethics in the relationships between individuals. The idealistic current believes that it is the duty of the individual to comply with the laws and rules that were established to serve the community. This current also stems from the assumption of the harmony of interests, considering that there is a natural agreement between the individual's higher interest and the community's higher interest.³

Examples of those who adopted the idealistic theories to the integration process include, for example, Jeremy Bentham, who is one of the most famous advocates of the optimistic theories. He was the first to use the term "international rules" or "international law," and he adopted in his project "For a Permanent World Peace" the aspiration to prevent the use of force. Emmanuel Kant also proposed that humanity move towards what he called a "world republic."

The idea of integration also has its roots in John Locke's philosophy. For him, life was characterized by equality among individuals who were imbued with a spirit of justice according to the natural law. Then, individuals tried to move from the stage of "nature" to the stage of the "political society" when interests became intertwined. In order to reach this stage, individuals made a contract with the king, which resulted in obligations on both sides.

2. An appraisal overview of the traditional literature of integration.

As for the theories of integration, the transition from the world of the state to the world state occurs through international functional mechanisms that transfer powers to integration organizations. Increasing links between countries lead to a contradiction of their sovereignty, thus replacing conflict with a high degree of cooperation and mutual dependence in many areas that concern the vital interests of countries.

The search for traditional theories presents us with four basic arguments represented by Hans, Itziony, Deutsch, and Lindberg. The fluctuations of regional integration in the 1960s in Europe and other parts of the world led to challenging some of the original principles of integration theory, which led to a reconsideration of traditional arguments by the pioneer of political integration theory, Haas. He revisited traditional concepts and attempted to revive them while searching for a general theory that responds to the requirements of the integration process. According to De Vree, researchers in integration and complementarity must adopt research beyond

theory. The latter presents two basic conditions for developing a coherent and rigorous theory by linking integration and fusion to public policy.

Secondly, recognizing that integration is a general phenomenon in terms of not having a national or international model. Lindberg had previously shown awareness of these two conditions. It is worth mentioning that the recognition that the theory of integration and fusion is built on a functional basis makes it a superior theory that focuses on the integration process and its stages without considering the multidimensional dimensions of the phenomenon and its requirements.

Additionally, Deutsch linked the increasing phenomenon of integration and fusion and its growth to the increase in the number of deals, making it both background and practical at the same time. Itziony received the most criticism for the concepts he presented, particularly the concepts of the integration of forces and elites, which led to confusion between the elites who exercise decisive power in the knowledge elite system of these groups and the local elites, creating a conflict between national elites and supranational elites.⁴

The traditional theories of integration and complementarity have put the theory of international relations in a predicament. Before the emergence of the terms "integration" and "complementarity," the concept of cooperation was the content used to express the state of convergence between two or more countries through trade exchange, military alliance, or any process below integration and merger. The emergence of current blocs has become a phenomenon that has political effects, despite being built on an economic-functional basis. The theory of international relations has led to in-depth studies, which could only be done by borrowing from the literature of international trade, by benefiting from the functional ideas that formed a solid foundation for international cooperation, and by seeking political integration. The nature of the complex phenomenon created debate and significant discussions in the field of international relations.

The first of which was the search for a definition of the concept of integration and complementarity, while seeking to strip it of ideological contents so that it could be accepted in academic circles and overcome theoretical dilemmas represented by the geographical scope of the phenomenon. Research aimed to find a general model that could be generalized to all experiences and levels of integration, starting from national to supranational levels and global levels, while taking into account the identity of peoples⁵, which often raises the reservations of reviewers, as the countries that relinquish part of their sovereignty to the bloc require them to be concerned about their components and social frameworks.

This led researchers in international relations to borrow from the literature of sociology to put in place social conditions that regulate this process, such as Karl Deutsch's ideas. This complexity in the integration process is not new to the political phenomenon that casts its shadow on the economic, social, and even psychological phenomenon. The use of literature in political science from other sciences is only a

search for a response to this urgent need to cover all aspects of the phenomenon, taking into account the criticisms of reviewers of traditional literature. We find many discussions that do not cancel their importance as much as they respond to the state of stagnation in these integrative entities and in line with changes in the international scene.

Thirdly: Orientation towards modern intellectual constructions for integration and complementarity.

In this axis, we dealt with the reality of integration in international relations through the proposals of the most important modern intellectual trends, and touched only on their field projections, and finished with a general evaluation of these modern theses.

1. Modern theories and models explaining the phenomenon of integration and complementarity.

After the shortcomings shown by the traditional literature, modern intellectual trends emerged that tried to find solutions to all the problems facing integration in international relations.

1.1. The dialectical function theory:

Some researchers, led by Corbey in 1995, concluded that the dialectical function represents the proper and effective approach in studying and interpreting the stages of stagnation and progress in the European integration project. The basic idea in the dialectical function is that the occurrence of integration in a sector of public policy is supported by interest groups and internal forces in the member states affected by integration to direct their pressures towards the national governments to protect the other sectors functionally linked to the integration sector and redirect state activities towards these sectors. As a result of this integration process, it stops. However, when political competition intensifies among member state governments as a result of their intervention in these non-integrating sectors, competition eventually turns into sterile and repetitive competition, leading to increased costs and burdens.

This competition leads to the next stage of the integration process, which is the stage of movement and progress. If the decision to integrate a particular sector is taken, such as the abolition of internal customs policy and a reaction to increased government intervention in other functionally related sectors⁶, the integrating sector may compensate for the loss of sovereignty, leading to strengthening internal competitiveness and the emergence of a new demand for integration and an increase in the cost of mutual government competition in non-integrating sectors due to support for private companies and social compensation for non-tariff barriers in the face of the abolition of customs policy. This leads to the intervention of the European Committee by proposing moderate solutions to regulate and restrict competition, thus creating a new dialectic for integration. This way, stagnation becomes a regular and familiar stage in the context of the integration process.

1.2. The theory of distribution and specialization (towards a more serious formulation of the functional theory)

It is completed by the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which recognizes regional organizations and their potential role in serving peace and stability in the world as long as their activities do not conflict with the goals and principles of the Charter. However⁷, in addition to the shortcomings of the current theory, the current international system has witnessed a range of political and economic developments, including the end of the Cold War and the trend towards global economic integration, as well as the spread of wars and internal and regional conflicts in many parts of the world. All of these have required a re-examination of the current theory of the distribution of roles between global and regional organizations. In this context, three main three directions can be distinguished, each differing in its perspective on the dialectic relationship between regional and global organizations.

1.3. Hegemonic stability theory and its interpretations:

Hegemonic stability theory is considered one of the most developed and updated Realist theories in the field of systemic analysis. It is based on the idea that a system can only exist and remain stable if there is a state capable of maintaining balance within the system, which means that the system's stability is a result of a high degree of imbalance in the distribution of power in a particular sector.

Recent interpretations of this theory suggest that stability can be achieved under the relative power of a dominant state or a controlling power. As long as this state has enough power to make it a source of influence for others who are weaker than it, they have reason to challenge its relative power position. Another view suggests that a limited collective power, such as oil-geopolitical power, can be an alternative to singular power, particularly in the context of open or flexible regional arrangements.

Another trend suggests that balanced disparity, or the unequal distribution of power resources among states in the system, can create a type of balance among them, instead of having a stabilizer as a necessary condition for the emergence and continuation of systems, particularly in regions that include countries with wide political, ideological, and cultural conflicts, as is the case in most distinct geographical regions in Asia and Africa.

1.4. Modern Systems Analysis

The first signs of the systems analysis approach appeared in the literature of international relations and international organization in the mid-1980s, and the concept's position was strengthened to the point where systems analysis has become one of the most common and widely used approaches in the study of international, global, and regional organization⁸. It is particularly useful in studying new forms of regional arrangements, such as open and flexible regionalism in their nascent stages, as well as regionalism among coastal states, in addition to using the approach in studying non-technical aspects of regional organization, such as human rights.

1.4.1. Systems Analysis through Interest-Based Theories (New Liberalism)

Theories based on the concept of interest represent the main approach in the study and analysis of systems, and they start from a basic idea that states are "rational actors" whose only concern is to achieve their absolute interests. Interest-based or new liberal theories include many approaches to interpreting the emergence and development of systems, such as the functionalist approach, which views systems as emerging from the convergence of states' preferences in a particular functional area, and the partial structural approach, which involves cooperation through systems in a particular sector and through other strategies such as self-reliance in other sectors depending on the nature of the problem. Negotiation approaches are also used to establish institutions and reduce the uncertainty and informational asymmetry between parties, and to agree, particularly through negotiation leadership, on acceptable arrangements for all parties, regardless of their resources and interests.

1.4.2. Cognitivism in system analysis:

It is based on the idea that decision-makers' need for information is a precise and documented process that is linked to the role of cognitive groups in creating systems due to their specific expertise. The degree of influence increases as uncertainty waves increase, and the group becomes part of the bureaucratic system in the state, and as agreement among its members increases⁹.

There is a recent trend in cognitive theory that means the influence of ideas in creating and sustaining systems, which states that common concepts and ideas embody themselves in the form of institutions and systems in the broader sense, such as sovereignty and recognition.

This helps create a "sense of commitment" among system parties, even if there is not complete compliance with the principles and rules upon which the system is based. Additionally, the spread of cooperative institutions over time leads to the formation of collective identities that can form restrictions or controls on actors' behavior through the principle of reciprocity.

1.4.3. Institutional constructivism theory:

The basic assumption of this approach is that institutions, through the strategic interaction they provide, shape the interests and roles of actors in a way that ultimately helps to develop accepted rules, expectations, and collective identities for the actors. The focus of this approach is on studying the relationship between systems and institutions in the broad sense, as well as roles and rules, starting from defining systems as "a set of formal and informal rules that define the behavioral roles of actors, constrain their activities, and shape their expectations."¹⁰

This theory differs from the new realism theories, which study regional systems through material conditions such as balance of power and a state capable of preserving peace and stability. It also differs from the new liberalism theories, which see actors as creating systems to develop cooperation in specific areas. The essence of the difference between this approach and the realism and liberalism schools lies in

the fact that, according to this theory, systems or institutions may not be the result of rational and conscious choices made by states, but rather may emerge as a result of specific patterns of interactions that eventually turn into organized institutional structures. Furthermore, institutions represent an important source in shaping the identity, roles, and interests of the state.

1.4.4. Systems theory and the transnational approach:

The decline that has affected the strategic political actor is an indicator of the international relations in favor of economic, financial, and cultural factors. The increase in the number of active and influential forces on the international stage, in addition to the emergence of international and global issues that existing international institutions are unable to address, all of which led to the search for new theoretical frameworks that help interpret cooperation between states seeking to achieve their own interests. Krasnar considers regimes as a set of principles, rules, regulations, and implicit or explicit procedural frameworks, around which the expectations of the active forces meet and which affects a specific qualitative field¹¹.

The first theoretical proposals regarding regimes appeared in Keohane's writings while dealing with "complex interdependence," which requires the study of sequential flows of economic exchanges related to the expansion of the capital market and the path of economic integration on the one hand, and the multiplicity of active and influential forces on the other, such as states, international organizations, transnational corporations, nationalist movements, churches, and associations. Keohane's studies, which continued through the periodic publications of the International Organization journal, advocate for the transnational approach not to abandon the role of the state but to take mechanisms that limit the freedom of these states.

1.5. Systemic analysis through new realism:

New realism agrees with new liberalism in analyzing systems that states represent the most important actors on the world stage, and that they act inspired by their own interests in a chaotic environment lacking a central authority. However, the former, unlike the latter, does not rely heavily on the role of institutions in cooperation and focuses on the benefits gained by opponents and competitors¹². New realism also includes the theory of institutional construction, which is based on the idea that systems play a role in leading cooperative projects and may help develop a basis for reciprocal treatment, as is the case in European Union organizations, which makes it easy for states to accept relative losses at one point in time in anticipation of compensation at another time.

1.6. The Idea of Democratic Peace:

The concept of democratic peace represents the essence of liberal thought in the post-Cold War era, where the discussion of the democratic peace thesis began before the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, which paved the way for highlighting

theories that claim that democratic states rarely fight each other, although they may engage in wars against other states.

Therefore, democracy is considered a source of peace, as is the case for liberal institutions. This proposal has received wide support in European political and academic circles. President Bill Clinton also referred to the absence of democracy as a justification for American policies aimed at promoting the democratic process in Eastern and Central Europe after the end of the Cold War in his speech on the state of the European Union in 1994, opening the door for these countries to join the European Union.

2.The reality of integration complementarity in international relations in light of modern trends.

In this element, we tried to test the theories of integration by dropping these models and intellectual constructions on the reality of international relations.

2.1.The concept of harmony in understanding integration and complementarity in Latin American countries .

Based on the philosophy underlying Latin America, which is to consolidate the political independence that the region's countries achieved in the nineteenth century and achieve comprehensive development for these countries. Some researchers developed the concept of coordination and harmony (Coordination and Concertation) in 1992 to study the regional organization of Latin American countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s. From the perspective of this trend, "Concertation" represents a correct approach to studying regional cooperation among Latin American countries, which is experiencing its third stage of development. The first stage was the establishment of the Central American Common Market (CACM) in 1951, while the second stage was the establishment of the Latin American Economic Cooperation Association (ALADI) in 1975¹³. The third stage, known as the coordination and concertation stage, was a reaction to global and regional developments. The characteristics of Latin American harmony can be summarized in points:

- Achieving and maintaining peace in the Americas region beyond the bilateral level to collective activities aimed at coordinating and cooperating in combating general and organized crime.

- Political integration is achieved to a high degree in consensus, where direct coordination takes place between government leaders, foreign ministers, and specialized ministers to develop collective solutions to the international problems facing the countries of the region, without neglecting the social forces supporting integration.

- Flexibility of membership combines bilaterism and multilateralism, as happened in Europe in the 1950s.

- Following a pattern of specialization and division of labor regarding the development of foreign relations with groups and countries.

It should be noted that the success of the consensus in Latin America depends on its ability to develop the institutions existing towards supranational organization for the region's countries.

2.2. The constructivist institutionalist theory to explaining the failures of Arab regional integration.

The basic assumption of this theory is based on the framework of strategic interaction in the formation of interests and roles of actors that ultimately help develop accepted rules, expectations, and collective identities of the actors. Therefore, the point of interest in this approach lies in studying the relationship between systems, roles, and rules, starting from the premise of systems as a set of interconnected official and unofficial rules that define the behavioral roles of actors, restrict their activities, and shape their expectations¹⁴.

Applying the constructivist institutionalist approach to the Arab regional system leads to the conclusion that Arab countries have fallen captive to the fundamental and broad conflict between the sovereignty system or institution and the Arab national system or institution. Initially, before the 1967 war, the conflict was intense between the two systems of the relationship between the state and the nation. Then, after that, and for many internal and external reasons, the conflict between the two systems ended in favor of sovereignty to organize Arab-Arab relations on the basis of mutual recognition and complete equality, and even the concept of Arab leaders and even Arab masses regarding Arab nationalism has turned to reinforce the institution of sovereignty as a governing principle for Arab relations. In other words, nationalism and sovereignty are no longer conflicting concepts, which ultimately led to imparting the spirit of cooperation and consensus to Arab relations.

2.3. Systems analysis as an theory to understanding Asian integration

Flexible and open regional arrangements are a fertile ground for the application of systems analysis with its modern developments and trends. Researcher Emerson studied the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which includes six countries: Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines¹⁵, Myanmar, and Brunei, through a new development of the theory of stability and the concept of the leading state. The theory suggests that balanced disparity helps in the establishment and stability of a system. The ASEAN system emerged and continued because of a certain degree of variation and diversity in factors such as land area, per capita income, technological progress, and the size of the domestic market among its members, ensuring a relative stability. The researcher concludes that stability within the ASEAN will continue as long as the balanced disparity remains, especially between Indonesia and Singapore, which is the most likely possibility at least in the medium term. He justifies this by stating that the contradiction or balanced disparity between the member states is an automatic factor in preserving stability in regional systems.

2.4. Dialectical functionalism and its role in interpreting the achievements and setbacks of the European Union:

The European experience in regional integration during the period from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s revealed the failure of the integration process and the halt of the transfer of power from the states to the European community institutions, according to proponents of dialectical functionalism. They argue that the stagnation that plagued the project throughout the seventies and eighties can be explained by the establishment of the European Common Market, which led to increased government intervention in non-customs-related sectors, government aid, wage policies, and social policy. The harm caused by non-tariff barriers and the damage suffered by exporters within the European community, in addition to the declining competitiveness of European industries in the face of Japanese and American industries, all contributed to the cooperation of European countries through the European community to address unemployment and social recession. This resulted in the adoption of unified European law¹⁶.

The functional role of dialectical functionalism is not actually diagnosing a crisis, but rather a momentary deadlock that allows member states to respond to the pressures arising from intense competition. The Corbey movement emerged as a result of this. In addition to the explanatory power of dialectical functionalism in interpreting the European integration process, it also contributes to the development of a certain concept of the European Union. It stands in the middle ground between the theory of supranational state and governmentality, forming a new type of regulation or governance that does not compromise the fundamental flaw of the existence of the nation-state, as federalism assumes. However, at the same time, it surpasses the governmentality theory through its influence on the policies of member states.

2.5. Social constructivism as an introduction to understanding the obstacles of the internal environment of African integration

Social constructivism is one of the most important approaches to understanding the African environment and identifying the obstacles to integration in Africa through a set of characteristics. The constructivist approach is based on the concept of identity presented by constructivists, which is one of the main causes of internal and international conflicts and a major obstacle to African integration. They argue that three characteristics create crises for African blocs: economic and social crises, state crises, and internal ethno-cultural homogeneity crises.

3. Evaluating the recent trends in the study of integration

It reveals a set of characteristics and observations that can be summarized as follows over the past ten years:

-Do the curricula and theories used in the study of integration and fusion during this period distinguish themselves by a realistic feature, meaning that these curricula and approaches¹⁷, whether in terms of their first appearance or in terms of their

development and updating, are related to a certain regional environment. Modern trends have some common denominators or points of convergence between modern curricula and approaches in the study of regional organization.

-The functional dialectic modifies and develops the new functionalism, and the realistic, liberal, and cognitive schools all agree on the role of systems and institutions in international cooperation, even though these schools differ among themselves about the size and degree of "institutional" required to achieve cooperation, i.e., whether systems are just dependent variables or independent actors in shaping international cooperation behavior. In this context, the institutional constructivist approach developed by some to study Arab regional organization agrees largely with cognitive theory in its rigid form, which also stems from an approach that revolves around the existence or absence of an institution and views institutions in its broad meaning as an authentic variable in shaping behavior, imposing compliance, and forming a common identity.

-Most of the curricula and theories that have recently appeared in the study of regional organization are suitable for studying global organization and international cooperation arrangements in general, especially the system approach with its various theories and trends. Advocates of the functional dialectic have not overlooked the possibility of applying it on a global scale. On the other hand, there are some modern, limited, and scattered applications of traditional curricula and approaches within the scope of international organization to study some regional groupings and organizations.

This is also the case with the use of the open systems analysis approach¹⁸, known as organization theory or the relationship theory between the organization and its environment, with its evaluation of the organization's effectiveness through its interaction with all internal and external factors and variables present in its environment.

Use this methodology in studying the patterns of change, and the limits of effectiveness in the structure of international organizations, whether regional or global. Also, as in the case of using content analysis in its quantitative and qualitative aspects, in studying and evaluating the basic demands of the European Union towards the Mediterranean countries during the Barcelona Conference held from 22-28/11/1995 on the future relations between the Union countries and most of the countries bordering the Mediterranean, the researchers presented their analyses within the framework of the basic assumptions of realism theory, especially the stability theory associated with dominant power.

- The credibility of these traditional methods generally depends on the state of the organization and whether it is in the process of formation and construction, or restructuring, or whether it is in a state of activity or facing the challenge of survival and continuity. In the latter cases, the use of these methods, especially the system analysis approach or organization theory, may have scientific value, while this value

may be less in the case of international organizations in the process of formation and construction, as is the case with the establishment of many regional groupings and arrangements in various regions of the world nowadays. This imposes the necessity to search for suitable methodologies and approaches and requirements of the current situation for these groupings and arrangements.

-As for the neoliberal approach, it has received significant academic support, but it has not been immune to criticism. Dr. Samir Amin questions the required democracy, where he sees that there is no room to underestimate the importance of the Western bourgeois democratic legacy¹⁹, i.e., respect for laws and legitimacy, free expression of diverse opinions, electoral processes, separation of powers, and the organization of parallel powers. However, democracy cannot stop at this point. Democracy is required to start, renew and fit into a framework where the law of uneven development plays a role.

In general, we can say that modern approaches have provided greater theoretical flexibility and effectiveness and the ability to continue to understand regional arrangements. With their diversity and different perspectives, they have been able to solve, to a large extent, the problem of the multiple aspects of the phenomenon of integration and fusion between political, economic, and social aspects.

Conclusion:

The epistemological study aimed to review the literature of integration and fusion and discuss modern trends in the field by applying them to the reality of blocs in international relations. We arrived at a series of results mostly related to the general characteristics of the integration and fusion theory:

- Despite the theory's departure from subjectivity towards objectivity, it still needs to draw from the subjectivity of its creators. This is justified by its focus on the centrality of the economy in integration, which is the lifeline of liberal capitalism.

- It is subject to the general trend of culture, which is Western culture distinguished by materialism and liberalism. This is evident in the general theory of integrative fusion when it establishes integration from the economic sector, which is the essence that remains unchanged. Based on this, it rejects any integration that contradicts this dimension and calls for freeing the economy from all political, ethical, and cultural constraints (the form follows the function principle in David Metrani's functional theory).

- This theory establishes a Eurocentric and centralistic view, where the part is subsumed under the whole, while in essence, it is not equal to it but has its distinct cultures that see integration based on non-economic factors fundamentally different from it.

- This theory proposes itself as a general theory, i.e., a working ground for all integration projects, but it does not achieve its independence from the peculiarities of culture and the European and Western reality in general, which is developing towards the predominance of economic interest. This theory sees in all integration projects

that do not consider functional requirements a threat to the global capitalist economy and international security - the idea of the haphazard division of the international community mentioned by Metrani.

- This theory, in its essence, is dedicated to perpetuating Western dominance by reproducing relations of subordination in a new form and renewing the unequal exchange between the developed and the developing world. This is evident in ideas that call for undermining the pillars of the nation-state and reducing its various roles, and the countries and economies that will be most affected by this reduction will be the weak ones.

- The integration theory is a call for institutionalizing the model globally by proposing the European integration model as a template for all integration projects, and through the centralization of the economy in the integration project. However, every society has its own specificities and we cannot have a general model for integration.

- The integration theory is a theory of globalization and fragmentation... a theory of integration that leads to disintegration.

- The mechanical theory sees integration as a matter related to objective factors limited to the material side, while it has been proven that integration is a cultural project that requires psychological and social mobilization and other spiritual conditions.

- One of the paradoxes of this theory is that it aims to go beyond the state by relying on the state.

Recommendations:

- Adopt appropriate theoretical frameworks that are tailored to the characteristics of integrated states, rather than importing theoretical models that do not meet the needs of society, as we have shown in the field projections of modern trends. The European Union was ready to build integration on an economic basis, while the African Union needs to build a social foundation through strong institutional construction of states to become ready to enter functional paths.

- Move away from the central circle of Western theorizing, which presents projects for domination rather than theoretical approaches that explain or adopt integrative models.

- Build a major theory of integration and merging led by political scientists, rather than importing literature from other fields of knowledge. This is done through understanding that the phenomenon is attributed to the field in which it is studied, even if the phenomenon is essentially economic, we must deal with it as a political phenomenon that casts its shadow on the economic, social, and legal aspects, and give priority to the political aspect.

- Continue to follow the integrative paths, as they are not a static process, but a dynamic process, in which fixed models should not be built. These blocs usually

suffer from oscillations in their results, according to the internal environment of integration and in line with the effects of the external environment.

Margins:

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