

Analysis of Historical Development of European Integration: From the Perspectives of Marxist Philosophy

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Abstract

European integration has its own developmental logic and it is considered one of the most successful international organizations in the world, many scholars attempt to analyze the historical development of European integration and put forward specific theoretical framework, which is conducive to further research on European studies. The paper uses methodologies of Marxist philosophy to explore European integration development, providing a brand new research dimension in European studies. There are four major principles in dialectical materialism: The Combination of Necessity and Contingency; The Law of Unity and Struggle of Opposites; The Law of Change from quantitative to qualitative and The Law of Negation of Negation. Historical development of European integration completely follows these four principles. First of all, European integration sticks to the combination of necessity and contingency because it is the common interest for most European countries, European politicians design the basic framework of European integration and make it happen. Secondly, European integration complies with the law of unity and struggle of opposites, contradiction between nation and supranationality as well as sovereignty transfer are two major obstacles in European integration, but member states will remain rational when they attempt to keep a balance between national interests and common interests. Thirdly, European integration will make giant progress in future after accumulating the experience and going through difficulties, which is correspondent to the law of change from quantitative to qualitative. Last but not least, the law of negation to negation is the engine of European integration which will expand and consolidate the scale of European integration. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the methodologies of Marxist philosophy in European integration because it will provide a brand new research vision in the historical development of European integration.

Keywords

European Integration; Marxist Philosophy; Methodology; Principle.

1. Introduction

European integration is a kind of cooperation among the European Union member states in terms of industrial, economic, political, legal, social and cultural integration. Because of the catastrophe caused by the second world war, European countries, especially Germany and France, started to focus on building an international organization which could promote cooperation among European countries in order to prevent wars from happening again. Furthermore, some nation states realized that greater regional cooperation would be needed to make economic and political interdependence come true, ensuring prosperity, stability and security in future. As the Schuman declaration stated "peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it." In other words, European integration is historical developmental trend for European Union countries, it is necessary to take further research on the reasons of historical European integration, theoretical

framework in particular, because every action they made are correspondent to the inner meaning of theories.

European integration cannot be carried out if there are no guidance theories, it is essential to avoid wars among the nation-states, so Federalism and Functionalism were proposed among the nation-states while transactionalism has the purpose of promoting stabilization of the nation-states system. Neofunctionalism is one of the most influential theories of European integration, which was put forward by Ernst B. Haas (1958). Leon Lindberg further developed it. The theory advocates that more integration will be gained if we follow the rule of spillovers of integration. Liberal intergovernmentalism, another important theory of European integration, stresses that state preferences are the key to implement the theory. Andrew Moravcsik was the inventor of liberal intergovernmentalism, it became very influential because it absorbed the work related to intergovernmentalist of Stanley Hoffman and other scholars. In order to deeply understand the existing problems and developmental trends of European integration, neofunctionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism do not reach a consensus and still remain some discrepancy, but two of them are the key points to understand the operation of European integration.

Many scholars have already taken further research on European integration theories. Mark A. Pollack (2007) points out that new institutionalism has emerged and evolved into plural institutionalism, we can make use of new institutionalism and apply it to the study of European Union and the question of EU enlargement so that we can realize the strengthen and weakness of the institutional approaches. C. Shore (2013) focuses on the keyword "cultural politics", attempting to analyze European integration from the perspective of cultural politics. Sweet, A. S. and Sandholtz, W. (1997) combine European integration with supranational governance, analyzing logical development from national, intergovernmental to supranational governance. Marks, G., Wilson, C. J. and Ray, L. (2002) put forward that party positioning plays a paramount role in European integration, rather than strategic competition, national location, participation in government as well as the position of a party's supporters. Therefore, European integration theories basically analyze historical process of the European Union and it also demonstrates that scientific characteristics exist in European integration, which is correspondent to historical developmental trends.

It is acknowledged that Marxist philosophy contains two components, one is historical materialism and the other one is materialist dialectics. Historical materialism tells us that human beings must produce in order to survive in future, so material production is the fundamental human activity. The human society progress is stimulated by the development of productive forces. Human manufacture, distribute and exchange in certain ways so that production relation can be formed. Production relation must be adapted for production force, production force will be developed when production force is situated in appropriate production relation. It is inevitable that sometimes production relations will lag behind the development of production force. When production relation hinders development of production force, obsolete production relation will be replaced by the new one. In the process of revolution, human have experienced primitive society, slavery society, feudal society and capitalism society, each kind of social forms has their own characteristics. Human society is transforming from capitalism society to socialism society, production relation of capitalism is still dominant in the world. Therefore, human social development relies on the relationship of production force and production relation, which has great potential power as it has mentioned by Karl Marx. European integration is a part of human society, European integration is achievement of the interaction between production force and production relation. Besides, European integration will be further analyzed from the perspective of dialectical materialism, which will provide brand new perspective in analyzing historical development of European integration.

The structure of paper can be constructed as follows: there are five chapters of the paper in order to fully analyze historical development of European integration. The first part mainly focuses on the combination of necessity and contingency, which demonstrates that historical development of European integration contains necessity and contingency, and the second part will follow the law of unity and struggle of opposites, it informs us that everything will obey the law of unity and struggle of opposites, EU is in no exception. The law of change from quantitative to qualitative will be fully presented to the next chapter in order to prove that European integration cannot be achieved within one day or decades. The law of negation to negation will be analyzed in the last chapter and some conclusions will be given. The paper aims at providing new research perspective, which will be conducive to the further research in historical development of EU.

2. Historical Development of European Integration: The Combination of Necessity and Contingency

Based on the dialectical materialism, the emergence of regional integration in Western Europe after the second world war has its own contingency as well as necessity. The first regional integration organization in Europe is called European Coal and Steel community. The purpose of establishing the organization is to maintain peace in Europe, which has a strong sense of political intentions. Jean Monet put forward that Europe should build up common market for coal and steel. France and Germany work together, combining two fundamental industries. Their resources, production and consumption are managed by a supranational institution, as a result of which Germany could no longer rebuild its military industry by using economic ways to solve a political issue. Monet's unique design is paramount for European integration, Schumann and Adenauer and other European politics have made some contributions during the process of European integration so that common market can be implemented, which means that regional integration has the characteristic of contingency. The 1957 Treaty of Rome and the establishment of European economic community expands the region of common market to the whole European community, which proves that it has the characteristics of necessity, because Jean Monet creates cross-border common market in order to meet the demands of Western European production development. Western European countries need economic recovery and development after the second world war, they intend to organize production, distribution and consumption to make good use of resource. And that is the beginning of European economic integration, they formulate and implement common agriculture policies and basically realize that merchandise can be circulated in the European continent; common tremendous market can be built by implementing internal market plan; some member states even use common monetary. European economic integration also affects other regions of European integration like society, culture and politics. European integration originally starts from six member states, and gradually develops into twenty-eight countries. The scale of European integration is still in progress. Therefore, according to historical development of European integration, we can analyze that European integration is correspondent to the need of production development, European integration is the result of revolution in production relation. It is acknowledged that globalization is an inevitable trend in the world, it is necessary that some countries break the limit of borders to establish international organizations, which demonstrates that the whole process has the characteristics of inevitability and necessity. Even though European integration comes across obstacles and predicaments, historical missions are still in progress and there is still a long way to proceed. The function of European integration is to maintain peace in European continent, it also provides experience for other regions to establish regional integration. Hence, necessity and contingency exist in the historical development of European integration.

3. Historical Development of European Integration: The Law of Unity and Struggle of Opposites

The law of unity and struggle of opposites mean that everything in the world evolves with unity and struggle, the world cannot make progress without unity and struggle, which is the core of dialectical materialism. During the historical process of European integration, the contradictions existing in European integration promote its process, distinctive contradictions in European integration is the contradiction between states and supranational. European integration has distinctive supranational feature because it builds up common institutions at the first place and also empower common institutions with legislation, judiciary and administration ability, it is worthwhile to mention that common institutions developmental process, which means that original states' functions and authority should be given to the common institutions. That is called sovereignty transfer. Supranational and sovereignty transfer is two major symbols of European integration, which demonstrates that European integration exists a contradiction between nations and supranationality. Sovereignty transfer is the keyword in the historical development of European integration. sovereignty transfer can be realized in each time when they modify or sign specific treaties. The transfer of sovereignty in European integration can also be revealed by analyzing its names, European economic community, European community and the name of European integration finally is certified as European Union. In the process, member states sometimes are reluctant to transfer their sovereignty.

It is the national interest that keeps the contradiction between nation and supranationality in balance, which means that European integration relates to national interests of member states. On the one hand, the original purpose of member states is to join in the European integration to realize their own national interests so that they are willing to transfer some sovereignty; on the other hand, national interests of member states sometimes are not completely correspondent to common interest in European integration, they refuse to sovereignty transfer because it will affect their special interests. When it comes to specific political issues, conflicts and discrepancies will be revealed on a regular basis. But the conflict will be eliminated because some member states make some compromise in order to keep European integration in progress. As we all know, the original intention of promoting European integration is to prevent world wars from happening again, and European integration is conducive to economic recovery. Many European countries desperately want to participate in European integration because it will provide them with invisible shield today. Although British have already exited from European integration, it does not mean that integration process come across stagnant situation. Each country in European union still euphorically devotes themselves to economic construction, improving fundamental infrastructure as well as gathering together to battle against COVID-19.

4. Historical Development of European Integration: The Law of Change from Quantitative to Qualitative

There is one rule in dialectical materialism called the law of change from quantitative to qualitative, it means that everything in the world will be developed from quantitative to qualitative. The destination of quantitative is qualitative and qualitative will provide new conditions for the next quantitative. Philosophers will always use "quantum leap" in physics to describe water boiling or nuclear explosion. European integration can be analyzed with the law, European integration is the interaction between quantitative and qualitative in its historical development. Starting from European steel and coal community, European integration has already reached three times of quantitative by signing Rome Treaty, Maastricht Treaty and Lisbon Treaty. Rome Treaty aims at expanding the common market in European integration,

from industrial sector to the whole economic area and it also lay solid foundation for building up European council, European commission as well as European court. Maastricht Treaty levels up European economic integration, it aims at social integration, cultural integration, educational integration and security integration, etc. The Treaty is prepared for European Union. Lisbon Treaty declares that European Union takes the place of European community and establishes European citizenship, the institutions of European Union are adjusted to deal with political issues. European integration is the process combining with expansion and consolidation. European integration expansion means that more and more states want to participate in the European Union; European integration consolidation means that the relationship among all member states is closer than ever before. Without expansion and consolidation, European integration will be stagnant. In other words, although there are some difficulties and predicaments all the time. European integration expansion does not mean that disagreements will be appeared or detrimental to European integration, member states will take necessary precautions to maintain European integration even though common interests sometimes conflict with their national interests. The precautions that member states take provide foundation for quantitative, it is the prerequisite for qualitative which will definitely have made giant progress in European integration.

5. Historical Development of European Integration: The Law of Negation of Negation

The law of negation to negation can also be applied to analyze the historical development of European integration. The law tells us that everything in the world will vanish one day, which means that there is no such a thing that will be ever-lasting. Many people avoid discussing the law because it is a little bit frustrated to know that everything has its own destiny. The law can be combined with European integration, we can analyze it from two perspectives, one is the process of European integration, European integration will become much harder than before because of inner contradiction; and the other one represents a relationship between production and superstructure. Therefore, European integration is the need of production development and historical reality, European integration evolves into the European union because of preparation and improvement, it means that European integration changes a lot to eliminate the contradiction. Nowadays, during the period of expansion and consolidation, European integration is still facing with a lot of difficulties in terms of economy, security and COVID-19. Historical development will last for a century or several centuries and we can draw some useful experience and conclusions from the process. It takes several decades for European integration to form European Union, one of the most successful international organizations in the world. There is no doubt that European Union has many inner obstacles waiting to be solved, each member states have their own national interests and sometimes they are not compatible with common interests of integration. However, facing with the difficulties, European integration will be strengthened and member states will spare no efforts to solve difficulties instead of disintegration.

6. Conclusion

The paper attempts to use Marxist philosophy to analyze historical development of European integration. From the analysis above, European integration follows the law of combination of necessity and contingency, globalization is the future trend of the world and European integration is a part of globalization. Moreover, European integration follows the law of change from quantitative to qualitative because European integration accumulates a lot of experience during the developmental process. Besides, European integration sticks to the law of unity and struggle of opposite, the contradiction between nation and supranationality and sovereignty

transfer are two major obstacles in the European integration. Conflicts will always be solved in a proper way because each member states will remain rational to work issues out, they cooperate together and consolidate the integration. And finally, European integration complies with the law of negation to negation because European integration is the original intention of member states, it will make giant progress in future after accumulating experience and experiencing predicaments.

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