

## EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND SECURITY IN POST-BREXIT AGE: A POSSIBLE MODEL NEOPOSTNAPOLEONIC?

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**Abstract:** *In this paper we propose to assess the possible anticipatory European identity and security context in the post-Brexit age. In this context, based on the concept of theory neomedievalist of English School, we tried to support the hypothesis that UK out of the EU club could lead to resize identity and security European architecture, in a similar manner as the type congress / European concert, established after the defeat of France in the Napoleonic Wars. The research objective is to identify similarities / differences between the two factual historical and security contexts on the continent, which are able to support the previous hypothesis. Quadrilateral power (Russia, Prussia, Austria, England) in Europe established after the Congress of the Holy Alliance, could be replicated in a similar quadrangle after a new E.U. treaty that would reshape E.U. after Brexit, quadrilateral composed of European powers that were favorable to the project said two-speed Europe (Germany, France, Italy, Spain). Therefore, a set of conditions similar postnapoleonic context could create prerequisites of identity construction and security type neopostnapoleonic, but supplemented by functional integration problems.*

**Keywords:** *European identity; security; Europe post-Brexit; concert/ congress neopostnapoleonic.*

**JEL Classification:** *F52; F53; F55*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two centuries, the balance of the international system has constantly depended on the condition of security on the European continent, and the finding of the most appropriate continental security formula has proved to be one of the most difficult enterprises both in terms of political and diplomatic practice and on the level of intellectual-epistemic theorization. Whereas constructivists recognize the identity factor as being a significant component of European security, the rationalists of the English School assert the role of normative arrangements (agreements, treaties) in calibrating the continental security framework. In Europe, more than in any other regions of the World, the architecture of national identities and security framework has undergone evolutionary metamorphoses in line with the dynamics of political and historical transformations validated by political, economic or security arrangements. Thus, the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), the Congress of the Holy Alliance (1815), the Treaty of Versailles (1919), the Treaty of Paris (1947), the Treaties of the European Communities (1957) are examples of

arrangements that have brought about new political, economic and security formats across the continent. Many of them have capitalized on a number of institutions and systems used by previous arrangements.

Pursuing this line of reasoning, we will argue that Britain's exit from the European Union could generate a new security framework on the continent, similar to that established after France's defeat in the Napoleonic wars, even if the United Kingdom's exit is a voluntary gesture as opposed to France's, the latter being a consequence of the humiliating defeat.

Over this background, we find many similarities between certain systemic elements of the post-Napoleonian context and those of the current European framework under Brexit conditions. The comparative examination allows us to analyze from a neo-medievalist perspective the European dynamics determined by the UK's separatist option. The liberalization of Continental Europe from a series of restrictions associated with former British claims<sup>1</sup> could lead to a re-

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<sup>1</sup> Optout clause; not including the Schengen space; differences in fiscal policy, defense and common security policy etc.

/consolidation of the EU's basic treaties, in order to strengthen the convergence of common policies and thereby increase the degree of Community integration in the new circumstances.

The need for such a reconsolidation is illustrated by the positions already adopted by European officials regarding the re-/design of the EU at different speeds. In fact, Brexit seems to be an excuse that allows for the opportunity of implementing the organizational and security reconfiguration desired by the powers of "old Europe", given the current volatile security climate (migration, terrorism) and the poor economic and social convergence of the so-called "new Europe" spaces which joined after 2004. Obviously, the EU's political and security rearrangements, once institutionalized, will be accompanied by the adjoining identity and community corolla (Bărbulescu, 2015: 547) responsible, in their turn, for perceptual and behavioral readjustments in post-Brexit Europe. Europe's new structure, following a new gravitational model, will be facilitated by the prospective institutional segregation of actors with different "weights" in the process of political, security and identity re-establishment of European society. This phenomenon creates the premises of a state of fact similar to the one institutionalized by the 1815 Congress of the Holy Alliance.

For the purpose of comparative contextual assessment, we have identified and extracted the premises in question by comparing the provisions of the political and security arrangements established by the Treaty of the Holy Alliance, the current provisions of the consolidated European Treaties, and the declarations of intent of European leaders.

*The aim of this paper* is to identify and evaluate the similarities and differences between the post-Napoleonic political and security context and the current one, under the Brexit / post-Brexit conditions.

*The research hypothesis* states that by leaving the EU, the UK generates the contextual framework necessary to undertake a remodeling of the European Community architecture in line with the political, economic and security interests of the main post-Brexit actors (Germany, France, Italy, Spain); the model gives a mimetic projection of the situation managed by the European powers (Prussia, Austria, Russia, England) after the Congress of Vienna.

The paper is structured according to the following sections: introduction, literature review and epistemic framing, methodological approaches, results, conclusions and bibliographic references.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The basic treaty provisions of the EU with regard to community governance, have brought to the limelight of the academic debate of the last decades the assertion of neo-medievalism, a model promoted by the representatives of the English School. Neo-medievalism argues that national sovereigns have a strong devolution to both supranational and sub-national levels of governance (Bull, [1977], 2012:245). In a manner similar to the neo-medievalist thesis put forward by Bull, we can argue that the current European conjuncture related to Brexit brings to attention the emergence of elements associated with the context generated by the provisions of the Final Act of the 1815 Congress of the Holy Alliance.

Most academic approaches assess comparatively the framework of European security institutions. The European power concert is analyzed through the lens of how similar the balance of power established at the Congress of Vienna (1815) is, compared to the less known subsystem power balance of the current environment, which is largely concealed by the institutional framework of the European Union (Miroiu, Soare, 2006:207-208).

According to Jervis, the *status quo* established after the Napoleonic Wars can be seen as a security regime (Jervis, 1982:364), and at present the European context can be interpreted to the limit as operating under the security regime offered by OSCE (Ungureanu, 2006:241), an aspect which has been conserved after Brexit. However, the current data allow us to give a view alternative to Jervis's and to accept the current and immediate situation as a predictable exception to the accepted rule for building a power concert, according to which "a concert of power can be established only after a conflagration against a potential hegemon" (Jervis, 1985:60). However, there are also a number of differences which are noted in the literature such as the security community based on identities and shared values (Adler, Barnett, 1998:31) operable in the EU (most likely after Brexit as well), which did not exist in post-Napoleonic Europe.

Taking Buzan and Wæver's considerations as a starting point, we can state that the composition of European security in the post-Brexit era could circumscribe some security coordinates similar to those of the post-Napoleonic concert, namely a series of institutional arrangements that vary from the perspective of the themes and the approaches

covered (Buzan *et al.*, 2011:266) and with obvious differences. Thus, from a neo-realistic perspective, the post-Brexit stage could re-/bring the exercise of a balance of power within the EU, but in an exclusively economic and non-military matrix (Ungureanu, 2010:81).

The saving epistemic solution that might offer an explanation for the similarities between the post-Napoleonic European concert and the probable post-Brexit one comes, rather, from a neoliberal perspective on the subject. The interdependencies between the European powers after 1815, those of today, and those in the immediate future, seem to be taking place within a network of rules, norms and procedures (Keohane, Nye, 2009:64), determined by the reciprocity of interests between these powers, the expectations regarding the others' behavior as well as their number (Axelrod, Keohane, 1993:87-98).

According to constructivist assessments, the normative framework, along with the interactions and the conveyance of ideas, regulate the relationships among states and influence their behaviors and identities, albeit in different ways across the eras (Legro, 2009).

Thus, some fixed constructs of identity could add to the socio-economic and security reconfiguration of the continent in an era of future post-sovereignty (Greenhill, 2008:365), in a manner similar to the catalytic role that nationalisms had for the consolidation of sovereignty in the post-Napoleonic stage (Armstrong, 1982:96). It is therefore desirable that a remapping of the power concert in Europe be accompanied by a gradual rethinking of European identities (Morin, 1987:47), in accordance with the sympathies associated with the new arrangements (Ross, 2006:198) and with the ongoing metamorphosis of the national phenomenon's facets in Europe (Rumford, Buhari, 2014:121; Adamson, Demetriou, 2007:490). Understanding these changes is essential for a rational management of predictable remodeling in continental architecture and assumes the end goal of safe cohabitation in a common European home, governed by balance and security.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

For the purpose of identifying the similarities and differences between the European context established in the aftermath of the Vienna Congress and the current post-Brexit situation, we used a questionnaire comprising essential issues

that characterize the two eras. The items of the questionnaire cover three categories of referential elements, namely the elements of the political framework - 5 items, elements of the economic framework - 4 items and elements of the security framework - 5 items (Table 1). The answers to these items were formulated by extracting the corresponding information from the content of the normative acts and their derivatives, acts which established the organizational and functional configuration of the European system at the two relevant historical moments: the Final Act of the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the Consolidated Basic Treaties of the European Union, decisions, recommendations and opinions of the EU institutions and their decision-makers on Brexit issues.

With regards to *the political framework*, we focused on identifying the main processes underlying the political and security arrangements of the two eras, the emerging ideologies, the distribution of power centers in the international system, and the way in which power was exercised across the continent. Three of the five points used in the questionnaire outline current Brexit related processes in a converging grid, with similar processes that appeared following the Congress of the Holy Alliance.

Thus, the main continental event in the post-Napoleonic era was the political and territorial unification of central Europe (in the German space), while in the post-Brexit era a reconceptualization of European integration is anticipated, with the same Germany being considered as the catalyst. This phenomenon will undoubtedly have to be validated by a new post-Brexit treaty, as the European reality after the defeat of France was enforced by the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna. The reconceptualization of both epochs was / is accompanied by the emergence of new deviant ideas: while the 19<sup>th</sup> century has seen the emergence of revolutionary, Marxist, socialist ideologies, the current era seems to witness the explosion of populist, Eurosceptic and anti-system ideas. There are only two referential items of the European political domain which do not present comparative convergence: the way power is distributed in the current international system is no longer a Eurocentric, but a polycentric one, and the exercise of power at European level is largely based on a qualified majority vote of the EU Council, and not on a restoration of Europe's principles as established by the Holy Alliance.

Table 1. The comparative framework of European context postnapoleonic and post-Brexit context

Referential elements	Enquiry	Europe in the postnapoleonic age	Europe in the post-Brexit age
Political features	Main process	Political and territorial unification/ centralization in Central Europe (German area)	Reconsidering E.U. integration (around Germany)
	Basic rule/ act/ arrangement	The European arrangement architecture by the Agreements of the Congress of Holy Alliance	The arrangement of new E.U. architecture by a new treaty to strengthen the E.U.'s basic treaties
	New ideas/ Schismatic ideas	The development of alternative ideologies (revolutionary/ socialist / marxist ideologies)	The development of alternative ideologies (populist/ eurosceptic/ iliberal/ countersystem ideologies)
	The distribution of centers of power in international system	Eurocentric international system	Polycentric international system
	The exercise of power	The restoration of the Princes' Europe	Community decisions by qualified majority voting
Economic features	Economic processes founder	Developing capitalist economy after the industrial revolution	Digital and innovative world economy development after the IT revolution
	Evolutionary economic processes	Transition from premonopoly capitalism to the monopoly capitalism	Strengthening newfunctionalist economic integration: preparing the transition to fiscal union
	Type of market	Free economy in monopoly conditions	Internal Market based on the four freedoms
	Monetary system	Gold monetary standard	Single currency; Euro wide area
Security features	Type of institutional system	European concert/ congress of security	Security concert into the Euro-Atlantic Community of security
	Type of European framework	An architecture with two categories of actors: 4 hegemon powers (Russia, Prussia, Austria, England) + outskirts of Europe	An architecture designed for a two-speed Europe: 4 main actors (Germany, France, Italy, Spain) + outskirts of Europe
	Type of insecurity	Turbulences generated by the empowerment of indigenous nationalities	Turbulences associated with the diasporic communities outside Europe deterritorialized
	Security status of Europe	Security independence of Europe	Euro-Atlantic political-military Alliance
	Existence/ Non-existence of ex-European threats	No ex-European threats	Ex-European threats
Legend: <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> - similarities <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #00BFFF; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> - differences			

Source: Authors' proceedings

The elements of *the economic framework* have taken into account the transformation processes of the European economy, the existing market type and monetary system. Two of the four points used in the questionnaire highlight the convergence of current post-Brexit processes with some processes following the Congress of Vienna. Thus, in both eras, Europe had/has recently re-established itself in the matrix of new types of economies: the development of the capitalist economy following the industrial revolution, and the development of

the digital and innovative economy following the IT revolution (Kobrin, 1998:382). Likewise, both periods have experienced beneficial transition processes: the transition from pre-monopoly capitalism to monopoly capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the preparation of the transition to the fiscal union, that will have to be sanctioned by the next post-Brexit consolidation treaty. The two items related to the economic domain reflect divergences between the reference moments, due to the processual dynamics of the European

economy: monopoly capitalism versus integrated economy based on the freedom of movement of capital, goods, people and services, namely monetary system based on the gold standard versus European single currency and, most likely, on the rethinking of the Eurozone after Brexit, based on the European model with two (or more) speeds.

*Continental security parameters* derive exclusively from the projected security arrangements anticipated (Mitzen, 2006:342): adopted models of security architecture, types of internal turbulence, Europe's security status in the international system, the nature of the new emergent threats. Three of the five security items used in the questionnaire reveal shades of similarities between the 1815 post-Vienna security patterns in Europe and post-Brexit Europe. Both security contexts state the power concert as the institution admitted to the continent, with the amendment that, perhaps, after the UK's exit, the community's power concert will be further circumscribed, from a security point of view, to the Euro-Atlantic Security Community, compared to its post-Napoleonic independence.

At the same time, for both periods, the European power architecture is structured according to the two-speed Europe model: the dominant core and the peripheries; the difference is only given by the composition of the hard core: Russia, Prussia, Austria and England, as laid down in the Final Act of the Holy Alliance, and Germany, France, Italy and Spain, according to their position in support of the statements made by the President of the European Commission with regard to a post-two-speed Brexit. The internal unrests of 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, as a result of the emancipation of nationalities, are replaced by new phenomena - such as radicalization, alienation and social exclusion, identity crises - generated by the presence of extra-European diasporas (Chiru, Barna, 2006). The contextual differences between the periods under scrutiny refer to the origin of the threats (excluding the 19<sup>th</sup> century intra-European ones, predominantly extra-European at present) as well as Europe's degree of security autonomy (19<sup>th</sup> century security independence as opposed to the current dependence on NATO's Atlantic Alliance).

#### 4. RESULTS

The previous evaluation allows for a European Post-Brexit model, based on the coordinates of a European power concert similar to that established by the Congress of the Holy Alliance, although not completely identical.

Indeed, the post-Brexit community order aims at fulfilling similar goals to the post-Napoleonic concert, but in the matrix of the new main actors: preserving the European equilibrium, preserving intergovernmentalism (based on the sovereignty of states, albeit with wider predictions), maintaining security and stability in accordance with both the Community norms and the security commitments that the EU Member States are part of. The paradigm of preserving the European balance, most strongly supported by England and Austria in 1815, now has Spain and Italy as fervent supporters because of their security interests in the secessionist tendencies they feel threatened by (Catalonia, the Basque Country, South Tyrol). The Germany-France pair seems to be replacing, in a rather mimetic way, the Russia-Prussia pair at the Vienna Congress. Russia's 1815 desire to establish a European federation under the leadership of Tsar Alexander I (metamorphosed in the "European Common House" skillfully reinvented by Mikhail Gorbachev between 1987 and 1989) is now replaced by Germany's hegemonic tendency in what seems to be an unbalanced European Union after the leave of the United Kingdom. Therefore, through a counterfactual exercise in imagination, we can visualize the virtual translation of the Tsarist Europe of 1815, to the more plausible Europe of the Kaiser (Ferguson, 2013:149); in fact, we are dealing with only a relative increase in Germany's potential in the new European concert, attributable to a "smaller" West on a global scale (Boia, 2013). By converging to the line of Germany, France finds itself in a position very similar to that of Prussia at the time of the Holy Alliance. Even Britain, as an EU outsider, can be given the posture of France in the post-congress power concert. Though defeated, France managed to be accepted in the power concert after 1818, thanks to the capability of its Foreign Minister, Charles Talleyrand. Similarly, the United Kingdom, which had firmly refused to join the European Community in 1957, was accepted as a member in 1973. In such a context, we have all the arguments to state that a possible wish on London's behalf to rejoin the community club (in another format), would not be refused.

From the perspective of such an emerging evolution and the silent acceptance of a wider multiple speed European project, it is possible to outline the post-Brexit landscape. If the model is to be validated by a new treaty, Europe's first speed could include the four main actors (Germany, France, Italy and Spain) along with some other developed "old Europe" members for the

reconfigured euro zone. In this context, the Eurozone concert could give up on some of the current members (such as Greece and Cyprus) in a similar way that the actors of the Congress of Vienna decided to exclude Spain from the post-Napoleonic concert (Wight, 2002:53). Europe's first speed could also include some non-Euro members, which prove not only good economic compatibility, but also an identitarian and socio-cultural one with most of the other members of this elitist group (such as Denmark and Sweden).

A second-speed Europe would include the current non-Euro states, to which Greece and Cyprus would be added, all of which are perceived as having not only economic difficulties, but also serious socio-cultural differences with their first-rate competitors.

Another emerging dimension that supports the hypothesis of a post-Brexit Europe very similar to the post-Napoleon Europe is the nature of alternative ideas. Just as the 19<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the emergence of Marxist revolutionary ideologies, so is the present age increasingly disturbed by Eurosceptic or anti-system ideologies.

Neo-post-Napoleonian emergence is also ensured by the upgrading of some economic "rites of passage". The current development, which derives from the technological revolution, resembles that of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was generated by the effects of the industrial revolution, and the transition to a tax integration of the community body (catalyzed by Britain's leave). Therefore, the transition to liberal capitalism is repeated in a ritualistic fashion.

At the same time, today's Europe and that of the near future, will have to find the most appropriate instruments for managing the social instabilities (Ciupercă, 2018) related to the existence of allochthonous diaspora minorities, just as between 1815-1918 the European powers had to cope with the waves associated with the emancipation of indigenous nationalities.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The assessment of the current post-Brexit European dynamics compared to that of the 1815 Congress of the Holy Alliance, reveals the possibility of offering an epistemic definition to the context, in the form of a neo-post-Napoleonian paradigm, seen as an intellectual mutation of the neo-medievalist theory, the latter being largely accepted in the field of international relations and security studies. The emergence of our paradigm

encompasses political, economic and security dimensions.

From a political point of view, the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union could be used as an opportunity, similar to France's departure from the 1815 European Concert, for the reconfiguration of the European scene. The projection of a new European concert would allow the institutionalization of a two-speed gravity model of Europe, enforced according to the political, economic and security interests of four main European actors (Germany, France, Italy and Spain); this idea resembles that of the post-Napoleonic hard-core which was made up of Russia, Prussia, Austria and England.

The economic realities circumscribe the register of beneficial consequences (the current IT revolution versus the industrial revolution) and the expected transitions (transition to the fiscal union versus the transition to the liberal economy during the years following the industrial revolution). In terms of security, the new realities address the turbulences associated with extra-European diaspora communities, which have replaced the turmoil caused by the emancipation of indigenous nationalities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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