

## **BREXIT AND THE DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Egwuogu, Bonny Ikenna**

Department of Political Science  
Imo State University, Owerri

### **Abstract**

*On June 23, 2016, the British electorate voted in a referendum to decide whether the country was to continue to remain in the European Union or break way from the organization. The result of that referendum was that while Seventeen million, four hundred and ten thousand, seven hundred and forty (17,410,742) representing 51.89% of the country's population voted to leave the European Union, Sixteen million, one hundred and forty-one thousand, two hundred and forty-one people representing 48.11% of the population voted to remain within the confines of the multilateral political institution. This paper interrogated the nexus between the apparently over optimistic hope offered by the Functionalist theory on the automaticity of the political union from cooperation in designated functional areas in utter disregard to the ever present tendency of the modern day nation-state to re-assert its sovereignty. The study adopts a descriptive approach in its analyses and the source of data is secondary materials. The theoretical framework that is at play is Functionalism. It was found that the functional approach is at once overtly too optimistic and does in fact ignore the animating proclivity of the nation-states as the epicenters of political power and authority. It is suggested that rather than build a utopia about the cooperative instincts of the nation-states, theorists and statesmen should concentrate on the underpinning of benchmarks which are realizable and that are susceptible to the realism of state power and the concomitant authority over their citizens.*

**Keywords:** Referendum, Functionalism, Benchmarks, Nation-state, Sovereignty, Brexit.

### **Introduction**

On Thursday June 23, 2016, the people of Great Britain voted in a referendum to exit the trailblazing behemoth that is known as the European Union. The epoch making and by no means expected outcome of the referendum has sparked off a concatenation of events in international politics that it is also beginning to necessitate the need for in-depth interrogation in the academia. This is particularly so in order to unearth the implications of the result of the referendum for international politics as a process and or phenomenon and the European Union as a microcosm of the referenced phenomenon.

It must be stated that the exit of Great Britain from the European Union (an organization which in spite of not being a pioneer member, it has always played a

central role) was not only a surprising outcome for political pundits and scholars across the world; it was even so for major political leaders within the British political firmament.

Let it be stated that for the people of Great Britain, the referendum itself was avoidable and could even not have seen the light of the day or could have been delayed for sometime if Mr. David Cameron; the extant British Prime Minister had correctly read the mood of the British people at the time. Needless to say, the somewhat hurried exuberance with which he sure-footedly introduced the motion for the referendum into the British House of Commons was entirely symptomatic of his expectation that victory was certain for him and his co-travelers.

In any case any keen observer of British politics must reckon with the fact that Great Britain itself is a country that is made up of three main ethno-nationalities who correspondingly reside in England, Wales and Ireland. The consequences of this triad in the ethnic composition of the country for the outcome of the referendum and its implications for future democratic theory are issues which this paper intends to return to later.

Nonetheless as the campaign for the referendum rolled on, the British electorate balkanized into two main groups. There was the group of individuals who wanted the country to stay within the rubric of the European Union. This group was led by the then British Prime Minister; Mr. David Cameron who in concert with majority of the members of his cabinet really were against the country's exit from the organization. On the other hand, there was also the group that had been against British membership of the European Union and who were really determined to sway the British people along the trajectory of exit from the organization.

The group had some protagonists who were trenchant in their criticism of British membership of the EU and pursued this mission with a singleness of purpose. To be exact, there were three dramatis personae in this group whose devotion to the Brexit campaign easily drew them into national light. These were; Mr. Boris Johnson who paradoxically has been appointed the British Foreign Secretary by Mrs. Theresa May, who also has replaced Cameron as the new Prime Minister, Mr. Davis David who is described as a veteran conservative Member of Parliament (MP) who incidentally has been appointed to oversee all affairs concerning Brexit and Mr. Liam Fox - a former Defence Secretary who has also been appointed the International Trade Secretary. Indeed the visibility of this troika in the Brexit campaign has earned them the sobriquet 'The Three Brexiteers.'

It has to be noted that in terms of geographical contiguity, Great Britain is not in continental Europe; it is indeed an Island nation. However mention must be made of the fact that from even times immemorial, it has always played a very important role in the affairs of Europe to the point that it had played the enviable role of holder of the balance in European politics in the days of the Concert of Europe and the associated Balance of Power dynamics. To be exact, it is true that some of the factors that had combined to make Great Britain a very important player in the politics of Europe and that of the world have given way under the weight of the changing circumstances of the new world order (like the invincibility of the then British navy

and the so-called British Empire that was more expansive than any before it), Britain has continued to be a very important member of the European Union. For instance it had continued to be one of the single most important contributor to the finances of the EU. Again perhaps apart from Germany, since after its unification, Britain had attracted and welcomed a very large immigrant population from the other parts of Europe.

Unfortunately, there had also been some negative backlashes as a result of the aforementioned factors. In terms of immigration, Britain had started suffering from the activities of its large immigrant population not only in terms of an unprecedented upsurge in the activities of terrorist groups but also in terms of the immigrant's contention with British nationals over the available jobs and social amenities. These and other factors had given rise to a groundswell of populism and economic nationalism. Needless to say, it was against this backdrop that some British nationals started giving vent to their opposition to membership of the EU which for them had opened up their borders to all kinds of immigrants as a result of the protocol on free movement of people among the organization members.

The objective of this study is to highlight the upsurge in economic and right wing nationalism which built up to a crescendo that was the referendum in which British voters decided that their country had to exit the European Union. This objective is also related to a second one, namely to situate the exit of Britain from the European Union particularly against the overt optimism of the Functionalists (Mitrany, Haas and others) and the recrudescence of the sovereignty of the Westphalian nation-state with its attribute of sovereignty. Indeed, with the benefit of hindsight, it could be safely stated that in spite of the claims of the functionalist theory in terms of the advantages of cooperation in functional areas necessitating a dynamism that would overlay the boundaries of the nation-state, the exit of Great Britain has amply demonstrated that the nation-state is still the final arbiter over its affairs as it still guards most jealously its attribute of sovereignty.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

A distinction has been made between the functionalism that arose from the Parsonian epistemological scheme and the functionalism that inheres in the academe of international relations and international politics (Haas, 1968, p. 6) According to this writer, while the former is concerned with the idea of the interdependence of subsystems of a whole that work in unison for the attainment of the goals of the organization or system, the later is a tendency in international relations which is concerned with the cooperation among nation-states in the low and less controversial areas that could ultimately goad the cooperating entities into an economic union with the prospect of a political union.

The Functional Theory is the result of a concatenation of factors which arose during a particular historical epoch in the affairs of the world. Indeed it is an analytical tradition which arose during the period of the interwar years between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War (Haas, 1968).

The First World War had ended and with it the devastation it had brought to

mankind and his civilization; it was said that more than eleven million people perished in that war. The League of Nations which was structured on idealist foundations had failed to prevent the occurrence of a second world war (Bowett, 1963, p.21; Rourke, 2007). In addition, the extreme nationalism that had bred Nazism in Europe had rejuvenated and was flourishing to an extent that was visibly disturbing. Indeed the nationalism that was the result of the overbearing influence of the modern day nation-state was beginning to drive the entire world to the edge of precipice (Hall, 2005, p, 611-625). Protectionism in economic matters and trade was confining man and his enterprising spirit within the inhibiting drawbacks of the nation-states and these statesmen were quick to add contributed immensely to the factors that generated the conditions for the World War I and the subsequent World War II (Hall, 2005). There was, therefore, the search for an enduring peaceful system that was going to bring the nation-states closer as a way of avoiding internecine conflicts that often led to war.

In a paper entitled "A Working Peace System" in 1943 (Mitrany, 1975) postulated the Functional Theory of international politics. According to this theory, conflict and war would be avoided if the nation-states cooperated in functional economic areas where experts and not power hungry politicians would work and solve the world's problems in delineated functional and technical areas. These could be in areas of health, environment, energy, etc.

Bemoaning the inhibitions imposed by the boundaries of the nation-states, Mitrany (1975, p. 118) stated that "Our social activities are cut off arbitrarily at the limit of the state, and if at all, are allowed to be linked to the same activities across the border only by means of uncertain and cramping political ligatures" Indeed he was to continue as he averred that "What is here proposed is simply that these political amputations should cease. Whenever useful or necessary, the several activities would be released to function as one unit throughout the length of their natural course. National problems would then appear and would be treated, as what they truly are-the municipal sections of international problems."

The Functional Theory envisages a situation in which the boundaries of the modern day nation-state and the encumbrances they manifest in the interactions of the states of the world are crippled as a result of the advantages of constant and perpetual cooperation in designated functional areas in which technical expertise divorced from political competition is the norm. This engenders the cooperative spirit, enhances intensive interactions and breeds a culture of solidarity that begins to ignore the boundaries of the nation-states and the legal and or political drawbacks associated with them. Indeed, Pavenhouse and Goldstein (2008, p. 248) were alluding to this when they stated that "Disharmonies and conflicts prevail in a society in which authority is exercised by politicians rather than technicians, by parliaments rather than voluntary groups. Power, instead of the common good, then determines policy and irrational behavior follows" The avoidance of this state of affairs is therefore the *raison d'être* of the functional approach.

The Functional arrangement does not clamour for changes in the boundaries of the territorial nation-state either peacefully or conflictually. This according to

Mitrany is because attempts at such changes may breed conflicts no matter how they are handled. Indeed such changes are unnecessary (Mitrany, 1975, p. 120). The purpose of the functional approach is to remove the need for such desires because it breeds the cooperative spirit that transcends such boundaries. Indeed according to him it is the task of the functional approach to remove the need for territorial boundary adjustments. In his own words, “The Functional approach may be justifiably expected to do precisely that; it should help to make changes of frontiers unnecessary by making frontiers meaningless, as it would gradually overlay them with a continuous growth of common activities and interests, as of common administrative agencies.”

To be exact, the functionalist approach insists that once man is liberated from the political and hence power index which characterize the orientation to action of governments of nation-states and is goaded towards the welfare index of common needs, the tendency towards conflictual competition would be removed more so if these are also freed from the shackles of the circumscription imposed by the limiting ambience of national frontiers (Haas, 1968, p. 7).

What would happen is that the cooperative attitudes that are learned by the technical experts chosen on the basis of their technical know-how from their countries but who work in the series of administrative machinery that oversees the implementation of the common needs area, are transferred from here to the people extant in the cooperating nation states. This way there would be a diffusion of the emergent culture of cooperative spirit (Haas, 1968, pp. 8-14). Accordingly, this would lead to the transfer of allegiance from the nation-states to the functionalist organization. Again, as has been stated by Pavenhouse and Goldstein (2008, p. 249), “an ever-widening mesh of task-oriented welfare agencies would come to pre-empt the work now done by some governments, leading eventually to the creation of a universal welfare orientation.”

Consequently, cooperation in the isolated functional areas would lead to expanded cooperation into other functional areas thereby leading to economic integration from purely initial functional cooperation. The spill-over into political integration is therefore an expectation that would materialize sooner than later.

The Functionalist theory was further elaborated on by the Neo-functionalists whose chief protagonist is Haas (1968). The neo-functionalist does not display the magnitude of contempt for the nation-state which the Functionalist theorist displays. However the neo-functionalist reinforces the position of the functionalist theory and even goes further to talk of the ‘automaticity of political integration from initial cooperation in designated functional areas (Haas, 1968). Thus neo-functionalism agrees with the original functionalists that the index of needs from the economically denominated functional areas inevitably leads to political integration

This is particularly spelt out by Haas in another of his outing; *The Uniting of Europe-Political, Social and Economic Forces* (1968) in which he analyzed the European Coal and Steel Commission which was started by six initial European nations but which has today not only metamorphosed into a common market but also comprises about twenty-eight members.

Nonetheless this paper is not on Functionalism *per se*. It is rather an attempt to look at the assumptions of that theory vis-à-vis the existing nation-state particularly its attribute of sovereignty with a view to beaming our searchlight on the implication of the British decision to exit membership of the European Union. These concerns would form the fulcrum around which energy would rotate in the remaining part of the work at hand. However, before embarking on the aforementioned task, a word or two on the centrality of the organization that has come to be known as the European Union (having metamorphosed from the European Coal and Steel Community to the European Common Market and finally to the European Union) is apposite.

It must be stated that the coming together of the six countries that initially started the European Coal and Steel Commission, (ECSC) and which eventually became the progenitor of contemporary European Union is subsequent and not antecedent to the formulation of the Functionalist theory by Mitrany. It could therefore be said that the attempt at an exhaustive examination of European integration through the prism of the functional theory has largely been the task of later day theorists of the neo-functionalist hue. As already highlighted earlier in this work, that task was undertaken by Ernst Haas not only within the matrix of his two works that have already been cited but also in numerous articles published in academic journals.

It is for this reason that the withdrawal of Great Britain from the EU and the socio-political and economic fallouts (particularly against the background of the proclivity of the nation-state towards independent actions that is implied in its sovereign status) has become the animating factor for the work at hand.

It is worthy of note and must be reiterated that in underpinning the veracity of the functionalist idea, Haas was so optimistic about its empirical applicability that he visualized an 'automaticity' of the political union from the economic and functional areas (Haas, 1968) The ultimate goal is total political integration and the arrival at this goal is the result of the self-propelling dynamics generated by the cooperative process. Let it be reiterated that as the nationals of the cooperating countries interact in various functional areas, a point would be reached at which the advantages gained from cooperation would generate the tendency to begin to think beyond the nation-state. At that point, what had been learned by these amorphous amalgams of citizens from the various cooperating countries would begin to be transferred back to their home countries and the consequent diffusion would engender attitudes that are at once integrative. Needless to say, this is the very predisposition that would also lead to the development of the spill-over effect from the economic to political integration.

Let it be stated at once that this work is descriptive and has relied heavily on available data or what is also known as secondary data as its main source. What has been done is to glean information and data from the most relevant of the original ideas on functionalism and neo-functionalism while applying these in the interrogation of the dynamics that led to Brexit and the subsequent exit of Britain from the European Union.

### **The Historic Referendum**

After months of intensive campaign that took the campaigners to all the nooks and crannies of the British Isle, the referendum produced a mixed bag of results in line with the territoriality of the three main ethno-nationalities that co-habit in Britain. It is true that overall, the result of the referendum showed a simple majority of 52% of the population in favour of exit and 48% in favour of the stay campaigners in an election in which about thirty million of the electorate representing about 71.8% of the entire population voted. Nonetheless the result in terms of the ethnic dimensions has left a residue of political issues that are yet to be settled and that must be carefully handled if the ghost of the previous agitations for the balkanization of Britain and the quest for independence by some of the constitutive units is not to be resurrected.

This is because as already pointed out, the regional outcomes of the referendum result did not point in the same direction. For instance in England, the result was more than Fifty-three percent (53.4%) as against about forty-six percent, (46.6) for those who wanted the country to leave the EU and those who wanted it to stay respectively. Conversely in Scotland while about sixty-two percent (62%) percent of the population voted to remain in the EU, a mere thirty-eight (38%) voted for exit. The case of Northern Ireland was not significantly different as about fifty-five percent (55.8%) voted to remain in the EU as against about forty-four percent (44.2%) that voted for exit. At the national level, while about fifty-two percent (52.5%) voted to remain in the EU, about forty-seven percent (47.5%) of the population voted to leave the EU.

In the aftermath of the results of the referendum, the then subsisting British Prime Minister, Mr. David Cameron on June 24 resigned his position as the Chief Minister of Her Majesty's government and this was for a number of reasons. The British system of government is Parliamentary. In a Parliamentary or Cabinet system of government, the tussle for power is almost a daily affair as the subsisting cabinet ministers are also members of the lower house of the bicameral legislature. In other words, the Prime Minister together with all the members of the cabinet are also members of the British House of Commons. Here the cabinet which in any case works under the principle of Collective Responsibility resigns en masse if and when they are defeated on any major policy instrument. Indeed this can even happen if a particular minister of the government is unable to defend and discharge the obligations on a major policy decision during what is normally known as the 'Question Time' in the parliament. The Question Time itself is the time during debates in the parliament that the individual actions of ministers and hence the government are brought under close scrutiny by members of the opposition.

Note that the resignation of David Cameron has thrown up Mrs. Theresa May (the former Home Secretary) as the new British Prime Minister. Perhaps it is also apposite to add here that Mrs. Theresa May herself did not campaign on the side of the pro-exit group and did in fact vote in support of the group that had favoured British continued stay in the EU. In spite of this obvious fact, the new Prime Minister is saddled with the task of implementing actions that would lead to the exit of Great

Britain from the European Union. And any remaining iota of doubts as to her commitment to the implementation of the exit agenda has been permanently obliterated by her assurance that “Brexit is Brexit” meaning in effect that there would be no going back on the choice of the British electorate.

### **Sovereignty and the modern day Nation-state**

At this stage, a question could be posed as to whether the predictions of the functionalist and their theoretical cousins have been borne out by events in the European Union. Again even if for the sake of argument, it is said that there is a visible movement in the trajectory of an eventual European political integration, what does the recent exit by Great Britain portend for that tendency and the EU itself?

The answer to the above stated question is not and can never be in the affirmative. To be exact, the answer is emphatically in the negative. It is true that the integrative process has gone and come a long way in Europe particularly since 1957. It is also correct to say that the EU as it exists in contemporary times has created notable institutional structures that give it a façade of an integrated nation-state. Indeed the movement away from the European Coal and Steel Commission to the European Common Market and now to the European Union must be seen as a gargantuan achievement. It is noted also that the creation of such institutional structures as the European Commission, the European Court, the European Parliament and all such other apparent governmental organs are innovative strides that must be acknowledged. All these are indicative of a determined effort to arrive at the goal of an authentic European integration. When indeed all these are juxtaposed with the creation of the Euro which was meant to be a single currency for Europe, one cannot but commend the enterprising determination to succeed exhibited by the extant political leaders in the European continent. However, viewed against the actual postulations of the neo-functionalists and the benchmarks associated with the state system, the European Union is far from being an integrated nation-state.

In the first place, there is the virulent issue of a common monetary currency for the union. Note that even though the Euro currency was created in 1993, evidence on the ground points to the difficulty in actualizing the dream of a single currency for the EU. This is because the Euro exists parallel to the other currencies of the constitutive countries. It exists in the mist of such national currencies like, the German Mark, the Dutch Guilder, and the British Pound Sterling, etc. Indeed, the case of the British is particularly illustrative. While there are at least nineteen of the EU member nations that have committed themselves to the use of the Euro as a medium of transaction among themselves, the British had in fact refused to join the monetary arrangement. Instead it has continued to transact in its national currency; the British Pound Sterling.

There is also the Exit of Greece from the Euro currency as soon as the result of a referendum on that subject got a resounding affirmative answer from the Greek electorate.

Again it is important to highlight the nature of the building blocks that are involved in the integrative process in Europe at the moment. These building blocks



are the modern day nation-states.

### **The Nation-State and Sovereignty**

From its emergence at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 to its concretization at the Congress of Vienna, at the end of the Napoleonic wars (The Thirty Years Wars) in 1815, the behemoth that is the nation-state has always been the greatest champion of the idea of national sovereignty.

Sovereignty connotes the notion of untrammelled and unmitigated freedom of action and unquestioned authority of the state within its territorial boundaries. This work does not pretend to be a treatise on sovereignty per se. Suffice it to say that the principle of sovereignty which has the two components of popular and legal, underpins the fact that the modern day nation-state does not brook any attempt at interference from outside of its national frontiers

In other words, the human contrivance known as the nation-state is imbued with an existential dynamics which abhors and is anathema to the idea of a higher authority domiciled and or denominated outside of its territory to which it must offer obeisance on decisions within the purview of its national boundaries. Indeed the nation-state does not tolerate this and is prepared to go to war if only to defend this basic principle that epitomizes its existence. To be exact, sovereignty is the very essence of the modern day nation-state and the experience of history in more than five hundred years bears this out. Alluding to this fact, scholars have drawn attention to the supremacy of the state over decisions with its territorial domain (Morgenthau, 1967; Art & Waltz, 2009).

Following closely on the heels of the sovereignty of the nation-state is the issue of the national interest of same. The modern day nation-states are imbued with national interests. The national interest of the state can be defined as those priceless, desires and issues which it nurtures, projects, seeks and defends as it plays with other nation-states in the international arena.

These interests could be tangible. On the other hand, they could also be intangible. However what is of utmost importance is that the nation-states pursue the realization of their national interests with single minded devotion. Let it be added at once that Morgenthau has stated that for the nation-state, the national interest is usually defined in the power category (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 5).

In any event, if these national interests were not the same across national boundaries, there would be no problems. If the bounties of Mother Nature were not scarce and seriously circumscribed, there would be no problems. Indeed if the realization of the national interest did not impinge on the satisfaction of the needs of the people domiciled within the boundaries of the other nation-states, again there would be no problem.

Needless to say, the national interests of states clash and there are more than one hundred and ninety-three (193) independent members of say the United Nations. Each and every one of these nation-states has interests that differ and or may approximate the interests of the others and the desiderata of their national interests demands that such interests must be realized.

Herein lay the critical and vexed issue of international politics. How to reconcile these interests among the amalgam of nation-states and how to moderate the strivings of the nation-states as they play among themselves is one of the ever recurring problems of contemporary international politics.

Again it must be stated that human beings are the hand-maiden of state actions in terms of the initiation of policies and the subsequent implementation. Mention must be made of the fact that theories and perceptions about the nature of man have abounded from time immemorial. These range from the Hobbesian perceptive of man to the Rousseau and to the Kantian notions to mention just a few.

Although an elaborate adumbration on the specificities of the aforementioned theories is not apposite here and for reasons of space would not be allowed to detain us, it is instructive to espouse at least a bird's eye view of two major tendencies of these.

The Rousseau's and Kantian notion of man is that of a good natured and peaceful being who would pursue the ideals of peace and even without prompting exhibit friendliness towards one another. Therefore for these philosophers, the state of nature was peaceful and devoid of violence

On the other hand, Thomas Hobbes could be regarded as one of the earliest Realists philosophers. For him, man is selfish and wicked and these inherent attributes of man are the reasons for the short, brutish, nasty and bellicose nature of the state of nature. The need to escape from the Hobbesian state of nature is the reason for the creation of the Leviathan or the Common Wealth (Sabine, 1975, p. 340).

This pessimistic notion of man is at the epicenter of the realist tradition in international politics where power is seen as a very important attribute (Morgenthau, 1967; Art and Waltz, 2009) and must necessarily and inevitably mark the point of departure here. The portent and systematic statement of power as a very important element of international politics was made by Morgenthau very many years ago (1967, p. 7-10). According to him, the relevance of power in international politics and the pursuit of the national interest to which it is deployed have their foundations in the nature of man. Indeed the realist believes that international politics is a struggle for power because human attributes that animate this tendency are unchanging (Morgenthau, 1967). This is perhaps Morgenthau's iron law of international politics (Rourke, 2007)

But it must be remembered that this same man with his innate characteristic of *animus dominandi* (Rourke, 2007) is as already highlighted, the hand-maid or instrumentality through which the national interests of the extant nation states are pursued and implemented. This is to say that man has not only infected the nation-state with his bellicose nature but has indeed extended his selfish and covetous desires beyond the national frontiers as he interacts with the players who represent the other nation-states in the international arena.

One of the major outcomes is that the international system according to the political realist is anarchic and has all the attributes of perpetual instability. Indeed according to some of the more recent of the realists, power is the fungible instrument

of international politics (Art & Watz, 2009)

### **Brexit and Challenges of Sovereignty**

It could be stated that the erstwhile British Prime Minister underestimated the nature and magnitude of the negative groundswell of opinion that British citizens were expressing against continued membership of the European Union. Otherwise, perhaps he would not have so quickly rushed into the referendum that has resulted in the exit of his country from the EU. However, further pursuit of this trend of thought might take lead far into counterfactual theorizing with its penchant for subtleties and unending speculation.

What is important is that the referendum had been held and the people of Britain had also stated their desire to opt out of the EU. Once that has happened, it also means that the citizens of Britain have reasserted the sovereign mandate and decided on a course of action. Consequently the other side of the coin is that the British nation-state must also translate the popular sovereignty of the people into the sovereign essence of the state by withdrawing from the EU. The necessary actions to this effect would commence as soon as the new Prime Minister using the mandate of the British parliament invokes article fifty (50) of the EU constitution. The other corollary is that such invocation of article fifty and the result of the subsequent negotiations with Britain must be approved by the parliaments of all the remaining EU members.

The unavoidable lesson to learn from the events of June 23 in Britain is that the protagonists of Functionalism were overly optimistic in their hope of the integrative capacity of the functional process. Their conclusion had come too soon as it did not factor in many other possible intervening variables such as the nature of the state-centric international system and the nature of the constitutive units that make it up.

Certainly, it is trite to say that they did not reckon with the dynamics of power politics and the abiding national interests of states as they play in international politics. Needless to say, the prevailing configuration of actors in international politics is made up of states that are imbued with national interests. The competition resulting from attempts to realize this national interest predisposes the state-centric system towards anarchy. To worse issues, in spite of all the attempts by man, there is not as yet an overriding international organization that has attained the level of universal supra-nationality capable of restraining the nation-states and effectively moderating the pursuit of the national interest. This is perhaps the greatest dilemma that confronts international politics.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the nation-state (in this case, Great Britain) that was reeling over the perceived drawbacks that they were suffering as a result of membership of the EU decided to reassert its sovereignty by deciding to exit the organization. Again it must be stated that before the referendum, complaints were rife in Britain about the sharing of the Value Added Tax, VAT that was collected in Britain in the other less fortunate European nations. There was also the complaint on the massive population immigration into the country aided by the protocol on free

movement of people and this had indeed meant the influx of people with Middle Eastern antecedents into Britain .It must be reiterated that the corollary was an upsurge in terrorist activities and this aggravated anti immigration sentiments that fueled the demand for British exit from the European Union.

It is therefore very certain that the protagonists of Functionalism and Neo-functionalism could never have foreseen these types of intervening variables many years ago when they were formulating the theoretical framework.

Again it cannot be overemphasized that there is a general rise of populist and ultra-rightist sentiments and or tendencies across the world today. These tendencies as epitomized in the speeches of people like the ‘three Brexiteers’ already made reference to in this work and the rabble rousing anti immigration speeches of the Republican Party presidential nominee, Mr Donald Trump (now President Trump) are intervening issues that the protagonist of the functional theory could not have envisaged. These tendencies at right-wing nationalism are now getting to their crescendo in countries like Germany where the Chancellor, Mrs Angela Merkel’s party has lost ground in the just concluded local elections partly because she is seen as not protecting the German national interests by allowing massive immigration of refugees into the country.

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

The people of Great Britain have spoken and they have made a choice through the instrumentality of their votes. The result of their choice is that they elected to opt out of the integrative assemblage that is the European Union. The fact that that choice is not subject to any higher authority is indicative enough that the contemporary international system is state-centric. It is also indicative of the fact that the nation-state as contemporarily constituted retains its sovereignty and can duly reassert this fundamental attribute when the need arises in an attempt to realize its national interests.

Indeed man can theorize about such nuances as interdependence and globalization. The notion of complex interdependence (Nye, 2009) may hold a lot of attractions for International relations experts. To be exact, the current mantra of globalization has even pushed the frontiers of this new tendency in international relations and or politics. The truth of the matter is that the nation-states are the dominant players in the international arena. Since they must play in accordance with the realization of their national interests deploying power as the most viable instrument for effectuating same, international politics is as of necessity a struggle for power (Morgenthau, 1967).

In the event, attempts by man to change the anarchic nature of international politics must reach out to God-knows-where, to find the magic wand that would change at least two fundamental variables. The first is that it must find a way; perhaps an ingenious way to change the nature of man and the animating instincts that are embedded in him. In doing this, it must seek to exorcize the selfish nature of this organism and whittle down the tendency towards the ‘I before others’ that is innate in him.

Having succeeded in doing that, it must elevate the same action to the level of the nation-state. Of course the incapacitation of the selfish instincts in man would also translate to the incapacitation of same in the modern day nation-state.

But these are tasks that are as uphill as they are almost impossible. As a result, rather than attempt the impossible, it is suggested here that while getting enmeshed in whatever political contrivances at the international system level, the limits of such a cooperative effort must be recognized. This is because in spite of its theoretical elegance, Functionalism as advocated by its protagonists and evangelists is antithetical to the nature of man and the nation-state and these must be factored into any theorizing about the spill-over effect from the functional area to political integration.

### **References**

- Art, R. & Waltz, K. (2009). *The use of force: Military power and international politics*. Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Bowett, D. W. (1963). *The Law of International institutions*. London: Frederick A Praeger Publisher.
- Brzezinsky, Z. (1997). *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperative*. New York: Basic Books.
- Chester, A. C. (2001). *Turbulent peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Claude, I. (1962). *Power and International Relations*. New York: Random House.
- Dyck, R. (2002). *Studying Politics: An introduction to Political Science*. Ontario: Nelson and Thomson
- Dyck, R. (2006). *Studying Politics: An introduction to Political Science*. Ontario: Nelson and Thomson
- Haas, E. B. (1958). *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Haas, E. B. (1968). *Beyond the Nation-state: Functionalism and International organization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Handler, S. P. (2013). *International Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. London: Sage Publishers.
- Hall, J. W. (2005). *History of the World: Earliest Times to the Present Day*. Massachusetts: World Publications Group Inc.
- Hobbs, R. (2008). *World War 2 and Beyond, Islam, Fascism, the Third Jihad and other Threats to the USA*. Nevada: Col Doc Publishing
- Kurlantzick, J. (2013). *Democracy in Retreat: The Revolt of the Middle Class and the Worldwide Decline of Representative Government*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Martin, S. (2010). *Geography and Politics among Nations: An Introduction to Geopolitics*. New York: Universe Inc.
- Mitrany, D. (1975) *The Functional Theory of Politics*. London: Martin Robertson Company Ltd.
- Morgenthau, H. (1967) *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Pavenhouse, J & Goldstein, J. (2008). *Readings in International Relations*. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Sabine, G. & Thoresn, T. (1973). *A History of Political Theory*. Illinois: Dryden Press.