

Functionalism

Like federalists, functionalists sought to theorize the conditions for world peace. But in contrast to the federalist vision of a constitutional settlement that reins in conflict by dividing authority between a centre and its units, functionalism offers a strategy for peace based on promoting international cooperation in non-controversial, technical and economic areas. Developed by David Mitrany in the 1930s, functionalist integration theory holds that, in an interdependent world, international organizations arranged according to functional tasks are better placed to solve universal technical and economic problems, and provide social services, than nation states. Once created, international functional organizations will gradually take over the core welfare functions of governments, thereby winning the allegiance of domestic societies and undermining the basis of national frontiers. The result is a gradual shift from a balance-of-power system built around sovereign states to a system whose units are non-territorial, functional and technocratic agencies. Like its federalist counterpart, functionalism offers a formula for international organization rather than a theory of integration (Groom and Taylor 1975: 1). In the words of Mitrany, 'the functional approach is an attempt . . . to offer a practical line of action that might overcome the deep-seated division between the needs of material unity and stubborn national loyalties' (1943: 126).

The intellectual lineage of functionalism can be traced back to the classical liberal economic philosophy of the nineteenth century, which held that trade and material progress were fundamentally contrary to war. An important inspiration for Mitrany's ideas was the work of British liberal economist Norman Angell (other important influences were Hobhouse and Laski). In his famous book *The Great Illusion* (1910), Angell argued that economic interdependence made war irrational and that growing transnational economic links would lead states to eschew armed conflict. Mitrany built directly on these ideas. Like Angell, he saw the promotion of welfare as a primary means to prevent war: 'Give people a moderate sufficiency of what they need and ought to have and they will keep the peace: this has been proved time and time again nationally, but it has not yet been tried internationally'.

But where Angell saw economic interdependence as a direct instigator of peace, Mitrany saw it merely as an *opportunity* for peace that

could be realized only through the creation of international planning agencies designed to serve common welfare goals (Ashworth 1999: 85). What Mitrany had in mind was not a federal world state or a series of regional federal unions. He was quick to point out that political federations would merely reproduce the sins of the nation state at a higher level. Rather what was needed was a complete rethinking of the way the world was governed. He wanted to reorientate us away from comprehensive political designs (whether national, regional or international) toward a system of function-specific international organizations, which linked together particular activities and interests, one at a time, according to need and acceptability (see Mitrany 1965: 135).

As a practical approach to international organization, Mitrany's functionalism was strongly inspired by the growth in international functional organizations at the end of the nineteenth century, such as the International Telegraphic Union (1865), the International Postal Union (1874) and the commissions controlling navigation on the Danube. 'Working smoothly and efficiently for the interests of the world at large' rather than for individual states (Mitrany 1932: 89–90), these were prime examples of the kind of international cooperation Mitrany was after. He also drew on the lessons of Allied cooperation during World War I. In particular, Sir Arthur Salter's (1919, 1921) analysis of inter-allied cooperation was a substantial influence (see Mitrany 1969: 17–18). In his work, which Mitrany later edited for the Carnegie Endowment's 'Economic and Social History of the First World War', Salter describes how the transatlantic supply line during the war was organized essentially along functional lines. Collaboration was governed by close links between the relevant departmental organizations of the Allies, such as transport or munitions. Decisions were made by direct communication between experts rather than via inter-governmental negotiations. The effect, he notes, was that issues were rarely politicized. If there was any conflict of interest, it was a conflict between different services rather than between different countries (Salter 1919:20). To Salter this was a model for future international cooperation.

Building on these ideas, Mitrany's early work laid out the key principles that went into his functional theory. In 1932 he gave the Dodge lectures at Yale University where he presented for the first time his functional principle of international organization. Published under the title 'The Progress of International Government' (1932) the lecture laid the ground for the famous booklet 'A Working Peace System', which first appeared in 1943 (see Chapter 2). Written before the end of World War II and the post-war boom in economic and functional cooperation, the lecture provides a clear vision of functional cooperation and identifies the twin 'revolutionary changes' that Mitrany

believed were transforming international relations in a functional direction. The first was technological progress. Mitrany observed that by the twentieth century, developments in communication, industry and warfare had raised political, social and moral issues that could only be dealt with on a global scale. The second change was the growing role of the state in the provision of welfare for the individual. A defining trend of the twentieth century was that people were focusing less on military security and more on social security and welfare. The result was increasing pressure on the state as more and more functions were pressed upon it by society (Mitrany 1932: 86–97). Politically these trends were moving in critical opposition. On the one hand, the greater role of the state in providing welfare for its citizens required centralized economic planning. On the other hand, economic interdependence meant that welfare needs could no longer be satisfied by economic activity within the state but became reliant on forces outside it. Mitrany saw in this schism a danger and an opportunity. The danger was that states, in striving for economic self-sufficiency, would turn more nationalist than ever. This had been the case after 1919 when major tasks of reconstruction had been left to individual states and created a basis for a new form of rabid economic nationalism (Mitrany 1939: 171). Mitrany sought to impress the urgency of the conflict on his readers, and to promote functional integration as the only way forward from it. The fundamental contradiction between interdependence and national welfare provision meant that, in the long run, the growth of national welfare programmes would produce pressure toward the transfer of welfare functions to international organizations where they would be better fulfilled (Mitrany 1932: 97, 1941: 107).

During World War II, these ideas matured. At the beginning of the war, Mitrany wrote a memorandum entitled 'Agenda of Peace-Making' (1939) in which he argued that problems of reconstruction would be more numerous and complex than after the last war and would force advances in international cooperation. The war, he predicted, would trigger a wave of 'social nationalism' as publics disillusioned with the wartime performance of their regimes would demand increased security and social welfare. To Mitrany, this presented a new opportunity to fulfil the functionalist vision. To retain political control, he argued, the Allies would have to quickly jump-start economic and social life. To do so they would be forced to rely on international cooperation (1939: 173, 1969: 19). According to some later students of European integration, this is precisely what happened. Alan Milward (1992; see introduction to Part III) argues that post-war integration has been the result of policymakers searching for ways to ensure the successful implementation of national welfare programmes. He thus confirms Mitrany's prediction that growing demands for welfare provision

would create pressure toward integration. But whereas Mitrany hoped that social and economic integration would lead to the demise of the state, the result, according to Milward, has been to 'rescue the nation-state' by allowing it to satisfy public demands more effectively.

A recurrent theme in Mitrany's work is his critique of federalism, which also features strongly in the article below (see also Mitrany 1941, 1965). Mitrany saw at least three fundamental fallacies in the federalist agenda. First, he rejected the 'utopianism' of ideas for world federation. He pointed out that existing federal states such as Germany or Switzerland were essentially national federations, built on historical elements of kinship and shared history. Their experience could not be replicated at the international level, which was more diverse and complex. Second, he criticized the rigidity of a constitutional approach to international organization. To Mitrany, the best way to tackle socio-economic problems was through administration not legislation. Federal polities were ill equipped to deal with the complexities and fluidity of modern economic and social life, which required the capacity to adapt to constantly changing circumstances (1971: 540). To illustrate this he turned to a federalist icon, the USA. He described how Roosevelt had to fight the Supreme Court to implement the New Deal in 1933 (Mitrany 1943: 35, 1965: 60). Crucial to American economic success, the New Deal had been implemented only with great difficulty due to the constitutional inflexibility of the American federal system. A world federation would be even more rigid since it would concentrate control over many functions in different environments in a single centre where they would be subject to political conflict and deadlock. Finally, a world federation would not secure peace. To Mitrany, the federalist espousal of political means to arrive at clearly political goals was more likely to produce conflict than peace. One cannot provide a political solution to problems of divisive interests in the absence of an underlying socio-psychological community (Taylor 1968: 89). Such a community cannot be imposed from above but must be built, step-by-step, via cooperation to solve common problems of non-controversial, economic and social character. In other words, integration must be depoliticized.

While Mitrany rejected ideas for world federation as impractical, he was equally critical of plans for more limited regional unions. To Mitrany, 'anything that throws a fixed territorial framework around a social-technological activity amputates the working principles and frustrates the very purpose of the action, no matter at what level of jurisdiction – provincial or national, federal or regional' (1975: 256). Functional regions, he stressed, are not geographical entities like Western Europe, but practical areas such as railway transport, aviation, shipping or epidemic control (1941: 111–16). He also warned that regionalism held the seeds to a new form of nationalism. To stim-

ulate internal unity, regional unions would have to create a sense of outer danger. Interwar pan-Europeanists and post-war federalists had exploited anti-Americanism and Bolshevism to increase intra-European loyalty (1930: 475, 1965: 125). Mitrany felt that such strategies would not lead beyond nationalism but would give birth to new inter-regional divisions (Mitrany 1948: 351; see also Salter 1929: 93).

Associated chiefly with the work of Mitrany, functionalism gained a substantial following in the early post-war period with scholars focusing in particular on the specialized agencies of the UN and the ECSC as foundations for international functional cooperation (see e.g. Mance 1946; White 1949). Later contributors to the approach include Patrick Sewell (1966), and Paul Taylor (1968, 1975a, 1975b). But Mitrany's approach was also a target of intense criticism, in particular by scholars identifying themselves as 'neofunctionalists' (see Part II). Much of this criticism centred on the apolitical, technocratic nature of functionalism. Functionalism moves by tackling non-political, technical problems and by basing its solutions on a universal 'common good'. The basic premise is that international conflict can be tamed by delegating tasks to technical experts. Being interested in problem solving rather than power, experts can be expected to achieve agreement where statesmen will fail. Experience suggests, however, that technical and economic matters are not always non-controversial but may be subject to political and cultural conflict. Experts evidently do not always agree, and special interests may be as prevalent in expert communities as among the constituents they represent. (For a critique along these lines see Haas 1964: 11–13 and Claude 1956: 387).

Functionalism was also faulted for ignoring the significance of political boundaries. As Hans Morgenthau, a leading realist scholar, pointed out, the belief that the superior performance of international organizations will lead people to abandon loyalty to the state is naive: whereas in war the common interest in victory might temporarily enable functional cooperation, in peacetime what the nation has to offer in terms of contributions to individual welfare outweighs by far the benefits to be derived from international functional agencies (Morgenthau 1948: 335).

A final line of criticism pushed mainly by federalists centred on democratic oversight. Mitrany's vision of technocratic planning implied government by experts, and would hence be undemocratic (Sewell 1966: 42). Yet, Mitrany himself saw no contradiction between expert government and a democratic basis for politics. In his vision, control by national governments and parliaments would be replaced with control by international functional assemblies consisting of representatives of government and professional bodies. Such functional representation would offer a valid remedy for the growing power and insulation of the administrator by 'bringing together those who know

with the things they know', and would ultimately be more sensitive to constituents' needs than a parliamentary system (Mitrany 1965: 140; also Ashworth 1999: 93–103). The problem with this position is that it pays no attention to the generation and representation of interests. How do functional assemblies determine what needs to represent? How do they prioritize among different constituencies and interests? Or as James Mayall (1975: 254) notes, 'if the state, and hence the criterion of national interests, are dissolved, how and to whom do...needs present themselves?' As we shall see in Part IV, this argument recurs in various guises in recent debates over democratic legitimacy in the EU.

'A Working Peace System', reproduced in Chapter 2, is clearly a normative document, setting out an agenda for international change. Yet, as David Mitrany (1992: 23) points out, it could also be read to imply a functional *explanation* of integration: that is, the supply of functional organs at the international level is explained by the need to solve a growing number of transnational technical problems. In this text, Mitrany portrays functionalism as a form of 'federalism by instalments'. Note, however, that in many other writings he explicitly denies that a species of federation is an ultimate end goal of integration, projecting instead a global web of technical administrative agencies.

Transactionalism

Transactionalism or 'communication theory' focuses on the social rather than political or economic dimensions of integration. In contrast to federalism, the transactionalist approach does not presuppose a specific legal and institutional framework. In contrast to functionalism, it does not concern itself with the satisfaction of practical welfare needs, but rather with the conditions necessary to create and maintain a sense of community among the populations of different countries (Pentland 1975: 36). Pioneered by Karl Deutsch and his colleagues in the 1950s, transactionalism views integration as a process of cultural assimilation, leading to the formation of international 'security communities' (a concept first introduced by van Wageningen in 1952) in which peoples are linked in bonds of mutual trust and identification, and in which war is no longer considered possible. Simply stated, Deutsch's vision of integration as the formation of security communities relies on the notion that international transactions – communication, migration, mutual services, military collaboration, even tourism – trigger processes of social-psychological learning which in turn produce common identities and trust among social actors.

In the transactionalist model, integration has two key dimensions. The first is a process of *social* integration, leading to the formation of