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## **“Remarks on CANZUK”: Theoretical and methodological perspective of research on the post-Brexit Anglosphere**

### **Abstract**

BREXIT, the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU structures has become a turning point in the process of formation of (as it seemed) permanent supranational blocs of economic cooperation. It was the first time that the European Union as a *sui generis* first in the world supranational organisation was so explicitly questioned as a value in itself. The redefinition of values that took place in the United Kingdom may be connected with a turn towards the part of the “Anglosphere” known as CANZUK. The research hypothesis for the studies announced in this article is that this ideological turnaround will lead to gradual regional integration. The article presents the theoretical and methodological framework for conducting the planned studies, outlines the currently available sources, and maps out the directions for detailed analyses within the singled out research areas.

The planned research fits into the area of political and law studies. As regards the first field, analysed will be efforts aimed at consolidating cooperation, and in the future – postulated integration. The research will be carried out from the perspective of Karl Deutsch’s communication theory. The theory emphasises substantiveness of nation states and the need for social integration before political integration, which is also the fundamental assumption underlying the postulates of both the supporters of Brexit, as well as the persons and entities postulating the

construction of the CANZUK bloc. With the use of this theoretical perspective it will be possible to complement the research with analyses in the area of contemporary political thought indicating the axiological foundations for the construction of a community in the Anglosphere. In the latter area, analysed will be certain acts of public international law, such as e.g. Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement. That act may be treated as a model solution as regards constructing an alternative mechanism for the freedom of movement of persons.

**Key words:** BREXIT, CANZUK, TTTA, Indo-Pacific, Integration, Post-BREXIT, UK

## Introduction

The presented text is aimed at outlining the research perspective for analysing the Anglosphere, and more precisely its variant known as CANZUK. The area of Anglosphere research is still in *in statu nascendi*, though the first analytical works concerning the issues discussed below have been already published. The text provides more information on – still no great – the accomplishments of world politology and international studies in this area. The studies planned in the article fit into the trend of a new, emerging space for interdisciplinary reflection touching upon the practical dimensions of international relations in the post-Brexit era. The author can only hope that the presented conceptual outline will become a beginning of the publishing series "Remarks on CANZUK".

\* \* \*

The idea of establishing a bloc of states comprising Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom is not new. Its historical roots reach back to the concept of the imperial federation, which arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and gradually evolved alongside the changing world (Kenny, Pearce, 2018: 7). A subsequent iteration of a supranational organisation or close cooperation between the United Kingdom and her settler colonies is the concept of Greater Britain. The acronym CANZUK appeared in political texts as late as in the 1960s (McIntyre, 1966: 275). The concept of a union, confederation or closer cooperation under this aegis was not in any significant manner seized by the politicians. The departure from closing cooperation with former dominions is connected with

the accession of the United Kingdom to the European Communities in 1973. The concept of CANZUK re-emerges anew in the context of BREXIT in 2016. From that time on we can speak about the creation of a new imaginatorium – a developmental concept of earlier, still 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas for organising (a part of) the so-called Anglosphere in the form of a bloc of closely cooperating nation states with a prospect for more profound integration.

The description of the imaginatorium of CANZUK, accompanied by a historical disquisition on earlier iterations of the concept was presented in the article *Brexit, CANZUK, and the legacy of empire* (Bell, Vucetic: 2019). The authors linked the proposition of CANZUK with the long tradition of conservative ideas to revive in a new form the concept of the British Empire, pointing out that CANZUK remains this type of reminiscence and denying the significant element of novelty of this concept. It seems, however, that the criticism directed at that project of cooperation, and in the future potential integration, is too severe. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom remain significant elements of the group of the most affluent states in the world. Moreover, except New Zealand, their economic are of a significant size on the global scale. The authors, who published their article in 2019, neither were able to acquaint themselves with the concepts put forth by Her Majesty's Government under a collective motto of "Global Britain". Those are in turn connected with shifting the interest of the United Kingdom from the Euro-Atlantic area to Asia-Pacific. For the idea of CANZUK this means that the United Kingdom, as a partner adapting to the other polities who are major players in the Pacific region, will not vie to take the position of a leader. What is more, the long-time presence of the UK

in the European Union caused that the extent of bilateral arrangements concerning either the freedom of movement of persons, or broadening the scope of trade, or recognition of professional qualifications between the UK and other CAN-ZUK members is significantly smaller.

A practical manifestation of the UK's political and economic interest having shifted towards the Asia-Pacific region are its efforts aimed at acceding to the *Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership*. Should the negotiations prove to be successful, the UK would be the first country from outside of the Asia-Pacific region to accede to the Agreement. The efforts of the British government indicated that they seriously treat the need for a sharp turn and the desire to become strongly involved in the geographically distant region of the world.

Thus, if the first analyses concerning the imaginatorium and constituting a review of the advocates of the CANZUK project (Bell, Vucetic, 2019: 5–7) are already available on the publishing market, the area of research from the viewpoint of the theory of integration and comparative studies in the field of public international law are still left mostly untouched. In a large measure this is so because of a sceptical approach of, for instance, the authors of the abovementioned first significant paper on CANZUK, to the very concept itself. At the same time, it seems that the emergence of an NGO network backing the CANZUK idea and an ever more numerous group of politicians in the individual member states of the hypothetical partnership who support the cooperation movement, encourage further studies.

## Theoretical framework

In the words of its advocates, the idea of integration of the states of the Anglosphere is to assume first of all the form of cooperation between the nations sharing the same culture, system of law and language (Hannan, 2013). So understood concept of cooperation within a group of English-language peoples has been developing for the past 200 years and grasped the interest of such prominent politicians as Tony Blair or Gordon Brown (Kenny, Pearce, 2018: ch. 6). Those concepts had a strong impact on the narration of Brexit supporters (Murphy, 2018: 198). The idea of a return to the family of states with a similar axiological backbone and cultural legacy was fostered by many representatives of the Conservative Party and UKIP.

An emphasis on cooperation in the cultural field, the need to rapprochement at the level of values provides a strong foundation for carrying out the study on the CANZUK concept from the viewpoint of Karl Deutsch's theory of communication. The point of departure for the communication theory of political integration is the recognition of the institution of a nation state as the main subject of international political relations. In this light, the process of integration is comprehended as the emergence, creation of "a community of states" defined by the high level of diplomatic, economic, social and cultural cooperation between its component entities (Pentland, 1973: 29). On the other hand, efforts of this type make up a basis for carrying out the processes of consolidating cooperation, and in the future possibly integration, within the planned CANZUK community.

The opponents of consolidation cooperation, and in particular integration within the group of CANZUK states point out

primarily problems with economic integration and the great distances between individual polities. As a matter of fact, the volume of trade between individual CANZUK countries and the planned community is insignificant. In the majority of case it accounts for about 5%. Only in the case of New Zealand it amounts to over 20%, the majority of trade being carried out with Australia. On the other hand, historical data show a much greater share of trade between the UK and Australia, or the UK and New Zealand before 1973. This may suggest that the processes contributing to an increase of trade will be put in motion again after 2021. Nevertheless, the attack at CANZUK indicating that it is hardly possible to increase the volume of trade and consequently that there is no real possibility for economic harmonisation or integration seems mistargeted.

The CANZUK project is built on the basis of different theoretical assumptions than the project of European integration in its current form. Paradoxically, what is proposed now by the network supporting the idea of CANZUK directly refers to the thinking of the founders of the European Communities, who emphasized the need to integrate societies prior to economic and political integration. However, the present European Union reversed the original assumptions and wants to attain integration of societies through economic and political integration. Meanwhile, the assumptions of Karl Deutsch's theory of communication perfectly describe the possible development scenarios for the CANZUK project. The project should be treated in this perspective as in a large measure based on the grass-roots approach, which will be moderated only by harmonisation of bilateral agreements, which will facilitate integration of, after all already culturally close, societies.

## Anglosphere and CANZUK

Before describing the research subject it is necessary to specify how the two basic terms, namely 'Anglosphere' and 'CANZUK' have been understood so far and how they will be defined in the planned study. Both terms and the underlying concepts have been already covered by relevant literature.

Anglosphere – as indicated by B. Wellings (Wellings, 2017: 1) – surfaced for the first time in its 21<sup>st</sup> century format in 2003, during the Iraq invasion. For the United Kingdom, Anglosphere as a concept entered the mainstream political debate in 2016, at the time of the Brexit referendum. Since then, the concept of the Anglosphere, understood as a group of English speaking countries with a shared cultural legacy, a common system of values and axiological foundation of the political system, has been in the centre of the debate. This is in a large measure due to the need to look for new concepts of the United Kingdom's presence in the globalised world. The exit from the European Union means that it is necessary to find alternative models of supranational cooperation and integration acceptable from the viewpoint of philosophical foundations. The Anglosphere, by definition consolidated by the cultural and linguistic community and the affinity of institutions dominating in individual political systems, seems to be a tailor made solution.

The question about the boundaries of the Anglosphere remains open. In literature, in particular as regards exclusive ways of defining the Anglosphere and reducing it to the other notion that is essential for the subject of the planned study, namely CANZUK, it happens to be blamed for introducing a form of structural racism. The authors who are critical of this type of a cooperation project point out that its aim is to build

"a white man's world" (Lake and Reynolds, 2007; Schwarz, 2011). The exclusive concept of the Anglosphere assumes that that it will include only such countries as: the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and possibly Ireland. The latter, because its attitude to the European Union, the smouldering conflict concerning Northern Ireland, is frequently left out from not so much academic as journalistic discussions about the Anglosphere. Therefore, CANZUK seems to be an even farther narrowing down of the concept of the Anglosphere. However, this is done for practical reasons – exclusion of the United States from the project of cooperation and perhaps (re)integration in the undefined future is due to the need of preserving a balance of the economies involved in the process.

An alternative to the exclusive concepts of the Anglosphere is its broad definition, which boils down primarily to restricting it to the area of domination of the English language. However, the charges racism, readily accepted by public opinion, even with regard to integration concepts, should not obscure the fact that the exclusive concept of the Anglosphere is based on stronger axiological foundations. Inclusion of the countries where English is the official language does not mean a lack of reflection on cultural affinity, as regards both political and legal culture, and also the social capital in individual countries. Nonetheless, disputes concerning legal and political culture as well as social capital underlay the decision on Brexit. Thus, alternative concepts of cooperation and possible integration for the post-Brexit United Kingdom should not be based exclusively on one dimension of cultural affinity, namely the linguistic community.

CANZUK may be defined as an exclusive variant of the Anglosphere. In this visions it is reduced to Canada, Australia,

New Zealand and The United Kingdom. This significantly deepens the dimension of cultural community. All those countries share not only a common language, but also cultural, political and economic bonds. Although the latter visibly weakened after the accession of the United Kingdom to the European Union. The CANZUK countries have the identical model solutions with regard to their political system. They are all based on the Westminster model and the head of state of each is the same monarch. The bonds in the area of political culture between individual countries are so strong that the chairs of speakers in individual parliaments are either gifts of the United Kingdom to the emancipating dominions or a gift of a dominium (Australia) to the metropolis experienced by World War II (the UK). Likewise, as regards legal culture all CANZUK countries employ the common law system. Also, although they are all multicultural societies with a significant share of immigrants, they belong, either as an European country or so-called settler colonies, to the same culture. Finally, they all belong to the so-called global North, which means a high level of economic development and quality of life.

From the viewpoint of evolving projects of cooperation and potential integration in the Anglosphere, and (re)integration within the framework of CANZUK, exclusive concepts seems the only feasible ones in light of the arguments against the European Union in the Brexit debate. Thus, the Anglosphere, reduced to its narrowest form, i.e. CANZUK, is at present the most certain subject of research on the processes of cooperation and potential integration.

## Subject of research

The subject of research under the planned project will be theoretical and philosophical (doctrinal) assumptions underlying the processes aimed at creating a community of societies and states of the Anglosphere, and more precisely CANZUK. However, there is a collective publication available on the publishing market which contains remarks concerning applicable research approaches to the study of the Anglosphere (Wellings, Mycock, 2019). The area of research on the Anglosphere as a new concept in political science or international relations studies requires some more theoretical and methodological reflection.

In the first place, analysed should be policy paper – programme documents indicating the directions of efforts of state actors on the international arena, which may be aimed at building a supranational community. In this respect, first to be analysed should be the Global Britain report, which is being developed and which will map out the directions of the UK's involvement in the years after the Brexit process is finalised.

Secondly, important sources will be political treatises, including those of a doctrinal character. Such papers as D. Hannan's *How We Invented Freedom* may be treated as quasi-philosophical political treatises, which lay axiological/normative grounds from building an Anglophone community. What is worth emphasising is that Hannan's treatise is not a lonely island in the sea of studies on the future of the United Kingdom. In the literature on the subject one may encounter analyses indicating that he was much inspired by the works of Macfarlane, and he himself has become an inspiration for later studies (Scheer, Geddes, 2017). The analysis

of assumptions arising from this type of studies as regards political doctrines will allow for assessing their impact on the process of making political decisions. Thus, it will be possible to evaluate whether the network of support for the CANZUK project exert a real impact on the political reality.

The research on the policy papers treatises will constitute an introduction to analysis of ongoing political processes taking place among the CANZUK countries. The analysis of actions will be based on the theoretical framework set by the concept worked out by Karl Deutsch. In this respect, the research will involve classical studies on international relations.

The last potentially useful in practice and cognitively interesting area will be comparative studies on institutions set up under bilateral agreements and mutual recognition agreement between CANZUK countries and relevant EU institutions. Studies in the latter area will be primarily of a legal comparative nature. An example of analyses needed to be carried out will be the comparison between the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement with the European Freedom of movement of persons. Comparative analyses will concern not only the area of law dogmatics (comparison of regulations), but also axiological foundations for shaping individual norms.

Therefore, the analyses of theoretical and doctrinal foundations of current political processes, which may lead to closer cooperation and eventually integration of the CANZUK countries, will be the main subject of interest under the planned research project. General analyses will be supplemented with legal comparative elements, which will facilitate a better understanding of institutions the establishment of which is postulated by the CANZUK support network. Those institutions are to beamed at creating an integrated Anglophone

community with an alternative to the EU's system of the movement of persons, recognition of professional qualifications or certifications. This alternative scheme of consolidation is to be carried out without producing a supranational institutional superstructure which is characteristic of European integration. It is to be possible thanks to cultural and legal affinity as well as common values nurtured by the societies of individual states.

### Conclusion

The planned research, although dealing with a new area for both politological and legal analyses, will not be carried out in a complete vacuum. So far, several significant works have been published concerning the post-Brexit plans for a turn of the United Kingdom towards the Commonwealth, not to mention the analyses and studies on the CANZUK concept as such. The overwhelming majority of those works are of a policy paper character and will be the primary subject of research. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the analyses of the processes of cooperation and potential integration in the so-called Anglosphere is singled out as an interdisciplinary research area within social sciences.

The proposed research scheme must be spread over time. First of all due to the fact that the processes of cooperation and potential integration within the framework of CANZUK are just beginning. Therefore, the research subject outlined in this article is *in statu nascendi*. Thus, those studies will be similar to the early stages of research on European integration. Thus it will be possible to draw on the experiences of Europeanists, who also had to deal with an uncertain and constantly changing reality. At the same time, it means that

it is possible to research structures and concepts that are *in statu nascendi*.

This text presents a list of still an insignificant number of publication by the pioneers of analyses of the Anglosphere and CANZUK, such as Bell, Vucetic, Wellings or Hanan. It also outlines a research project concerning the Anglosphere and CANZUK as an emerging new area of research within the areas of political studies or studies on international relations, and complementarily also law or economics. The proposed theoretical framework provides for the analyses to be carried out primarily in the area of the axiological foundations for the processes that will take place in the course of research. Attempts to explain the decisions of the actors on the international stage or a critical analysis of subsequent policy papers will ultimately allow to analyse what the idea of Anglosphere and first of all CANZUK will eventually become.

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