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Master's Thesis of Political Science

**Formulation and Mobilization of Ideas:
Discursive Politics of Brexit**

아이디어의 형성과 동원
- 브렉시트의 담론정치 -

August 2019

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- 브렉시트의 담론정치 -

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**Formulation and Mobilization of Ideas:
Discursive Politics of Brexit**

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Abstract

In an effort to illuminate the way institutional changes are led by ideas and discursive politics in an open economy, this thesis examines how Brexit was developed by the ideas and discourses of international and domestic politics.

Brexit cannot be understood by the existing theoretical frameworks that overlook the interactions of political actors and noneconomic factors. First, neither the class interests of comparative historicists nor the institutional interests of neoinstitutionalists could explain the recent Brexit decision. Although historicists and institutionalists consider the interests of political actors as predetermined and fixed, the British actors had gradually adjusted their understanding, interests, and preferences on foreign policy without class restructuring or external shocks. Second, an economic analysis of Brexit does not correspond to the actual decision of the actors. The UK decided to leave the EU even though the expected impacts of Brexit were pessimistic to its national economy.

In addition to deficiencies in the existing theoretical frameworks, an inconsistency of foreign policy in the UK has challenged many comparativists. The current thesis defines a pattern of the UK–EU relationship as a stop-go one. Although during the postwar era the UK increasingly promoted the general trend against European integration, its foreign policy alternated between reluctant participation and breakaway.

The key argument of this thesis is that Brexit was catalyzed by a discursive politics of ideas, not by a cost-benefit analysis of the

predetermined interests of actors. The thesis suggests the concept of the Brexit Idea to capture a few of the thoughts and discourses proliferated during Brexit. In the face of socioeconomic challenges after the 2000s, European countries shared a discourse on the inequalities between nation-states and domestic coalitions. Through this inequality discourse, shared understandings of neonationalism, Euroscepticism, and deglobalization were formulated and constituted the Brexit Idea, which was conducive to the UK leaving the EU. Moreover, the concept of the Brexit Idea is analyzed by looking at internal and external fragility. Although the Brexit Idea made a strong demand on initiating related discourses and actual behaviors, it did not provide a dominant framework with which to interpret the problematic situations and interests of actors and was open to the political competition of actors. Brexit was finally chosen because the proleave group was more efficient in diffusing its interpretive framework on the Brexit Idea.

Keyword : Brexit, theory of endogenous institutional change, idea, internal fragility, external fragility, discursive politics, institutional change

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The United Kingdom (UK) astonished the world on June, 23 2016 when it decided to leave the European Union (EU) through a referendum. Because the UK was known for its path dependent institution and hesitant policy making, the divorce from the EU caught the attention of comparativists from all over the world. It was the causes behind Brexit that they especially focused on. Because the relationship between the UK and the EU has been distinctively established along British history, it was hardly straightforward to suggest the causes of Brexit.

The objective of the current thesis is to investigate how the Brexit Idea was formulated and mobilized and then to understand the domestic institutional changes by looking at the ideational factors in an open economy, here based on the *endogenous institutional change theory* and *ideational approach*. Thus, the current thesis asks the following: How can we understand complicated causes and the process of Brexit by using an ideational approach? If the Brexit Idea played a critical role during Brexit, how was it formulated and proliferated? What is a feature of the Brexit Idea? Finally, in an open economy, how do ideas lead to domestic institutional changes?

The main argument of the present thesis is that the Brexit Idea served as an impetus to leave the EU, yet its internal fragility caused political gridlock after the referendum. The relationship between the EU and the UK, from incipient hostility to sophisticated Euroscepticism, formed the institutional background of Brexit in historical terms. According to the current thesis, European countries underwent a series of socioeconomic

challenges after the 1990s and dealt with the problems together, which led to a recognition of inequality not only among the EU member states but also between domestic actors. Ideas of deglobalization, Euroscepticism, and neonationalism flourished, respectively, at the international, European, and domestic levels because of inequality discourses. Finally, the Brexit Idea was formulated and utilized in the UK. Yet the Brexit Idea was internally fragile because of its hardly agreed-upon premises: the effect of globalization and regional integration on European countries. This ideational fragility brought about the Brexit decision only with a minute margin of vote and a gridlock in domestic politics with high uncertainty.

In sum, the current thesis suggests a concept of the Brexit Idea that stresses the interaction between domestic and international politics and discursive politics between actors as a crucial explanatory variable of Brexit and its aftermath. The case of Brexit implies that an idea formulated at the international level can change a domestic institution in an open economy by mobilizing domestic actors around its related discourses. Specifically, the characters of an idea, such as internal and external fragility, work for the possibility of domestic institutional changes.

The present thesis indicates that the literature on institutional change often overlooks the interactions between international and domestic actors, only looking at the economic factor. First, the literature assumes that the interests of political actors are largely defined by their socioeconomic positions and institutions. With this assumption, past arguments hardly manage to explain dynamic discursive interactions, a reorganization of interests, and any endogenous institutional changes. Comparative historicism and neoinstitutionalism, which represent the literature on a domestic political economy, consider that the interests of political actors are

given by their economic and institutional position, respectively. On the one hand, comparative historicists argue that classes are constructed by a large flow of history, and thus, actors conform to the class interests and roles given to them by history (Moore 1966; Skocpol 1979; Luebbert 1987; Rueschemeyer 1992). Neoinstitutionalists, on the other hand, share an assumption that the current institutions impose restrictions on the interests, behaviors, and policy decisions of actors despite these institutions' subdivision into historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, behavioral institutionalism, or others (Hall 1986; Hall and Soskice 2001; Schmidt 2002; Blyth 2002; Fioretos 2011). An analysis of most literature fails to explain the actual decision of actors because it disregards the actual process of politics, such as the development of political narratives, competing paradigms, and sharing a cognitive understanding.

In the case of Brexit, the literature does not consider political discourses and is not able to propose congruent explanations in both vertical and horizontal terms. The UK has kept the liberal market economy (LME) system after World War II, except for a short period of having an interventionist state and collectivistic growth during the 1970s (Kesselman 2006). The LME system was particularly stressed after Thatcher seized power. Furthermore, the rapid growth of the British economy was expected with the accelerated pace of globalization in the 1990s. This was because globalization and economic neoliberalism were thought to be complementary with the British LME system. Notwithstanding the continuous institutional complementarity between the British LME system and the international economy, the UK showed fickleness in European policy. This is the point where comparativists have difficulty explaining institutional changes.

Right after World War II, the British government tried to check the European Economic Community (EEC) by establishing the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Owing to the failure of the EFTA, the UK had to strive to join the EEC three times, the first two of which were vetoed by the former French President, Charles De Gaulle. After gaining its membership to the EEC, the UK held the 1975 referendum to confirm its membership in domestic society, giving an indication of reversing its decision about EEC membership. After that, the UK opposed the creation of the EU, declined to join the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) but joined the EU, and finally withdrew from the EU.

This erratic nature of British foreign policy cannot be easily understood by most political economic literature, which overlooks the interaction of political actors and rules out a possibility of endogenous changes. The fact that the LME system continued after the war refutes the argument attributing institutional changes to the exogenous shocks, as the punctuated equilibrium theory suggests. Furthermore, the emphasis on traditional institutional paths and exogenous crises also leads to overlooked dynamic interactions. In sum, most of the literature on institutional changes could be criticized as considering the interests of political actors as being ascribed and thus closing any possibility of endogenous institutional changes, here ignoring the discursive interactions between actors.

On the other hand, an international political analysis on domestic institutions does not clearly analyze the causes and processes of Brexit. International political scientists considered Brexit to be a collateral effect of restructuring international relations after full-out globalization rather than a self-generated institutional change. For instance, there is an argument that the liberal order of the international system and the history of international

integration driven by Western advanced capitalism is coming to an end. Instead, nationalism, protectionism, and neoauthoritarianism have emerged as dominant political doctrines of which Brexit is an example (Ikenberry 2018). Yet this argument does not include the effects of international politics on domestic political processes, instead merely considering the politics of international relations. In other words, a dichotomous perspective between international and domestic politics as a divided container particularly perplexes international political scientists when studying recent institutional changes.

Second, the current thesis suggests that many studies on institutional changes stick to only economic variables. After the development of capitalism, the interests of nation-states have been exhaustively defined by economic interests, and thus, the goal of every nation-state has been to seek economic wealth and growth. Accordingly, every social problem has been reduced into the subject of economic adjustments. Institutional efficiency has been explicitly equated with the creation of economic profits. When it comes to foreign policy, explanations from an economic point of view seem to be dominant (Hall 1986). For example, Brexit was found to be a complementary institutional of the LME system with the aim to obtain economic profits using the LME system.

Still, the economic approach has a main drawback in explaining Brexit in that Brexit disagrees with the continuous institutional path and thus has resulted in economic losses. Although the interest system of the British actors was unchanged under the identical economic model, the decision to leave the EU was made without exogenous shocks. In other words, the economic approach has a limitation in offering the plausible causes behind Brexit because economic variables are, in effect, not a noticeable an

independent variable.

In the British LME, markets and economic policy are adjusted through competition and contracts between private actors without any intervention from the political realm (Shonfield 1965; Cohen 1977; Zysman 1983; Hall and Soskice 2001). Not surprisingly, the British economy showed hostility against any restrictions on private actors and movements of goods and capital, particularly those imposed by regional political communities (Krieger 2006).

A decision to leave the EU hurt the UK's economic efficiency in that the UK would deviate from a free trade policy assured by a common market of the EU and its built-in protectionism. This implies that the British economy should abandon the advantages offered by the LME system because the existing institutions of the British market system and protectionism would conflict and produce inefficiency. This contradictory decision cannot be found in the existing literature, which explains an institutional change from the perspective of economic adjustments.

In addition, studies sticking to an economic variable have problems analyzing institutional changes after globalization, especially those changes that were largely engendered by other factors. There is no way to account for institutions that are inconsistent with a cost-benefit analysis. According to the HM Treasury, Brexit was not supported by a cost-benefit analysis: trade balance deficit, decreasing job opportunities, and a slowing economic growth rate were expected (HM Treasury 2016)^①. Nonetheless, Brexit

^① According to the report by the HM Treasury, a decision to leave the EU has three feasible options regarding its relationships, as follows: to have a membership in the EEA (European Economic Area) like the Norwegian model, to be under a negotiated bilateral agreement like Swiss, Turkey, and Canada, or to have a membership in the WTO (World

occurred even with economic causalities, which indicates an oversight over the economic factors during the policy-making process.

As a noneconomic factor, there has been a rearrangement of the socioeconomic structure after the 2015 European Migrant Crisis, increasing economic inequalities between social groups following a growth of the British economy, reformation of the decision-making mechanisms, and so on. All of these noneconomic factors also came under consideration in Brexit. Moreover, new questions about the social virtues, such as social integration, inequality, and so forth, were subjected to commitments on propriety and correctness rather than economic adjustments. Thus, in terms of its noneconomic causes and virtues, Brexit is inexplicable when trying to be explained by conventional descriptions such as comparative historicism and neoinstitutionalism, which perceive that the interests of actors are constructed *a priori* based on an economic position and institutions and which take an interest-centered approach.

Therefore, the current thesis focuses on the discursive interactions between actors and endogenous institutional changes that occur because of noneconomic variables, hence accounting for why and how the UK determined to leave the EU. To achieve these goals, the present thesis will

Trade Organization) without other agreements with the EU. The report suggests a long-term economic expectation of Brexit in 15 years depending on the type of relationship the UK will take. For instance, the GDP level is expected to drop by 3.8% in the EEA, 6.2% in a negotiated bilateral agreement, 7.5% in the WTO. The GDP per capita is predicted to decrease £1,100, £1,800, and £2,100, respectively. The amount of the decrease on the net impact on receipts is estimated to reach £2 million, £3.6 million, and £4.5 million in each case, respectively. In brief, the report points out that a decision to leave the EU may move toward the impoverishment of the UK (HM Treasury 2016).

adopt and develop the endogenous institutional change theory as an alternative perspective. As one offshoot of historical institutionalism, the endogenous institutional change theory stresses a variety of individual ideas and reinterpretation of ideas that take place during political interactions (Blyth 2002; Schmidt 2008; Herrigel 2010; Kwon 2013; Thelen 2004). Although the punctuated equilibrium theory and path dependency argument attribute Brexit to the international economic crisis and continuity of the LME system, the endogenous institutional change theory proposes the possibility of institutional changes by repeated interactions and everyday politics.

Based on the endogenous institutional change theory, the current thesis will show that the Brexit Idea was formulated through international political discourses during socioeconomic challenges and the responses of the European community. The Brexit Idea became an interpretation framework based on which social actors could understand problematic situations and modify their interests. A new coalition and diverging lines emerged in domestic politics. Indeed, the Brexit Idea and rearrangement of domestic politics led to Brexit.

In brief, the current thesis will constitute a concept of the Brexit Idea and closely examine the interactions and mobilization among various social actors. An idea is distinct from the concept of interests claimed by comparative historicism or neoinstitutionalism in that there is room for internal creation, change, and abolition of ideas by discursive interactions. Although interests are defined *a priori* by socioeconomic positions and institutional environments and are closed to individual reinterpretation, the interactions and discourses of everyday politics may have an impact on ideas because ideas require the behaviors and discourses of actors. Hence, a

theory with ideational variables could explain institutional changes without any external shocks, instead doing so with gradual institutional changes throughout the process of daily politics. Furthermore, ideas often fall into the realm of floating resources, of which social actors can take advantage of their dynamic and flexible nature. In opposition, interests are occupied and controlled to a disparate extent because interests are based on unchanging socioeconomic positions.

The fact that the current thesis is based on the concept of ideas and discursive interactions bespeaks its merits in grasping institutional changes without an intervention of external variables, such as global economic crisis, regime changes, and so forth. We could also observe institutional transitions between times or countries in so far as ideas and discursive interactions are valid comparative tools. Although other conditions differ between different time periods or societies, a comparative study can be attempted using the concept of discursive interactions, reinterpretation of ideas, and institutional changes.

To investigate the development of the Brexit Idea and Brexit, the current thesis consists of four parts. Chapter two reviews a few dominating studies on institutional changes, including those using the comparative historicism, neoinstitutionalism, and international political theories. This chapter examines the existing literature on institutional changes and their direction in the political realm. In the present thesis, Brexit is considered an institution taking the form of foreign policy. Next, an alternative theory and analytic framework is proposed based on critical literature reviews. Theoretical premises and key conceptions, such as the Brexit Idea and internal and external fragility, are thoroughly dealt with.

Chapter three investigates the peculiarity of British foreign policy toward the European community after World War II all the way to Brexit. How a sentiment of an unfledged hostility developed into a sophisticated ideational framework of Euroscepticism is traced in comparative historical terms. The historical path of the British foreign policy becomes a reference point with which to understand Brexit. Before proposing an argument, chapter three catches the distinctiveness of the British foreign policy, distinguishing it from other time periods and countries. In short, a so-called “stop-go” in macroeconomic policy was also adopted in foreign policy (Hall 1986). The UK has shown a tendency to arbitrarily choose a position toward the European community depending on the time. It actively engaged in European regional integration, but it also deviated from the European community, not sharing in all of its burdens.

Chapter four addresses how the Brexit Idea came into being. First, the European community went under socioeconomic challenges and repeated responses against certain challenges: the European Debt Crisis and the European Migrant Crisis in 2015. It was these international discourses that the process of sharing understandings on the current inequalities was held. The main points of the inequality discourse are the sovereignty and economic gaps among EU member nations and social actors. The current thesis asserts that three pillars of the Brexit Idea were constructed through prevalent international discourses on these inequalities: deglobalization at an international level, Euroscepticism at a regional level, and neonationalism at a national level, all of which are the shifting incentives of actors.

In addition, chapter four captures the nature of the Brexit Idea before discussing the endogenous institutional changes in chapter five. This chapter looks at the ironic but remarkable aspects of the Brexit Idea, which worked

to initiate deliberation and public discussions on related themes, even making these interactions inevitable. Here, the Idea was solid and secure and seems to be the new dividing line in European society. Meanwhile, the Brexit Idea had a fragile and volatile character in that its meaning was entirely subjected to the individual and voluntary reinterpretation of actors. The Idea could be understood as a fixed concept when it comes to its contents and implications.

In short, the existence of the Brexit Idea itself is established and secure, while its contents are fully fragile and left open to reinterpretations. These features are expressed as externally solid but internally fragile. Dealing with these features, chapter four suggests why and how these features were first embedded in the Idea. The argument revolves around a discussion on globalization and regional integration.

Chapter five examines how political coalitions utilized the Brexit Idea to mobilize actors and struggle against each other. Beyond the conventional divides between Whig and Tory, the current thesis suggests a conflict between the pro- and anti-European integration as the possibly new cleavage in the UK; it signifies a rearrangement of social actors and party systems in response to this new line. Most political forces did not well utilize the Brexit Idea to mobilize British actors and to build a dominating coalition. Finally, chapter five endeavors to find a relationship between the ideas and institutional changes in an open economy. Although we cannot conclude how ideas determine the direction of institutional changes, it is evident that ideas involve collective deliberation and public discourses that could be the seed of institutional changes.

Finally, a conclusion chapter briefly goes over the argument, taking into account its implication for an adaptation of nation-states toward globalizing

politics and economies.

Chapter 2. Debates on Institutional Changes

In January 2013, former Prime Minister David Cameron publicly promised to hold the Brexit referendum if the Conservative Party won the 2015 general election. In response to it, the leader of the Labour Party, Ed Miliband, denounced the announcement as a “huge gamble,” and Brexit debates rapidly heated up in the UK. Political comparativists also began to study how Brexit would affect the British and European economies and whether Brexit would pass or not. These studies mainly concentrated on proposing the economic effects of Brexit in a quantitative form, a reason why many existing studies have failed to describe the dynamic changes in politics and the economies of member countries. In addition, a mounting sense of crisis was rampant because of worldwide economic recession, rising far-right populism, the European Migrant Crisis, and sharply transforming politics of the UK and the European community. Thus, many comparative studies kept focusing on how British politics unfolded without much consideration of the inherent theoretical flaws.

After the watershed of the Brexit referendum, the focus of Brexit debates suddenly shifted. After the UK confirmed leaving the EU in two years according to Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, how Brexit discourses first arose or how the European integration would change in the future came to be actively discussed^②. Despite shifting focal points, most studies still

^② Brexit was investigated from the perspective of party politics, political culture, and economic wealth. First, Brexit is attributed to the malfunction of old party system and the weakness of the Conservative and the Labour party (Ford and Goodwin 2017; Jessop 2017; Morgan 2017). After globalization, interests of domestic actors have diversified. And

concentrated on the economic causes and repercussions of the phenomenon. To make matters worse, their analysis overlooked the dynamic interactions of the actors and their international and domestic perspectives and the gradual changes in the political economic features of member states, which could be substantive resources of institutional change. Consequently, these studies have been unsuccessful at achieving an integrated explanation of the causes and effects of Brexit.

If we understand Brexit at a more fundamental level, this practical case could be paralleled with the theoretical disputes on institutional changes and their appearances. Varieties of Capitalism school (VOC) after the 1990s has

interactions between globalization and an attempt to europeanize have taken on the complicated dimension. Nevertheless, traditional two-party system merely polarized this complex issue into either stay or leave option. Moreover, both the Conservative and the Labour party experienced the internal division and did not overcome disappointment of voters. These facts imply a failure of conventional parties in reforming conventional political institutions and in resolving a conflict among voters. Therefore, it is suggested that Brexit referendum was a part of democratic institutions which display nonconfidence on existing politicians and political system.

Second, a rapid globalization, increasing immigrants, terrorism, and far right populism receive attention as an engine of Brexit (Hobolt 2016; Balibar 2016). The far right parties insist that decades of extensive globalization have disparately affected to gains and losses of the domestic groups with a new social cleavage. They aimed to transform this argument into a fear against other countries, races, or classes, and to mobilize voters. The far right populists like UK Independence Party effectively appropriated Euroscepticism and a referendum.

Third, it is argued that economic factors triggered the British *de facto* skepticism about international economic integration (Margalit 2012). The economic globalization represented by the EU has been deemed to increase wage disparity and welfare differential in domestic societies and between member states.

studied the diversification of institutions by political economic models, the features of each model as a reason for institutional diversification, and the conditions for institutional development. Under the context of VOC, Brexit could be studied as a diversification of the British institution from the past or from another country. Therefore, it is indispensable to review the literature on when, how, and why institutions change.

Furthermore, Brexit as a foreign policy signifies an institutional change led by international politics in the era of globalization. Because after globalization domestic institutions could be altered by international political variables rather than domestic factors, disputes on the causes of institutional reform have no choice but to develop beyond the border of nation-states. Likewise, this is partially because of the complexity of institutional reforms stemming from globalization, meaning that the studies focusing on political outcomes should be closely examined.

The dominant ways to explain the mechanism behind producing political outcomes, such as policy, regime change, or so forth could be divided into a political economic approach and an international political approach. As a representative case of the political economic approach, comparative historicists insist that multiple classes are constructed through the interests and relationships between classes and that the relationship between classes decides political outcomes (Moore 1966; Skocpol 1979; Rueschemeyer 1986; Gourevitch 1986). For instance, prodemocratic laborers, antidemocratic landlords, and capitals build their own coalitions. The balance of class power decides the political outcomes of the society (Rueschmeyer 1986). Because comparative historicists suppose that the interests of actors are determined by economic positions, their explanation excludes a case where variables other than interests drive political changes.

Although the negative economic effects of Brexit were predicted and that the class system was not restructured in the UK, British voters chose to leave the EU. Here, a comparative historical description falters.

Neoinstitutionalists commonly maintain that a set of institutions settle a policy path, notwithstanding its internal differentiation into historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, behavioral institutionalism, and so on (Weir and Skocpol 1985; Katzenstein; Gourevitch 1986; Hall and Soskice 2001; Schmidt 2008; Blyth 2002; Streeck and Thelen 2005; Pierson 2004; Levi 2009; Hay 2006; Fioretos 2001). The path dependent way of development can be sustained because institutional conditions constrain the choice of actors in favor of existing institutions. This approach, however, excessively sticks to the continuity of institutions, which often betrays a real choice. For example, existing neoinstitutional studies seem to preclude giving explanations for the UK's decision: to deviate from the common market, to withdraw support from the LME system in an international trade area, and to choose a protective trade frequently dubbed economic nationalism. The reason for the UK shifting from joining the EU to withdrawing from it is beyond description when it comes to neoconstitutionalism.

Meanwhile, the international political approach explains domestic political outcomes by looking at structural pressures from international relations (Gerschenkron 1963; Kurth 1979a; Wallerstein 1974; Gilpin 1975; Krasner 1976; Allison 1969; Nye and Geohane 1971). Yet this approach leaves out the actual political process for political outcomes. This implies that the direction of political changes is still blank.

If so, how can we understand Brexit when looking at the influence of international and domestic interactions and of complicated economic and

institutional factors? How could the political economic model of the UK be interpreted in the case of Brexit? Which theoretical perspectives could replenish the existing studies that have fixated on economic interests and/or international structures?

The current thesis suggests that institutional reform occurs because of the politics of domestic coalitions under the constraints of institutional environments. In this regard, the viewpoint of the present thesis is in the same vein as comparative historicism and neoinstitutionalism. Yet the current thesis focuses less on institutional and economic interests and more on the ideas crossing these factors and on the discourses and interactions where ideas are grown. What decided Brexit was not just the interests of the British economy or LME system themselves, but rather the Brexit Idea and international discourses used to interpret the established institutions. The current thesis also closely observes the actual behaviors of actors to interpret their interests, which leads to the endogenous institutional change.

This chapter explores the prevalent theories on producing political outcomes, including comparative historicism, neoinstitutionalism, and key international political theories. Then, the theoretical framework of the current thesis is presented.

2.1. Comparative Historicism

Comparative historicists argue that the transition of a political system is determined by the power struggle between domestic coalitions based on actors' interests (Moore 1966; Skocpol 1979; Rueschemeyer 1986; Gourevitch 1986). Each class shows interest-specific behaviors because

economic positions construct these interests and the classes of the actors. Every class strives to compose a coalition and to mobilize power to achieve their desired outcomes. A specific path of political development could be adopted following a power struggle between classes. For example, when there is a strong *bourgeois impulse*, a society progresses toward democracy by means of a *bourgeois revolution*. France had a societal structure where the bourgeois class led an agrarian one, which was the seed for a bourgeois revolution. In contrast, with a powerful landed upper class, the bourgeois is subordinated to the landed upper class, and there is a strong possibility for fascism by *revolution from above* (Moore 1966).

In the same line of thought, in the case of an economic crisis, the government employs policy by considering the *production profile*. To be concrete, the political actors, such as business, labor, and agriculture, shape political preferences based on their production profile. Political preferences play a role in constituting domestic coalitions and when applying pressures to the government during policy making. For example, the British government implemented a free trade policy in the late 1800s because the production profile of industry, agriculture, landowner, aristocrat, and labor was favorable to free trade (Gourevitch 1986).

Although comparative historicists assume that the interests of actors are predetermined by economic positions, interests are neither defined by economic position nor constructed *a priori*. After the development of capitalism in Germany, although the state was seized not by landlords but by labors, it failed to move forward to democracy (Moore 1966). The German case cannot be fully understood with the hypothesis that landlords are antidemocratic and that laborers are prodemocratic. As such, the actual behaviors of the German landlords and labors readily disapprove the

argument that interests are defined *a priori*.

The fallacy of comparative historicism is also found in the case where behaviors are endogenously modified by the changes of a socially shared understanding, priority of virtues, and way of thinking despite having a consistent class structure. This fallacy demonstrates an incompetence of the theoretical perspective, which is common with functionalism. Comparative historicists cannot explain the self-reinforcement and self-destruction of institutions under a coherent systemic environment. Likewise, functionalists maintain that institutions are created, reformed, and abandoned following the roles and necessity of a system without recognizing the possibility of self-generated institutions.

In the case of Brexit, the interests of the actors did not agree with their economic position, and the actors did not act based on their economic interests. The British Treasury predicted a GDP decrease of 3–7% as a possible effect of Brexit. Negative economic effects were also found in many indicators, such as per capita income, unemployment rate, direct investment rate, and so forth (HM Treasury 2016). The Brexit decision insinuates that the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, and voters in general had criteria other than economic adjustments. Moreover, although reorganization of the class structure did not occur before and after 2016, the actual choice of the actors shifted from staying to leaving, something comparative historicists cannot explain.

Comparative historicism also is weak in describing the dynamics of a change and transition inside the political system. It lacks a process-mechanism analysis. For instance, Gourevitch (1986) examined the power struggle among class coalitions with an emphasis on domestic politics for policy making. Yet his analysis did not set a relationship between five

variables^③ when multiple variables conflicted for class interests. In effect, he consistently emphasized the production profile for his case study of the UK, France, and Germany. However, four variables, save for the production profile, are considered as not having the same degree of explanatory power. The strong point of this analysis is at the systemic level but omits the political process of establishing interests and its dynamism.

The problem with a lack of political process is that the real agency of actors does not exist. In the actual process of political implementation, actors actively reinterpret their interests by understanding and demanding policy. In a comparative historicist explanation, however, policy-making mechanisms that have a regular pattern of interactions are largely ignored because of the absence of active players.

When it comes to Brexit, multiple socioeconomic variables were taken into account, such as economic effects, traditional political systems such as the two-party system and parliamentary system, immigrant inflow, expansion of far-right populism, enthusiasm for democratic ideals, and the EU's cooperation demand to recover the economy. Many studies point out the negative economic predictions, changing political culture with increasing amount of immigrants, and a growing far-right party as the cause of Brexit. Yet they are obsessed with only a few variables and do not try to use a holistic and integrated view. Moreover, the real agency of political

^③ Gourevitch suggested five feasible policy options against economic crisis: classical liberalism, socialization and planning, protectionism, demand stimulus, and mercantilism. Actors shape their preferences based on their production profile, intermediate associations, state structure, economic ideology, and international system. Following their preferences, domestic coalitions are established, and the power struggles among them lead to the final policy decision (Gourevitch 1986).

actions such as the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, and the City is prominent in the case of Brexit. These facts illuminate a necessity to understand the political process and how it crosses multiple variables.

Finally, comparative historicists are inclined to treat political systems as containers that are isolated from others or from international systems. When we understand domestic politics as isolated, numerous interplays between political systems may slip out of our analysis. For example, after the Maastricht Treaty entered into force in 1993, the EU expanded its influence over Europe, and the interactions between the supranational regime and nation-states arose exponentially. After the 1990s, the EU became a dominant order in Europe. In this case, there must be a deficiency in perceiving each nation's politics as isolated, without looking at political interactions.

Brexit has both domestic and international features because it is a domestically enacted policy that deals with a supranational community. Although Brexit was born through a domestic policy-making mechanism, we cannot neglect the structural pressures from the UK's relationship with the EU: the EU asked the UK to increase its share of expenses, to cooperate and accept more immigrants, and so forth. In other words, it implies that we should look at the perspective of dynamic interactions to discover the institutional choice of Brexit.

2.2. Neoinstitutionalism

Neoinstitutionalists emerged after the 1990s, criticizing the fact that functionalists and comparative historicists hardly observe changes and the

differentiation of institutions by country and society. To capture the varying aspects of institutions, neoinstitutionalists suggested new analytical methods. At the same time, neoinstitutionalists also refuted the argument of neoliberals. Whereas neoliberals argued liberalism was a universal path of economic development (Strange 1997; Rodrik 1997; Friedman 2006; Bhagwati 2010), neoinstitutionalists found an institutional reform to be path dependent. Because institutions decide the interests of political actors, the paths of development would self-reinforce and follow the established institution.

The neoinstitutional theory can be divided into a few streams: historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, and behavioral institutionalism. Historical institutionalists suppose that the interests of actors are defined by the historical arrangements of institutions, and thus, political systems or institutions must have been around for a while before any external shock can happen (Katzenstein 1978; Berger 1981; Weir and Skocpol 1985; Hall 1986; Thelen and Steinmo 1992). Once a specific system and institutions settle down, they fix the interests of actors and social relations. Consequently, when external shocks occur, they verify the established institutions, which are refractory and repeatedly self-reinforce. Rational choice institutionalism, on the other hand, asserts that institutions move toward an equilibrium point by adopting the best strategy under the given conditions and circumstances (Iversen and Soskice 2006; Greif and Laitin 2004). In common with historical institutionalism, rational theorists propose the concept of a self-reinforcing equilibrium that makes players adopt the same institutional choice unless an external shock appears. Finally, according to behavioral institutionalism, actors carry out a cost-benefit analysis on alternative institutions, hence shaping their preferences (Fioretos

2011). The potential costs and benefits of institutional reformation are judged by historical legacies. Behavioral institutionalists see that a present institutional choice would be abandoned if the result of a cost-benefit analysis is differentiated.

Rational choice institutionalism, behavioral institutionalism, and historical institutionalism have a common difficulty in analyzing Brexit. The pitfall lies in the neoinstitutional theory itself. First, the institutionalist argument regarding the continuity and path dependency of institutions is often divorced from actual choices. This is because institutionalism premises that the actors' interests are predetermined by established institutions. Contrary with institutionalists' expectations, however, actual institutional changes often occur in different directions with established institutions beyond the interests of actors. For instance, the successfully accomplished social pacts of European countries are attributable to a shared understanding between actors (Avdagic et al. 2011). In Ireland, what was helpful to constitute a corporatist governance system was not institutional conditions defined *a priori* but rather the political exchanges between the main actors, a social agreement, and shared understanding and virtues (Kwon 2014).

Neoliberals also present a significant flaw of neoinstitutionalism. According to the convergence theory of neoliberalism, every political economic model of nation-states converges toward a liberal market model featuring flexible production and labor. It signifies a deviation from the traditional political economic model. Irrelevant to the validity of the neoliberal argument, a few northern European countries lost their Keynesian social democratic policy measures by implementing flexible labor policy (Grahl and Teague 1997; Lash and Urry 1987; Streeck and Schmitter 1991).

The aim of the labor policy was to curb a wage increase and make production flexible, finally raising competitiveness in the world economy. Although the rule of competition slightly changed after globalization, including opening the domestic market and the free movement of capital and labor, there were no external shocks that could lead to institutional changes in the paradigm-shifting level. Although most institutionalists predicate upon the punctuated equilibrium theory, suggesting an institutional change because of the influence of external crisis, changes in competition conditions and preferences could make strategic actors choose alternative institutional options.

In other words, an institutional choice that is disparate from the existing contexts appears more sharply and more frequently than what neoinstitutionalists maintain. Another example is the French political economic model after the 1990s. During the 1950–60s, France, under the guidance of Charles De Gaulle, established state capitalism, where the development of the national economy was mainly driven by state planning. After the 1990s, however, the French government kept trying to improve the flexibility of labor to strengthen the competitiveness of the national industry. These attempts are noticeable in the Macron government. As such, the French institutions of political economy are going under a gradual reform, even without an external crisis, finally deviating from the existing institutional contexts. This somewhat negates the neoinstitutionalist premise that the interests of actors are constituted *a priori* and do not change routinely. Rather, the interests of actors are often adjusted by the interactions between actors and subsequent change of circumstances.

Brexit is counterevidence of the institutional theory, which sees

interests as transcendently constructed because an institutional change occurred, even though the LME system persisted. Specifically, the interests and preferences of domestic actors and subsequent behaviors in the UK in 2016 are not appropriately accounted for only by looking at institutions.

Second, institutional gains are not estimated by economic efficiency, as neoinstitutionalists argue. Following VOC, economic efficiency becomes more secure if institutions such as corporate governance structure, business relations, and the like are complementary. Likewise, institutional gains and economic efficiency are closely intertwined in neoinstitutional theory. In empirical terms, however, not all institutional changes aim at adjusting economic interests. When we consider an institutional alternative, judging the criteria to with which evaluate its validity are not just economic rationality or interests but vary from actor to actor. For example, apropos reducing social security, we could consider the immediate economic benefits, but at the same time, shared social, cultural, and ethical virtues such as protecting the disadvantaged, decreasing the wage gap, and improving social stability are included as a yardstick. Furthermore, even economic interests could be understood as short term and long term. Unlike short-term interests like a rise in the stock market, a wage increase, and so forth, long-term interests are often integrated with communitarian virtues. For instance, long-term economic interests such as creating jobs and national economy growth have both economic and social aspects. In brief, institutions could be calculated not only by their economic gains, but also by the diverse perspectives particular to each actor.

In practice, actors voluntarily integrate disparate institutions because it is the actors who decide the meaning and effects of institutions. For example, the Blair government sought the reformation of the EU in a way

that agreed with the British liberal market economy (Hobolt 2016). He was able to blend the European communitarian virtues with neoliberal institutions. Meanwhile, the Major government refused to adopt the European Social Chapter and observed its opt-out right in the transition phase into the EMU. When the Major government interpreted the EU policy option, not only an economic cost-benefit analysis, but also the British exceptionalism and Euroscepticism, were considered (George 1998; Foster 2002; Gifford 2016).

Neoinstitutionalism takes the interests, preferences, and coalitions of actors as equivalent because they are defined in economic terms. In fact, real actors include not only the economic variables, but also other variables when considering their interests, preferences, and coalitions. As a result, three concepts have different values. Accordingly, there must be a gap between the reality and an attempt to observe the institutional changes on economic factors.

Brexit supports the argument that neoinstitutional studies overstate the economic factors when it comes to institutional changes. Even though the UK should have chosen to stay in the EU if the decision was grounded on an economic cost-benefit analysis, the choice was not solely based on an economic analysis. For these reasons, we could refute the premise that the interests of actors are interpreted by economic factors alone. Consequently, many studies endeavor to define the interests of the British actors by looking at diverse facets: maladaptation of the British two-party system in the era of globalization, substantive weakness of the Conservative and the Labour Parties (Ford and Goodwin 2017; Jessop 2017; Morgan 2017), growing support for the far-right populist parties because of an increasing number of immigrants and terrorism (Hobolt 2016; Balibar 2016), and so on.

Third, because neoinstitutionalism does not take into account the internal process of politics, institutional changes without external shocks are not the objects of consideration. To understand institutional changes, recent historical institutionalists have suggested an updated argument: the respective actors can interpret institutions disparately because of the ambiguity embedded in institutions. In addition, because legislators and the followers of institutions are different, the actual operation of institutions can vary. Here, rational choice institutionalists assert the possibility of gradual institutional changes through everyday politics. The actual actors produce feedback as practicing institutions, and they strategically consider feedback from other actors, which becomes a source of gradual institutional changes (Pierson 2004; Greif and Leitin 2004).

Yet the institutional theory still returns to the problem first pointed out: a direction of political change is confined to established institutions even in recent self-corrected theoretical perspectives. For instance, many conventional descriptions end up relating interpretation of interests, preferences, and alternative institutions into existing institutions; even when adapting institutions to changed socioeconomic environments, actors voluntarily interpret institutions, consider feedback from each other to reach an equilibrium, and weigh alternative institutions following self-corrected historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, and behavioral institutionalism. In other words, because the recent development of neoinstitutionalism embraced an individual interpretation of actors as a significant variable, it earned more leeway to reflect actual institutional changes. At the same time, the modified perspectives still constrain an interpretation of these actors by the established institutions as retrenching room for arbitrary of interpreting interests and institutions.

For these reasons, the endogenous dynamics born by the actual interactions among actors and institutional changes cannot be adequately described by neoinstitutionalism. The Brexit Issue also requires explanatory variables other than existing institutions for understanding it. Hence, the current thesis concentrates on interactions and ideas as the pervasive impetus of Brexit. Here, the actors who weighed Brexit as an institutional alternative laid more stress on the Brexit Idea than the LME system, which was accompanied by an understanding that leaving the EU would be appropriate.

The last problem of conventional neoinstitutional is that it overlooks the variables of international politics, omitting international political variables from the very beginning of the analysis or regarding international variables only as an intermediate or control variable. For example, Gourevitch (1986) takes into account the international system when studying domestic policy making. Indeed, his analysis centered on the production profile, a dependent variable about economic interests. The international system was inconsistently considered only when unexplained by the production profile.

In effect, after the 1990s, pressures from international relations tended to directly engage in domestic institutional changes. The Brexit case encountered relational pressures from an international level because it concerned a supranational regime with its member states. Specifically, after the 2015 European Migrant Crisis, the UK was given pressure to accept more immigrants and pay more contributions to EU member states like France, Germany, and the Southern European countries (Trauner 2016). Likewise, when the Wilson government held the referendum on joining the EEC and renegotiating the joining conditions, increasing the UK's

contributions to the EEC were brought into question (Brivati and Young 1993; Duncan and Pilkington 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to weigh international variables to understand Brexit, which encompasses both domestic and international politics.

2.3. International Political Theory

The international political theory focuses on how structural pressures from international politics and the global market decide national politics. Perspectives on the international political theory diverge based on the degree of structural pressures, interconnectedness between nation-states, capacity of nonstate actors, and so forth. Yet they all argue on that international political pressures directly determine domestic politics such as the type of regime and coalition, institutional environments, and the like.

A key example is the late industrialization debates (Gershenkron 1963; Landes 1969; Hobsbawm 1969; Kurth 1979b). A comparative study on late industrialization argues that political outcomes are decided by the international economy and when each country initiated its industrialization. In general, few competitors and industrial structures are unsophisticated and occur during the early stage of development. In contrast, competition between players becomes fierce, and industry becomes complicated in the late stage of industrialization where there are more thorough conditions for late developers (Gershenkron 1963). The more advanced the international economy becomes, the more the entry cost for new entrants increases. For instance, the UK initiated its industrialization during the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, and that economic development was

relatively linear and simple. The steep industrial development at that time was because of the accordance between the British liberalism and simple character of industrialization.

Kurth (1979b), who developed the argument of Gerschenkron, shows how the global economy determines national politics. According to Kurth, premodern and modern classes coexisted in Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Latin American countries, which were late developers. Not surprisingly, the liberal and authoritarian regimes alternatively occurred among the dominant class. It is a feature of international economic development, especially in an industry that is seized and abandoned by early developers that decide the form of the emerging regime at specific points in time. Despite the strength of late industrialization debates in revealing the leverage of the international economy, they are still ineffective in describing international and domestic interactions, especially in understanding national politics and economy. In other words, late industrialization debates end up returning to the aforementioned problem of domestic political economic studies in that it is a domestic political system that eventually decides the specific aspects of realizing international influence.

The dependencia theory stresses the dominant effect of international factors over domestic political ones. This theory is aimed at eschewing reductionism toward domestic politics and its variables (Frank 1969; Wallerstein 1974). According to the dependencia theory, advanced capitalism sets the framework for an international economy that restricts what lesser developed countries can adopt. Because the international system is constructed by core countries that monopolize international political resources such as capital and military preponderance, the resources taken by lesser developed countries are scarce. Because of a scarcity of resources, the

benefits for various sectors from global economic growth are unequal. As a consequence, modern sectors meeting the needs of the global economy keep growing, but other sectors stay in doldrums.

A comparative study of Wallerstein (1974) suggests that the international political system is divided into core, semiperiphery, and periphery groups, and each country group faces indigenous demands from international politics. Acceding to demands, core countries develop strong states, periphery countries develop weak states, and semiperiphery countries develop hybrids. However, the dependencia theory cannot fully understand the differentiation among countries in the same group. Why respective periphery countries do not have identical state capabilities is not explained. Notwithstanding an initial awareness of a problem that reductionism toward national politics should be rejected, the dependencia theory retreats to domestic politics again to portray political outcomes.

Compared with late industrialization debates and the dependencia theory, which emphasizes pressures from the international political economic system, there also is a school of thought considers the influence of globalization and interstate relations as being far more dominant: the liberalism and interdependence schools. Liberalists maintain that both investor and recipient countries experience economic growth and increasing wealth by coming into close relations with each other under world market forces. According to the liberal argument, all nation-states go through an analogous way of economic growth and development.

The interdependence school primarily casts doubt on whether a state is a single performer of an international system because governmental behaviors are more immediately restricted by international relations when there is increasing interdependence among nation-states (Nye and Keohane

1971; Morse 1976). Following the emergence of supranational and multinational performers and the loss of governmental control measures, power is transferred from the central government to other actors until the national political structure transforms. Yet the arguments of liberalists and interdependence schools can only be applied to a limited number of cases and do not have consistent and general explanatory power. Compared with conventional studies such as late industrialization debates or the dependencia theory, these schools of thought are less effective in delineating the influence of international politics over domestic ones, which could be considered one of its most serious defects.

In sum, the international political theory overemphasizes international political variables and thus cannot explain why national politics differentiate; it often lacks a measure to describe causal relationships between international and domestic variables. Although the international political theory and a political economic analysis such as historicism or institutionalism respectively argue the opposite, both regard international and domestic politics as a divided territory and stress the absolute ascendancy of specific variables. Consequently, they cannot investigate the interactions between international and domestic politics.

Because Brexit assumes interactions between international and domestic politics, there is a limit to the explanation of the international political theory. Brexit was put under internal pressures from the international community, as well as the British national political mechanism. In addition, understanding the politics of each nation-state must take precedence to examine the distinct feature of Brexit when compared with France or Germany. Therefore, we must modify and reorganize conventional comparative studies. The current thesis builds a theoretical framework based

on an existing political economic analysis and international political theory, emphasizing the discursive interactions between international and domestic politics and on the causal relations among variables.

2.4. Research Hypothesis and Theoretical Framework

2.4.1. Research Hypothesis

The current thesis puts forward three key hypotheses about the reasons why the UK chose to leave the EU, features of the Brexit Idea, and the relationship between institutions and ideas.

Research Hypothesis 1: The “Brexit Idea,” whose principal pillars are deglobalization, Euroscepticism, and neonationalism, served as an impetus to leave the EU. The idea was formulated by discursive interactions between international and domestic political actors.

Many ideas, including deglobalization, Euroscepticism, and neonationalism, were formulated into the Brexit Idea by the discursive interactions that occurred in the EU and its member states. The Brexit Idea became an impetus for British voters to choose to leave the EU. This argument is different from what considers the British economy as a divided container and proposes domestic political factors as the sole independent variable. At the same time, it is contrasted with the argument that Brexit was decided only by the political and economic pressures the EU put on it. According to the current thesis, the Brexit Idea was constructed at the international political level and restructured the interests and preferences of

domestic actors, finally leading to a reform of domestic institutions. Brexit is considered an institutional reform triggered by the alteration of a shared understanding that moved toward the Brexit Idea.

Research Hypothesis 2: The Brexit Idea has ambivalent characters. Although its understanding is open to discussion and repeated reinterpretation, it is pervasive and firmly exists as an ideational axis of social cleavages. Both solidity and fragility are features of the Brexit Idea.

Although the Brexit Idea is firmly entrenched in European societies, its contents are still open to individual interpretation. In other words, the initiation of the Brexit debate was almost inevitable because the existence of Brexit Idea was secured, and even the Idea pervaded to the extent that a new social cleavage rose. At the same time, however, the social actors of the European countries did not consent to its meaning and way of interpretation, leaving each actor room to understand it. Thus, the Brexit Idea is internally fragile despite its external stability, showing its ambivalence. In theoretical terms, although many studies perceive ideas as a significant variable, they overlook the feature of ideas. Indeed, the possibility or concrete direction of institutional reform by ideas depends a lot on ideas.

Research Hypothesis 3: Ideas can lead actors to transform institutions by modifying their understanding of preferences, interests, and institutions at both the international and domestic levels. This implies that ideas play a significant role in changing institutions in an open economy. In addition, ideas can reinforce the distinctiveness of the established model of each national economy.

Each member state, including the UK, Germany, and France, adopted a disparate European policy even though they shared some thoughts in common. In particular, the direction of institutional change was toward reinforcing the uniqueness of the established economic model of each country rather than weakening it. It is true that ideas at the international level are shared by all countries that participate in the related discourse. Yet ideas do not necessarily lead each society to foster the same kind of institutions. Instead, varied institutional changes come about through the features of related ideas and by the specific processes of mobilization. The current thesis opposes the argument that national economic models converge into a liberal market economy or that the uniqueness of each model is weakened because of increasing international discourses.

2.4.2. A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change and Ideational Approach

The present thesis proposes an analytic framework with three key aspects. First, to examine the decision of the UK to leave, the current thesis adopts the *endogenous institutional change theory* and *ideational approach*. The endogenous institutional change theory is distinguished from the path-dependency argument and punctuated equilibrium theory: it is neither about the classic historical institutional approach stating that the LME system led to Brexit, nor about that external shocks such as global economic crisis or refugee crisis that led to Brexit. Instead, the British voters interacted at the international and domestic politics and enthusiastically modified the understanding on their preferences, interests, or institutions, finally arriving

at Brexit. In addition, the current thesis maintains that the interactions between actors can be captured by means of *ideas* based on an ideational approach.

Second, the current thesis studies the concept of idea, including its formulation and mobilization, external and internal features, and relationships with institutional reform. Our review of Brexit confirms that when the EU counteracted against socioeconomic challenges, the Brexit Idea became firmly shaped. The interactions and discourses that occurred during the counteracting process are ascribable to Brexit. This argument is distinct from conventional international relations studies stating that interactions at international politics produce consistent and fixed forms of international systems. It is an idea with the feature of the floating resources that are created by increasing interactions among nation-states in the era of globalization. Ideas are deemed to be floating because they are open to the arbitrary and voluntary reinterpretation of social actors. In the current thesis, this floating character will be described as the internal fragility of ideas. On the other hand, some ideas have greater influence in public discourses. Those ideas strongly lead actors to initiate a discourse on related themes, even creating a social cleavage. This aspect of ideas is told as externally stable and secure. According to the current thesis, the Brexit Idea is open to the reinterpretation of individual actors while inevitably producing related conflicts and discourses.

Third, the current thesis investigates how the Brexit Idea was utilized to mobilize voters toward the leave side. The mobilization of ideas will be divided into two stages: creating a few discourses of British society by integrating the Brexit Idea and LME system and modifying the preferences and interests of actors through discursive interactions using the Brexit Idea.

By distinguishing the mobilization of ideas into two stages, the present thesis suggests the *de facto* influence of ideas as an independent variable in isolation from the influence of institutions.

First, the current thesis is based on the endogenous institutional change theory and ideational approach, focusing on the aspect of ideas and highlighting the dynamics of discursive interactions, as well as the connectedness of international and national politics. Although the current thesis agrees with the fundamental premises of the endogenous institutional change theory and the ideational approach, it introduces a modification to the understanding of ideas.

According to endogenous institutional change theory, social actors interpret their interests during political and discursive interactions (Kwon 2014). Then, they construct a political coalition and derive political outcomes in favor of their interests (Gourevitch 1978, 1986; Kahler and Lake 2013). Social actors construct ideas through social interactions, and ideas become a framework for interpreting the interests of actors. In this way, ideas are directly involved in developing institutions. Once again, institutions as an outcome of ideational interactions impact the construction of ideas by reorganizing the surrounding environments of actors. Consequently, social actors, discursive interactions, policy and institutions, and ideas are closely intertwined inside the cyclic process of political outcomes.

It is not the existing institutions or external shocks that determine whether institutions will be changed or where they will be directed. Rather, the cognitive behaviors of actors determine the possibility or specific direction of institutional changes. Actors actively strive to understand a problematic situation and to have normative judgment on various social

virtues, including economic interests. Therefore, this type of analysis is distinguished from the path dependency argument or punctuated equilibrium theory. In addition, when compared with self-corrected neoinstitutional arguments, an endogenous perspective is more flexible in recognizing the larger room for individual and voluntary reinterpretation of institutions. Recent neoinstitutionalists, on the other hand, see that existing institutions constrain the interpretation of actors but still acknowledge the possibility for actors to individually interpret institutions (Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Pierson 2004).

Another reason that the endogenous theory is well suited to investigate Brexit is that Brexit displays continuity and discontinuity at the same time. Although the political economic environments of the UK, such as anti-European sentiment, Euroscepticism, LME, and the absence of external shocks, have continued for most of the postwar period, institutional rupture in the field of foreign policy was realized. If British foreign policy divorced from the existing institutional path, this phenomenon should be analyzed in terms of a change in understanding and interpretation by the actors rather than a problematic situation or the institutional environments themselves (Schmidt 2008; Blyth 2002). Not surprisingly, in this respect, ideas are emphasized once again as “cognitive filters that principal actors take advantage of to interpret surrounding institutional environments and encountering problem and to grasp their own preferences” (Kwon 2014).

Yet the current thesis has two different ways of constructing *idea concepts*: the endogenous theory and the ideational approach (Schmidt 1996, 2008; Blyth 2002). First, the current thesis agrees with the argument of the endogenous perspective that ideas are modified not only in the case of crisis but in everyday politics. Compared with the endogenous perspective, the

present thesis insists that changes in ideas accumulated through everyday political moments are more powerful explanatory variables for political outcomes than rapid ideational changes in crisis. Considering that ideas are formulated and interpreted by discursive interactions with gradual and cumulative features, practice in daily politics could be more appropriate to understand most political outcomes rather than an exceptional and unprecedented crisis.

When we assume that socioeconomic challenges happened to the European countries and that the interactions among member states and domestic coalitions led to the UK leaving the EU, Brexit is not radical and dissociative but rather gradual and cumulative. Subsequently, an ideational variable is persuasive in intermediating a series of events the EU encountered and in leading to Brexit as a result of these events. Yet it is nearly irrefutable that ideas emerging unexpectedly in the case of sudden crises are more striking and evident than cumulative changes of ideas in daily politics. Thus, the present thesis criticizes the problem that the importance of constructing ideas during everyday politics in understanding substantial political outcomes is excessively overlooked in most comparative studies.

Second, ideas can be formulated at the international level and transferred to domestic politics as well. In the era of globalization, this feature of ideas is significantly influential in tracing institutional changes. Ideas are neither a peculiar product of national politics nor an ascribed and fixed variable. Similar to national politics, shared understandings of the given theme are formed and altered through enthusiastic discursive interactions among member states at the EU level. Then, these ideas must have been born from international politics, such as the Brexit Idea, and work

as a framework for domestic actors to choose their specific behaviors. Of course, there is the transmission of ideas from national politics to the international system. Because the current thesis departs from the existing literature that overlooks international factors, it focuses on formulating ideas at the international level. Therefore, ideas may not only be formed by international behaviors, but also can become a key variable bridging international systems and domestic politics.

2.4.3. Formulation and Mobilization of Ideas

The present thesis suggests that when a problematic situation occurs in everyday politics, individual states and regional communities interact and create related discourses to solve the problem. As a consequence of these discourses, the participating countries produce a shared idea. This analytic frame is contrasted against a conventional study that regards the outputs of international relations as an international system that has a linear and fixed nature. For example, late industrialization debates argue that international market forces, a kind of international relationship, build a linear hierarchy composed of early developer and late developer countries (Gerschenkron 1963). Then, the international economic hierarchy forces each country to develop a specific regime form.

Yet this perspective makes an unexplainable divergence of regimes within the same country group, as Gourevitch (1978) has criticized. Hence, most limitations of the existing comparative study result from seeing it as a linear and stationary system that international relationships produce. This is because the preceding studies largely ignored both dynamic interactions in international relations and the active behaviors of actors for interpretation.

The current thesis proposes that international relationships effectuate the interactions between players and that these discursive interactions beget related ideas. In detail, the community of nation-states and individual nation-state encounter socioeconomic challenges. These challenges include every situation that happens during everyday policy making rather than just a large-scale crisis such as the Great Depression. Every nation-state and their community recognize problematic situations and cope with them at both the national and community levels. When solving problems, issue-specific or pan-issue discourses are bound to arise. Compared with a perspective that deals with only national politics to examine a significant discourse or that international and national discourses are clearly divided (Waltz 1979), the current thesis assumes there are discursive interactions during everyday politics and that ideational variables cross the international and domestic levels.

Furthermore, ideas as the shared understanding of actors are generated by a problematic situation, repetitive actions against the situation, and repeated reproduction of discourses. To cope with problems in a cooperative and consistent way, countries develop a common understanding of an awareness of problems and responses. When it comes to having a common understanding, the current thesis claims it is realized in the form of an idea. In addition, the ideas suggested here are privately owned resources. Ideas cannot be disposed of by particular hierarchal groups such as an early industrialized country, country with security ascendancy or so forth, as the above-mentioned studies on international relations alleged. Rather, ideas are floating resources that every country and individual actor can freely exploit. Actors voluntarily interpret and transform ideas through interactive discourses and switch transformed ideas into their exclusive resources.

In the case of Brexit, the EU began to face socioeconomic challenges that were especially caused by globalization. The European Debt Crisis and European Migrant Crisis in 2015 display that the EU and member states had shown both cooperative and domestic policy against the challenge of globalization. Against expectations, problems were not resolved, and only recognition of the inequality among member states was proliferated, if anything. For example, the EU implemented its major decision making at the European Parliament (EP) to achieve *de facto* equality in decision making among member states. Compared with its initial goal, countries that took the lead were so-called core countries such as Germany and France. When the European Debt Crisis fell over Europe, the EU policy imposed on the Southern European countries was determined by the European Commission, European Bank (EB), and International Monetary Fund (IMF), meaning a few advanced capitalisms took responsibility rather than just the EP.

Going through a series of events after the 2000s, the EU member states came to share an understanding of the failure of the EU to achieve democratic ideals and infringement on the meridional countries' sovereignty. As a consequence of a damaged dream at the EU level, the European actors cast doubt on a few goals that the EU pursued from the beginning: liberal trade, substantial regional integration, and deepening globalization. For instance, because the EU claimed to support globalization through phased integration, pervasive recognition of inequality at the EU had grown into a deglobalization idea. The European actors arrived at a decision to refute attempts for phased and partial globalization, whose incarnation was the EU. In other words, the value judgment deeming deglobalization as "adequate" or "right" came to be shared by the member states through the discourses of

international politics.

In this way, neonationalism, Euroscepticism, deglobalization, and related ideas finally integrated into the Brexit Idea, which became an influential trigger for the leave side, suggesting how the Brexit Idea first formulated. After its crystallization at the macro political level, the ideas experienced a differentiating stage in each society by the main actors and their groups. How the Brexit Idea was formulated will be delineated in chapter 4.

When it comes to the mobilization of ideas, the current thesis asserts that interpreting and mobilizing ideas must happen in domestic politics. It is true that path dependent institutions define the economic and social position of actors and constrain their interests, at least to some degree. Yet a more decisive factor when it comes to being aware of a problem, interpreting interests, and framing policy is the actual process of political and discursive interactions. When given a problematic situation, each actor introduces it into their cognition, constitutes feasible alternatives, and decides to adopt a new institution. What is important in this process is that actors have their own paradigm and that the power struggle among the actors comes to adjust the paradigm of the whole society (Hay 2006). Therefore, the interests of actors are socially constructed by domestic politics.

When we regard the ideas of international discourses as the basis for political struggle among domestic actors, we must analyze the domestic process of interpreting and mobilizing ideas. Following the way actors introduce ideas and construct their own understanding of situations, interests, and feasible alternatives, domestic political factors change, such as the behaviors of actors, alignments of social coalitions, and policy.

To closely examine the mobilizing process, the process of introducing

ideas is divided into two stages. First, ideas from international politics are adapted to or integrated with the political system and institutional environments of each national economy. This is why ideas shared by nation-states are converted into discourses that assume the peculiar direction of society. Who transforms international ideas into domestic discourses and ideas are the principal domestic actors, such as state, industry, labor, and capital. Principal actors tend to process international ideas into a compatible form with existing domestic institutions, at least to a certain extent.

In the UK, conservative forces played a significant role in the integrating of the Brexit Idea, especially the deglobalization part, and the traditional LME system in securing electorate support and to sew together the ragged party because of internal conflicts. The result was proleave discourses; the proleave discourses mainly consisted of recovering sovereignty and economic competitiveness by withdrawing from the EU. Meanwhile, introducing international ideas into domestic society does not necessarily mean moving toward discourses compatible with existing institutions. For instance, withdrawal from the European common market is contradictory to free trade and the free market principle of the LME system. Even if newly introduced discourses are disparate from existing institutions, they also could be a dominant political discourse. However, this is true only if they correspond to the recognition of actors at any given point of time and if they offset the costs of leaving from the existing institutional path.

Second, once international ideas are introduced into domestic society, they spread across society by mobilizing individual actors. It is not until the second stage of mobilization that the various paradigms of individual actors come to the front in the form of a slogan, bill, policy, and so forth. Then, diverse paradigms in society compete through power struggles among actors

and coalitions. The paradigm declaring its predominance is directly reflected in the institution-changing process. Although the Conservative and the far-right forces such as the UK Independence Party evidently constituted the leave side discourses, the Labour Party or the City failed to articulate the opposite discourse. Failure to constitute and proliferate their own paradigm may be seen as the most plausible cause of losing electorate support, as shown in the 2016 referendum. Along the same line of thought, Brexit can be dubbed as a slight victory of the paradigm held by the Conservative Party and far rights.

2.4.4. Institutionalization of Ideas by Solidity and Fragility

In an era of globalization, ideas can be formulated by discursive interactions among actors at the international political level and then transferred to domestic society. Social actors individually interpret the adopted ideas in accordance with existing institutions. Individual actors who have their own understanding of ideas struggle to gain political power, which is usually represented as electorate supports. This analytic framework of the idea-centered process was mentioned in the previous chapter with an emphasis on dynamic interactions and politics.

There is another significant condition regarding whether ideas will be converted into institutions and established as a part of the national economic model. The current thesis suggests what eventually determines a possibility or a direction of institutional changes is the feature of ideas. When it comes to the institutionalization of ideas, much depends on the nature of ideas beyond the formation and mobilization of ideas.

Although there are innumerable ways to grasp the feature of ideas, the

present thesis concentrates on the fragility of ideas and distinguishes fragility into external and internal facets. The importance of the fragility of ideas is attributable to the relationship between the ideational fragility and the institutional changes. Ideational changes and struggles among individual ideas play a crucial role in deriving gradual and cumulative changes in everyday politics, which make up a substantial portion of the institutional environments of a national economy. Consequently, the fragility of ideas puts a different hue on discursive interactions and decides an occurrence direction of institutional changes. Not surprisingly, a feature of ideas should be understood in relation to the discursive interactions of which ideas become a foundation.

First, the internal fragility of ideas implicates there is no canonical understanding on ideas; thus, individual actors could voluntarily reinterpret ideas for their own sake. If ideas are in a fragile state, this means there can be further interpretation and understanding by willing actors. Considering that ideas are a framework for actors to understand their interests, preferences, institutional alternatives, and so on, ideas being internally fragile insinuate that social actors could have different types of knowledge about a problematic situation. With the diverse appreciation of the problematic situation, actors have differentiated the organization of interests and preferences and thus display disparate support for feasible political outcomes. In other words, with the internal fragility of ideas, actors could find their own meanings in ideas compared with what others find and utilize this in discursive interactions for policy outcomes. In the opposite case, if ideas are internally solid, a perception of the ideas is given and is consistent without controversy.

Second, ideas could be externally fragile if they cannot drive actors to

initiate debates on related themes. The reason for being externally fragile is because ideas are still a trivial issue at any given point of time. In contrast, if ideas are externally solid and secured, starting debates on the idea becomes inevitable. Externally solid ideas could even create a social cleavage by being an ideational axis (Stein and Rokkan 1999). Regardless of the substantive contents of ideas and related interactions, ideas with external solidity force social actors to either form a coalition or confront each other along the ideational axis.

In brief, the current thesis analyzes a feature of ideas according to their fragility/solidity in both their external and internal aspects. Although the external solidity of ideas indicates the force of ideas in forming and establishing related discourses in a society, internal fragility means there is a large amount of space for the voluntary and arbitrary reinterpretation of ideas. In other words, external and internal fragility are respectively related to the inevitability of existence and the substantive meaning of ideas. Although these features are closely intertwined and affect institutional changes in complicated ways, they could be recognized as independent from each other.

Based on the external and internal fragility of ideas, the current thesis proposes a relationship between institutional changes and the nature of ideas. Through a feature of ideas, we could find if institutional changes will occur and whether the direction of the institutional changes can be expected. First, looking at the case that ideas are externally solid and internally fragile, it is likely that the discourses related to the ideas will occur and that domestic coalitions will be realigned following the discourse. Thus, the possibility of institutional changes increases because public deliberation through discursive interactions takes place. On the other hand, because the contents

of ideas are not given and room for interpreting them remains, it is hard to suggest a direction for the institutional changes. Irrelevant to the high probability that idea-related discourses occur in society, we must follow one path of institutional transition because of the semantic uncertainty of ideas. The Brexit Idea falls into this category, as will be discussed later.

Second, in cases where ideas are solid in both their external and internal facets, it is evident that institutional changes will occur in the expected direction. Because the knowledge of the ideas is already agreed upon by most social actors or given by powerful actors or coalitions and thus has internal solidity, institutional changes driven by ideas could be predicted. When compared with internally fragile ideas, ideas with internal solidity are prone to lead to more or less predictable institutional reforms, whether the changes are continuous or interrupted using the existing institutional path.

Finally, we cannot discuss the direction of institutional changes if the fundamental ideas are externally fragile. Actors have little interest in specific ideas considered externally fragile. Social actors and coalitions show an air of indifference toward institutional changes being brought about by an externally fragile idea. Hence, there is a slim chance that institutional change will occur. Not surprisingly, the course of change cannot be discussed regarding externally fragile ideas.

We have examined the character of ideas by looking at fragility/solidity and their relationship to institutional changes. As mentioned above, there is a necessity to return to a historical institutional perspective. The historical view is required to examine an idea and its features. Because the fragility of ideas and its relationship with institutions could be defined only in relative terms, historical contexts should not be ignored. That is, an explanation

using the ideational variables demands the timely compensation of a comparative historical analysis. This is why the present thesis adopts both an ideational approach and the endogenous institutional change theory. Our review of Brexit confirms this point as well.

Chapter 3. History of the UK–EU Relationship: Patterns of Stop-Go

In the reconstruction era following World War II, attempts to integrate the broken continent were attempted. Following the suggestion of Robert Schuman, the Foreign Minister of France, the European countries led by France and West Germany established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952. It was the first step toward restoring peace in the European continent. The efforts to establish the new international system deepened in the 1957 Treaty of Rome that founded the EEC. Integrated into the EEC, the European countries started to build an economy that rivaled the U.S. economy. These supranational efforts to spawn peace came from an awareness that the pursuit of exclusive national interests caused the tragedy. As a consequence, the European countries decided to adopt an international system based less on nation-states and more on the commonwealth of independent countries.

The UK assumed a different stance than other European countries when it came to European integration. As a victorious country, the UK self-praised itself for getting back peace by attracting the U.S. to take part in the war and by bringing the war to an end. It was partly why the UK regarded itself as a leader of world and rejected being a mere European country. In addition, to sign up for supranational entities like the EEC implied a partial transfer of national sovereignty from individual nation-state to a coalition of countries. From the British perspective, transferring its glorious sovereignty to a gathering of modest countries that could not be balanced out. Thus, the UK refused to join the ECSC and engaged in European integration debates

based on its national interests. In other words, the UK was neither affected by Europe Program of the United States of Europe program nor criticism on the nation-state-centric view of the early twentieth century.

It is ironic, however, that the person who first advocated for the concept of the United States of Europe was Winston Churchill in 1946. At the very first stage of European integration, it was principally British politicians such as Churchill who steered the integration program. Moreover, the UK endeavored to construct an economic bloc with the Nordic countries that would be equivalent to the EEC. As shown in these examples, British foreign policy was not merely anti-Europe and prioritized its national identity to a European identity. Rather, it fluctuated, and this fluctuating trend lasted until the referendum of 2016. The UK decided to leave the EU once again, and its politics after the referendum went as far as to be mocked by other European countries as being whimsical. Why did the UK decide to sign up the Maastricht Treaty in the 1990s and to withdraw from the EU in 2016? What is a difference between that time and now? How can we understand the irregular attitude of the UK toward European integration and its wonky foreign policy?

In this chapter, this thesis will closely review the relationship between the UK and the EU historically. By historically reviewing how the UK and the EU kept their shaky cooperation, the volatility of British foreign policy can be understood. First, British foreign policy was not just chaos, as the dominant comparative study portrays, but has a stop-go pattern. British foreign policy cannot be attributed to aversions of the UK toward the European continent, which occasionally forced the UK to behave capriciously. Second, the current thesis suggests that the historical and institutional path of foreign policy has had a significant impact on Brexit.

Because the principal theme has been understanding Brexit's historical institutional perspective and ideational approach, it is necessary to investigate the historical path of the European policy that became the institutional background of Brexit.

3.1. Beginning of the Long-term Hostility

3.1.1. Reluctantly Joining the EC (1957–1973)

It is irrefutable that the UK, the self-confessed hegemon, wanted to take a lead in stabilizing the European continent shortly after World War II. A more important point was that the UK concurrently sought two goals that seemed incompatible. The UK desired to maintain its position as a major superpower but not to sacrifice national economic interests by getting involved in supranational integration. Therefore, the UK refused to participate in any supranational organizations, denying the transfer of sovereignty. Instead, the UK pursued intergovernmental cooperation to restore peace in Western Europe. Representative examples of intergovernmental cooperation were the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Organization of European Economic Cooperation. For these reasons, the UK did not sign the Treaty of Rome that inaugurated the EEC.

To put this series of events in more concrete terms, during the Messina Conference of June 1955, the foreign ministers of six member states of the ECSC—France, West Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, and Luxembourg—met to review the achievements of the ECSC and to expand its integration into industries other than coal. Accordingly, they launched the

Spaak Committee to examine a detailed direction of European integration. What these six member states and the Spaak Committee pursued was European integration in the form of a common market.

It is not until this conference that the first *stop* phase of the UK came to light. During the Messina Conference and the Spaak Committee, the UK was invited to engage in the activities of the Spaak Committee and further common market. Facing the invitation from the European continent, the UK revealed a lukewarm stance. Even though the Treasury bureaucrats jibbed at not attending a common market, the cabinet only sent a representative without the ability to give a final say and did not deliberate on the issue. The announced reason was that losing discretion in tariffs would not fit with the UK's hegemon position. In particular, the stop decision was for fear that London as a financial center would lose its status because of seceding control to the supranational entity. In the first stop phase, it was principally its political status in the international system that the UK considered the most.

After the decision to not participate in the EEC, the UK had to find out how to counteract the EEC and to retain its economic competitiveness in the global market. Harold Macmillan, the former prime minister, proposed the EFTA with six states and other European countries. He thought that the EFTA could offset the costs of rejecting the EEC. For instance, the UK was in a situation where there would be no tariff benefits because of not joining the EEC. Unfortunately, the EFTA program floundered as a result of opposition from France in 1958. Although the UK tried to take the lead in forming intergovernmental cooperation in its favor to balance the costs of its first stop decision, other European countries did not align with the UK. To make matters worse, the United States was dissatisfied with the EFTA for

threatening American supremacy in the international economy. The first decision of the UK eventually came to nothing.

Despite the failure of EFTA, the UK continued to show a *go* attitude regarding European integration. Not only was the sentiment of the UK toward Europe not growing to the extent of hostility, but there was also urgency. The fragmented European market might exert a negative influence on the British economy, and other member states of EFTA could be attracted to the EEC. Furthermore, it was plausible that the economic loss of the UK might undermine its political clout over Europe, other non-European countries, and the whole world. Although the political leverage of the EEC was mounting in accordance with its economic growth, it became clear that the UK was losing its past glory. These arguments were also assisted by the report of the Economic Steering Committee in May 1960. Hence, there was no other choice but for the UK to join the EEC to resolve this political and economic stalemate.

Macmillan concluded that the UK should sign up for the EEC to enjoy the benefits of the European common market. What is worth noting about Macmillan's decision is the extent to which the UK was willing to countenance about European integration. In contrast with the argument of the federalists of France and West Germany, Macmillan clarified that the UK would approve of a confederation of Europe, not a federation. Here, we can find reluctance against European integration. Even when the UK held a *go* stance, it showed the possibility of a stop phase, insinuating the *stop-go cycle* of the British foreign policy.

After all, Macmillan publicly announced a strong desire to sign up for the EEC in 1961. The first try of the UK to do this did not come to anything, however. The UK developed its position against the European continent for

a decade in the postwar period and vice versa. Charles De Gaulle cast doubt on whether the UK was authentic or not. He bore the possibility that the UK was plotting against the EEC. His doubt was plausible because the UK did not forgo a relationship with the European Commonwealth in the least, including the British Commonwealth Preferential Tariff. Moreover, the UK took a highhanded attitude during the negotiation process, which infuriated De Gaulle. As a result, De Gaulle finally declared disapproval of the UK joining the EU in 1963. Thus, the first attempt of the UK to join the EEC was ambivalent regarding showing both its *go* and *stop* sides.

Notwithstanding this first failure, the Wilson government of the Labour Party showed a willingness to join the EEC once again. Economic difficulties played a large part in applying for the EEC than before. In particular, decreasing trade with the Commonwealth countries was a fatal blow to the UK. A fiscal crisis and following the monetary crisis in the late 1960s also contributed to the second try. For these reasons, Wilson officially applied for the EEC in 1967. The hostility of De Gaulle against the UK was no better then, and De Gaulle wielded the veto once more. It became clear that it was virtually impossible for the UK to join the EEC until the retirement of De Gaulle. The second go try for the EEC was forcibly interrupted by international forces.

Finally, the UK made a successful application to join the EC in 1973. As soon as De Gaulle left office in 1969, Edward Heath, the former Prime Minister from 1970–74, rapidly progressed an application for EEC membership. Because the Heath government prioritized the problem of European integration over other issues, it shrewdly resolved any difficulties in negotiation. The UK succeeded in resolving a few issues, such as contributions to the EC, the British Commonwealth Preferential Tariff, and

so forth. After the negotiation with the EC from 1970–72, the UK signed the Treaty of Accession, which provided for the accession to the EC *ad extremum*. Notably, the motive for membership was only economic goals. The logic for signing up with the EC was to offset deficits from dwindling trade with the EC and to enjoy the privilege of the common market. Until 1973, when the 1972 European Communities Act came into effect, the UK thought nothing of keeping sustainable peace in Europe or establishing an international system of confederation. Therefore, attachment of the UK to the EC cannot be considered a full-blown attempt to integrate Europe. Rather, it demonstrates ambivalence of the British foreign policy in the *stop-go cycle*.

In sum, during the first two decades of the postwar era, the foreign policy of the UK demonstrated a patterned *stop-go cycle*. On the one hand, the UK endeavored to become an axis state of European integration for its own political and economic leverage. On the other hand, the glorious history of the British Empire, its status as a victorious state, preferential relationship with the Commonwealth, and discredit of other European countries hampered the UK from enthusiastically participating in integration. There were both encouraging and baffling factors for sharing rosy futures with the other European countries. As a result, European policy overlapped with repetitive stop and go cycles.

Many comparative studies treated the stop-go cycle of British foreign policy as irregular. According to our review, the UK demonstrated patterned behaviors. The UK based its attitude on cost-benefit analyses from an economic standpoint. For instance, the chief motive to join the EC was to gain benefits of a common market. The UK government made a judgment that the EC was the most efficient and sole measure to keep economic

competitiveness in the global market. From time to time, the economic analysis was complemented with historical legacies. The British did not acquire the same knowledge from the war as France or Germany and did not see a causality between nation-states centrism and conflicts. There was a solid logic of a cost-benefit analysis and the British identity at the bottom of what would seem an inconsistent stop and go cycle. Hence, the current thesis suggests that the erratic policy of the UK could be understood in a patterned cycle with an internal working mechanism.

Within the overlapping stop and go phases, the hostility of the UK against the European continent was gradually sprouting. After the first denial of the UK to engage in the Spaak Committee, ulterior exclusion from the European community became evident. It is well shown in the repeated vetoes that De Gaulle exercised. In contrast, the European countries other than the UK also raised an aversion to the selfish nationalistic behaviors of the UK. From the perspective of the continent, the cost-benefit analysis that the UK conducted was enough for the other European countries to consider the UK as not sharing the same sustainable integration program with them. In this way, the UK and the European Continent were germinating a seed of long-term hostility in both directions, which has continued to the current day.

3.1.2. After Entering the EC (1973–1980)

Even after joining the EC, the UK had to suffer from a few more bitter problems stemming from national politics. Because the principal incentive to join the EC was to share a portion of economic growth, the economic crisis that the UK and Europe encountered in the early 1970s was enough to make the UK regret its choice. No sooner did the UK enter the EC than the

United States announced its suspension of specie payment in 1971. Shortly after the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, the world economy was descending into a recession because of the oil crisis in 1973 and 1979. The UK entered the EC and the occurrence of the worldwide recession coincided, putting the British economy at a disadvantage. At this juncture, the UK was agonizing over the *stop-go* decision.

It was Harold Wilson and the Labour Party that took advantage of the nationwide schism over the European policy. To handle the split within the party, Wilson promised to renegotiate the joining conditions that the Conservatives negotiated at the outset and to hold a referendum on whether to stay or leave the EC. Because the joining conditions included provisions unfavorable to the British economy, the proposal on renegotiation and the stay/leave referendum drew electorate support in the general election of October 1974. In this way, the Labour Party was able to join the *promarket* and *antimarket* forces and accomplished a transfer of power.

Even after the Labour Party came to power, conflicts existed inside the ruling party, as well as between parties. Antimarket deputies defined the common market as the club of capitalists and they argued to leave the EC. In the atmosphere of nationwide division, the British electorate voted on whether the UK should stay in the EC. In the June 1975 referendum, the turnout rate was 65.5%, and 67.2% of voters answered yes to the question. Eventually, the UK became a member state in formality only after threatening the other member states of the EC with withdrawal.

The 1975 referendum was especially a noteworthy phenomenon for three reasons. First, factors other than economic interests came into effect concerning the UK's European policy. The UK decided to sign up for the EC from sheer economic motives, such as the tariff benefits of a common

market, free movement of capital and labor inside the common market, and securing a demand base by aggrandizing its economic size. The UK paid special regard to its economic interests and collateral effects on its political status. None of its communitarian goals, such as keeping a sustainable peace in Europe, influenced the decision. Nevertheless, the UK reversed its stance on membership several times, from a refusal to join the Spaak Committee to finally joining in 1975. Although the net surplus of joining the EC changed from time to time, the result of the cost-benefit analysis in economic terms consistently encouraged the UK to enter it. Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect other influential variables than economic ones.

When the UK makes a decision about its stance toward the European community, the current thesis proposes that the most influential variable is *ideas*. Ideas signify the framework to interpret not only the problematic situation, but also the economic interests of actors, political preferences, and so forth, while the concrete substances of ideas change over time. For instance, joining the EEC was denied at first because ideas including the lasting British Empire, nationalism centered on the interests of nation-states, British exceptionalism, and distrust of other European countries had deeply rooted in the minds of the British. These ideas made political actors see the institutional change toward the EEC as being against either their economic interests or political status. It was a matter of the perception of interests.

Second, this was the first time that domestic forces made use of international political problems for political means. This was mainly done to settle internal conflicts when Wilson suggested a renegotiation of the EC joining condition and a stay/leave referendum as a general election pledge. The Labour Party was divisive around domestic issues and consisted of many internal factions at that time. The party leaders resorted to the EC

issues to diffuse attention from heated power struggles in the party and to make all the deputies unite around the general election. That is, to strategically bring international political issues into the domestic political scene was how the party leaders aimed to resolve internal conflicts and to differentiate themselves from the Conservative Party simultaneously. Even though the Labour Party was able to win more than half of the seats at the 1974 general election, the UK on the whole came to suffer a series of losses because of the referendum strategy. Because of the historical legacies of the day, other European countries held suspicion and hostility, finally showing signs that the relationship between the UK and the European community was strained.

Finally, although the 2016 Brexit and the 1975 referendum display a few points in common, they do not have a mutual relationship. First, two events occurred in the atmosphere of division and keen competition in domestic politics. It was not until the 1975 referendum that both major political parties agreed on European integration and presented a single opinion. Even the ruling party was divided into a few factions, including a procommon market and an anticommon market. Later in the 2000s, because the two major parties were divided into Europhile and Euroscepticist, they were flooded with third parties, such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP). In addition, the leadership of the two major parties was pestered by ability absence and a lack of public support in both 2016 and 1975. Notwithstanding their commonalities, indeed, it turned out that social forces supporting the UK to leave the EC during these two time points were irrelevant (Becker et al. 2017).

The decision was carried out with a lack of conventional political leadership; it was the ideas and actors who voluntarily interpreted and

utilized ideas that led to the decision. The malfunctioning of the traditional policy-making mechanism in 1975 and 2016 is one such facet that highlights the importance of ideas for political outcomes.

3.2. Deepening Euroscepticism

3.2.1. Compelling Hostility During the Thatcher Government (1979–1990)

The stay decision in the 1975 referendum and finally obtaining an EC membership did not necessarily connote an amicable relationship between the UK and the EC. Shortly after Margaret Thatcher organized her cabinet, the relationship worsened rapidly. The British stance toward the EC showed *stop* signs during Margaret Thatcher's premiership.

The first problem that arose during her premiership was about the British Budgetary Question—or UK Rebate. At the European Council in 1979, Thatcher clamored to give rebates to the UK. The reason for this was that the UK was carrying an excessive burden on the resources program of the EC. It is true that 70% of the EC budget flowed into the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that the UK did not take advantage of because of its small agricultural industry. In addition, the VAT base of the UK against the gross national product was higher than other member states. The VAT base made the economic competitiveness of the British industry inferior to other member states' industries toward non-European countries.

The reasons why Thatcher asked for a reformation of the budgetary system were obviously persuasive in part. When it comes to the economic

grounds, other member states of the EC also assented because they had felt the budgetary system made in 1970 had been battered enough to revise. Meanwhile, it was the attitude of Thatcher and the UK that fostered hostility. During the whole negotiation process, Thatcher explicitly demonstrated hostility toward European integration, the feeling that had been latent in the British after World War II. The leadership of the other member states had a bitter experience, finding the explicit aversion of the UK against European integration. When the UK and the EC reached an agreement in 1985, the deepened hostility went to extremes. Notwithstanding the acrimonious conflicts with other member states, the UK was determined to get back 66% of the difference between the amount the UK would pay and that the EC would redistribute to the UK.

In the late 1980s, Thatcher still held a hostile stance toward the EC. The Thatcher government went as far as to tellingly disapprove of any attempts for a closer integration of Europe. The most notable example was her objection to the European Monetary Council (EMU). Jacques Delors, the former President of the European Commission, proposed introducing a single market for the EC. Against the proposal of Delors, the logic of *no federation but confederation* appeared once again. Thatcher argued that the EC with the EMU would strip each nation-state of its sovereignty and centralize power. Again, the extent of integration to which the UK would tolerate was found to be more obvious and narrower than other member states.

Indeed, the way that the Delors Committee operated was similar to that of the Spaak Committee in the late 1950s; it insinuated the weakness of British leadership in the process of monetary integration. Furthermore, the fact that the German model was adopted instead of the integration plan the

City proposed came as a shock regarding the UK's status in the international financial system. Not surprisingly, the UK negatively responded during the rest term of Thatcher. Yet in 1990, Thatcher had to resign because of her hardline hostility. As the intransigent attitude of the Thatcher government continued to increase, the Conservative Party was divided by internal conflicts over the European integration issue. Indeed, conflicts inside the Conservative Party finally dragged down the most anti-European leader.

It was Thatcher who arranged the groundwork of Euroscepticism by combining historical legacies and facing situations. It also became evident that the UK wanted the Single European Act, not the Treaty of Rome of the EC. Yet compared with long-standing support for Thatcher as an incarnation of hostility toward Europe, the situation soured for her in a sudden and unexpected manner. How can we understand the sharp turnover of European policy?

The rapid assuagement of a bitter hostility may be partly because of the ideas following this thesis. That is, a review of the Thatcher premiership also attests to the arguments of a *stop-go cycle* of the British foreign policy and the role of ideas on political outcomes. A division inside the Conservative Party and decreasing support rate for Thatcher regarding the European policy suggested that it was time to reform the related institutions. Specifically, this meant that the political actors wanted to abandon the current policy. Thatcher was no exception to the *stop-go cycle*, a distinctive feature of the British institutional path toward foreign policy.

More importantly, it was because of a changed understanding of interests related to the EC that the British political actors no longer wanted a *stop* policy for anything. The UK's leverage over the EC was still limited, and nothing had sharply changed on the cost-benefit analysis regarding

European integration. The actual number on the balance sheet did not play a significant role in resigning of Thatcher. Rather, it was a matter of the perception of interests once again. It was an idea that newly emerged that changed everything: globalization. Globalization was precipitated after the late 1980s, which made the UK nervous about its economic competitiveness. In addition to the substantial trend of globalization, much depended on the interpretation of the globalization idea and the fact that the UK might fall behind if it did not jump on the globalization trend. The idea of globalization and its interpretation exercised influence over reorganizing domestic coalitions, such as the split inside the Conservative Party and dwindling support over explicit hatred toward European integration.

3.2.2. Neither Yes nor No: Maastricht Treaty and EMU (1992–2007)

Because internal party pressures on the UK's European policy had driven the resignation of Thatcher, John Major assumed a more flexible and practical attitude on the issue. He approved intergovernmental negotiations on the establishment of the European Union and the EMU. The Major government ratified the Treaty of Maastricht, not holding a referendum as well. Notwithstanding a little transition of foreign policy, the fundamental political lines on European integration were the same as the previous government. Still, the reason for the Major government adopting a more flexible European policy was not a wholehearted empathy with the continental states. On the one hand, it was to secure electorate support in domestic politics considering the growing necessity of a common market or a single market in economic terms. On the other hand, it was a temporary attempt to take the initiative in the European integration debates and to

reform the European community in accordance with the British neoliberal political economy from an international perspective.

The UK explicitly prioritized its national interests in European policy and made a demarcation between domestic politics and European politics. This self-centered way of foreign policy stood out when signing the Maastricht Treaty. The Major government demanded the right for an opt-out against the social provisions of the treaty as well as joining the EMU. These demands were based on the British idea that European integration should be carried out based on a nation-state basis, preserving the unqualified sovereignty of each member state, which continued after World War II. Only a reform of the European Communities into the British neoliberal model was acceptable to the UK. Although the Maastricht Treaty enlarged the European community from economic integration to closer political integration, it was decisive that inserting *federal goals* into the preface of the treaty ended in failure because of the nationalistic efforts of the UK.

In particular, the financial industry was a central axis that the UK considered to be in its national interests. For instance, the UK exercised the right of opt-outs not to enter the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979. Because the EMS was a harbinger of the Eurozone, an opt-out gave a compelling hint that the UK would not join the monetary integration of the European communities. The opt-out in 1979 was also propelled by the perspective of national interests. To the British leadership, joining the EMS signified abandoning its sovereignty over monetary control. Along the same lines, the UK secured an opt-out right from the process of establishing the EMU, an institutional ground of the Eurozone.

The European policy was a more complicated issue in the view of the Labour Party. The conventional position of the Labour Party was to define

the European community as a capitalist club and to maintain the UK's sovereignty by resisting integrative movements at both the international and domestic levels. Because the conventional party program was against European integration, it was adventurous to hastily take a pro-EU position. Yet Tony Blair changed his direction toward Europe in contrast to the traditional party program. One of the most significant achievements on the European policy was that he succeeded to unite the Labour Party into his program when compared with the divisive Conservative Party. Moreover, he strived to be involved in the European integration program rather than taking it away from closer integration. He scathingly criticized the traditional path the UK had taken, that is, to fixate a permissible degree to which the UK can integrate with the EU. Specifically, the Blair government gave the Bank of England political independence. He also signed up for the European Social Charter, which the previous cabinet refused to join, and the Amsterdam Treaty, the Nice Treaty, and others. It is uncontradictable that Blair took integration with Europe to a whole new level.

Indeed, we could point out that Blair's efforts to raise the UK's degree of cooperation were limited as well. His limitation was especially noticeable during his second term as prime minister. The UK gave up joining the EMU because Blair just could not overcome the opposition inside the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. A breakaway from the EMU became a critical obstacle for the UK when it came to European politics after then.

Although the Major government and the Blair government adopted different stances regarding European policy, the current thesis suggests that both governments demonstrated a tradition stop-go pattern. Established shortly after World War II, the *stop-go cycle* was repeated throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. Unlike many conventional studies that assume

an irregularity in British policy, the British European policy was obviously consistent in that all decisions were made in accordance with the *stop-go cycle*. Under the largely stop position, the Major government kept its distance from the EU, although to a lesser degree than the Thatcher government. Owing to a turnover in the political regime, the Blair government took the go policy despite its defensive nature. In brief, both Major and Blair properly adopted either a *stop* or *go* policy to achieve paradigm conflicts regarding European integration.

In addition to the consistency and durability of the *stop-go cycle* in the UK, we can discover the importance of ideas when it comes to a referendum. As shown in the case of the 1975 referendum, referendum propositions on the Maastricht Treaty and the EMU, and the like, whether politicians would hold a referendum or not was mainly determined by the predictability of the referendum results. In other words, the government determined the execution of a referendum only when the results were anticipated to be favorable. If we consider a referendum on controversial issues such as the political strategy of the actors after the Wilson government, the execution of a referendum was significantly affected by the interpretative framework on ideas that individual actors have on the given issue. As a consequence, regarding the political institution of referendums, ideational changes historically played a leading role.

The referendum decision emphasizes political interactions between actors. For instance, the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, the City, and other voters struggled against whether to join the common market of the EC. During this struggle, of course, a cost-benefit analysis from an economic view was presupposed as the basis of the debates. Nonetheless, British actors put their peculiar ideas before a mere economic calculation, such as

nationalism, British exceptionalism, old imperialism, Euroscepticism and Europhile, globalization, and so on. Each idea worked as an interpretive framework of national interests and alternative foreign policy. Therefore, the referendum issue was not only a symbol of direct democracy, but also a mirror of the heated discursive interactions between political actors.

The current thesis finds that the 2016 referendum was neither a political break from the historical institutional legacies nor a new phenomenon caused by a crippled two-party system of the UK or by globalization effects. Rather, the referendum demonstrated a consistent pattern of British foreign policy and became a place for the discursive interactions of political actors. The same applied in 2016 regarding the question and shape of the referendum as well.

3.3. Referendum and Brexit in 2016

The intention of British leadership to engage in the European integration program was not to contribute to establishing peace in Europe, setting up the European federal by concentrating political and economic sovereignty of member states, or achieving complete integration in the economic field; their purposes were rather offensive, such as differentiating the UK from other European countries, wresting the initiative from the existing leader states, increasing its political and economic leverage against non-European countries, or enjoying economic interests in a common market. Indeed, David Cameron adhered to the same line of thought as previous governments.

The offensive intent toward the European continent were consolidated

during the Debt Crisis in the Southern European countries in 2007–08. Because the economic crisis, the UK had to go through deficits in its financial industry and real economy. To make matters worse, the British government had to cut expenses on social security benefits to overcome the economic crisis. Confronted with a tightening budget and its direct influence toward the social security of actors, not only did Eurosceptic MPs inside the Conservative Party sharply increase, but also the UKIP expanded its influence in the government. Indeed, the UKIP gained 27.5% of the total vote in the 2014 European elections.

The radically Eurosceptic forces in the Commons insistently demanded the Cameron government to hold a referendum. Cameron parried the first demand in 2011 but acceded to the second demand in 2015 to resolve internal party conflicts and fear of Eurosceptic forces. Shortly after the Conservative Party won the general election of 2015, the Cameron government passed the European Union Referendum Act 2015 as promised. Once again, the referendum and the European integration issues were political measures, not a goal itself.

Euroscepticism was sophisticated, becoming a new social force for creating a social divide. Although a feeling of hatred against the continent states were deep-rooted and pervaded across the UK, it was not until decades after World War II that Euroscepticism developed into political ideas and the basis for political behaviors. The period from shortly after World War II to the 1970s can be seen as the time when Euroscepticism sprang up beyond the extent of just hatred or doubt. Then, during the premiership of Thatcher, Euroscepticism was equipped with a combination of actors, ideas, and supporting institutions, receiving protection from the ruling government. Finally, Euroscepticism became full-fledged after the

1990s when the trend of globalization accelerated. In recent years, even social divides have arisen along the line of Euroscepticism.

After the 2000s, ideas regarding the European community were exposed to more hostile circumstances. A large number of British people ascribed the by-products of globalization such as the global recession, increasing numbers of refugees, terrorism, job losses, and so forth to the EU. It is plausible that the promise of Cameron for a referendum came from this idea fostered by the British people, even though we rule out vague hostility. In brief, these kinds of animosity established a major pillar of Brexit ideas that will be covered in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, the growing concept of Euroscepticism was not a linear process but rather a repeat of the *stop-go cycle*. One of the reasons that the *stop-go cycle* was sustainable for numerous decades was that there were no systematic opinions from the left side, like the Social Democratic Party of the continent states. The Labour Party, often regarded as leftist, did not adopt social democratic principles. Even the Labour Party led by Blair attempted to expand the British neoliberal economy. Because ideologies other than just a *stop* and *go* policy did not emerge in the UK, conflicts over the European policy were simplified into a repeated *stop-go* pattern. Not surprisingly, the absence of a third philosophy made the British foreign policy settle one of the two patterns.

Chapter 4. Formation of the Brexit Idea

As examined in the previous chapter, the relationship between the UK and the EU has been following a stop-go cycle since the end of World War II. Notwithstanding its conformity to a stop-go cycle from a macro perspective, every foreign policy of the UK demonstrated its distinctiveness in a peculiarity of interactions, discourses, and ideas. Because ideas become a fundamental basis for understanding situations, interests, and institutions, we could begin our analysis on a specific policy that stems from distinctive ideas. This is why chapter 4 investigates the formation of the Brexit Idea. In this chapter, we answer the following questions by starting our comparative study of the Brexit Idea: How was the Brexit Idea formulated from the perspective of the theoretical framework of this thesis? What are the detailed substances of the Brexit Idea? Which ideational features best describe the Brexit Idea?

This chapter suggests that the European Debt Crisis and the 2015 European Migrant Crisis served as the momentum for the most significant discourses about Brexit. The principal reason for their significance is that the Eurozone Crisis and the European Migrant Crisis were socioeconomic challenges developed at the European politics level, hence neither stemming from international politics nor national politics. Of course, not only was the regional scope of the crises primarily limited to Europe, but the policy methods against these problematic situations were carried out by the cooperation of member states. Because the issues unfolded with close cooperation with the EU member states, not surprisingly, the discourses about two issues were a string of interactions between European political

actors. It is true that the global economic crisis of 2007–2008 exercised more significant impacts on the national economy of European countries. The two issues of this chapter, however, have a more intimate relationship with generating discursive interactions in Europe. Notwithstanding the larger numerical impact of the global economic crisis, it was the European Debt Crisis that significantly influenced British awareness of European integration. Therefore, if we are to understand Brexit under its own context, the European Debt Crisis and the European Migrant Crisis should be highlighted.

In addition, the two cases also can reveal the structural problems embedded in the EU. One of the typical structural problems of the EU is that economic disparity is remarkable between a few leader states and the rest. Because economic integration in the European region started with a small group of states shortly after World War II, a degree of economic growth and development remained differentiated from country to country. The result was the accruing trade surplus of core countries and government deficits in the periphery countries. Though the economic gap was endeavored to be slightly adjusted by the flow of goods, capital, and labor from the core countries to the periphery ones, the economic inequality finally incarnated in the financial crisis of the Southern European countries.

Likewise, the European Migrant Crisis is partially resulting from another structural problem of the EU. The EU had to implement strict immigration policy at both its inside and outside barriers to increase the internal flexibility of labor, goods, and capital and to shut off a negative influence from outside the EU. Owing to its double-sided immigration policy, the EU got into trouble when immigrants from outside would want to settle and travel inside the EU without any limitation. In other words, the

boundary between outside exclusiveness and inside integrity became blurry because of the constant influx of immigrants. It was the European Migrant Crisis in 2015 that the incapability of the EU in resolving its intrinsic structural problem on integration materialized.

Among the controversial issues in the UK, the European Debt Crisis and the European Migrant Crisis were where the intertwinement of domestic politics with international politics can be best seen. Not only domestic actors such as political parties, industry, voters, and so forth, but also international actors such as the EU and its member nation-states engaged in Brexit, positively accouching the related discourses and ideas. Because the current thesis explores the complicated interactions among international and domestic actors, these two cases fit well into the goal of this thesis.

In brief, this chapter investigates the European Debt Crisis and the 2015 European Migrant Crisis to analyze the formulating process of the Brexit Idea. As mentioned above, the current thesis is interested in international and domestic politics as the site where the Brexit idea was created. First and most importantly, this chapter explores the relationship between two socioeconomic challenges, the recognition of inequality by political sovereignty and economic growth, the ideas of deglobalization, neonationalism, and Euroscepticism, all of which are closely related to Brexit. During this exploration, discursive interactions among actors by means of ideas are especially highlighted.

Next, the current thesis illuminates a feature of the Brexit Idea using the proposed analytic framework. Because the Brexit Idea is composed of numerous understandings of actors, this chapter first classifies the elements of the Brexit Idea. Using this classification, the Brexit Idea might become explicit in revealing a relationship with the mobilizing process. Then, if the

Brexit Idea has characteristics of either internal or external fragility, a relationship between features of ideas and institutional changes will be answered. The discussion in this chapter fundamentally assumes dynamics of ideas.

4.1. Recurring Socioeconomic Challenges and Responses

Section 4.1 elaborates on the development process of the European Debt Crisis and European Migrant Crisis in 2015, emphasizing the political responses that the EU and its member states made.

4.1.1. Economic Challenge: European Debt Crisis since 2009

In 2009, the European Debt Crisis began to move from just the government deficit and default of the Southern European countries, including Spain, Portugal, Italy, and so forth. It lasted a few years and left behind a momentous scar on the EU concerning the genuine integration of nation-states. In essence, the European Debt Crisis is generally assumed to have occurred because of the intrinsic structural problems of the Eurozone—a *currency union without a fiscal union*. Because the EU lacks a measure of fiscal policy and joint funds, it was not able to transfer finances to the countries in crisis. The absence of a joint policy measure in the fiscal area was rooted in a fundamental rule of the EU: the EU kept fiscal stability inside the community by applying strict regulations rather than providing fiscal help to member states. For instance, the Maastricht Treaty set a degree of government deficits and debts, and yet the Southern European countries

ignored this standard after the 2000s.

In addition to the underlying structural problem, the Eurozone Crisis chiefly occurred in the capital and financial sector. The launch of the Euro in 1999 was immediately followed by a flow of credits from the leader states such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands to the rest members of the EU and from the consumer boom in the periphery as well. Unfortunately, the consumer boom and animated investment in the periphery countries were just temporary because the mentioned economic phenomenon brought about trade and government deficits to these periphery countries, which became an unbearable burden for them. In particular, easy but massive amounts of credits allowed banks in the periphery countries to invest in high-risk, high-return items. When the 2007–2008 global economic crisis occurred, the Southern European countries had to provide a bailout for the broken banking sector following the burst of real estate bubbles and credit supply disruptions in the region. In other words, similar to the 2007–2008 global economic crisis, the easy capital enabled by a common market started a recession.

We must also note the policy reactions that the EU and each member state adopted, along with the structural cause of the Eurozone Crisis. Above all, the EU established temporary organizations, including the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM), to provide rescue funds to the countries in debt. It was the leader countries of the EU that mainly engaged in the operation of the EFSF and EFSM. For instance, the EFSF raised funds to provide loans to countries in crisis and private banks and to take over government debts by issuing bonds. Activities related to the issuing of new bonds were supported by the German Debt Management Office. In addition, the bond issues

were guaranteed by the Eurozone member states, whose guaranteed amounts were proportionate to the investment money at the European Central Bank (ECB). Along with efforts of the EFSF and EFSM, the ECB independently ran open market operations for buying sovereign and private debts as well. This measure became feasible because the ECB changed the policy in favor of countries in crisis. For instance, most kinds of national debts accredited by countries in crisis were accepted despite their low credit ratings. When it came to affording financial aid, it was principally the axis state of the ECB, represented by Germany, that took charge.

It is remarkable that leader countries provided financial assistance under the rigorous condition of tight financing. The leader countries forcefully put pressure on other countries in crisis to reduce government spending if they wanted to receive financial help. The more the leader countries took lead in a conciliatory policy, the more they could in a hardline policy. For example, according to the European Fiscal Compact signed in 2011, Eurozone member states would face a penalty in case they exceeded either 3% of government deficits or 60% of government debts to their gross domestic production. This punitive method was chiefly directed by Germany. Likewise, efforts to make the fiscal rule of the Eurozone much stricter, including the European Fiscal Compact, were made by only a small number of member states, such as Germany and France. Along with the initiative of France and Germany, since the Eurozone community had built up objective and quantitative fiscal regulations, it could be said that the bureaucrats of the community came to obtain sovereignty over the member states.

Even the result of the EU policy measures produced unequal results for its member states. Although Germany and the UK rapidly recovered their

economies after 2010, the Southern European countries remained in a recession. For instance, Germany regained a fixed capital investment rate equivalent to the one before the crisis. In contrast with Germany, fixed capital investment, unemployment, wage decrease, high tax rates, and other economic indicators show that Southern European countries such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, and so on still did not recover from the crisis (Park 2017).

From the economic challenge that the EU encountered in 2009, the EU made collaborative efforts. Instead of countries in crisis without feasible policy measures, it was the European community and its member states that led the problem-solving process. What is more significant, however, is the actual actors who formed and conducted the joint policy: the leader countries such as Germany and France.

Notwithstanding its logical clarity, the fact that the community policy was steered by the key countries contains an undertone of inequality. Even if the member states are assumed to have an equal status in the EU, their political leverage inside the community explicitly turned out to be different. Moreover, having different leverage over the decision of the EU policy might show that the sovereignty of the member states varies. This would run counter to the spirit of intensifying integration for which the EU sought from the beginning. The principle of sovereign equality was thought to be violated in conjunction with economic inequality inherent from the beginning.

In addition, the fact that the UK successfully ended a plan for new financial treaties threw a sidelight on the problematic feature of the EU's decision-making system. Shortly after the Eurozone Crisis, EU leaders wanted to change existing EU treaties on financial regulations. Although most EU leaders agreed upon an amendment plan on shabby treaties

following the lead of François Hollande, Cameron succeeded in interrupting this plan by demanding an exemption of the City. The fact that just one member state can readily check an agreed intent of the greater part demonstrates a structural problem of the EU as a community of sovereign states aiming at a federation as the ultimate goal.

Not only a difference during the policy-making process, but also the substances of the policy alluded to inequality among the states. Most remarkably, the bailout program for the indebted governments and central and private banks were mainly offered by *the Troika*, which consists of the IMF, the European Commission, and the European Central Bank (ECB). Although the Troika assumes to bailout creditors with tolerance, they virtually forced the countries in crisis to tighten government spending and raise taxes, even to an undue extent. The aided countries also had to decrease their spending on social security, which affected the lower class more during this economic recession. The countries in crisis had to suffer popular grievance, reaching a social unrest because of these austerity measures. Even though the avowed aim of the austerity drive was to facilitate the financial aid, substantial implications might be the infringement of economic sovereignty.

Finally, the results of economic recovery after the cooperative relief measures turned out to be much more disparate from state to state. As mentioned above, the inequivalent economic performance of the member states appeared in the form of growth rates, amounts of capital investment, unemployment rate, or the consumer dissatisfaction index. These recovery gaps can be concurrently attributed to recognizing the inequality among European citizens.

In sum, although the economic challenge that happened in the

European community was not as destructive as the Great Depression in the early twentieth century, it was enough to betray the structural problem embedded from the outset and to drive the European citizenry to recognize this problematic structure. The dominant way of interactions during the Eurozone Crisis could be told as a one-way delivery of message and unwilling compliance to the given message.

4.1.2. Social Challenge: European Migrant Crisis in 2015

Along with the economic challenge, it was the 2015 European Migrant Crisis that hurt the faith of the European citizen in its community. To tell the conclusion first, the European Migrant Crisis exposed both structural problems intrinsic to the EU and the inequality found during the Eurozone Crisis. The European Migrant Crisis was intensified because the burden of massive numbers of immigrants into Europe was concentrated into the relatively disadvantaged countries of the region and that a resolution to the problem was steered by national interests of the leader countries, which was seemingly contrary to the principle of equal sovereignty. This social challenge was also full of a one-sided delivery of instruction and a lop-sided aspect of interactions among member states.

Historically, Europe has experienced the entry of immigrants into its boundaries from other continents. Yet it was not until the twentieth century that immigrants across the Mediterranean Sea or the Southeast Europe proliferated. Regarding the pattern of immigration after the twentieth century, the European community seriously regarded the inflow of immigrants from the politically or economically disadvantaged regions as a critical cause for social unrest. The inflow of immigrants outside the

community overlapped with movement inside the community, such as immigration from Eastern Europe to Western Europe to find a job. Among the continuous movement of immigrants into Europe, the European Migrant Crisis in 2015 indicates an incredibly surging number of immigrants, especially from Muslim countries in Southeastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The inflow of immigrants was taken seriously by the EU because the immigrants coming after 2010 wanted to permanently reside in Europe.

The gravity of the massive inflow of immigrants kept growing, especially concentrating in the countries with economic difficulties. As noted above, the so-called periphery countries were directly hit by the Eurozone Crisis in 2009, and their recovery rate was tardier than the leader countries. With this being the case, the flock of immigrants into the Southern European countries was virtually beyond the economic capabilities of these countries. Consequently, the Mediterranean countries were incapable of fulfilling neither the Schengen Agreement nor the Dublin Regulation^④ regarding immigrants. According to existing treaties on immigration, the Mediterranean countries should deal with large-scale immigration, which was implausible. As a result, the conventional agreement on handling the issue of immigrants came to a halt.

In this process, the EU policy was controlled by the leader countries, which did not consider the situation and will of others. For instance, with

^④ The Dublin Regulation decided which member state is responsible for an application of immigrants into the European community. As a key institution of the Dublin System, the Dublin Regulation defines a responsible country for immigrant asylum and process to transfer them. In principal, the responsible member state for the asylum is where immigrants visit the first time they enter the EU.

Austria, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced in September 2015 that refugees would be welcomed by Austria and Germany when crossing the border from Hungary. Placing aside the compliments on her announcement as humanitarian, her decision signified that the application of the Dublin Regulation on Syrian refugees would be terminated inside the Schengen region. That is, Germany decided to control its borders without consultations at the EU level or with other member states. As a result, member states other than Austria and Germany had to manage their borders regardless of the immigration regulations established by the democratic decision-making process at the community level. Merkel's announcement virtually connoted that the immigrant problem would be left to the decision of each member state rather than the EU. Much like before entering into the Maastricht system, national borders at the European region were demarcated based on a nation-states-centered system once again.

When it comes to the joint policy of the member states, most remarkably, the European Commission planned to cooperatively process immigrants through the European Asylum Support Office, and Merkel also proposed allocating a quota on accepting refugees to each member state. Although the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia made a declaration that they were unwilling to adopt a distribution plan of the EU, the European Union interior ministers approved a relocation plan by a majority vote. The main reason that most participant countries criticized the relocation plan was its lack of democracy, demonstrating the decision-making process of the European Commission. The result of the opposition was raising a physical wall against each nation-state without the deliberation process of the community.

The absence of problem solving was found to be against the initial

integration program of European integration. Instead of internal consultation based on equal sovereignty and *esprit de corps*, the EU had to take advantage of Turkey, which is outside the European community, to solve the refugee problem and internal conflicts. In 2016, the EU was determined to send immigrants to Turkey, where these immigrants would be examined and sent again to European countries. In other words, the EU managed to settle the refugee crisis by externalizing the problem, not by genuine cooperation and integrative efforts that every member state and its citizen expected.

The refugee crisis accompanied cooperative reactions at the EU level, similar to the Eurozone Crisis. The EU proportionately relocated and resettled immigrants into member states, made the list of Safe Countries of Origin, installed the European Border and Coast Guard by upgrading the existing border patrol, and conducted negotiations with Turkey. All policy measures were carried out under the name of the European community with the intent of resolving these immigration problems. Yet here, as elsewhere, this collective policy making was driven by the leader countries. For instance, it was the German government that decisively modified the application of Dublin Regulations and Schengen Agreement and publicly declared the immigration issue as a political matter, not an administrative or technical one. That is, the declaration of Merkel directly triggered the rebirth of a nation-states system because of immigration. Germany, as a leader country of the EU, could be considered to exert dominance over the whole collective policy in a regard that it took a lead in defining a problem, which became the foundation of ulterior actions. According to the theoretical perspective of the current thesis, what Merkel did about the refugee crisis was to create a dominant understanding of the given problem.

As another example, when the EU decided to distribute immigrants

proportionately to the country's economic size and population size, the EU ignored the opinion of the Central European countries such as Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic, and Slovakia and pushed ahead with its resettlement initiative. This initiative not only intensified inner community conflicts, but also revealed the inequality of EU decision making, especially regarding geographic and democratic barriers. The same inequal sovereignty in the Eurozone cases is found in immigration policy as well. Instead of deliberation on socioeconomic challenges based on equality, the EU adopted a hierarchical way of decision making with the message delivered from the leader countries to the other member states and non-European states.

The effectiveness of national policy preemptively taken by the leader countries overrode the decision of the community. For instance, when the German government arbitrarily expressed its volition to receive Syrian refugees regardless of the Dublin and Schengen Agreement, other member states had no choice but to be abide by Merkel's preemptive declaration. Shortly after the declaration, for instance, Hungary built a fence along the Serbian and Croatian border on 15 September 2015 and on 16 October 2015, respectively, arguing that it was a countermeasure against illegal immigrants. Likewise, France, Austria, Sweden, and so forth had to adopt measures for tougher border enforcement. It is plausible to say that the German foreign policy superseded agreements of the community—the Schengen Agreement and Dublin Regulation.

Moreover, cooperation in this joint policy was slow because most member states prioritized their own national interests and discounted the goals and virtues of the community. For example, after the EU reached a deal with Turkey on 20 March 2016, immigrants arriving at the Mediterranean countries were to be sent to Turkey, and Syrian refugees at

Turkey would be sent where they hoped to go following the deal. However, the Southern European countries lacked the appropriate administrative and economic measures to accept and send immigrants, and other member states remained spectators because they did not want immigrants to arrive at their borders. This also confirms the point that the EU member states overlooked democratic goals inside the community for the sake of their own national interests.

4.1.3. Development of Inequality Discourses

Our review of the European Debt Crisis and the 2015 European Migrant Crisis hint at the inequalities among nation-states and among the actors, which developed into political discourses in the 2000s. Accordingly, this section organizes the various dimensions of inequality and the way inequality turned into political discourses, which are the ideational framework of the Brexit Idea.

The current thesis suggests that the structural defects of the EU were preliminary to the behaviors and remarks of the EU member states. Even before the inequalities were reinforced by the actual behavior of the actors, an inherent structural deficiency was embedded in the EU. The Eurozone as *a currency union without a fiscal union* could be criticized as a representative structural problem of the EU. Although monetary policy and fiscal policy should be adopted at times of crisis to get back to an equilibrium, the Eurozone had just a monetary policy and was not able to efficiently adjust the market economy as expected. For instance, in the case of the Eurozone Crisis, the EU could not afford financial funding to the countries in crisis because it lacked joint funding resources. In other words,

member states handed monetary policy measures to the community and had only fiscal policy, and the EU, as a structurally deficient integration, was without fiscal measures to use. The Southern European countries were being tormented by fiscal hardships, and thus, their hands were tied by the fiscal policy. As a result, the countries in crisis had no choice but to rely on the capital resources of leader countries. Because of its structure, it was inevitable the EU would develop a hierarchal system around capital.

In addition to the inherent structural deficiency, inequality was more explicitly revealed in actual practices. First, the member states were divided into a leading group and others during the process of joint policy making, and the leader countries exerted more influence on the EU policy. During the Eurozone Crisis, the actual policy decision was carried out in the European Commission, the ECB, or other bureaucratic organizations rather than the European Parliament (EP). This implies that countries with more say inside bureaucratic organizations were more efficient in determining political outcomes. The principle of sovereignty equality in the EP had little practical relevance while the whole policy-making process was dominated by differential leverage based on a country's national economy, military superiority, and so on. In particular, the tendency to degenerate the EP into a name-only organization was noticeable more and more as the controversial issues of globalization poured in.

Considering these unfair disparities, it stood to reason that the European actors would develop political discourses on these inequalities. One of main inequality arguments was that the EU coaxed economic sovereignty over its member states under the pretext of complete integration and distributed it to a few leader countries. Both in the European Debt Crisis and the 2015 European Migrant Crisis, those who rose to the political

forefront were individual political players using a nation-state system rather than the EU as a community. Because the limited use of economic policy and refrained engagement in policy making was present, the political actors of domestic politics came to perceive that sovereignty in the field of national economy and politics was deprived of them. This was accompanied by grievances that the leader countries exercised more sovereignty in the EU than their own shares.

Although the leader countries were paramount in resolving socioeconomic challenges, it does not necessarily mean that there was not a recognition or dissatisfaction of the inequalities in the EU. The leader countries claimed they also yielded their sovereignty in that they would have to bear further burdens for other member states and have no other options but to do so. Similar to the follower countries, they expressed their concern over the violation of sovereignty by supranational organizations. This was why they suggested a detailed program on European integration at first and then rejected it when the program was to be carried out.

Our review of the two socioeconomic challenges also confirms the inequality perceived by the leader countries. Even though the countries who were struck by economic crisis were not the leader countries, they had to pay extraordinary amounts to help the countries in crisis get out of the recession. In the sense that the leader countries had to reluctantly sacrifice for other member states from time to time, inequality discourses in European politics took hold in the leader countries as well. That is, inequality discourses were backed by their deterioration of sovereignty and decrease in national interests by the supranational community. The follower countries were not the only ones who experienced inequality in sovereignty and confronted the democratic rule inside the EU. The leader countries also

developed their own logic on inequality. As a result, recognition of the emergence of inequality and the related discourses were prevalent across the EU member states almost without exception.

Meanwhile, the European Debt Crisis and the 2015 European Migrant Crisis were a tipping point when looking at this from the ideational approach. The recognition of the inequalities and related discourses gradually pervaded after globalization, and these two issues were indicators that demonstrated the proliferation of discourses. The forces against an inefficient EU led by the leader countries were organized into a few streams around the inequality discourses: they were movements of neonationalism, deglobalization, neoprotectionism, Euroscepticism, and so on. In brief, what is significant in relation to Brexit was not a series of crises as phenomena but the inequality perception and its discourses, which frames the Brexit Idea.

Then, how could we systematically organize the recognition of inequality into various dimensions? How was Euroscepticism sophisticated into the inequality discourses through a series of socioeconomic challenges? By all accounts, the sources of the inequality discourses that flourished after the early 2000s can be traced back to the rapid movement of globalization and the additional efforts of interstate integration for the sake of a national economy. Across advanced capitalism, the dominant themes after World War II were an open economy, liberal market, and globalization. As a part of keeping economic competitiveness in the globalized market, the European nation-states built their rosy dream of European integration. This is why the European countries agreed to pull down inside borders and achieve a single market with a *laissez-faire* style that was permitted to members only. Once the approximate goal of European integration was set as a tool for national

competitiveness, the backlash against it appeared. Therefore, the inequality discourses were one kind of backlash, and their knowledge developed in the opposite direction of globalization. This is why the current thesis investigates the development of the inequality discourses from the perspective of its interrelationship with globalization. In this context, the inequality discourses are understood in two ways: inequality among nation-states and inequality among actors.

First, the inequality among nation-states was centered on the sovereignty issues described above. With great expectations of the benefits that regional integration would give to member states, the European countries bumped into basic problems when they started to construct a community. Although they thought the European countries were sharing similar initiatives in their integration programs, all of them sought a wide spectrum of different plans. For instance, France and Germany supported a form of federation, whereas the UK argued for a confederation. Because their preferences and interests differed because of national interests, it was nearly impossible to agree on the extent to which they could entrust supranational organizations with a substantial part of their sovereignty.

As a result, the communities of the European countries had to keep the scope of the mandate to a minimum or to force a few member states more than a minimum of transferring sovereignty. Until now, the European community has lacked sophistication in drawing an adequate line for nation-states and the EU. In other words, the immaturity in dealing with interstate cooperation and integration could be considered an underlying obstacle for the EU *ab initio*. Because inequality among nation-states unfolded at the international political level, knowledge of it was effectual at developing international discourses.

Second, the inequality among actors was intensified, owing to the globalization of production. As it proliferates across the world, nation-states and domestic coalitions are divided into groups either benefiting or losing from the globalization of production. For instance, it is often argued that advanced capitalist countries experience outsourcing and hollowing-out that may trigger the destruction of their industrial ecosystems. The United States is a typical example of nation groups losing from the globalization of production. On the contrary, the receiving countries are often deemed to gain from globalization effects. In addition to the categorization of states, domestic coalitions can also be separated following the cost-benefit analysis of globalization of production. It is argued that the high flexibility of labor markets after globalization make favorable environments for high-skilled employees, high-tech employers, and capitalists and vice versa for low-skilled employees, agriculturalists, and so on (Berger 2005; Breznitz and Zysman 2013).

These new divides also played a role in spreading inequality recognition among political actors. Even if inequality among actors was often found in domestic society, it also buttressed the inequality discourses at the international political level through the actors who frequently cross the border. From time to time, domestic coalitions allied by interests beyond national borders share the inequality perception at the international level.

In summary, there was a growing tendency to recognize inequality among both states and actors and the European Debt Crisis and the 2015 European Migrant Crisis showed this tendency. The inequality discourses were intensified after rapid globalization as the socioeconomic challenges and countermeasures against it were repeated and as real actors formed an understanding of the inequality of sovereignty, industry, coalition, and

others. Beyond a feeling of hostility or doubt, inequality discourses firmly were established as one of main discourses in European politics.

4.2. What is the Brexit Idea?

The principal theme of the current thesis has been how ideas wield influence over institutional changes and how these ideas are formulated and mobilized. Our review of the institutional environments of the UK–EU relationship, the Eurozone Crisis, and the 2015 European Migrant Crisis validated the theoretical framework. Now, we need to focus on the underlying ideas to understand the behavior of real actors. For instance, although it was the Mediterranean countries that went through the social and economic crisis, the Western and Northern European countries developed far-right populism and its supporting parties in a progressive way. In particular, the domestic coalitions in the leader countries stressed the importance of sovereignty. During the Eurozone Crisis, domestic coalitions in the Western countries assisted in raising a wall against each other to block the expansion of an economic crisis. By the same logic, they also decided to control national borders by themselves rather than mandate control to the EU. Even a few far-right groups organized physical attacks against people who were not citizens.

If we are to predicate existing institutionalism or historicism, backlash from socioeconomic challenges should have an impact in proportion with the damage these challenges cause. Then, the negative effects of the challenges must have been graver in the Southern European countries or the frontline countries when it came to the refugee inflow. This is because

conventional comparative studies often consider the cost-benefit analysis as the principal drive for an actor's behavior. Indeed, the policy outcomes in reality were different from what most comparativists expected.

The incongruity between the expectation of conventional studies and what actually happened confirms the argument of the current thesis that ideas play a critical role in the possibility and direction of institutional changes. It is not a result of the cost-benefit analysis but the interpretation of them that finally draws the policy outcomes. The significance of these ideas often reaches to an extent that the actual numbers cannot intervene in the policy-making process. In extreme circumstances, the facts are often taken advantage of only to prove the already proposed ideas rather than to formulate or adjust these ideas. Therefore, the argument that institutional changes principally depend on related ideas and that other causes such as economic factors, power struggles, and so forth play collateral roles were verified in the two cases.

Therefore, this chapter first scrutinizes how the Brexit Idea was developed based on the inequality discourses prevalent in Europe. In particular, the present thesis focuses on how the inequality discourses were modified and then introduced into British politics. The political mechanism of changing international political discourses into domestic discourses will be investigated. The Brexit Idea was found to have an intertwined relationship with the inequality discourses of European politics. As examined in the previous section, the British actors recognized the inequality of sovereignty and economy at the European political level. In conjunction with long-term hostile relationships with the European community, the British actors developed ideas against the dominant paradigms of the EU, such as regional integration, a single free market,

globalization, and so forth. Subsequently, the British actors developed their ideas of deglobalization, Euroscepticism, and neonationalism in opposition to large megatrends—globalization and European integration. In the British context, these thoughts were incorporated into the Brexit Idea, constituting the main pillars of it.

In sequence, this chapter analyzes a feature of the Brexit Idea. Here, not all ideas succeed in changing institutions, and institutional changes depend on the specific features of the related ideas. In this respect, we ruminate on whether the Brexit Idea fulfilled the necessary conditions for institutional changes. The conclusion is that the Brexit Idea has internal fragility and external solidity. Because the Brexit Idea is firmly nestled in the British society, there were heated debates about the European integration, drawing lines of social divides along pro- or anti-EU. Notwithstanding its external solidity, the Brexit Idea is internally so fragile that relevant debates are controversial, leading policy-making processes to a deadlock.

To sum up, the Brexit Idea can be understood in the aspects of its development, substances, and features. How the Brexit Idea realized an institutional change in the field of foreign policy will be explained in the next chapter.

4.2.1. Constructing the Brexit Idea at three levels

The inequality discourses proliferated because of EU politics, as seen in the previous section. These inequality discourses unfolded around two key dimensions. First, inequality in sovereignty was asserted in that the EU member states transferred their policy-making rights and were forced to comply with the EU's decision, which was led by a few leader countries.

The leader countries had to bear the burdens of all of the EU and developed their own reasoning for inequalities. The decision-making process of the EU did not operate well enough to resolve these socioeconomic challenges and thus to guarantee democratic equality inside the community. Furthermore, the structural problem of the EU underlies this issue. It was not only all the conditions of the national economies of member states, but also a limited form of integration devoid of valid policy measures, that created these inequalities. It was apparent that the member states shared inequality discourses on the grounds of European politics.

The inequality discourses of international politics were adopted into domestic society through the medium of political actors. When it comes to introducing international discourses, the most important part here is that the international discourses combined with the existing institutions and historical legacies of the host countries. In the case of the UK, the UK–EU relationship was embedded in understanding the British actors and British society. To be specific, long-lasting hostility toward the continental European countries first determined the stop-go pattern of UK foreign policy. Then, the long-term hostility and stop-go policy consolidated the path dependency throughout the postwar period. Not only a feeling of Euroscepticism, but also its supporting institutions penetrated into the understanding of the British actors. Because the actors who introduced the inequality discourses into national politics evidently recognized the historic hostility that predominantly constituted institutional environments, the existing institutions and inequality discourses were bound to be amalgamated. In brief, the inequality discourses were incorporated with domestic institutions and the relevant ideas of the actors in the initial phase.

Before describing how inequality discourses comply with existing

institutions, one analytic conclusion is going to be suggested first. The Brexit Idea is represented by the following three thoughts: deglobalization, Euroscepticism, and neonationalism at the international, regional, and national levels, respectively. By classifying the Brexit Idea into three themes, the development of the Brexit Idea can be understood as an emergence of rival interpretations of globalization. If we see the Brexit Idea as chiefly being composed of deglobalization, Euroscepticism, and neonationalism, these three ideas could be placed into the context of globalization debates.

The current thesis proves that it was primarily globalization and the repeated responses of the European community to globalization that created the Brexit Idea. To put it concretely, globalization emphasizes the principle of a single market, free trade, and free capital and labor movement; it also highlights the significance of technology and innovation for industrial competitiveness. Under globalization, European advanced capitalism could take advantage of regional integration for its economic competitiveness; the European capitalist countries were to reorganize their industrial structure by means of the EU.

Indeed, the European countries were originally meant to utilize European integration in to keep peace in Western Europe. Either to precipitate economic development or rival the U.S. economy was an ancillary goal. Yet after rapid globalization in the 1990s, the European countries thought economic integration inside Europe would be a key enabler in improving their competitiveness. Whether the goal was to keep peace or to increase their competitiveness did not matter when it came to the form of an integrative program, however. The European integration program consistently demanded its member states to abandon tradition international political systems composed of individual nation-states. Not surprisingly,

they had to inevitably open their territories to other member states to deepen integration.

Yet there were critical obstacles for the UK to efface its barriers with others. In essence, the existing institutional environments were opposed to integration. There was an inveterate feeling of hostility against Europe, especially the continental states, something seen throughout British history. Moreover, this feeling of hostility was elaborated in Euroscepticism, which could be considered as a political paradigm. The traditional institutions of the UK were rather unfriendly against supranational integration in this respect.

In addition, the economic necessity of the UK joining the EU was also unfavorable to the EU's integration when compared with other members. When the UK joined the EC in 1972, their primary aim was to assist the City by securing the free movement of capital in Europe, which would support the growth of its representative industry. Except for the financial industry, the successive British governments reckoned they were not deriving benefits from the EEC or EU. The perception that economic gains were absent had decisive effects, resulting in the Thatcher government clamoring to get their money back or else withdraw from the EU.

The unpleasant cohabitation with the continental countries continued even in the economic realm. For instance, the rates of economic recovery were different from country to country after the Eurozone Crisis. Compared with economic performance before recession, although the UK recovered its full-fledged economic capacity, some member states such as Greece, Italy, Spain, and even France and Germany fell behind in many economic indicators such as GDP, unemployment rate, foreign direct investment, and so forth.

Observing the performances of other member states, the UK supposed that its swift recovery from the recession was by virtue of its arm's-length distance from the EU. The UK considered that when economies are more open to one another, economic crisis spreads more easily. Owing to the contagiousness of economic crisis and relatively far distance with the EU, the UK was less susceptible to it. In sum, the UK had a chip on its shoulder when it came to its cost-benefit analysis of the EU. The expenditure on the EU and decreases in social security spending far outweighed interests provided by the EU. Instead of a cost-benefit analysis, what mattered to the British actors was the unfavorably processed interpretation of the real number.

In addition to economic recognition, the UK also refused European integration. The British government outrightly expressed animosity against EU social policy. It is well-known that the Major government opted-out of the initial social chapter. The fact that the UK did not generally share social virtues with other member states came to the front in the case of the 2015 European Migrant Crisis once again. The UK refused the EU policy regarding the refugee problem, including the redistribution program, joint financial burden, and so on at the initial phase of the crisis. It did not want to transfer its sovereignty or spend more for this problem. Fundamentally, conflicts emerged from different understandings of basic concepts such as social virtues and international political systems. Although the continental countries achieved various goals through a community, the UK still adhered to traditional international systems based on a nation-state system with a self-help doctrine. Even the UK seemed to keep its glorious past as a unipolar hegemony.

After considering all the factors causing an unfavorable stance toward

the EU, it is reasonable that the inequality discourses were introduced in the form of deglobalization, Euroscepticism, and neonationalism. Adopting inequality discourses to domestic society was equivalent to the endless interpretation of the discourses. As a part of international politics, inequality discourses had to be interpreted and understood by political actors for domestic use. Because the British actors already had Eurosceptic institutions and actual experiences with the EU, they had no choice but to interpret the inequality discourse in a way that opposed the EU. As a result, the inequality discourses shared at the international political level were adopted as the Brexit Idea.

Understandably, it was an inevitable conclusion that the direction of the Brexit Idea was thus against not only regional integration, but also globalization itself. First, the opposing discourses against the EU were organized into Euroscepticism. The Euroscepticism was not just a feeling of hostility but an elaborated political idea according to which the actors judged their interests, preferences, and strategies. The reason that these Euroscepticist actors tilted toward withdrawing from the EU was because they interpreted the inequality discourse in a way that the UK could protect its complete sovereignty and economic competitiveness only by repudiating the EU as a source of any inequality.

Second, the inequality discourses were also interpreted as being opposed to globalization. This was because the EU had the same way of expanding inequality with globalization and that the globalization trend could be recognized in the UK's relationships with the EU. Understanding inequality discourses against globalization diverged into two facets: neonationalism at the national level and deglobalization at the international level.

Whereas the deglobalization idea remained abstract without a concrete political program, neonationalism materialized. This was partially indebted to neoprotectionist movements around the world, such as from the Trump administration or the Xi Jinping regime. Because the neoliberal principle swept the global economy, most advanced capitalism nations agreed upon a neoliberal rule to keep their competitiveness until the mid-2010s. Yet there was a transition of the international economic order with the appearance of two superpowers that were armed with neoprotectionism. Once again, the international economic system was now dominated by leaders exhaustively centered on national interests. Although the leverage of neoprotectionism has been limited, it was enough to attract other countries to look into the neoprotectionist order. Along the same line of thought, the UK moved toward protecting its national interests by keeping a safe distance from the EU.

To be brief, the British actors took the inequality discourses in the direction of neonationalism, the foremost goal of which is to protect national interests under the free market order of the nation-states system. This neonationalism idea interacted with the neoprotectionist movement across the globe, constituting a main pillar of the Brexit Idea.

In consequence, the Brexit Idea was settled in British politics by the interpretation and understanding of the actors who looked to the inequality discourses of international politics. It assumed a role as a political program, cognitive filter, framework of interpretation, and political paradigm.

4.2.2. Characters of the Brexit Idea: Its Solidity and Fragility

As suggested in section 2.4.3, ideas can be classified according to their

inherent features: external and internal fragility/solidity. First, the external fragility of ideas signifies that ideas cannot attract actors to initiate discourses on related institutional changes. In contrast, political actors are pressured to begin related discourses following an ideational axis drawn by externally solid ideas. Second, the internal fragility of ideas implies that domestic actors do not share a common understanding of the given ideas. The interpretation of ideas by an individual actor is thus not bound to a socially constructed understanding. In the case of internal fragility, political actors with respective understandings of ideas should compete to make their own understanding become accepted.

When it comes to the relationship between the fragility of ideas and institutional changes, its type can be divided as well. If an idea is both externally and internally solid, debates relevant to the idea would surely occur, and the result of the debates would be fairly predictable. Otherwise, with externally solid but internally fragile ideas, the actors would necessarily discuss the related institutional changes without any expected course of changes. Finally, if the idea lacks external solidity, it would likely be because the actors do not have much interest in it.

The Brexit Idea can also be analyzed in terms of being a feature of ideas. This is because the Brexit Idea belongs to a conception of idea as an interpretive framework for a problematic situation, interests, preferences, and alternative strategies. As reviewed in the previous chapter, the British actors came up with the Brexit Idea from the inequality discourses based on existing institutions and interactions during the interpretation process. Moreover, the Brexit Idea became an interpretive framework to understand a problem and interests for the national politics on Brexit because it finally settled as an idea in the domestic political discourse.

The Brexit Idea is externally solid. Its solidity was supported by historical legacies in British society. Historically, the UK–EU relationship was continuously discussed across the economic, political, and other fields. Accordingly, the UK–EU relationship had been established as an institutionalized issue, and its path dependency shored up the external solidity of the Brexit Idea. After globalization, the external solidity of the related ideas was even strengthened after the period shortly after the war. As the recent landscape of British political parties displays, political conflicts appear around the EU issue. For example, the line between the established two parties and the UK Independence Party as a new, and strong party was the EU issue in the 2019 European Parliament Election.

As a result, the fact that the British actors discuss institutional changes in foreign policy is unyielding. Although if they decide to leave or stay is still not predicted, the Brexit issue must be the most heated controversy in British society. Even the Brexit Idea could be considered a source of new social cleavage. Similar to traditional cleavages like class, religion, region or so, the Brexit idea works as a determinant of an actor's interests and as a confrontation against opposing social forces. Above all, political conflicts around the Brexit ideational axis have firmly ensconced after the late 2000s without the possibility for a quick reconciliation.

Yet the most noticeable feature of the Brexit Idea is its internal fragility. There is no fully consented to understanding of the Brexit Idea among the participating actors, even a majority understanding. Whereas the Brexit Idea is entirely open to the political use of individual actors and furnishes abundant reasoning for their political behaviors, a consistent interpretation is not possible. However, the Brexit Idea can be used in both directions, either Eurosceptic or Europhile policy. This is why a host of feasible

interpretations are present, and they are competing in British politics. A specific way of the Brexit Idea was utilized since 2015, and this will be analyzed in the next chapter.

Practical knowledge substantiates the internal fragile feature of the Brexit Idea. Although leaving the EU was determined in the 2016 referendum and the UK is in the transition period, the withdrawal process did not improve after the withdrawal agreement with the EU. For instance, the MPs did not approve the withdrawal deal of May, and the British government had to ask for an extension of period. Under the situation that the MPs are not reaching an agreement inside the Commons, it will be tough for the UK to make a final decision until 2020. In other words, domestic politics is deadlocked when it comes to Brexit, and the current thesis suggests this stalemate is the result of internal fragility. Because the Brexit Idea allows a multitude of plausible political arguments to emerge from it, respective understanding and interpretations are still competing to gain the upper hand.

Then, why is the Brexit Idea externally solid and internally fragile? Above all, the underlying phenomenon of inequality discourses is controversial at the international political level. Here, *globalization* and *regional integration* are the underlying phenomenon. Economic effects and the courses of development of globalization are contentious across the world, such as the debates on the globalization of production. Both positive and negative responses against globalization coexist among advanced capitalist European countries. Likewise, regional integration includes two ideas at the two extremes, doubling its ambiguity. Although regional integration is considered globalization of a reduced size, it may oppose worldwide globalization based on the desires of this regional block at the same time.

If the underlying phenomenon of the specific idea is contentious, ideas that come out of contentious factual premises are susceptible to being versatile or fragile. Because both globalization and regional integration as the underlying factual premises are controversial, the Brexit Idea that originated from them are internally fragile. Yet because the Brexit idea and its discourses cannot be left out of the social discussion for its external solidity, as mentioned earlier, the idea finally established social divides between anti-Europe and pro-Europe forces.

In addition to the factual premise of ideas, the domestic actors and their behaviors can be one reason for internal fragility. Beyond the existing liberal or conservative coalitions, globalization and the regional integration reorganize new divides, and thus, the party coalition is also rearranging itself. The problem was that the rates of reorganization differed among the population and political system. The traditional party system of the UK seemed to fall behind in the reorganization of new divides and gathering political actors around the dividing lines. Because all of the established political coalitions failed to firmly mobilize another political actor, an equilibrium among arbitrary actors was formed, as shown in the result of the referendum as 48% stay vs. 51% leave. In other words, although many conventional studies argue that Brexit was determined because of the huge success of far-right populist, it is not plausible. Rather, all social coalitions were not efficient enough to utilize the Brexit Idea, and thus, a nondeterministic decision on the EU policy was made. In sum, unlike the argument of existing studies, not only the established parties but also far-right populist parties contributed to building the internal fragility of the Brexit Idea by not providing a dominant interpretation of it.

In conclusion, the Brexit Idea had to be accompanied with relevant

debates on foreign policy because of external solidity. This implicates new institutional courses that must be chosen regarding the EU policy, even if the UK is to stay on the same institutional path as before. Indeed, the Brexit Idea has an internally fragile feature as well. Although the initiation of Brexit discourses was clearly expected, the concrete details of the discourses were not predicted because the Brexit Idea still left room for arbitrary interpretation from all political actors. Until now, the institutional path of British foreign policy has been at sea.

Chapter 5. Mobilization of the Brexit Idea

This chapter investigates how the Brexit Idea mobilized. As seen in chapter 4, inequality discourses in international politics were introduced into British politics in the form of the Brexit Idea with its derivative domestic discourses. Accordingly, there have been heated debates on the EU membership of the UK. This chapter describes the domestic politics of Brexit, emphasizing the interpretation of the Brexit Idea, competing political actors with an inherent political agenda in Brexit, and their detailed interactions. Even though these British actors shared the Brexit Idea in common, their political paradigms and specific behaviors were much differentiated following their understanding of the Brexit Idea. These disparate thoughts were mobilized into two major coalitions: Britain Stronger in the EU and Vote Leave.

Because the Brexit Idea is internally fragile, any related political movements were not successful in mobilizing the population to adopt a specific paradigm. For instance, this is shown by the fact that approval rates of the two established parties gradually decreased while alternative parties did not gain the voters' support to an equivalent extent. When it comes to the Brexit referendum, the absence of the leadership of conventional parties was more noticeable in that the existing party system had a small role in proliferating the related paradigms. Then, how was Brexit determined without efficient mobilization by the political parties? Was Brexit nothing but a coin toss?

The current thesis argues that the Brexit decision can be attributed to the failure of most political coalitions in disseminating the interpretation of

the Brexit Idea in their favor. The narrow margin of the vote was because no Brexit Idea interpretation was dominant and that the practical issues advantageous to Brexit, including Syrian refugees, the tax evasion scandal of the Conservative leaders, and so forth occurred shortly before the referendum. Under the lack of leadership, individual actors magnified their understanding of the Brexit Idea, which had been proposed by a few political coalitions at first and who then adopted their own framework of interpretation. By examining British politics toward Brexit, we could collaterally inspect the detailed relationship between ideas and institutional changes.

5.1. Britain Stronger in Europe vs. Vote Leave

On January 23, 2013, David Cameron promised to hold an in-or-out referendum on EU membership before the end of 2017 and to renegotiate with the EU under the pressure of both left and right Eurosceptics. This announcement was on the condition of the Conservative Party winning the general election in 2015. Because the Conservative Party won the election, reaching a majority, the Parliament legislated the European Union Referendum Act, and the Cameron government started to renegotiate with the EU on a few controversial issues. Until then, Cameron considered a referendum as an opportunity to reaffirm popular support on EU membership. Not only the major parties, but also industry, labor, banking, and other major sectors, advocated to stay in the EU. After the Cameron government had renegotiated with the EU on securing a single market, restraining the inflow of immigrants, opting out from deeper integration

toward federation, and reducing the red-tape regulations of the EU, the Brexit campaign of each camp was initiated following an announcement date: June 23, 2016.

Table 1. Position of Political Parties

Remain	Great Britain	Green Party of England and Wales Labour Party Liberal Democrats Plaid Cymru— The Party of Wales Scottish Green Party Scottish National Party
	Northern Ireland	Alliance Party of Northern Ireland Green Party in Northern Ireland Sinn Féin Social Democratic and Labour Party Ulster Unionist Party
Leave	Great Britain	UK Independence Party
	Northern Ireland	Democratic Unionist Party People Before Profit Alliance Traditional Unionist Voice
Neutral	Great Britain	Conservative Party

The political landscape was divided into the proremain and proleave sides. Among the many political campaigns to stay in the EU, Britain's Stronger in Europe, mainly led by Cameron, was designated as the official campaign group. On the other hand, Vote Leave led by Boris Johnson, the

former Mayor of London, was designated as the official campaign to leave the EU. Not surprisingly, there were other numerous campaigns supporting either Britain Stronger in Europe or Vote Leave; Conservatives In, Labour in for Britain, Environmentalists for Europe, Greens for a Better Europe; and Scientists for EU for the stay side and Leave EU, Get Britain Out, Grassroots Out, Labour Leave, Left Leave, Trade Union and Socialist Coalition, Green Leaves, and Liberal Leave for the leave side. Even though their specific understanding of Brexit was different, they were situated along a confrontation line to stay versus leave.

During an early phase of the Brexit campaign, Britain Stronger in Europe readily overwhelmed the counterpart because the economic cost-benefit analysis evidently worked against Brexit. Because the expected economic indicators were found to be negative, the winning of the Britain Stronger in Europe campaign was taken for granted. Representative groups of the domestic coalitions also endorsed the remaining decision: for example, they were the Confederation of British Industries, British Bankers Association, British Trades Union Congress, and National Farmers Union. The proremain side repetitively put forward national interests as major evidence to stay. Yet the Vote Leave campaign turned the tables on the proremain by means of these very national interests. Although the proremain side utilized actual numbers as they were, the proleave processed economic cost-benefit analysis into discrete antipathy. The proleave ascribed an economic loss to immigrant policy and financial contributions of the EU.

In particular, the immigrant policy emerged as a major issue for Brexit. The Vote Leave campaign integrated the immigrant issue with national interests, which ended up bringing victory to them. In detail, the proleave alleged that immigrants would steal jobs from the British and that massive

immigrants would flow in with the EU. Social coalitions such as industrial laborer, a radical part of the City, approved the interpretation of immigrant policy and national interests, which was suggested by the Vote Leave campaign. Not surprisingly, people with a low income, low education, and poor job opportunities were the main supporting groups of Vote Leave.

Other than the intertwined immigrant and interest issue, it was about national sovereignty that Vote Leave campaigned for. Vote Leave argued that the EU, a supranational organization, might take away British sovereignty, leaving British voters without a voice. In other words, a referendum symbolized retrieving democracy back by the voters themselves, not the elites. A series of maladministration of the EU leadership during socioeconomic challenges set the cause for leaving out. It was of little importance whether the Brexit referendum actually held political elites responsible or was to develop democracy in and out of the UK. Instead, what mattered was the idea that Vote Leave proliferated. It was enough that there was a probability that British voters could improve their political democracy by casting their ballots on the leave.

As a result, a majority of voters answered to leave the EU in the referendum, winning 51.89% to 48.11%. The referendum attracted 72.21% of the registered voter turnout, 65.38% of the voting age population. Following his promise, Cameron had to announce his resignation after the result came out, and Theresa May became the next Prime Minister on July 13, 2016. Though the May government succeeded in declaring the withdrawal agreement with the EU, the deal was voted against by MPs three times. Subsequently, the British government had to ask the EU to extend a due date for Brexit, and October 31st became the new deadline. Yet there is still the task of passing the deal and to legislate the deal into the British law

by MPs. Until recently, Brexit has been adrift, making the hard Brexit seem probable.

When compared with the prostay movement, the proleave campaign was a little more efficient in extending its interpretation of ideas in national politics. If we take a closer look, however, the principal arguments of the proleave group were composed of sentiments such as antipathy, fears, or discontent rather than discursive thoughts. Although the proleave group was successful in winning the referendum, its arguments were short of discursive factors, including logical reasoning on the cost-benefit analysis and practical use of main concepts such as sovereignty, democracy, globalization, and so on. This argument is shown in that there are still none of the dominant interpretations of Brexit among the proleave group despite its victory. The inefficiency in proliferating its own understanding on the Brexit Idea was noticeable during the early phase of the campaign and was strongly confirmed by the aftermath of the referendum. According to the current thesis, it is because of inefficiency in organizing the Brexit Idea that the stalemate of carrying out the Brexit decision came to be.

What the proleave group suggested during the campaign could be equated with an obsolete and unfledged idea that was dominant shortly after World War II. The campaign of the Vote Leave was just to rekindle thoughts of the UK–EU relationship composed of nascent and vague hostility.

The problems of the proremain group were more critical than of the proleave. Whereas the leave side constructed their program out of the Brexit Idea, the remain side continued to provide only numerical results of the cost-benefit analysis. That is, the proremain group not only failed to construct its own political paradigm using the Brexit Idea but did not even try to take a closer look at the Brexit Idea, which rested at the core of Brexit

debates.

Both campaigns shared a basic cause of gridlock after the referendum: they failed to subsume interpretations of the Brexit Idea by individual actors into an official political program. Because a diverse understanding of Brexit was not decisively introduced into institutional politics, complicated issues regarding the relationship with the EU had to be simplified into in-or-out choices. A reason for these deficient discourses was the lack of leadership of the established political forces; they treated the Brexit issue as a strategy for resolving domestic political problems, excluding a diversified political program from the referendum.

As mentioned earlier, ideas intrinsically are like floating resources, unlike socioeconomic positions or institutions. Furthermore, because the Brexit Idea is internally fragile because it is widely open to individual and voluntary interpretation, the possibility of being disposed of was increased. What mattered in the case of Brexit was that none of the actors were efficient in exploiting floating resources, in this case, the Brexit Idea.

5.2. Ideas and Institutional Changes

There is no linear or given path of development. The features of ideas and mobilization of actors during related debates are decisive in institutional changes. The ideas and interactions of actors lead to institutional changes and decide a specific path. Although many conventional descriptions pointed out path dependency or external crisis as a direct cause of institutional changes, the current thesis emphasized ideas as the most fundamental source of political behaviors and relevant institutional changes.

The present thesis focused on ideational and discursive factors rather than economic indicators and numbers when analyzing institutional change. In addition to scrutinizing the economic factors, the current thesis showed little importance of the demarcation between international political and domestic politics by highlighting the discursive interactions between the two levels. Indeed, international political discourses play a significant role in determining national political economic institutional changes through ideas and discourses.

Our review of Brexit provides two important implications for the relationship between ideas and institutional changes. First, not all ideas are conducive to institutional changes, and their features determine the possibility and concrete direction of institutional changes. The supports for institutional changes spring from public deliberation on institutional alternatives, and public discourses often result from the external solidity of ideas. The Brexit Idea was able to drive Brexit because it made related discourses inevitable. Moreover, interpretations of the Brexit Idea did not stick to existing institutions or the cost-benefit analysis and was open to diverse actors and coalitions. This internal fragility formed the basis of the pro-Brexit argument in British society. In brief, we should focus on both ideas and their features to thoroughly investigate institutional changes.

Second, ideas tend to slip into institutional changes as either strengthening or weakening the distinctiveness of political economic models. It is true that the thoughts of international politics can be combined with domestic institutions in the direction of conforming existing institutional paths, as is often argued by the path dependent theory. However, existing comparative studies have postulated too high of a threshold for institutional divergence. As in the case of Brexit, it is also possible that institutional

alternatives without continuity can be adopted without external shocks. Under the stop-go cycle of the UK, although the institutional path just before Brexit was reluctantly favorable to the EU, the Brexit decision ran directly counter to the integration program.

The current thesis suggests that ideas matter the most when institutional reforms could bear every direction of change found in the prevailing political economic models. For instance, not only ideas could lead to the convergence of models toward a liberal market order as neoliberals insist, but it could also consolidate the inherent distinctiveness of each national economy. When it comes to the divergence of the political economic model, there are also three ways of divergence: each national economy could permanently keep its distinctive features, there could be a delay of the convergence toward a neoliberal market order, or a third way of development could be formed. That is, the current thesis considers ideas as a key variable of institutional changes and their direction instead of suggesting the dominant way of institutional changes.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The recent decision of Brexit challenged the current theoretical frameworks found in most comparative studies. Considering the path dependency of institutions and the absence of external shocks, the existing theoretical frameworks cannot adequately explain endogenous institutional changes that arise out of the interactions of political actors. Because many comparative studies assume that actors' interests are predetermined, institutional changes would hence occur only when external shocks are encountered. Moreover, producing policy outcomes becomes complicated because globalization leads international politics to become directly involved in domestic politics. Interactions at the level of international politics, as well as national politics, should be considered when trying to explain institutional changes after globalization. Although there were a series of socio-economic challenges that the European countries faced after the 2000s, these challenges cannot be regarded as external shocks because they hardly altered the socio-economic or institutional position of the actors.

Along with the rigid assumption of interests, the traditional success of nation-states has been assessed by economic wealth after the emergence of capitalism. However, focusing on an economic cost-benefit analysis alone left many theoretical frameworks falling short when trying to explain Brexit. Indeed, Brexit was opposed to the dominant economic reports suggesting that there would be negative impacts of Brexit on the British national economy.

Consequently, the current thesis adopted the endogenous institutional change theory and ideational approach to overcome two main

problems found in existing comparative study: overlooking the interactions among actors and exclusively sticking to economic variables. Instead, the current thesis has suggested that institutions can be changed by the discursive interactions among actors and ideas. Actors repeatedly interact through the discourses of everyday politics, and ideas are produced through these interactions. Then, the interpretation of ideas can be developed and diffused through discursive competitions. In particular, ideas can be formulated at the level of international politics and introduced into domestic politics through the interpretation of main political actors. A dominant interpretation of ideas can show how problem situations, interests, and preferences would be understood and eventually lead to the decision of the actors.

Based on the theoretical framework and by focusing on the Brexit Idea, the current thesis has examined how Brexit was determined. The Brexit Idea was formulated from the inequality discourses, which were shared by the European countries after they encountered socio-economic challenges, including the European Debt Crisis and the 2015 Refugee Crisis, and then produced repeated collective or individual reactions against them. The European countries recognized that the inequality of sovereignty and economy exists among member states. Based on the recognition of inequality, there were heated discourses on inequality that became the seed of the Brexit Idea in the UK. In particular, the inequality discourses that were introduced through the Brexit Idea had the main pillars of deglobalization, Euroscepticism, and neo-nationalism, fighting against the two megatrends of globalization and regional integration.

When it comes to the final decision of Brexit, it can be attributed to the mobilizing behaviors of the domestic coalitions and to the features of the

Brexit Idea. It was the proleave group that was more active in interpreting the Brexit Idea to a specific political paradigm. When compared with the prostay group, they succeeded in proliferating their interpretation of the Brexit Idea and made the British voters accept their interpretative framework. The competition around interpreting the idea was possible because the Brexit Idea was internally fragile. Although its external solidity obtained concerns from the actors in the related debates, its internal fragility allowed for a diversity of interpretations and understandings of the Idea.

How do institutions change in the era of globalization? As an alternative to the current theoretical frameworks, this thesis has suggested the revised endogenous institutional change theory, here placing importance on the concept of ideas. Ideas and the discursive interactions around these ideas are in order to grasp at what lays at the core of institutional changes.

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국문초록

아이디어의 형성과 동원 - 브렉시트의 담론정치 -

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본 논문은 세계화 이후 아이디어 및 담론 정치가 제도 변화를 이끄는 양상에 집중하여 브렉시트의 원인과 전개 과정을 탐구한다.

브렉시트를 설명하는 기존 연구들은 행위자 간 상호작용을 간과하며 경제적 요소에 천착한다는 한계를 가진다. 대표적으로 비교역사주의 및 신제도주의는 행위자 간 상호작용에 의한 이익 변화 가능성을 고려하지 않음으로써 브렉시트를 적절하게 설명하지 못한다. 비교역사주의와 신제도주의는 행위자들의 이익이 계급 및 제도에 의해 선형적으로 규정되어 있다고 가정하였으나 실제 영국 행위자들은 계급의 재구조화 및 외적 충격 없이 점진적으로 대외정책에 대한 이해, 이익, 선호를 변화하여 유럽연합 탈퇴를 결정하였다. 브렉시트에 대한 경제적 손익분석 또한 실제 행위자들의 결정을 설명하지 못하는 한계가 있다. 브렉시트로 인해 영국 국민경제에 부정적 영향이 발생할 것으로 예상되었음에도 불구하고 국민투표를 통하여 유럽연합 탈퇴가 결정되었기 때문이다.

이에 본 논문은 브렉시트를 이해하기 위하여 세 가지 질문을 제기한다. 첫째, 유럽에 대한 영국 대외정책의 독특성은 무엇인가? 둘째, 아이디어와

국내외 담론이 영국의 유럽연합 탈퇴를 이끌었는가? 셋째, 행위자의 담론 상호작용 과정에서 아이디어의 특징에 기초한 동원이 어떻게 발생하였는가? 이상의 질문에 답하기 위하여 “브렉시트 아이디어 (the Brexit Idea)”의 형성, 확산 및 특징에 집중한다.

먼저 유럽에 대한 영국의 대외정책 양상을 “스탑 고 패턴(a stop-go pattern)”으로 정의한다. 전후 영국은 전반적으로 유럽 통합에 반대하는 움직임을 형성하는 가운데 유럽통합에의 마지못한 참여와 이로부터의 이탈을 반복하였다.

본 논문은 선험적으로 규정된 행위자 이익이 아니라 아이디어 및 행위자 간 국내외 담론정치에 의하여 브렉시트가 결정되었다고 주장한다. 2000년대 이후 유럽 국가들은 일련의 사회경제적 도전과 이에 대한 개별적, 협력적 대응을 반복하는 과정에서 국가 간, 국내 연합 간 불평등 담론을 공유하였다. 특히 2009년 남유럽 재정위기와 2015년 이민위기 이후 유럽연합 내 회원국 간의 주권 불평등 및 국내 연합 간 경제적 불평등이 두드러졌다. 유럽정치에서의 불평등담론은 회원국들로 하여금 세계화 및 신자유주의라는 메가 트렌드에 반하여 네오내셔널리즘 (neonationalism), 유럽연합회의주의 (Euroscepticism), 탈세계화 (Deglobalization)라는 이해를 공유하도록 하였으며 이는 영국의 유럽연합 탈퇴를 이끌었다.

나아가 본 논문은 아이디어의 “내적, 외적 허약성(internal and external fragility)”의 관점에서 브렉시트 아이디어를 분석한다. 브렉시트 아이디어는 외적 견고성으로 인하여 관련 담화와 행위의 발생을 필수불가결하게 만드는 동시에 내적 허약성으로 인하여 지배적인 이해의 틀을 제공하지는 못한다. 이로 인해 문제 상황과 행위자 이익의 이해가 개별 행위자 및 행위자 집단 간 국내 정치적 경쟁에 의하여 발생하였다. 그러므로 본 논문은 브렉시트 찬성 연합이 브렉시트 아이디어의 이해 틀을 확산하는 데 효과적이었기 때문에 브렉시트가 최종적으로 결정되었다고 보았다.

주요어 : 브렉시트, 내생적 제도변화 이론, 아이디어, 내적 허약성, 외적 허약성, 담론 정치, 제도 변화

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