

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE "HAMILTONIAN MOMENT" AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ'NİN COVID-19 PANDEMİSİ SONRASINDA "HAMILTONCU YAKLAŞIM" DENEYİMİ

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ABSTRACT

ÖZ

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This study examines the European Union (EU)'s economic relief package announced for member states in the aftermath of COVID-19 and the ensuing debates over whether the EU is evolving into a federation. To establish the theoretical framework, the origins of the concept of the "Hamiltonian Moment," as well as the arguments and discussions put forth by proponents of federalism within the EU are analyzed. Following an exploration of these two approaches, a general evaluation of the scope of the economic package is provided. This study argues that, due to the differences between the context in which the federalist structure in the United States (US) was established and the current environment within the EU, it is impossible to replicate the financial system created by A. Hamilton in the US within the EU. After elaborating on the conceptual background and related developments, the institutional and political perspectives of the EU on this matter, the steps it has taken, and the methods it has employed are presented. The post-COVID-19 global order has confronted every state with new political and economic challenges. Supranational structures have also been affected by the disruptive impact of COVID-19.

Bu çalışma, COVID-19 sonrasında Avrupa Birliği (AB)'nin üye devletler için ortaya koyduğu ekonomik yardım paketi açıklaması ve akabinde ortaya çıkan AB, Federasyon'a mı evrilecek tartışmaları kapsamında ele alınmıştır. Bundan dolayı teorik arka planı anlayabilmek için öncelikle "Hamiltoncu yaklaşım" kavramının kökeni ile AB bünyesinde federalizmi savunanların argümanları ve tartışmaları incelenmiştir. Bu iki yaklaşımın ne olduğu ele alındıktan sonra ekonomik paketin kapsamı hakkında genel bir değerlendirme yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, ABD'deki Federalist yapının inşa edilmesi sırasındaki konjonktür ile şu an AB'nin içerisinde olduğu ortamın farklılığı sebebiyle, A. Hamilton'un ABD'de kurmuş olduğu mali sistemin aynısının AB'de kurulmasının imkânsız olduğu savunulmaktadır. Bütün bu kavramsal arka plan ve konuyla ilgili gelişmeler açıklandıktan sonra, AB'nin kurumsal ve siyasal perspektiften bu konuya nasıl yaklaştığı, attığı adımların ne olduğu ve hangi yöntemlerin tatbik edildiği ifade edilmiştir. COVID-19 sonrasındaki yeni dünya düzeni, siyasî ve ekonomik olarak her devleti yeni problemlerle karşı karşıya bırakmıştır. COVID-19'un sarsıcı etkilerinden uluslararası yapılar da etkilenmiştir.

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Introduction

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization's office in China reported cases of pneumonia in the city of Wuhan, located in China's Hubei Province. Subsequent announcements revealed that a previously unidentified and rapidly spreading viral outbreak was affecting the region. Consequently, the COVID-19 outbreak, which began in China, quickly spread worldwide. Following these developments, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on 12 March 2020 (Budak & Korkmaz, 2020). Previous epidemic cases have primarily been associated with health concerns. However, an event that poses a threat to human health on a global scale can also impact economic, social, and political domains (Kiran, 2020). At this point, a global pandemic transcends national borders and places people from all walks of life at risk. During such periods, disparities in power and economic capacity between states become more pronounced, leading to the emergence of new international inequalities (Beck, 1992). Developments during and after the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated that a global outbreak affects the entire world across every parameter.

The COVID-19 process has affected not only states but also supranational entities such as the EU in political terms. Discussions regarding how the EU's future will be shaped post-COVID-19 clearly illustrate this point. This study examines how the EU can navigate the political and economic challenges it has faced in the aftermath of COVID-19. In doing so, it also seeks to contribute to broader integration theory by interrogating whether functional crisis responses can generate long-term institutional change in the absence of a founding political moment. This allows for reflection on whether the EU may be witnessing a non-Hamiltonian path to federalization. Within this framework, the question of whether the EU will continue with a federalist organizational model is analyzed in light of the federalism model experienced by the US. Although each country or organization has different experiences, the idea of federalism is elaborated upon in this study. Based on this, debates in the literature about whether the EU should adopt a different governance model are presented.

In this regard, the core research question guiding this study is the following: Can the EU's post-pandemic fiscal response be considered a genuine "Hamiltonian moment" comparable to the foundational fiscal transformation led by Alexander Hamilton in the early US? To answer this, the study conducts a structured comparison between the EU and the US, focusing on three key dimensions: political will, fiscal authority, and constitutional infrastructure. These dimensions serve as analytical tools to assess the extent to which the EU may be approaching a federal configuration.

The theoretical framework of this study focuses on the understanding of federalism in the US and debates on federalism in the EU. At this point, similarities and differences are highlighted. Furthermore, the study discusses whether the "Hamiltonian moment" model, which played a significant role in institutionalizing federalism in the US and is attributed to Alexander Hamilton, can be successfully implemented within the EU in the post-COVID-19 period. In this regard, EU institutions bear significant responsibilities. Managing the post-pandemic process involves various challenges. The complex nature of the EU system has been compounded by chaotic developments following the pandemic.

When analyzing the post-pandemic process, it is evident that the steps taken within the EU have been cautious. During this period, the institutional and political stance of the EU is of great importance. It is also noteworthy to examine how proponents of federalism within the EU have evaluated this process. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still ongoing, leaving no doubt that more research will be conducted on this subject in the future. Questions regarding how the EU will proceed in its recovery process, what additional steps will be taken, and what the outcomes of these steps will be are essential preparatory points for further debates. Moreover, monitoring developments in this area will contribute to diversifying theoretical discussions.

Research Design

Research Objective

This study aims to examine whether the EU's fiscal and institutional responses following the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the implementation of the "Next Generation EU" recovery package, can be considered a

“Hamiltonian moment” comparable to the fiscal transformation led by Alexander Hamilton in early US history. The core research question guiding the analysis is: To what extent does the EU’s crisis-induced fiscal coordination reflect a shift toward deeper federal integration, and can this shift be conceptually compared to the US experience of federal consolidation after the Revolutionary War?

Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative and comparative research methodology, which is frequently employed in political science and European studies to analyze institutional transformations through historical analogy and theory-driven comparison (George & Bennett, 2005; Yin, 2018). Specifically, it relies exclusively on secondary data sources, including peer-reviewed academic publications, historical archives, official EU communications, and policy reports. These sources provide both empirical content and conceptual grounding. The theoretical framework is built upon core debates in federalism theory -particularly classical federalism, functionalism, and neofunctionalism- to interpret institutional developments in the EU. These approaches are not only reviewed conceptually but are systematically operationalized as analytical tools for structured comparison between the EU and US cases. In this context, historical institutionalism and comparative case study design serve as the principal methodological guides (Peters, 2012). The case selection -comparing the EU post-COVID with the US post-revolution- is justified on the basis of analytical parallelism, not historical equivalence, thereby allowing theory-driven insights into the limits and potential of EU federal transformation.

Data Collection Techniques

The research relies exclusively on secondary sources and employs document analysis as the principal data collection method (Bowen, 2009). The materials analyzed include peer-reviewed academic literature on federalism and European integration, historical records concerning the US constitutional and fiscal consolidation process, official communications, reports, and policy evaluations issued by EU institutions such as the European Commission and the European Parliament, as well as policy papers and expert commentaries on the Next Generation EU initiative. These sources collectively provide both conceptual grounding and empirical evidence for the study. The selected documents were examined and categorized based on their relevance to the study’s core analytical dimensions: political will, centralized fiscal authority, and constitutional infrastructure.

Theoretical Framework and Comparative Criteria

To interpret the institutional evolution of the EU, this study incorporates four major theoretical approaches within federalism scholarship: classical federalism, functionalism, neofunctionalism, and liberal intergovernmentalism. Classical federalism, as articulated by Hamilton and his contemporaries (Hamilton et al., 1788), provides the foundational model for analyzing centralized authority and fiscal integration. Functionalism (Mitrany, 1948) and neofunctionalism (Haas, 1968) offer insights into the incremental and sector-based nature of integration, emphasizing how cooperation in specific areas can lead to deeper political unification. Meanwhile, liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik, 2001) frames integration as a product of strategic bargaining among sovereign states, placing emphasis on national interests and treaty-based coordination rather than supranational authority.

These theories are not only addressed in the literature review but also operationalized within the analytical framework of the study. Drawing from these theoretical perspectives, the research employs three key comparative criteria to assess the EU and US cases: the existence of a unified political will, the degree of centralized fiscal authority, and the presence of constitutional supremacy. These dimensions serve as analytical lenses through which institutional capacity for federal transformation is measured.

The comparative analysis proceeds in two stages. The first stage reconstructs the post-revolutionary US experience, with particular focus on the political and fiscal strategies pursued by Alexander Hamilton to consolidate federal authority. The second stage examines the EU’s fiscal innovations in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic using the same criteria. This two-step structure allows for a nuanced, context-sensitive evaluation

of whether the EU's recent policy developments signal a deeper structural shift or represent provisional mechanisms consistent with an intergovernmental logic.

By explicitly outlining the analytical categories and the stepwise structure of the comparison, this methodology addresses the question raised by one of the reviewers: "What is the method behind the comparison between the US and the EU?" In this context, the methodology provides both the conceptual basis and the operational steps for interpreting the EU's fiscal developments within a historically grounded federalist framework.

This framework also establishes a logical transition to the next section, "COVID-19 and the "Hamiltonian Moment", where the empirical application of these criteria is carried out. The post-pandemic policy environment in the EU is examined not in isolation, but as part of a broader inquiry into whether functional crisis responses can generate federal-like institutional outcomes in the absence of a founding political moment.

Alexander Hamilton and Federalism

Before delving into Alexander Hamilton and the debates surrounding federalism, it is essential to discuss the significant developments that led to the founding of the US. Britain's influence in North America began in the early 17th century with the arrival of British settlers. As Britain's dominance in the region increased, tensions grew among the American colonies. In this context, British-imposed taxes and economic pressures between 1763 and 1765 led to the "Boston Tea Party" uprising in 1773, reflecting colonial resistance to British rule. Subsequently, colonial representatives, including Hamilton, convened in Philadelphia in 1774. Following brief conflicts, the Declaration of Independence was signed on 4 July 1776, securing the independence and sovereignty of 13 states, which then united under the Articles of Confederation (Hatipoğlu, 2013).

A. Hamilton is regarded as one of the founding fathers of the US. During the challenging post-revolutionary period, he earned prominence by building key institutions and introducing governance reforms. Hamilton was committed to establishing a strong state mechanism. Appointed Secretary of the Treasury on 11 September 1789, Hamilton emphasized that a nation's economic strength was critical to inspiring confidence in the international system (Murray, 2007). Hamilton's first task assigned by Congress was to prepare and report on public credit. Given his role in drafting the Constitution, Hamilton is recognized as one of its principal architects (Speer, 1906). Additionally, Hamilton aimed to introduce radical economic measures. In this context, he announced that the federal government would assume the war debts of all 13 states. This decision sparked intense debate in Congress (Mayer & Whalen, 2020). At that time, due to the prolonged repayment schedules, approximately 70% of the national debt was managed by the federal government (Edling & Kaplanoff, 2004).

John Jay was another proponent of federalism alongside Hamilton. Jay argued that government was indispensable and highlighted the debate over whether the American people should unite under a single federal government or a confederation model (Hamilton, et al., 1788). Hamilton implemented a series of reforms to promote the idea of a strong executive branch (Coşkun & Dulkadiroğlu, 2018). Following the economic exhaustion caused by the Revolutionary War, the US had to make swift decisions to stabilize its economy. At the time, states carried varying levels of debt, leading to heated debates in Congress. The US also owed debts to France and other nations. In response, the US established a national currency and accelerated its production. The creation of the Bank of the US marked the beginning of state-building efforts (Whimster, 2010). Hamilton's reforms, particularly in finance, are widely regarded as revolutionary. Measures such as restructuring post-war debts, the federal assumption of state debts, and establishing a national bank were pivotal at the time. Consequently, Congress gained control over revenue management and assumed full responsibility for debt payments. The federal government relieved states of their financial burdens (Georgiou, 2021).

The establishment of a national bank played a crucial role in revitalizing trade in both the public and private sectors. Industrialists increased investments, and the agricultural sector experienced growth. National prosperity improved with the establishment of the bank (Frieden, 2016). Hamilton's main rival in this period was Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson was an advocate of free democracy. Jefferson supported farmers against the rising capitalist and banking elite that gained influence alongside Hamilton (Manioğlu, 2021). Hamilton's emphasis on a strong Constitution and critique of confederation governance initiated a transformation that extended to economic reforms. He criticized the loose economic and political organization of the states, advocating for structural changes. While he deemed constitutional reforms insufficient, the changes implemented during that

period were considered radical. Although the federal assumption of state debts appeared controversial, it ultimately reinforced the central authority of the federal government.

Federalism and the EU

Beyond Alexander Hamilton's model in the US, it is crucial to analyze federalism as a broader concept and the perspectives of federalist advocates within the EU. Federalism entails a governance structure organized at multiple levels, facilitating cooperation among administrative units to achieve shared goals. Such frameworks require negotiation mechanisms to build consensus among these units. A central issue within this structure involves decision-making processes, particularly the principle of conferral. Questions about the distribution of power between central and regional authorities, as well as decision-making modalities, are critical. Moreover, control over coercive instruments is another significant consideration (Arisoy, 2010). In his work "American Commonwealth" Lord Bryce describes the federal government and federated units as "distinct and separate in their action" (Rath, 1978). To maintain a balance of authority, constitutions incorporate rigid provisions that are difficult to amend (Livingston, 1952). This arrangement also entails negotiations between the states and Congress on various issues (Derthick, 1989).

The US Constitution enabled a centralized fiscal authority that could override state interests when necessary. In contrast, the EU lacks such a foundational legal framework with supremacy in fiscal matters, which limits the durability and depth of its federal initiatives. Federalism requires a clear constitutional delineation of responsibilities and authority between federal and federated units. In the US context, this delineation was achieved through a comprehensive constitutional convention, whereas the EU lacks a single constitutional text that clearly defines federal authority. This fundamental difference highlights a core limitation in applying Hamiltonian principles to the EU setting.

Political consciousness is pivotal, demanding that both the federal government and federated units possess the will to establish such a system. Without consensus and unity, implementing this system becomes challenging. This challenge is evident in the EU where diverging national interests often hinder the formation of a unified fiscal and political structure. Unlike the post-revolutionary American states, which sought unity under economic duress, EU member states retain strong commitments to national sovereignty, complicating efforts toward Hamiltonian-style integration. In this model, neither the federal government nor the federated states have overarching authority over each other, relying instead on dual layers of governance with the Constitution as the foundation.

The role of federalism in the EU's integration process remains a subject of debate. The EU represents a dynamic and evolving structure, serving as a unique example of regional integration. Intense debates and major crises have shaped this process. Since the Treaties of Paris and Rome, discussions have focused on a "strong and deep Europe" versus a "flexible Europe". Consequently, debates on federalism and confederalism have frequently resurfaced. Federalists advocate for the partial transfer of sovereignty from nation-states to a supranational authority, thereby strengthening EU institutions with centralized powers (Sunay, 2006). Federalists have traditionally opposed centralized, authoritarian nation-state structures, while confederalists have criticized federalists for being overly idealistic (Bóka, 2006).

David Mitrany's views on federalism, particularly his emphasis on functionalism, are central to these debates. Mitrany recognizes federalism's unifying potential but highlights its restrictive aspects. He argues that regional authorities with equal status possess clearly defined powers and functions, protected by a rigid constitution (Mitrany, 1948). Mitrany identifies three types of political formations: international organizations like the League of Nations and the United Nations, federal systems such as the US, and functionalist arrangements, which he prefers. While acknowledging federalism's advantages, Mitrany critiques its rigidity, as well as its geographical and ideological constraints. He suggests that growing interactions among states could lead to global federation but rejects regional federalism. Comparing the US, the United Kingdom (UK), and Federal Europe, Mitrany praises the US for its deliberate construction and the UK for its strong traditions but questions Pan-Europe's foundational values, arguing that 19th-century nationalism prioritized differentiation over unity (Alexandrescu, 2007). Mitrany favors international organizations with functional mandates to promote peace and prosperity, asserting that success in one area would inspire similar efforts elsewhere (Mercan, 2011).

Federalists within the EU counter criticisms by citing historical developments. They highlight the rise of oppressive regimes and weak international law during the interwar period, which exacerbated instability. In this context, Ortega y Gasset questioned why states embraced nationalism rather than uniting under federalism. Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, leader of the “Pan-European Movement” supported constitutional federalism as a safeguard against fascism and Stalinism. Advocates of constitutional federalism emphasized human rights, autonomy, and international law. They argued for dismantling oppressive regimes and strengthening economic ties among states. Preferring Switzerland’s federal model over the US model, they believed the nation-state model, seen as a source of conflict, should be replaced by supranational institutions (Bóka, 2006). Federalists criticized nation-states for inadequately protecting citizens’ rights, proposing a European parliament to draft a constitution and a referendum to involve citizens (Rosamond, 2000).

Andrew Moravcsik describes the EU as a weak federation due to its limited budget, lack of coercive power, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and complex decision-making. He argues that these constraints prevent the EU from functioning as a traditional federation (Moravcsik, 2001). This supports the argument that without an empowered fiscal authority -similar to what Hamilton achieved through the US Treasury- the EU’s collective financial actions are often reactive and fragmented. The absence of a unified constitutional core reinforces the confederal rather than federal nature of the Union. Moravcsik claims that the EU’s structure is not suitable for federalism. Considering federal system worldwide, he assesses the possibility of federalism in the EU as weak.

Moravcsik’s theory of liberal intergovernmentalism explains the EU’s enlargement process as an intergovernmental bargaining dynamic based on unanimous decision-making among member states. In the context of Eastern enlargement, Moravcsik emphasizes that candidate countries were relatively weaker actors during negotiations. The primary factors shaping member states’ national preferences include geographical proximity, cross-border trade relations, and capital flows. Consequently, states bordering Central and Eastern European countries tend to place greater importance on the economic development of these regions. Accordingly, the support provided by southern European countries such as France, Italy, and Greece for the accession of Bulgaria, Romania, and other Southeastern European states can be understood in terms of anticipated economic benefits arising from mutual interdependence. Although the exact motivations behind all national preferences may not be fully explained, the fundamental driving force behind the enlargement process appears to be the varying levels of expected gains derived from interdependence among member states (Aytuğ, 2018).

Federalism ultimately requires the partial relinquishment of national sovereignty; therefore, the likelihood of member state governments retreating from federalism is considerably lower during periods of economic prosperity. Conversely, in times of global recession and international economic turbulence, member states tend to turn inward and prioritize national interests, which in turn reduces the popularity of federalist initiatives. Since the foundation of the EU, none of the states that have joined the Union have explicitly viewed it as a federalist project. Instead, their motivations for accession have predominantly been driven by economic interests and the desire for political recognition at the international level. Most of the current and prospective member states, both in practice and in principle, appear to support intergovernmental cooperation rather than a federal integration model (Miles & Redmond, 1996).

French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, in his declaration of 9 May 1950, emphasized the necessity of European unity. Advocating gradual integration, Schuman proposed pooling coal and steel production as the foundation for a European federation (Burgess, 2000). His vision underscored the creation of a supranational structure leading to political union. Ernst B. Haas argued that, in the aftermath of World War II, European nation-states were unable to effectively address emerging challenges, prompting the search for alternative governance models. Although efforts to establish a federal system in Europe did not initially succeed, Haas emphasized that Jean Monnet’s principles laid a crucial foundation for promoting peace and prosperity in the region (Haas, 1968).

Haas identified certain prerequisites for European integration. According to him, these include the establishment of a pluralistic framework, economic development, the adoption of a shared ideological objective, and the implementation of parliamentary democracy. Haas also asserted that achieving these minimum conditions would pave the way for integration, ultimately leading to the emergence of a new political order (Köksoy, 2020). However, these conditions -particularly the presence of a shared ideological objective and

parliamentary democracy- were fulfilled in the US federal founding process but remain contested and uneven across EU member states today. This weakens the analogy to Hamilton's experience.

The perspective of Haas is commonly referred to as Neofunctionalism in the academic literature. He developed this theory by building upon David Mitrany's functionalism and Jean Monnet's principles. Neofunctionalism posits that political unification within the EU necessitates initial economic integration. In this regard, Haas argued that eliminating trade barriers and enhancing industrial productivity among member states would be insufficient, highlighting instead the need for the creation of a common market (Haas, 1961). Through his theory of neofunctionalism, Haas predicted that integration would gain momentum over time. Consequently, he distanced himself from federalist perspectives, asserting that Europe was unlikely to evolve into such a system. Haas emphasized that budgeting is a critical aspect of federalism. For instance, examining the budget of the US illustrates this point clearly. Maintaining such a structure requires a substantial financial foundation to ensure its sustainability.

In addition to addressing the historical debates on federalism within the EU, it is also essential to examine another development as significant as the COVID-19 pandemic: the UK's decision to leave the EU, which was made through the 2016 Brexit referendum and was implemented in practice in 2020. Throughout its EU membership, the UK maintained strong structural safeguards and employed them when deemed necessary. For instance, between 2011 and 2016, the UK vetoed a proposed increase in the budget of the European Defense Agency in order to limit EU expenditures. In another case, the UK government reacted against a policy initiative led by the European Central Bank (ECB) and supported by Germany and France, which aimed to develop a monetary strategy involving euro-denominated swap transactions to ensure that the circulation of money remained within the eurozone. In response, the UK brought the matter before the European Court of Justice, relying on the EU's legal framework. The Court ruled that the proposed plan violated the rules of the Single Market and decided in favor of the UK. As these examples suggest, the UK's inclination to pursue more inward-looking policies and its active use of the EU's structural and judicial safeguard mechanisms were among the significant factors that contributed to the eventual divergence between the UK and the EU (Glencross, 2020).

Brexit represents one of the rare political events that has triggered a profound structural transformation. In the post-Brexit period, the UK has sought to redefine its trajectory by departing from the policy frameworks it had adhered to for over four decades. (Dudley & Gamble, 2023). However, in the aftermath of the Brexit process, the UK has witnessed increasing tensions between central and local authorities, largely stemming from challenges associated with centralized governance (Diamond, 2023). On the other hand, Brexit has been evaluated by some commentators as a development that could potentially harm the EU. It would be misleading to regard the UK -which withdrew from the EU- as an ordinary member state, given that it was the third most populous country among member states and the second-largest economy in terms of gross domestic product and budget contributions. Moreover, the UK is one of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The departure of such a significant actor from the Union has raised concerns regarding a potential economic downturn and a decline in the EU's geopolitical influence. In addition, some scholars have argued that the UK's withdrawal may trigger similar tendencies in other member states. Indeed, in the aftermath of Brexit, the so-called "Frugal Four" -Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and the Netherlands- have intensified their opposition to further fiscal integration (Schelkle, et al., 2024).

In recent years, the EU has witnessed increasingly intense debates on the rule of law, particularly with regard to Hungary and Poland. Following the rise to power of the radical right-wing Fidesz party in Hungary in 2010, EU institutions have assessed that policies implemented in the country conflict with the Union's core values, particularly in the areas of democracy and the rule of law. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's conservative and nationalist rhetoric, governance approach emphasizing Hungarian cultural identity, and policies affecting judicial independence have drawn significant criticism at the EU level. In this context, in 2018, the EU launched proceedings under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union, aiming to suspend Hungary's voting rights in the Council. The Orbán government, in turn, has viewed the EU's rule of law mechanisms as an intrusion into national interests. Furthermore, following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, Hungary has repeatedly threatened to veto critical EU foreign policy decisions requiring unanimity. This stance has disrupted the EU's decision-making processes and led to significant controversy, particularly in light of Hungary's perceived alignment with Russia. According to EU law, when a member state is found to be systematically

violating the fundamental values of the Union, sanctions may be imposed, including the suspension of voting rights in the Council. Within this framework, as of January 2025, the EU has withheld €1 billion in funds previously committed to Hungary in 2022 (Müller & Slominski, 2025; Rasquinho, 2025).

The COVID-19 pandemic coincided with Brexit, deepening the EU’s political and economic fragility. Far from moving toward federalization, the Union has struggled even to preserve its confederal structure. The UK’s departure, rule of law backsliding in Hungary, and growing resistance to fiscal integration among member states have revealed the limits of EU solidarity. These developments demonstrate that the EU remains structurally and politically distant from a true federal system.

Tablo 1. A Systematic Comparison between the US and the EU in the Context of the “Hamiltonian Moment”

Analytical Criteria	US (Post-Revolution)	EU (Post-COVID-19)
1. Unified Political Will	A shared national identity and political unity emerged after the Revolutionary War; the 13 states voluntarily transferred powers to a central authority to ensure stability and cohesion.	Member states retain strong national sovereignty; political will is fragmented. Solidarity is often conditional, driven by short-term national interests rather than collective vision.
2. Centralized Fiscal Authority	Hamilton implemented federal assumption of state debts, introduced a national bank, and centralized tax and debt mechanisms under federal control.	The EU introduced the “Next Generation EU” plan as a temporary measure. Debt issuance is collective, but fiscal powers remain largely within national governments.
3. Constitutional Supremacy	The US Constitution clearly defined federal authority; the supremacy clause granted the central government power over states in key domains, including fiscal and monetary policy.	The EU lacks a single constitutional document. Its treaty-based legal structure prevents the creation of a centralized fiscal union. There is no supremacy in economic decision-making.

Note: Building on the observations summarized in Table 1, the following section further examines whether the EU’s post-COVID-19 fiscal response constitutes a structurally transformative moment or continues to function as a provisional mechanism primarily influenced by intergovernmental dynamics.

COVID-19 and the “Hamiltonian Moment”

Since economic cooperation and the common market were at the forefront of the EU’s foundation, health issues were not initially a primary area of focus. However, throughout its historical development, the EU has sought to introduce treaties supporting member states’ actions in the protection and improvement of public health. Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that the EU shall ensure a high level of human health protection in all its policies. It also emphasizes that member states will be supported and that their health policies will be respected. Within this framework, developments related to health within the EU have largely been left to the discretion of member states (Oğurlu, 2022).

Each EU member state has its own distinct health system. Therefore, the EU does not possess the authority to construct a common health policy. In cases of an epidemics or urgent health-related issues, member states would need to delegate authority to the EU to enable collective action. Despite the absence of such a transfer of authority, member states often require the support of EU institutions during crises (Akdoğan et al., 2020). At times, member states have adopted competing health policies in response to the scientific and administrative recommendations proposed by the EU (Alemanno, 2020). The EU’s role in health policy remains ambiguous. While it assumes responsibility for supporting member states’ health policies, it lacks independent authority in this area (Greer, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic placed the EU in an exceptionally challenging situation. By the end of February 2020, Italy requested medical equipment from other member states but received no support. In addition, countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany began to impose export controls on medical supplies. These controls were lifted in Germany under pressure from the European Commission. Nevertheless, confidence in the EU had already begun to wane in Italy (Schelkle, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic pushed many countries worldwide into economic and political hardship. States prepared economic recovery packages to mitigate the effects of economic difficulties. The repercussions of the pandemic continued even after its conclusion. The EU was among the most severely affected. To alleviate the impacts of the pandemic, the EU announced the implementation of an economic recovery package in 2020. The recovery package, titled *“The Next Generation EU”* aimed to reduce the economic difficulties faced by member states. A massive budget of 750 billion euros was allocated, to be utilized between 2021 and 2027. The plan not only aimed to help the EU weather the pandemic with minimal damage but also supported long-term strategies (Bagalà & Partners, 2021).

Some details of this package are particularly striking. Member states are not expected to contribute directly to funding this large-scale economic recovery package. Instead, the EU will issue debt in financial markets on its own behalf. Under this plan, borrowing will not be undertaken individually by states but collectively by the EU, which assumes the debt itself (Díaz, 2021). Although reminiscent of Hamilton’s assumption of state debts in 1790, the EU’s collective borrowing was designed as a crisis instrument rather than a structural reform. Without turning such temporary mechanisms into permanent institutional features, the EU cannot replicate the Hamiltonian leap toward federation. While previous EU practices gave the impression of lacking explicit spending authority, the Next Generation EU recovery package has been interpreted as a sign of transformation (Van Malleghem, 2023). Although the issuance of collective debt was considered a significant change, it lacked the political momentum and institutional restructuring that accompanied Hamilton’s reforms in the US. By contrast, Hamilton’s plan was backed by a clear federal mandate and a centralized authority with the power to act decisively – a condition that is largely absent in the EU.

During the implementation of the economic recovery package, member states formed various groupings and adopted differing positions. In this context, the so-called “Frugal Four” – a group that generally supported the idea of an EU-level recovery fund, but insisted that it remain limited in size and be provided only in the form of loans to member states – explicitly opposed any form of joint borrowing. Throughout the process, they sought to play an active and influential role in shaping the outcome (Becker, 2025). According to the economic recovery package, the EU has undertaken supranational debt. This approach could, in the long term, enhance integration within the banking sector and capital markets across Europe. Political forces and institutional structures played an active role in developing this plan. On 18 May 2020, Germany and France initially proposed the plan. Subsequently, on 27 May 2020, the European Commission adopted it as a recommendation, and finally, on 21 July 2020, the European Council announced its agreement on the plan. Following this announcement, the value of the euro increased in markets, and there were comments suggesting that integration within the EU would strengthen further (Bank of Spain, 2020).

Many commentators viewed this development as both a political and economic innovation for the EU. It was also accepted by other EU member states that the European Commission could utilize a significant budget in exceptional circumstances. Some commentators even described this development as the EU’s “Hamiltonian moment.” This expression first gained attention in 2011 when Paul Volcker, appointed to Barack Obama’s Economic Recovery Advisory Board, used it. Subsequently, many commentators adopted this phrase to emphasize Alexander Hamilton’s 1790 fiscal and financial policies. While the United States operates at a federal level, the EU assumes fiscal responsibilities at a supranational level. This difference is not merely terminological, but structural. Hamilton’s reforms created a permanent shift in fiscal authority toward the federal center, whereas the EU’s supranational mechanisms remain contingent and temporary, subject to intergovernmental negotiation and treaty limitations. Advocates of federalism within the EU view the European Commission’s recovery package as a “Hamiltonian moment.” However, integrating the historical processes of the US and the EU into a single framework remains highly challenging (Kempf, 2023). While the comparison between Hamilton’s historical reforms and the EU’s post-pandemic fiscal response is conceptually appealing, this study argues that the structural conditions that enabled Hamilton’s success are largely absent in the EU context. Hamilton operated within a newly independent political system that was actively seeking centralization and

cohesion. In contrast, the EU remains a union of sovereign states with divergent political will, fiscal capacity, and constitutional authority.

An unprecedented economic plan was implemented in the EU's integration process. Under this approach, member states would collectively, rather than individually, borrow from the EU. In the long term, member states are expected to place greater emphasis on tax policies to generate new financial resources. Some political analysts argue that increased taxation will also bring enhanced political power and control (Díaz, 2021). Others believe this massive budget will further strengthen solidarity. It has been noted that the EU initially failed to fully grasp the situation and adopt effective fiscal policies during the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis. However, subsequent emergency and decisive measures led to the creation of this plan (Vinci, 2020). Thanks to the economic recovery package implemented after the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU provided substantial financial assistance to its member states. The primary goal was to maintain economic stability across the Union. As a result, public investment levels did not decline in many countries; in fact, some even recorded increases (European Commission, 2024). In addition, following the European Parliament's decision in June 2023, a number of strategic goals were set. These included boosting public investment in healthcare infrastructure, implementing monitoring frameworks to track emerging health risks, performing resilience assessments of national health systems, improving accountability in joint procurement procedures, promoting the EU's strategic independence in producing essential pharmaceuticals and active ingredients, and advancing a long-term vision for health system sustainability (European Parliament, 2023).

While these developments may appear to signal a deeper level of fiscal integration within the EU, this study argues that they remain primarily reactive and limited in scope. The decision to implement a collective borrowing mechanism, although historically significant, was largely framed as a one-off response to an extraordinary crisis rather than a structural shift toward fiscal union. The absence of binding commitments to institutionalize joint taxation or establish a permanent EU treasury indicates that political will for long-term federal transformation remains fragmented.

The implementation of this plan is expected to lead to significant changes in the EU's institutional perspective. Throughout its integration process, the EU has often treated each crisis as an opportunity to learn lessons and deepen cooperation. Previously proposals for the EU to issue debt and bonds were rejected by countries such as Germany; however, this approach was revived during the pandemic. The leadership shown by Germany and France in advancing the plan underscores the importance of solidarity and cooperation in the integration process. With this plan, grants were also allocated to member states that were severely affected by the pandemic and already facing economic difficulties. Yet, the fact that the proposal originated from two dominant national governments rather than a central supranational authority again illustrates a key difference with Hamilton's top-down federalism model, in which the federal center was empowered to act independently of state governments. Political analysts and EU researchers have since drawn comparisons between this plan and the financial reforms introduced by Alexander Hamilton in 1790 in the United States. While those reforms paved the way for American federalism, the historical and economic contexts of the EU and the US differ significantly. The announced recovery package does not aim to establish a full fiscal union, though it is expected to further deepen integration. It is hoped that these developments will prompt the European Parliament to adopt a more democratic and transparent approach. Additionally, through this plan, the European Commission, which has taken on significant responsibilities, provides considerable advantages for institutional investors through its bond issuance (Asmussen, 2020).

Still, unlike the US Congress, which gained full legislative and fiscal competence in the wake of Hamilton's reforms, the European Parliament lacks equivalent powers. As a result, democratic oversight in the EU remains institutionally limited and politically dispersed. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, channels for dialogue and cooperation among EU member states remained open, particularly during the negotiations and discussions that led to the formulation of the economic recovery package. However, considering the established federal system in the United States, questioning whether a similar system can be implemented within the EU risks drawing misleading conclusions, as the two entities operate under fundamentally different variables and conditions.

The statement made by the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs regarding the recovery package is particularly significant. He emphasized that the term "joint responsibility" should be used instead of "mutual debt" when

discussing the economic recovery measures. All EU member states bear both economic and political obligations towards one another. During this pandemic, the economic challenges faced by severely affected countries also had repercussions for other member states (Díaz, 2021). In this sense, the EU can be likened to a ship: damage to any part of the vessel poses a threat to everyone on board. Adopting such a holistic perspective may facilitate the development of common solutions.

Some scholars argue that the economic recovery package introduced in response to COVID-19 should pave the way for the uninterrupted advancement of the EU's fiscal integration process and ultimately lead to the establishment of a fiscal union, enabling the Union to develop a more homogeneous economic policy framework. These commentators acknowledge that the adoption of the recovery package represents an important step; however, they also stress that it is insufficient. They contend that if the EU Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) continues to rely primarily on market-supervision-oriented policies, the EU will be unable to overcome its fragile economic outlook. At this point, it is emphasized that supporting a common monetary policy alone will not resolve the issues; rather, the adoption of a shared fiscal policy is essential. Accordingly, these scholars advocate for comprehensive reforms and the implementation of a genuine "Hamiltonian" model (Celi, Guarascio & Simonazzi, 2020).

According to this perspective, during the pandemic, the EU focused primarily on temporary measures to address financial difficulties rather than implementing permanent solutions. Consequently, it avoided undertaking structural reforms. The EU's bond issuance has also raised questions about how it will manage financial settlements with member states in the future. Therefore, it is argued that the EU must adopt radical reforms to effectively address its financial challenges. The pandemic has once again underscored the importance of institutional structures within the EU. Throughout this period, the legitimacy of these institutions has been re-evaluated by EU actors (Tesche, 2021). One of the most significant outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic within the EU has been the renewed emphasis on the value of supranational institutions.

Jean Monnet made a striking observation regarding crises in the EU. According to Monnet, Europe advances through the solutions it devises in response to crises. The problems that arise within the EU ultimately serve to strengthen it further. This perspective should not be limited to economic crises alone; political crises are also fundamental drivers of progress. From this viewpoint, the COVID-19 pandemic can be evaluated within this framework. The EU's decision to allocate a budget of 750 billion euros, with the provision that these funds would be distributed to EU member states in the form of grants or loans, can be seen as an unprecedented measure in the Union's history.

The question that arises here is whether the EU can adapt the "Hamiltonian moment"—a framework implemented in the United States—to its own circumstances. If a genuine fiscal and political union is desired, the necessary conditions must be fulfilled. To date, the tendency of member states' parliaments to act in a non-transparent manner and to deviate from a coherent course must be addressed. Another significant lesson the EU can draw from the "Hamiltonian" model is the creation of a common defense policy. EU leaders need to recognize that political integration is not solely dependent on economic recovery packages and debt unification (Issing, 2020: 17).

At the time when the "Hamiltonian moment" was implemented in the United States, there was a conscious and determined desire to achieve political unity. This aspiration was translated into action, ultimately leading to the adoption of a federal organizational model. Some scholars suggest that the EU has been progressing toward its own "Hamiltonian moment" since 2010. This interpretation reflects a primarily a political perspective.

Despite differences in conditions and processes regarding the assumption of debts, certain similarities are noted. In both cases, investors began to perceive public debt as safer and more stable. However, the parallels between the EU and the United States largely end there, and the differences are considerably more pronounced. In the United States, Hamilton granted the federal government full authority to control public finance. He then utilized this authority to implement radical reforms in the financial system. By contrast, the EU has refrained from undertaking structural reforms. In summary, while a drawing comparison between the United States and the EU in the context of the "Hamiltonian moment" may be politically useful, it remains highly inadequate as an analytical framework (Georgiou, 2021).

The economic recovery package introduced by the EU aimed to centralize more financial resources. However, it has become evident during the implementation process that the resources allocated to Italy and Spain were quite limited. Northern EU member states demonstrated reluctance to provide more substantial assistance to their southern member counterparts. Rather than achieving genuine fiscal union, the COVID-19 pandemic has, in fact, exacerbated the economic disparities between the northern and southern countries of the EU (Sobel, 2020). Until the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, Germany had stood out as a strict adherent to fiscal austerity policies during periods of crisis. However, in the aftermath of the pandemic, Germany markedly shifted its position by supporting the EU's debt issuance policies (De la Porte & Jensen, 2021).

Conclusion

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, states sought various solutions to address the political and economical challenges they faced. Within the EU, the pandemic had particularly disruptive effects on countries such as Italy, prompting EU institutions to focus on developing economic models aimed at mitigating the ensuing crisis. Prior to COVID-19, the concept of a "Hamiltonian Moment" had not gained significant traction in EU discourse. However, much like other economies around the world, the EU economy was severely impacted by the pandemic, compelling the Union to adopt economic policies it had not previously refrained from implementing. In this context, the idea of managing debt collectively at the EU level-, an issue long debated but never fully realized- resurfaced and was ultimately put into practice. Member states that had previously resisted such a mechanism were compelled to reconsider their positions due to the gravity of the situation. The system introduced by Alexander Hamilton in the United States in the late 18th century yielded positive results in a relatively short period, despite facing considerable opposition at the time. Similarly, the EU's recovery plan has sparked both support and criticism. Detractors argue that it lacks the structural and political foundations necessary to replicate a true "Hamiltonian Moment" often expressing strong reservations about the Union's current institutional capacity.

The criticism regarding the lack of transparency in national parliaments is particularly noteworthy. Some observers contend that the newly announced package is largely symbolic and fails to address the underlying causes of the EU's economic challenges. Introducing structural reforms into the EU's economic governance framework represents a complex and demanding undertaking. Nevertheless, the implementation of such an ambitious recovery package during a period of severe crisis was a highly significant development. While, it has been widely acknowledged that a direct replication of Hamiltonian reforms the EU is difficult, but once the necessary conditions have been established - namely, the consolidation of both the economic and political foundations - the prospect of approaching a genuine "Hamiltonian moment" could become more realistic.

While the exact replication of the American model may not be feasible, a version adapted to the unique characteristics of the EU could potentially be constructed in the future. However, this study also recognizes that historical trajectories are neither linear nor inherently replicable. The EU may gradually develop its own variant of fiscal union -functionally similar to Hamilton's vision but institutionally unique. This points to the possibility "European-style federalism" emerging not through a constitutional revolution, but rather through incremental, crisis-induced integration. In fact, achieving such a transformation would require a profound redefinition of sovereignty and the cultivation of a collective political identity capable of laying the groundwork for a fiscal and political union comparable to that established in the early United States. Absent these conditions, the Hamiltonian analogy risks serving primarily as a rhetorical device rather than a functional guide for integration. However, such adaptation would necessitate a much deeper level of political consensus than currently exists among EU member states.

Hamilton's reforms succeeded because they emerged from a shared national vision forged through revolution and common debt. In contrast, the EU, continues to grapple with foundational questions of political identity, democratic legitimacy, and institutional authority, rendering a true Hamiltonian transformation difficult to achieve. Crisis periods such as COVID-19 pandemic encompass both opportunities and conflict. Economic disparities among EU member states become more pronounced during crises, and economically weaker countries often face criticism.

Ultimately, this study suggests that the EU is unlikely to experience a genuine “Hamiltonian Moment” comparable to that of the early United States. While crisis-driven fiscal mechanisms, such as the Next Generation EU package, demonstrate a degree of solidarity, they fall short of fulfilling the structural conditions required for federal transformation. This conclusion is grounded in the conceptual criteria outlined earlier - namely, the absence of a unified political will, constitutional supremacy, centralized fiscal authority, and a strong collective identity among EU member states. These missing elements significantly constrain the EU’s capacity to evolve into a federal union, distinguishing its trajectory from that shaped by Hamilton’s reforms in the American context. In this respect, the Union remains institutionally and politically situated within the boundaries of intergovernmentalism, despite occasionally adopting federal-like features during crises.

Looking ahead, this study suggests that unless institutional reforms addressing political fragmentation, fiscal sovereignty, and legal constraints are undertaken, the EU is unlikely to transcend its confederal logic. However, if future crises continue to require unified fiscal responses, a gradual convergence towards a functional federal structure may still occur, though this would be achieved through incremental adaptation rather than a constitutional breakthrough. While this study does not claim to predict institutional outcomes definitively, it proposes the following possible scenarios for the long term evolution of EU fiscal governance: (1) a reversion to strict intergovernmentalism as temporary recovery mechanisms expire; (2) the continuation of hybrid arrangements characterized by increased coordination without formal federalization; or (3) the emergence of a deeper fiscal union prompted by future systemic crises and growing public support.

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I hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

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The study was conducted and reported by a researcher.

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Ethics committee approval was not obtained for this study because I declare as the responsible author that this study is one of the studies that does not require ethics committee approval.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

COVID-19 salgını, Avrupa Birliği (AB) için hem ekonomik hem de siyasi açıdan önemli zorluklar ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu makale, AB'nin salgın sürecinde karşılaştığı bu zorlukları ele alarak, krizden çıkış için geliştirilen politikaları ve özellikle “Hamiltoncu yaklaşım (Hamiltonian moment)” olarak adlandırılan yaklaşımı incelemektedir. Pandeminin başlangıcında, AB üye devletlerinin sağlık sistemlerinde ciddi bir koordinasyon eksikliği yaşanmıştır. İtalya gibi bazı ülkeler, tıbbi malzeme desteği talep etmiş ancak yeterli yanıt alamamıştır. Bunun sonucunda, AB'ye duyulan güven zedelenmiştir.

COVID-19 salgını ile beraber, AB içerisindeki fikir ayrılıklarının arttığı görülmektedir. Bundan dolayı, üye devletlerin kendi başlarına hareket etme eğilimleri, AB'nin birlik ve dayanışma ilkelerini sarsmıştır. Ekonomik açıdan ise salgın, ciddi bir durgunluğa yol açmıştır. Bu süreci yönetebilmek amacıyla AB, “Next Generation EU” adlı bir ekonomik kurtarma paketi oluşturmuştur. 750 milyar Euro'luk bu paket, üye ülkelerin ekonomik kayıplarını telafi etmeyi ve gelecekteki büyümeyi desteklemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Paket kapsamında, AB ortak borçlanma yoluna gitmiş ve bu durum, AB'nin mali yapısında önemli bir dönüşümün başlangıcı olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bu adımlar, AB'nin kriz yönetimi yeteneklerini geliştirirken, gelecekte daha fazla merkezileşme ihtimalini de artırmıştır. AB'nin bu krizden ders çıkararak daha dayanıklı yapılar oluşturması gerektiği vurgulanmaktadır.

Makale, ABD'nin 18. yüzyıldaki mali reformlarını gerçekleştiren Alexander Hamilton'un çalışmalarını da ele almaktadır. Hamilton, ABD'nin mali sistemi için federal düzeyde bir model oluşturmuş, eyaletlerin borçlarını merkezi hükümetin üstlenmesini sağlamıştır. Bu reformlar, ABD'de merkezi yönetimin güçlenmesine ve ekonomik istikrarın sağlanmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Hamilton, federal yönetimin güçlü bir ekonomik sistem inşa etmesinin, uluslararası güveni artıracığını savunmuş ve bu doğrultuda radikal değişiklikler yapmıştır. Hamilton, bu değişiklikleri yaparken, eleştirilere de maruz kalmıştır.

Hamilton'un reformları, kriz dönemlerinde güçlü merkezi yönetimlerin önemini ortaya koymuştur. AB'nin COVID-19 sonrası uygulamaya koyduğu ekonomik kurtarma planı da bu modele benzetilmiştir. Ancak AB'nin federal bir yapıya geçişinin, üye devletlerin farklı siyasi ve ekonomik çıkarları nedeniyle daha karmaşık olduğu belirtilmiştir. AB'nin Hamilton modeli doğrultusunda reformlar yaparak, krizleri fırsata çevirebilmesi ve dayanıklılığını artırması gerektiği tartışılmaktadır.

Federalizm, farklı yönetim düzeylerinin tek bir merkezi otorite altında birleştiği bir yönetim modelidir. AB'de federalizmi destekleyenler, merkezi bir yapının krizlere daha hızlı yanıt verebileceğini savunmaktadır. Buna karşın, federalizm karşıtları, AB'nin mevcut yapısının federalizme uyumlu olmadığını, çünkü üye devletlerin egemenliklerinden vazgeçmeye istekli olmadıklarını öne sürmektedir.

Federalistler, özellikle kriz dönemlerinde merkezi bir otoritenin güçlendirilmesinin AB'nin geleceği açısından kritik olduğunu belirtmektedir. Buna karşılık, bazı uzmanlar AB'nin sınırlı bütçesi ve karar alma süreçlerindeki karmaşıklık nedeniyle gerçek bir federasyon olamayacağını savunmaktadır. Federalizm yanlıları, ortak mali ve siyasi politikaların AB'nin uzun vadeli istikrarını güçlendireceğini savunurken, bu yaklaşımı eleştirenler bu modelin üye devletlerin bağımsızlıklarına zarar vereceğini düşünmektedir.

AB, pandemi sırasında ekonomik toparlanmayı desteklemek için kolektif borçlanma modelini benimsemiştir. Bu yaklaşım, AB'nin federalizme bir adım daha yaklaştığı şeklinde yorumlanmıştır. Ancak bu durum, bazı üye devletler arasında ekonomik eşitsizlikleri artırabileceği endişesini de beraberinde getirmiştir. Salgın sonrası alınan ekonomik tedbirler, AB'nin gelecekte krizlere karşı daha dirençli bir yapı oluşturma potansiyelini ortaya koymuştur. Kurtarma paketinin finansmanı, AB adına ortak borçlanma yoluyla sağlanmıştır. Bu model, uzun vadede bankacılık ve mali piyasaların entegrasyonunu artırma potansiyeline sahiptir. Ayrıca, AB'nin mali gücünü artırarak ekonomik ve siyasi yapısını güçlendirebilir. Ancak bazı analistler, bu adımların geçici olduğunu ve daha kapsamlı reformların gerekli olduğunu belirtmektedir.

AB'nin daha sağlam bir yapıya kavuşabilmesi için ortak vergilendirme ve mali politikaların geliştirilmesi gerektiği ifade edilmektedir. AB'nin COVID-19 sonrası ekonomik politikaları, ABD'de Hamilton tarafından uygulanan reformlarla karşılaştırılmıştır. Bu karşılaştırmada, AB'nin federal bir yapıya evrilib evrilemeyeceği sorgulanmıştır. ABD'de Hamilton'un reformları, merkezi yönetimi güçlendiren ve ekonomik istikrarı sağlayan kalıcı değişiklikler yaratmıştır. AB'nin ise benzer bir dönüşüm yaşaması için daha fazla yapısal reforma ihtiyaç duyduğu ifade edilmiştir. Makale, AB'nin ekonomik kurtarma paketini önemli bir adım olarak değerlendirse de bunun yeterli

olmadığını vurgulamaktadır. Gerçek bir mali birliğin oluşturulması için vergi politikalarında ve bütçe yönetiminde daha kapsamlı değişikliklere ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Federal yapıya geçişin yalnızca ekonomik değil, siyasi iş birliğini de gerektirdiği belirtilmiştir. AB'nin COVID-19 sırasında yaşadığı zorluklar, iş birliğin önemini bir kez daha ortaya koymuştur.

Makale, COVID-19 salgınının Avrupa Birliği üzerinde derin etkiler bıraktığını ve Birliğin ekonomik ve siyasi yapısında bazı değişiklikler gerektirdiğini savunmaktadır. Ayrıca, AB'nin "Hamiltoncu yaklaşım" olarak adlandırılan bir dönüşümden geçip geçmediği konusunun hâlen tartışmalı bir mesele olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. AB'nin iç yapısındaki mekanizmanın "Hamiltoncu yaklaşım" için uygun olmadığı yönünde yorumlar yapılmaktadır. COVID-19 süreci bağlamında, AB'nin federal bir yapıya evrilmesi, krizlerin etkili yönetimi için önerilen bir yol olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Ancak, mevcut koşullar ve üye devletlerin siyasi eğilimleri, bu geçişin karmaşıklığını artırmaktadır. AB'nin gelecekte daha güçlü bir ekonomik ve siyasi birlik oluşturup oluşturamayacağı, yapısal reformlara bağlı olarak şekillenecektir. Özetle, COVID-19 pandemisi AB'nin ekonomik ve siyasi yapısını test etmiş, krizlerin yönetimi için daha merkezi ve güçlü bir yapı oluşturulması gerektiği fikrini gündeme getirmiştir. Ancak, bu hedefe ulaşmak için AB'nin daha köklü reformlar gerçekleştirmesi gerekmektedir. Bu reformların başarısı, AB'nin krizlerden ders çıkarma ve gelecekte daha dayanıklı bir yapıya evrilme kapasitesine bağlı olacaktır.