

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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■ Chapter Overview

Understanding how the European Union (EU) works is not easy, but it is well worth the effort. This introductory chapter sets out the reasons – both practical and analytical – for studying the European Union. It then introduces some of the main conceptual approaches to understanding this unique institution, how it functions, and why. Finally, the chapter sets forth three broad themes that will tie together our analysis of the European Union and how it works.

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Studying the EU

In 2007 the European Union celebrated its fiftieth birthday. Assessments of its state of health varied enormously, from the familiar hand-wringing ‘Europe is dead’, to the considerably more upbeat ‘Europe’s golden moment’. That the EU can elicit such diametrically opposite diagnoses is nothing new. It is an absolutely distinctive creation, varied and complex enough to invite wildly contrasting interpretations of the sort generated by blind men feeling different parts of an elephant (and extrapolating about the entire beast; see Puchala 1972). The aim of this book is to provide the knowledge and insights that will enable readers to make their own interpretation of the EU and how it works.

The European Union is not easy to grasp. To the uninitiated, its institutions seem remote, its remit unclear, its actions complex and its policies perplexing. Such perplexity is understandable. To begin with, the EU defies simple categorization: it combines the attributes of a state with those of an international organization, yet it closely resembles neither (see Box 1.1). Its development is shaped by an increasing number of players: 27 member governments, five EU institutions (with legal status, many more without it), and almost countless private interests, experts, foreign actors, and citizen groups all converge to influence what the EU is and what it does. ‘What the EU does’ has also expanded enormously since its origins in the 1950s. Originally concerned narrowly with free trade in coal and steel, its policy remit has expanded to cover agricultural, monetary, regional, environmental, social, immigration, foreign, and security policy, and the list does not stop there (see Box 1.2).

This task expansion—especially into areas traditionally seen as the responsibility of elected national governments—has meant that debates about the EU are increasingly wrapped up in larger debates about [sovereignty](#), democracy, and the future of the nation-state. Studying [European integration](#) therefore means studying a lot more than

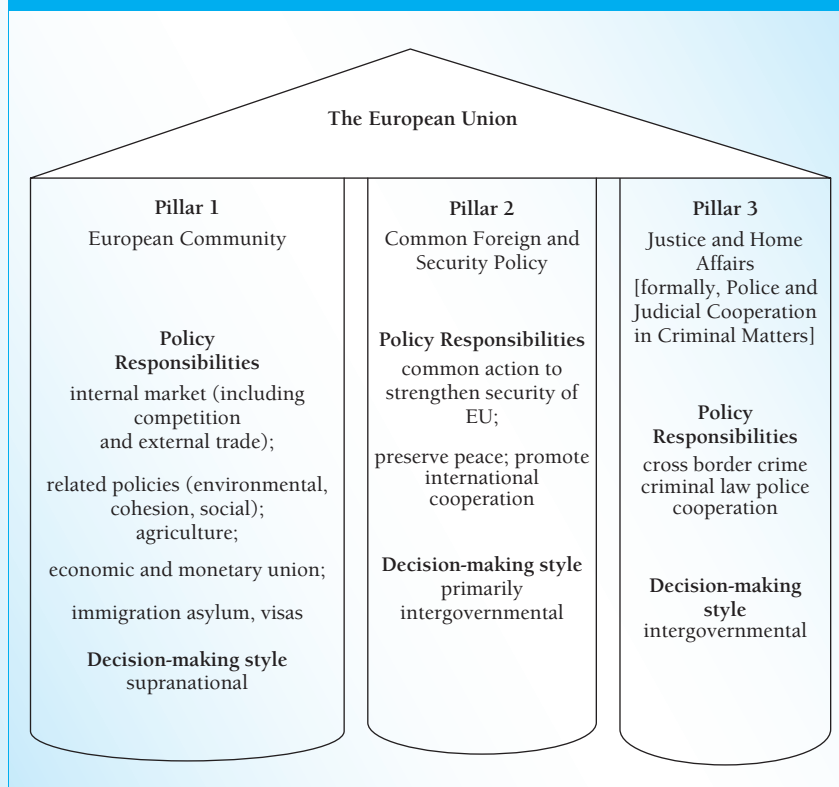
BOX 1.1 What’s in a name

Even the question of what to call the EU can cause confusion. The European Union was originally established as the European Economic Community (EEC, colloquially known as the Common Market) by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. The name was shortened to European Community (EC) in 1992. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty created the European Union, which is made up of the EC as well as two other ‘pillars’ of cooperation in the areas of common and foreign policy and Justice and Home Affairs. We use the label European Community to refer to the organization in the pre-Maastricht period (see, especially, Chapter 2), but ‘European Union’ to refer to all periods—and the activities of all [pillars](#)—thereafter. Legal purists may object—formally, for instance, there is no such thing as ‘EU law’ or an ‘EU budget’, only Community law or the Community budget—but for simplicity’s sake we use ‘EU’ as a kind of shorthand.

BOX 1.2 The three pillars of the European Union

The activities of the EU were divided into three areas or ‘pillars’ by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. When (and if) the 2007 Reform Treaty comes into force, the pillars will be collapsed into one common institutional structure, which most closely resembles the old pillar I (European Community) and gives the EU a single legal personality.

FIGURE 1.1 The three pillars of the European Union



Pillar 1: European Communities

The first pillar is the busiest, incorporating what was previously the European Community and including the vast majority of EU responsibilities. It covers internal market policies as well as agriculture and competition policy. It also covers most immigration and asylum policies, and economic and monetary union. In this pillar the EU’s common institutions (Commission, Council, Court, and Parliament) can act largely (never entirely) independently of the national governments.

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Pillar 2: Common Foreign and Security Policy

In the second pillar, member states attempt to forge common positions and take joint action on foreign and security affairs. Decision-making is primarily intergovernmental (that is, between governments); neither the European Parliament nor the Court of Justice have much direct influence.

Pillar 3: Justice and Home Affairs (formally called Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters)

The objective of the third pillar is to increase cooperation in the area of internal security, including the fight against international crime and the drugs trade. As in Pillar 2, decision-making in Pillar 3 is essentially intergovernmental. Common action is loose, and the unanimity of 27 member governments is required for virtually all important decisions.

Sometimes Treaty reforms can shift policy responsibility from one pillar to another. When this occurs, the nature of decision-making power can also shift significantly. For instance, when the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty moved policy on visas, immigration, and [asylum](#) from the third to the first pillar, it signalled a shift towards more supranational decisions in this area (see Chapter 7).

a single organization. Adding to the challenge is the EU's tendency never to stand still for long. It seems always in motion, constantly changing and expanding.

• Q1 **Why •Bother?**

Understanding the EU is thus a challenge, but one well worth taking on. First, on a purely practical level, no student of politics can make sense of European politics without knowing something about an organization that has daily and powerful effects on European (and non-European) governments, [markets](#), and citizens (see Box 1.3). What other international body would or could, in a matter of months, issue far-reaching decisions governing: animal welfare, mobile phones, imports of illegally logged timber, caps on carbon emissions, university fees, cross-border policing, and peace in the Middle East? Of course these rules and decisions were not made overnight; most were negotiated and decided over a period stretching into years, not months. Not all had immediate or even perceptible impact: in foreign policy, especially, the EU finds it much easier to talk than to act. Nor were these decisions easily reached: they were the result of negotiations amongst an astonishing array of actors across regional, national, even international borders. Yet, however derived, EU decisions frequently have a significant impact on prosperity and peace in Europe and beyond.

Secondly, students of politics, economics, law, and international relations are interested in the EU not just because of its practical relevance, but also because of its analytical significance: it represents the most advanced experiment in multilateral cooperation and political [integration](#) (see Box 1.5)—the 'process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties,

BOX 1.3 The practical significance of the EU

The EU's practical impact is felt in several areas including:

- **Legislation:** it is estimated that over 50 per cent of domestic legislation of the Union's member states originates in or is linked to EU legislation (see Chapter 6).
- **Currency:** In 2002 twelve national currencies—some dating back 600 years—ceased to be legal tender and were replaced by the euro. By 2008, 15 countries and over 300 million consumers used this single currency.
- **Wealth:** The EU's collective wealth (Gross National Income) accounts for about 30 per cent of the world's total.
- **Market:** The EU now regulates a market of nearly 500 million consumers, around 40 per cent more than the US.
- **Trade:** Not counting intra-EU trade, the EU's share of world trade (imports and exports) exceeds that of the US, accounting for around 20 per cent of all global trade.
- **Aid:** The EU and its member states are the world's largest donors of development aid, accounting for over 55 per cent. They are also the world's largest importer of goods from less developed countries (see Chapter 10).

While the wisdom or desirability of EU policies and actions is hotly contested, few would deny their practical importance.

Figures available from the websites of Commission, DG Trade,

- http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/euro/our_currency_en.htm
- http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/index_en.htm
- http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_122531.pdf

and from the World Trade Organization http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfiles/E25_e.htm

expectations and political activities toward a new center' (Haas 1958: 16). Thus, understanding the EU helps us to frame questions about the future of the nation-state, the prospects for international cooperation, the effects of **globalization** (see Box 1.5), and the proper role of governments in advanced industrial societies. Put another way, much of what makes the EU challenging to study—its dynamic character, complexity, and expanding activities—also makes it fascinating. Rather than avoid these attributes, we use them as themes to glue together our analysis (see below).

Finally, the EU fascinates because it represents a political puzzle. On one hand it has been enormously successful. EU governments and institutions have transformed it from a common market of six countries into a peaceful, integrated Union of 27 with a population of close to 500 million. It is the world's largest trading block, accounting for over 20 per cent of global trade with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) considerably larger than that of the United States (US) (see Box 1.3). It has its own currency and a fledgling common foreign policy. A queue of applicants waits at its borders.

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Yet a growing number of citizens express disillusionment with the EU, and not just in the traditionally more ‘sceptical’ states such as the United Kingdom (UK). In 2005 citizens in two founding countries—France and the Netherlands—soundly rejected a Constitutional Treaty designed to make the EU more efficient and bring it closer to its citizens (see Box 1.4). ‘Brussels bureaucrats’ make easy targets for almost every ill, and populist parties often gain popular success through EU-bashing. Voter turnout in European Parliament elections has fallen with each election. EU institutions—the European Commission, the Council of Ministers (representing national governments), and even the directly elected Parliament—are viewed as increasingly remote and shrouded in secrecy, or just not worth bothering about. The EU certainly is not a well-understood body, and it is difficult even for diligent students to see just how (or if) the EU works.

In this book we address the practical question: ‘how does it work?’: who are the main actors, what are the main processes, dynamics, and explanations for what the EU does, and how it does it? But we also want to address the more rhetorical question: ‘how (in the world) does it work?!’ How can such a massive, complex, unwieldy amalgam of states, institutions, lobbyists, languages, traditions, legal codes, etc., etc. possibly do much of the governing of Europe? More practically, why have sovereign states agreed to relinquish part of their **sovereignty** (see Box 1.5)? With what implications? Why do policies emerge looking as they do? Why did the EU develop the way it did and where is it likely to go from here? Why does it elicit such strong demonstrations of support and antipathy? Our main goal is to address these questions in a lively and comprehensible way.

We employ several devices to help us to achieve that goal. This book is largely written by experts with either research, teaching, or policy-making experience (some with all three). Many of its chapters are co-authored by an academic and practitioner to illustrate both how the EU works and how to make sense of it. Students need to understand both the formal ‘textbook’ rules of EU practice (what the Treaties say; what the legislation stipulates) but also how it ‘really’ works (how are the Treaties interpreted; what informal rules guide action). We capture this dual dynamic through a series of boxes (entitled ‘*How it Really Works*’). These boxes illustrate how a particular actor, policy, or process actually works, regardless of what the formal rules are.

The book also seeks to make the EU more comprehensible by placing its institutions, structures, or policies in a comparative perspective. Most chapters include a ‘*Compared to What?*’ box which compares EU institutions, practices, or processes with their counterparts inside the member states or outside the EU. The intent is to help students better understand the EU by underlining how it is like—or unlike—other systems of **governance** (see Box 1.5), and in what ways it is unique. More generally, the book is seasoned throughout with vignettes or other boxes which draw students into the substance of the chapter through real-life examples or illustrations. Finally, each chapter offers ‘*Key concept*’ boxes that define important terms, and each also provides guides to further reading and useful Internet sites. All these features are designed to achieve our overall aim: to bring the EU to life for our readers.

BOX 1.4 Constitutional Treaty or Reform Treaty?

The Constitutional Treaty, the result of a special Convention on the Future of Europe (see Chapter 8), was unanimously endorsed and signed by government leaders in 2004. The Treaty comprised three basic elements: institutional reform, a charter of fundamental rights, and the consolidation of existing treaties. The primary institutional measures (see also Table 3.1) included:

- increased majority voting on the Council of Ministers (where each member state is represented), readjusted more closely to reflect member states' populations;
- more legislative powers for the Parliament;
- a full-time president of the European Council (where heads of state and government are represented). This post would replace the six-month presidency that rotates between member states;
- a smaller European Commission; and
- a new EU minister of foreign affairs

The second section of the Treaty codified a **Charter of Fundamental Rights** (a wide-ranging statement of 'rights, freedoms principles' including the right to life, free expression and the right to strike; see Chapter 8).

The third part (by far the longest) consisted of a consolidated and amended version of all previous treaties. In addition, the Treaty established a constitution in name for the first time (it formally gave the Union a 'legal personality'). At the same time it provided an exit clause for states wishing to leave the Union. Designed to streamline and bring the EU closer to its citizens, the Treaty ended up stretching to 300 pages of text, not all of them comprehensible. (Thus the French government's decision to post copies of the entire text to all voters in advance of France's referendum was not a successful 'vote yes' strategy.)

Treaty change requires ratification by all member states. By mid-2007 eighteen of the 27 had ratified the Treaty. But voters in two founding member states—France the Netherlands—had rejected the Treaty in referenda held in 2005. An alternative solution had to be found. In early 2007, several member states, led by Germany, sought to revive the Constitution. A 'road map' for its future was put to EU leaders at a European summit in June 2007.

European leaders thus agreed on a 'Reform Treaty' which changed the name and structure of the Constitution, stripped out all references to constitutional symbols such as a European flag or anthem, and (for example) renamed the EU Foreign Minister as its 'High Representative'. But the new Treaty maintained the bulk of the substance of the Constitutional Treaty. The Reform Treaty has two parts. The first is called Treaty on European Union, and contains all the basic aims, principles, and instruments of the EU. The second part is called Treaty on the functioning of the EU. It contains all EU policies. So, did we get a Constitution or a Reform Treaty? Well, actually a reformed treaty with constitutional elements.

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BOX 1.5 Key concepts and terms (listed alphabetically)

globalization is the idea that the world is becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent because of increasing flows of trade, ideas, people, and capital. Globalization is usually presented as reducing the autonomy of individual states, although whether its impact is essentially positive or negative, inevitable or controllable, are hotly-debated questions.

governance means 'established patterns of rule without an overall ruler'. Even though there is no government, the EU undertakes the sort of activities that governments traditionally have done. The EU is thus said to be a system of governance without a government (or an opposition).

integration is the process whereby sovereign states relinquish (surrender or pool) national sovereignty to maximize their collective power and interests.

intergovernmentalism is a process or condition whereby decisions are reached by specifically defined cooperation between or among governments. Formally, at least, sovereignty is not relinquished. The term intergovernmentalism is usually contrasted with supranationalism.

multilevel governance is often used to describe the EU. It means a system in which power is shared between the supranational, national, and subnational levels. The term also suggests that there is a fair bit of interaction and coordination of political actors across those levels. How they interact and with what effect helps determine the shape of European integration (see Hooghe and Marks 2001).

sovereignty refers to the ultimate authority over people and territory. It is sometimes broken down into internal (law-making authority within a territory) and external (international recognition). Opinions vary as to whether state sovereignty is 'surrendered' or merely 'shared' in the context of the EU.

supranationalism means above states or nations; that is, decisions are made by a process or institution that is largely (but never entirely) independent of national governments. The subject governments (in the case of the EU, the member state governments) are then obliged to accept these decisions. The European Court of Justice (Chapter 3) is a supranational institution. The term supranationalism is usually contrasted with intergovernmentalism.

Understanding the EU: Theory and Conceptual Tools

When studying something as complex as the European Union, we need conceptual tools to guide us. A theory or model simplifies reality and allows us to see relationships between the things we observe. Scholars trying to understand the EU employ different theories developed in the study of international relations, comparative politics,

sociology, and **public** policy. Each theory seeks to explain different developments, episodes, and dynamics of EU politics and European integration. Just as there is no single explanation for events, so there is no one theory of EU politics. We offer here brief synopses of leading theoretical frameworks or approaches. Our aim is not to present or apply these approaches or theories, with all their nuances, nor to privilege one over the others. We aim to pull out for the reader the key assumptions and insights offered by each. The following chapters will then use these insights to elaborate and explain their particular topic.

International Relations Approaches

Several classic theories of integration draw from international relations theory. They are concerned primarily with explaining the broad development of European integration: that is, how and why nations choose to form European institutions, and who or what determines the shape and speed of the integration process.

One of the earliest theories of European integration was **neofunctionalism** which was developed primarily by Ernst Haas in the 1960s to explain the development of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC), the predecessors of the EU. Haas and others were concerned with explaining how a merger of economic activity in specific economic sectors (say, coal and steel) across borders could ‘spill over’ and provoke wider economic integration in related areas (Haas 1958; 1964; Lindberg and Scheingold 1970). More ambitiously, neofunctionalists believed that this economic integration would produce political integration and the creation of common, integrated **supranational** institutions to accelerate this process. (‘Supranational’ here means transcending national borders, interests, and powers; see Box 1.5). Finally, according to neofunctionalists, interests and loyalties would gradually shift from the national to the supranational level.

Early neofunctionalist theory seemed to explain well the initial successes of European integration, but its uni-directional logic (integration could only go forward) was heavily criticized when European integration appeared to stagnate and even to reverse in the late 1960s and 1970s (Rosamond 2005). Dissatisfaction with neofunctionalism led to the development of alternative theoretical models, especially **liberal intergovernmentalism**.

Most closely associated with Andrew Moravcsik (1993; 1998) liberal intergovernmentalism builds on the work of international relations scholars and historians who reject the notion that national governments do not control European integration (see Hoffmann 1995; Milward 1992; Schimmelfennig 2004). Marshalling impressive historical evidence, liberal intergovernmentalists argue that major choices—what Peterson (1995) calls ‘history making decisions’—reflect the preferences of national governments rather than supranational organizations. Each state’s preferences reflect the balance of their domestic economic interests. The outcomes of EU negotiation are the result of intergovernmental bargaining, that is, bargaining between sovereign national governments (see Box 1.5). Any subsequent delegation to supranational institutions is calculated, rational, and circumscribed. In short, national governments are the

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dominant actors in shaping integration, and they are in control: ‘governments first define a set of interests, then bargain among themselves to realize those interests’ (Moravcsik 1993: 481).

A Comparative Politics Approach

Analysts drawing on comparative politics approaches have challenged the primacy of the state in shaping European integration and the EU. Foremost among these approaches is **new institutionalism**, which emphasizes the importance of institutions in shaping or even determining government preferences. In the EU context, institutionalism demonstrates how the EU’s common institutions (Commission, Council, Parliament, or Court) are more than impartial arbiters in the policy-making process: they are key players with their own agendas and priorities (Armstrong and Bulmer 1998; Pollack 2004). For *new* institutionalists, ‘institutions’ refer not only to institutions traditionally defined—executives, parliaments, courts—but also to values, accepted standards, and informal conventions that govern social exchanges between actors. These values affect or ‘frame’ the way actors perceive the choices open to them. So, for example, the informal rules or practices (say the unwritten goal of seeking consensus whenever possible) can mould the behaviour of national government representatives in ways that governments neither plan nor control.

A second insight of new institutionalist analyses is the concept of ‘path dependency’: the notion that once a particular decision or path is chosen, ‘it is very difficult to get back on the rejected path’ (Krasner 1984: 225). **Path dependency** means that it is hard to change policy—such as an expensive common agricultural policy—even when it outlives its usefulness. The ‘sunk costs’ (time and resources already invested) of agreeing a policy in the first place are often considerable, and the idea of starting again on a long, time-consuming, and expensive process of agreeing a new policy are resisted for that reason (see Pierson 1996).

A Public Policy Approach

A third theoretical approach useful to those studying the EU is the **policy networks** framework (see Peterson 2004). Unlike neofunctionalism or liberal intergovernmentalism, this approach does not tell us much about the policy bargains struck between national governments, nor the history-making decisions (such as treaty reform) that set the broad direction of European integration. But a network analysis is useful for uncovering the nitty gritty, behind-the-scenes negotiation and exchange that can shape policies at a day-to-day level. A policy network is ‘a cluster of actors, each of which has an interest or stake in a given EU policy sector and the capacity to help determine policy success or failure’ (Peterson and Bomberg 1999: 8). Policy networks at the EU level usually bring together institutional actors (from the Commission, Council, Parliament) and other stakeholders such as representatives of private

firms, public interest groups, technical or scientific experts and, perhaps above all, national officials. Networks lack hierarchy (there is no one actor in charge) and instead depend on resource exchange. That means that participants need to bring to Brussels (or Strasbourg) some valued resource with which to bargain: information, ideas, finances, constitutional-legal power, or political **legitimacy**. According to network analysts, bargaining and resource exchange among these actors—rather than strictly intergovernmental bargaining—determine the shape of actual EU policies.

A Sociological/Cultural Approach

An increasingly popular conceptual approach that cuts across multiple theories is **constructivism**, a school drawing on cultural and sociological studies and recent developments in International Relations (IR) theory. It is a strikingly diverse school, but at its core is an attempt to focus attention on the ‘social construction’ of the collective rules and norms that guide political behaviour (Eilstrup–Sangiovanni 2006: 393). At its most radical, a constructivist approach argues that reality does not exist outside human interpretation or language. In the study of the EU, however, a less radical or abstract form of social constructivism is prevalent.

Above all, constructivists seek to go beyond a rationalist approach to understanding the EU. The latter assumes pre-set and rational interests and identities; political actors (say, national representatives) weigh the costs and benefits of actions, and make decisions based on those calculations. Constructivists argue instead that EU political actors’ positions and even identities are shaped not (only) by the rational pursuit of national or self-interest but by the bargaining process itself, especially the pressure to conform or reach consensus (see Lewis 2003: 99).

Constructivism can and has been coupled with the theories of integration introduced above. Like neofunctionalism, constructivism focuses our attention on socialization, the transfers of loyalty, and the process whereby actors redefine their interests as a result of interaction within European institutions (Haas 2001). Similarly, constructivism complements the new institutionalism’s emphasis on norms and ideas. Along with institutionalists, social constructivists suggest that informal rules and norms (such as reciprocity or the desire to show ‘good will’) can shape (or even determine) political actors’ behaviour (Checkel 2006; Lewis 2003).

While most would agree that ideas or norms are important in some way (see, especially, Chapters 3 and 4), it is extremely difficult to show that abstract ideas or norms actually cause a change in behaviour as many constructivist argue. Constructivists often can correlate ideas with behaviour, but have trouble proving that ideas matter more than interests (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000; Checkel 2004). Thus, constructivism does not offer a theory for understanding the EU as much as it draws our attention to insights that might be missed by other theories.

Each of these approaches has its own assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses (see Table 1.1; Nelsen and Stubb 2003). No one theory can explain everything treated in this book. But each school introduced here offers different insights about different

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TABLE 1.1 Theories of European integration and the EU

Theory/ Approach	Proponents/ Major Work	Assumptions	Shortcoming/ Criticisms
Neofunctionalism	Haas, 1958	Supranational institutions crucial; spillover drives integration	Can't explain stagnation
Liberal inter-governmentalism	Moravcsik, 1998	Member states control European integration	Too state-centric; neglects day-to-day policymaking
New institutionalism	Bulmer, 1998; Pierson, 1996	Institutions matter; Path dependency	Overemphasizes power of the EU's institutions
Policy networks	Peterson, 1995	Resource exchange within networks shapes policy	Cannot explain big decisions
Social constructivism	Checkel 2004 Risse 2004	Ideas matter; interests constructed, not pre-determined	Methodological weaknesses

key features of the EU: how integration evolves; the way policies are made, and the role of different actors in this process. Students need not master all these theories to use this book. Rather, these theoretical insights—and their application in subsequent chapters—are meant to encourage students to begin thinking about theory and its role in helping us to understand and evaluate European integration and EU politics.

Themes

To help the reader make sense of the EU this text is held together by three common themes. Each highlights a key, distinctive feature of the EU as:

1. An 'experiment in motion', an ongoing process without a clear end-state;
2. A system of shared power characterized by growing complexity and an increasing number of players;
3. An organization with an expanding scope, but limited capacity.

We introduce each of these themes below.

Experimentation and Change

Since its conception in the early 1950s, European integration has been an ongoing process without a clear *finalité*, or end-state. In one sense its development has been a functional step-by-step process: integration in one area has led to pressures to integrate in others. As neofunctionalists would point out, the Union has developed from a **free trade area** to a customs union; from a customs union to a **single market** and from a single market to an economic and monetary union. This development, however, has been neither smooth, automatic, nor predetermined. Rather, integration and the EU's development has progressed in fits and starts, the result of constant experimentation, problem-solving, and trial and error. European foreign policy, from failed attempts of the 1950s to the creation of a **European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)** in the last decade, is a good example of this evolution. With no agreed end goal (such as a 'United States of Europe'), the EU's actors have reacted to immediate problems, but they have done so neither coherently nor predictably.

The nature and intensity of change are also varied. Constitutional change has taken place through Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs)—special negotiations in which government representatives come together to hammer out agreements to alter the EU's guiding treaties. The first (resulting in the Treaty of Paris, 1951) created the European Coal and Steel Community made up of six states. More recently, the Constitutional Treaty (signed in 2004 but never ratified) or its successor, the so-called Reform Treaty (of 2007), as designed to serve an EU of 30 or more (see Box 1.4; 1.6). Less spectacularly, legislative change has taken place through thousands of EU **directives** and regulations. Finally, the EU's institutions, especially the European Commission and Court of Justice, have themselves acted as instigators of change, and have expanded the powers of the Union throughout its history. The point is that change is a constant in the EU. This book will explore its main sources and implications.

Power-sharing and Consensus

Our second theme concerns power and how it is shared between different actors and across layers of government. The EU policy-making system lacks a clear nexus of power: there is no 'EU government' in the traditional sense of the term. Instead, power is dispersed across a range of actors and levels of governance (regional, national, and supranational). Deciding which actors should do what, and at what level of governance, is a matter of on-going debate within the EU. The principle of **constitutionalism** (see Chapter 8) is meant to address this issue, but debates about constitutional power and authority continue.

The three most important sets of actors are the member states, institutions, and organized interests. Certainly, much about the evolution of the EU has been determined by the member states themselves, and, in particular, their different approaches to

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BOX 1.6 The Treaties

When practitioners and academics use the term 'the Treaties', they are referring to the collection of founding treaties and their subsequent revisions. The founding treaties include the Treaty of Paris (signed in 1951, establishing the European Coal and Steel Community) and two Treaties of Rome, 1957, one establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), the other the European Economic Community. The ECSC became void in July 2002. The Euratom treaty never amounted to much. But the Treaty of Rome (signed in 1957) establishing the EEC became absolutely central. It has been substantially revised in the:

- Single European Act (signed in 1986),
- Maastricht Treaty (or Treaty on European Union, signed in 1992),
- Amsterdam Treaty (signed in 1997), and the
- Nice Treaty (signed in 2001).

As Box 1.1 explained, the intergovernmental conference leading up to the Maastricht Treaty not only revised the Treaty of Rome (it is now formally called the Treaty establishing the European Community) but it also established the broader Treaty on European Union (TEU or Maastricht Treaty, 1992) which included two new pillars or areas of activity on foreign policy and JHA (see Box 1.2). The two core Treaties (at least until the Reform Treaty combines them) are thus the Treaty Establishing the European Community (TEC) which covers the first pillar, and the Treaty on European Union (TEU) which covers the second and third pillars of EU activity.

These two key treaties, as revised in Amsterdam and Nice, are the basic toolkit of ministers, Commissioners, parliamentarians, and civil servants dealing with EU matters. Each piece of legislation is based on one of these treaty articles (of which there are nearly 700). The Treaties have grown increasingly long and complex. To improve the presentation and facilitate the reading of the Treaties, the articles were renumbered in the Amsterdam IGC of 1997. But the Treaties are hardly an easy read. Even many legal scholars would agree that the language borders on the incomprehensible. The 2004 Constitutional Treaty was intended to simplify the existing texts and make them more readable, but arguably it did neither (although it did reduce the number of articles from 700 to 450). Its successor, the 2007 Reform Treaty, marked another attempt to give the EU constitutional simplicity, although the term 'Constitution' was nowhere to be found. Presumably, it will remain a term that dares not speak its name in Brussels for many years to come.

integration. Some member states want deeper integration, others do not, and this division continues to shape the speed and form of the integration process. Meanwhile, EU institutions have shaped the EU's development as they vie for power with the member states, as well as among themselves. Finally, organized interests—including representatives of subnational levels of governance, private interests, citizens groups—now play an increasing role.

Part of what makes the EU unique—and certainly different from its member states—is that these actors exist in a complex web where there are established patterns of interaction but no overall ‘ruler’ or government or even dominant actor. Instead, actors must bargain and share power in an effort to reach an agreement acceptable to all, or at least most. This dynamic has been captured in the term **multilevel governance** (see Box 1.5), which suggests a system of overlapping and shared powers between actors on the regional, national, and supranational levels (Hooghe and Marks 2001). EU governance is thus an exercise in sharing power between states and institutions, and seeking consensus across different levels of governance. Coming to grips with this unique distribution of power is a key task of this book.

Scope and Capacity

Our final theme concerns the expanding remit of the EU, and its ability to cope with it. The EU has undergone continuous (in a phrase used by insiders) ‘widening and deepening’. The widening of its membership has been astonishing. It has grown from a comfortable club of six member states (Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg) to nine (UK, Denmark, and Ireland joined in 1973), to twelve (Greece in 1981; Portugal and Spain in 1986) to fifteen (Austria, Finland, and Sweden joined in 1995). Then in 2004 the EU jumped to 25 following the **accession** of Ten mainly central and eastern states. The accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 took the EU to 27 with additional candidates, including Turkey, knocking on the door. The institutional, political, economic, and even linguistic challenges this enlargement poses are immense (see Box 1.7).

The EU has also ‘deepened’ in the sense that the member states have decided to pool sovereignty in an increasing number of policy areas, including, most dramatically, in the sensitive area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) (see Chapter 7). This robust policy development has meant that the EU is managing tasks that have traditionally been the exclusive preserve of the nation-state. At the same time the EU continues its attempt to dispose of its image as an ‘economic giant, but a political dwarf’. The Union is trying to stamp its authority on the international scene through its leadership on issues such as climate change, or the development of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which, according to the Treaties, ‘might in time lead to a common defence’. These developments have challenged the EU’s ‘capacity’—its practical and political ability to realize its ambitions. While the EU has taken on more members and more tasks, its institutional and political development has not kept pace. This mismatch—between the EU’s ambitions on one hand and its institutional and political capacity on the other—raises questions about the EU’s future and ability to adapt. It also represents the third theme of the volume.

Taken together these three themes address:

- how the EU has developed and why (experimentation and change);

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BOX 1.7 Lost in interpretation?

With the addition of Irish as an official language in 2007, the EU boasted 23 official languages:

- Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French,
- German, Greek, Irish, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese,
- Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish.

The EU's translation service is the largest in the world by far (over twice the size of the UN's) and the cost of translation and interpretation is over ?800m a year (Commission 2007c). In Parliament alone, where interpreters in soundproof boxes attempt to translate words such as gobbledegook (the word doesn't exist in Polish), and avoid confusing frozen semen with seamen (as occurred in one parliamentary debate), the cost and potential confusion is immense. But being able to communicate with your electors and fellow representatives in your own language is also seen as a fundamental right. After all, it is difficult for EU citizens to feel close to an institution which does not operate—at least officially—in their own language. In practice, most of the work of the EU is carried out in just three languages, English, French, and German. Meanwhile, the rising cost of translation has had one positive effect—it has forced practitioners to limit official texts to under fifteen pages.

Commission (2007b; 2007c), *National Geographic* (2005)

- who are the main players and how do they interact (power-sharing and consensus);
- what the EU does, and how it does it (scope and capabilities).

These three themes provide the glue necessary to hold together our investigation of the EU and how it works.

Chapter Layout

Any book on European integration that aims to be at all comprehensive is bound to cover a lot of ground, both theoretical and practical. In explaining how the EU works it is necessary to look at the historical background of European integration, the major actors involved, the key policies and their impact, and the EU's global presence. The book's layout reflects this logic. Chapter 2 tells us 'how we got here' by providing a concise historical overview of the EU's development. The next section (Chapters 3–5) focuses on the major actors: the EU's common institutions, the member states, and organized interests such as business groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Section III focuses on policy and process. It provides an expert overview of

key economic and related policies (Chapter 6), the newer area of JHA (Chapter 7), and the wider constitutional issues arising from these policy processes (Chapter 8). Chapters in the last section examine the EU's relations with the wider world. Chapter 9 covers EU enlargement and its policy towards states in its geographical neighbourhood, whereas Chapter 10 explores the EU's growing role as a global actor. A conclusion draws together the main themes of the volume and ponders how the EU might work in the future.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The EU can be seen as one of the most successful modern experiment in international cooperation, yet it is increasingly unpopular amongst its citizens. Why?
2. Which theory appears to offer the most compelling account of recent developments in European integration?



FURTHER READING

Some of the key themes introduced in this chapter are inspired by leading general broad studies of the EU including Hooghe and Marks (2001), Scharpf (1999), Wallace, Wallace, and Pollack (2005) and Weiler (1999). Nelsen and Stubb (2003) feature a collection of seminal works on European integration theory and practice. Holmes (2001) provides a collection of 'Eurosceptical' readings while Leonard and Leonard (2001) counter with their 'Pro-European Reader'. An excellent and comprehensive overview of key perspectives, works, and theories is provided by Jørgensen *et al.* (2006). A useful summary and overview of different theoretical approaches is offered by Eilstrup-Sangiovanni's collection (2006). For an incisive survey of these different theories applied to the EU, see Rosamond (1999). To explore in more depth some of the key theoretical approaches, see Haas (1958) on neofunctionalism; Milward (1992) and Moravcsik (1998) on liberal intergovernmentalism; Armstrong and Bulmer (1998), Pollack (2004), or Meunier and McNamara (2007) on new institutionalism; Peterson (2004) on policy networks; and Checkel (2006) on constructivism.

Armstrong, K., and Bulmer, S. (1998), *The Governance of the Single European Market* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press).

Checkel, J. (2006), 'Constructivism and EU Politics' in Jørgensen, K. E., Pollack, M. and Rosamond, B. (eds) *Handbook of European Union Politics* (London: Sage): 57–76.

Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, M. (2006), 'The Constructivist Turn in European Integration Studies; in M. Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (ed.), *Debates on European Integration. A Reader.* (London: Palgrave).

Haas, E. (1958), *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950–7* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press).

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- Haas, E. (2001), 'Does Constructivism Subsume Neo-functionalism?' in T. Christiansen, K. E. Jørgensen, and A. Weiner, *The Social Construction of Europe* (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage): 22–31.
- Holmes, M. (ed.) (2001), *The Eurosceptical Reader, 2nd edn* (Basingstoke: Palgrave).
- Hooghe, L., and Marks, G. (2001), *Multi-level Governance and European Integration* (Lanham and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.).
- Jørgensen, K. E., Pollack, M., and Rosamond, B. (eds.) (2006), *Handbook of European Union Politics* (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).
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- Pollack, M. (2004), 'New Institutionalism' in A. Wiener and T. Diez, *European Integration Theory* (London: Oxford University Press): 137–56.
- Rosamond, B. (1999), *Theories of European Integration* (London and New York: Palgrave).
- Scharpf, F. W. (1999), *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press).
- Wallace, H., Wallace, W., and Pollack, M. (eds.) (2005), *Policy-making in the European Union*, 5th edn. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press).



WEB LINKS

• Q2

The EU's official website 'The European Union online' (<http://europa.eu>) is a very valuable starting point. It provides further links to wide variety of official sites on EU policies, institutions, legislation, treaties and current debates.●

Precisely because the EU's website is so large, the Europa—Information Services website provides a nice index of where to find answers on the Europa website (http://europa.eu/geninfo/info/guide/index_en.htm).

You can also use the web to access the *Official Journal* (OJ) which is updated daily in several languages. The OJ is the authoritative and formal source for information on EU legislation, case law, parliamentary questions and documents of public interest (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/>).

For pithier reporting, the *Economist* (www.economist.com) provides useful general articles, while *European Voice* (www.europeanvoice.com) offers insider coverage of EU policies and news.

To follow current events and developments within the EU, the following sites are useful.

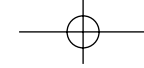
- EurActiv reports EU current affairs with analysis, and has an easy to navigate system of 'dossiers' which provide an overview of different policy areas (<http://www.euractiv.com/en/HomePage>); while the
- EUobserver offers coverage of EU current affairs with a very useful email bulletin service (<http://euobserver.com/>).

Current debates and topics are also addressed in series of think tank websites. Some of the better known include the Centre for European Policy Studies (<http://www.ceps.be>); the European Policy Centre (<http://www.epc.eu>); the Centre for European Reform (www.cer.org.uk), and the Trans European Policy Studies Association (www.tepsa.be).

Finally, the Institute for European Politics' (Berlin) website offers an overview of current thinking on EU policies and issues in all the member states (<http://www.iep-berlin.de/index.php?id=publikationen&L=1>).



Visit the Online Resource Centre that accompanies this book for additional material:
www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/orc/bomberg2e/



Queries in Chapter 1

- Q1. We have inserted question mark '?' here. Kindly check.
- Q2. We had provided the second color for the website addresses appears in the weblinks section, kindly confirm if it is fine.

