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THE POLITICS OF EVERYDAY EUROPE

Constructing Authority in the European Union



KATHLEEN R. MCNAMARA

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For Henry Diego

Preface

Decades ago, William Fulbright, a US senator from the Ozark foothills of Arkansas, corralled his colleagues into creating the Fulbright Program, a massive, government-funded international research and teaching fellowship program closely linked to the US State Department. The goal, as the Fulbright website states today, was to “strengthen the basis for peace by strengthening mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the peoples of partner countries around the world.” I was lucky enough to get a fellowship in the 1990s to write my doctoral dissertation in Brussels, at the epicenter of the European Union (EU) in the midst of the excitement over the creation of the Maastricht Treaty and the euro. But I did not apply for the Fulbright to Belgium program. Instead, among students applying to study in France, or Kenya, or Japan, I competed for a newly created Fulbright to the European Community (the former name of today’s European Union). At the time, it struck me as a little odd that the US would be interested in “strengthening the basis for peace” with an entity that was not a “partner country,” and therefore could not have its own “peoples.” Enjoying my *moules* and *frites* while learning first-hand about the invention of the European Monetary Union, I didn’t spend much time thinking about this seeming anomaly. But in many ways, the fact that the EU was put in a category alongside all the world’s nation states constituted a political puzzle that informs the book you are reading. The Fulbright to the European Union continues to this day, but it remains the only Fulbright fellowship assigned to a political entity that is not a state.

I put aside my musings about this diplomatic curiosity, and set out on my professional career. For many of the years that followed, I studied the development of the euro, the single European currency that has replaced German Deutschmarks, Portuguese escudos, Slovakian koruna, and 16 other national currencies. The breaking of the link between nations and currencies puzzled me, and I decided to learn more about how money became nationalized in the first place. The story of how consolidated national currencies initially arose was fascinating and surprising to me. It turned out that before the second half of the nineteenth century, multiple types of money circulated and were used for transactions, including bank credits, IOUs, local currencies,

and foreign currencies circulating outside their borders. The story of how exclusive, national monies such as the US dollar arose was a deeply political story of a broader set of dynamics often involving warfare and intense political strife. Currency, it turned out, was jealously fought over as part of highly contested projects to concentrate political power through taxing, spending, debt creation, and control over the national money supply. All this was done in the service of what scholars now call state building. Currency consolidation was just one part of a broader story of political development, with the outcome being the sovereign nation states we know today.

Learning this raised an important question for me, one that fundamentally shifted the way I think about the European Union. If currency is part and parcel of larger political projects, what did that mean for the euro, which was usually understood as a technical project, a tepid and partial consolidation of economic power? Was the euro a historical anomaly, just as the Fulbright to the European Union was an anomaly for US policy? Or were there lessons to be learned from these historical episodes about broader political processes at work in Europe?

My conclusion, and the proposition that drives this book, is that a vast array of policies and processes under way in the European Union should indeed be considered in terms of a long trajectory of profound political development now occurring at the European level. The EU's single currency is but one example of the accrual of political authority at the center of a bounded polity in Europe, in ways that look a lot like the burst of innovations in political forms of the late nineteenth century. That burst created the modern nation state. It is time we consider the EU as an emergent political entity of its own, and tell the story of the EU in terms of this broader historical process. Yet though the term political development implies a linear and forever forward process, as with any other political project, the EU's trajectory involves dramatic ups and downs. Often not very pretty, involving name calling and deplorable dysfunction in governance, the transformation of political authority to new governance forms is messy and contested. In the end, the EU might collapse of its own weight—there are no guarantees of success in political life. But thinking about the EU in terms of political development, not as a unique case we call "European integration," we can appreciate the EU as an innovative new governance form with similarities and differences to what has come before, and be less surprised by the political conflicts and seeming dysfunctions at work in the process.

Once I saw the EU through the lens of comparative political development, I began to notice that along with efforts in the economic and security realms, the EU was doing curious things in social and cultural arenas, using its symbolic powers in an attempt to shape citizens' views and expectations. Although not displacing the nation state and its strongly held national identities, the

EU was attempting to solidify the process of political development and the building of power and capacity by making itself seem a natural source of legitimate governance. Once again, a comparison with historical examples, namely the powerful process of nationalism, proved helpful. Although very different in certain ways, the EU has used everyday practices and an array of social representations to construct itself as a taken-for-granted actor and source of political authority, just as nations have. From the use of architecture in the key public spaces of EU governance, to the collection of data by the EU-wide statistical agency Eurostat, to the creation of a European diplomatic corps, to the iconography on the euro itself as it passes from hand to hand throughout the 19 states that use it, the EU has been working to become a “taken-for-granted” fact of life, despite its oddity as a political actor. From this perspective, the US Fulbright organizers were right to include the EU because of its status as an emergent political entity, but they were also participating in its legitimation by placing it so visibly in a category alongside sovereign states.

This new Europe is being imagined by its citizens, and those in the international realm who interact with it, in a process of meaning making that involves EU officials, national leaders, lawyers, business people, students studying abroad within the EU, and all who live day-to-day in the symbolic and practical environment shaped by the EU. The fate of this endeavor is not only of academic interest, however. Quite simply, it will help to determine the fate of the EU. A sense of commonality and belonging is critical to hold any polity together, particularly a newly created one. This book is a story about political technologies that label, map, and narrate Europe and how they form the cultural foundation for the EU’s particular trajectory of political development. The punchline to this story, however, is that Europe does have a sense of commonality but it is one that is deracinated, not rooted in any passionately felt identity. The symbols and practices that the EU’s legitimacy is built on are unusual in their continual emphasis on what I call “localizing” the EU. As the EU navigates the continued traditions of the nation states, it is framed as complementary to, not in competition with, national identities. This deracination and localization does produce a certain type of legitimacy for the EU, but it is a strikingly banal authority compared to those political forms that came before. And it is therefore not well fashioned to stand up to the anti-EU populism that is sweeping Europe, as its citizens struggle to overcome the harsh economic and social fallout of the Eurozone crisis. The cultural mechanisms at work creating the innovative, but unloved, imagined Europe and its accomplishments and shortcomings are the subject of all that follows.

Training in international relations did not fully prepare me for where this project would go. I draw widely and rather indiscriminately from scholarship

in political science, sociology, anthropology, comparative politics, art history, urban planning, cultural studies and history, as well as international relations. I apologize ahead of time to those disciplines for what is, I am sure, a highly idiosyncratic reading of their literatures. I am less interested in disciplinary smackdowns and adherence to specific traditions, however, than in understanding the curious case of the EU in terms of its evolution of governance. Nonetheless, I hope the reader will be open to my approach and find the journey worthwhile.

This book could not have been written without the monetary, intellectual, and emotional support of many people and institutions. In its very long gestation, I have incurred many debts. I acknowledge the support of Georgetown University and its Graduate Faculty fellowship, and a residence in Paris at Sciences Po and its Centre d'études européennes. Many years of talented and curious Hoyas in the undergraduate seminar, "Imagining Europe" made unlocking the puzzle that is the EU all the more enjoyable. Along with teaching, my day job while writing this book has been as Director of the Mortara Center for International Studies at Georgetown. I thank our donor Virginia Mortara and her family for making possible our vibrant and engaged scholarly community. Adam Olszowka, Eva Zamarripa, Halley Lisuk, and especially Moira Todd all supported this book, and me, way beyond the call of professional duty. Trellace Lawrimore stepped in at the eleventh hour to help with the manuscript preparation with admirable precision and dedication.

John Peterson, Kristine Mitchell, Frédéric Mérand, and Virginie Guiraudon carefully read individual chapters, while Abe Newman heroically read the penultimate draft of the manuscript. They all have my sincere gratitude for their expertise and kindness. They saved me from various egregious errors, but all remaining shortcomings are of course my own. Vincent Pouliot, Dan Kelemen, Henry Farrell, Chuck Meyers, and Charles King always remained encouraging even when this project seemed terminally overwhelming. The work and friendship of sociologists Michèle Lamont and Frank Dobbin transformed my way of understanding politics, for which I am very grateful. Versions of this book's argument, some very early, were presented at many seminars including Princeton University's Center for International Studies, University of California at Berkeley's Center for German and European Studies, the PIPES seminar at the University of Chicago, the Dickey Center at Dartmouth University, University of Wisconsin's Department of Political Science, the Institute for Global and International Studies at George Washington University, Johns Hopkins Department of Political Science, Yale University's International Relations seminar, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Ottawa, the University of Oregon at Eugene, McGill University, George Washington University's West Europe seminar, and the Penn-Temple European Studies Colloquium (twice). I thank the organizers and participants

for helping to move my thinking forward with their comments and ideas. Toward the end of the project, I was very fortunate to have Adrian Favell, Ian Manners, and Marty Finnemore, all of whom know a thing or two about the social construction of political life, serve as my discussants at various conferences. I also thank two sets of anonymous readers at Cambridge and Oxford University Press for their careful reading, and Dominic Byatt for being a wonderfully supportive editor throughout the process.

I would be remiss not to give a shout out to my colleagues in the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University—a more friendly, smart, and sensible group of academics you could not hope to find. Carole Sargent and the members of Georgetown’s Book Lab deserve special thanks for getting me through some very rough patches. For generosity of spirit and intellect through the years, one could do no better than friends like Sheri Berman, Dan Drezner, Charlie Kupchan, Nicolas Jabko, Dan Nexon, James Vreeland, the late Carol Lancaster, Marty Finnemore, Julie Lynch, Anna Gryzmala-Busse, and Debbi Avant. Over a Campari and soda at Leopold’s Kafe, Roland Stephen helped me to see a better structure for the book, long walks with Sarah McNamer in Rock Creek Park bucked me up at crucial points, and conversations with Matthias Matthijs made studying the EU more fun than it should be. Over the years, Abe Newman and David Edelstein’s enthusiasm for this project never flagged, even when mine certainly did.

At home, my sons, Theo and Henry, were amazingly supportive and never complained once about their mother’s preoccupation with writing, or the time away from everything else that writing demanded. Most importantly, however, this book could not have come about without my luck in marrying the right man, Tomás Montgomery, who continues to astonish me with his ability to be the perfect husband.

Chevy Chase, Maryland
September 2014

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1

Introduction

How do political authorities build support for themselves and their rule? Doing so is key to accruing power, but it can be a complicated affair. In this book, I show how social processes can legitimate new rulers and make their exercise of power seem natural. Historically, political authorities have used carefully crafted symbols and practices to create a cultural foundation for rule, most notably in the modern nation state. The European Union (EU), as a new governance form, faces a particularly acute set of challenges in naturalizing itself. I argue that a slow transformation in the symbols and practices of everyday life in the EU have built a cultural infrastructure for governance that has helped make the EU a “taken for granted” political authority.

Consider the border between France and Spain, on the coast of the Bay of Biscay in the Basque region. Where Hitler once met with Franco to plead for Spanish support against the French in World War II, there is no longer any physical experience at all of a boundary between the two countries. The old booths housing border guards have been torn down, and cars whizz by without stopping. Elsewhere around the world, policing of borders is an unquestioned prerogative of states, and passports invented in an effort to exert social control over a population seeking to cross national boundaries. Those days seem long gone for those countries of the EU that have dismantled their borders. All 28 member states now share an EU burgundy-colored passport that people flying back from abroad wave at customs officers as they line up in a special queue for “EU Nationals.” Moreover, when going out for a night of Spanish tapas in San Sebastián, the residents of Biarritz along the French coast do so without the need to convert francs into pesetas to pay for their *boquerones* and *vino tinto*. Instead, they use euros, the common currency shared by the majority of the EU countries. A single currency has historically been closely linked to state building, as political elites sought to centralize control over the economy and polity. Yet today, despite a series of financial crises that have dragged on since late 2009, 19 member states put authority

for their money in the hands of the EU and its Frankfurt-based European Central Bank, and many young people are growing up knowing only a common currency.

I argue that we need to consider how these and other changes generate cultural processes that create the EU as a political authority and subtly reorient citizens toward Europe. Daily life in Europe is repeatedly shaped by or imprinted with the EU, in symbols and practices sometimes obvious and at other times very much under the radar. Pick up an object such as a hair dryer or a cuddly plush toy and there will be a small tag printed with a “€” logo (standing for “*Communauté Européenne*”) indicating the product meets EU safety standards. Italian lawyers have had their work routines changed dramatically by the wholesale reorganization and resizing of their law firms toward Brussels, as EU law comes to dominate national legal systems. A family in the Netherlands with an aging parent may now share their home with a healthcare worker from Romania, thanks to the European single market for labor. German firms have recalculated their business plans in response to surprisingly tough sanctions set by the EU in 2014 against Russia after Putin’s military interventions in Ukraine. In these and many other ways, the EU is changing the basic foundations of day-to-day life, and in the process reframing as European what used to be solely understood as national political prerogatives. The consequences of EU symbols and practices even extend outside the boundaries of Europe, as the EU’s foreign policies and its diplomats construct the EU as a sovereign actor among states, signing international treaties and sending ambassadors to foreign capitals.

These EU programs are important in themselves for quite down-to-earth reasons, as they create winners and losers and redistribute wealth and power. But they also engage important social processes and construct a cultural infrastructure for governance. I define culture as a process of meaning making, shared by some particular group of people, by which they make sense of their world. Dense social interactions help to drive our interpretation of the realities around us, shape how we see, what we value, and thus our very identities. Culture is not intrinsic or monolithic, however. We all belong to different overlapping sets of cultures, and these cultures infuse our sense of self and form our multifaceted identities.

If we think of culture not as something we are, but as something we do, we can start to understand how such a cultural infrastructure, and the identities it engenders, matters for governance. By changing the lived experience of what Europe is, the symbols and practices at work in Europe today make natural a deepening of political power at the European level, while constructing “Europeans.” These cultural processes work to create the EU as a social fact, that is, a widely shared intersubjective understanding that seems to exist on its own, separate from us, even as it relies on our collective agreement for its

existence. The EU is no different from a long line of new political authorities that have used similar strategies to shore up their legitimacy, most obviously, nationalism and the “imagined community” of the modern nation state. And like these earlier authorities, the power of social control exercised by the EU through these symbols and practices can be highly consequential.

Yet the EU is not simply a supersized nation state. Instead, the EU’s cultural infrastructure is rooted in a specific type of banal authority, which navigates national loyalties while portraying the EU as complementary to, not in competition with, local identities. The labels, mental maps, and narratives generated by EU policies are often deracinated, purged of their associations with the powers of the nation state and instead standardized into a seemingly unobjectionable blandness. Consider the following. The euro’s paper currency displays abstracted bridges and windows instead of images tied to a specific person or place. Rather than building one monumental national capital in Brussels to symbolize and practice EU governance, European institutions and their mostly unremarkable buildings are flung far across the 28 member states, with the European Parliament even moving, vagabond-like, between cities. The creation of a new single diplomatic voice for Europe has been labeled the “High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy” rather than a European Foreign Minister, symbolically watering down the impact of this potentially pivotal new job. Moreover, the symbols and practices of Europe are often “localized” by nesting them in the member states: the standardized EU passport is issued by each country with its own national crest and the words “France” or “Czech Republic” beneath the EU label. Euro coins balance standardized European symbols and maps on one side while a Celtic harp graces euros originating in Ireland, Queen Beatrix is on Netherland’s coins, and Cervantes on Spain’s.

These examples and many others all point to the historically distinct qualities of the EU’s polity. The EU has effectively used the tried and true political technologies of what I call labeling, mapping, and narrating to create social categories and classifications to govern Europe’s people. But the legitimation that is accrued through the EU’s tempered symbolic and practical activity is an unusual and relatively thin one. While cultural processes may have made the EU a natural part of the political landscape, folded into national political identities, the EU is often met by indifference by its citizens, rather than with affection. Unlike the historical project of nationalism, the EU’s efforts therefore may have built-in limits to the development of a single, stand-alone European identity.

In the chapters that follow, I investigate a wide swath of EU policymaking to demonstrate these dynamics: the use of the EU’s public architecture, arts, and popular entertainment to reinforce a particular vision of its political legitimacy; the ways in which the legal category of European citizen and

policies promoting the free movement of people change the experience of Europe; and the cultural impacts of economic symbols and practices in the single market and with the single currency. I also examine EU diplomacy and foreign policy, the most difficult area for the EU to finesse its tempered sovereign status but one where symbols and practices have nonetheless helped to legitimate its particular brand of networked human security and diplomacy.

I find a series of deliberate and surprisingly successful policy actions on the part of European officials to naturalize the EU, but also some less successful attempts to create a sense of a unique European identity. In addition, some EU policies targeted toward more material results have had important but unintentional cultural side effects, generating habits and representations that normalize the EU as a new emergent political form. These dynamics are at work even in areas not strictly under the EU's official purview, such as the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) football leagues and popular entertainment such as the Eurovision Song Contest. A blurring of the lines between the EU and "Europe" buttresses the effort at expanding the taken-for-granted authority of the EU.

My scholarly focus on cultural and social processes may seem trivial compared to the need to analyze the tough challenges ahead in Europe. EU mandated economic austerity programs have brought drastic cuts in public spending, high unemployment, and hard times to many citizens. Deep divisions exist among national leaders about the future direction of the EU, and a possible exit from the EU by the United Kingdom looms. But I believe there is a real payoff from understanding the nature of the social processes legitimating the EU. My perspective helps to explain both Europe's past integration successes, and its potential limits, by situating the EU in terms of larger macrohistorical trends of legitimation and identity creation in political life.

The accomplishments of the EU in promoting democracy, political stability, and economic prosperity in the aftermath of two bloody world wars and a Great Depression remain nothing short of astonishing. I argue that the EU's particularly banal cultural infrastructure has been an important contributing factor in the evolution of the EU's surprisingly robust governance system. However, when today's economic and political crises ratchet up demands for institution building and social solidarity across European publics, and more visibly reveal the winners and losers from European policies, my account predicts that the EU's particular type of banal authority may falter as a legitimating device. Beyond these policy implications, my theoretical specification of the mechanisms at work constructing and stabilizing political entities as social facts, giving them a taken-for-granted status in political life, constitutes a step forward for our study of political authority and collective identity. Often invisible, but far from unimportant, the classificatory mechanisms of naming, mapping, and narrating that I theorize in the EU case provide a

conceptual framework for understanding the exercise of social power more broadly, beyond Europe, by any would-be political authority.

The euro crisis that began in late 2009 made the EU a focus of unprecedented political and partisan debate. The European Parliament elections of 2014 and very public national maneuvering over the nomination of new top leaders in the EU seemed to usher in a new era of open contestation in European politics. When we situate the EU in terms of the broader history of political development—be it the Holy Roman Empire, the medieval era's Italian city states, the Hanseatic League of Northern Europe, or the sovereign nation state first consolidated in sixteenth-century France—such contestation is very much to be expected. Arguably, it is a welcome and necessary part of any democratic system. But the cultural infrastructure and linked European identity that have been built to support the EU are straining under the weight of these new demands. Unlike some of the EU's historical precursors, the EU has not been designed to inculcate a passionate sense of European belonging and identity, but rather an implicit and passive acceptance. This book helps us to understand both the surprising legitimation of the EU as a new emergent actor, as well as the potential limits of the cultural processes that have produced it.

The EU as an Emergent Political Authority

Is the EU worth considering as a legitimate political authority at all? I am making some strong claims about the transformation of political power toward the EU level. Political authority can be conceptualized as the process of creating social control and compliance (Hurd 1999). While coercion or immediate material payoffs can bring about adherence to rule, force and self-interest alone will not be sufficient to create robust political order, either domestically or internationally. Legitimacy, in the sense of a claim to a culturally accepted principle or value that shores up the right of that political authority to rule, is necessary as well. Legitimacy is a subtle form of power that rests in a political authority's ability to create consent for its governance while also appearing to transcend that particular political actor. The terms by which political legitimacy is established vary with historical context, as demonstrated by the transition beginning in late eighteenth-century Europe from the norms of dynastic rule to today's democratic sovereignty (Bukovansky 2002).

How should we think about the EU in terms of political authority and legitimacy? To the casual observer, the EU looks to be more prone to squabbling and deadlock than legitimate rule. The periodic EU summits of national leaders seem to be better at producing nice photo-ops in historic places than anything enduring. The EU's single currency, the euro, has been blamed as

the vehicle for the financial crises that swept much of Southern Europe and Ireland, and the austerity policies that followed have been blamed for slow growth and high unemployment. Any social solidarity that might have existed among the European publics seems irreversibly frayed. Can we really take the EU seriously as a political authority, one that we can fruitfully compare to earlier moments of profound political transformation and reorganization?

I argue that the answer is a resounding yes. From traffic laws to food safety, to healthcare rights to internet privacy, to busting up large corporations in anti-trust suits, the EU increasingly and profoundly shapes public and private life in its 28 member states and beyond. It does so without recourse to coercion and intimidation but rather with the consent of the governed. As a system of supranational governance began to be built at the European level, and as the EU's membership extended from the original six signatories of the 1958 Treaty of Rome to today's 28 member states, European institutions, administrative bodies, legislators, judges, and policymakers have come to do more and more of the work of governing Europe. A brief outline of these shifted capacities might help to persuade those unfamiliar with the ins and outs of the EU that it indeed has substantial policy capacity. This transfer of power to the European level, beyond immediate national control, raises the issue of what legitimates the EU as a new political authority—the focus of this book.

Historically, the EU has played a key role in market regulation, agriculture, trade policy, and monetary policy. Most prominently, the Single European Act of 1987 and its subsequent legal extensions revolutionized the original market integration project of the early Treaty of Rome, bringing down barriers to trade in Europe and standardizing rules on everything from electrical outlets to roaming tariffs on mobile phones to financial reporting to public procurement rules (Egan 2001; Kelemen 2014). The EU also has exercised a heavy hand in shaping member state monetary policy, first indirectly through its longstanding exchange rate regime and, since 1999, directly controlling participating members' money supply through the European Central Bank and the euro (McNamara 1998). A significant majority of national laws across the 28 member states are subject to the supremacy of decisions by the European Court of Justice, from fair wages for women to the mutual recognition of food standards to competition for public works projects (Stone Sweet 2004, 2010; Schmidt and Kelemen 2013).

Less well known, perhaps, is that the EU has now moved beyond strictly economic policy areas. Although social policy has historically been jealously guarded by national actors, the EU has begun to actively shape welfare and social safety nets across its members (Caporaso and Tarrow 2009; Conant 2010; Anderson 2015). Citizenship and interior affairs have likewise been penetrated by EU programs (Shaw 2008; Olsen 2012). In the area of the

environment, the EU has formulated and passed some of the most extensive policies designed to stem global warming (Delreux 2011). Public health, education, and cultural programs have also become part of the EU's policy portfolio, including the Erasmus student exchange program that promotes movement of students throughout the EU (Mitchell 2014). Economic development initiatives and targeted programs have significantly affected the development path of longstanding member states such as Ireland and Portugal, as well as the newer member countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Importantly, however, although its policies redistribute wealth and opportunity, the EU does not have a formal system of direct taxing and spending, or debt creation at the European level, as is routine for all nation states no matter how federal or decentralized.

On the world stage, contrary to the conventional wisdom that the EU lacks foreign policy power, the EU signs treaties alongside sovereign states, negotiates in high level talks such as with the US and Iran over nuclear issues, litigates against nations such as China in the World Trade Organization, and has coordinated robust collective sanctions on Russia. Many observers note that the EU's influence in the world lies in its institutional and distinctive non-military and non-coercive character—in particular the spreading of its norms and values (Manners 2002, 2006; Smith 2003; Meunier and Nicolaidis 2006). The EU has had tremendous influence on many of its neighboring states, most often through the lure of EU membership, and as such has accomplished enduring regime change through institutional and legal channels (Jacoby 2004; Vachudova 2005). In the military sphere, the EU has deployed troops, police forces, and crisis management personnel to more than a dozen conflicts, and has taken over the responsibility for providing security in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Mérand 2008; Norheim-Martinsen 2013). Once again, however, in contrast to traditional nation states, the EU does not have its own European army under a hierarchical command, but rather networks the member-state militaries together for its limited joint EU actions.

The main EU institutions that are responsible for this deepening of the EU's policy capacity are the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council, and the European Court of Justice (Peterson and Shackleton 2006; Hix and Hoyland 2011). The European Commission is made up of a "college" of national political appointees who serve as commissioners, as well as a standing bureaucracy divided into functional policy bureaus or directorate generals. The commission can initiate policy proposals and implements policy decisions. The European Parliament, made up of European Members of Parliament elected in EU-wide contests every five years, has notably strengthened its role over the past decade, with the power to amend, veto, and advise, and the authority to oversee EU institutions and

censure the commission. The European Council is the intergovernmental arm of the EU, being made up of representatives of the national governments. Finally, the European Court of Justice, sitting in Luxembourg, acts in concert with the national courts to uphold EU law and has proved an important actor in the integration process through its interpretations of the EU's laws, or *acquis communautaire*.

These extensive and penetrating governance regimes emanating from the EU level have created what many refer to as a “European constitutional order,” where states and their citizens appear to be bound together institutionally in ways far surpassing traditional international organizations (Weiler 1991). Constitutional orders are marked by the binding of members to ongoing governance and a shared commitment to the broader project of the polity, in contrast to international treaties signed by sovereign states in pursuit of specific interests (Ikenberry 2001). Over the decades of the EU's history, adherence to the web of laws and institutions described above has developed to the point where the EU can be described as a legitimate political authority. Importantly, this political order has been underpinned by a host of cultural changes that, in a series of subtle and underappreciated ways, have called into being a sense of Europe as a cohesive, bounded territory.

Has Anyone Asked This Question? How Others Study Europe

How have other scholars addressed the emergence of the EU as a legitimate political authority? Simply put, few observers of the EU have focused on questions arising from this transformation. Many political scientists see the EU as an international organization, an example of institutionalized cooperation in the same category as the International Monetary Fund or the Food and Agricultural Organization. From this perspective, the EU is an intergovernmental grouping of states that come together to cooperate, but whose national sovereignty is not significantly compromised. The EU is a sensible institutional solution to the challenges of world markets, pushed forward in part by private interests—banks and firms intent on creating a big European market for their products (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998; Mattli 1999). Others have argued that the EU is best understood as an intergovernmental solution to more security-related concerns or balance of power dynamics (Rosato 2011). For many years, the dominant scholarly view was that EU cooperation is best explained by understanding the material interests of the participating states and their relative bargaining power in EU negotiations (Moravcsik 1998). Political authority does not arise as an issue, as the source of the EU's legitimacy is similar to that of international organizations: democratically elected national leaders have decided in considered and thoughtful