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THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Sabine Saurugger



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Theoretical Approaches to European Integration

Sabine Saurugger

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First published 2014 by
RED GLOBE PRESS

Red Globe Press in the UK is an imprint of Springer Nature Limited,
registered in England, company number 785998, of 4 Crinan Street,
London, N1 9XW.

Red Globe Press® is a registered trademark in the United States,
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ISBN 978–0–230–25143–4 paperback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully
managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing
processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations
of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

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List of Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSCE/OSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe/Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EC	European Community
ECB	European Central Bank
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECOFIN	Council of Economic and Finance Ministers
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EMS	European Monetary System
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EPC	European Political Community
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCC	Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
IPE	international political economy
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
Mercosur	Southern Cone Common Market
NAFTA	North American Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPM	new public management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OMC	Open Method of Coordination
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEA	Single European Act
SGP	Stability and Growth Pact
UN	United Nations
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations
WTO	World Trade Organization

Acknowledgements

When Steven Kennedy told me in 2009 that Palgrave would be interested in publishing an extended and revised version of my work *Théories et approches de l'intégration européenne*, I did not know that I was about to engage in what turned out to be a very long and exciting, but almost never-ending story. Writing a book on theories seems at first sight to be an easy enough task. However, the sheer abundance of detailed theoretical works on European integration, every one deepening, enlarging and slightly changing the main hypotheses of previous theories and concepts, has made writing such a book an extremely challenging intellectual adventure.

My gratitude goes first to Steven Kennedy, William E. Paterson and Neill Nugent. Without ever losing patience, they have provided suggestions, support, encouragement and meticulous reading of the various drafts of this book. The anonymous reviewers have challenged the book where necessary and have provided suggestions and extremely constructive critiques. Ben Rosamond's excellent book in Palgrave's European Union Series was a constant inspiration.

I am immensely grateful to Paul Stephenson, who has helped me to produce a book in a language which is not my own. Without him, reading it would have been much more difficult.

I am also grateful to Céline Belot, Clément Fontan, François Foret, Charlotte Halpern, Patrick Le Galès, Christian Lequesne, Frédéric Mérand, Franck Petiteville, Uwe Puetter, Claudio Radaelli, Alex Warleigh-Lack and Nikos Zahariadis who, despite their busy schedules, found time to read and comment on parts of the manuscript. The book would not be what it is without the intellectual companionship and warm friendship of Fabien Terpan, who provided support, enthusiasm and an abundance of constructive criticism and who has read this whole book so often that I am sure he has had enough of it.

The Institut universitaire de France offered me a period of sabbatical leave to enable me to carry out my various theories-projects, and Sciences Po Grenoble gave me the time and funding I needed to complete this book.

A special thank you goes to my students at Sciences Po Grenoble, the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the University of Cologne, who have asked complex and challenging questions, as only students are able to do. My family has seen me less than they should have, and I am immensely grateful for their patience and laughter when things have not always functioned as they should.

Introduction

Theoretical and conceptual accounts of European integration abound. It is rare these days for an academic publication on European integration not to be anchored in a conceptual framework of one kind or another, while claiming to deepen, test, enlarge or reinterpret a theoretical account.

At a time of increased strains and contestation for the European Union (EU), it is more important than ever to understand the range of theoretical perspectives that have helped explain its evolution and present state and provide the resources for addressing new developments and challenges. This book is designed to provide an introduction to and critical assessment of the wide range of theories that currently prevail in the study of European integration. It does so both in terms of an analysis of their substantive contributions to the field but also in terms of their historical context and origins (including what they were developed to explain and the impact of real-world events on their fortunes) and their philosophical underpinnings. While the first theorists specifically focused on explaining European integration, i.e. why states have agreed to abandon all or parts of their national sovereignty and what results this integration process has produced, since then others have sought to apply more ‘mainstream’ approaches from comparative politics, public policy and beyond to explain the day-to-day politics of European integration.

The book will argue, however, that neither of these two perspectives is sufficient to understand contemporary European integration. This means, more precisely, that the EU cannot be analysed merely as an inter-governmental entity in which member states make central decisions, nor that it is a political system similar to that of a (nation)-state – an interpretation introduced by general comparative politics approaches. This book argues that only a combination of both international relations and comparative politics approaches will allow us to answer crucial empirical contemporary European studies questions both on its internal and broader external – or international – aspects. In other words, this book aims at ‘mainstreaming’ theoretical accounts of European integration. What do we mean by that?

Mainstreaming European integration theory

Theoretical ‘mainstreaming’ means drawing out the relationships between key concepts and frameworks in EU studies with broader theorizing in political and social science both today and historically.

While this attempt was undertaken as early as in the 1980s (Bulmer 1983), and has become even more systematic since the 1990s (Hix 1994, 1998; Pollack 1996; Caporaso 1999; Gabel, Hix and Schneider 2002), this book aims to give it another twist.

Mainstreaming European integration theory means, to the understanding of these authors, not only looking at the construction of new institutions at a supranational level. European integration is also about the transformation of domestic structures, policies and politics. Thus, instead of developing theories and frameworks solely designed to study European integration, conceptual tools broadly used to study the state should be applied to European integration.

This particular understanding of mainstreaming European studies is reflected in the development of contemporary European integration frameworks such as institutionalisms (Chapter 5), governance (Chapter 6), Europeanization (Chapter 7), sociological approaches (Chapter 8) or political theory (Chapter 9). I refer to this understanding as ‘bottom-up mainstreaming’ because its origins can be found in the study of the state.

However, this particular movement has a serious flaw: it neglects the international and intergovernmental aspect of the integration process (Hurrell and Menon 1996, 2003). Bargaining among member states inside the EU, negotiations between the EU and other states, bilaterally or multilaterally in international organizations such as the EU, takes place in an intergovernmental arena where contemporary conceptual international relations frameworks provide precious tools for analysis. These interactions are shaped by sovereignty-based considerations such as ‘national interests’ or ‘power’. Theoretical tools developed by ‘bottom-up mainstreamers’ do not systematically take these sovereignty considerations into account, as they consider the EU as similar to a nation-state. Yet the intergovernmental aspect of European integration remains crucial. This, of course, concerns the external aspect of European integration (all areas of external relations – trade, defence or diplomacy, as well as internal policies that have an external impact, such as Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)). Sovereignty and power, however, also concern the internal aspect of European integration, i.e. the bargaining that takes place among the EU member states (Chapter 10).

Furthermore, the EU is not the *only* regional integration project, neither in time nor in space: NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Association), MERCOSUR (the Southern Cone Common Market) and ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), to mention just three, are other cases with which comparisons might be extremely beneficial. These comparisons would allow for a better understanding, not only of regional integration processes, but also of the consequences of regional integration for states and society more generally (Chapter 11). It is in all these areas that new international relations approaches offer promising avenues for research because, in one way or another, they

recognize an actor's role as being influenced by sovereignty and 'national interest' considerations. This research attitude is what this book calls 'top-down mainstreaming'.

This book differs from earlier calls for academic mainstreaming in a number of respects, most importantly by looking to a broader range of disciplines, including both international relations and comparative politics, alongside sociology. Linking the concepts of 'bottom-up' and 'top-down mainstreaming' in this book is not necessarily about developing one single homogenous conceptual or methodological approach to European studies. Here it means insisting on the fact that only the combination of theoretical concepts originating in comparative politics, public policy *and* international relations will allow for any nuanced understanding of the different aspects of European integration.

Introducing the reader to the richness of theoretical accounts in EU studies and guiding them through the complexity of these concepts, however, also requires putting these theoretical approaches into their political and historical context.

Contextualizing theories and concepts

Contextualizing theories and approaches in general is central for our understanding of where the origins of theories lie, and what the underlying scientific and methodological paradigms are. The analysis of processes, institutions or real-world phenomena more generally is always influenced by the particular social context within which the observer evolved (i.e. was trained to analyse and observe) and operates today (some academic institutions are renowned for their particular approach or 'school of thought'). The development of theoretical and conceptual approaches in EU studies is no exception: approaches and frameworks are influenced by the prominent academic but also political paradigm of their time, i.e. by trends. Thus, presenting the historical origins of theoretical approaches to European integration helps us explain the structures of thought generally implicit in these tools for analysis.

Let us take three moments in European integration in order to illustrate the importance of the social, political or academic context in developing theoretical frameworks. First, the theoretical accounts introduced in the 1940s and 1950s were developed to explain the origins of European integration. Three theories competed in explaining European integration in the 1950s, all of them influenced by the traumatic events of the Second World War: neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism and federalism. As will be shown in Chapter 1, federalism argued in favour of supranational integration, developing ideas on how to best structure regional integration in order to hinder the outbreak of a new armed conflict on the European continent. On the contrary, neofunctionalism

(Chapter 2) and intergovernmentalism (Chapter 3) emerged during a period of change in scientific paradigms: behaviourists introduced scientific methods stemming from hard sciences into social sciences. Influenced by this debate, these approaches developed hypotheses that sought to identify what had pushed sovereign states to abandon their room for manoeuvre and adhere to a new form of international organization. Their ideological standpoints were discarded: neither neofunctionalism nor intergovernmentalism believed that member states accepted to create the European Community (EC) mainly because of their wish to secure peace on the European continent. While neofunctionalists argued that European integration was due to the perceived benefits of this integration: positive results in one integrated policy area would lead to pressure for increased integration in another policy area, intergovernmentalists specifically emphasized the role of state interests driving the integration process forward.

While the latter interpretation remained largely valid for 20 years, the mid-1980s saw the emergence of new frameworks explaining European integration providing the second example of the importance of theories and conceptual frameworks in interpreting ‘real-world events’. Contrary to the dominant intergovernmentalist thinking of the time, which emphasized the minimal interest of the major member states in European integration and, as a result, the relative apathy of the EC, the rise of institutionalism brought change to the theoretical mainstream. More precisely, it allowed for an alternative interpretation of this 20-year period, but with hindsight. When adopting an institutionalist viewpoint (Chapter 5), we observe that, under the calm surface, a large number of changes and reforms were afoot. These include the introduction of the European Monetary System (EMS), the first elections to the European Parliament, the implementation of intergovernmental cooperation on foreign policy and integration through European law via the European Court of Justice (ECJ). Thus, far from being dependent on state interests alone, ‘institutions mattered’. The existing institutions, as well as those established during the 1960s and 1970s, helped further European integration. Such an observation would have been impossible had the theoretical framework been based purely on a single variable – namely, state interests being for or against increased European integration.

The analysis of the negotiations for the Single European Act (SEA) in 1986, a document that ‘relaunched’ the European integration process by creating a single European market, is a third example that illustrates how the same events can be read very differently depending on the theoretical lens one chooses to look through. Thus, we may understand the SEA as an instance of purely intergovernmental negotiation between member states, and more precisely Germany, France and the UK (Chapter 3) or, on the contrary, as having been largely influenced by non-state actors and, more precisely, economic interest groups such as the European

Round Table of Industrialists. From this perspective, the preparation of the SEA becomes a phenomenon better explained using the conceptual approach of network governance (Chapter 5), according to which a broad and pluralistic number of actors – both public and private – negotiate in order to define and implement a policy.

What we observe here are cyclical or dialectical patterns of challenges to, and the reinforcing of, existing theoretical perspectives (Paterson 2010). Sets of real-world events, crisis and caesuras provide challenges, but also opportunities to reformulate theories and conceptual frameworks. The academic and sociohistorical context largely structures the emergence and subsequent importance of these theoretical approaches.

European integration studies have also been influenced by conceptual debates going on in other fields of political science and international relations. At the same time, European studies have exerted their own influence, contributing to the emergence of a number of considerable controversies in the social sciences more generally (Wiener and Diez 2004, 2009; see also Bache and George 2006; Rosamond 1995, 2000; Kelstrup and Williams 2000). For instance, governance approaches (Chapter 5), developed at the beginning of the 1990s in EU studies, opened up new possibilities to conceptualize the integration of the state into a supranational entity, by cutting the state into small constituent elements – public and private actors. This also led to normative questions about the democratic character of the EU in general, dealt with by political theory approaches (Chapter 9).

The relevance of theories

In short, this book is based on the basic and perhaps obvious assumption that theories matter. But why do they matter? Is it not enough to study the history or detailed workings of the EU as historians and lawyers do? Albeit important, this approach is not entirely satisfactory. Theories and conceptual frameworks matter precisely because they allow us to understand how a specific hypothesis can influence the interpretation of a given research question. To put it bluntly, if no effort is made to structure our observations, no proper understanding is possible (Marsh and Stoker 1995).

The origin of the notion of theory comes from the Greek verb *theorein*, meaning ‘observing, identifying and understanding’. It refers more precisely to the idea of bringing order and meaning to phenomena observed. In a restricted sense, ‘theory’ is defined as an argument of correlation or determining variables of universal, historical and nomothetic validity which can be tested by a set of refutable hypotheses (Przeworski and Teune, 1982; King, Keohane and Verba 1994). This book, however, deals not only with theories, but also presents key

concepts and frameworks. Contrary to theories that attempt to develop an argument about causality, concepts and frameworks offer ideas for interpreting social facts. In the case of concepts and approaches, social phenomena are part of a specific context and must be interpreted rather than explained – i.e. any explanation is first and foremost (merely) an interpretation.

The link between concepts and theories can be understood as a continuum. On this continuum, multiple positions are possible. On the one hand, not all authors presented in this book who advocate an explanatory theoretical approach necessarily defend conceptualizations based on unidirectional links between causes and effects. On the other hand, adepts of the interpretive, conceptual approach do not all reject the use of language based on hypotheses and variables, be they dependent, independent or intervening – in fact, the majority of scholars take a position somewhere in the middle of this continuum.

This book will use the notion of *theories* or *theoretical approaches* when these frameworks allow us to develop a system of hypotheses. The notion of *conceptual framework* is used in a wider sense, referring to what Gerry Stoker called ‘frame[s] of references in which reality can be examined ... [by] providing interpretations of relationships between variables’ (Stoker 1995: 18).

The theories and conceptual frameworks analysed in this book can be distinguished according to two functions: their explanatory function, on the one hand, and their critical and normative function, on the other.

Although *explanatory theories* differ very broadly in their epistemological underpinnings and, therefore, in the methods used by scholars when employing such theories, these theories do share a common objective: to explain why and how events take place. Their added value lies in systematic research aimed at uncovering the reasons for, and determinants of, the policy processes observed. Critical or normative theories, on the contrary, do not take European integration as a given. They aim to

Table 0.1 *Functions of theories and conceptual frameworks*

<i>Functions</i>	<i>Theories and conceptual frameworks</i>
Explanatory	Federalism, transactionalism, neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism, institutionalism, governance, Europeanization, constructivism, sociology, political theory, international relations, comparative regional integration
Critical and normative	Federalism, functionalism, constructivism (post-positivist variant), normative power Europe (NPE), political theory

Table 0.2 *Four dimensions of EU research*

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Main question</i>
Ontology	Does the world exist independently from actors' perception?
Epistemology	What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge?
Sub-disciplines	Should we study different areas of integration with different disciplinary tools?
Scope of theoretical approach	Can we explain the EU's political system in its entirety or only parts of it?

provide avenues allowing for developing alternatives to political and economic processes at the EU level. Political theory, for instance, led to reflections on what the EU should be or become.

However, distinguishing between the explanatory and normative functions of theories and conceptual approaches does not allow us to fully understand all the fundamental differences between the approaches presented in this book. Joseph Jupille's (2006) differentiation between four metatheoretical dimensions seems better suited to explain the architecture and cleavages present in scientific research on European integration (see also Wiener and Diez 2004, 2009).

The first dimension concerns ontology: 'What is the world made of?', 'What is a cause of the social world, and what is an effect?' Ontology deals with the question whether the world exists independently of the perception or experience of actors (and therefore, objectively), or if it only exists via the perception of individuals or the individual (subjectively). Are actors moulded by their environment and where they are situated in it, or are their preferences formed independently from external influences? This debate is best known as 'structure versus agency' debate. It can be understood as an issue of socialization against autonomy of an individual: does the individual act as a free agent or in a manner dictated by social structure?

The second key dimension is epistemological: 'What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge?' More precisely, we distinguish between the question of 'how the social world functions' (understanding) and the question 'what makes the world function?' (explaining). Understanding refers to the scholar's attempt to make us grasp what events mean. In order to understand an event, we must interpret it, put it into perspective, generally in starting the explanation from an actor's view. Explaining, on the other hand, refers to the attempt to explain the laws of nature: 'The crucial move is to insist that every individual works basically in the same law-like way, with individual varieties depending

on systematic differences in, for instance preferences and information' (Hollis and Smith 1991: 4). A theory of knowledge thus tries to determine whether we can build up sufficient knowledge of the world (for example, via empirical observation) that will ever enable us to validate our hypotheses objectively. Or, conversely, is any observation based on a, at least partially, erroneous theory, as this theory will implicitly determine the responses that we hope to find in the empirical field? Both of these concerns are specifically discussed in the chapters on constructivism (Chapter 7) and sociological approaches to European integration (Chapter 8). Another way to frame the dimension of epistemology is to distinguish between positivist and post-positivist perspectives: A positivist theory of knowledge argues that causalities, i.e. relations between cause and effect (explaining), are out there just waiting to be found, whereas post-positivists refer to a value-laden social reality, only coming to light through individual interpretation (understanding).

A third dimension concerns the explanatory functions of subdivisions in the social sciences more generally. This book primarily concentrates on political science and sociological approaches and, thus, offers a rather homogenous view as compared to theories developed in legal studies, history or economics. At the same time, the different sub-disciplines of political science such as political theory, public policy, comparative politics or international relations raise also different questions, which in turn lead to different answers in European study research. Thus, international relations approaches until the 1970s were mainly concerned with identifying those factors that encouraged states to pool their sovereignty at the European level, whereas more general comparative politics approaches questioned the consequences of European integration for policies as well as for the citizens of European member states.

The fourth and last dimension concerns the scope of the theoretical approach. Can we explain a political or social system in general, in time and in space, and thus develop a so-called grand theory, or should researchers strive to explain a particular context, an attitude that can be found in so-called mid-range theories? Thus, theoretical approaches vary not only in terms of objectives, but also in terms of scope. Analysing EU energy policy, for example, requires different tools, based on mid-range theories than those used to assess the EU as a political regime in its own right where we can find attempts to develop grand theories.

The structure of the book

The book is divided into three main parts: Part I groups together theories which attempt to explain the reasons behind regional and, more specifically, European integration and the direction this process took. Part II presents frameworks that explain the way the EU functions, an aim that

has led to a gradual 'mainstreaming' of conceptual frameworks for studying the EU by using those designed to analyse the state ('bottom-up mainstreaming'). Part III presents international relations approaches developed to analyse the variety of intergovernmental bargaining. A variety of these approaches, however, are not based on state-centred views, but deconstruct terms such as 'sovereignty', 'national interests' or 'power' ('top-down mainstreaming').

The consideration of the factors accounting for European integration, developed in the first part of the book, begins with what is widely called original debates on regional integration, such as functionalism, transactionalism and federalism (Chapter 1). As we will see in Chapter 1, federalism, in particular, will be presented as an evolutionary theory – from its origins to more contemporary conceptualizations. Originating as a largely normative approach in EU studies, federalism analyses cooperation between states, where cooperation leads, or is meant to lead, to the establishment of a new task-oriented body. Federalism gathered momentum again in the periods of evolutionary treaty negotiations, such as after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 or the Constitutional, and then Lisbon Treaty, respectively, in 2004 and 2007. Thus, while empirically challenged at the EU level from the 1950s to the 1980s, it was reinforced again through a new set of empirical developments at the beginning of the 1990s and 2000s, to be challenged again after the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty. For nearly thirty years, until the beginning of the 1990s, neofunctionalist (Chapter 2) and intergovernmentalist approaches (Chapter 3) replaced federalist approaches. The critical analysis of these approaches is the subject of the first part of this book. The central question these theories try to explain is why states agree to join a regional bloc, and how this supranational organization developed or stagnated.

The second part of this book critically analyses conceptual frameworks in EU studies that stem from more general political science and comparative politics approaches. This new research did emerge at the beginning of the 1990s, with a call to mainstream European studies and a plea in favour of abandoning the project of conceptualizing the EU as a single case or as being *sui generis*. As developed above, this has meant the emergence of analytical frameworks proposing a greater use of comparative politics, public policy, political sociology or political theory in the study of European integration, mainly concentrating on policy areas linked to former pillar 1 policies. In this second part, the book will thus look in turn at different forms of institutionalism (Chapter 4) and governance approaches (Chapter 5), Europeanization and policy transfer studies (Chapter 6), constructivism (Chapter 7), sociological approaches to European integration (Chapter 8) and political theory (Chapter 9). The main objective of these academic concepts (and accompanying sets of literature) is not to develop frameworks for explaining *why* states join

regional integration schemes in the first place (motives, rationale, costs/benefits), but to contribute to our understanding of *how* the European political system actually works in practice today, and how the EU has influenced and transformed domestic politics in the various member states.

In the third and final part, the book seeks to analyse how the EU can be interpreted by using international relations approaches: on the one hand, to examine how general international relations theories can be applied to European integration when coupled with more sociological interpretations of international relations (Chapter 10). This chapter will allow us to present conceptual frameworks for measuring the influence of sovereignty and national interests on the bargaining behaviour of member states, as well as the EU's role in the world, i.e. whether it can be seen as a normative power, a coherent international actor or whether its internal structure prevents it from influencing international relations.

On the other hand, comparative regional integration approaches turn, at least partially, back to initial questions such as why states agree to form regional integration schemes and how these regional integration schemes function, in studying forms beyond the European continent (Chapter 11). These conceptual approaches thus attempt to conceptualize international integration processes more generally, rather than concentrating solely on those concerning European integration.

The proliferation of theoretical and conceptual approaches for studying the EU allows us, on the one hand, to engage in a more detailed and nuanced analysis of the EU and its historical development. At the same time, however, they have also revealed signs of increasing fragmentation (Paterson, Nugent and Egan 2010). While most of the approaches and theoretical frameworks have avoided becoming too specialized, there is nevertheless a certain danger that, instead of bringing the whole picture of European integration back in, they increasingly concentrate on micro-subjects or issue areas. In other words, we currently observe the consolidation of a multitude of middle-range theories that do not set out to *explain* the reasons for integration, but, instead, enable us to *structure* our research in a coherent manner. That is not to say that these many different approaches are operating in complete isolation from each other. What we hope for, of course, is that the borders between these different approaches are broken down or become more permeable, to give way to more open debates on the advantages and disadvantages of each approach and their level of application (Manners 2009).

However, it does seem that we are at a point where contemporary theoretical frameworks should consider how they might be more ambitious, in an attempt to explain the structure and functioning of the wider system as a whole. This is essential if we want to avoid wallowing in a multitude of very detailed examinations of specific, yet isolated, policy studies. Further studies focusing on European society (Fligstein 2008)

or the EU as a system (Bartolini 2005; Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig 2012) would allow us to envisage the ‘bigger picture’ from alternative perspectives, and arguably, have more value for the community of Europeanists as a whole.

The aim of this book is not to present a history of European integration, to give precise accounts of specific policies, or to analyse the political system of the EU, for these endeavours have been carried out elsewhere with great success (Dinan 2004; Wallace, Pollack, and Young 2010; Hix and Høyland 2011). Instead, it seeks to provide the reader with critical tools in order to navigate through what is an increasingly complex and dense body of theoretical and conceptual literature. That said, the frontiers between the approaches presented in this book – where one begins and another ends – are sometimes not as clear-cut as one might expect. Sometimes approaches overlap or cross over because of what they focus on and how they inherently perceive the EU. This is due to the fact that concepts often develop simultaneously, influencing each other either through stark opposition or apparent complementarity. In turn, proponents of one concept or framework may react to the emergence of another by tightening up their own so it becomes more separate and/or distinct. Accepting this mutual dependency, throughout the chapters the reader might not find the authors where they expect them to be, but instead discover their horizontal influence upon, and/or relevance to several other conceptual frameworks.

Why Integrate? Theories of Integration

The study of intergovernmental cooperation is by no means a recent phenomenon. The question of why states cooperate is subject to different interpretations in international relations and can be traced as far back as the peace treaties of Westphalia in 1648. Academic attention to state cooperation in regional frames gained ground more systematically after the Second World War and, in particular, during the 1950s and 1960s. The first part of this book provides an analysis of the origins of, and recent developments, in those early theoretical approaches to regional and European integration. The main question was *why* sovereign states cooperated in international affairs at all, i.e. how did they do so, who were the central actors of cooperation, what was its bottom-line objective, what were the limits and constraints, the processes and procedures?

The theories analysed in this part are mostly concerned with the factors conducive to integration, as well as with the results of this process. This differentiates them from the approaches discussed in Parts II and III of this book, where the *how* question predominates. Conceptual frameworks dealt with in the latter parts of the book concentrate on specific developments of regional integration, and on processes and dynamics, but not so much on the question of why international actors search out and agree to be part of regional integration processes. The questions raised by the theories in Part I address issues such as why European states accept to gradually transfer powers to the European Parliament or the European Commission, how states organize their cooperation, what the consequences of integration are in terms of elite socialization, or why and how states use their veto power. The answers to these questions are multifaceted, but what they have in common is an attempt to address the reasons leading to the construction of a political union, either explicitly or implicitly.

Developed after the First World War, the first integration theories paid particular attention to the dangers of nationalism and economic protectionism. War was considered an essential characteristic of the international system, which divided peoples into nation-states and pushed them to fight to secure scarce resources. Federalist, functionalist and neofunctionalist accounts aimed to develop analytical models that

could explain how international anarchy might be replaced by a system of international societies that regulate international relations. Alternatively, neorealist, intergovernmental and liberal intergovernmentalist theories argued, at different degrees, that international anarchy remained the driving force for state behaviour.

Albeit diverse, three characteristics are common to the theories studied in this first part (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006: 17): first of all, the idea that the problems of contemporary society have reached such a scale that they can no longer be handled adequately at the level of the individual nation-state but require international solutions – which can potentially be found by state representatives through international cooperation. Secondly, these theories argue either in favour of or against the basic assumption that international institutions have the capacities necessary to develop solutions, which in turn help states cooperate with each other. Finally, scholars in that first period of integration research initially pursued a framework that went beyond European integration to study regional integration comparatively beyond Europe. Neofunctionalists, intergovernmentalists and federalists based their thinking on non-European examples of regional integration. Developments from the beginning of the 1990s onwards transformed those theories into EU-centred approaches with little or no interest in regional integration beyond the European realm.

Rather than limiting the debate on grand theories in EU studies to the three usual suspects – federalism, neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism (see Wiener and Diez 2004, 2009; Chrysosouchou 2008; Schimmelfennig 2010), the aim of this part is to trace the origins of these theories and to present more general approaches to state cooperation in the regional context.

Thus, the first chapter presents theories of international and regional integration that laid the foundations for classic integration theories – the so-called ‘pre-theories’ (Rosamond 2000; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006): functionalism, transactionalism and federalism. These pre-theories profoundly influenced later mainstream integration theories, albeit implicitly. Europe is often used as a regional case study for identifying distinct features of regional integration processes.

Our examination of specific approaches to European integration begins in Chapter 2, with its focus on neofunctionalism. It is followed by a third chapter looking at intergovernmentalist approaches that developed as a result of empirical observation – specifically, after the Empty Chair Crisis triggered by the French government of General de Gaulle in 1965/1966. As such, both chapters hark back to the original attempts to explain regional integration, namely, why exactly states accept to pool their sovereignty.

All theories and theoretical approaches discussed here have strongly influenced the conceptual frameworks developed since the end of the

1980s to analyse European integration. As Part II will show, while some conceptual frameworks oppose the premises and hypotheses of this first generation of work on regional integration, later scholarship attempts to refine them by tightening up concepts and fleshing them out in greater detail.

Original Debates

While regional integration studies are no recent phenomenon, they certainly gained in importance after the Second World War. The extent to which the world became organized according to regional logics increased steadily. Trade flows, direct investments or indeed the activities of international organizations were increasingly concentrated within ‘regions’ – often entire continents – as well as globally. With the end of the First World War, the prevalence of a system based on states with a tendency to engage in conflict was called into question – how to establish more effective balance of power mechanisms? In both academic and political circles the liberal idea of rejecting the state as an ultimate form of human governance emerged. Yet state conflict soon led to the subsequent horrors of 1939–45. International and supranational institutions were thought necessary to help overcome the antagonistic attitudes of states, in particular in Europe. On the one hand, these ideas were rooted in economic institutions created during the 1920s such as the European Customs Union and the International Steel Cartel which associated German, French and British steel producers. At the same time, the rise of American political and economic power triggered fear among the European elite that the continent would lose its central position in world affairs. On the other hand, philosophical ideas found their way back into political debate. The intellectual origins of European integration can be found in the Kantian idea of a European federation or Winston Churchill’s United States of Europe. The vocabulary and ideology of federalist movements emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century were forged on the eighteenth-century philosophy of Immanuel Kant. In the 1920s Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi developed the Pan Europa idea with his call for a federal union of European states centred on France and Germany. While this discourse, these actions and ideas do not qualify as theories in the social science sense, they are nonetheless important in terms of providing an intellectual basis, and set of alternatives for political debates on how to practically ‘reorganize’ the European continent.

In order to contextualize the current conceptual tools used in EU studies, it is therefore important to return to the origins of theoretical approaches to regional integration more generally. This chapter does so in three steps, with a first section presenting functionalism as a pre-theory to neofunctionalism. A second section then presents transactionalist

Table 1.1 *Original debates in brief*

<i>Perspectives</i>	<i>Main assumptions</i>
Functionalism	International organizations, governed by experts, are needed to guarantee peace. National elites are too interested in re-election to make efficient and good decisions
Transactionalism	Communication is the key variable determining the social engagement in communities (security communities)
Federalism	The theory or advocacy of federal principles for dividing powers between member units and common institutions

perspectives, focusing on the construction of a regional identity through cooperation in the field of security. A final section discusses federalism, which is not only an analytical toolbox, useful for explaining why and how states integrate into a larger territorial entity, but it is also a normative approach in the sense that it argues in favour of greater integration. Contrary to the two other theories, federalism has, since the 1980s, been further explored and refined. The aim of these conceptual developments was to better understand recent European integration phenomena. It is essential to grasp how these pre-theories intellectually underpinned early developments in regional integration, even if much academic enquiry in contemporary EU studies has now shifted to focus more on governance processes and thus took the so-called ‘governance turn’ (Pollack 1996: 454).

Functionalism

Functionalism led to a new and influential understanding of why states agreed to establish international organizations. Functionalist approaches and, in particular, the account developed by David Mitrany, are considered as the cornerstones of classic integration theory. As a precursor to the neofunctionalist approach (Chapter 2), functionalism had been central to the study of international relations and was part of the liberal-idealist movement which spanned Kant to interwar liberals such as Woodrow Wilson. This movement developed ideas on how to guarantee peace among nations. The conceptual framework of functionalism emerged as one of the first to directly question state-centred approaches. Through its arguments that allowed for the including of other actors in international relations, such as experts, civil servants or international

organizations, it paved the way for the so-called interdependence approach(es) by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (Keohane and Nye 1977) or the 'regimes theory' of the 1980s (Krasner 1983).

The founding father of functionalism, David Mitrany, was very much an exception among the authors whose works are analysed in this book. Mitrany studied at the London School of Economics (LSE) but did not subsequently embark upon a university career. As a journalist, adviser and foreign-policy analyst (Claude 1964; Pentland 1973; Navari 1995), his work had a more normative character than those of his colleagues. For him, the idea was less to establish a refutable theory and more to develop a conceptual framework conducive to promoting conditions that would put an end to situations of war – a framework that carried considered intellectual favour in the 1940s. Mitrany's objective was to propose specific factors that might lead to the establishment of permanent international organizations guaranteeing peace, and not to retreat into the quick-fix, enthusiastic idealism of the interwar period. As Ben Rosamond points out, Mitrany's starting point is not to identify an ideal form of international society, but to pinpoint the essential functions that such a system should be able to deliver (Rosamond 2000: 32).

At the heart of this approach is the belief that the political game *per se*, i.e. politics, stands in the way of the creation of favourable social conditions for all. Ideological positions harboured by states are a powerful factor working against the collective wellbeing and which can also, *in fine*, lead to war. According to the functionalist conception, as entities, nation-states are therefore the least suited to nurturing the fundamental development of their citizens. Public policies are encumbered by politics' (and its politicians') quest to optimize individuals' needs. As a result, powerful supranational institutions are needed to exercise the function that rational individuals attribute to them, hence the notion of functionalism.

Through their political elite, governments create situations in which the acquisition and exercise of power overshadow the pursuit of the common good. Politics also prevents the state from acting creatively when faced with public policy challenges. Their inflexibility, due to their ideological nature, creates a need for institutions and international or transnational agencies. Thus, according to Mitrany, in order to achieve certain objectives, it is better to ignore the constraints of territory – and national territory in particular. The creation of such entities is thought to have two consequences. First, citizens or populations in general will transfer their loyalties to newly created institutions. The second consequence of the creation of such institutions is a marked reduction in the probability of armed conflict. The application of the rational and technocratic approach is therefore the basis of a sustainable, peaceful system (Mitrany 1943). The functionalists' key idea is that the *form* (the institution to be created) is the consequence of the *function* that this same

institution is required to accomplish – form follows function. Since the state – and political actors more specifically – cannot govern in a flexible manner, the need for transnational institutions arises. If distinct governmental forms arise for different functional needs, however, the predicted outcome is not a single regional body like the EU, but a ‘cobweb’ of organizations with different functions and memberships.

It was in the complex interwar period of the 1930s that Mitrany pursued the idea that the state should not be the centre-point of internationalist reflection (Mitrany 1933, 1943). Three areas of critique emerged. First, the state should not be considered as an entity independent of others, nor indeed should it be considered sovereign. Mitrany was the first to use the notion of ‘material interdependence’ – a term subsequently adopted by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye and extended through the development of regime theory (Keohane and Nye 1972, 1977). Secondly, Mitrany considers the state as ultimately archaic, precluding any constructive or innovative reflection. In his view, international and transnational institutions are the only antidote to this reigning inertia. Finally, and particularly apposite in contemporary debate, Mitrany considers the state as a poorly suited and rather inadaptably structure for resolving the problems of complex interdependence, one of the characteristics of contemporary public policies (Papadopoulos 1995). Only the proliferation of transnational organizations and institutions could lead to interests being pursued to meet the needs of humanity effectively. These institutions should be numerous and specialized, while remaining profoundly independent. The result of this process could be a network of overlapping institutions that differ according to their functions.

Critiques

Some of the observations developed in functionalist theory have been taken up in more recent conceptual frameworks in EU studies, such as in the governance literature (Chapter 5), or normative theories of European integration (Chapter 9) – for example, the inability of states to deal individually with specific transnational issues such as environmental protection, trade or, more recently, financial regulation, which arguably need transnational institutions to regulate their relevant policy fields. However, the functionalist approach in general has been widely criticized on the grounds of its normative and teleological nature, the minimal importance it has attached to the political nature of decision-making, and the absence of any sociological analysis of actors working within transnational and supranational institutions.

With regard to the normative and teleological issue, functionalism is criticized for not sufficiently explaining the notion of ‘human need’. These needs are legion and often contradictory, while the notion of rationality is particularly relative in this context. There is no guarantee

that supranational institutions will apply a rational approach or that individuals will be convinced of functionalists' arguments referring to 'human need' in their day-to-day affairs.

Secondly, and more importantly, by insisting on the technocratic nature of the organizations to be created, Mitrany fails to take the permanent and unavoidable presence of politics into consideration. No public policy management can be purely technocratic. Politics is not necessarily always an ideological or partisan game, but fundamental power-play in any process of bargaining exists when it comes to the public interest. Thus, even experts and civil servants – considered as neutral – will defend the interests of the group they represent.

Finally, it is not clear which actors Mitrany believes should manage functionalist transnational and international institutions, nor what their selection criteria should be. The abstract category of 'experts' is too broad to be operationalized in empirical research.

Neofunctionalists (Chapter 2) took these critiques seriously and transformed the conceptual and normative frame of functionalism into a fully-fledged theory.

Transactionalist perspectives

The process of regional integration between the end of the Second World War and the end of the 1960s gave rise to a substantial body of theoretical studies. While some developed into fully-fledged theories, based on a coherent set of assumptions, such as neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism, others such as transactionalism somehow got shelved and forgotten. Implicitly, however, it very much influenced subsequent studies on socialization and cultural learning in EU studies.

With its focus more centred on the security of a set of countries than political or economic integration, the main exponents, Karl Deutsch and his colleagues, looked at the conditions required for a regional security regime to emerge. For Deutsch and his research team, integration was defined as the creation of stable, secure communities in a region or group of states. The EC was not the research object, but the North Atlantic Community. The objective was to develop 'the means by which individuals will one day be able to abolish war' (Deutsch et al. 1957: 3). Effective integration could thus be measured through the radical reduction of states' resorting to violence. Being both a specialist in international relations and political sociology, Deutsch's aim was to study the link between the creation of nations and the communication between individuals using newly developed computerized data-gathering methods. His central assumption was that communication is the key variable determining the social engagement of communities. These communities precede the emergence of nations.

Through the notion of 'security communities', the author and his colleagues referred to groups of people who became integrated within new political entities. Communication would lead to the establishment of a 'we-feeling', created psychologically through a devotion of individuals of this community to some symbol representing the community. This feeling of community would give rise to stable institutions and mutually acceptable practices, facilitating a transformation to peaceful coexistence. The authors went on to make a distinction between 'amalgamated' security communities and 'pluralistic' communities. Amalgamated security communities merge smaller units – states – into a bigger unit, thereby creating a new institution that is very much in line with federalist arrangements. Pluralistic security communities are communities in which individual states retain their sovereignty. They need three factors to exist: compatible values, a peaceful approach to internal conflict resolution by all participants, and the ability to predict the social, political and economic behaviour of the other members of the community (Deutsch 1968; Cobb and Elder 1970).

The central idea of the *transactionalist* approach is that the degree of community between states will be a consequence of the level of communication and the existence of a network of transactions between them. Only a high degree of communication and transaction will lead to a cognitive adaptation of all actors at the expense of the singular existence of one institutional elite – a criticism that Deutsch made of the functionalist and neofunctionalist approaches. Deutsch was more specifically interested in issues of identity and government within such security communities and states that agreed to form these communities than in external factors such as economic or security imperatives. Through this process, he directly defied realist and neorealist hypotheses which refused to open the 'black box' (the state) and which considered citizens as a negligible variable. Karl Deutsch and his colleagues stressed, on the contrary, the importance of the feelings of the individuals that constituted these security communities (for a more recent application see also Kaiser et al. 2005; Adler and Barnett 1998). This sociological approach led the authors to take only a very limited interest in the formal institutions of regional integration or, indeed, those of the member states. Their main study perspective was communication and transactional procedures between individuals. European integration *per se* was merely one example among others worthy of research investigation.

Limits of transactionalist perspectives

David Puchala (1981) drew attention to several difficulties in this perspective, of which two in particular were crucial. The first was the operationalization of the specific research question, i.e. the possibility of transforming transactionalist hypotheses into measurable variables.