

1

WHAT KIND OF UNION?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define and explain what Europe is.
2. Define and explain what the European Union is (and is not).
3. Understand the twin objectives of the European Union: power and plenty.
4. Explain the importance of the EU to the US, Europe, and the world.

In a 1950 declaration, Robert Schuman, the French foreign minister at the time, famously quipped: “The contribution which an organized and living Europe can bring to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. . . . A united Europe was not achieved [in the interwar period] and we had war.”¹ Winston Churchill similarly described in painful detail the despair that settled upon the minds of the desolate citizens of European countries who were devastated by World War II. “What is Europe now? It is a rubble heap, a charnel-house, a breeding ground of pestilence and hate.”² These are powerful words meant to move the masses—and, more importantly, the elites—of Europe into action. If nothing were done, tyranny would reign and violence would once again rear its ugly head.

And what should be done? How could Europe break the cycle of violence to which it seemed doomed to repeat? Schuman had the answer: “The pooling of coal and steel production . . . [that] will change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims.” But a united Europe would “not be made all at once or according to a single plan.”³

The community of Europe is a remarkable achievement that has been centuries in the making. As Schuman and Churchill make very clear, the relief and exhaustion following World War II provided the fertile ground within which the European Union



Robert Schuman

Source: European Union.

(EU) as we know it today could grow and prosper.⁴ But the idea of Europe both as concept and as political organization has a much longer and more turbulent history. European integration as it evolved since the mid-twentieth century is also a unique experiment. Never before in the history of humankind have we seen a voluntary pooling or transfer of sovereignty—depending on one’s point of view—without any blood shedding (Box 1.1). It may have taken a catastrophe of epic proportions for the point to sink in, but the fact remains that the establishment and evolution of integration in Europe is not an act of coercion. States decide for themselves whether and when to join.

BOX 1.1: FROM EC TO EU

In 1993, the Treaty on European Union (TEU, or Treaty of Maastricht) transformed the European Communities (EC) into the European Union (EU). The term *EC* technically refers to three European Communities (the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community, and the European Atomic Energy Community), although the term *European Community* was more widely used. The EC did not disappear with the advent of the EU; it continues to exist as an integral part of the EU. But the EU involves more than the supranational activities of the EC, such as agriculture or competition policies; it also includes common foreign and security policy, justice and home affairs, and the European security and defense policy, which did not exist prior to 1993.

WHAT IS EUROPE?

To understand the EU, one must first understand the essence of Europe. As the Preamble to the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU, consolidated version 2016) makes crystal clear, the EU and its precursors are part of an effort “to establish the foundations of an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe.”⁵ What is Europe, and who are the Europeans? Europe exists somewhat arbitrarily as a geographic term and as a political/cultural ideal. It is the latter that is most important in terms of creating a sense of community, although it is the former that is frequently used as a demarcation of Europe’s limits.

Europe as a Geographic Term

The term *Europe* derives from the Greek Εὐρώπη (*Europa*). In Greek mythology Εὐρώπη was a Phoenician princess abducted by Zeus in the form of a bull and brought to Crete, where she ruled for many years. Ironically, the name of an Asian princess is used to describe Europe and divide it from Asia. The Greek historian **Herodotus** narrates how these myths were the basis of the Persian view that explains the enmity and hostility between peoples in the continents of Europe and Asia. Doing so allows him to begin using the term as a geographic designation. He notes in his ἱστορίαι (Histories) that unknown persons divided the world into three regions: Europe, Asia, and Africa. While the term *Europe* originally referred to mainland Greece, its meaning was later expanded to refer to territories further north and west.

With some exceptions, the exact limits of Europe were not precisely defined or widely accepted, until the Age of Discovery and the advent of cartography necessitated some demarcation. Waterways were the most widely accepted demarcations. Indeed, the term *Mediterranean* means middle of the earth, separating Europe from Africa. The Atlantic Ocean divides Europe from North America. The Aegean and Black Seas separate Asia from Europe, but when it comes to the Russian landmass, that's a different story. There is no specific geographic or geological boundary to divide Russia. In 1730 Swedish cartographer Philip Johan von Strahlenberg proposed the Ural Mountains as a convenient way to separate the continents, but this designation appears to have been political in nature rather than geographic. In the eighteenth century, scholars of the Enlightenment divided what they considered to be continental Europe in two parts: East and West. The West was considered to be socioculturally progressive while the East was backward.⁶ Although the terms took on a more political meaning during the Cold War (1945–1989), referring to the democratic West and the communist East, they are still used today with similar sociocultural connotations.

Today, Europe is considered geologically to be a peninsula of the Eurasian landmass (Map 1.1). Because there is no tectonic plate separating the two continents, many geographers agree that Asia and Europe share many common geological features. There is no reason why mountains should serve as a dividing line between continents, especially if the topography actually divides a single country, Russia. The geographic demarcation is therefore a marker of convenience, a tradition that served political and cultural objectives in the past.



Source: <https://www.infoplease.com/atlas/europe>

Europe as a Political and Cultural Term

As Richard Rose perceptively noted in his study on understanding Europe, “Locating Europe on a map is a test of political values. Where we look depends upon what we



Jean Monnet

Source: European Union.



Winston Churchill

Yousuf Karsh/Library and Archives Canada.

are looking for.”⁷ The boundaries of Europe have changed over time as states and empires rose and fell. For example, despite the strong influence Greek democratic ideals have had on the US government, the US Department of State until the late 1940s considered Greece to be part of the Near East. Philosophers would disagree vehemently, putting Athens close to the center of their universe in deference to the Greek philosophers of antiquity.

Moreover, boundaries have shifted over time. While France and Italy remain central fixtures in European history, Turkey’s European orientation remains a matter of controversy and intense debate. Yet in the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire (Turkey is its modern twentieth-century incarnation) was the Sick Man of Europe, not Asia. The Ottomans’ (East) European orientation was well established despite the fact that the empire stretched from present-day Serbia to Iraq and from Romania to Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula.

Winston Churchill most clearly articulated this conundrum. He states in his speech on a “United Europe”: “[T]he real demarcation between Europe and Asia is no chain of mountains, no natural frontier, but a system of beliefs and ideas which we call Western Civilization.”⁸ Of course, the term *Western civilization* was contested then and even more so now; its boundaries and defining characteristics have shifted significantly over the

ensuing decades. But quoting an English writer named Sewell, Churchill continues: “Europe is a spiritual conception.” **Jean Monnet**, one of the EU’s “founding fathers,” agrees: “The beginning of Europe was a political conception; but even more, it was a moral idea.”⁹

If Europe is, as Monnet posited, a political/moral ideal, what does it represent? Is it a group of advanced, industrialized countries? Is it a group of mature democracies? Again, the answer depends on when the question is asked and who is being addressed. While many European countries do in fact have highly developed economies, there are some European countries, such as Albania, that still lag far behind. Is free market capitalism the hallmark of the European ideal? Perhaps now, but that was not always the case. During the Cold War, Europe was divided into two camps, the capitalist West and the communist East. Is Europe the embodiment of democracy and human rights? Perhaps in many ways it is today, but at the dawn of the twentieth century, Europe was made up of mostly undemocratic multinational empires, such as the Russian, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian empires. Besides, Nazi Germany was definitely European politically and culturally; a democracy it was not.

The main point is that the terms *Europe* and *European* (citizen of Europe) are elastic. They have been stretched over time to accommodate geographic oddities, cultural peculiarities, and sheer political expediency. Today, European values undoubtedly include democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law. But it is important to remember they are not unique European ideals. India is the world’s biggest democracy. What may be unique is that European democracy flourishes on a continental scale and in institutional depths that are simply not present in other parts of the world. Moreover, despite the difficulties of demarcation, the boundaries of Europe have expanded to include more territories than ever before. There are, admittedly, contested European boundaries, although they exist largely in people’s minds. Where precisely they lie depends on how the question is framed. If the question is, “Is Turkey part of Europe?” the answer may well be yes. European political elites settled this question in 2005 when they decided that Turkey should be invited to activate its membership application under certain conditions. However, if the question is, “Do Europe’s boundaries end in Iraq?” the answer is clearly no. Geography may well be used to limit the concept of Europe to mask cultural bias and political expediency.

WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN UNION?

Imagine you are arriving at the airport in Frankfurt, Germany. After a long walk up and down stairs, around corners and long hallways, you finally come to the passport control area. You look at the signs to determine behind which queue to stand. You see two major divisions: EU passports and passports from non-EU countries. So, the question naturally arises: what is the EU? It’s a deceptively easy question to ask that requires a painfully difficult answer. This book is, in fact, an answer. But to simplify things

enormously and preempt some of the discussion that follows, the answer is: it depends on who you ask.

First, let's start with what it is not. The EU is not a state meant to replace current states. Some analysts liken it to a political system with its own set of inputs, institutions, outputs, and feedback.¹⁰ The EU is not a federation like the United States because it is not a state; it has no constitution. Nor is it an international organization or forum for cooperation among governments, like the United Nations. Although it looks organizationally like a national government with its own legislative, judiciary, and to a lesser extent executive branches, in fact the EU does not have the power to implement its own decisions. Member states retain the authority to partially make and certainly carry out in their territories many decisions made in Brussels. Finally, the EU has no territory, *per se*; only its member states do.

Moreover, the term *Europe*, although used quite often as synonymous to the EU, in fact it is not. As noted above, the terms *Europe* and *European* take political and cultural connotations although they are also used in a geographical sense when politically expedient. Article 49 of the **Treaty on European Union** (TEU, consolidated version 2016) notes that any European state that respects and promotes the values in Article 2 is eligible to become an EU member. The problem is that the treaty does not interpret this criterion. As such, "it can be read equally well in geographical, cultural or political terms."¹¹ Nevertheless, Morocco's application was rejected in 1987 by the European Council on the grounds that it was not a European state. But Turkey's association agreement with the EU in 1963 provides for the possibility of eventual membership. All this implies that the term *European* takes on a political/cultural connotation. It certainly is subject to political interpretation.

So, what is the EU? Some argue it is a *customs union*, which is an integration agreement among a group of countries to eliminate trade barriers between them and to establish a common external tariff on goods and services coming into the union. The key elements of the definition are the terms **integration** and **customs union**. The EU certainly aims to integrate different European countries, though not all agree on what precisely integration means and how far it should proceed. But the EU is far more than a customs union, which is more or less economic in nature. The EU has definite political dimensions, such as common foreign, security, and defense policies run by the European External Action Service.

A lobbying group for the European photographic industry refers to it as "a political and economic grouping of 27 states."¹² The EU is certainly a grouping with political and economic dimensions, but there is more to it than that. There are social dimensions, such as labor policies, and cultural dimensions, such as subsidies for events like "the Cultural Capital of Europe." Moreover, the term *grouping* does not do justice to the nature of the EU. The EU is a particular kind of grouping of states.

The EU's publication *Panorama*, which is designed to explain the EU to the citizens of member and other states, describes the EU as "a unique economic and political partnership between 27 democratic European countries . . . [designed to promote]

peace, prosperity and freedom.” Yes, the EU is a partnership, but the term connotes a relationship based on interests. The EU is more than that because partnerships come and go. Interestingly, the EU has provisions only to accept members, not to expel them (although Brexit has proven countries may leave voluntarily). It is an ever-increasing, evolving, and transformative relationship among states, resembling almost that of a marriage between individuals. The EU involves that deep of a commitment.

We will use the definition provided by the European Delegation to Albania to define the essence of the EU: “The EU is a family of democratic European countries, committed to working together for peace and prosperity. . . . [It is a unique organization whose] member states have set up common institutions to which they delegate some of their sovereignty so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level.”¹³ It is an organized family, more than a grouping or partnership, because bonds that tie members go beyond interests or alliances. They are based on shared values and historical experiences. Values are “respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail” (Article 2). The EU does not just uphold these values; it nurtures and promotes their use across the territories of its member states and beyond.

BOX 1.2: TIMELINE OF KEY DATES IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

May 9, 1950: Robert Schuman, French minister of foreign affairs, proposes *the pooling of coal and steel resources of France and West Germany* in a new organization that other European states could join.

April 18, 1951: Six states—France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg—come together in *Paris* to sign a treaty establishing the *European Coal and Steel Community*. It is to last for fifty years. The treaty comes into force in 1952.

June 1955: Meetings in *Messina, Italy*, to extend integration to other economic areas.

March 25, 1957: The same six states meet in *Rome* to sign the treaty establishing the *European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community*. It comes into force in 1958.

April 1965: A treaty is signed *merging* the executive bodies of the three Communities and creating a single Council and Commission.

January 1966: Following political tension, France strikes a deal known as the “*Luxembourg compromise*,” whereby France agrees to take part in Council meetings again provided among others that in issues of vital national interests, unanimity rules apply in decision-making.

July 1968: A common external tariff is introduced, turning the Communities into a *customs union*.

January 1972: Accession treaties to the European Communities are signed in Brussels with *Denmark, Norway, Ireland, and the United Kingdom*. Following ratification, they come into force in January 1973. Norway rejects the membership offer after the negative outcome in a national referendum.

December 1974: The leaders of the nine member states agree to meet three times a year as the *European Council*.

February 1975: A treaty is signed in *Lomé, Togo*, between the EEC and forty-six African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, establishing trade and aid agreements. It comes into force in April 1976.

July 1978: Germany proposes the creation of the *European Monetary System*, which will begin functioning in April 1979.

May 1979: A treaty of accession is signed with *Greece*, which take force in January 1981.

June 1979: The first *direct elections* to the European Parliament are held.

June 1984: An agreement is struck at *Fontainebleau, France*, granting the UK its famous "*rebate*" to the European Communities budget. The nine heads of government/state also agreed in their declaration to "give the European economy an impetus comparable to that it gained from the founding of the customs union in the early 1960s."

June 1985: A treaty of accession is signed with *Spain and Portugal*, which take force in January 1986, bringing membership to twelve.

February 1986: The *Single European Act* is signed in Luxembourg and the Hague. It comes into force in July 1987.

November 1989: Fall of the *Berlin Wall*.

December 1989: The European Council agrees to convene an intergovernmental conference to move ahead with *Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)*.

June 1990: Agreement is signed at *Schengen* abolishing checks at the borders between member states.

December 1991: Member states adopt a treaty on European union.

February 1992: A treaty is signed in *Maastricht, Netherlands*, creating the *European Union* and setting the criteria and timeline for EMU. The treaty come into force in November 1993.

January 1993: The *single market* is created.

June 1994: Accession treaties are signed with *Austria, Finland, Norway, and Sweden*. They come into force in January 1995. Norway stays out as Norwegian voters reject the accession referendum.

November 1995: The *Euro-Mediterranean neighborhood partnership* is launched with countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

December 1998: *Fixed and irrevocable exchange rates are set between the national currencies of eleven member states.*

January 1999: *The euro is launched.* The currency is adopted by eleven member states (Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain). Greece will join later. The European Central Bank is now responsible for the EU's monetary policy.

June 1999: The European Council creates a taskforce to launch a Convention to draw up a *European Charter of Fundamental Rights*.

December 1999: *Turkey is officially recognized as a candidate for EU membership.*

February 2001: *Treaty of Nice is signed, coming into force in February 2003.*

December 2001: The European Council prepares the way for a *Convention on a European Constitution*. Former French president Valéry Giscard D'Estaing is appointed president of the Convention.

January 2002: People in the eurozone area begin to use *euro notes*.

April 2003: Accession treaties are signed with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. They join in May 2004.

July 2003: Completion of a *draft European Constitution*.

May/June 2005: Voters in France and the Netherlands *reject the European Constitution*.

January 2007: *Bulgaria and Romania* become members of the EU, which now has expanded membership to twenty-seven.

December 2007: Member states sign the *Treaty of Lisbon*, which goes into force in December 2009.

September 2008: Global economic crisis, later known as the "*Great Recession*."

May 2010: The *sovereign debt crisis* begins with the first country bailout, Greece.

December 2012: EU awarded the *Nobel Peace Prize*.

July 2013: *Croatia* becomes the twenty-eighth EU member state.

February/March 2014: *Russia invades Ukraine* and eventually *annexes the Crimea peninsula*. It prompts widespread condemnation, economic sanctions, and asset-freezing by the EU.

December 2015: *Paris agreement on climate change*, with the EU playing a pivotal role.

December 2015: Over one million asylum seekers arrive in Europe, mainly from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries of the Middle East and Africa. As a result, the *EU signs and agreement with Turkey* in April 2016 to help manage migrant flows into Europe.

June 2016: 52 percent of voters in the *UK decide to leave the EU*. Brexit officially takes place in January 2020 when the UK ceases to be a member state.

February 2020: The *COVID-19 pandemic* hits Europe, prompting the first more or less continent-wide lockdowns since World War II.

February 2022: *Russia invades Ukraine*. The UN estimates twelve million people have been displaced, with five million fleeing to neighboring European countries. It prompts sanctions by the EU and culminates in a plan to reduce dependency on Russian oil and gas.

The EU started from humble beginnings in 1952 with the Treaty of Paris. It created the European Coal and Steel Community among six (what were then) democratic West European countries: Italy, France, West Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Box 1.2 contains a timeline of key developments to which we will refer in this and subsequent chapters. The same six countries went on to establish more communities through the Treaties of Rome in 1957, which were far broader in scope and encompassed most aspects of economic life. They collectively became known as the European Communities (EC), which were the precursor to what is now the EU. The EU incorporated the EC in 1993 with the Treaty of Maastricht but also went far beyond it to include economic and monetary union—a part of which is the single currency, the euro—in addition to a variety of activities in noneconomic areas, such as common foreign, security, and defense policies; social affairs; and asylum policy. In the meantime, more European countries joined so that by 2014 the EU numbered twenty-eight members. In 2020, the UK famously left the EU. To return to our EU passport example in the beginning of this section, only holders of the following twenty-seven passports qualify to be in the EU passport lane: Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Malta, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia, Poland, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Ireland.

The EU is a union among diverse people. The term may sound contradictory, but the point is to celebrate diverse political systems, customs, and cultures, while still promoting closer cooperation. The EU's official motto is “**united in diversity.**” While the EU fosters cooperation among the peoples of Europe, emphasizing once again it is about the peoples not the people of Europe, it also promotes unity while preserving diversity. The aim can be profitably contrasted with the United States' motto of an indivisible nation (*e pluribus unum*). Indeed, the purpose of creating “one nation under God” through the metaphor of a melting pot contrasts sharply with the aim of the EU. Diversity in the EU is not a precursor to unity. The EU aims to nurture unity in diversity rather than to promote unity out of diversity. The point is that unlike the US, where the founding fathers sought to safeguard liberty and promote justice by creating unity among people with diverse ideas, identities, and interests, the EU safeguards liberty and justice by celebrating diverse ideas, identities, and interests through the rule of law. Whereas diversity in the US is a means to an end, diversity in the EU is an end unto itself.

WHAT DO EUROPEANS WANT FROM THE EU?

The EU is a tool, an instrument created by European states to pursue certain objectives. In order to answer the all-important question “is this the best tool for the job?” one has to respond to something more fundamental: What is the job? What does Europe want from the EU? What are the aims and goals? According to the European Parliament, the EU’s main objectives are “to promote peace, follow the EU’s values and improve the wellbeing of nations.”¹⁴ What does this mean in practice?

The first meaning is to enhance Europe’s political weight and safeguard the peace and security of European citizens in a way that reflects the values and aspirations of its members. Democracy and political accountability, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and common foreign and security policy, among others, purport to accomplish this goal. The second meaning is to foster economic growth and social welfare. Trade policy is one way to achieve this aim. While the two objectives are distinct, they need not be antithetical, as Jacob Viner made very clear in his work on the subject several decades ago.¹⁵ Sometimes, one is viewed as a stepping stone to pursuing the other. For example, Schuman argued in the **Schuman Declaration** in 1950 that “by pooling this production [coal and steel] . . . [and by] contributing to raising living standards . . . this proposal will lead to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.”¹⁶ It has to be acknowledged that while both aims are important, the EU has historically gone further in promoting **plenty** and not power. In fact, the EU is a very good example of demonstrating how difficult it is for international nonstates to accomplish both tasks.

Plenty

Prosperity is a key—but not the only—objective of every political endeavor. No government can afford to pursue a course of action without at least some discussion of how it affects the nation’s actual or prospective wealth. This is especially true in cases of increased international cooperation. Europe’s economies were devastated by World War II. As US Secretary of State George Marshall made clear when he informed graduating seniors at Harvard University’s commencement in 1947: “The truth of the matter is that Europe’s requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products—principally from America—are so much greater than her present ability to pay that she must have substantial additional help, or face economic, social and political deterioration of a very grave character.”¹⁷

How can Europe’s economic need be satisfied in the long term? US President Dwight Eisenhower succinctly summarizes the rationale behind a united Europe: “Europe cannot attain the towering material stature possible to its people’s skills and spirit so long as it is divided by patchwork territorial fences. They foster localized instead of common interest. . . . Once united, the farms and factories of France and Belgium, the foundries of Germany, the rich farmlands of Holland and Denmark, the

skilled labor of Italy, will produce miracles for the common good.”¹⁸ Jean Monnet adds to this observation his own European version of the solution. If only France was able to dispel its fear of German industrial domination, that could restore mutual trust and build the foundation for a more prosperous Europe.¹⁹ Major contributions to European prosperity and wealth are key ingredients to the EU’s success (or failure).

Power

Power is the ability of political actors to control, influence, or alter the behavior of others in ways the latter would not voluntarily do.²⁰ It is relative, situational, and multidimensional. Relative power implies the capacity to use it can only be measured compared to a benchmark or another actor. Situational means power varies according to the context to which it is applied. Multidimensional refers to various sources, such as military, economic, ethical, ideational, and others. It is important to note actual power, such as the size of a state’s military, is often as important as the perception of power—that is, others’ belief the military will be used in certain situations to attain state goals. Be it military or otherwise, in the EU case power not only safeguards territorial integrity and independence, but it also actively promotes peace and builds political confidence.

It is difficult to remember the context that propelled Europeans to create the EU, but in the dark days of the late 1940s it was quite clear: no more war. Democracy, human rights, and respect for the rule of law were key ingredients of this new era of peaceful coexistence. The most important, immediate objective was to find a way to secure and maintain peace in Europe. Robert Schuman makes it very clear in his famous declaration: “The solidarity in production [of coal and steel] will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible.”²¹ War was the scourge that brought Europe to its knees. War decimated European economies and generations of some of the more economically productive Europeans. War swallowed most of Europe’s young, robbing states of much of their future. War sowed the seeds of hatred, distrust, and misery. President Truman made this point very clear: “The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died.”²² A united Europe was seen as the antidote.

How Do Europeans Go about Getting What They Want?

The pursuit of each objective can be analyzed from two very different perspectives. A perspective is a way of simplifying and interpreting the EU—what it is and what it does. Perspectives are important because they tell us what to look for and what groups of actors and resources are important and in what ways. Linking the study of the EU to objectives permits an organic integration of theory into the empirical material. It helps us identify how actors, institutions, and ideas interact to make things happen.

Each perspective represents a stream of research; analysts share common assumptions and logic, but they may disagree on the specifics. While each perspective has a “natural turf,” areas where it is most applicable, it is important to stress that each offers clear predictions about the pursuit of both objectives.

Two perspectives tend to provide clear and sometimes opposing answers to the puzzle of integration: **supranationalism** and **intergovernmentalism** and their variants. More information will be provided in the next chapter, but a brief synopsis will suffice to clarify the meaning of each perspective here. Because each makes different assumptions, considers different actors to be important, and utilizes different logic to derive propositions, it is no surprise that each perspective envisions a different kind of EU; a different past, present, and future. What is even more interesting is that the perspectives differ in what they are supposed to examine, i.e., European integration. Each defines integration in different ways!

Integration is understood in different ways. Supranationalists once defined integration as “the process by which actors in several, distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new center whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states.”²³ Of course, this is a very broad definition that incorporates elements, such as shifting of loyalty, which proved to be untenable, to say the least. Some neofunctionalists, such as Leon Lindberg, tempered this definition to broaden the scope to social, economic, and political activities, but without possession of jurisdiction or shifting loyalties. Integration is also about pooling sovereignty or delegating responsibility.

Intergovernmentalists see integration in narrower terms. It is the creation of political institutions with delegated authority as a result of member state choices. It is easy to see how each definition narrows or expands the scope of inquiry and the spectrum of important actors, leading to different expectations. Supranationalism has a broader scope and places a premium on political elites and structural and functional factors. Intergovernmentalism reduces integration to crucial moments when governments make choices about what the EU will be in the next few years. These choices bias all subsequent institutional functions, policies, and outcomes. Whereas supranationalism sees integration as the outcome of exchange among political elites and interest groups, be they national or supranational, intergovernmentalism sees the EU as a function of largely member government preferences. Interestingly, none devote much attention to public opinion or ascribe any significant role to it. The book will illuminate both perspectives and their various strands in order to drive home the point that each perspective envisions a different kind of EU.

A Supranationalist Answer

In the early years of the EU, Ernst Haas used neofunctionalism to explain why the EU came about, what it is, and what it does.²⁴ In the years since then, analysts have enriched and amended neofunctionalism to incorporate arguments closely tied to historical institutionalism, constructivism, and supranational governance. The term *supranationalism*

is used as a form of shorthand to refer to these perspectives collectively. It is viewed as a broad stream of research rather than as a specific theory. It is more of an orientation, a perspective, rather than a set of logically connected and coherent propositions.

Supranationalism makes four assumptions. First, actors are rational and self-interested, but they also have the capacity to learn and change preferences midstream. Second, integration is pluralist in the sense that a multitude of actors drive the process. Third, once established, institutions take a life of their own and drive the process of integration sometimes in concert and at times against the wishes of their creators. Fourth, technological advances create opportunities for more integration. Fifth, the pursuit of plenty, i.e., wealth rather than power, is the major goal of increasingly prosperous societies. Wealth creates power, but without wealth power can only be fleeting.

Based on these assumptions, Haas and others have argued that integration will increase and eventually supplant the nation-state because elites will conclude there are more benefits from integration relative to costs. The process of integration will spill over time from the modest few sectors where it originally started to the rest of the economy as elites, firms, and other actors in “neighboring” sectors see the benefits enjoyed by those in the already integrated areas. Because some sectors are so interrelated (Haas had coal and steel in mind), integration in some sectors creates issues that can only be addressed by integration in related sectors, such as the broader energy, defense, or construction industries. Eventually, elites occupying the created institutions will take over the process and push it forward according to their own logic and preferences and in ways that may have been unintended by the original creators.

An Intergovernmentalist Answer

In response to intellectual and empirical deficiencies with supranationalism, some scholars developed a body of literature termed *intergovernmentalism*.²⁵ It, too, has been amended to include rational institutionalist and principal-agent insights. Intergovernmentalism as a perspective takes a narrower and different view of the EU. It makes two fundamental assumptions. First, states are rational actors, meaning that they bargain for the best deal according to their own preferences and interests. Second, national preferences do exist and can be estimated by the push and pull of domestic political actors. The EU, therefore, is a series of institutions composed of rational choices made by national leaders that reflect the “balance of power” in critical junctures of time.

In other words, the EU is only what its member states make it out to be. States delegate authority to EU institutions in areas where they believe they stand to gain more than they will lose and in cases where they wish to bolster the credibility of international commitments. Although EU institutional leaders play a role in propelling or inhibiting further integration, they are not as influential as national leaders. The center of gravity does not lie in Brussels, where most EU institutions are located, but rather in key national capitals. Moreover, there is nothing inevitable about integration. Unlike supranationalists, intergovernmentalists see no shifting loyalties or the creation of a European, as opposed to national, identity.

By definition, supranationalism and intergovernmentalism as perspectives are not right or wrong. It's like saying one's pair of glasses is better than another person's pair. There is no basis for making this judgment, partly because vision needs differ across individuals and circumstances. Night goggles do wonders for most people at night, but they are far less optimal during the day. Prescription glasses make a huge difference to those in need of focus, but they are less than useless to those who don't need them. Perspectives as biases are just that, biases. But that does not mean all explanations are created equal. Not all perspectives are illuminating all the time. Some are better because they provide more complete explanations most of the time.

The point of this book is to help students acquire the skills and sharpen the tools needed to identify and apply each perspective. Each perspective says something about what the EU wants and how it is likely to go about getting what it wants. Each perspective envisions a different EU past, present, and future. Understanding it goes a long way toward helping us understand what Europe is and where it may be headed.

WHY DOES THE EU MATTER?

The EU is important to all people because it serves as a model of peace and reconciliation. Never before in the history of humankind have sovereign states voluntarily ceded so much authority to an organization of collective decision-making. The EU is without precedent; it is what academics commonly refer to as a *sui generis* experiment. It is unique and significant. But at the same time, it serves as a precedent for others to emulate. The peaceful resolution of disputes that plagued Europe for centuries and the search for common interests and values is a model of peace and prosperity for other regions to follow. It provides a solid empirical case of what to do and, perhaps, how to do it. The EU matters to Americans, Europeans, and the world.

To Americans

The EU's success is pivotal to America's peace and prosperity. Twice in the twentieth century, Americans fought in Europe to prevent Europeans from being overtaken by the forces of tyranny and hatred. Thousands of Americans lost their lives in Normandy, Italy, and North Africa saving Europeans from themselves. The EU's success is in America's interest. George Marshall put it well shortly after World War II: "Aside from the demoralizing effect on the world at large and the possibilities of disturbances arising as a result of the desperation of the [European] people concerned, the consequences to the economy of the United States should be apparent to all. It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace."²⁶ A strong Europe is in America's interest. Europe defending itself lessens America's burden.

The EU is the biggest commercial partner of the US. It remains the biggest collective trading partner to the US, buying and selling a dizzying array of manufacturing and agricultural goods and services. It is the biggest foreign investor in the US, responsible for creating more jobs than any other ally. According to the Delegation of the European Commission to the US, transatlantic flows of trade and investment amount to more than \$1 billion a day!

In terms of security, the US has found some of its strongest allies among EU members. The US and the EU share many common objectives and interests. More US troops have been (and are) stationed in EU member states than in any other territories worldwide. Military ties were cemented with the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 and have remained strong ever since through solidarity and cohesion. Troops from EU member states provided the bulk of non-US NATO troops in Afghanistan. A just and lasting peaceful order in Europe is the cornerstone of NATO's security objectives.

Cultural and ethnic ties are also very strong. Many of the fundamental US ideals came from Europe, as the first immigrants brought their culture and traditions with them. Much of what we regard as Western civilization, such as popular love for the arts and sciences, the institutions of democracy, the ideals and importance of civil rights and freedom, have European roots. America's cultural ancestry remains deeply European. Most of the immigrants who came to the US up to the mid-twentieth century came from what are now EU member states.

Of course, just like any other partnership, the US and the EU have had their share of problems. They both compete for jobs and market share. The Boeing–Airbus controversy over illegal subsidies is a good example of how economic interests occasionally diverge. Political and social differences have stirred much debate over the importation and consumption of genetically modified foods. Remarks by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld about “new” and “old” Europe in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 aimed to divide and ridicule. President Donald Trump mocked the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, in similar fashion when he said the mayor had “done a very bad job on terrorism” because he allowed millions [of Muslims] to come to London.²⁷ But one should not make too much of these differences. It must be noted that the negatives are dwarfed by the positives in every imaginable field of political, economic, and cultural cooperation.

To Europeans

The EU is important to Europeans as well because it symbolizes some of the best and some of the worst that European politicians have to offer. The EU certainly epitomizes the strategic vision of the postwar generation of European leaders who, having drawn the terrifying lessons of World War II, decided to pursue a prosperous and peaceful union. From its humble beginnings of dismantling barriers to trade in coal and steel to the creation of the single currency, the EU has proven to be a successful forum for collaboration and coexistence. For example, EU policies are chiefly responsible for:

- Easing travel among residents and tourists across national borders;
- Bolstering and standardizing educational standards and encouraging the study and exchange of ideas in Europe's universities;
- Raising standards for clean drinking water and safe waste management;
- Safeguarding the rights of minorities and protecting the legal rights of all EU citizens, even in the event of individuals going against their own government;
- Creating a single European currency;
- Providing additional sources of funding for infrastructure and regional development.

No one knows how much regulation and legislation originates in the EU. Numbers differ wildly, from 84 percent of national legislation according to the German parliament to almost 50 percent according to David Cameron, the former leader of the British Tories, to 6.3 percent according to the Swedish parliament. Can they all be right? Of course not; the actual number depends on a couple of factors. First, who quotes the figure? Eurosceptic politicians and think tanks usually tend to quote higher figures because they inflate the EU's importance, making it easier to demonize the "eurocrats." Second, what counts as legislation? Does one go beyond directives and regulations issued in Brussels? For example, the open method of coordination, a useful EU tool, encourages national legislatures to pass laws following best practices adopted in Brussels. Do these laws count as national laws or EU laws? Third, which member state are we discussing? Figures obviously differ across states as their legislative output differs. Fourth, does the state in question have a federal system? If so, the figure is likely to be inflated if it includes only national laws because subnational governments likely have considerable legislative autonomy and their own laws complement or are affected by the EU. Fifth, does the quality of legislation matter? The point is to note that many important and expensive bills, such as health, defense, or pension bills, are actually decided at home and not in Brussels. Therefore, even an inflated figure of 84 percent may not convey actual significance if it reports only legislation that affects business and not what costs or matters most to individual voters.

It is tempting to take the middle ground and cite a figure of roughly 40 percent, but that will also be misleading, as it is a statistical artifact. So, what is the end result? No one agrees on how much the EU counts in terms of legislative output. The best we can do is to answer the question in the following way. Is the EU important as a locus of legislation? The answer is yes. Does this mean that issues that matter most to European voters are decided only or mostly in Brussels? The answer is no. Any claims about the general impact of the EU that mention hard and fast numbers should be treated with suspicion.

In terms of negative repercussions, EU institutions, such as the Commission and the Parliament, represent to some voters bureaucratic arrogance, waste, and

corruption. Scandals abound among members of the European Parliament (MEPs), some of whom have accepted bribes in return for amending legislation or who file for reimbursement of expenses not incurred.²⁸ The Commission continues to be viewed in some quarters (though in truth it is not) as a vast, distant, and heartless bureaucracy. This is in part the reason why the College of Commissioners headed by Jacques Santer was “forced” to resign *en masse* in 1999. For years, the Council of Ministers (now Council of the European Union), which consists of representative ministers from member states, did not publish the minutes of its meetings. Voters were left in the dark, more or less, as to the specific deals their national political representatives made in Brussels.

Positively or negatively, the EU affects Europeans in profound ways. At the very least, it has made war between France and Germany unthinkable. This is something Europeans of the mid-twentieth century could simply not imagine. Beyond that, the scope and size of its impact remain politically contested topics.

To the World

The EU plays an important role in international affairs. EU members have two of the five permanent seats in the Security Council. EU leadership plays a pivotal role in global climate change talks. The EU was the major force behind the negotiations and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Likewise, it will play a major role in pushing for a new treaty to reduce emissions and protect the global environment. Its position has provided both inspiration and despair in the current world trade talks. From economic and political standpoints, the EU has helped promote political stability and economic prosperity not only among its members but also in its neighborhood and around the world. It is one of the major aid donors, both bilaterally and collectively. On a political level, European countries serve as the institutional models of democracy. Despite its major presence, the US continues to be very much the exception. Like it or not, EU action and inaction matter to the world.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The EU is a family of states set up after World War II to help Europeans to pursue peace and prosperity in Europe. Being less than a state but more than an international organization, its organizational structure, decision-making rules, and membership have evolved over time. How this evolution has taken place is to a large extent a matter of interpretation. Interpretation is based on a biased explanation, called a perspective. Different perspectives point to different explanations. The aim of the book is to identify two broad perspectives, supranationalism and intergovernmentalism, and use them to analyze, prescribe, and explain in detail the EU’s past, present, and future.

The rest of the book is divided into three parts. The first deals with the fundamentals. It presents the historical foundations, institutions, values, and occasional

trade-offs that leaders have had to make at critical junctures of the EU's development. Chapter 2 presents the perspectives in greater theoretical detail to highlight differences and similarities. Chapter 3 explores the allure of joining and leaving the EU and the unique challenges of membership for both institutions and members.

Chapter 4 examines the role of democracy in the EU. The chapter shows there are at least two ways to look at democracy and, not surprisingly, opinions differ as to which is best. Chapter 5 looks at the relationship between European institutions and national life through the phenomenon called Europeanization: how national groups and governments affect EU decisions and are in turn affected by it. Chapter 6 explores the historical evolution of institutionalizing and maintaining the European spirit through the eyes of the European Commission and the Court.

The second part deals with the mechanisms and institutions created to pursue plenty. Chapter 7 examines the mechanisms used to foster prosperity. This chapter discusses the ways in which integration has fostered economic growth and makes the point that the reasons for and outcomes of this process differ between perspectives. Chapter 8 discusses economic and monetary union as the most important attempt to foster prosperity and generate wealth. National governments have been at the forefront of this effort, becoming the most forceful proponents and biggest obstacles. Chapter 9 makes the point that environmental and agricultural concerns are intimately related. Efforts to increase food production may actually raise pollution levels. The chapter explores the similarities and differences, frequent trade-offs among perspectives and issue areas, and different solutions that the EU has adopted over time. Chapter 10 looks at one of the most important objectives of the EU: the need to reduce economic and social disparities between richer and poorer regions.

The third part explores in thematic sequence the steps the EU has taken to acquire and project power. Chapter 11 evaluates the EU as an actor on the world stage. It explores European attempts at a common foreign and security policy and shows how each perspective helps us explain the successes and failures of the institutions and mechanisms created to do so. Chapter 12 analyzes attempts to protect fundamental individual and group rights. The achievement of this goal requires mutual recognition and enhanced collaboration in the areas of immigration, civil justice and police work, and human rights.

Finally, Chapter 13 wraps things up by reviewing the EU's journey between the two objectives: power and plenty. It briefly considers the cases where one goal was pursued in order to later achieve the other, the cases where one objective was pursued at the expense of the other, and the cases where both objectives were pursued, sometimes successfully, other times not. The aim is to point to different priorities at different times, the conditions that necessitate trade-offs, the conditions that lead to the pursuit of both, and ultimately the costs and benefits of each goal. This sets up the final discussion of issues and prospects. Each perspective presupposes a bias that in turns leads to a different interpretation of the past and the future. Europhiles and euroskeptics are at odds primarily because they disagree on what the EU is and what they want it to become. Is there common ground between the two camps?

Just like any organization, the EU is a work in progress. As Walter Hallstein, the European Economic Community's first Commission president, said: "[The Community] is a process of continuous creation. It is a policy, an endless series of questions and answers, of continual challenges and responses."²⁹ For better or worse, the EU remains a controversial experiment. With what issues should it deal? How should it deal with them? Who gains and who loses from these deals? Is there a new European identity that aims to supplant national identities in years to come? Does the EU roll back the state or does it back its role? Has it developed adequate institutional machinery and political clout to address the challenges of the twenty-first century? This book will provide some answers to these questions, and more importantly, give students the tools to formulate their own questions and craft their individual answers.

KEY TERMS

Customs union	Power
Herodotus	Schuman Declaration
Integration	Supranationalism
Intergovernmentalism	Treaty on European Union
Jean Monnet	United in diversity
Plenty	

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Booker, Christopher, and Richard North. *The Great Deception: Can the European Union Survive?* New ed. Bloomsbury, 2016. A polemic against further integration.

Byatt, A. S. "What Is a European?" *New York Times*, October 23, 2002, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/13/magazine/what-is-a-european.html>. An interesting essay on national identity.

Dinan, Desmond, ed. *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2014. By now, a classic examination of all things EU.

Monnet, Jean. *Memoirs*. Doubleday, 1978. The fascinating firsthand history by the intellectual founding father of the EU.

Rose, Richard. *What Is Europe?* 2nd ed. Longman, 2007. A solid examination of what constitutes Europe.

Verhofstadt, Guy. *Europe's Last Chance*. Basic Books, 2017. An argument in favor of further European integration by one of the EU's staunchest proponents.