

Introducing the Mosaic of Integration Theory: Its Past, Present and Future

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1. Focusing on integration theory

1.1. The dual purpose of this book

There is surely no shortage of books on European integration. This is a booming field, and readers will know better than anyone else the difficulties in choosing the appropriate literature. But it is all the more surprising then that very few of these books are dedicated to the theory of European integration. Most of them deal with the history of the integration process and its main actors, with the European Union's formal institutions and particular policies, or with present and future member states policies. This is not to say that there is no work done on integration theory. Indeed, this is in many respects a vibrant field that has overcome the impasses of the past. Yet, except for a few notable exceptions that we will return to in the course of this introduction, concise overviews of the work done in this field remain rare.

This is therefore what we set out to do in this book: first, to provide an introduction to integration theory and its various approaches to those who have started to study European

integration, and are interested (as, we argue below, anyone studying European integration should be) in the theories of their field; second, to provide an overview and take stock for those who are involved in the development of European integration theory, and who want to make sense of the sometimes confusing array of approaches that have been proliferating since the 1960s.

To this end, we have invited ten eminent scholars who all have contributed significantly to the development of a particular theoretical approach, to take part in this 'stock-taking'. We have asked them to reflect upon the development, achievements and problems of 'their' approach according to a set pattern, which we will introduce below and which will allow for comparing and relating individual approaches to each other. In this introduction, we want to first make the case for the relevance of theory when studying European integration, which will be our concern in the remainder of this *first section*. In *section two* we then proceed to give a broad overview of the phases of theorising European integration, thereby surveying the theoretical approaches that we have included in this volume and providing our rationale for this particular selection. *Section three* introduces the comparative framework that provided the guide for the chapters. This will include a discussion of the nature of the relationships between theories, a theme that we return to in the conclusion of this book. Finally, building on this discussion, *section four* introduces the pattern of each chapter and provides an overview of the book.

We should add that the process of stock-taking would make no sense if it would not lead to the further development of theory. To that extent, we would not want to see this book read purely to understand and replicate existing theories, but rather as the starting point for criticising and reformulating existing approaches, bringing them together in novel ways and to move beyond them. And we would like to see both colleagues and students involved in this project – it is probably fair to say that without the critical engagement of their students, none of the authors of this book could have made the contribution they did to European integration theory.

1.2. What is integration theory?

In order to talk meaningfully about integration theory, its two constitutive terms 'integration' and 'theory' need to be defined. This is less straightforward than it may seem at first, since both terms are heavily contested.

Let us turn to *integration* first. Ernst Haas, one of the most influential integration theorists on neofunctionalism (see also Schmitter in *chapter 3*), once defined integration as the process 'whereby political actors in several, distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions process or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states' (Haas 1958: 16). This is a broad and therefore demanding definition, which includes both a social process (the shifting of loyalties) and a political process (negotiation and decision-making about the construction of new political institutions above the participating member states with a direct say in at least a part of the member states' affairs). Not all theorists would include both aspects in their definition, and there are reasons why Haas, from his perspective, emphasised the social element of integration. A less demanding definition preferred by intergovernmentalists, coming from a different angle within the

spectrum of integration theory, focuses instead on political processes, although this may then be qualified as 'political integration'.

While this may seem broad enough as a common denominator for most traditional integration theories, we will, for the purpose of this book, assume an even broader understanding if not of integration proper, then of the field of integration theory. In both of the definitions above, integration is first and foremost a process: both neofunctionalists and intergovernmentalists are more concerned with the process of integration than with the political system that integration leads to. However, more recently various authors have focused specifically on the shape of what they call a new system of governance emerging in the EU. While they are more concerned with the outcome than the process of integration (see Marks et al. 1996a, 1996b), their work is included in our understanding of integration theory, because it now undeniably forms an important part of that field.

Secondly, what is *theory*? Again, understandings differ, and as above, we endorse a broad rather than a narrow definition. Narrowly defined, theory is understood as a causal argument of universal, transhistorical validity and nomothetic quality, which can be tested through the falsification of a series of hypotheses (King, Keohane and Verba 1994; Przeworski and Teune 1982). Some of the integration theories discussed in this book will stick to this narrow definition, many however will not. Instead, they use theory in a rather loose sense of abstract reflection, which despite its abstract nature can nonetheless be context-specific, for instance by taking its point of departure in the consideration of a particular policy field of the EU. To make this point clearer, it helps to consider that theories serve different purposes. Some explain outcomes, behaviour, or decision-making rationales, others criticise general trends on the basis of abstract considerations; some fit particular developments into a larger scheme, others seek to provide normative guidance (see, e.g. Woods 1996). In each case, theory means something else. As the contributions to this book will illustrate, different theoretical approaches to European integration are informed by different understandings of the meaning and purpose of theorising.

To distinguish these different understandings from the narrow definition of theory outlined above, we will speak of 'integration theory' when we mean the *field* of theorising the process and outcome of (European) integration, while we use the term 'theoretical approaches' when we refer to the *individual* ways of dealing with integration (see also figure x in *chapter 3*), some, but not all of which may be classified as theories in the narrow sense of the term. What they all share, however, is that they are not primarily concerned with the development of particular policies, but with the abstract reflection on European integration.

1.3. Why study integration theory?

For many, the main purpose of studying integration is to gain a better understanding of the EU's formal institutions. To do so, students require first and foremost knowledge about how these institutions are set up and how they work so as to, for instance, identify organisational competences, the role and function of a particular institution according to the Treaties as well as access points for lobbying activities. From this perspective, the value-added of theory is not obvious – instead, empirical facts appear to provide

sufficient information. Why then study integration theory, nonetheless? There are, at least, two reasons.

First, apart from the set up, role and function of formal institutions, many readers will, for example, be concerned with questions of democratic reform and legitimacy. On the one hand, these *do* require detailed knowledge about the EU's institutions. Yet, on the other hand, they also require a deeper understanding of the normative issues at stake, such as: What should legitimacy be based on? Or: What form of democracy is appropriate for a polity beyond the nation-state? Many approaches that do not fit the narrow scientific definition of theory address such issues and assist and encourage further reflections upon them.

Second, and arguably more importantly, 'pure' empirical knowledge of how institutions work is either impossible or not very meaningful. It is *impossible* since the representation of empirical facts is always based on particular concerns, and assumptions about the *nature of the EU* and the finality of the integration process, which often remain un-reflected. Integration theory helps to highlight and problematise these concerns and assumptions. 'Pure' empirical knowledge is *not very meaningful* in the sense that since any empirical representation is imbued with such assumptions, to concentrate on the 'facts' provides a superficial understanding only that disregards at least some of the political disputes 'underneath' the surface. To sum this point up, analysing integration is not only a 'technical' matter, but involves particular understandings and conceptualisations of integration and the EU, for which we need integration theory.

Two examples illustrate this point. The first one concerns the nature of foreign policy decision-making within the EU. To observers who base their assessment on the idiosyncratic organisational design, the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is by and large identified as a matter of the Council and therefore intergovernmentally organised. Not quite so, argue some more recent studies (see Jørgensen 1997a; Glarbo 2001; Øhrgaard 1997). While it is true that formally, CFSP is primarily a matter between governments and does not fall within the scope of the Commission, this characterisation misses some of the informal, 'societal' developments that have created a dense web of consultation with integrative effects, which are not captured by the intergovernmentalist picture. These take place on the 'social' level through the creation of a 'diplomatic community' within the EU, but they also have political consequences, such as the so-called 'co-ordination reflex', the wide-spread tendency to co-ordinate foreign policy with other member states rather than going it alone. The extent to which this is true is a matter of empirical analysis, but the important point is that these studies employ a particular theoretical approach that allows them to take the social dimension of the integration process into account, even in areas formally characterised by intergovernmentalism (see also Risse on social constructivism in *chapter 9*).

The second example concerns the development of citizenship in the EU. Here, formal institutional approaches would find that Union citizenship was 'invented' at the intergovernmental conference that prepared the treaty revisions at Maastricht. As such, it is often seen as a 'thin' institution with little substantive importance. Yet, some authors have pointed out that elements of (market-) citizenship *i.e.* fundamental rights of working citizens had been included in the treaties before, and that the way European citizenship

emerged at Maastricht was in fact conditioned by previous legal cases, rulings, and provisions (O'Leary 1996, Kostakopoulou 2001, Kadelbach 2002). Others have pointed out that previous "citizenship practice," *i.e.* the policies and political processes that forge the institutionalised terms of citizenship within a particular context, had constructed elements of citizenship rights, access and belonging that shaped the formulation of Union citizenship later on (Wiener 1998; see also Meehan 1993). The citizenship case demonstrates that the assessment of an institution's meaning depends on the type of theoretical approach chosen to study the problem. Whether one regards the institutionalisation of EU citizenship with the Maastricht Treaty as an important development will, for instance, depend on the theoretical assumptions about context, institutional role and function, *i.e.* whether citizenship is approached from a normative, liberal or, indeed, dogmatic legal perspective. Furthermore, the process of integration raises questions about theoretical assumptions and contested concepts, for example, the question of whether such citizenship undermines the familiar concept of modern (national) citizenship. All of these are questions that are ultimately of a theoretical nature in the sense of this book, and the theoretical vantage point one takes is crucial for the answers one gives.

Reviewing the history of European integration demonstrates that there have been a number of occasions that are hotly debated in the integration literature, mostly due to analysts' approaching them from different theoretical angles. The following is just a brief selection of some of these controversies, some of which we will get back to in more detail later on:

- *The role of state interests in the founding years:* From a 'realist' perspective,¹ integration and especially the developments in the founding years are largely down to interests and power of big member states, during that phase particularly France and Germany, with France wanting to control Germany and Germany having an interest in getting back onto the international stage (see, e.g. Pedersen, 1998). Against this, neofunctionalists have emphasised the role of normative ideas taken from functionalism in the inter-war years (see *chapter 3*).
- *The lack of major institutional developments in the 1970s:* The 1970s are often labelled the 'doldrum years' of integration (and, as it were, integration theory), because political integration seemed to stagnate. But others have argued that 'below the surface' a lot of changes took place that would prepare for the 'reinvigoration' of integration and integration theory in the latter half of the 1980s (Caporaso and Keeler 1995). Furthermore, outside Political Science, legal scholars have advanced the argument of 'integration through law', focusing on increasing legal interdependencies and corresponding shifts in the meaning of sovereignty (see *chapter 5*).
- *The agreement on the Single European Act (1986):* The agreement on institutional change introduced with the SEA raised a number of new questions for integration theory. Having been forged at an intergovernmental conference, it led to a re-launch of the theoretical debate discussing the role and formation of state

¹ When we use the term 'realism' in this chapter, we refer to realism as a particular tradition in International Relations Theory, rather than as an epistemological position.

preferences in the negotiations towards the SEA (Moravcsik 1991, 1993, see his *chapter 4*), on the one hand, and emphasising the role of the Commission, informal processes within the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER), and the influence of private actors such as the European Round-Table of Industrialists, on the other (Wincott, 1995; Hayes-Renshaw, Lequesne and Mayor Lopez. 1992; Ross 1995; Bornschier 2000).

All of these controversies need to be investigated empirically, but they cannot be reduced to a simple testing of alternative hypothesis. Instead, as we will suggest below, seemingly competing theories often shed a different light on the issue that is enabled by a particular theoretical perspective.

2. Integration Theory: A broad overview

2.1. Phases of European integration theory

Having established the relevance of integration theory, the following offers a first cut at its development. The objective is to provide an overview of the theories discussed in more detail by the contributions to this book.

Phase	When?	Main themes
Explaining Integration	1960s onwards	How can integration outcomes be explained? Why does European integration take place?
Analysing Governance	1980s onwards	What kind of political system is the EU? How can the political processes within the EU be described? How does the EU's regulatory policy work?
Constructing the EU	1990s onwards	How and with which social and political consequences does integration develop? How are integration and governance conceptualised? How should they be?

BOX 1.1: Three phases in integration theory

We suggest that the development of integration theory can be divided into three broad phases (see also Wiener 2002). These are preceded by a normative proto-integration theory period. We identify the three phases as explanatory, analytical and constructive, respectively. A note of caution is on order, however. Since most approaches combine various dimensions of theory, the distinction among the respective phases is not as clear-cut as analytically suggested. The phases are therefore meant to identify the emergence, development, and, at times, dominance of particular theoretical tendencies, but they are

by no means to suggest that these were the only (and sometimes not even the dominant) ones. In Box 1.1, we have left the endpoints of these phases open, since work in one tradition tends to continue after the emergence of new tendencies in theorising. However, when we mention end dates in the following text, these are to signify a shift within European integration theory towards new approaches.

The normative proto-integration period predates the actual development of political integration in Europe. It is an important pre-cursor of the three phases of integration theory building. Functionalism is typical of this normative period. Popular in the inter-war years, with David Mitrany's *A Working Peace System* (Mitrany 1943) as the core publication, it had a strong normative agenda, namely how, through a network of transnational organisations on a functional basis, one could constrain states and prevent future war. This was a global concern and had no direct relation to European integration – as a matter of fact, Mitrany was an opponent of regional integration that he saw as undermining his global concerns and replicating rather than transcending a state-model (Mitrany 1966; see Rosamond 2000: 36-38). Early federalism, too, can be located in this period. As a political movement it was more directly related to particular developments in Europe, for example in the form of calls for a European federation made during the inter-war years by actors as different as the German Social Democrats (see Schneider 1977; Hrbek 1972) and the conservative Hungarian Count Coudenhove-Kalergi (cf. Coudenhove-Kalergi 1971).

With the *first phase* roughly lasting from the signing of the Treaty of Rome until the early 1980s, we enter European integration theory proper. Despite the realist attempts to integrate them into their worldview, the early successes of integration challenged the existence of the territorial state system, which is at the core of realist assumptions. Accordingly, integration theories initially sought to explain the processes of institution-building above the state. Two theoretical approaches came to dominate the debate for decades. Both were based on rational actor assumptions, while locating the push and pull for the integration process on different levels and in different societal realms. Thus, neofunctionalists, in line with their broad definition of integration, explained the move away from the anarchic state system and towards supranational institution-building by depicting particular societal and market patterns as push factors for elite behaviour towards common market building. Because of the functional interconnectedness of policy areas, these shared policy initiatives in so-called 'low politics' areas were seen as having potential for 'spilling over' into other policy areas, at first to those closely related to market policy, but ultimately beyond (*functional spill-over*). In addition to this, to the extent that actors shifted their loyalties and redefined their identities, they were expected to actively demand further integration (*political spill-over*). Neofunctionalists built on functionalism and kept part of its normative agenda (especially 'political' neofunctionalists, such as Jean Monnet), yet they also introduced both a stronger emphasis on societal elements in explaining the interest in further integration, on the one hand, and an explicit social scientific interest in creating a general theory of regional integration that was applicable beyond the European single case (see in particular Ernst Haas's as well as Philippe Schmitter's work; Haas 1961, 1967, 1970; Haas and Schmitter 1964; and Schmitter in *chapter 3* of this book). In a different but not dissimilar way, Karl W. Deutsch (1957) saw integration coming about through the increased communication

and interaction across borders, which gave his theoretical approach the name 'transactionalism.'

These arguments were opposed by intergovernmentalists who explained supranational institution-building as the result of rational decision-making within a historical context that was conducive to strong and clearly defined interests of the various involved nation-state governments (Hoffmann 1966). The debate between supporters of integration as 'the rescue of the nation-state' (Milward 1992), on the one hand, and as the overcoming of the nation-state, on the other, which began in this first phase of integration theory, has remained a consistent factor in social science analysis to this day. While especially more recent additions to this strand of theorising, in particular liberal intergovernmentalism, have not denied the societal impact on supranational institution-building, as the theorisation of societal preference formation in Moravcsik's work demonstrates, their focus has been on governmental actors whose capacity for decisions were enhanced by supranational institutions, but not constrained by them. Institutions, according to this view, are designed for particular purposes and under control of the actors who created them. In other words, they remain potentially reversible or changeable at any point in time.

For a new generation of integration theorists, however, institutions were not mere tools in the hands of their creators, but had themselves an important impact on both the integration process and the development of European governance. As neoinstitutionalists have demonstrated, institutions can cause 'unintended consequences' (North 1990), making the process of institution-building less easily reversible than the intergovernmentalists would have it (Pierson 1996). A particularly dramatic example of unintended consequences was the largely underestimated creation of the Single European Act (Weiler 1999). While, as indicated above, it led on the one hand to the revival and revision of classic integration theories in the form of liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik 1991) and neo-neofunctionalism (Stone Sweet 2002; Sandholtz and Zysman 1989; Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991), it also marks, on the other hand, the starting point for a shift of focus in theoretical approaches to European integration away from International Relations Theory towards Comparative Politics, not least out of a recognition that the EU's complex institutional set-up seemed to be here to stay. This *second phase* considerably broadened the scope of empirical research and theoretical reflection on European integration, and introduced a greater degree of interdisciplinarity. It brought comparative and institutionalist approaches to the foreground of integration theory, following questions of what kind of polity the EU really is and how it operates - as Thomas Risse-Kappen (1996) famously put it, to 'explore the nature of the beast'. Among the concepts developed during this phase to answer these questions are the EU as a system of 'multi-level' (Marks et al. 1996a) or 'network governance' (Kohler-Koch and Jachtenfuchs 1996), or as a 'multi-perspectival polity' (Ruggie 1993). Others focused on the way in which policies are made through the analysis of policy networks (Peterson 1995; Peterson and Bomberg 1999). A key process analysed was the "Europeanisation" of governance rules, institutions and practices across the EU (Cowles et al. 2001). Questions of institutional adaptation and 'misfit' and of 'good governance' including legitimacy, democracy and transparency are other issues addressed by works in this second phase of integration theories.

To some extent, the *third phase* of integration theory is marked by the return of International Relations Theory, although of a different kind. During the 1980s and 1990s, International Relations Theory was characterised by the rise of a variety of critical and constructivist approaches, which drew their inspiration from developments in other fields of social theory. Scholars questioned both the ontological and epistemological assumptions on which traditional approaches had been built. Social constructivists, for instance, demonstrated the relevance of ideas, norms, institutions and identities for international politics and pointed to the interdependence of the structure of the state system, on the one hand, and the agency of those involved in international politics, on the other. Post-structuralists problematised core concepts of International Relations Theory and drew attention to the discursive construction of our understanding of international politics. Critical Theorists and feminists not only developed important critiques of the contemporary international system, but also often offered alternative paths towards what they saw as a more just world. These developments coincided with the move towards political union in the 1991 Maastricht and the 1996 Amsterdam Treaties. Under the pressure of massive enlargement and constitutional revision, integration theories faced the challenge of analysing and problematising the interrelated processes of widening and deepening. Different from the first two phases, which sought to explain or analyse either institution-building on the supranational level, or institutional change on the meso- and sub-state levels, this third phase of integration theory thus faced the more encompassing task of theorising the goal of European integration (finality), the competing ideas and discourses about European governance and the normative implications of particular EU policies. Accordingly, apart from problem-oriented theorising, works during this phase have been concerned with questions about our understanding of integration, how particular policy areas have been defined and developed in the way they did, and what political effects these definitions and historical processes have had. This third phase therefore focuses on substantial questions about 'constructing' (and limiting) European integration. It is in answering these questions that the critical and constructivist approaches in International Relations Theory were taken up, alongside or combined with insights from the 'constitutional turn' towards the end of the second phase, which, sparked by the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties and the increased public debate about the legitimacy of European governance, brought normative questions about the EU's constitution to the heart of the analysis of governance.² Especially social constructivism has in some respects drawn on, and in turn contributed to insights in governance approaches. In particular, it has addressed issues of the development of the EU's formal and informal institutions, as well as processes of Europeanisation, although as far as the latter are concerned, its focus has been on the Europeanisation of identities rather than institutions and policies (see Risse in *chapter 8*).

2.2. Approaches covered in this book

² It should be noted that there have of course been critical approaches to European integration all along. See for example, International Political Economy approaches, informed by Marxism and Post-Marxism, e.g. Deppe 1976; Holland 1980), posed themselves as alternatives to the mainstream in the 1970s and 1980s, but they were always confined to a few niches, and did not gain as much popularity as the more recent approaches covered here, although there has over the past decade or so been a resurgence of related approaches in the form of what one could call the 'Amsterdam School' (see below).

The theoretical approaches discussed in this book cover the three phases of integration theory, including their normative pre-cursor. We have therefore divided the book in three corresponding parts, 'Explaining European integration', 'Analysing European governance', and 'Constructing the European Union'.

Part I, Explaining European integration, contains firstly a chapter on federalism. While federalism is first and foremost a normative theory, it has been used more recently in a comparative fashion to explain, analyse or device particular features of the Euro-polity (Koslowski 2001). Furthermore, scholars such as Moravcsik (1998) have derived hypotheses about the particular institutional choices made in intergovernmental conferences for European governance from federalism. Together with neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism, federalism can be seen as a triad of theories that are often, although problematically so, as we will argue below, presented as competing with each other. Accordingly, *chapter 3* is devoted to neofunctionalism and *chapter 4* to intergovernmentalism, both of which we regard as explanatory approaches. Last but not least, *chapter 5* critically recalls the 'integration through law' approach (Capeletti et al. 1986) that sought to explain integrative progression in the EEC based on the ECJ's rulings. This chapter opens the scope of integration theory towards legal studies, which, while often overlooked in the theoretical debates of European Studies, have long had a key role in assessing the progress, scope and constructive force of the integration process, and, in line with our three phases, have since the 1980s moved from explanatory to more normative analyses (Shaw and More 1995, Bellamy and Castiglione 1996, Weiler, Haltern and Mayer 1996).

In *Part II Analysing European Governance*, we turn our focus to those approaches that try to understand and analyse the EU as a type of political system. *Chapter 6* reflects on the development of governance theory, with particular reference to the EU as a multi-level system of governance. Focusing more on the analysis of policy-making processes and drawing on a different set of Political Science literature, *chapter 7* discusses the policy network approach to the analysis of European governance. Finally, *chapter 8* looks at the contribution that various 'new institutionalisms' have made to the study of European governance, analysing in particular the impact of institutions on policy-making and the overall development of governance, as well as the shaping of those institutions by political actors.

Finally, *Part III Constructing the European Union* deals with those more recent approaches that stress the constructed dimension of European integration and governance and add a critical dimension to studying the European Union. This part includes firstly, a discussion of social constructivist approaches in *chapter 9*. Similar to the development of social constructivism in other social sciences, these come in various forms and with different purposes, but maintain an ambition to understand or explain integration outcomes. In contrast, the issue of gender perspectives, which is covered in *chapter 10*, follows a critical and problematising line throughout, building in part on the advances of feminist approaches in other disciplines. Finally, *chapter 11* reviews discursive approaches to the analysis of European integration, some of which have used post-structuralist concepts taken mostly from International Relations Theory to problematise particular conceptions of European integration and governance, while others have tried to

use those concepts to develop an explanatory framework for the analysis of the European policies of member-states.

The list of approaches covered in this book is obviously not exhaustive of all the approaches available to the student of European integration. We have included what we believe are the currently most salient and influential approaches in European integration theory, and by including some of the more recent developments, we may have already expanded the scope of what is conventionally taught as the core of the discipline. Nonetheless some of the omissions may prove more controversial than others. Three require particular justification.

Firstly, we have not included a chapter on transactionalism. While we agree with those who would like to see this approach given much more attention than it currently receives, because it would refocus our attention to the social, rather than the political integration process, we cannot ignore that, a few exceptions aside, hardly anyone has followed the lead of Karl Deutsch in this respect. In addition to this, Deutsch's focus was on NATO and the transatlantic 'security community', rather than on European integration *per se* (but see Deutsch et al. 1967). It is telling that one of the few recent pieces that comes close to transactionalism subsumes Deutsch's work under neofunctionalism, and focuses on transnational exchange as one of the independent variables influencing the form of supranational organisation, rather than on different forms of community as a result of communication across borders (Stone-Sweet and Sandholtz 1997).

Secondly, we have not included a chapter on Critical Theory, which would have included approaches that build on the work of Jürgen Habermas on legitimacy, discourse and democracy beyond the nation-state, and on the work of critical international political economists such as Robert Cox or Steven Gill, who try to conceptualise the struggles of transnational social forces in a globalising world. Both of these strands of Critical Theory have been used to analyse European integration. Studies that draw on Habermas are gaining influence particularly in interdisciplinary assessments of democratic or good governance (Eriksen and Fossum 2000; Joerges and Neyer 1997, Joerges 2002, Maduro 2002). Members of what may be called the 'Amsterdam School' have offered critical analyses of EU economic policies and the impact of economic interests on the integration process, building on the work done by Cox and others in International Relations Theory (Ryner et al. 1998; van Apeldoorn et al. 2002; van Apeldoorn 2002). Particularly the latter's impact on integration theory has so far been relatively limited compared to gender perspectives and discursive approaches, although this may well change in the future.

The relative neglect of Critical Theory, particularly its political economy variety, brings us to a third omission in this book, that of economic theories of integration. In this respect, we do not believe that there can be a purely economic theory of European integration as defined above, which is above all a political and social process. To the extent that economic theories exist in this field, they are looking at particular aspects and especially the effects of economic integration, and are thus not theories of European integration as such (see Balassa 1962, El-Agraa 1982). Economic theories have, however, found their way into some of the approaches covered, such as liberal intergovernmentalism, where predictions about the outcome of domestic bargains over national interests are made on the basis of economic theorems, and they are therefore discussed within these contexts. But we do not think that an economic theory as such is

currently playing a major part of the integration theory debates, nor are we convinced that it should be.

Last but not least, the approaches that we have included have in their majority been formulated by scholars working in English, and within the Anglo-Saxon scholarly community. This is a problem to the extent that we are thereby imposing a narrative of the development of European integration theory on scientific communities that may have had a very different experience, and we may have overlooked important and exciting theoretical developments in that process – European integration theory outside the Anglo-Saxon boundaries may indeed be ‘the best kept secret’ (Jørgensen 2000). Having said that, not all of our approaches have their stronghold in English-speaking universities, as the discussion of national differences below will illustrate. At the same time, the success of approaches beyond national boundaries requires its formulation in what is increasingly becoming the *lingua franca* of academia. This is not to say that there are no interesting developments outside what is accessible in English. It is also true that there are particular academic styles that differ between national academic communities, and that translating from another language into English does not always properly convey the meaning of the original. But as an overview and a stock-taking exercise, we had to base our selection on what we regarded as success across borders, and English-speaking publications remain in many ways the yardstick for such an exercise, even if this is problematic.

3. Studying integration theory

3.1. Contexts of theoretical development

The story of integration theory can be told from a chronological angle or with a focus on theoretical debates and the specific issues covered. Our account above combined a chronological perspective with a perspective on debates because there are distinct themes and controversies to particular *phases* of European integration theory. Telling the story of integration theory in these terms is not uncommon (cf. the overviews by Caporaso and Keeler 1995, Bache and George 2001, Rosamond 2000). More contested is the question of how the theoretical approaches relate to each other. There are two aspects to this issue. The first relates to the emergence of theories and the movement from one dominant approach to another, and can therefore be seen as a contribution to the history and sociology of European integration studies. The second is concerned with the ‘fit’ of theories, (e.g. are they compatible or competing?), and is therefore a contribution to theory-building in itself.

Starting with the historical-sociological approach, there are two factors that are often seen as influencing the development of theories, the academic and the socio-political context (cf. Rosamond 2000: 9). The academic context consists of debates and problems that are pursued in the wider scientific context of a particular field as well as the legacies of previous debates in the field itself. Of particular importance in this context are particular ‘paradigms’ that provide researchers with guideposts about how to conduct and present their studies (see Kuhn 1964). The socio-political context, in contrast, consists of factors outside of academia, such as the development of the object under analysis, the influence

of sponsors on research agendas, or the discursive restrictions set by a particular political climate. In addition, both of these contexts can be coloured by national differences.

Our account of the three phases of European integration theory above provides plenty of examples for how the study of European integration has followed the ups and downs of its subject. The rise, fall and comeback of neofunctionalism in the 1950s, following the Empty Chair crisis and the Single European Act respectively, is the most obvious one. The relation between the socio-political context and the development of theory is, however, not a one-way street. Thus, not only was neofunctionalism developed on the basis of what happened in Western Europe in the 1950s, neofunctionalism itself also became the quasi-official ideology in the Commission and other parts of the EC institutions. Ironically, as George and Bache (2001: 15) point out, it is today often used by so-called Eurosceptics to increase fears of a technocratic, centralised and undemocratic super-state, whereas governments supportive of further integration tend to resort to the intergovernmentalist rhetoric of sovereignty being only 'pooled' in order to alleviate these fears.

While the influence of the EU's development on integration theory may be obvious, the academic context has been no less forceful in shaping the way in which integration has been conceptualised and analysed. As Rosamond (1995: 394) argues, theories of integration 'have arisen in the context of dominant perspectives in the broad arena of social scientific inquiry' and are 'bound up with intellectual fashion and debates between and within different theoretical paradigms'. Thus, if we had included a listing of major works in other social sciences and neighbouring fields in this introduction, we would have seen that theoretical movements in European integration studies are often preceded by or run in parallel with developments in disciplines such as International Relations, Political Science or Legal Studies. Neofunctionalism provides yet again a good example with its social-scientific turn against earlier versions of functionalism (see Caporaso and Keeler 1995: 32-4; Kelstrup 1998: 24).

European integration also became an instrument for the pursuit of academic controversies in that it served as ammunition for the critique of the dominant, state-centred realist paradigm (George and Bache 2001: 19). Thereby, the neofunctionalism versus intergovernmentalism debate became embedded in a discourse in which the model of the state remained at the core, either on the national or on the European level (see Rosamond 1995), which in turn hindered the development of a debate about legitimacy 'beyond the state' (Kelstrup and Williams 2000: 8). That such a debate eventually became possible is not only due to the acceptance of the EU as a polity discussed above, but also to the development of normative, critical and constructivist approaches in other social sciences that could be imported into the third phase of European integration theory (see Hix 1994: 10; Kelstrup and Williams 2000: 1, 9). Similarly, the comparativist project of the second phase benefited greatly from the previous development of neoinstitutionalist research in sociology, which provided comparativists with new concepts to analyse political institutions as an important influence on politics in their own right.

Interestingly, it is the academic context where national differences seem to matter most, rather than the socio-political context, and the problem of language discussed earlier plays a crucial part in this. It is perhaps ironic that most of the classic integration theories have been developed in the United States, rather than within Europe. This, however, can

be explained by the dominance of theory-driven American Social Science in International Relations (see Wæver 1998a), from which the approaches in the crucial first phase of integration theory developed. European studies have traditionally tended to be much more historically or normatively oriented, or have been engaged in detailed empirical studies of particular policies (cf. Smith and Ray 1993). Only with the advent of the second and the third phase of integration theory are there more clearly audible European voices – most of them advocating form of social inquiry that is different from the American social science model. Among these voices, there is also a certain degree of differentiation along national or regional lines, although whether this is more than coincidental would require further analysis. To give but two examples, discursive studies of the EU have by and large emerged from a Scandinavian context (e.g. Hansen and Wæver 2002; Larsen 1997; Neumann 1999; Wæver 1998b), whereas two major studies on ideas and European governance have originated in Germany (Jachtenfuchs et al. 1998; Marcussen et al. 2001).

3.2. Competing or complementary approaches?

The importance of socio-political and academic contexts for the development of integration theory raises fundamental questions about the relationship of individual approaches to each other. Does the discussion in the last section imply that instead of moving to one unified theory, these approaches offer different perspectives that are largely determined by the contexts in which they are developed? Are these perspectives mutually exclusive, and can the arguments they put forward be tested against each other? How, in short, is one to compare the different theoretical approaches?

At the extremes of this debate is, on the one hand, the notion of scientific progress, where through falsification our knowledge of (in this case) integration advances, and, on the other hand, the notion of incommensurable paradigms, which, in effect, construct and talk about different realities, and between which dialogue is hardly possible. If we take the different understandings of theory advanced above, the more scientifically minded will generally tend towards the former, those with a broader understanding of theory towards the latter pole. Consequently, Moravcsik (1998) for instance, in his major contribution to the development of European integration theory, tests different theories against each other in order to establish a (liberal-intergovernmentalist) ground on which future theory can build. His exchange with Diez as well as with Risse and Wiener on the value of this contribution, however, can serve as an example for talking past each other because of very different agendas, concepts and definitions that emerge from very different contexts (see Diez 1999; Moravcsik 1999, 2001; Risse and Wiener 2001).

While we agree that scientific progress is ultimately influenced by its academic and socio-political context, we nonetheless find the argument of incommensurability problematic. Most integration theories have been developed within the context of Western academia, and although their pedigree differs, and consequently their ontological and epistemological foundations, they share quite a lot of common ground, as will become more obvious when reading through the chapters of this book. *To the extent that they are incompatible, this is a consequence not of their inherent incommensurability, but of the claims they make about their scope.* In other words, many theorists make broader

claims such as 'explaining integration', when what they really do is a much more limited enterprise, for instance explaining results of intergovernmental conferences, criticising a particular conceptualisation of integration, or seeking to understand the historical development of a particular aspect of integration. This problem, as well as the criticism of it, is not new. Puchala already remarked in 1972 that 'different schools of researchers have exalted different parts of the integration "elephant". They have claimed either that their parts were in fact whole beasts, or that their parts were the most important ones, the others being of marginal interest' (Puchala 1972: 268).³

Even if two approaches agree on the aim of explaining integration, they might still be difficult to compare if what they mean by integration are two different things. Moravcsik, for instance, focuses on political integration and the role of intergovernmental bargains, whereas neo-neofunctionalists Stone-Sweet and Sandholtz (1997) see integration as a much more social process happening in part through what they call 'transnational exchange' between member states societies (see also Branch and Øhrgaard 1999; on liberal-intergovernmentalism see also Rosamond 1995: 398). All of these are respectable accomplishments in their own right, and hardly testable against each other (see also Hix 1994: 3). Yet, at the same time, this does not necessarily make them incommensurable once there is a certain modesty introduced regarding the scope of the argument made.

The approaches in this book therefore can be seen as providing different perspectives on the subject of integration, each contributing to our overall understanding of the subject. They cannot easily be lumped together to form a grand theory of integration because one needs to adopt their own viewpoint in order to 'make them work' (see also Figure x in *chapter 3*). However, they are not always direct competitors either, although some of them will indeed formulate hypotheses that can be tested against each other. Instead, one might see them as stones in an always-incomplete mosaic. The picture of integration that emerges from them is a multi-faceted one – a point we will have to revisit in the conclusion to this volume, together with some of the questions this raises about the advancement and value of theory.

For now, it is important to develop an understanding of the main dimensions along which these approaches differ. We consider two such dimensions as particularly important. One is about the functions of theory shortly referred to above; the other is about the areas (developed below) that the approaches analyse.

3.3. The functions of theory

There are three main functions of theory (broadly understood), and these run parallel to the three main phases of integration theory identified above.

1. *Theory as explanation or understanding.* Although explaining and understanding approaches differ widely in the epistemological claims they make, and consequently in the methodologies they apply (see Hollis and Smith 1990), they

³ While we are in agreement with Puchala as far as the identification of the problem is concerned, we differ from the solution he suggested. While he proposes the identification of the then EC as a 'concordance system', we do not propose a single framework, but argue in favour of theoretical pluralism instead.

share a common purpose in the sense that they ask why (explaining) or how (understanding) an event has come about. To that extent, they ask for reasons and/or causes for something to happen (on reasons and causes, see the discussion in Wendt 1999 and Smith 2000). The approaches in the first main phase of integration theory have asked these sorts of questions, and most of them have leaned towards the 'explanation' variant. More recent approaches such as Social Constructivism have sometimes also asked similar questions, and while most Social Constructivists would see themselves in the 'understanding business', at least some of them have leaned towards 'explaining'.

2. *Theory as description and analysis.* This might at first seem like a waste-bin category, but it is not. Approaches in this category focus on the development of definitions and concepts with which to grasp particular developments, practices and institutions. In that sense, explaining and understanding approaches have to presuppose descriptive and analytical approaches because the latter provide the former with the concepts on the basis of which events can be explained or understood. Taking a look at governance approaches, this distinction becomes immediately clear. In the second main phase of integration theory, we would expect a focus on description and analysis, rather than explanation, because the aim of these approaches was to provide a vocabulary with which to capture 'the nature of the beast'.
3. *Theory as critique and normative intervention.* While approaches in the first two categories take the development of integration more or less as a given, other approaches question the route that the integration process, or a particular policy, has taken, or develop norms and principles for the future of integration. Approaches in this category therefore either problematise a given development, or they develop alternatives. Theory in this understanding is often much closer to what one might call philosophy, or perhaps only 'abstract reflection', but in the form of normative theory, it has always had its rightful place in the canon of Political Theory, and many critical theories have recently been added to this. At least some of the approaches included in our third phase of integration theory fall into this category.

If theory has such different purposes, it would be unfair and not even valid to hold one approach accountable on the basis of criteria set by another one. Evaluating and weighing theoretical approaches against each other therefore always has to take account of the principal function or purpose that the approach assigns to itself, unless we want to impose one common purpose on all theoretical approaches.

3.4. The areas of theory

It is, however, not only the purpose of theory that varies, but also the area, or the 'object' of particular approaches. Analysing member states' integration policy is different from, although related to, reflecting on the best institutional set-up for the EU, and consequently may require a different methodology. These areas of theory are a second, independent dimension on which theoretical approaches can differ from each other. Again, we propose three different areas, which we have delineated along the triad of

polity (institutional framework), policy (content and style) and politics (decision-making process).

1. *Theory dealing with polity*. 'Polity' refers to the political community and its institutions. Approaches falling in this category would be those analysing the 'nature of the beast', those explaining how the EU's particular set-up came about or those trying to find constitutional alternatives on the basis of normative considerations, to give examples taken from all three functions of theory.
2. *Theory dealing with policy*. 'Policy' includes the actual measures taken to tackle concrete problems, and theoretical approaches in this area analyse and compare their content, or critically reflect upon them. This includes aspects such as 'policy style, the general problem-solving approach, the policy instruments used, and the policy standards set' (Börzel and Risse 2000: 3). However, to qualify as theory as defined above, they need to bring such analyses onto an abstract level, for instance by drawing out general patterns of policy content, or reflecting on the normative underpinnings within a policy field.
3. *Theory dealing with politics*. 'Politics' comprises the process of policy-making and the daily struggles and techniques of political actors dealing with each other. It is about the bargaining between governments, the influence of particular interest groups, or the dominance of a specific style of how decisions are reached. Approaches concerned with politics look at such issues as why technocratic governance prevails over participatory governance, how interest groups try to influence the policy-making process, or how particular groups are systematically disadvantaged by the dominant political style.

As these definitions have illustrated, it would empirically be rather difficult to strictly stick to one of these areas. Any discussion of polity is likely to involve constitutional frames in which policy-making takes place, or which restrict the content of policy, as well as the implication of constitutional arrangements for politics. Nonetheless, approaches are likely to emphasise one or the other, and not deal with all three poles of the triad in equal measure. When we say a 'theory dealing with polity', we therefore do not mean that approaches in this category exclude all other considerations, but that they are given secondary status in contrast to the main concern of an approach.

Furthermore, even if two approaches operate in the same area, they may still not be directly testable against each other. The example of liberal-intergovernmentalism v. neo-neofunctionalism illustrates this. In this case, while both approaches want to explain the political process of reaching a decision, and to some extent the outcome of that process in terms of its effects on the polity, they actually look at different political processes due their different definitions of integration. The distinction of various analytical areas is therefore a rather general one that always needs to be supplemented by a closer look at the basic concepts and definitions that approaches use within their area. This is not only true for the area- but also for the function-dimension. Because we have lumped together 'explaining' and 'understanding', 'analytical' and 'descriptive', 'critical' and 'normative', approaches even within one cell are not necessarily directly comparable, as the epistemological claims they make differ widely, and thus the scope of their argument.

3.5. *The mosaic of integration theory*

Combining these two dimensions, we arrive at what we call the ‘mosaic of integration theory’. Keeping the caveats raised above in mind, theoretical approaches can be located in the nine cells of this table. Its ‘mosaic-ness’ comes from the fact that each approach can be seen as a stone that adds to the picture that we gain of the EU. This picture is likely to remain unfinished, as new approaches will add new stones to change the picture. To reiterate, our point is that rather than directly competing with each other, each approach contributes to the emerging picture in its own limited way. The contributions can be ambiguous – the EU itself in many ways is. But they are not necessarily mutually exclusive and incommensurable, as is often assumed. Placing an approach in a particular part of the mosaic therefore clarifies with which approaches it actually competes in a rather narrow field, and even then, as pointed out above, approaches may still be complementary rather than competitive if the definitions of their key concepts and their focus differ from each other.

	POLITY	POLICY	POLITICS
EXPLANATORY/ UNDERSTANDING			
ANALYTICAL/ DESCRIPTIVE			
CRITICAL/ NORMATIVE			

Table 1.1: The functions and areas of (integration) theory

Of course, as we have pointed out above, approaches will usually find themselves in more than one category. The mosaic should not be seen as an exercise in compartmentalisation. Instead, it is a heuristic device that allows us to move beyond fruitless debates in which approaches operating in different areas and pursuing different purposes talk past each other. Besides, even though approaches will cross the imaginary boundaries of the identified fields, they will tend to focus on one or the other – life is too short, and book space too restricted to deal with everything.

4. Reviewing integration theory

4.1. *The structure of the chapters*

Although the structure of individual chapters varies, they all address a set of questions that will help in the comparison between theoretical approaches and the assessment of their compatibility or incommensurability. Each author was asked to summarise the origins of the approach covered, its main arguments and development over time. As all of the authors were substantially involved in the development of ‘their’ approach, these sections are to be seen not only as an introduction, but also as a reflection on the current state-of-the-art of each approach in relation to earlier work. Chapters also include an overview of the main debates surrounding approaches, including the criticism raised from the perspective of other approaches, the main current questions facing authors and potential ways forwards.

However, in order to answer our main questions regarding the comparison of the approaches, we have furthermore asked authors to include a section in which they provide an example of a concrete puzzle that they think 'their' approach is particularly apt to address, and which in the past has been a focus of many works written in this tradition. If our argument about European integration theory as a mosaic holds, we expect approaches to differ in their 'most favourite puzzle', or in the area that they focus upon. We have furthermore asked authors to include a section in which they summarise, or speculate, how works written from 'their' approach have, or would address the issue of enlargement. Again, we expect the contributions to focus on different areas of enlargement, but also to ask different types of questions about enlargement, illustrating the different functions of theory.

On the basis of these two sections where authors provide examples of how 'their' approaches deal with concrete issues, we will return in the conclusion to the questions raised in this introduction, but we also invite readers to make their own comparisons when reading this book, and to use these sections as a starting point for critical reflections on the past or ongoing debates summarised in each chapter, and thereby pushing European integration theory forward.

4.2. Past, present and future

'Past, present and future' is the subtitle of this book. It provides an organising theme in a double sense. Firstly, each chapter, by reflecting on the origins and development of each approach, on the main puzzles addressed and state-of-the-art, and on the current challenges and ways forward, addresses the past, present and future of each approach. Secondly, the three parts of this volume reflecting the three phases of European integration theory can be seen as an expression of 'past, present and future': 'Past' in the sense of a set of approaches that have been with us since the early days of integration theory, have been developed to a considerable degree, and have influenced subsequent generations of integration scholars; 'present' in the sense that a lot of theoretical work today has shifted towards questions of governance that combine International Relations and Comparative Politics; and 'future' in the sense that a set of novel approaches raise a number of issues which, although unlikely to dominate theoretical development in the future, will have to be taken into account, as they are now taken into account in other Social Sciences.

We have already made clear that we do not wish to reinforce some of the fault(y) lines along which the field of European integration theory was divided in the past. Instead, we see in the present a healthy trend towards a proliferation of approaches that contribute to an ever more faceted and nuanced picture of the European Union, its history and its development. What we would like to see in the future is neither the development of one single grand theory, nor the isolation and non-communication between approaches. The following chapters should help to clarify where each approach comes from, and what the scope of its argument is, so that a critical but constructive and open debate can thrive.

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