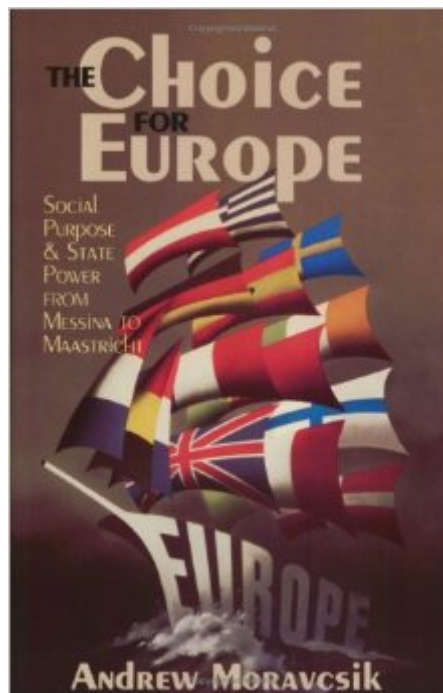


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The Choice For Europe: Social Purpose And State Power From Messina To Maastricht (Cornell Studies In Political Economy)



Synopsis

The creation of the European Community ranks among the most extraordinary achievements in modern world politics. Observers disagree, however, about the reasons why European governments have chosen to coordinate core economic policies and surrender sovereign prerogatives. In this eagerly awaited book, Andrew Moravcsik analyzes the history of the region's movement toward economic and political union. Do these unifying steps demonstrate the preeminence of national security concerns, the power of federalist ideals, the skill of political entrepreneurs like Jean Monnet and Jacques Delors, or the triumph of technocratic planning? Moravcsik rejects such views. Economic interdependence has been, he maintains in his provocative argument, the primary force compelling these democracies to move in this surprising direction. Politicians rationally pursued national economic advantage through the exploitation of asymmetrical interdependence and the manipulation of institutional commitments. Focusing on Germany, France, and Britain, Moravcsik examines the five decisive agreements that propelled integration forward. He seeks to reintegrate the historical study of European unity with theoretical inquiry into the sources of international cooperation.

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Customer Reviews

For once, here is a general text purporting to analyse the history of European integration that actually lives up to its billing. It is quite rightly considered a tour de force. Indeed, Andrew

Moravcsik's "The choice for Europe" has already established itself as one of the most important publications to date on this subject. While it is obvious that the continued evolution of the European Union has been one of the most 'extraordinary political achievements' to have taken place during the 20th century, the reasons why this community of states was created in the first place and the ways in which it has since developed have not always been so convincingly explained or succinctly outlined, that is until now. What Robert Keohane describes on the fly-cover as the 'most compelling and significant analysis yet of the European Community' is just that. Moravcsik is not a historian, but in this text he tries to integrate political science theory into a historical study of European unity; this is in order to discover why there has been such a high-level of cooperation between Western European states during the last half-century. His book fills an important gap in our knowledge by tracing the somewhat erratic developments that have led to a greater degree of economic and political union gradually being instituted throughout this region and by placing these in a theoretical perspective. In this most accessible work, he persuasively argues that economic interdependence has been the prime motivator in successive governments making these rational choices.

Andrew Moravcsik boldly makes the case for the centrality of the three largest member states in the construction of Europe. In this volume, Moravcsik articulates his "liberal intergovernmentalist" (LI) framework of analysis and utilizes primary sources to strengthen his response to Paul Pierson's "historical institutionalist" (HI) account of European integration. As Moravcsik explains, in making the choice for Europe "...it was the deliberate triumphs of European integration, not its unintended side-effects, that appear to have increased support for further integration. This is the key point of divergence between HI theory and the tri-partite "liberal intergovernmentalist" interpretation advanced here. For most governments, inducing economic modernization-even with unpleasant side-effects-was the major purpose of European integration." (p. 491) One of the strongest contributions of Moravcsik's volume is to revisit the classic neo-functional-intergovernmentalist debate and to place it in a new theoretical context. To Moravcsik's credit, this tome offers a detailed, thorough and remarkably organized assessment of competing explanations in the European integration literature. Students and scholars of integration will grapple with the issues raised as a result of this work for years to come. Moravcsik's volume challenges the "myths" of European integration and calls into question the relevance of actions taken by supranational entrepreneurs. National versus supranational debates notwithstanding, Monnet's (and later Delor's) talent was to seize a moment in history when Europe was at the brink of continuity or change.

In this deeply researched book, Andrew Moravcsik studies five key moves toward wider and deeper European integration: the Treaties of Rome, consolidating the Common Market, monetary integration, the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty. He argues that the member governments chose ever closer union in order to promote their countries' economic interests. He aims to prove that economic interests, not political ideas, drive EU integration. He focuses on how the governments of Germany, France and Britain made their decisions. Moravcsik argues that the British government's policy in the 1950s of opposition to joining the Common Market "was the rational one for a government that traded little with the Continent, had high tariffs in place, and feared competition with German producers." So there was economic logic to staying out. It is less clear that there was good reason for the subsequent reversal of policy: trading with a bloc does not oblige us to join it! He shows that De Gaulle vetoed Britain's application not out of chauvinism, but because we opposed generous financing for French farmers through the Common Agricultural Policy. In 1969, Pompidou lifted the veto, but only in exchange for the British government's huge concession of agreeing to a permanent financing arrangement for the CAP. This made it CAP reform impossible. Similarly, member governments have pursued integration through creating the Single Market and EMU. Moravcsik shows how Europe's multinational companies and the national employers' organisations backed integration. The European Commission admitted, "The single market programme has done more for business than it has for workers", a judgment true also of Economic and Monetary Union.

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