

## Editors' Preface

There is a growing literature documenting the institutionalist turn in European Union (EU) studies. This work is exciting and innovative and has done much to relink the study of the EU to the broader disciplines. At the same time, the three of us have shared a sense of frustration that the emerging whole—a better understanding of institutional dynamics in Europe and elsewhere—was less than the sum of the parts.

In reviewing the literature, we saw divisions that were unnecessary, confusion that could be clarified and meta-theoretical bloodletting that was both needless and hindering scholarly progress. These facts led us to convene an exploratory workshop at the University of Washington in March 2000. Our initial hunch was that three divisions were motivating the debates among institutionalists. The first was geographical: Over time, scholars in Europe and the United States had come to approach the study of the EU in different ways. The second was functional: Institutionalists drew on different subfields—comparative politics (CP) or international relations (IR)—depending on how they had been trained. The third was social theoretic: Scholars studying the EU could differ meaningfully depending on whether their institutional assumptions were informed more by economics or sociology.

Although the first workshop was structured to highlight the role played by all three divisions, it quickly became apparent that the first two—U.S. v. European; CP v. IR—were more apparent than real. The more potent divide was the third, social theoretic, one. Given this finding, we began to explore ways in which this latter gap could be transcended.

This exploration led to the present set of essays. We wanted to understand better the putative divide separating rationalist and sociological/constructivist institutionalisms. Much more important, though, was a desire to drive this debate down to empirical and operational levels, thus getting a better sense of complementarities—as well as of continuing antagonisms—between these traditions. Exactly how can bridges be built between them? What are the limits of such exercises? What is the value added for understanding institutional dynamics within the EU?

The articles in this special issue have been through a multistage review process. Virtually all of them were first presented and critiqued at two work-

shops held a year apart (in March 2000 and May 2001). In addition, the three editors—singularly or collectively—provided detailed comments on at least two drafts of each essay. (In all, these commentaries totaled more than 40 single-spaced pages.) Finally, we recruited two outside reviewers—Steve Hanson of the University of Washington and Jeff Kopstein of the University of Toronto—to assess the entire set of articles for both individual quality and collective coherence.

Generous financial and logistical support for the project was provided by the European Union Center. We especially appreciate the efforts of John Keeler and Philip Shekleton. We also appreciate the support of the Department of Political Science and Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington as well as that of the Miami European Union Center.

Our biggest debt of gratitude is intellectual and not material, however. The contributors to this volume, with their good faith and intellectually stimulating responses to our numerous requests for improvements, demonstrated that the quest to “integrate institutions” was time well spent indeed.

Joe Jupille  
Florida International University  
Jim Caporaso  
University of Washington  
Jeff Checkel  
University of Oslo

## **Request Permission or Order Reprints Instantly**

Interested in copying, sharing, or the repurposing of this article? U.S. copyright law, in most cases, directs you to first get permission from the article's rightsholder before using their content.

To lawfully obtain permission to reuse, or to order reprints of this article quickly and efficiently, click on the "Request Permission/ Order Reprints" link below and follow the instructions. For information on Fair Use limitations of U.S. copyright law, please visit [Stamford University Libraries](#), or for guidelines on Fair Use in the Classroom, please refer to [The Association of American Publishers' \(AAP\)](#).

All information and materials related to SAGE Publications are protected by the copyright laws of the United States and other countries. SAGE Publications and the SAGE logo are registered trademarks of SAGE Publications. Copyright © 2003, Sage Publications, all rights reserved. Mention of other publishers, titles or services may be registered trademarks of their respective companies. Please refer to our user help pages for more details: <http://www.sagepub.com/cc/faq/SageFAQ.htm>

**[Request Permissions / Order Reprints](#)**