

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

While EU governments are formally the ‘Masters of the Treaties’, EU institutions have played a key role in pushing Europe further along the road towards the ‘ever closer union’ envisioned in the Treaty of Rome by providing direction and oiling the wheels of compromise. Looking at both the deepening of the Union in treaty reform negotiations and the widening of the Union through enlargement, this book recasts the core debate within EU studies on the role and impact that EU institutions have had in the history-making intergovernmental bargains of European integration in the past three decades.

The basic argument of the book is that there is evidence that EU institutions play a significant role even in the most intergovernmental forums of the EU – intergovernmental conferences amending the EU Treaties for either treaty reform or accession (IGCs). Intergovernmentalist theorists have argued that governments are firmly in the driving seat in these grand bargains, whereas supranationalists have contended that EU institutions like the Commission have acted as the motor of the integration process through the exploitation of their roles in daily Community decision-making. This book recasts this debate by going *beyond* the either-or dichotomy found in most of the existing literature on European integration by putting forward a new model that emphasizes the importance of leadership: EU institutions do matter vis-à-vis governments in the actual intergovernmental history-making decisions, but their influence varies according to the leadership resources they possess, the negotiating context and their choice of strategy in the negotiations.

The leadership model serves as the theoretical baseline for the comparative analytical chapters that trace the deepening and widening of the European Union from the mid-1980s until the present. The chapters look at the negotiation of every major IGC since 1985, including the recent 2003–4 IGC, along with the negotiation of the fifth enlargement that was concluded in Copenhagen in December 2002.

This book investigates the roles and impact of three EU institutions:

the European Commission, the European Parliament (EP) and the Council Secretariat in a comparative case study. While the Council Secretariat is not an official treaty-based 'institution' as the other two are, officials in the Council Secretariat do share common institutional interests that make it possible to empirically identify it as a collective 'institutional' actor alongside the Commission and the EP (for more, see the chapters below and Christiansen 2002, 2003). In contrast, while the actual Council of Ministers (Council) is a treaty-based institution, ministers do *not* have common institutional interests to the same degree, and the Council's 'interests' are merely a *sum* of the preferences of the *individual* members taken together.

The oversight of the Council Secretariat in the existing literature is patently surprising, as my findings show that the Council Secretariat was *more* influential than either the Commission or European Parliament in most treaty reform negotiations in the 1990s. The role of other EU institutions such as the European Court of Justice will not be investigated directly, as they play no role in the actual negotiations (see Beach, 2001; Burley and Mattli, 1993; Pollack, 2003; Weiler, 1993).

The following will first describe the basic argument of the book. Thereafter, the rest of this chapter will first briefly discuss in general terms how treaty reform and enlargement negotiations are conducted. The chapter then discusses the definitions of the terms 'leadership' and 'influence' as they are used in this book. Following this, I discuss the assumption of treating institutions as unitary actors. Finally there are a few words on the empirical materials and sources of the book.

The basic argument

It is widely accepted in the literature that EU institutions such as the Commission are influential in daily Community policy-making (Moravcsik, 1995; Peterson, 1995; Pollack, 1997, 2003). But most scholars do not ascribe large roles for EU institutions in the so-called history-making intergovernmental decisions, arguing that national governments dominate this setting (e.g. Moravcsik, 1999a; Peterson, 1995). The basic argument of this book is that EU institutions do matter in the history-making intergovernmental bargains of the EU, but that their impact varies according to the circumstances and their strategic choices.

Leadership can be necessary in the major intergovernmental negotiations in order to overcome two major bargaining impediments. First, complex multilateral negotiating situations such as EU

intergovernmental conferences often have very high bargaining costs, which can prevent the parties from finding and then agreeing upon a mutually acceptable outcome. Secondly, even if these bargaining costs can be overcome, there are often coordination problems that can prevent agreement from being reached. For instance, when there are multiple possible acceptable solutions that can be chosen, leadership is often necessary in order to help the parties reach agreement.

Drawing upon rational choice institutionalism and negotiation theory, a leadership model is developed that hypothesizes that EU institutions can play a key leadership role when:

- they have strong leadership resources such as comparative informational advantages;
- they have privileged institutional positions in the negotiations;
- the negotiating situation is complex;
- the distribution and intensity of governmental preferences opens a window of opportunity;
- the issues being negotiated are low salience and technically complex; and
- they choose low-profile and moderate leadership strategies.

While leadership has an altruistic dimension, with the leader assisting the parties in finding an agreement, by providing leadership the leader also gains opportunities to skew the final outcome closer to its own preferred outcome.

This leadership model serves as the theoretical baseline for the comparative empirical chapters that trace the deepening and widening of the EU in the period from the negotiation of the Single European Act in the mid-1980s until the conclusion of the Constitutional Treaty in June 2004.

The case studies show that leadership by EU institutions is particularly successful in two different situations. First, when EU institutions exploit windows of opportunity and privileged institutional positions by tabling moderate proposals that aim at what can be termed the ‘upper edge of realism’, they often are able to shift outcomes closer to their own interests. The best example of this was the impact of the Commission in the 1985 IGC which negotiated the Single European Act. In the IGC, the Commission was given *de facto* control over the IGC agenda by the Luxembourg Presidency, enabling the Commission to table a series of proposals that substantively shaped the agenda and skewed the final outcome closer to the Commission’s own preferred outcome. Critical to Commission influence was the institutional role given to it by the Luxembourg

Presidency in the negotiations, and the Commission's use of pragmatic agenda-shaping tactics in exploiting the window of opportunity that had opened due to the strong demand for agreement among governments (see Chapter 3). The Commission put forward moderate proposals that were aimed at the upper end of what the member states would realistically accept, leading to a more integrative final treaty than would otherwise have been agreed upon. In later IGCs, when the Commission did not have the same accepted agenda-setting role, governments reacted very negatively to the Commission attempting to table a series of proposals. Further, when the Commission put forward overly ambitious proposals in the 1985 IGC, they were disregarded.

The second type of situation where EU institutions matter is when they facilitate compromise by assisting and advising Presidencies, together with brokering key deals. By playing this type of leadership role, the EU institution gains numerous opportunities to skew outcomes closer to their own preferred outcome. For example, in the 1996–7 IGC that negotiated the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Council Secretariat was able to successfully exploit the possibilities for influence opened by the negotiating context through the use of low-profile agenda-shaping leadership tactics in assisting Presidencies. The Secretariat also used its power of the pen to gain influence in several salient issues, illustrating for example, the 'influence of those who provide draft texts for debate – they run the show' (Stubb, 1998, p. 219).

The argument is not that EU institutions are 'rogue elephants' wildly out of the control, nor that they are even *always* necessary in order for governments to reach an efficient agreement. My claims are more restricted – namely that, given the high bargaining costs and the uncertainty involved in EU Treaty negotiations, the context and the leadership strategies employed by EU institutions *can* allow them to translate their leadership resources into influence over outcomes.

The plan of the book

Following the present introductory chapter, Chapter 2 of this book introduces the two poles of debate within integration theory on whether the grand intergovernmental bargains of European integration are dominated by national governments or by EU institutions. The intergovernmentalist position is first reviewed. The basic argument of intergovernmentalists is that governments are firmly in charge of the EU's intergovernmental negotiations on treaty reform or enlargement.

At the other end of the spectrum, supranationalists such as neo-functionalists argue that EU institutions are influential due to the roles that they play in daily EU policy-making, but they concede that EU institutions play little role in the actual negotiation of the history-making decisions. My argument is that even in the most intergovernmental forum of the EU, there is evidence that EU institutions can matter but, in contrast to supranationalists, they do not always matter.

The theoretical chapter then introduces a leadership model of European integration that contends that EU institutions do possess leadership resources in the history-making negotiations that *potentially* can be translated into influence *contingent* upon the negotiating context and whether the EU institutions choose appropriate leadership strategies in the negotiations. The theory is built upon insights drawn from mainstream negotiation theory and from rational choice institutionalism. The theory is based upon three basic assumptions. First, intergovernmental negotiations in the EU have relatively high bargaining costs that can prevent the parties from reaching a Pareto-efficient agreement. Secondly, actors are treated as boundedly rational, which in short means that bargaining costs matter. Thirdly, the institutional position that an actor is delegated also matters, and can affect both the efficiency and distribution of agreements.

Chapter 3 analyses the roles and impact of the EU institutions in the agenda-setting phase and negotiation of the Single European Act (SEA) in the mid-1980s. As the Single European Act is widely regarded to have been the high point of Commission influence, the analysis will concentrate upon the role of the European Commission, but will also more cursorily look at the impact of the European Parliament and Council Secretariat. The chapter concludes that the Commission did have a strong leadership role in the 1985 IGC, first ensuring that an IGC was convened, and then creating a SEA that had a broader and more ambitious scope than governments would have otherwise agreed upon. But Commission influence had limits, and when the Commission put forward overly ambitious proposals, they had little effect.

Chapter 4 investigates the two parallel IGCs that resulted in the Treaty on European Union in 1991 – the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) IGC and the Political Union (PU) IGC. The chapter illustrates the importance of low-profile leadership strategies by contrasting the relative success in the PU IGC of the Council Secretariat's low-profile and behind-the-scenes interventions with the failures of the ambitious attempts by the Commission and the European Parliament to gain influence. The importance of possessing a privileged institutional position is also highlighted in the analysis by the chairing role that the Commission President Delors played in

the preparation of the agenda on EMU within the Delors Committee prior to the IGC. Delors played a key brokering role that ensured that the Committee wrote a unanimous report which shaped the final EMU outcome.

Chapter 5 investigates the negotiation of the Treaty of Amsterdam. This case clearly shows the impact that context can have upon opportunities for EU institutions to gain influence, together with the impact of inappropriate leadership strategies. The Council Secretariat was very influential in the 1996–7 IGC due to a privileged institutional position – a position that it was able to expertly exploit through the use of low-profile leadership tactics to gain significant influence upon the outcome. The Commission in contrast was marginalized in the negotiations, and played itself even further out of influence by putting forward extremely unrealistic and unacceptable proposals on most issues. The European Parliament was forced to lobby in the margins of the negotiations, but was able to translate gains from daily EU policy-making into influence on provisions regarding its own institutional powers through the use of relatively moderate leadership tactics.

Chapter 6 looks at the ‘worst case’ scenario for the three EU institutions – the negotiation of the Treaty of Nice in the 2000 IGC. The central issues in the negotiations were the relatively clear-cut and politically sensitive institutional issues relating to Council vote re-weighting and the number of Commissioners. In these circumstances, while there was a high demand for leadership in order to broker a compromise, all three institutions were sidelined by Presidencies – with somewhat predictable results for the final Treaty of Nice. Despite these handicaps, both the Secretariat and Commission were able to exploit the few opportunities they had to provide leadership through the skilful use of low-profile strategies, whereas the EP reverted to its ineffectual strategy of shouting extreme positions from the sidelines.

Chapter 7 analyses the European Convention and the following IGC 2003–4 that negotiated and adopted the Constitutional Treaty. The chapter shows the importance of the shift of the real substantive treaty reform negotiations from the actual IGC to the preparatory phase – the Convention. This shift significantly affected the ability of EU institutions to gain influence. The Convention’s draft Constitutional Treaty was a more ambitious result than governments would have agreed upon themselves due to successful EP leadership within the Convention. As a core of governments led by Germany was then interested in adopting the Convention’s draft more or less ‘as is’ in the following IGC, the IGC itself was relegated to being a tidying-up exercise of the Convention’s text, with the exception of a handful of contentious institutional issues.

Chapter 8 investigates the negotiation of the fifth enlargement of the EU that led to the Eastern enlargement of the EU, focusing both upon the setting of the agenda prior to the opening of the negotiations, and then the formal negotiations from 1998 until their conclusion in the Copenhagen Summit in December 2002. In comparison to IGC negotiations on treaty reform, the Commission had a much more privileged position in the enlargement negotiations. What is particularly interesting is that the Commission chose to play a pragmatic and low-profile role in the enlargement, assisting governments and finding solutions for problems instead of exploiting its position to push its own agenda. The Commission played in many respects a role similar to the role of the Council Secretariat at its best in IGCs. The Commission facilitated the decision-making process, and without the leadership of the Commission it is highly probable that the process would have creaked to a stop, as no other actor could have lifted the burdens of the technical negotiations, the preparation of realistic draft common positions, and the coordination of the pre-accession aid programs.

The conclusions of the book discuss the empirical findings of the chapters. The basic conclusion is that EU institutions do matter. Outcomes of intergovernmental negotiations do not simply reflect the lowest common denominator, but when EU institutions succeed in providing leadership they are more ambitious and have a broader scope than otherwise would have been agreed. The cases showed first how the *possibilities* for influence through leadership for each of the EU institutions changed due to the changing contexts in the negotiations. Thereafter the chapter analyses the impact of the choice of leadership strategy. What strategies were most effective, and why? These conclusions are then discussed in relation to the existing academic debate. Finally, the conclusion debates the implications of the findings for the democratic deficit in the EU and point towards the future of leadership in the EU.

The object of study – intergovernmental negotiations in the EU

There are two main categories of intergovernmental negotiations in the EU: treaty revision and enlargement negotiations. The first category are intergovernmental conferences (IGCs) held to revise the Treaties. There are currently three major EU Treaties: the Treaty establishing the European Community; the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom); and the Treaty on European

Union. The fourth Treaty, the European Coal and Steel Community, expired in 2002 (see Church and Phinnemore, 2002, pp. 567–74). There are a series of minor treaties, including Accession Treaties.

No major IGCs were held from 1957 until 1985, although minor IGCs had been convened. In these minor IGCs the substantial negotiations took place within the Council. This was followed by a ceremonial IGC that was convened to adopt the final Treaty. Since 1985 the EU has convened six major IGCs where the negotiations took place within the IGC itself. In effect, IGCs are ‘constitutional conventions’, where history-making decisions are taken by governmental representatives from EU member states that alter the competences of the EU, its decision-making procedures, and the relative balance of power between both EU institutions and between the EU and its member states (Peterson and Bomberg, 1999).

IGCs are based upon Article 48 EU (ex Article N), which states that:

1. The government of any Member State or the Commission may submit to the Council proposals for the amendment of the Treaties on which the Union is founded.

If the Council, after consulting the Parliament and, where appropriate, the Commission, delivers an opinion in favour of calling a conference of representatives of the governments of the Member States, the conference shall be convened by the President of the Council for the purposes of determining by common accord the amendments to be made to those Treaties. The European Central Bank should also be consulted in the case of institutional changes in the monetary area.

The amendments shall enter into force after being ratified by all the Member States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.

IGCs are convened either by agreement in the Council under Article 48 EU, or by a binding legal commitment included in a treaty. A proposal to convene an IGC can come from either a member state or from the Commission. The decision to convene an IGC is taken by a simple majority vote in the Council.

There are no formal provisions for how the agenda for an IGC should be prepared, and in the past agendas have been prepared by specific committees, reflection groups, and ad hoc COREPER discussions. There are also no provisions in the Treaties regarding how IGCs are to be negotiated, but a set of norms has developed – the *acquis conferencielle*. IGCs are formally outside of the institutional

framework of the EU – they are in effect both international and inter-governmental negotiations between national representatives. But they do draw upon and involve EU institutions to varying degrees, as will be seen in the following chapters. IGCs are chaired by the member state holding the six-month rotating Presidency. The Presidency prepares and chairs all of the meetings and controls the drafting process of the single negotiating text.

IGCs since 1985 have been conducted at three or four different levels, with the exception of the 2003–4 IGC, where negotiations were officially only at the political levels of foreign ministers and heads of state and government levels. The four levels are:

- heads of state and government,
- foreign ministers,
- ambassadorial-level meetings within the Preparatory Group and
- technical meetings among ‘Friends of the Presidency’.

The highest level of the IGC is the heads of state or government meeting within the European Council. It is at this level that key deals are brokered and the final treaty is concluded. The next level is Foreign Ministers, who have the overall political responsibility for the IGC. But they are often sandwiched between two levels: lacking the informational skills to follow the lower-level discussions and lacking the political weight of the heads of state and government to strike key deals (McDonagh, 1998, p. 20). In the EMU IGC in 1990–1, the ministerial level negotiations were among Economic and Finance Ministers (ECOFIN).

The Preparatory Group level comprised representatives of foreign ministers. The group meets frequently during IGCs. Most of the IGC negotiations are dealt with at this level, with discussions focusing on detailed and technical questions in what is often characterized as a problem-solving environment. At the lowest level are the Friends of the Presidency, a forum that is used to prepare technical questions for the personal representatives. In the 1990–1 Political Union IGC, the Friends of the Presidency assisted the personal representatives by clarifying points and asking questions on key issues (Mazzucelli, 1997, pp. 61–2, 136). In the 1996–7 IGC this group was charged with discussing questions of simplifying the treaty and in the 2000 IGC the group discussed proposed changes to the EU’s judicial system.

The final outcome of an IGC negotiation is a treaty that revises or replaces the existing treaties. The final treaty must then be ratified by member states following upon their constitutional requirements.

Enlargement negotiations are negotiations conducted between the EU and candidate countries within an intergovernmental conference, as accession requires the revision of the treaties. Article 49 EU as revised by the Treaty of Amsterdam states:

Any European State which respects the principles set out in Article 6(1) may apply to become a member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members.

The conditions of admission and the adjustment to the Treaties on which the Union is founded which such admission entails shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional arrangements.

After the Commission presents a non-binding opinion on the preparedness of the candidates to the Council, the Council decides upon the principles and procedures to be used in the negotiations (Nugent, 2004; Avery, 2004). The fifth enlargement negotiations were split into two phases.

The first phase was a screening process, where the Commission conducted a detailed examination of the progress made by candidates in transposing and implementing the *acquis communautaire*, or body of EU legislation. The Commission then used this information to prepare draft EU common positions, or negotiating mandates on the terms of the accession, for the Council. The issues in the fifth enlargement negotiations were split up into 31 different chapters.

The substantive negotiations with a candidate state start after the Council has adopted a common position using unanimity. The common position is then delivered by the Presidency to the candidate, after which formal bilateral sessions are held between EU governments and the candidate government at either the heads of state and governments, ministerial or the ambassador level (Avery, 2004). These sessions are chaired by the government holding the Presidency, assisted by the Commission and Council Secretariat (see Chapter 8 for more).

After all of the chapters are closed, a final accession treaty is adopted by the European Council. The fifth enlargement negotiations were for example concluded at the Copenhagen Summit (see Ludlow,

2004a). The accession treaty contains the terms of accession and adjustments to the existing treaties, for example as regards voting weights in the Council (see Church and Phinnemore, 2002, pp. 592–606).

A note on leadership and influence

Leadership is defined in this book to mean broadly any action by one actor to guide or direct the behaviour of other actors towards a certain goal (Underdal, 1994, p. 178). By successfully providing leadership, this allows the leader to influence the final outcome. Therefore a short digression is necessary to detail how this book defines the concept of influence. While the concept of influence is central to political science, its definition is fiercely contested. I will first discuss the definition of influence used in this book and then briefly raise some of the significant methodological problems of measuring influence in actual negotiations.

What do I mean by influence? Influence is here defined as the successful use of leadership resources to change an outcome from what it otherwise would have been in the absence of the action. How then do we know influence when we see it? In order not to open the Pandora's Box of the debate on forms of power and influence too wide, there are two basic types of influence that will be used in this study.

First are the forms of influence that relate to Dahl's classic definitions of power and influence – two terms that he uses synonymously in his work. For Dahl, the analytical focus is observable events. Power/influence is defined as, 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B otherwise would not do (Dahl, 1957, pp. 202–3). However, what if actor A is able to limit the agenda itself to issues that are 'comparatively innocuous' to actor A (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, p. 948)? Actor A would therefore be able to gain influence over actor B through the use of non-decision-making, preventing certain issues from even being raised and thereby also changing the outcome.

Other theorists have further expanded upon these forms of power and influence. Lukes has pointed to a third form of power, where actor A is able to shape the very interests that actor B acts upon (Lukes, 1974). Therefore 'A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's [real, objective] interests' (p. 34). Others such as Digeser have gone even further, building upon the work of Foucault to analyse how actors A and B themselves are constructed as

subjects, and looking at the sources and effects of norms and values (Digeser, 1992).

However, there are both ontological and epistemological problems with using these additional dimensions of power/influence. At the ontological level, the underlying assumptions of this study are that actors are rational individual agents. By choosing an agency-oriented ontology, I thereby deny that structure determines actor behaviour as is argued by Lukes and Digeser. At the methodological level, I employ a positivistic epistemology that utilizes statements of intention by actors as indicators of their true preferences. In contrast, Lukes argues that we must investigate the real, objective interests of actors, and that stated interests are often the reflections of 'false consciousness'. But this opens up a epistemological Pandora's box, as it can be argued that theorists are always correct no matter what they meet in the real world, as any anomaly can be explained away by contending that the actor was acting based upon 'false consciousness' and not its true interests. Given this and numerous other methodological problems, this study will confine itself to analysing decision-making and non-decision-making.

Returning from this brief discussion of power and influence, how then can we measure the level of influence EU institutions have – that is, how do we know influence when we see it? As is well known, success often has many self-proclaimed fathers.

The simplest method is to measure the correlation between the preferences and proposals put forward by EU institutions and the negotiating outcomes. High levels of correlation would imply that the EU institution had a high level of influence. Yet this method is victim to the problem of anticipated reactions (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963, p. 635). If actor A anticipates what actor B's interests are and only submits proposals that it believes will be accepted by actor B, can we argue that actor A was influential in the negotiations when it was merely putting forward proposals that it knew that actor B would accept? If a Commission proposal merely anticipates what a winning coalition of member states would have accepted anyway, this would clearly *not* be an example of Commission influence over outcomes.

It is necessary to show that an EU institution undertook an observable action that changed the outcome from what it otherwise would have been in the absence of this action. To do this Moravcsik and Nicolaïdis suggest that we look for proposals that were both 'unique' and 'successful' (Moravcsik and Nicolaïdis, 1999, pp. 69–70). However, real-world negotiations are 'one-offs', making it impossible to know with certainty what would have happened if a given actor did not intervene at a given time in a negotiation.

One method to solve this problem is to use counterfactual analysis, attempting to use counterfactual arguments to explain why a high level of supranational influence occurred or did not occur in a given circumstance (Fearon, 1991). The argument used in this book will be basically ‘what would have plausibly happened had the EU institution not provided leadership in the given situation’? Would an agreement have been reached without the provision of leadership by the EU institution, and if so, in what manner would it have differed from the agreement that was actually reached? The most serious methodological problem with this type of argumentation is that we naturally cannot know with any certainty what might otherwise have happened (Fearon, 1991, p.173). Therefore we are forced to rely upon the quality of the counterfactual arguments, which can be improved if we base our counterfactual reasoning upon theories and regularities distinct from the hypotheses being tested (Fearon, 1991, pp. 176–7). In this case, what would rational actors in for example a given treaty reform negotiation have done if the Council Secretariat had not brokered a specific deal, based upon what we know from multilateral negotiation theories and rational choice institutionalism?

Can EU institutions be treated as unitary actors?

As an analytical simplification, EU institutions are treated in this book as unitary actors unless otherwise stated. The point of the book is to investigate whether EU institutions were able to provide leadership, and in this respect when institutions present a clear and coherent position vis-à-vis other actors in the negotiations, then the unitary actor assumption is acceptable (Pollack, 2003, pp. 36–7). March and Olsen even go so far as to state that the ‘claim of coherence is necessary in order to treat institutions as decision makers’ (March and Olsen, 1984, p. 738).

Naturally all three of the EU institutions had internal disagreements, and some of these disagreements did affect the choice and effectiveness of their leadership strategies. For example, during the Convention in 2002–3, the Commission had at times two external ‘faces’ in the negotiations (see Chapter 7). One was the relatively moderate and pragmatic face of the two Commission representatives in the negotiations. The second face was that of Commissioner Prodi and his aim of a much more ambitious step forward. The result of this split in the Commission came to a head in December 2002, where on the same day each of the two camps published a position paper, creating a situation where the Commission confusingly was speaking with two tongues. But in

general, the claim of coherence is justified, as both the Commission and the EP usually adopted a unified position that they then followed during the negotiations.

A note on the empirical material and sources

Finally a few words are in order about the materials and sources that will be employed in this book. All of the intergovernmental negotiations covered in this book took place behind closed doors, and what happened at the negotiating table was confidential. Therefore there is a substantial element of interpretation involved in analysing these secretive negotiation processes.

Primary sources are the main source of information on all of the negotiations covered. First and most importantly, the author has had access to national archives in Sweden and another member state. Secondly, over 50 interviews were undertaken with civil servants from national administrations, selected officials from the Commission, European Parliament, and Council Secretariat, together with several MEPs. The interviews were based upon a standardized questionnaire that was given to the interviewees prior to the interview, though the actual interviews were conducted with some flexibility, and time was spent on motivating interviewees to elaborate or clarify specific events in which it was expected that they were especially knowledgeable. The main focus of the interviews was upon gaining information that was otherwise unavailable about the conduct of the negotiations. The interviews are coded in the book in order to protect the confidentiality of interviewees. Another source of interview information was the archive of over 300 interviews conducted by a team led by Keith Middlemas in the period 1992 to 1994 for the 1995 book *Orchestrating Europe: The Informal Politics of European Union, 1973–1995*. The transcripts of these interviews are deposited at the Sussex European Institute in Brighton, where I consulted them in April 2002.

A significant methodological problem with using interviews as a source is that there are many sources of bias. First, there is the natural tendency for actors to forget details of events over time, or to adapt their recollections to other accounts of the events. Regarding tendencies in the responses, it was expected that national civil servants would have certain incentives to stress the ‘rational’, state-based character of IGC negotiations, thereby also discounting the role of EU institutions. Somewhat surprisingly therefore, it was often among national civil servants that I found the most frank accounts of Council Secretariat influence in the negotiations.

Further, it was also expected, perhaps counter-intuitively, that officials in EU institutions would have incentives in *downplaying* their own influence. It had been evident that the very high-profile strategy by Delors in the late 1980s and early 1990s had been counterproductive, giving the Commission incentives to shift to a lower profile public role – but this does not mean that the Commission had given up attempting to gain influence. Given this, it is therefore not surprising that Delors himself in an interview with Moravcsik downplayed his own role in the 1990–91 EMU IGC (Moravcsik, 1999a, p. 291).

Another significant problem with interviews of civil servants is the problem of anonymity, which makes replicability difficult. In this study I have attempted as far as possible to corroborate findings using publicly available sources of information.

Other primary sources utilized in this study include the proposals put forward in the IGCs by member states and EU institutions, the reports, articles and opinions published before and during the negotiations, and transcripts of speeches by national politicians and Commission officials.

Secondary sources were also consulted in this study. Surprisingly, much of the literature on European integration merely relies upon ‘soft’ secondary sources such as newspapers. This is highly problematic, as journalists often do not (or cannot) empirically verify the validity of the public statements of politicians and civil servants. Therefore when using these types of sources, ‘accurate statements of fact coexist alongside the most casual of observations and the most opportunistically partisan of *ex post* justifications. National decision-makers often express one position in public and the opposite in private . . . The result? One can find abundant support for *any* plausible conjecture about the causes of European integration’ (Moravcsik, 1998, p. 11).

To take account of this, this study draws upon ‘hard’ secondary sources, meaning accounts that meet the highest methodological standards. For example, the account in this study of the negotiation of the EMU IGC draws upon the authoritative account of the negotiations by Dyson and Featherstone (1999). This work is based upon a series of 440 interviews conducted by the authors, who also had access to the negotiating minutes of the IGC meetings.