



**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
Institute of Political Studies  
Department of Political Science

**Master's Thesis**

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**Sebastian Kiehl**

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Institute of Political Studies

Department of Political Science

**Economic Spillover of Europeanization:  
A Permissible Attack on Realism?**

Master's thesis

Author:	<b>Sebastian Kiehl</b>
Study programme:	International Economics and Political Studies
Supervisor:	Professor Jan Hornát, PhD.
Year of the defense:	2023

## **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

**In Prague on 31 July, 2023**

**Sebastian Kiehl**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Kiehl', written in a cursive style.

## **Bibliographic note**

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# Master Thesis Proposal

Institute of Political Studies, IEPS programme  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Charles University in Prague



Date: 12.19.21

<b>Author:</b>	<b>Sebastian Kiehl</b>	Supervisor:	Prof. Jan Hornat, Ph.D
E-mail:	82823587@fsv.cuni.cz	E-mail:	jan.hornat@fsv.cuni.cz
Phone:	0049 1762333 8374	Phone:	00420721530968
Specialization	IEPS	Defense	September 2022
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## Proposed Topic:

**Economic spill-over of Europeanization: A permissible attack on realism?**

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**5 Keywords:** European Union, Democratization, Multilateral spillover effect, Realism, Europeanization

## Topic characteristics / Research Question(s):

The general research question to be answered is going to be: Does the multilateral spillover effect justify the deliberate disregard for individual sovereignty as anchored within a countries realistic approach?

For the European Union to enlarge its territory requires member-states to willingly and deliberately forgo components of their sovereignty. While this contradicts with any realistic political approach, countries agree to do so in order to gain access to the EU's network. The EU allows member states access to different programs that allow countries to create / overhaul their individual institutions. Member states align their political and social structures with the overall vision of the European Union. While the European Union states that their key incentive behind their democratization and Europeanization efforts is the promotion of liberty, equality, and solidarity, it fails to specifically and structural outlines the essence of what democracy is and what justifies their 'invasion' of another country's sovereignty. This thesis will argue that a key motive of the EU's democratization efforts as well as the willingness of member states to deliberately forgo their individual sovereignty is tied to the financial spillover effect of joining the EU. While the EU gains another 'partner' it also gains a new market and as such can grow its global market presence. The member country on the other side gains access to previously unprecedented markets and treaties which allows these countries to further develop and enhance their economy. As such for both sides of this 'democratization' is much less the promotion of universal human rights or due to shared ideologies, as argued by many authors, but rather and solely of economic nature. In order to study and prove this research question, I will be describing the different understandings of realism (as defined by the likes of Machiavelli, Mogenthau, Waltz) to outline the significance of sovereignty for countries. Another central part of the paper will be a comprehensive macro-economic analysis to outline the development of the EU as a whole as well as a set of individual countries to show economic growth on both sides. Here I will be highlighting economic and market development of before and after joining the European Union. For the quantitative part of my research, I will be relying of economic analyses of countries provided by the World Bank, the European Union, and OECD to create an applicable dataset that depicts key economic identifiers, such as GDP, Foreign Direct Investments, and others.

**Working hypotheses:**

1. By joining the EU, countries deliberately forgo their sovereignty and hence oppose their realistic nature
2. Classical researchers' root cause of Europeanization is based on the promotion of democratic ideologies
3. Spillover effect is occurring and economically significant
4. The EU increase in its territory is economically significant

**Methodology:**

The methodology is split into two parts. For the theoretical part that outlines the key aspects of realism I will be relying on critical literature review related to key traditional researchers, such as Waltz and Morgenthau but will also analyze some opposing reviews to create an overall view of realism and how it relates to individual countries. For the second part of the thesis, where I am employing macroeconomic analysis, I will rely on meta-analysis, which is a quantitative literature review process. Meta-analysis is a method of combining the results of numerous studies that look at the same phenomenon and use the same or similar metrics.

**Outline:**

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical Background and literature review
3. Traditional IR Theory
  - a. Realism
  - b. Other prevalent theories
4. EU's Europeanization and democratization approach
5. Analysis of the spillover effect
  - a. Meta Analysis of the EU as a whole
  - b. Meta Analysis of a selected set of countries
  - c. Discussion and Comparison of the Results
6. Conclusion
7. Bibliography

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## **Abstract**

This master thesis's main hypothesis, is attempting to answer if the economic spillover effect of the European Union is a strong enough motive for countries to abandon their traditional realist behavior. In order to analyze and ultimately answer the question, the author employs a combination of qualitative research for the theoretical aspect and a quantitative comparative economic analysis. The qualitative research delves into the motivations and expectation of people prior to joining the EU, compared to after joining the EU. The comparative study attempts to highlight the positive economic spillover from EU membership, revealing how these economic benefits may have altered the nations perception of sovereignty and international relations. The latter part of the thesis is relying on quantitative data from six countries in total, spread evenly between the EU enlargement of 1995 and the one in 2004.

The findings do indicate that while the general motivation behind EU membership does include an economic driver. This is also underlined by the comparative case study, which highlights different levels of positive economic developments for the above-mentioned countries, indicating that the economic spillover effect may as well be a valid excuse for countries to abandon their realist mentality and resort to unilateral thinking.

The study contributes to our understanding and illuminates how in the contemporary world dynamics, potential economic benefits do encourage a cooperative and interdependent attitude towards foreign relations. Which, furthermore, helps our understanding of the evolving dynamics between economic integration and realist philosophy. It highlights the needs for countries, who wish to remain wealthy, powerful, and influential, need to embrace a multilateral approach. Finally, the results indicate how the significance of offensive realism is diminished, in favor for a more cooperative and mutually beneficial framework as the European Union.

**Keywords:** *Realism, European Union, Economic Spillover Effect, Multilateralism, Democracy, Europeanization*

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**List of Abbreviations**

EAEC	European Atomic Energy Community
EC	European Community
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
E.U	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IO	International Organization
IR	International Relations

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*Unity!* Unity is such an omnipresent phrase/word. No matter in what circumstance or relation, anyone has encountered this term and what it represents. Nevertheless, it is challenging for anyone to define the term in a way that embraces and encompasses all of its true interpretations and applications.

Let's take a glance at one of the most renowned philosophers, Socrates, who is often perceived not only as the founding father of Western philosophy but also its cornerstone. As explained by Rattinin (2019), Socrates was and one of the “most enigmatic figures of ancient history”.

His viewpoint on unity can be traced back to his stance on virtues. During their famous dialogues, Protagoras explains that after being initiated by Socrates, he sees the five individual virtues (piety, courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom) as components of a unified whole. Upon further inquiry of Socrates, Protagoras proclaims that he believes the individual virtues all different components that while they may appear to be distinct and unique, they do compose the full face, when put together (Clark 2015, p. 446 – 447; Brickhouse and Smith 1997). Therefore, with this understanding, unity is an attribute of an entity that is pooled within itself yet split from others. Hence, being unified implies being one, despite individual disparities. We, as humans, accept this rather straightforward definition of unity<sup>1</sup>. And honestly speaking, it would probably warrant multiple separate academic papers, just to delve into and analyze the different possibilities to define unity. This signifies that the true essence of unity is complex and demanding to explain and clarify.

However, any one of would agree that unity, or more precisely being united, is can be consequential to success. As stated by Abraham Lincoln so famously, “A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free.” (Lincoln 1858). With this renowned speech, Lincoln rallied and urged his fellow politicians to unite and find common ground. They were to put their differences and disagreements aside and join together to form a united front. This pattern of unity and setting aside differences is not an uncommon occurrence, especially in the United States, where the

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<sup>1</sup> This definition is a rather simplified version which holds for this paper. The author acknowledges that the general definition of unity can be reinterpreted by different people and different people hold another understanding as to what unity and being unified is all about.

initial motto was *E Pluribus Unum* (Out of many, one), signifying the unification of thirteen individual colonies to form a unified (united) state.

States cannot thrive without unity. Every successful and prosperous state or nation is built on the foundation of unity. This can be seen in one of the most influential and far-reaching empires in history - Rome. Rome, formerly a little town in Latium, expanded remarkably in terms of its territory and the empire it acquired. The ability of the empire's leaders to unite and integrate the various populations under its dominion contributed to its unparalleled longevity. While the Romans allowed their citizens to maintain and preserve their unique identities and customs, the empire's unity was marked by the creation of shared traditions, languages, history, and (religious) beliefs. One may argue that the empire's unity was a successful construct based on unifying and merging various people and their traditions by offering them a Roman lifestyle as an additional layer on top of their existing one (Dijkstra, van Poppel and Sloopjes 2015).

Much closer to our current timeline, yet still sharing similarities with above mentioned concept, stands the construct upon which the European Union (EU) has been built. Much like the Roman empire but with perhaps less cohesiveness, the EU is attempting to promote a set of standards and communal customs that bring together countries under a European “nation/identity”. It not only forges connections between said people from various different countries and background, the EU goes a step further in establishing a space to unites them into a multilateral framework.

However, as this paper will attempt to argue, the pursuit of this multilaterilism will inevitably lead to a compromise on a country's sovereignty. While the Roman empire imposed its shared set of customs using brute force and military supremacy, the European Union is relying far less aggressive and more subtle means. . This paper intends to demonstrate that while nations are steered by a realist understanding and motivation, they are willing to forgo parts of their political and philosophical stance (aspects that make them unique) for economic advantages. This argument will highlight that by joining and aligning with the European Union, countries will reap the benefits of a economic spillover effect that is so beneficial that they are willing to cede parts of their sovereign political framework and ultimately surrender their ideology. Which, ultimately shows that the measurable and tangible economic benefits of the spillover effect represent a valid and permissible attack on nations initial realist behavior.

To accomplish that, the second chapter of this paper will introduce and explain four major political theories and their relevance to a nation’s willingness to unify and cooperate with other nations. Chapter three will the detail how people perceive this cooperation within the Union. The chapter looks into the expectations and perceptions of people prior, as well as

after joining the European Union. Chapter four presents a set of economic indicators that help to show the aforementioned economic spillover effect, experienced by member countries. Ultimately, chapter 5 will draw from the insights of chapter 4 to summarize and outline the discoveries, ultimately determining whether the economic spillover effect is impactful enough to pose a permissible attack to a nation's realistic behavior<sup>2</sup>.

## 1.1 Literature Review

To delve deeper into the motivations for EU membership, as hinted throughout this paper, it is crucial to compare how these motives compare to current academic literature. This segment will review some scholarly literature on Europeanization and other international organizations<sup>3</sup> (IO) and their reasons for entering and cooperating within a unified framework and structure.

Historically, as mentioned earlier when referring to the Roman empire, unification and cooperation were achieved through brute force. The alignment of nations and people around a unified belief system was achieved through coercion. Today, however, most countries worldwide have chosen to collaborate, pool resources, and unite for a common purpose “There are more than 300 intergovernmental organizations worldwide” (Evers 2012). The proliferation of international organizations, the growth of treaty agreements among nations, and the strengthening of regional integration efforts in Europe and other regions are all formal signs of institutionalization of international politics over time (Martin and Simmons, *International Organizations and Institutions* 2002, p. 326). Ever since the establishment of the League of Nations, a concept inspired by Woodrow Wilson's *Fourteen Points* following World War I, IOs have become a pivotal part of international relations.<sup>4</sup> Many scholars and researchers

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<sup>2</sup> Definition of realism as used throughout this paper will be done in chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this paper, international institutions or organizations are defined as a group of states / organizations that adhere to a set of common rules, that stipulate how states should act, cooperate, and compete. They specify what constitutes acceptable state behavior and what constitutes inappropriate behavior. According to many eminent theorists, these rules, which are negotiated by nations, involve the mutual acceptance of higher norms. These laws are normally codified in international accords and are frequently implemented by independent bodies with their own staff and resources. (Mearsheimer, *The False Promise of International Institutions* 8-9; North and Thomas 1994)

<sup>4</sup> President Wilson laid out 14 objectives for world peace in this January 8, 1918, speech on War Aims and Peace Terms, which would be utilized in post-World War I peace negotiations. The Treaty of Versailles included Wilson's capstone point, which called for a world organization to guarantee some form of collective security. The League of Nations would later be named after this organization. (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration).

would argue that the creation of the League of Nations pioneered the concept of IOs and ultimately gave way to the academic field of international relations.

Let's begin this segment with an unchallenged fact; nations join IOs to for some form of gain. There must be an advantageous aspect to joining ; otherwise, it would not be logical for a country to join an IO willingly. Much of the scholarly study done on this topic emphasizes that states enter these agreements to aid in resolving coordination issues, persuade third parties to alter policies, and ensure the enforcement of agreements (Martin 1994). Unsurprisingly, international institutions have gained significant within international political economics and security studies. As traditional work describes, the objective of IOs it to seek "common or converging national interests of the member nations." For the vast bulk of this literature, the fundamental goal of IOs is to handle transnational disputes that cannot be resolved domestically (Abbott and Snidal 1998; Archer; Feld and Jordan 1992). Moreover, institutionalists<sup>5</sup> often see institutions as a powerful mechanism for maintaining and enforcing stability by steering states away from war and promoting peace (Mearsheimer, *The False Promise of International Institutions* 1994, p. 6).

Especially when considering the EU as an international institution, the peace, as mentioned in Mearsheimer's work, becomes an integral aspect of the characterization and reason of an international institution. As shown by Harold K. Jacobson and his colleagues, who associate IOs with democracy, and consequently, with peace. Their research indicates that democratic countries are more willing to join IOs (Jacobson, Reisinger and Mathers 1986). This supports the ideology of the European Union that leverages its influence to disseminate democracy throughout the European continent. Keeping in line with this ideology, a country's willingness to join the EU is rooted in its aspiration to be "more" democratic and, therefore, more peaceful:

"The functioning of the EU is founded on representative democracy. A European citizen automatically enjoys political rights. Every adult EU citizen has the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in elections to the European Parliament. EU citizens have the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in their country of residence or in their country of origin" (European Commission (7) 2022).

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<sup>5</sup> Institutionalism is the theory where institutions are a vital part in causing and preserving order and stability. They are a central part of the cause of peace (Mearsheimer, *The False Promise of International Institutions* 1994).



By joining the EU, countries must upgrade their internal political systems if they have not already done so. The conditionality of entering the EU, conditioned on democratic principles, was officially and legally instituted in 1993 with the establishment of EU accession criteria, often known as the Copenhagen criteria. Conditioning entry into the EU, numerous European countries could improve their political systems quicker and get closer to democracy (Democratic Progress Report 2016). Hence, the mutual promotion of democracy combined with the aforementioned economic factors, could pose a valid reason of countries' willingness to join the bloc.

However, this paper argues that while democracy undeniably holds quite an importance and trivial position, it is a rather non-quantifiable benefit. This case particularly pertains to such member nations that have long had a democratic political system, even before joining the EU. As such, these nations may find it challenging to clearly determine how their political status has become even more democratic<sup>6</sup>. However, nations who were less democratic in the past, such as former members of the Soviet Union who eventually joined the EU, can undoubtedly see some level of improvement in their democratic political environment and as such can see improvement in their societal well-being and overall welfare. As indicated by research within this field, democratic development in a country has positive effects on the welfare of said country<sup>7</sup>. This could be an indication that even for less democratic countries, joining the EU and inevitably upgrading their political system, is motivated by the expectation of a rise in welfare, both socially and economically.

Which could be an indication, going back to the key argument of this paper, that the primary inclination of countries is mutual collaboration based on economic gains. This notion of synergy is loosely founded and based on the terms *neo-functionalism* and *intergovernmentalism*, which are often used when explaining Europeanization<sup>8</sup>.

Different scholars employ these two theories to potentially explain possible reasons behind European integration. Neofunctionalism, rooted in the ideas of democratic pluralism<sup>9</sup>,

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<sup>6</sup> This also being the case that while there are organizations measuring democracy (freedomhouse or IDEA), democracy is easier comparable amongst more and less democratic states. However, democracy is harder to measure and less tangible, so not easily quantifiable.

<sup>7</sup> See (Mungar and Cramer; Orviska, Caplanova and Hudson 2021; Orviska, Caplanova and Hudson 2014))

<sup>8</sup> The term refers to the European Union's (EU) mutual influence on its member states, as well as EU-driven interactions within and between member states and the EU's impact on EU candidate nations. It highlights the widening of the scope of the national citizens' economic and political activities which are a direct result of the EU (Dosenroode; Medrano)

<sup>9</sup> Pluralism refers to the coexistence of multiple interests' groups. A multitude of different governments, with their own ideologies and interest coexist within a larger more complex system (Dahl; Burtenshaw; Georg)

upholds the idea that governments can be divided into multiple different groups. Rather than assuming states' objectives as classical realists do, neo functionalists perceive the state as an arena in which social actors work in collectively to achieve their goals (Bergmann; Hooghe and Marks 2019). These actors can redefine their values, thus reconsidering their preferences and, ultimately, their goals (Haas 2001, p. 23). Therefore, cooperation within supranational institutions / entities (like the EU) is preferred, as such supranational institutions hold greater potential in achieving the individual groups' interests. Consequently, Europeanization comes as a response to economies of scale. While neo functionalism views integration as the result of societal actors' cooperation and competition, intergovernmentalism considers the unification of European nations as the product of cooperation and competition of national governments (Hooghe and Marks 2019, p. 1114-1115).

Similar to the two aforementioned terms, this paper's author believes that democracy, whilst being a plausible reason, does not solely warrant a countries willingness to cooperate and as a result sacrifice certain aspects of their sovereignty; arguing that the economic benefits resulting of the spillover effect are the key reason that let countries abandon their realistic beliefs.

## **1.2 Methodology**

The methodology for this master's thesis consists of two parts: qualitative literature analysis and an comparative economic study. These components will be carried out in different stages but will work collectively to answer the central research question: To what extend can the economic spillover effect of joining the EU, be considered a justifiable challenge to the realistic mindset of nations.? Additionally, this research will seek to determine whether an economic spillover effect actually exists and to what extend individuals perceive the benefits of the European Union and the spillover effect. .

Recognizing that "A thorough, sophisticated literature review is the foundation and inspiration for substantial, useful research," the first part of the methodology, qualitative literature analysis, acts as the thesis's backbone. Essentially this part build the theoretical backbone on which the practical comparative analysis will be added on to. The theoretical part has the goal to introduce the essential terms, such as realism and showing its differences and similarities to other often used political ideologies. "Such [exhaustive], detailed reviews are required by the complicated nature of research" (Boote and Beile 2005).

This section explores a variety of scholarly publications that have been published in both print and digital formats using a thorough and holistic approach. This broad base of scholarly publications is aimed at understanding both the concept of realism, compared to other political ideologies, as well as economic spillover effect.

In the methodical and reiterative process of a literature review, sources are not only read but also evaluated, compared, and combined. It begins with a wide scope to gather as much relevant data as possible, and then gradually narrowing it down to fit with the particular research question.

Following the comprehensive literature review, a more detailed content analysis will be used. This involves sorting texts according to recurring themes, important ideas, and theoretical ideas. The aim here is to identify common insights and revelations from the literature that directly address the research question. By sticking to this procedure, the literature review will be methodical, transparent, and replicable, which will increase the validity of the conclusions reached.

The primary focus will be on the scientific understanding of the four prominent approaches to political theory and international relations theory: Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, and Marxism. As these theories have a significant role in shaping international relations and economic cooperation<sup>10</sup>, a comprehensive understanding of them is necessary to provide context to the research question and hypothesis. This is essential to properly being able to differentiate realism to the other political theories, showing its key identifiers in regards to collaboration, unification, and multilateralism within a supranational system.

Initially, the research will adopt a holistic approach, elaborating each of these theories in detail and their respective perception on multilateralism and sovereignty - two concepts central to understanding the EU's economic spillover effect and potential challenges to realism. Moreover, the idea of sovereignty, which is a central aspect of realism, will be reviewed in the light of the EU's supranational authority and potential spillover effects.

This comprehensive review will help create a theoretical agenda, through which the economic spillover of the European Union and its effects on realism, along with the other political methodologies, can be analyzed.

This introduces the second part of the thesis. While the first one aims to build a theoretical understanding of realism and related political ideologies and how they each perceive membership in the union, the second part aims to showcase the existence of the economic

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<sup>10</sup> See (Snyder; Baylis, Smith and Owens)

spillover of joining the EU. Furthermore, in this section of the thesis, the author will attempt to showcase to what extent the spillover effect can be felt by member states. This is essential, as the main part of the thesis argues that the economic spillover effect may be a good reason for countries to ignore their usual realistic behavior. This section will be predominantly led by economic comparative case studies that will attempt to showcase the economic development of pre-defined countries with different background. a set of economic identifiers.

The reason behind the research instrument is based on the consent of other social scientists. As explained by Abadie, Diamon, and Hainmueller (2010), social scientists frequently how particular events (in this case EU membership) affects entities (nations) on a larger scale. (p. 493).

The comparative case study heuristic, as proclaimed by Joseph Maxwell, relies on a system which he calls process orientation. In terms of people, circumstances, events, and the processes that link them, process approaches "tend to see the world in terms of people, situations, events, and the processes that connect these; explanation is based on an analysis of how some situations and events influence others" (2013, p. 29; Bartlett and Vavrus 2017). They "tend to ask how x contributes to the cause of y, what the mechanism is linking x and y" (2013, p. 31). In this thesis variabel x is the moment a countries joins the European Union and variable y would be the transformation in one of the economic indicators. In order to properly compare the nations base on the variables, such as GNI, unemplyment rate, and inflation, it is important to look at the development pre and after joining the EU. This way it will be possible to indicate how each variable has chnaged once the country has joined the EU, this should indicate a potential economic spillover effect. Of cours, it is important to note that there could be other factors that could have a positive impact on the aforementioned identifiers.

## Chapter 2

### Key Political Theories

As described above, the initial part of this chapter begins with an examination of the four major political ideologies that have gained academic acceptance: Marxism, Liberalism, Constructivism, and Realism. Understanding these theoretical foundations is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of international relations, particularly regarding the nature of unity and collaboration amongst different nations. This section of the thesis will concentrate on creating a common definition of each political theory, defining its core concepts, and examining how these concepts could affect and explain how a country operates abroad. While it is critical to highlight that this paper's central theme is surrounding realism, it is essential to have a look at the other theories as well. In order to show the particularities of realism and its approach to multilateralism, sovereignty, and international organizations, it is pivotal to highlight the similarities and differences to the other theories. All of which serves as further reference to be used throughout this thesis.

As the core idea of this thesis, the investigation into realism will initiate this chapter. Realism, a leading ideology in international relations, is predicated on the premise that governments are the main actors and are largely motivated by self-interest and the power preservation. We will thoroughly examine how this theory interprets the creation of a multilateral supranational entity like the European Union.

Next up, the chapter will continue with the introduction and explanation of liberalism. A philosophy that argues can be interpreted differently, once from a plain philosophical understanding and secondly from an international relations perspective. However, the fundamental understanding, contrary to realism, is centered around individual liberty, collaboration and the pursuit of peace and prosperity.

A third theory, that could indicate the creation of a supranational union such as the EU, is the constructivist school of thought. Unlike realism and liberalism, which have a materialist viewpoint, constructivists maintain that mutual ideas, essentially shape human relations.

Lastly, this chapter will conclude with the investigation of Marxism. This theory serves as a critique of capitalism and the class struggle. Just like the previous theories, Marxism does have thoughts on multilateralism and global cooperation, which can also be interpreted into the EU

## 2.1 Theoretical overview of Realism

Before diving into a deep study of realism, it is essential to set aside any preconceived ideas of a "monolithic theory of realism" (Dunne and Schmidt 2014, p. 103). Recognizing that realism, like any notable theoretical construct, is not a static idea, but rather a dynamic field of study filled with multiple different viewpoints and perspectives and interpretations. This segment will, therefore, aim to reveal and investigate these various viewpoints surrounding realism. The goal is to blend these various perspectives to form a detailed understanding of realism that will be uniformly applied throughout this paper.

Realism, as a political theory, has a rich and long-standing history, demonstrating significant development over the years. Instead of considering it a single theory, as adequately summarized by Mark Pollack (2011), Realism can be understood as a "family of theories" (p. 3). Its key ideas and principles have been redefined and expanded over the years. As noted by Stephen Walt in his 2002 publication, realism traces a distinguished heritage, which spans across centuries. Notable thinkers and proponents include Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Friedrich Meineke, Carr, and Morgenthau. Each of these scholars has added depth and variety to the realist tradition, enhancing its richness and diversity (Walt 2002).

Thucydides' key works, especially his narrative of the Peloponnesian War, provide quite some foundation for the realistic school of thought. This colossal clash between the ancient city-states of Athens and Sparta served as an initial testing ground for realism's basic ideologies. With his depiction of this iconic battle, Thucydides raised several persistent issues in global politics, such as the security dilemma and the concept of balance of power. This imbalance of power, which Thucydides argued fosters a climate of peace, essentially triggered the conflict. Athens's rising power alarmed Sparta, causing it to up their defenses. Athens, on the other hand, was compelled to fight and engage Sparta to preserve the expansion of its empire (Dunne and Schmidt 2014, p. 104).

The Peloponnesian is an exemplary case for the early recognition of the complex relationship between power dynamics and state behavior. This scenario perfectly illustrates fundamental doctrines of realism: a disturbance in the balance of power can quickly incite conflict and war, while maintaining the balance of power inevitably maintains peace. Thucydides' account solidifies its status as a cornerstone of realist theory by highlighting the importance of maintaining the balance of power and its crucial role in influencing the behavior of political actors. In order to maintain peace, there needs to be order.

There is a fascinating correlations between Thucydides' detailed narrative of the Athens-Sparta conflict and some of the later philosophical ideas introduced by Thomas Hobbes. According to Richard Schlatter (1945), Hobbes' philosophical career was greatly influenced and shaped by Thucydides' writings. Schlatter argues that Hobbes' academic career began with the translation of Thucydides' works, which marked his first significant intellectual accomplishment (Schlatter 350). Hobbes' key work, "Leviathan," which Rossi (2010) recognizes as a fundamental source in the realism political tradition, displays Thucydides' influence.

As proposed by Dunne and Schmidt (2014), the above mentioned order is a inherent desire by humans. It frequently takes the form of a forceful pursuit of belonging (p. 104). This forceful attempt to belong essentially ignites a power struggle. Both Thucydides and Hobbes primarily attribute this violent conflict to innate aspects of human behavior, which is a key characteristic of classical realism.

Structural realists, on the other hand, refocus their emphasis onto the organizational makeup of states and institutions. They argue that instead of human nature, the center of chaos and discord is rooted within the structural elements of states and institutions. They contend that the power struggle is due to the absence of a supreme authority that governs individual states (Dunne and Schmidt 2014, p. 104). This focus on power distribution within the international system as the primary factor of global politics results in two closely related yet distinct strands of thought- *offensive realism* and *defensive realism*. Each idea provides a distinct perspective on the startegies used by states in their ceaseless pursuit for security, safety and survival within the anarchic international order.

### **2.1.1 Offensive Realism**

Within offensive realism, "the absence of a worldwide government or universal sovereign [,] provides strong incentives for expansion" (Taliaferro 2001, p. 128; Dunne and Schmidt 2014, p. 105). States aim to increase their power relative to other states in order to guarantee their own survival. States adopt expansionist policies when its beneficial. This involves opportunistic expansion, unilateral diplomacy, build up of their military power, and protective foreign economic policies (Mearsheimer, Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War 1990).

It is unlikely, that the great powers are satisfied with the current balance of ; they are often driven to alter the power equilibrium in their favor. They are constantly looking to remodify the equilibirum and are ready to employ force if it means altering the balance of

power to their benefit at a reasonable cost. Due to their relentless desire for supremacy, great powers are inclined to look for and exploit any opportunity to reshape the balance of power to their benefit. In simpler terms, while a great power nation is prepared to initiate an attack, it is also ready to thwart any rival nation attempting to diminish its power. that wish to overthrow it at the expense of other countries. Thus, a great power is prepared to fight in order to preserve safeguard its status quo in the power equilibrium, while simultaneously being tily tilt the power scale to reap the benefits (Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics* 2001).

As such, it is hardly suprising that proponents of offensive realism are skeptical of IOs and international institutions as a whole, considering them as a “reflection of the distribution of power” (Mearsheimer, *The False Promise of International Institutions* 1994, p. 7). While realists do not dispute that negotiated processes can likely result in the formation of international regimes, they view these orders as a form of collusion between oligopolistic actors to further their own perceived interests at the expense of others, i.e. those states considered outside the exclusive *Great Power* club or international “high society” (Schweller and Priess 1997, p.8).

Because realists tend to disregard parts of international relations that are not the “real stuff”, they argue that international cooperation is only meaningful when it benefits states (Steans, Pettiford and Diez 2010, p. 65). Therefore, as argued by proponents of offensive realisms and followers of Mearsheimer, international institutions and IOs alike, are primarily a tool of the powerful and dominant countries to expamd and exert their influence over weaker nations.

A case in point of offensive realism’s thinking on IOs is provided when looking at NATO. The formation of NATO undoubtably played a substantial role in the West’s triumph in the Cold War and the prevention of World War III. However, NATO was and still does symbolize the bipolar power dynamics that dominated Europe during the Cold War. In fact it was this dynamic, not NATO itself, that was essentially vital for the preservation of continental stability. NATO, essentially operated as an American instrument for controlling power in Europe in the face of Soviet threat. With the fall of the Soviet Union, NATO needs to either disband or reorganize itself in line with the new power dynamics in Europe (Mearsheimer, *The False Promise of International Institutions* 1994, p. 14)

In conclusion, while offensive realists acknowledge the existence and particular roles of international institutions, they often view their contribution to global stability with cynicism. They accept these institutions’ presence in the global political system, but they often question their ability to maintain law and order. Moreover, offensive realists argue that rather than



effectively altering the political playing field, these institutions reflect existing power dynamics. They maintain that these institutions' norms and procedures, far from being impartial, generally favor the powerful.

Lastly, offensive realists argue that there are inherent limitations to how effectively international institutions can address states' basic security concerns. They see international politics as a self-help system marked by competition and conflict and claim that states should rely more on their own resources and capabilities than on international institutions for survival.

Therefore, although offensive realists acknowledge the existence and role of IOs, they do so a pinch of salt, as they these institutions serve as a tool for the powerful countries to dominate and subjugate the weaker nations that as a reliable stabilizer of political stability.

### 2.1.2 Defensive Realism

While offensive realists perceive security as a scarce good, which they need to safeguard, defensive realists, on the other hand consider security to be more accessible, and even abundant. As explained by one of the theory's main advocate, Kenneth Waltz, the anarchy of international systems does not push states to pursue offensive strategies and become power hungry. Instead, the anarchical system prompts governments to adopts defensive and calculated actions. That being said, states are not inherently hostile and seek conflict and increase their dominace over others; instead, they strive to maintain their current position in the system (Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* 1979, p. 126-127). Governments that want to dominate the international system would face resistance from those that want to keep the status quo, thereby ensuring a balance of power. Attempts at hegemony, according to defensive realists, is fruitless and can actually weaken state, decreasing its security due to the potential of protective reaction and opposition of the other states. .

They challenge the offensive realist notion that states tend to act belligerent and desire to extend their influence . Rather, states prefer to preserve their position in order to protect their own security. As described by Dunne and Schmidt (2014), state's primary goal is to ensure and guarantee their own security, making belligerent actions counterproductive. Hence, contrary to offensive realist's opinion, making states security maximisers rather than power maximisers (p. 105).

Much like its offensive counterpart, however defensive realism, provides insights about collaboration and engagement with IOs. They argue , similar to the offensive stance, that collaboration through IOs poses its own set of risks. Governments enter in cooperative

agreements because they are inevitably steered towards achieving their own individual goals and acting on their self-interests. Since each country chases their own specific individual goals and is attempting to satisfy their own self-interest, the system is filled with uncertainty.

Jeffrey Taliaferro (2001) highlights this uncertainty inherent in things such as war or arms races. Failing such competitive ventures can have substantial consequences on a nation's security. Therefore, defensive realists, while having reservations and being cautious, adopt a more perceptive attitude towards collaboration, given its potential to enhance security. "States cannot be certain of the outcome of an arms race or war beforehand and losing such a competition can jeopardize a state's security" (Taliaferro 2001, p. 138).

This delicate tension between individuals and collective interests, and the trade-off between immediate and long term goals is best illustrated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'stag-hunt' parable<sup>11</sup> In the competitive landscape of international politics, the pursuit of self-interest often hinders the provision of common goods like security or free trade. Nonetheless, the principle of comparative advantage suggests that unrestricted international trade in goods and services would make all participating states wealthier (Dunne and Schmidt 2014).

States are frequently faced with having to deal with challenges in this complex environment that can only be addressed through cooperation. By participating in supranational regimes and IOs, nations can facilitate cooperation by disseminating mutually beneficial information. The impact of IOs is amplified as their principles, norms, regulations, and decision-making procedures apply to a wide range of situations and scenarios, not just a single one. .

Furthermore, as regimes are often interconnected and nested within larger international principles and standards, violating certain agreements might prevent a state from achieving other objectives (Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger 1996, p.184-186; R. O. Keohane 2007).

Defensive realists adopt a more appeasing approach, neatly summarized by Charles Glaser (1995) as follows:

"Realism properly understood predicts that, under a wide range of conditions, adversaries can best achieve their security goals through cooperative policies, not competitive ones, and should, therefore, choose cooperation when these conditions prevail".

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<sup>11</sup>See (Waltz, Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis 167-168)

This statement highlights a fundamental principle of defensive realism: under the right circumstances, collaboration, not competition, is the best strategy for states looking to enhance and improve their security.

### **2.1.3 EU in a realist light**

Having gone over the theoretical framework of realism and its different forms, it is not essential to apply the theory to the concept of the European Union. The question is, how do realists perceive the European Union, European integration and subsequently multilateralism?

As this chapter has, hopefully successfully, shown that for realists the state is the most central actor within any political system. And for any state, sovereignty is distinguishable trait. Without it a state cannot be considered a state. That means that within its territorial space, the nation has the unlimited authority to make and enforce laws. This power is used to guarantee security in its own borders. International politics is a system of self-help. Realists are sceptical towards international organizations protecting a nations security. The nation must ultimately rely on itself to achieve and maintain security (Dunne and Schmidt 2014, p. 108).

In the eyes of proponents of Mearsheimer and the offensive realist approach, countries need to focus on the insecurities stemming from international politics. Nations need to maximize their own power to guarantee security and their own survival. From this perspective, states indeed need to prioritize military power and relative gains, painting a grim prospect for international cooperation, and reducing international institutions to mere deceptive promises that can barely alleviate the effects of anarchy (Pollack 2011, p. 4). As previously seen with the NATO example, according to this view, the EU could be seen as a tool of the EU's leading powers Germany and France. They could essentially use the bloc as a conduit to disseminate their power and to keep an "power imbalance" in their favor. By joining the EU, countries deliberately forfeit areas of their sovereignty in exchange for perceived advantages of EU membership. While there are certainly benefits in joining the EU, these benefits may not align with the nation's main objective, which is rooted self-preservation, security, and individual national interest. The mistrust in European integration and multilateralism is underlined by events such as the Eurocrisis or Brexit. Both are examples of events where countries had self-serving motivations, opposite to others. These events highlight the limitations of European integration and the multilateralism of the European Union, once national interests are on the line. For them, it makes no sense to forgo parts of their sovereignty, in light of the mistrust towards other nations.

From a defensive realist approach, the European Union could have its benefits. As mentioned earlier, defensive realists are a bit more positive towards collaboration. According to their views, the logic of self-interest works against the provision of common goods, such as "security" or "free trade". In the case of the latter, all governments would be wealthier in a world that permitted free movement of products and services across borders, in accordance with the idea of comparative advantage. However, by pursuing protectionist measures, individual nations or groups of states like the European Union can grow their income. Naturally, the obvious result is for the remaining governments to adopt a protectionist stance; international trade fails, and a global recession causes each state's wealth to decrease. Therefore, the question is not whether everyone will benefit from cooperation, but rather, who is most likely to gain. Due to this concern of relative gains, defensive realists would argue the self-help system needs to make way to a certain degree for a collaborative approach (Dunne and Schmidt 2014, p. 110). From their vantage point, the EU and subsequently multilateralism can enhance welfare, stability, and peace through collaboration.

The EU, as a multipolar system<sup>12</sup> can help to stabilize the European environment. The multilateral setup of the EU is a collective measure to minimize power imbalances (Swiss 2013). Power is disseminated throughout all member states (in a perfect EU scenario) and as such the EU acts as counterbalancing mechanisms against potential power nations, both internally and externally. Furthermore, European integration and multilateralism, offer nations an arena to collaborate on shared concerns and ideas and to work together to maintain power. Nations can focus on security maximization rather than power maximization, which inevitably leads to a more stable global system. Nevertheless, defensive realists would remain cautious, as albeit the benefits of collaboration and security maximization, countries may still act based on their own national interest. Nationalism, according to realists, will always remain a key part of any country.

## 2.2. Theoretical Overview of Liberalism

"If one wants to know what liberalism is and what it aims at, one cannot simply turn to history for the information and inquire what the liberal politicians stood for and what they accomplished. For liberalism nowhere succeeded in carrying out its program as it had intended." (von Mises 3)

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<sup>12</sup> A system in which political power is spread amongst three or more countries.

While the above quote is most accurate for economic liberalism, it does show some parallels to liberalism in the sense of international relations/politics. In neither one can simply look into the past and define liberalism or its impacts. Liberalism has been interpreted in a wide variety of ways throughout history. It has attempted, at various periods, to safeguard the right to own property, protect the person from tyranny, develop the doctrine of inherent rights of man, construct a global market, or promote individualism. But most of the time, liberalism's function depends on time's demands. Fundamentally, liberalism stands up for and protects the rights of men no matter the circumstances (Martin 1948, p. 295). In particular, liberalism has historically been seen as the opponent of realism in IR theory because it promotes a more upbeat worldview that is based on a different historical interpretation than that of realist studies. The words in which this school of thought should be distinguished from its competitors are one of the ongoing topics of internal debate in this case, as in others. Therefore, attempting to identify the "essence" or "guide spirit" of liberalism has limited significance (Larmore 1990, p. 399).

The common use of the phrase "liberal democracy" to characterize nations with free and fair elections, the rule of law, and safeguarded civil liberties serves as an example of how liberalism is a distinguishing characteristic of modern democracy. But when it comes to IR theory, liberalism has developed into a separate concept all its own. Different ideas and arguments regarding how institutions, behaviors, and economic linkages restrain and lessen the violent power of states can be found in liberalism. In comparison to realism, it expands our field of vision by include more elements, particularly the consideration of citizens and international organizations (Meiser 2017, p. 22).

The wide-ranging liberal tradition in political thought, which has often been described as "for almost three centuries the political doctrine that comprised the primary current of modern politics in Europe and the West," includes classical liberalism. The idea of liberalism is a broad one that encompasses numerous concepts (van de Haar 2008, p. 34; Minogue 1988). Although it represents various ideologies, at its cores liberalism centers of the idea of liberty and freedom. Supporters of liberalism propose that humans have the right to certain liberties and these liberties are vital to the liberalistic framework. John Locke, frequently credited to be the founder of liberal thinking, summarizes these rights as the natural rights of life, liberty, and property<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, liberalism, when it first got recognition and attention during the Age of

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<sup>13</sup> "The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges everyone: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions" (Locke 1690)

Enlightenment<sup>14</sup>, was dealing with preserving the natural right of life, liberty, and property. Representative democracy and the rule of law were to take the place of the hereditary privilege, state religion, absolute monarchy, monarchs' divine right, and conventional conservative norms. Additionally, liberals eliminated mercantilist practices, royal monopolies, and other trade restrictions in favor of free trade and market systems (Gould 1999, p. 3). The entire ideology revolves around these natural human rights. Liberals are concerned with protecting and expanding those rights. Hence, the primary motivation of the movement is to uphold these liberal innate human entitlements.

Liberals, similar to realists, believe that people behave in a logical and rational manner. To be clear, as used in this context, the word “rationality” refers to the ability to carefully assess the advantages and disadvantages of any particular course of action or decision. Jeremy Bentham and other followers of the “utilitarian” school of thought argue that rational actors always act in a way that maximizes their own personal “utility” or self-interest. While this may initially appear as a defense for selfish actions, liberals provide a complex moral justification for this morally dubious situation. According to their point of view, even while people may primarily behave according to their own best interest, this behavior can have positive effects, especially when it occurs in large groups.

Individualism and self-interest are seen as the fundamental driver of human activity. Nonetheless, liberals maintain that the same self-interest, when directed through a group's collective actions, can considerably increase the groups' overall wellbeing. This is done through coordinating individual behavior and self-interest in a way that advances common good and prosperity of the entire group, beyond their limited scope of individual self-interest. This surprising, unexpected, and beneficial outcome of numerous self-interested actions coined as collective benefit. Fundamentally, liberals believe that combining people's self-interest in a community can, paradoxically, produce a communal advantage that improves society's overall wellbeing (Steans, Pettiford and Diez 2010, p. 27).

The societal overall welfare stands at the core of liberal view on government involvement. From an economic perspective, economic liberals prefer a rather limited government involvement<sup>15</sup>, because it is better for the economic wellbeing of the country. That

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<sup>14</sup> Period of serious scientific, political, and philosophical dialogue, which dominated European society in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Enlightenment was characterized by a wide range of beliefs that emphasized the importance of human happiness, the pursuit of knowledge based on reason and the evidence of the senses, and ideals like liberty, progress, tolerance, and fraternity as well as constitutional government and the separation of church and state (White; Conrad; Zafirovski 144-145)

<sup>15</sup> See Adam Smith 1759

is the case because the economic environment is controlled solely by demand and supply. Social liberalists, on the other hand, support a larger government involvement if the governments protects the fundamental liberal rights inherent to all people. Essentially, governments are necessary because they provide a judicial system that acts as a regulatory framework to, among other things, enforce contracts and safeguard these inherent rights. Nonetheless, classical liberalism believes that limiting government action is ultimately in the best interests of everyone (Steans, Pettiford and Diez 2010, p. 28).

Scholars within the liberal school of IR hold international institutions in high regard, for their role in facilitating international cooperation and guaranteeing peace and security throughout a united system. They argue that these institutions have a mediating role and promote interstate cooperation because of their capacity to serve as a common platform for interaction. They further suggest that states' mutual interests are likely to reduce their conflicts, paving the way for sustained cooperation (Naruzzaman 2008; Axelrod and Keohane 1985; Keohane and Nye 200).

Liberals passionately favor the establishment of a unified, harmonized, and collective global system, charged with the duty of identifying and neutralizing any threats to global peace and security. In order to prevent these threats, their visions call for the establishment of a singular entity tasked with fostering international collaboration. As insecurity can incite conflict, this vision is based on the idea that a system of collective security can greatly mitigate insecurity, bolstering the international order and increasing the chances for peace.

The need for state cooperation has grown more critical in the context of modern governments. Today's contemporary governments are responsible for meeting the complex and diverse needs of their people, a task which necessitates for cooperation with other states. International institutions and regimes are essential elements of global governance as the dynamics of interdependence become increasingly powerful. These IOs and regimes in today contemporary political world are further tasked with spreading democracy. This is predicated on the democratic peace theory, which states that democratic states are less likely to go to war with each other. Although the likelihood of war between any two states is statistically very low, the lack of war among liberal democracies despite a variety of historical, economic, and political factors suggests that democratic states have a strong tendency to refrain from using military force against one another (Levy 1988; Doyle 1983; Russett 2009).

As a result, organizations offer a platform for international collaboration by bringing together a variety of countries, including both rich and industrialized countries, as well as poorer, underdeveloped nations. It is often posited that regardless of where they fall in the

international order, all members stand to gain in some way from such collaboration. These organization or regimes provide governments a place where disputes can be settled amicably, preventing the need to resort to war, even in circumstances where bloodshed seems imminent and inevitable. These IOs effectively function as safety valves, releasing tensions and offering peaceful resolutions to disputes in order to foster a more stable, balanced, and peaceful international climate (Steans, Pettiford and Diez 2010). Hence, they contribute to the protection of mankind's libertarian rights. It solidifies a culture that respects and upholds human dignity, protects individual liberties, and places human rights above all else. From a liberal viewpoint, the ultimate objective is the construction of a global environment that fosters individual freedom and communal harmony.

### **2.2.1 EU in a liberal light**

Compared to their opponents, realists, many liberals would agree that the EU serves as a successful manifestation of regional and supranational cooperation. The EU presents itself to the world as a singular and effective civilian and actor that articulates a wise liberal vision to promote democracy and rule of law, defend and protect human rights, and encourage the peaceful resolution of crises. This presentation is based more on identity than practice. Europe's liberalism assumes a global stance and an interventionist approach since it is based on diplomacy rather than force, incremental progress rather than massive bangs (Haine 2009, p. 455)

In accordance with their key principles, the EU acts a principal platform that advocates peace and safety, whilst at the same time extending the of democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Furthermore, by fostering collaboration and fusing European nations into a single economic and political entity, it succeeds in reducing conflict and encouraging economic growth and welfare throughout Europe. As aforementioned, proponents of liberalism follow Emmanuel Kant, in their believe that hat the threat of war could be eradicated by the introduction of democracy among the nations, which would prevent them from going to war with one another (Ahmad, Kalim and Gull 2018, p. 32). The proliferation of peace and with it the inevitable reduction of conflict is brought on by the supranation bodie within the EU, such as European Commission or the European Parliament. They maintain compliance with shared norms and regulations, mediate disputes amongst member nations, and encourage cooperation on a variety of topics. With a shared agenda, the EU also manifests a shared vision on domestic policies, which, according to Ahmad, Kalim and Gull (2018) play a pivotal role within the



liberal theory. If the local political and social environment is healthy, a nation will enjoy dealing with people abroad and the nation will have a positive impact on others.

Liberalist might even argue that the European Union is one of the best examples of liberal theory (Ahmad, Kalim and Gull 2018, p. 35). That being said, from a liberal perspective joining the EU would be beneficial, as it would further the democratic growth, creating an even more stable political environment within the European hemisphere. The more countries join the bigger the combined welfare for everyone. Together, countries can maintain a safe and stable environment that protect the liberal inherent human rights.

In conclusion, liberals see the EU and subsequently multilateralism as essential tool for fostering international collaboration, upholding liberal principles, and collaborating to solve issues.

### **2.3. Constructivism**

Certainly distinguishing itself from the previous political philosophies is the philosophical school of constructivism. This relatively new school of thought departs from the conventional emphasis on material elements like power or collaboration. It distinguishes itself even more by the fact that constructivism, especially in its social version, is frequently regarded as less of a theory in the conventional sense.

Unlike neo-liberalism and neo-realism, which present a coherent and comprehensive theoretical system, social constructivism does not present a set of interconnected theories that form a theoretical system. Instead, it relies heavily on underlying assumptions from which more wide-ranging hypotheses and arguments are generated (Steans, Pettiford and Diez 2010, p. 186).

This shift from traditional political theory has its origins in the writing of Alexander Wendt, who is widely credited as coining the term “constructivism”;

“...students of international politics have increasingly accepted two basic tenets of constructivism:(1) that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and (2) that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature” (Wendt 1999, p. 1)

Wendt's unique perspective, which emphasizes the influence of social interactions and structures on the international political sphere, has significantly shaped this unconventional theoretical approach. .

In sharp contrast to realism, which asserts that states' security concerns and material interests – all defined in terms of power – govern international relations, and to liberal internationalists, which emphasizes the interconnection of global actors operating within a complex web of institutional constraints, constructivism adopts a very different perspective on international politics. It views international politics as a dynamic arena of interaction, shaped by the identities and behaviors of the participants involved and constantly changing due to evolving normative frameworks. Constructivists contend that agency and structure are mutually constitutive, which suggests that both structures and agency are influenced by one another. Structure refers to the global system made up of material and ideational components, whereas agency refers to a person's capacity to act (Theys 2017, p. 37).

Furthermore, the social corporate identities of states – essentially how they perceive themselves in relation to the rest of the world – determine their goals. These objectives can span a broad range; they can be ethereal, subjective goals like international standing or they can be tangible, material goals like ontological security and economic development (Griffiths, O'Callaghan and Roach 2008, pp. 51-53). Consequently, constructivism holds that states are less motivated by power struggles. Instead, they follow a complex interaction of established identities, norms, and beliefs. These identities influence not only the actions of states but also the public's perception. Rather than reflecting an objective, material reality, according to constructivists, international politics are a representation of an intersubjective or socially constructed reality (Onuf 1989).

Like the previous theories, constructivism offers its own perspective on international institutions and IOs, including their individual roles in the international system. International institutions serves two distinct functions: they act as both organizations that create norms (constitutive) and as organizations that enforce those norms. Regulative norms establish the basic standard of moral and ethical behavior by endorsing or disapproving particular behaviors. On the other hand, constitutive norms define activities and give them meaning. In the absence of constitutive laws, actions would be meaningless and without any context. Institutions have a responsibility to maintain and protect these norms.

However, constructivists do not perceive international institutions as merely physical or organizations structures. They are perceived as combinations of various identities, cultures and norms. They are in fact, physical embodiments of how norms, attitudes and practices

interact to influence how nations and people behave within the international system (Steans, Pettiford and Diez 2010, p. 192; Griffiths, O'Callaghan and Roach 2008, p. 51).

In summary, the idea of constructivism is frequently described as stating the obvious: that reality is shaped by our actions, interactions, and perceptions. In fact, the name of this theory family is derived from that concept. International relations are literally built by our thoughts and deeds. But when applied hypothetically, this seemingly straightforward notion has profound effects on our ability to comprehend the universe. Constructivism is advantageous to the field of international relations because it addresses topics and ideas that are ignored by popular theories, particularly realism. Constructivists do this by providing additional justifications and insights for things that happen in the social environment (Theys 2017).

### **2.3.1 EU in a constructivist light**

Analysing the European Union in a constructivist lights is relatively simple, as compared to the previous two theories. As shown above, constructivists see international organizations as more than simply a tangible organization. Rather, the EU is perceived as a social construct, impacted and shaped by shared norms, ideas, and cultures. Its evolution is not only a result of economic interests or power dynamics, but also due to a shared overarching sense of European identity and European values, such as democracy, human rights, and rule of law. By continues interaction among member states and the institution itself, the identities continue to reshape, making them non static. Thus, EU's policies, actions, and even its structure is ever-changing with the changing norms and identities of the European citizens.

Constructivist theory makes an important acknowledgment of the interaction that occurs on institutional platforms like the European Union itself as well as the norms that are employed as an acting principal among the member states. However, when studying the European integration, constructivist researchers make identity their central focus. In 2010, Michelle Cini and Nieves Perez-Solorzano Borrigan said, "constructivists endeavour to understand the constitution of interests and, therefore, identities" (p. 118). The shared identity among member states, acts as a binding agent. In turn, this unifying factor permits the integration process, which starts in one area, like the economy, and then progresses to other areas like decision-making, such as following the signing of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997. Such shifts in European integration are not related to external challenges that might lead to deeper collaboration, as constructivists would explain. Instead, the established common identity enables defining the union's purpose. The shared interests can be taken into account

thanks to the common identity that is created via interactions and a desire for a more consistent approach to decision-making (Risse 2009). Consequently, the common identity created by and for the member states allows for the creation of collective understanding, elevating some norms and prohibiting others. Furthermore, constructivists would argue that the EU plays a vital role in creating and enforcing international norms. In doing so, it not only influences the behaviour of its member states but also that of external actors through the promotion and dissemination of its norms. In doing so it shapes global norms and impacts international politics.

Whether states that consider themselves to be more European-like may easily integrate into the union depends on the identity that is to a lesser or greater extent managed by the standards within the union. In addition, these states, as suggested by constructivists, share shared ambitions including liberal principles and the necessity of democracy in addition to a notion of fitting into the European frame. This in turn affects how the member nations view their own and one another's actions. The dedication to common goals that forms a part of the common European identity alters how member states view one another. According to the notion, EU members no longer consider themselves to be independent of the union. In turn, their actions are "increasingly defined by their EU membership" (Risse 2009, p.6) making their interactions a subject of interpretation of the common concepts. Future decision-making will be defined by the member states' shared identity. The spillover-effect of the integration process results from established norms spreading to new areas rather than from the specific interests of the sovereign states (Khayrullina 2020).

So, as a consequence, both the European Union and multilateralism are seen as embodiments of shared norms, identities, and ideas, which are continuously reconstructed and reshaped through social interactions. These shared norms, in turn, create and influence the identities and interests of nations, inducing their behaviour and leading to cooperation at a global level

## 2.4 Marxism

Marxism is both a traditional method based on the intellectual and sociological tradition of its namesake, the German philosopher Karl Marx (1818–1833), and a critical approach that always seeks to challenge the dominant policy-driven approaches to IR theory. In fact, Marxism is the only theoretical school of thought in IR to bear a person's name (Pal 2017, p. 42).

The most accurate interpretation and definition of Karl Marx's original writing and ideas has long been the subject of numerous debates because of the complex combination of interpretations and applications that make up the ideology known as Marxism. Marxists often find themselves debating over the best interpretation and application of Marx's writings to modern-day situations. This results in Marx's intellectual legacy constantly remaining open to conflicting interpretations and viewpoints from various schools of thought. Each of which asserting their interpretation as being the most accurate interpretation of Marx's ideas (Andersen and Kaspersen 123-124).

His philosophy has garnered considerable influence on the political thought on a global scale. Famous political theorist Isaiah Berlin (1996) neatly summarizes the profound influence of Marx by stating:

“No thinker in the nineteenth century has had so direct, deliberate [,] and powerful an influence upon mankind as Karl Marx. Both during his lifetime and after it he exercised an intellectual and moral ascendancy over his followers, the strength of which was unique even in the golden age of democratic nationalism (...).”

Karl Marx was born in Trier in 1818. Three decades of revolutionary discord and counterrevolutionary responses had a significant influence on both, Marx's upbringing, and his later education, and formed his political passions. It also created a set of political adversaries that persisted throughout his life (Sperber 2013, p. 11). These influences stem from events such as the rise of Europe's dominance in the global trade, the expansion of empires, the intellectual development brought about by the Enlightenment, technological advances triggered by the

Industrial Revolution<sup>16</sup>, and the political turmoil that followed the American (1776) and the French (17989) revolutions. Marx's system incorporates a philosophical perspective (the dialectic), a historical analysis (materialism), and a political analysis (socialism) and merges them into a larger system of political economy draws heavily from the economical ideas of Smith and Ricardo. His framework explains the economic, social, and political structure of society, along with how they transform (Ormerod 2008, p. 1573).

Marx's philosophical outlook was significantly shaped by his exposures to the writings of Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel while a university student. Marx ferociously disagreed with Hegel's idea that reality was primarily generated from ideas or consciousness. Instead, Marx accepted materialism, claiming that the natural world and human interaction with significantly shaped the socio-political environment. The study of human interaction within their social surrounding and their dealings with one another is emphasized by materialism (Ormerod 2008, p.1576; Sayers 2021, pp. 379-380). Karl Marx's theory of historical materialism is a great analytical framework that offers a comprehensive viewpoint for exploring the structure and operation of almost all complex human societies.

Marx envisioned a time when capitalism, with all of its flaws and inequalities, will be replaced by a communist society throughout his whole intellectual development. He believed that the various divisions present in capitalism, including wage labor, private property, class differences, and a formalized political system would be nonexistent in his ideal society (Ormerod 2008; Sayers 2021). Marx's meticulous analysis of the rise and unavoidable dissolution of various social institutions throughout human history served as the foundation for his progressive outlook.

Marx's analytical framework is grounded on the notion that societal structuring is significantly influenced by the means of production. These include all physical resources essential for the producing of goods, such as land, natural resources, and technical advancements.. The social relationship that people develop as they acquire and use these productions too are also part of the relations of production. Marx identified the primary cause of societal unhappiness and conflict as the discrepancy between these economic foundations and the developing superstructure (Turner 2006, pp. 17-18).

Furthermore, in the context of capitalism, Marx noted that the basic human ability as well as the intricate network on inter-human interaction had reached a point where society

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<sup>16</sup> A period in which people transition from manual labor to developing and using machinery to easy labor. While exact beginning and end is varying among different sources, the period spanned from around 1760 to 1840 (Wilkinson; Heller)

could collectively and strategically determine the mode their production. Marx proposed that this communal supervision could reduce social unrest and as such promote a stable social framework (Ormerod 2008, p. 1578). In other words, Marx believed that societies would go through several stages of development, with each stage they progress and ultimately end in capitalism, which Marx saw as the final step before transitioning into a communist society. Marx believed that the ethical principal of communism will finally fully resolve the fundamental tensions brought about by worker exploitation.

Marx was not alone in his views. Friedrich Engels, his longtime friend and confidant, shared Marx's ideologies and ideas. Both of them shared the opinion that capitalism was a problematic system, primarily due to its exploitation of the workforce. This critique on capitalism is shared by many Marxists throughout the history and is manifested by two very notable and significant theories of the contemporary Marxist school of thought, which are nowadays considered to be key theories of Marxism; the *Dependency Theory* and the *World System Theory*. These theories echo Marx and Engels' view that the systematic oppression of the working class is caused by the capitalistic structure.

Marx and Engels's core ideology – that capitalism thrives on the exploitation of the labor force – is explained in detail in *The Dependency Theory*, which was first developed in the 1960s in order to explain the developmental problems in Latin America (Frank 1967; Ahiakpor 1985). In its essence, this theory contends that the socio-economic development of former colonies, now so-called developing countries, has been hampered by Western industrialized countries that formerly dominated them.

This configuration, in which rich and industrialized countries leveraging emerging nations for their inexpensive labor force, as well as their abundant national resources is a frequent pattern in the global economic environment. Developed nations produce goods on a vast scale by taking advantage of these favorable economic factors. Ironically, these very resources and products are then returned to the poorer, developing nations from whom they were initially taken, typically at much higher prices than in the developed country. Through this, any capital that could have been invested into developing their own nation is drained to the goods (Munro 2023). Although this complex relationship may at first appear to be semi mutually beneficial, a deeper examination reveals a rather complicated dynamic between the two countries. The developed and developing nations are reliant on one another in different ways, and they are interdependent.

Developed countries, which are mostly ruled by capitalist economic systems, will continue to expand and advance as long as emerging countries supply them with cheap labor

and resources. On the other hand, the markets, resources, technical innovations, and outputs of the industrialized countries are essential to the developing economies, as they lack the capital or output to progress on their own merit. Hence, despite appearing to be helpful to both sides, this interdependence hurts developing countries and keeps them from really emerging and progressing any further, while industrialized countries reap the benefits and maintain their wealth and power. This unequal distribution of benefits, which results in the structural underdevelopment in developing countries while containing wealth in the developed nations, forms the basis of the *Dependency Theory*, a key critique of global capitalism (Love 1980; Ahiakpor 1985; Velasco 2022).

Immanuel Wallerstein created the *World systems theory* in 1974, as an expansion of the previous *Dependency Theory*, taking into account the changes of the late 20th century and challenge the tendency of conventional methods to view imperialism as a state-led endeavor. The methodology of Wallerstein utilized many analytical units and adopted a much longer-term perspective of the development of states and their interactions (Pal 2017, p. 44).

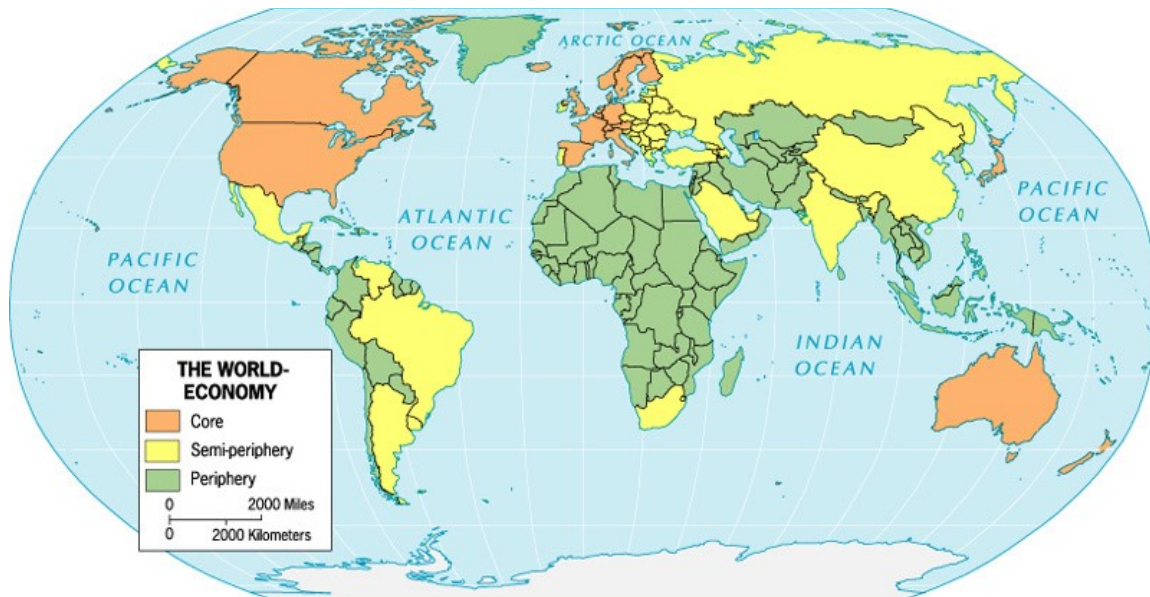
Wallerstein categorized regions into three groups (see Figure 1) based on how they fit into the global economy and how it affects their political structure.

First, the **core**, which are regions distinguished by strong manufacturing industries, technologically advanced agriculture, metropolitan centers that have grown, skilled laborers who are well compensated, and significant investment. However, the core needs the so-called **peripheries** in order to generate economic surplus that fuels its expansion. These peripheries are made up of areas that generate necessities while metropolitan centers lose population, the workforce is kept low-skilled and underutilized to keep costs down. Technologically innovation is halted and capital is directed into the core rather than being amassed locally. The gap between the core and the periphery was initially small, but northern Europe exploited it and made it wider by exchanging expensive industrial commodities for inexpensive basic products.

Finally, there is the **semi-periphery**, which consists of areas that are either losing ground to the core or trying to gain ground from the periphery. Frequently, these areas serve as barriers between the core and the periphery regions. Semi-peripheries often show conflict between a strong local landed elite and the central government. They serve to fend off revolutionary actions resulting from unrest in the periphery and become appealing locations for capitalist investment when wage rates in core economies rise quickly due to well-organized labor forces (Modern History Sourcebook: Summary of Wallerstein on World System Theory 2021; Wallerstein 1979; Wallerstein 1974; Chirot and Hall 1982)



**Figure 11: World Systems Theory Map**



Source: Elwall, Frank

Karl Marx's definition of class aligns with the way the world is ranked, especially when it comes to ownership of the means of production. As a result, core states assume the responsibilities of high-level manufacturing and primarily own and control the majority of the global industrial infrastructure. Peripheral states, in contrast, control a minor share of the global manufacturing infrastructure and provide a low-skilled labor force. As a result of this uneven distribution of resources or incentives within the global economy, states behavior on a macrolevel similiarly to a class system. The majority of the surplus production goes to core state, while only a little percentage ends up with the nations that build the periphery. However, core states have an advantage because they frequently have access to cheap non-core state commodities and raw resources, allowing them to charger higher export prices.

However, the semi-peripheries suggest that this global economic infrastructure is of a dynamic and not static. Nations are able to move up or down this economic ladder, but only within certain parameters. Due to the persistent inflow of capital and skilled labor force, thew ability of periphery nations to advance their standing and climb the socio-economic ladder is hampered. This centralization strengthens a fundamentally uneven global structure, in which the semi-peripheries and core states enjoy continous growth, while at the same time stalling the progress of the periphery.

The core idea of the above-mentioned theories can be implied when investigating Marxist view on IOs. They share a striking similarity with relists, seeing international

organizations as a image of the wrongful distribution of power and as a tool for the powerful states (core) to assert their dominance over the weaker states.

With that in mind, Marxists do not view the globe as a partnership of sovereign nations but rather a network of political, economic and social linkages that together make up a superstructure. Marx and his proponents essentially see the world through the lens of the Hegelian totality<sup>17</sup>, seeing it as a complex, interconnected organism where “each part of the social structure becomes an expression of the whole” (Buroway 1978, p. 51). Therefore, in this holistic structure, all components are interdependent and are shaped by the economy.

The economic sector divides the contributions of various social groups before defining the connections between them in accordance with its practical requirements, or as Marxists argue, the conditions of reproduction. Hence, elements like the states’ enforcement of law and order, the family’s role in raising new employees, the ideological justification of capitalist relations, and the legal system’s protection of private property are all essential to the survival of the capitalist economy. The interactions between these parts are established by the unique ways in which they individually improve the system’s overall operations. On top of it, each component’s “function” determines its form or structure, giving it autonomy and its own logic (Buroway 1978, p. 51)

Thus, local, national, and regional economies are now vital aspects of and impacted by modern capitalism, which has essentially developed into a global system. Parallel to this, how people, societies, and even entire countries are positioned within this wider, global capitalistic framework determines how well off they are (Katzenstein, Keohane and Krasner 1998; Steans, Pettiford and Diez 2010, pp. 91-92). This viewpoint reemphasizes alienation – a fundamental Marxist idea- in the context of international economics.

#### **2.4.1 EU in a Marxist light**

From a Marxist perspective, the European Union, multilateralism, and European integration can all be seen as tools to disseminate and facilitate capitalism on a global scale. In essence, for Marx, the Eu would be the embodiment of a system that spreads capitalism around the globe. Underlining this thought is being done in *Figure 1*. The European core countries, as

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<sup>17</sup> “The state as a living spirit exists without fail only as a certain organized whole subdivided into particular functions which, stemming from one concept of the rational will (although not yet known as a concept), produce it constantly as their result. A political system is the very articulation of state authority. It contains a description of how the rational will, as far as in individuals it is the general will only in itself, reaches on one hand consciousness and self-understanding and finds itself, while on the other hand through the actions of the government and its particular branches it is embodied in reality and maintained in it, as well as defended from the accidental subjectivity of both the government and individuals. It is an existing justice as the reality of freedom in which all its rational determinations are developed” (Hegel; Such).

seen in the figure above, are also mainly the key leaders of the European Union. As per the theory, the core lives off the peripheral states and in general dominate the areas around the peripheries and semi-peripheries. From a Marxist perspective, this can be said about the European Union as well. The major industrialized (capitalistic) countries in the EU make politics and as such live off the periphery and semi-periphery states, continuously protecting and enhancing their own development, simultaneously hampering the development of the other European nations. While this is certainly a valid Marxist perspective of the European Union, some may see the European Union as a potential Marxist utopia.

As previously outlined, Marx sees the socio-economic realm as different levels of transitions. Nations develop through different political regimes and eventually reach capitalism, which Marx calls the penultimate stage prior to communism. In order for communism to happen, the nation-state needs to disappear in order to give way to a larger interconnected, almost stateless, community. Looking at the European Union and European integration in a rather radical way, this could be made a valid point. European integrations seek to unify a variety of different states under a *European* ideology. Nationalism is to give way to the greater sense of Europeanism.

In other words, many people find the European system to be appealing in the same way that Marxism did. It offers the ambiguity that results from the denial of any natural order and, in fact, of truth itself; a concurrent apparent escape from politics and from the choices related to it; a political system in constant flux; the demise of the (nation-)state; and its replacement with a new system based on hypothetically unpolitical administration. In reality, the overthrow of the nation-state ideology, which is at the core of European ideology, entails the overthrow of the state in general and its replacement with European - and perhaps, one day, global - statelessness (Laughland 2009).

However, the more commonly accepted Marxist viewpoint is that the EU and multilateralism are capitalistic structures that disseminate and protect the global capitalistic system. The European integration and sought cooperation are all mechanisms to maintain power by the capitalist class. A view similar to the realist theory, discussed earlier.

## Chapter 3

### The European Union and its public perception

In the previous chapter, the four key doctrine of political ideologies have been extensively discussed. Not only their general theoretical setup and ideologies but also how each of them pertains to the European Union and terms such as European integration and multilateralism. It becomes clear that while there are certain distinctive differences, some of them also share similar almost negative views of the European Union and see it as a form of weapon of the powerful to suppress the weaker states. The proponents of political liberalism, on the other hand, would agree that the EU could be considered the ultimate sign of the superiority of liberal thought. No matter where once stance, what becomes undeniable is that the EU is a fascinating interplay of differed ideologies and ideas.

The following chapter will dive deeper into the authentic perception of the European Union. Meaning, this chapter will look into how the European people actually perceive the European Union. Are people in Europe more liberal and feel and appreciate the democratic advancement of the European union, or are they more realistic and are cautious in giving up their nationalism to become part of a unified European bloc? These questions and more shall be answered throughout this chapter. As this chapter will not be delving into a comprehensive outline of the European Union's development, *Table 1* serves as a general reference point to show a summary of the historical development of the EU.

**Table 2: Historical Development of the European Union**

Year	Development
1951	Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg sign the Treaty of Paris, establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (Treaty enters into force in 1952)
1957	The six countries sign the two separate Treaties of Rome, creating the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) (Treaties enter into force in 1958)
1965	Merger Treaty is signed, consolidating the ECSC, EEC, and EAEC into one organization, the European Communities (EC), now comprised of an administrative Commission and executive Council (Treaty enters into force in 1967)
1973	First enlargement: Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom join
1974	European Council created to facilitate discussions among government leaders
1981	Second Enlargement: Greece joins
1986	Third Enlargement: Spain and Portugal join

<b>1992</b>	The Maastricht Treaty is signed, creating the European Union, which acquires the European Communities as its principal institution. The European Council obtains a formal role in crafting political guidelines for the EU's development (Treaty enters into force in 1993)
<b>1995</b>	Fourth Enlargement: Austria, Finland and Sweden join
<b>2004</b>	Fifth Enlargement: Czechia, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia join
<b>2007</b>	Bulgaria and Romania join. Also, Treaty of Lisbon is signed, clarifying the powers and procedures of the EU; the European Council officially becomes one of the seven EU institutions (Treaty enters into force in 2009)
<b>2013</b>	Croatia joins
<b>2020</b>	UK officially leaves the EU

Source: Based on: (European Union; About Us: CVCE.eu; Leppert).

As maintained through this thesis, many European countries find the idea of EU membership enticing. These nations are drawn to the EU by the numerous advantages promised by membership, including better and new trade opportunities, the capacity to influence events on a global scale, access to a single and vast European market structure, and involvement in a sound democratic system. Understanding the sentiments of the different member states and their people and recording the change in the attitudes prior to and following their country's membership, however, is a difficult task. When one considers the relationship between the economic and democratic benefits that EU membership provides, this complexity intensifies.

Public support for the EU is of increasing importance for the future of the European integration project. With a proliferation of referendums on EU matters, increased powers of the European Parliament, and an indirect influence via national governments, the future success of European integration hinges on the public's perception and support. This stresses the need to learn more about the factors that influence EU support (Vliegthart, Schuck and Boomgarden 2008, pp.416-417). Personal experience, societal discourse, media portrayal, and political decisions are just a few of the many factors that have an impact on public perception. One major factor is, in particular, influence that comes from the balance between the anticipated and actual economic and democratic gains of EU membership.

As mentioned on multiple occasions throughout this paper, the European Union's appeal for countries considering joining is frequently based on its promises of economic prosperity and the advancement of democracy. The hopes of potential member states are usually defined by ambitions of economic expansions, increased regional influence, and advanced democratic values as these countries stand on the verge of entering the EU. However, it is important to note that these demands are not given equal priority across potential member

nations. Instead, they differ according to regional context, societal emotion, and the unique requirements and goals of the nations. These various aims and concerns are frequently mixed together in the attraction of EU membership.

A significant 58% of respondents from potential member countries believed that joining the EU would primarily have an economic impact, helping to strengthen their home countries' economies, according to a thorough Eurobarometer study carried out in 2009 (European Commission 2009), indicating that by joining the EU a nation's populous might attempt to increase their own national economy. This could be a strong indication for a motive, rooted in realist theory. This substantial number highlights an important feature of the EU's appeal by confirming that the vision of economic success can be considered one of if not the primary motivator for countries to considering EU membership. Similar indication can be seen in the *Jahreswirtschaftsbereicht 1995* (report of the yearly economical situation). During the expansion of 1995, Austria for example also counted on some economic benefits stemming from its membership in the union, they expected their GDP to increase by over 3%. 46% of Austrians believed that joining the EU would have a significant economic impact (Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 1995). Similar perception can be said of the Swedes, who joined the same year. With their entry into the bloc, Sweden, who were battling a high unemployment rate of 8 %, were expecting their unemployment rate to decrease to 7 % and at the same time, 56% of Swedes, were expecting overall economic expansion (Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 1995). A lot of that optimism is rooted in the then freshly emerged European market. All things considered, back in 1994, 59% of members were expecting significant economic benefits from the single market economy (European Commission 1994).

A more recent study indicates a comparable image, when looking at the entry of the Czech Republic for example. As indicated by the Czech National Report of 2004, 46% of the Czech participants in this report believe that the Czech Republic will benefit from its membership in the EU. Further into the report, the desire for economic benefits is reiterated. According to the report, the Czech inhabitants are less aware of the possibility of economic problems associated with EU membership than citizens of other countries. This is, among other things, a result of the EU's presentation as a generous donor, offering a range of programs and benefits to economically less developed member states. According to this logic, then, EU membership must bring with it only economic benefits. At the same time, however, the sentiment of "national economic pride" persists in the mindset of Czech citizens from the time when the country was presented, or rather self-presented, as economically strong and

successful during the period of economic transformation and preparations for EU accession. In the context of the above, it is clear that fears of economic decline and crisis are being expressed by the 'older' members of the Union rather than by the citizens of the newly acceding countries (pp. 5-6).

This indicates that a country populous would be tempted to join the EU to boost their own national economy and reap the financial benefits. This could be an indication for Adding to this, according to a Eurobarometer, which was published in 2021, nearly 70 % believe that their regional economic situation is good, with 13% responding it to be very good (European Commission 2021). Highlighting the economic importance and spillover of the EU.

This does not imply, however, that the advantages of EU membership in terms of democracy and other related benefits be discounted entirely. As shown by the percentage of responders from Europe who are satisfied with how democracy works in the EU has remained constant, as the most recent Eurobarometer (2023). 54% of responders are satisfied with how democracy works. Furthermore, 37% of EU citizens deemed democracy as the primary value that should be protected by the EU (European Parliament 2023). Similarly, to that, the Czech reports indicates a similar trend. As indicated by the report the topic of democracy also plays a significant role for the Czech population. As such, while 53% of Czech people look forward to a single monetary policy, on top of the previously mentioned economic benefits, they also regard the European Union as a guarantor of democracy as well as economic prosperity (European Commission 2004, p. 27).

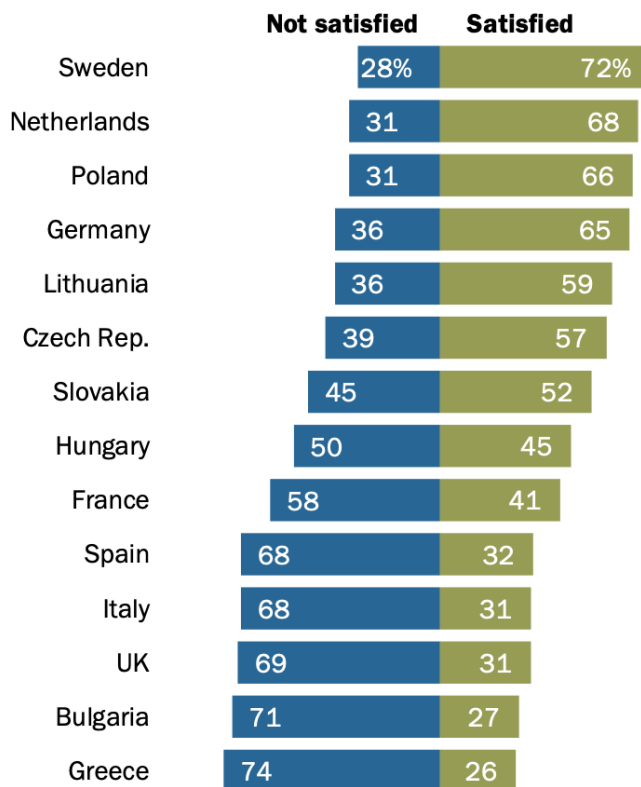
An entirely different perspective can be seen when analyzing Poland, another country that joined the bloc in 2005. When the Polish joined in 2005, they did not perceive the European Union is an economic benefactor. 72% of respondents feared that accession would bring hardship to Polish farmers, while 65% feared that Poland would be forced to pay more and more money into the EU budget. These fears stemmed largely from an awareness of the country's less than ideal economic situation at the time of the survey. High unemployment combined with serious problems in the functioning of the health service (caused by the health care reform) prevented respondents from seeing the first signs of the end of the recession (European Commission 2004 (1), p. 7). Furthermore, compared to the Czech who have quite a trust in their own democratic system, the Polish, however, in 2004, had expressed a very low trust in their own political system which led to a disappointment not only with the main actors on the political scene, but also with democracy as such. Currently [in 2005], only 16% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the way democracy functions in the country, and this

is the lowest rate among all member countries of the enlarged Union (European Commission (2) 2004).

Let's have a look at a fourth country, that also joined in 2005, Lithuania. As with the first two countries, Lithuania's, in 2004, shared a rather positive sentiment. As stated in the overview of the study, prior to joining the EU, the expectation from people was surround rapid economic growth following accession into the EU (European Commission (3) 2004, p. 3). This can be underlined by the fact that young people are optimistic about the future, while there are more pessimists than optimists among people of pre-retirement and retirement age. On the other hand, while middle-aged people are more likely to say that their situation has worsened in the past five years (34%), they are more likely to be optimistic (35%) than pessimistic (15%) when looking to the future. An analysis of the results of surveys of the Lithuanian population conducted in recent years shows that optimism about the future is most often linked to two factors: the growing Lithuanian economy (as seen through the prism of the media) and the prospects of EU membership (European Commission 2004 (3), p. 9).

Returning to more recent Eurobarometers and studies, it shows that the overall sentiments and expectation have not really changed. While the actual indication of expected economic changes will be highlighted in the next chapter, we shall have a quick look at the other topic that has been omnipresent throughout this thesis – democracy. As mentioned above, democracy does play quite some role for potential EU memberstates, as seen with the Czech Republic that initially saw the European Union as protector of democracy. However, as indicated by more recent studies in general nearly four out of ten people (41%) are dissatisfied with how democratically the EU operates, highlighting the need for continued initiatives to improve openness and inclusivity in EU decision-making processes. This point is especially elaborated by the fact that 47% of Europeans do not believe that their voice matters, while 48% believe their voice does indeed matter. Following a favorable development between November-December 2021 and April-May 2022, the percentage of people who believe their voice is heard in the EU fell by six percentage points between April-May and October-November 2022 and has since returned to levels recorded from 2017 to 2019 (European Parliament 2023). A similar trend can be observed during the Eurobarometer 90 (2018), where 48% of Europeans expressed the sentiment that they perceive a democratic deficit, pointing out the absence of direct control over EU decisions (European Commission 2018). These results are supported by the report published by Pew Research Center (*Figure 2*), which indicates that the dissatisfaction with democracy in the European Union is quite common.



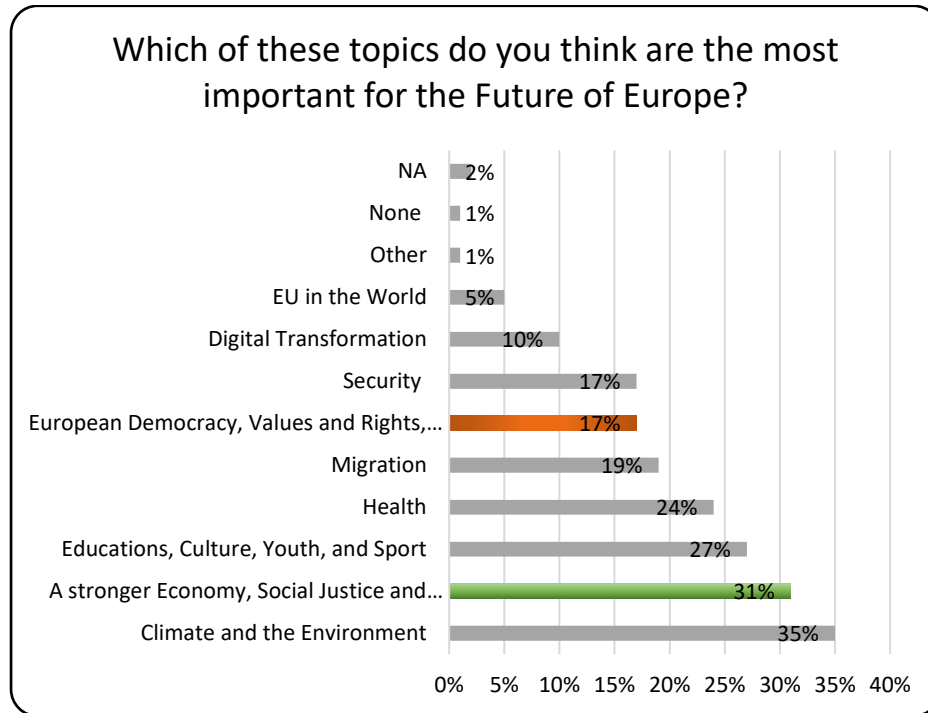
**Figure 12: Democratic Satisfaction in the European Union**

Source: PEW Research Center (2019)

As supported by Vivien Schmidt (2016), despite the fact that the EU's democratic values are well established and generally supported, a feeling of democratic disappointment may result from the lack of actual power (tangible power) to influence choices at the EU level, as European integration increasingly intrudes into issues at the very core of national sovereignty and identity as decision-making in policy area after policy areas has been elevated to the EU level. More and more, EU rules or prescriptions apply to money and monetary policy, economic structure and labor markets, borders and immigration, public services, and even welfare guarantees. However, the issue for national democracies is not so much that EU policies have encroached on them as it is that voters have had little influence over these issues, let alone participation in political discussion about the policies at the EU level. The fragmented nature of European democracy has meant that politics continue at the national level even if policies are normally decided at the EU level in an apolitical or technocratic manner (p. 217). As a result, national democracies have grown to be the domain of "politics without policies" whereas the EU level looks to be "policy without politics" (Schmidt 2006; Schmidt 2016).

Albeit, the perception of democratic deficit, when comparing economic development with democratic improvement, 31% want the EU to prioritize the advancement and need for a stronger economy, social justice and jobs. However, only 17% highlighted the need to uphold European democracy, values, rights and the rule of law (see Figure 3) (European Commission 2021).

**Figure 13: Priorities for the Future of the EU**



Source: Based on Flashbarometer 500 (European Commission 2021, p.39).

Combining some of the earlier mentioned political ideologies, it seems that when looking at the polls and the expectations of people there is a mix between expectations fueled by defensive realist ideas (joining the EU is a necessity to improve national economy and national standing) and liberal ideas (seeing the EU as a overall protector and disseminator of democracy and other liberal ideas). These attitudes, however, are not constant and shift as reality materializes once officially joining the bloc. The intricate network and interaction of supranational and national actors, which is a defining factor of public opinion, has a significant impact on the trend of these expectations. Acknowledging and understanding this balance of democratic enhancement and economic growth is crucial for determining the future trajectory of the EU.

## Chapter 4

### Economic Analysis

As shown throughout the previous chapter, countries and its population are steered by promises and expectations in their desire to join the European Union. This goes back to the main argument that, the accession to the bloc is essentially a tit-for-tat situation. Countries forgo parts of their political sovereignty and even parts of their nationalism to benefit from the vast system of opportunities offered by the EU. Though, as became more apparent in the latter part of the previous section, when it comes to promises of democracy, the majority of EU members is rather disappointed (*Figure 2*).

This leaves countries with the promise of a stronger economic foundation spanning into the future, once joining the EU. This particular promise will be put under the spotlight in the following chapter. We will be using different economic identifiers and relying on comparative studies to identify the economic benefits (spillover) from EU membership. Ultimately, this chapter aims at answering, if the real economic spillover effect supports the initial expectations.

#### 4.1. Methodology

As previously mentioned, essentially this paper is split into two different, yet interconnected methodologies. The first part that dealt with the introduction of the key political ideologies was heavily reliant on a comprehensive qualitative theoretical analysis. Throughout this chapter, the focus will shift to a more quantitative approach. In order to show economic progress, it is important to show the development of economies throughout time. For this purpose, we will be relying on the following identifiers and investigate how they have changed from before the EU as well as during the EU over time: gross domestic income (GDP), employment rate, inflation

These identifiers will be compared via a comparative case study, which will include different countries from the different enlargement phases mentioned in *Table 1*. Some of which include, as discussed in the previous chapter, Austria, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Lithuania. These countries will be compared based on the system explained in the *Methodology* section.

The comparative study will rely on two phases: the initial phase is the data collection phase, which is then followed by the analysis and interpretation phase.

1. **Data Collection:** The initial step of the research begins with the process of data collection. Here we will look through a variety of data to gather relevant macroeconomic information pertaining to the discussed nation. As mentioned the key focus will be on the economic identifiers mentioned above. Data prior of joining the EU and starting from the accession to the EU will be used throughout this stage. The detail and meticulousness of this phase will determine the success of the following analysis and in such will influence the effect on the interpretation. As such, it is important to clearly identify key data points and properly combine them and analyze them. This phase of data collecting will lay a solid foundation for the following processes, enabling a comprehensive and informed economic analysis. All data this chapter will be based on sources gathered mostly for institutes such as World Bank, combined with data from worlddata.com.

2. **Interpretation and Analysis of Data:**

The second and final stage of this process will use the data collected in the previous step and use a variety of different economic formulas and models to highlight the effect of European Union on each identifier. Here, it is important to acknowledge that there may be other factors influencing the data that are outside of the spectrum. The goal is to determine how these identifiers have changed through the nations EU membership. Is the change positive or negative and even more important to the hypothesis, could the change validate a country abandoning its realist notion. Any and all graphs and visuals provided throughout this chapter will be solely based on the computations by the author. The author relies on RStudio. R is a programming language which is often based for computing and analysis of statistical data.

In the analysis part of this chapter we will also incorporate the results from the previous chapter pertaining to the economic expectations of the people.

## 4.2. Definition of Economic Spillover

Let's start by defining what exactly a spillover effect is. To better understand this term let's refer to a little example, provided by Tom Teitenberg and Lynne Lewis (2012). Let's consider two businesses that are located in proximity to a river. The first one makes steel, while the second runs a resort hotel somewhat downstream. Although they use it differently, both heavily rely on the river. For the steel mill, the lake serves as a trash disposal, and the hotel uses it to draw guests looking for aquatic activities. Due to the fact that the steel mill does not experience the costs of the resort's reduced business resulting from the continued dumping of garbage into the river, it is not likely that the steel mill will bear these costs in mind during its decision-making process. As a result, it is probable that there will be an excessive amount of trash dumped into the river, preventing it from being used efficiently (p. 25). While this example illustrates negative externalities – spillover effect – does not mean all spillover effects are negative. Easy example for a positive spillover can be a vaccination. While a vaccination can benefit me and protect me from getting a certain disease, it also protects other people. I cannot be a carrier and as such cannot get anyone sick. This is a very simplified form of a positive externality or spillover effect. In other words, the spillover effect defines an effect of a situation, choice, or action that unintentionally or intentionally affects other connected ones. So, one entity's activity (in our case the EU) has an impact on another entity (EU members). These effects are significant since they can be either good or bad (Kenton 2020). As such, as stated by the hypothesis of this thesis, EU memberships brings a positive spillover to member states.

### 4.2.1 Identifiers of Economic Spillover

For this study, we will be using the following key economic identifiers:

- **Gross domestic product**

Because economic growth often indicates increased earnings and expenditures by individuals and firms, many scholars and economists use the gross domestic product as an indicator (GDP). Alternative one could use the gross national product (GNP). The key difference is that GNP includes the income gained by residents from abroad. As for most economic research, this analysis will use GDP as it presents the national economy more precisely than GNP. Secondly, GDP is the most widely used tool to measure economic expansion or contraction through academic economic research<sup>18</sup>. GDP

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<sup>18</sup> See (Abadie, Diamond and Hainmueller 2010; Hakimi 2019).

simply measures the monetary value of all finished goods and services produced in a nation over a given time frame. A rise in GDP frequently reflects an expansion, while a drop in GDP indicates a contraction or recession (What is economic growth? 2022; Trinh 2017, p.14). In this particular study, the author will be relying on GDP per capita, as it interprets to how much spending power each person has. This translates that a higher GDP, on average, means the more spending power a individual in that nation has. Higher GDP per capita can impact the overall welfare.

- **Employment Rate / Unemployment Rate**

The percentage of the labor force that is employed is known as the employment rate. Employment rates are an instrument to indicate how effectively the potential workforce (people looking for work) are being utilized. The calculation is based on the proportion of people who are employed to people who are of working age. Although employment rates are cyclically sensitive, over the long run, they are greatly impacted by government policies on higher education, income support, and policies that favor the employment of women and underrepresented groups (OECD 2023).

- **Inflation Rate**

If the overall level of prices for goods and services increases exponentially, it leads to a decline in buying power, which is called an inflation. If there is a considerable increase in inflation during an economic transition, it may indicate that the economy is expanding too fast or the monetary policies are inefficient. In regards to inflation, it is good to have a stable inflation that does not fluctuate too much.

#### **4.3. Macro Analysis**

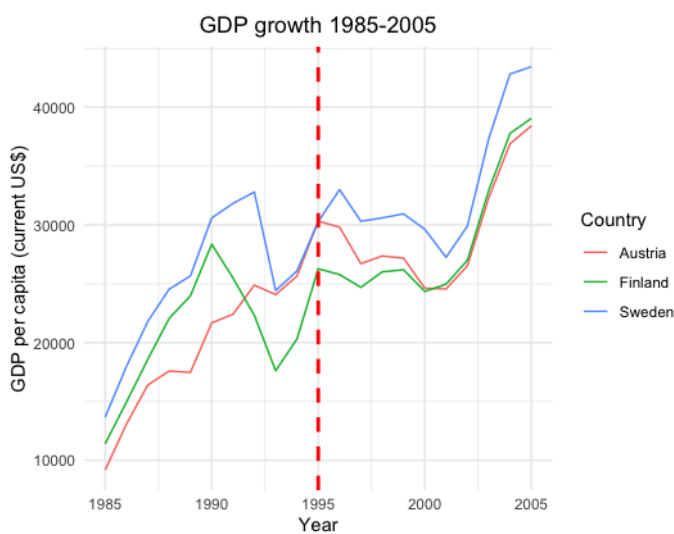
As discussed in length throughout this chapter, a key task of this thesis is to investigate the potential spillover effect of accessing the European Union. Primarily the focus is on potential economic effects. When analyzing EU accession, the Synthetic Control Method is very helpful. Its use may shed some light on the financial effects of the EU membership. In this research, the accession is viewed in two steps. Main focus of this research is on two different enlargements. The first one is the Fourth Enlargement of 1995 and the second one is the Fifth Enlargement, which started in 2004. In each enlargement, we will be focusing on

different countries, as aforementioned. All data this chapter will be based on sources gathered mostly for institutes such as World Bank, combined with data from worlddata.com.

### 4.3.1 Enlargement 1995

For the first analysis, the first enlargement under investigation, we will have a look at the three identifiers for Sweden, Austria, and Finland. As seen in *Figure 4*, it becomes evident that while all three countries experienced a slight growth of their GDP up until around 1990, when all three countries had to battle a sudden drop in their GDP. However, as of 1995, all three countries experience a steady increase as per the time between 1990 and 1995.

**Figure 14: GDP per Capita (1985 - 2005)**



For the first analysis, the first enlargement under investigation, we will have a look at the three identifiers for Sweden, Austria and Finland. As seen in *Figure 4*, it becomes evident that while all three countries experienced a slight growth of their GDP up until around 1990, when all three countries had to battle a sudden drop in their GDP. However, as of 1995, all three countries experience a steady increase as per the time between 1990 and 1995.

An interesting discovery can be made when focusing just on Austria. Between 1985 and 1995 the GDP, on average, increased by 2.115,38 US\$, however, between 1995 and 2005, so the next span of 10 years, the GDP increased, on average only 1.160,98 US\$. While the initial estimates were, as shown by the expectations earlier, that we would see economic enlargement, on average the GDP increase was higher prior Austria joining the EU. A simple explanation of this is that overall, the economy of Austria started growing with their application to join in 1989 (BMAW n.d). As seen by the graph above their GDP has semi steadily grown

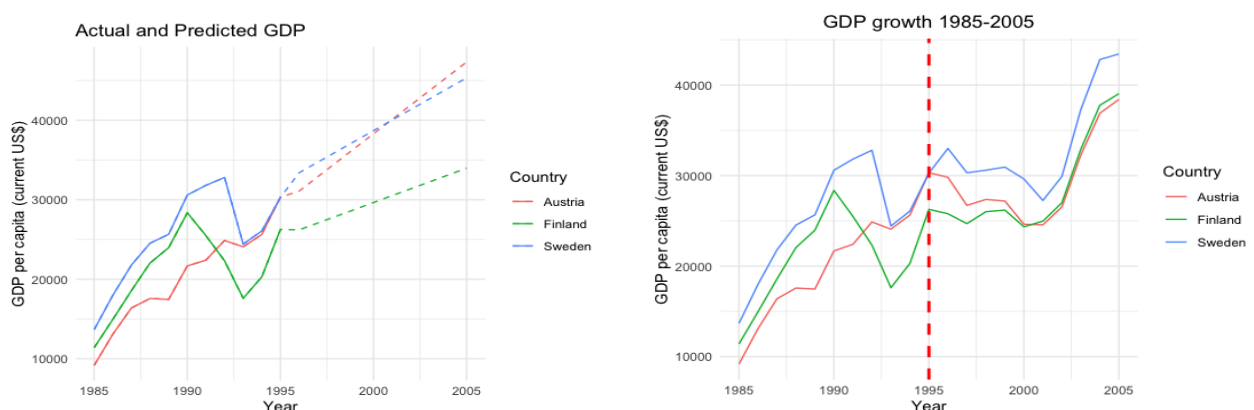
since the mid 1980s and the general growth was higher at the beginning because the growth rate was more radical. Once the GDP has reached a certain level (in 1995 and later) growth rate begins to straighten out a bit more because the potential of economic expansion is at a certain limit.

Finland's GDP progression is quite opposite of the Austria. As seen in the graph above, Finland also had the biggest most noticeable drop in their GDP per capita between 1990 and 1995. In the final 10 years before joining the EU, Finland's GDP, on average 1,307.79 US\$, however, after 1995, the next span of 10 years, saw the Finish GDP per capita rise by 1,704.87 US\$, which shows an increase by 30 %. Here, it can be easily said, or at least cautiously perceived, that by joining the EU, Finland has seen a boost to the GDP per capita, which does translate to some economic expansion.

For Sweden, these indications are semi in the middle, at least for GDP per capita. In the final decade before joining the EU, Sweden enjoyed an incline of 1,505.45 US\$ for their GDP per capita, whilst in the first decade of joining the EU, their GDP per capita grew on average slightly more with 1,577.45. This indicates an increase to the previous decade by 13%.

The overall effect, especially for Finland, becomes much more visible when looking at the predicted development, based on the data provided from 1985-1995 vs the actual development. Finland's GDP per capita increase was predicted to be much smaller than it actually turned out to be. For the other two countries, the predicted values, would be worse than the actual values.

**Figure 15: Predicted GDP per Capita vs actual development**



Unfortunately, the results for unemployment are bit lacking, due to missing data points, nevertheless, as seen in *Figure 6* below, there is still a semi clear trend, especially for Finland.

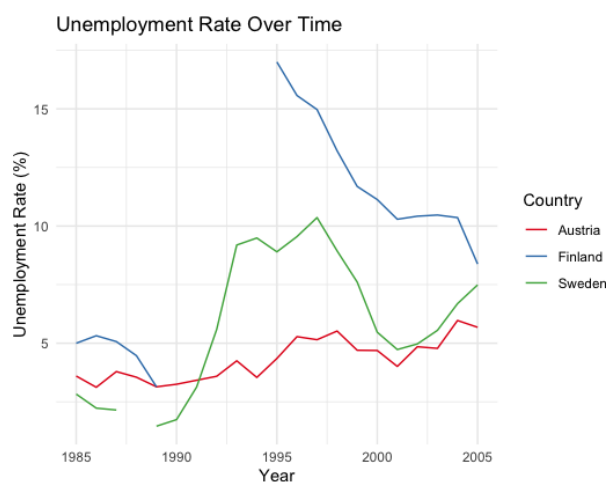


In 1995, the unemployment rate was at 17%. After 1995, the unemployment rate has drastically decreased and semi normalized.

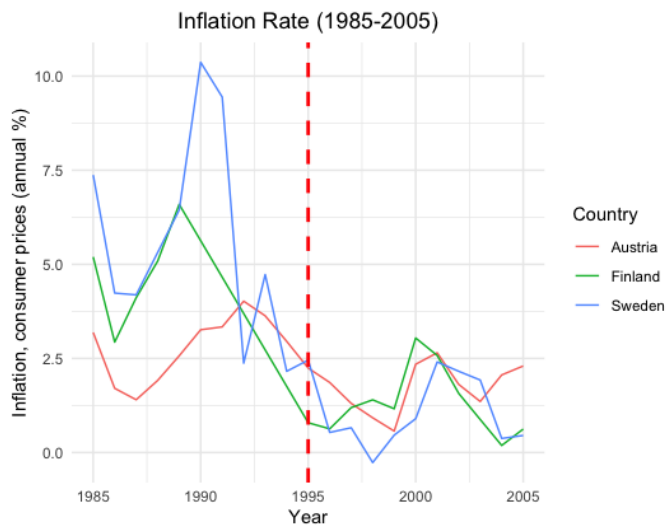
In this example, the only other outlier could be considered Finland, who's unemployment rate steadily rose until 1993 and 1994 and then also dropped to a more normal level of about 5%, before again increasing to around 7.5 % in 2005.

Once again, Austria is a bit inadequate to really make an impactful statement, as they have had pretty stable unemployment rate prior and after joining the bloc.

**Figure 16: Unemployment Rate (% total of labor force)**



Let's have a look at the final identifier for this enlargement period; inflation. For the first time really, even for Austria one can see an improvement. In the final decade (1985-1995), Austria averaged an inflation rate of 2.75%. Prior to joining the EU, the average inflation rate dropped by 35.75% to 1.77%. As shown in *Figure 7*, the general trend of inflation for Austria, as well as the other three countries is harsh decline in inflation starting at around the early 90s. As with the GDP per capita, this could be a result of expectations towards joining the EU in 1995. By the early to mid 2000s, all three countries can be seen within a rather healthy inflation environment, going in hand with the expectation of the European Central Bank that expects around 2% within the EU zone (European Central Bank n.d).

**Figure 17: Change of inflation rate between 1985-2005**

In summary, the three indicators show different effects for the different countries. The economic effect can certainly be shown with more certainty for Sweden and Finland, who both, more or less, can see economic benefits in BGP per capita, inflation, and unemployment rate. Austria, on the other, in some cases has almost no visible positive or negative trend. However, let's analyze the expectations, discussed in the previous chapter with the reality shown throughout this section.

As aforementioned, Austria expected some economic spillovers from their accession into the European Union. One issue mentioned, was the increase of their GDP by at least 3%. If we look the full 20 years, we can see an increase from initially 9,172.10 US\$ per capita, in 1985 to 38,417.46 US\$ per capita in 2005, which would translate to an increase of 318%. However, this number is a bit unrealistic and does not indicate the full picture. Obviously, there were many changes between 1985 and 2005, which distort this number. The polls, mentioned above were done in 1994. So, let's look at 1994, where the GDP per capita was at 25,646,70 US\$. A 3% increase of this would be 26,366.30 US\$ per capita. This number was surpassed initially in 1995, followed by a minor drop, and then again in 2002. So, in summary, the expectation was pretty much met immediately. However, the expectation of the initial 46% that were expecting significant economic impact, at least in the time measured here, have to be disappointed. As mentioned, yes there is positive economic spillover, resulting from EU membership, however, it cannot be considered significant.

Sweden, on the other hand couldn't be happier when comparing the initial expectations with the actual results. As previously mentioned, the Swedes were extremely worried about

their high inflation and wanted it to drop to or below 7%. By the time they joined, in 1995, their inflation has dropped to 2.46%, showing a clear indication of economic uplift. However, as with Austria beforehand, the other factor may hint to an economic expansion, but the true ‘super’ effect remains unseen.

Finland was not discussed in the chapter before. They are one of the clearest examples of the economic spillover effect. For all three indicators, Finland shows strong signs for economic expansion, indicating that their economy has greatly improved from their intent to join the EU to joining the EU. This could be seen as a clear indication for an economic benefit, toed to EU membership.

### 4.3.1 Enlargement 2004

Now that we have analyzed the first ‘true’ enlargement of the European Union, we shall now have a look at its largest and probably one of the most meaningful ones. The enlargement of 2004, initiated in 1997, was intended to finally reunite the European continent once more after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union late 80s, early 90s. In this part we will look at former member of the Soviet Union, Czech Republic and Lithuania. And one former Soviet satellite state: Poland. We will once more rely on the three economic indicators and look at the different development of the countries and compare the final results to the initial expectations, voiced by the members.

**Figure 18: GDP Development 1995 - 2015**

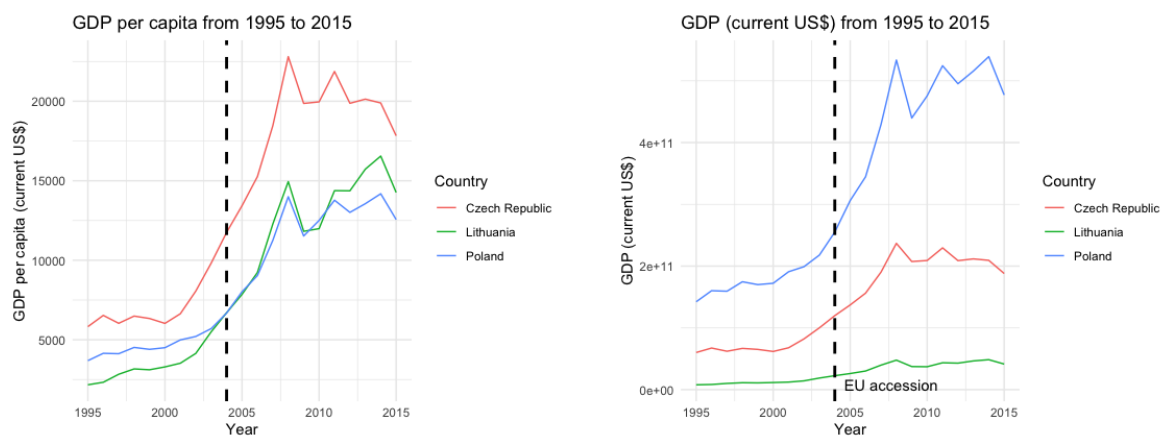


Figure 8 indicates that all their countries, leading up to their accession in 2004, experienced an upward trend in both their GDP per capita, as well as their actual GDP. A rather

significant increase can be seen starting in the early 2000s and especially after 2004, once all here of them officially became an EU member state.

Czech Republic GDP per capita, rose by 101 % between 1995 and 2004. It increased close to another 52% between 2004 and 2015, coming to a total increase, compared to 1995, of 206,24%. This is a massive economic improvement. Their actual GDP, however, increased ‘only’ by 99.15% between 1995 and 2004. In this particular case, GDP per capita and overall GDP are very close to each other.

A similar phenomenon can be seen, when we take a closer look at Poland. As shown in the left graph of *Figure 8*, Poland also experienced a major boost to their GDP per capita. The boost seems so much bigger to their normal GDP. However, when analyzing their percentage growth rate, once again, we can see that these two are very similar. Their GDP per capita increased, between 1995 and 2004, by 81 %, while their actual GDP increase by 79,23 percent. In total, in the measured timeframe, Poland experienced a GDP per capita growth rate of 240%, which is even more than what the Czech Republic experienced. Their normal GDP, in the same timeframe, saw a proportional growth rate of 235%, which once again is a massive indication that by joining the EU, Poland has positively benefited from the economic spillover.

Last but not least, let's have a look at Lithuania. While seemingly having the smallest increase in their normal GDP, their per capita GDP enjoyed a 209% increase between 1995 and 2004, indicating that the overall spending capabilities of Lithuanians, tripled in that timeframe. Between 1995 and 2015, Lithuanian had a massive GDP per capita increase of 557.86%. That is a massive improvement and can undoubtedly show some form of positive influence from their EU membership.

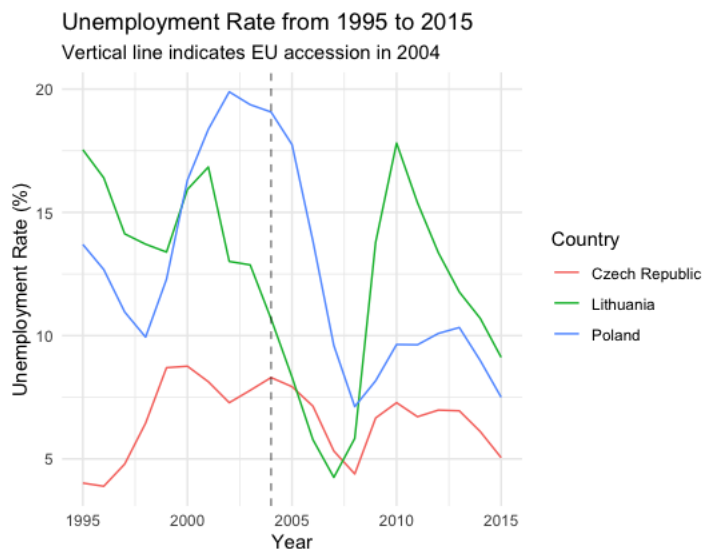
When taking a glance at the development of the unemployment rate once again, the trends of the three countries are somewhat similar but yet surprising. As previously mentioned, Czech Republic and Lithuania were official member states of the Soviet Union and as such, if we discard size of the country and population size, we should expect some similarities between those countries. However, as seen in *Figure 9*, when it comes to the development of unemployment, Poland and Lithuania have more in common than Lithuania and the Czech Republic.

Both Lithuania and Poland share a relatively high unemployment rate in the early 2000s. Both countries fluctuate between 16 up to almost 20% between 2000 and 2005. With the accession in 2004, both countries experience a massive drop in their respective unemployment rate, going from 19.07 in 2004 % to 9.06 % in 2007 for Poland, while Lithuania dropped from 10.68% in 2004 to 4.25% by 2007. As seen in the graph, both countries share a

common trend and their individual trend lines act in a seemingly similar way, until around 2009, when Lithuania, once again took a steep rise to 17.81 % (2010), while Poland managed to keep their employment rate relatively stable between 8 and 9%.

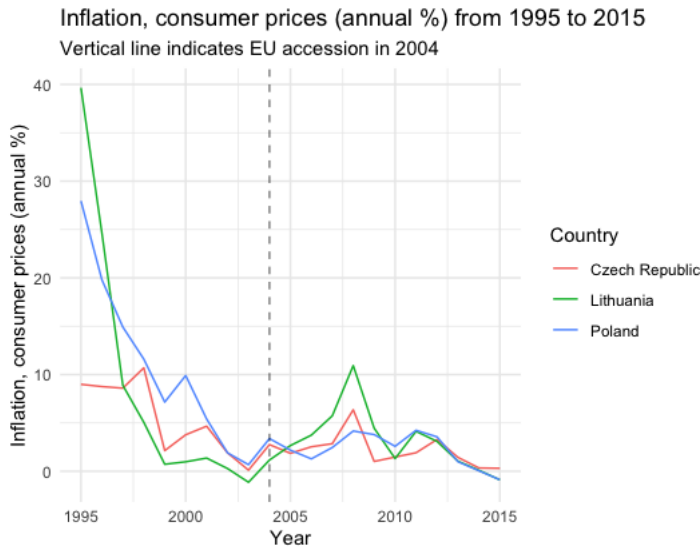
The Czech Republic, on the other hand, has had quite a stable development of their unemployment rate, ever since late 1990s. They have constantly remained somewhere between 6 and 4 %, which indicates quite a strong and stable economy, both prior as well as after EU accession.

**Figure 19: Unemployment Rate 1995 - 2015**



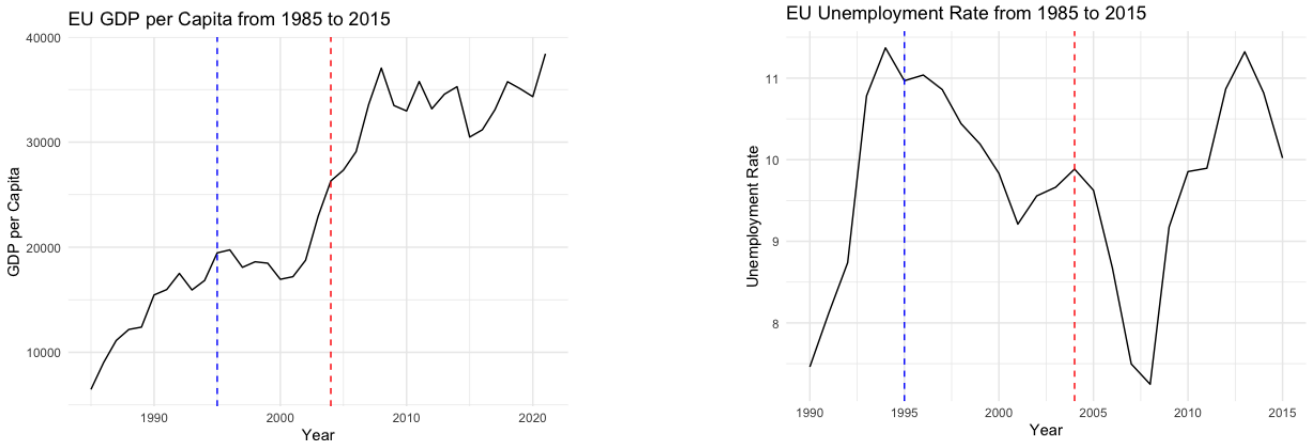
Lastly, let's have a look at the inflation, derived from the inflation, throughout these three countries (*Figure 10*). In this regard, all three show similar behavior, after around 2004, so after their EU membership started. Once again, the two major outliers are Poland and Lithuania, who have an initially high inflation rate (in 1995), 27.59% and 39.65%, respectively, Czech Republic, meanwhile, has a comparable low 8.99%. Once all three approach the deadline of their EU accession, all three enjoy a decrease in their respective inflation rate. Right in 2004, the Czech Republic has an inflation rate of 2.76%, Poland is at 3.38%, and Lithuania at a good 1.16%, indicating that for all three nations, the accession to the EU was beneficial for their individual inflation rate.

**Figure 20: Inflation Development 1995 - 2015**



Going forward throughout the years, it becomes apparent that all three countries experienced a slight increase again, right before 2010 (could be associated to the financial crisis that was happening during that time), nevertheless, all three countries recovered quickly and once more found themselves in a very healthy inflation range.

**Figure 21: EU overall GDP per capita and Employment Rate**



Let's summarize the findings for the second enlargement. The most obvious answer is that for the countries investigated and analyzed for the second enlargement, the economic benefits (spillover) of EU membership are much more prevalent. All three countries show patterns of economic development. What is extremely interesting, is the fact that when the

sentiment and expectations were looked at in the earlier chapter the Czech's had a strong sense of national economic pride. This pride is completely justified as the Czech Republic has been the single country, amongst the ones investigated for this enlargement that has remained relatively untainted by the changes and has remained relatively stable. While the other two countries, went through quite some changes and developments.

Initially, the Polish, as shown in the earlier chapter, were very pessimistic toward the accession of the EU and many were afraid that their economy would even get worse. However, as indicated by the numbers and graphs here, it becomes apparent that this initial fear was unjustified. Poland experienced quite a boost to their economy, as suggested by the indicators in this study.

In total, one can definitely make the case that for these three countries, the economic benefits stemming from their participation in the European Union is overwhelming. All three countries show a massive push to their GDP per capita as well as their normal GDP. It is safe to say, that for these three countries, one can safely say that there is an economic benefit, which spillover from the EU membership.

In conclusion, it is also necessary to look at the impact each enlargement has had on the EU itself. As visualized in *Figure 11*, the EU has greatly benefited from the continues expansions and additional members. Both graphics clearly indicate that GDP increased after 1995, while unemployment rate dropped. The same pattern, however, with a greater effect, can be seen following the second enlargement in 2005. This is an indication that the spillover effect is seemingly mutual, which kind of makes sense. The more members join the EU the larger the overall economy and the larger the benefits for all members. An economic system, that includes an open market structure with multiple entities (countries) provides quite some stability and a semi continues economic growth. As each country develops, so does the EU as a whole, providing spillover to all its members.

## Chapter 5

### Summary and Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate nations reasoning of joining the EU. Its key hypothesis proclaimed that countries are inherently acting to a realist behavior. According to offensive realists, countries should not trust any other country and instead maximize and enhance their own power wherever possible. This includes never giving up parts of their inherent sovereignty. Defensive realists, however, maintain that countries need to focus of their security and instead maximize their own security, rather than their power. However, both sides would agree that countries will always act in accordance to their own agenda and motivation, which makes trust and cooperation almost impossible. Since that is the case, why would nations then decide then to join the European Union and with that, abandon aspects of their sovereignty.

Political liberals would argue that the European Union is essentially a symbol of the liberal concept. In accordance with their key principles, the EU acts a principal platform that advocates peace and safety, whilst at the same time extending the of democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Furthermore, by fostering collaboration and fusing European nations into a single economic and political entity, it succeeds in reducing conflict and encouraging economic growth and welfare throughout Europe. That being said, from a liberal perspective joining the EU would be beneficial, as it would further the democratic growth, creating an even more stable political environment within the European hemisphere. The more countries join the bigger the combined welfare for everyone. Together, countries can maintain a safe and stable environment that protect the liberal inherent human rights. However, as shown earlier, a feeling of democratic disappointment may result from the lack of actual power (tangible power) to influence choices at the EU level, as European integration increasingly intrudes into issues at the very core of national sovereignty and identity. As indicated by the polls, there is a certain discord amongst people that feel that the EU is in fact undemocratic. Here it is, however, essentially to admit that the topic of democracy can be quite a tricky one. The core idea of democracy, will essentially always lead to people feelings left out or feeling like their voice does not matter.

Nevertheless, assuming countries will join the European Union solely out of hope to become more democratic can be refuted. Here, the case can be made that especially countries such as the Czech Republic or Lithuanian, formerly part of the Soviet Union, prefer a more



democratic dissemination and enjoy that particular part of the European Union. But even those countries are looking for something more.

Leading us to constructivist ideology and their attempt to explain why countries would like to join the EU. Constructivists see the EU as a social construct. Essentially, we are all connected in some way, shape, or form based on our shared ideologies, norms, cultures, and ideas. Here again, values such as democracy, human rights, and rule of law, become part of the attempted reasoning as to why nations decide to join the EU. Same as with the liberal attempt, one has to argue that while there are some merits to this idea, nationalism is still the more prevalent force. Furthermore, it can be argued that in order for this construct to work, people would have to cooperate and engage with each other to find a common ground and shared values. In essence, yes, constructivism is part of the EU, once the membership is established and once people consider themselves as part of European identity. So, again, not really a good enough reason as to why countries would abandon their realist approach and give up their sovereignty for EU membership.

Wish leads us to the final theoretical approach, Marxism. Marxism shares many values with the school of thought of realism and as such, considers the European Union a vessel of the powerful, capitalistic states that use the international organization to spread capitalism and maintain their power. While this might be a rather harsh perception, the case can be made for the big players in the European Union, such as France or Germany. These countries benefit greatly under the EU, both economically and politically. Both countries continue to grow in these regards and benefit from each new member that essentially buys their products. Both nations have immense power and say in the EU. Again, this is a rather radical view, however, it does have some merit to it.

So, with everything being said, what is the key motive for realist countries to abandon their beliefs and cooperate with others? Well, the economic spillover that affects both joining nations as well as member states is certainly a major motive. As shown in the economic analysis, there clearly is a positive economic spillover. By joining the EU, countries do experience economic uplift. These uplift benefits both the EU as a whole but also the individual country. However, as seen with the different countries investigated in this thesis, the level of benefit is quite different and heavily depends on the previous environment of the country. Countries who formerly were members of the Soviet Union, may see this economic uplift as astronomically (an increase of 200% for GDP per capita). However, as these countries are freshly independent, there are other factors at play. They themselves are finding themselves and developing themselves. Nevertheless, membership in the EU does offer many benefits to them.

– access to economical support and a safe structure to build themselves up and exchange ideas and innovation with other countries. With that in mind, it becomes evident that while the economic spillover exists and certainly heavily impacts these countries it needs to be views with a pinch of salt.

Similarly, when looking at the results from Austria, their economic impact prior to joining the EU and after joining the EU was minimal. That can be traced back to them already being an established member of the European community, who had trade relations and other strong ties with members prior joining the EU, which results in them already having a relative established economy, which already is benefiting from the European Union, without really being an official member.

What this is trying to highlight is the fact that there is not just one reason that would justify a country to abandon their cautious outlook. Maybe, it can even be said that offensive realism is slowly dying out. In a world where everyone and everything is interconnected, countries that distance themselves, may not progress fast enough. So, as stated earlier, the general idea behind defensive realism is quite valid. Cooperation, multilateralism, and unity are all essential for countries to remain relevant and to continue their growth. Countries need to open themselves up for trade and cooperation in order to progress and sustain continued success.

Hence, while this thesis may not have been able to prove that the economic spillover from EU membership is the sole purpose for countries to abandon their realist beliefs, it may have helped to show that the overall idea of offensive realism is no longer applicable. Countries that are out to optimize their power, cannot do so alone. So, in retrospect, the economic spillover is certainly a major advantage of the European Union, however, they key reason as to why countries abandon their pessimistic realist aspiration is due to the fact that realism has shifted. In order for countries to remain powerful, remain relevant, and to enjoy continues success, they need to cooperate. Abandoning parts of their sovereignty, and joining the EU, increases their power and their standing in the global environment.

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