

**Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 18-24.**

European integration is best understood as a series of rational choices by rational leaders.

It involves a three stage process. Each stage however has rival explanatory mechanisms.

1. Preference formation which is driven by geopolitical or economic factors
2. A bargaining phase which can be explained as a process of “supranational entrepreneurship” or in terms of inter-state bargaining power
3. the choice of institutions which can be explained by theories of federalist ideology, technocratic centralization or national credibility commitment.

The three stages produce a multicausal explanation for each round of integration.

Moravcsik’s method involves the formulation of falsifiable hypotheses from the theories outlined above, the use of disaggregated case studies and a reliance on primary sources.

Assumption is that the nation-state is unitary and rational, i.e. it acts as if it had a “single voice”, but not unitary internally. The nation-state is assumed to have stable preferences, which do change over time, but can be taken as stable within each round of negotiation.