

**“Designer” Europeanization:**

**Lessons from Jean Monnet**

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## **Abstract**

The European Council called for a period of reflection in each of the member states of the European Union (EU) after the people of France and the Netherlands rejected the Constitutional Treaty in referendums in 2005. The present paper offers a contribution to this process by reflecting on the prospects for institutional design and redesign in the EU. It does so from a historical perspective, and the paper discusses what lessons can be drawn from Jean Monnet, viewed as an institutional designer on the European stage. It is argued that the successful establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ESCS) was a product of a robust deontological design in a constitutional moment for Europe, and that prospective designers in the EU can learn important lessons from how Monnet identified and exploited available spaces for institutional design.

## **Key Words:**

Institutional and political design; the European Union; Jean Monnet; constitutional moment; deontological approach

## **1. Introduction**

The overriding theme of this paper is deliberate political design, and the main objective is to make a contribution towards understanding why some political design attempts turn out more successful than others. The interest in this topic stems from a well-known puzzle in politics; while democratic governance is based on the fundamental idea that social and political life can be shaped purposefully, it is often observed that comprehensive reforms can be difficult to carry out in practice (March and Simon, 1958; March and Olsen, 1989; 1995). This paper addresses this puzzle by analysing a particularly successful attempt at radical deliberate political design, and discusses what lessons can be drawn from it for prospective designers.

As a point of departure for his theoretical discussions on design and redesign of political institutions, Johan P. Olsen poses two questions (Olsen, 1997: 203). First, to what degree do democratic contexts create a viable space for institutional design – making design necessary, politically feasible and legitimate? Second, what kinds of processes tend to make designers able to exploit the available space of design? This paper considers these two questions in the context of the European Union (EU), where focus is on the space and role of deliberate political design during the early European integration efforts after World War II.

The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) through the 1951 Treaty of Paris ignited what is often considered to be the most remarkable international

political integration project the world has witnessed. The process of institution-building, law-making, policy integration and market creation in the EU has produced a model of internationalization with distinct characteristics (Laffan, 1998). However, the future of this project and model is now more uncertain, as a widespread sense of crisis has engulfed the EU after the people of France and the Netherlands rejected the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (the Constitutional Treaty) in referendums in 2005. In light of these results, the European Council called for a period of reflection in each of the EU member states. The present paper offers a contribution to this process by reflecting on the prospects for institutional design and redesign in the EU. It does so from a historical perspective in order to avoid the “myopic theories based solely on the most recent developments” (Olsen, 2003: 835). Although the size and heterogeneity of the European integration project has increased substantially, potential lessons for the current constitutionalization process will be drawn from the successful establishment of the ESCS. A historical perspective is further justified by the fact that the current institutions of the EU are remarkably similar to those designed in the early 1950s (Pinder, 1985-86).

A beloved child has many names as they say in the Scandinavian countries, and Jean Monnet has been recognized, among other things, as the architect and master builder (Ball, 1978), the creator and instigator (Yergin and Stanislaw, 1998), the entrepreneur and planner (Ardagh, 1968) and the innovator and trail-blazer (Rostow, 1994) for European post-war unity. Each of these characterizations entails references to the phenomenon of deliberate political design, and this paper takes an in-depth look at Monnet as an institutional designer. Monnet referred to his political vision and project in terms of “a European grand

design” (Monnet, 1978: 465) or “un vaste dessein européen” (Monnet, 1976: 546), and the discussions draw heavily on Monnet’s own views and experiences with deliberate political design at the supra-national level, as they are expressed in his *Memoirs* (Monnet, 1976; 1978).<sup>1</sup> This book has been referred to as a handbook “on how to get constructive things done in a world where governments still claim sovereignty, and bureaucrats ardently defend their turf and the status quo” (Rostow, 1994: 258). Aware of the potential pitfalls associated with evoking the “dead kings” in the contemporary EU debate (Petersson and Hellström, 2003), this paper discusses what lessons can be drawn from the role of Jean Monnet in the establishment of the ECSC for prospective designers at the EU level. Responding to the appeal for more theoretically and methodologically rigorous evaluations of the role of entrepreneurship in studies of the EU (Moravcsik, 1999), a set of concrete hypotheses concerning the role of design will be empirically tested.

The paper is organized as follows: Part 2 presents the concept of deliberate political design in greater detail, and seeks to identify circumstances and factors that may affect available spaces for institutional design, as well as prospective designers’ abilities to exploit these spaces. Distinctions between two types of political contexts and two types of political designs are made and presented. Further, the discussions on political design at the EU level

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Monnet’s *Memoirs* was written with assistance of the writer François Fontaine (Monnet, 1976), and it was translated from French to English by Richard Mayne (Monnet, 1978). An introduction by George W. Ball was included in the English version (Ball, 1978).

are linked to the established Europeanization literature. In Section 3, Jean Monnet is viewed and analyzed as an institutional designer, where focus is on the design context and process associated with the ESCS. Based on these discussions, Part 4 reflects on the space and role of design in connection with the Constitutional Treaty. Finally, Section 5 sums up and concludes.

## **2. Designer Europeanization: Contexts and Processes**

This paper deals with the early post-war attempts at radical supra-national political design at the European level, and in light of these findings, discusses the prospects for deliberate institutional design in the EU today. Focus is on the dynamics and outcomes of EU level institutional development which can be referred to under the umbrella of Europeanization (Olsen, 2002).<sup>2</sup> The word “designer Europeanization” emphasises the deliberate aspects of these processes, where design is understood as purposeful and deliberate intervention that succeeds in establishing new institutional structures and processes, or rearranging existing ones, thereby achieving intended outcomes and improvements (Olsen, 1997: 205).<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, political design is a dual exercise, as successful designers must be able to develop visions, as well as to enact the developed visions.

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2 See Olsen (2002) and his discussion of five different accounts of Europeanization.

3 The concept of “designer Europeanization” has earlier been used by Helen Wallace (2002: 144).

Although purposeful and deliberate interventions occasionally are successful, they are most often less than perfect, i.e. decisions to change do not lead to change, or they lead to further unanticipated and unintended change (March and Simon, 1958; March and Olsen, 1989; 1995). Despite these imperfections, most governance models are premised on the ideal that elected visionary political leaders can move a polity in a desired direction. It is therefore imperative for both ordinary citizens and elected political leaders to increase our understanding about the conditions that may facilitate deliberate political design.

Towards this aim, the foundation of the ECSC will be analysed in light of two dimensions; a contextual dimension that is assumed to affect the spaces for political design, and a procedural dimension that is assumed to affect the designers' abilities to exploit the available spaces for design. First, we can separate between two contexts for political design, and they can be referred to as constitutional moments versus routine politics (Olsen, 2003: 833). Constitutional moments as opposed to routine politics can be defined as "the rare moments in a nation's history when deep, principled discussion transcends the logrolling and horse-trading of everyday majority politics" (Elster, 1988: 6). These moments can be produced by revolutions, social unrest, financial bankruptcy or some other serious performance crisis, or follow from external shocks such as war, conquest and defeat (Olsen, 1997). Routine processes of learning and adaptation are assumed to reduce the need for comprehensive reform (Olsen, 2003), and the hypothesis here is that available spaces for deliberate political design will be wider when states face constitutional moments than in contexts of routine politics and politics-as-usual. Although design processes are affected by

timing, we do not assume a deterministic relation between design context and outcome. Despite its limitations, political leadership is relevant, and it is important to pay attention to how and with what effects political designers can influence and shape the objective context, as well as people's perceptions of this context. For instance, convincing and mobilizing the right amount of participants (some, but not too many) around a constitutional moment may be a key to successful political and institutional design by preventing overcrowded "garbage can" processes that make it difficult to reach joint decisions on change (Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972).

Second, concerning the question of what kinds of processes tend to make designers able to exploit the space of design, a distinction can be made between deontological designs and instrumental designs (Olsen, 1997: 220). A design based on instrumental principles focuses on the expected contributions to realize predetermined goals, and the immediate substantive results of these efforts. This type of design presupposes that all action alternatives, the probability distribution of consequences conditional of each alternative, and the subjective value of each possible consequence are known (March, 1999). Lack of exact knowledge constitutes a serious problem for instrumental designs. Deontological designs, on the other hand, are not assessed based on precise calculations of their effectiveness and efficiency in specific situations, instead, the question is whether they are seen as appropriate in coping with a broader class of tasks and situations (Olsen, 1997). Focus here is on long-term general principles rather than specific outcomes. Deontological designs, therefore, acknowledge and embrace the uncertainties and ambiguities associated with decision-making. Gibson and Goodin (1999), for instance, see vagueness as a model for institutional

design. They argue that agreements on reforms are easier to achieve when they are wrapped in a “veil of vagueness” that can cloak the actual nature of an agreement and in that way make the process more acceptable to all concerned. A key hypothesis here is that it will be easier to build support for robust deontological designs that refer to basic principles that constrain political processes in somewhat uncertain and ambiguous ways and allow different substantive outcomes, than for instrumental designs that dictate precise policy outcomes (Olsen, 1997).

### **3. The European Coal and Steel Community: A Deontological Design in a Constitutional Moment for Europe**

Across the centuries, many attempts at creating a more politically integrated Europe have been made. Among all those initiatives, the Treaty of Paris establishing the ESCS stands out as a remarkably successful case of deliberate political design. This radical new project received almost immediate preliminary approval by the 6 participating states, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The formal negotiations started two months after the idea had been presented for the first time in May 1950. The final treaty was signed in April 1951, less than a year after the formal negotiations had commenced. The ESCS entered into force in August 1952 after having been ratified by the national parliaments of the 6 member states. Although Jean Monnet worked closely with other people in this process, he is, in this paper, studied as the main designer of the ESCS

project, and his views on contexts and procedures associated with successful political and institutional design will be presented and discussed.

The underlying context leading up to the Treaty of Paris can be described in terms of a constitutional moment in European politics. After WW II, there was a widespread feeling that Europe needed to undertake concrete plans to avoid future armed conflicts through other strategies than what had been used in the League of Nations. This popular and political mood gave rise in late 1940s to the European movement, which has been described as a loose collection of individuals and interest groups ranged across the political spectrum that shared the advocacy of European unity (Dinan, 1999). However, there was little agreement on what principles future European co-operation and unity should be based, and a clear split could be observed between the “unionist” and the more radical “federalist” position.

Jean Monnet, who was the head of the French Commissariat Général du Plan, was an outsider and observer to the European movement. He had come to the conclusion during WW II that economic integration was the only means by which a future conflict in Europe could be avoided. It was this realization that stimulated his 1943 vision of the formation of “a federation or a European entity” among the states of Europe (Monnet, 1978: 222).<sup>4</sup>

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4 In a letter written to the Committee of National Liberation in Algiers on August 15, 1943, Monnet argues that “...the states of Europe must form a form a federation or a “European entity” which will make them a single economic unit”.

Concerning the enactment of this vision, Monnet stressed the importance of patience and timing. It is clear that Monnet felt that WW II had the potential of producing a constitutional moment and a space for deliberate political design at the supra-national level in Europe. However, he did not think that the destructiveness of WW II was serious enough to “trigger a political reaction of the kind that would cause European countries to pool their sovereignty in a unique, supranational entity” (Dinan, 1999).<sup>5</sup> He therefore continued to prepare and work on his grand design in a context of routine politics, while he was waiting for the constitutional moment when his vision could be presented and sought enacted. “The essential thing is to be prepared. For that, I need a firm belief, based on long reflection. When the moment comes, everything is simple, because necessity leaves no room for hesitation” (Monnet, 1978: 35). As emphasised by Rostow (1994: 265), there are several explicit references in the *Memoirs* to the critical importance of timing in the designing of political institutions, and Monnet claimed that only the “pressure of necessity” would produce a constitutional moment for European unity.

In connection with the German industrial recovery and the gradual softening of British and U.S. occupation policies towards the end of the 1940s, it became increasingly evident that the harsh and punitive French policies towards Germany had become outdated and were in need of a fundamental revision. This feeling was further exacerbated by the establishment of the Federal Republic of West Germany in September 1949. In this context, Monnet was

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<sup>5</sup> Monnet openly states that he had expected to see more material destructions when he returned to France from exile in 1945 (1978: 225).

convinced that the moment he had waited patiently for had arrived and “that the time had come to act” (1978: 287). However, faced with a multitude of participants, problems and solutions concerning the future of Europe after WWII, Monnet was aware of the fact that specific stimulus and political leadership was necessary in order to transform a disposition for change into his preferred option for institutional reform. Monnet believed that France’s, and the wider Europe’s, economic and security interests could be best ensured through Franco-German reconciliation, and on April 28 1950, Monnet sent his vision of a supranational coal and steel community to the French Prime Minister, Georges Bidault and the Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman. At that point, Monnet knew that the Americans had asked the French to propose the broad lines of a German policy on behalf of the three Western occupying forces at the Foreign Ministers’ meeting in London on May 11-13, 1950.

Concerning the contextual dimension of Monnet’s supranational design project, the ESCS was a product of a vision developed over time in a context of routine politics. This vision was, in turn, presented and sought enacted in the context of a constitutional moment when the available space for institutional design was assumed wider. Organization of attention around what can be referred to as a constitutional moment was therefore a central aspect of Monnet’s political design project. “[A]lthough it takes a long time to reach the men at the top, it takes little to explain to them how to escape from the difficulties of the present. This is something they are glad to hear when the critical moment comes. Then, when ideas are lacking, they accept yours with gratitude” (Monnet, 1978: 231). Monnet’s proposal was

picked up by Schuman, who in turn placed before his own cabinet and presented it to the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer.

A study of the political designer Jean Monnet illustrates the importance of patience in deliberate political and institutional design; i.e. waiting for the development of a space that makes design necessary, politically feasible and legitimate. Thus, the timing of the plan was “no accident at all” (Duchêne, 1994: 190). However, Monnet was not a passive observer in this process, as he actively sought to shape people’s perceptions of the context. In order to increase the chances of convincing enough people about the existence of a constitutional moment and to increase the space for institutional design, he seemed to stimulate the sense of crisis by being overly pessimistic and through over-dramatization of the situation.<sup>6</sup> As will be illustrated, Monnet also had a clear opinion on how the space for institutional design should be successfully exploited. Focus here is on how Monnet used and embraced ambiguity in the designing of the ESCS.

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<sup>6</sup> Duchêne (1994) illustrates Monnet’s overly pessimistic and dramatic attitude in 1950 through a number of quotes. For instance, Monnet claimed that the cold war was the first stage in the preparation of war. Further, he told a visitor when asked about how things were going: “Badly my friend...They are going to drop it, the atom bomb, and then...” (Duchêne, 1994: 198). According to Duchêne, Monnet continued to rely on this strategy as President of the High Authority of the ESCS, as he created an “atmosphere of permanent crisis” which was used to generate what is referred to as “creative tensions” (Duchêne, 1994: 240)

After having received the politicians' attention, and the acceptance from France, Germany and the U.S., Monnet aimed to stabilize the attention that had been produced through the constitutional moment. Already before the *Monnet Proposal* was presented to the French government, Jean Monnet worked on institutionalizing the attention and the idea: "pleased as I was, I knew that the essential task remained to be completed; and I was impatient for one thing – institutions to give shape to an agreement based on goodwill. Nothing is possible without men: nothing is lasting without institutions (Monnet, 1978: 304-05). Monnet had at an early stage been clear that supranational institutions would be needed to enact his vision. Repetition was another method used to stabilize attention around his vision. Monnet was famous for his repetition of central messages, and always the same message, no matter who he talked with.<sup>7</sup> "There are many advantages in getting the same formulae fixed in people's minds" (Monnet, 1978: 126).

The Monnet vision for European unity had an overriding political and moral purpose, and as will be illustrated, he relied on a robust deontological design in order to achieve the widest possible acceptance for this vision. The basic principles of reason and morality behind Monnet's vision of a unified Europe are summed up in the following sentence from the Monnet Plan, which was officially presented as the Schuman Declaration on 9 May 1950: "By the pooling of basic production and the establishment of a new High Authority

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<sup>7</sup> According to Rostow, Monnet explicitly made "repetition a principle and a weapon" (1994: 264).

whose decisions will be binding on France, Germany, and the countries that join them, this proposal lay the first concrete foundations of the *European Federation* which is indispensable to the maintenance of peace” (my emphasis) (Monnet, 1978: 298).<sup>8</sup>

In realizing this general vision, Monnet embraced uncertainties and ambiguities, and discussions of details were either avoided or wrapped in a “veil of vagueness”. There are many examples of this. First, political details concerning the vision of European unity were absent when Monnet first presented the plan to Adenauer: “The aim of the French proposal, therefore, is essentially political. It even has an aspect which might be called moral. Fundamentally, it has one simple objective, which our Government will try to attain without worrying, in this first phase, about any technical difficulties that may arise” (Monnet, 1978: 310). According to Monnet, Adenauer welcomed the vision, and responded that: “we shall not let ourselves be caught up in details” (Monnet, 1978: 310). The political details were still unspecified when Schuman officially presented the plan. The future of the plan is like “a leap in the dark” as he sincerely told the journalists immediately after his presentation (Monnet, 1978: 305). Monnet could not blame Schuman for his lack of an informative response because: “Few people realized how true the metaphor was” (Monnet, 1978: 305). The former British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, also realized this, and he referred to the Schuman plan as “a plan to have a plan” (Duchêne, 1994: 209). Second,

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<sup>8</sup> This quote is from Monnet’s Plan as it was presented to the French government in April 1950. This proposal was presented by Schuman on 9 May 1950 with only minor modifications.

even the economic details had not been included in the planning of the ECSC project, and the Monnet proposal was presented without a detailed examination of the relative costs to French and German coal and steel industries (Lynch, 1988). Third, Monnet also actively tried to avoid technical discussions over the institutional configuration of the ECSC, and in particular with regard to the role of the High Authority in the formal negotiations between the 6 countries after the initial plan had been approved. “My colleagues wanted these technical clauses settled beforehand: I should have liked to deal with them afterwards” (Monnet, 1978: 325). What Monnet wanted was to establish the institutions of the ECSC, and then let them work out all technical issues. Fourth, and in terms of personnel, Monnet actively tried to recruit generalists rather than technical experts to represent the 6 countries in the negotiations on the ECSC. As a direct response to Chancellor Adenauer’s request for advice on who should represent Germany in the negotiations, Monnet answered: “It would be a mistake to worry too much about expertise. What counts is a sense of general interest” (Monnet, 1978: 311).

In short, Monnet did not rely on an instrumental design where all outcomes would be precisely dictated. “I can say that at that time I was convinced that progress towards a united Europe would be easier if we could exclude from the new Treaty the legal and technical formalities that normally burden such agreements (Monnet, 1978: 321). It can be argued that Monnet’s vision for European unity was based on a robust deontological design with no blueprint of the final state. Although his vision of European unity was clear, he never assumed that it would be realized through a single general plan or comprehensive design. Instead, he thought his vision would be gradually realized through concrete, but

more or less unspecified achievements. As emphasised by Gerber, “Monnet had produced a project that was both precise for the situation of coal and steel at the time, and potentially rich in future developments for Europe” (Gerbet, 1956: 552).

A key to the successful establishment of the ECSC seems to be that Monnet managed to prevent the process from becoming a “garbage can” that makes joint decisions difficult due to an overload of participants, problems and solutions (Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972). Although he waited for the constitutional moment that would mobilize people, he intentionally tried to keep the number of participants down. Mobilizing some, but not too many seemed to be a guiding principle throughout the whole ECSS process. He preferred speed and secrecy in the planning phase, and only nine people were in the know of his plan the week before it was officially presented by Schuman on 9 May 1950 (Monnet, 1978: 301).<sup>9</sup> Further, the number of participants in the 10 month long Schuman Plan Conference that commenced on 20 June 1950 counted not more than sixty delegates from the 6 countries combined. The deontological design adopted by Monnet may have further contributed to reducing the number of participants. In fact, it was the deontological nature and the veil of vagueness surrounding the ESCS project that ultimately led to the British decision not to participate. The British government sought clarifications of central concepts in the French-German agreement, and refused the idea of *committing* themselves to pool resources and set up an authority with certain *sovereign powers* “before there had been full opportunity of considering how these important and far-reaching principles would work in

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<sup>9</sup> “I wanted to keep the idea as secret as possible” (Monnet, 1978: 294).

practice” (Monnet, 1978:313). Acceptance of the ambiguous and unspecified principles underlying the ECSC project was of major importance for Monnet, and they were seen as “the entry ticket to the Schuman talks” (Duchêne, 1994: 202) . In fact, they were treated as the institutional building-blocks for European unity.

The next section discusses the failure to ratify the 2004 Constitutional Treaty in light of Monnet’s deliberate political design project. It will be argued that the space for deliberate political design in the EU seemed more narrow, but also that the available space was less effectively exploited in connection with the constitutionalization process 50 years after the successful foundation of the ECSC.

#### **4. The 2004 Constitutional Treaty: An Instrumental Design in a (Temporary) Equilibrium in Europe?**

Monnet emphasised the element of patience in institutional design, and we have earlier seen how Jean Monnet waited for seven years before his 1943 vision for European unity was presented and acted upon. He waited for the constitutional moment that would create a space for deliberate political design. The context around the Constitutional Treaty seems different, as it was designed and sought ratified in a context of what has been referred to as a temporary equilibrium after a decade of institutional reform in the EU (Moravcsik, 2002; 2006). Schmitter (2000) argues that, in this context, full-scale constitutionalization would be impossible because member states were not ready for a major overhaul of their ruling

institutions. Constitution-making should be seen as a complex and multi-step process (Fossum and Menéndez, 2005). However, a lack of patience characterized the constitutionalization process, and the Constitutional Treaty was launched and sought ratified in a time when the available space for deliberate political design seemed very narrow.

The ESCS design process was driven by a deontological design and what can be identified as “available, legitimate institutional building-blocks rather than substantive problems” (Olsen, 1997: 222). Jean Monnet studied the viability of alternative structures for achieving the vision of European unity, rather than aiming at tailor-made designs for achieving immediate policy goals. Focus was on long-term general principles rather than specific outcomes, ambiguities and uncertainties were embraced and veil of vagueness was used to generate the broadest possible support. The process associated with the Constitutional Treaty was different, and it was designed to realize a set of precise policy outcomes, i.e. making the EU more effective, more transparent, more comprehensible and closer to the European citizens (European Union, 2006). Constitutionalization was justified on the basis that the body of Community law as a whole, which was based on 8 existing treaties and more than 50 protocols and annexes, had made the “European structure more and more complex and very difficult for European citizens to understand” (European Union, 2006). Simplification and streamlining were therefore central aims associated with the Constitutional Treaty, as the designers tried to lift or remove the veil of vagueness surrounding the relationship between the basic institutions of the EU, their powers, their responsibilities and interrelations, as well as concerning the normative principles that the

EU is based on. However, simplification and explanation of existing treaties and law is not unproblematic. As emphasised by the Swedish Prime Minister, the existing treaties are the result of delicate compromises, and simplification will be difficult without changing their content (Persson, 2001). The fundamental idea behind a deontological approach would have been to secure agreement on general principles on a broad level before going into more detailed discussions. However, this approach was not chosen, and there was even little agreement on whether the EU already had a constitution, whether it needed one, and if so, what kind of constitution was needed (Joerges et al., 2000). In short, the instrumental nature of the design did not seem to generate broad enough support to undertake radical treaty changes in the form of ratifying a Constitution for Europe. The difference between the 1951 Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community and the 2004 Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe as design projects can be summed up in a simple two-by-two table.

**Space for Institutional Design**

		Constitutional Moment	Routine Politics
<b>Type of Design</b>	Deontological Design	1951 Treaty of Paris	
	Instrumental Design		2004 Constitutional Treaty

## 5. Conclusion: Design Lessons

Although several elements of Monnet's original vision did not survive unaltered in the final Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (Griffiths, 1988), his achievements represent a powerful example of deliberate political design.<sup>10</sup> His success was built on an extraordinary ability to identify and exploit available spaces for institutional design. Although Monnet described his method based on patiently waiting for constitutional moments and relying on robust deontological design as "slow and unspectacular" (Monnet, 1978: 300), he also added in his *Memoirs* that: "I cannot see that in twenty-five years anything else has been invented as a means of uniting Europe, despite all temptations to desert that path" (Monnet, 1978: 432). Despite this, the Monnet method has come under increasing attack, and it has been said to be of "limited use for the political integration and democratization of Europe" (Fischer, 2000). The Constitutional Treaty was in many ways a product of a process that was more open, transparent and deliberative than earlier reform processes at the EU level (Risse and Kleine, 2007). However, it was not the Convention method or the democratization of the EU that produced the negative

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<sup>10</sup> Monnet's design project has also encountered criticism. Altiero Spinelli once said that "Monnet has the great merit of having built Europe and the great responsibility to have built it badly (Burgess, 1989: 55-56).

referendum results in France and the Netherlands. Instead, the current ratification crisis must be seen in light of the designers' neglect and/or misjudgement of the viable spaces for political design, as well as their ineffective approach to the exploitation of the available (although narrow) spaces for design. These two aspects were fundamental aspects of Jean Monnet as an institutional designer, as he waited patiently for constitutional moments and relied on robust deontological designs.

The “no” to the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands has mobilized citizens in deliberation on the future of the EU to a larger extent than the Convention that opened in February 2002 and delivered its draft in July 2003 managed to do. Despite this, it is still a time for patience in the EU. Perhaps inspired by the designer of European post-war unity Jean Monnet, the Council has called for a period of reflection. Referring to the stagnation associated with the Presidency of De Gaulle in France and his championing of the nation-state, Monnet wrote: “It was still a time for patience, and I had plenty of time to pursue my reflections to the point where I could turn them into action, which would then depend on circumstances (Monnet, 1978: 485).<sup>11</sup> Comprehensive reforms are difficult to carry out in practice, and the importance of patience in deliberate political and institutional design at the EU level must be emphasised. In the absence of constitutional moments, the EU like other

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<sup>11</sup> The chapter in the Memoirs that deals with the 1964-1972 period is entitled “A Time for Patience”. This stagnant period is part of what has been referred to as “Eurosclerosis”, and it has been associated with events as General de Gaulle’s “empty chair policy” and his continued veto against British membership.

polities will have to cope with tensions and disputes through routine politics rather than through comprehensive reforms and single comprehensive constitutive decisions (Olsen, 2003). This has also been realized by the European Commission, which has been given a leading role in the public debate on the future of the EU during the current period of reflection. In the aftermath of the failed Constitutional Treaty, the Commission has taken a number of initiatives in order to simplify and better explain the EU, both key objectives behind the Constitutional Treaty. For instance, in September 2005, the Commission came up with a list of 68 legislative proposals to be scrapped as a part of the Commission's new "simplification initiative" (Dinan, 2006). According to the Commission, this initiative should be seen as an exercise in re-regulation rather than de-regulation, which could contribute to dispel the notion that the EU is a "bureaucratic monster" (Verheugen, 2005). Thus, the EU is back to piecemeal reforms through learning and adaptation; a "slow and unspectacular" method that has worked well before, and that has produced spectacular results over a relatively short period of time.

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