Unsurprisingly, the de-politicisation patterns I have just discussed in regard to the first three decades or so of integration were not without rivals. This chapter acts as a reminder that the narrative of the existing economic and supranational integration as the way to peace and prosperity was never uncontested. Neither were questions of how these objectives should be pursued, or of who should bear what part of the costs of integration, and reap what share of the benefits. I discuss three sets of competing discourses that deliberately politicised the issue of what the European Communities were about. The first drew on federalist and on specific national traditions that insisted on democracy as a condition of the Communities’ legitimacy. In this context, I look specifically at the debate on direct elections to the European Parliament. A second set of competing discourses challenged the Communities’ supranational elements in the name of national sovereignty. It advanced an intergovernmentalist, rather than supranationalist, counter-vision of integration. Here I look, in particular, at the discourses surrounding the crises of the 1960s. The final discursive challenge to the legitimating discursive patterns I analysed in Chapter 1 arose from difficulties with the member-states’ and the Communities’ ability to deliver efficient problem-solving and planning in the context of the financial and economic crises of the 1970s. This chapter’s source base again includes both official discourses of the European institutions and the public discourses of national political and opinion leaders and journalists.
Democracy

Early official legitimation discourses, in particular, the indispensability, common good, and social engineering discourses discussed earlier, were dominated by ideas of legitimacy that were not primarily based on how democratic was the political order of the Communities. Rather, they showcased rather the new system’s helpfulness and usefulness in safeguarding peace and improved living conditions. This needs to be seen in the broader historical context of social beliefs on legitimacy at the time. As Martin Conway and Peter Romijn point out, it was a complex question ‘whether the democratic nature of the regimes of postwar western Europe rendered them legitimate in the eyes of their populations’ (2004:380). Given the experience of authoritarianism, many people’s ideas on democracy were marked by a certain distrust in unobstructed mass politics. Only gradually, over the course of the 15 years following the Second World War, did ‘democracy’ emerge as the key element of political legitimacy in post-war Western Europe (see Conway and Depkat 2010). This corresponds with the increasing centrality of democracy and the EU’s democratic deficit in legitimacy-related discourses of later decades, which I discuss in Chapters 3 to 5. In the early days of the European Communities, official legitimation discourses tended to highlight the symbolism of meetings, agreements, historic cities, values or human decency, and the overpowering goal of preserving non-authoritarianism, rather than referring to democratic authorisation, control, or representation in the strict sense of those words (Leucht 2011a). Even where representative democracy was held to be a necessary condition of legitimacy, it was not necessarily the parliamentary element that was attributed this role. In France, in particular, the Fourth Republic’s difficulties with its own legislature had brought parliamentarianism into some disrepute as a source of legitimacy for any political order, whether national or supranational. The Gaullist agenda for the Fifth Republic, in particular, was geared instead towards producing a strong executive (Shlaim 1973:159, Knapp and Wright 2006:49–66, but see also 3–4, 61–3, 142).

In any case, how much democracy (of whatever kind) was necessary to authorise and control specifically the unprecedented enterprise of European, partly supranational, integration was a matter of disagreement. Jean Monnet for his part did not deem democracy particularly suited to legitimating the new European regime or bringing it into being (see e.g. Burgess 1989, 2000:31–36). He was to reminisce in his memoirs: ‘I have never believed that one fine day Europe would be created by some