Favell, Adrian, and Virginie Guiraudon, eds. 2011. *Sociology of the European Union*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 224 pages. ISBN: 9780230207127

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The state of sociology in the context of EU studies is nicely depicted by George Ross in the epilogue chapter to this volume on "Sociology of the European Union": Sociologists are like a group of ambitious dancers arriving at a ball whose dances have already been decided upon by others, in this case political scientists and economists. What should sociology do?

The answers given by editors Adrian Favell and Virginie Guiraudon and their collaborators are a good starting point, since they try to avoid the pitfalls of what mainstream EU studies so far have identified as the sociological approach to Europeanization – the focus on culture, norms and ideas. At the same time, Favell and Guiraudon do not try to assimilate their perspective to the mainstream of EU studies by limiting the scope of their volume to institutions and the impact of rules and norms on the evolution of the EU. Indeed, their scope points, as they state in the introductory chapter, "towards the development of new methodologies, extensive measures, and new datasets on Europeanized behaviours or practices on the ground" (p. 11). In other words: Let us take a closer look at European actors and at why they do what they do. The volume thus offers a way out of what can best be described as an impasse in the research on Europe: The choice between an overly rationalist interpretation of how European institutions work and an equally misleading constructivist notion on what Europe is in the eye of its actors. Both views have turned out to be unable to answer some of the most important questions about European socie-

ties and European institutions as for instance: Why do some people migrate more easily between European states than others? Why has an institution such as the European Parliament gained more and more power? Why does the current crisis of the Euro seem to backlash on the willingness of European populations to support each other? To answer these questions, a look at practices and behaviours – the approach offered in this book – might be a promising starting point.

The book is organized into two parts. The first part offers some answers to questions about the social foundations of European societies and whether they have changed due to Europeanization. It provides some very interesting insights i.e. on European social classes (Juan Diez Medrano) and European markets (Neil Fligstein). The results, however, are ambiguous, since although markets tend to become more and more transnational, identification remains firmly on the national or sub-national level and members of the same social classes across Europe usually do not recognize each other as sharing the same beliefs, one of the prerequisites of unified social classes.

The second part is more closely focused on the political institutions of the European Union and the behaviours of their actors and it is – with the exception of Hans-Jörg Trenz' chapter on Social Theory and European Integration – a very good illustration of how to apply French Sociology to European problems. Drawing heavily on Bourdieu's notion of political field, Niilo Kauppi, co-editor Virginie Guiraudon and Frédéric Mérand in their

chapters open up the question of how to define power within the European Union and how to describe adequately the relations of actors within different political fields. This is a refreshing perspective on the institutions of European Integration since it does not presume interests as given nor does it limit itself to an analysis of the culture of those institutions.

What the volume offers is an inspiring overview of how sociology could contribute not only to a better understanding of European Societies, but also to a better cognition of the functioning of the European Institutions. But there is a special Brownie point to the volume in that it is one of the first books to assemble Anglo-Saxon and continental, mainly French, perspectives on European societies. As the organization of the book also makes clear, both approaches rest on quite different theoretical foundations and can only gain from taking each other seriously. Anglo-Saxon (and German, by the way) EU studies would profit greatly from integrating more work focusing on the power relations within the EU and its networks. Bourdieu and his later applicants actually can explain why the political field Europe is structured differently than national fields. On the other hand, this volume also shows how French sociologists could broaden their perspective by taking power as one variable among many and by taking into account that the analysis of markets or classes can be as revealing as the appraisal of the institutions.

Indeed, the volume is a great step forward in the sociological research on Europe since it overcomes differences of national focus and offers good syntheses for newcomers and compelling arguments for experts on Europe. However, one point of critique should be made. The theoretical perspectives employed in this book are mainly based on the classics of sociological theory such as Max Weber, Emile Durkheim or Pierre Bourdieu. These have a lot to offer, but their concepts were developed for national societies. The question whether theoretical shifts, i.e. towards network theory, might be necessary for the analysis of European societies is not discussed. This is a shame, because the use of classic concepts sometimes leads into a straightforward dichotomy between a European and a national level, where identification with the national level seems to preclude the emergence of European social classes (as in the chapter by Diez Medrano). Or, to put it in other words, many chapters of the book still try to analyse a European society with the ontology of the nation-state, which inevitably leads to the conclusion that national societies are at the most partly Europeanized. That answer is as predictable as it is unsatisfying, because it can hardly give a name to the state of societies between unity and diversity. The chapters in this volume are a first step, but there still is a long way to go for a sociology of the European Union.

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