

CHAPTER 1

Sociology of the European Union: An Introduction¹

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Key concepts: Europeanization, operationalization, functionalism, neo-functionalism, transactionalism, socialization, meta-theory, ontology, epistemology, social constructivism, identity, institutionalism, globalization, nation building, social theory, comparative sociology, political sociology, socio-history

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After many years in the wilderness, sociology is finally being called for by mainstream studies of the European Union (EU) seeking new inspiration. Sociologists on the whole have been curiously absent from EU studies. Not that they don't study Europe. They have 'Europeanized' their projects and objects of study along with all the other disciplines chasing after European research funding; they have their own European networks, associations and journals; sociology additions to courses on the EU are popping up everywhere. Yet over the

¹ In what follows, we would like to acknowledge our contributors' many thoughts on this subject during the development of this project. Their earlier formulations on the question of 'What is a sociology of the European Union?', which were included in some cases in their original drafts, are reflected throughout the volume's introduction. We would especially like to thank Patrick Le Galès for his draft notes towards the historiography of comparative sociologies of Europe reflected in the third section of the introduction.

years sociologists have participated little in the characteristic approaches and debates of mainstream EU studies which focus on the production and implementation of policies and laws coming out of the European institutions. Nor have they been much heard in the now broad range of work considering 'Europeanization', seen as the way in which political and legal institutions at the national level have been transformed by processes of European integration. This is despite the notion that such Europeanization ought to be taking EU studies down and out into studying the full effects of the EU across and within European societies, an issue with obvious sociological implications.

However, recently things have changed. Sociology in EU studies is now on everyone's lips. In the last few years, the adjective 'sociological' has been used in all kinds of international relations (IR) and comparative politics studies as a synonym for anti-rationalist, institutionalist, ideas-driven or cultural approaches in political science. Critical theorists and others that use contemporary social theory extensively in their work, meanwhile, have also come to discuss Europe and the EU. Viewed more broadly, there are longer standing, if somewhat marginal, currents in EU studies involving anthropologists and historians which share many of the same questions that a sociology of the EU might pose. Sociology clearly means many things to many people: it is an impossible discipline to define exhaustively. Our goal in this volume is more specific. In relation to these various currents, we seek to take a distinct line on what the *empirical* sociology of the EU is and might be: that is, make explicit what questions, research design and methodologies such an approach might involve, and show how it can make a distinctive contribution to the mainstream of EU studies.

As a rule of thumb, the sociologists collected in this book are unified by three things. First, there is an enduring interest in the influence of the sociological classics – in this volume you will find references to Weber, Durkheim and Marx, as well as Goffman, Gellner and Goldthorpe. Second, there is an insistence on the importance of studying the specifically social dimension of the European Union, whether it is the possible social foundations of the political and legal construction, the social characteristics of political actors or policy networks, or the consequences for society of European integration. Third, there is a belief in research that combines the virtues of qualitative ethnographic research and quantitative demographic work. One of the key goals of the collection here is to show how relevant sociological questions about the European Union can be specified and hence operationalized as data-driven empirical projects.

An empirical sociology of the European Union thus will not only offer an alternative approach to answering the usual questions about familiar EU political actors, policies and institutions. Rather, it also poses different questions

about the causes, consequences and scope of the European Union, proposing to answer them via the introduction of quantitative and qualitative methodologies not yet used in EU studies. One consequence is that the turn to sociology reopens the bigger questions about the 'Europeanization' of European societies – in terms, say, of the emergence of European class structures, mobility patterns, or transnational networks – that are usually defined by scholars in EU studies in terms of a narrower focus on institutional change, policy implementation and compliance at national levels. Sociology in EU studies, in short, would change the *object* of study, as well as offering a different understanding of Europeanization.

In this introduction and those which preface each half of the book, we explain these choices, via an interpretation of the existing literature in EU studies and the sociology of Europe.

First, we trace the rise, fall and return of 'sociological' concerns in mainstream EU studies: from neo-functionalism through new institutionalism to social constructivism. The presence of sociological approaches among political scientists offers opportunities for a new sociology of the European Union, yet certain limitations and errors in understanding what sociology might bring to EU studies first need diagnosing.

In the following section, after briefly reviewing how the European Union has appeared as a theme in contemporary social theorists such as Jürgen Habermas and Ulrich Beck, we move on to what will be much less familiar terrain in EU studies: the contributions of the comparative sociology of Europe since the 1980s – involving figures such as Hartmut Kaelble, Henri Mendras, Colin Crouch, Göran Therborn and Gøsta Esping-Andersen. The comparative sociology of Europe debates how European societies might converge on a distinctively European economic or social model, but they are not *yet* necessarily the same thing as a sociology of the European Union. This would go further by taking the notion of sociological Europeanization seriously, and focusing on the social, economic, cultural and political practices that underpin or are induced by the making of the EU.

A similar basic introduction is then offered to a neglected, distinctive school of political sociology that has emerged among EU studies specialists who work with a framework that uses the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his notions of 'field', 'capital' and 'habitus'. This leads to a rather different interpretation of EU politics and policy than that found in the mainstream, one which locates the determination of familiar European institutions, laws and policies studied by political scientists elsewhere – in the social positions and trajectories of actors and their symbolic conflicts about meaning, legitimacy and social power. It is a quite fresh empirical approach to the political sociology of the EU that is reflected in second half of this volume.

Following the contours of the two latter sections in the introduction, the volume is split into two distinct halves: the first, 'Social Foundations', presents a variety of studies that offer empirical studies of the social structures and social change associated with European Union, and the second, 'Politics and Policies', applies sociological approaches to classical areas of EU political action and policy-making. In the short introductions that preface each half, we thus guide readers briefly through the chapters that follow as a 'how to do' the sociology of the European Union. This is both a question of how to re-think the EU as an object of study – in terms of recognisable sociological questions that take up the concepts and themes of classic and contemporary sociologists – and, even more importantly, of how to turn these questions into fully operationalized research projects with practical, data-driven methodologies. Taking a range of topics – from the impact of European Union on class formation or mobility to the sociological underpinnings of EU policy-making and parliamentary politics – we show what a sociology of European can and should be doing (see also Favell and Guiraudon 2009).

Sociological approaches in EU studies from neo-functionalism to social constructivism

Although nominal sociologists have not been much present in EU studies over the past decades, sociology and distinctly sociological forms of reasoning were highly present in the original work of the field's forefathers in the 1950s. No survey of the canon of EU integration theory, for example, would omit the names of Karl Deutsch or Ernst Haas. These famous names at the origins of the research field both proposed visions of the European Union that were grounded in clearly sociological-style arguments (see also Rosamond 2000: 171–5).

The first oft-mentioned name of the period, Karl Deutsch, was a sociologically minded IR scholar with an abiding concern for rational, economic regional integration as the master process uniting nations in ever more international structures (1957). It was a view embedded in the archetypal modernist developmental perspective that dominated progressive social science in its heyday in the 1950s and 60s: a classic kind of functionalist theory, predicting that the form of future political structures would evolve from a growing functional need in the world for such forms. Through the influence of sociologist Talcott Parsons (1951) – the most famous figure associated with the functionalist paradigm – sociology and sociological theory was pervasive in the dominant 'systems-based' logic of much political science of that time. For functionalists, the modernization of society would lead to ever more abstract legal-rational forms that would gradually supersede the antiquated ethnic or cultural preoccupations of nations.

The emergent European Community, for some, seemed one more form of this developmental process. Deutsch's transactionalist theory thus posited macro-regional integration as a larger-scale version of the dynamics that had built nation-states in an earlier era. He set out to empirically investigate the degree to which regional integration projects were beginning to display these forms in the more integrated post-war world. In these terms, it was possible to consider measuring the everyday cross-border interactions of European elites, policy actors and (potentially) everyday citizens, as an indicator of cross-border integration – a process that might one day form a European society as the sum of all the European transactions, and which would be a parallel process to the historical dynamic that formed societies on a national scale.

The dynamic of micro-level socialization leading to macro-level integration was developed further in the other major sociological-style thinker on European integration of that period, Ernst Haas. His massively influential early study of the forerunner to the European Community, the European Coal and Steel Union (1958), emphasized how international institutions might socialize bureaucrats and policy actors such that they engage in building cooperation and policy instruments across an ever-expanding range of policy areas beyond the nation-state. 'Neo-functionalism', as it has come to be known by generations of EU studies students, thus offered a broad macro-theory of how European regional integration proceeds through a cumulative dynamic. Through a functional mechanism called 'spillover', supranational integration in one policy area creates incentives for integration in others, and in the process national policy actors come to identify with the European level and hence 'supranational' forms of governance as a more effective way of regulating matters that would normally be left to national law or politics. Once again, the theoretical paradigm that lay behind the basic explanatory logic at work in this model was a Parsonsian-style modernist functionalism.

The influence of these classic readings remains high today, especially in institutionalist, multilevel governance, and social constructivist accounts of European integration. In particular, the notion of 'socialization' has been used by a new generation of scholars interested in studying the internal dynamics of European institutions through the way these institutions may or may not Europeanize these actors. A number of scholars have revisited Haas's ideas to see whether EU institutions become laboratories of social engineering, in which actors are internationalized and therefore promote further internationalization in their own self-image (Hooghe 2001, 2005; Checkel 2005; Börzel 2006). The opening of the black box of socialization, and hence the return to the more sociological questions of the 1950s and 60s, associated with Haas and the Parsonian style of political science dominant in that era, inevitably challenges narrower rational choice models of political action. Deutsch's main influence, meanwhile,

was through scholars who have continued to pursue large-scale studies on regional integration, even as the topic has waxed and waned in popularity. He has enjoyed a substantial comeback in the work of political economists re-introducing the big regional integration questions (Mattli 1999; Warleigh 2004; Katzenstein 2005; Bartolini 2005), economic geographers pointing to the dynamics of trade, mobility and welfare as core (Rodríguez-Pose 2002), and, most spectacularly, in the fully worked out Deutschian development of a sociology of the European Union by Neil Fligstein (2008 and Chapter 5 in this volume). In this, and in the accompanying work here of Díez Medrano, Favell and Recchi, and Andreotti and Le Galès, there is a clear positing of Deutschian-like assumptions about the micro-level roots of macro-level integration, that each is answering in clear empirical terms. While empirically the evidence for Deutsch's hypotheses was generally sceptical and remains so – as it was indeed for tests of Haas's theory – the theories of integration of Haas and Deutsch established clear sociological hypotheses about the underlying drivers of an ever closer Union.

However, despite the underlying influence, sociological reasoning about the EU has not always been consistently applied at the different times it has momentarily appeared in the mainstream debates. The problem is essentially that sociological approaches to the European Union have entered and exited the field according to theoretical – indeed *meta*-theoretical – disputes among political scientists about the core assumptions and approaches of their discipline, not necessarily in relation to what was going on in sociology at the time. The timing and intellectual context of these inconclusive meta-theoretical debates about *ontology* – the objects and elements that make up the political world – and *epistemology* – the methods or forms of reasoning that are appropriate for revealing this world – are specific to internal disciplinary dynamics. The sporadic sociological turns in EU studies thus did not emerge as a result of imperatives emerging out of contemporary sociology and its agendas, but limitations and controversies within political science paradigms.

There is a fascinating history to the peculiar relationship of political science and sociology as seen by political scientists, which is relevant to these misunderstandings. Sociology, as mentioned above, held sway in the 1950s and 60s as the master paradigm discipline for political science, through the influence of Talcott Parsons and functionalist logic. However, from the 1970s onwards political science, particularly in the US, began to realign itself much more with economics as the master discipline, with the rise of methodologies using rational choice and mathematical models. This was a historical paradigm change captured in a famous book by Brian Barry (1971), *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy*. In the following decade, sociological, historical and cultural approaches in political science fell into disrepute. Yet while the mainstream has

continued with a 'hard core' economics-led approach, over the years a substantial minority of political scientists continue to be attracted to the alternatives, particularly those working in IR and comparative politics. Specifically, there were two influential works that most characterized the sociological revival in political science: the first in IR, the second in comparative political studies.

Peter Katzenstein, a redoubtable Cornell University professor of German origin, spearheaded the first: a tightly integrated edited collection entitled *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (1996a). Katzenstein, not coincidentally, was a student of Deutsch, a scholar of grand political economy in the post-war world, and was determined to reinvigorate the context-sensitive regional studies of his mentor, and also to put culture back on the menu of an overly rationalist, economics-dominated political science. Rational models alone could not explain variation in the post-war international relations of countries such as Japan in comparison to countries like the US and Germany, as he found in his own related work (1996b); nor could they do historical justice to the situated motivations of actors embedded in cultural, value-laden action or influenced by social norms, as he laid out in the *The Culture of National Security*. When historians study political actors using archives it is natural that the motivation and socialization of such actors must bring culture and social values into explanatory models. Katzenstein also presented his argument in terms of going back to Barry and what he called 'rummaging in the graveyard of sociological studies' (1996a: 1). Sociology, in other words, was in this view already a dead discipline, and the best that could be done with sociology at that point was to go back to the future – to a Parsonian-style functionalist theory, and its emphasis in explanations on the ordering role of collective values, identity and the stabilizing pressure of social norms, in order for political science to advance.

Katzenstein's vision provided an extraordinarily powerful and seductive vision of an alternative political science for the legions of frustrated qualitative and theoretically-minded international relations students resisting what was seen as the hegemony of rationalist intergovernmental IR. A whole new generation of younger authors, many of whom were involved in the original collection, poured in through this door, particularly those emphasizing the influence of norms, ideas and culture – conceived in terms of normative notions such as democracy, freedom, security, or human rights – on political institution building and outcomes (Finnemore 1996; Keck and Sikkink 1998, Risse *et al.* 1999; see Checkel 1998a). The EU, as an unusual form of international organization, became a ripe territory for this kind of work. In one archetypal move by a leading figure, Thomas Risse moved from studying human rights and INGOs to studying the EU as a new source of identity and novel political construction (Risse *et al.* 1999, 2001).

Others in IR sought to take the cultural turn even further, moving debates up to a meta-theoretical level about language and concept construction, to critically question the mainstream discipline and its 'realist' assumptions about the world (Wæver 2003). Rather, locating themselves in the philosophical 'idealist' tradition – that holds that 'reality' is hidden behind the language and ideas through which we perceive the world – they sought their inspiration in other, older, sociological classics, such as Berger and Luckmann (1966) on the social construction of reality through language and concepts, and Erving Goffman (1974) on the notion of conceptual framing. The most spectacular version of what become known as the 'social constructivist' turn it inspired was *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999), a book by Alexander Wendt, an associate of Katzenstein, who also puts to use another sociological favourite of IR theorists, Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration (1984). This set the scene for a fully worked out social constructivist programme on the social construction of the EU, a book which for many defines the sociological approach: Christiansen, Jørgensen and Wiener's *The Social Construction of Europe* (2001), and its continuation in the theoretically-minded works of associates such as Diez (1999), Rosamond (2001) and Checkel (2006). These are all writers who like to stress the influence of language, symbols, discursive formations, culture and norms – understood in the 'normative' ethical or philosophical sense – on EU actors who might otherwise be conceived as acting 'rationally' in terms of pre-defined 'interests'. Rather, social constructivists believe that such political action is determined by the social context and modes of interaction embodied in the collective language and culture shared by particular actors. These authors label their approach as 'sociological', but their intellectual positioning is entirely determined by their hostile relationship with the 'rationalist' or 'realist' political science mainstream, not by any intention to contribute to sociology as a discipline (for another view on these disputes, see Rosamond 2003).

Meanwhile, during the 1990s, comparative politics scholars had come to stake a claim to study the EU, with an alternative approach to international relations and international organizations (Hix 1994). Just as in IR, a battle was raging in comparative politics about dominant 'rationalist' versus alternative models. A focal point for a more qualitative, comparative political science, knitting together the outlying sub-disciplines of political economy, organizational sociology and normative political philosophy, was being provided around this time in the famous synthetic article (1996) by the Harvard political economist Peter Hall and sociologist Rosemary Taylor, which summed up a decade in which political science had been rediscovering institutions and organizations as a key way of understanding political dynamics.

Hall and Taylor's famous three versions of institutionalism identified one strand that uses modified rational actor assumptions; a second called 'historical

institutionalism', which brings in a crucial temporal dimension of change in political systems, and a third, 'sociological institutionalism', which points to how political action is not merely explained by utility-maximizing choices but also influenced by 'culture', that is by ceremonial routines, symbols, frames of meaning, or social norms. They were particularly influenced in this reading by scholars in organizational sociology, such as John Meyer (Meyer and Scott 1983) or DiMaggio and Powell (1991), who had re-introduced a more cultural understanding in these terms into bureaucratic and organizational behaviour dominated by more rationalist Weberian theories. As with Katzenstein, this work opened the door for a generation of comparative politics students seeking alternatives to the rational choice mainstream; it became the key foundation for all subsequent institutionalist studies of the EU (Stone Sweet *et al.* 2001; Parsons 2006; Schmidt 2006). However, there were also unintended effects of identifying the third strand of institutionalism as the definitively 'sociological' one. There is a misperception at work here in identifying sociologists *only* with qualitative-style work on the influence of discourse, meanings, frames, norms, ideas, and so on. In fact, sociologists might be identified in all three strands of institutionalist work: there are also many influential rational choice and historical institutionalist sociologists (for a sample, see Brinton and Nee 1998). Another way of putting this is to note that political scientists tend to equate sociology with the more cultural and holistic Durkheimian form of reasoning – and its distinctively non-individualist and idealist social ontology – while overlooking those parts of sociology more in the rationalist and realist Weberian style, which is grounded in methodological individualism. Both Katzenstein's and Hall and Taylor's definition of sociology underlined the Durkheimian current in sociology, perhaps because the Parsonian sociology being recalled from the 1950s and 60s was itself essentially an updated, highly Americanized, version of Durkheim.

Notwithstanding this point, the rationalist versus anti-rationalist dichotomy – the stylized opposition of rational choice models versus constructivist and sociological institutionalist alternatives – has since the 1990s become a staple feature of theoretical debates in EU studies. There has, of course, been a counter-backlash amongst hard core 'positivist' political scientists against the 'sociological' trend. Thus, when the social constructivist and sociological institutionalist versions of EU studies have been attacked by rationalists, sociology as such gets tarred by the same brush for the fallacies of 'sociological' studies (Pollack 1998; Hix 1998). The rejection of the social constructivist wave is best expressed by the American political scientist Andrew Moravcsik, who is known for his rationalist intergovernmental accounts of the EU. In a quite devastating critique of Christiansen *et al.*'s paradigm-defining book, he argues that if this was the new way of doing 'sociological' studies of the EU – all discourse and

language, soft methods, anecdotal evidence, and far too much meta-theory – there was indeed ‘something rotten in the state of Denmark’ (Denmark, through the Copenhagen school of critical IR, being the place most associated with the social constructivist style of political science). Moravcsik is canny enough in his review to also point out that the absence of much concern with operationalizing meta-theory empirically, or seeking a social grounding in research for the constructivist claims, in fact distanced the whole social constructivist project from what goes on in any American sociology department that he knew.

Despite the critique, the social constructivist wing of EU studies continues to be very active (Schimmelfennig *et al.* 2006; Wiener 2008). Moreover, a further ‘sociological’ trend in EU studies has emerged with the developing debate on European identity. Based either on Eurobarometer measures (Gabel 1998; Citrin and Sides 2004; McLaren 2006; Green 2007; Fligstein 2008), or alternative empirical strategies (Duchesne and Frogner 2002, 2008; Díez Medrano 2003, 2009; Bruter 2005; White 2010), a range of scholars have convincingly shown how a national identity variable can account for differences in public opinion about the EU, particularly in relation to the much debated breakdown of the ‘permissive consensus’ (Hooghe and Marks 2004, 2008). Thomas Risse’s later work on European identity reads the concept as a question of social psychology (rather than sociology as such), which opens a whole new set of tools (Herrmann *et al.* 2004; Risse 2010). The most recent wave of work has developed ambitious new methodologies for studying the relation between public opinion, European citizenship and identity, via, for example, focus groups with working class and political activist groups (Duchesne *et al.* 2010), new analyses of location and space in identification with the EU (Berezin and Medrano 2008), or elite interviews (Ross 2008). A recent collection brings together some of the best alternative works on European identity across the disciplines (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009).

As the eclectic disciplinary origins of these scholars reveals, identity is not in the end a uniquely sociological concern: it is a stereotype of other disciplines that sociology is particularly preoccupied with this theme. Some of the works on European identity involve sociology and sociologists, others do not. Many sociologists – particularly the variety we present in this volume – would be more comfortable with research that focussed less on attitudes or opinions and more on behaviour, thus treating ‘identity’ – a notoriously difficult concept to define, and one heavily polluted by its everyday political uses – as an attitudinal black box that needs unpacking in behavioural terms (see Brubaker 2000; Favell 2005). They also often prefer to limit themselves to talking only about self-conscious declarations of actors in terms of ‘identification’ not ‘identity’ as such (Duchesne 2010; Díez Medrano 2010). The sociology of

the European Union is in fact much more interesting for what it might have to say about this: pushing the public opinion question away from thin measures of identification, in terms of revealed preferences or stylized survey data, towards the development of new methodologies, extensive measures, and new datasets on Europeanized behaviours or practices on the ground. This, we argue, would be a more distinctive and original way for sociologists to engage with the concept of Europeanization, and is the starting point for several chapters in the book.

Comparative sociologies of Europe

In his *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe*, a book sure to become a landmark in the sociology of the European Union, Neil Fligstein (2008) likens EU studies to the study of an iceberg. Political, legal and institutional studies of the EU tend to focus only what is *visible* about the European construction. Yet logically and temporally there has to be something causally that precedes or underlies the building of the European Union as an institutionalized legal–political form, that is, a societal-led process of the European Union as a historical transformation of Europe in space and time, a regional integration perhaps linked to other global and regional processes. This is what lies under the water, as it were, and it is where the sociological shifting of the object of study may be most needed, in moving sociological effort away from studying (only) political and legal processes towards thinking about a European ‘society’ as perhaps undergirding the legal–political construction above.

As we suggest in the introductory section above, the obvious way to conceptualize this would be to speak of a sociological agenda for studying the Europeanization of European economy and society as both an upstream cause and downstream consequence of processes building the European Union – analogous, perhaps, to ways in which the globalization of societies has been studied, although in this case regionally specific. Sociologists in fact were slow to discover ‘Europeanization’ in this sense, and the recent emergence of this agenda needs explaining. It is worth noting, though, that by the early 1990s anthropologists had already begun to use the term ‘Europeanization’ in a similar way, as a broad umbrella for studying the human dimension of European regional integration, whether it be through border interactions, shared sporting competitions, or pan-European regional associations and movements (for a comprehensive literature review see Kearney 1997). Anthropological work was never convincingly recognized by mainstream EU studies, and many anthropologists subsequently lost interest in the EU and moved on to other topics, although a small number of works are well known and became key references in

the cultural and constructivist turn in EU studies (Abélès 1992; Bellier and Wilson 2000; Shore 2000; Holmes 2000).

Using 'Europeanization' in a deeper and broader sense, however, became problematic as certain leading EU studies scholars – mainly public policy analysts – started to pin down its meaning to a sense referring much more narrowly to the downstream effects of EU policy implementation on national bureaucratic structures, and the bureaucratic or legal politics linked to this (Héritier *et al.* 2001; Knill 2001, see also Olsen 2002; Featherstone and Radaelli 2003; Graziano and Vink 2006), often with an argument about avoiding 'concept stretching' (Radaelli 2000). The field has thus come to focus mostly on questions of legal compliance, and the way national policy makers or institutions adapt differentially to EU pressures (Börzel and Risse 2003), rather than what sociologists would propose studying: the societal forces, structures and dynamics that must logically and temporally lie behind or below the EU, moving the iceberg through time and space. The mainstream Europeanization debates, then, do not really grapple with the broader societal processes that might lie behind the EU.

This is why we call for a broader conception of 'Europeanization'. To be clear, this is less a point about the concept itself – which can be easily critiqued as excessively teleological, and potentially too normative in tone – but rather the more substantial object of study to which it should be pointing. As we keep stressing, sociologists would wish to use the concept to evoke a macro-regional scale process – both social and spatial – parallel to the notion of globalization. This would also re-connect the English usage of the word with the way it is used commonly by scholars writing in German and French. To some extent, then, the problem here is a question of expanding the range and ambition of EU studies, both historically and theoretically, so that it recognizes itself again – as it did in the era of Haas and Deutsch – as a form of macro-regional studies. Some sociologists, though, will be equally concerned with the everyday micro-level of these processes, on 'putting a human face' (Smith and Favell 2006) on regional European integration.

Mainstream comparative sociologists, though, have found it difficult to grapple with the question of a European society – often for good historical reasons. In fact, sociology as a discipline is unusually attached to the modern nation-state. A broad section of post-war and contemporary sociology has thus been concerned with the comparative historical study of the making of societies – that is, the making of nation-states. Nation building was the core outcome of the twin processes of modernization and industrialization, first in Europe, then the world; this theme was, if anything, the defining question of the founders of sociology (Giddens 1971). The enormous historical sociological literature, whether in a Marxist, Durkheimian or Weberian tradition, above all showed

how *slow* these processes of building (national) societies were. Such sociology focused on the *longue-durée*, the tectonic shifts in European history. Social structures rarely change dramatically. It arguably took decades, generations, even centuries for the recognizable nation-state-societies of modern Europe to fully form in their twentieth-century versions. For this reason, there has been an almost inevitable expectation amongst most comparative historical sociologists that whatever the EU is making, it is making it slowly, and that it is unlikely to affect existing European social structures, anchored predominantly in a variety of national forms and 'paths to modernity' (on this, see especially Mann 1993a). Consequently, many such sociologists have been slow to take up the question of the European Union as one on which they might have something to say.

A further reason for the slowness of comparative sociology in grappling with the notion of a society beyond the nation-state lies in the scientific and bureaucratic self-understanding of modern societies. Rooted in the state-centred apparatus of statistical categorization of (bounded) populations, and national historical archiving, this has led to an inbuilt 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002) in the concepts and data made available by modern societies to the scientists that study them, especially when that science is interlinked, as is often the case, with national policy-making or social engineering. As authors such as Brubaker (1992) have pointed out, there is a characteristically Weberian process at work here: a dual movement, in which borders are strengthened and the inside is differentiated from the outside (through institutions such as citizenship and the welfare state), while an internal order is organized and a national society gradually homogenizes (via culture, education, socialization and so on). No surprise again, then, that comparativists find it hard to see beyond the nation-state, or detect transnational or regional trends at work.

In some sense, these are limitations specific to comparative empirical sociology. Viewed in terms of the more famous grand social theories, it is clear that a large part of contemporary sociology has been directed at the notion of society beyond the nation-state, but towards *globalization* rather than Europeanization on a regional scale. The global transformations evoked by contemporary social theory in terms of metaphors of 'mobilities' (Urry 2007), 'liquid modernity' (Bauman 2000), 'the space of flows' (Castells 1996) or 'reflexive modernisation' (Beck *et al.* 1996; see Cohen and Kennedy 2007 for an overview of contemporary social theories of globalization), tend simply to look past the regional particularities and technical empirical details of the European construction. At best, for them, Europe might affect local inflections on an unstoppable global narrative generalizing much more broadly about the dynamics of (mostly Western) modern and post-modern social forms. This has not always been the case with these so-called 'grand' social theorists, who are certainly the most

visible household names of sociology worldwide. Europe – partly because they are mostly European – has sometimes been a congenial playground for their ideas, often overlain with a normative hope that the European construction could one day actually embody some of the highest Enlightenment hopes of a viable and just post-national construction in a post- or late-modern global age. Of the famous names, Jürgen Habermas (2001) and Ulrich Beck (Beck and Grande 2007) have been most suggestive in their engagement with the idea of the EU. Habermas identifies the possibility of the EU as a post-national construction rooted in a new form of ‘constitutional patriotism’ that will supersede national forms of political community. Beck similarly reads the EU normatively as the expression of a universalist cosmopolitanism which will be able to surmount the national conflicts of the past and the risk-preoccupied global challenges of the future.

The question remains: how to operationalize these often sweeping social theories of change and conceptual innovation into specified and fully operationalized empirical research about post-national, transnational or cosmopolitan society? Clearly, we present a partial and particular vision of what sociology is, and for social theorists who identify themselves as ‘post-positivist’ our empirical angle may be controversial (see the critique of Favell and Guiraudon in Rumford 2008). We do not cover much here works that have taken direct inspiration in EU studies from Habermas (Eriksen 2005b; Wessler, Peters *et al.* 2008) or Foucault (Barry 2001; Walters and Haahr 2005). Yet a volume on the *social theory* of the European Union would be a rather different book, and we warmly recommend those written by other authors who offer this kind of vision (in particular Delanty and Rumford 2005; see also Manners 2007). We also offer one chapter by Hans-Jörg Trenz (Chapter 9) that links up with this kind of approach.

There are antecedents, though, to the empirical comparative sociology of the European Union that we foreground in this book. It was in fact at the intersection of sociology and political economy that the first ambitious comparative works on Europe started to emerge. These included pioneering studies on trade unions and industrial relations (Crouch and Pizzorno 1978); on neo-corporatism by Streeck and Schmitter (1986); on the origins of the European state by Rokkan (1999) or Tilly (1990); and the early comparative work on the welfare state by Flora (1986) or Korpi (1987), which was later to evolve into the ‘varieties’ or ‘worlds’ of welfare capitalism associated respectively with Hall and Soskice (2001) and Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999), which we discuss presently. Looking at the output of European sociology as a whole, however, these were quite exceptional efforts – and not even always driven by sociologists. More telling from our point of view is that *none* of these key comparative social structural works mention or give any credence to the impact of the European Union, or look for a underlying Europeanization of European society

influenced or structured by the EU. There was, in short, no clear thought about the emergence of a distinctive European society (in the singular), even if some of the work hinted at convergent European social structures. In many ways this dominant perspective on the international comparative tradition comes together in another landmark work, Colin Crouch's *Social Change in Western Europe* (1999), in which he focuses on the political and social compromises forged across Europe after the Second World War and how they in fact gave new vigour to the national welfare state model. European industrial capitalist societies were organized around the state, its citizens' rights and its institutions – and continued to be so, according to Crouch, even in the face of simultaneous, even dramatic processes of the European Union.

The legacy of the EU's most renowned historian, Alan Milward (1992, 1993), is in fact another key starting point for the sociology we propose. There is an old argument to be reopened about what Milward calls, in a casual but still unjustly neglected piece, the 'social bases' of European integration (Milward 1997). This obscure work is to be found in a maverick volume by historians and sociologists that sought to pose new questions about the EU (Gowan and Anderson 1997). Milward makes the very basic, but fundamental point, that European integration has ultimately been driven by the broad wishes and support of the European middle classes: the same median populations that have determined national political outcomes in the post-war period, ensured the maintenance of the welfare state and pastoral national institutions, and represent the social core of European national societies. To some extent, the sense of an external grounding to the political dynamics of European integration was a hallmark of the original pluralist accounts of the EU, as well as later intergovernmentalist ones (Moravcsik 1998). In these, the 'bases' were often rather crudely aggregated into national political 'interests'. But Milward made a basic point that has been reiterated in Moravcsik's more recent statements (2005) about the EU's democratically legitimate 'constitutional compromise'. The cliché of technocratic EU elites freely manipulating a far-off and hostile mass population is neither a realistic nor viable model of how post-war (democratic) European economy and society has (more or less) stably worked in the last fifty or more years, even if we may now need to ask if the 'permissive consensus' is broken.

To answer such a question about the underlying social structure of the European Union and its relative stability or transformation over time, one comparative strategy would be first to ask: what, if anything, distinguishes the European economy and society from its regional rivals, North America and East Asia? On this point, one key reference stands out. Distinguished social historian Hartmut Kaelble's classic *Auf dem Weg zu einer Europäischen Gesellschaft* (1987), as well as later work (2007), maps out the essential agenda here. Kaelble

was the first to define the criteria that might distinguish European society from its non-European rivals, zooming in on key structural features of European society: family structure, educational patterns, the role of women, the welfare state, urbanization models, forms of inequality, the structure of the working population, and shifts in economic modes of industrialization.

Kaelble's original social history of Europe, translated into several languages, was in fact a root text for the broader wave in the 1980s and 90s of comparative macro-sociological projects on the European economy and society discussed above. Yet while these works documented the structural sources (in terms of class relations) and growing convergence (in terms of social models) of European societies, plus certain elements of pan-Europeanization (such as consumer behaviour or cultural practices, or the evolving differentiation of the European model from the rest of the world), they rarely if ever mentioned the European Union as a factor in this. Kaelble, however, suggested to a much greater extent that there was indeed a European society in the making. A French scholar, Henri Mendras, was working along parallel lines in collaboration with Vincent Wright, Arnaldo Bagnasco, Patrick Le Galès and Anand Menon (Mendras 1997), in an international project based at the University of Poitiers called the *Observatoire du Changement en Europe Occidentale*. With hindsight now, we can see Kaelble, Mendras, and their associates' efforts as a cornerstone of the regional sociology of European integration. They are reflected strongly in another landmark synthetic work by Göran Therborn (1995); in further work on the diversity of capitalism (Crouch and Streeck 1997); and in a whole series of other inter-related works that developed a long-term research programme about sociological Europeanization of different dimensions of European politics, economy and society (Suleiman and Mendras 1995; Bagnasco and Le Galès 2000; Cavalli and Galland 1997; della Porta and Mény 1997). In the last few years a number of good integrated textbook sociologies of Europe have appeared, adapting theories of modernity or comparative welfare states to a more specific European terrain (Outhwaite 2008; Rumford 2009; Roche 2010; Immerfall and Therborn 2010). There has also been a second generation of scholars in German sociology – also mainly working in German – who are less committed to nation-by-nation comparison and much more alive to the transnational dimensions of the Europeanization processes (Bach, Lahusen and Vobruba 2006; Gerhards 2007, 2010; Münch 2008; Haller 2008; Mau *et al.* 2008; Mau and Verwiebe 2009; Mau 2010). Connections back to history can also be made to contemporary EU historians – who have now gone well beyond the restrictions of nation-centred diplomatic studies. As well as the more well-known grand synthetic works about post-war European and EU history (Mazower 2000; Judt 2005; Anderson 2009), there are also those building empirically on the Milward legacy, yet with a more transnational account of

European integration, alive to its specific political and legal dynamics and its social rootedness (Kaiser 2008; Kaiser *et al.* 2008; Knudsen 2009).

On the whole, though, we are still quite far from a true convergence of interests between the comparative or comparative historical sociologists of Europe seeking a distinctly Europeanized model of economy and society, and the overt study of political, legal or institutional processes building the European Union, even when they are filtered through a sociological lens.

There are some exceptions to this lack of development within the field. One young American sociologist, Beckfield (2006), has opened an agenda for comparative quantitative studies on stratification with his work using the Luxembourg Income Study on how regional integration in Europe has over several decades led to a rise in income inequality in West European countries. The key question here is sorting out what is caused by regional integration, and what is caused by globalization, a central question of the quantitative tests on European market effects carried out by Fligstein and Mérand (2002). In subsequent studies, Beckfield and associates have enlarged this to look at comparative regional effects of globalization on trade, economic integration and inequality, comparing Western Europe with the US and Japan, as did Crouch (Brady *et al.* 2007). These studies do indeed suggest there are distinctive dimensions to the European model. However, their survey of the relevant literature also makes clear how rare it is for any study in global political economy to even mention the EU amidst vast data sets focused exclusively on cross-national comparisons.

More familiar to the mainstream of EU studies, the Sapir report (2004) on the future of the EU model in the light of the visionary Lisbon agenda of 2000 gave an extremely prominent place to ideas of 'flexicurity' in Europe – that is, the structural feature of (some) European welfare states that allow a liberal economy and labour market to be combined with strong social and employment benefits that enable retraining and rapid re-employment. This echoes the warnings of familiar faces to the EU mainstream, such as Alberta Sbragia and Brigid Laffan, about how EU politics must respond to struggles and contestation over European social models. Most obviously, the Sapir report called up as a key reference the later work of Esping-Andersen (1999), which compares alternative models of welfare capitalism in Europe, and defends a Scandinavian variety as the potential European future. Esping-Andersen himself, however, almost never mentions the EU in his models, and is focused resolutely on cross-national comparison within Europe.

Bizarrely, just as the comparative sociologists hardly ever mention the EU in their studies, there is little or no trace of such comparative political economy in the widely discussed theories of integration that are supposed to conceive of European integration in the broadest and most ambitious terms in EU studies

(in textbooks such as Rosamond 2000 or Wiener and Diez 2003). While these authors are certainly sympathetic to a 'sociological' agenda in EU studies, it is perhaps symptomatic that they do not factor into this vision the kind of core works in comparative sociology or international political economy that have most effectively spelt out the structure of the post-industrial society and welfare state in Europe, and which are slowly beginning to recognize its linkages to the regional process of European Union. On both sides, then, the linkages need to be made. In the contributions to the first half of this volume, we thus present a variety of ways that connections can be built between comparative macro-sociology, international political economy and EU studies, using examples of contemporary sociological research on the EU.

The political sociology of EU politics

If Part I of this volume focuses on Europeanizing behaviour, practices or social structures, and the possible emergence of a European society and Europeans who might populate it, Part II focuses on the political production of specifically European, that is, EU decisions, that affect social practices across the continent from work to study, care to leisure. It is thus aligned with the mainstream's understandings of the topic of Europeanization, while offering a quite alternative toolbox of concepts and methods.

The second half of the book again presents work that may be less familiar to most mainstream EU scholars, largely because it is being led by scholars working in French. We are very conscious in this volume of the need sometimes to break out of the hegemony of English language-only EU studies – as we have seen, much of the most important comparative sociology of Europe has over the years been first developed in Germany. Over the last ten to fifteen years, the burgeoning of EU studies in France has led to what we describe here as a 'new political sociology' of the EU. Of course, much of what has been presented in earlier parts of the book could well also be described as 'political sociology', some of it coming more out of political science, some of it more from sociology. Defining political sociology is a complicated business: while still strong if not dominant in some national traditions of political science (France being a good example), it is almost entirely absent in others (the US especially), where all political sociology essentially goes on in sociology departments. A central handbook on Anglo-American political science (Goodin and Klingemann 1996) relegates sociology to a peripheral role in chapters on political behaviour or political economy; an international handbook on political sociology, meanwhile, which covers a vast array of big and central political topics, is mostly compiled of sociologists (Nash and Scott 2001). Yet, whatever the disciplinary

division of labour, there are persistent common questions, in particular when it comes to the study of power, political legitimacy, civil society, public opinion or citizenship, as examined in the context of nation- and state-building, and traditions of democratic theory. What we thus propose here is to apply to EU politics and policies some rather old questions that date back to the classics of the political sociology canon, such as Ferguson on civil society or de Tocqueville on democracy. Yet the new political sociology of the EU puts into action a rather distinct approach to other political sociologists, mixing strong ideas about the theoretical construction of their object of study with in-depth empirical research using new methods on the EU terrain.

What does this view bring? We may feel we already know the European Union as an object of study. The institutions are a familiar constellation to any students of the EU. The EU enlarges and deepens. Yet another treaty comes into force. The European Commission routinely issues proposals, the European Council of Ministers and the European Parliament approve legislation, the European Court of Justice rules on cases, and, once in a while, European citizens vote 'No' to a referendum on a new EU treaty, or demonstrators gather enough momentum to gain media attention and make headlines denouncing the European construction. Numerous EU textbooks cover the subject in this sense (Dinan 2005; Hix 2005; Cini 2007). Yet just as in Balzac's and Thackeray's novels, we want to know more, from a 'sociological' viewpoint: who exactly are the 'upstarts' in Brussels and Bucharest, learning and applying EU-specific resources and skills, what are they in fact doing and why? We also wonder how ordinary Europeans – but also citizens of candidate countries and resident 'third country nationals' – view, experience, debate, and contest the European integration process. It is thus precisely the increasing complexity of the European Union as a field over and beyond formal politics and law itself, that requires us to study the very people – the actors – that are building Europe, at both the core and the periphery of the Union, in the capital and at the margins. Rejecting a stratospheric view of the EU, typical of the institutions-focused mainstream (*'une vue trop aérienne'*, in the words of Smith 1999, or the 'birds' eye view', as Guiraudon 2006 puts it), is there a way we can focus in on these actors' behaviour, their social characteristics, and their distinctive views of Europe? As people, with a human face, they surely have much to tell us about EU political dynamics.

Others may wonder why we need to study Europeans sociologically in order to understand European integration. The sociological view, however, is not entirely absent from recognizable names in the field of EU studies. Sidney Tarrow (2001) and Stefano Bartolini (2005) have noted an analogy between European integration and historian Wayne te Brake's notion of 'composite polity' in early modern European history. As te Brake says: 'it was often in the interstices and on the

margins of these early modern state formations that ordinary people enjoyed the greatest political opportunities' (1998: 14–15). The analogy suggests that EU scholars should be asking how the emerging EU institutional complex changes or does not change the sources of social power and its distribution among live European actors. It is a clearly a key question for political sociology (Mann 1993b), but it also matters for disciplines such as political science and law interested in shifts in what they would call 'the attribution of competences'. In other words, there is a call for new kinds of empirical studies on the actors that take part in what mainstream EU studies has typically called the 'institutionalisation of Europe' (Stone Sweet *et al.* 2001).

In the 1990s, a range of political sociologists took up this agenda. They have developed new ways of studying mobilization in relation to the EU, by studying the actions of what might be called 'EU professionals', in both institutional settings and beyond. Thus the careers and social profiles of politicians, bureaucrats and judges have come to be documented and analyzed in-depth, as well as others orbiting EU institutions – such as lobbyists, collective actors such as associations, trade unions and social movement organizations that position themselves in relation to European integration, even the media professionals that cover all this as news. Political sociologists re-discovered Europe as an object of study in the early 1990s, after the *relance de l'Europe* (relaunch of Europe), the single market completion 1992 deadline, and the Maastricht Treaty of 1993. While the development of a new political sociology of the EU has been much more advanced in France, there were signs of this renaissance in the mainstream Anglo-American literature. As well as the work of Tarrow and Bartolini mentioned above, a key example was political sociologist George Ross's account as an observer within the Delors cabinet (Ross 1994). This also reflected a period when a handful of anthropologists, mentioned above, first became intrigued by the EU and Europeanization (Abélès 1992; Bellier 1994). In 1993, one team issued a notorious report based on the first extensive insider ethnography of the Commission and Parliament (Abélès *et al.* 1993). For those anthropologists who joined in the rush to study the EU, the EU was not so much an object of study as a laboratory or (as the French love to say) a terrain, a location for field work.

What sociologists and anthropologists shared is a view that political and other actors implicated in the EU are always also socially embedded in worlds outside politics *per se*. They can thus be observed as more than just political actors, by a variety of methods, including ethnography and comparative datasets. They can be observed in terms of the social resources that individuals taking part in EU politics can draw on and build up over time to improve their position in society at large; the way that they incarnate a role that might have been carved out of nothing or constructed over time; and the extent to which

these resources and roles differ from typical political elites and activists in national or international contexts. Different kinds of professionals can be considered: whether they are sitting MEPs, *fonctionnaires* at the Commission, advocate generals at the European Court of Justice, NGO and think tank personnel, or EU media correspondents. As we will see, this focus on such actors in context can lead to a rather different view of the EU, which seeks explanations for familiar European institutions and policies, not within the dynamics of politics as such, but outside – in the social positions and trajectories of such actors and their symbolic conflicts about meaning, legitimacy and social power in wider society.

In France, a variety of studies along these lines has developed, often under the theoretical and methodological influence of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. They seek to understand the formation of a distinct European *field* of political action, specify the specific types of ‘capital’ thus valorized, and the ‘habitus’ they incarnate (for good introductions to the French political sociology of the EU, see Kauppi 2003; Irondelle 2006; Georgakakis 2008; Weisbein 2008). A field here denotes the unclearly defined and ever-shifting political space in which different political actors define themselves in relation to others, and struggle over dominance and influence over each other. To do this, they call up a variety of different resources – forms of capital – that actors can use to position themselves with social power and domination over others. These can range from straightforward economic resources to cultural credentials, social know-how and other forms of prestige. Habitus, meanwhile, here refers to the habits and automatic reflexes that specialist professionals develop through their socialization into different roles and social positions. The pioneering work in this vein by Didier Bigo (1996) on the transnational field of security professionals and Niilo Kauppi (1996b) on MEPs and European Parliament campaigns, both explicitly adapt Bourdieu’s notion of field to capture what are always emergent and protean dynamics.

A first set of studies has sought to contribute to this new socio-history of the EU by re-examining what had become unquestioned common sense in political science studies of the same subjects. This is particularly the case in research on the importance of legal expertise and the European Court of Justice in European integration (Jettinghoff and Schepel, 2005; Rask Madsen, 2005; Cohen and Vauchez, 2007a). They focus on the human face of law by looking at the social means by which legal professionals consecrate their own circles and legitimate the supremacy of European law. They seek to explain what we take as an explanation – integration through law – by situating the Court in its broader social context, in which European lawyers are struggling for social power in relation to their peer group(s) back home, as well as other EU professionals in the EU institutional environment. The legal field is in fact rather porous and lawyers

or persons trained in law are everywhere to be seen both inside and outside EU institutions.

Other sets of studies focus on the careers of different EU professionals. With roots in the political anthropology of the EU mentioned above, these more recent political sociologies have used ethnographic methods to go inside EU institutions, immersing themselves in the *loci* of power: whether following debates over Europe and institutional reform (de Lassalle and Georgakakis 2007a; Cohen and Vauchez 2007b); focusing on policy developments (Guiraudon 2003; Smith 2004a; Mérand 2008); studying places where 'Europe' is taught, such as Bruges (Schnabel 1996) or training schools in European affairs (Michel 2006); and immersing oneself in the world of Brussels journalists and their social networks (Baisnée 2007a). Still others have created personalized databases of individual careers within EU institutions, gathering as much information on the socio-demographic characteristics of EU officials and tracing their educational and professional trajectories (Dorandeu and Georgakakis 2002). The study of the Commission (de Lassalle and Georgakakis 2007b), for example, shows the increasing specialization of personnel over time with the development of particular profiles: transversal/political posts for Commission top managers with international and EU experience versus technical/sectoral posts for national civil servants. Studying who people *are* and what they *do* highlights processes of distinction over time. Work on the European Parliament is telling in this respect as one sees over time the institutionalization of the MEP function, with its emphasis on expertise and the professionalization of 'unlikely' politicians, such as women, celebrities and minority parties' members, such as the Greens and Right-wing populists (Kauppi 2005; Beauvallet and Michon 2010). This work dialogues with theories developed in other streams of political science. In a recent study based on a biographical database, Willy Beauvallet and Sébastien Michon (2008) seek to explain why there are many women in the European Parliament (around 30 per cent in the 2004–9 legislature), going beyond the main hypotheses that focus on the electoral system (proportional voting) and focusing rather on political recruitment strategies, political resources and strategies. Given that women have made up around 40 per cent of French MEPs and only 10 per cent of the national parliament in the last decade, they code and compare the biographies of male and female MEPs to establish how women are less endowed with social and political capital (in terms of education and career trajectory). They also show how this then influences the strategies and behaviour of women once they are elected: the positions that they occupy as MEPs and the role that they construct for themselves.

Studies that flesh out EU institutions show power struggles between insiders and outsiders, lines of cleavages, and rules of entry and interaction. In brief,

they show how fields are institutionalized, and roles are scripted there rather than institutions being taken for granted (Guiraudon 2006). They help understand practices and their social significance within institutions, for example the broader meaning of a vote in the European Parliament (see Kauppi, Chapter 7 in this volume). And finally, they show that that true power holders in EU fields are those that are multi-positioned in both national and EU fields and can thus act as brokers and gatekeepers (Favell 1998; Guiraudon 2000; Ruzza and Bozzini 2008).

Meanwhile, quantitative studies all point to a steady increase in mobilization targeting the EU and in the discussion of the EU in the media since the 1990s and the advent of the single market (Imig and Tarrow 2000). There has been much debate about the emergence of a European 'public sphere' and its importance in making the EU a political community that people could identify with. Normative Habermasian approaches are one way to consider this (Trenz and Eder 2004; Eriksen 2005b). Comparative studies of news items, editorials and public claims made by political actors in national newspapers have followed (Fossum and Schlesinger, 2007; Wessler *et al.* 2008; Díez Medrano 2009; Koopmans and Statham 2010). Drawing on original databases, they demonstrate the remaining differences in the domestication of EU developments by national media and actors.

As the variety and range of the works cited above suggests, there is a whole new field of work emerging in EU studies that takes a distinct political sociology angle on the field. This new political sociology of the EU has struggled for recognition in the mainstream, although it is now beginning to receive attention from advocates and critics, sceptics and sympathizers alike (Favell 2006; Guiraudon 2006; Dezalay *et al.* 2007; Adler-Nissen 2008; Menon 2008, Saurugger 2008, 2009; Mérand and Saurugger 2010, Rumford 2008; Parsons 2010). Our sample here in this volume offers a further taste of a mode of analysis of the EU that is likely to grow in importance in the coming years, as sociological tools and methods are adopted by the mainstream.

How to do a sociology of the European Union

In the light of the three surveys in this chapter of what are currently understood as sociological approaches to the European Union, what might a new sociology of the European Union look like? In the chapters that follow this introduction, we present a series of distinct but complementary visions of how this question might be operationalized in empirical work. Split into two halves which cover Social Foundations and Politics and Policies, we introduce each section with a brief summary of each author's contribution and their relevance to current

concerns in EU studies. The book thus opens with themes from the central agenda of sociology – addressing questions of class, identity and mobilities, culture, social stratification and economic organization – to assess the emergence of a ‘European society’. Later chapters then move into applying theories and modes of analysis in sociology to revisit the core issues of EU studies: addressing the political sociology of the EU and various dimensions of democracy, representation, mobilization and policy in the EU.

At the end of this journey, we hope that the contribution of the sociology of the European Union will be clear. We do not present this manifesto as a turf war exercise. This would only reify a discipline-centred view of the field in a fluid age where all scholars might need to be inter- if not post-disciplinary in some aspect of their work. But past and present relations between the disciplines need clarifying, and we do argue for an appreciation of what a distinctive new empirical sociology – not yet fully recognized – might bring to EU studies. While joining our agenda, most of the contributors to this volume think of themselves as thoroughly interdisciplinary scholars. Their involvement in an inherently interdisciplinary field such as EU studies puts them at the margins of their own discipline and is sometimes worn as a mark of their own frustration with it. Nevertheless, we believe the key to true interdisciplinarity is the ability to understand the differences between disciplines, both in terms of how they look from the outside and how they operate from the inside. Law, history, economics, anthropology and political science all have their distinctive *modus operandi* in relation to studying the EU; so does sociology. We hope here to have presented a clear overview of how sociology can be positioned in relation to other disciplines’ work on the EU, and of what kind of new empirical contributions it can bring to the field.