

Sociology of the European Union, edited by A. Favell and V. Guiraudon (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, ISBN 9780230207127); xiv+266pp., £22.99 pb.

A Political Sociology of the European Union: Reassessing Constructivism, edited by J. Rowell and M. Mangenot (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010, ISBN 9780719082436); xv+270pp., £65.00 hb.

At the March 2011 European Union Studies Association (EUSA) annual conference in Boston, Massachusetts («<http://www.eustudies.org/conference.php?cid=6>»), Favell and Guiraudon's book was hailed as thankfully as rain in a drought. Sociology, writes George Ross in his postscript, was 'arriving late at the European Studies ball' (p. 215), and the volume tackles the thirst (as the contributors see it) in EU Studies for a 'distinctive, new, empirical sociology' (p. 24). It takes the form of an edited, paperback contribution to Palgrave Macmillan's wide range of EU Studies, adopts an approach intended to be interdisciplinary (p. 24) and explicitly declares itself as a 'manifesto' for doing a sociology of the European Union.

In form, the book is somewhat shoehorned into paperback norms, with the presence of boxed inserts of key concepts at the start of each chapter sitting rather superfluously with material that by and large is advanced in nature. Chapter styles fluctuate widely, and in places would have benefited from more rigorous editing, particularly since the book is indeed intended to speak to students. In substance, and following a general introduction, the book is divided into two parts (Social Foundations – the impact of Europeanization on 'everyday European citizens' lives and experiences' [p.25]; and Politics and Policies – 'how sociological tools might be operationalized to study more explicitly political integration' [p. 125]). Each of these halves begins with its own introductory summary, and in this sense, the book can be read as having pedagogical intent since by marshalling its material under these broad headings, and by bringing so many leading scholars onto the pages, it is a valuable introduction to sociological 'data-driven' (p. 4) methodologies and theory applied to a wide range of specific fields of inquiry. Part One brings to a wider readership work seen before in other guises: Juan Díez Medrano on social class and identity; Adrian Favell and Ettore Recchi on social mobility and spatial mobility; Alberta Andreotti and Patrick le Galès on elites, middle classes and cities; and Neil Fligstein on markets and firms. In the second part of the book, the material inevitably, and usefully, overlaps with and complements the French scholarship that is the hallmark of the second volume reviewed here.

Rowell and Mangenot's book, published in hardback by Manchester University Press, is also co-edited, and is an expansive distillation of the scholarship generated by the Strasbourg School ('the Strasbourg research centre on the EU (currently known as GSPE PRISME)', Favell and Guiraudon, p. 126) – namely, the application of political sociology (itself a key dimension of French political science) to the study of the European Union. The book's contributors include authors from institutions beyond the Strasbourg laboratory itself, but all are based in French research teams (or French-speaking, in the case of Laurent Scheek from the Université Libre de Bruxelles). Roughly a third of the chapters draw on studies conducted initially on French research objects: Marine Lasalle on 'European' careers in sub-national French administrations; Hélène Michel on the construction of European interests based on the example of French property owners' associations; Andy Smith on protected geographical indications for food. In contrast, the majority of the chapters start from analyses of specifically EU-level 'fields', 'problems' and 'instruments' (each of these objects organizing one of the three parts to the book): Didier Georgakakis and Marine de Lassalle on EU civil servants; Michel Mangenot on the EU's Council Secretariat; Christele Marchand and Antoine Vauchez on the 'sociology of litigants pleading before the European Court of Justice'; Laurent Scheek on fundamental rights; Willy Beauvallet on the European Parliament and 'the politicisation of the European space'; intergovernmental benchmarking by Isabelle Bruno; 'the instrumentalisation of European opinion' by Philippe Aldrin; Romuald

Normand on 'expert measurement in the government of lifelong learning'; and Jay Rowell, finally, on 'the instrumentation of European disability policy'. Every single contribution is rich in detail and succinct in its conclusions, and, vitally, highly readable thanks to having been held to a clear template by the editors.

In a certain light, both volumes read as Bourdieu-*schriften*, which is to be expected, and are none the worse for that. Both have flaws that are virtually inevitable when dealing with material that is edited and, in the Rowell and Mangenot book, translated in many cases from French to English, although only the lack of gender-aware language in some chapters of the latter really jars in any way. Indeed, of the two books under review here, it is Rowell and Mangenot's which offers the more accessible read, and which provides the more coherent account of how we might think of the EU as a collection of socially constructed objects. It offers the most original empirical material in support of its arguments, and it is the more consistently and effectively edited. Yet it is also the more ferocious of the two volumes in its (self-declared) battle for turf, not only amongst 'EU constructivists' (p. xv), but within 'existing approaches to the EU' in general, to which 'both the individual chapters [...] and the book as a whole, constitute a sustained and systematic challenge' (p. xv). The political sociology of the EU, we can logically conclude, is being pioneered by our colleagues from the Strasbourg stable, and it is a good thing that these two publications have brought the work to the attention of the wider readership that two English-language texts can offer. Its legitimacy thus established, its proponents might consider taking a breather from the battle for disciplinary *lebensraum*, and joining Favell and Guiraudon in promoting the benefits of the equally challenging adventure of forging a truly interdisciplinary sociology of (the) European Union.

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An Inside View of the CAP Reform Process: Explaining the MacSharry, Agenda 2000 and Fischler Reforms, by A. Cunha with A. Swinbank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, ISBN 9780199591572); xix+226pp., £50.00 hb.

The common agricultural policy (CAP) was the EU's flagship policy of the 1960s as well as its most expensive, absorbing almost 70 per cent of the entire Community budget by the early 1980s. Today, that figure is around 40 per cent. Three decades after its creation, EU leaders, with a sense of reluctance, embarked on a series of reforms to the CAP. It is these reforms that are examined by Arlindo Cunha with Alan Swinbank in this book. It traces the reform process from the late 1980s, spearheaded by EU Agriculture Commissioner Ray MacSharry, through to the early 2000s when Commissioner Franz Fischler began to rework the policy although with mixed results. The book makes an important contribution to the existing and expanding literature on the CAP and will complement the ongoing scholarly achievements by historians who have researched the early years of this policy.

The book is especially useful for the way it attempts to explain the policy and decision-making processes inherent in one of the EU's most complex and technical policy fields. Sensibly structured, the first two chapters attempt, with varying degrees of success, to explain both the origins and development of the CAP, as well as introducing how policy and decision-making work at EU level. For the reader, a pre-existing knowledge of both is required. The remaining chapters chart the reform efforts not only from a European perspective, but with clear links between CAP reform (or non-reform) and wider international trading environment *vis-à-vis* the Gatt (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and, later, the WTO (World Trade Organization). However, the book promises much but falls short on delivery. Cunha, the main author, was Portugal's agriculture minister during the early reforms of the CAP and had a front row seat at national and at EU level to decision-making and political deal-making. Later, he served as vice-president of the European Parliament's