

IN A WORLD CONTEXT of increasingly bounded nation-states promulgating circumscribed national identities, the establishment of the freedom of movement as one the founding principles of the EU constituted a revolutionary social and political development. The central problem that Favell attempts to address in this excellent book is why, given this freedom of movement, less than 2 % of West Europeans live, work and settle abroad in other European states. And this conundrum points to a second broader concern – whether a United States of Europe, as an invention and as something modeled on the US, is actually possible in practice or will remain merely a legal, political, and administrative ideal.

Favell draws on a wide-ranging number of theoretical resources from sociology, human and economic geography, and political theory in order to pursue these questions. He also employs evidence from a number in-depth qualitative interviews incorporating the life histories and subjective narratives of 60 Europeans migrants – or what he terms “Eurostars” – moving to three global cities: Amsterdam, Brussels and London.

The book begins by outlining the structure, provisions, and appeal of these three multicultural, dynamic, international “porous” global cities, which although all containing mixes of ethnic immigrants, foreign urban professionals and old established locals, vary considerably. Nevertheless, all contain significant attractions in addition to the employment opportunities they offer: Amsterdam is the embodiment of European progressive modernity freedom, cosmopolitanism tolerance, and liberalism; London allows high levels of occupational mobility, lacks rigid bureaucracy, and offers cultural cool; and Brussels offers a vibrant multinational, intersection of French, Dutch, German and English-speaking worlds and a small village like feel. Yet all three also have significant drawbacks: Amsterdam is not as permissive as it appears and is in fact part of a deeply regulated and controlled society; London has a poor infrastructure, expensive public services, and a mid-Atlantic rather than European mindset; Brussels is a shabby, unattractive city suffering from high levels of bureaucratic inertia and state interference. Adopting a modified rational choice approach Favell

* About Adrian FAVELL, *Eurostars and Eurocities: Free Movement and Mobility in an Integrating Europe* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2008).

then goes on to consider why and how Eurostars move. Many have a structured set of preferences and migrate in order to develop their career path which would otherwise be stifled in their country. Few, however, have perfect information about their destination and its long-term implications for their lives and those in couples tend to mediate these economic criteria with issues tied to sustaining a relationship, often choosing a third “neutral” country in an effort to balance relationship with career.

Rather than simply originating from an elite background the majority of his respondents came from average middle class provincial, working class, or rural backgrounds and experienced social mobility as a result of their spatial mobility. As social spiralists who make a risky move from familiar national contexts into uncertain territory most do not see themselves as immigrants at all but rather identify as Europeans who are flexible and mobile. In addition, it is paradoxically precisely the low numbers of other Europeans who migrate, which provides them with a sense of originality and distinction which facilitates their own migration.

Despite theoretical discussions of hyper-mobility from social theorists, constant mobility is not a long-term option for any of the Eurostars and questions concerning settlement and integration – especially in terms of how the cities differ in their provisions and in facilitating settlement – inevitably arise. Favell examines how the Eurostars attempt to combine their sense of mobility with a functional integration. Their lifestyle choices are structured by a struggle over access to scarce resources and involve trying to merge urban life with the problems of inner city residence in terms of cost of living, acquiring housing, family life, medical and health care, and security. Their initial excitement deriving from the occupational opportunities available in the host society soon becomes tempered by the operation of informal mechanisms which prevent their overall integration and long-term settlement. Although many have economic capital they lack the social and cultural capital necessary to become integrated into the city. Few belong to the long-established locally savvy urban tribes which have reservoirs of finely tuned knowledge and know how and which usually facilitate access to quality of life resources. Rather they tend to have highly cosmopolitan networks containing a number of nationalities which occasionally include native nationals who have lived abroad.

Of the three cities Brussels fares best overall as a result of its cost of living, openness, facilities, access to work, cultural life, public transport, and homely feel.

For most nation states integration involves adapting to its standardized norms through a process of renationalization. This in turn allows access to scarce social resources and the good life. To succeed in these cities Eurostars need to live standardized, nationalized lives which is precisely what they have tried to avoid through their migration. It is because renationalizing processes are weakest in Brussels that it is seen as the easiest place to settle and for the migrants to achieve a kind of functional integration into the city.

Nevertheless, most never settle because of these renationalizing processes which manifest themselves through informal processes of social and ethnic closure operating through the minutia of everyday life including language use. Despite an appearance of openness and cosmopolitanism, these international or global cities cultivate a latent hostility to such forms of life.

For Favell, Europe is caught between an economic universalism which pervades these cities and engenders global connections and regional networks, and a cultural particularism that aims at maintaining locality, place, and a distinctive culture through social closure: "So the myth of the free European market bumps up again and again to the residual power of national and local cultures. That stick in the mud quality of European populations who perhaps rightly value cultural distinctions, the quality of life it assures, and the sense of community that closes this off to outsiders. . . These are two sides of modernity that Europe is struggling to reconcile. Diversity and freedom" (p. 222). It is the Eurostars who live out these tensions and conflicts and through their actions provide reproduce this impasse.

The book has a number of undeniable merits. It sets up a fascinating research problem and confronts it directly. It also examines a different type of highly skilled migration to the heretofore dominant preoccupation with low skilled migration from developing to developed countries. In contrast to the speculative and exaggerated claims of many globalization theorists whose hyperbolic obituaries of the nation-state are often glossed with incredible assumptions of demographic fluidity and labour mobility, Favell employs empirical data to show the continuing significance of banal everyday nationalism. He also draws attention to the human face of migration by recognizing the mundane and practical realities – dealing with a foreign culture, maintaining family and social networks, and building a career – with which even comparatively privileged migrants have to deal. Finally, the book is written in a clear and refreshing style.

One of the major strengths of the book is its intermingling of the phenomenological experience of the actors with broader structural

discussions of European and national political, economic and legal frameworks. But at the same time the emphasis is very much on the former with Favell foregrounding the actors' accounts, the constitutive role of consciousness, and the use of the rational choice approach in explaining their migration. Whilst Favell clearly identifies strongly with the very human dilemmas faced by these migrants, a slightly stronger and more critical emphasis on structural and social processes, on why the Eurostars said what they did, as well as a less subjective conception of integration, may at times have been helpful. Moreover, although the focus of the book is on free movement within Europe only, there are implications for the question of open borders on a more general global scale which could have been mentioned. But these minor points of emphasis do not detract from what is overall an exemplary and insightful work in migration and integration studies.

S T E V E N L O Y A L