

Frymer also conceives "the state" as an arena of struggle (an argument reminiscent of Poulantzas' work), hence, politics for Frymer is extremely important. Lastly, and perhaps the most important theoretical and substantive point in Frymer's account, power is deemed as working *through* institutions such as the Courts or the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Rather than positing *a priori* that these institutions "simply reflect the interest of the powerful," Frymer argues they "can take a life of their own and have an independent causal effect on how power is attained and manifested" (p. 9).

Frymer shows that the Wagner Act, and the institutions it created, ultimately failed as they became the "Magna Carta for White Labor." This institutionalization of white labor power in the NLRB forced the civil rights community—particularly the NAACP, to find redress for discrimination in the Courts. This path, combined with the limited power of the civil rights enforcement agencies created years later (e.g., the EEOC), almost guaranteed, along with several laws enacted for different purposes (see Chapter Four), the expansion of the "legal state" as the place to settle civil rights concerns. Based on this analysis, Frymer concludes that the labor and civil rights communities will have to "rely less on mobilizing and organizing and more on a frank recognition of the realities of democratic representation" (p. 139) to advance their common interests.

And it was precisely the conclusion of the book that made me go hum, as I believe exactly the opposite! Frymer's conclusion is derived from his concern with how things *might* have been rather than how they *were*. He laments how the Democratic Party split its labor and civil rights corner rather than understanding that this was what was in the historical cards. Had Frymer followed his own argument about racism and institutional power a few years back, he would have concluded that this bifurcation of power was the logical outcome of how race and class had operated in America. Accordingly, unlike Frymer, I do not put my faith on the "realities of democratic representation" and the messiness of democratic politics for progressive social change. Instead, I believe that in order to create an inclusive democracy that reflects labor, race, and gender interests in its politi-

cal institutions, we need more social movements and more organizational work. And the movements and the actors I envision that will push democracy forward will be, like they have been in the past, mostly outside formal organizations (Frymer limits his analysis of "social movements" to organized labor and the NAACP which excludes the multiple examples of less "organized" and equally important forms of social mobilization).

Despite my criticisms, this book deserves to be widely read. Frymer's systematic analysis and clear exposition alone make this book required reading for sociologists interested in politics, political sociology, state and social policy, social movements, and race matters in general.

Cultural Overstretch? Differences Between Old and New Member States of the EU and Turkey, by Jürgen Gerhards. New York: Routledge, 2007. 208pp. \$150.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780415435499.

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Long an object of study in other disciplines, European integration has sparked a sociological literature relatively recently. Precisely how sociology's concepts and *problematiques* can contribute to our understanding of the European Union (E.U.) is still being defined. The task is daunting: neither a nation-state nor an international organization comparable to, say, the WTO, the E.U. has been meticulously documented in what is often an encyclopedic, actorless mode, rendering the whole phenomenon guileless and smoothly machine-like on the surface, yet deeply ambiguous in meaning and effect.

None of this implies that we should give up on a sociological contribution to the study of integration. For sociologists studying Europe in any of its dimensions, the E.U. is now without a doubt the ethereal elephant-in-the-room. The elephant needs to be given form and depth, if for no other reason than its sheer magnitude: as of 2007, the 27-member E.U. had a population of 495 million people. This is much more than an 'N of one.'

For all these reasons, the analysis in *Cultural Overstretch?* is laudable, if not entirely unproblematic. The book sets out to address Europe's prospects for integrating populations into its fold that were, until only recently, not considered European. It attends in particular to Turkey—the E.U.'s most controversial prospective member to-date. Rightly breaking from the predominance of economic considerations, *Cultural Overstretch?* focuses on the question of cultural 'fit': can the cultures of the younger and prospective member states mesh with the E.U.'s 'cultural blueprint'?

The book addresses the question in three steps. First, it describes the E.U.'s 'cultural blueprint,' drawing from legislation and the E.U.'s (failed) constitution. Second, it uses items from representative national surveys to evaluate differences between member states that sit closer to the E.U. blueprint and those that do not. Third, it uses OLS regression to explain cultural differences, focusing on modernization (GDP per capita and the U.N.'s Human Development Index), religious denomination, and years under democratic rule as the main explanatory variables. The chapters of the book iteratively cycle through these steps, assessing cultural differences across 'value spheres': religion, gender roles, the economy, the welfare state, and democracy and civil society.

The analysis of religious differences highlights the E.U.'s commitments to secularism and non-discrimination, and that the new and prospective members' populations are on the whole less secular, and perhaps less tolerant of different religions, relative to the 'old' E.U. These are based on averages, however, with substantial within-group variation; many of the new member states (the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary) are in fact highly secular—more so, for instance, than Italy, one of the oldest E.U. members. As a result, the real implications of the descriptive results are hard to pin down. On the explanatory side, the author emphasizes the importance of modernization-related factors and integration into a religious community, rather than any religious denomination *per se*.

The other chapters are similarly informative; two present particularly interesting findings. A chapter on economic conceptions

shows that the E.U.'s economically liberal and entrepreneurial themes are more commonly found in the new and candidate countries, raising the awkward possibility that economically 'European' citizens are more populous outside of 'old' Europe. The explanatory analysis does not make firm conclusions on why this would be the case. The chapter on social welfare offers similarly puzzling findings: the 'E.U. blueprint' for a minimalist welfare state runs contrary to orientations in the vast majority of European countries, old and new—where citizens tend to favor a social democratic (or even a socialist) sort of welfarism. The explanatory component of the chapter presents some unintuitive results (for instance, that Protestants are the least welfarist)—but there is very little variation to explain.

Overall this is an interesting and thoughtfully constructed book, but there are deep problems embedded in its approach. One is the research question itself: how much similarity, and of what sort, constitutes fit; how much discrepancy is too much? These are crucial questions that can be informed, but not answered, using statistical analysis. A work like *Cultural Overstretch?* usefully supplements what must, in the end, be a fuller consideration of the politics of enlargement, assessing who stands to gain and who stands to lose, and what the longer-term implications might be. This is within the reach of sociological analysis, but is not achieved in this book.

A final problem is rooted in the elephant-in-the-room issue. The author argues that European values can be uncovered using the E.U.'s primary and secondary legislation and its constitutional draft. To assess national culture, he emphasizes the need for comparability and representativeness, using sources that do not draw from elite discourse. There is an inconsistency here. While the E.U.'s 'cultural blueprint' is defined using sources largely produced by different sorts of elites and interest groups, national culture is defined using representative opinion surveys. This is not fatal for the analysis of 'fit,' but it should have shaped the interpretation of results: arguably, the book offers an analysis of fit between the priorities of those elites who exert influence over the E.U.'s *acquis* and the priorities of the general populations

of members and prospective members. But, without exploration of the E.U.-level itself—that is, how its legislation is produced, by whom, in what sorts of contests—the question of cultural fit is framed as if the E.U.- and national-level measures of culture represent true equivalents.

From the Cult of Waste to the Trash Heap of History: The Politics of Waste in Socialist and Postsocialist Hungary, by **Zsuzsa Gille**. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2007. 264pp. \$45.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780253348388.

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Zsuzsa Gille's excellent book breaks important theoretical ground, adds compelling empirical evidence in the area of environmental sociology, and demonstrates the power of multi-methodological designs for examining the interrelationships between technological change, political economic transformations and the natural environment. The book's most compelling contribution is a new framework for conceptualizing and empirically examining the political economy of waste. Gille's framework provides a fresh new sociological approach for examining the role of waste in society. She contends that waste and society are mutually constitutive, that the dichotomy between consumption and production is false, that waste is a hybrid category—part material and part social and that social transformations can be viewed through the lens of *waste regimes*.

Gille's synthesis of political economy and environmental sociology results in a new concept she calls *waste regimes*. Waste regimes are a lens through which one can examine how institutions determine what wastes have social value, and what wastes are a problem. Waste regimes differ in the way waste is produced, the politics surrounding the production, distribution, storage, and disposal of waste, and the way in which waste is represented in political and social discourse. Moreover, since waste regimes are dynamic, production, politics and representation vary over time in response to other aspects of social change

and institutional transformation. Hence, waste regime analysis facilitates comparative research across nations and over time. As Gille observes, research shaped by a waste regime framework moves away from a mode of production analysis to focus on the changing materiality and discourse of waste within a particular society over time or between different societies.

Gille's observations about the "spatiality" of waste are particularly interesting. Spatiality in this context means cognitive and rhetorical space, not geographic space. Accordingly, the sociological challenge is to understand the social processes that result in waste being placed (or dis-placed) into various categories, some of which like recycling are positively valued while others like toxic dumps are framed in a negative light. Classification, therefore, is social behavior, and waste is a both a material and a social category. Moreover, since society and waste are dynamic and mutually constitutive, social structures that regulate and manage waste change along with its rhetorical reclassification as being useful or non-useful, beneficial or dangerous. These representational distinctions expose relationships between waste and the social relations of production. In socialist societies, for example, managers often hoarded surplus resources as a hedge against future shortages. This frequently resulted in rot, rust, spoilage and evaporation as valuable industrial inputs were transformed into waste. In capitalist systems, by contrast, waste tends to result from surplus production and underutilized excess. Examining waste regimes in a comparative context questions the conventional wisdom that state socialism was inherently wasteful while market based systems are more efficient, less wasteful and more sustainable.

Gille uses the waste regime framework to shape and motivate a skillful empirical examination of the politics of waste in Hungary between 1948 through 2004, from the beginnings of state socialism through accession to the European Union. Her multi-method research design utilizes meticulous archival research, interviews with historical actors in both production and waste management sectors, and field-based research conducted in a number of sites at different spatial scales. Some readers will recognize

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