BOOK REVIEWS

once the wheels of political and administrative favour turn again and these issues re-emerge on to the agenda, this book might acquire significant status, so buy soon.

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Europe


This edited volume looks at the responses of Italian society to the increasing success of Silvio Berlusconi. It analyses how opposition by intellectuals, artists, media practitioners and grass-roots activists was organised during the second Berlusconi government (2001–6). The introduction, written by Albertazzi and Rothenberg, is a brief and useful overview of the figure of Berlusconi. The rest of the book, written by academic scholars, is divided into four sections in which all aspects of opposition are analysed. Starting with a thorough analysis of the transformation of society and media landscapes during the Berlusconi period, the authors analyse the political challenges of the left and centre parties, the intellectual opposition within television shows (Lutazzi and Guzzanti), the cinema (Il CaImano by Nanni Moretti), theatre (Paolo Rossi), the press (Il Corriere della Sera), literature (Vincenzo Consolo) and the web (Pasto Cunegonda, Girottoni and Beppe Grillo). The last section is devoted to the two important journalism censorship cases of Michele Santoro and Enzo Biagi and on the actions of important movements such as immigrant, feminist and LGBT associations. The conclusion, written by Ross and Brook, is a reflection on all the opposition analysed in the book.

The entire book is a successful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of all these kinds of opposition.

The opposition actors are all different and, as a consequence, they all have a different focus; while individual opponents criticise the figure and image of Berlusconi, other groups target his politics and policies. However, the conclusion is the same in both cases: the fragmented nature of the opposition makes it unable to oppose the cumbersome figure of the right-wing leader.

The stress of the analysis is often placed on the problem of Berlusconi's conflict of interests - his double role as head of government and owner of the major private television channels is seen as a key factor in explaining his own success and the failure of all kinds of opposition. The events of Mani Pulite (Italian for 'clean hands', referring to the nationwide investigation into political corruption in Italy during the 1990s) have influenced the political structure of Italy, causing a detachment from traditional cleavages and increasing the influence of the media. In this respect, Berlusconi's position allows him to exercise more influence on the electorate than the opposition.

As the editors point out, this book 'is not another book on Silvio Berlusconi' (p. 1) because it is not an analysis of the career of this most important Italian leader. But it is a study of how politics and above all society react to Berlusconi and his neo-conservative values. Its international perspective and simple language make the book readable by the international community and do not limit its audience to political scientists. Although the analysis is limited to a few years, this book is a good tool for understanding why Berlusconismo has not (yet) been defeated.

Pasqualina Snaith
(University of Siena)

Negotiating Political Identities: Multiethnic Schools and Youth in Europe by Daniel Faas. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010. 288pp., £55.00, ISBN 978 0 7546 7844 1

In a nutshell, Daniel Faas’ book presents an empirically informed cross-national analysis of how the national, European and multicultural agendas are intertwined at EU and national levels, or more importantly, how schools and young people interpret the development of these policy agendas (p. 1). The book is written in a comparative framework and divided into two main parts, analysing the impact of the aforementioned three political agendas on German and English education.
systems and youth political identities. Each part presents the analysis of shifting politics of migrant education in the context of the post-war changes in each country and of the ways in which schools located in Stuttgart and London mediated these national debates in their curriculum, which, in turn, impacted on the political identity-formation processes of fifteen-year-old students of ethnic majority and minority Turkish background. Selecting two schools in each national context allows the author to examine within-country differences in youth identity construction based on the type of environment (e.g. middle or working class) and curriculum (e.g. Eurocentric, multicultural) each school affords to young people.

In the context of his empirical findings, Fass contends that ‘national citizenship agendas and identities involve complex ethnic negotiations, circumscribed by the presence or absence of European dimensions’ (p. 197). Indeed, residues of Germany’s monocultural but Europhile vision of European integration and migration-related diversity as well as England’s inability to re-conceptualise its national identity in European terms were found both in the school curricula and in young people’s identities and sense of belonging. School policy approaches vis-à-vis diversity/cultural pluralism, demographic intake and peer cultures also shaped the identities of both majority and minority youth and accounted for the within-country differences. With respect to implications of the study for inclusive citizenship and social cohesion in schools and European immigrant societies at large, the author argues that ‘policies that incorporate diversity and allow all people to forge new identities that are recognized and valued’ are more effective for immigrant integration than ‘assimilation-based approaches on the one hand and cultural pluralist policies on the other’ (p. 209). The final chapter of the book expands the findings by including a discussion of European and American literatures on the incorporation of immigrants and their children.

This is a very readable and well-organised academic text. It will appeal to all those who have a professional and/or academic interest in issues of immigration, youth citizenship identity, ethnicity, multiculturalism and the Europeanisation of education. The book will also be a helpful reference for new social researchers since, in addition to relating the findings of the empirical study, it explains in sufficient detail the author’s post-structuralist theoretical framework for the study of youth identity, addresses the key conceptual issues and methodological concerns of the study and includes research instruments.

Antonina Tereshchenko
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Andrew Glencross adds to a small but growing literature comparing the emerging EU political system with the experience of US federalism. However, Glencross argues, the best period for such historical comparison is not the early constitution making of the Founding Fathers or the functioning of modern US federalism, but the antebellum period – the decades between the foundation of the American Republic and the outbreak of the Civil War – when the relationship between member states and the political centre was most ambiguous and contested.

Such a comparison, Glencross argues, leads us towards an expanded concept of ‘viability’ embracing not only the formal allocation of institutional and legal powers and ‘competency over competences’, but also actors’ understandings of the purposes of the union and whether popular sovereignty is ultimately invested in the centre, the member states or both. Applying this framework, he identifies two distinct approaches to achieving viability in semi-federal, semi-confederal state unions like the EU or the early US: (1) ‘voluntary centralization’ where the different actors negotiate their way to a stronger, more integrated state; and (2) ‘dynamic equilibrium’ where institutional and political ambiguity – far from being a problem to be solved – is the key to viability.

The viability of the antebellum US, he argues, was in the end fatally undermined by an emerging politics of ‘voluntary centralization’, while the EU has survived precisely by sticking to a pattern of ‘dynamic equilibrium’. In this light, projects to fix the European Union through various forms of democratization and constitutionalization appear at best irrelevant and at worst dangerous. There are, Glencross acknowledges, important differences between the two cases: the US was created through a constitutional instrument, the EU