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**Rethinking the state and polity-building in the European Union: the
sociology of globalization and the rise of reflexive government**

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Abstract

In order to understand the type of state represented by the EU sociology has been required to rethink concepts developed for the study of nation-state society. To do so it has drawn heavily upon political science approaches to the EU state. Two main weaknesses can be identified in the resulting sociological approaches to the question of what kind of state or polity the European Union represents. First, it is assumed that what is under consideration is the degree to which the EU constitutes some form of supra-national state. Second, in contextualizing the changes to the nation-state induced by European integration, globalization (viewed primarily in economic terms) is conceived as a series of processes external to the EU; threats or challenges which have resulted in greater integration. It is argued that it is necessary to rethink the relationship between the EU and globalization (conceived as a multi-dimensional series of processes) to allow for the fact that it can promote greater internal differentiation and fragmentation, thereby making polity-building extremely problematic. Rather than view the EU as a form of state it is suggested that the idea of reflexive government best captures the way in which the EU works to secure the means of government in the face of forces which make effective governance increasingly difficult. These ideas are explored in relation to the changing nature of the EU's agricultural policy, from state intervention to reflexive government.

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a marked increase in interest among sociologists in the nature and dynamics of the European Union (EU). This is not simply a case of a sociological shift from the study of national societies to concern with supra-national forms of social organization, regulation and control, and their interaction with those existing at the national level. Sociology's increasing preoccupation with the European Union has coincided with a broadening of EU studies to include issues of citizenship, civil society, governance, education, new social movements, social exclusion, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and environmental and health risks, all of which have a strong sociological provenance. In this sense, rather than sociology embracing EU studies, the study of the EU has come to sociology.

As Walby (1999) points out, understanding the European Union poses a major challenge for sociology and its traditional conceptions of state. Not only for sociology: the nature of the EU state has proved to be an intractable problem for political scientists too, the axis of the debate forming around the extent to which the EU can be considered a supra-national or intergovernmental entity, a nation-state "writ large" or a forum for furthering national interests. In its most contemporary manifestation the problem of the EU state has been recast somewhat as the form of polity the EU represents (Friese and Wagner 2002): a post-national polity (Axford and Huggins 1999), a quasi-federal polity (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998), a multiperspectival polity (Diez 1999), a composite polity (Imig and Tarrow 2001). The literature on polity-building recognises that integration has occurred to a significant degree in the economic, and more recently political, field but that social integration remains relatively underdeveloped, and that this contributes to the EU's democratic deficit (Giorgi, Crowley and Ney 2001), and its lack of legitimacy in the eyes of European citizens (Therborn 1995).

The rise to prominence of the idea of the EU as a polity-in-the-making can be associated with the preference for the idea of governance as the designation for the way the EU seeks to regulate and manage transnational European space (Rosamond 2000: 109). Governance is accomplished through a broad range of state and non-state agencies. While government is associated with national administration and internal organisation, governance points to a different range of activities both within and beyond the national level: of firms and NGOs as well as independent agencies and multi- and international organizations. Government implies rule over a territory, governance however is not just the business of the state. "Rather it is a function that can be performed by a wide variety of public and private, state and non-state, national and international institutions and practices" (Hirst and Thompson 1996: 183-4). In Scholte's (2001) words, "[c]ontemporary governance is multilayered. It includes important local, substate regional, suprastate regional, and transworld operations alongside and intertwined with national arrangements." Within the EU a multiplicity of state forms are at work: nation-states, regions, supra-national authorities and myriad agencies and networks which make governance possible. In Axford and Huggins' (1999) formulation the EU "partakes of some elements of state-centred co-ordination, a whiff of supranationalism and a growing amount of non-hierarchical, cross-border networking."

This paper examines the ways in which recent sociological thinking has attempted to understand the EU as a state or polity. As we shall see, sociologists have frequently followed political scientists in their attempts to develop fresh approaches to the question of what kind of state the EU represents. Four

sociological appropriations of interpretations of the EU state are considered. First, we will look at the multi-level governance thesis, endorsed by Held et al (1999). Second, we will examine the idea of the EU as a regulatory state, advanced by Walby (1999). Third, the idea that the EU represents an internationalization of the state (Nash 2000). Finally, the European Union as an example of a network state (Castells 2000).

It is argued that the major weakness common to all these approaches inheres in their conceptualization of the relationship between the EU and globalization. In all cases globalization is seen as a force or series of processes external to the EU and impelling “ever closer union.” In addition, advocates of the multi-level governance approach frequently view the global as a “level” beyond the EU, and as such subject to different regime of governance. On this reading the local, regional, national, and supra-national “levels” are present in the EU, the global is external to it and has a wider scope of operation (Mann 1998). It is argued that such approaches reveal an impoverished understanding of globalization vis-à-vis the EU.

In preference to the sociological accounts under consideration here it is argued that the state-like characteristics of the EU, such as they are, should be understood in terms of reflexive government, a term appropriated from the Anglo-Foucauldian governmentality theorists (Dean 1999) but expanded and re-formulated to allow for consideration of the impact of globalization on the EU. As developed in this paper, reflexive government allows for a consideration of the ways in which the EU operates on a range of sites and through multiple agencies including but not limited to supra-national, national and regional state agencies.¹ The choice of reflexive government also recognizes that the EU’s primary concern is not to ensure social solidarity, but the need to manage the lack of correspondence between the state, society and economy (Albrow 1998a; Lamy and Laidi 2001).

In place of searching for evidence of polity-building, integrated multi-level governance, or a supra-national state system we should focus instead on the development of new forms of government within (but not necessarily authored by, or under the control of) the EU. Interpretations of the EU which emphasise its regulatory capacities “above” the level of the nation-state, or its ability to combine sub-national regions, member states, and supra-national state functions into a new ensemble, neglect to account for the way the EU works secure the means of government (the governmentalization of government in Foucault’s formulation) in the face of forces which make effective governance increasingly difficult. Rather than contribute to the idea that the EU is a nascent polity reflexive government seeks to capture another, more important dynamic in relation to the question of how the EU operates as a state. Reflexive government accounts for EU attempts to extend its mechanisms of governance into new areas, and to secure the means of government through strategies to accommodate the global. These developments will be explained later in the paper with reference to EU policy on agriculture and rural development.

Globalization and the nation-state

Trust in the assumption that the nation-state is the guarantor of cultural cohesion, social solidarity and collective expression in the modern world has blinded conventional sociology to other, more important dynamics of the contemporary global system. Before we can explore further the question of the most appropriate way to conceive of the EU as a state or polity we need to deal with two other pressing issues.

The first is exactly what sociologists have come to understand by globalization, a term which has given rise to a multiplicity of interpretations and a large degree of uncertainty both as to what it means, and its place within sociological study. Second, the relationship assumed to exist between globalization and the nation-state, particularly the changes that the former has forced upon the latter, as this has a crucial bearing on the way the EU is conceptualised.

Appadurai (2001: 2) does not exaggerate when he talks of the “discourses of globalization growing dangerously dispersed, with the language of epistemic communities, the discourses of states and interstate fora, and the everyday understanding of global forces by the poor growing steadily apart.” Indeed, there is little enough consensus as to what globalization means within sociology, let alone among the social sciences more generally. Although there is certainly no “globalization school” within sociology there is a good deal of commonality in the work of Albrow (1996), Beck (2000a) and Robertson (1992), in addition to the work of political scientists such as Axford (2001) and Scholte (2000). All emphasise the cultural and political as well as the economic dimensions of globalization and the fact that diverse processes - technological innovation, mass communications, and supra-state regulation - have “caused” globalization to happen (Scholte 2000: 89-108). At root, they share the view that the world is becoming increasingly interconnected (not necessarily unified), and that people are increasingly aware that this is so. The globe has become a reference point for human aspirations, activities, and organizations.²

Although sociology can be (accurately) portrayed as being in thrall to the study of “nationally sequestered societies” (Robertson 1992) it must also be pointed out that the discipline (and its cognates) also has a long history of studying society beyond the nation-state: transnational religious movements (Beyer 1990; Robertson 1992), global culture (Featherstone 1990; Appadurai 1996), and world society (Meyer 1980; Bergesen 1990). As such, it can demonstrate an engagement with globalization which predates the more recent economic discourses. Nevertheless, despite a strong tradition within sociology conceptualising it as a wide-ranging and complex series of processes occurring over a long period of time (Robertson 1992), an economic reading of globalization has become predominant of late.³ Many sociologists have ignored the availability of a multi-dimensional and cultural understanding of globalization, investing heavily in an economic interpretation instead (Castells 2000; Deacon 1999; Hirst and Thompson 1996; Sassen 2001). For example, Castells (2000: 348) sees globalization as driven by “strategic economic activities” integrated “through electronically enacted networks of exchange of capital, commodities, and information.” This situation has come about because for many sociologists the current concern with globality has emerged from an engagement with the economicism of World Systems Theory (Sklair 1999), and/or the primacy of the idea that the effects of globalization can best be measured by the changes it has foisted upon the nation-state as an economic actor.

There exists a broad consensus that globalization has impacted upon the nation-state in many ways, not all of them negative, and it is rare to encounter sociological arguments in support of the idea that globalization is simply a threat to the nation-state.⁴ There is however a tendency to see globalization as responsible for a weakening of the nation-state in the face of (economic) globalization (Nash 2000), hence the need for the European Union (Castells 2000).⁵ Some approaches emphasise the link between globalization and decline of citizenship (Falk 2000) or question the meaning of sovereignty (Colas 2001). More commonly, sociological and social scientific interpretations of globalization emphasize that the nation-state is

simultaneously strengthened and weakened by globalization (Fulcher 2000; Held et al. 1999; Robertson 2001; Scholte 2000). Historically, globalization has strengthened the nation-state. In relation to the development of the national principle, the expectations generated by societies regarding their survival and viability are conditioned by “an increasingly global sense of how societies should be constructed” (Robertson 1992: 110). For Meyer (2000: 234), world society has created “common models of national state identity and purpose.” In short, in the Twentieth Century the nation-state became the global norm for the political unit. The formation of nation-states proceeded hand-in-hand with their mutual recognition and the formation of an international system of states. In the later half of the last century the international system became increasingly regulated and reinforced by international organizations. For Giddens’ (1985: 291), “[w]ithout the UN and a host of other intergovernmental organisations the nation-state would not be the global form of political ordering that it has become.”⁶

It is argued that to understand the EU sociology must “transgress the national scheme of things” (Ougaard and Higgot 2001; Soysal 2000) and address the complex processes through which transnational space is created. However, there is much at stake in moving beyond a national frame of reference, and sociology is implicated in the project of producing national societies (Robertson 1992). Many sociological concepts have applicability within the national context not necessarily reproduced within a transnational or global frame (Delanty 1998). The “container theory of the state” (Beck 2000b) is not simply a convenient way of representing the relationship between nation-state and society under conditions of modernity: the nation-state has also acted as a container for sociological thinking. The dimensions of a whole range of social issues and conflicts are measured according to the standards established by and within the nation-state. Citizenship, democracy, inequality, justice, development, welfare, collective action, social cleavages are all given substance by the national container.

Transnational or global space should not be viewed simply in terms of the increasing linkages between national spaces (Held et al 1999), what Beck (2000b) designates as globalization “operationalized as interconnectedness”. According to Albrow (1998b) ‘[t]he transnational exists in the context of relations across national units, whether in the shape of nation-states or not.’ In other words, the transnational traverses the national but it is not necessarily nation-states who are the primary actors in transnational relations. Furthermore, it implies a different understanding of territoriality. Transnational space is not necessarily bounded, cohesive or geographically contiguous. Social scientific thinking too often privileges the territorial and the national over the super-territorial and the transnational (Axford and Huggins 1999; Jonsson, Tagil and Tornqvist 2000; Scholte 2000).

A sociological reading of the relationship between globalization and the nation-state leads us to the realization that the global is not necessarily constructed from the building blocks of the national. This should be born in mind when attempting to understand the relationship between globalization and the EU. From the sociology of globalization perspective advanced here it would be a simplification to see the EU simply as an agglomeration of nation-states. A collection of nation-states, no matter how much sovereignty they transfer “upwards,” will not become a nation-state “writ large.” Neither should we view the nation-state and the EU as distinct levels in a hierarchy of international governance. The construction of the EU has transformed the nature and capabilities of nation-states, and globalization has reordered its internal structures and relativized its international relations. In Beck’s terms, “globalization not only alters the interconnectedness of nation-states and national societies but the

internal quality of the social. Whatever constitutes ‘society’ and ‘politics’ becomes in itself questionable, because the principles of territoriality, collectivity and frontier are becoming questioned.”

Sociological approaches to the European Union as a form of state

Contemporary sociological interest in European integration is framed by two overarching concerns. First, an appreciation of broader changes to the nature of social solidarity in European societies (and elsewhere), particularly those changes engendered by shifts from redistributive policies (symbolised by the welfare state) to policies promoting economic competitiveness (neo-liberalism). Second, an awareness that previously stable borders and boundaries are being undermined by the processes of globalization. This does not only refer to the territorial borders of the national state, generally held to be increasingly porous, but to the boundaries between society, politics and economy previously seen as being maintained within the nation-state (Beck 2000b: 87-8).

Hence the need to develop a “sociology beyond societies” (Urry 2000) in recognition of the fact that globalization works to undermine the traditional (national) frame for sociological study. Traditionally, sociology has been aligned with the idea that (nation-) states make societies (Offe 2002) – notwithstanding the existence of alternative traditions which emphasise that world society makes nation-states (Bergesen 1990; Meyer 2000) - but as Beck 2000a: 25) points out, one feature of the globalization debate is a “dispute about which basic assumptions and images of society, which units for analysis, can replace the axiomatics of the national state.” Through grappling with the problem of globalization sociology has come to question the assumption that society must be coterminous with the nation-state (Albrow 1996). Society has been freed from its national moorings and what form it takes, and what holds it together or regulates it is increasingly at issue (Beck 2000b; Soysal 2001). In this sense, sociological thinking on EU polity is part broader contemplation of society beyond the nation-state, transnational society, and global polity (Delanty 1998; Mann 1998; Ougaard and Higgott 2001).

In respect of social solidarity, Bornschier (1997) views the EU as a compromise between nationalism and liberalism, the latter being the driving force behind growth and development, the former the inherited principle of social solidarity. Based on this reading we can say that liberalism has tilted the scales at the present time, with no principle of social solidarity emerging at the European level to substitute for national attachment, even though as Bornschier notes “national pride and support for European integration are not mutually exclusive.” In Streeck’s view (1999) “[g]rowing competitiveness in an internationalizing economy is eroding the material base of traditional redistributive solidarity in European welfare states.” What is emerging in its place are attempts at a “productivist reconstruction of solidarity” which accommodates markets rather than overrules them. This is happening because neo-liberalism induces policy makers to “frame policy in terms of competitiveness rather than social goals such as equality or solidarity” (Hooghe 1998: 463). In other words, economic prosperity and development must now be achieved through growth rather than redistribution, and social cohesion is aligned with competitiveness rather than compensatory mechanisms (Rumford 2000a). To develop this argument further we must give detailed consideration to reflexive government in the context of EU integration. Before we can do so we must first survey the dominant sociological interpretations of the EU as a form of state.

Multi-level governance

The move to study the EU as a polity is linked to the shift of emphasis in EU scholarship towards a study of governance (Rosamond 2000; Lamy and Laidi 2001). Governance has become the preferred term for the way the EU organizes the complex array of mechanisms of rule at its disposal, working at regional, national, and supra-national levels with the EU, and involving a variety of state and non-state agencies. From the point of view of it being a suitable tool with which to understand the EU as a form of state we can identify two main weaknesses with the idea of governance. First, there are strong associations between the idea of governance and the hegemony of neo-liberal economic and political values (Jessop 1998). The World Bank talks of "good governance" by which it means rule within a society comprising a plurality of power-sharers and political actors. To this end it encourages an end to state-centric government, the privatization of publicly owned utilities, and the transfer of authority to non-state organizations (Rose 1999: 16). Governance is closely associated with the idea of "downsizing government," deregulation and replacing monopolies with markets. As generally employed in relation to understanding developments in the contemporary EU governance denotes the organization of rule most attuned to the needs of a European space structured by the twin dynamics of neo-liberalism and (economic) globalization.

A second problem area is that governance, while signalling a diffuse array of state and non-state forms of government still rests upon and in turn propagates the idea that the EU is synonymous with integration. Governance, whether multi-level or otherwise, suggests that disparate elements are combined within the EU to constitute integrated aggregates of groups, regions, sectors, and citizens, whose organization exhibits systemic properties. Against such a simplistic interpretation we would have to agree with Delanty (2003) that "European integration is not for good or bad creating an integrated political community, with a unified public space and common citizenry, with shared values, principles and aspirations. In fact the very term integration is no longer applicable for a process that is bringing about far-reaching social transformation."

Within European studies questions of governance have been dominated by the increasingly influential multi-level governance approach (Marks *et al* 1996; Hooghe 1996; Jeffery 1997; Benz and Eberlein 1999; Hooghe and Marks 2001; van Tatenhove 2002). The multi-level governance approach offers an account of the EU as a series of interlocking and mutually reinforcing levels: regional, national and supranational (Hooghe and Marks 2001). Its appeal is that it both strives to capture the capacity of the EU as a complex polity and gives expression to its aspirations for greater democracy, social inclusion, and citizen participation. The multi-level governance thesis represents a positive step in integration studies as it embraces the plurality of levels, centres and agencies operational in the exercise of power. More importantly perhaps, it encourages a wider perspective on European issues. Not state building or centralized supranational power as such, but the exercise of rule and authority throughout the Euro-polity. The multi-level governance thesis is a sophisticated attempt to understand the complexity of European integration, but fails to incorporate a true global dimension to an understanding of the EU. For example, it discounts the possibility that sub-national regions could be animated from beyond the EU (Marks *et al* 1996),⁷ or that postnational European citizenship could have a marked global dimension (Streeck 1996).

In addition to the emergence of the multi-level governance approach within EU studies, deriving from but no longer limited to a study of EU regional policy, there have been moves more generally within social science and sociological approaches to the relationship between globalization and the EU to utilize a multi-level approach. For example, Mann (1998) develops a multi-level perspective on the networks of power in the European context, and Nash (2000) and Castells (2000) (both considered below) appropriate the imagery of multi-level polity. Perhaps the fullest development of the multi-level governance thesis as applied to the relationship between the EU and globalization can be found in Held et al. (1999), for whom transnational European space has been impelled by globalization and takes the form of amalgamated levels of governance, deriving from, displacing but not eliminating the nation-state. The need for greater competitiveness in the global marketplace has forced EU member states to bind more closely together in order to regain at the European level some of the autonomy lost at the nation-state level: what is “global” about globalization is an intensification of interconnectedness. At the same time, the nation-state has been subject to pressures from new, mainly supranational levels of authority and globalization is responsible for creating “multiple power centres and overlapping spheres of authority” (Held *et al* 1999: 441). In relation to European polity more particularly, this theory of transnational spaces relies upon the idea that a transnational “level” of civil society is emerging. One important effect of globalization is to encourage new forms of public life and the emergence of transnational actors empowered to debate regional and global issues (Held *et al* 1999: 452). The transnational level reorders the nation-state level within the overarching integrative framework provided by the EU.

The regulatory state

It has become common to follow Majone (1996) and characterise the EU as a regulatory state (Axford and Huggins 1999; Barry 2001; Caporaso 1998; Walby 1999; Urry 2000). In other words, the EU works not through welfarism and public ownership (the Keynesian state), or through deregulation (the neo-liberal panacea), but by encouraging the development of a panoply of independent or quasi-independent regulatory agencies designed to correct market failure (existence of monopolies, environmental pollution).⁸ The EU, rather than acting as a super-state, has set about creating a space across which regulatory innovation can be disseminated, and within which the regulatory systems of the member states can become harmonized. Community activity has not replaced national activity, but “actually created new regulatory responsibilities” (Majone 1996: 59). Majone’s work is important because it supports the idea that the EU is something other than a supranational state and offers an alternative account of the way in which the EU governs.

Majone’s thesis is that regulatory reform has been the defining feature of the decline of the Keynesian, welfarist state. Writing in 1996 his argument is that “the last fifteen years have been a period less of deregulation than intense regulatory reform, where the latter term is used to denote the apparently paradoxical combination of deregulation and re-regulation” (Majone 1996: 2). This regulatory reform marks a “reordering of public priorities” (Majone 1996: 54). Until relatively recently “most European countries attached greater political significance to redistribution and to economic stabilization and development than the correction of market failure through competition and other regulatory policies.”

Walby (1999) concurs that the EU does not work through traditional state methods, through redistributive mechanisms (taxation) or the institutions of repression (police, army). The EU has not attempted to institute a European welfare state. Rather the EU is a regulatory state, exercising its legal powers to regulate markets and to deliver social justice in specific areas by deploying legal instruments which “reach over the heads” of national governments. Walby argues that our understanding of the EU’s social dimension must be expanded to include regulatory activity as well as traditional mechanisms of redistribution. In other words, the EU state – which she describes as a supra-state – is not a redistributive welfare state, except in the fields of agricultural and cohesion policy, but it has a number of policies - such as those targeted at backward regions, social exclusion and re-training – which have a social component.

There are three main problems with Walby’s sociological interpretation of Majone’s work on the EU as a regulatory state. First, in counterposing legal regulation to traditional welfare provision she makes the error of supposing that the Common Agricultural Policy and cohesion provision are redistributive in nature, and in doing so implies that the EU does not work through regulation in these policy domains. In fact, neither agricultural or cohesion policy can be accurately termed redistributive policies (unless redistribution is redefined as transfer of funds from poorer to richer areas), although it must be admitted that this is indeed the way they are frequently portrayed in the literature (eg. Hix 1999). The EU promotes a market economy not a redistributive one. At root, cohesion policy is a series of instruments contributing to the creation of a harmonised European economic space, and enhancing the competitiveness of the EU (Rumford 2000a).⁹ Neo-liberalism “induces cohesion policy makers to frame policy in terms of competitiveness rather than social goals such as equality or solidarity” (Hooghe 1998: 463).

The second problem in Walby’s account of the EU as a regulatory state lies in her depiction of regulation as a tool of the European supra-state with which social justice can be administered through legal means rather than the tax-and-spend options available to national governments. This is a rather selective appropriation of Majone’s work on the regulatory state and neglects the role of the member states in effecting regulation, through mutual recognition of national standards (Majone 1996: 268-9), and the national preference for a European-level solution in order to increase the credibility of such regulation (Majone 2000: 400). Furthermore, Walby’s emphasis on the role of law in the regulatory process serves to confirm her thesis that the EU is becoming a supra-state. Foucault (1991: 93-5) puts the case that the task of government is not to impose laws on men but to ensure the appropriate disposal of things: employing tactics rather than laws, and using laws themselves as tactics. This exemplifies the difference between a state-centred and government-centred interpretation of political rule. In sum, Walby views the EU preference for regulation as evidence of supra-state building, placing emphasis upon the supranational regulatory authority of the Commission. The argument advanced here is that EU regulatory policy is better understood as one element of reflexive government: the EU’s role is orientated not towards the implementation of laws but to work with and through agencies in order to ensure that the mechanisms of governance are extended to more domains and create new European constituencies.

The third problem is the relationship between globalization and European integration assumed in Walby’s account. Globalization has restricted the range of traditional redistributive mechanisms open to nation-states and the development of the European regulatory supra-state is an aggressive response to the perceived threat. In other words, states are not passive victims of globalization but can shape and mould their

own responses. This account conforms to the accepted understanding that contemporary EU integration is a response to external forces; globalization as a series of threats or challenges which have resulted in greater economic integration, political coherence, and which has enabled the EU to control internal developments. It does not allow for the fact that the EU may work to shape globalization (Ross 1998), or that globalization may be responsible for the increasing differentiation and autonomization of the EU (Rumford 2000b).

An internationalization of the state

In the course of a discussion on the development of democracy and postnational citizenship in the EU Nash (2000: 210) advances the view that the European Union is “increasingly a supernational state.” The EU is assuming the mantle of a state by carrying out functions which were previously the preserve of its constitutive member states. What is happening within the EU is also true more generally: the state is being transformed, becoming at the same time more disaggregated and internationalized. Nash (following Jessop 1998) outlines “three main trajectories of change in the form of the state” consequent on globalization: denationalization, de-statization and internationalization (Nash 2000: 261). We will look briefly at each in turn. Firstly, the hollowing out of the state - what Nash calls denationalization- wherein the state is reorganized and its functions relocated. Some functions are referred upwards, for example where member states lose a degree of sovereignty over economic policy, others downwards as with the case of EU regional policy. Some state power even leaks away “sideways” where for example, regions occupy portions of more than one nation-state. Miall (1993: 53) makes a similar observation about the redistribution of state power. He states that the nation-state is “becoming porous, granting some powers to international organizations, and others to local governments and regions.”

Secondly, we can observe a “de-statization of the political system, a shift from government to governance” (Nash 2000: 262): governance has grown at the expense of national government (Jessop 1998). The state no longer monopolizes the management of the economy or social welfare programmes but works in conjunction with non-governmental organizations to realize its objectives. Thirdly, the internationalization of some agencies of the state. Globalization has disaggregated the state in practice “in comparison with the sovereign nation-state of fifty years ago” (Nash 2001: 87). There is also a blurring of the boundaries that separate international organizations such as the EU and the internationalized state, and a consequent blurring of the distinction between domestic and foreign policy (Jessop 1998). Under such conditions the state should not be seen as unified and integrated but as “a fluid grouping of institutions with unstable boundaries, all of which are constantly engaged in negotiating their tasks and capacities” (Nash 2001: 87). Importantly in the EU context, “the state does not appear on the international stage as a unified whole but as a coalition of bureaucratic agencies each pursuing its own agenda, sometimes with minimal direction (Nash 2001: 88).¹⁰

In Nash’s account denationalisation, or the hollowing out of the state, is a variation on the idea that sovereignty is ceded by the nation-state in the cause of European integration. Powers are passed upwards to a supranational authority and devolved downwards to regional administrations. In other words, denationalization is EU integration by another name. In Nash’s formulation the idea of the internationalization of the state goes hand-in-hand with the idea of global civil society. The basic components of the national polity now inhabit a larger field of operation. Both the internationalized state and global civil society can become involved in global

governance. This conceptualisation of different “levels” of governance is a variation on the multi-level governance thesis. On this model it is only the international dimensions of the EU which have a connection to the global while the subnational “levels” correspond to the local. The nation-state gives way to the supranational state while civil society becomes global civil society. The local, national, supranational and global are discrete levels which operate independently of each other.

Nash’s account succeeds in positing a non-unitary and dominating super-state, and her emphasis on the fragmentary nature of the internationalised state, comprising differential agencies and interests, is a useful one. At the same time, the idea that the state is becoming fragmented, redeployed, or “rolled back” can be aligned with the idea that civil society is becoming more important vis-à-vis the state, an argument developed by Keane (1988). Neo-liberalism has undermined the welfare state and in doing so has increased the role of civil society in terms of acting as a counterweight to the state and allowing the political representation of a whole range of social movements. Civil society is also important because of its growing role in the “global public sphere” (Lamy and Laidi 2001). For these reasons civil society has an important role in the contemporary development of the EU.

Keane (1998: 102-7) identifies four mechanisms by which a post-national Europe is being created, all of which accord an important role to civil society. First, the EU is developing multi-level governance, comprising ‘interlocking networks of democratically accountable subnational and supranational institutions’ (Keane 1998: 102). Second, the EU, in common with the UN, is responsible for the formulation and application of internationally recognized guarantees of national identity. As such, national identity is becoming a ‘civic entitlement’ identified with civil society, not the state (Keane 1998: 107). Thirdly, and as a consequence of the second mechanism, national identity becomes one identity amongst many possible identities. Identity is a matter of politics and choice rather than fate, and difference is a right and a duty for everyone. Fourth, the EU represents the internationalisation of civil society, wherein people can intermingle and develop mutual understanding. For Keane the construction of an EU civil society is equated with the development of transnational civic, rather than supra-national space.

Keane’s version of the EU-polity argument is important in that it promises a European social space distinct from the aggregated national spaces of the member states. On this view, a European democratic realm, identified by so many commentators as so important for the emergence of a true European polity, is becoming a reality. At the same time, he draws heavily upon the idea of multi-level governance in order to establish that civil society is a necessary component of European integration. This is still a model of European society enmeshed in the structures of the nation-state, only in his version European civil society is made possible by the decoupling of state and society promoted by cosmopolitan democracy and European integration: European civic space transcends national space.

The network state

For Castells (2000) the EU is a protective shield raised by the European nation-state to defend its weaknesses and vulnerabilities. He argues that the history of European integration has been shaped by a series of defensive political projects, and that now, in the contemporary context, the rise of economic globalization has given integration a new twist (Castells 2000: 339). The European Union has defended the European nation-state in a number of crises with which it was poorly equipped to deal. The first

of these was the threat of another war. Therefore, Germany was accommodated in the west's post-war order as a partner, and the industries central to any future war effort – coal and steel – were the subject of the first of the European community. The second crisis inspiring a defensive reaction was the perception of a “technology gap” between the Europe, the US and Japan in the mid-1980s. The result was the Single European Act of 1987 and a giant step on the path to the single market. A third crisis point was the collapse of communism at the end of the 1980s which, following the unification of Germany, necessitated another round of integration. Europe had become unbalanced and the German economy needed to be further integrated with that of her European partners. A new equilibrium was sought by means of economic and monetary union, the European Central Bank, and further enlargement.

Castells terms the European Union a network state, the result of a transfer of sovereignty from the national to supranational level. The resulting Euro-polity takes the form of a complex network of European, national and sub-national institutions mixing together federal, supranational and intergovernmental arrangements for exercising power. To understand Castells' ideas on Europe and the network state it is first necessary to appreciate the extent to which they are shaped by his interpretation of globalization. Networks arise from the need to accommodate various centres of national and regional political authority across Europe and, at the same time, to respond to the forces of globalization. According to Castells (2000: 502), the originary and dominant networks are those of the “new economy” which is “organized around global networks of capital, management and information.” The networks which constitute the EU stem from the networks comprising of global flows of capitalism.

Castells' appreciation of globalization is undoubtedly an economic one in which global movements of capital and technological knowledge are the key indices.¹¹ The network “works” for capitalism and is a sensible arrangement under conditions of globalization. Castells writes, “the network state ... is the response of political systems to the challenges of globalization. And the European Union may be the clearest manifestation of this emerging form of state” (Castells 2000: 364). In Castells' hands the idea of the EU as a network state is an alternative way of formulating the familiar idea that government in the EU is now organized on different “levels,” and that the regions are important players alongside nation-states. The EU represents a new form of state - the network state – consisting of new institutions of government “created at the European, national, regional, and local levels” (Castells 2000: 339).

Reflexive government

Sociologists require conceptual tools with which to deal with key issues in the study of the EU, without projecting onto the European stage concepts which have reached their limit at the national level (Delanty 1998). Any approach to understanding the EU-as-polity must deal with the reality that the EU is not a state, in any accepted sense of the term, nor a polity, if by that we mean an institutionally constituted realm comprising a unity of state, society, and economy. Equally important, an understanding of the dynamics of the EU must break with the inevitabilism characteristic of much thinking on globalization and the EU (Calhoun 2002): that globalization acts primarily as a catalyst for greater integration, and the EU constitutes a necessary response to the global integration of capitalism.

This paper advances the thesis that reflexive government is the most appropriate way of characterising the EU's blend of pan-European governance, harmonization of regulatory structures, and empowerment of multiple, state and non-state agencies. Reflexive government has the advantage of focussing attention on forms of rule at work within the EU rather than looking for evidence of state-building. In doing so it engages with the current trend to designate as governance forms of government without the state. In particular, it questions the integrative logic which suggests that EU governance works on a number of "levels" to further integration and construct an EU polity. Reflexive government also allows for the possibility that the processes comprising globalization work in contradictory ways, fracturing and fragmenting, as well as unifying and integrating European actors.

As developed by the Anglo-Foucauldian governmentality theorists, reflexive government points to the way in which "government begins to conceive its task as operating upon existing forms of government rather than governing either things or processes" (Dean 1999: 211). Governments are less and less concerned with economic management and the redistribution of wealth, and increasingly occupied with attempts to ensure the "security of governmental mechanisms" (Dean 1999: 177): from national budgets to the competitiveness of individuals and institutions. In other words, the purpose of government is to monitor and reform the performance of governmental institutions and techniques. Dean argues that the government of the state (associated with the regulation of populations and welfarism) has been replaced by reflexive government. We must embrace the idea that there exists a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, often combined together in complex ways, which are capable of governing. Government is less involved with bureaucratic control and direct intervention, rather it increasingly acts "indirectly upon the actions of these autonomous entities, by focussing upon results: setting targets, promulgating standards, monitoring outputs, allocating budgets, undertaking audits" (Rose 1999: 146).

Before we examine the usefulness of the idea of reflexive government through an investigation into the changing nature of the EU's agricultural policy it will be useful to summarise the advantages of the concept over more traditional sociological approaches to viewing the EU as a form of state. We can identify four main dimensions of reflexive government. The first is centred on the way in which the relationship between the EU and globalization is conceived. The second concerns the nature of transnational spaces. The third is centred on the relationship between governance and reflexive government. The fourth addresses the relationship between state and society.

1. Reflexive government is not inevitabilist. Conventional sociological accounts of the impact of globalization on EU integration see the former as a catalyst for the latter. As Calhoun (2002) points out, on this model the EU is viewed as a necessary response to the global integration of capitalism, and the EU state an inevitable consequence of "ever closer union." Reflexive government allows for the non-integrative ordering of globalization. For example it is responsible for animating a range of European actors, - citizens, NGOs, industrial sectors, sub-national regions – from beyond the borders of the EU thus making it difficult for the EU to capture them (totally) within its gravitational field. Similarly, under conditions of globalization state-centric political authority is diminished, partly as a consequence of the dislocation of nation and state (Appadurai 2001), and society and state (Albrow 1998a), and partly because of the rise of institutions of global governance (Shaw 2000;

Keane 2002). The EU does not have authority in the traditional sense of the Westphalian nation-state, and member-state and non-territorial communities of interest cooperate or co-exist in the absence of any overarching system of domination. Furthermore, globalization increases the disjunction between society, economy and state and in doing so detotalizes existing polities. Rather than engaged in the process of state or polity-building the EU works to mitigate the tensions generated by the cleavages – within and between nation-states - produced by globalization (Lamy and Laidi 2001).

2. Reflexive government problematizes transnational space. We have seen how many sociological and non-sociological approaches to globalization tend to see “the global” as being constructed out of national building-blocks. Reflexive government rejects the idea put forward by Held *et al* (1999) amongst others, that globalization results from the increased interconnectivity of existing places. Reflexive government draws upon those sociological traditions which view the nation-state as the product of a prior global ordering of society and culture through the global dissemination of statal forms, norms and practices constitutive of the government of national spaces (Robertson 1992; Elias 2000; Meyer 2000). Consequently the EU has to be viewed not simply as an aggregation of nation-states with an internal motor of integration, but as an entity patterned by the accelerating institutionalisation of international and global instruments of governance (UN, World Bank, GATT, NATO, OECC) within the orbit of US, and framed by a developmental logic sustained by the Cold War.
3. Reflexive government relativizes governance. Conventional sociological approaches to the question of the EU-as-state place great faith in the idea that in recent times there has been a shift from government (by the nation-state) to governance (within and beyond the nation-state). Governance is deemed to be the most appropriate designation to reflect the shift in the principle of social solidarity from welfare to the market, and from the management of national society to the regulation of transnational and global spaces. Reflexive government interprets the underlying processes somewhat differently. For example, the oft talked about “democratic deficit” in the EU is conventionally seen as inhering in the gap between the democratic practices enshrined within the nation-state and those instituted at the European level. From the perspective of reflexive government globalization has created a disjunction between the government of territorially-bound units (nation-states) and transnational or global spaces within which traditional indices of democracy have little application. To compensate the EU is required “to contractualize its relations with other agents to guarantee the legitimacy and effectiveness of its acts” (Lamy and Laidi 2001). In the terms favoured by the governmentality theorists, to govern is to seek the authority for one’s authority (Rose 1999: 27). On this reading, the European Commission has encouraged new forms of governance in order to increase its legitimacy.
4. Reflexive government reorders state/society relations. Sociological approaches which attest to the emergence of an EU state expect concomitant developments in the social realm. In short, an EU state promises an EU society, and where this does not exist it is perceived as a lack and the source of the democratic deficit. The state/society nexus is best demonstrated by the popularity of the idea of civil society, which is defined in opposition to the state, although it also requires it in judicious measure in order to function. In

Walzer's memorable formulation, "only a democratic state can create a democratic civil society; only a democratic civil society can sustain a democratic state" Walzer (1995:24). In the sociological approaches under consideration in this paper the presumption of a Euro-state is accompanied not only by the expectations of a European public sphere but also by the assumption that a transnational state serves to perpetuate the state/society distinction. For example, while more predisposed to see society as a partner in governance and therefore to not adjudge state and society to be totally distinct realms, the multi-level governance approach views society as something which cannot exist independently of the state. Similarly, the internationalisation of the state is accompanied by transnational civil society, both being extrapolated upwards from their nation-state origins, while the idea that the EU is a regulatory state serves to maintain the state/society distinction. Only the network state thesis blurs the distinction between network state/network society. However, this should not be taken to mean that Castells re-theorizes state/society relations. Rather, he talks of network state and a network society without adequately differentiating between them (Axford and Huggins 1999: 196). Conventional sociological approaches to state-society relations assume that the state rules over a territory, a society, an economy. Reflexive government holds that governing occurs in a wide range of settings - some of which comprise society (NGOs, interest groups, media) - and through all manner of institutions, organizations, agencies and individuals. In doing so, reflexive government breaks down the state-society distinction common to sociological theories of the EU state.

The Common Agricultural Policy: from state intervention to reflexive government

Until recently the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was widely considered to be the most obvious example of statist interventionism in the EU. However, recent agricultural reforms have seen the EU begin to abandon traditional forms of market support and protection in favour of a multi-dimensional approach in which agricultural support instruments are merged with rural (and regional) policy. These changes in the nature of CAP appear to resonate with the idea of a shift from government to governance, from market control and protectionism to neo-liberal values, from redistributive to competitive solidarity, but, it is argued, can be better understood through the lens of reflexive government.

To many commentators on EU affairs CAP represents the worst excesses of the interventionist Euro-state and Brussels bureaucracy, and a poor advertisement for the benefits of European integration. The negative image of the EU held by many people is in no small part due to the association of CAP with heavily subsidized (French) farmers, EU profligacy, artificially high consumer prices for agricultural produce, and large agricultural surpluses ("grain mountains" and "wine lakes"). Furthermore, CAP has always absorbed a large proportion of the EU budget (currently approximately 44.5 per cent, but previously in excess of 80 per cent) and has tended to dominate the EU policy agenda despite the fact that agriculture employs just 5 per cent of the EU workforce and accounts for only 3 per cent of GDP (McCormick 1999: 188).

The basis for a Common Agricultural Policy was enshrined in the Treaty of Rome at a time when the nascent EEC was under pressure to lower barriers to US agricultural exports and align price support with prevailing GATT norms, while also having to cope with the problem of how to ensure adequate food supplies to European

consumers. From the outset CAP was framed by EEC/ global relations. European nation-states negotiated the conditions under which they were to participate in the global system by instituting protective measures and permitting the maintenance of differing national models of agricultural support. It is for these reasons that protectionism, subsidies, and price controls have always been strong elements of CAP. It also goes some way to explaining why agricultural reforms are an ongoing problem for the EU, and such progress as has been made has been achieved in the face of some strong national opposition, notably from France for whom proposed EU agricultural reforms reduce the scope of the “European model of agriculture” to modulate global agricultural trade regimes.

Some authors (for example Rieger 1996; Hix 1999) have chosen to view CAP as an extension of the welfare state, that is to say, to emphasise its wider role in bringing stability to society. For example, Rieger (1996: 104), echoing Milward’s idea that the EU was a way of rescuing the nation-state, argues that CAP has provided a means to integrate “the national farming population into both the *national* society and the *national* polity,” and evolved into “something which could be called a welfare state for farmers.” In a similar vein, Hix (1999: 252-3) interprets CAP reforms as evidence of a new type of welfare policy which seeks to work in the “general public interest rather than the narrow interests of the farmers.” The interpretation of CAP as a component of a wider welfare regime is certainly not shared by all commentators. For Grant (2001) the disproportionate share of benefits going to better-off farmers demonstrates that if “CAP is intended to be a social policy, it fails in that respect.”¹² Equally important, the welfare interpretation of CAP perpetuates the idea that the EU is a rather traditional form of redistributive state.

For more than a decade the EU, stimulated by both internal pressures (the single market programme and the prospect of enlargement) and external constraints (GATT negotiations), has embarked upon a series of agricultural reforms, of which the most far-reaching were the MacSharry reforms of the early 1990s which began to de-link subsidies from production, moving instead to a system of direct payments for farmers.¹³ The Commission’s Agenda 2000 programme proposed further reforms aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of the sector and introducing a new framework for rural development, the “second pillar” of CAP. These changes are not simply a response to the perceived problem of eastern enlargement or a new strategy for cutting the level of farm support. No longer is agriculture viewed as “an industry like no other” and a policy area to be managed by intervention, but as a realm which both impacts upon other key policy areas (regional and environmental policy in particular) with which it must increasingly dovetail, and as a key factor in the growth, competitiveness and development potential of a region or nation.

The changing nature of CAP can be best explained, not by fixating on the problems and issues with which agricultural policy must come to terms (enlargement to the east, budgetary restrictions, uncompetitive farming, environmental and health concerns, accommodation with global trade regimes), but by viewing the growing importance of rural development policy from the perspective of reflexive government. In other words, it is not simply the case that the EU has chosen to reform CAP, but that the EU has significantly transformed the way that it governs agriculture. For example, farmers paid to re-train and move out of agriculture demonstrate this very well: less a shift in the emphasis of agricultural policy, more the bringing to bear of new techniques of government. Agricultural policy gives way to the government of rural development, of which agriculture is one component.¹⁴ In addition, the European Commission has embraced the cause of agricultural reform not because it is

convinced by the need to create global markets for agricultural products but because it sees rural development policy as a realm through which it can establish European mechanisms of government, distinct from the national interests invested in CAP. In other words, the Commission has identified a means through which it can exercise a greater degree of control over the government of agriculture.

It may be tempting to interpret these changes as part of the shift to governance: new “levels” of state activity co-opting organizations within civil society. On this line of reasoning agriculture has been captured within the neo-liberal imperative that the concerns of the citizen-consumer, not the farmer, should be paramount, and that farm policy can no longer be treated apart from any other considerations. Governance dictates that policy areas must dovetail with strategies for achieving broader goals: citizenship rights and “the needs of society.” However, these formulations do not capture the full extent of the transformation of EU agricultural policy. It is more plausible to argue that agriculture is in the process of being transformed from a policy area in need of special protection (to the extent that it was virtually taken out of the single market programme) to one increasingly aligned with the wider EU concern with competitiveness: another case of the European Commission bringing a recalcitrant policy realm within its purview. Reflexive government directs our attention to the governmentalization of government, and the way that the EU is increasingly concerned to secure the means of government. As Dean points out, this is particularly important at a time when there are processes (such as globalization) deemed beyond government control. The diversity of rural areas, hitherto not addressed under CAP, is brought within the reach of agricultural policy.

The EU aims to act not just upon production levels, prices and exported quantities, but a whole new range of rural economic activities (from environmental protection to recreation). As the Commission explains, the policy for agriculture “is targeted not just at agricultural producers but also at the wider rural population, consumers and society as a whole” (European Commission 1999a: 1). The “second pillar” increases the EU’s capacity to govern areas which were previously of secondary or no interest at all: food safety, environmental damage, training for agricultural workers, and the use of non-agricultural land. The aim is for an agricultural sector more competitive and compatible with the dynamics of the single market “in the context of a comprehensive, integrated strategy for rural development” (European Commission 1999a: 3). The development of this kind of rural policy is indicative of a shift away from protection and intervention towards the government of diverse rural areas, regions and sectors. Direct aid to farmers (including incentives to leave farming) and support for diversification of rural development is on the increase while market support and export subsidies are on the decline.

The “second pillar” of CAP resembles regional policy more than it does agricultural policy. Rural areas are increasingly seen as regions with special problems. Moreover, rural policy is explicitly linked to EU attempts to reduce disparities between regions. Emphasis is placed on the “multifunctionality of agriculture.” In other words, the value of agriculture lies not simply in what farmers produce but in the services they provide (European Commission 1999b). Consumers are encouraged to take advantage of these services and by the same token farmers are encouraged to become entrepreneurs of the self, consuming training courses, re-training to enable them to exit agriculture, and the services of marketing and unemployment agencies. The European model of agriculture has given way to the “European rural model.” In the face of mounting criticisms of a narrow, protectionist and production-orientated strategy the EU has moved to both link agriculture to wider rural concerns and to

apply its technologies of entrepreneurial government to greater areas. In the words of Commissioner Fischler, “agricultural policy alone cannot solve such large-scale issues as unemployment, economic growth or the preservation of the environment, we must tackle them more directly through ‘tailor-made’ rural development policies that complement the changes occurring in rural areas” (Fischler 2001). To this end rural policy incorporates strategies to enhance competitiveness and employment and addresses environmental concerns, rural diversity, tourism and other non-farming activities.

Conclusion: the case for reflexive government

The EU is increasingly concerned with governing a genuinely European sphere, as opposed to increasing its influence over a collection of national domains. However, this should not be taken to mean that the EU is developing into a super- or supra-state. Existing sociological approaches to understanding the EU as a form of state have been criticised for both their understanding of globalization, and for their conceptualisations of the Euro-polity. It is common to encounter approaches which assume that globalization has impelled greater integration and that some kind of EU state must exist or be in the process of creation. It is much rarer, however, to encounter the view that globalization is creating disjunctions and disunity within the EU to the extent that an integrated polity is not a likely outcome of “ever closer union.”

This paper has argued that globalization – understood as a series of processes patterning the political organization of the globe through an enhanced awareness of the “oneness” of the world – both undermines tradition conceptualisations of the state and accounts for the EU’s ability to constitute itself as a polity. This latter point is well expressed by Delanty (2000: 87) who asserts that, “[w]e are living in an age which has made it impossible to return to one of the great dreams of the project of modernity, namely the creation of a unitary principle of integration capable of bringing together the domains of economy, polity, culture and society.” Under such conditions, it has been argued, the EU is not likely to develop state-like institutions, and the problem of constructing an integrated polity has caused the EU to focus more and more on securing the mechanisms of government – the governmentalization of government, in Foucault’s terms - or reflexive government as formulated here. In an attempt to achieve this the European Commission has turned its attention to new policy areas and/or policy domain with a transnational dimension, and not previously governed by the EU: cohesion, the “democratic deficit,” governance, civil society, and rural policy are all good examples, the latter being the focus of attention in this paper.

The strength of the concept of reflexive government over its rivals is that it draws attention to the multiplicity of forms of rule currently coexisting within the EU – national institutions, supranational structures, postnational forms of governance – and sees the EU involved, not in state or polity building as such, but in a project to establish pragmatic forms of government in an environment in which EU governance is increasingly problematic and uncertain. The EU is not a super- or supra-state or a polity. The EU is inserted within, and to a large extent dominated by, a complex of global flows and processes which rather than leading automatically to deeper integration, are responsible for the failure of the EU to constitute itself as an economic, social and political polity.

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Notes

¹ The choice of reflexive government acknowledges the current sociological interest in reflexivity (Beck 1997; Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994; Benton 2000; Delanty 1999; Lash and Urry 1994).

² There are sociologists for whom the global is not an appropriate object of sociological enquiry. For example, Fulcher (2000: 525-6) holds that “[t]he globe is a geological entity rather than a sociological one,” and “ [t]he global’ is sociologically unattainable.”

³ According to Robertson (2001), “The current tendency to regard globalization in more or less exclusively economic terms is a particularly disturbing form of reductionism, indeed of fundamentalism. Nowadays invocation of the word ‘globalization’ almost automatically seems to raise issues concerning so-called economic liberalism, deregulation, privatisation, marketization and the crystallization of what many call a global economy.”

⁴ For a survey of the effects of globalization on the nation-state see Hedetoft (1999).

⁵ For a critique see Weiss (1997: 15-16), who dismisses the idea that the nation-state is vulnerable in this way as “the political construction of helplessness.”

⁶ There are similar arguments in relation to the European Union and its role in “rescuing” the nation-state in the post-war period (see Milward 1992).

⁷ Albrow (1996) and Rumford (2000b) outline the ways in which globalization animates the Euro-region from beyond the EU in ways that can compromise integration.

⁸ For Majone (1996: 276) regulation consists of “a sustained and focussed control exercised by a public agency over activities that are valued by a community.”

⁹ The EU makes this explicit: “cohesion is concerned with increasing economic growth and new opportunities in the poorer regions and for disadvantaged social groups and does not imply a reduction in either growth or jobs for others” (European Commission 1996: 14-15).

¹⁰ On this point see also Dehousse (1997).

¹¹ Castells shows scant interest in sociological theories of globalization nor does he acknowledge the pioneering work of Meyer, Robertson and Albrow in developing globalization as a sociological field.

¹² The Commission has made plain that CAP tends to favour the larger, more profitable farms of northern Europe rather than the smaller ones of the south. Also, one of the “poor four” – Portugal - continues to be a net loser from CAP. (European Commission 1996 and 2001).

¹³ According to Grant (2001), historically speaking the drivers of reform have been budgetary pressures, external trade negotiations (the Uruguay Round), and eastern enlargement. Recently, the issue of food quality and safety issues has also spurred reform.

¹⁴ Although it should be noted that the “second pillar” of CAP currently receives only about 10 per cent of available funds.

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